

**NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

**Stigmatization of Widows in Mutomo
Village in Gatundu District**

BY

Esther Waithira Mwaura

*A THESIS SUBMITTED TO GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION*

HQ
1058
.M83
2010

July, 2010

**NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

**STIGMATIZATION OF WIDOWS IN MUTOMO
VILLAGE IN GATUNDU DISTRICT**

BY

ESTHER WAITHIRA MWAURA

**A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Christian Education**

LIBRARY
NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, A.I.U.
P.O. Box 24918 - 00101

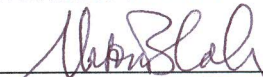
Approved:

Supervisor:



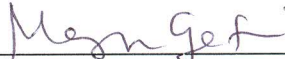
Dr. Alice Mambo

Second Reader:



Prof. Victor Cole

External Reader:



Prof. Mary Getui

July, 2010

Student's Declaration

STIGMATIZATION OF WIDOWS IN MUTOMO VILLAGE IN
GATUNDU DISTRICT

I declare that this is my original work and has not been
submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views submitted herein are not necessarily those of Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed)



Esther Waithira Mwaura

July, 2010

ABSTRACT

This study sought to understand the factors leading to the stigmatization of widows in Mutomo village of Gatundu District in Kenya. Data for this study was collected through face to face interviews with twelve respondents. The responses were recorded, transcribed and later analyzed.

The outcome of this study shows that the family, church and the government have all failed in addressing the socio-economic problems faced by widows in the village. Kikuyu culture has also contributed to their tribulations.

The study reveals that the stigmatized widows face challenges with issues such as social interaction, economic challenges, parenting and low regard by society; they are torn between remarriage and remaining in their initial marriage as traditions dictate.

Based on these findings, recommendations which were made included that the government should have a desk to address issues relating to widows. The church should help the needy ones materially and counsel them to overcome trauma. Relatives should allow widows to remarry if they wish and leading women groups and other non-governmental organizations like Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) should be empowered by the government in the area. The government, through the Ministry of Education should consider putting widowhood as a topic in the school curriculum of Kenya. The church should also include it in the teaching program so that people get sensitized on the need to appreciate widows.

TO

My late father Sospeter Mwaura Thirikwa and mother Peninah Nyakirimi for their selfless dedication, encouragement and prayers throughout my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the support given by my family; husband Njoroge and children Ngigi, Wangoko, Nyakirimi and Wamuhu for the assistance they offered in computing my assignments and projects throughout this course. I appreciate their encouragement without which I would not have completed my studies.

Rev. Grace Itegi and her family for their encouragement and hospitality, without which I would have dropped the course. God bless them abundantly.

Dr. Alice Mambo, my supervisor and mentor for prayers, patience, advice and encouragement, when I almost gave up in my studies. God bless you.

To my second reader, Prof. Victor Cole for his wise counsel and patience. I appreciate your effort in making my study a success.

My late dad Sospeter Thirikwa and mum Peninah Nyakirimi for their understanding, moral and financial support throughout my academic journey that has taken me to the graduate level.

My parents-in-law Francis Ngigi and Lillian Wangoko for prayers, encouragement and understanding when I missed family gatherings to attend to my study.

To my lecturers, Mrs. Rosemary Mbogo and Dr. Ngewa for their moral support and unending understanding when my health deteriorated during the study.

Vincent Njuguna and Kung'u's family for accommodating me while at NEGST. I sincerely thank them for their hospitality and generosity.

Above all, I would like to thank the Almighty God for His faithfulness and goodness without which this project would not have been a success

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VI
TABLES	X
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement	2
Research Questions	2
Purpose Statement.....	3
Significance of the Study	3
Limitations	4
Delimitations.....	4
Definition of Terms.....	4
CHAPTER TWO	5
LITERATURE REVIEW	5
African Traditional Perspective on Widows.....	5
Loneliness and Solitude in Widowhood	9
BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WIDOWS	10
Old Testament View on Widows	11
New Testament View on Widows.....	15
Widows' Socio-Economic Challenges	17

Social Challenges	17
Economic Challenges	18
Problems Related to Parenting	19
The Community's Regard for Women	20
Summary of Literature	21
CHAPTER THREE	23
METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	23
Entry	25
Population	25
Sampling Techniques	26
Instrument	27
Data Collection Procedures	28
Data Analysis and Interpretation	29
VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION STRATEGIES	31
CHAPTER FOUR	32
FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS	32
Purpose	32
Data Analysis	32
Factors Contributing to the Stigmatization of Widows	34
Kikuyu Customs on Widows and Remarriage	34
Widows' Social Status	36
Negative Attitudes towards Widows	38
Challenges in Social Interaction	39
Encounter with the In-laws	40
Financial Problems	40
Widows Dilemma in Parenting	41

God’s Care for Widows	42
Position of Widows in the New Testament	44
Assistance Offered to Widows.....	44
Family	44
Government Intervention	46
The Church Role	48
Summary of the Findings.....	49
CHAPTER FIVE	51
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	51
Major Findings and Implications	51
Conclusion	53
Recommendations.....	55
Recommendation for Further Studies	58
REFERENCE LIST	59
APPENDIX	62
VITA	64

TABLES

Table	Page
1. Widows code names.....	33

