

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The Igbo people of southern Nigeria are a very distinct species of human beings. They devise means of survival through their amazing cultural practises. They have so many rites of passages in their culture that enable them to attain various stages and goals in their life time and even at death and in the world beyond. These rites of passage are observed for the fulfilment of various purposes in the lives of the Igbo people. Rites of passage for children are: birth (*iputa ụwa*), burial of umbilical cord and placenta – (*ili otubo na ihe na-eso nwa*), cutting of natal hair – (*ikpu isi mburuputa ụwa*), circumcision – (*ibi ugwu*), naming ceremony- (*igu nwa aha*) and sighting of the first teeth – (*ihu nwata eze*). The puberty rites of passage are initiation into masquerade cult – (*ibammanwu*), scarification – (*igbu ichi*), tying of wrapper – (*iwa akwa*), in some parts of Igbo culture for boys, seclusion of young girls before marriage – (*Iru mgbede*). Adulthood rites of passage are marriage rite – (*alum di na nwunye*), title taking – (*ichi echichi*), pregnancy rites and birth rites.

Marriage which is one of the adulthood rites of passage is a very important and most celebrated institution in Igbo culture area. According to Onwuzurigbo (1990), marriage among the Igbo is patrilineal. This means a family situation in which status and property are inherited through the paternal line. Women leave their paternal group and reside with the paternal group of their husbands. For African peoples, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet to be born. Marriage is not what one will get up one day and consummate in a flash in Igbo land. It is a gradual process which is accompanied by various rites and rituals at different stages of the marriage. It is a family affair because the two families whose children are getting married will automatically become an

extended family when the marriage is consummated. Therefore, it is a gradual process that is carefully done.

The essence of marriage in Igbo land before the coming of the missionaries was not necessarily to unite two persons who were in love, as it is today, but primarily to establish a legal basis for procreation, which because of the emphasis on children, the Igbo regarded as an obligation to the ancestors. This was based on the tradition that those born owe the debt of begetting others. Mbiti (1975:104) says that “a marriage fulfills the obligation, the duty and the custom that every normal person should get married and bear children. This is believed to go back to the very beginning of human life. Failure to get married is like committing a crime against traditional beliefs and practises”. Different types of marriages existed in pre-colonial Igbo land according to Uchendu (1997). They included the normal marriage contract involving two exogamous families; marriage through pawning, which allowed fathers to use their daughters as collateral for loans, concubinage, marriage by abduction, marriage by exchange and gynaegamy.

Gynaegamy, the concern of this paper, was a recognized and legal form of marriage in pre-colonial Igbo society. It is called different names by different scholars. Uchendu (1965) calls it woman marriage; Uchendu (1995) coined the word ‘gynaegamy’ to describe woman marriage in Igbo land in order to differentiate it from same-sex and gay marriage that exist in the western countries of the world. Amadiume (1997) calls gynaegamy ‘female husband’ marriage. Also Uchendu (2007) calls it ‘woman-marriage’. The Awgu people call it *ínwè Mgbàfùtà* literally meaning rescue marriage. This means that the minor woman in the marriage comes to rescue the major woman and her husband from the ugly situation of childlessness. The main aim of gynaegamy among Awgu people is for women to have children through other women for continuation of their husband’s lineage for inheritance purposes. Among Awgu people a barren widow or one who had no

male child for her deceased husband had no claim to the deceased's property. If, however, she had 'married' a wife and had a male child from her, she would inherit her husband's possessions through the male child born for her by her rescuing wife.

Igwe (2009) opines that there is "the tradition of same gender marriage in Igbo land". The researcher got interested and was moved to investigate whether or not that same gender marriage exists in Awgu which is a town in Igbo land. Awgu is a patriarchy society: this means that inheritance is only through male descendants. This culture makes it impossible for girls to inherit their fathers' land property, including their homestead, because they are expected to be married to other homesteads. This means that a childless woman or woman who has only female children does not get anything from her husband if the husband dies before her. This makes her husband's sibling take the homestead as there is no male child to continue that lineage. To forestall a family from being taken over by one's relatives or overgrown with weed, gynaegamy, ghost marriage and daughter-wife marriages were allowed in Awgu town by their progenitors to sustain family pedigree. Gynaegamy ensures that a childless woman has access to her husband's land property, from where she will gain her economic resources. The economic resources include farm crops and cash crops such as yams, cocoyam, vegetables, pears, coconut, oranges and breadfruit.

The Awgu people's economic engagement before the coming of the Europeans was farming on their pieces of land to produce food and cash crops. They depended solely on their land for the production of these food crops. This was why every Awgu man values his land and is ready to die for it. Land among the Awgu people is owned by the family. It is hereditary as it is transferred from one generation to another. Land is inherited from fathers and only male children are given portions of land in the Igbo culture area. Girls are not entitled to inherit land because they are to be married off to other homesteads and kinsmen other than their biological kindred. This is why every Igbo

couple prays for the gift of a male child to continue the lineage and inherit their land when they are no more. This explains the reason Igbo people give such names as *Amaechina, Obiechina, Amaefuna, Obiefuna, Afamefuna, Obodoechina, Amaajuoyi, etc.*

However, when a couple fails to have a male child in their monogamous family in Awgu, and the wife has passed the age of child bearing, the wife is allowed by the culture of the land to contract marriage with a younger woman with the consent of her husband to know whether God will give them an heir through her. If her husband is late, she gives her husband's kinsmen some money to marry a wife in the name of her late husband. Children begotten from this marriage bear her late husband's name. If there is a son, he will inherit the father's land. All these efforts are geared towards making sure that the homestead of the couple is not claimed by their relatives. The woman strives to sustain the patriline of her husband and she is, therefore, constrained to indulge in gynaegamy.

### **Geographical Location of Awgu town**

Awgu is one of the towns in Igbo culture area. Onwuejeogwu (1975) explains culture area as a geographical area occupied by people whose culture exhibits a significant degree of similarity with each other as well as a significant degree of dissimilarity with the culture of others. He further says that the concept of culture area was first invented by American Anthropologists among whom Wissler was the most important. On another development Onwuejeogwu (1997:7) asserts: "The Igbo culture areas may be enclosed by an imaginary line running outside of the settlements of Agbor, Kwale, Aboh (West Niger Igbo), Ahoada, Diobu, Umuagbayi (Port – Harcourt ), (Nsukka area), Ebu (West Niger Igbo)".

Awgu is a town in southern part of Enugu state and it belongs to East Niger Igbo. It is bordered in the north by Mmaku and Mgbowo, in the south by Isiagu and Lokpanta of Ebonyi and Abia States respectively, in the east by Ndeaboh, while Mgbidi and Ugwueme are their neighbors in the west. Many people live in Awgu because Awgu is the headquarters of Awgu Local Government Area. Awgu town is predominantly Christians. This is why it was easy for them to liaise with Awgu elites and fight against gynaegamy. Awgu people are mainly farmers and wine tappers. This makes them a hospitable people. Whenever they have guests, they are entertained with tapioca - *abacha* and palm-wine - *nkwu ocha*, which are popular delicacies of the town. Their sociability as well as their belief in the traditions of the land made them observe, for long, gynaegamy as help in preserving a family lineage from extinction.

The origin or migratory root of Awgu is yet to be convincingly traced. Available oral evidence, according Chukwu (2016), rooted it in myth (Namkpu – emerging from an anthill), legend (common ancestral linkage with Mmaku, Achi – Nnaka, Nenwenta, Awgunta), and synonymous socio – cultural recognition (Egbeleli in Nenwe and Awgu). This common ancestor is said to have had three sons: Dim, Ezike and Uchejingu. To secure Awgu communities under these three identified sons, a genealogical linkage became necessary: Dim became the father of five sons who transformed afterward as Olikwu, Uhuegu, Amaovia, Obuovia, and Ololi; Ezike had two sons who subsequently became Umuhu and Amokwe. Uchejingu sired three sons – Adogba, Ohaja and Ogboli. Adogba begot two sons to give Olocha and Ululor; Ogboli through accommodation, neighbourliness or common pedigree gave the two communities of Ezioha and Ibite. From this oral myth, Awgu people were assumed to have emerged from an anthill.

## **1.2 Problem of the Study**

In Igbo land in particular and Africa in general, childless married woman is adjudged as a curse. She is seen as having failed in her role as a wife married to fill her husband's homestead with children. Having failed in her function of procreation as a mother, she will engage in gynaegamy to remedy her situation. Gynaegamy occurs in Awgu only when it is obvious that a homestead is threatened by childlessness or lack of an heir to that compound. In this case, a major woman marries a minor woman in her husband's name to know whether God will bless them by giving them a son who will inherit the homestead and continue the patriline. This happens because some Igbo societies, Awgu inclusive, just like many African societies are patrilineal.

Unfortunately, some writers and scholars like Igwe (2009) and Murray and Roscoe (2012) misconstrued gynaegamy with lesbianism or gay marriage that exists in the Western world. They believe that same gender or gay marriage has been in existence in Igbo land and Africa. Also, Black lesbians are using such prejudiced interpretations of African situations to justify their choices of sexual alternatives which have meaning in the West. This is why Igwe (2009) cited the gynaegamy practised in Igbo land as same gender marriage. This is capable of leading the younger generation of the Igbo nation astray if this notion is not tackled head-long. Therefore, this work wants to correct the misinterpretation of the Igbo gynaegamy as gay marriage because the Igbo people's gynaegamy is only employed for bearing of children by a childless or sonless married woman with the consent of her husband or his kinsmen.

To forestall the ugly situation that will befall the Igbo nation in future as their children may use their gynaegamy as an excuse for engaging in gay marriage, this research proposes In-Vitro fertilization and children adoption as a means of sustaining their husband's pedigree and wiping away the shame of childlessness or sonlessness when the need arises.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

There are purposes for embarking on this study. They are to:

1. Bring to the knowledge of the public the meaning of gynaegamy in Awgu culture.
2. Ascertain whether gynaegamy procedure is different from other marriages in Awgu.
3. Ascertain the degree of existence of gynaegamy in Awgu.
4. Bring to the fore the extent gynaegamy is accepted in Awgu.
5. Disapprove the insinuations that gynaegamy in Igbo land is same as gay marriage.
6. Bring to limelight the reasons Awgu tradition adopted gynaegamy that helped them sustain their patriline when In-vitro-Fertilization (IVF) and adoption were not in vogue.
7. Ascertain whether there are constraints to gynaegamy in Awgu.

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

Gynaegamy has helped to put smiles on the faces of childless and sonless couples in Awgu. Therefore, as this culture of Igbo people is at its death throes, there is the need to record the culture for future generations to read and know about it.

The study, as an aspect of cultural practises in Awgu will be a springboard for further researches by other interested researchers on the declining human culture.

The didactic relevance of this work with regard to its sociological and anthropological suggestions is informative. The work is therefore a vicarious experience to teachers, students and researchers in Igbo culture.

As regards curriculum development of Igbo studies, this work will form a veritable topic on what should form a part of the body of knowledge on cultural studies in universities and colleges.

It will be useful for Ministry of Women Affairs to enable it to keep tract of a practise that helped Igbo women to have their own children when IVF and child adoption were not in vogue, and for the archives to safeguard for future use.

The study will help the Ministry of Culture and National Orientation Agency to educate the masses that gynaegamy is quite different from same-sex or gay marriage practised in Western countries. It will help the Ministry of Women Affairs to organize seminars to educate women about their right to inheritance issues in Igbo land. It is the issue of denial of females their right to inherit land properties in their homesteads that motivates Awgu women to indulge in gynaegamy so as to accord inheritance to the son that comes from this marriage.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This work is based on gynaegamy with reference to Awgu town. It is limited to socio-cultural investigation of Awgu. Nevertheless, references are made to other cultures where this type of marriage exists in order to illustrate the purpose of this study. Origin of gynaegamy in Awgu is discussed. When this type of marriage is accepted in Awgu, reasons for engaging in gynaegamy in Awgu, types of marriage that exist in Awgu, the relationship between the major women and minor women are also discussed.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

Some research questions were constructed to guide the researcher in analyzing the data collected.

These questions are:

1. What is gynaegamy?
2. What ways is the procedure of gynaegamy in Awgu done?
3. To what degree is the existence of gynaegamy in Awgu?



4. To what extent is gynaegamy accepted in Awgu?
5. How does the major woman behave towards the minor woman in gynaegamy in Awgu?
6. What are the reasons for gynaegamy in Awgu?
7. What are the Constraints to Gynaegamy in Awgu?

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

There are several factors that posed problems to this study. They are

Transcription: The data for this work were collected through oral interview; therefore, it is difficult for the researcher to find suitable Igbo words to replace Awgu dialect. The researcher, however, as an Igbo scholar, made use of knowledge of Igbo dialect to transcribe Awgu dialect to standard Igbo.

Secondly, attitude of the respondents is a major problem to the study because many of the respondents demanded tips of money for snuff and when not given they declined to answer many questions claiming that this is *omenaala* and it is not for women. This made the researcher explain further that this work would be written as a book for future generations to know about Awgu culture. When the respondents heard this their hearts were gladdened and they answered every question without reservation.

Finance is another problem that limited this study because the researcher could not afford the fare of cyclist for herself and the research assistant. This made them trek to many of the nearby villages on foot. Transportation is another factor that limited this study. There were many villages in Awgu where their roads are not good, but the researcher, on reaching such places, would alight and trek to the places of the respondents on foot.

## **1.8 Definition of Terms**

### **Gynaegamy**

A type of marriage between an elderly married childless or sonless woman and a younger woman who is adjudged to be fertile with the consent of the older woman's husband or in his name if he is late. This is done for the purpose of childbearing to continue the lineage of the man. This is called *ilu nnwe mgbafuta* in Awgu.

### **Major- Woman**

Older woman in gynaegamy. Some scholars like Amadiume, Greene and Oboler call her female husband. Awgu people call them *oke nwai*

### **Minor-Woman**

The wife of the major woman in gynaegamy. Scholars like Amadiume, Greene and Oboler call her wife of the female husband. She is addressed as *nnwe mgbafuta* in Awgu.

### **Daughter-Wife**

A daughter that is retained in her father's house, preferably the first daughter, to bear male children for her father. Some scholars call it male-daughter or female son. This is called *idagbe* in Awgu.

## **1.9 Historical Perspective of Gynaegamy in Awgu**

Gynaegamy has been in Awgu for a very long time. This is why many of the respondents have forgotten its origin. Some said that it has been in existence in Awgu but they do not know the origin while others said that Awgu people borrowed it from their neighbouring communities during the era of the slave trade. This was because during the era of slave trade, Awgu people used to travel from Awgu through Lokpanta to Arochukwu's Long Juju Oracle (*Ibini Ukpabi*). According to them, they came in contact with people of Ibeku, Ohafia and Edda where this type of marriage is in vogue.

Uchendu (2007:3) opines "...that little is known about the origin of gynaegamy in Igbo land. Individuals interviewed in this practise spoke of its antiquity but could not state when exactly it came into existence". So it is not out of place that many of the respondents do not know the origin of gynaegamy in Awgu.

Ivo Nwavoko, a male respondent, said that gynaegamy has been in existence for a long time but Christianity and civilization have affected it so much that it is almost at the verge of extinction. He said that this type of marriage came into existence in Awgu in the olden days because they related and fought many inter-communal wars with their neighbours, like Isiagu people in the present day Ebonyi State, Mgbowo, Ndeaboh, Ugwueme, Mgbidi and Mmaku all in Enugu State. Awgu, which is situated at the foot of the mountain and surrounded by all these towns named above, is usually the target of those living up the mountain, like Ugwueme, Mgbidi and Mmaku. A lot of wars erupted because of scramble over land properties. As these wars were wedged many of the married young men and the unmarried ones lost their lives in the process. Those who were married, but failed to have children or had only female children when they met their untimely death at the war front were compensated by the community allowing their wives to bear children in their names. Those who died as bachelor had wives married in their names and children were begot for them by one of their kinsmen. This was done to ensure their names were not effaced from the earth.

Nwavoko said that this has been the trend until one man named Udoko Nwavomma from Amovia Awgu, who was a renowned warrior but was childless, was slain by Isiagu people during a communal war. Udoko was an only child of his parents and was married to his wife for over thirty years but they had no child. Suggestions and pleadings were made for him to marry another wife but he refused due to the love he had for his wife. When he died, his village suggested that his wife should contract marriage with a younger woman to bear children for her deceased husband in order

to continue the lineage of Udoko, the great warrior of Awgu. The whole villagers rallied round and supported Udoko's wife in contracting the marriage of another wife for Udoko while his wife became the major woman. One of Udoko's age mates from his village was chosen for the procreation role while Udoko's wife used her husband's resources in taking care of the children that resulted from this marriage. After Udoko's experience, women who were childless in Awgu were advised to imitate Udoko's wife, by contracting marriage with minor women in their husbands' name to have children for them. Those who had only female children followed suit and they were allowed to engage in this marriage too because the family lineage of their husbands were equally threatened. All these were allowed because the Awgu people in the olden days did not want any homestead to be overgrown with weeds - *Amaechina*. This appears to be how gynaegamy was adopted in Awgu.

The history of origin suggests that it was only the necessity of continuity of a homestead that led Awgu people to practise gynaegamy to safeguard childless situations. Now that children adoption and In-Vitro Fertilization are in vogue, this type of marriage is dying a natural death in Awgu because of its consequences of contracting sexually transmitted diseases from multiple sexual partners and the shame a young girl who became a minor woman will undergo from her mates and the society. No sane girl presently no matter the hardship experienced, will agree to be a wife to a major woman.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The review of literature is broken down into parts for easy comprehension. The parts are conceptual framework, theoretical framework, empirical studies and summary

#### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

Conceptual framework takes a look at the concepts in this topic of study. This is done to make the audience understand this work better. Conceptual studies are discussed under the following headings: marriage, gynaegamy, culture and patriline.

##### **2.1.1 Marriage**

It is pertinent here to review what scholars have written about marriage before reviewing gynaegamy which is one of the types of marriages that exist in Igbo culture area. Marriage is the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law. Marriage is the legal union of a man and a woman living together in order to procreate. According to Onwuzurigo (1990), among the Igbo, marriage can be defined as an undertaking entered into by the close kin of the man and wife, in particular by their respective lineage kin, with regard to the paternity of the wife's children. It is one of the most important events in the life of the Igbo. From the time the boys and girls are capable of thinking for themselves, marriage is set before them as the one object to be attained. Also Anizoba (2010) says that marriage is the living together of two persons in a way that is acceptable to the community for the sake of child bearing and rearing and one of the persons must be a woman. Anizoba goes on to say that this definition encapsulates the types of marriage that exist in Igbo land because there are

seven types of marriage that capture this definition. They are: Monogamous Marriage – (*Alụmalụ otu nwoke na otu nwaanyi*), Polygamous Marriage – (*Alụmalụ otu nwoke na ụbara nwaanyi*), Oracle Marriage – (*Alụmalụ nwaanyi na mmụọ*), Gynaegamy – (*Alụmalụ nwaanyi na nwaanyi /nnwe mgbafuta*) which is the concern of this study, Levirate marriage- (*Alụmalụ Nkuchi nwaanyi*), Daughter-Wife Marriage- (*Alụmalụ Nhachi nwaanyi*) and Ghost marriage – (*Alụmalụ Nluchi nwaanyi*). This definition truly captures the one accepted by this research because this study is working on one type of marriage that comes out from this definition - Gynaegamy – (*Alụmalụ nwaanyi na nwaanyi*).

Writing on this important institution, Parrinder (1962:97) opines that “marriage in Africa is a social affair, concerned as much with the contracting families as it shows that it is not only the husband and wife that marriage brings together but the family also”. In Igbo marriages, the families of the couples are fully involved. Okafor (1992:3) agrees with Parrinder’s idea and he says that Igbo marriage is “an alliance between two families rather than a contract between two individuals. It establishes a new social link not only between families but also between the villages of the bride and the bridegroom”. Supporting Okafor, Nmah (2003:44) maintains that in Igbo, “marriage is an alliance between two families and death of the groom does not terminate the alliance”. Ogbukagu (2008:273) avers: “In Adazi Nnukwu and other Igbo communities, marriage is not an affair between a man and a woman, but rather it transcends the whole *Ụmụ-nna* – (kinsmen), *Ụmụ-ọkpụ* (kindred women). The two, singly or collectively, have a role to play in resolving conflicts between a husband and a wife”. One of these decisive roles is to suggest the man taking a new wife, if there is problem in procreation between the couple, or more so, for the woman, if she is wealthy to give fund to her husband to get married to another woman to enable him to retain his name in the family as children come from the new wife. Ogbukagu’s observation of marriage as alliance affirms Okafor’s and

Nmah's definition of marriage as alliance in Igbo communities as well as Parrinder's view of marriage as a social affair in Africa.

Still on Igbo marriage and how it helps in forming alliance, Ogbalu (2006) further says that the institution of marriage is very important among the Igbo people. It is not just an affair between a man and a woman. It involves the whole of *umunna* and, to some extent, the villages. The expression *Otu onye adighi alu Nwaanyi* (a man does not get married to a woman all by himself) sums up the Igbo people's attitude. Ogbalu's observation about marriage is the reason that makes the Igbo people seek resolution to any problem in the marriage a whole *umunna* or village rallied around to consummate. They may suggest marrying another wife. The woman herself might willingly foot the bill of contracting marriage with a younger woman in her husband's name (this is gynaegamy). All these efforts are geared towards sustaining the family lineage, in order to prevent the homestead from extinction.

On the essence of marriage, Shorter (1973:179) sees marriage as a "covenant between persons for the bringing into existence of other persons. This is the foundation of its seriousness and, ultimately, of its indissolubility". This means that marriage is a covenant which couple goes into in order to bring young ones to life and it is not easily dissolved because of childlessness. Suggestion would be made for the husband to marry another wife if they suspect that the wife is sterile or that the woman should find a good man to bear children for her husband or engage in gynaegamy if the husband is suspected to be impotent. In addition, Mbiti (1975:104) says that "a marriage fulfills the obligation, the duty and the custom that every normal person should get married and bear children. This is believed to go back to the very beginning of human life. Failure to get married is like committing a crime against traditional beliefs and practises". In Awgu, every grown adult that refuses to get married is seen as a waste for the family in particular and community in general.

Efforts are made for them to get married by finding suitors for the females and wives for the males. If a man is suspected to be impotent, an already pregnant girl may be married for him in order to give him an heir. The wife will be advised to find a male friend whom (this male friend is called *ÙzÍ* in Awgu) she will be “sleeping” with in future for childbearing. What makes a child legitimate in Awgu is the bride price. The man or woman that pays the bride price of a woman owns the children that will be borne by the woman. In furtherance of his own view, Mbiti (1975) explains that through marriage and child bearing the parents are remembered when they die. Anyone who dies without leaving behind a child or close relative to remember him or make libations for him is a very unfortunate person. Therefore, marriage is intimately linked up with the religious beliefs about the continuation of life beyond death. Mbiti’s explanation has summed up the reasons Awgu and Igbo people in particular and Africans in general engage in marriage. They believe in the Igbo saying of *A fù nwa e cheta nna* “the sight of a son reminds us of the father”. The ulterior motive of every Igbo marriage is to beget children. That is why during marriage ceremony, the couple would receive the blessings from their parents and well-wishers. The summary of the prayers is usually fertility of the womb or procreation. Both Male and female children are usually prayed for. Secondly, Mbiti made mention of making libation. In Igbo culture it is believed that death does not end the existence of a person. The belief is that when a person dies, he goes to the world beyond and is now regarded as an ancestor which is called *Ndì Ichie* by Igbo people. During festive period, especially during *Ilo Mmuo* festival, children remember their dead ancestors, by making libation to them. This makes the Igbo man strive to leave behind children especially males that will make libation to him after death. It is this notion that made Okonkwo in Achebe (1958) lament that should Nwoye join the church group, when he dies, he will be waiting in vain at the spirit world for him to receive his own food (libation from Nwoye) and Okonkwo threatened to deal with Nwoye .



Writing about marriage and its nature in procreation in Igbo land, Basden (1921:68) says that “celibacy is an impossible prospect in Igbo life. Unmarried persons of either sex, except in special cases, are objects of derision, and to be childless is the greatest calamity that can befall a woman. Hence, a very high value is set upon marriage and procreation”. To avoid this calamity mentioned by Basden, childless Awgu women are motivated to contract marriage with younger women with the consent of their husbands: this means that when such women bear children, the children now belong to both women and bear the name of their husbands. The intent of this is that the first woman does not want her husband’s name to be erased, and so, she funds the marriage of another woman for him. Corroborating why the Igbo people value marriage, Ubesie (1987) explains that it is a thing of shame in every household that has grown up daughters if none of them is ever approached for marriage proposal. According to him, at a certain age, a daughter is no longer addressed as “whose daughter” but as “whose wife”. This may be the reason which leads some girls accepting to be minor women instead of them staying in their fathers’ house to be derided by people especially their sisters-in-law who always mock them with this scathing remark in Igbo: “*Nna ga-alu*” which means father will marry.

Further on this important institution, Ogbalu (1979) asserts that marriage is joining together of two different families to become one. This is why, when a man searches for a wife, his family members try as much as possible to get answers to their inquiries concerning the bride and her family lineage. Such inquiries range from history of premature death, existence of chronic illness, like leprosy, traits of envy, disposition for theft, inveterate false witnessing, inherited barrenness and other miscellaneous anti-social acts. Also, the family of the intending bride enquires about the groom’s side.

Mbiti (1969) explains marriage as a complex affair with economic, social and religious aspects which often overlap with the family so that they cannot be separated from one another. He says that marriage is a duty, a requirement from corporate society and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate. Otherwise, he who does not participate in it is a curse to the community, he is a rebel, and a law breaker, and he is not only abnormal but ‘under-human’. Failure to get married under normal circumstances means that the person concerned has rejected society and society rejects him in return. Adding to the name calling of a person who refuses to get married, Onwuzuruigbo (1990:8) observes: “an unmarried Igbo adult is called by many derogatory names. He is called *Oke-Okporo* (male woman), *Akalogheli* or *Okeikpa*. The unmarried woman is called *Ndabili* all meaning good for nothing”. In Awgu, an unmarried adult both male and female is called *eghirigha* meaning good for nothing. When they die, they are buried in the evil forest. A knife is used to cut open their pubic region; this is called *ima mma la ehe* in Awgu. This is to tell them to procreate in their next world, as they did not procreate in this world, they did not achieve anything meaningful in Awgu culture. In Awgu culture, anybody that dies without leaving behind someone to remember him is adjudged to have failed in his mission on earth. They prefer bearing children to wealth acquisition and this is why they give such names as *Nwakaego* ( a child is greater than money), *Nwabueze* (child is king), *Nwabueku* (child is wealth), *Nwadiuru* (child is profit), *Uruakanwa* (no profit is greater than child), *etc.*

Also Mbiti (1969) equates marriage with religious obligations by means of which the individual contributes the seed of life towards man’s struggle against the loss of original immortality. A person who, therefore, has no descendants in effect quenches the fire of life, and becomes forever dead since his line of physical continuation is blocked, if he does not get married and bear children. Unfortunate, therefore, is a man or woman who has nobody to remember him/her

after physical death. To lack someone close who keeps the departed in their personal immortality is the worst misfortune and punishment that any person could suffer. To die without getting married and without children is to be completely cut off from human society, to become disconnected, to become an outcast and to lose all links with mankind. This is why a childless couple in Awgu is advised to engage in gynaegamy. Through the new wife, the family will have children who will ensure continuous links with the society when they might have joined their ancestors.

In her own view, McDonnell (2003:79) sees marriage as the “legal union of a man and a woman”. She says that “marriage is a worldwide practise, shaped by state rules, tradition and religion. Marriage laws take cognizance of the prevailing customs, values, religious beliefs, and local socio-economic dictates of the society”. What McDonnell says may be the reason Awgu people’s tradition and beliefs made them engage in gynaegamy if childlessness occurs in a marriage or the couple has only female children. And the law of the land recognizes the children as legal children to the family whether the husband of the major woman is the biological father or not.

### **2.1.2 Gynaegamy**

Gynaegamy has been referred to as female husband marriage, woman marriage, woman-woman marriage and woman-to-woman marriage by various writers. These names mean the same thing, which is marriage contracted between two women. There are no sexual desires or attractions between the two women who engage in it. That is why gynaegamy is quite different from same-sex marriage which involves sexual gratifications of the two partners. The woman who contracts gynaegamy is in need of children. Uchendu (1995) coined the word “gynaegamy” to describe the marriage contract between a major woman and a minor woman in Igbo land. He explains gynaegamy as a type of marriage where a woman may marry another woman to raise offspring for her husband’s

lineage and that this type of marriage occurs only among patrilineal Igbo group. This is what Awgu people do. A childless widow or woman with only female children marries another woman in the name of her husband to bear an heir for her husband's lineage.

On the other hand, gynaegamy is derived from two Greek words 'gynae' and 'gamy'. 'Gynea' according to Mish (2004:558) is a Greek word which means woman. Also Mish (2004:514) sees 'gamy' as marriage or union for propagation or reproduction. This means that gynaegamy is a woman marriage for reproduction and propagation of human race. In Africa, Igbo land and Awgu, a married sonless or childless woman marries a younger woman who is adjudged to be fertile to give them children. This is done with the consent of her husband for propagation of his patriline.

Ngige, Ondigi & Wilson (2008) explain gynaegamy as a marriage contract between two females and is distinct from lesbian couples. They say that gynaegamy is often initiated by a middle aged woman (major woman). The partner is usually a younger woman (minor woman) who has the characteristic, such as reproductive capacity and physical energy. This work agrees with the above assertion because this is what is practised by Awgu people. A middle aged woman who has passed child-bearing age contracts marriage with a younger woman to bear children for her in the name of her husband. Affirming the above ideas, Ezeh (2017:86) says that

Gynaegamy is a patriarchal union technically for the obvious reason that the woman marries in the name of her own husband lineage. There is no record of a female celibate or other marital status marrying gynaemically in favour of her own agnate.

This means that gynaegamy in Igbo land is only for women who are married and not for spinsters.

In some other parts of Igbo land as observed by Amadiume (1987) and Nwoko (2012) wealthy women contract gynaegamy to show affluence or ease themselves of domestic chores and as

paraphernalia of title taking. But in all these, the older woman contracts the marriage for her husband's lineage.

Writing on gynaegamy in Igbo land, Thomas (1914:83) note. "That the Igbo term for the female husband is *nwunye di* and the wives of the female husbands as *nwunye okporo*. This distinction was to show that the roles involved in woman-woman marriage were distinguishable from dominant marriage form". In Awgu, major woman is known as *oke nwai* (great woman) while minor woman is known as *nnwe mgbafuta* (rescuer wife). This means that the major woman is great because she is a wealthy woman to be able to pay the exorbitant bride price demanded from her. The minor woman comes to rescue the major woman and her husband from their childlessness or sonless situation which is seen as a curse. Also, Onwuejeogwu (1975:286) believes that

Woman-to-woman marriage is a marriage arranged between two women. One of the women has the rights of a pater over any children borne by the other woman, who cohabits with a lover or lovers. The children belong to the kin groups of the female pater.

In Awgu the children belong to the husband of the major woman in whose name the marriage was contracted as no spinster or divorced woman is allowed to engage in gynaegamy in Awgu. The woman who foots the bill of the marriage will inherit her husband's properties through the sons that will result from the marriage, be it from the major woman's husband or an outsider.

Also Samuel (2006) states that gynaegamy is called *Nyumba Ntobhu* or 'House of Women' in Tanzania and it is a centuries old tradition. He describes it as a situation where a woman is permitted to marry a younger woman if she is childless and widowed or her husband chooses to leave her because she is childless. The younger woman is then able to take a male partner and potentially give birth to male heirs on the older woman's behalf. In Awgu culture, children born by

the minor woman belong to the husband of the major woman as women who separate from their husbands in Awgu are not allowed by custom to engage in gynaegamy.

On the other hand O'Brien (1977:110) lists a number of societies which have practised gynaegamy:

By region they are: 1) West Africa (mainly Nigeria) –Yoruba, Ekiti, Bunu, Akoko, Yagba, Nupe, Igbo, Ijaw and Fon (or Benninois); 2) South Africa (especially the Transvaal)- Venda, Lovedu, Pedi, Hurutshe, Zulu,Sotho, Phalaborwa, Narene, Koni and Tawana; 3) East Africa- Kuria, Iregi, Kenya, Suba, Simbiti, Ngorme, Gusii, Kipsigis, Nandi, Kikuyu, and Luo; and 4) North-East Africa - Sudan-Nuer, Dinka, and Shilluk. In addition, others have noted the practise among the Kalabari of West Africa and the Kamba of East Africa.

This list shows that many of the African countries practise gynaegamy including Nigeria which Igbo culture area is part of. So, gynaegamy is not limited to Igbo people of Nigeria.

Gynaegamy according to Nyanungo (2014) is a woman who is legally married to another woman. Putting it the other way he says that it could also mean where a woman marries another woman. He further says that it is important to note that gynaegamy in this context is not the same as lesbian marriage. The nature of the relationship between the women married to each other in these traditional women marriage arrangements is legal and social but not sexual. Thus, while woman-woman marriage is same-sex marriage, it is not lesbian marriage because there is typically no sexual attraction or involvement between the major woman and the minor woman. The researcher disagrees with Nyanungo on the part he says that gynaegamy is same-sex marriage because same-sex marriage means that the major woman is contracting a marriage with a minor woman for her sexual satisfaction. In Igbo land, the children from this marriage bear the name of the major woman's husband and culturally these children are referred to as the children of the major woman's husband, whether he is living or late.

### **2.1.2.1 Gynaegamy in Other Parts of the World**

The researcher observed that it is not only in African continent that gynaegamy exists; it also existed in other parts of the world especially in the olden days. Kriger (1993:395) says:

In the region of the Lamai Emirate of Dubai at the turn of this century, female husbands often gained profit by sending their wives on extended trading trips. Many wives, while they are gone, would bear children that are legally belonging to the female husband. As the children reached the age of five or six (usually the age when the children are able to begin working), the female husband would claim them, whereupon the biological father would often pay her to transfer her paternity rights to him. It has been noted that female husbands were known to generate large profits from such encounters.

This is not the intention of Awgu women that engage in this observance. Even though one of the reasons they indulge in this type of marriage is economic gain, it is to get access to their husband's land property through these sons born to them by their wives and not to exchange the children for money.

In the bible, there is what can be assumed to be gynaegamy. Kanachikuzhy (2012) notes that when God shut the womb of Abram's wife, Sara said to Abram, "The lord has kept me from having children. Why don't you sleep with my slave? Perhaps she can have a child for me". Abram slept with Hagar and she became pregnant and bore Ishmael for Abram. Also in Kanachikuzhy (2012:55), Rachael said to Jacob: "Here is my slave Bilhah, sleep with her, so that she can have a child for me. In this way I can become a mother through her". Jacob slept with Bilhah and she bore a son to Jacob. Rachael exclaimed: "God has judged in my favour; He has heard my prayer and has given me a son". In Awgu the bride price of the slave girl will be paid to any one chosen to stand in as the father

if she is bought from faraway place. This they do, because paying of bride price makes a child born by a wife become a legitimate child of the person that paid the bride price.

#### **2.1.2.2 Gynaegamy in African Continent**

Gynaegamy exists in many African societies. This may be why some lesbians are citing gynaegamy practise in Africa as gay marriage. Gynaegamy practise in Africa, Igbo land and Awgu town is devoid of sexual attraction between the two women that engage in it. It is an avenue through which a childless woman redeems her status as a mother.

Writing on gynaegamy in African continent, Herskovits (1937:335) observes that “in most cases, the wife bears children for the female husband. All ceremonial aspects of these marriages are observed, bride wealth is paid to the girl’s father, and all rules of divorce in the society apply”. The children that are born in this type of marriage in Awgu belong to the husband just like in monogamous or polygamous marriages. Any child born in a marriage in Awgu belongs to the man that paid the bride price of the major woman who contracts marriage with the minor woman that gave birth to that child no matter who is the biological father. In addition to what Herskovits says, Oboler (1980:79) says that in Nandi in Kenya, the female husband is socially considered to assume the conceptual male role upon marriage to her wife. This is done in order to avoid the confusing situation which would arise in a patrilineal and patrilocal system whereby women have no right to land or inherit property. By conceptualizing the female husband as a man, the community recognizes that she possesses what are traditionally considered to be male rights, particularly in situations where property and inheritance are involved. This happens in Awgu but it is only in daughter-wife marriage where the daughter is retained as a son that she can assume the role of a man in order to retain her father’s property after her father’s death.



Still on gynaegamy, Herskovits (1937:336) says that “Nuer female husbands pay a male outsider, usually in form of cattle, to procreate with their wives, aware that if children are produced in the name of the deceased husband, she will be revered by his family”. Moving further, Herskovits (1937:336) made bold to say that “among the Nuer, the Dinka and the Kamba, widows often contract woman-to-woman. In such cases, a widow’s wife produces children in honour of the female husband’s deceased husband”. This is what Awgu women do, if their husbands are dead and they have passed the age of childbearing, they will contract marriage with a minor woman to procreate for their dead husbands. If the woman is still in her premenopausal age before her husband’s demise, she is advised to look for a decent male friend (this Awgu people call *uzzi*) and bear children especially male child for her late husband.

Another person that writes about gynaegamy in Africa is Huber (1969:748). He avers that “Simiti female husband often chooses her wife from her brother’s house. As her bride wealth helped to establish his home, he is often more lenient about the amount of bride wealth he demands”. The major women in Awgu do not choose their bride from their father’s house, it may be from a far village or from another nearby town to avoid gossips that may mar the marriage. Supporting Huber, Strobel (1982:121) maintains that

The matrilineal Lovedu grants every woman the right to a daughter-in-law from the home which was established through the use of her bride wealth. That is, “the brother uses his sister’s bride wealth cattle to obtain a wife; the sister is then entitled to her brother’s daughter”. Normally, this exchange would result in the well-known form of cross-cousin marriage. However, a woman does not lose her right to a daughter-in-law if she has no son; woman-to-woman marriage ensures her this right.

Awgu people do not chose their bride from their father's house, as obtained in Simiti and Lovedu according to Huber and Strobel respectively. They chose their bride from other families in the village. Equally all the children born by the wife of the female husband belong to her husband as her own children would have been, had she given birth to children and not to the lineage of the major woman. Contrasting the above ideas Hakansson (1985:97-98) says:

Unlike the Simbiti and Lovedu, in Kenya, the Gusii female husband does not choose a daughter-in-law to marry from her brother's home. The sonless woman, however, uses the bride wealth of one of her daughters to marry a woman on behalf of her non-existent son. The married couple refers to each other as "mother-in-law and daughter-in law" and their children are considered to be female husband's grandchildren.

This can be said to be what is happening in Awgu but not all the time. Where there are only female children, the family can retain the first daughter to become daughter-wife after necessary marriage rites have been performed. This is called *Nhachi nwaanyi*. If the daughter insists on getting married to a man, her bride price will be used in contracting marriage for a younger wife for her father and her mother will become a major woman.

However, Obbo (1976:375) avers that "among Kamba widows, the first child born to the widow's wife will belong to the lineage of the widow's deceased husband. Subsequent children born to the widow's wife may be affiliated with the widow's lineage, thereby giving her the prestige associated with having an heir". All the children that result from gynaegamy in Awgu belong to the husband of the major woman in whose name the marriage was contracted. This marriage is solely for the sustenance of family lineage of the man who could not bear children especially male child with his wife.

According to Krige (1974:11), female husband is “the institution whereby a woman marries another woman and assumes control over her and her offspring”. This is not so in Awgu town: a woman contracts marriage with a younger woman but it is in her husband’s name. She gets the woman married for one purpose, which is for procreation, to get children or male children if she does not have one. If her husband is still alive, she marries the wife for him in order to retain her husband’s name through the male children that will result from that marriage and equally have a share of her husband’s inheritance. Even if the husband is dead, she gives money to her husband’s kinsmen to marry a wife for her on behalf of her late husband. She fends for the woman and assumes the role of the husband and control over her.

Also Mackenzie (1990) explains that among the Kikuyu of Kenya, a widow enters gynaegamy in order to increase the lineage of a deceased husband. The widow gains social status by becoming a female husband in order to add members to her dead husband’s lineage. She is to choose between levirate and gynaegamy. Many widows choose to become a major woman because it gives them control over land. Awgu people practise this but only if the intending major woman does not have a male child. Even if it is one male child that a couple has the wife will not be allowed to contract marriage with a younger woman because there is an heir that will continue the lineage. Also they do not engage in levirate marriage because it is a taboo for a sibling to sleep with his brother’s wife in Awgu whether he is alive or late. The punishment is life exile from the community. Supporting Mackenzie, Greene (1998:405) observes:

Among the Lovedu, childless female husband had no status seeking intention outside the realm of the marriage. Because she was unable to fulfill the expectations attached to her female role, she becomes executor of that position. She marries a woman in order to assume

the unfulfilled portion of her gender role, thereby securing her place in her husband's lineage.

It was possible, though rare, for a wealthy woman to become a female husband.

The researcher agrees with what Greene says. In Awgu it is assumed that a woman fails in her role whenever childlessness occurs in marriage. This is because, as they say, it is the woman that possesses the womb where a child is conceived, developed and birthed. It is, therefore, the wife's role to fill the homestead with children. When she fails in this noble function she has to seek the assistance of a minor woman to bail her out of the ugly situation through gynaegamy. This may be the reason they refer the minor woman as *nnwe mgbafuta* (rescuer wife) and the marriage as *ilu nnwe mgbafuta* (rescue marriage).

Corroborating Greene, Kimutu in Cadigan(1998) says that among the Kamba of Kenya, a barren woman is a "social disgrace, she is a humiliation" as long as her husband is potent and fertile. A barren wife can resolve her unfortunate social position by engaging in gynaegamy. In such cases, the wife bears children for the major woman and brings honour and glory to the barren woman. The major woman in this situation also achieves prestige for contracting marriage with a minor woman and obtaining children. The researcher agrees with Kimutu. A barren woman in Awgu is adjudged to be a curse. This is why she is denied access to her husband's land properties if her husband dies. If she engages in gynaegamy and bears children, her status will change from barrenness to fertility. She will now be addressed as mama Obinna or mama Chike. She may assume the role of a man if her husband is dead, by providing for the family, but she will never be seen as a man in Awgu as she is still the wife of her husband.

Kimutu in Cadigan (1998) further explains that among the Kamba in East Africa, when a woman marries an "*iweto*" (a wife), she becomes highly esteemed, respected, influential and raised above other women because she virtually assumes the status of a (male) husband. Also Cadigan

(1998) explains that in Gusii, Lovedu and Simbiti which are agricultural communities, they often recognize a woman's need for a daughter-in-law to help with domestic chores and farm work. This recognition is reflected in a form of woman-to-woman marriage whereby the female husband marries a "daughter-in-law". This is closely related to the motivations caused by barrenness. Women without sons would pay bride wealth for a girl and refer to the process as marrying a "daughter-in-law" for the "house". This form of woman-to-woman gives a sonless female husband the opportunity to become the head of a "complete" house. Among the patrilineal Gusii and Simbiti, it also enables the major woman to expel the stigma attached to her because she failed to bear a male heir. Gynaegamy in Awgu is motivated by the needs of the vacancy of an heir to the compound. This can be due to barrenness of the wife or sterility of her husband. These women do not assume the role of family head unless their husbands are dead before they contract marriage with minor women.

Supporting Cadigan's assertion about gynaegamy and how it helps in agricultural communities to retain their means of production, Carmengo (2018) avers that within the Nandi society property and livestock are held and managed exclusively by man. Therefore, a son is needed to transfer ownership of the land and livestock from one generation to the next. In instances when a woman has no sons, she marries a younger woman in the hope that she may bear a male child in order to provide an heir for her assets. Sons are also needed to continue the family name; else the family name will die thereby closing the patriline of the man.

Also Greene (1998:395) avers:

This practise, whereby a woman could legally marry one or more women, had two general forms. The first form existed if a woman created and controlled her own economic surplus. She could then pay the bride wealth necessary to marry a wife, in the same manner as a man. In the second form, a woman married another woman in order to augment kinship ties (e.g., a

woman marries her brother's daughter and further strengthens the ties between a uterine brother and sister, etc.)

Awgu people do not practise this; they only marry wives if they are childless or lack male children.

In his own opinion, Sitati, (2016:2) states: "among the Nandi and Kipsigis, a woman who has passed the age of child-bearing, and who has no sons, may enter into a form of marriage with another woman. This may be done during the lifetime of her husband, but it is more usual after his death". Awgu people observe this: they must have passed the age of child bearing before they are allowed to engage in gynaegamy.

### **2.1.2.3 Gynaegamy in Nigeria**

Gynaegamy existed in many parts of Nigeria other than Igbo land. It existed in Yoruba land, Sokoto Caliphate and Kalabari Kingdom. Herskovits (1937:336) made us understand that

Among the Igbo land and Kalabari communities of Southern Nigeria, barren women have also been noted to enter into woman-to-woman marriage. The female husband gives her wife to her own husband or his kin in order to procreate; an outsider would never be brought in as a lover. Often the female husband's wife is a purchased slave.

This is what Awgu people do but if the husband is late the major woman is allowed to choose an outsider preferably her husband's age mate for procreation.

Kruger (1993) states that female textile traders in the Sokoto Caliphate in West Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries employed gynaegamy to advance their own economic status. As females accumulated wealth through trading, they often invested it by taking wives. The institution of women-to-women marriage was most likely used to gain control over the labour of children and wives with the aim of producing textiles at low costs. Women of the Sokoto Caliphate

were engaged in weaving and spinning and were able to trade freely and to keep all profit. This work agrees with Kriger because Awgu women indulge in gynaegamy to gain economic status. This they do by gaining access to land because they are farmers. Equally when children are born from the minor woman they also help in farm work. Nwoko (2012:78) notes that the “Yoruba of the South Western Nigeria simply employ it to keep a loving and faithful widow who desired to stay with her in-laws even when there were no males in the family to keep her. In that case, she was acquired by any of the surviving female relations of the late husband. The woman is not allowed any sexual relationship within or outside”.

#### **2.1.2.4 Gynaegamy in Igbo Land**

Gynaegamy exists in many Igbo communities of the Igbo culture area which Awgu is one of them. Researchers have written widely on this topic.

According to Uchendu (1965:50), “gynaegamy” is a recognized Igbo institution by which women can validate status in the society. Under this system, women ‘marry’ in their own right by paying the bride wealth and have the right to dispose of their rights in their brides”. This means that the right of the major woman to inherit his husband’s properties is transferred to the bride so that when she bears children, the son would inherit the properties as the major woman would have done has it been that she has a son. Moving further, Uchendu (1995) says that in a gynaegamous marriage, the seed raiser or genitor is different from the social father. He argues that before science advanced to the stage that yielded test-tube babies and gave us surrogate mothers, Igbo civilization had made it possible for wealthy and respectable Igbo women who are childless to bear legal children through gynaegamy. Supporting Uchendu, Amadiume (1987:72) opines that traditionally, “among the Igbo of Nnobi, rich women were able to become female husbands in order to free themselves from

domestic responsibilities. Their wives would perform all household chores while the female husband used the extra time she gained to devote her energies to other money-earning ventures”. This is not so in Awgu. They engage in gynaegamy for only one purpose which is to bear children or a male child if a male child is not in the family and equally help the major woman in household chores.

Amadiume (1987:7) explains that... “Interpretations of woman-woman marriage as lesbianism would be totally inapplicable, shocking and offensive to Nnobi women, since the strong bonds and support between them do not imply lesbian sexual practise.” She disagrees strongly with those Western lesbians who have cited this African practise to justify their choices of sexual alternatives which have roots and meanings in the West. Corroborating Amadiume, Uchendu (2007) maintains that woman marriage in Igbo land does not connote the existence of sexual relationship among women lesbianism. In Awgu the researcher observes that no sexual relationship exists between the major woman and the minor woman. Their relationship is like mother and daughter.

Also Greene (1998:404) says... “Female husbands among the Igbo were childless women, wealthy women, and male daughters. Evidence suggests that the childless woman’s gender position among the patrilineal and patrilocal Igbo was generally altered the least by her role as a female husband”. This means that a major woman is still a woman because her contracting marriage does not change her role as the wife of her husband. Lending his voice to this assertion about gynaegamy and what it is in Igbo land, Nwoko, (2012:78) says that...

What will certainly remain true is that the practise of woman to woman marriage in Igbo land did not involve sexual relationship between the couples. Instead, it was a traditional way of legalizing what ordinarily would have amounted to the birth of illegitimate children, who traditionally would have been denied inheritance. Therefore, woman to woman marriages were not actually contracted in response to the sexual emotions or attractions between the



couples, but simply an instrument for the preservation and extension of patriarchy and its traditions.

This means that many of the minor women are young girls who were put in the family way out of wed-lock. They are usually the target bride especially if the husband is adjudged to be impotent. This child who would have been born as an illegitimate child to the girl's family would now become a legitimate child of the husband of the major woman.

On who will be responsible for copulating with the minor woman for childbearing if the husband of the major woman is late, Uchendu (2007) observes that in parts of Abia State, such as Umuahia, minor women are allowed to choose men of their choice for sexual gratification but in Nsukka and its environs, it is major woman who selects the man to do the honours. The man must not be of questionable character. In Awgu, it is the custom that one of the age mates of the husband of the major woman will be selected for procreation. Supporting the above ideas of Uchendu, Igbanoi (2013:1) avers that:

Under the custom for instance, a woman who has been married for several years without a child is permitted to choose a young fertile bride, pay her bride price and 'marry' her with the full compliments of a properly traditional wedding. The new bride would then do the bidding of her female "husband", which is essentially to procreate through her husband. This is said to be common amongst the Onitsha people of Anambra State.

Still on this face saving cultural practises of the Igbo nation, Nwoko (2012:76) says... "In Osumari area, a titled woman took a wife, which was the paraphernalia of her status, in some cases more than one". This is not the same in Awgu. A woman does not get another woman married into her family unless she is childless or she does not have a male child. Explaining further, Nwoko (2012) says that

among Mbaise Igbo, the female children of a family can collectively pay the bride price of a younger woman after the demise of their father in the name of their elder sister so that the new bride could procreate and raise male children to preserve the family lineage. The Awgu people of Igbo land do not practise this type of marriage; rather, one of the female children will be installed as daughter-wife (*idagbe*) to bear male children for her father.

On woman in Igbo land and what it means Uchendu (2007) explains that there is a difference between a woman marrying a wife for her husband and marrying for herself. If she is marrying for her husband, she will accept and treat the new wife as a co-wife. The children born from the marriage will be strictly her husband's. Where she is marrying for herself, even if the husband accepts to take care of the sexual needs of her wife, he has no claim to her and her children will remain jointly owned by the two women in the relationship. The researcher disagrees with Uchendu on her second idea where she said that the children in this marriage are jointly owned by the women; whereas the husband does not have claim on the children. In Awgu, it is only a monogamous family that its homestead is threatened that gynaegamy is allowed. This means that gynaegamy was approved because they wanted the husband to have children, especially male child of his own, through the minor woman. A major woman in Awgu contracts marriage with a minor woman in their husbands' name. Ele (2016) states that in Igbo culture, the woman does not marry her fellow woman for herself, it is for a man who is either alive or dead, who is the husband. The children born under this arrangement bear the name of the man even when he had died. He further says that a woman who "married" another woman has the motive behind her actions, as the very essence and significance of marriage in Igbo culture is for family and lineage continuity. This is the reason the Igbo give such names like *Afamefuna*, *Obiechina* and *Amaechina*. The Researcher agrees with Ele as this assertion explains in totality the reason Awgu people engage in gynaegamy.

### **2.1.2.5 Reasons for Engaging in Gynaegamy**

There are several reasons why African women in general and Igbo women in particular engage in gynaegamy. From what has been reviewed in this chapter it is clear that it is for inheritance matters that motivates African women in general to contract this marriage. In Awgu, this marriage is indulged in because wives and female children are denied access to land properties if their father died before them.

Herskovits (1939) says that in Igbo and Kalabari culture areas, barren women enter into gynaegamy primarily to increase their economic status. If a woman has no male children, she has no claim on her husband's property upon his death and may have to leave the land on which she is likely to have lived for decades. Offspring from a gynaegamy guarantee the female husband secure economic standing by maintaining her rights to occupy property which is inherited by her children.

Obbo (1976) states that wealth possessed by a major woman also motivate women to agree to become the wives of other women. He says that many Kamba wives of major women consented to gynaegamy in order to avoid starvation or poverty which is ravaging them in their father's house.

Obboler (1980:76) opines: Among the Nandi, women often express their opinion that it is far better to be married to a wealthy woman than to a poor man. Furthermore, female husbands tend to give more bride wealth than male husbands because of the anxiety and difficulty involved in finding a willing and suitable bride.

Greene (1998) states that positional succession is useful in understanding the institution of gynaegamy among the Igbo, the Fon and the Lovedu people. This is because positional succession whereby the successor inherited the predecessor's position in the social system included the status, rights, and authority of the predecessor. Succession assured the perpetual existence of the lineage structures among these three named nations.

Cardigan (1998) says that in many African societies, a woman's traditional social obligation is to get married and procreate. A barren woman is often considered a failure and is ostracised. Through gynaegamy, a barren woman is able to gain social prestige and her husband's favour.

Another reason is to indicate or accrue wealth. Cardigan (1998) also states that in many societies where the institution of gynaegamy exists, wealthy women who have enough property may become female husbands. These women may be single or already married to men. The female husband may take a wife for the sake of gaining public recognition and esteem. Wealthy women, just like their male counterparts, marry women to increase their social status and as a means of investing their wealth.

#### **2.1.2.6 Constraints of Gynaegamy**

Huber (1969) opines that the occurrence of gynaegamy among the Simbiti may decrease and its importance may also decline with time as medical advances may reduce infant mortality and barrenness. In addition, the increasing trends towards monetary economy may alter inheritance rules. Going further, he says that the acceptance of gynaegamy may lessen as the minor women are increasingly taking advantage of their sexual freedom and behaving more like 'prostitutes'. Also the impact of Christianity and Western education may have an effect on gynaegamy as it works to reduce the cases of polygamy.

Uchendu (2007) says that the relationship indirectly encourages a discreet form of polygamy with its entire social ill and some abuse of women. She says that it is also an avenue for unbridled prostitution among young women who are minor women. It was discovered that it is not in all cases that major women carefully regulate the sexual activities of their youthful 'wives'. Though, some minor women are allowed to meet any man they want as long as they have children for their

husband. Giving one woman access to more than one man promotes the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which has claimed millions of lives in African.

### 2.1.3 Culture

Culture in a lay man's definition is the totality of a people's way of life, their language, food, house pattern, dancing pattern and musical instrument, marriage styles and beliefs. Kroeber (1953) sees culture as the mass of learned and transmitted reactions, habits, techniques, ideas, values and the behaviour they induce. Lending support to this, Nwala (1985:8) asserts that

*Omenala* (culture) refers to Igbo attitude to life and their basic conceptions about nature, society and life. It embraces the whole system of civilization of the Igbo in both theory and practise. Indeed it contains, within itself, the principles for propagating and protecting Igbo traditional civilization and way of life. Myths, rituals, traditional system of initiating, educating and socializing the young into the traditional way of life, and sanction, were the means of propagating and protecting Igbo traditional civilization.

What this means is that every aspect of Igbo man's life is embedded in his culture. And this makes gynaegamy part and parcel of this culture. Corroborating Nwala, Bali (1997:120) says that culture of a society "implies its general way of life. It implies a general behaviour pattern of a society. Thus, their customs, beliefs, language, ways of thinking, feeling and acting constitute the culture of a society. Culture refers to all that man has acquired as a member of society".

Tylor (1891) acknowledges that culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society. Also Leach, in Onwuejeogwu (1975:6), believes that "culture emphasizes the

component of accumulated resources, immaterial as well as material, which the people inherit, employ, transmute, and transmit". Gynaegamy in Awgu is a culture inherited and transmitted from their forebears. They employed it when a homestead was about to lie desolate. On his own part Sogolo (1997) says that every culture operates its own perception of objects and its own concept of reality. There exist in each a division between the world of common sense that is between the realities, or direct perception and experience through the human senses and the reality, beyond that which is based on our systematic construction of what we perceive.

Also Taylor in Bali (1997) asserts that culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. He goes further to explain that capabilities here imply language, techniques for making and using various tools and capability of thinking. Whatever man inherits as a part of his society in the form of ideas, habits and values constitutes his culture. This means that gynaegamy is Awgu culture as it is one of the things they inherited from their ancestors. Elaborating the above, Nwosu and Kalu (1978:3) aver:

Culture refers to the gamut of the knowledge, beliefs, customs, traditions and skills that are available to the members of a society. Cultural practises are man-made rather than God-given. They are designs, prescriptions and responses, which are deliberately fashioned to guide all aspects of a people's life.

The researcher accepts this definition because the Igbo culture prescribes that when a couple is childless, or the man dies without children or sons, the wife should contract marriage with another woman in her husband's name to bear children for the family lineage. Explaining further, Nwosu and Kalu (1978:3) aver... "Culture is therefore a distinctive and transmissible network of symbols

which characterizes a designated aggregate of people”. In other words, culture is transmissible from one generation to another as it does not end in one generation.

Odumegwu (2006:155) agrees with the above, and adds that “culture is the cumulative of what makes man human as well as what makes a society or a people distinct. So, culture is easily defined as the way of life of a people”. In addition to what Odumegwu says, Uwandu and Nwankwo (2006:63) opine that

Culture is the complete way of life of a people, the shared attitudes, values, goals, and practises that characterize a group, their customs, art, literature, religion, philosophy. It also includes their institutions and their organizations, their material goods - foods, clothing, building, tools and machines.

The Awgu people’s philosophy is that no patriline should go into extinction, that is why they device a means to sustain family pedigree through gynaegamy if a married woman fails to bear male children in her marriage. Therefore, gynaegamy is the way of the life of Awgu people. It is acceptable to them and children borne from this union are legitimate in Awgu.

Throwing more light on what culture is Neibuhr (1956:31) writes that culture is the “sum of all that has spontaneously arisen for the advancement of material life and as an expression of spiritual and moral life - all social interactions, technology, art, literature and science. This means that culture of people arises from their material needs”. In this case, gynaegamy arises because the Igbo in general and Awgu people in particular do not want their patrilineal homestead to be forgotten, that is their material need and that is why they include this type of marriage in their culture. Still on material need of the society and how to achieve it through culture, O’Dea (1966:7) views culture as a more or less integral body of knowledge, pseudo-knowledge, beliefs and values which define the human situation and the condition for the members of the society.

Iwe (ND: 84) sees culture as

an aggregate and complex concept and the way of life of a people- a way of life that reflects their distinctive genius and spirit, their fundamental character or ethos, their hierarchy of values and values orientation, world-view, institutions and achievements in the various spheres of human activities: legal and literary, artistic, aesthetic and scientific, socio-economic and industrial, religious and spiritual, philosophical and technological. This means that all man's endeavor in this world is enshrined in his culture.

That is why gynaegamy which Awgu people practise is their religious and philosophical belief. They believe that no homestead should lie desolate without someone preferably a male child who will make libations for the fathers of such homestead.

### **2.1.3.1 Igbo Culture**

Writing on Igbo culture, Nwala (1985:8) opines that “*Omenala* Igbo was thus a community enterprise; it was an ideology which emerged from their natural and social environment, especially from their mode of production, the basis on which Igbo traditional society was organized”. The Igbo people's mode of economic activities is through farming prior to the coming of the Europeans. They farm their land and produce their food. Food crops are cultivated on land. This is why every Igbo man values his land and is ready to die for it. Land among the Igbo is owned by the family. It is hereditary as it is passed down from father to son. Girls are not allowed in Awgu culture to inherit land properties. This is because Awgu culture emphasises that girls are born to be married to other people's homestead. This is why a woman who has only female children indulges in gynaegamy in order to inherit land properties through male child that will come from this marriage.



On the other hand, Odinkemelu (2013) states that Igbo people have a way of life (*E jiri mara ndị Igbo*) that is peculiar to them and that gives them particular identity. He lists those peculiar things as the culture, moral and religious attitudes of the Igbo people. Gynaegamy is a way of life of Awgu people that is peculiar to them and some other parts of the Igbo culture areas that practise this type of marriage. Therefore, people who do not know what it is should stop interpreting it to mean what it does not represent.

#### **2.1.4 Patriline**

A patriline (father line) is a person's father, and additional ancestors, as traced only through males. Patriline is an aggregate of patrilineages. It is a word formed from patri + line. The word originated in 1950's and was found in Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Patriline according to the free dictionary.com is a line of descent traced through the paternal side of a family. Mish (2004:909) sees patrilineal as relating to, based on, or tracing descent through the paternal line. Patrilineality also known as the male line, the spear side or agnatic kinship, is a common kinship system in which an individual's family membership derives from or is recorded through his or her father's lineage. It generally involves the inheritance of property, rights, names or titles by persons treated through male kin. According to Onwuejeogwu (1975), patrilineal (agnatic) descent is the reckoning exclusively descent through males. He says that "pater" means father. He further says that lineage is a descent group in which the successive genealogical connections are assumed and traced between living members and the founding ancestors. A lineage may be patrilineal, that is, a patrilineage or matrilineal, that is, a matrilineage

Onwuejeogwu (1997:7) says that in Igbo culture area, "the Igbo live in patrilineage, (*umunna*), ranked from the minimal to the maximal, so none of them will want his own lineage to be

wiped out”. If any lineage is threatened through lack of male children or childlessness, especially if the situation is as a result of the man’s sterility, the wife is advised to engage in gynaegamy in order to bear an heir to that family, so that the lineage of her husband does not go into extinction which means - *ka obi ghara ichi* in Igbo. Nmah (2003), writing on patrilineal, explains that the Igbo is a society with a strong patrilineal emphasis and the whole society is classified into a number of agnatic groups (*Umunna*). He further explains that “therefore, rights over the use of land depend primarily on agnatic descent. It is to one’s lineage he rears his children and gives them their stake in life”. This shows that for one to inherit and use land in some Igbo communities the person must come from the lineage of those that own the land except in the case of leasing out land to others for planting of their crops. This reason makes it important for every couple to bear children, especially male children, as the patriarchy practised in some Igbo land recognizes only inheritance through primogenitor of the husband. Patrilineages according Merriam-Webster’s online Dictionary is a lineage based on or tracing descent through the paternal line. <https://www.merriam-websters.com>.

### **2.1.5 Same-Sex Marriage**

Doniger (2013:215) says that same sex marriage is the practise of marriage between two men or between two women. In Igbo culture area, which includes Awgu town, they do not have same-sex marriage where a single woman will marry a woman for herself or a man will marry another man. What they have is a major woman contracting marriage with a minor woman because she and her husband are childless or they have no son who will continue the lineage of the husband when he joins his ancestors. Same-sex marriage (also known as gay marriage) according to Wikipedia is the marriage of same-sex couple, entered into in the civil or religious ceremony. The first law establishing same-sex marriage in modern times was enacted in 2000 in the Netherlands and came

into force in 2001. This type of same sex marriage is different from what is practised in Igbo land in general and Awgu town in particular. This is because same sex marriage from the above definition involves man marrying another man and both engaging in sexual act, but the gynaegamy practised in Igbo land is devoid of sexual relationship.

### **2.1.6 Inheritance in Igbo Land**

Inheritance in Igbo land was designed by their progenitors to suit their cultural inclination. The Igbo value their children both male and female but the male were more preferred because it is the male children that would continue the family lineage. The type of land ownership in Igbo land made them bequeath their land property only to their male children in order that their land would remain with their kinsmen for their future generations to inherit. It is this type of inheritance practised in most part of Igbo land that motivates barren and sonless women to indulge in gynaegamy so as to have access to their husband's land properties.

Henderson (1969:205) avers that “women do not directly inherit anything from their fathers. If a man has no sons, his property, that is houses, self- acquired land, money and other things, goes to his nearest male relative, not his female children”. This is exactly what happens in Awgu and the reason sonless women engage in gynaegamy to avert their going empty handed should their husband die before them. Supporting Henderson, Erinosh (1977:8) observes that “women are inhibited from inheritance by restrictions imposed by tradition and culture”. In Awgu culture, these restrictions, as they claim were imposed for stability and order to be maintained in the society. They said that they wanted to avoid conflict in land dispute among their sister's children (*nwadiala*). Emarievbe (2005: 67) attempts a trace of inheritance: he opines that “traditionally, the girl is not recognized as an important member of the family as the laws of inheritance are patrilineal, restricting the willing of

properties to males”. Corroborating Emarievbe, Kassim-Oghiato (2005: 45) observes that “*ndiom bu onu obodo nde ozọ* which means that women are a property of another family’. This is not so in Awgu. That a girl does not inherit land properties does not make her less important in her father’s family among Awgu people. It is the girls that have the functions of taking care of their aged parents and even have very crucial burial rite to perform during the dressing of the parent’s corpse. If girls are lacking in a family in Awgu, during the burial rite of the parents, nieces will be hired and rewarded handsomely to play the role of a daughter. So they equally cherish their female children too.

In her own view, Ojiako (2005: 103) looks at inheritance and states that: “traditional system of land tenure is lopsided in the sense that it did not provide for land inheritance or ownership by a woman”. If lands are owned by women, will it belong to her children or her father? If it is her children, then it still means that it is her husband’s property but if it is for her father, it then means that his brothers will inherit it. That is why the Igbo culture maintains that lands are for males in order to avoid instability in the family lineage. If a woman wants to buy a piece of land, she will buy it in her husband’s or son’s name. By this, she has handed the ownership of the land to her husband and children. Oserogho (2014) as well contributes when he states that inheritance in Nigeria is determined by the customary rules of where the deceased person originates and not by where he resides or lives, or where the property is situated. This means that every part of Nigeria has custom that is governing their inheritance rite. The Awgu people have their own way of sharing inheritance among their children.

Also Goiton (2014:6) has interest in inheritance in Igbo land. He says that the “inheritance rules of the Igbo ethnic group appears to largely favour males offspring of a deceased person. Inheritance of individually owned land generally follows the principal of primogeniture”.

Corroborating Goiton, Nmah (2003) opines that as regards the right to inherit her father's land property where a man is not survived by sons, the daughters have no right to inherit his compound or any of his other lands or houses. What Goiton and Nmah say is why a woman who has no son in Awgu engages herself in gynaegamy to have a son that will inherit her husband's land properties; otherwise it will go back to the family kinsmen. Obeta (2015) says that though customs and traditions in Igbo land do not confer expressly right of inheritance on female, there are instances in Igbo communities where females exercise overriding control over their father's properties, including land than their male siblings. He says for instances, in Nri, one of the acclaimed Igbo ancestral origin, Dr. Okechukwu Ikejiani conferred inheritance right of his property on her daughter, Professor Mirian Ikejiani–Clark, even though he bore many children. He also stated that Chief Reuben Nwafor Tabansi, another wealthy man in the ancient town, also allocated large part of his wealth to one of her daughters, Mrs. Anthonia Tabansi-Okoye, even though he has many sons. What Obeta says is what is happening in this modern age. It was not obtainable in the olden days and those men mentioned may not have given their daughters their homestead, which is their ancestral homes; rather it was houses they built in the cities or on other land in their village.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

There are many theories that can explain why gynaegamy is practised in parts of the world especially in Igbo land; such theories include descent theory, alliance theory, patriarchy theory, functionalist theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Need theory. The theories on which this research is based are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Functionalist Theory. The reason for the choice of these theories is that gynaegamy in Awgu was motivated by inheritance of land properties.

Firstly, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is a motivation theory which is used to answer the question 'why' of a peoples' behaviour. Why do many Awgu women engage in gynaegamy? The reason is to gain access to their husbands' land properties through male children born to the family by minor woman thereby sustaining the husband pedigree.

Secondly, functionalist theory studies the functions of various institutions in the society. The major function of marriage as an institution is procreation. When this role of bearing children that will continue the lineage of a family is not performed by the wife in a marriage, she employs the help of a minor woman through the contract of marriage of a minor woman to help her achieve the function of the marriage, which is procreation.

### **2.2.1 Patriarchy Theory**

Patriarchy is a feminist theory that originated from Marxian Framework of class analysis of 1845. Karl Marx was against capitalism and favoured communism instead. He saw that workers in Germany were oppressed by their employers and wrote against it in many of his articles. In his book titled *The Communist Manifestoe*, he stated that "Property" – understood not as a personal possessions but as ownership of the resources necessary for social wellbeing (the means of production) - is the basis of class division because it creates a situation in which some groups are able to claim that they own the means of production while other groups work to do the producing. Marxian analysis focuses particularly on how this class division works out under capitalism, the economic system of modern societies. The distinctive feature of capitalism is that the class that owns the means of production, the capitalists, operates on logic of continuous capital accumulation: capital is wealth which can be in form of money and other assets that can be used to generate the material infrastructure of economic production. In Awgu, which is a patriarchal society, men own the means

of production which is land and women are denied access to it. For a woman to have access to land, it is through her son which she has from her marriage. This makes it difficult for childless women or those with female children only to have access to the only means of production, which is land.

Patriarchal society is a male- dominated social system where males are the supreme authority figures and hold primary and maximum power. It means the rule of the father because in a patriarchal society, it is the father who controls every economic, social, and moral decision regarding everyone else in the family. Patriarchy is a system of society or government in which the father or eldest male is head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line. In a patriarchal society there is a cleavage between masculine and feminine attributes, which is often reduced to natural arguments of society. Mackinnon (1979) sees patriarchy as violence practised by men and by male-dominated organization against women. Violence may not always take the form of overt physical cruelty: it can be hidden in more complex practises of exploitation and in control, in standard of fashion and beauty, in tyrannical ideas of motherhood, in sexual harassment in workplace; in the practises of gynecology, obstetrician, and psychotherapy.

Also Hartmann (1979) argues that men allied with capital to exclude women from certain jobs. Male skilled craft workers used their unions to exclude women from some trades. Lindsey (1981) says that patriarchy refers to a specific society where the father (the patriarch) rules not only the women in the family but also the younger men. Such a society depends on peasant or artisan product based on at least partly in the home. The patriarch power is usually derived from his possession of the wealth produced and his ownership of land. In Awgu in particular and Igbo land in general pieces of land are owned by families. It is the head of the family that is the patriarch, who inherits land and transfers such to his heir. This makes it difficult for women who do not have male children to engage in farming if their husbands die early in life. To avoid this oppression of childless

widows, the women indulge in gynaegamy in order to bear children especially male children in order to gain access to the means of production, which is land.

Eisenstein (1979) says that capitalist patriarchy under gender oppression is seen as a relationship in which one party, the dominant, succeeds in making the other party, the subordinate, an instrument of the dominant's will, refusing to recognize the subordinate's independent subjectivity. Hartman (1979) opines that patriarchy is a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependent or solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women. She further argues that the material base upon which patriarchy rests lies most fundamentally in men's control over women's labour and power. Lerner (1986) makes bold to say that not only is patriarchy historically the first structure of domination and submission, it continues as the most pervasive and enduring system of inequality, the basic societal model of domination of women

According to Ritzer (2012:471), patriarchy is a "gender oppression theory that is incorporated in the deepest and most pervasive ways into society's organization, a basic arrangement of domination, in which society is organized to privileged men in all aspects of social life". Still on oppression of women by men, Haralambos *et al* (2013) say that radical feminism sees society as patriarchal - it is dominated and ruled by men. From their point of view, men are the ruling class and the women the subject class. To radical feminist, men are to blame for the exploitations of women because it is men that have benefitted from women's subordination. Patriarchy is the domination of the society by men. The male folk rule the society; whereas the female folk are subjugated and relegated to the back ground. According to Mish (2004:908), patriarchy is a social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line. There are two major facts in



Mish definition: firstly the supremacy of fathers to mothers in the clan, village and town and various organizations, secondly, dependence of wives and children on the husband for legal reckoning and inheritance. In Awgu town in particular and many of the Igbo communities in general, wives and children depend on their husbands and fathers to inherit what they should leave behind. That is why a couple who do not have a male child strive, with the willingness of the wife, to get married to another woman that can bear them a male child, because inheritance in Awgu town in particular is by patriarchy.

Moving further, Ritzer (2012:474) avers: “patriarchy exists as a near-universal social form because men can muster the most basic power, resources, and physical force to establish control”. He further states that once patriarchy is in place, power, resources, economic, ideologies, legal and emotional can be marshaled to sustain it. Nwoko (2012) explains patriarchy as a social system where the family headship along with power and possession pass from the man on to his sons. It also refer to as a social system in which men wield all the powers and use it only to their own advantages.

### **2.2.2 Functionalist Theory**

Functionalist theory was propounded by Emile Durkheim. The Functionalist perspective was used by Durkheim in his work titled *Division of Labour in Society* 1964 to examine several aspects of society by asking what function they played in maintaining the social order as a whole. Durkheim (1964) discovers that various institutions in the society have their own functions they perform. He says that once an institution fails to perform the function required of it, it is dead and supposed to be removed from that society. Examples of these institutions are religion, marriage, social, cultural and political institutions. Functionalist theory is used to highlight the functional relevance of this observance, by the Awgu people, in maintaining marriage stability, thereby sustaining the family

pedigree. Prominent proponents of Emile Durkheim theory were Auguste Comte, Talcott Parsons, Davis and Moore, Herbert Spencer, Almond and Powell, Jonathan, H, and Maryanskis, A. Z.

Many scholars have written about functionalist theory. One of them is Coser (1977:140), who observes that “When the explanation of a social phenomenon is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the functions it fulfills”. Another person is Parsons (1977:27). He believes that “order, stability and cooperation in society are based on value consensus, and that is a general agreement by members of society concerning what is good and worthwhile”. This work agrees with Parsons because the Awgu people believe that female husband marriage is very necessary in the olden days because it helped them in sustaining family pedigree. The family as an institution in the social strata of the society has the function of transferring its culture from the older generation to the younger one. This is done through the procreation of younger ones by married people and when a couple fails in this function, the help of a younger woman is sought for through female husband marriage.

Also, Turner and Maryanski (1988:8) define functionalist theory as “an approach that is based on seeing society as analogous to a biological organism and attempts to explain social structures in terms of the needs of society as a whole”. Another person who has works on functionalist theory is Akhter (2016:3) He opines that all social system shares certain functional prerequisites which must be met if the system is to survive and operate efficiently. One of such prerequisites, he says, is role allocation and performance. This means that all roles must be filled. They will be filled by those that perform them best. The primary role or function of marriage in Awgu and Igbo land in particular and Africa in general is procreation. They believe that the function of the father is to provide for and protect the family. While the role of the mother is to give birth to children and fill the house. This is why childlessness is always blamed on the part of the woman

even if she is fertile and her husband sterile because it is in her body that a child is formed. The functionalist perspective attempts to explain social institutions as a collective means to meet individual and social needs. In the functionalist perspective, societies are thought to function like organisms, with various social institutions working together like organs to maintain and reproduce societies. Institutions come about and persist because they play a function in society, promoting stability and integration. The researcher agrees with Akhter. There are role allocations in Igbo land: fathers have their role as the head of the family, and they provide food, shelter, clothing and protection of the family; whereas the wife performs the role of bearing and training the children.

Going further, Doniger (2013) observes that Talcott Parsons enunciated the “functional prerequisites” that any social system must meet in order to survive: developing routinized interpersonal arrangements (structures), defining relations to the external environment, fixing boundaries, and recruiting and controlling members. For Awgu as a social system to continue to survive, families that make up the social unit must continue to recruit new members through birth of generations to each couple. When this fails they can indulge in female husband marriage to recruit new generations.

### **2.2.3 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need Theory**

Maslow’s hierarchy of need is a motivation theory in psychology and comprises a five tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 and 1954 work entitled, “*A Theory of Motivation*”, in psychological review. Maslow subsequently extended the idea to include his observations of human’s innate curiosity. Maslow used the term physiological, safety, belonging, love, esteem, self-actualization and self-transcendence to describe the patterns that human

motivations generally move through. Maslow studied what he called exemplary people such as Albert Einstein, Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Frederic Douglass rather than mentally ill or neurotic people. Maslow's theory was fully expressed in his 1954 book *Motivation and Personality*. Abraham Maslow developed the hierarchy of human needs to show how we have to satisfy certain basic needs before we can satisfy higher needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs has often been represented in a hierarchical pyramid with five levels: lower order needs are considered physiological needs, while top level of the pyramid is considered growth needs. The lower level needs must be satisfied before higher order needs can influence behaviour. The levels are as follows: physiological, safety, belongingness, self- esteem and Self-actualization.

Writing on Maslow's theory, Santrock (2001) says that Abraham Maslow's belief is that certain basic needs must be satisfied before higher need can be satisfied. Supporting Santrock Anyaegbu (2006:3) posits: "Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory believes that people are motivated by a sequence of needs that are arranged in hierarchy of importance. She further says that Maslow believes that individuals are motivated by unsatisfied needs. As each of these needs which are hierarchically arranged in order of importance is met, it ceases to be a motivator. This means that if a married Awgu woman has a male child who will help her to achieve safety needs in her husband's house, male child will cease to be a motivator in her quest for a woman. She cannot be motivated to marry another wife for her husband because she has already met that need. It is only the barren women and those that have only female children that are motivated to become major women because they want to achieve a safety need which, for them, secures their marriage.

Still on Maslow's hierarchy of need theory, McLeod (2007:1) states that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. The researcher agrees with McLeod because the need to have children takes precedence over many other needs of

married Awgu women. The couple may even sell their land to marry another woman to bear children for them. This is why the Igbo people give such names like *Nwakaego*, *Nwabueze*, *Nwabuaku*. This means that they prefer a child to wealth. Maslow (1954) states that human motivation is based on people seeking fulfillment and change through personal growth. Self-actualized people are those who are fulfilled and doing all they are capable of. Gynaegamy in Awgu is a confirmation of what Maslow states above. Women in African culture, Awgu custom inclusive, who are married but have no children or have only female children are not fulfilled, that is why they seek fulfilment through gynaegamy. When they do have male children they become self-actualized because they will be safe in their husband's house.

Maslow (1987:17) also points out that most behaviour is multi motivated and notes that “any behaviour tends to be determined by several or all of the basic needs simultaneously rather than by only one of them”. This is very true of gynaegamy in Awgu. Married Awgu women strive and pray to have male children because of inheritance right, especially land property. For a person to grow crops to yield food which is one of the basic needs, it must be grown on a land. Whereby she has only female children, the land property will be denied her. This land property motivates the women to engage in gynaegamy so as to have male children who will inherit their father's land property and continue the lineage.

### **Meaning of Motivation**

Qayyum (2012) says that the word's etymology is derived from the Latin word *movere* which basically means to move, e.g. stimulate, trigger or influence the doing of something. Also Doniger (2013) agrees with Qayyum as he makes us understand that motives are “forces acting either on or within a person to initiate behaviour. He says that *motivus* (a moving cause) is derived from the

Latin word which suggests the activating properties of the processes involved in psychological motivation. He goes on to say that motivation relates to the “why” of behaviour. The ‘why’ Awgu women indulge in gynaegamy is to bear children especially male ones who will sustain the pedigree of their husband. Çeliköz (2010) says that there is, however, a huge diversity among theorists in their interpretation and definition of motivation. Doniger (2013: 437) explains that

Motives are often categorized into primary or basic motives, which are unlearned and common to both animals and humans; and secondary or learned motives which can differ from animal to animal and person to person. Primary motives are thought to include hunger, thirst, sex, avoidance of pain, and perhaps aggression and fear. Secondary motives typically studied in humans include achievement, power motivation, and numerous other specialized motives.

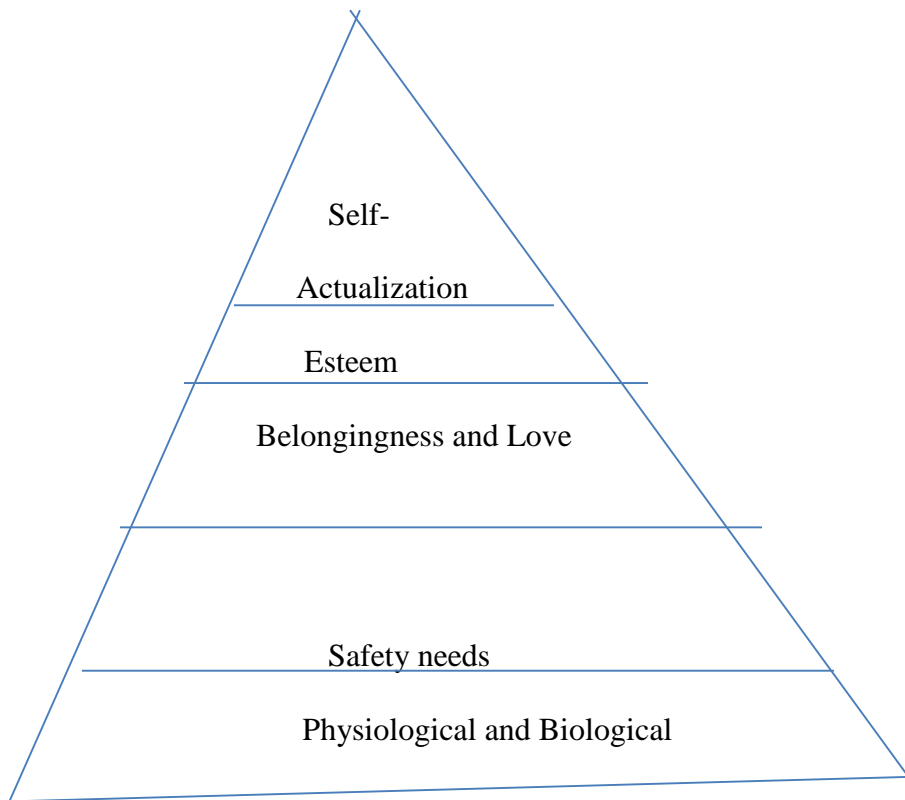
Fear which is one of the primary motives is what leads Awgu women to engage in gynaegamy. The fear that their husbands’ homesteads will lie desolate if there is no son to live in it motivates them to engage in this marriage. Also the fear that if their husbands die before they have male children, they will be denied access to their husbands’ land properties makes them engage in gynaegamy.

Wittig and Williams (1984) define motivation as a set of one or more conditions which activate or turn on behaviour, direct it towards some goal and maintain the behaviour until the goal is reached. The researcher agrees with this definition because Awgu women are turned on by childlessness or lack of a male child and directed to engage in gynaegamy in order to bear children especially male children. Shah & Bhat (2010) note that the wide interest in the subject is because it is seen as essential for understanding and explaining the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the human behaviour. i.e. how people can be motivated to perform their activities and why they behave in certain ways.

How Awgu people included gynaegamy in their custom is that some claim that they borrow it from their neighbours while some claim it was due to necessity. The ‘why’ is that they do not want the path to any homestead to lie desolate. This means *Amaechina* in Igbo. Corroborating Shah & Bhat Riyono & Himam (2012) say that much has been written on motivation in recent decades, with motivation becoming ranked as the second most widely written about topic, after the topic of methodology. Odde (2011) made us understand that among the scholars and practitioners who are notably interested in motivation are individuals from fields such as philosophy, sociology and psychology. In these fields, motivation has been subjected to rigorous analyses and debates based on ‘what is needed’ to motivate an employee, e.g. what makes an employee act efficiently, how an employee can be influenced to perform productively, what motivational framework works best for a given workforce. What motivates Awgu women to engage in gynaegamy is quest for a male child. They needed male children who they would lay hand upon to inherit their husbands’ property and who will continue the lineage of their husbands.

Also Feldman (2000) says that motivation constitutes the factors that direct and energize behaviour of human and other organisms. The factor that directs and energizes Awgu women to engage in gynaegamy is childlessness or being sonless. The treatment the custom imposes on them, which is denial of access to their husband land properties, directs them to contract marriage with younger women with the hope that male children will be born for them. According to Bagozz, Bergami, & Leone (2003), Maslow argues that motivation is best understood in terms of a hierarchy of needs, which for him is physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualization. Opara (2004), in another development, sees motivation as an individual’s urge, desire, tendency or striving to achieve a goal or fulfill certain need. The diagram below helps to clarify the above explanation.

**Diagram of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs according to McLeod (2007:1)**



**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

**Physiological and Biological Needs**

Physiological needs according to Maslow are air, food, water, shelter, warmth, sex and sleep. Netotea-Suciu, Manolescu & Dorobanțu (2012) say that the starting point for the Hierarchy of Needs model is the basic physiological needs, e.g. oxygen, food, shelter, water and rest. Khan, Khan & Saeed (2011) say that Maslow believes that physiological needs are the most important to employees and without those, it is impossible to motivate and satisfy them. Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg & Schaller (2010) note that physiological needs are presumed to be igniting the process of satisfaction, with the other basic needs in the hierarchy being derived from the satisfaction of the physiological



needs. Thus, they 'serve as channels for all sorts of other needs as well' What this means is that the major motivation first and foremost would undoubtedly result from the physiological needs—the most prominent of all human basic needs. This means that Awgu women are employed by their husbands to bear children for them in marriage for family continuity.

Maslow (1943) says that only when the physiological needs are fully satisfied do they become unimportant in motivating people. Thus, they cease to exist and they are no longer a determinant of the motivation of an employee. Under these circumstances, a new need emerges, namely safety needs. With these safety needs becoming the dominant motivation factor, every other need thereby becomes less important. In this sense, the motivation becomes the outcome of a non-satiated need that is wholly dominated by safety needs.

### **Safety Needs**

Safety needs according to Maslow are protection from elements, security, order, law and stability. Khan *et al* (2011) say that at this second level, security or safety is the major pursuit of needs, such as a fear of job instability. In the lives of Awgu married women, what is their need in this second level is children especially male child to be safe in their marriage, as wives who have no male children are adjudged to be still standing with one foot. It is when they have male children that they know that they are safe because they cannot be thrown out easily as the male children can come for them when they grow up. Still on safety needs Maslow (1943) also notes that all other needs become less important, including the physiological ones given that they have now been satisfied. The appearance of the safety needs (e.g. due to a risk or of being harshly or roughly treated at work by bosses, or a threat or danger of dropping out of work or of losing the job) is a key reason for any

employee to be motivated at work. The maltreatment meted out to childless and sonless women in Awgu is what motivates them to engage in gynaegamy to bear children, especially sons.

Maslow (1954a) explains that the need for safety, security and protection at work dominates, mobilises and motivates the employee as long as the individual worker feels persistently frightened—especially during bad economic situations. Further, Maslow (1943) opines that the employee behaves as if a great work catastrophe (e.g. redundancy) is almost always inevitable or impending. Thus, the employee's motivation is based on the safety need until it becomes fully gratified, at which point a new set of needs will emerge—of love, affection and belongingness. The researcher agrees with the above idea of Maslow's because Awgu women after marriage are always in prayer for God to give them male children because they are aware of the consequences of not having male children. These are denial of access to the husband's land properties should the husband die before the wife and the discontinuity of the husband lineage. These are the reasons that motivate them to engage in gynaegamy to achieve safety need.

### **Belongingness and Love Need**

Love and belongingness needs according to Maslow are friendship, intimacy, trust, and acceptance, receiving and giving affection and love. According to Pulasinghage (2010) the absence of friendship, encouragement and support of fellow workers and managers makes the employee feel motivated, as never before, to attain this need with great intensity. So, love and belongingness become the paramount need for the employee at work. Further, this level of the hierarchy of need lays a greater emphasis on emotional and social support. In Awgu childless women are viewed as social disgrace and as being cursed by the gods. The woman is abused by her husband, relatives, mates and age group. She will have few friends because many of her friends will desert her as a

result of her childlessness. For her to regain her social status, she has to engage in gynaegamy and bear children. Also Yawson, Armah & Pappoe (2009) explain that receiving help in dealing with work problems and pressures, support to cope with a work injury, advice and guidance on work performance, support during interpersonal conflicts and anxieties, financial support or general career advice and support for confidence building all primarily facilitate the desire of an employee in promoting and maintaining the optimal level of motivation in the work environment based on care, companionship and deeper relationships. Married Awgu women especially in the olden days needed children to help them in their farm work and to give them support during misunderstanding with their husbands, relatives and their mates. If a woman in those days is childless, she is abused and beaten by her husband, relatives and her mates and their children without any child coming to her rescue. Also Maslow (1943) says that in the situation when the need for safety and security at work is more active and powerful, the employees forget about the need for friendship, understanding and affection.

### **Esteem Needs**

Esteem needs are classified into two categories by Maslow: (i) esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence.) and (ii) the desire for reputation or respect from others (e.g.status, prestige). Anyim, Chidi & Badejo (2012) opine that esteem needs indicate a need to respect one's rights, appreciation of one's ability and capacity, acknowledgement of one's achievement and recognition of one's autonomy and independence. Mujah, Abdul-Samad, Singh & D'Cruz (2011) say that with this type of need, employees at work are driven by their need for prestige or reputation, attention, recognition, appreciation or importance. Awgu women are driven by prestige and reputation to engage in gynaegamy in order to achieve belongingness need. There

are certain clothes in the olden days (*anama and joji*) that were only worn by women who had given birth to children. Also childless women are forbidden from taking *ogo* title in Awgu. According to Maslow (1954b), the employee motivation is shaped by those esteem needs. It is therefore highly significant for the organisation to recognise and meet the esteem needs of its employees

Netotea-Suciu *et al.* (2012) note that, indeed, not acknowledging such esteem needs of an employee on the part of the employing organisation could likely result in dissatisfaction, helplessness, discouragement, inferiority, weakness or inability, and thus a demotivated employee at work. Benson & Dundis (2003) maintain that the work environment is apparently a major source of need fulfilment for the employees in which they are able to achieve or accomplish things, such as obtaining financial rewards and societal recognitions. The environment in Awgu makes it necessary for every woman to bear a male child as their inheritance is patrilineal. Any woman that has male children has guarantee of safety as she will have access to her husband's land properties through the male child. Sadri & Bowen (2011) made us understand that the esteem needs, such as rewards, titles (e.g. employee of the month) and promotions are the main reasons for joining, staying with or working for the employing organisation. For married women in Awgu are motivated by the tradition because those who give birth to about seven children up are rewarded by slaughtering a she goat for them. This is called *ewu ukwu* or *ewu omumu*. Literary meaning 'goat birth'. Forbes (2011) says that the employee at work is motivated and keen to satisfy the esteem (or self-esteem) needs which will give rise to his motivation in terms of boosting his self-confidence and morale, feeling of worth and usefulness, demonstrating his own capability and achievement of potential. Maslow (1943) believes that once the satisfaction of these needs is fulfilled, it in turn gives rise to the need for self-actualisation to be created and become dominant. Awgu women who are childless are motivated to

boost their self-confidence by engaging in gynaegamy which will guarantee them safety and sustain the continuity of their husband's lineage.

### **Self-actualisation Needs**

Maslow says that self-actualisation needs are realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences. Maslow (1943) explains that self-actualisation refers to the need for self-fulfillment, i.e. the need for an individual to reach his full potential, or be everything that a person is striving to be. Awgu people believe that they are self actualised if they have children who will bury and remember them when they die and also continue their lineage. This notion is the reason Awgu people give such name as *Nwabugwu*. (Child is honour). Maslow (1943:383) claims that 'we shall call people, who are satisfied in these needs, basically satisfied people, and it is from these, that we may expect the fullest (and healthiest) creativeness. Sadri and Bowen (2011:47) also agree with Maslow in making a similar claim that 'there is a sense that once these needs are engaged, they likely will become stronger as they are fed and satisfied. Therefore, this layer within the hierarchy is used to inspire employees and to help them perform at their highest levels'. Awgu women who have children are always at their best in their duty, as they strive to make their children comfortable that is why they are always serious with their work in order to make ends meet. Forbes (2011) observes that most employees seek to express and exercise their exceptional talents and problem-solving skills, as well as show their creative work performance approaches. This is only when, according to Benson & Dundis (2003), work becomes fulfilling and pleasurable where motivation is merged and satisfied with work. In Awgu, children perform the burial and funeral rites of their parents. If an Awgu adult dies without leaving behind any child, his funeral ceremony will be left undone. The implication is that the deceased person will not be admitted into the world

beyond. So, when Awgu childless women engage in gynaegamy and bear children for their husbands both feel self-actualised because they are sure that their funeral ceremony will be performed for onward admittance into the rank of ancestors.

Maslow (1943) explains that it might be that a need for one person is to be the most competent employee to reap financial rewards, or for another, it will be the need to be the most creative worker and a logical candidate for promotion. Also Maslow (1975:43) says that more importantly, another motivation might be a need to devote the work to something that is considered precious for that given employee. Moving further Maslow (1975) believes that this could be considered as a need to devote motivation at work to 'some calling or vocation in the old sense, the priestly sense'. As such, this need becomes a major means of motivation and the essence of creating joy and satisfaction for an orthodox employee. To Maslow (1943) what this basically means is that the motivated employee is no longer concerned with the physiological, esteem, love and safety needs. Instead, the only thing that motivates an employee is to create a particular self-actualised human behaviour that 'comes to know what his destiny is'. To Maslow (1975), this demonstrates that the higher self-actualization towards full human growth, and doing what is meaningful and worthwhile, is as important as the person's lower needs. Maslow (1954b) observes that this higher need supplies the employee with what they want or need in order for them to be motivated

In considering the influence of the need hierarchy, the present research examines the applicability of Maslow's theory. Therefore, it is crucial to illustrate the widespread application and influence of this hierarchy in order to justify why this researcher has taken an interest in it as a theory of motivation.

### 2.3 Empirical Studies

Empirical studies show contributions by leading scholars in the areas under study. The studies give accounts of past researches on the topic. Some notable scholars in this field have carried out some researches about gynaegamy, female husband or woman-woman marriage in Igbo land, Nigeria, Africa and the world at large.

Herskovits (1937) carried out research on gynaegamy. His topic is “A note on women-to-women marriage in Dahomey.” He observes that the role of the minor woman is to bear children for the major woman. If the children can be adjudged to be legally that of the major woman, she must have to pay bride wealth to the girl’s father and other ceremonial aspects of marriage are observed. The children that are born in this type of marriage in Awgu belong to the husband just like in monogamous or polygamous marriages. Any child born in a marriage in Awgu land belongs to the man that has paid the bride price of the woman that has given birth to that child no matter who is the biological father.

Also Huber (1969) studies “Women marriage in some East African societies” and observes that in Simiti, major woman often chooses her wife from her brother’s house. As her bride wealth helped to establish his brother’s home, the major woman’s brother is often more lenient about the amount of bride wealth he demands”.

Also Obbo (1976) takes a study in gynaegamy. The title of his work is “Dominant male ideology and female options: three East Africa”. He found out that among Kamba widows, the first child born to the widow’s wife will belong to the lineage of the widow’s deceased husband. Subsequent children born to the widow’s wife may be affiliated with the widow’s lineage, thereby giving her the prestige associated with having an heir”. Awgu people do not choose their bride from

their father's house, as obtained in Simiti and Kamba according to Huber and Obbo. They choose their bride from other families in the village. Equally, all the children born by the minor woman belong to the husband of the major woman and bear his name.

Krige (1974) studies "Gynaegamy with special reference to the Lovedu" and discovers that the female husband marriage is the institution whereby a woman marries another woman and assumes control over her and her offspring. This is not so in Awgu town: a major woman contracts marriage with another woman for her husband. She gets the woman married for one purpose, which is for procreation, to get children especially male children if she does not have one. If her husband is still alive, she marries the wife for him in order that she may have a share of her husband's inheritance through the male children that will result from the marriage. She will not participate in the marriage procedure herself. Even if the husband is dead, she gives money to her husband's kinsmen to marry a wife for her on behalf of her late husband. She will fend for the woman and assume the role of the husband to the minor woman and her children. If the husband is alive he will be in control of the two women but if he is dead the major woman will be in charge of the house.

Oboler (1980) carried out research in gynaegamy; her work is titled "Is the female husband a man? Woman-to-woman marriage among the Nandi of Kenya". She discovers that in Nandi in Kenya, the female husband is socially considered to assume the conceptual male role upon marriage to her wife. This is done in order to avoid the confusing situation which would arise in a patrilineal and patrilocal system whereby women have no right to land or inherited property. By conceptualizing the female husband as a man, the community recognizes that she possesses what are traditionally considered to be male rights, particularly in situations where property and inheritance are involved. This happens in Awgu but it is only in daughter-wife marriage where the daughter is retained as a son. She assumes the role of a man in order to retain her father's property.



Strobel (1982) studied “African women” and found out that Lovedu a matrilineal society grants every woman the right to daughter-in-law from the house which his bride price helps to establish. This means: as her brother uses her bride price to marry a wife, the woman has a right to marry her niece as a wife if she has no son to marry her. This would be said to be an incestuous act in Awgu. For cousins to marry each other is considered an abomination and the punishment is life exile from Awgu town.

Hankasson (1985) carried out a study on gynaegamy in Kenya. His work is “why do Gusii women get married? A study of cultural constraints and women’s strategies in a rural community in Kenya.” He found out that sonless women use the bride price of one of her daughters to contract marriage with a younger woman on behalf of her non-existent son with the hope that such marriage will bring forth a son to continue the lineage of her late husband. He says that the major woman and the minor woman refer each other to as mother-in-law and daughter-in-law respectively. In Awgu, the custom is to retain one of the daughters usually the first daughter if the family does not have a male child, with the hope that she will bear a male child for the compound after some rituals have been performed. The daughter will be referred to as daughter-wife, which is called *idagbe* in Awgu.

Mackenzie (1990) did a research on woman marriage titled “gender and land rights in Murang’a district, Kenya”. He found out that Kikuyu women in Murang’a district are always faced with two options at the demise of their husbands. They either accept levirate marriage or become major women. He said that many of the women prefer to become major women because it gives them right to their husband’s land properties and equally makes childless or sonless women have one for their deceased husband. In Awgu, widows do not engage in levirate marriage. This is because gynaegamy is more efficient in making a sonless old widow have one through the help of a younger woman. This is not obtainable in levirate marriage if the widow has reached menopause.

Next is Kriger (1993). He studies “Textile production and gender in the Sokoto Caliphate” and finds out that in the region of the Sokoto Caliphate, major women often gained profit by exchanging children born to them by the minor women with money from the biological fathers who would want to claim them at all cost. This is not the intention of women that engage in gynaegamy in Awgu. They engage in gynaegamy to be able to bear children especially male ones in their husbands’ name. These male children will qualify them to have access to their husbands’ land properties.

Also Uchendu (1995) studies “*Ezi na Ulo: The Extended family in Igbo civilization.*” He finds out that gynaegamy is strictly a patrilineal institution, which is practised by Igbo people to sustain patrilineal lineage. This is what is obtainable in Awgu. A major woman contracts marriage with a minor woman for the sustenance of the lineage of her husband.

Another person is Cadigan (1998), who studies “Woman-to-woman marriage in sub-Saharan Africa” and discovers that cross-culturally, women take wives under three circumstances all of which enhance the status of the major woman: first, the barren women take wives to gain rights over children produced. Secondly, rich women accumulate wives to gain prestige and wealth in the same way men do through Polygyny. Thirdly, in societies where women possess the right to have a daughter-in-law, a woman without a son may take a wife to give her non-existent son. The researcher agrees with Cadigan’s first reason. Even though Awgu women engage in gynaegamy for economic reason, that is having access to the land property, they do not gain wealth as men do. Awgu women indulge in gynaegamy solely to have a child preferably a male child for pedigree continuation.

Greene (1998) studies the institution of woman- woman marriage in Africa and finds out that woman-marriage reflects and embodies social and political circumstances as well as individual

contact like childlessness in Igbo land, acquisition of wealth in Fon of Benin and relationship as a sister in Lovedu of South Africa. In Awgu which is one of the towns in Igbo culture area, it is childlessness or lack of male children that makes a woman engage in gynaegamy, although scholars like Amadiume and Nwoko explain that some women contract this marriage as a mark of wealth and as paraphernalia for title taking respectively.

On their own part, Njambi and O'Brein (2000) studied "revisiting woman-woman marriage: notes on Kikuyu women". They collected their data through oral interview from central Kenya. They found out that there are complex reasons for engaging in woman-woman marriage in Kikuyu, thus suggesting that it is a flexible option within which women pursue a range of social, economic, political and personal interest. The researcher agrees with the above idea because even though Awgu women contract gynaegamy for the continuation of their husbands' lineage, they are motivated to do so because of their own economic and social interest. They are aware that they will not inherit land properties from their husbands if they do not have sons. Equally, their funeral ceremony will remain undone if they are childless.

Also, Uchendu (2007) investigated woman-marriage in Igbo land and discovered that the over-riding goal for gynaegamy in Igbo land was for women to have children through other women for inheritance purposes. Among the Igbo, a barren widow or one who had no male child for her deceased husband had no claim to the deceased property. If the barren woman had married a wife and had a male child from her, she would inherit property from the husband through the male child born for her by her wife. This study agrees with Uchendu because it is what Awgu people practise.

On their own part, Ngige, Ondigi and Wilson (2008) carried out research in gynaegamy. The title of their work is "Family Diversity in Kenya." They found out that there are several reasons for engaging in gynaegamy. One is childlessness, where a barren woman who is desperate and has

suffered the turmoil and humiliation resultant from cultural oppression and discrimination for not having children engages in gynaegamy to have children. They say that having a sterile husband is a second reason. This involves a woman whose husband is unable to give her children and now she is past childbearing age, yet she desires to raise children who would be recognized as her own. Another reason they say centers on inheritance and succession. A childless woman is vulnerable to insecurity and disinheritance in old age if she has no children of her own, and in particular if she has no sons, through whom she would inherit her husband's property. The fourth reason is preference for male children. In some communities, a widow who has borne girls only may not inherit property from her deceased husband, and therefore desires to raise sons of her own through a secondary marriage. Inheritance chasers are an additional reason. A divorced woman with many children can approach a rich widow to maintain her and her children through gynaegamy. The researcher agrees with the above assertion as this is what is obtainable in Awgu.

Mezu's (2013) study shows that there is no tradition of same gender marriage in Igbo land and observes that marriage in traditional Igbo society is primordially and predominantly for the procreation of children and the continuation of the lineage. A powerful, strong and wealthy woman, if she is barren or infertile for one reason or the other, or even if she has only one child, sometimes, and this is not the norm or the "tradition", may decide with the husband's consent to marry a younger woman (*ilubata Nwaanyi*) to the husband's matrimonial home for the sake of procreation. The new wife remains under the control of the older wife. The children from the new wife and the husband of the two women are joyfully brought up, educated and equipped by the older wife and the family. Mezu was refuting what Igwe (2009) said that there is the tradition of same gender marriage in Igbo land. In Awgu which is part of Igbo land, a woman who has a son is not allowed to marry

another woman. If her husband chooses to marry another woman, that is different, but for her to engage in gynaegamy while she has any son is not permissible in Awgu tradition.

Murray and Roscoe (2012) studied Boy-wives and Female Husbands in East Africa and discovered that homosexuality is neither random nor incidental – it is a consistent and logical feature of African societies and belief system. They claimed that homosexuality in Africa predated their contact with the West. The researcher disagrees with Murray and Roscoe because in Igbo culture areas, which Awgu is part of, there was never a time a major woman and a minor woman practised homosexuality neither did they have boy wives. Gynaegamy practised in Igbo land is different from what Murray and Roscoe described here because women who engage in this type of marriage are married women only, who, because of one problem or the other, have no children. They married other women in their husband's name and children begotten bear the name of the husband of the major women. These women do not engage in this type of marriage for sexual pleasure like what Murray and Roscoe stated that happens in East Africa.

Nwoko (2012) studied female husband in Igbo land, Southeast Nigeria, and discovered that unlike other societies, women to women marriages in Igbo land were not contracted in response to the sexual emotions or attractions of the couples, but simply an instrument for the preservation and extension of patriarchy and traditions. The researcher agrees to Nwoko's assertion that female husband marriage in Igbo land which Awgu is part does not sanction engaging in sexual relationship between the major and minor woman. The major woman 'married' her wife in the name of her husband in order to continue the family lineage.

Onuche (2013) studied same sex marriage in Nigeria and identified that in the Nigerian moral context, same sex marriage has been described as an oxymoron, meaning the terms are incompatible upon considering marriage's inherent nature. Homosexuals' sex has no procreative

value, and thereby negates marriage most important need which is procreation. This work equally believes that marriage is for procreation in order to maintain continuity in the family pedigree. This is why gynaegamy was designed by Awgu progenitor to help and maintain a family that is about to go into extinction, it is not for sexual satisfaction of the major woman. If the major woman's husband is still alive the new wife procreates through him.

Nyanungo (2014) studies "female husbands without male wives: women, culture and marriage in Africa" and finds out that gynaegamy in this context is not the same as lesbian marriage. The nature of the relationship between the women married to each other in these traditional arrangements is legal and social but not sexual. Thus, while women marriage is same sex marriage, it is not lesbian marriage because there is typically no sexual attraction or involvement between the major women and the minor women. This work disagrees with Nyanungo in the area of same sex marriage. The Igbo people of the Southern Nigeria do not practise same-sex marriage because the major woman who is contracting marriage with the minor woman is already married to a man either living or dead and a man cannot marry a man in Igbo land in general and in Awgu in particular. The major woman is marrying another woman in her husband's name not hers. The study, however, agrees with Nyanungo that gynaegamy is not lesbianism, as the new wife graces the bed of the male husband, or has reputable man picked for her procreation engagement.

Ele (2016) studied the perception of same-sex marriage in Igbo culture and observed that in Igbo land there is no traditional marriage between a woman and a woman *qua tale* but between a man and a woman because the woman who marries another woman is not her husband even if she cares for the children as a responsible man would do. The offspring of the marriage does not bear the name of the person who paid their mother's bride price or the name of the person who put their mother in the family way but the name of the man in whose name the marriage was sealed. This

study agrees with Ele's assertion about gynaegamy. It is believed in Igbo land which Awgu is part of that same-sex marriage which involves sexual relationships between the two women is a taboo. What a woman who engages in gynaegamy is doing is helping the husband to have a son if they have only female children or to have children if they are childless.

Sitati (2016) studied "customary laws: woman to woman marriage and constitutionality return of dowry in Kenya" and found out that among Nandi Kipsigis, a sonless woman who has reached her menopausal age may enter into gynaegamy in her husband's lifetime or after his demise. It is only allowed after menopause as the woman who is still in her pre-menopausal age is adjudged to be fertile and can bear a son. This is what Awgu custom allows: a woman who is still in her fertile years is not allowed to contract marriage with a minor woman whether her husband is living or late. Their reason is that she may be blessed in later years with children especially male ones by God. And if this happens after she might have contracted marriage with a younger woman it will contradict the rules of gynaegamy as a woman who has a son is not allowed to engage in gynaegamy in Awgu.

Carmengo (2018) carried out a study on gynaegamy. His topic is "Female husbands" and found out that in Nandi society, as an agrarian society land properties is exclusively managed by men. Therefore a son is needed in order to inherit the land properties and herds of cattle. So, when a couple do not have children especially a male child who will inherit all these properties, at the demise of the husband, the wife will engage in gynaegamy in order to have children who will help in farm work and also inherit the land properties and continue the family descent. This is what is applicable to Awgu town. The tradition is that lands belong to male line. That is why a woman, who does not have a son, engages in gynaegamy with the hope of having one through the minor woman.

## 2.4 Summary

Various people have studied gynaegamy in other cultures other than Awgu town. Some scholars such as Herskovits (1937), Huber (1969), Krige (1974), Greene (1998), Cadigan (1998), Uchendu (2007), Nwoko (2012), Onuche (2013), Ele (2016) and Carmengo (2018) have studied gynaegamy in Igbo land, Nigeria, Africa as a continent and other part of the globe. Their studies were based on three major reasons why Igbo, Nigeria and other African women indulge in gynaegamy: childlessness, women who want to show affluence and those who want to retain family tie. These scholars did not write about gynaegamy in Awgu hence the need to document Awgu people's version of gynaegamy for scholars and other researchers to use it as reference point and for future Awgu generation to know about it. Among Awgu people, a childless couple is seen as a curse, and they are derided by others. A wife in childless marriage does not have inheritance right in her husband's house. That is why she has to engage in gynaegamy to achieve this. Giving the lacuna in the earlier researches, there is an important need to carry out this research: Gynaegamy in Igbo culture: a study of marital sustenance of patriline among Awgu people.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter gives the methodology of the study. This includes explaining the type of research design adopted, area of study, research population, sampling and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection and method of data analysis.

#### **3.1 Type of Research Design**

The type of research design used for this study is descriptive qualitative design. This according to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) is the collection, analysis and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual (non-numerical) data in order to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest. Whitten (2012) opines that qualitative research which seeks to understand social phenomena from the viewpoints of those being studied, is holistic and relies on flexible research strategies. Qualitative Research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem.

Visual online (2013) sees qualitative research as the approach usually associated with the social constructivist paradigm which emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality. It is about recording, analysing and attempting to uncover the deeper meaning and significance of human behaviour and experience, including contradictory beliefs, behaviours and emotions. Researchers are interested in gaining a rich and complex understanding of people's experience and not in obtaining information which can be generalized to other larger group.

### **3.2 Area of the Study**

This work covers the ten villages of Awgu town in Enugu State, Nigeria. Respondents were randomly selected from each of the ten villages in Awgu. The aspect of culture is gynaegamy and how it helps to sustain the pedigree of husbands when the need arises.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The population of this study consists of entire people of the ten villages of Awgu, mostly titled men, major women or minor women and their children who are directly involved in this marriage, traditional religious adherents, Christians and elites. The choice of respondents was informed by the fact that they are people believed to be knowledgeable in areas of gynaegamy. The total number of the respondents, both literate and non-literate, was one hundred. According to Kerlinger (1964:58), population is "...all members of any well-defined class of people, events or objects. It is the universe of some group of people or objects in which investigation is interested"

### **3.4 Sampling and Sampling Techniques**

This involves the selection of some people from the population chosen to study. Simple random sampling was employed to select the people interviewed from each village in Awgu. Sampling according to Osuala (2005:114) is taking any "...portion of a population or universe as representation of that population or universe." There are ten villages in Awgu. A total number of one hundred respondents were chosen for interview. In each village, two titled men who were knowledgeable in the tradition of Awgu, two major and minor women or their children, two traditionalists who insisted that this culture should be upheld, two Christians and elites who helped in weakening this tradition were interviewed. This means that in each of the ten villages in Awgu, ten people were interviewed.

### **3.5 Instrument for Data Collection**

The primary instrument used for the collection of data was oral interview. The instrument was complemented by participant observation. Interview involved eliciting information from the respondents through some verbal interaction between the respondents and the researcher. In this case, samples of population were interviewed with unstructured questions to obtain data for the research. Questions were asked based on interviewee's responses and the interview procedures were like a friendly, non-threatening everyday conversations. The obtained information from the interview was subsequently transcribed and the data from observation also presented. In addition, the interview method was complemented by participant observation. The essence of choosing participant observation is in line with what Okolo (2009:120) says:

Uncontrolled participant observation is used when the researcher is a member of the group or can so disguise himself to be one. Depending on the nature of the study... it can be taken for granted that if the members are unaware of the investigator's purpose, their behavior is least likely to be affected. Thus, we may be able to record the natural speech or behavior of the group thereby having access to a body of information which could not easily be obtained by merely looking on in a disinterested fashion.

Nworgu (1991:82) says that "Observation involves watching people, events, situations or phenomena and obtaining firsthand information relating to a particular aspect of such people, events or phenomena". The researcher observed the behaviour of the major women and the minor women, listened to their discussions and transcribed their responses afterwards.

### **3.6 Method of Data Collection**

Data were collected through oral interview and unobtrusive observation method from Awgu populace. The unstructured interviews were randomly done across titled men, major women/minor women and their children, traditional religious adherents, Christians and elites. The essence was to ascertain why, how and when Awgu people indulge in gynaegamy. The researcher observed and recorded the relationship between major woman and minor woman for six months. These women were observed at homes, farms, streams, markets and women meetings (*inyom di*) during Christmas, Easter, *Ikeji* festival, village gatherings (*olodi ulo*), burial and funeral ceremonies in the village. The essence was to further ascertain whether there is an intimate relationship between the major women and the minor women. Equally documentary materials such as books written by various scholars from the library were consulted.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

The method of data analysis for this study is content analysis. Data collected were analyzed in line with the research questions and the theoretical framework. The study gave in-depth analysis of gynaegamy in Awgu culture. This method of analysis involved analysing responses from interviews from selected population. This elicited the pieces of information needed, which were described and analyzed using the research questions and the theoretical framework. The research questions and arguments were justified by the responses extracted from the oral interviews and literature reviewed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This chapter presents the content analysis of the data collected for the study. The data include those from participant observation and oral interview. It is worthy of note that these women were observed on different occasions and unstructured interview spanned across different groups of people in Awgu. The research is guided by seven research questions which the work is expected to provide answers to.

#### 4.1 Gynaegamy in Awgu

Gynaegamy is one of the six types of marriage that exist among the Awgu people. They are monogamous marriage, polygamous marriage, betrothal marriage, ghost marriage, daughter-wife marriage, and gynaegamy. It is also one of the three marriages that help in sustaining the patriline of a family that is threatened by extinction: they are ghost marriage, gynaegamy and daughter-wife marriage.

Coser (1977:140) observes that “When the explanation of a social phenomenon is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the functions it fulfills.” What Coser means is that when an explanation of a word that is not easily understood is given, the reader will know what it is all about. Therefore, this work explains here what gynaegamy is in Awgu according to sources consulted and interviewed.

To explain what gynaegamy means in Igbo land, Igbanoi (2013) explains that under the custom, according to Igbo for instance, a woman who has been married for several years without a child is permitted to choose a young fertile bride, pay her bride price and ‘marry’ her with the full compliments of a properly traditional wedding. The new bride would then do the bidding of her female “husband”, which is essentially to procreate through her husband.

To Ivo Nwaovoko (personal communication 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2018) gynaegamy is the one in which a married woman, who is childless or does not have a son, contracts marriage with a younger fertile woman with the consent of her husband. This is done with the hope that God will give them children or sons through the second woman. This older wife ‘marries’ this ‘wife’ for her husband if he is alive or in the name of her husband if he is dead. He explains that a difference exists between a wife marrying another wife for her husband as a second wife and a major woman contracting marriage with a minor woman for her husband for the purpose of childbearing for continuity of a family name – *Afamefunu*. According to him, when a woman marries a wife for her husband, she does so because she wants to ease herself of some household chores like cooking, farming, and sexual pleasure. Ivo Nwaovoko’s explanation corroborates Amadiume’s (1998) view. She says that Nnobi rich women were able to become major women in order to free themselves from domestic responsibilities. The minor woman would perform all household chores while the major woman would use the extra time she gained to devote her energies to other money-earning ventures. Other respondents Alibisi Oko, Onwukwe Añu, Nwokolo Nwavo corroborate what Ivo Nwavoko said.

Nwangbo Chukwuogele, (personal communication 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2017), explained that the woman marrying a wife for her husband already has male and female children. She is not in need of children or sons to continue the homestead; rather she wants to have more rest from these chores. She said that this marriage of relief from domestic chores in most cases does not immediately receive approval from a husband who believes it is courting troubles that usually emanate from a polygamous marriage. However, in the long run, the wife will prevail on her husband, and a new wife is brought in. When this marriage is consummated, the new wife becomes a second wife to the husband and a co-wife and mate of the first wife. They have different huts and cook their meals

differently. If their husband wants to share anything he will divide it into two equal parts for the two wives. During inheritance rite, their husband's property is shared equally between the two huts.

Mrs. Chukwuogele went further to explain that marriage contracted for childlessness or lack of a male child – gynaegamy (this is called *ilu nnwe mgbafuta*, in Awgu) - is done to maintain a husband's pedigree. A barren or sonless mother discusses with her husband or her husband's kinsmen if her husband is late the need for bringing in another wife. The result of this discussion is seeking another wife. The search takes time, as the intention of the marriage is made known to the bride, her parents and kinsmen who can accede to or reject the proposal. The difference between this marriage and marrying for her husband is that the new wife will be under the first wife. They will live in the same hut, cook in the same kitchen and pot, weed their husband's yam farms together without sharing it, and have their crops and vegetables like cocoyam, yellow yam, cassava, okra, pumpkin etc. on the same plot of land. They usually go to market with one basket of farm produce, sell it and keep their money together. Their husband does not share anything between them. He gives them enough yams (*itu ahi*) and meat to be cooked in one hut and in one pot and, afterwards, eat together like a mother and a daughter. Most importantly, they raise the children that come from this second wife together. Finally, inheritance is only through that same hut. What Nwamgbo Chukwuogele said was affirmed by Agbidi Okeke, Mgbavo Oge and Uzumma Orjinta.

Nwamgbo Chukwuogele's observation corroborates Uchendu (2007). She explains that there is a difference between a woman marrying a wife for her husband and marrying for herself. If she is marrying for her husband, she will accept and treat the new wife as a co-wife. The children born from the marriage will be strictly her husband's. Where she is marrying for herself, even if the husband accepts to take care of the sexual needs of the minor woman, he has no claim to her and her children will remain jointly owned by the two women in the relationship.

From what has been said the researcher deduced that gynaegamy was necessitated by the fact that a family lineage is threatened. This informs the need for this type of marriage to make a wife feel safe in her husband's home as she providentially has children or a male child through it.

#### **4.1.2 Other Types of Marriage in Awgu**

According to Maduabuchi Onwe, (Personal communication on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) there are six types of marriage in Awgu. These are monogamous marriage, polygamous marriage, betrothal marriage, gynaegamy, daughter-wife marriage, and ghost marriage. He said that Awgu people do not engage in levirate marriage because gynaegamy, ghost and daughter-wife marriages take care of its importance. The essence of marriage is for procreation in order to continue the lineage, but, these three later marriages have helped Awgu people to sustain the family pedigree. What Mr. Onwe said may be the reason Mbiti (1975:104) says that

A marriage fulfills the obligation, the duty and the custom that every normal person should get married and bear children. This is believed to go back to the very beginning of human life. Failure to get married is like committing a crime against traditional beliefs and practises. Mbiti's observation agrees with Mr. Onwe's assertion and both lend credence to Maslow's theory of need, as well as functionalists' theory emphasizing a necessary function of an established institution.

##### **4.1.2.1 Monogamous Marriage**

This type of marriage, according to Onwukwe Anu, (Personal communication on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2018) joins a man and a woman together. The main purpose is to bear children for the continuity of the husband's homestead. Whereby children are not forthcoming, suggestion for a second wife for the husband is normally given by some respected elders in Awgu. The husband may object to a



second wife because he loves his wife dearly or he may have known that he is impotent. This will compel him to object to a second wife to avoid embarrassment. He may afterwards accept suggestion about his wife becoming a major woman after she has reached menopause. However, the failure of a couple to have children, particularly a male child, places the wife on an unsafe position, because a child is a seat upon which a wife nestles challengingly. The desperation for a child and the thought of her safety in her house threatened, she is compelled employs the help of another woman through gynaegamy. David Orji explained that Awgu women who indulge in this marriage are those from monogamous marriage and who do not have any other option in those days like In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF), and adoption. He said that nowadays many Christians in Awgu and elites are taking these options instead of gynaegamy. David's explanation was corroborated by Orji Louis, Christian Chukwundu, Priscilla Okeke, Vincent Ugo and Godwin Nwaoshiaja.

As important as these options may be, many respondents especially the elders and titled men believe that gynaegamy is far better than adoption as the paternity of the offspring from this marriage is known, especially when the husband is responsible for the procreation of the children.

#### **4.1.2.2 Polygamous Marriage**

According to Umegalukwe Egbo (Personal communication on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2018), this type of marriage has a man marrying more than one wife. This marriage in Awgu does not allow gynaegamy contract. This is because the childlessness of the first wife or her giving birth to only female children might be taken care of by the other wife who may have had male children. The reason for granting gynaegamy is for continuity of pedigree of the husband. Where none of the wives has a male child, the first daughter of the family is retained as *idagbe* to bear a male child who will continue the lineage. So in a polygamous marriage, Awgu people do not envisage gynaegamy because inheritance

is by *hut-mkpuke*. If one of the wives gives birth to a male child, even if she is the last wife, her son will inherit the compound. If all the wives had sons, the inheritance would be shared by mother or hut, i.e. the first wife, the second wife and so on. A wife in a polygamous marriage who does not have a son already knows that she has no share in the land property of her husband. She normally resigns herself to fate and contents herself with what her female children will offer her till she dies. She is not allowed to contract marriage with a minor woman. This is because firstly, the homestead is not threatened by extinction as there are sons to occupy it and continue the pedigree. Secondly, there are male children to make libation to the ancestors and perform the funeral ceremony of any of their dead parents. Mr. Egbo's assertion was affirmed by Oluoha Okolie, Oyibo Ojidi, Onyema Uduji and Agwade Udeji.

Egwuoke Onu (Personal Communication, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018) observes that in a successful polygamy, a barren wife aspires to be in good terms with the children of the other wives, upon whom she hopes for a befitting burial and funeral rites. She is not allowed to become a major woman because her husband's homestead already has bubbling male children to keep it going. Nwaebia Utamdi, Nwamgbo Chukwuogele, Oko Udummaeze also affirmed to this.

From the foregoing, arising from respondents, it is clear that one of the reasons Awgu people indulge in polygamous marriage is to secure homestead from extinction. This is in line with Maslow's theory which says that when a need is achieved it no longer motivates. When a son is around, gynaegamy is not necessary.

#### **4.1.2.3 Daughter-Wife Marriage**

Daughter-wife marriage in Awgu is the type of marriage whereby a daughter, usually the first daughter, is retained by the father to bear male children for him. This marriage occurs only when the

wife or wives of a man failed to bear a male child. Parsons (1977:27) believes that “order, stability and cooperation in society are based on value consensus, and that is a general agreement by members of society concerning what is good and worthwhile”. For order and stability to be maintained in any society, the family institution will continue to bear children that will transmit the culture of the land to the new generations that are yet unborn. This is why families are obliged to bear children especially male ones that will continue their father’s name, and teach their children what is good and what is bad. The agreement of the Awgu people is that it is good and worthwhile that every family should have a son who will be taking care of the homestead at the demise of the father. When the son is not forthcoming, the couple will be advised to retain one of their daughters as *ɨdagbe* to bear children for them especially male children.

Also Riyono & Himam Shah & Bhat (2010) note that the wide interest in motivation is because it is seen as essential for understanding and explaining the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the human behaviour. i.e. how people can be motivated to perform their activities and why they behave in certain ways. The ‘why’ Awgu people retain one of the daughters from a sonless family is for family continuity: to allow the *ɨdagbe* to bear children hopefully male children that will continue the lineage of her father.

Daughter-wife according to Mgbavo Oge (Personal Communication 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) is retaining one of the daughters usually the first daughter in a family where only female children are born. She explained that there is a ritual that will be performed before a daughter can be retained as daughter-wife which is called *ɨdagbe* in Awgu. This she said is the presentation of kola-nuts and wine of the kinsmen (*inye oji na ibunye mmanya ɨmunna*) of the father to the girl. The above explanation was also quoted by Okeeja Nwuuzo,, Ibeka Nwaedu, Nwokporo Egwu and Inoegbu Ozoiele. Nwokolo Nwavo (Personal Communication 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) explained that in daughter-

wife marriage, bride price is not paid because the father of the bride who would have received the bride price of her daughter from another suitor will not pay himself. After the presentation of kolanut and wines of the kinsmen, the father will make known his intention to his kinsmen. Then the ritual of retaining the daughter will be performed. This ritual is called *emume nhachi nwaanyi* in Awgu. She said that the ritual is performed by the kinsmen only as no outsider is allowed to join in this ritual. Their reason is that they are trying to prevent an extinction of a lineage of their kinsmen and as such they do not want an outsider. This was affirmed by Nwaata Nwaokomma, Mgbechi Nwude, Mgborie Uka and Olovo Ali.

The ritual according to Egwuoke Onu (Personal Communication 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017) is performed as follows: the father of the daughter-wife would be asked to leave his house as early as 4am on the day of this ritual to return after four market days. The reason, he said, is that the father has handed over his compound to the hand of his daughter to whom he hopes to continue the lineage in his absence. At about 6am in the morning, the daughter to be retained is made to sit at the center of the compound to which she is getting married and be holding a she-goat that has given birth. The elders from each household of his kinsmen will stand round the daughter and make libation, one after the other, calling on their ancestors to come to their aid and wipe away the tears off the face of their kinsman whose homestead is about to lie desolate. They will also implore the gods of the land to come to their kinsman's aid to achieve this task through his daughter. As the she-goat has giving birth to both he-goat and she-goat, may the daughter also give birth to both female and male children. At the end of the ritual, the she-goat will be immolated and the meat will be used in cooking yam porridge for the kinsmen who have performed this ritual. Bachelors and men whose wives have not giving birth to male children can be part of the ritual but they cannot partake in eating the yam porridge. The reason for not allowing this group of people to take part in this meal is

that they too can be victims of such in future. After the entertainment the kinsmen will disperse to their various homes and the daughter will be sleeping with a man recommended by the father for bearing children. The person must be without bad character. Ogbumma Nwali, Simon Okolodeligwe, Uzo, Enu and Iweolu Nwavobu affirmed to the above explanation by Egwuoke Oñu.

Mgbavo Oge (Personal Communication 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) said that except in three or two cases in Awgu, all the *idagbe* bore male children that continued the lineages of their fathers. This was corroborated by Nwoji Nwavo, Ovuteuzo Ugwa, , Onukwe Añu and Agbidi Okeke.

#### **4.1.2.4 Betrothal Marriage**

Betrothed marriage is a child marriage practised in Awgu prior to the coming of the Europeans. It was in vogue then because everybody depended solely on farm produce for feeding. According to Alibisi Oko (Personal Communication, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2017), wealthy farmers usually lent yam seedlings to beginners and not-so-wealthy farmers in their villages. The lender and the borrower would reach an agreement binding in marriage of the lender's son and the borrower's daughter. The seed yams borrowed were taken as the bride price of the borrower's daughter. The failure of this marriage would make the borrower return the yam seedlings twofold. For example a borrower who borrowed four hundred yam seedlings would return eight hundred yam seedlings. The reason for this double refund, as Mr. Alibisi (Personal Communication, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) said, was interest. The other four hundred yam seedlings were taken as interest accrued from the yam seedlings borrowed some years back. This is why parents who borrowed yam seedlings made sure that the marriage came to fruition. This type of marriage, monogamy or polygamy, was rife in the olden days but are all dying out now. Nwaokolo Nwavo, Nwangelike Okolie, Chihanwa Okonwuche and many others corroborated what Alibisi Oko said.

Agbidi Okeke (Personal Communication 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017) described some other versions of betrothal marriage. She said that two friendly families often engaged their children in this type of marriage. When a girl child is born, the man who has a young boy usually goes to the family of the new born girl in company of his wife to present some gift in form of money, cloth or yams as well as a present of four gallons of palm-wine. They make their intension about their particular son marrying their daughter as they grow to adulthood. This presentation is regarded as welcoming the new baby by the parents of the male child (*inete nwa*). If eventually the girl grows to like the young man she is betrothed to, they will then marry each other; otherwise, those things presented to her at birth will be refunded and she will marry another person. This type of marriage was very useful in the olden days because it helped to make sure that every girl had a husband; it also reduced the chance of promiscuity because once the girl observed the seclusion rite for young maidens in Awgu, the groom would complete the marriage rite and take his wife home.

This type of marriage enables the family of a groom to perform the function of making its son marry a well behaved girl and also making him a complete man by finding and marrying a wife for him. The function of the family as an institution was performed by both parents of the boy and the girl in making sure that their children were married to continue their lineage. According to functionalist theory which stated that each institution has a role to perform, the family as an institution in this case has performed its function in ensuring its continuity through the contracting of marriage of their children. Mgborie Uka, Nwaata Nwaokomma, Okeeja Nwuuzo and Nwaokporo Egwu affirmed to the above statement.

#### 4.1.2.5 Ghost Marriage

Ghost marriage, according to Nwaebia Utamdi, (Personal Communication 26<sup>th</sup> December 2017) is marriage performed on behalf of an unmarried dead man. This type of marriage usually takes place when a dead man is killed accidentally during hunting expedition or killed during inter-communal war. He explained that this marriage will only be allowed in Awgu after an oracle is consulted to ascertain the identity of the husband of the wife to be married. This means the seed donor will be responsible for procreation for the late man. When the identity of the representing suitor is known, his kinsmen would contribute money to marry the woman. He said that this wife with her children would live with the man who sired them, but the children would bear the name of the deceased man in whose name the wife was married to continue his patriline.

Nwangelike Okolie (Personal Communication, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) explained that whereby this marriage concerned an accidentally killed man during hunting expedition, the homicide would sponsor the marriage bill while the nearest relation of the deceased person would be saddled with the care of his wife and the children resulting from the marriage. The wife and children would bear the name of the slain person for whom the marriage was consummated to continue his lineage. Mr. Nwangelike (Personal Communication, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) emphasized that for family's name to be retained in the surface of the earth, the kinsmen or the homicidal person had to marry a wife for the dead man to ensure that children were reproduced for him. All these were for the family pedigree to be sustained. He said that it is only done for an only male child. Sunday Agba, Kingsley Okeke, Ibeka Nwedu and Inoegbu Ozoemele agreed to the above explanation of ghost marriage.

Again, from the aforementioned, it is clear that Awgu people permit ghost marriage in order to retain a family lineage. This is supported because of the need involved. Someone to occupy a homestead and make libations for that family - *Amaajuyoyi* - is needed to prevent a compound going

desolate. Therefore, the function of marrying a wife for a dead family member is palpable for retention of a family pedigree. This marriage also shows the function of the marriage as an institution which helps to make sure that a particular homestead does not go into extinction and that every family name is secured. The analysis of the above data from respondents has answered question one in stating the meaning of gynaegamy and the types of marriage that Awgu people practise and the ones that allow gynaegamy.

#### **4.2. The Procedure of Gynaegamy in Awgu**

Gynaegamy in Awgu is one of the forms of marriage in Awgu town. It takes the normal marriage procedures with the exception of traditional wedding ceremony. The following are the marriage procedure in Awgu: the need and decision to engage in gynaegamy, searching for a bride, inquiry about the bride/groom, presentation of gift, and paying of bride price. Traditional wedding ceremony is deliberately omitted because gynaegamy does not encourage publicity to avoid mudslinging the bride from the guests. Igbanoi (2013:1) reports that “under the custom of the Igbo, for instance, a woman who has been married for several years without a child is permitted to choose a young fertile bride, pay her bride price and ‘marry’ her with the full compliments of a properly traditional wedding.”

##### **4.2.1 The Need and Decision to Engage in Gynaegamy**

The first step in every marriage in Awgu is the need that one has to get married and bear children. It is a duty to be carried out by both boys and girls. In a monogamous childless marriage,



the couple is not happy: they see the need for children to be born in that family, especially a male child, to run errands for them and retain the family lineage. This agrees with what Mbiti (1975:104) says:

A marriage fulfills the obligation, the duty and the custom that every normal person should get married and bear children. This is believed to go back to the very beginning of human life. Failure to get married is like committing a crime against traditional beliefs and practises.

Various suggestions will be made by kinsmen, in-laws, relatives and well-wishers about the man marrying another wife. Some will suggest the wife bearing children outside for her husband if he has fertility problem. If any of the pieces of advice were not taken by the couple, gynaegamy would be suggested for them. They may decide to give it a trial due to the fact that they have seen that age is no longer on their side. Some couple in most cases would even decide that they do not want gynaegamy marriage and this decision would consequently make the family lineage go into extinction.

#### **4.2.2 Searching for the Bride (*Icho Nwaanyi*)**

Nkalele Nwammaku (Personal Communication, 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) said that searching for a bride is the second step taken by any person who wants to get married in Awgu, be it polygamy, monogamy or even woman. In gynaegamy, the intending major woman has to inform all her relatives, both paternal and maternal, friends and well-wishers to help her in searching for a bride that would agree to be in a gynaegamy because quite few girls are willing to be minor women. This may be the reason Parrinder (1962;97) opines that "...marriage in Africa is a social affair, concerned as much with the contracting families as it shows that it is not only the husband and wife that marriage brings together but the family also." In Igbo marriages, the families of the couple to be are

fully involved during the search for a bride. Supporting Parrinder, Ogbalu (2006) says that the institution of marriage is very important among the Igbo people. It is not just an affair between a man and a woman. It involves the whole of *Umunna* and, to some extent, the villages. This explanation by Nkalele Nwammaku was corroborated by Agnes Otigba, Iweolu Nwavobu, Christian Oshi, Basil Kene and Ovuteuzo Ugwa

Egwuoke Onu (Personal Communication 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2018) explained that every willing girl as well as girls with poor parental backgrounds was a choice bride. Other targets for brides are usually those who failed virginity test during *Inu Eni* rite of passage for young girls, (seclusion rite of young maidens in Awgu before marriage) girls with unwanted pregnancy are added advantage to the intending major woman, divorced young girls from their previous marriages are equally sought for. The girl with any of these experiences will agree to be a minor woman instead of staying in her father's house to be a laughing stock. This confirms Ubesie's (1987) information that it is a thing of shame in every household that has grown up daughters if none of them is ever approached for marriage proposal. According to him, at a certain age, a daughter is no longer addressed as "whose daughter" but as "whose wife". Mr. Egwuoke (Personal Communication 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2018) further explained that during the era of slave trade, many of the minor women were purchased slave. This assertion corroborates Herskovits (1939) who says that in Kalabari and Igbo areas, very often the minor woman is a purchased slaves. These girls are potential brides to major women because of their social status. Onyema Uduji, Nnabugwu Uchenta, Oyibo Ojidi and Alibisi Oko affirmed to the above.

#### **4.2.3 Inquiry about the Bride**

Nwokolo Nwavo (Personal Communication 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) said that if any of the above girls is found, the intending major woman and her husband are informed and enquiries about the

family of the girl commence. Information sought is the family health of the bride, regarding existence of chronic illness and commendable reputation of the family. In the case of already pregnant girl, the person responsible for her pregnancy will be sought for to know why he rejected the pregnancy. Nwokolo Nwavo's (Personal Communication 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) explanation may be the reason Nwoko (2012:78) says that "...female husband marriage was a traditional way of legalizing what ordinarily would have amounted to the birth of illegitimate children."

Chihanwa Okonwuche (Personal Communication, 19th November, 2017) said that if all these pieces of information are positive, the intention of the major woman will be made known to the bride, her parents if they are alive and her kinsmen. Their response will determine whether to go on with the marriage or not. He said that it is compulsory in Awgu law to make this marriage known to the would-be bride in order to avoid problem with the major woman. This disclosure about her procreation role will make her not to think herself a co-wife to the first wife, and, so, forestall misunderstanding among husband, the major woman and herself. What Mrs. Okonwuche said was affirmed by Onyeama Uduji, Nkalele Nwammaku and Ibeka Nwaedu.

#### **4.2.4 Presentation of gift – (*ikwe aka*)**

The researcher observes that for ordinary marriage to be consummated in Awgu, presentation of gift is made elaborate. It is the first marriage rite that informs the whole town that a son of a certain person has formally proposed to marry the daughter of this man. The bride will go to his would-be spouse with two of her girlfriends. She will be introduced to the groom's family and any objection can mar the marriage. Eke Nwaeku (Personal Communication, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017) said that in woman, this visit enables the friends and the families of the major woman to meet the bride for the first time. The bride will be formally introduced to her future husband's family. Any

objection from any of them can mar the marriage. Okafor (1992:3) says that Igbo marriage is "...an alliance between two families rather than a contract between two individuals. It establishes a new social link not only between families but also between the villages of the bride and the bridegroom." The above opinion of Okafor may be the reason Awgu people included this rite in their marriage so that the bride and her friend should visit the intending major woman at her husband's house.

Mrs. Eke (Personal Communication 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017) explained that this visit is a confirmation rite in Awgu marriage procedure to ascertain whether a bride has accepted a marriage proposal or not. The acceptance of the bride to the marriage precedes her invitation by the first wife and her husband along with two of her friends. This invitation is for the bride to be entertained with assorted food, presented with money gift, clothing materials, soaps and pomade. She goes home with all these and failure to return these gift items means that she has accepted the marriage proposal. The above explanation was corroborated by Ikechukwu Uko, Uzumma Orjinta, Okolie Ebute, Mgbavo Oge and Ifeanyi Aja.

#### **4.2.5 Paying of Bride Price (*Inye Ego*)**

The researcher observed that payment of bride price in Awgu is what makes a child born to a man his own in a marriage. If the bride price is paid on the head of a woman, every child she bears belongs to the man who has paid the bride price, whether he is the biological father or not. Also if a man "put a woman in family way", without paying her bride price after the child is born, it belongs to the girl's father. Uzumma Orjinta (Personal Communication 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2017) explained that the most important aspect of marriage in Awgu is the paying of the bride price. It is the bride price that makes a man the owner of the children that result from the marriage: if a bride price is not paid, any child that results from the union belongs to the bride's father.

Mgbavo Oge (Personal Communication 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) said that if the items used for *ikwe n'aka* rites were not returned after twelve market days by the bride, it means that she has accepted the marriage proposal. On account of this acceptance, the payment of bride price follows - the last stage of this type of marriage in Awgu. The bride price of gynaegamy is always higher than a normal marriage in Awgu because the parents of the bride know that it is difficult for an intending major woman to find a willing bride. This is why the parents and the kinsmen of the bride always demand higher bride price. They do this because they know that the major woman and her husband will rally round to pay as they are desperate to marry a girl that can give them children or male children. The bride price can be as high as five hundred yam seedlings in the pre-colonial time when yams were used for payment of bride price. Normal marriage attracted about two hundred yam seedlings. During the use of cowries five to seven bags of cowries were presented, while normal marriage might require two to three bags of cowries. The dawn of currency saw this type of marriage attracting double of what was offered for normal bride price. For instance, an ordinary marriage might be settled at five shillings for the bride family while gynaegamy would gulp ten shillings of the major woman and her husband. This high bride price of woman experience in Awgu may be the reason Cadigan (1998:89) says that “motivations caused by barrenness or women without sons would make them pay higher bride wealth for a girl and refer to the process as marrying a “daughter – in-law” for the “house”.

The payment of the bride price satisfactorily is followed by the sipping of wine. The bride collects the wine from her father or the eldest man in her family, sips from it and searches for the major woman's husband to give it to him. If the husband is dead she gives the wine to one of his kinsmen with whom she has acquainted during the *ikwe n'aka* rite. After the sipping of wine, meals of various foods are served. At the end the bride goes to her husband's house. The major woman is

not involved in this marriage rite; she stays at home to make preparation for the new wife's arrival. Mrs. Oge's assertion was affirmed by Nwosu Uzo, Mmaduabuchi Onwe, Okoudummaeze, Olovo Ali and Basil Kene.

The foregoing testifies eloquently that Awgu people allow this marriage because of the need for children or a male child. The childless or sonless wife only provides the wherewithal for her husband or his representative to consummate the marriage rite for her. Her presence is not needed at the bride's place as her husband is already there. Durkheim (1964) discovers that various institutions in the society have their own functions they perform. Once an institution fails to perform the function required of it, it is dead and supposed to be removed from that society. Examples of these institutions are religion, marriage, social, cultural and political institutions. The function of marriage is procreation for continuity of lineage and humanity. When a couple fails in this function in Awgu, the help of another woman is employed to remedy the situation and continue the family descent.

The data analysis above from various respondents and literature review has gone far in explaining the second research question. The second question states: What ways is the procedure of gynaegamy in Awgu done? It explains this by stating marriage procedure beginning from the need of a wife and the decision to take a new wife, the search for a willing girl to the last stage which is the payment of the bride price.

#### **4.3 The Degree of the Existence of Gynaegamy in Awgu**

Gynaegamy has been in existence in Awgu since time immemorial. It is rife in Awgu culture especially before the coming of the European missionaries. That is why everybody, including elders, titled men, Christians and elite, is aware of this practise. The periods of its existence can be

graduated into three. The three stages of the time are: Pre-Colonial, Colonial and Post-colonial periods.

#### **4.3.1 Gynaegamy in Pre-Colonial period in Awgu**

This is the period before the coming of the Europeans missionaries. The Awgu people in this period depended solely on their agricultural ventures for their upkeeps. In this period also, there were no hospital or health centres to take care of maternal and children health. Children born in this period were prone to many diseases like tuberculosis, measles, jaundice and yellow fever, and these led to the death of many of them. Parsons (1977) believes that order, stability and cooperation in society are based on value consensus, and that is a general agreement by members of society concerning what is good and worthwhile. Awgu people in the olden days generally agreed to adopt gynaegamy based on the value they placed on leaving someone behind for continuity of family pedigree as this would bring order, stability and cooperation among them. This tacit approval prevents another male from inheriting his brother's property, as well as discourages the tendency to kill his brother as he knows that his wife will engage in woman marriage.

Nkechi Ejinwuka (Personal Communication 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017) maintains that in the pre-colonial period, this marriage was the only way in Awgu to solve the problem of childlessness or of not having a male child. This was because childless couples and sonless parents have no option as it is today that child adoption and In-Vitro Fertilization are available. This means that during this period, anybody that was childless had recourse to this bailing out practise in order to leave someone behind who would remember him or her. In monogamous marriage, what it means is that the homestead of childless couple will be overgrown with weeds if no male child is around. So, Awgu people, to circumvent this pathetic experience, devised three types of marriage that will help the

survival of family pedigree. These marriages are gynaegamy, ghost marriage and daughter-wife marriage. Gynaegamy existed as an alternative to today's child adoption and IVF. In those days, it was an abomination to die without leaving behind someone to make libations to the ancestors of that homestead. In that era, there was nothing as child adoption because the Igbo people said that: *A naghị azụta nwa n'ahịa*, meaning 'children are not bought from the market'. This above explanation was corroborated by Joseph Nwafor, Boniface Ndu, Peter Chukwuoji and Kenneth Kelle.

Nwamgbo Chukwuogele (Personal Communication 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) said that this marriage exists in all the ten villages in Awgu. According to her, right from time immemorial it has been used as a means of stabilizing marriage and making a lineage not to go into extinction. This importance makes Awgu people have the custom that guides gynaegamy and recommends it to couples who are childless or sonless couples. She said that before civilization came to Awgu, this observance of gynaegamy was used to bring succour to childless couple. Mrs. Chukwuogele's assertion lends credence to Uchendu (1995) who argues that before science advanced to the stage that yielded test-tube babies and gave us surrogate mothers, Igbo civilization had made it possible for wealthy and respectable Igbo women who are childless to bear legal children through gynaegamy. The above explanation was affirmed by Iweolu Nwavobu, Umegalukwe Egbo, Ugwoevi Eku, Atavi Ele and Nwaoji Nwavo.

Nwaoshiaja Godwin (Personal Communication 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) praised this marriage in Awgu. According to him, continuity is the main reason for marriage. Awgu people included gynaegamy in their culture in pre-colonial period because there were no hospitals and clinics to take care of maternal and child health. Child-mortality rate was so high that couples who had about five to twelve children had them dead because of lack of medical attention. He stressed that the main objective of marriage in Awgu is to bear children to succeed their parents. When procreation is



lacking in a marriage, a big vacuum is created as the most important function of the marriage which is childbearing is threatened. What Mr. Nwaoshiaja said was supported by Christopher Iwe, Donatus Chukwuma, Sunday Ikoh and Louis Orji.

From these respondents, it is clear that gynaegamy existed in Awgu in pre-colonial time, as it was the only way to solve the problem of childlessness. It is a doctrine of necessity to wipe tears of childlessness off the face of couples without male children. Unlike in other part of the world where some people engage in same-sex marriage for sexual activities, this marriage takes place in Awgu because there is need for self- esteem, safety and sustenance of a family pedigree. This corroborates what Maslow says: when a need is unsatisfied it becomes a motive. Awgu women are motivated by the fact that if they do not have children, especially male children, their husbands' homestead will lay desolate, thus, other kinsmen of their husbands will inherit their husbands' property. This makes them try as much as possible to engage in this marriage in order to salvage such situation.

#### **4.3.2 Gynaegamy in Colonial Period in Awgu**

The missionaries came to Igbo land with Christianity and education. It permeated every fabric of the Igbo culture and made many weak. All the obnoxious practises in Igbo land in general and Awgu in particular were affected: killing of twins, harmful widowhood rite, and even gynaegamy were shaken.

This time Christianity introduced in Awgu fell foul with these practises. Gynaegamy just like polygamous marriage was criticized by the missionaries. They considered it ungodly and those engaged in it were not welcomed in the church. This made the practise dwindle. Ann Dibia, (Personal Communication 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) said that gynaegamy is polygamous marriage and those who engaged in it are not allowed to receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church. She

maintained that child bearing is a gift from God and God gives his gift to those who He wishes to give it to. She said that it is better for those who do not bear children to adopt other people's children from motherless baby's home, rather than marrying other women for their husband because that is still polygamous marriage no matter what name it is given. She explained that the idea of a woman marrying a wife in the name of her dead husbands is case of encouraging adultery with other men, because those men are not the husband of the younger woman.

Clement Nwafor (Personal Communication 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) thanked Christianity for introducing good thing in the life of Awgu people. This includes weakening gynaegamy which was in vogue in the town during pre-colonial era. According to him, the preaching of the gospel and evangelization convinced the people of Awgu to see this marriage as something not good in the sight of the Lord. They see it as a polygamous marriage which is against the teachings of Jesus Christ. They accept barrenness as their cross and agree that only good deed will secure eternal life for one and not the number of children or wealth that someone has. This made gynaegamy decline during this period. The above explanations of Mrs Dibia and Mr. Nwafor were affirmed by Cosmas Nwafor, Vincent Ugo, Priscilla Okeke and Lucky Nwankwo.

Anna Dibia's and Clement Nwafor's explanation clearly shows that the teachings of Christianity affect this marriage and weaken it like other harmful practises which are killing of twins, widowhood rites and other obnoxious cultural practises in Awgu. Even though gynaegamy still exists, it is reduced to insignificance by the missionaries and the church. This shows that the church as an institution has performed its function of crippling a fundamental observance for sustaining society. Nevertheless, in spite of the attack by Christianity, some people still rely on it to secure their lineage, in accordance with Maslow's need theory that an unsatisfied need motivates an

individual to seek for it. As well as this, the function of gynaegamy in ensuring pedigree sustenance continues to resist Christianity's onslaught of suppression.

### **4.3.3 Gynaegamy in Post-colonial Period in Awgu**

Orji Louis (Personal Communication 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) said that in this modern time education and technology have eased people's sufferings and agonies; the issue of fertility is also affected. Modern technology has helped childless couple to bear their own children and select sex of preferred baby through adequate medical research, laboratory test, and use of fertility drugs and In-Vitro Fertilization. This makes many educated and even illiterate Awgu women use these modern methods to give birth to children and saying goodbye to gynaegamy. So in this age, this marriage has been reduced to barest minimum in Awgu as almost every girl is educated: no one is interested in becoming a minor woman. Even if a girl got pregnant in her father's house, and the person responsible denied it, she would object being given to a major woman as her 'wife'. She would rather have her child and train her baby herself when it is delivered. Louis quickly added that the refusal of these young girls to engage in gynaegamy has brought about many of them bearing children without social fathers. This he said is not good as many of this illegitimate children often indulge themselves in social vices like armed robbery, prostitution, cultism and drug addiction for lack of fatherly care and advice. This corroborates Nwoko's (2012) observation that gynaegamy was a traditional way of legalizing what ordinarily would have amounted to the birth of illegitimate children, who traditionally would have been denied inheritance.

According to Boniface Ndu, (Personal Communication 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018) this marriage is almost going into extinction in Awgu. He said that it is archaic, outdated and no longer in vogue. He

explained that many of the childlessness experienced in the olden days were as a result of lack of ante-natal care from health institution as none was available during that time. He pointed out that many of the couple that was childless had many children that died as a result of sickle cell anemia which they termed *Ogbanje*. This was because they did not know what it was and that many couples were ignorant of incompatible Rhesus factor: the result was that their children died. Thus, they resorted to gynaegamy to bear children. David Orji (Personal Communication 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018) remarked that much risk accompanies gynaegamy. The new woman may instigate misunderstanding between the major woman and her husband. He said that it is not only bringing discord, the new woman may be Human Immune Virus (HIV) positive or even have some other sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). This may be transferred to their husband if he is still alive and the major woman herself will contract it from her husband. The above explanations of Barrister Orji and Mr. Ndu were affirmed by Cosmas Nwafor, Vincent Ugo, Priscilla David Orji, Sunday Ikoh and Lucky Nwankwo.

Kanayo Ume (Personal Communication 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) said that nowadays, many couples of Awgu origin do not care whether they have female children alone or not as civilization has taken them to another level. They are no longer dependent on farming only as it was prior to civilization. Mr. Kanayo (Personal Communication 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) said that lands can be bought anywhere today and the person can build house for his children. That is why it is no longer an issue that a woman must bear a son in order to inherit land properties from the husband. He went on to say that Awgu elites in conjunction with Eze V.E.D.Orji, Egbeleli I of Awgu, in 1990 included gynaegamy in Awgu constitution and wrote that no girl or woman should be coerced by their parents or relations to contract marriage. They suggested children adoption as a remedy to childless couples then. Now that In-Vitro Fertilization is in vogue, he suggested that someone in her right sense should not accept to be a major woman not to talk of being the minor woman in this modern age. According

to him, nobody is willing anymore to be a 'wife' to an older woman because it presents that person as unimportant in that homestead. The new wife becomes a baby making machine while the major woman and her husband are the beneficiary. This was affirmed by Kenneth Kelle, Clement Nwafor, Ann Dibia and Bernard Okeke.

David Orji (Personal Communication 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018) gave an example of one Awushiego Nwankwo from Ogboli Awgu who was married to a major woman from Onoli Awgu. He said that Awushiego gave birth to five children but those children did not know their real mother. This was because after weaning, the major woman would take the child with her to Lagos where she lived with her husband. When Awushiego insisted on visiting her children, she was threatened with torture by the major woman. This made Awushiego report this to the Egbeleli and his cabinet members. At the end of the day, Awushiego won the case. The cabinet members admonished the husband of the major woman and his wife to take Awushiego to Lagos so that she would bond with her own biological children. They told them that even though the minor woman's primary duty was to help in bearing children for the major woman and her husband she was not a slave. This case made it more frightening for girls who were still nursing the feeling of becoming minor women as they do not know the fate that would befall them in future. The above assertion was corroborated by Ifeanyi Aja, Uchenna Udeh, Ikechukwu Uko and Simon Okolieodeligwe

Margret Ucheagwunanwa (Personal Communication 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) said that gynaegamy is at the verge of being eroded by modernism because there are alternatives to it, such as children adoption and IVF. However, many of the respondents especially the elders and titled men said that they prefer this marriage to adoption and In-Vitro Fertilization especially if the husband is responsible for the pregnancy. Their choice is that they know the paternity of one who is inheriting a homestead instead of 'bad blood'.

From what has been said by these respondents, it is the need for children that motivated women of the olden days to engage in this type of marriage. Now that health institution has been established to help childless couples, these health institutions have been performing the function of gynaegamy by providing avenue to drugs and IVF to boost fertility for childless couples. The research data that were collected from various respondents and analyzed above have answered the degree of existence of gynaegamy in Awgu. This was done by explaining the three stages that gynaegamy has existed.

#### **4.4 The Extent of Acceptance of Gynaegamy in Awgu**

From the researcher's observation, there are occasions when gynaegamy is accepted in Awgu. These occasions embrace the following conditions: Firstly, it must be a married woman, secondly, when a couple is childless, thirdly, when a couple has only female children, fourthly, when a married man dies childless or sonless and fifthly when a daughter-wife (*idagbe*) has only female children. Anyaegbu (2006:3) says that Maslow "...believes that individuals are motivated by unsatisfied needs. As each of these needs which are hierarchically arranged in order of importance is met, it ceases to be a motivator." Women who are allowed to engage in gynaegamy in Awgu are those that have unsatisfied need. They are motivated to engage in it because they are childless or they do not have sons. Any woman that has a male child in Awgu is not motivated because she is already safe and self-actualized in her marriage. A male child or children are not a motivator for them, so they do not engage in this type of marriage. Durkheim (1964) discovers that various institutions in the society have their own functions. He says that once an institution fails to perform the function required of it, it is dead and supposed to be removed from that society. He enumerates these institutions as religion, marriage, social, cultural and political institutions. The main function

of marriage in Awgu and Igbo land in particular and Africa in general is procreation. When a couple cannot procreate, Awgu society views them as having failed in their role to fulfill the function of marriage. In this case, the Awgu society comes to the rescue of this type of couple by suggesting for the wife to engage in gynaegamy to help them fulfill the function of marriage.

#### **4.4.1 Married Women**

Nwokolo Nwavo (Personal Communication 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) explained that only married women who have passed the age of child bearing are allowed to engage in gynaegamy in Awgu. It had never been heard of that any Awgu man had contracted marriage with a fellow man before or that a spinster had married another spinster in her father's homestead as it is happening in the Western World today. He said that if any man wants he may marry as many as twenty wives. This is his business, but for him to 'marry' another man as 'wife' for sexual pleasure is an abomination. This has never happened in Awgu. If in any case a man is impotent, he will arrange with his wife to bear children for him outside or she will engage in gynaegamy after she reaches her menopause. What Nwokolo Nwavo said corroborates Onuche (2013) who says that homosexual sex violates the law of procreation; this is because homosexual sex has no procreative value, and thereby negates one of the marriage needs which is procreation.

Nwangelike Okolie (Personal Communication 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) said that for a woman to become a major woman she must be a married woman who is childless or has only female children or *idagbe* who could not bear a male child for her father. An unmarried woman is prohibited from engaging in this marriage. This is because if it is allowed what it means is that a girl can decide to remain unmarried and she may go ahead to 'marry' another woman in her father's compound. This is why an unmarried woman who becomes pregnant in her father's house is quickly and readily given to any willing couple in gynaegamy. If this child is allowed to be born in its mother's paternal

home, it has no legal inheritance there. This is the reason any girl with an unwanted pregnancy will agree to marry the next available suitor to give her child social father from where he will have inheritance right if the child is male. This respondent's observation lends credence to Nwoko (2012) who says that woman marriage in Igbo land was a traditional way of legalizing what ordinarily would have amounted to the birth of illegitimate children, who traditionally would have been denied inheritance.

Mr. Nwangelike remarked that girls are meant to be married to other homestead other than their biological homesteads. A girl remaining in her father's homestead without any reason is a viewed as taboo in Awgu. She is seen as a curse, one who does not want to be useful in life and as bad example to other girls in the family. So she is not allowed to engage in gynaegamy in her father's house. He said that there is no way a 'perpetual spinster' ( a girl who refuses every suitor that seeks her hand in marriage) will be allowed to become a major woman in Awgu. "Who is she marrying the wife for? Is she marrying for her father, her husband or herself?" He queried. Therefore, a major woman must have been married and must be childless or sonless before she will be allowed to contract marriage with a minor woman. What this respondent said corroborates Mezu (2016) who says that if a powerful, strong and wealthy woman is barren or infertile for one reason or the other, or even if she has only one child especially if it is a girl child, she may decide with the husband's consent to bring another woman to the husband's matrimonial home for the sake of procreation. The new wife remains under the control of the older wife. The children from the new wife and the husband of the two women are joyfully brought up, educated and equipped by the older wife and the family. The above explanation was affirmed by Uzumma Orjinta, Nkechi Ejinwuka, Okeaja Nwuuzo and Agwade Udeji.



Mr. Nwangelike maintained that it is not accepted in Awgu for an unmarried woman to marry a 'wife' for herself because of the inheritance rite practise in Awgu. Awgu people frown sternly at perpetual spinsters especially those who refused to get married without genuine reasons. He said that prior to civilization, after *inu eni* ceremony (seclusion rite for young maidens) every marriageable maiden usually has a husband, and the left overs are mainly the candidates of this marriage. Married women who engage in this marriage do so because they are childless or have only female children. They indulge in it with the hope that a male child will result from the marriage, thereby sustaining the pedigree of the husband's family. The above assertions from respondents lend credence to Akhter (2016:3) who opines that

All social systems share certain functional prerequisites which must be met if the systems are to survive and operate efficiently. One of such prerequisites, he says, is role allocation and performance. This means that all roles must be filled. They will be filled by those that perform them best.

The role allocated to married Awgu women is to bear children. When they fail to perform this function, they will be advised to engage in gynaegamy to fulfill the function of childbearing through the minor woman.

#### **4.4.2 When a Couple is Childless or Sonless**

Egwuoke Onu (Personal Communication 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018) said that for a woman to engage in gynaegamy in Awgu, she must be a childless woman who is married. A woman who is childless is allowed to be a major woman because she is doing that for her husband's family continuity. There is a need for her to indulge in this type of marriage to be self-actualized in her marriage. A perpetual spinster is not allowed in Awgu tradition to engage in gynaegamy. Igbanoi

(2013:1) avers that under the custom, according to Igbo for instance, a woman who has been married for several years without a child is permitted to choose a young fertile bride, pay her bride price and ‘marry’ her with the full compliments of a properly traditional wedding. The new bride would then do the bidding of her female “husband”, which is essentially to procreate through her husband. Couples who have children especially male children are not allowed to engage in gynaegamy in Awgu. This is because they have sons who will inherit the homesteads and make libations for them when they join their ancestors. Also a married childless woman in a polygamous marriage is not allowed to engage in gynaegamy as there may be children from the other wives who will continue the lineage. Mr. Onu’s assertion was affirmed by Onwukwe Añu, Chihanwa Okonwuche, Nwaoji Nwavo, Nwaata Nwokomma and Ogbumma Nwali.

Being childless makes a woman unsafe in her marriage because as the Awgu people say, *nwa bu oche di pelu ogoli nwai* meaning children are seats that husbands offer to their wives to sit upon. This implies that if a woman is married and is childless, her position in that marriage is uncertain, as she could be asked to leave any time. But when she bears children especially male children she is comfortably sitting down, for she can no longer be shoved out easily. The above ideas lend credence to Maslow’s (1954) who states that human motivation is based on people seeking fulfillment and change through personal growth. Self-actualized people are those who are fulfilled and doing all they were capable of. When Awgu couples are childless, they are uncomfortable because they are unfulfilled in their marriage. They will seek fulfillment through gynaegamy.

#### **4.4.3 Women who have only female children**

Igbanoi (2013) says that gynaegamy is also allowed when a man has all female children and as he gets old, his wife is allowed to ‘marry’ another woman. Agbidi Okeke, (Personal

Communication 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2017) affirming the above, explained that gynaegamy is allowed in Awgu when a monogamous marriage produces only female children. She lamented that this is because inheritance rite in Awgu excludes female children from inheriting land property. This makes it necessary for every couple especially monogamous couple to have an heir to the family. When there is no male child to inherit the father's land property including the homestead – *Obi* - it means that the sibling of the man if any will inherit them and if not they will be inherited by the nearest kinsman. To forestall this type of ugly situation, the Awgu couple will employ gynaegamy. Mrs. Okeke's explanation corroborates Amadiume's (1987:32). She explains that "...among the Igbo of Nnobi, land returned to the possession of the extended family if a compound head had no heir." Also, Carmengo (2018) says that within the Nandi society property and livestock are held and managed exclusively by men. Therefore, a son is needed to transfer ownership of the land and livestock from one generation to the next. When a woman has no sons, she marries a younger woman in the hope that she may bear a male child in order to provide an heir for her assets. Sons are also needed to continue the family name; else the family name will die. Olovo Ali, Nwuko Okekeocha, Agwade Udeji, Nwangelike Okolie and Nwiino Nwuzo agreed to what Agbidi Okeke said.

Uzo Enu, (Personal Communication 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017) supporting what Agbidi said, agreed that a son is needed in the family for continuity of its name and making of libations to the ancestors when the parents might have joined their ancestors. That is why when a woman has only female children, and her husband has died or is not willing to marry another wife, she may decide with her husband to indulge in gynaegamy to know whether God will give them a son through this wife. The intention she said is for both of them to gain from the marriage: the major woman will now inherit her husband's land property through this son while the husband's family pedigree will

be sustained through the same son. This was affirmed by Nwamgbo Chukwuogele, Atavi Ele, Nwaoji Nwavo, Iweolu Nwavobu and Umegalukwe Egbo.

Nwokolo Nwavo (Personal Communication 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017) explained that women who have female children are better than those who are childless. This is because in Awgu a childless woman is seen as a curse: whereas a sonless woman is seen as having bad luck. Sonless woman has females and she is sure that her burial and funeral ceremonies will be performed by them. He said that sonless women at least know that they are fertile. Nevertheless, they still need a son for their husbands' pedigree continuity. They have two options: either to engage in gynaegamy or they retain one of their daughters as an *idagbe*. What this respondent said is in line with Anyaegbu (2006:3) who posits: "Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory believes that people are motivated by a sequence of needs that are arranged in hierarchy of importance. She further says that Maslow believes that individuals are motivated by unsatisfied needs. As each of these needs which are hierarchically arranged in order of importance is met, it ceases to be a motivator. What Nwakolo Nwavo said was affirmed by Egwuoke Onu, Nwosu Uzo, Mmaduabuchi Onwe, Mgbavo Oge, Ovuteuzo Ugwa and Eke Nwaeku.

This shows that Awgu people do not indulge in this marriage for the fun of it or for sexual pleasure of it: rather, they indulge in it when there is need for it. They are motivated by the need for a male child who will continue the lineage of their husband to engage in it. The major woman is motivated to have a son through gynaegamy as she does not want her husband's homestead to lie desolate when he joins his ancestors. She needs a male child, in order to be qualified to have access to her husband's properties especially land properties.

#### 4.4.4 When a Married Man Dies Childless or Sonless

Sitati (2016:2) states that "...among the Nandi and Kipsigis, a woman who has passed the age of child-bearing, and who has no sons, may enter into a form of marriage with another woman. This may be done during the lifetime of her husband, but it is more usual after his death." The above statement of Sitati affirms the reason Awgu women who have lost their husbands but are sonless engage in gynaegamy in the name of their husbands to give them heirs to continue the lineage.

Nwaata Nwokoma (Personal Communication 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017) acceded to the aforementioned. He said that when a man dies without having a son who will continue his family lineage and inherit his property, his wife is allowed to engage in gynaegamy if she has passed the age of child bearing. She accomplishes this by reaching out to her husband's kinsmen. They will help her in looking out for a young bride and making sure to consummate the marriage ceremony on their brother's name. The above assertion corroborates Mackenzie's (1990:619) who says that "...a widow enters woman to woman marriage in order to increase the lineage of a deceased husband." However, if the wife is still in her reproductive years before the death of her husband, she is expected to look for a decent man and bear her husband an heir to his homestead. Mr. Okoma (Personal Communication 17<sup>th</sup> December 2017) said that all these efforts are geared towards making sure that the man's name continues to exist in the face of the earth. He said that even though the man had died before his wife conceives and gives birth to those children, they are still his children because the Igbo people believe that death does not terminate marriage alliance. The woman is still her husband's wife. This respondent's assertion is in line with Nmah (2003:44) who remarks that Igbo "marriage is an alliance between two families and death of the groom does not terminate the alliance". The major woman does not delve into this type of marriage because she wants to have fun but because she wants to sustain her deceased husband's lineage. This may be reason Herskovits

(1937:336) says that “Nuer female husbands pay a male outsider, usually in form of cattle, to procreate with their wives, aware that if children are produced in the name of the deceased husband, she will be revered by his family. What Nwaata Nwokoma said was affirmed by Nwangbo Chukwuogele, Nkalele Nwammaku, Uzo Enu and Onyema Uduji.

#### **4.4.5 When *Idagbe* has only female Children.**

Amadiume (1987:32) explains that among the Igbo of Nnobi, land returned to the possession of the extended family if a compound head had no heir. A male daughter was officially installed through the ritual of *nhayikwa or nhanye* in order to continue a line of descent, to keep possession of associated property, to protect her father’s *obi* (ancestral house or compound). Amadiume’s explanation agrees to the reason Awgu people retain one of their daughters if there is no son in a monogamous marriage.

Oko Udummaeze (Personal Communication 28<sup>th</sup> December 2017) explained that *idagbe* is daughter-wife. This means a daughter, usually the first daughter, is retained by the family to bear children specifically male children for the family. This will be after some necessary rituals have been performed by the kinsmen as required by Awgu tradition. It is called *nhachi nwaanyi* in Awgu. The intent of this is for the daughter to remain in her father’s homestead with the hope of bearing male children who will continue the lineage of her father. He explained that when an *idagbe* bears only female children, she may be advised to engage in gynaegamy. This is because she is already married to her father’s compound-(*Ezi*). She ‘marries’ this woman in her father’s name whom she is representing. Oluoha Okolie, Mgbechi Nwudu, Alibisi Oko, Oyibo Ojidi, Chihanwa Okonwuche agreed to what Okoudumma Eze said.

On his own part, Atavi Ele (Personal Communication 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2018) observes that *idagbe* is also allowed to become a major woman if she could not give birth to a son who will inherit her father's homestead. He says that Awgu people approve her becoming a major woman because her father's homestead cannot be overgrown with weed. He explains that an *idagbe* has been married to the compound and her primary assignment is to fill the compound with male children, so that the family will not go extinct – (*ka ama ghara ichi*). When she could not fulfill this mission, she is allowed to engage in this marriage in her father's name in order to bear him male children. This, he says, is in rare occasion as many of the daughter-wife usually bear male children but it has happened in two or three places in Awgu. What Atavi Ele said was corroborated by Ogbumma Nwaali, Okeeja Nwauzo, Ejileka Ukamma and Ugwuevi Eku.

In her contribution, Mgbavo Oge (Personal Communication 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) said that in one of the three cases, the family members of the *idagbe* protested her engaging in gynaegamy because they wanted to inherit the land property of their uncle especially his compound which is at a very strategic sight. However, these usurpers were stopped by Awgu custom when they were dragged to the traditional ruler by the daughter-wife. She said that *idagba* is allowed to engage in this marriage because just like many wives in the normal marriage, it is not her fault that she did not bear a male child. According to her, an *idagba* has been married to the homestead and the intention is for her to bear a son. When she could not fulfill this function, she is allowed to contract marriage with a minor woman in her father's name to know whether God will bless her through another woman. Ifeanyi Aja, Cosmas Nwafor, Nwaebia Utamdi, Onwukwe Anu and Christopher Iwe agreed to Mgbavo Oge's assertion.

From the afore said by Oko Udummaeze, Atavi Ele and Mgbavo Oge, it is obvious that some Awgu women who are daughter-wives are retained for one purpose – to bear male children for

family lineage continuity (*Ka ama ghara ichi*). When they could not achieve it, they are obliged by the need to bear male children to engage in this type of marriage. They do this not for their pleasure or sexual satisfaction but because they are motivated to sustain their fathers' homestead, for which they are retained. Opara (2004) sees motivation as an individual's urge, desire, tendency or striving to achieve a goal to fulfill certain need. This Awgu people do, as there is need for a male child, and if a male child is not born in any compound there will be vacuum, which will lead to the lineage going into extinction. The need to check this vacuum causes a daughter-wife to be retained by her family to bear male children for the homestead. Where the aim of her retention is not attained, then she is allowed to become a major woman. Her inability to fulfill this need forces her to contract marriage with another woman to complete her assignment. She is not engaging in this marriage for the fun of it; rather, she is doing it for the continuation of her father's pedigree – (*Afamefunu*). She is motivated by the fact that she does not want her father's compound, which she is married to, to lie desolate – (*Obiechina*).

The research question which states: To what extent is gynaegamy accepted in Awgu has been answered from the above data collected from the respondents; it is answered by listing the five occasions that gynaegamy is accepted in Awgu.

#### **4.5 The Behaviour of the Major Woman towards the Minor Woman in gynaegamy**

The behaviour of the major woman towards the minor woman is motivated by childlessness or lack of male children. The major woman is desperate to have children or a male child, which is the most basic need of marriage in Awgu. The behaviour of the major woman towards the minor woman is expected to be like that of a mother and a daughter. Even if the major woman is wicked she will pretend to be good so that she actualizes her dream of becoming a mother through the minor woman. This is why Maslow (1987:17) points out that most behaviour is multi motivated and notes



that "...any behaviour tends to be determined by several or all of the basic needs." The basic need of marriage in Awgu is procreation of children especially male ones to continue the patriline. The relationship features in these headings for clear understanding.

#### **4.5.1 Living Together**

Egwuoke Onu (Personal Communication 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018) observes that the major woman and the minor woman always live in peace especially if their husband is still alive. He notes that these two are not mate; there is no jealousy among them. The older wife has passed the childbearing age, and so jealousy of the younger woman sleeping with her husband daily is not in her mind. The older woman knows that she needs the younger woman to solve her procreation problem. So, she treats her with care as she would do her daughter. The younger woman knows what she came to do, and she accepts it. She is in no way in competition with the major woman. She respects both the first wife and her husband and runs errands for both of them. She makes sure that she avoids any behaviour that will lead to quarrelling. She addresses the older wife as 'big mother' which means *nne m ukwu* in Awgu and the husband as 'our father' *nna anyi*, while the major woman addresses her as my daughter '*ada m*'. The above respondent's assertion corroborates Amadiume's (1997:72) who opines that "traditionally, among the Igbo of Nnobi, rich women were able to become female husbands in order to free themselves from domestic responsibilities. Their wives would perform all household chores while the female husband used the extra time she gained to devote her energies to other money making affairs". Nwamgbo Chukwuogele, Basil Kene, Nkechi Ejirinwuka, Nwangelike Okolie and Chihanwa Okonwuche agreed to the above explanation.

Boniface Ndu (Personal Communication 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018) said that the two women live in the same hut but sleep in separate rooms. He said that he had never witnessed her two 'mothers'

sleeping together in one bed not to talk of engaging in sexual pleasures. In Igbo custom, it is the duty of younger women to prepare meals in the house. It is therefore the duty of the new wife to cook their meal. The first wife being older teaches the younger wife how to prepare various local delicacies the way their husband likes it. She has the responsibility of making sure that she teaches the younger wife her husband's likes and dislikes in terms of the food he likes most and the best method to prepare it. She ensures that her husband eats on time. As the new wife is not her co-wife they will not be rotating cooking for the husband. They cook in one pot and serve their husband and the children the food they cook. The major woman is answerable to the husband about any bad taste of meal or wrong in the house as the new wife is under her control. She makes sure that the new wife sweeps her husband's *obi*, fetches drinking water and firewood for him. The new wife is expected to do these things without bitterness, as she already knows that she is not a mate to the first wife from whom she takes orders and does her biddings to live happily. What Boniface Ndu said was supported by Kingsley Okeke, Margrette Ucheagwunanwa, Simon Okolodeligwe Victor Ani and Louis Orji.

#### **4.5.2 Farming**

In Awgu, before the coming of the Europeans, agriculture was the mainstay of the people. Wealthy men are measured by number of yam stakes in their barns. Those who help the man in farm work are his wives and children. When in a monogamous marriage, the couple could not bear children the work of the farm would be done by the couple alone. In order to have a helping hand in farm work, many women would use their own money to marry second wives for their husbands. This may be the reason Cadigan (1998:89) explains that "Gusii, Lovedu and Simbiti, which are

agricultural communities, often recognize a woman's need for a daughter-in-law to help with domestic chores and farm work.”

Mgbavo Oge (Personal Communication 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) explained that a major woman and the minor woman farm their land and plant their crops together. They cultivate their crops on the same land; they do not have different farms like co-wives do. They plant okra, cocoyam, water yam, yellow yam, cassava and vegetable on the same land; weed the farm, harvest the produce and sell them together. The major woman keeps the money gotten from the product and uses it for family upkeep especially if her husband is dead. She has the responsibility of making sure that they work hard to earn their living and train the children from the gynaegamy. If their husband is still alive, both wives weed their husband's yam farms together, plant crops like maize, pumpkin, local beans and pepper in them; harvest all these things and jointly sell them. The older wife has the responsibility of keeping the money from the product of farm crops and uses it for housekeeping. She buys clothes for the minor woman and children from this money to supplement the ones the husband may have bought for the new wife. Onyema Uduji, Ikechukwu Uko, Nwaokporo Egwu, Uzumma Ojinta, Nwangbo Chukwuogele and James Okolie agreed to what Mgbavo Oge said.

### **4.5.3 Sexual Relationships**

From the observation of the researcher, there is no sexual relationship that exists between the two women in the marriage. They behave like mother and daughter and sometimes they do quarrel like co-wives. Sometimes the major woman will scold the younger woman if she tries to be wayward by not sleeping only with the major woman's husband or the man chosen for her. Herskovits (1937:336) avers that “among the Igbo land and Kalabari communities of Southern Nigeria, barren women have also been noted to enter into woman-to-woman marriage. The female husband gives

her wife to her own husband or his kin in order to procreate; an outsider would never be brought in as a lover". Amadiume (1987:7) claims that

Interpretations of female husband marriage as lesbianism would be totally inapplicable, shocking and offensive to Nnobi women, since the strong bonds and support between them do not imply lesbian sexual practise. She disagrees strongly with those Western lesbians who have cited this African practise to justify their choices of sexual alternatives which have roots and meanings in the West.

Corroborating Amadiume, Uchendu (2007) maintains that woman- woman marriage in Igbo land does not connote the existence of sexual relationship among women who engage in it.

The above assertion of researchers on gynaegamy in Igbo is in line with what Awgu people practise in this marriage. Alibisi Oko (Personal Communication 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) maintained that there is no sexual relationship between a major and the minor woman in Awgu. Awgu women contract marriage with other women for their husbands, whether dead or alive, for family continuity and not for their sexual satisfaction. He said that it has not been seen or heard of that Awgu women, who are major women, engage in sexual acts with their 'wives. He related that, judging by the strict rules that guide gynaegamy, one would know that it is only childless couple in a monogamous marriage, which the wife has reached menopause that is allowed to engage in this observance. On his part, Onwukwe Anu (Personal Communication 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2018) says that sexual relationship between persons of same sex or between man and animal is an abomination in Awgu as it is unheard of in the olden days. It is only recently, he adds, that such occurrences started to be heard from outside the community. He says that major woman's husband is responsible for his new wife's sexual need, whose main purpose is for procreation in Awgu. If the husband is dead one of his age mates from another kindred will be responsible for her sexual needs for procreation. According to

him, this is done in order to make sure that the family lineage did not go into extinction. The man must be a person without any social stigma like stealing and chronic disease. This agrees with Uchendu (2007), who says that in parts of Abia State, such as Umuahia, minor women are allowed to choose men of their choice for sexual gratification but in Nsukka and its environs, it is the major woman who selects the man to do the honours. The man must not be of questionable character. The above assertion was agreed to by Okoudumma Eze, Agwade Udeji, Onyema Uduji, Nwamgbo Chukwuoge, and Egwuoke Onu.

Uzumma Ojinta (Personal Communication 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2017) stated that in Awgu, a woman who still is in her pre-menopause stage is not allowed to engage in gynaegamy, reason is that she might still bear a son with her husband or with someone outside, if her husband is dead. Awgu women contract marriage with other women not for sexual pleasure, as they are free to have sex with other men outside if their husbands are dead. It is the need for social recognition and to wipe away shame of childlessness that makes Awgu women indulge in it. The above statement was corroborated by Nkechi Ejnwuka, Nwamgbo Chukwuoge, Uzo Enu, Ulaogu Onwu and Mgbechi Nwaude.

Nwokolo Nwavo (Personal Communication 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017) spat out disgustingly and declared vehemently that he had never heard that a major woman had had sexual relationship with her 'wife' in Awgu. He said that the sexual need of the bride is provided by the husband of the older woman if he is alive or any of his age mate that was chosen by his kinsmen if the man is late. If the major woman's husband is alive and is adjudged to be impotent, the wife will make it seem as if there is quarrel and she will park some of her clothes and go to her parents' house, there she will be sleeping with the agreed age mate of her husband until she becomes pregnant. Her parent will inform her husband who will come with four gallons of palm wine and four big yams and beg his wife to

come home. He said that this is done because the dignity of the man of the house has to be protected as another man cannot come to his compound to be sleeping with his wife while he is alive. So this arrangement is made to preserve his dignity as a man. Inoegbu Ozo, Ulaogu Onwu, Mgborie Uka, Ogbumma Nwali and Nwaokporo Egwu affirmed to the above explanation by Nwaokolo Nwavo.

Nkechi Ejinwuka (Personal Communication 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) said that since she started living with the major woman, she has never been approached for sexual play with the major woman. She said that the husband of the major woman was responsible for the six children she had before he died. On his own side, Boniface Ndu (Personal Communication 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018) maintained that he had never witnessed his parents engaged in sexual relationship. He said that if such a thing has been happening, he would have noticed it as a little boy sleeping in the same hut with the women. He said that he thought that the older woman was his paternal grandmother due to the closeness between the two women. He explained that he came to understand the type of marriage his mother was into when the older woman died and they were required to perform the rituals before her burial - *Ime Emume* in Awgu. The above assertion of Mrs. Nkechi was affirmed Eke Nwaeku, Nwangbo Chukwuogele, Sunday Agba, Appolonia Nwafor and Udeogu Okwuduluchukwu.

From what has been said, it is clear that no sexual relationship or sexual desire exists between these women. Both see each other as mother and daughter and behave as such. The major woman provides for the family's need just like a husband would do if he is alive. The sexual need of the new wife is provided by the major woman's husband if he is alive or one of his age mates if the husband is dead. Contracting marriage with another woman is only necessitated because of childlessness of the first wife or because of the need to have a male child who will inherit the homestead and make libations for the ancestors. It is the need for social recognition and to wipe away shame of childlessness that makes Awgu women indulge in it and not for sexual pleasure.

The research question which states: How does the major woman behave towards the minor woman in Awgu has been answered from the above data sourced from respondents and literature review. This was done by stating the relationship that exists between the minor woman and the major woman in terms of living together, farming, etc.

#### **4.6 Reasons for Gynaegamy in Awgu**

Awgu women engage in gynaegamy because their society practises patriarchy. Inheritance is from the father to the son and not from the father to the daughter or wife. This makes it difficult for women who are barren or sonless to inherit land property from their husbands.

Coser (1977:140) observes that “When the explanation of a social phenomenon is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the functions it fulfills”. This means that gynaegamy exists in Awgu because of what it stands for. Durkheim (1964) discovers that various institutions in the society have their own functions they perform. Once an institution fails to perform the function required of it, it is dead and supposed to be removed from that society. Examples of these institutions are religion, marriage, social, cultural and political institutions. From what has been discussed, gynaegamy exists in Awgu for the following reasons: social, economic, religious and political.

##### **4.6.1 Social Reason**

Kimutu (in Cadigan 1994) says that among the Kamba of Kenya, a barren woman is a “social disgrace, she is a humiliation” as long as her husband is potent and fertile. A barren wife can resolve her unfortunate social position by engaging in a gynaegamy. In such cases, the minor woman bears children for the major woman which brings honour and glory to the barren woman. The major

woman in this situation also achieves prestige for contracting marriage with the younger woman and obtaining children from her.

Uzumma Ojinta (Personal Communication 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2017) explained that the major reason for marriage in Igbo land in general and Awgu in particular is for procreation. This is to enable the continuity of the Igbo race. It is always strange and makes the tongue wag if anybody refuses to marry. Gynaegamy exists in Awgu because a couple lacks children especially male children to continue lineage of the family. A couple without children is seen as cursed by the gods and as having no value in the society, is abused, insulted and called names especially the woman. A married childless woman, even if her childlessness is not her fault, is blamed for bringing bad luck to her husband. She is seen as a misfit, as a social outcast, who does not have a say in the gathering of *inyom di*, *umuokpu*, and in the village. Mrs. Orjinta's assertion may be the reason Basden (1921) says that to be childless is the greatest calamity that can befall any Igbo woman. Hence a very high value is set upon marriage and procreation. Ivo Nwavoko, Nwamgbo Chukwuogele, Nwaata Nwaokoma, Agbidi Okeke, Okwuduluchukwu Udeogu and Innocent Okeke agreed to this.

Nkechi Ejiniwuka (Personal Communication 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2018) lamented that many titles and clothes of recognition are denied a childless woman in the community. She explained that in the olden days, a barren woman is not allowed to tie certain wrappers like *Anama* and *Joji* which are regarded as costly wrappers for women. She is also not allowed to do some fashionable hairstyle like *okanga* and *egwueji* hair styles that are solely for women who have given birth to children. For her to be socially valuable in the society she has to engage in gynaegamy and bear children preferably male children for her husband to perpetuate the family lineage. In doing that she is performing her function and role as a wife. Being a major woman and bearing children through this new wife, she wipes away the shame of childlessness from her face and that of her husband's. If it is male children



that are lacking in their compound she contracts marriage with another woman for her husband to give him a male child. By so doing she elevates her husband to the level of self-actualization, as her husband actualizes his dream of having a male child to take his place at death. So, gynaegamy, she maintained, is engaged by Awgu women in order to attain social statuses reserved for those who have children and those who have male children. Examples of such title are *ime ogo* and *ichi inyom*. Mgborie Uka, Mgbechi Nwaedu, Nkalele Nwammaku, Eke Nwaeku and Okolie Ebute agreed to the above explanation.

#### **4.6.2 Economic Reason**

Kruger (1993) states that female textile traders in the Sokoto Caliphate in West Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries employed gynaegamy to advance their own economic status. As females accumulated wealth through trading, they often invested it by taking wives. The institution of women-to-women marriage was most likely used to gain control over the labour of children and wives with the aim of producing textiles at low costs. Women of the Sokoto Caliphate were engaged in weaving and spinning and were able to trade freely and to keep all profit.

Maduabuchi Onwe (Personal Communication 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) said that in inheritance procedure in Awgu, a woman who does not have children or male child will not inherit land property. He moved further and said that Awgu people's economic realization was only through farming prior to the coming of the Europeans. Lands were of great value then because food and cash crops were planted on them. Lands in Awgu are bequeathed only through inheritance and it is only male children that are entitled to land ownership. Any woman who engages in gynaegamy does so because of economic reasons to gain access to his husband's land properties. The above assertion corroborates Herskovits (1939). He says that in Igbo and Kalabari culture areas, barren women enter into gynaegamy primarily to increase their economic status. If a woman has no male children, she

has no claim on her husband's property upon his death and may have to leave the land on which she is likely to have lived for decades. Offspring from a gynaegamy guarantees the female husband secure economic standing by maintaining her rights to occupy property which is inherited by her children.

Nwuko Okekeocha (Personal Communication 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) explained that inheritance rite in Awgu is done by huts, which are hut of wives who have male children and not based on the number of male children. If a man marries two or more wives, he will share them his properties by hut/mother that has male children. If any of them does not have a male child, that hut will not get a land property. So, a monogamous marriage has only one hut. If this hut does not have a male child, the implication is that the kinsmen of the man will inherit his land property if he dies. This is the reason for which Awgu women engage in gynaegamy in order to have children from another woman so as to have inheritance through the son that will result from the marriage. This affirms this special saying in Awgu supporting this marriage: *Onye O bigolu eka eli ive di e* meaning one who she places her hand upon to inherit her husband's property.

It is therefore noteworthy to know that a major woman in Awgu is motivated by the need for a woman to have access to her husband's land property through the providential birth of a male son. It is her functional duty as a mother to bear children especially male child to continue a lineage and inherit her husband's properties.

#### **4.6.3 Religious Reason**

Mbiti (1969) equates marriage with religious obligations by means of which the individual contributes the seed of life towards man's struggle against the loss of original immortality. A person who, therefore, has no descendants in effects quenches the fire of life, and becomes forever dead

since his line of physical continuation is blocked, if he does not get married and bear children. Unfortunate, therefore, is a man or woman who has nobody to remember him/her after physical death. To lack someone close who keeps the departed in their personal immortality is the worst misfortune and punishment that any person could suffer. To die without getting married and without children is to be completely cut off from human society, to become disconnected, to become an outcast and to lose all links with mankind.

Also Mbiti (1975) asserts that through marriage and child bearing the parents are remembered when they die. Anyone who dies without leaving behind a child or close relative to remember him or make libations for him is a very unfortunate person. Therefore, marriage is intimately linked up with the religious beliefs about the continuation of life beyond death. In Achebe (1958), Okonkwo laments that should Nwoye join the church group, when he dies, he will be waiting in vain at the spirit world for him to receive his own food (libation from Nwoye) and Okonkwo threatens to deal with Nwoye .

Egwuoke Onu (Personal Communication 5<sup>th</sup> January 2018) said that every Igbo man's prayer is to have a son to remember him at festivals of the town when he is dead. In Awgu, there are many festivals/ rituals that are performed in honour of the departed. Such festivals are: *Ili Ali*, 'feast of the earth goddess', *Igwa eka* , 'feast of Ikenga', *Ikpali Ndị Ichie Nni*, 'feast of feeding the ancestors', the breaking of kola nut in the morning and marriage ceremony of every girl child born in that compound. In all these festivals the sons pray for good things to happen to that family from their ancestors. The first son mentions the name of their own father, grandfathers and great grandfathers. This is why every family strives to have children (male children) that will remember the ancestors during these festive periods, else the ancestors of that homestead will be waiting in vain to receive their libations. These, Awgu people believe, usually bring mockery to the ancestors of such

homestead from their mate in the world beyond. This was the fear of Okonkwo in Achebe (1958) that made him threaten his son Nwoye that he will kill him should Nwoye join the church group. The reason was affirmed by Bernard Okeke, Onyema Uduji, Okeja Nwuuzo, Inoegbu Ozo, James Okolie and Ovuteuzo Ugwa.

Nwokolo Nwavo (Personal Communication 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017) observed that Awgu people believe that a dead person can only rest in peace and be admitted to the abode of their forefathers if a male is around to cater completely for burial and funeral rites and rituals of the departed. The burial and funeral ceremonies are adjudged in facilitating the deceased admission to the group of *Ndi Ichie* in the world beyond. Failure to perform these burial and funeral ceremonies compels the deceased to wait under the rain and sunshine until they are performed. These burial and funeral rites are performed by the children of the deceased person. Any Awgu person that dies without having a child, either male or female has lost the right to have his funeral rites and rituals performed. The person is seen as waste and earns this scathing remark: *O nwevo ive O kwalu la uwa* – he or she did not achieve anything in this world. Sons perform the *Ikpa* dance for their father while all the children perform the *opieke* dance for their mother. If one dies childless in Awgu, no one will perform all these rites and rituals for him/her and the soul of that person will not be admitted into the spirit world; rather he/she will be roaming between the spirit world and the living world: this the Awgu people explains as: *O na-agaghari n' amandi mmuo na mmadu*. This makes it absolutely essential for every Awgu person to strive to leave behind children, especially male children, to perform these rites and rituals at his or her death. Nwaokolo Nwavo's observation was supported by Mgbavo Oge, Nwaoshiaja Godwin, Mmaduabuchi Onwe, Nwosu Uzo, Umegalukwe Egbo and Atavi Ele.

It can be noted that Awgu people engage in gynaegamy in order to procreate children that will perform their burial and funeral rites and rituals to facilitate their reception in the world beyond. Childlessness, especially male childlessness, makes burial and funeral rites unobserved, as no one inspires their performance. This is why married women who are childless engage in gynaegamy to see if God will give them children through the second woman. These children will perform both their own funeral rites and that of their husbands.

#### **4.6.4 Political Reasons**

Umegalukwe Egbo (Personal Communication 7<sup>th</sup> January 2018) said that Awgu has what is called the compound head, which is *Onyeisi Mbaraezi* in Awgu. Every first son is automatically an *Onyeisi Mbaraezi*: he oversees the welfare of his father's compound. He is the political head of that family at the demise of his father. Before the coming of the Europeans, he was responsible for choosing those who would go to war from his father's compound if war erupted. He represents his father's compound in the gathering of the village meeting, contributes to the kinsmen's meeting and gets his father's family share at the gathering of the kinsmen. When a cow or games from hunting expedition are shared, he brings his father's compound share- *Oke Mbaraezi*. If there is no surviving male, after the death of a father of the compound, automatically that compound will begin to lose the right of collecting shares divided at the kinsmen's gathering. If there is a surviving male child, he is qualified to vote and be voted for as the head of the kinsmen meeting. Even if he is the youngest and it falls on his father's compound to produce the next kinsmen's head he will be given the post. This is why every family tries hard to engage in this marriage if the need arises in order to leave a male child behind. Mr. Umegalukwe's assertion was affirmed by Kenneth Kelle, Iweolu Nwavobu, Nwaoji Nwavo, Okoudumma Eze and Okechukwu Kene.

The fundamental position of a male is captured by Nwokolo Nwavo (Personal Communication 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017). He said that daughters from the families in which male children are lacking are prone to maltreatment by their husbands and relatives. The husbands of such daughters easily maltreat their wives because they have no men to fear in their in-laws' families. He hinted that the daughters do not fare well if misunderstanding erupts with any of their kinsmen who may want to lord their father's property over them and get away with it. But the presence of a man protects the sisters and ensures that no one molests them. This is why Awgu people have this saying *ihu okukọ na-eche akwa ya*. (The presence of a hen protects its eggs). This means that the presence of brothers always gives protection to the daughters or sisters. The above explanation by Nwokolo Nwavo was affirmed by Ivo Nwavoko, Umegalukwe Egbo, Nwuko Okekeocha, Nwangelike Okolie and Onwukwe Anu.

Gynaegamy is *sine qua non* for bearing of male children to sustain a family lineage. This male child becomes the head of his father's compound after the latter's death, performs the function of representing the family both in the kinsmen and village gatherings, as well as the function of protecting the family members from external danger. He is the spiritual strength of confidence of the daughters married outside as he makes sure that they are not maltreated by their husbands. It is obvious that gynaegamy is done in Awgu for the sole purpose of procreation. A woman in need of children or a male child uses it to bear children for her husband in order to continue her husband's lineage.

The above analysis of the data takes care of the reasons why gynaegamy is practised by Awgu people. These reasons which range from social, religious, economic and political have answered the question which states: What are the reasons for gynaegamy in Awgu?

## **4.7 Constraints to Gynaegamy in Awgu**

Gynaegamy just like any other marriage in Awgu has its own problems that emanate from two people living together. These problems are jealousy, promiscuity, maltreatment, stubbornness, separation and divorce.

### **4.7.1 Jealousy**

Nwmagbo Chukwuogele (Personal Communication 24<sup>th</sup> December 2017) explains that jealousy is one of the most outstanding vice among co-wives in a polygamous family. She emphasizes that even though the custom stipulates that the minor woman should be under the major woman, human beings want to be free at all time. The first wife may start feeling that she has been shortchanged as the minor woman continues to enjoy the warmth of their husband every night. The minor woman on her side may start feeling that she is the person that bears the heir to that family and should be consulted in every decision. Failure to let her know about any decision taken in the family will bring problem. The love of the husband may start dwindling away from the major woman as he focuses his love on the minor woman who has given him his children or sons he has been looking forward to since his youth. This type of situation may lead to incessant quarrelling and fighting between the two women and even between the major woman and her husband. Jealousy is less if the major woman's husband is late before his wife engages in gynaegamy. She cited many examples where jealousy was the cause of separation and divorce between the major woman and the minor woman. The explanation given above was supported by Agbidi Okeke, Eke Nwaeku, Mgbechi Nwuude, Nkalele Nwammaku and Nkechi Ejinwuka.

#### **4.7.2 Stubbornness**

Mgbavo Oge (Personal Communication 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2017) stated that many a time the problem will emanate from a minor woman's stubbornness. She said that the minor woman may want to be free from the control of and taking orders from the first wife. She may start refusing to do any of the domestic chores like fetching water, sweeping the house, cooking food and going to the market or even accompanying the major woman and her husband to farm. This may be as a result of keeping bad company with those who will advise her to leave the marriage and go back to her father's house. In many occasions she will be idling with the village gossips and discussing the major woman and her husband with them. Nwamgbo Chukwuogele (Personal Communication 24<sup>th</sup> December 2017) added that the minor woman in her house, in most cases, demanded to be allowed to cook her own food differently like co-wives do. She equally wanted to have her own portion of yam farms to plant her vegetables. She all along knows that these are not possible but those advising her will make her believe that the major woman will succumb to her pressures. Mrs. Chukwuogele emphasized that this stubbornness is prevalent among minor women that married childless major women. In case of sonless major women, their daughters help their mother in taming the minor woman's excesses. What Nwamgbo Chukwuogele and Mgbavo Oge said were supported by Nwaata Nwaokoma, Ifeanyi Aja, Nwiino Nwuuzo, Okwuduluchukwu Udeogu, Oluoha Okolie, and Mgborie Uka.

#### **4.7.3 Promiscuity**

Agbidi Okeke (Personal Communication 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017) explained that another problem that is envisaged from gynaegamy in Awgu is the promiscuous life of the minor woman. The minor woman is far away younger than the husband of the major woman. She agreed to the marriage because of the shame trailing unclaimed pregnancy. Some agreed to the marriage to leave their



father's house as all her mates were married. But when she gives birth to two or three children, she will start envying her mates who are married to younger men. This may constrain her to seek sexual satisfaction from her male peers and from stronger men. If the major woman's husband is alive, the major woman's attempts at cautioning her always receive rebuff which culminates in misunderstanding between the two women. Sometimes this may lead to separation or divorce. The above explanation was agreed to by Ogbumma Nwali, Okeeja Nwuuzo, Nwaokpor Egwu and Okolie Ebute.

#### **4.7.4 Maltreatment**

Eke Nwaeku (Personal Communication 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) said that the major women especially those who have female children are the people who usually maltreat the minor women. A major woman may become sad about the possibility of the younger wife relegating her to the background and inheriting her husband's property through her biological children. This thought may induce the major woman and her female children to start withdrawing their support for the minor woman after she has given birth to male children for the family. They make life so unbearable for the minor woman that she may run away from the marriage. When this happens the major woman will train the male children as her own and inherit her husband's property through them. Olovo Ali, Nwaebia Utamdi, Nwosu Uzo, Simon Dibia and Atavi Ele supported the above assertion.

Nkalele Nwamaku (Personal Communication 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2017) on the other hand, said that many of the minor women maltreat the major women especially those childless major women. They fail to take care of them in old age, as they are only interested in the marriage for the opportunity afforded by the land properties they will inherit. Some minor women go to the length of poisoning the major women so as to own every property belonging to the major women and their husbands.

#### **4.7.5 Separation and Divorce**

Atavi Ele (Personal Communication 5<sup>th</sup> January 2018) explained that most of the major women want separation or even divorce after the minor women have given them children. This is noticeable from different behaviours exhibited, like maltreating the younger women, withdrawing their support to them, hiding most of their husband's land properties from the minor women. Any slightest provocation from the minor woman attracts angry outburst reminding of their age difference, and an option of opting out of the marriage. This ordeal of the minor woman is mostly noticed in a wealthy home where the husband of the major woman is late. The major woman goes to any length to push the minor woman away so that she will inherit the properties of her husband through the children of the minor woman. In this case, the community will look into the predicament of the younger woman. If the major woman is maltreating her because she wants her to leave they will force the major woman to give the minor woman part of their husband's wealth in order to leave on her own. Iweolu Nwaobu, Egwuoke Onu, Sunday Ikoh, Nwaebia Utamdi, Mgbavo Oge and Nwangelike Okolie agreed to the above explanation.

An example is given about one major woman that forced a minor woman to separate from her by accusing the minor woman of theft. This was because she knew that the minor woman was from a very poor background and no one would have the effrontery to challenge her decision from the minor woman's home. The community aware of the machinations of the major woman compelled her to build a separate house for the minor woman or they would advise the minor woman to take all her children with her as they are still too young. This is the tradition in Awgu. When a wife leaves her husband's house because of maltreatment she is expected to go with her children. Wanting to be with his children forces a man to mellow down and beg his wife to come back. The major woman was cowed into building a separate house for the minor woman as she was aware of

the implication: loosing entirely the children and denying herself the inheritance purpose of their procreation. The community's intervention in this case is in line with Doniger (2013) He observes that Talcott Parsons enunciated the "functional prerequisites" that any social system must meet in order to survive: developing routinized interpersonal arrangements (structures), defining relations to the external environment, fixing boundaries, and recruiting and controlling members. The Awgu community recruits their new members through gynaegamy when childlessness or lack of male children occurs in a marriage. It also controls the behaviour of the two women that engage in this marriage by ensuring that they follow the law of the land. The above example was corroborated by Nkechi Ejileka, Agbidi Okeke, Eke Nwaeku, Oyibo Ojidi, Agwade Udeji and Onyema Uduji.

From the above ideas, it is clear that the normal problem experienced in polygamous marriage is also present in gynaegamy. The rule that applies to other types of marriage in Awgu is applicable here in terms of separation and divorce. The research question which states: What are the problems that are envisaged from gynaegamy has been answered by the above data sourced from respondents and literature review. This is done by stating the problems that are envisaged: stubbornness and promiscuous life style on the part of the minor woman, maltreatment and urge to separate or divorce on the part of major woman.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter comprises the summary of the work, the findings, the recommendations and suggestions as well as the conclusion.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The study conducted in Awgu traced the origin of gynaegamy, its concept, and how this marriage which was motivated by inheritance rite helped in lineage continuation in Awgu especially in the olden days when there was no alternative for childless couple. The reasons why Awgu women were allowed to engage in gynaegamy by their community were equally looked into. Gynaegamy in Awgu originated to secure a threatened lineage from extinction and protect homestead from being overgrown with weeds. The denial of access to land properties of a husband to his wife at death because of childlessness or having female children only is an oppression of the women by Awgu community which is a male dominated society. This translates into motivating childless women to engage in this observance to regain self-esteem.

At the end of the study, the research discovered that:

Gynaegamy is the marriage contracted by a married childless or sonless woman with a younger woman who is adjudged to be fertile. This is done with the consent of the husband of the major woman if he is alive. If he is late, the major woman will seek the help of her husband's kinsmen in contracting this marriage. Gynaegamy in Awgu along with ghost and daughter-wife marriages helps in the continuity of a family pedigree,

Gynaegamy takes the normal marriage procedure in Awgu but in a low key manner. This is done to avoid many guests in order not to advise the bride against engaging in the marriage. It is

costlier than a normal marriage because willing bride to this marriage is hard to come by. This is why the parents and relatives of the bride normally hike the bride price.

In Awgu, gynaegamy is accepted in monogamous and daughter-wife marriages only when there is no male child. This is done to avoid a homestead lying desolate.

Only married women and daughter-wife who have reached menopausal stage are allowed to engage in gynaegamy. This is because women in their productive years may still have male child in future.

Gynaegamy still exists even till today in Awgu although it is at the verge of extinction because there are alternatives to gynaegamy – children adoption and In-Vitro Fertilization. Even though civilization and Christianity have affected its existence, many traditionalists interviewed prefer children begotten from this marriage to the adopted ones as the paternity of the child from this marriage can be traced in Awgu.

Unlike same-sex marriage practised in the Western world, gynaegamy by Awgu people is devoid of sexual relationship between the minor woman and the major woman. It is used as an avenue for childless couple to have children through another woman. It is purely for procreation as the relationship that exists between the major woman and the minor woman is usually that of a mother and daughter. The major woman herself is not directly involved in gynaegamy rites in Awgu. She only provides the funds and her husband or his kinsmen will perform the marriage rites.

It was discovered that there are four major reasons why gynaegamy is recommended for childless and sonless couples in Awgu. The reasons are social, economic, religious and political reasons.

Equally, the study found out that this marriage has some constraint. This ranges from maltreatment on the part of the major woman to prostitution of the minor woman as she is still far younger than the major woman and her husband. This can lead to her contracting sexually

transmitted diseases especially HIV. The minor may transmit these diseases to her husband which will be transmitted to the major woman.

The origin of gynaegamy remains unknown in Awgu, even though a few people claim its adoption from Awgu people's contact with Abia people and others trace its introduction by some Awgu people to forestall paternal lineage extinction.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Prior to modern civilization, Igbo culture areas in particular and Africa in general viewed childlessness as a curse and childless couples were seen as accursed by the gods. To extricate themselves from this uncomfortable situation, barren women engaged in gynaegamy to bear children and continue their husband's descent. This observance constrains the Igbo people to make families retain descents and lineages when it becomes obvious that a homestead (*obi*) is about to lie desolate. Igbo women in general and Awgu women in particular engage in gynaegamy to procreate children through other women when it becomes apparent that they have crossed procreation period. This does not involve sexual relationship as it is obtainable from Western world where same sex marriage is in practise. Those who often refer to Igbo gynaegamy as gay marriage should go back to their research to know the truth about it before proclaiming their ignorance about Igbo gynaegamy being gay marriage. An Awgu woman contracts marriage with another woman for procreation in order to continue her husband's descent (*Afamefuna*).

The study concludes that gynaegamy arrests a husband's lineage extinction, assures a father of a legacy left behind to commemorate him at death, and gives confidence in accepting death whenever it strikes. This tradition veritably assures consanguinity sustenance rather than the suspicion of paternity of adoption.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

From the study it is discovered that gynaegamy which some researchers call female husband marriage, woman marriage or woman-woman marriage in Igbo land is devoid of sexual relationship between the older women and the younger women that engage in it. A major woman marries another woman because she is in need of a child to save herself from a situation of mockery by the society which she finds herself. Women who have only female children are motivated to engage in gynaegamy to gain access to their husbands' land properties if they die before they have sons to inherit land properties.

Therefore, this work recommends that both secondary and senior basic schools' curriculum on national values should include gynaegamy as a topic. Students should be taught same-sex marriage in Western world in juxtaposition with gynaegamy in Igbo land and Africa so that they should not be deceived into considering lesbianism as the Igbo gynaegamy.

The work also recommends that girls' education should lay emphasis on their fundamental human right to equip them with knowledge to fight for their right of inheritance in their father's homestead should the need arise.

Again, in this modern day, children adoption should replace gynaegamy, so long as the child, well-brought up, can continue the lineage of the couple. Now that IVF is in vogue and has been observed to be giving succour to millions of childless couples, it should be made affordable by the Federal and State governments. Reduction cost for IVF would bring laughter to both the rich and the poor childless couples as they can pay the price of its service.

Federal and state government should enforce the law of female inheritance in Igbo Culture Areas. The laws have been passed by both the Federal and the Enugu State government stating that females should not be denied their right of inheritance. Many women and their daughters after

winning the cases in the court still do not get anything from their uncles because the court does not enforce the execution of the spirit of the case.

#### **5.4 Suggestion for Further Studies**

This research was based on gynaegamy in Awgu town of Enugu State, Nigeria. A similar study may be carried out using other towns in Enugu State, or any other state in Igbo land, or other part of Nigeria or African continent.

The researcher worked on how gynaegamy helps in the sustenance of patriline in Awgu in Igbo land. A research may be fully carried out on how other marriages like surrogate, daughter-wife and ghost marriages help in sustenance of patriline in any of the towns or states in the Igbo culture area where these marriages are practised.



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## APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is gynaegamy/*nnwe Mgbafuta*?
2. Are there any other marriages that help in patriline continuation?
3. Can you trace the origin of this marriage in Awgu?
4. Do woman still exists in Awgu?
5. When is gynaegamy accepted in Awgu?
6. Are there rules that guide woman in Awgu?
7. What are the processes involved in this marriage in Awgu?
8. Is there any help that can be rendered by relatives of the major woman and her husband?
9. Explain the relationships that exist between the female husband and her wife.
10. Is there any problem that emanates from this marriage?
11. How do Awgu people view this marriage?
12. The children of the female husband, are they accepted in Awgu?
13. How do their children react to when they realized the type of union that brought them to the world?
14. Why do Awgu people engage in gynaegamy?
15. Can a husband or his relative refuse their wife engaging in this marriage?
16. Why?
17. What are the reasons for gynaegamy in Awgu?
18. Now that adoption and In-Vitro Fertilization is trending, do you still recommend this marriage for childless couple in Awgu?
19. Why?
20. Thank you for the information, do you have any other thing you wish to say?

## APPENDIX II: ORAL INTERVIEW

### AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH IVO NWAVOKO FROM ADOGBA AWGU

**Researcher:** Good Afternoon sir!

**Respondent:** Good Afternoon my daughter. How do you do?

**Researcher:** I am fine sir. You requested me to come back today for you the account about gynaegamy in Awgu.

**Respondent:** Oh! Welcome! What did you say you are doing again with this information?

**Researcher:** I said that I am a student of Igbo Culture from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, conducting a Ph.D. research in gynaegamy in Awgu. This is an examination which I must do in order to obtain my degree.

**Respondent:** Where are you from and who is this man with you?

**Researcher:** I am from Ezioha Ogboli Awgu and the man with me is my husband.

**Respondent:** My son, you resembled my good friend Reginald Chukwugwa Okomma from Ezioha Ogboli. Are you his son?

**Researcher:** Yes he is his eldest son.

**Respondent:** God, thank you, you are your father's carbon copy. You are welcome. I will tell you everything you need to know about gynaegamy in Awgu.

**Researcher:** Thank you sir. How old are you?

**Respondent:** I am 80years.

**Researcher:** What is your occupation?

**Respondent:** I am a hunter and a farmer.

**Researcher:** What is gynaegamy?

**Respondent:** Gynaegamy is the type of marriage in Awgu in which a married woman, who is childless or does not have a son, contracts marriage with a younger woman considered fertile with the consent of her husband. This is done with the hope that God will give them children or sons through the second woman. This older wife ‘marries’ this ‘wife’ for her husband if he is alive or in the name of her husband if he is dead. He explains that a difference exists between a wife marrying another wife for her husband as a second wife and a major woman contracting marriage with a minor woman for her husband for the purpose of childbearing for continuity of a family name – *Afamefuna*. According to him, when a woman marries a wife for her husband, she does so because she wants to ease herself of some household chores like cooking, farming, and sexual pleasure. Gynaegamy is the last option for childbearing in a monogamous marriage in Awgu. It is used when all other cures for procreation inhibition have been exhausted to no avail. It is used to rescue a family from sonless or childless condition. This is why Awgu people named it, *Nnwe Mgbafuta* (Rescue Marriage). Are you listening to me?

**Researcher:** Yes sir

**Respondent:** The couple would have taken all medicine and performed all sacrifices to the gods without any result. Thus when the wife has passed childbearing age, they will be advised to engage in gynaegamy. This marriage is for the continuity of lineage of the husband. As you can now understand; Awgu people do not want any homestead to lie desolate. That is why they engage in this marriage.

**Researcher:** Talking about sustenance of lineage, is there any other marriage that helps in continuity of family lineage in Awgu?

**Respondent:** Yes, all the types of marriages which exist in Awgu are for family continuity. But there are three types that are used only when it is obvious that a family is going into extinction. They

are gynaegamy, daughter-wife and ghost marriages. They are employed to give children to the family, especially male children, to continue the patriline.

**Researcher:** Why do Awgu people remove surrogate marriage from their culture?

**Respondent:** (Shakes his head. My daughter you see, this world is very bad, people can do anything and get away with it. Someone seeing that his brother has a beautiful wife and is prosperous can kill his brother if this type of marriage is allowed in order to marry his wife and possess his properties. This is why Awgu culture removed surrogate marriage and instead retained the other three types which enable a wife of a man, even if he is dead to procreate through an outsider.

**Researcher:** Can you trace the origin of gynaegamy in Awgu?

**Respondent:** You see the origin of gynaegamy in Awgu is not disputable. The other day an argument ensued at the village gathering about the origin of gynaegamy in Awgu. I know that someone might have informed you that I was the person that told them the origin of gynaegamy. That is why you came to ask me this question. Let me tell you, before I will relate to you the origin of gynaegamy in Awgu, these younger generations that are jumping up and down, demanding that this and that must be abolished will later regret it as there will be a time in future when they will need them but it will have already gone into extinction. (He clears his throat picks his snuff box and scoops some snuff onto his palm, scoops some into his nostril. He clears his throat again and wipes his tears streaming down his cheek with the back of his hand and says) My daughter, I would not have repeated this story again if not because you said that you want to put it into a book so that future generations will read it. When they read it, they will know that we have a reason for engaging in gynaegamy. My grandfather told me that: in olden days because Awgu people related and fought many inter-communal wars with their neighbours, like Isiagu people in the present day Ebonyi State, Mgbowo, Ndeaboh, Ugwueme, Mgbidi and Mmaku all in Enugu State. Awgu, which is situated at

the foot of the mountain and surrounded by all these towns named above, is usually the target of those living up the mountain, like Ugwueme, Mgbidi and Mmaku. A lot of wars erupted because of scramble over land properties. As these wars were wedged many of the married young men and the unmarried lost their lives in the process. Those who were only sons who were married but failed to have children or had only female children when they met their untimely death at the war front were compensated by the community allowing their wives to bear children in their names. Those who died as bachelors and who were the only sons had wives married in their names and children were begot for them by one of their kinsmen. This was done to ensure their names were not effaced from the earth.

My brethren (*ndu nwem*) this had been the trend until one man named Udoko Nwavomma from Amovia Awgu, who was a renowned warrior but was childless, was slain by Isiagu people during a communal war. Udoko was an only child of his parents and was married to his wife for over thirty years but they had no child. Suggestions and pleadings were made for him to marry another wife but he refused due to the love he had for his wife. When he died, his village suggested that his wife should contract marriage with a younger woman to bear children for her deceased husband in order to continue the lineage of Udoko, the great warrior of Awgu. The whole villagers rallied round and supported Udoko's wife in contracting the marriage of another wife for Udoko while his wife became the major woman. One of Udoko's age mates was chosen for the procreation role while Udoko's wife used her husband's resources in taking care of the children that resulted from this marriage. After Udoko's experience, women who were childless in Awgu were advised to imitate Udoko's wife, contracting marriage with minor women in their husbands' name to have children for them. Those who had only female children followed suit and they were allowed to engage in this marriage too because the family lineage of their husbands were equally threatened.

**Researcher:** When is gynaegamy accepted in Awgu?

**Respondent:** That is what these idiots that were making noise of abolishing it forget to ask. Gynaegamy, ghost marriage and daughter-wife marriage are not like other marriages. Childlessness and sonless condition makes someone to engage in any of them. When a husband marries his wife, what they are looking forward to is the gift of God which is the fruit of the womb, both male and female. When you were married, did you not receive blessing during the *Ikpọ ọvọ* ceremony from your father or elder.

**Researcher:** I did

**Respondent:** That *Ikpọ ọvọ* rite is an invocation of the fruit of womb, for you and your husband to bear male and female children but male ones should be in greater number. Do you know why Awgu people usually include that phrase “but male children should be in greater number”?

**Researcher:** No.

**Respondent:** They included that phrase because it is the male children that will continue the lineage of every family. When male children are lacking in a marriage, gynaegamy will be employed to rescue the family from extinction. Women who have only one son each are not allowed to engage in gynaegamy. This is because they already have someone to continue the lineage. But women with female children only are allowed to engage in gynaegamy as female children are expected to get married and live with their husband in their homes. If a sonless family does not want to engage in gynaegamy, it can retain one of its daughters as *idagbe* to stay in her father’s compound with the hope of bearing male children for the continuity of the family pedigree.

**Researcher:** Are there rules guiding gynaegamy in Awgu?

**Respondent:** What are you saying? Where there is no rule there is disorder. If there is no rule guiding gynaegamy in Awgu it means that anyone can decide to engage in gynaegamy. That is why I

told the young men at the village square the other day they were shouting to remember that there are rules guiding this marriage right from the time immemorial. These rules are: it must a married woman, she must have passed the age of childbearing, she must be in a monogamous marriage, she must be either childless or sonless, it must be with her husband's consent if he is alive or with the approval of his siblings or kinsmen if he is late and the minor woman and her family must be in the know that it is gynaegamy that she is engaging in.

**Researcher:** Why did they not include sonless and childless women in polygamous marriage?

**Respondent:** This marriage is not for fun of it, it is a serious issue. A woman in a polygamous marriage who is childless knows that she has a problem with conception. She has to resign to her fate. In the case of a sonless woman in a polygamous marriage, she is not allowed to engage in gynaegamy as the other wives may have given birth to male children. If that is so, why would she be allowed to engage in gynaegamy when there are male children to continue the patriline? My daughter as I have told you, this marriage is used as a last resort when other means of having children have failed.

**Researcher:** If, in a polygamous marriage, all the wives have female children what will happen?

**Respondent:** The first daughter of the family will be retained as an *idagbe*. None of the wives is allowed to engage in gynaegamy.

**Researcher:** What about unmarried women, can they be allowed to engage in gynaegamy?

**Respondent:** No, how can that happen. In Awgu women are meant to be married. If in any case a woman is not married for any health challenges, she is not allowed to engage in gynaegamy in her father's compound as Awgu inheritance procedure does not have any place for such children. If she has any child in her father's house, the child does not have any chance of getting land property from the family as he is not part of it. Unmarried women are barred from engaging in gynaegamy. But

*idagbe* who has only female children is allowed to engage in gynaegamy as she is married to her father's compound.

**Researcher:** What are the processes involved in gynaegamy?

**Respondent:** Gynaegamy goes through the normal marriage process in Awgu but it is low keyed. The traditional wedding ceremony is omitted to avoid crowd gathering which at times leads to mouth wagging and discouraging the bride not to go into gynaegamy. You know that during traditional wedding ceremony, the height of it is the sipping of wine to show the guests the husband to be. In gynaegamy traditional wedding is omitted to avoid the psychological trauma that will follow when the guests will be asking questions like is this not the husband of this person? Is he marrying her as a second wife or a rescue marriage? If the husband of the major woman is late and another man is standing in for him the questions will be, is Okeke the one marrying this girl? Why is she giving the wine to Nwafor? To avoid all these, which may affect the mood of the bride on the day of her traditional wedding, all the ceremonies are done on the day of payment of bride price with only the kinsmen in attendance.

**Researcher:** Is there any help that can be rendered by the relatives of the couple?

**Respondent:** Of course! The relatives of the couple are worried when childlessness or sonlessness rears up consulting different herbalists for medicinal remedies, visiting different diviners and oracles to seek for solutions and helping financially to buy sacrificial items. When all these fail, gynaegamy is suggested for the wife when she has passed the age of childbearing. The relatives of the woman will help in looking out for a woman who is willing to engage in gynaegamy. The relatives of the man will help her in consummating the marriage rite, especially if he is late.

**Researcher:** Explain the relationship between the major woman and the minor woman

**Respondent:** Do you know why Awgu people call it *nnwe mgbafuta*?



**Researcher:** Yes, you already told me that it was because they are coming to rescue the couple from sonless or childless situation.

**Respondent:** Then, what do you expect from them regarding their relationship? The younger woman is being married to rescue the older woman from the shame of her childlessness or sonless situation. The minor woman has agreed to rescue the situation of the couple, she is expected to live in peace and do the biddings of the major woman and her husband, if he is alive. The major woman is expected to love and treat the minor woman as her daughter. She should treat her as her helper and not a slave. The two women live in peace as the older woman has passed the age of childbearing; there is no jealousy about her husband sleeping with the minor woman throughout the year or for months. They cook in one pot and live in the same hut. Their husband does not share anything between them.

**Researcher:** Are there no sexual relationship between the major woman and the minor woman?

**Respondent:** No there is none. As I have told you, if the husband of the major woman is alive, she will be sleeping with the minor woman for procreation. If the husband is late, the major woman has the right to look for a man outside and pay him for this purpose.

**Researcher:** Are there no problems that emanate from this marriage?

**Respondent:** You are asking as if you do not know what human beings can do. Gynaegamy involves two women; these women are co-wives with a slight difference that the first one is in charge of the second one. The second wife is under the control of the first wife and cannot do anything without the permission of the first wife. So, there are times when problem can arise from the marriage. Firstly, the minor woman after she might have given birth to two or three children will feel that she has arrived. She will start thinking of how to free herself from the clutches of the major woman and be getting things from her husband directly. She may become disobedient to the major

woman and instigate misunderstanding between the first wife and her husband. One of the minor women whose name I will not want to mention even went to the extent of telling her husband to sack the major woman. The kinsmen of the man told him the implication; if the wife goes, she will go with the minor woman and her children as the minor woman is married on gynaegamy rite and not as second wife in polygamous marriage. The husband declined. There is another case which I will not mention name: the major woman married this minor woman after the death of her husband who had many land properties and fruit bearing trees. The minor woman poisoned the major woman and she died. When she was accused of killing the major woman, she explained that the major woman wanted to divorce her take her children and inherit her husband's properties while she would go empty handed.

**Researcher:** How do Awgu people view this marriage?

**Respondent:** They view it as a means of propagating lineage continuity. In the olden days it was the only means of sustenance of patriline in a childless monogamous marriage. And Awgu people's philosophy is that no lineage should be allowed to go extinct and no homestead should lie desolate. This is why they give their children names like: *Obiefuna, Amaefuna, Afameuna, Obiechin* ,and *Amaechina*. But you see, my daughter, now the church is and schools are teaching the younger generation that it is not right to engage in gynaegamy.

**Researcher:** Are the children from gynaegamy accepted in Awgu?

**Respondent:** Why not? Are they not human beings? They are accepted as long as their mothers' bride prices were paid, they are legitimate children of the man in whose name the marriages were contracted whether he is living or late. No matter who is the biological father, the social father is the husband of the major woman, and the children will continue his lineage.

**Researcher:** How do the children react when they realize that their mother is a minor woman?

**Respondent:** What will they do? They have to accept it and move on, though some of them misbehave especially those fathered by another man. This is the reason the major and the minor woman is always advised to look for a man that does not have social problem like chronic alcoholism, stealing and other social vices. Look let me tell you some of the children produced from this marriage are doing well in Awgu today. Some are lawyers, doctors, teachers millionaires and even pastors.

**Researcher:** Can a husband or his relative refuse their wife engaging in this marriage?

**Respondent:** Yes and no

**Researcher:** Why?

**Respondent:** I will answer that let me go and ease myself. You see, yes he can stop his wife engaging in gynaegamy in the sense that it falls in the confine of the rule that gynaegamy in Awgu must be with the consent of the husband of the major woman. Some men if they are impotent will not want others to know their condition. They will oblige their wives becoming major woman to hide his impotency.

On the other hand no, if the husband of intending major woman is late, his kinsmen do not have any right to refuse his wife engaging in gynaegamy. If they try it the woman reports to the village assembly they will be fined and viewed as greedy kinsmen who wants to inherit their kinsman's property by not allowing their late brother's wife to engage in gynaegamy.

**Researcher:** What are the reasons for gynaegamy in Awgu?

**Respondent:** Yes, if there is no reason why would it be practised. There are reasons why gynaegamy was included in Awgu tradition. The first one is for family continuity as I have told you. The second one is that any married man or woman who does not bear a child is not buried inside the compound. The third is to have children who will perform the burial and funeral rite of the parents.

The fourth is to have a helping hand in the farm work; this was prevalent in the olden days when farming was the only mainstay of Awgu people. The Fifth is to live someone behind who will remember the parent when they might have joined their ancestors and make libations to them during festive days like *ikeji, ikpalu ndiichie nni, aho ovulu, ili ali*. Etc.

**Researcher:** Now that adoption and In-Vitro Fertilization is trendy, do you still recommend this marriage for childless couple in Awgu?

**Respondent:** I do not know what In-Vitro fertilization is but I know what adoption means. I do not like adoption, because the paternity of the child is not known. Secondly let me ask you: Are children an article of trade?

**Researcher:** No, but sir, adoption is not buying of children. It is taking a parentless child to give him or her home and taking proper care of the child. A child who would have been an illegitimate child is made to be legitimate through adoption.

**Respondent:** Whatever names you like give it, but I prefer gynaegamy to adoption, especially if the husband of the woman is responsible for the reproduction of the children.

**Researcher:** Thank you for the information. Do you have any other thing to say?

**Respondent:** Yes, I forgot to tell you what happens when an impotent man accedes to his wife engaging in gynaegamy. When gynaegamy is consummated by a major woman whose husband is alive, the rule is that the husband will be sleeping with the minor woman for procreation in order to continue his lineage which is the reason for the marriage. But if the man is impotent what will happen is that the major woman, knowing her husband's predicament will arrange with a man, pays him to sleep with the minor woman.

**Researcher:** Thank you very much Sir,

**Respondent:** Oh! My daughter, please, take good care of your husband and children. Also greet my friend Reginald for me, tell him that you came to my house today.

**Researcher:** I will bye.

## **ORAL INTERVIEW WITH NWAMGBO CHUKWUOGELE FROM IBITE OGBOLI**

### **AWGU**

Age: 73years

Occupation: Potter/farming

**Researcher:** Good evening ma!

**Respondent:** Good evening, who are you?

**Researcher:** I am Anthonia from Ezioha Ogboli Awgu. I am a student at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka; I am conducting research on gynaegamy in Awgu.

**Respondent:** So that you will announce to the world that I am marrying another woman? Listen to me: it was my predicament that led to my engaging in gynaegamy.

**Researcher:** No mama, far from it, Awgu culture is dying, and some people are confusing Awgu gynaegamy with gay marriage. On the contrary I want to let the world know that Awgu gynaegamy is different from the lesbianism that young women are practicing today. That is why I would want you to tell me everything you know so that I will tell the world the truth about Awgu gynaegamy.

**Respondent:** So you will tell them that Awgu gynaegamy is different from woman marrying another woman and sleeping with her like a man.

**Researcher:** Exactly, I will do just that

**Respondent:** Then what do you want to know about gynaegamy?

**Researcher:** Thank you mama. I will start by asking what you understand by gynaegamy.

**Respondent:** Gynaegamy is one of the marriage types in Awgu that helps in sustaining family pedigree. It is a marriage in which an already married woman who is childless or sonless contracts with a younger woman who is fertile with the consent of the husband of the married woman. It is motivated by the fact that no woman wants to be childless or sonless as this will make her stand firmly in her marriage. The need to have a son who the childless or sonless woman will lay hand upon to inherit her husband's property motivates Awgu women to engage in gynaegamy. It is devoid of sexual gratifications of the two women that are involved. Did you hear me?

**Researcher:** Yes mama.

**Respondent:** In the olden days, there was no alternative to gynaegamy as it is today. The only means of rescuing a childless or sonless woman is gynaegamy. Listen, I had twelve children but all died: some stayed up to two, three and four years before dying. Sobbed and started crying. *Okwanu okochi palite nkwa okwawalija onye ejọ uwa.* Meaning ill-fated person dances to the drum of ill luck.

**Researcher:** Mama, stop crying it is Okay. This is why I will let the world know that gynaegamy is due to ill-luck. Awgu women engage in it because of the need to have children of their own.

**Respondent:** Wipes away her tears and said: Any time I recount this ugly experience of mine I am always moved to tears but I will not cry again, let us continue.

**Researcher:** Thank you mama. Can you trace the origin of gynaegamy in Awgu?

**Respondent:** No. I heard that the people of Awgu borrowed this marriage from Abia people during the era of slave trade.

**Researcher:** Is there any other marriage that helped in continuity of patriline in Awgu?

**Respondent:** Yes, they are ghost marriage and daughter-wife marriage.

**Researcher:** Can you explain them?

**Respondent:** Ghost marriage is contracting marriage in the name of a man slain during communal wars, during hunting expedition or killed accidentally. Daughter-wife is retaining one of the daughters, usually the first daughter in a sonless family with the hope that she will bear male children to maintain her father's compound.

**Researcher:** Does gynaegamy still exist in Awgu?

**Respondent:** Yes, gynaegamy still exists till today even though the younger generation is against it. Some childless and sonless women are still engaging in it to bear children for their husband patriline continuity. I am not going to mention names but there is someone in this village that recently engaged in this marriage. Even during the time the church people wanted to abolish it by sending those who engaged in gynaegamy away from the church, many of us left and continued with our lives. Did we make ourselves childless or sonless? Is it not ill-luck that makes a woman engage in gynaegamy? Women who have male children are not allowed to engage in gynaegamy.

**Researcher:** When is gynaegamy accepted in Awgu?

**Respondent:** It is accepted only when a patriline is about going into extinction. It is used as a means of continuity of a pedigree of the man of the house. If a man's homestead is about to lie desolate, that is when it is accepted. Any other excuse for engaging in gynaegamy is not accepted in Awgu. In my case, I carried twelve pregnancies: eight births and four still births. The eight children all died when they were between the ages of two and four years. During that time there was no hospital or maternity in Awgu town to attend to pregnant women. I was devastated and wanted to commit suicide. But for the counsel I received from my relatives I would have done that. I suggested to my husband to take a new wife but he refused vehemently saying that I had suffered greatly with him, that he did not want another woman coming and destroying what we build for years. After my pleading with him to take a new wife fell on deaf ears, I was advised to engage in gynaegamy.

Though my husband received the advice with a pinch of salt, he later succumbed to my pleadings. And today, we had three grown married men and four married daughters from the marriage with many grand and great grandchildren.

**Researcher:** Are there rules guiding gynaegamy in Awgu?

**Respondent:** Yes. There are rules that guide gynaegamy in Awgu. The rules are: firstly, no single lady is allowed to engage in gynaegamy, if this is allowed many women especially those from proud and wealthy parents would prefer to stay in their father's house and marry another woman to bear children for them. This will create problem among their children and those of their brothers, as Awgu tradition does not have any place in inheritance procedure for a daughter's child (*nwadiala*). Also it will strike resemblance to what people say about the Western world where young girls contact marriage with other girls and two of them will live as husband and wife. Secondly, it must have been in a monogamous family where the couple lacks male child. Thirdly, the woman that wants to engage in gynaegamy must have reached her menopausal age. This is to be sure that in future she does not bear a male child for her husband, as that will bring confusion in inheritance procedure. In gynaegamy inheritance is done through by hut, that is, through the hut of the first woman who contracted the marriage with a minor woman. Lastly, any intending bride to gynaegamy must be informed of the intention of the major woman. The minor woman must know that she is not being married as a second wife but as a rescuing wife (*nnwe mgbafuta*). She is coming to rescue the couple from their sonless or childless situation.

**Researcher:** What are the processes involved in this marriage in Awgu?

**Respondent:** It is a normal Awgu marriage process with the exception of traditional wedding, but the rites are not as elaborate as the ordinary marriage. This is done because some people tend to dissuade the bride or her relatives from engaging in gynaegamy. This is prevalent if the husband of



the major woman is alive. Those discouraging the bride and her family will want to know why the husband should not marry their daughter as a second wife. In my own case they asked mama Ikechukwu why she wanted to ruin her chances of getting married to a man as his first wife, rather than staying under another woman. So, to avoid all these ugly occurrences the rites are done with only close relatives of the bride. Before it will be made public, the bride is already preparing to go move into her new family. This is why traditional wedding ceremony that involves inviting far and near relatives and well-wishers is omitted to avoid gossips.

**Researcher:** Is there any help that can be rendered by relatives of the major woman and her husband?

**Respondent:** Many helped me during the consummation of the marriage. I was not directly involved in the marriage. It was my maternal uncle from Uhuevi Obuovia that found mama Ikechukwu for us. I and my husband asked all our relatives to help us in looking out for a girl that might want to engage in this marriage. Mama Ikechukwu lost her mother when she was three years old. She was being maltreated by her father and step-mother. When she was informed of the marriage proposal, she readily accepted and her step-mother who wanted to throw her out of the house by all means convinced her husband to accept the offer. Many other girls were equally found: one already out of wedlock, but the young man responsible denied it and the other girl had some health challenges. My husband after considering three of them settled for mama Ikechukwu. My husband's kinsmen rallied round and helped us in making sure that the entire marriage rite was performed and on time.

**Researcher:** Explain the relationships that exist between the female husband and her wife.

**Respondent:** I and mama Ikechukwu were living together since she was married in our house but in different rooms. We cook our meals together and serve our husband and children the food we

cook. We do not share anything like meat, yams and other comestibles like co-wives do. We plant our crops together and weed our husband's yam farm and sell our farm products together. But in all we do not have any sexual intimacy between us. I have never for one day looked at mama Ikechukwu sexually. Spats! Tufiakwa! It is an abomination! How can I sleep with a fellow woman? If it is sexual satisfaction I had wanted, it seems from the story I told you of having giving birth to twelve children, I have had enough of it. My daughter, you know, when you give birth to a child, and the child dies, you will be forced to continue to seek for another child. This means having sex continually until you conceive again. It is worse in childless situation. The woman and her husband in all the years round have sex. So, a major woman does not engage in gynaegamy for sexual gratification because she already had enough of it from her husband. My husband sleeps with mama Ikechukwu in his room. It is my husband that fathered all our seven children.

**Researcher:** Are there problems that emanate from this marriage?

**Respondent:** Yes! Problems usually erupt from gynaegamy. Firstly, as you know human beings can change anytime. When mama Ikechukwu was newly married, she was obedient to the core, having experienced hard time from her father's house. I took her as my own child. We were very close. As she had not experienced motherly care, I taught her all that she needed to know as a married woman. But as time passed, her behaviour began to change from good to bad and from bad to worse. This, she later confessed, was an issue of bad company. She started listening to my co-wives (my brother-in-laws' wives). They told her that I was a witch who had eaten my children, and she started calling me a witch anytime I admonished her of misbehaving. It got to a point that they advised her to demand that she would be cooking differently, having her own farm land and planting her crops separately from mine. My husband called us severally to make peace but she had made up her mind because of what they were telling her. When my husband sent her packing the day she

fought me for merely asking her why she came to farm late with our labourer's food, it seemed a scale fell off her eyes. She realized the gravity of her fault. This was because she would not stay with her father and step-mother peacefully as she had insulted them by refusing her step-mother visiting for *omugo* anytime she put to bed. I begged her the first time she had her first child but she refused and explained that I was the mother that she knew that I should do all the *omugo* work. My husband later bought all the materials for me. This angered her step-mother who nursed the wish that one day this marriage could come crashing and she would come home to face her. So, when the reality dawned on her she was full of regrets but my husband had made up his mind to teach her a lesson. All the pleading from me and his kinsmen fell on his deaf ear. He made good his treat by sending her to her father's house in the evening.

Mama Ikechukwu stayed for seven market weeks in her father's house and none of her friends who used to visit her in my husband's house visited her to know how she was doing. Her father did not care about her welfare and her step mother made her life unbearable throughout the number of days that she had stayed. When my husband finally agreed to bring her back because of the children who were consistently asking for their mother, mama Ikechukwu did not even hesitate to follow them back that same day. She had been sending some of my relatives to beg me to forgive her. Since she came back, she realized that my co-wives did not want her to live with us because she was the person that dashed their hope of taking over all my husband's land properties by giving birth to children, both male and female. She realized that they did not like her as they claimed. She begged for my forgiveness and I forgave her and, ever since, we are living like mother and daughter.

**Researcher:** How do Awgu people view this marriage?

**Respondent:** They see it as a means of continuity of patriline. They view it as a last hope of rescuing a childless or sonless couple from their ugly situation, especially in a monogamous family.

**Researcher:** Are the children from gynaegamy accepted in Awgu?

**Respondent:** The children are accepted like other children even if the husband of the major woman is not responsible for the procreation. Once the marriage is contracted in his name the children that will result from the union are his legitimate children. They bear his name and inherit his properties.

**Researcher:** How do their children react when they realize the type of union that brought them to the world?

**Respondent:** I have never seen my children raising eye brows or questioning why their biological mother agreed to be a minor woman. As you can see, this marriage is like polygamous marriage with a difference. The minor woman is married for the major woman's husband whether dead or alive.

**Researcher:** Why do Awgu people engage in gynaegamy?

**Respondent:** As I have told you before, I gave birth to twelve children and all died, I was devastated as a childless woman and my husband's refusal to get married to another woman was a problem to me. I wanted him to marry another woman so as to have children, especially male, to continue his lineage but he refused. What this means is that our funeral ceremony will be performed by other relatives who will be paid to do them. And only couples that gave birth to children will be buried in the compound. It is those who could not conceive at all and they did not engage in gynaegamy that will be buried in the bush.

**Researcher:** If your husband had married another wife, and she gave birth to a male child would you still engage in gynaegamy?

**Respondent:** No. there is no room for gynaegamy in polygamous marriage. This is because Awgu people have a rule that guides gynaegamy. If a lineage is not threatened by extinction there is no

room for gynaegamy. Gynaegamy is used as a last resort for rescuing a homestead from being overgrown with weeds.

**Researcher:** Why do Awgu people engage in gynaegamy?

**Respondent:** After the death of all my children, I was mocked, cajoled and abused by the wives of my husband's siblings. Their abuse so affected me that I stopped attending the *inyomdi* meeting and village women meetings. When I eventually engaged in gynaegamy and children started coming, they tried all means to separate mama Ikechukwu from our family in order to make sure that I would not be happy for once. They knew that the children would inherit their father's properties. They used to remind I and my husband that everything we inherited as the first son of the family will be shared to them after our death. They were happy that we did not have children and were warming up to take all our properties before I eventually engaged in gynaegamy.

**Researcher:** Can a husband or his relative refuse the wife engaging in this marriage?

**Respondent:** Yes a husband can decide not to engage in gynaegamy and his wish respected even after his death. What this means is that he want to remain either childless or sonless. But if he did not say so before his death, his relatives cannot refuse his wife engaging in gynaegamy.

**Researcher:** What are the reasons for gynaegamy in Awgu?

I think I have told you that already. No woman wants her husband's homestead to be overgrown with weed, so they try as much as possible to see that they performed their role in the marriage which is giving birth to children to continue the patriline. Again women are motivated to engage in gynaegamy because of abuse and denials of her husband's properties if he dies before them.

**Researcher:** Now that adoption and In-Vitro Fertilization is trending, do you still recommend this marriage for childless couple in Awgu?

**Respondent:** No. I do not know how they do in-vitro fertilization, for adoption, I do not buy the idea of someone going to buy a child that she or he do not know the biological parents. Remember children are not articles for trade.

**Researcher:** Thank you for the information, do you have any other thing to say?

**Respondent:** Yes when you asked about gynaegamy, I forgot to tell you that there is a difference between a first wife wanting to marry a second wife for the husband and gynaegamy. When a first wife wants to marry a wife for her husband, she is doing that because she needs a helping hand in her husband's farm work; her husband may be the only son and needed many children. The first wife already has many children both male children and female children. May be she has pleaded with the husband to marry another wife to help in easy her domestic chores to no avail. She will plead with husband to allow her marry a new wife for him. If the husband agreed to this, the woman is coming as a second wife. When she finally arrives, the husband will share the two wives yams, meat and his yam farms. The two women will be cooking in turns for their husband. They will have different huts and during inheritance rite the land properties of the husband will be share between the two huts equally if the two both have male children. But in gynaegamy the first woman is childless or sonless. She is marrying the second woman to help her in bearing children or male children. They cook together and farm together.

**Researcher:** Thank you ma.

**Respondent:** Make sure to tell the world that Awgu women are not lesbians.

**Researcher:** I will do just that. Bye.

**APPENDIX II- LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Olovo Ali</b>	65years	Carver	Ohaja Awgu	2 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2017
<b>Mgborie Uka</b>	52years	Trader	Ohaja Awgu	2 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2017
<b>Mgbechi Nwudu</b>	60years	Dirge performer	Ohaja Awgu	4 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Oluoha Okolie</b>	69years	Farmer	Ohaja Awgu	4 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Patricia Uche</b>	32years	Teaching	Ohaja Awgu	6 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Appolonia Nwafor</b>	35years	Civil servant	Ohaja Awgu	6 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Nwokolo Nwavo</b>	80years	farming/drummer	Ohaja Awgu	8 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Sunday Agba</b>	45years	businessman	Ohaja Awgu	8 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Alibisi Oko</b>	71years	farming	Ogboli Awgu	8 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Nnabugwu Uchenta</b>	50years	businessman	Ogboli Awgu	10 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Inoegbu Ozo</b>	72years	Retired civil servant	Ogboli Awgu	12 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Ulaogu Onwu</b>	55years	civil servant	Ogboli Awgu	15 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017

<b>Nwuko Okekeocha</b>	78years	Hunting	Ogboli Awgu	15 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Nwaata Nwokoma</b>	89years	Farming	Ogboli Awgu	17 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Oyibo Ojidi</b>	74years	Carver	Ogboli Awgu	17 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Uzo Enu</b>	65years	Potter	Ogboli Awgu	22 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2017
<b>Udeogu Okwuduluchukwu</b>	45years	Welder	Obuovia Awgu	22 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2017.
<b>Agbidi Okeke</b>	68years	Farming	Obuovia Awgu	22 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2017
<b>Nkalele Nwammaku</b>	70years	farming	Obuovia Awgu	29 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Margret Ucheagwunanwa</b>	50years	teaching	Umuhu Awgu	29 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017
<b>Ogbumma Nwali</b>	57years	Wine tapping	Umuhu Awgu	3 <sup>rd</sup> November, 2017
<b>Simon Okolieodeligwe</b>	69years	Retired police officer	Umuhu Awgu	3 <sup>rd</sup> November, 2017
<b>Umeh Kanayo Cletus</b>	57years	Politician	Umuhu Awgu	5 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Onyema Uduji</b>	95 years	Farmer	Umuhu Awgu	5 <sup>th</sup> November,



				2017
<b>Agwade Udeji</b>	84years	blacksmithing	Umuhu Awgu	7 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Joseph Okolie</b>	23yeras	Student	Umuhu Awgu	7 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Agnes Otigba</b>	35years	Nursing	Umuhu Awgu	9 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Orji Louis</b>	43years	lecturing	Umuhu	12 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Okeaja Nwuuzo</b>	87years	Chief priest of Ali	Amovia Awgu	12 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Anna Dibie</b>	55years	Tailoring	Amovia Awgu	12 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Ibeka Nwaedu</b>	57years	Bicycle Repairer	Amovia Awgu	15 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Nwaokporo Egwu</b>	73years	Farming	Amovia Awgu	15 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Ikechukwu Uko</b>	56years	Civil servant	Amovia Awgu	17 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Kingsley Okeke</b>	40years	Laboratory Technician	Amovia Awgu	17 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Chihanwa Okonwuche</b>	80years	farming/drummer	Amovia Awgu	19 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017

<b>Nwangelike Okolie</b>	78years	farming/drummer	Amovia Awgu	19 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Eke Nwaeku</b>	67years	Farming	Amovia Awgu	26 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Nkechi Ejinwuka</b>	62years	Trading	Uhuegu Awgu	26 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Lucky Nwankwo</b>	45years	Medical Practitioner	Uhuegu Awgu	29 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Uchenna Udeh</b>	23years	Student	Uhuegu Awgu	29 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017
<b>Pricilla Okeke</b>	47years	teaching	Uhuegu Awgu	1st December, 2017
<b>Victor Ani</b>	53years	Businessman	Uhuegu Awgu	1st December, 2017
<b>Innocent Okeke</b>	56years	laboratory technologist	Uhuegu Awgu	3rd December, 2017
<b>Uzumma Orjinta</b>	70years	Farming	Uhuegu Awgu	3 <sup>rd</sup> December, 2017
<b>Okechukwu Kene</b>	59years	Businessman	Uhuegu Awgu	5 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Christian Oshi</b>	47years	tailoring	Uhuegu Awgu	5 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>EjilekaUkaamma</b>	93years	hunting/	Ololi Awgu	10 <sup>th</sup> December,

		acupuncturist		2017
<b>NwiinoNwuuzo</b>	65years	Tailoring	Ololi Awgu	10 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Ovuteuzo Ugwa</b>	80years	Hunting	Ololi Awgu	10 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Bernard Okeke</b>	60years	Civil servant	Ololi Awgu	12 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Ifeanyi Aja</b>	54years	labourer	Ololi Awgu	12 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Okolie Ebute</b>	90years	accupuncturist	Ololi Awgu	15 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Vincent Ugonta</b>	28years	Medical laboratory	Ololi Awgu	15 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Ugwoevi Eku</b>	68years	Dirge performing	Ololi Awgu	17 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Mgbavo Oge</b>	79years	Farming	Ololi Awgu	17 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>James Okolie</b>	82years	Retired headteacher	Ololi Awgu	19 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Cosmas Nwafor</b>	70years	Retired Officer	Ololi Awgu	19 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Nwaoshaja Godwin</b>	74years	teaching/ farming	Ohaja Awgu	24 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017

<b>Nwamgbo Chukwuogele</b>	73years	Moulding/farming	Ogboli Awgu	24 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Peter Chukwuoji</b>	76years	trading/ chief priest of Ngwu	Amaovia Awgu	26 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Nwaebia Utamdi</b>	62years	wine tapping/farming	Amaovia Awgu	26 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017.
<b>Okoudumma Eze</b>	73years	Chief Priest of Agbala	Ogboli Awgu	28 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017.
<b>Mmaduabuchi Onwe</b>	93years	flutist/drumming	Amokwe Awgu	28 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Nwosu Uzo</b>	68years	trading/farming	Amokwe Awgu	30 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Clement Nwafor</b>	55years	Pastoring	Amokwe Awgu	30 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017
<b>Basil Kene</b>	80years	Retired army officer	Amokwe Awgu	2 <sup>nd</sup> January, 2018
<b>Joseph Nwafor</b>	31years	Student	Amokwe Awgu	2 <sup>nd</sup> January, 2018
<b>Boniface Ndu</b>	26years	Laboratory Scientist	Ohaja Awgu	3 <sup>rd</sup> January, 2018
<b>David Orji</b>	67years	Teaching (rtd)	Ohaja Awgu	3 <sup>rd</sup> January, 2018
<b>Olovo Ali</b>	78years	Farming	Ohaja Awgu	5 <sup>th</sup> February,2018

<b>Atavi Ele</b>	72years	hunting/farming	Ohaja Awgu	5 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Onwukwe Anu</b>	80years	Carpentry (rtd)	Adogba Awgu	5 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Peter Orji</b>	56years	Bricklaying	Adogba Awgu	5 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Umegalukwe Egbo</b>	74years	farming	Adogba Awgu	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Ivo Nwavoko</b>	80years	farming/hunting	Adogba Awgu	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Egwuoke Onu</b>	92years	Herbalist	Adogba Awgu	9 <sup>th</sup> January 2018.
<b>Donatus Chukwuma</b>	53years	teaching	Adogba Awgu	9 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Sunday Ikoh</b>	63years	Medical Practitioner	Adogba Awgu	11 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Kenneth Kelle</b>	45years	Legal Practitioner	Adogba Awgu	11 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Iweolu Nwavobu</b>	70years	drumming	Adogba Awgu	13 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Simon DIBIE</b>	54years	Business	Adogba Awgu	13 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018

<b>Nwoji Nwavo</b>	67years	drumming	Adogba Awgu	15 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018
<b>Christopher Iwe</b>	51years	Civil servant	Adogba Awgu	15 <sup>th</sup> January, 2018