

**AN EVALUATION OF INHERITANCE PRACTICES AMONG WIDOWS IN
NIGERIA: A STUDY OF SELECTED URBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES IN
ENUGU STATE**

BY

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**INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA
ENUGU CAMPUS**

NOVEMBER, 2011

CHAPTER ONE

TITLE PAGE

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**BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, ENUGU CAMPUS**

NOVEMBER, 2011

APPROVAL PAGE

This project has been approved for the award of Masters of Science (M.Sc Honours) in Institute for Development Studies (IDS).

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Supervisor

Date

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Date

DEDICATION

To my beloved family especially my lovely Mother Mrs. Catherine Daniel and my beloved son, Chisimdi Emmanuel Okorafor for their love, care, support during this period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God be all the Glory, Honour, and Adoration forever more.

I humbly appreciate everyone that contributed to the success of this work especially my able supervisor (Ag Director) Mr. Boniface .D. Umoh who was always available to guide and direct me, and gave me a soft landing to the success of this work.

ABSTRACT

The research was conducted to evaluate the inheritance practices among widows in Nigeria. It critically examined widowhood with particular emphasis in Igbo society. Different calibers of people were interviewed both in the rural and urban communities. The problems associated with widowhood and inheritances practiced in Nigeria were supposed to experience basically equal pains for the death of the partner. But in Nigeria it appears that the prevailing societal practice tends to be pro-men. This appears to undermine the personality of women and violates the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and many other international conventions and treaties. The bereaved needs to express and deal with their feelings of loss before they can reorganize their lives. The outcome of our analysis of field data analysis depicts that in no distance time inhuman treatments of Nigerian widows in the area of inheritance will soon be antiquated.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Title page	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	i
Approval page	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	ii
Dedication	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	iii
Acknowledgement	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	iv
Abstract	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	v
Table of contents	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	vi

CHAPTER ONE

1.1	Background to Study	..	....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
1.2	Statement of Problem	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
1.3	Area of Study	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
1.4	Objectives of the Study	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	18
1.5	Research Questions	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	18
1.6	Research Hypotheses	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	19
1.7	Significance of Study	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	19
1.8	Scope of the Study	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	20
1.9	Limitations of the Study	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	21
	References	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	22

CHAPTER TWO

	Review of related literature	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	25
2.1:	Introduction	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	25
2.2:	Theoretical Framework	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	26
2.3:	Problems Inherent with Widowhood	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	31
2.4:	Ill Effects of Widowhood on Women	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	34
2.5:	The Developing World, Widowhood and Inheritance	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	36
2.5.1:	Inheritance within the Lineage	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	38
2.5.2:	Inheritance through Marriage	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	41

2.6:	Widowhood under Customary Law	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	44
2.7:	Widowhood and the position of the Nigerian Legal System	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	48
	References	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	51

CHAPTER THREE

	Research Methodology	..	..	..	....	..	..	..	..	55
3.1	Introduction	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	55
3.2	Research Design	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	55
3.3:	Sources of Data	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	56
3.3.1:	Primary Sources	..	....	..	..	..	..	..	..	56
3.3.2:	Secondary Sources	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	58
3.3.3:	Enugu-East Local Government Area	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	59
3.3.4:	Awgu Local Government Area	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	60
3.4	Population of the Study	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	62
3.5	Sample and Sample Size Determination	..	...	..	..	..	..	..	..	62
3.6:	Instrument Validity and Reliability	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	63
3.7:	Administration of Instruments	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	63
3.8	Method of data Presentation and Analysis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	64
	References	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	66

CHAPTER FOUR

	Presentation of data	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	67
4.1	Introduction	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	67
4.2	Socio- Demographic Background of Respondents	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	68
4.2.1:	Age of respondents	..	..	..	....	..	..	..	..	68
4.2.2:	Educational Background of Respondents	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	69
4.4:	Disparity in the level of treatment widows and widowers receive in the community	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	73
4.5:	Nature of job before and after loss of spouses	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	74

4.6:	Present Relationship With Spouses' Family.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	78
4.7:	Most difficult relations to relate with after the death of respondents' spouses								79
4.8	Test of Hypotheses	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	80
4.8.1:	Test of Hypothesis One	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	80
4.8.2:	Test of Hypothesis Two	..	..	..	...	..	..	..	82
4.8.3:	Test of Hypothesis Three	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	83

CHAPTER FIVE

	Discussion of Findings and Implications for Development	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	85
5.1:	Cultural practices involved in handling widowhood and Inheritance among the Igbos	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	85
5.2:	Impact of poor widowhood/ Inheritance Practices	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	86
5.3:	Alienation from Assets of a deceased spouse	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	87

CHAPTER SIX

	Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	89
6.1	Summary	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	89
6.2	Conclusion	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	90
6.3	Recommendations	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	92
	Bibliography	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	94
	NDIX 1: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	98
	Oral Interview	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	104
	Appendix 11	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	105

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

In spite of Nigeria's cultural dynamics, widowhood presents a myriad of problems across every facet of the country. The problems associated with widowhood and inheritance practice in Nigeria have considerably been researched into. The outcome depicts that they wear a toga of economic, social and psychological dimensions (Pearce, 2001; Robinson, 2001; Uchedu, 1994). These problems have biting effects on widows particularly in the first few years after the death of a spouse. Across the globe, the argument that there exist a water tight relationship between gender and economic development has gained currency (Knowles et al, 2002; de la Croix and Vander, 2008). In most underdeveloped countries, it has been argued that women are inadequately served when it comes to education, health, social status, opportunities, legal rights and, in our case, rights to inheritance (Dollar and Gatti, 1999).

Ordinarily, both the widow and the widower are supposed to experience basically equal pains for the death of the partner. However, in Nigeria, it is appears the prevailing societal practice tends to be pro-men. It is also in records that African traditional society was predominantly a man's society. The age-long practice of and believe in male dominance prevails in considerable dimensions in modern day Nigerian society. That Nigerian widow suffers many deprivations is a fact held in many circles. Obviously, the discriminatory approach in the practice of widowhood in Nigeria appears to undermine the personality of women. Also, it violates the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and many other related international conventions and treaties.

Deeply rooted in our customs, their practice constitutes the greatest threat to the realisation of the human rights of millions of widows in Igbo land (Okoye, 1999; Onwuejeogwu, 1987).

In Nigeria's statutory marriage, the inheritance law is governed by the Marriage Act of 1990. This act provides that a woman can inherit part of her husband's property and estate including land (section 26). Again, where there is a will, the property will be administered in accordance with the wishes of the deceased. However, this is a theoretical aspect of the law. The reality is a different thing. Worse still, multiplicity of laws on inheritance leaves a gap that permits the courts and traditionalists who include unscrupulous relatives to choose the laws that are beneficial to their self interest, and most often, to the disadvantage of the bereaved woman. Under the Igbo customary law, a woman cannot inherit land from her husband's estate. The relatives of the deceased usually regard such property as family property and a birth right ((Nwoga et.al, 1989; Nwebo, . & Eze . 1989). Furthermore, acquisitions of property with a spouse are not recognized under the custom to give the woman any right to any part of the property even when it is proven. The condition of a widow without a male child is better experienced than explained. In many instances, she is a total loser as she does not inherit anything directly or indirectly.

Outside the obvious intrinsic problems of associated with poor widowhood practices, the instrumental effects of such socio-cultural cum economic bias greatly inhibit the nation's quest for sustainable development. This aspect is of immense importance to us in the course of this study. This is so because such practices will obviously have adverse impacts on a number of valuable development goals. As Albanesi & Olivetti (2006) rightly observed, gender inequality in education and access to resources may have been argued to prevent a

reduction of child mortality, of fertility, and an expansion of education of the next generation. Again, gender inequality in a long run leads to a reduction in economic growth. In this case, one needs not over amplify the fact that economic growth furthers the improvement in well-being. That economic growth, on average, furthers wellbeing (measured through indicators such as longevity, literacy, and reduced poverty) has been popularity researched into and documented by many (Sen, 1999, UNDP, 2000; UNDP 2007). In their work on the impact of gender inequality on development, Knowles et al. (2002) estimate a neoclassical growth model including male and female education. They came up with a conclusion that the educational gender gap is a barrier to economic development.

There is no gain amplifying the fact that the loss of a loved one is a source of intense emotional stress. The bereaved need express and deal with their feelings of loss before they can reorganize their lives. According to Ahonsi et.al (2001), normal grief often follows a fairly predictable pattern. First a few weeks after the death of a loved one, survivors react with shock and disbelief. Second, as the fact of the loss sinks in, this initial numbness gives way to overwhelming sadness. Some people cry almost constantly, many suffer physical symptoms like insomnia, shortness of breath and loss of appetite. Some fear that they will have an emotional brake-down; some drink too much or sedate themselves with tranquilizers. Third, beginning about 3 weeks after the death, continuing for about 1 year, survivors often relive the death in their minds, in an obsessive search for its meaning. Fasoranti and Aruna graphically captures this point when they postulate succinctly that:”they may hallucinate the presence of the dead person – seeing the face hearing the voice. Fourth, at the start of the 2nd year after the death, the survivors become more active

socially, getting out more, seeing people, resuming their interest. At this point, survivors feel stronger, knowing that they have come through an ordeal. However, there are other cases in which the survivors find it very difficult to cope and adjust to their new status in life.

Culture certainly determines the pattern of reactions to the death of a man as husband or a woman as wife. Each culture determines the rationality of practices relating to widowhood and mourning rites. The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria have differing practices relating to widowhood and widow inheritance. In Igbo society, women either married, unmarried or widowed are being tossed up and down. Within their lineage, they are deemed to have no right because they are expected to marry and benefit from their husbands property. As married women they are considered to be strangers who have no part in the inheritance. In the light of the above, this researcher agrees that widowhood is a multifaceted tragedy in most Nigeria's society. It is overwhelmingly a woman's problem which reveals atrocious social injustice. The sustainability of poor widowhood practices in our culture endangers our quest for sustainable development and threatens the nation's progress towards meeting the MDGs. Caught in this eddy; we find it expedient to research into the dynamics of widowhood practices in Nigeria with a particular interest on the area of widowhood inheritance practices. We intend to do so using selected urban and rural communities in Enugu state as sampled communities and hope to use the research outcome to extrapolate for the entire state. We equally intend to rely on the research outcome in making informed policy prescriptions on how to sustainably address problems associated with poor widowhood practices in Nigeria.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Within the past few decades, research has shown that widows constitute a large proportion of the adult female population in many African communities (Okoye, 1999; Pearce, 2001; Fasoranti, and Aruna, 2007). It is also of note that systematic investigation into the dynamics of widowhood practices and inheritance in Nigeria is missing (Fasoranti, and Aruna, 2007). The result is that much of the scanty pieces of information we have today on this subject matter are mere raw and unprocessed information. A wide gap still exists on the aspect of a systematic and sponsored sociological and cosmological to this critical area of development. For the same reason of lack of analytical approach, comparative studies of widowhood practices in urban and rural communities of Igbo land are also conspicuously absent. There are also absence of diachronic studies aimed at showing how widowhood practices have evolved or changed over time especially as a result of religion (majorly Christianity and Islam) and modernization. This work holds it obvious that widowhood practices are, no doubt, a product of history intercepted by religious and cultural constructs, since they are deprived their late husband's property such as landed property, car, finance and other things to get on with their livelihood.

Poor widowhood and inheritance practices still exist in the Igbo society. Widows in urban areas are alleged to enjoy a better degree of inheritance practice than their rural counterparts. All these point to the fact that there is a gap in the degree of widows suffering by both rural and urban areas. The widowers have better conditions when compared to the widows. They can inherit whatever the late wife left behind without much problem. They can equally re marry with ease. These are not allowed by the society according to the cultural believe for

the widows. This work therefore intends to establish the gaps observed above and considerably proffers measures of filling same with a specific interest paid to prevailing situations in urban and rural communities of Enugu state.

1.3 AREA OF STUDY

This work limits its study area to Enugu State, South Eastern Nigeria. According to a publication by the Enugu State Government (1998) Enugu State derives its name from the capital city, came into being on August 27, 1991.

Enugu is the capital of Enugu State in Nigeria. It is located in the southeastern area of Nigeria and is largely populated by members of the Igbo ethnic group. The city has a population of 722,664 according to the 2006 Nigerian census (NPC, 2006). The name *Enugu* is derived from the two Igbo words *Enu Ugwu* meaning “hill top” denoting the city’s hilly geography. The city was named after Enugu Ngwo which coal was found under.

Since the 17th century the location of present day Enugu has been settled by the Nike subgroup of the Igbo people; one of Enugu’s neighbourhoods still retains the village’s old name Ogui. In 1900 the Southern Nigeria Protectorate was established by the colonial administration of the British Empire. The discovery of coal by the colonialists led to the building of the Eastern Line railway to carry from the inland city to the port of Port Harcourt a city created for this purpose located 151 miles (243 km) south of what was called Enugu Coal Camp. Enugu was then renamed simply Enugu and developed among the few cities in West Africa that were created from European contact. By 1958 Enugu had over 8,000 coal miners. As at 2005 there were no significant coal mining activities left in the city. Enugu

became the capital of the Eastern Region after Nigeria's independence in 1960; a succession of territory adjustments in 1967, 1976 and 1991 led to Enugu becoming the capital of what is now Enugu State. On 30 May 1967 Enugu was declared the capital of the short-lived Republic of Biafra; for this Enugu is known as the "capital of Igboland". After Enugu was captured by Nigeria, the Biafra capital was moved to Umuahia.

Industries currently in the city include the urban market and bottling industries. Enugu has become a preferred filming location for directors of the Nigerian movie industry, dubbed as "Nollywood". Enugu's main airport is the Akanu Ibiam International Airport which is being upgraded to accommodate large aircraft. The main educational establishment in the city is the Enugu campus of the University of Nigeria based in Nsukka, a town north of Enugu and in the same state.

The first settlement in the Enugu area was the small Nike village of Ogui which was present since the era of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Nike in the Igbo language means 'with strength or power. It was through slave raiding that the Nike people acquired most of their lands, which, however, were mostly unsettled. The Nike people acquired most of their lands, which, however, were mostly unsettled. The Nike used slaves for a defence strategy where they would place slave camps at the edge of their territories so that it would be harder for an enemy to access the free born. The Nike people were allied to the Aro people who formed the Aro Confederacy (1690-1901) which was an Igbo organization that controlled slave trading in the Enugu area (Bostic, 2009). Along with the Aro people who came to trade from the north. The Hausa traders provided horses to the Nike which was used for rituals by the Igbo.

Industrialization; by 1909 coal was found under the village of Enugu Ngwo in the Udi and Okoga areas and by 1913 the coal was confirmed to be in quantities that would be viable colony and Protectorate of Nigeria commercially.

In 1915 the British began talks with the indigenous people of the land that would become Enugu about its acquisition in order to lay the Eastern Line railway and to building a colliery. The first houses built in the area were in a temporary settlement consisting of Igbo traditional mud housing inhabited by a W.J. Leck and some other Europeans on Milken Hill. Another settlement known as *Ugwu Alfred* inhabited by an Alfred Inoma (a leader of indigenous labourers from Onitsha) and his labourers, was located on a hillside. After the land acquisition by the British, Frederick Lugard, the Governor-General of Nigeria at the time, named the colliery built at bottom of the Udi Hills Enugu Coal Camp to distinguish it from Enugu Ngwo which overlooks the city from atop a scarp on Enugu's west.

In 1938 Enugu became the administrative capital of the Eastern Region. The number of employed coal miners in Enugu grew from 6,000 (of mostly Udi men) in 1948 to 8,000 in 1958. Enugu's population rose sharply with its industrialization; the population of the city reached 62,000 in 1952. Mining in Enugu was sometimes turbulent, as demonstrated by the events of 18 November 1994 when 21 striking miners were shot and killed and 51 wounded by police under British governance. The massacre that came to be known as "The Iva Valley Shooting" fuelled nationalist or "Zikist" sentiments among most Nigerians, and especially amongst Eastern Nigerians. "Zikisim" was a post World War II movement that was created out of admiration for Nnamdi Azikiwe who was a prominent nationalist of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). The shooting was right after a period of

unrest when miners were angered by the belief that their full pay was being held back by the colliery management, a belief that their was pushed by the nationalist press.

Enugu became a municipality in 1956 and Umaru Altine became its first mayor. After four years passed, Nigeria gained its independence in 1960. On 27 May 1967 the Nigerian government divided the Western, Northern and Eastern Region into 12 states and Enugu was made the capital of the new East Central State.

On 30 May 1967 Enugu was declared the capital of the short-lived Republic of Biafra which was created out of the East Central State. Radio Biafra, alternatively the voice of Biafra (formally the Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting Service), was based in Enugu, it was from here that the Biafran leader, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, broadcast speeches and propaganda to Biafrans and to the rest of Nigeria. Because of the war Enugu witnessed a decrease in the number of non-Igbo, especially non-eastern Nigerian residents.

In 1976 the East Central State was broken into two new states, Imo and Anambra; there were then 19 states in Nigeria; Enugu was the capital of Anambra. In August 1991 the military dictatorship of Ibrahim Babangida divided the old Anambra State into two new states, Enugu and Anambra state. Enugu remained as the capital of the newly-created Enugu state, while Awka became the capital of the new Anambra State.

Enugu lies at the foot of an escarpment and not a hill. Enugu is located in the Cross River basin and the Benue through and has the best developed coal in this area. Precambrian basement rock in this region is overlaid with sediments bearing coal from the Cretaceous and tertiary age. Coal seams in Enugu coal district measure between 1 and 2 meters (3.3 and

6.6 ft) in thickness and the reserves have been estimated to be more than 300 million tones (Duckworth, 1961).

Enugu's hills at the extreme may reach an elevation of 1,000 metres (3,300 ft). Highlands surrounding Enugu for the most part are underlain by sandstone, while lowlands are underlain by shale. Much of the escarpment stretching from Enugu to Orlu has been ravaged by soil and gully erosion. Other geological features in Enugu include the Nike Lake near which the Nike Hotel has been built. The Ekulu, Asata, Ogbete, Aria, Idaw and Nyaba rivers are six largest rivers located in the city. The Ekulu River is the largest body of water in Enugu urban and its reservoir contributes to part of the city's domestic water supply.

Enugu is located in the tropical rain forest zone with a derived savannah. The city has a tropical savanna climate. Enugu's climate is humid and this humidity is at its highest between March and November. For the whole of Enugu state the mean daily temperature is 26.7 °C (80.1 °F). As in the rest of West Africa, the rainy season and dry season are the only weather periods that reoccur in Enugu. The average annual rainfall in Enugu is around 2,000 millimetres (79 in), which arrives intermittently and becomes very heavy during the rainy season. Other weather conditions affecting the city include Harmattan, a dusty trade wind lasting a few weeks of December and January. Like the rest of Nigeria, Enugu is hot all year round.

In the cityscape and architecture, the tallest building in Enugu's Central Business District (CBD) is the African Continental Bank (ACB) tower with six stories. The tower was built in the late 50s for the African Continental Bank Limited which was founded by Nnamdi Azikiwe who became the first president of Nigeria after the country's independence from

the United Kingdom on October 1960. The opening of the building took place on April 1959. Other tall buildings include the Hotel Presidential opened on August 1963. The seven story building contains 100 rooms and is located in the Independence Layout. In the middle of Enugu is the Micheal Okpara Square, dedicated to the premier of the former Eastern Region Micheal Okpara. Beside the square is located the Enugu State Government House, Enugu State House of Assembly and Enugu State Judiciary Complex.

Enugu's coal mines are dotted around on the outskirts of the city, a majority of which are closed. The Colliery Camp mines are located in the Iva Valley which is near the neighboring town of Ngwo and Hilltop of Enugu. The Iva Valley coal mine is accessed through the Iva Valley road linking Enugu with Ngwo. Other coal mines are located in the Ogbete and Coal Camp layouts; these mines are located on the periphery of the city near the Iva Valley as well.

Architectural design in Enugu's early years was in the hands of the British colonial administration; Enugu's architecture was consequently very European. English cottage housing and Victorian houses were used for housing Europeans and Nigerian colonial civil servants in the early 20th century until Europeans started trying to adapt their architecture to the tropical climate. Some other examples of these European styles are visible in churches of the colonial era, such as the Holy Ghost Cathedral with its Greco-Roman stained glass windows depicting Europeans. Enugu's roads were reflective of its British rule; much of the city's narrow roads in the GRA have been preserved dating back to the incorporation of the city itself. Low rent one bedroom flats in Enugu and other Nigerian cities are known as

“face –me-I- face- you” for the way a group of flats face each other and form a square where a compound entrance is lead into.

Government in Enugu city covers three local governments areas; Enugu East, Enugu North and Enugu South. A local Government Council exists for each of these seats that manage sectors including primary education and health; an elected Executive Chairman and a group of elected Councilors from the Local Government Council that heads each Local Government Area. Enugu South is split between its rural and urban parts when electing an Executive Chairman, these chairmen represent their LGA’s in the Enugu State of Assembly. The Ministry of Lands, survey and Town Planning (at the state level) and the Local planning Authority (at the local government level) are responsible for the administration of urban lands and town planning. Government House, Enugu is split between two congressional areas; Enugu North/South.

According to the 2006 Nigerian census, the Enugu metropolitan area has an estimated population of 722,664. This estimate along with population estimates of other Nigerian cities have been disputed with accusations of population inflation and deflation in favour of the northern part of the country. The population of Enugu is predominantly Christian, as is the rest of southeastern Nigeria. Like the rest of Nigeria most people in Enugu speak Nigerian English alongside the dominant language in the region; which is Igbo. Nigerian English, or pidgin (a mix of English and indigenous words) is often used because of ethnic diversity and sometimes because of ethnic diversity and sometimes because of the diversity of dialects in the Igbo language. In cultural and linguistic terms Enugu is within the

Northern cluster of the Igbo region which includes other towns and cities like Awka and Nsukka.

The indigenous people of Enugu include the Ogui Nike who live in the areas surrounding Hotel Presidential, Obiagu, Ama-igbo, Ihewuzi and Onu-Asata. Other groups include the Awkunanaw people, who live mainly in the Achara Layout and Uwani areas. The Enugwu Ngwo people live in Hilltop on the west of the west of the city with their farm lands sprawling all over the valley. Other Nike people live around the Abakpa, Iji-Nike, and Emene areas of the city. Most of the non-indigenous people of Enugu are migrants from other parts of the Igbo cultural area. After the majority Igbo, the Yoruba people are another significant ethnic group found present in Enugu; other groups include the Hausa and Fulani people.

Enugu's crime rate rose in 2009 as kidnapping and armed robbery rates increased in southern Nigeria specifically between September and December. The Enugu State government sought to check the high kidnapping rates by passing a bill on February 2009 that made kidnapping by the use of a weapon a capital offence; the bill was passed by the Enugu House of Assembly unanimously. 1,088 arrests were made in the city between September and December 2009; 270 of these were in September, 303 were in October, 295 in November and 220 were in December. 477 of these detainees were accused of committing capital offences which included kidnapping (Sada, and Oguntoyinbo, 1981). The motives of kidnapers in Enugu are primarily financial and some ransoms went into the millions of Naira. Much of the crime in Enugu and the rest of Nigeria have been attributed to unemployment.

Enugu share cultural traits with its neighbouring towns. Two important Igbo traditional festivals take place in Enugu annually; the Mmanwu festival and the New yam festival. The Mmanwu festival takes place in November and Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium as a parade of carnival-like masquerades that are accompanied by music and it is supported by the Enugu Council of Arts and Culture. The second important Igbo festival, the new yam festival known as “iwa ji”, is held between August and October marking the harvesting and feasting of the new yam (Nzewi, 1994). The yam is a root vegetable that is the staple crop and a cultural symbol for the Igbo people.

The tourism industry in Enugu, managed by the Enugu State Tourism Board (ESTB), is small; however, the state government recognizes a variety of historic and recreational sites. These sites include places like the Udi hills, from which the majority of Enugu city can be viewed. The polo amusement parks are a funfair that is among the first generation of public parks in the city; other parks in the city include the Murtala Muhammed park. Enugu’s former coal mines, Onyeama and Okpara, are open to public visits.

Some other spots include: The Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Sculptural Garden and Art gallery, the Eastern Region Parliamentary Building, the old Government Lodge, the Enugu Golf course. A National Museum is located near Enugu at its north, although it receives few visitors. It is managed by National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM).

In media and literature, English –language newspapers published and sold in Enugu include the Daily Star, Evening Star, The Renaissance and one of the earliest newspapers published in Enugu was the Eastern Sentinel published by Nnamndi Azikiwe’s Zik Group in 1955, but

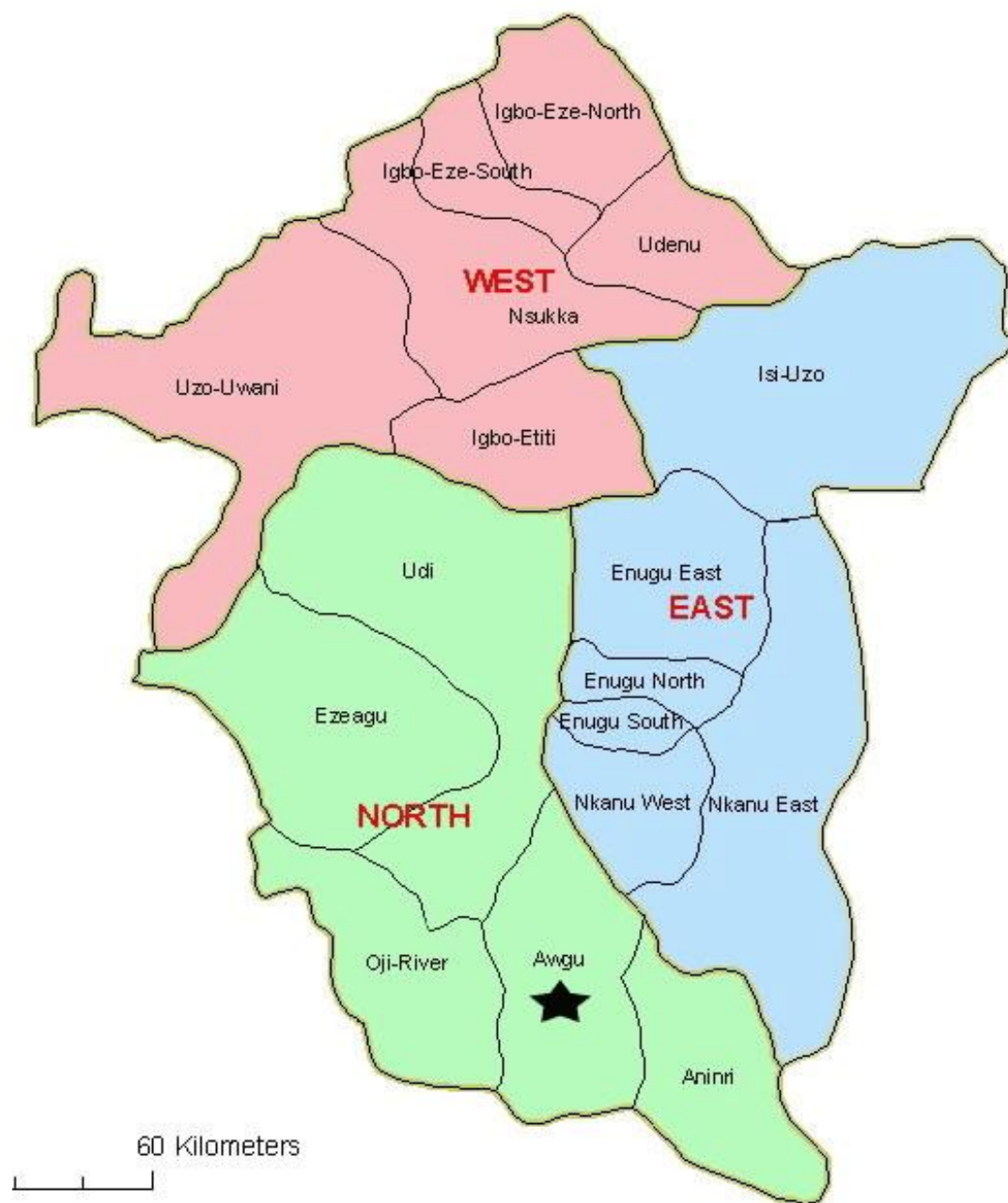
failed in 1960. Among the city's television and radio stations are the Nigerian Television Authority's network affiliate (NTA Enugu) headquarters located at Independence Layout; and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) network affiliate station (Radio Enugu) which broadcasts in English, Igbo, Efik, Ijaw and Tiv. Enugu State Broadcasting Service Television (ESBS-TV) is a state owned television broadcasting company which offers 18 hours of continuous broadcasting on weekends. Enugu, after Lagos is preferred city for shooting films in Nigeria and a film production centre in the East. In 2007, Enugu hosted the first-ever film festival in the state, the Enugu International film festival. Held at Hotel Presidential, the festival's intent was to highlight Enugu as a "film making hub" in Africa including movie premiers and prizes for different film categories.

Enugu's economy in the early 20th century depended on coal mining in the Udi plateau; this industry was the pushing force towards the city's growth. The Nigerian Coal Corporation has been based in Enugu since its creation in 1950 where it controlled coal mining. With the creation of the Eastern Line, Enugu was connected with the sea via Port Harcourt to its South and later connected to the city of Kaduna to Enugu's north. The Biafran war brought widespread devastation that forced a decline in coal production from damage or destruction of equipment. As of 2005 coal mining is no longer the major source of income and mines lay unused. Other minerals mined in Enugu include iron ore, lime stone, fine clay, marble and silica sand. There are three main urban markets in Enugu: Ogbete, Awkunanaw, and New Market. New Market is a major market for sales of garri. Ogbete market is patronised by merchants from all over the surrounding area, including merchants from cities like Onitsha, Aguleri, Abakaliki and Aba.

In education, Enugu has three main tertiary institutions; the Enugu State University of Science & Technology (ESUT); the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus (UNEC); and the Institute of Management & Technology (IMT). The city also is home to Our Saviour Institute of Science and Technology, a polytechnic. Some notable secondary schools in Enugu include the college of the Immaculate Conception (CIC) built in 1940, Holy Rosary College (HRC) built in 1943, Colliery Comprehensive Secondary school, Queen's Secondary School, Federal Government College and the University of Nigeria Secondary school. University Teaching Hospital (UNTH) Enugu, under the University of Nigeria, is also located in the city.

Enugu State at present has 17 Local government areas (LGAs). About 59% of the population lives in the rural areas. The 3 LGAs in Enugu municipality together accounts for 22% of the population and, Nsukka, a rapidly growing University Community, a further 10% of the population. The other 13 LGAs are mainly rural, with widely varying population densities between 60 persons per square kilometer for Uzo Uwani in the west of the state and more than 500 persons per square kilometer for Igbo Eze in the North (Ukwu,1998). Figure 1 shows the location of the LGAs in Enugu state on the map.

FIGURE 1: MAP OF ENUGU STATE SHOWING ENUGU EAST AND AWGU L.G.A



Source: Enugu State Ministry of Information.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives shall guide this study:

- i. To examine the cultural practices inherent in handling the death of a woman's husband.
- ii. To examine the level of disparity in treatment given to both widows and widowers in Igbo land.
- iii. To examine the impact of such relationship as stated above on the wellbeing of the deceased household.
- iv. To ascertain if the prevailing inheritance practices in Enugu State significantly alienate widows from assets of their deceased spouses.
- v. To proffer solution to negative widowhood practices in Nigeria.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This work shall accordingly be guided by the following research questions so as to achieve the above-mentioned objectives:

- i. What are the cultural practices inherent in handling the death of a woman's husband?
- ii. Is there any significant level of disparity in treatment given to both widows and widowers by the community?
- iii. To what extent do such relationship stated above impact on the wellbeing of the deceased household?
- iv. Do the prevailing inheritance practices in Enugu State significantly alienate widows from assets of their deceased spouses?

- v. How could we satisfactorily address problems associated with poor widowhood practices in Nigeria?

1.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

This study will be guided by the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis1. H₀: There is no cordial relationship between widows and relatives of their deceased husbands in Enugu State.

Hypothesis2. H₀: The prevailing inheritance practices in Enugu State do not significantly alienate widows from assets of their deceased spouses.

Hypothesis3. H₀: There is no significant level of disparity in treatment given to both widows and widowers by the society

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

We cannot end poverty and reach the MDGs in Nigeria if adequate commitment is not made to address some societal ills that are inherently anti-development. Poor widowhood practices and other societal induced poor treatment against women rank top in this very consideration. Until we eliminate incidences of discrimination against women (the girl child inclusive) in our society, our quest for sustainable development will continue to be elusive. Women have a vital role to play: to the economy, to better governance, to peace processes, to their communities and their households. Denying them the basic means to socio-economic

freedom reduces their chances of contributing significantly to the process societal development.

When a widow is poorly treated, the future progress of the deceased household is endangered. Again, The MDG 3 target recognizes that education for girls is one of the most effective ways of reducing poverty. But education alone is not enough. Achieving MDG 3 also requires progress in other key areas such as: Political participation, access to productive assets and employment opportunities, access to health and other services and protection from violence. The true meaning of development depreciates in any society where half the population is prevented from fully benefiting from, and contributing to it.

This study is therefore important as its outcome will be useful to policy makers and implementers of development programmes in Nigeria. It could equally be adapted in similar society to tackle the menace of inequality among women and men. It is expected that students and researchers in development related discipline will find the work invaluable. The work is also hoped to accentuate valuable insight on the preparation of Enugu State in terms of attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Above all, the findings of the study will ultimately help in addressing poor widowhood practices among Nigeria's rural and urban women.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is limited to disparity in women's socio-political and economic participation in some selected communities of Enugu State. Whatever will be the outcome of the research from these study areas will be used in extrapolating for the entire Enugu State. Primacy is given to the subject matter of inheritance. In the course of our research, we

intend to limit our focus to issues involving Enugu widows residing in both rural and urban communities of the state. Where anything to the contrary would be done, such will be for the purpose of comparism.

The time dimension of this study shall be limited to the period 1999 – 2009. This is the period where Nigeria is experimenting democratic governance. It is expected that citizens' right, irrespective of sex, are better guaranteed in this epoch than in that of the military. Again, the affirmative action and other international conventions aimed at uplifting women socio-economic and political standard can only be well sustainably practiced in a democratic society .

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study limits itself to widowhood and inheritance practices among the Igbos in Nigeria. This scope however cannot give a holistic picture of the problems and prospects of widowhood in our society. Consequently, this researcher recommends for a comprehensive research into vital areas that will complement this very effort. Such areas recommended for future research will include, but not limited to, the following;

- i. A study of widowhood and re-marriage among the Igbos. Here attempts should be made to analyze the psycho-social and emotional conflicts that arise out of widows'- marriage practices in Igbo society with the exploration of its attendant effects on family, child-bearing, power and gender relations.
- ii. Widowhood and widowhood empowerment Scheme among the Igbos. In this regard, exploration should be made to ascertain modalities made by communities and widows themselves to reduce widows' relative helplessness and alienation in order to gain greater control over all aspects of their lives and social environment.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1: INTRODUCTION

This work examines widowhood from the context of it being the status of an individual who was legally married to someone who subsequently died. Economically, the death of a spouse will result in loss of income and property that the deceased spouse received or owned, unless provision for their continuation and inheritance is made explicit in income program rules, laws of inheritance, or through the deceased spouse's will. For this reason, it is important to understand how marriage and inheritance rights to income and assets are defined in law especially in South Eastern Nigeria.

Obviously, bereavement is a social fact in any culture. However, reactions and practices relating to it vary from culture to culture. It will be apposite to state that widowhood experiences are quite traumatic. Worse still, in some African societies, they are considered more as an experience of deprivation, subjugation and humiliation. Ironically, the disorganization and trauma that follow the death of a spouse seem to be greater on the women than on the men whenever either loses his or her spouse. In the case of the loss of the husband, the wife becomes the primary suspect as the cause of the husband's death and is thus treated accordingly. On the other hand, where a man loses his wife, the man is almost immediately offered a substitution to comfort him and douse the impact of the grieve of bereavement.

The cause of the above is not far-fetched. As Ahosi (2002:2) rightfully observed “The differentiation between men’s and women’s role in Nigeria as with other societies is one of complementary and superior relationship in favour of men. It involves a hierarchy in which men are given greater leverage over decision making and resources than women. The result is a cultural setting that invariably promotes male domination and female subordination”. As it relates to certain societies in Nigeria therefore, it can be observed that some of the customs relegate women to the background and clearly rob women of their rights and privileges. This work seeks to examine this and other related issues critically within the context of the Igbo culture.

2.2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In examining widowhood and widow inheritance in Igbos society, this researcher finds it expedient to note that theories that deal with people and their interaction in the society are relevant for this work. However, we shall limit ourselves to the theory of symbolic interactionism. Originally developed by Blumer in 1962, the subject matter of symbolic interaction has been improved upon over the years by a number of scholars. The concept has three principles as its foundation. These principles and their implications for this work are:

1: “Human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning that things have for them”

To convey this, considerable ethnographic detail is usually presented about the range of ways in which people see themselves, others and their situation.

2: “The meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of the social interaction one has with one’s fellow”.

The interaction pattern among the participants in the activity in question is presented in such a way that people's activity can be seen to support the way they interpret the situation. The focus here is on those aspects of the interaction that promote stability.

1. "These meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters". The focus here is an activity that foster change in how people see the situation and themselves. The symbolic interactionist's rationale for focusing on concrete activities is the view that a person's behaviour "is not a result of such things as environmental pressure, stimuli, motives, attitudes and ideas but arises instead from how he interprets and handles these things in the action which he is constructing.

Marshall's (1975) presentation on how people come to see death in a retirement village is a modern symbolic interactionst analysis. He shows that death comes to be seen not as desirable, but as appropriate and thus the anxiety of people shifts from death itself to the manner of death (slow or quick). For instance, most residents want to live no longer than they expect to and only 12 percent of retirement villages as compared with 53 percent of respondents on a general population survey (done by somebody else), feel death always comes too soon. How the old people interpret death is an open discussion of death which makes it part of the community's symbolic universe. Death is approached in a practical manner – for instance, residents make funeral arrangements. The village treats it on routine – there are no obituary, only a notice on the board and list in the village newspaper. Residents in the village are involved in a full round of activities and these in form of informal socialization. This helps to induct people into and to maintain a community in

which death is interpreted as appropriate, yet in which a full life can go on until death comes.

An important addition to symbolic interaction is provided by one strand in the early work of Erving Goffman- a dramaturgical analogist. He suggests that any social establishment can be usefully studied from the point of view of “Impression management”; how people create and maintain a certain impression on others. This approach lends itself to a dramaturgical analogy as Goffman does not wish totally to assign the ‘self’ to the role player. People are seen as standing to some extent outside situations, calculating both what role they should play and how they should play it (e.g. should they maintain role distance or not). Goffman develops this analogy by using concepts like “front region”- the area where an effect is made to show that an action maintains and embodies certain standards- and ‘backstage’- the area where for some given performance the illusions of the front region are constructed and may even be openly contradicted. He also talks about terms of performers with solidarity and secrets presenting to an audience and some of the ways in which situations can deviate from this.

Unlike the classic symbolic interactionist approach focusing on the construction and reconstruction of the meanings of activities, situations and symbolic universes, the dramaturgical approach takes this largely for granted. Instead, the focus is on how individuals cope with the ‘conditions and constraints’ (Goffman, 1972:150) that situations impose. Situations are seen as limiting the ways in which a person can pursue his ends and thereby producing a set of ‘patterned adaptations’.

What makes Goffman's and other similar analyses seem cynical is that people are presented as constantly selecting among a wide variety of adaptation to the situation to extract advantage for themselves. Also contained in this view is what Rock (1979:172) calls a 'hidden contrivance'. People in the same position appear to have the same competence and grasp of situations. All people are shown to possess similar capacities for acting- it is only their situations that change and with this the appropriate ways of acting. By examining situations from the point of view of the individual, the dramaturgical approach adds another dimension to the symbolic interactionist analysis of how symbolic universes are sustained and changed. A presentation of the ways in which an individual can cope with a situation helps one to understand what the situation means to him and thereby adds another layer of meaning to the symbolic interactionist presentation of the symbolic universe. Furthermore, if the communication between individuals that maintain a symbolic universe is also reciprocal assessment, then our understanding of their interaction is deepened and has a different 'feel'.

The symbolic interactionist accounts attack some major ways of giving a causal understanding of an activity. Arguing that this account is refined an alternative description of the activity in some specified socio-cultural setting is put forward. This account examines the processes through which people produce and change their meaningful activities by showing how the setting shapes these activities. The central basic concept of symbolic interaction is interaction, according to several of its proponents (e.g. Brittan, 1973 ch. 1; Glassner, 1980 chs. 1-2). Glassner points out that "interactions consist of at least the following: events, states, phenomena and processes. None of these can be reduced entirely to analysis of symbols' (1980, p. 16). Interactions' occur on a variety of levels and thus

require an analysis in terms of both causal and meaningful understanding of actions and beliefs as it holds that the linkages among human activities are both meaningful and causal. Neither causal nor meaningful links are alone sufficient for an understanding of the process whereby activities came to have certain meanings (e.g. a payment being a tip), or people engage in certain actions (e.g. wearing a uniform), or people acquire a particular awareness of self (e.g. as ill), or people come to hold certain views (e.g. that death is appropriate). The linkages that exist in some particular situation must be understood at both levels and an integrated analysis produced. Another way to state the central claim of this paragraph is to say that symbolic interaction rejects idealist account of human action. It recognizes that people's processes of creating definitions of the situation, themselves and others exist in the world and cannot be grouped purely on the level of meaning.

One component of a symbolic interactionist analysis is an analysis of action in terms of meaning- symbolic interaction is concerned with how activities or beliefs are intelligible to or are to be understood by or what meaning they have for some specified group of people. One establishes that action or belief A has meaning x for some specified group of people by placing it in a pattern of other actions done by and beliefs held by the group. By supplying a large enough description of the context of the action or belief, one endeavours to get to the point where there is only one intelligible way of filling the gap. This way of filling in the gap is the meaning x of the action or belief A. Symbolic interaction accounts also contain claims about the causal effects of the activities they are discussing. However, these claims are embedded in the analysis and cannot be detached from the situation about which they are made. An embedded causal claim states that some concrete action has a particular effect

(another concrete action or belief). These embedded causal linkages are presented as a routine accomplishment that anybody familiar with the situation which is being analysed could make.

The basic concern of symbolic interaction is therefore to present ethnographic description of the range of ways in which interaction between particular groups of people creates, sustained and modifies various particular symbolic inverses. A sustainable programme of symbolic interactionist research shows the diversity of humanity. The main thrust of symbolic interactionist research is towards more and more 'esoteric' subjects. Symbolic interaction is over-concerned with the transient, quaint and exotic features of social life (Meltzer et, al, 1975 ch. 3). Symbolic interaction is not only voluntaristic interpretative description that is necessary to the foundations of causal theories, but it is pregnant with causal theories as well and its concern with people as the creators of their world, though not in circumstances of their choosing; the insistence on people collectively having the freedom to create vast numbers of forms of life, its concern for the detail and texture of human life all contribute to a humanistic view of people. These cherished attributes, that have affinity with the subject matter of this research, endeared us to anchor this work on the theoretical underpinnings of symbolic interactionism.

2.3: PROBLEMS INHERENT WITH WIDOWHOOD

Widowhood presents a myriad of problems such as economic, social and psychological particularly in the first year or so after the death of a spouse. Helena Lopata (1977, 1979) has done extensive research with more than 1000 widows and widowers. A major problem

for both sexes, as she discovered, is economic hardship. When the husband was the principal breadwinner, his widow is now deprived of his income and the nucleus of the family is destroyed. The freedom and independence of the nucleus of the family is suddenly lost as a result of the death of the husband. A widowed man on the other hand, now has to buy many of the services his wife had previously provided. Where both had been employed, the loss of one income is often major. Grief over the loss of a loved one especially one who had played such a central role in one's life for so many years, may affect the widow's or widower's health making them to have more physical illness and are frequently admitted to hospitals, thus leading to rise in the death rate.

Bellin and Hardt studying 1803 people over 65 years of age in New York, found out that the rate of mental disorder was higher among the widowed than among the still married. These higherrate of mental illness was related not only to widowhood but also to advanced age, physical illhealth and other variables. Blackwell(1981) also found that higher rate of mental illness was found among the widowed than their married counterparts. What does widowhood mean for day-to-day life? Widowhood has led to illness and death of the griever through grief. Men are more likely than women to die from a "broken heart". Widows on the other hand are more apt to suffer from disabling chronic conditions (Verbrugge, 1979). Scientific evidence suggests that dying of grief is indeed possible. Either of the widow or widower is more likely to die than a married person, but the death rate among widowers skyrockets. One study compared the death rate of nearly 4,500 widowers over the age of 54 with the death rates of married men of the same age. The result showed that the death rates

of widowers increased over 40 percent in the first six months of mourning and then declined again to the levels of the married men (Lynch, 1977).

In another study by Parkes, Benjamin and Fitzgerald, 1969, 4486 widowers over age 55 were studied. They found out that the death rate during the six months following their wives death was 40 percent above the expected rate and that most of the men had died of heart ailments. The extremely high death rates among the widowers probably develop for several reasons such as:

_ Widowers with good health and financial resources generally remarry and leave the pool of widowers dominated by men with poor health and little money.

_ The new tasks that a widower must assume (cooking and other domestic chores) are more closely related to survival than the tasks assumed by a widow (yard work, home repair).

_ Wives usually maintain a couple's social ties with relatives and friend, while on the other hand the widower often finds himself socially isolated and lonely. With the above report, it shows that women who are widowed still live longer after being widowed unlike their male counterparts who not being used to doing some of the duties performed by the females find themselves grieving for too long leading eventually to their death.

Another of the problem associated with widowhood is loneliness as most widows nearly eight out of ten live by themselves and so they suffer the fear of being alone and loss of self-esteem as women in addition to the many practical problems related to living alone. They feel the loss of personal contract and human association therefore they tend to withdraws and become unresponsive. Most are reluctant to move in with their children and only those who are poor and frail live with some relatives, few express any interest in remarrying and

so the lack of potential remarriage partners may not distress them. The greatest problem of all though, is still emotional. Even in a bad marriage, the survivor feels the loss. The role of spouse has been lost, social life has changed from couple-oriented to associations with other single people and the widowed no longer have the day-in, day-out companionship of the other spouse that had become a basic part of their lives.

2.4: ILL EFFECTS OF WIDOWHOOD ON WOMEN

In some African societies, a wife is perceived as a stranger among her husband's family. They are therefore ready to throw her away like a useless appendage the moment her husband is dead. This often makes the widow to wallow in poverty and even sometimes a widow is also devastated by certain cultural practices which make her to undergo certain degrading rites in the process of mourning the man. Some women have had to undergo ugly experiences as a result of the demise of their husband for instance some women had given account of the bad experiences they had to undergo; some women had also been accused of killing their husbands in order to inherit their property. After the accusation, they could be asked to swear with either the Holy Quran or the Holy Bible to prove their innocence, even the water used for washing the corpse could be given the widow to drink in order to prove her innocence the more. The process and duration of mourning wearing dull brown to black clothes without having bath could last from seven days to two weeks while the duration for wearing dark cloths ranges from three months to a year.

In some cases a widow could be asked to marry the junior brother of the late husband and in case a widow refused such an offer, she is disowned by the late husband's family and

banned from inheriting any of the dead man's property while all the household properties would be carted away by the family members especially where the widow does not come from the same town as the deceased husband. Such women have had to rely on the help and assistance from friends and social organizations to which they belonged in order to cater for themselves and children.

Widowed older women, on average, report lower incomes and are more likely to be poor than are other groups of elderly persons. This is true in the United States and in other countries as well, though the difference in the United States is greater overall than in other developed countries. In the United States, over 48 percent of the poor elderly are widows, even though widowed women account for only 26 percent of all persons age sixty-five and older. Compared to the slightly more than 4 percent of couples age sixty-five and older who are poor, about 20 percent of widowed women are poor. This poverty rate is considerably lower than the 50 percent of widows who were poor in 1970, reflecting gains in earnings for men and women, as well as improvements in pension and Social Security benefits. Nevertheless, on average, married women in the United States experience a decline in income when their husbands die. Although widowers (men whose wives have died) are somewhat more likely to be poor than are married couples, data that follow couples over time do not show a decline in average economic well-being for men when wives die.

The decline in economic well-being upon widowhood is somewhat of a puzzle. There exists a well-functioning life insurance market that sells products that insure against the loss of income upon widowhood. In addition, legislation has increased the rights of spouses to spouses pension benefits. While the timing of death is uncertain for a given individual, death

probabilities can be predicted with considerable accuracy, permitting the estimation of probabilities and length of widowhood. Information that is readily available on Social Security benefits, and requirements that pensions provide annual reports on workers' accrued benefits, would seem to provide the information necessary for couples to protect against any loss of income upon one spouse's death.

One explanation for the difference between the economic status of married couples and widows is the association between death probabilities and economic status. Poorer men are more likely to die than higher income men. This is partly because individuals with chronic health problems generally have lower lifetime earnings (and lower retirement income) and die at younger ages than healthier individuals. For these individuals, low wages and early death are both due to long-term health problems. On the other hand, individuals who work in lower-paying jobs may be engaged in more hazardous tasks, have no employer-provided health insurance, and be less able to pay out-of-pocket for health care. Their low earnings are a cause of poorer health and consequent higher mortality. Whatever the reason for the association between lower earnings and poorer health, the lower income of widows can be attributed in part to widows being drawn from couples who were economically worse off when married than were women of the same age whose husbands are alive. This, however, is only a partial explanation.

2.5: THE DEVELOPING WORLD, WIDOWHOOD AND INHERITANCE

Women make up half of the world's population, they nurture, the earth and its beings, yet burdened by the poverty and problems associated with women, men, children and the

environment. It is disheartening too know that several African countries have non-implementable, non-implementing, or refused to be implemented law on widowhood and inheritance, and even when they are ready to implement this law, it takes the lifetime of the affected woman before judgment is proclaimed, this due to the cumbersome nature of out courts proceedings.

Widowhood and inheritance should not be a subject for 2010, if we are really developing, but today they are two peculiar challenges faced by women yet unaddressed by our leaders through their non-implementable instruments, it will be right then to say that the laws of the clan supersedes that of the land, or do we agree that the problems of our women is the least of our governments' problems. Will it also not be wrong to conclude that gender imbalance or unequal representation of gender at the helms of affair has part to play in this? Stories and unending cries, it is unbelievable that some women have to be married to their brother in law in order to have access to their children and their husband's property, mind you they worked together for the property and when we dig deep, into productive roles, and activity profile we will submit to the fact that women play overwhelming roles in the acquisition of these property, yet are denied of them, after the death of their spouses.

Apart from India, that ensures that all inheritance go to the wife, there are no countries in our developing world who is truly interested in the plight of the widows and their inheritance, this is a condition not desired by any woman but accepted because no one can question her maker. Several women in the developing world have been denied the right and desire to mourn their husbands because of inheritance grabbing, imagine a woman sitting

beside the late husband's corpse and watching as her life's saving is being grabbed not by strangers but practically disinherited by in laws.

Patriarchy has been institutionalized to disinherit women of all dignity, it has been used for hundreds of years and it is still being used, although subtly in the areas of patriarchy-predator- protection. It will be satisfying if one can get the answer to who is a predator and who is a protector? Who is to be protected, who seeks protection from whom? Lots of generative questions we would agree. Have you ever read or witnessed ceremonies on widowhood rites? Then it may be right to say that everywoman needs protection from women and men in this regard, because elderly women are used to perpetuate the worst form of human's inhumanity to human when it comes to this dastard rite, it must be a topic for another day.

What are our leaders doing? In Nigeria, we have the available instruments, but what of the unwritten codes? Do you sue the clan? Fight against the in laws, in our world where MARRIAGE IS CONSIDERED AN INVIOLETE INSTITUTION! And these widows remain in appalling conditions because of their children. May be we should also take a closer look at the fact that even as beautiful as this legal instruments look like and presented by our not so working or slow institutions, the court proceedings are re-traumatizing and always filled scenarios of mad rush of emotions.

2.5.1: Inheritance within the Lineage

Under the Yoruba and Hausa customary law, a woman can inherit land within her own patrilineage. However, her claims to such land are easily contested by her brothers once she

moves away from the lineage to be married. A woman is seen as a “source of further people for men’s household” and not as “a magnet attracting people into household of their own.” (Barber, 1995: 77). The Hausa customary law allows women to own property. A woman can inherit from either of her parents though they seldom do. The female is entitled to half of the share of the male sons. In practice where the only surviving child is a female, her uncle occupies the land as of right, but the female child is entitled to the proceeds of the farmland. (Holmes and Holmes, 1995) However, with the increasing pressure on land, females tend to receive movable and more liquid assets as inheritance while land remains close in the hands of men. (Palmer, 1991) Under the Maliki or Islamic Law, there are fixed shares of inheritance which are gender based.

In the Yoruba culture, a woman can inherit from her parents or from her brothers or sisters. (Adedoyin v. Simeon, 1928) The case of Victoria Bola (F) v. Sam Ojo (M) further buttresses the fact that women can inherit from their parents. In the 1944 case, Victoria Bola sued her husband for divorce and for the refund of a sum of money she kept with him. According to her, the sum of money was from the proceeds of the cocoa products she sold from the land she inherited from her late father. She proved and won the case (Ojo, 2001). In a similar case, Mrs. Kolade was sued by her brother who objected to her inheriting their late father’s land because according to him a woman cannot inherit land. The native court overruled his claims and held that the sister could inherit land (Ojo, 2001).

There are differences in cultural or customary law practices of inheritance in different areas. Under the Edo and Ishan customs in Midwestern Nigeria, women cannot inherit from their lineage. Landed properties and family estates are usually an all male affair. A woman’s

estate consisted of her clothes, bodily ornaments, cooking utensils, few domestic animals and one or two fruit trees(Dawodu, 1999) . After her death, the daughters take all the personal properties, but share the fruit trees with the male children. The customary law practice under the Edo and Ishan culture is that the first son inherits all disposable property to the exclusion of all other brothers and sisters. He has discretion to distribute to the other brothers, but not to the sisters. (Nwogogu, 1974; Ogiamen v. Ogiamen, 19) Education and accompanying capitalism has offered women increasing opportunity to accumulate properties in land and other goods. The effect is that the inheritance of landed property is now favorable to women who are now able to inherit through their mother. (Dawodu, 1999) This has however created problems. This is because traditionally women did not own property and there is the absence of laid down principles for inheritance of property belonging to women. This has heightened and increased the number of land matters in the court because the male chauvinists still want to apply the customary practice of an all male affair.

The Igbo customary law is different from the Yoruba and Hausa customary law on inheritance from the lineage. In the Igbo culture the system of inheritance is either patrilineal or in certain areas of Abia State of Nigeria, matrilineal. Under the Igbo customary law, a woman cannot inherit land from her lineage. In all areas of land holding, women are excluded as land passes from the father to the male children. An unmarried daughter has a right to live in her father's house, but she is not allowed to cultivate the land as her own. As Korieh stated, "Why should a woman be allotted land? She married away from this village and can only have access to land where she marries. Her access to land

will be through her husband and children.” (Korieh, 2001). To further buttress the fact that Igbo customary law does not allow female inheritance, a female is not allowed to inherit the property from the father’s estate even where there is no male issue to inherit the property. In such cases, the property passes on to the eldest adult male in the family.

2.5.2: Inheritance through Marriage

In a statutory marriage, the inheritance law is governed by the Marriage Act (1990) that provides that a woman can inherit part of her husband’s property and estate including land (section 26). Where there is a will, the property will be administered in accordance with the wishes of the deceased. However, this is a theoretical aspect of the law. The reality is a different thing. The multiplicity of the laws on inheritance leaves a gap that permits the courts and self styled traditionalists who include the unscrupulous relatives to choose the laws that are beneficial to their self interest and to the disadvantage of the woman. Under the Igbo customary law, a woman cannot inherit land from her husband’s estate. The relatives of the deceased usually regard such property as family property and a birth right. Acquisitions of property with a spouse are not recognized under the custom to give the woman any right to any part of the property even when it is proven.

The only means of inheritance by a woman of her husband’s estate is through her male child if such child agrees to give the mother any part of it. A childless woman is a loser through out as she does not inherit anything. The courts have also compounded the issue by upholding such discriminatory customary practices. In a customary court decision, the traditional ruler had this to say on the custom:

“The Eze, (King) who is the custodian of the customs and traditions of this town in no equivocal manner condemns the practice of purported purchase of landed property from women or housewives. Such practice is disallowed by the customary laws of the town particularly in a case such as this where the woman, a widow for that matter has a grown up son who is the automatic heir to the estate of the deceased father. (Palace Records, 1988)

In an appeal in the above case to the customary court in Ahiazu, Mbaise in 1989, the court held that

“It is unheard of, that a woman with a grown up son can sell her husband’s land in the absence of the son. It would be uncustomary if this court were to find for the defendant claiming that he bought a piece of land of a man with a son from his wife.” (Suit No. CCC H/59189)

The rationale for the decision above becomes clearer in another decided case on this customary law practice of inheritance.

“The native law and customs alleged here is briefly that property cannot be allotted and descended through a wife. If such native law and custom exists, it would mean that on the death of a childless wife, not of the same family as her husband, property vested in her would pass away from the husbands family from whom the wife became entitled to it to the wife’s family.” (Omiyi, 1980)

The formal courts appear to have given judicial notice to this customary practice in Igbo land. In *Ilboma v. Ibeneme* (1963) the Supreme Court of Nigeria, the highest court in the land held inter alia, “of course it would be absolute nonsense in the circumstances for a widow who is herself regarded as property to turn around to claim property from her late husband.”

Under the Yoruba culture, a married woman does not have any inheritance right in her husband’s property. She is regarded as part of her husband’s property to be inherited along with other properties. In the case of *Suberu v. Sunmonu* (1957), the supreme court held that, “a wife could not inherit her husband’s property since she herself is like a chattel to be inherited by a relative of her husband.” In an earlier case of *Sogunro Davis v. Songunro Davis* (1929), Beckley J said, “Yoruba native law and customs deprived the wife of inheritance rights in her deceased husband’s estate because devolution of property follows the blood.” The same practice is found among the Ijaws in mid-western state of Nigeria.

The position of the Hausa woman is different from the other groups discussed above. Under the Hausa customary law, a woman has a right to inherit from her husband’s estate even where she is childless. (www.law.emory) Under the custom, the woman is ensured support for herself and her children and it enhances patrilineal inheritance of the cattle. (Stenning, 1959) In Adamawa State of Nigeria, among the Hausa/Fulani groups, the inheritance practice is that the parent of the deceased and the widow share the property equally. (Okoye, 19). Generally women either married, unmarried or widowed are being tossed up and down. Within their lineage, they are deemed to have no right because they are expected to marry

and benefit from their husbands property. As married women they are considered to be strangers who have no part in the inheritance.

Another practice closely linked with inheritance is the customary practice of leverite. This is the practice where a family member inherits a married woman whose husband is dead. This customary practice is found in the three groups and still practiced in rural communities. The practice is degrading and harmful. The woman is deemed to be a chattel that should be inherited with other properties since a bride price was paid on her. In the Yoruba and Igbo cultures, a brother or son of the deceased, but not the son of the woman, was allowed to inherit the woman as a wife. Young widows continue with child rearing with the new husband. The influence of education and urbanization has reduced the practice of this culture.

2.6: WIDOWHOOD UNDER CUSTOMARY LAW

Widowhood is a multifaceted tragedy. It is overwhelmingly a woman's problem which reveals atrocious social injustice. It joins a woman into the category of the marginalized defenseless and invisible being. Under the Igbo culture, widowhood is used as slang for being defenseless. As Afigbo notes (1989), when a person is assaulted and such a person effectively fights back, it is common to hear the person attacked taunt the surprised attacker as follows, "Perhaps you thought you were dealing with a widow." Supporting the aforementioned assertion, Korieh cited an Igbo saying which states, "Why should a man who goes to his widow concubine be in a hurry to depart. Is it that he does not know where

her husband had gone.” (Korieh, Chapter 2:2) This is the general plight of a widow who is seen as weak and defenseless.

There are many widows among the adult female population in Nigeria. This problem is compounded by the rampant cases of war and confusion in the country. In such confusion and riots, men are more among the casualties and women suffer. The number of widows increased dramatically in eastern Nigeria between 1967 and 1970 after the Biafran Civil war, in western Nigeria after the Modakeke life disturbance and the numerous religious upheavals in Northern Nigeria. Traditional practices deeply embedded in the customs of many societies now constitute the greatest threat to the human rights of millions of widows. These customary law practices vary from culture to culture, however, generally they can be described as cruel and inhuman and expressly forbidden under several International Conventions and Treaties.

Widows are subjected to humiliating and degrading burial rites and mourning practices in the name of custom. It is pathetic to note that the traditional custodian of cultural practices in widowhood is almost exclusively female who rigorously enforce these practices leaving the widow isolated, impoverished and damaged.

It is the widow who suffers for the death of a spouse. A widower on the other hand does not suffer the same fate as the widow even though both had lost a partner. According to Nawadinobi (2001) at the death of a spouse a widow is dethroned, defaced and disinherited. According to her, a widow herself, while talking about the widowhood in Igbo land, a widow on the death of her spouse, is dethroned because she loses the status conferred on her

by her husband by being made to sit on the bare earth, straw mat or palm leaves. The “defacement” comes in when the widow is expected to look unattractive, dirty, unkempt with her hair shaved and denied of washing. The “disinheritance” comes in when the widow is disposed of all the property she had acquired with her husband.

The widower on the other hand at this time is pitied because of loneliness caused by the loss of his partner, pampered as he will be fussed over and pacified usually with different suggestions of taking a new wife. From many reported cases, the cultural practice does not distinguish the social class of the widow. The practices of widowhood vary from culture to culture.

The outburst of intense wailing, weeping and hysteria, full vent of grief by beating the chest, rolling on the floor and aimless hours of crying are common expectations as to the actions and behavior of a widow. In some cultures in Igbo land, the widow is fined when she does not cry or the crying is judged insufficient. (Korieh, 19: 46) On the contrary, men are not expected to cry in public or to show outward grief.

Amongst the Igbos the shaving of the hair of the widow is a common feature. However, the effect of christianity has whittled down this practice but it is still observed in the rural communities. Widows who refuse to observe this practice on the grounds of religion are usually punished by excommunication. The mourning rites is also a customary practice still observed. This is a period of seclusion from common activities by the widow and it is usually during this period that the oppressive and dehumanizing acts are inflicted. The duration and intensity of the mourning rites vary from culture to culture. Under the Hausa

culture, the periods are shorter. (Trimmingham, 1959) With the increase in the number of working women caused by civilization, urbanization and migration the periods are shorter though still observed.

The influence of Christianity has influenced these customary law practices and a change is being observed. The mourning dress which used to be black has now changed into white or any other color. There are elements of exploitation in the practices mentioned above in widowhood. The assumed defenseless position is exploited by other women. This is particularly true of the “Umuadas” under the Igbo culture. These are the patrilineal daughters in the family who retain intense influence over what happens within the family in which they are born, though some are married into other families. The practices are meted out by these groups of people onto the widow and they decide on the proper treatment. This is done either out of vengeance for what they suffered in their matrimonial home or out of spite on the widow or to generate funds. Leith-Ross gave an example of such exploitive motive behind the injustice inflicted on the widow. (1963) She stated that under a regulation in 1930 in Owerri, a city in East Nigeria, customs stipulated that the fee for the shaving of the hair of the widow should be one shilling and the shaving was done by one of the relatives of the deceased husband. However, if the women in their judgment felt that the deceased should have married more than one wife, the widow would be made to pay the total amount of money the shaver would have collected had the deceased married the expected number of wives.

All these practices are against religious tenets and instructions as widows were in particularly mentioned in the bible as a category of people to be cared for. (The New King James Bible; Omar Tarhuni, 2001)

2.7: WIDOWHOOD AND THE POSITION OF THE NIGERIAN LEGAL SYSTEM

There is no gain saying that legal pluralism operates in Nigeria. This causes confusion and generates controversy. It has left a gap that permits choice of laws. The interests of the woman are particularly affected by the operation of multiple legal systems governing family law in Nigeria. Depending on the place of residence, type of marriage, ethnic group, or religion, a woman's right and responsibility to marriage, inheritance, ownership and widowhood practices may be governed by one of the systems under discussion. Boundaries of the three family law systems are complex and the customary laws are not unified. The multiplicity of the applicable legal system has been a problem for the courts that are faced with determining not only the problem of law that is applicable, but which of the several customary laws is applicable. There are further complications because the federal system of government that operates in Nigeria places customary law with the legislative competence of the states but retain federal jurisdiction over statutory marriage.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the supreme law of the land with various provisions that protect the rights of all citizens from discrimination and provides citizens with rights to freedom from discrimination based on community, place or origin, ethnic group, sex, religion or political opinion. (Section 41) However, these rights in the Constitution are more declarative than actual mostly due to the underdevelopment and

inefficiency of the implementation measures. The existing legal system and the criminal justice system have not been too helpful or lived up to expectation in solving this problem. It should however be noted that in recent times, efforts are geared towards protecting women against the violence inflicted as a result of customary law practices but more effective action has to be taken.

Some states in Nigeria have instituted legislation regulating customary law practices in some of the areas discussed. In Eastern Nigeria for example, there is a legislation creating a merger between customary law of marriage and statutory law. (Eastern State, 1956). The court system where justice is dispensed and the advocates of equity and justice, and equality before the law have not in all cases portrayed themselves to mean this. There are occasions when the courts shifted to the side of customs in its decisions in issues of marriage, inheritance or widowhood disregarding the provisions of the statutes and its decision resulted in inflicting violence on the woman. The roles played by the regular courts have not been consistent. However many judges are now on the progressive path and have taken the bull by the horn in upholding justice. See *Okonkwo v. Okagbwe* (1994), *Mojekwu v. Mojekwu*(1997), *Ukeje v. Ukeje and Anor* (February 26, 2001). In all the three cases above the judges denounced such repugnant and discriminatory practices.

Many of the practices under customary law are against these Covenants; they are discriminatory and are similar to slavery practices which the government has guaranteed freedom for all. The enabling environment and cultural values for implementing such Treaties are absent. A particular feature in the Nigerian legal system is the attitude of the people. Most disputes involving family law are regarded as private. When contested in

public, such disputes are usually taken outside the formal court system, and decided at the village or local administrative level. An example is the native courts or the “Umuadas” in Igbo land. At such level, precedence is given to the customary law of the people. However, recent decisions have shown the progressive changes in the higher courts in evoking the principles of natural justice.

It is known that in the enforcement of customary law, it is a rule that the native law tradition and custom is not to be enforced if it is distasteful, offensive and opposed to natural justice or contrary to any written or official law. (Proclamation No. 6 of 1900) This proclamation remains a part of the Nigerian legal system under common law applicable in Nigeria. There is no way to describe some of the customary practices of marriage, inheritance or widowhood than to call it distasteful, offensive and opposed to natural justice.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Survey data for this work were collected in selected rural and urban communities of Enugu State between November 2010 and February 2011. The main objective was to identify the trend in widowhood practices and inheritance among urban and rural communities in Enugu state. In this third chapter, emphasis is paid to the research method that was used in carrying out the research. The chapter also deeply discusses the area of study, research design, study population, sample and sample size determination and the sampling procedure as well as source of data. Instruments used for the study, the validation of the instrument, methods of data collection and analysis are also discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The Survey research method was adopted for this study. This was done due to the large number of subject under investigation. To study a very large population as is the case in the communities chosen to be studied in Enugu State could be very cumbersome for any researcher. In the word of Osuala (1987:180) states:

Survey research studies both large and small population by selecting and studying samples chosen from the populations to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables ----

Survey research focus on people, the vital facts of people and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviours.

3.3: SOURCES OF DATA

Data for this study will primarily be sourced from both primary and secondary sources.

3.3.1: Primary Sources

This represents information that was obtained directly from the field in the course of this study. In this respect, oral interviews will be conducted among some respondents. A close ended questionnaire will be used to obtain information from the respondents in both rural and urban communities of interest. This instrument will be divided into two sections. Section “A” shall contain questions on the social and demographic background of respondents while section “B” will address contextual issues of primary concern to the subject matter of this research work.

Qualitative data was collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview (KII) and direct observation. KII was used because an indepth interview with people who are concerned was conducted for the purpose of collecting candid responses on the evaluation of inheritance practice among widows in Nigeria. In all, FGDs will be conducted with select group of widows and widowers in each of the LGAs. Key Informant Interviews will be conducted with few elderly women and men who have been widowed for a period not less than ten (10) years. Armed with these, we hope to gain an insight into their organizational structure and objectives.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

This depicts a means of gathering in-depth information from a small group representing target audience through a guided discussion of issues of primary importance to the research topic. FGDs are imperative in obtaining insights into behaviour, ideas and suggestions. They equally help researchers to find out the ‘why’ about issues being addressed. By implication, the Focus Group Discussion enables the researcher to uncover underlying motivations and attitudes and is equally effective in encouraging the submission of new and hitherto hidden suggestions. The FGDs, organized as conversation, involve a maximum of 12 and minimum of 5 persons and promote consensus building on pertinent issues that border on peoples’ perception, tacit knowledge and behaviour. Focus Group Discussions was used because the questionnaire was designed for target audiences which are the widows and widowers in the rural and urban communities. The questions asked were to confirm the challenges they encounter either from their relations and communities when they lose either of their spouses e.g. **Which of your late spouse relations is difficult to relate with after his demise?**

STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

The structured questionnaire is a quantitative data instrument intended to give respondents the opportunity to express their independent views on a number of aspects of the study variable this, it is argued, must be done within a rather closely defined alternative (Selara, 2003). It must also be designed to elicit specific responses with regards to answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses formulated (Nwosu & Uffoh, 2005). The questionnaire has the advantages of turning up more valid data that can be easily quantified.

For our purpose, a set of close-ended questionnaire will be prepared and administered to selected female members of the study community (respondents).

The questionnaire is in two parts Oral interview and Written –Inherited Practices.

Some of the questions asked in the questionnaire are focused on the rights of the widow or widower in terms of his/her rights to the properties, how long is she/he expected to stay at home before going back to work, accommodations and relationship with the family etc.

The responses for inherited practices were filled by the respondents while I did the oral interview part of the questionnaire for those that cannot read and write.

3.3.2: Secondary Sources

In the course of our investigation, relevant information will be sourced from related published works such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines and other unpublished materials relevant to the study.

The population of these LGAs as stratified along sex divides is as shown in table 3.3.1.

TABLE 3.1: POPULATION OF ENUGU STATE

S/NO	L.G.A.	POPULATION	MALES	FEMALES
1	Igbo-Eze North	259431	138006	121425
2	Igbo-Eze South	147328	78308	69020
3	Udenu	178466	87000	91466
4	Isi-Uzo	148415	72865	75550

5	Igbo-Etiti	209248	104162	105086
6	Nsukka	309633	149241	160392
7	Uzo-Uwani	124480	67622	56858
8	Ezeagu	169718	84053	85665
9	Udi	234002	115579	118423
10	Enugu East	279089	132816	146273
11	Nkanu East	148774	75119	73655
12	Enugu North	244852	121625	123227
13	Enugu South	198723	94461	104262
14	Nkanu West	146695	72326	74369
15	Aninri	133723	69765	63958
16	Awgu	198134	95421	102713
17	Oji-River	126587	65833	60754
TOTAL		3,257,298	1,624,202	1,633,096

Source: National Population Commission, 2006 Census Estimate.

In this work, study shows each of the rural and urban Local Government Areas in Enugu State. For the Urban LGA, we intend to work in Enugu East LGA while Awgu LGA has been picked as our rural LGA. It is our intention to utilize the outcome of the study from these LGAs for extrapolation for the entire state

3.3.3: ENUGU-EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Enugu-East Local Government Area is amongst the seventeen (17) Local Government Areas in Enugu State. The Local Government was founded in 1997. It has its Headquarters at Nkwor-Nike Town. The Local Government is located in the Enugu-East Senatorial Zone of

Enugu State and houses one of the most populous and well known communities (Abakpa-Nike) in Enugu State. There is also the stationing of a magnificent multi-billion naira five start hotel- the Nike-Lake Resort-in this LGA. Enugu East Local Government Area has twelve political wards with total population strength of 279089. Of these, the male resident population is put at 132816 and while that of female is 146273 (NPC, 2006). This number of persons is living in various communities across the LGA and they geographically spread across the following communities showing in table 3.1

Table 3.2: Communities in Enugu East LGA.

S/N	COMMUNITIES
1	Abakpa
2	Agbogazi
3	Akor
4	Ama-okpo
5	Amoji
6	Edem
7	Ibagwa
8	Mbulo-owehe
9	Nchata-ncha
10	Nokpa
11	Ugbo-odogwu
12	Ugwogo
13	Ugwu-omu

Source: Researcher's field work, 2011.

3.3.4: AWGU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Awgu Local Government Area is one of the oldest and largest rural based LGAs in Enugu State. It shares boundaries with Aninri, Oji-River, Udi and Nkanu West LGAs of Enugu

State. The 2006 population census gave the population of Awgu to be 198,134 comprising of 95,421 males and 102, 713 females (NPC, 2006). The Local Government occupies a total land Area of 447.17 square kilometer (Sq/km) with 443 populations per square kilometer (p/Sq, km) (EPC, 2006:2). It lies between longitude 7⁰ 28' E and Latitude 7⁰ 28' E.

Seventeen (17) Autonomous (rural) communities make up Awgu LGA. Farming and trading are the dominant occupations of the people. Awgu market days attract traders from neighbouring LGAs as well as from outside Enugu state. The undulating Awgu hill is magnificent scenery to behold. No wonder, it played host to a world class, reality TV show (i.e. The Ultimate Search) some time ago. More so, the oldest National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) orientation camp in Nigeria is located in Awgu LGA of Enugu State. This number of persons is living in various communities across the LGA and they geographically spread across the following communities showing in table 3.3

Table 3.3: COMMUNITIES IN AWGU LGA.

S/N	COMMUNITIES
1	Agbogugu
2	Agbudu
3	Amoli
4	Awgu
5	Ezere-Nhewenta
6	Ihe
7	Isuawaa
8	Ituku
9	Mgbidi
10	Mgbowo
11	Mmaku
12	Nkwe-Awgunta

13	Obeagu
14	Ogbaku
15	Ogugu-Ugbo
16	Owelli
17	Ugweme

Source: Researcher's field work, 2010.

3.4 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Adult female and male residents in selected communities of Awgu and Enugu East LGAs who are widowed shall make up the population of the study. They will be selected from a portion of the 279089 and 198134 who should scientifically constitute our population of study in Enugu East and Awgu LGAs respectively if we were to deal with the entire population.

3.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

A selected proportion of the widow's population was chosen for this study. For the urban based LGA, we selected for this survey, two associations that involve widows. They are:

- i. Gracia Widows Association, New Heaven and;
- ii. Widows' population from St. Theresa Catholic church, Abakpa.

From our preliminary survey, the widows' population in Gracia Widows Association, New Heaven is 37 while widows' population from St. Theresa Catholic church, Abakpa is put at 59. The researcher also visited two communities from rural based LGA to ascertain the number of widows in those communities. The communities chosen in this regard are Mmaku and Ezere. The widows' population here is put at 15 for Mmaku and 21 for Ezere.

3.6: INSTRUMENT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In the course of this survey, research questions were carefully formulated in a manner as to enable the researcher obtain requisite qualitative and quantitative data that will aid the attainment of our set research objectives. To maximize the reliability of the instrument used, the researcher ensured that questions were not ambiguously presented to respondents as to give them the impression of different meanings or in a manner likely to communicate different meanings that could generate inaccuracy and inconsistency in responses. The researcher also maintained objectivity with no leading suggestions as to the responses desired. Most importantly, a pilot survey will be conducted to ensure that respondents understand the questions and answer them correctly. Accordingly, a pilot survey of a sub-sample will be carried out in two selected communities each from Awgu and Enugu East Local Government Areas. A total of thirty respondents will be selected for the pilot survey. From their responses, some of the awkward questions (if any) are hoped to be reframed.

3.7: ADMINISTRATION OF INSTRUMENTS

All items on the close –ended questionnaire were scored on the basis of five (5) points using. Also, some open-ended question will be included. Each of the questionnaires which was administered was accompanied with an introductory letter. The essence is to assure the respondents of the confidentiality of information needed as well as to give them insights into the mission of the study. On the field, the researcher employed the assistance of local residents who will work as community catalysts under the strict supervision of the researcher. These will be basically women who could effectively translate the

questionnaires into local dialect for better understanding by respondents in the process of administering the questionnaires. The field survey will commence immediately the supervisor gives his consent.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data will be presented and analysed using simple frequency tables and percentages. Simple frequency tables are used in presenting the number of questionnaire administered as well as those collected and utilized in the analysis. Simple percentage (%) ratios are also used in presenting the results of data collected. Thereafter, the computer software-Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used in analyzing the data and testing the hypotheses with a non-parametric statistical test instrument-the Chi-Square. The researcher will equally ensure that the hypotheses manually are tested manually. This will be done for the purpose of triangulating facts from the SPSS with that of manual calculations in order to reach admissible conclusion. In this study, the chi-square method of analysis is applied to test the statistics in order to see if there is an agreement between what is expected and what is observed/ calculated; and determine the significance of such disagreement or agreement.

The chi-square is statistically denoted as:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - e_i)^2}{e_i}$$

Where O_i = Observed frequency in each cell

e_i = the expected frequency in each cell

Σ = Summing over all cells.

Df = Degree of Freedom

Formula for df = (r-1) (c-1)

Where r = number of rows in the frequency table

C = number of columns in the frequency table.

The test will be carried out at a 0.05% level of significance. These take care of our quantitative data.

The qualitative data will be analyzed manually by looking at issues relevant to this study. We attempt to identify common issues identified and highlighted by all groups by looking out for homogeneity and dissent. The issues involved are critically examined, sorted out manually, categorized (look at in order of priority) and evaluated based on responses from our raw data. Again, the researcher intends to compare various case studies we intended to look at. In doing these, we did not seek universal laws but regularities within a social (community) context. Armed with these, we hoped to be able to filter data and prioritize the needs and aspiration of the people in order to advance an admissible conclusion.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we present both secondary and primary data collected during the survey. We also subjected collected data to empirical analysis in order to evaluate the research questions we earlier posed in our chapter one. For the analysis of collected data, the major emphasis was placed on relating the method to the research problem in particular and the nature of the study in general. Only this enabled precise presentation of results capable of representing genuine tests and achievements of the research objectives.

TABLE 4.1: QUESTIONNAIRE RETURN RATE

Communities	No distributed	Percentage	No collected	Percentage
Urban	96	(73%)	85	(71.4%)
Rural	36	(27%)	34	(28.6%)
Total	132	100%	119	100%

Source: Author's field work, 2011

As could be observed in table 4.1 above, we administered a total of 132 questionnaires within the sampled areas. This was done on the bases of the respective sampled areas'

widows' population strength, 96(73%) for urban communities and 36(27%) for rural communities. Of the number administered, 85(71.4%) and 34(28.6%) were finally utilized for analysis for both Urban and Rural communities respectively. Few questionnaires were not returned from the field while, some questionnaires were discarded due to some observed incongruities that posed a threat to data integrity and reliability. Thus our analysis will basically be based on responses from 119 respondents representing 90.2% of total expected respondents.

4.3 SOCIO- DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

4.2.1: Age of respondents

Efforts were made to group respondents on the basis of age (Table4.2)

Table 4.2: Age brackets of respondents

Location of Community		Age brackets of respondents(years)			Total
		18-35	36-55	56 and above	
	urban	25	47	13	85
		(21.0%)	(39.5%)	(10.9%)	(71.4%)
	rural	18	15	1	34
		(15.1%)	(12.6%)	(.8%)	(28.6%)
Total		43	62	14	119
		(36.1%)	(52.1%)	(11.8%)	(100.0%)

Source: Author's field work, 2011

Survey results show that most of the respondents were in the 35-40 years. The following percentage of respondents are in the urban area 21.0% of the respondents within the age bracket of 18-35 years are located on the urban area, 39.5% of respondents within the age of 36-55 years while 10.9% of the respondents in the age of 56 and above.

4.2.2: Educational Background of Respondents

Information was obtained from respondents on their educational status. The outcome is as indicated in table 4.3

Table 4.3: Highest level of education attained by Respondents

Location of Community		Highest level of education attained			Total
		primary school	Secondary School	Tertiary Institution	
	urban	3 (2.5%)	10 (8.4%)	72 (60.5%)	85 (71.4%)
	rural	18 (15.1%)	8 (6.7%)	8 (6.7%)	34 (28.6%)
Total		21 (17.6%)	18 (15.1%)	80 (67.2%)	119 (100.0%)

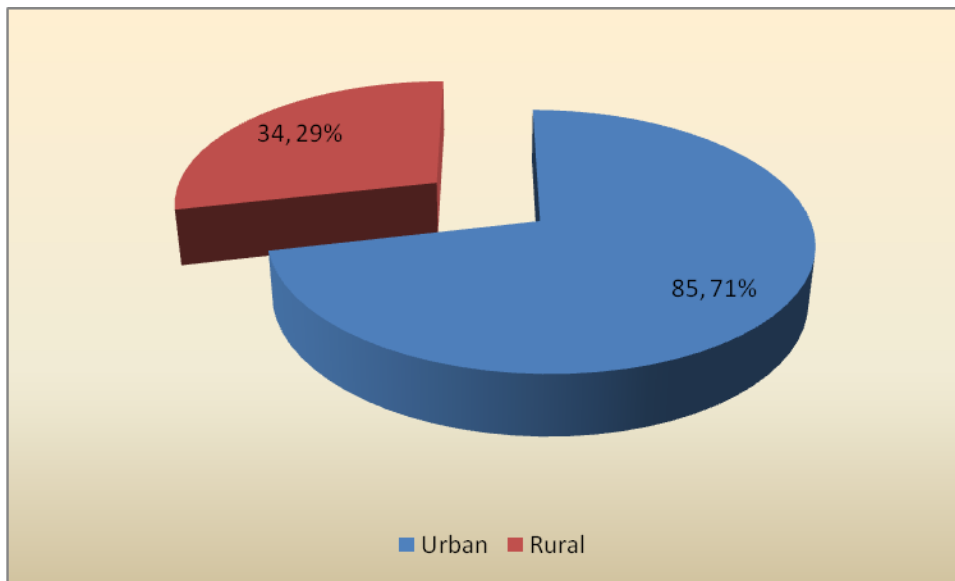
Source: Author's field work, 2011

Survey results show that on the aggregate, majority of respondents (67.2%) have acquired tertiary education. However, if disaggregated, it is obvious that while 60.5% of urban-based respondents are among the categories that have acquired tertiary trainings, only 6.7% of rural-based respondents have attained this feat. Again, majority of rural based respondents

have only attained primary education. 18 out of 34 of respondents from rural communities we surveyed fall among this category.

4.2.3: Population of Rural and Urban Widows.

Figure 4.1: Population of Rural and Urban Widows



Source: Author's field work, 2011

The figure above shows clearly that smaller part of the chart has 29% of respondents (widows) were from rural communities and 71% from urban communities. Moreover, it also means that the higher numbers of widows are in the urban areas.

4.2.4: Years since respondents lost their spouses

Information was obtained from respondents on how many years it is since they lost their spouses. The outcome is as indicated in table 4.5

Table 4.5: Years since respondents lost their spouses

Location of Community		Numbers since spouse was lost			Total
		0-5 years	6-11 years	12-20 years	
	urban	20	33	32	85
		(16.8%)	(27.7%)	(26.9%)	(71.4%)
	rural	20	13	1	34
		(16.8%)	(10.9%)	(.8%)	(28.6%)
Total		40	46	33	119
		(33.6%)	(38.7%)	(27.7%)	(100.0%)

Source: Researcher's field work, 2011

From the above, it could be deduced that majority of respondents interviewed (38.7%) lost their spouses 6-11 years ago. This group is closely followed by those who lost theirs between 0-5 years ago. In our rural communities, it could also be observed that only one respondent lost her spouse in a period between 12-20years ago.

4.2.5: Respondents' Employment Status.

Information was obtained from respondents on their employment status. The outcome is as indicated in table 4.6

Table 4.6: Respondents' employment status

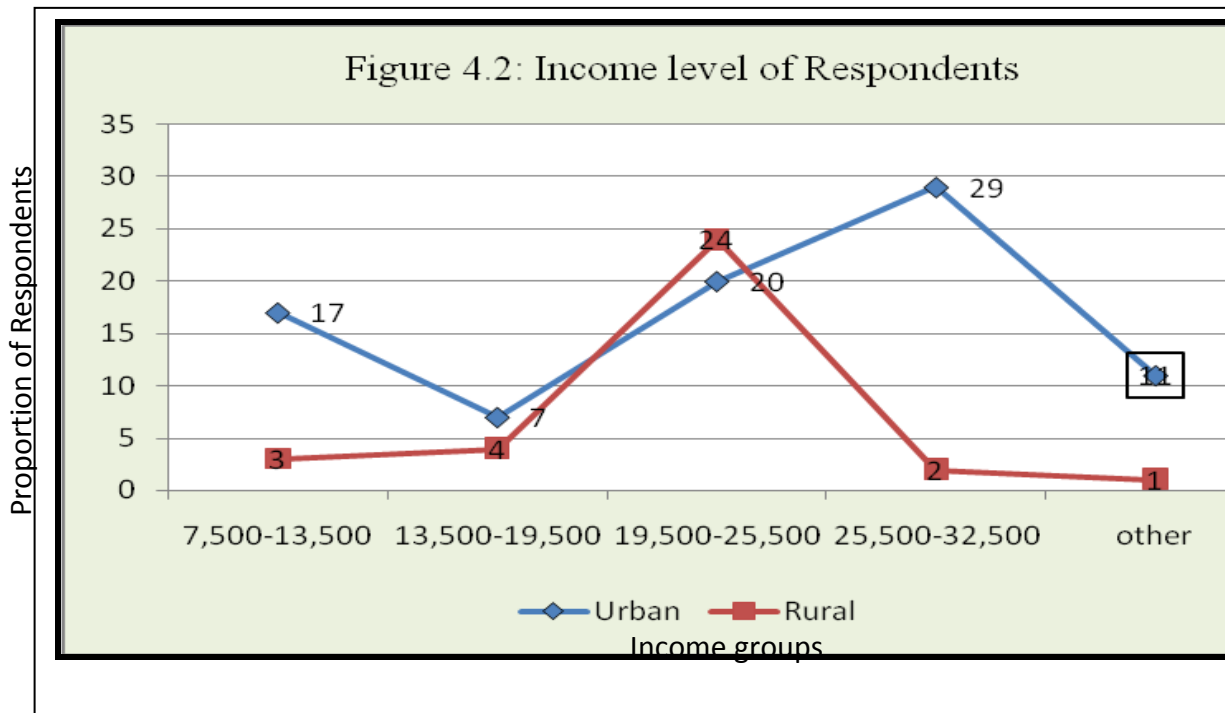
Location of Community		Employment status				Total
		By private business	Civil servant	Retiree/Pensioner	Self Employed	
	urban	11	46	16	12	85
		(9.2%)	(38.7%)	(13.4%)	(10.1%)	(71.4%)
	rural	2	5	4	23	34
		(1.7%)	(4.2%)	(3.4%)	(19.3%)	(28.6%)
Total		13	51	20	35	119
		(10.9%)	(42.9%)	(16.8%)	(29.4%)	(100.0%)

Source: Researcher's field work, 2011

Survey results as depicted in table 4.6 above show clearly that majority of respondents are civil servants. This is the situation both for the urban and rural based respondents. In all 42.9% of respondents are civil servants, followed by those who are self employed (29.4%), retirees/pensioners (16.8%) and private business operators (10.9%).

4.2.6: Income Level of Respondents

Information was obtained from respondents on their income level. The outcome is as



indicated in 4.2

Source: Author’s field work, 2011

The average monthly income levels of respondents are as depicted in the above line graph. The graph shows that while 17 respondents from urban communities fall among those that earn between ₦ 7,500- ₦ 13,500 per month, 3 out of 34 of rural based respondents belong to

this category of income earners. Again, 7 out of 85 of urban based respondents earn between ₦ 13,500- ₦ 19,500 per month. For rural based respondents, the percentage in this group is 4 out of 34. A critical appraisal of the line graph depicts that for other income categories, the number of both urban and rural based respondents' surveyed rises and falls almost at the same rate.

4.4: DISPARITY IN THE LEVEL OF TREATMENT WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS RECEIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

Table 4.7: Respondents' perception on the level of disparity in treatment given to both widows and widowers in the community.

Location of Community		Are widowers better treated than widows in your community?			Total
		Yes	No	Don't know	
	urban	66	7	12	85
		55.5%	5.9%	10.1%	71.4%
	rural	27	2	5	34
		22.7%	1.7%	4.2%	28.6%
Total		93	9	17	119
		78.2%	7.6%	14.3%	100.0%

Source: Author's field work, 2011

From table 4.7 above, it is obvious that widows and widowers are at par when it comes to equality in treatment (especially with regards to inheritance) in the communities where this study was carried out. 78% of respondents agreed that comparatively, men who lost their spouses are better treated in the community when it comes to inheritance. In both urban and rural communities, it appears the same trend is observed. This is so because 27 out of 34 rural based respondents and 66 out of 85 urban based respondents agreed that widowers are

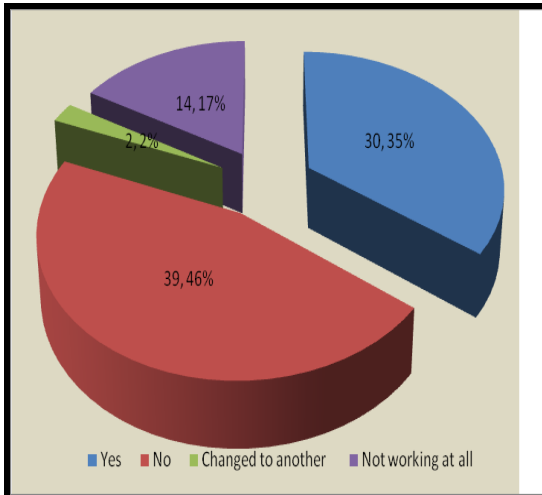
better treated than widows in their communities. Only 7.6% of respondents disagreed while 14.3% said they have no idea about the questions raised.

Again, qualitative data gotten from the survey also buttress the point raised above. During the FGD session with some groups of widows, discussants were unanimous that our widows are far from been equally treated like the widowers especially with regards to inheritance practices. Even some widowers interviewed in Mmaku and Ezere corroborated this view.

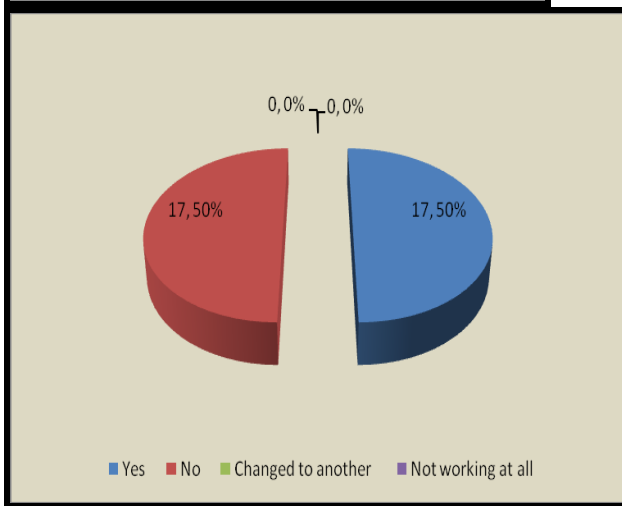
4.5: NATURE OF JOB BEFORE AND AFTER LOSS OF SPOUSES

During the survey, respondents were asked if their present jobs are still the same as the ones they did when their deceased spouses were alive. Consequently, the following responses were gotten from both urban and rural based respondents.

Urban responses



Rural Responses



Source: Author’s field work, 2011

Source: Author’s field work, 2011

As depicted in figure 4.3 above, responses from rural based communities show that the ration of respondents that have changed jobs after the death of their spouses and those who maintains their jobs after their spouses’ death is 50:50. For urban based respondents, there is a slight difference in responses. Thus while 46% of them have not changed their job after their spouses’ death, 35% have changed. A very insignificant number (1.7%) have changed to another while 17% of urban based respondents are not working at all.

**4.6: TIME SPENT AT HOME BEFORE GOING OUT OR STARTING WORK
AFTER SPOUSE’S DEATH.**

In table 4.8 below, we sought to know the amount of time spent by respondents to mourn their spouses before re-engaging in economic activities.

Table 4.8: Respondents’ responses on the number of time spent at home before going out or starting work after spouse’s death.

Location of Community		time spent at home before going out or starting work after spouse death				Total
		6 months	1 year	2 years	Other (specify)	
	urban	14 (11.8%)	23 (19.3%)	31 (26.1%)	17 (14.2%)	85 (71.4%)
	rural	4 (3.4%)	29 (24.4%)	0 (.0%)	1 (.8%)	34 (28.6%)
Total		18 (15.1%)	52 (43.7%)	31 (26.1%)	18 (15.1%)	119 (100.0%)

Source: Author’s field work, 2011

Data presented in Table 4.8 above shows the number of time spent by respondents at home before going out or starting work after the demise of their spouses. From the table, it is deduced that 43.7% of respondents mourn their spouses exclusively for 1 year. This is closely followed by those who do so for 2 years (26.1%). 15.1% of respondents said they do so for six months. Only .8% of respondents spent up to five years to mourn their spouses.

Table 4.9: Respondents' responses on whether their spouses' death resulted in their change of residence.

		Did your partner's death made you change residence?			Total
		yes	no	don't know	
Location of Community	urban	42	39	4	85
		(35.3%)	(32.8%)	(3.4%)	(71.4%)
	rural	5	27	2	34
		(4.2%)	(22.7%)	(1.7%)	(28.6%)
Total		47	66	6	119
		(39.5%)	(55.5%)	(5.1%)	(100.0%)

Source: Author's field work, 2011

From table 4.9 above, it is obvious that while 39.5% of respondents changed their residence as a result of the death of spouses, 55.5% of them do not. However, a disaggregated data depicts that while 42 out of 85 urban based respondents changed residence as a consequence of losing their spouses, only 5 out of 34 rural based respondents do so. This goes to show that urban based respondents are more disposed to change residents than their rural counterparts once a spouse is lost.

4.6: Time spent at home before going out or starting work after spouse's death.

Table 4.10: Respondents' responses on which of their partner's asset they inherited after the death of their spouses

Location of Community		Which of your partner's asset did you inherit?				Total
		Money	land	household	other(specify)	
	urban	14	13	27	29	83
		14.1%	13.1%	27.3%	29.3%	83.8%
	rural	5	1	5	5	16
		5.1%	1.0%	5.1%	5.1%	16.2%
Total		19	14	32	34	99
		19.2%	14.1%	32.3%	34.3%	100.0%

Source: Author's field work, 2011

Efforts were also made during the survey to ascertain from respondents the nature of assets inherited from their death spouses. The result as indicated on table 4.10 above shows that only 1 rural based respondent inherited land from her deceased spouse. The ratio for urban respondents in this regard is 13 out of 83. In all, 19.2% of respondents said they inherited money, 32.3% household, 14.1 lands and other, 34.3%.

4.6: PRESENT RELATIONSHIP WITH SPOUSES' FAMILY.

In the course of this study, the researcher also made effort to ascertain the current relationship

status of respondents with their inlaws. The result is as shown in table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Respondents' Present relationship with their spouses' family

		Present relationship with your spouse's family			Total
		Cordial	Normal	Conflict ridden	
Location of Community	urban	17	44	23	84
		14.5%	37.6%	19.7%	71.8%
	rural	10	19	4	33
		8.5%	16.2%	3.4%	28.2%
Total		27	63	27	117
		23.1%	53.8%	23.1%	100.0%

Source: Author's field work, 2011

The outcome of analysis as reflected in figure 4.11 buttress the fact that the relationship of respondents with their deceased spouses' family is quite normal than conflict-ridden. While

23.1% of them said the relationship is cordial, 53.8% and 23.1% answered that theirs is normal and conflict-ridden respectively. Almost the same trend is observed in both urban and rural communities where this study was carried out.

4.7: Most difficult relations to relate with after the death of respondents’ spouses.

In the course of this study, the researcher also made effort to ascertain the current relationship

status of respondents with their inlaws with a specific interest to find out which of them is the most difficult to relate with. The outcome of our investigations is as shown in table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Responses on most difficult relations to relate with.

Location of Community			Which of your late spouse relations is difficult to relate with after his demise?			Total
			male	female	both	
	urban		10	11	62	83
			8.8%	9.6%	54.4%	72.8%
	rural		16	5	10	31
			14.0%	4.4%	8.8%	27.2%
Total			26	16	70	114
			22.8%	14.0%	63.2%	100.0%

Source: Author’s field work, 2011

From the above table, it could be deduced that both male and female in-laws are difficult to relate with. However, rural based respondents appear to have more difficulty dealing with their male in-laws after the demise of their spouses.

4.8 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Three hypotheses were formulated to guide this study. The hypotheses were directly derived from the research objectives/questions. The chi-square statistical test was applied in testing the hypotheses. The hypotheses tested are as follows:

Hypothesis1. H_0 : There is no cordial relationship between widows and relatives of their deceased husbands in Enugu State.

Hypothesis2. H_0 : The prevailing inheritance practices in Enugu State do not significantly alienate widows from assets of their deceased spouses.

Hypothesis3. H_0 : There is no significant level of disparity in treatment given to both widows and widowers by the society

4.8.1: TEST OF HYPOTHESIS ONE

The hypothesis states thus:

H_0 : There is no cordial relationship between widows and relatives of their deceased husbands in Enugu State.

To test this hypothesis, we employed the chi-square statistical technique. We also assumed that the probability of respondents saying 'Cordial', 'Normal', or 'Conflict Ridden', are equal with the probability for each response being given as $1/3$. The used in this respect is that

presented in table 4.11. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents and their responses are as summarized in the contingency table below.

TABLE 4.13: CHI-SQUARE CALCULATION FOR HYPOTHESIS 1

RESPONSES	oi	Ei	oi-ei	(Oi-ei) ²	$\frac{(oi-ei)^2}{ei}$
Cordial	27	39	-12	144	3.7
Normal	63	39	24	576	14.8
Conflict-ridden	27	39	-12	144	3.7
Summation	117				22.2

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The Chi-square is computed with the formular:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - e)^2}{e}$$

$$X^2 = 22.2$$

Using the significance level of 5% (0.05) and a degree of freedom of 2, the table value of chi-square is 5.991.

Since the calculated chi-square value (22.2) is greater than the table value of the chi-square (i.e. $22.2 > 5.991$), we reject the null hypothesis and therefore accept the alternative hypothesis which states that:

There is a cordial relationship between widows and relatives of their deceased husbands in Enugu State.

4.8.2: TEST OF HYPOTHESIS TWO

The second hypothesis states thus:

Hypothesis2. H_0 : The prevailing inheritance practices in Enugu State do not significantly alienate widows from assets of their deceased spouses.

To test this hypothesis, we used the data from our figure 4. 4 as reproduced hereunder. Again, we employed the chi-square statistical technique. We also assumed that the probability of respondents saying “Money” “Land”, “Household items” or “other” are equal with the probability for each response being given as 1/4. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents and their responses are as summarized in the contingency table below.

TABLE 4.14: CHI-SQUARE CALCULATION FOR HYPOTHESIS 2

RESPONSES	O _i	E _i	oi-ei	(O _i -e _i) ²	$\frac{(oi-ei)^2}{ei}$
Money	13	22.8	-9.8	96.04	4.2
Land	58	22.8	-35.2	1239.04	54.3
Household Items	8	22.8	14.8	219.04	9.6
Other	18	22.8	4.8	23.04	1.0
Summation	97				69.1

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The Chi-square is computed with the formular:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - e)^2}{e}$$

$$X^2 = 69.1$$

Using the significance level of 5% (0.05) and a degree of freedom of 2, the table value of chi-square is 5.991.

Since the calculated chi-square value (69.1) is greater than the table value of the chi-square (i.e. $69.1 > 5.991$), we reject the null hypothesis and therefore accept the alternative hypothesis which states that:

The prevailing inheritance practices in Enugu State significantly alienate widows from assets of their deceased spouses

4.8.3: Test of Hypothesis Three

The hypothesis states thus:

Hypothesis3. H_0 : There is no significant level of disparity in treatment given to both widows and widowers by the society

To test this hypothesis, we used the data from our table 4.7. From the said table, we analyze data with chi-square Test of Proportion.

TABLE 4.14: CHI-SQUARE CALCULATION FOR HYPOTHESIS 3

RESPONSES	O _i	e _i	oi-ei	(O _i -e _i) ²	$\frac{(oi-ei)^2}{ei}$
Yes	93	39.7	-53.3	2840.89	71.6
No	9	39.7	-30.7	942.49	23.7
Don't Know	17	39.7	-22.7	515.29	13
Summation	119				108.3

Source: Field Survey, 2011

It is clear from the above table that of the total population of 119 surveyed, 93 are in favour of the proposition that widowers are better treated than widows in their community. This measures 78.15% of the population. Also, it is observed that the **chi-square** value of 108.3 is greater than the table value (108.3>5.991). We infer then that the proportion of individuals in favour of proposition is more than those against, thus the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis which states that:

There is a significant level of disparity in treatment given to both widows and widowers in the Igbo society.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

5.1: CULTURAL PRACTICES INVOLVED IN HANDLING WIDOWHOOD AND INHERITANCE AMONG THE IGBOS.

Culture and lack of confidence has been adduced as some of the obstacles to women improved socio-economic status in Nigeria. Inherent in this is the issue of inheritance. Over the years, empirical evidence has shown that in many societies, women are very important agents of socio-economic and political development. However, when they are disempowered through poor inheritance practices, the immediate households in particular and the society in general suffer. Bereavement, as we discussed earlier in this work, is a social fact in any culture. However, reactions and practices relating to it vary from culture to culture. Widowhood experiences, irrespective of culture or religion, are quite traumatic. In some African societies, they are considered more as an experience of deprivation, subjugation and humiliation.

Ironically, result from this survey has shown that the disorganization and trauma that follow the death of a spouse is greater on the women than on the men whenever either loses his or her spouse. In the case of the loss of the husband, the wife becomes the primary suspect as the cause of the husband's death and is thus treated accordingly. On the other hand, where a man loses his wife, the man is almost immediately offered a substitution to comfort him and douse the impact of the grieve of bereavement. This goes to support the postulation of Ahosi

(2002:2)that “The differentiation between men’s and women’s role in Nigeria as with other societies is one of complementary and superior relationship in favour of men. It involves a hierarchy in which men are given greater leverage over decision making and resources than women. The result is a cultural setting that invariably promotes male domination and female subordination”

Furthermore, the outcome of our study depicts clearly that widows and widowers are at par when it comes to equity in treatment (especially with regards to inheritance) in the communities where this study was carried out. 78% of respondents agreed that comparatively, men who lost their spouses are better treated in the community than their women counterparts. In both urban and rural communities, it is obvious that the same trend is observed. This implies that by subjugating widows to this kind of unwholesome treatment, the society has wittingly and /or unwittingly deprived itself of vital developmental contributions from the widows as a result of deliberate disempowerment occasioned by unequal treatment.

5.2: IMPACT OF POOR WIDOWHOOD/ INHERITANCE PRACTICES

We noted earlier in this work that in most culture, a wife is perceived as a stranger among her husband’s family. They are therefore ready to throw her away like a useless appendage the moment her husband is dead. This often makes the widow to wallow in poverty and even sometimes a widow is also devastated by certain cultural practices which make her to undergo certain degrading rites in the process of mourning the man. The process and duration of mourning wearing dull brown to black clothes without having bath could last

from seven days to two weeks while the duration for wearing dark cloths ranges from three months to a year. This long period of mourning has serious negative consequences on the deceased household as well as the society in general.

In the course of this study, this researcher made frantic effort to ascertain the amount of time “waste” in mourning deceased spouses by the bereaved. We found out that 43.7% of respondents mourn their spouses exclusively for 1 year. While 26.1% do so for a period of 2 years. This to us is a huge waste of time that should have been used in productive activities that will support the course of development. It is quite apathetic that in this modern age, women still held on to the belief and practice of mourning deceased husbands exclusively for up to 2 year. Exclusive mourning in our understanding will not in any way benefit the deceased nor the living. Such a belief system and practice can be inherently cataclysmic especially in a situation where the widow has many “mouth” to feed. During our field work, we came in contact with many of such widows whose socio-economic situation has changed drastically/negatively few years into the death of their husband as a result of exclusive long period of mourning and other poor widowhood induced factors. Field empirical evidence shows that the decline in economic well-being upon widowhood is somewhat of a puzzle.

5.3: ALIENATION FROM ASSETS OF A DECEASED SPOUSE

We examined the issue of alienation from a deceased spouse’s asset among the Igbos. Key Indicators used in this respect were money, Land and Household items. Survey outcome depicts that in both rural and urban communities, majority of the widows had to part with

land upon the death of their spouses. The degree of alienation in respect of other factors considered was quite insignificant. Considering the role land plays in the process of development as well as subsistence, especially for the rural dwellers, it is obvious that this practice of alienating widows from their spouses' land will have far reaching negative consequences on the wellbeing of the deceased households.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY

The Igbo culture is inherently patrilineal and patrilocal. Consequently, family life is centered on the lineage as defined through male descendants. Upon marriage, a woman relocates permanently from her father's residence to that of her husband. Again, inheritance and residence are centered on the male lineage, and men are obviously major decision makers and controllers of wealth and power. Upon the death of their spouses, widows are more likely disposed to suffer some level of disempowerment, deprivation and discomfiture. This negative development is not so pronounced among the widowers. The age long cultural practice of treating widowers fairer than widows in Igbo land left the woman, especially the uneducated widows in the rural communities, with little or no choice on how to better her lots and that of her children after the demise of her spouse. This notwithstanding, data from this survey supports the fact that the ills associated with the customary practices of marriage, inheritance and widowhood in Igbo land is gradually becoming obsolete. Responses gotten mostly from our urban-based respondents support this assertion.

This work critically examined widowhood and inheritance in Nigeria with particular emphasis on what is obtainable in Igbo society. We have found out that though the issue of inheritance among widows calls for concern, widows in contemporary igboland, especially the educated ones, are not so badly affected when it comes to inheriting their deceased

spouses' property. It thus goes to support the fact that while most of the rites associated with widowhood inheritance have found their ways to the modern day, some are obviously now practiced nominally. With western education, religious greed, improved situation on women education, gainful employment, improved legal system that allows a woman access to gainful employment as well as private ownership of property, international conventions to protect the rights of woman as well activities of some Non-Governmental Organizations, concerted efforts are being made to adjust inheritance practices in favour of the widow. The outcome of our analysis of field data depicts that in no too distance a time, inhuman treatments of Nigerian widows in the area of inheritance will soon be antiquated.

6.2 CONCLUSION

From time immemorial, the death of one's spouse is a moment of devastation and sadness. This is usually occasioned by loss of love, care, company and livelihood, attended by a feeling of abandonment. Again, it represents not just the departure of a companion and soul mate but in most times, a breadwinner. This development could also lead to a radical change in one's social status and lifestyle. It is natural for one to grieve for the death of a loved one. Thus, in Igbo culture, issues associated with death are often emotive. . This is due to the fact that death presents a situation in which one loses the power of negotiation, since it is beyond human control. The survivor's helplessness is made worse if, as is the case for our many rural-based respondents who are widows, the loss of the capacity to negotiate is extended to the activities that are meant to restore normalcy to them. Put differently, when the process of re-adjustment to the new scenario created by bereavement is controlled by pre-defined cultural forces that are inherently detrimental to the wellbeing of the bereaved, the situation

becomes more pathetic and calls for serious attention. Such is the situation with widowhood and inheritances, the subject matter of this study.

Culture, as we know, is dynamic not resilience. It could be adjusted over time to suit present situations/contemporary demands. Though it is often argued that the destruction of a culture is to destroy the root from which human society sprung from, it is even more pertinent to note that retaining a culture that is oppressive is destroying the oppressed. Therefore, with a positive disposition and change, widows can get an opportunity for growth, and discover aspects of their personalities that facilitate their own empowerment. In this task, the society must play a vital role. The process of change in a positive direction, which has begun, should be sustained and improved upon. Though this process may be slow, it must however be vigorously pursued and supported by all. This is so because if you, as a man, are not directly affected by poor widowhood inheritance practices, your wife, mother, daughters or female relatives may be affected. The task to remedy the situation is not an individual task. It is a collective one that must be approached from a multifaceted perspective. The three tiers of government in Nigeria, the federal, state and local governments, the custodians of culture and traditions, the agents of the criminal justice system, non-governmental organizations, the men folk and women are all agents that will be needed in this move for a change against the wide spread of customary law abuses and in eliminating discriminatory practices against women.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Having critically examined and analyzed the dynamics of widowhood inheritances in Igbo land, we have come to see the need for all hands to be on deck in order to remedy the situation. Although conclusions from the research and data are not definitive, the researcher finds it expedient to make a number of recommendations with respect to how we address the practice of poor widowhood inheritance practices in our society. As a corollary, this work makes the following recommendations;

- i. The education of both the girl and boy child should be given priority attention in our society. It should be noted that education plays an important role in causing societal change. Our society desperately needs this societal change especially in the area of value in land and property right. We must educate and gender sensitize both men and women. This is an effective way of transforming popular beliefs and attitudes. In this regard, awareness programs in the local languages, the distribution of booklets and posters in local languages and application of other trado-modern means of communication should be applied positively.
- ii. Training and Empowerment Programs that will include formal and informal education geared towards enabling women to come out of their shells and be productive and not just child bearers should be implemented at all levels: Federal, State, Local Government and community.
- iii. Networking and convergence among women groups for their collective benefits should be encouraged. Women themselves must rise to the challenge of remaining united, focus, purpose driven, proactive and resilience in pursuit of their collective dreams and aspirations.

- iv. Traditional institution and practices should be modified in line with global trends and emerging facts. The age long tradition of making women to play subordinating role in the society should be vehemently discouraged by all.
- v. The mass media can be and should be applied as an effective tool towards ensuring women's active involvement in every stratum of our socio-economic and political life. Women should also take advantage of the instrumentality of the mass media to propagate their message against gender inequality.

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NDIX 1: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, ENUGU CAMPUS

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am a postgraduate student of the University of Nigeria Enugu Campus. I am currently working on a research project entitled: AN EVALUATION OF WIDOWHOOD AND INHERITANCE PRACTICES IN NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED URBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES IN ENUGU STATE

To enable me complete this study, kindly help answer the following questions. All answers provided will be treated in strict confidence.

Thanks for your kind Co-operation.

Yours faithfully,
Okorafor Nkem (Mrs)
PG/M.Sc/09/54400

SECTION 1: SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

- (1) Location of Community?
 - (a) Urban []
 - (b) Rural []
- (2) How long have you lived in this community?
 - (a) Less than 10 years []
 - (b) 11-30 years []
 - (c) 31 – 60 years []
- (3) Sex
 - (a) Male []

- (b) Female []
- (4) Age brackets
 - (a) 18-35 years []
 - (b) 36-55 years []
 - (c) 56 and above []
- (5) Highest level of education attained:
 - (a) No formal Education []
 - (b) Primary School []
 - (c) Secondary School []
 - (d) Tertiary Institution []
- (6) Religion
 - (a) Christianity []
 - (b) Islam []
 - (c) Others []
- (7) Please how many years is it since you lost your spouse?
 - (a) 0-5 years []
 - (b) 6-11 years []
 - (c) 12- 20 year []
- (8) Please are you currently employed?
 - (a) Yes []
 - (b) No []
- (9) If yes, what is your employment status?

- (a) Employed by private business []
- (b) Civil servant []
- (c) Retiree/pensioner []
- (d) Self employed []
- (e) Others specify:.....

(10) Please who is your employer?

- (a) State []
- (b) Federal []
- (c) Private []
- (d) Self []

(11) How much do you earn in the average per month?

- (a) N7,500- N13,500 []
- (b) N13,500 – N19,500 []
- (c) N19,500 – N25,500 []
- (d) N25,500 – 32,500 []
- (e) Other specify:.....

SECTION 2: INHERITANCE PRACTICES

Instruction: Please tick (√) against the option which best describes your opinion on the issues below :

(1) With respect to widowhood and inheritance practices will you agree that male members of your community who lost their wives are better treated by the society than women who lost their husbands?

(a) Yes []

(b) No []

(c) Don't know []

(2) Please is the job you are doing now the same job that you were doing before your spouse death?

(a) Yes []

(b) No []

(c) Have changed to another []

(d) Not working at all []

(3) How long did you spend in the house before going out or starting work again after the death of your spouse?

(a) 6 months []

(b) 1 year []

(c) 2 year []

(d) Other specify:.....

(4) Did the death of your partner made you to change where you were living after the death of your spouse?

- (a) Yes []
 - (b) No []
 - (c) Don't know []
- (4b) If yes, what was the reason for relocation?
- (a) Inability to pay rent []
 - (b) Forced by spouse siblings []
 - (c) Personal resolve to relocate []
 - (d) Advice from friends/relatives []
 - (e) Other (specify) []
- (5) Which of the assets of your partner did you inherited when he/she died?
- (a) Money []
 - (b) Land []
 - (c) Household items []
 - (d) Others specify:.....
- (6) How is your relationship with the family members of your late spouse.
- (a) Cordial []
 - (b) Normal []
 - (c) Conflict-ridden []
- (7) Which of the following asset of your spouse did you have to part with on his death?
- (a) Money []
 - (b) Land []
 - (c) Household items []
 - (d) Other (specify).....

(8) Which of your late spouse relations is difficult to relate with after his demise?

(a) Male(S) []

(b) Female(S) []

(c) Both []

ORAL INTERVIEW

- (1) What is your occupation?
- (2) How many children do you have?
- (3) How many of the children are male?.....
- (4) How many of the children are female?
- (5) Mention those cultural practices that are related to widows as observed in your community.

.....
.....

- (6) Which of the cultural practices in your opinion are inherently inhibiting widows/widowers from contributing significantly to the development of the society?

.....
.....

- (7) What are those strategies adopted by men/women in your community to cope with widowhood and its attendant challenges?

.....
.....

APPENDIX 11

SPSS RAW DATA SHEET

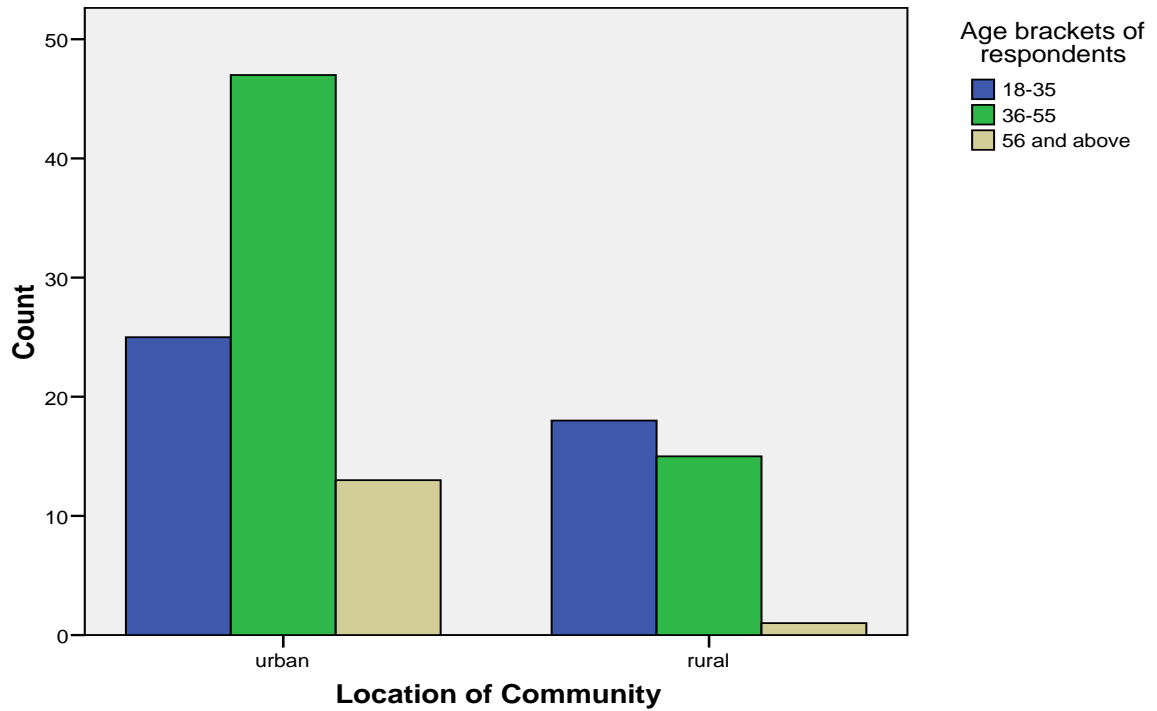
Location of Community * Duration in the community Crosstabulation

			Duration in the community		Total
			Less than 10 Years	11-30 years	
Location of Community	urban	Count	80	5	85
		% of Total	67.2%	4.2%	71.4%
	rural	Count	27	7	34
		% of Total	22.7%	5.9%	28.6%
Total		Count	107	12	119
		% of Total	89.9%	10.1%	100.0%

Location of Community * Age brackets of respondents Crosstabulation

			Age brackets of respondents			Total
			18-35	36-55	56 and above	
Location of Community	urban	Count	25	47	13	85
		% of Total	21.0%	39.5%	10.9%	71.4%
	rural	Count	18	15	1	34
		% of Total	15.1%	12.6%	.8%	28.6%
Total		Count	43	62	14	119
		% of Total	36.1%	52.1%	11.8%	100.0%

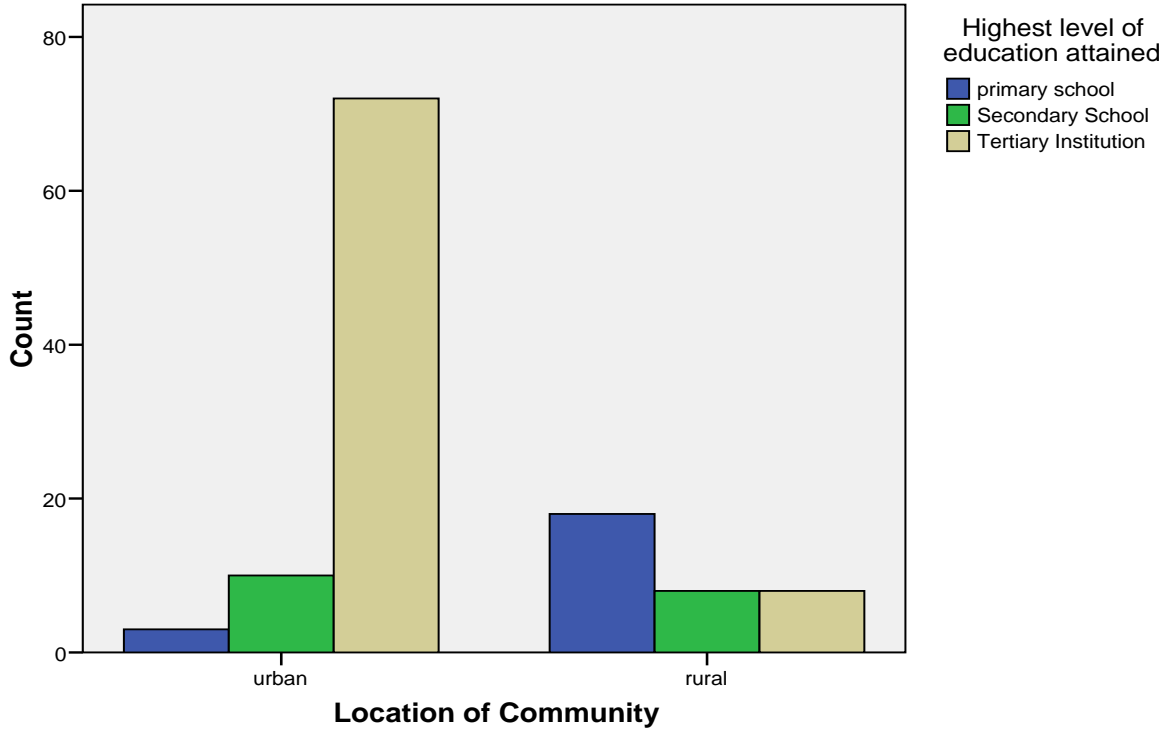
Bar Chart



Location of Community * Highest level of education attained Crosstabulation

			Highest level of education attained			Total
			primary school	Secondary School	Tertiary Institution	
Location of Community	urban	Count	3	10	72	85
		% of Total	2.5%	8.4%	60.5%	71.4%
	rural	Count	18	8	8	34
		% of Total	15.1%	6.7%	6.7%	28.6%
Total		Count	21	18	80	119
		% of Total	17.6%	15.1%	67.2%	100.0%

Bar Chart



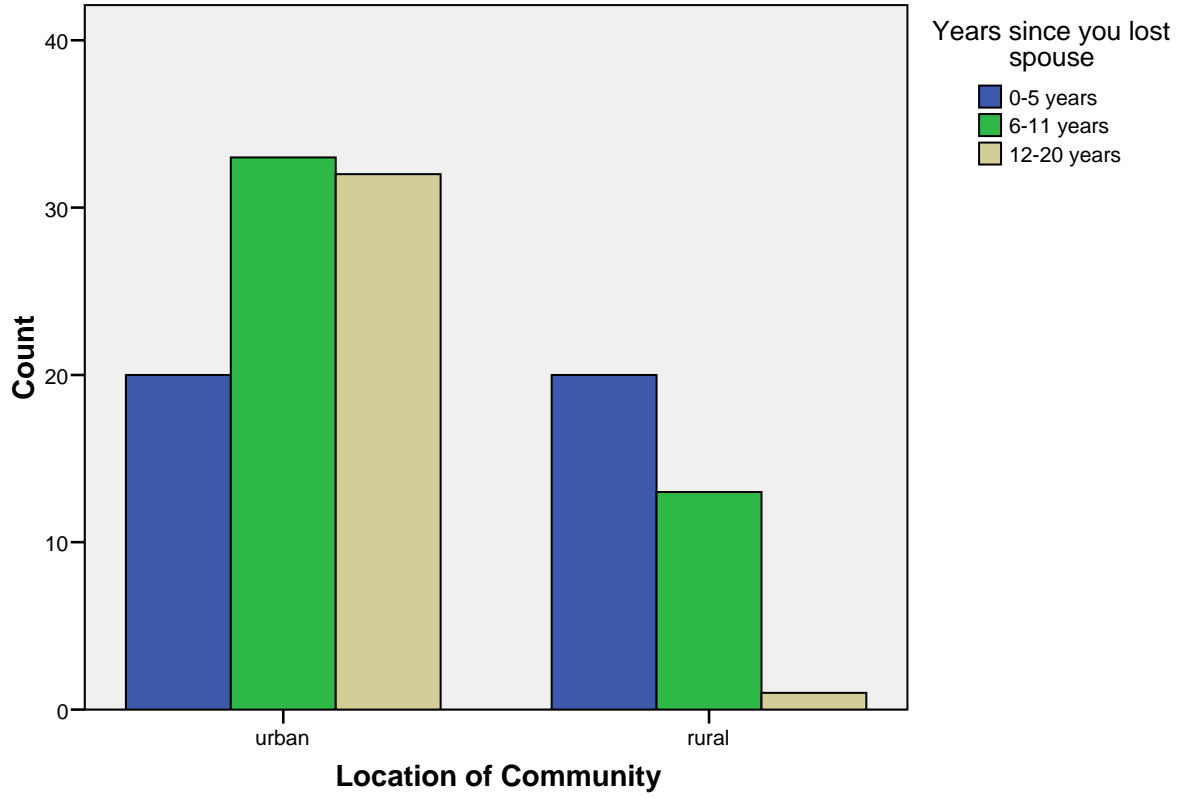
Location of Community * Respondent Religion Crosstabulation

			Respondent Religion	Total
			Christianity	
Location of Community	urban	Count	85	85
		% of Total	71.4%	71.4%
	rural	Count	34	34
		% of Total	28.6%	28.6%
Total		Count	119	119
		% of Total	100.0%	100.0%

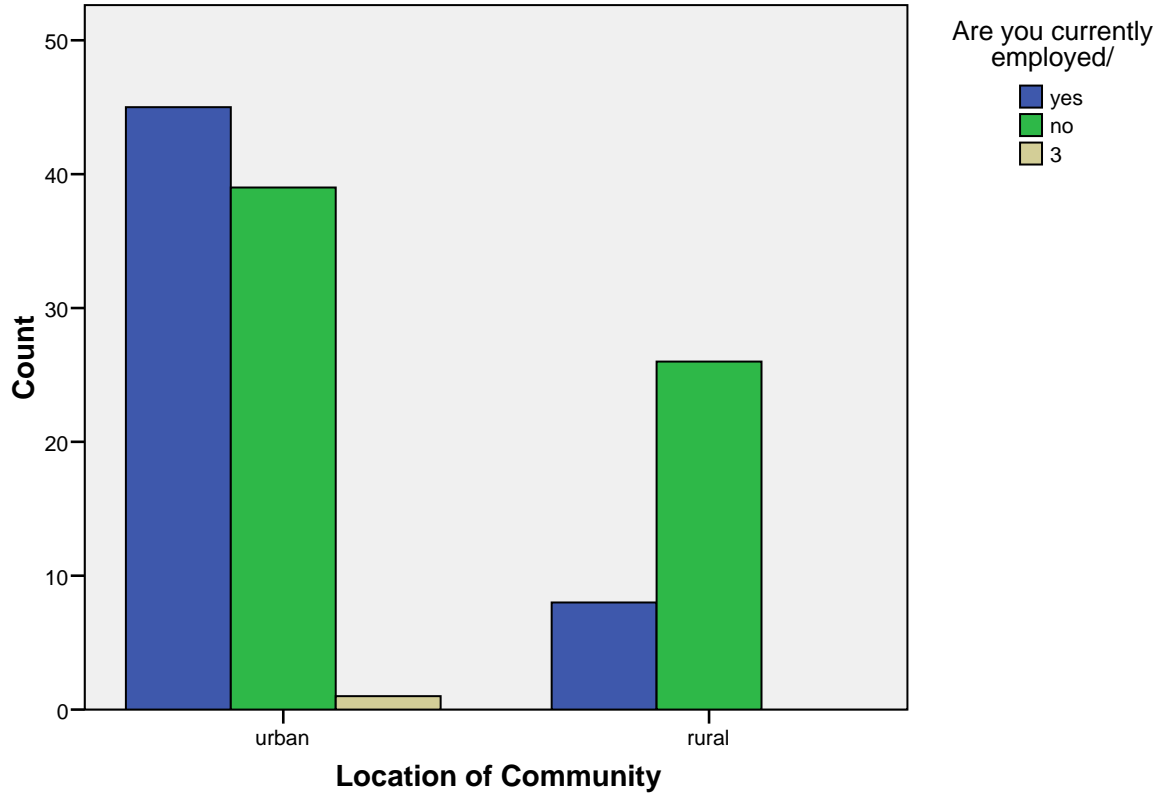
Location of Community * Years since you lost spouse Crosstabulation

			Years since you lost spouse			Total
			0-5 years	6-11 years	12-20 years	
Location of Community	urban	Count	20	33	32	85
		% of Total	16.8%	27.7%	26.9%	71.4%
	rural	Count	20	13	1	34
		% of Total	16.8%	10.9%	.8%	28.6%
Total		Count	40	46	33	119
		% of Total	33.6%	38.7%	27.7%	100.0%

Bar Chart



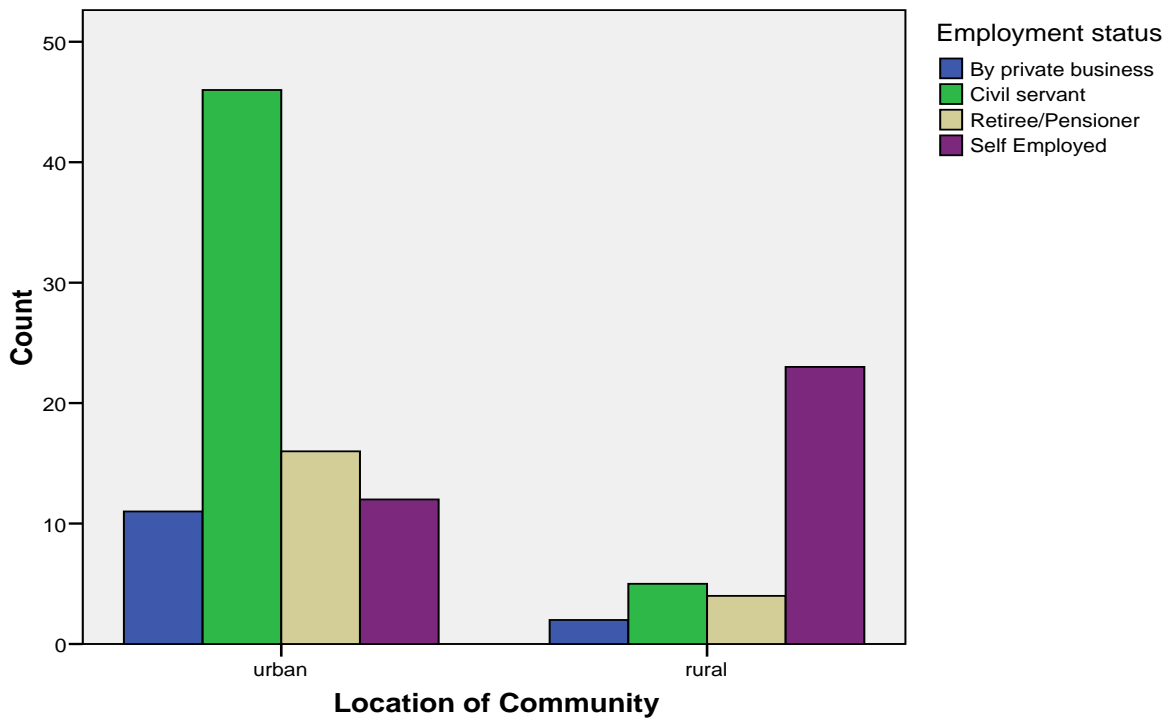
Bar Chart



Location of Community * Employment status Crosstabulation

		Employment status				Total	
			By private business	Civil servant	Retiree/Pensioner	Self Employed	
Location of Community	urban	Count	11	46	16	12	85
		% of Total	9.2%	38.7%	13.4%	10.1%	71.4%
	rural	Count	2	5	4	23	34
		% of Total	1.7%	4.2%	3.4%	19.3%	28.6%
Total		Count	13	51	20	35	119
		% of Total	10.9%	42.9%	16.8%	29.4%	100.0%

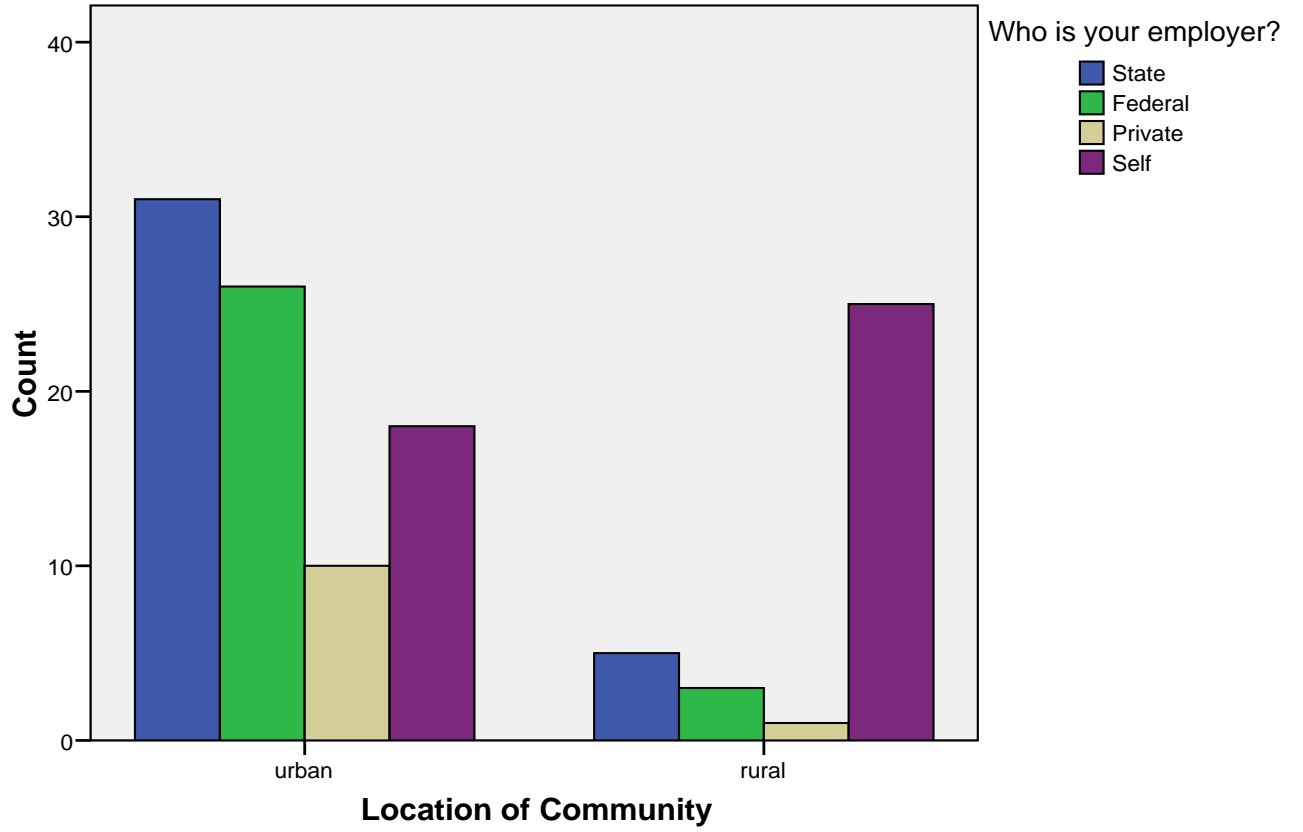
Bar Chart



Location of Community * Who is your employer? Crosstabulation

			Who is your employer?				Total
			State	Federal	Private	Self	
Location of Community	urban	Count	31	26	10	18	85
		% of Total	26.1%	21.8%	8.4%	15.1%	71.4%
	rural	Count	5	3	1	25	34
		% of Total	4.2%	2.5%	.8%	21.0%	28.6%
Total		Count	36	29	11	43	119
		% of Total	30.3%	24.4%	9.2%	36.1%	100.0%

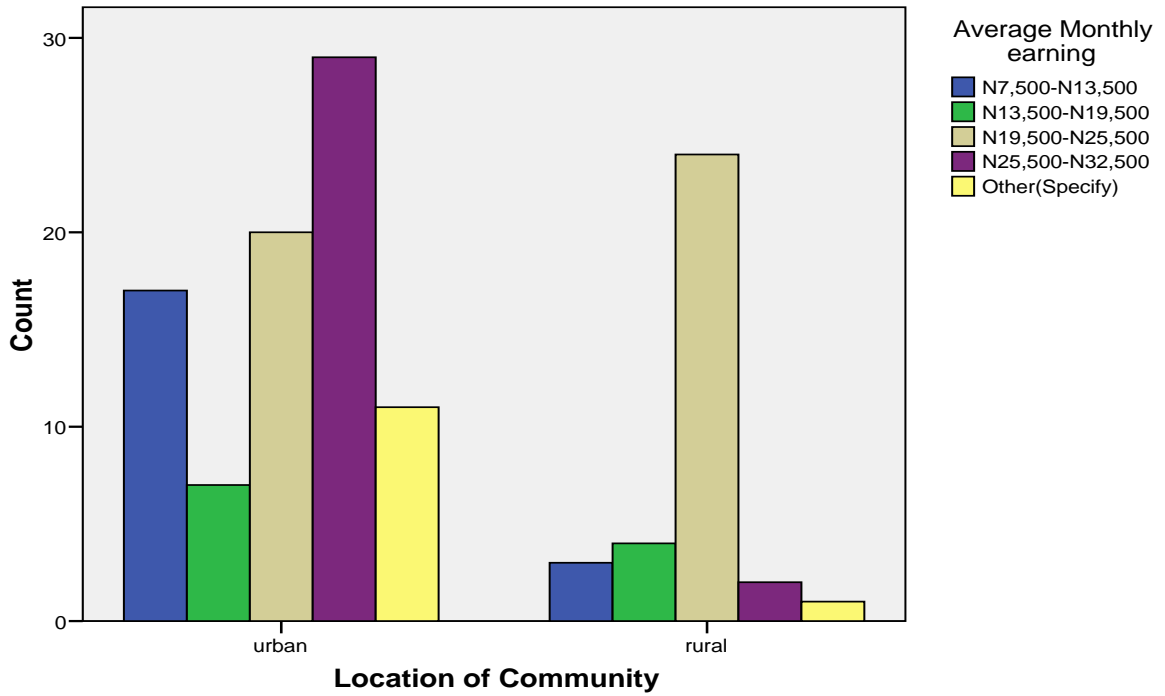
Bar Chart



Location of Community * Average Monthly earning Crosstabulation

			Average Monthly earning					Total
			N7,500- N13,500	N13,500- N19,500	N19,500- N25,500	N25,500- N32,500	Other(Specify)	
Location of Community	urban	Count	17	7	20	29	11	84
		% of Total	14.4%	5.9%	16.9%	24.6%	9.3%	71.2%
	rural	Count	3	4	24	2	1	34
		% of Total	2.5%	3.4%	20.3%	1.7%	.8%	28.8%
Total		Count	20	11	44	31	12	118
		% of Total	16.9%	9.3%	37.3%	26.3%	10.2%	100.0%

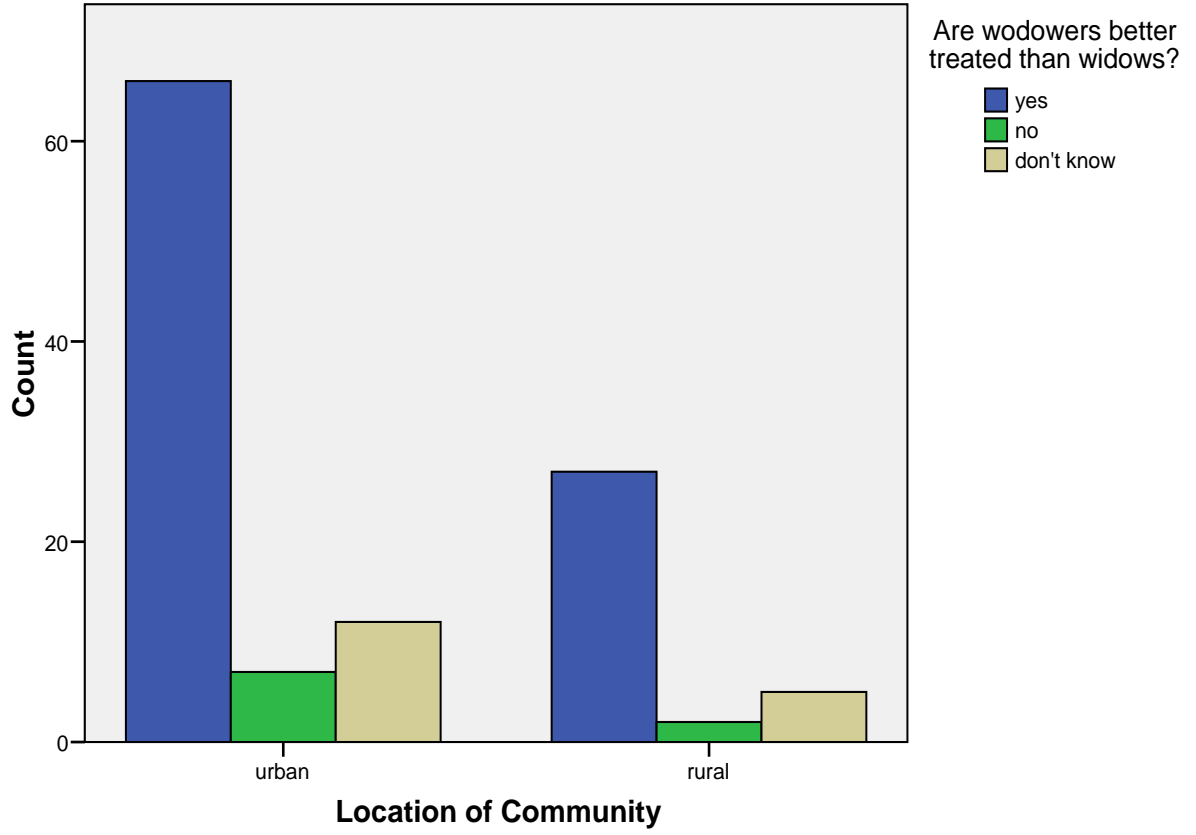
Bar Chart



Location of Community * Are widowers better treated than widows? Crosstabulation

		Are wowers better treated than widows?			Total	
		yes	no	don't know		
Location of Community	urban	Count	66	7	12	85
		% of Total	55.5%	5.9%	10.1%	71.4%
	rural	Count	27	2	5	34
		% of Total	22.7%	1.7%	4.2%	28.6%
Total		Count	93	9	17	119
		% of Total	78.2%	7.6%	14.3%	100.0%

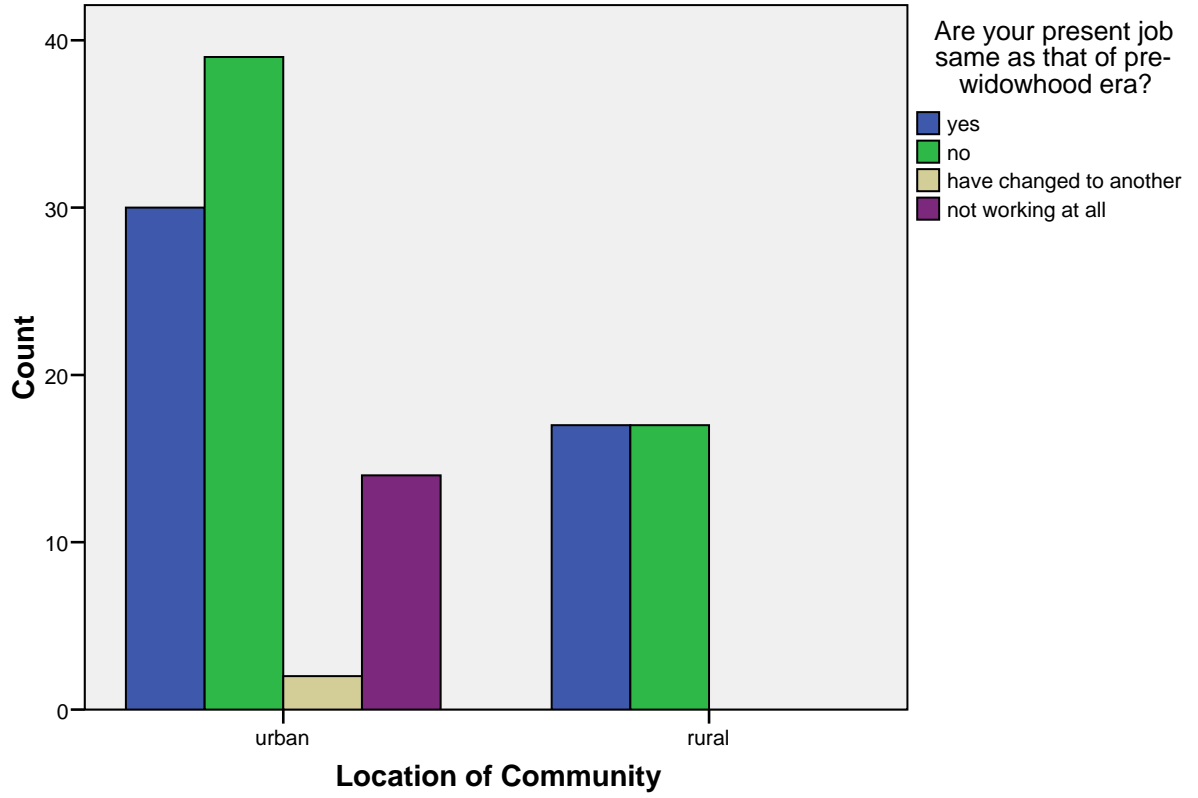
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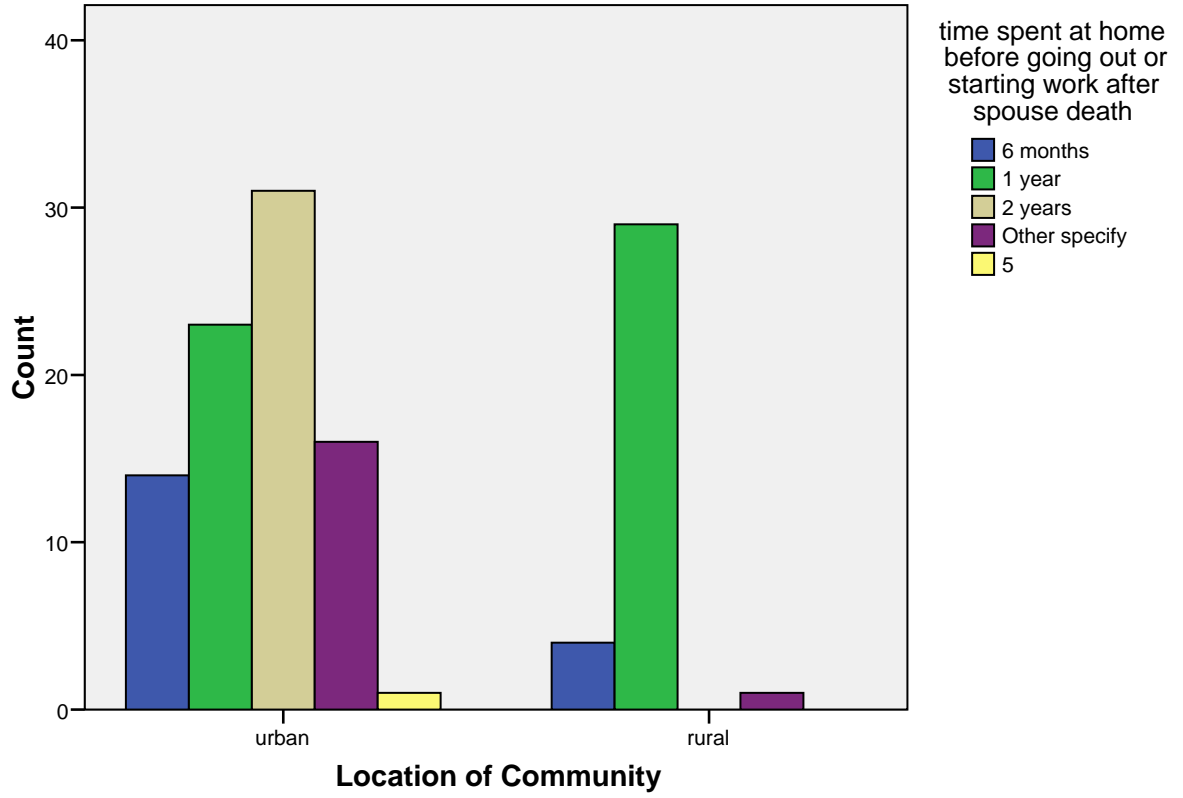
Location of Community * Are your present job same as that of pre-widowhood era?
Crosstabulation

		Are your present job same as that of pre-widowhood era?					Total
			yes	no	have changed to another	not working at all	
Location of Community	urban	Count	30	39	2	14	85
		% of Total	25.2%	32.8%	1.7%	11.8%	71.4%
	rural	Count	17	17	0	0	34
		% of Total	14.3%	14.3%	.0%	.0%	28.6%
Total		Count	47	56	2	14	119
		% of Total	39.5%	47.1%	1.7%	11.8%	100.0%

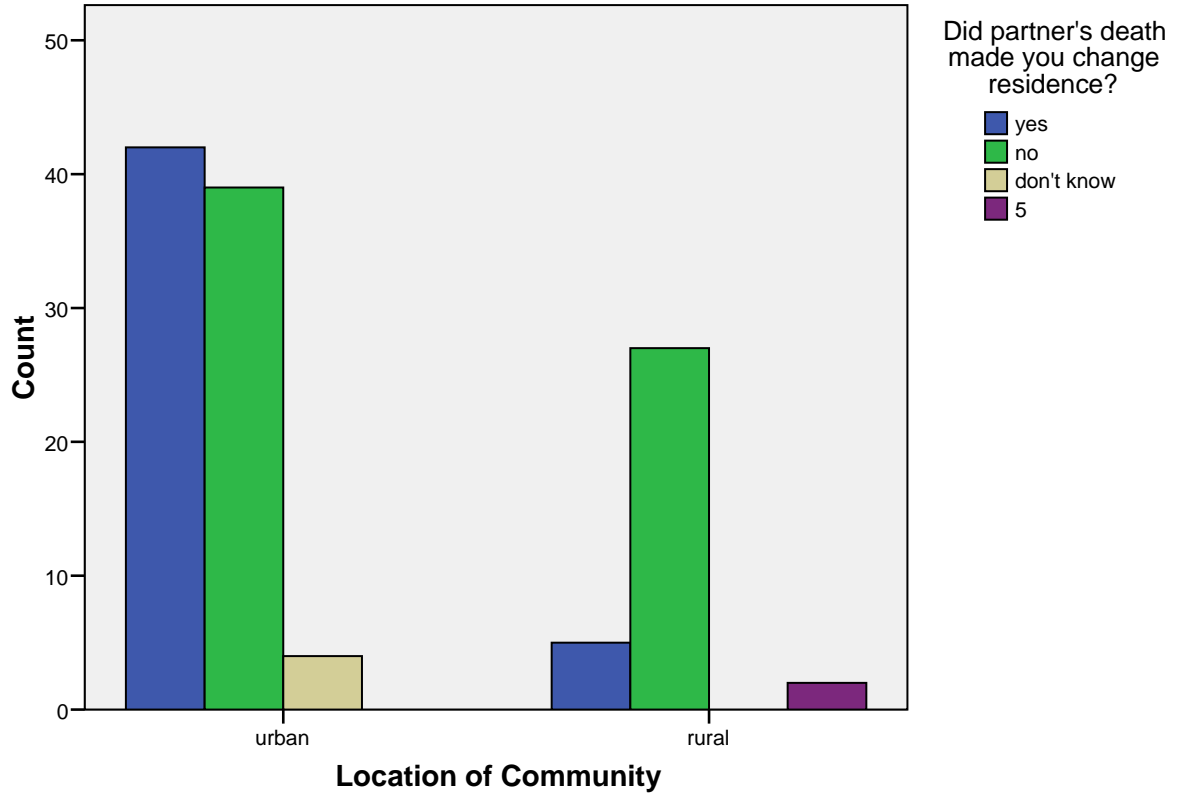
Bar Chart



Bar Chart



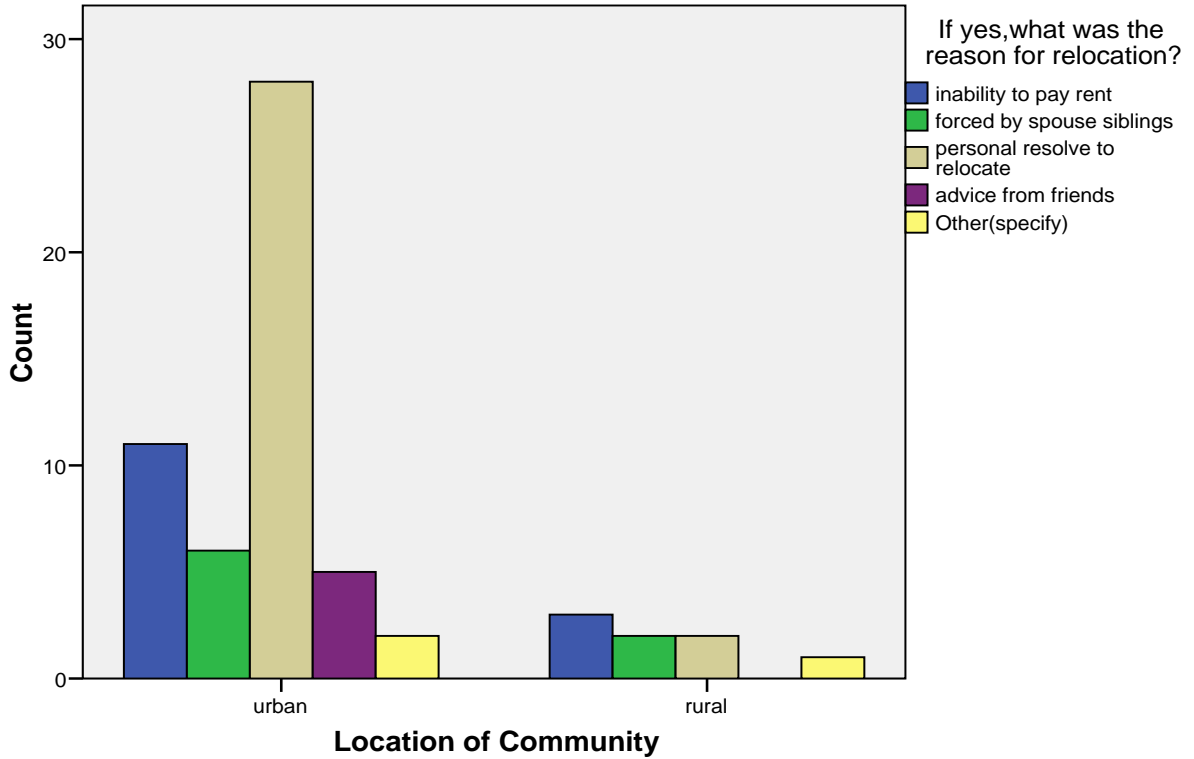
Bar Chart



Location of Community * If yes,what was the reason for relocation? Crosstabulation

			If yes,what was the reason for relocation?					Total
			inability to pay rent	forced by spouse siblings	personal resolve to relocate	advice from friends	Other(specify)	i
Location of Community	urban	Count	11	6	28	5	2	52
		% of Total	18.3%	10.0%	46.7%	8.3%	3.3%	86.7%
	rural	Count	3	2	2	0	1	8
		% of Total	5.0%	3.3%	3.3%	.0%	1.7%	13.3%
Total		Count	14	8	30	5	3	60
		% of Total	23.3%	13.3%	50.0%	8.3%	5.0%	100.0%

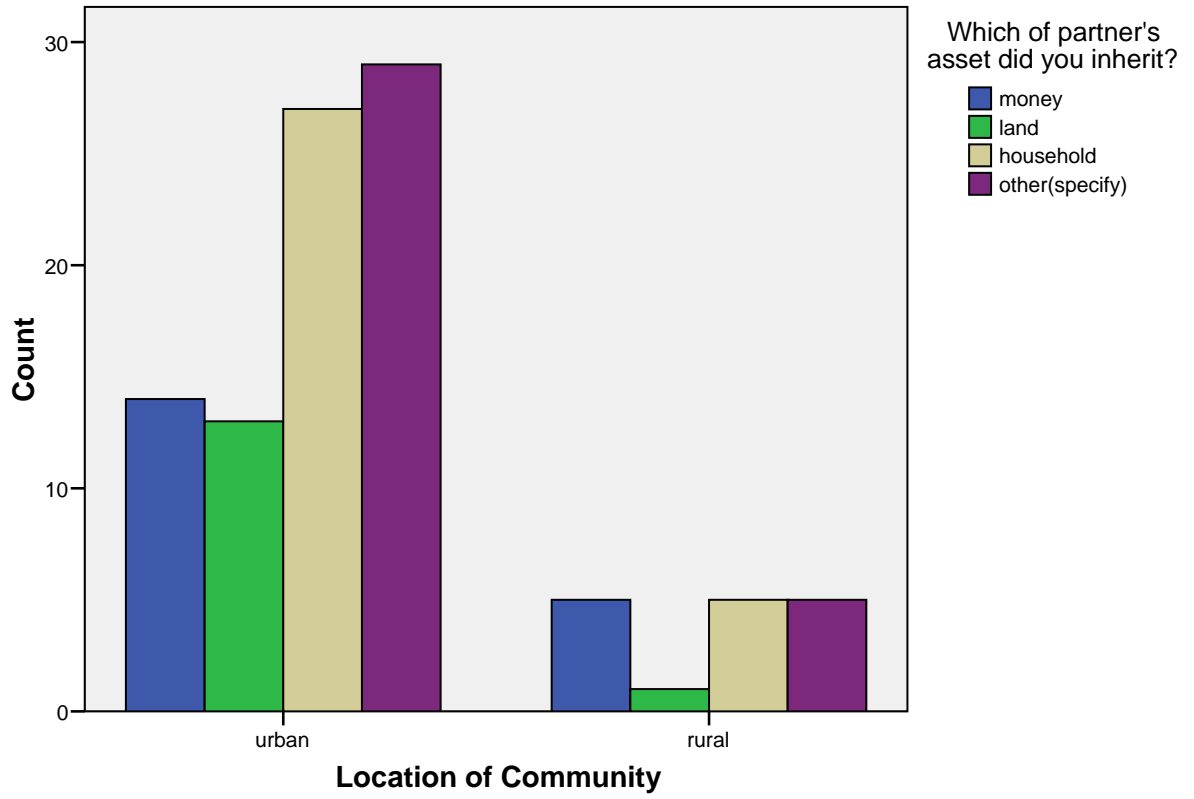
Bar Chart



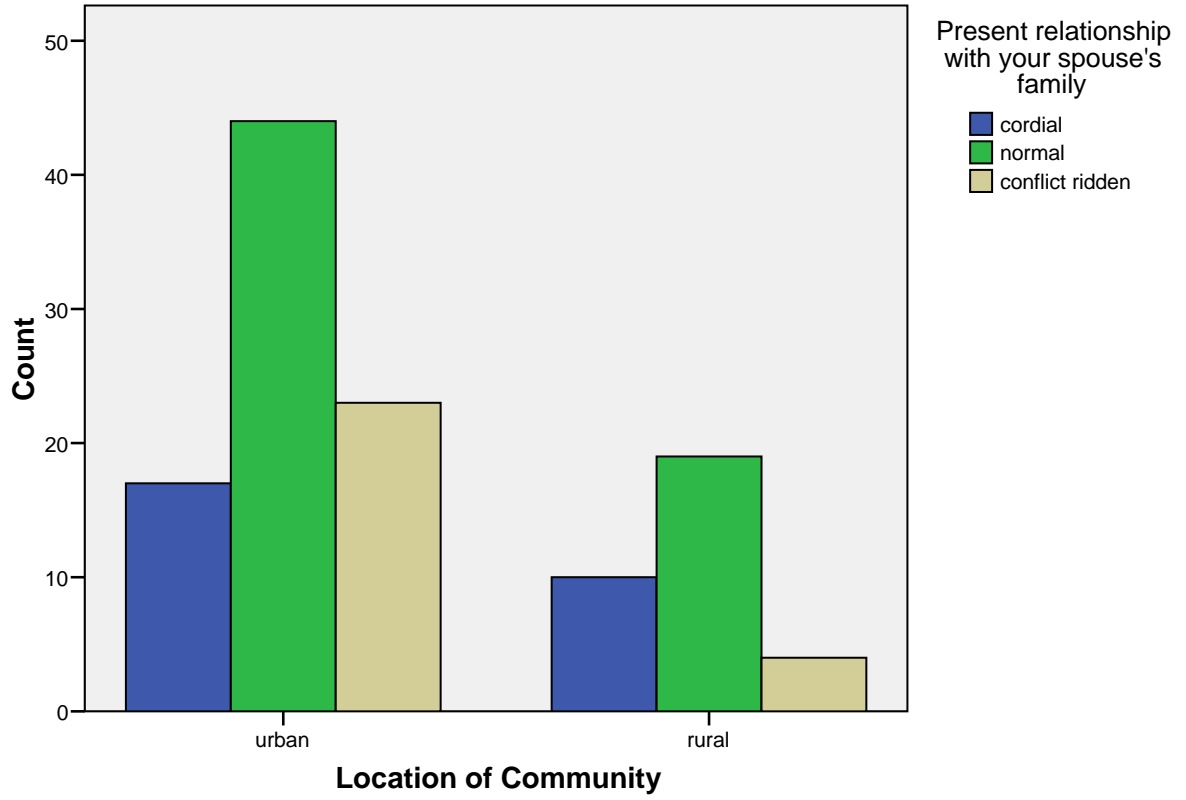
Location of Community * Which of partner's asset did you inherit? Crosstabulation

			Which of partner's asset did you inherit?				Total
			money	land	household	other(specify)	
Location of Community	urban	Count	14	13	27	29	83
		% of Total	14.1%	13.1%	27.3%	29.3%	83.8%
	rural	Count	5	1	5	5	16
		% of Total	5.1%	1.0%	5.1%	5.1%	16.2%
Total		Count	19	14	32	34	99
		% of Total	19.2%	14.1%	32.3%	34.3%	100.0%

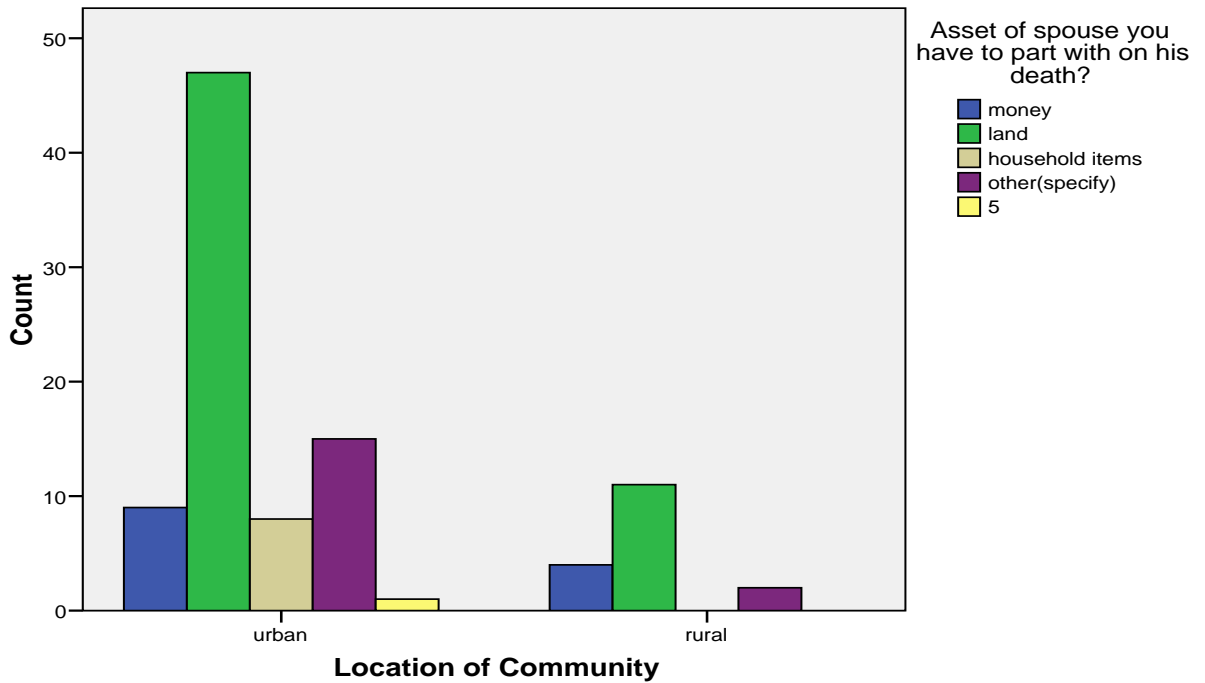
Bar Chart



Bar Chart



Bar Chart



Location of Community * Which of your late spouse relations is difficult to relate with after hos demise? Crosstabulation

Location of Community			Which of your late spouse relations is difficult to relate with after his demise?			Total
			male	female	both	
urban	Count	10	11	62	83	
	% of Total	8.8%	9.6%	54.4%	72.8%	
rural	Count	16	5	10	31	
	% of Total	14.0%	4.4%	8.8%	27.2%	
Total		Count	26	16	70	114
		% of Total	22.8%	14.0%	63.2%	100.0%

Bar Chart

