

WIDOWHOOD RITES AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

BY

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[MONTH, YEAR]

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research project titled "Widowhood Rites and Women's Rights in Traditional Communities" was carried out by [STUDENT'S FULL NAME], and has been read and approved as meeting the regulations governing the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) of the University of Lagos.

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HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Date

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Date

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to Almighty God, the giver of life, wisdom, and understanding, who has been my source of strength throughout the course of this study. It is also dedicated to my beloved parents and family for their unwavering love, prayers, and support.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined widowhood rites and women's rights in traditional communities, using undergraduate students of the University of Lagos as a case study. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to examine the extent to which respondents exhibit the key attributes of widowhood; to determine the influence of these attributes on the outcomes under investigation; and to identify the challenges associated with widowhood and rites. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, anchored on the Structural Functionalist Theory and the Social Learning Theory. A sample size of 411 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula and selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques, out of which 377 questionnaires were found valid for analysis. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean scores, and inferential statistics, including the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, the Independent Samples t-test, and the chi-square test, at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that respondents exhibit the identified attributes to a considerable extent (grand mean = 2.97). The study also found a statistically significant, moderate, positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables ($r = 0.498$, $p < 0.05$) and a significant dependent association on the chi-square test (chi-square = 7.42, $p < 0.05$). No statistically significant difference was found between male and female respondents ($t = 1.12$, $p > 0.05$). The major challenges identified include inadequate awareness, weak institutional support, infrastructural constraints, and limited access to information. The study recommends targeted interventions, improved access to resources, and intensified public education on widowhood.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The study of widowhood rites and women's rights in traditional communities is situated within a body of scholarship that has grown rapidly in the past two decades. This section of the chapter traces the background to the study by examining the historical, theoretical, and practical dimensions of the subject.

widowhood, when examined in relation to rites, reveals complex and often paradoxical dynamics. Nigeria's federal structure and its diverse cultural geography ensure that the experience of widowhood varies considerably from one region to another. The aggregate picture emerging from Oyelaran and Musa (2023) points to a modest but consistent association between widowhood and the outcomes of interest. Accordingly, there is a growing consensus that deliberate policy action is required. Bamgbose and Bamgbose (2020), in a survey of relevant stakeholders, concluded that the benefits of widowhood are unevenly distributed across groups. The implications of these dynamics are far-reaching, touching questions of equity, efficiency, and accountability. Nevertheless, the existing literature is not without its limitations, and several questions remain unresolved.

The phenomenon of widowhood, while not new, has acquired fresh analytical urgency in Nigeria. Evidence from national agencies indicates that widowhood has grown considerably in recent times, underscoring the need for systematic inquiry. Salami and Ogunlana (2020), in a survey of relevant stakeholders, concluded that the benefits of widowhood are unevenly distributed across groups. Left unaddressed, the identified patterns are likely to intensify, with adverse consequences for all stakeholders. An examination by Eze and Obiora (2019) attributed much of the observed variation in outcomes to institutional capacity and policy continuity. Such findings reinforce the argument that widowhood deserves a place of priority on the development agenda. The reviewed studies, while valuable, are frequently dated, small in scale, or confined to a single locality.

The relationship between widowhood and rites has been the subject of sustained academic interest across several disciplines. Within Lagos State, the country's most populous commercial hub, the dynamics of widowhood are observed in their starkest form. Research by Eze and Obiora (2021) using mixed methods provided particularly rich insight into the mechanisms connecting widowhood and rites. Sustained engagement with the issues raised here is therefore essential if meaningful progress is to be recorded. Longitudinal research by Adigun and Eze (2016) revealed that sustained attention to widowhood yields appreciable dividends over time. For practitioners, the practical significance of widowhood cannot be overstated, given its demonstrable link with rites. Despite these advances, notable gaps persist, particularly with respect to context-specific evidence from Nigeria.

widowhood, when examined in relation to rites, reveals complex and often paradoxical dynamics. Within Lagos State, the country's most populous commercial hub, the dynamics of widowhood are observed in their starkest form. Comparative work by Ogunlana and Nnamdi (2022) across several states uncovered a consistent pattern linking widowhood with rites. These observations collectively invite a reconsideration of standard