

A STUDY OF UDENU'S ELABORATE FUNERAL CELEBRATIONS

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Abstract

Udenu people of Enugu state believe that the spirits and the ancestors who are higher than them in rank must be appeased. In order to achieve this aim, they get involved in several propitiatory rites and customs for the dead in order to appease the gods and the spirit of the departed by according respect and special rite to the corpse before it is buried. This is done by providing food and other items with the belief that the dead still needs such things in the underworld. Burial rites is an integral part of Igbo society and religious life since death which is the final end of man on earth has been part of the Igbo. It follows that burial rites had also been an integral part of Udenu people's religious life. Burial which is the act or ceremony of burying a dead body is not a new concept in the academia. Using phenomenological method, the work gathered information from key informants and secondary materials from existing literatures. Death is inevitable to human race and everybody must be ready and prepared to face the bullet of death anytime no matter your age, sex or races. Death is natural which put an end to all earthly plans, dreams, desires and endeavours and whatever had a beginning must end up somewhere. It is believed that after the cessation of life, the body must decompose to mother-earth to avoid odour which will saturate the environment of those alive. It is advisable that the family of the deceased must bury the dead which is one of the corporal works of mercy.

Keywords: Igbo, Udenu, Funeral Celebrations, Death, Immortality

Introduction

From buying expensive caskets and tailoring new clothes to slaughtering animals and organizing a massive feast, little expense is spared in Udenu's elaborate funeral celebrations. This elaborate and expensive manner of celebrating the dead is exactly the problem this work is set to tackle. Life starts from the fusion of the male sperm and female egg to form a zygote which later divides and

becomes human being. Life-span on the other hand is a period between somebodies' birth, marriage and ends at death, or a sum period of somebody's existence or function (Hornby 2000:683). Death means cessation of life which also marks the beginning of another life in the world beyond for man. Originally according to the Biblical account of creation man was created to live forever in a stable and peaceful world but the sin of Adam and Eve against the warning of their Creator (God) brought death to him (Genesis 3:3). Anyacho (2005) described life to an African as a continuous process, its cessation paves way for the soul to experience life in the great beyond. Death therefore is a passage to the hereafter. The last rite given to a man at death marks his transition from the physical existence to the invisible existence which takes him to the land of the ancestors. The death of humans has generally and commonly been considered sad or unpleasant occasion. This is due to the affection for the being that has died and termination of social or familial bounds with the deceased. In African society, death brings about burial and funeral rites. This is an idea that centres on the unified view of reality that leads man to seek for an acceptable way of pacifying or creating harmony among the spheres of the universe; the heaven, earth and underworld so as to maintain the fluidity among them in order to live in peace and to avoid molestation by the deceased.

Udenu people believe that the spirits and the ancestors who are higher than them in rank must be appeased. In order to achieve this aim, they get involved in several propitiatory rites and customs for the dead in order to appease the gods and the spirit of the departed by according respect and special rite to the corpse before it is buried. This is done by providing food and other items with the belief that the dead still needs such things in the underworld. Burial rites is an integral part of Igbo society and religious life since death which is the final end of man on earth has been part of the Igbo. It follows that burial rites had also been an integral part of Udenu people's religious life. Burial which is the act or ceremony of burying a dead body is not a new concept in the academia.

The concept of burial among Udenu People

The universality of the concept of burial cannot be denied but however it is necessary to observe that every culture has one way or the other conceived or expressed an idea about the activities that take place in the next life after proper burial. Funeral ceremonies are not just events to honour those who have died, they are important rituals that help survivors take part in dealings with their deceased one. It also assists in taking the first steps in the grief process by

reinforcing the reality of deaths. A funeral ceremony offers an opportunity to express feelings of grief. It provides support from friends and families and acknowledges the loss with the community. Funerals are more than just a service for the person who has died, it is also for the loved ones who are left behind. Participating in a funeral ceremony can be a therapeutic act which starts the healing process.

Funerals are not chiefly to benefit the dead, but the living as well. As a rite of passage; funerals assist the bereaved in recognising the passing of a loved one, supporting you as you start your life without the deceased and reintegrating you back into the social group as a person whose loved one is no longer alive (Rando: 1991). Although, funeral ceremony has a lot of benefits to both the deceased and the bereaved; there are also difficulties involved in the preparation of funerals which have effect on the development of the people. One such challenge is that funerals are periods of sadness, pains to the loved ones of the deceased. It is a source of distress not solely for one individual or a social group but also for an entire community. Death poses a challenge or threat to the moral order and systems of ultimate meaning in the society. According to Basden (1982:14), burial rites among the Igbo are not only elaborately done but also expensive. To him:

The best possible arrangement must be made. There must be no half measures and nothingness on the part of the family. In the case of titled man or affluent person the highest honours will be rendered and no expense spared to give their relative worthy send-off.

To support Basden, Nwogu and Ubani (2014:1) found out that “in almost all parts of Igbo land, the living spends lavishly to bury their dead one. Even if the dead was a pauper, all the traditional burial rites which are extremely elaborate, expensive and complex must be observed to the later. These assertions corroborate the fact that burial rites in Udenu Local Government in Igbo land is not only very elaborately done but also very expensive, since they believe that there is a connection between death, burial rites and acceptance in the ancestral homeland in African Traditional Religion. Generally, these elaborate and expensive burial rites described above are very much important in ensuring that the dead is accepted in the land of the ancestors in Igbo Traditional Religion. Hence these elaborate and expensive funeral rites among the traditionalists pave way for a dead person’s acceptance into the ancestral home land this is till date a practice among the people.

These ceremonies and rituals performed by the living members of the family for the deceased lend credence to the unbroken family relationship between the living and the dead. It is their belief that the dead and the living have a role to play in order to fulfil their family obligations properly. For instance, it is the duty of the bereaved to give the deceased a befitting burial rite of food, drinks and shelter to show their reverence and remembrance while the deceased in return plays the role of protection and guidance.

Ezekwugo (1992:86), opined that Africans regard their dead parent as the living dead and are alive and keeping surveillance over the affairs of the living that is why food items, clothing, trinkets and ornaments are buried along with the corpse so that the dead is believed still make use of them in the ancestral world. Ezekwugo (1992:87) when he wrote to say that the respect given to the deceased is not worshipping but participating in symbolic roles showing that African world is inhabited by the living, the dead and yet unborn. This applied to Udenu People of Enugu State which is part of Africa who show respect to their dead parents not worshipping them. The people also had the idea of after-life and that humans can become saints if they live well during their life time. This idea of sainthood prompts Africans to celebrate expensive funeral which compromises traditional funeral with its rituals which is the greatest service that can be given to the deceased who has joined the community of living-dead. (Beller 2001). In continuation, Beller observed three stages of Burial which includes physical commitment of the corpse into the grave, burial which is more of a party; organised to mark a person's death (second burial) and memorial services which is organised in honour of the dead (remembrance service). Ogbukagu (1997) and Gehman (2008) supported Beller that the second burial rites is absolutely necessary since it is only when it is conducted that the deceased is believed to have reached the world of the spirit. Denying the dead a second burial could lead to bad luck as the ancestral spirits will be unhappy with the living for not according them proper burial. To avoid these bad luck on the part of the bereaved, the Udenu people despite financial involvement and inconveniences the burial rites will cause them, go on to carry out expensive burial for their deceased.

The methodology employed in this work is phenomenology which seeks to study religious phenomena in the light of the people's religious experiences as described by Ejizu (2013). One Religious ceremony which can be studied in the light of people's religious experience is funeral rites. This research method helped to bracket off the researcher's bias to the phenomena being studied and

presents the issue objectively as it manifests itself. It should be noted that the researcher also made use of oral interviews, participation and observation of burial processes in its data collection and also secondary sources from text books and library materials.

Udenu Igbo World

Udenu people are a group of people, a town and a local government in Enugu state, South East of Nigeria. The group as used in this paper includes Obollo, Amala, Iheakpu Obollo, Oba, Imilik-Enu, Ezimo and Imilike-Agu who has resemblance in culture and tradition. Udenu local government is bounded in the North by Igbo-Eze North Local Government, in the South Nsukka and Isi-Uzo Local Areas, in the west by Igbo-Eze South, in the East by Otukpa Local Areas in Benue State and has its headquarter at Obollo-Afor. It has a cross road system on the triangular 3 link highway at Obollo-Afor the headquarter which links to Amalain the North, Orba in the South and Obollo-Eke in the East and Enugu-Ezike in the West. Udenu Local Areas has an area of 248 km² and population of 178,466 of the 2006 census with postal area code of 412.

World view according to Madu (1996:1) simply means how the world is conceived, contemplated and perceived by people who live in it. The world view of the Udenu people is not different from the Igbo world view thus we are looking at the general Igbo world view. Achebe (1986) and Madu (1996) asserted that the worldview of Igbo people can be ascertained through their myths, proverbs, metaphors, customs and taboos. Achebe (1986:10) in her words remarks that;

Different cultures have different ways of ordering their world. Each mode is a lens through which man in a given culture views his world. Each culture's lens, enables it to see only a certain part of the world, but albeit, on which gives meaning to its existence. If one wore a different lens, he world see a different world.

The above underscores the comprehensive nature of a world-view as the totality of a people's assumption. Thus it can be said to give a sense of direction and purpose to our lives, and enables us to act purposely in and exercise a measure of control over our environment. In Achebe's opinion the Igbo world is arranged in the following hierarchy.

Structure of The *Igbo* Universe

Chi Ukwu Who Dwells In Eligwe



Akpu Ojodogo (Chi)



Osimiri



Ala Mmadu



Animate Inanimate



Other Spirit Forces



Ala-Mmuo



Alammadu

Source: Achebe (1986:14)

Certain names are used to describe the *Igbo* way of perceiving the world around them such as *Uwa di egwu* (the world is an unfathomable mystery) *Uwabunkonye* (no body owns the world) *Chukwudi* (God exists). *Chukwudike* (God is all powerful etc). (1996:4). In the myth of creation, the creative activity was ascribed to *Chukwuokike* (God the creator of all things visible and invisible) as the universe is broadly divided into two realms, visible and invisible worlds. Madu (1996:5) opined that the two worlds of the *Igbo* world view can be extended into three, the world of God and gods situated above the firmament and the underworld which is beneath earth surfaced which is the home of the ancestors. Though it is described and named according to human insight and conception of worldly structure. Ejizu (1986:10) supported Madu in classifying the *Igbo* universe into

three tiers; the *Elu-igwe*(heaven), *Ala-mmadu* (land of the living) and *Alanmuo* (land of the Ancestors). In the opinion of Madubuko (1994:7) has two tier structural arrangements of the world namely *Uwa-anaahuanya* (visible world) and *Uwaanaghiahuanya* (invisible world).

According to Madu (1996) the two worlds are overlap. He said that the visible world is made up of *Elu-igwe* and *Ala-mmuoas* well as *Ala-Mmaduare* inhabited by beings. Ejizu(1986:136) noted that Eligwe (sky above) is the abode of the Supreme being (Chuwu or Chineke) and major divinities such as Amadioha (god of thunder) and Anyanwu (god of light) while *Ala* is the earth goddess, minor deities and man while the ancestors and myriads of spirit forces (good or evil) inhabit under-world. Madu cleared the idea of the confusion who inhabit the sphere by asserting that there is mutual interaction of beings in Igbo world view. Thus beings in a particular sphere migrate to the other sphere when necessary. Madugave example to illustrate his point that the ancestors who inhabit the underworld of men can at times visit their families in the world of men. Also, the gods can equally do the same and even man can be transformed to visit the land of the dead. Even the nature gods inhabit the earth but they belong to the group of invisible beings. To Madu (1996) all these beings according to Igbo ontology occupy hierarchical ranks according to their Vital force. The Udenu people of Enugu State as part and parcel of the Igbo land also believe in this hierarchy of beings. Madu (1996:6) in agreement with Achebe (1986) identified five categories of spiritual being which includes the Supreme Being (Chineke, Chukwu) is the creator, deities (mmuo). Onuoha (1987:28-29) called the deities gods or ambassadors, these include Anyanwu (the lord of life and light), Ala (the earth goddess, mother of life and queen of morality). Amadioha or kamalu or igwe (God orderly and agent of instant justice). Muommili (the divinely appointed temptress) Ahiajioku (the lord of agriculture). Agwu-Nsi (the lord of divinations and healing), the spirit forces (Arusi/Alusi). The ancestors (Ndichie) and medicine (Ogwu).

Nature and Scope of Funeral Ceremony for Titled and Non-titled person in the Pre-colonial Period

Pre-colonial period refers to the period of time before the arrival of the colonial masters or western culture to our land. The period our fore fathers do their things or way of life as handed down to them by their fore bears. This is the period the Africans celebrate their culture without interference of anybody as directed or handed down to them by their progenitors. Funeral ceremony of

titled and non-titled person is quite different at the pre-colonial period but the non-titled person's funeral ceremony will be discussed first before the titled persons in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. Death to Udenu people is an inevitable end, a transition from this earthly life to another life beyond, a journey everyman must make in order to reach the world beyond and it is not an end to life. The people believed in different types of death such as matured or old age, married with children, lived a good exemplary life while on earth etc and will qualify him to become an ancestor. Those that died prematurely or at an unripe age, not married, without children in their lineage and those who died bad death of deadly diseases such as leprosy, madness, died during child birth, witchcraft, accident are not given befitting burials. There is celebration in the name of 'befitting funeral' of the people that died in old age with children wives, riches etc.

Traditionally, burial rites serve both religious and social functions. Burial rites are religious because they are part of the religious rites accorded to a dead person among the Igbo; they also serve a social function because they bring families, friends and well-wishers, the Umunna and sometimes the whole community to "fellowship" together.

Burial rites cannot be totally generalised among the Igbo people as there are peculiarities among the different Igbo sub-culture areas about the rites that are accorded to the dead. There are recognisable features of death and burial rites among most Igbos sub-cultures.

Firstly, the Igbo belief that some deaths are bad while others are natural. Igbo (2012:126) writes that;

The people make distinctions among three categories of death. Natural death called *Onwu chi*, bad death called *Ajoonwu* and death brought by human agent or vengeance from the gods called *onwu aka melu*. Instances of death considered to be the highest abomination and termed *onwuojoo*, or *ajoonwu* include suicide especially by hanging, also death of a spouse on mourning appeared to be abominable.

Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004) agreed with Igbo (2012) but included in the above, the category of bad death, death by leprosy, accident, small pox by mysterious illness without explanation or understandable cause. On the other hand, good deaths which attract full burial rites include death at ripe age with a lot of

prosperous children left behind to continue the family lineage. This is the type of death everybody wishes for including Udeno people of Enugu State.

Also, the Igbo believe that there is a connection between these types of death enumerated above and the type of burial rites to be accorded to the dead. Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004) alluded to this belief by arguing that those that died bad deaths, for example are not accorded full burial rites. Conversely, those who died good deaths among the Igbo in their traditional belief, are accorded full burial rites.

Thirdly, the Igbo traditionally believe in the practice of second burial which they take to be the final farewell to their departed. (Arinze (1970). Ilogu (1985) agreed with Arinze on second burial but added that those who were not given the second burial, have the capacity to torment family members they left behind. This torment could be in form of misfortune, bad harvest, stagnant business, and general retrogression in the family. It may sometimes include death of family members.

Fourthly, status, gender and sex all play a role in determining the type of burial rites accorded to the dead among the Igbo. By status, it refers to either married or unmarried wealthy or poor, slaves or free born. As regards to marriage, it is usually customary among the Igbo not to give dead unmarried men and women befitting burial. Gender and sex, refer to being either male or female member of the society. These to an extent determine the type of burial rites accorded to the dead among the Igbo including Udeno people of Enugu State.

Among the Udeno people traditionally, no corpse is allowed to stay unburied more than a day after death but there are exceptions to this, especially the death of a traditional ruler and titled men. They are preserved until the expected preparations and arrangements are made. (Basden, 1982).

Ilogu (1985) pointed out that burial of such traditional rulers and titled men involves meticulous religious observances. These assertions agreed with the point made in the work that social status is a determinant of burial rites among the Igbo. After the physical burial of the dead, the second burial follows in Udeno Local government Enugu State. This second burial which is mostly called Ikwaozu/ikwaonwu does not have a particular time limit in which it must be done but depends on the financial capabilities of the family of the dead; wealthy families always do not take longer in giving their dead a second burial (Ojobor Eze, Personal Communication 5th May, 2016).

Stages of funeral ceremony in Udenu

Kyrian (2012: 115) posited that it is of interest that for one to be accorded befitting burial rites, one must have been participating virtually in everything that has to do with his kindred, that is, he must not be a defaulter of any norms and values guiding his kindred. He went further to explain that some death rituals observed in his community *Obollo Afor* (one of the largest communities in Udenu Local Government Area in Enugu State) namely *OziOnwu* (Death Errand), *IzuOnwu* (gathering for the deceased) and *IkwaOnwu* (final funeral rite of second burial).

Death Errand (OziOnwu): This is the first ritual observed for the deceased by selected and supposed people on behalf of the immediate family of the dead person. This is done by sending the death news to the kinsmen and women and it is carried out in accordance with laid down traditions.

According to tradition, the death errand of a woman is slightly different from that of man because it is carried out by the visit to either the first male or female to the woman's family to inform her kinsmen of their daughter's death. This message is first of all taken to the eldest male in the immediate family of the deceased who then sends message to their kinsmen who in turn converge at their deceased daughters place for interment. During their visit at the funeral, entertainment of food, drinks, kola-nut is presented to them to show their appreciation (Mathias Ugwuoke Personal Communication on 22nd February, 2016).

Izuonwu (Gathering for the deceased): This is an official gathering of the family members to discuss how to accord a befitting funeral rite to the deceased. This is done at the compound of the eldest man (Onyishi). It is a period in which the daughters of the family married or not, gather to sympathise, keep the bereaved family members company for 8 days in order to assuage the trauma and vacuum created by death. The deceased must have been somebody known to be attending other people's funeral and not a debtor while alive.

According to Agnes Ezeokwor (Personal Communication, 23rd march, 2017); if the deceased was a defaulter or debtor, his or her relations are required to repay in cash or kind to the larger family (Umunna) on his behalf. During this period of 8 days (according to the narrator) food drinks and money representing kola-nut must be given to the daughters of the family (Umuada) and Umunna. These food items given to the daughters are cooked by married women of the family and critically inspected by the Umuada to know the quality and quantity. At the end

of 8 days (izuAbuo) she further explained that, the family of the deceased shave their hair while the widow and their in-laws bring palm wine (drinks) to sympathize with their wives and take their wives back to their marital homes. It is pertinent to note that after the shaving of the widow's hair, she is confined indoors at home, putting on black regalia bought for her by her husband's brothers.

According to Ann Mama (Personal Communication 11th March 2016) the black regalia has now been changed to white due to the influence of modernity. The widow is allowed to mourn the husband for one month before going back to her business if she is still strong. Traditionally, the end point of mourning is one year (12 months) after which the chief mourner (widow) burns the mourning regalia which is exchanged with a new wrapper and followed by the rituals of hair shaving again. The one-year funeral rite is very important in the life of the widow or widower as anyone who dies during this period is regarded as one who has died a "bad death". Also, during this period of mourning, they are not allowed to attend social gatherings such as funeral, marriage ceremonies till their period of mourning is over.

Ikwa Onwu (Final Funeral rite or Second Burial)

This is the peak of funeral ceremonies in honour of the deceased as, it is believed that until this rite is performed the spirit of the deceased continues to roam restlessly like a ghost among the living members of his family. In the pre colonial period, human beings (slaves) were among the items used for sending the deceased to the world beyond in the case of titled persons such as Igwe, Onyishi and in addition to a horse (Anyinya) but nowadays cows are used in replacement. The place of cow instead of horse could be attributed to the fact that horse might be difficult to bury but the cow can be slaughtered and eaten in honour of the departed.

There are reasons behind the use of cow in place of human beings (slaves) during funeral rites in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State, cow is costlier and sacred which only the well to do can afford to buy for funeral ceremony. According to Ugwu, C.O. T in a radio interview (voice FM Nsukka, 28/2/16), the reasons why cows are used for funeral in Igbo land which Udenu people of Enugu State are part of is that cows are sacred because they have the same gestation period of 12 months unlike human beings that has 9 months. The type of cow is a special specie called "moturu" (a native cow different from cattle).

Also, it is morally sacred in the sense that once a male cow impregnates the female, no other male cow goes near the pregnant cow. Another reason given for the use of cow for final rite of passage is that if that cow is stolen to a distant environment the cow will eventually return back to the rightful owner no matter the distance.

Kyrian (2012) agreed with Ugwu's comment during a radio interview that the killing of cow to send the deceased to the land of his ancestors is the highest honour given to the dead person so that his spirit will go to rest with his ancestors. He further explained that the cow to be killed is displayed publicly a day before the funeral rites by the relatives, in-laws and sympathizers parading the market square with words like "okeeshumo" (my big male cow) "Nnamg'ala o (my father will go home) etc while on the funeral day, all invited guests, friends, kinsmen and women gather at the funeral yard for merriment. The day is characterized with all sorts of mixed feelings of mourning and fun which include masquerade displays (in case of Onyishi or Igwe) dancing, eating and drinking etc. (Onyishi Cyprian Ezeugwu, personal communication 12th March, 2017) stated that traditionally the cow is killed next day and shared among people such that the eldest man (onyishi) takes the heart, the killer of the cow takes the hand; while the remaining parts of the cow are shared among the relations of the deceased except the head which is not tampered with as it is exclusively reserved for the immediate family of the deceased.

Nature of Funeral Ceremony for Titled Person in Udenu Local Government Area

In Udenu Local Government of Area Enugu State, the titled persons are the *Igwe*, *Onyishi* and distinguished *Ada* (first daughter of the family). When the eldest man in the community who also serves as the leader dies, the death is traditionally announced by firing cannon shots (*Mkpon' ani*). This makes people to start trooping into the deceased compound, to sympathize with the family. Also the appearance of masquerades all over the community brings to mind the death of a prominent man in the society. Messages will be sent across to the in-laws and relations both far and near informing them of the death.

When an elderly person dies, the corpse is immediately stretched out on plantain leaves after the corpse must have been bathed thoroughly and rubbed with cam wood, dye to mark it as sacred (Basden 1982; Nehering2016). According to OgbuNwasogwa (personal communication, 4th April, 2016) supported Basden

(1982), and Nehering (2016) on the method, the deceased body is taken care before the burial traditionally among Udeno people of Enugu State.

Furthermore, after cleansing the body, it is laid out in the living room, lying down with the feet facing the entry way. If the deceased is a woman, she is often seated upright. After this preparation for passage, a wake is held and it is the duty of the elder son of the bereaved family to welcome the community into their home with kolanuts and palm wine. Prayers and libations are conducted to escort the deceased home. The next morning there is canon shots to announce the death and commencement of the actual physical burial of the deceased and finally the body of the deceased is laid to the grave dug in the centre of the deceased room. Sometimes the deceased is buried alongside personal materials: clothes, walking sticks, dane gun, cooking pots, dishes etc. Odo Ugwu (personal communication 10th April, 2016) explained that since the physical burial is not the end of Udeno people (Igbo) burial rites, it is customary for the deceased to be accorded a second burial which paves the way for ancestor-hood. The second burial is usually a feast and a merry making occasion rather than mourning period. It is marked by slaughtering of cow in the honour of the dead and invitation of the whole community to come and make merry.

Nature of funeral in the contemporary society

The nature of funeral ceremony in recent times is alarming due to the huge amount of money spent in the celebration. Burial ceremony which expresses grief, pains and sorrow have turned to merriment, happiness, party, instead of reflecting on the life and times of the departed by family members. This led Okaba (1999:264) to voice out that sending off of the deceased in contemporary times seems to be most elaborate, expensive and highly ritualized of all our social celebrations. In this way, ostentatious funerals have assumed the status of a social narcotic. In the face of these expensive festivities, it has become costlier for an average Nigerian to die than to live. Ugwuoke Martins (personal communication 28th April, 2016) asserted that it is quite true of families among the Udeno people of Enugu State. This is because what seems to bother them is not the living who is sick but the dead, considering the amount of money to be spent to send the deceased home. It can be seen that when a person is sick the relatives are worried because they are aware of the socio-economic burden death will put on them, as they are aware that it is costlier to die than to live.

In Udeno and other Igbo-land, burialrite has become so expensive that people now engage in all sorts of unwholesome practices ranging from dubious business activities and even ritual practices in order to make money for burial ceremonies or even incur debt. Anyacho (2005) adds that since it is believed that the dead does not settle in the land beyond, if it is not accorded a befitting funeral rite, which will be accompanied by special rituals in form of elaborate funeral rites; in performing these rites, adequate care is taken to follow it to the latter. This is why the children and relatives of the deceased spend a lot of money in order to perform funeral rites in honour of the departed relation which leads to debt and worries to the family.

In the view of Amadi (1982) many societies give their members elaborate and expensive burial. In Nigeria, burials are highly celebrated affairs and account in no small measures for the popularity of the society or members as most people spend so much on burial rites as seen in their choice of expensive coffins, uniforms, assorted drinks and food etc. He further asserted that foreigners wonder at this apparent folly and deplore colossal waste of money due to funeral ceremony. In Udeno, the quest for social recognition and popularity has made many people spend above their capacity just to impress the society which leads to deplorable and colossal waste of money.

Mkpa (2001) condemned the expensiveness of funerals when he wrote that in certain parts of Nigeria, people worry about the high cost of living while others worry about a higher cost of dying. This means that in places where burial is too expensive, people tend to worry less about high cost of living but worry more about higher cost of burials. This can be seen when people attend burial ceremonies just to cause havoc by making demands which lead to incurring more expenses for the bereaved as seen in the way elders in Udeno Local Government Area prescribe the type and size of animal, food to be prepared and perhaps the type of materials to be used for proper burial as seen during funerals as agitated by Umunna and Umuada.

Challenges of Burial/Funeral Ceremony on the development of Udeno People of Enugu State

Challenges refer to problems encountered by any person embarking on a project, business education, marriage or even burials of the deceased. The challenges to be discussed in this research are on burial or funeral ceremonies to the development of the people of Udeno Local Government Area of Enugu State.

There is economic challenge because of funeral ceremony among Udenu people of Enugu State. Funeral ceremony is a burden to the poor as it has rendered many families' insolvent depriving them of embarking on any other project till the debts incurred are paid. The period of funeral ceremony is a period in which the people concerned are disengaged from various work such as farming, trading to stay at home to mourn the deceased. Though it is a time to rest but the bereaved will no longer partake in any other activity till the period of mourning is over.

It is compulsory for any person from Udenu Local Government to participate in funeral ceremony of their relations and any defaulters must be punished as he/she is expected to accord befitting burial to the deceased.

Death errand (ozionwu) is done by carrying the news of the demise to the kinsmen and women and it has its laid down procedure. According to Kyrians series of visits will be made to the deceased family if it is a woman with the first male and female to the woman's native home if not the people will not be part of the burial. In the course of the errand items such as food, drinks, kola nuts are presented to the woman's family. The message bearers could encounter a challenge if the deceased was not taken good care of while she was alive.

Another challenge is the problem of Umuada (daughters of the family) who use the opportunity to fine any person who was not regular in the past funeral ceremony of the deceased relatives. (Personal Communication 26th June 2017). It is a period the Umuada (daughter of the family) inspect food, drinks, kola nut brought to the arena to with the aim to accept or reject. According to an informant, even the women married to the family are not left out in the inspection since they cook the food usually sent to the Umuada throughout the period of mourning. Funeral ceremony takes a long time to consummate and no work is done at this period as everybody must remain indoor mourning the deceased and also consoling the bereaved as culture demands.

The long days spent preparing and celebrating the funeral of a deceased keeps people away from their business and all source of livelihood. The fact that funerals are usually fixed almost every month show the adverse effect expensive and lengthy funerals affect the economy of the people. Another challenge derived from funeral ceremony is status symbol on the part of the celebrant. This is seen at the nature and calibre of dignitaries that honour the funeral "who is who" in the environment to sympathise and celebrate with the bereaved and their families.

The act of killings cows portrays another economic effect of burial to the Udenu people, culturally it is believed that whoever did not kill cow to send his deceased relative to the land beyond would not be accorded the respect due to those who killed cows during funerals; also he/she will not eat beef used to bury any member of their family or else he will die as he/she had not killed a cow for his/her late parents. The belief in life after death adds impetus to the reason why Udenu people prefer to accord befitting and expensive burial to their deceased.

Spending so much on funeral could also be referred to as misplacement of priority considering the fact that when the deceased was alive he/she was not given proper attention such as caring, eating good food, wearing better clothes, taken to hospital when sick but just to be celebrated in death and the celebrant can go borrowing and end-up paying debts after the ceremony.

Been indebted as a result of expenses incurred for funeral, most people are unable to provide for their children's needs such as education. Socially and economically, the Udenu person who is unable to give befitting funeral for his/her deceased is usually looked down upon. Medically is not advised that the living should keep the corpse of their deceased one at home for days before burial. The internment observed for the dead for days poses serious health danger to the living. During funeral in Udenu Local government people are not allowed to go to farm or any form of work, thus Agricultural (food), building, and other business bear the brunt of the long days of funeral celebration.

Reasons for Continuity of Funeral Ceremonies:

1. **Befitting Burial:** The motive for funeral ceremony is to lead the deceased to join his/her fellow ancestors; to enable him/her enjoy new life. Since it is the people's belief it is good to accord the dead a befitting funeral.
2. **Relief for the Living:** The celebrant is relieved of the stigma of not giving a befitting funeral to his/her deceased parents in the society.
3. **Economic Gain:** There is also economic gain on the part of the celebrant as the invitees who attend the funeral aids and sympathize with the bereaved through donations of money and food items.
4. **Social Status:** Funeral ceremony is also to show the status of the celebrant in the society looking at the categories of people that attend the funeral. The celebrant uses the opportunity to invite his/her social groups such as clubs, group of meetings in his/her environment to support the bereaved and this reintegrates the society.

Reasons for Discontinuity of Funeral Ceremonies:

There may be good reasons why funeral ceremonies are done in our society, but there are also areas where the ceremonies are disadvantageous:

- 1. Show of status:** The expression of social solidarity to reintegrate the society has deviated from the sympathetic support expected from people to the bereaved. This is because funerals are now turned to a period of picnic and merriment.
- 2. Financial waste:** A lot of money is spent on expensive coffin, group uniforms (committee of friends) assorted drinks and funeral attires. The quest for social recognition and popularity made many people to give their deceased expensive funeral which lead to over spending above their capacity just to impress the society. The expensive nature of funerals has led many people to engage in all sorts of unwholesome practices such as looting, dubious business activities, ritual practices and even selling their family land in order to get money for funeral ceremony. Funeral rites are costly and held in high esteem which leads to untold sorrows arising from expensive funeral ceremonies.
- 3. The influence of technology:** The agents of change such as technology have added to the expensive nature of funerals in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State such as mortuary bills, life-band, funeral advertisement, obituary announcement, printing of invitation cards, posters, decorations etc. This agent of change has affected the mode of death announcement which was done by firing canon shots, and burial has been replaced by mortuary deposition and corpse returned by ambulance car and undertakers who carried corpse and displayed round the road to the deceased's church and compound.
- 4. Spending on the living not the dead:** Another area of probable discontinuity of funeral ceremony can be anchored on the fact that most deceased die as a result of lack of proper care. However, during funerals, the most expensive beds are used to prepare and decorate the corpse, renovation of the deceased house and compound within a short period of time. Most people in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State partake in expensive funeral ceremonies due to societal expectation which lead both the rich and the poorest among the people to resort to borrowing in order to 'do it like others', display wealth instead of the bereaved mourning and learning from the life of the deceased when on earth.

Recommendations

1. Reduce unnecessary expenditure so as to focus attention on the education and well-being of the wife/wives and children of the deceased. Since the motive of funeral rites given to the deceased by his relatives is to make him belong to his ancestral home and to have a good rest in the world beyond; it is advisable that the method used by the bereaved to send the deceased to his spiritual home must be checked and minimized so that the living members of the family will not over spend thus accumulating debt. Reduce Wastages: The funeral ceremony should be planned in such a way that the bereaved should not waste their resources unnecessarily for food, drinks and other things used for the ceremony. This is because food and drinks that is meant for the needy amongst us are given to pigs or even thrown away in name of funeral ceremony.
2. The communities in Udeno should limit the number of days Umuada spend for mourning so that they can engage in other useful ventures.
3. Elders should warn and place sanctions on the expensive coffins and groups who sow uniforms and should spell out punishment for defaulters who disobey the sanctions above.
4. Proper care must be given to our relations while they are alive than waiting for them to die in order to spend huge sum of money to show off in the society in the name of funeral ceremony.
5. The period of mourning by the widow or widower of the deceased should be minimized to enable the bereaved have a continued life after the loss of a loved one.
6. Sanctions should be melted on those that fight or quarrel during funerals.

Conclusion

Death is inevitable to human race and everybody must be ready and prepared to face the bullet of death anytime no matter your age, sex or races. Death is natural which put an end to all earthly plans, dreams, desires and endeavours and whatever had a beginning must end up somewhere. It is believed that after the cessation of life, the body must decompose to mother-earth to avoid odour which will saturate the environment of those alive. It is advisable that the family of the deceased must bury the dead which is one of the corporal works of mercy. This is an important assignment to be done to the deceased in form of befitting burial (to bury the dead or lay the person to rest). Also, after laying the person to rest, certain arrangements are made to make sure that the deceased joined his ancestors in form of second burial which should be elaborate than the

decomposition of the corpse of the deceased in the mortuary. This is the point where overspending comes to replace the mourning of the deceased by the bereaved relatives. It is important to note that funeral ceremony given to the deceased by the relatives is to honour the dead person and to perform the necessary rite that send the dead to the land of the ancestors since they believed that human beings are indestructible after death and becomes ghosts while the prominent ones become ancestral spirits who will be honoured and petitioned as invisible leaders of their community.

ORAL INTERVIEWS

S/N	NAME	SEX	AGE	OCCUPATION	DATE	PLACE	INTERVIEWER
1	Ugwuoke Mathias	M	80yrs	Mason	22/2/16	Ohulor-Obollo	Researcher
2	Ezeokwor Agnes	F	70yrs	Trader	24/2/16	Iheakpu Obollo	Researcher
3	Mama Ann	F	58yrs	Farmer	11/3/16	Obollo Eke	Researcher
4	Ugwuoke Martins	M	62yrs	Mason	28/4/16	Orba	Researcher
5	Onyishi Cyprian Ezeugwu	M	87yrs	Retired civil	2/3/16	Umuafia, Orba	Researcher
6	Onyishi OgbuNwasogwa	M	90yrs	Elder	4/4/2016	Orba	Researcher
7	Odo Ugwu	M	85yrs	Elder	10/4/2016	Ezimo	Researcher
8	Ojobor Eze	M	80yrs	Elder	5/5/2016	Imilike-Agu	Researcher
9	Ogbu Regina	F	85yrs	Elder	26/6/2016	Imilike-Enu	Researcher

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