

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**ASSESSMENT AND PRODUCTION OF ALTERNATIVE GARMENTS FOR  
WIDOWHOOD RITES IN THE BUILSA TRADITIONAL AREA OF THE UPPER  
EAST REGION OF GHANA**



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**DEPARTMENT OF FASHION DESIGN AND TEXTILES EDUCATION**

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EAST REGION OF GHANA**



**A Thesis in the Department of FASHION DESIGN AND  
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School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy  
(Fashion Design and Textiles) degree**

**AUGUST, 2022**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, LUCY AGAASA declare that except where references are sourced from other authors, that this thesis is entirely my own original work and has not been submitted for any degree at the University of Education, Winneba or elsewhere.

SIGNATURE .....

DATE: .....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

SIGNATURE .....

DATE: .....

NINETTE AFI APPIAH (PHD)

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## **DEDICATION**

To all widows of Builsa, Ghana and Africa



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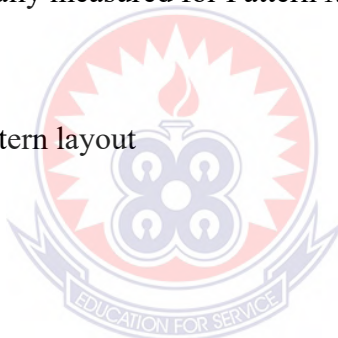


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## ABSTRACT

Costume design for widows in societies is a trickle down phenomenon from one ancestral generation to another. In Builsa tradition, women have undergone Widowhood Rites creating disaffection in terms of the dress code they wear. On the basis of this, the study aimed to investigate the historical evolution of the current costume and (sew garment and accessories). For this reason, the study adopted the practice based and descriptive survey technique to ascertain responses regarding the evolution of the costume. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample one hundred and twenty (120) respondents for the study. The main data collection instruments used were questionnaire and observation. The study found that the shea tree components including leaves, fruits, shea butter and bark were predominantly used by ancestors of the Builsa people as widowhood costume. Specifically, the leaves constitute the most pronounced Costume adorn by women during Widowhood Rites celebrations. Therefore, these components were identified and printed on hand woven “fugu” fabric to reflect the colours of the shea tree components and its accompanying accessories. The study recommends that traditional leader should adopt the design for mass production so that widows can have access to them any time they are in need. The designs should also be adopted and used by widow to bring about sanity and also preserve the nudity of widows.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Widowhood rites are understood in a different context. Widowhood rites are widely believed to be practices that a bereaved spouse has to go through upon the loss of a husband. During this period, a woman transits from being married to being a widow. In the view of (Tonah, 2009) widowhood is a situation in which one loses one's spouse through death. However, in the social or the cultural perspective, it refers to either the loss of a wife by a man or the loss of a man by a woman through death.

In the view of Ayagiba (2010), a widow is a woman who has lost her husband. Widowhood rites are the ceremonies and rituals that the widow is made to go through. In agreement with the above definitions, widowhood rites describe the period that any surviving spouse undergoes certain cultural rites to honour the dead spouse (Idialu, 2012). It is further described in other context as dehumanizing due to the associated violations of the rights of women (United Nations, 2009).

It is a global fact that thousands of widows have undergone or undergoing multiple human rights violations in the name of culture and dehumanizing customary practices. In most parts of the globe, widowhood rites are led by women who subject widows to torture, strip them naked, shave their hairs, and force them to drink concoctions prepared with leaves, hairs and fingernails of their late husbands (United Nations, 2005).

Additionally, widowhood rites is viewed as dispossession Willis (2018). In Sub-Saharan Africa, widowhood practices are detrimental to the well-being of women in societies. Across diverse cultures and traditions in sub-Saharan Africa, widows are prone to unpleasant conditions that are reprehensible and oppressive following the death of a spouse. That is,

many widows face various forms of discrimination, stigmatization and deprivation and consequently suffer disgraceful abuse (Ude & Njoku, 2017).

In the Upper East Region of Ghana, diverse ethnic groups with different cultural rites and performances exist. Each of these ethnic groups has a particular history, unique cultural features and traditions that give identity, self-respect and pride to the people (James, 2006). One unique feature of cultural heritage among these ethnic groups is widowhood rites (Anafo, 2010).

Traditionally, widowhood rites are characterized by a specific dress code with specific customary rites. These rites, nevertheless, vary from one ethnic group to another. Elsewhere in Ghana, widows are often clothed in black attire with the blessings of a chief priest known to the husband (United Nations, 2009). In the land of the Builsa, widows wear leaves and at times mini pants to mourn the dead husband (Ben & Sondra, 2013(Agaasa, *et al.*, 2018).

There are clear regulations governing widowhood rites that are often not adhered to. For instance, the 1992 constitution of Ghana guarantees the right of all persons to practice their culture provided the practice is not dehumanizing and injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person. On the contrary, the Ghana Human Development Report-GHDR (2007) indicates that widowhood rites are harsh and very cruel in nature. According to the report, a rite such as the shaving of hair is intended to make the widow unattractive for re-marriage. The GHDR report, therefore, states that such a practice is discriminatory against women.

The report also concludes that the severity of such rites and the harmful effects on women have led to the introduction of a provision in Criminal Law that makes it an offence for any person to compel a bereaved spouse to undergo any custom or practice which is cruel in nature (Section 2 (a) of PNDC Law 90) as cited in Dery (2016). Aside from this, the National



and Regional Houses of Chiefs are mandated to frequently review customary practices to ensure that they conform to current trends and for that matter do not violate the constitution.

Ultimately, the Builsa widowhood rites on which this study focuses, like any other tribe in Ghana have different customs and traditions including funeral rites. The performance of funeral rites has been with the people of Builsa since time immemorial and some of these rituals and rites performed seemed to be outmoded and unacceptable in today's scientific world. Some of the rituals performed especially by women bring stigmatization and psychological discomfort and they need to be modified to boost the morale of women. These rites and practices, therefore, remain unchallenged and not sufficiently reflected upon despite the pain they inflict on the widows (Manala, 2015).

It is against this backdrop this research sought to access the historical perspective of widowhood rites and costumes, modes of initiation of widowhood rites, associated benefits and disadvantages of widowhood rites as well as human rights perspectives. This would prepare widows of the Builsa people for the arduous task of self-reliance and confidence in society.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The concept of Widowhood rites has been described as one of the most dehumanizing and uncivilized cultural practices globally. In Africa, women undergoing widowhood rites suffer emotional trauma culminating in mental and spiritual torture. Some of the actions widows go through include but are not limited to the shaving of hair, drinking the remains of water used to wash their late husband's corpses, mourning late husband's death for about three to twelve months depending on the ethnic group (Eboh & Boye, 2005).

In Ghana, widows are regularly accused of having caused the death of their husbands, requiring that the widow proves her innocence of guilt. As a matter of principle, she is made to sit on fresh leaves or the bare floor almost unclothed, eating and drinking at the same spot for many days but should an ant bite her, this 'proves' that she caused the death of her husband (Widows & Orphans Ministry, 2010). This phenomenon is not mutually exclusive to the people of Builsa.

In terms of historical dimensions, widowhood practices in African history had received little attention in historical writings. Much literature on widowhood practices in Sub-Saharan Africa focused almost entirely on grief, bereavement, rituals, forced remarriages, human rights abuses, loneliness and discrimination in asset and property inheritance following the death of a spouse, resulting in poverty for widows and their children but they lacked historical perspective (Stephens, 2014).

In Builsa, women have undergone multiple rights abuse in the name of widowhood rites. It has created disaffection among women. Unlike other traditions, both women and men among Builsa people undergo widowhood rites. The severity of it is however skewed towards women. On the part of the women, nakedness, isolation and shaved hair are predominantly applied. Also, widows are subjected to public bathing with hot water which results in burnt skin, an indication that the victim is responsible for the killing of the husband. However, unburnt skin proves innocence. Furthermore, the widow is made to marry a family member of the late husband without her consent. Despite all these challenges, the historical evolution of these rites is unknown. These reasons account for the study to explore the history behind this culture and to assess a possible modification of the leaves used as a costume.

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

The study sought to ascertain the evolution of the costume used for widowhood rites and to design a modified version in terms of the layout of the Builsa people.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Assess the evolution of the shea tree leaves used as a costume for widowhood rites in the Builsa North Constituency.
2. Assess the colours and fabrics desired by widows for designing widowhood costumes.
3. Produce modified costumes from the shea tree component to be used for widowhood rites in the Builsa Traditional Area.
4. To evaluate the designed costumes regarding the fit, drape and motifs arrangement.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. How can the historical evolution of the shea tree leaves used as costumes for widowhood rites among the Builsa people be assessed?
2. Which colours and fabrics would widows prefer to be used for the designing of their costumes.
3. How can the shea tree components be used to produce costumes suitable for the widows of the Builsa Traditional Area?
4. How can the designed costumes be evaluated on the fit, drape and motif arrangement?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study is designed to bring comfort and solace to the widow of the Builsa area, since their code of dressing during the period of bereavement brings stigmatization and psychological discomfort.

The design and production of the costume for the widows will contribute to the removal of a sense of stigmatization among the widows. The research will also serve to promote the spirit of the PNDC law 90 which makes it an offence for any person to compel a bereaved spouse to undergo any customs or practices which are considered cruel in nature.

The study would enrich existing literature on funeral performance and its implications as well as serve as reference material for the National Commission on Culture and other researchers who may find the study useful.

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

Historical records of the practices and costumes of the widowhood rites in the study areas were difficult to access due to oral recording. As a result there were no existing costumes for widowhood rites for the purposes of referencing. Also, retrieval of questionnaires from the respondents was a bit problematic.

### **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

The study focused on Builsa widowhood costume evolution and the need to fashion out new costumes for widows in the area. The study however affects neighbouring ethnic areas with similar processes.



The study combines practice-based research techniques and procedures as well as participatory fieldwork and photographs. In addition to the thesis report, the study also produced two sets of sample costumes and accessories for the women of the area.

### **1.9 Definition of Key Terms**

**Dethronement:** This is when a widow is made to sit on the bare floor, leaves or mat signifying an ostensible fall in status.

**Human Rights:** Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, irrespective of our nationality, place of residence, sex, ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination.

**Oath Taking:** The postulation here is that a widow is guilty or blameworthy in her husband's death and can only absolve herself of innocence by taking an Oath.

**Ostracism:** Here, the widow is viewed as defiled and capable of defiling others, as a result, she may not be allowed to touch or shake hands, and in some cases, her hands are padded with rags.

**Rites:** These are ceremonies performed by a particular group of people, often for religious purposes; funeral rites, initiation rites and married rites (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 6th edition).

**Ritual Cleansing:** This is done to disunite the link between the living and the dead.

**Ritual:** A ritual consist of a series of actions that are carried out in the same way, especially as part of a religious ceremony

**Widowhood rites:** These refer to customs and rituals performed for and by the widow or widower following the death of a spouse (Nukunya, 1969 & Kirwen, 1979).

**Widowhood:** This describes the situation of a person who has lost his or her spouse and has not remarried. Widows and widowers are terms used to describe women in this predicament. (Kirwen, 1979).

### 1.10 Abbreviations

Ghana Human Development Report (GHDR)

Provincinal National Defence Council (PNDC)

Widows and Orphans Ministry (WOM)

Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)

Cocoa Butter Equivalent (CBE)



### 1.11 Organization of the Study

The thesis is organised and presented in six distinct chapters. Chapter one focuses on the introduction to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, organization of the work and operational terms. Chapter Two reviews the relevant related literature on the topic and arranged in themes. Chapter Three covers the Methodology which consists of the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instruments, and data collection procedures and data analysis and the practical processes involve to come out with the costumes. Chapter four presents the results of the study whereas chapter five contains a

discussion of the results. Finally chapter six consists of a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus was to review literature relating to widowhood rites and widowhood costumes in order to provide vivid understanding of the topic as well as identify similar works done within the study area and gaps that demand further investigation. Therefore, the historical concepts of the widowhood rites and the associated costume are reviewed. Also, the design process of widowhood costume have been outlined.

#### 2.2 The History of the Builsas

In Builsaland, the traditional system is governed by chiefs (Boateng & Afranie, 2020). The head of the traditional council is the Sandema-Nab who is the paramount chief of the Builsa traditional area supported by seven divisional chiefs and village heads called “Kanbon-Nab” (Ademin, 2016).

Currently, the Builsa traditional area is divided into two districts: Builsa North and Builsa South respectively. The Builsa North district is one of the thirteen municipal and district assemblies in the Upper East Region of Ghana. The district was created in 1988 from the then Kasena Nankana District by Legislative Instrument 1441. However, the new LI for the creation of Builsa North District in 2012 is LI 2148 (2010 Populationa and Housing Census, 2014).

The Builsa North District covers an estimated land area of 816.44030 km<sup>2</sup> and constitutes about 12.1% of the total land area of the Upper East Region with Sandema as the administrative capital. The district has an estimated population of 56477 with 108 communities according to the 2010 population and housing census exercise (Dery, 2016).



The Builsa South District is one of the newly created Districts carved out of the then Builsa District by Legislative Instrument LI 2104 in 2012 in the Upper East Region with Fumbisi as its administrative capital. The District covers an estimated land area of 1,403.5597 km<sup>2</sup> and constitutes about 13% of the total land area of the Upper East Region. The district has an estimated population of 36,514 with 47 communities according to the 2010 population and housing census (Atinga, 2006).

According to oral history, the real founder of the Builsa chiefdom was Atuga who came to the Builsa land as a stranger. Atuga is believed to be a Mamprusi from the royal family in Nalerigu. Atuga migrated from Nalerigu as a result of disputes between him and his siblings. He was the eldest in the family and the next to succeed the skin after the king who was very old. His younger brothers ganged against him, killed his wife who was pregnant and forced open the stomach to see whether she was carrying a male or female child. His brothers feared losing the skin if the foetus was male. Atuga realised that his life was in danger and after he had been persuaded by his loved ones to flee, he migrated with some Mamprusi people to settle at Gambaga near the escarpment. After a while, he moved northwards to settle at Atugapusik, present day Builsa land.

The Mamprusi immigrants who came to settle in Builsa land met indigenous people who had already occupied the land. The indigenes of the land are called the Builsa people who speak the language, Buili. The Builsa people who were the aborigines of the land outnumbered the migrants who were few and in the course of time, the language, customs, beliefs and traditions of the majority were assimilated and adopted by the immigrants. The Builsas, who were highly religious, revered their ancestors and the deities who they believe have the power to punish and to bless. The Builsa state was an acephalous one and had many communities called “Dɔk”. Each “Dɔk” was under a headman. Community heads and the people were

under the control and authority of the earth priest who was acknowledged and recognized as the owner of the land “Teng-Nyono”. The Builsa people believed nobody owns the land and cannot claim ownership. All lands belong to the ancestors and the deities who have entrusted the lands into the hands of the Teng-Nyono as a custodian (Ayagiba, 2010; (Ademin, 2016).

The Teng-Nyono was a very powerful man among the Builsas; he was feared and respected not because he could exercise physical punishment but the religious power he wielded. Disobeying him was tantamount to disregarding the ancestors and the deities which attracted death through strange and sudden sickness, and sometimes incurable diseases and illnesses. He was a religious leader but in the performance of his functions, religious and political leadership could not be separated (Ademin, 2016; Ubink & Amanor, 2015; Daanaa, 1992;).

Moreover, he was the mouthpiece of the deities and the ancestors as well as the link between the people and the divine elements (Ademin, 2016). He led processions and recessions of major events such as the “Feok” festival which means “a period of plenty and sacrifice to the deities and ancestors” which marks the end of the harvesting season and the beginning of the dry season (Agaasa, et al., 2018). The Builsas lived in relative peace and did not organize themselves into a formidable political unit to protect and defend the state in times of wars because they believed that the ancestors and the deities were more powerful than any human organization (Ademin, 2016). This belief was based on their daily encounter and experience with the deities and ancestors for centuries and the fact that no group of people had actually waged war to claim their land (Ayagiba, 2010). Then came Atuga and his people who settled in Builsa land and intermingled and intermarried with the local women. Atuga had four sons: Akadem, Awiak, Asam and Asinien in order of seniority. Asam, who was the third born, developed qualities of astute leadership, which provoked jealousy from Akadem, the senior brother. This situation constantly led to a physical confrontation between the two.

The other two siblings always rallied behind Asam against the elder. After the death of their father, Atuga, Akadem should have inherited and succeeded their father; but as a result of the dispute, all of them separated and moved from Atugapusik, the original habitat to establish their own communities. Akadem, the elder, moved and founded the Kadema chiefdom; Awiak also founded the Wiak chiefdom; Asam founded the Sandema chiefdom and Asinien also founded the Siniensa chiefdom.

It is important to state that Chuchuliga and Doninga were later founded by the descendants of Asam. However, Fumbisi and Gbedema were later founded by immigrants from the Mamprusi people in Gambaga who settled among the indigenes of the Builsas; this was made possible under the leadership of Afina. Kanjaga, Bachonsa, Zamsa and Gbedembilisi remained indigenous Builsas without any interference from the Mamprusi migrants (Ayagiba, 2010).

The chiefdoms were ruled separately and were independent of each other. Fortunately for Asam, the geographical location of Sandema enhanced its fortunes as it became the centre of commercial activities due to accessibility and high population. This commercial power was converted to political power. The presence of “Teng-Nyono”, who was in charge of the state shrine “Azagsuk” (chief deity), also provided the needed spiritual assistance to the town. With the enhanced status of Sandema based on commerce and spirituality, it naturally became a settlement of essence as compared to other communities.

In time, it became the seat of traditional political power of all Builsas. The Sandema chief became the paramount chief of the Builsa traditional area when the Builsa territory was annexed in 1902 by the British. The British endorsed his title: “Nab Ayieta” as a result of the decisive defeat of the slave raiders in the 1890s by the people of Sandema. With this official endorsement by the British, all the chiefs in Builsa land owed allegiance to the authority and

control of the Sandema chief as the paramount and supreme ruler of the Builsa traditional area.

Originally, the Builsa people did not have chiefs and had no knowledge of the chieftaincy system; it was Atuga who introduced the chieftaincy institution among the Builsas. Being a royal, he saw the need to organise the local people into a political unit along the lines of Nalerigu chieftaincy system where the chief was recognized as the political head of the state and the office of the Tendana or Teng-Nyono was maintained to perform his functions (performing sacrifices to the state deity, leading processions and recessions and the pouring of libation during the Feok festival) in the state.

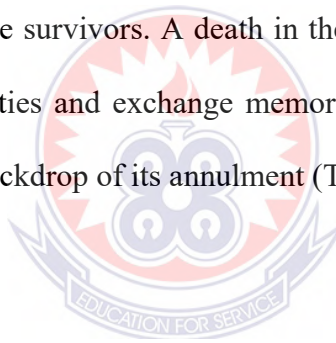
Atuga was able to achieve these noble acts not through wars of conquest to bring the local people under his control; but he applied wisdom by employing the skills, techniques and tactics of marriage alliance, diplomacy and negotiations to organize the indigenes under one political system. He did this because the few people who came with him to settle in Builsa land were not warriors to undertake wars of conquest and in fact it was clear that the local people outnumbered them (Ayagiba, 2010).

### **2.3 The Concept of Funerals**

Generally, a funeral arises when death occurs. It is believed by all and sundry in the society that death is inevitable. For this reason, there is a perfect correlation between death and funerals. The existence of man on earth is considered a temporal residence and after the temporal life, there exists a realm of life elsewhere. Others view death as misfortune. Tempels (1959) describes every calamity that Africans encounter as "a diminution of vital force." This force causes illness that weakens the body.

Amongst the tribes in northern Ghana, (Atinga, 2006) explained that the Frafra funeral is a ritual of rebuilding a traditional belief system in two distinct parts; wet and dry funerals. The wet funeral constitutes the burial rites activities whereas the dry funeral forms the second part known as the final funeral rites. This is not mutually exclusive from the traditional funeral rites of other tribes such as the Mamprusis, Dagombas, Kusasis and Builsa among others.

However, it is generally believed that the spirit of the dead after the wet funeral hovers around and could be harmful until the dry funeral is performed with all its accompanying rites to usher the spirit to the ancestral world (Angsotinge, 2002; Atinga, 2006). In this regard, funerals ceremonies portrays a socio-ritual unity of the community and with a symbolic demarcation to stop divisiveness. In summation, the celebration of the dead in most societies is also celebration of the survivors. A death in these societies is a central event, an occasion for kin to revive their ties and exchange memories, a time when life seems most vivid and desirable against the backdrop of its annulment (Turner, 1982).



#### **2.4 The Widow and Widower**

According to (Tonah, 2009), widowhood is a phenomenon in which a person loses a spouse as a result of the inevitable death. In other words, it is defined a situation in which either a man loses the wife or a woman loses the husband through death. Explicitly from the definitions of widowhood, a widow refers to a woman who lost the husband and she is not remarried yet whereas a widower refers to a man who lost the wife (Ayagiba, 2010).

In a broad range of societies and cultures, widowhood rites are known to be hazardous for women (Wilson, 2000). Also, in most societies across the globe, there is no group or person more afflicted with the pain of rejection than widows. In fact, they are painfully ignored from the statistics of most developing nations and are rarely mentioned in reports on women's

poverty, development or health (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2001).

## **2.5 Overview of Widowhood Rites**

Widowhood rites are commonly practiced activities globally although there might be variations in the manner in which they are practiced in different locations (Sandys, 2001). The phenomenon of widowhood rites is seen in many context as a cultural practice. For instance, in many parts of the world, the practice constitutes activities or ceremonies a woman goes through upon the loss of the husband through death. This period describes the stage at which a woman moves from married life to a widow through cultural ceremonies (Idialu, 2012).

The widowhood rites ceremonies are thus meant to ensure effective transition of the spirit of the deceased husband to the ancestors (Nukunya, 1992 and Kirwen, 1979). These ceremonies according to Chowdhury (1994) exert restrictions on the habitation of the widow, her dress code and diet, and thus expose the victim to both physical, psychological and mental aberrations, culminating into hardships and deprivation (Sossou, 2017).

Conceptually, the rites performed are mostly rituals performed by a widow or widower. In most cases, the rites are introduced as part of the funeral rites of the deceased spouse (Mitja, 2017; Manala, 2015; Atinga, 2006). Although, the rites are meant for both the widow and widower, that of the widow is more laborious and last longer to complete than those for the widower (Atinga, 2006). That is, widows suffer further abuses and violence than widowers (Azumah, 2010; Ogwenon, 2010). The situation is worse when the rites are promoted by cultural forces (Gunga, 2009).

### 2.5.1 Global Overview of Widowhood Rites

During the Victorian era in Great Britain, widows were expected to mourn for two years and were allowed to wear grey and lavender only in the last six months of the ‘half mourning’. Mourning widows were confined to their homes wearing full black attire and a weeping veil for one year and a day (full mourning) after her husband’s death. Clocks in the homes were turned off, windows opened and mirrors turned to face the walls (Jalland, 1996)

During the second mourning, that is the next nine months, the widow was allowed some small ornamentation like mourning jewellery and lacy embellishments’ to her black attire. Within this period, widows must deny themselves food and amusement for an extended period. Furthermore all normal activities were curtailed, or set aside, until all obligations had been fulfilled. Ritual purification was required before the mourner could resume normal social relations (Jalland, 1996)

Unlike funerals in some African countries where widows are expected to wail loudly for the loss of a love one and undergo an enduring elaborate widowhood rite (Sossou, 2002), in England and other Western European societies an excessive display of grief is seen as an embarrassment for both the bereaved and sympathizers (Tracey, 2022),

For the past two decades, the traditional funeral rites in Britain have been in transition for various reasons such as changes in social stratification due to a declining economy and shrinking resources, increased demand for cremations, decline in religious practices and increased secular observances and a shift from ancestral to contemporary funeral rites due to its cosmopolitan nature. Funeral rites have been taken over by funeral houses with religious bodies such as the churches performing their bid. This is evidently a different scenario if compared with funeral rites in India and Africa where there is social and religious significance attached to the rites (Gunga, 2009; Sossou, 2002; and Azumah, 2010).

According to Atinga (2006) in his study of the “Death and Dying; a Study of the Mortuary Rites of the Frafra of Northern Ghana in the Light of the Christian Funeral Liturgy, widowhood rites are usually performed to separate the deceased from the surviving spouse and therefore ensures that the deceased does not harm the surviving spouse. Therefore, comparing the widowhood rites in Britain and that of the Asia and Africa, one would realize vast difference in relation to the social and religious significance of the rites.

Chowdhury (1994), examining widowhood rites among the Haryana in India observed that widowhood rites places restrictions on residence, dress, diet and social intercourse thus force a widow to a life in the shadows affecting both her physical and mental health. She added that cruel mourning rites may confine the widow within a designated residence for many months or years. She also stated that until the enactment of the Hindu Succession Act 1956, the life of widows was determined by reliance on local customary law, which did not permit them to inherit.

Another observation was that only six states in India made amendments in their respective laws to recognize joint ownership rights of women. Furthermore laws prohibiting child marriage, ‘sati’ (widow burning) and violence against women have not succeeded in eliminating such traditions which persist mostly in rural communities or in villages of some Indian states. If “sati”, the practice of widow burning is put aside, the practice of confinement, defacement and cleansing are synonymous to widowhood rites in some African countries and among some ethnic groups particularly in Nigeria and Ghana (Akinbi, 2015).

### **2.5.2 Funerals**

It is popularly said that death is a necessary end and will come when it will come and therefore after death comes funeral. In the religions of Africa, life does not end with death,



but continues in another realm. The concepts of life and death are not mutually exclusive with no clear dividing lines between them. Human existence is seen as a dynamic process involving the increase or decrease of power or life force, of living and dying, and with different levels of life and death. The African religions scholar Placide Tempels (1959) describes every misfortune that Africans encounter as "a diminution of vital force." (Ezenweke, 2008).

Illness and death result from some outside agent, a person, thing, or circumstance that weakens people because the agent contains a greater life force. Death does not alter or end the life or the personality of an individual, but only causes a change in its conditions. This is expressed in the concept of "ancestors," people who have died but who continue to "live" in the community and communicate with their families (Fortes, 1965).

Atinga (2006) described Frafra funerals as a ritual re-enactment of their belief system, the meticulous nature of Frafra funerals and the way they handle the dead portray their belief about the dead vis-à-vis their relationship with the living. He noted that Frafra funerals are in two parts the 'wet' and the 'dry' funerals. The wet funerals could simply be understood as a burial rite. The rites in this part are rites that are performed shortly after death leading to the burial of the deceased. The wet funeral only paves the way for the second and more elaborate part known as the 'dry funeral' also referred to as the final funeral rites (Anafo, 2010).

Angsotinge (2002) described the concept of a "man" among the Dagaaba as being a person having body, intelligence, reason or spirit, vital breath, soul shadow and impurity. The component of the person, known among the Dagaaba as the 'doer' is termed mystical or spiritual dirt and is the root cause of the widowhood rites. Atinga (2006) mentioned the mystical dirt among the Frafra as a component of the personhood of a person as also being the basis for the performance of widowhood rites to

separate the deceased from the surviving spouse as well as prevent the deceased from causing harm. Until the rites are performed and the deceased is separated, it is believed that the spirit of the deceased lingers around the house could be harmful to the surviving spouse. It is therefore conclusive to say that funeral rites are linked to widowhood rites in most traditional societies particularly in Ghana (Anafo, 2010).

### **2.5.3 Widowhood Rites in some African Countries**

Widowhood rites in Africa are commonly practiced, although modernity is overshadowing this cultural event. In East Africa, especially within the Luo community in Kenya, widowhood rites are perceived as an act of disrespect and cruel. It encompasses most nasty rituals, compulsion of the widow, and re-marriage to undesired men. Others include hectic harassment, loneliness, rejection and depression (Gunga, 2009). This description is similar to the violations widows undergo in Ghanaian context (Azumah, 2010).

According to Sossou (2002), widowhood rituals in West Africa are characterized by difficulty and dejection, as well as a variety of physical isolation and a state of ceremonial impurity that necessitates purification. Death, unlike birth, is seen as a huge tragedy in W/A communities, regardless of the age of the deceased. This is because death in these societies is never viewed as a natural cause. That is, death is often attributed to witchcraft, especially, when the dead is relatively young (Sossou, 2002).

Assessing widowhood rites in the African continent further demonstrates diversities in traditional societies. These societies are not monolithic. That is, some of these societies treat widows same way as widowers (Mintz, 1998), and some do not (Sossou, 2002). Notwithstanding, the experiences of widows from African societies is viewed in terms of social, economic and psychological.

In Ivory Coast there appear to be indifference to gender mainstreaming regarding widowhood practices. Here, widows and widowers rites are identical. Earlier, the people practiced one-year mourning period. This has recently been changed to a three-month period during which the surviving spouse wears special clothing, fasts all day, and weeps every day from sunrise to sunset (Mintz, 1998). The crying ritual takes place within the limits of the conjugal compound. Here the widow refrains from contacting anyone save a previously widowed individual.

Also, even if he has several spouses, the widower avoids sexual intercourse. They are insulted by their family, and the bereaved individual, in this case the widow, is supposed to grieve profusely to pacify the relatives. In terms of properties belonging to the deceased, his original family takes custody of these resources (Maritz *et al.*, 2008). After the three-months of mourning period, there are rites that have to be accomplished. This must be done before the surviving spouse can continue with his or her sexual relations.

Widowhood rites and ceremonies among the Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria are Governed by greed and superstition in order to subjugate the widow. According to Sossou (2002), the deceased's patrilineal sisters, whether married and unmarried, wield authority over the entire family, which is demonstrated upon their brother's death. Others hold them in high regard, and they play an important role during funerals. Widowhood rites, on the other hand, are seen by Korieh (1996) as vengeance and out of contempt for the widow by the deceased's patrilineal sisters.

For instance, among the *Edo's* and *Esan's* of Nigeria, widows are described as either tainted with bad luck or have the potential of tainting others. The widow does not receive a hand shake except when her hands are padded (Egharevba, 1971; Okojie, 1960). In more strenuous instances among the *Edo's* and the *Esan's*, the widow sleeps on the bare floor, eats from dirty

dishes and drink the water from which her deceased husband's body had been washed to prove her innocence of guilt of killing the husband (Sandys, 2001; Egharevba, 1971; Okojie, 1960).

Widowhood rituals in Southern Africa differ among communities. For the Batswana tribe the widow is marginalized and discriminated against as a result of stigmatization (Manyedi *et al.*, 2003). With nearly 80% of the population of South Africa being Christian, a variety of South African Christian churches and religious missions has an influence on widowhood ceremonies. That is, mourning is a common experience for members of the Zion Apostolic Church in Venda, with the knowledge of widow's grief as a multi-layered phenomenon (Selepe & Edwards, 2008). Although the Zion Apostolic Church's Venda community provides a period of collective healing for widows, social isolation is also a component of the mourning process.

In addition, the *Luo* widow does not formally re-marry or take sexual partners in addition to the surrogate husband (Potash 1986a, and 1986b; Kirwen, 1979 cited in Gunga 2009). They are urged to get a surrogate husband within the family of the deceased husband that is culturally-sanctioned (Gunga, 2009). This is done to restore the normalcy of the widow.

Moreover, the *Luo* widow's re-marriage characteristics are similar to the "Arapesh" tribe of New Guinea. According to a renowned anthropologist, Margaret Mead's book entitled "historical standing of 1935 of New Guinea" the "Arapesh" widow is often coerced to re-marry to the dead husband's relative. Seventy-five (75%) of the widows re-marry by entering the home of the dead husband's younger brother (Owen, 1994).

#### **2.5.4 Widowhood Rites practices in Ghana**

Widows are obligated to stay with their deceased husband's body till burial in the matrilineal Akan society of southern Ghana. This is because it is believed that if the soul of the deceased returns to the widow and has sexual contact with her, she would be barren for the rest of her life (Magudu, 2004). In terms of dress code, the widow is expected to wear black attire throughout the period, and contribute food and gold as well.

#### **2.5.5. Widowhood Rites Among People in Southern Ghana**

In Ghana, Widowhood rites are performed as cardinal traditional custom of funeral celebrations for a deceased spouse (Tonah, 2009). Widowhood rites are generally performed after the first funeral rites of the deceased but prior to the second funeral rites. The first funeral often takes place in seven days but has now been reduced to three days in most communities.

These rites are generally classified as acts of purification of the widow (Tonah, 2009). It is thus a period when the widow publicly exhibits grief for the loss of a husband. For this reason, the widow defies pleasure and goes through rigorous and sorrowful rites to honor the dead. Nonetheless, the rites differ from tribes, communities and religions.

Among the Akan and Ewe, a widow often undergoes rituals that demonstrate mourning (Ghana Human Development Report, 2007), including seclusion, prescribed dress codes (black attire), walking barefooted, fasting for extended periods of time, symbolic gestures such as holding the deceased husband's ankle or in some cases sleeping in the same room where the corpse is laid (Atinga, 2006). Plate 2.1 represents Akan widowhood rites clad in red and black costume.



**Plate 2. 1: Akan Widowhood Rites (Source: Slidetodoc.com,2010)**

### **2.5.6 Widowhood rites in northern Ghana**

Unlike the Ewes and the Akan tribes, the Dagaaba live in the North-western part of the Upper West Region. Traditionally, the Dagaaba believe that the spirit of the deceased has a time limit before it departs to the ancestral world. During this period, it is believed the spirit can cause harm to close relations until the widowhood rites are performed (Angsotinge, 2002). Therefore, widows go through purification rites to be transitioned from a married woman into a widow in order to dispel the dead spirit.

Prior to that, a widow goes through fidelity test to show her faithfulness to the late husband when he was alive. The process of widowhood among the Dagaaba involves smearing of ash or clay, wearing ropes and shaving the hair. After that, the widow is isolated and she re-enters the house after three days. Failure by a widow to partake in this rite constitutes a crime punishable by rejection from the late husband's family house. Upon completion of these rites, the woman is at liberty to re-marry. Also, widowhood rites is not mutually exclusive to the Dagaaba of Northern Ghana but the Frafras, Kusassi among others, though minor variations

exist. Plate 2.2 is illustration of Widowhood rites among people of Northern Ghana with leaves around the waist as costume.



**Plate 2. 2: Widowhood Rites among people in Northern Ghana**

The Frafras' widowhood ceremonies are an important feature of the funeral celebrations of all the Frafras' neighbouring communities. Anafo (2010) in agreement with Atinga (2000) mentioned that widowhood rites among the Frafra are both traditional and cultural practices that are performed on a woman who loses her husband with the belief that it keeps off the spirit of the spouse.

The rites are normally performed during the final funeral rites of the deceased with religious and social connotations. The religious factors influencing widowhood rites among the Frafra correlate the belief system of the people. For instance, the people of the Zuarungu believe that the spirit of the dead remains hovering until the final funeral rites and associated forms are done before it freely joins the ancestors (Atinga, 2010).

Widowhood customs among the Frafra include placing the widow or widower apart, holding a calabash, shaving and bathing the widow, and re-integrating the widow into the family shortly following the loss of a husband, according to Anafo (2010). That is, the body of the

husband is laid in a room shortly after his death. The widow is then taken to a separate room and consoled by other women. Following that, she is given a ritual calabash to hold until the burial is completed.

This separation is in place until the widow is reintegrated after the final funeral rites are conducted. The widow's calabash, on the other hand, is taken after the burial and sealed in a pot before the final funeral rites. The calabash is brought out during the final funeral rites to be utilized by the widow for other duties she is enshrined to conduct. A widower, on the other hand, is not divorced right now. He is assisted by elders outside the house (Atinga, 2006).

Regarding the Builsa widowhood rites, there is no much information regarding the widowhood rites, except sitting and wearing of shea leaves as likened to the Frafra and the Kusassi. The male sits on cow skin or a customary mat, and the sheanut leaves are part of his ceremonies (Atinga, 2006). What's more surprising is that all of these ethnic groups cite the same reasons for utilizing it. The utilization of shea leaves has a straightforward and unmistakable rationale.

That is, the shea nut tree is significant in this ceremony because of its cultural significance. First and foremost, it supplies nourishment for the population in the form of fruits. It also produces wood for roofing, but its ability to give shea oil to soothe people's hearts is even more important. Shea butter is a popular name for the oil, which is used not only for eating but also for rituals and the treatment of diseases.

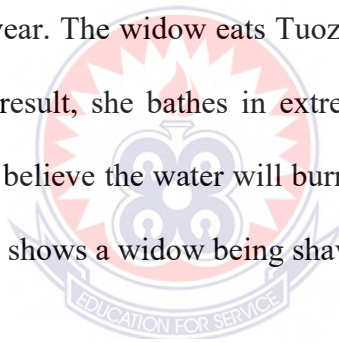
Despite the fact that the Frafra, Kusassi, and Builsa grow groundnuts, groundnut oil has no place in widowhood rites. It is permissible to use it for everyday meal preparation, but not for widowhood ceremonies. The leaves of the shea tree are usually utilized to symbolize a crucial role because burial rituals are among the final rites.



## 2.6 Some Common Practices of Widowhood Rites

***Shaving and Bathing the Widow*** -This is called rites purification. Shaving and bathing the widow is required as part of the widowhood ritual. This rite takes place outside the garbage dump of the family. It is done on the last day of the funeral. The widow/widower is brought out in the evening to be shaved and bathed. The widow sits on the heap of garbage. She does this while the widow is shaving (Atinga, 2006). A number of women surround her.

Herbs and leaves from the sheanut tree are boiled in a pot nearby before the shaving. The widow moves kettle with herbs and performs the cleansing ceremonies with the vapor from the boiled shea leaves after the hair has been removed. After that, the widow takes a bath in warm water infused with herbs (Dery, 2016). They used to wash entirely naked, but now they can at least bathe in their underwear. The widow eats Tuozaafi (T.Z). The pinnacle of eating from the calabash is this. As a result, she bathes in extremely hot water and smears shea butter oil from head to toe. They believe the water will burn the widow's skin if she has been unfaithful (Dery, 2016). Plate 2.3 shows a widow being shaved.





**Plate 2. 3: Shaving of widows (Source: Taire, 2016)**

*Sitting and wearing of leaves* - During the funeral of her late spouse, the widow of the Frafra sits on shea tree leaves. The widower, on the other hand, sits on a cow's skin. The most striking feature is that these leaves are used in widowhood rites not only by the Frafra, but also by the Kusassi and the Builsa.

The most intriguing feature is that all of these ethnic groups have the same rationale for why they use the leaves. Because of the importance of shea leaves in the communities, they are used in the ritual. That is, it offers food and wood for roofing and cooking through its fruits. The widow's ability to produce sheanut oil (shea butter) to calm people's hearts and as a ritual component is more crucial.

### **2.7 Re-integrating the Widow into Society**

Re-integrating the widow requires performance of rites that purifies the widow. Notably among these include isolation, shaving, performing sacrifices and bathing. In that regard, the

community expresses readiness to accept the widow. An older woman guides her to several strategic places of the house after she finishes her purification. She is escorted inside the grinding area and shown how to grind figuratively. They then proceed to the kitchen. Here she is forced to pee inside the pot that will be used to cook. She is escorted into the ceremonial chamber and given a tour (Atinga, 2006).

Indeed, the widow is treated as if she were an outsider who needs to be taught a new way of life. The process is then regarded complete, and she is not allowed to eat any leftover food from the funeral. The widow, who has lately concluded her ritual life, is unable to ingest the meal prepared for the ceremony. Some Frafra villages, on the other hand, do not follow these rules, but the vast majority complies.

## **2.8 Religious Widowhood Rites**

The role of religions and widowhood rites are intrinsically linked. These include Christianity linked with tradition, or Islam linked with tradition. This however, depends on the community.

***Christian Widowhood Rites*** - In Christianity, a widow mourns the husband for forty days, six months or even a year. The prescribed dress code is often black, white and nanny blue with a special chain on the neck with little social interactions (Kuenyehia, 1998). The Catholic Church of Ghana, on the other hand, has incorporated parts of the traditional customs, such as dressing and outdooring the widow, into Christian widowhood rites (Mawusi, 2009).

As a result, on the third day, a priest comes to the widow's house and blesses her clothes, prays for her against evil spirits, and after three months, she removes her mourning garments (Mawusi, 2009). The widow, on the other hand, is advised to live a modest and chaste life throughout her widowhood. Widows are not supposed to consult with fortune tellers.

**Islamic Widowhood Rites** - The widow stays in the residence where she was living when her husband died until the completion of her ‘iddah (mandated waiting period), which is four months and ten days. “And those of you who die and leave spouses behind, they (the wives) shall wait for four months and ten days, then after they have fulfilled their term, there is no guilt on you if they dispose of themselves in a just and honourable manner,” the Quran says. And Allah is well aware of your actions” (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 234). If she is pregnant, however, her ‘iddah will stop when she gives birth. Those who are pregnant (whether they are divorced or their husbands are deceased) must wait till they lay down their load until their ‘Iddah (prescribed waiting period).” [al-Talaaq 65:4].

The implication is that she should not leave her house unless it is absolutely necessary, such as going to the hospital if she is unwell or purchasing items from the market, such as food. If the house is destroyed, she should relocate elsewhere; if she does not have someone to keep her company and she is afraid for her safety, she has the right to depart.

She must also refrain from wearing attractive attire and refrain from wearing gold, silver, diamonds, pearls, perfume, bracelets, or rings till her ‘iddah is completed.. This is to prevent and protect her chastity or to prevent her from being lustful during the waiting period. There is therefore a link in the waiting period of the widow between Islam and the traditional religion.

## **2.9 Factors Influencing Widowhood Rites**

The reasons for widowhood rites performance are diverse, ranging from religion to social factors.

**Religious factors- Traditional** - Religious factors play an important role for the performance of widowhood rites. As a rule of thumb, most communities in northern Ghana perceive the

spirit of the dead not to have departed and could cause harm to the people until the funeral is performed (Atinga, 2006). In view of that, the widow is considered as the sole intimate to the husband and could surely be the target of the dead who may wish to take her along for companionship.

Aside that, there is a myth that postulates that the bond of love between the widow and the deceased never broken unless the funeral rites are performed, otherwise the widow would continue to be bonded to the spouse. For that reason, widowhood rites must be performed during the funeral rites to officially delink the spouse and her late husband. Once that is broken, it sets the widower or widow free from any harm and could therefore return to his or her normal life (Anafo, 2010).

***Socio-cultural factors*** - In practice, a widow who undergoes a ritual of separation after her husband's death stays in that condition till her spouse funeral is done. In that circumstance, the widow or widower is unable to function normally in society. This implies that she will be unable to remarry until the rites have been completed and she has been reintegrated into society.

In the end, the widow is not expected to participate in sexual activity before to her husband's funeral. As a result, widowhood is designed to help the widow or widower reintegrate into society so that she can resume her normal activities (Atinga, 2006). In other words, widowhood rites are rites of passage that allow a widow/widower to transition through a purifying process.

## **2.10 Effects of Widowhood Rites**

Many people view widowhood practices as cruel, ancient, degrading and needless. There have been calls for its cancellation (Sossou, 2002). Issues relating to separation, re-

integration, love, blessings, proof of innocence with respect to causing the spouse's death, and the obedience of tradition are among the reasons for people going through widowhood rites among most tribes in northern Ghana (Tonah, 2009; Tei-Ahontu, 2008; Atinga, 2006; and Angsotinge, 2002). These, however, come with psychological, economic and social consequences.

***Psychological impact of Widowhood practices*** - A majority of widows feel clinically significant downheartedness in the first year after their spouse's death, according to previous study, with proportions ranging from 15% to 30%. (Lund *et al.*, 1993). This is primarily due to the death of the husband and a sense of loneliness in the absence of companionship. Mendes *et al.*, (1994) discovered that young-old widows experienced high dejection beyond the first year of widowhood, but not elderly widows aged 75 and beyond.

However, not all researchers have identified considerable bereavement among the bereaved (Gallagher *et al.*, 1989), while others have discovered that some widows' bereavement is just temporary (Gallagher *et al.*, 1989 ; Murrell and Himmelfarb, 1989). Also, Thuen *et al.*, (1997) revealed that widows have a somewhat lower sense of coherence in terms of meaningfulness, and a moderately higher level of anxiety than their married counterparts, whereas no such effects were observed among the males.

***Economic effects of Widowhood practices*** - Widowhood is one of the risk factors in the transition to poverty. One of the economic adversities experienced by widows is the forfeiture of resources or property belonging to a deceased husband (Ude & Njoku, 2017). For example, according to a prior study, younger widows faced higher levels of economic consequences than older widows (Thuen *et al.*, 1997).

Wheaton (1990) conducted study to determine the risk factors that contribute to widows' economic effects. The absence of resources and stigma were identified as key risk factors.

The financial impact of widowhood rites on a widow includes lost income, acute poverty, financial dependent on men, the widow's and her children's neglect, and a high school dropout rate (Voice of the Widows, 2006).

***Social effects of Widowhood practices*** - The social effects of widowhood rites have had diverse results. Roberts (1998) investigated how widows are supported by their family, friends, and the families of their late husbands. Widows between the ages of 30 and 50 received more support from family and friends in that study than widows beyond the age of 60. However, according to McCalley (2000), widows over the age of 60 receive more support from their relatives because they are unable to work and care for themselves (Adatara & Charlotte, 2014).

Notwithstanding, the allegation of having killed the husband or infidelity on the part of the widow are some reasons given for the performance of the widowhood rites to enable the widow exonerate herself. Refusal to undertake widowhood rites may result in expulsion from the community, denial of inheritance and children being taken away. Widowhood rites purification thus serves to integrate widows into society in order to provide for them psychological and emotional healing (Angsotinge, 2002).

### **2.11 The Shea Tree and its Components as Costume**

The shea tree naturally grows in the wild and on farmlands, farms and around homes. shea tree is a small to medium-sized deciduous tree that occurs in a wide swath of territory above 1 of latitude in tropical Africa (Hall *et al.*, 1996). The tree is deciduous and perennial, and it grows primarily on dry open slopes. The tree is deciduous and perennial, and it grows primarily on dry open slopes (Yidana, 2004). shea trees (*Vitellaria paradoxa*) grow in the wild in about half of Ghana, with land coverage of over 77 670 km<sup>2</sup> in Western Dagomba,

Southern Mamprusi, Western Gonja, Lawra, Tumu, Wa, and Nanumba, with the densest stands in Eastern Gonja. It's also been stated that it's abundant in Ghana's Guinea Savannah and less so in the Sudan Savannah (Fobil, 2007). Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti, and the Eastern and Volta regions in the south of Ghana have little shea tree cover (Fobil, 2007). The leaves of a shea tree are depicted in Plate 2.4.



**Plate 2. 4: Shea Tree Leaves with seeds\fruits (Source: Lainocosmetics.com,nd)**

According to Abdul-Mumeen *et al.* (2013), the shea tree may grow to a height of 6.1 meters and a girth of 61 centimeters in the wild, where it is frequently devastated by bushfires. Under controlled conditions, they can reach heights of 15 m and girths of 17 cm. The trees take roughly 30 years to mature from seed to maturity (Yidana, 1994). Between May and August, the tree produces fruits and seeds with a pericarp that is about 1mm thick and emits white latex while green. When grown, it contains a fleshy pulp that is pleasant and fragrant. When let to overripe, it can be eaten raw. There are 1-2 huge, gleaming brown seeds in each fruit. The kernel is pale and high in lipids, and it is from this that oil is extracted. shea butter



is a type of butter that comes from the shea tree (Ani *et al.*, 2012). (Abdul-Mumeen *et al.*, 2013).

***Economic Importance of shea tree*** - The shea tree has proved to be very resourceful in tropical Africa and has been recommended among other trees like Parkia (FAO, 1989). Fruits are a popular snack for both children and adults. The tree also produces caterpillars, which provide nutritious food as well as a source of money for rural women. This caterpillar is prepared with sauce and served as a particular delicacy, which may be found being sold on the streets (Mpuchane, *et al.*, 2000).

Because of the high demand for its butter both locally and internationally, the tree is becoming more important as an economic tree crop (Abdul-Mumeen *et al.*, 2013). The unstable world market price for cocoa has resulted to the need to find a suitable substitute to cocoa in the confectionery and cocoa butter industry hence making shea tree and product economically important since 1970's (Dogbevi, 2009). The shea butter is used in food preparations, soap making, cosmetics, and in the chocolate industries (Diarrassouba *et al.*, 2007a). Plate 2.5 depicts a shea tree with a bunch of raw shea fruits.



**Plate 2. 5: Shea Fruit. (Source: EuroAfri Link, 2020)**

**Industrial Importance** - Shea is primarily imported by industrialized countries like as France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, North America, and Japan (Carette *et al.*, 2009). shea butter was accepted as one of six vegetable fats to serve as a Cocoa Butter Equivalent (CBE) by the European Union in 2003 (Schreckenber, 2004). As a result, the shea nut is utilized in a variety of food products, including chocolate, and it is increasingly widely used in cosmetics. The major market of shea butter has been found in chocolate and confectionary industries and there is fast-growing, popular market in cosmetics and personal care product industry (Alander, 2004). The shea tree has a significant, untapped capability for producing large amounts of sap, which might be a valuable raw material source for the gum and rubber industries. The Plate 2.6 is an illustration of the shea seed obtain from the shea fruit.



**Plate 2. 6: Shea fruit seed (nut) (Source: iStock, nd(Left); Indiamart,2022 (Right))**

**Domestic and nutritional value** - Shea butter tree is one of many indigenous fruit trees. Although undomesticated play an important role in sustaining the livelihoods of people living in rural areas. The fruits of the shea tree consist of a green fleshy monocarp which has high nutritional value and contains between 0.7 to 1.3 grams of protein and 41.2 gram of carbohydrate (Bernice, 2011). The shea fruit is an important source of food for rural communities especially at times of food shortages, hunger and other disasters in addition to providing enormous health benefit and income, hence it could help alleviate hunger in rural area during and after its ripening season (Aguzue *et al.*, 2013; Bernice, 2011).

For the people of Northern Ghana, the fruits serve as hunger stopgaps as they come in fruition during the lean season when food is very scarce, and many local communities particularly children and women who are the most vulnerable depend on the pulp for food to survive the critical hunger periods while pending the harvest of early maturing crops such as millet and the like. The consumption by humans is localized and therefore, there is no commercial and industrial utilization for the fresh fruit. Shea kernel is a rich source of fat (Tano-Debrah & Ohta, 1994). The Plate 2.7 illustrates ripped edible sheanuts.



**Plate 2. 7: Ripe Shea Fruit(Source: Speciality Produce.com, 2022)**

## **2.12 History of Costumes**

Traditional clothing is one of the most vivid aspects of cultural legacy, and ethnologists (such as Piotr Bogatyrev) consider it as a semiotic system that carries obvious social, gender, and age distinctions. It has a wide range of celebratory and everyday use in traditional civilizations, and is associated with magical and symbolic characteristics. Vernacular attire is a significant indicator of joyful behaviour. Some ethnic groups in modern nations continue to wear national costumes in an attempt to maintain their cultural heritage and resist globalization, indicating an 'us/them' dichotomy. Meanwhile, national clothing (Kente and Smock in Ghana) has taken on new social roles, emphasizing political identity concerns as well as commercial objectives (local touristic ethnographic performances, folk festivals). Many traditional costumes and their distinctive features (shirts, skirts/kilts, hats, shawls, belts, and decorations) have become trendy and have spread around the world (Sedakova & Vlaskina, 2016).

While most people think of clothes as a way to express one's personality and communicate social duties, few research have looked into the psychology of clothing and how it impacts both personal and external perceptions (Embry, 2018).

Costume designing is the creation of clothing for the overall appearance of a character or performer. Costume may be refers to as the style of a dress particular to a nation, a class, or a period (Eubank, *et al*, 2005).

According to Landis and Copley (2014) the costume designer is the person in charge of designing the clothing element worn by actors in the film or stage production. Additionally, costume designer as has been defined as a person who designs costume for a film, stage production or television show (Pirjo, 2014).

Pirjo (2014) again indicates that the art of film's costume design is a collaborative effort including the director, actor, costume designer, and other film industry experts. The costumes are inextricably linked to the film's release date and the cultural climate of the period. Because a spectator is unaware of the filmmaking process.

The history of costume can be traced back in time into the ancient world where cultures developed various dress codes for the performance of specific functions. According to Cartwright (2013), the origins costume can be traced to the origin of theatre, and hence theatre clothing, are thought to be related to ancient Greek village festivals and processions in honor of Diony (Dionysia), where, certain masks were created with a happy and a serious side on the same face in order to show a change in action without changing masks. Since then, functions costumes have expanded into uniforms of all kinds while the strict definition of costumes have remained with the film industry.

Today, every piece of clothing worn in a film is referred to as a costume. The filmmaker has numerous tools at his disposal to portray the tale, including costumes. Costumes let performers turn into fresh and realistic individuals on film by communicating the nuances of a character's personality to the viewer (Landis & Copley , 2014). These types of costume are usually referred to traditional costumes and are confined to certain cultures and social groupings. A lot of these costumes are created for performative purposes (Behrens, 2000).

According to Embry (2018), costumes of all kinds carry in them the histories that pertain to their range of time, location, materials, gender specific, and functionality. Additionally, Eicher and Roach-Higgins, (1992) describes how the types of costumes of certain political institutions such as the military and police mark the dynamics of power and the gender. In discussion costumes and power, they also posit that the judiciary (judges) is one of the political institutions where costumes symbolise the elements of power strongly.

Landis and Copley (2014) again indicate that the direction of a movies in terms of its time are usually known through the costume design. Clothing has had a part in identifying eras throughout history. Fashion is the reflection of our society. Men and women have twisted their bodies into every possible shape to attain a trendy look at some time in history.

Costumes as clothes also tend to comply with certain clothing theories such as social perception theory, attribution theory, impression formation theory, and the process of categorization.

***Types of Costumes*** - Just as in many classifications, there is no one way of looking at the different types of costumes used in the world today (Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1992). Costumes types are design for different purposes. Examples of well-known costumes are the eastern Sari, Kimono, Kebaya and the Shuka. In Africa, costumes such as the Agbada, Mamileke elephant mask costume as shown in Palte 2.8.



African Agbada



Kebaya



Shuka



Kimono



Eastern Sari



Muhuleke



Elephant Task

**Plate 2. 8: Types of Costumes:**

(Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:;), <https://shopperboard.com/>,

<https://www.alibaba.com/product-detail/>, <https://www.znurk.com/>,

<http://traditionalclothingindia.blogspot.com>, <https://www.wholesalehalloweencostumes.com/>,

2022).

### **2.13 Textile and Fashion Design**

Textiles designing, garment designing fashion designing are three different aspects of a related field known generally as the Fashion and Textile industry.

Textile Design and its process of making have usually been confused with the concept of fashion designing which tends to be the process of designing and making fashion related articles. Textile design which usually refers to the art and technology of design weave pattern to be carried through the processes of weaving. This was idea was extensively explained at the turn of the twentieth century by Nisbet (1906) and have since been updated by (Gürcüm, 2017; Valentine, et al; 2017).

Igoe (2010) shows that textile design as a sub-discipline of design with its own style of thinking and, as a result, design. These distinct and sometimes sophisticated ways of thinking necessitate various design methods and, as a result, a diverse set of values.

Fashion design on the other covers a wide range of areas that will include but not limited to general garment designing, accessories designing and millinery. Garment design according to Calderin (2011), is the formation of garments or dresses of apparel using various laid down techniques and processes. The idea was developed in the ancient world. The history of garment designing has expanded so much since the world entered into modernity. Dress making which used to be the work of one person and a few assistant now covers hundreds of experts and professionals (Calderin, 2011).

Despite a strong desire to blend in, the concept of uniqueness permits a person to feel unique. Faster, more convenient production now allows customers to enjoy cheaper pricing while still owning something really unique, thanks to their participation in the design process. Designers of a wide range of products are capitalizing on both the tools and the public's desire to strike a balance between the two (Calderin, 2011)



Customers can choose how the parts of a product are produced in compartmentalized design, resulting in one-of-a-kind combinations. Tailors make high-quality shirts. A customer may turn a tailor's shirt into an original by mixing fabrics and selecting particular design features like the collar, placket, pocket, pocket location, cuff, and cuff button. Converse makes the classic Chuck Taylor All Star high-top sneaker, which comes in a variety of materials including canvas, suede, and leather—but that's only the start. Customers have several options for shoe design and personalization, as well as a large range of color options, resulting in an unlimited number of design variants (Calderin, 2011).

The Colour-In Dress is a basic sleeveless dress with an A-line skirt made by fashion designer Berber Soepboer and graphic artist Michiel Schuurman of the Netherlands. The wearer is the third collaborator in the design process. She may personalize the outfit using the included textile markers. The geometric design on the cloth lends itself to a variety of interpretations. If the wearer choose to add more color each time it is worn, the dress has the potential to be a work in progress. When the clothing is familiar and the alterations are simple to envisage, the entire modification process is more effective. Designers may be hesitant to relinquish total control, but in each of these cases, product designers have the rare chance to experience their work through the eyes of their consumers. The practice gives them important information about what their target audience wants (Calderin, 2011).

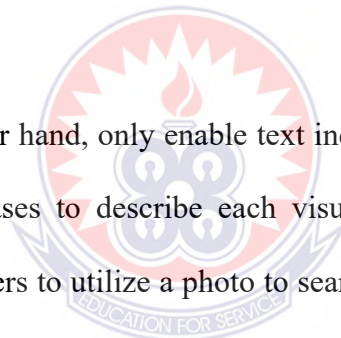
## **2.14 The Mood Board**

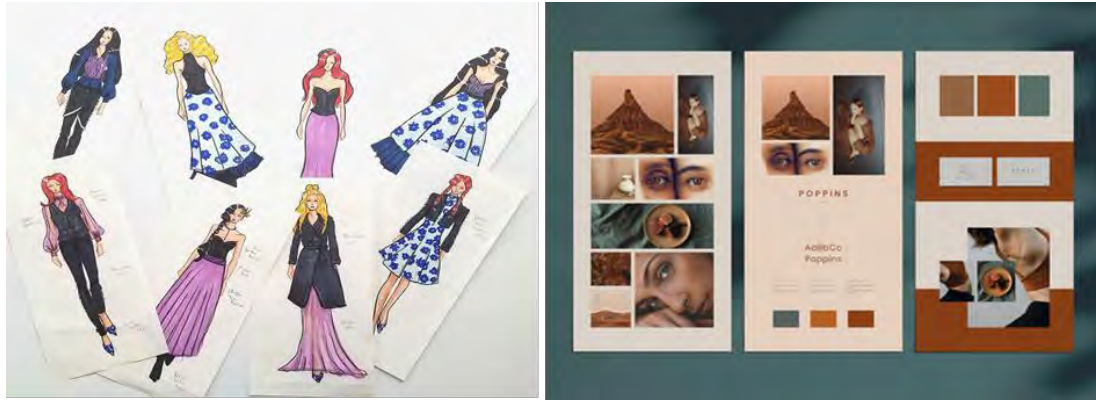
Mood boards or Inspiration boards are a way for the designer to establish a theme for his/her line of fashions, defining elements of colour, harmony, texture, and pattern. Mood boards are used by designers to gather new ideas. These are collages made up of different animations or images, as well as text and object samples. In creative professions like fashion and design,

mood boards are frequently used as a source of inspiration, and they are especially useful when ideas are difficult to describe orally (Tracy, *et al.*, 2008).

Mood boards enable designers to dig deeper into a project's themes and concepts, serving as a strong tool for communicating a "network of seemingly disconnected ideas, impossible to express verbally with similar force" (Steve & McDonagh-Philp, 2001). (Charles *et al.*, 2017). When a client presents rough product concepts, the process begins. The inherent visual aspect of mood boards fosters the emergence of fresh ideas, which has a lot of potential for inventive problem solving and discovery (Steve & McDonagh-Philp, 2001). Designers can use visual abstraction to turn abstract concepts into structured visual representations (Hernan & Gabriela, 1999). The final mood board presents the client or other stakeholders with graphic concepts.

Most search engines, on the other hand, only enable text inquiries, forcing designers to come up with useful, searchable phrases to describe each visual abstraction. Although Google Reverse Image Search allows users to utilize a photo to search related images on the internet, it provides little control over inappropriate results (Janin *et al.*, 2020). The Plate 2.9 represents a sample mood boards.





**Plate 2.9: Sample mood boards as source of inspiration (Source: Fashionista Sketch, 2016)**

Another significant problem is determining why some visuals are appealing: Designers must communicate their ideas to themselves and others, as well as synthesize broader concepts based on their research and experience. This act of making sense is critical for thinking about new ideas. Regrettably, existing methods provide minimal support for analysing visual content (Janin *et al.*, 2020).

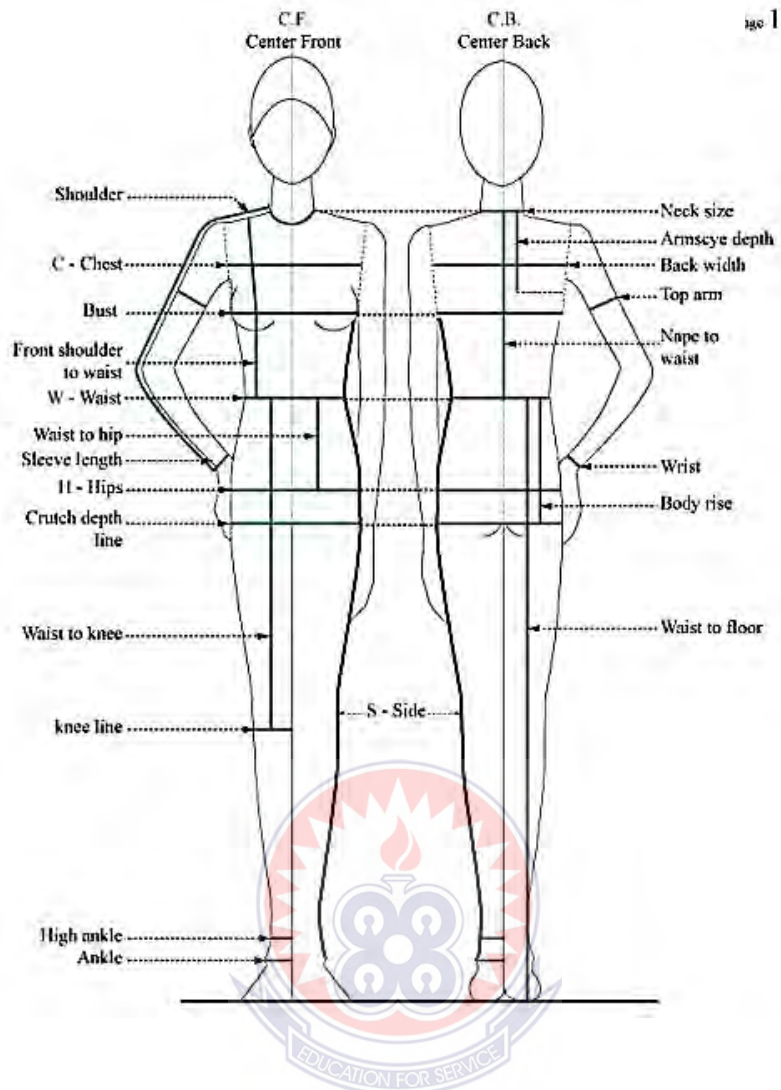
### **2.15 Pattern Drafting/ Making**

Pattern drafting is an art form which is considered as a plan of the garment using the person body measurement. According to Bakker-Edoh (2018) pattern drafting refers to an apparel making methodology based on a client's body measurements that is used to produce a pattern. Pattern drafting remains the bedrock of ways of designing clothing in the fashion industry which come with adjustments of fit and alterations of styles

**Body Measurements** - A "size" describes an item that shows a specified measurements along dimensions, such that it will perfectly fit a person with measurements equal to that size (Tryfos, 1986). However, the fit of a garment constitutes a relationship between garment measurements and the body measurements for which it is intended. Nevertheless, very little information regarding correlation among human body measurements exist. That is, along

with the large number of relevant body dimensions, body proportions are considerably varied greatly. This is a fact from the variety of body shapes that can be seen in a group of people. Therefore, body size as well as body shape can be a characteristic of particular ethnic group (Gupta *et al.*, 2006). Plate 2.10 illustrates body parts and measurements dimensions, and the descriptions are shown in Table 2.2.





**Plate 2. 10: Parts of the body usually measured for Pattern Making(Source: Clothing Pattern 101, nd)**

**Table 2.1: Description of the Parts of the body measured for Pattern Making**

<b>Body parts</b>	<b>Measurement Description</b>
A – Bust	Measure around bust from fullest point of the nipple The tape measure should be taken around the body
B – Waist	Measure the waist in between the thighs and the bodice. To help identify the precise waist tight a twin around the belly or bend side to side to aid measurement.
C – Hip	Measure the fullest part of the hip closer to the seat.
D - High Hip	Measure around the fullest part, about 3 - 4" below the waist. This is helpful when fitting a slim skirt or pants (to get an accurate idea of the shape of the hip, or the belly).
E - Front Waist Length	Measure from the shoulder and draw the tape closer to the lower part of the neck running to the waist the tape should be on the nipple which is the fullest point of the bust
F - Back Waist Length	Measure from the lower part of the neck (in the middle, not the side), to the centre of the waistline.
G - Arm Length	Measure from the shoulder bone though the arm where the hand bend to the wrist bone .it is imperative to bend the elbow to allow free movement and actual length of sleeve.

(Source: Descriptions based on image from *Clothing Patterns 101*, nd)

***Pattern making in Costume Design*** - Pattern making and laying as in Plate 2.10 is one of the main steps in the design process of a garment. Pattern Making can be a 2D or 3D process (Paras et al., 2008). Pattern making is described as an art of shaping a flat piece of fabric to conform to one or more curves of the human figure. That is, it is a link between the design and production of the costume. Cooklin (1994) explains that a sketch can be turned into a garment via a pattern which interprets the design in the form of the garment components. Fischer (2009) noted that patterns enable the designer to render something flat into something three-dimensional.

Also, drafting patterns may seem very nerve-wracking, but it is an astonishing skill that can take the dressmaker to a completely new level of realities. The difficulty in flat pattern making could be justified in a study conducted by Obinnim & Pongo (2015) that dressmakers appreciate not the use of flat patterns for cutting out. Despite this, one important advantage of this technique is that the newly developed designer pattern retains the size of original basic pattern, and grading in different sizes can be done very easily by flat pattern techniques. Plate 2.11 represents a sample of pattern layout.



**Plate 2.11: Patterns Laying (Source: Dario’s Couture, 2020)**

To create a simple pattern, a pattern maker would have to follow five essential steps: gathering their material, taking proper measurements, adding styles and designs, grading their design, then draping it to result in the final garment.

***Outline of Patterns adaptation with references to shapes*** - Garment design is incorporation of all the design elements, including colour, texture, space, lines, pattern silhouette, shape, proportion, balance, emphasis or focal point, rhythm and harmony. Each of these contributes towards the visual perception, Table 2.3 shows some concepts of the effects of lines in patterns making.



**Table 2.2: Effects of lines in Pattern Making**

Types of lines	Visual effects	Psychological effects
Straight lines	Emphasize angularity rotundity	Counter Stiff, direct, precise, dignified, tense, masculine
Vertical lines	Draw attention to the face or down to the feet	Taller looking
Horizontal lines	Draw attention to across body	Broader looking
Structural lines	Direct attention to certain area	Highlighting of the best features of the body
Curve lines	Emphasize body curves thinness	Counter Dynamic, feminine, active, youthful, unrestrained
Thick lines	Add weight	Forceful, aggressive
Thin lines	Minimize weight	Delicate, dainty, calm
Continuous lines	Emphasize bulges Smoothness	Consistent, sure, firm
Broken lines	Emphasize irregularities	Less certain
Sharp lines	Emphasize smoothness	Definite, precise, assertive
Fuzzy lines	Gently increase size	Soft, uncertain
Porous lines	Advance a little, recede a little	Open, delicate, less certain

**Source: Davis, (1996)**

In clothing design, illusion principles can be employed to complement the wearer's body (David, 1996). For example, in pattern design, the Muller-Lyer illusion can be employed to lengthen or shorten the wearer's apparent figure (a line with angled extensions at each end appears longer than a line of identical length but with angled lines at each end folded back).

The horizontal–vertical illusion can also be employed to generate the lengthening effect, in which a vertical line appears longer than a horizontal line of identical length (David, 1996).

In perspective, the Sander parallelogram refers to the tendency to treat diagonals and non-right angles as rectangles, resulting in an underestimation of distances. The Sander parallelogram can be used in clothes design to make diagonals appear longer than adjacent horizontal or vertical lines (Fan and Hunter, 2009). The Japanese kimono, for example, uses diagonal overlapping to lengthen the upper body. The effect of the surrounding lines' spacing on the garment angle sizes could be utilised in the collar design. For example, narrow lapels can make a V neck appear larger (Fan & Hunter, 2009).

## 2.16 Pattern Layout

Design layout is the process of placing a pattern on a fabric in a cost-effective manner, that is, without wasting fabric. In this situation, patterns should be organized in a way that follows the fabric's grain. The following are the most important considerations while laying patterns: (Luke, 2020).

- Before arranging the designs, press the fabric without wrinkling it.
- Lay the fabric out flat on a large or hard level surface. - Larger patterns are placed first. Patterns of the same length are grouped together.
- Fill up the gaps between the larger designs with smaller patterns.

If a design is to be cut in multiples, such as two sleeve patterns, the patterns are folded. If the cloth has a one-way design or the designs have different front and back patterns, this notion may not be achievable.

Put a pencil and pins in your hand to draw, or pin or lay weights on patterns to keep them in place.

## 2.17 Types of Pattern Layouts

Based upon the placement of the patterns, the layouts are classified as: Open layout, Lengthwise centre fold, Off-centre length wise fold, Cross-wise outer fold. Off centre crosswise fold. Double fold or combination fold. (Government of Tamil Nadu, 2019)

**Open Layout** - The most basic design is the open layout. The fabric is spread out on the table, and the patterns are laid out one by one, starting from the left. It can be found in a variety of patterns. This is especially handy for designs with contrasting left and right motifs.

**Lengthwise Centre Fold** - The fabric is folded in the lengthwise manner. The selvedge on both sides are folded in the middle and layered on top of each other. A fold forms in the fabric's centre. All folded patterns are placed in this fold. On a variety of frocks, shirts, and blouses, this fold can also be found.

**Off-Centre Lengthwise Fold** - On the cloth, the appropriate width for the patterns is measured and folded in the lengthwise manner. When several little designs are seen in clothing, this is a regular occurrence. Parallel to the selvedge, the fold should be made. This is utilized in a variety of clothes, ranging from simple baby pants to fully integrated men's coats.

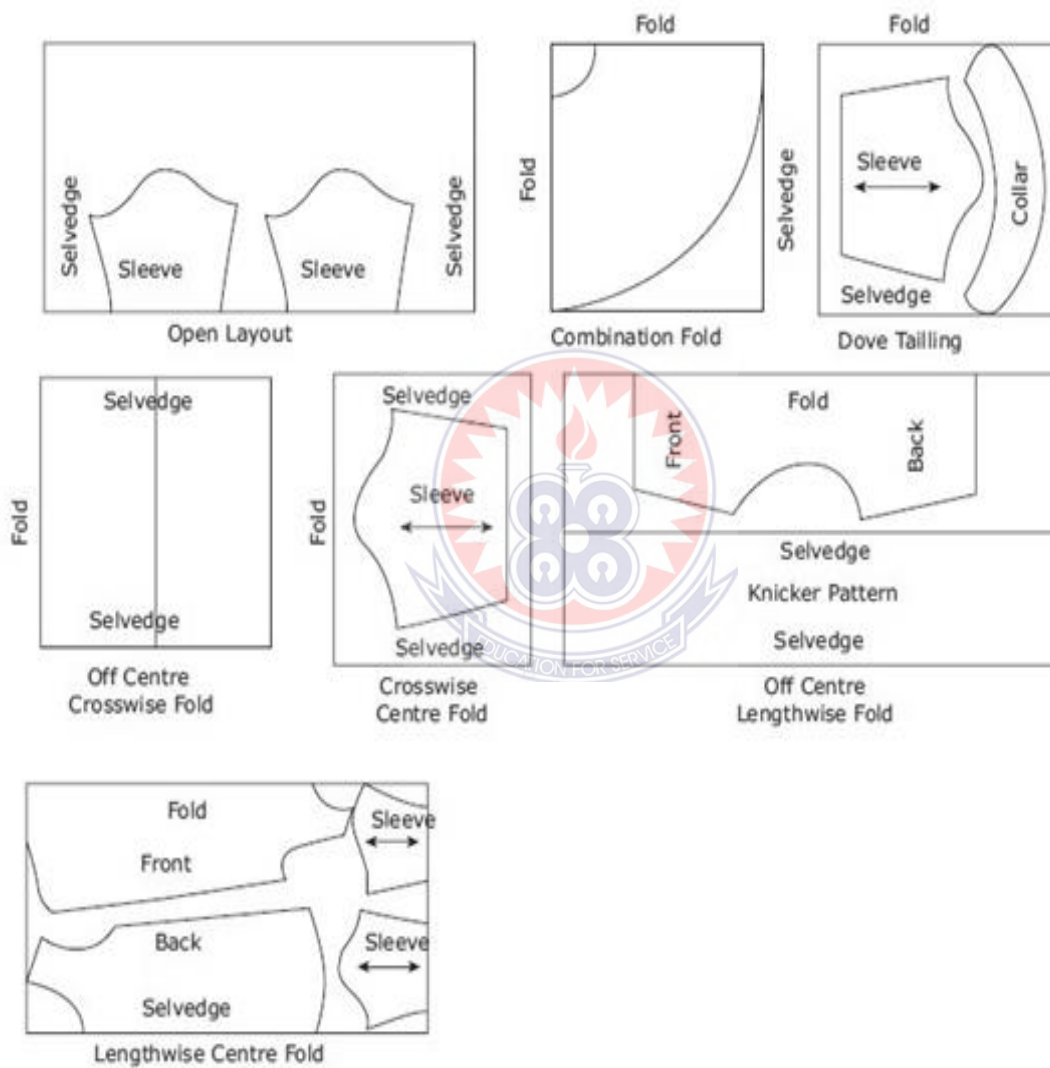
**Crosswise Outer Fold** - The length-wise and crosswise middle folds are comparable. The fabric is folded in a transverse direction in this fold. When the patterns are too narrow to fit in the lengthwise fold, it's the best option. This fold can also be used to create unusual effects, such as a dress with horizontal stripes made from a cloth with length-wise stripes.

**Off Centre Crosswise Fold** – The off centre crosswise fold is a layout where the fabric is folded in the cross grain. The fold is perpendicular to the selvedge. This fold is used when a

portion of a garment is cut transverse grain for ease or special effects. When horizontal or vertical strips are used to cut collars or yokes on textiles, for example;

**Double Fold or Combination Fold** – The cloth is folded lengthwise and crosswise grains together in a combined fold. Sari petticoats and jablas are made in this style.

(Plate.2.12). P



**Plate 2. 12: Different types of pattern layout**

(Source://www.braitkart.com.article:Retrievedon 15 May, 2021).

## CHAPTER THREE

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section provides methodology for the research questions. It includes research design, population, sampling technique and sampling size, data collection instruments, data analysis, materials and methods and the procedure for the studio/practical work outline categorically.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive research design to assess the evolution of the widowhood rites costume. This is because descriptive research design provides answers to real-life situations in a particular population by answering what, when, where and how, questions regarding the research problem, rather than the why. According to Wang and Cheng (2020). Also, it offers the opportunity to gather data from a sampled population of interest in order to determine the prevailing characteristics at a given time (Fraeckel & Wallen, 2007). Thus this study relied on mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) to assist the researcher collect more than one type of data and tabulate them in numerical form for ease of analysis, as well as examined and relationships between variables such as dependent and independent variables (McLeod, 2017; Conrad *et al.*, 2014; Creswell, 2009, Lincoln & Guba, 1985 and Glass & Hopkins, 1984).

#### 3.3 Population

Population for a research study is the total number of people or items that have similar features and interest a researcher considers for the purpose of data collection (Popoola 2011). According to Neumans and Dickinson (2003). Population constitutes of a group of individuals or items from which a sample for a research study is chosen by the researcher.

### 3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The purposive sampling technique was used to select 200 people including dressmakers, widows, traditional leaders, opinion leaders, religious leaders and queen mothers (Black,2010). A sample of one hundred and twenty (120) was then calculated using the equation 1.

Where,  $X = (z_{\alpha/2})^2(p)(1-p)/MoE$

- $Z_{\alpha/2}$ =critical value of the normal distribution: confidence level of 95%,  $\alpha$  is 0.05 and the critical value = 1.96).
- MoE is the margin of error = 5% (0.05)
- P is the sample proportion = 75% (0.75)
- N is the population size = 200

In terms of sampling procedure, the purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents following a procedure outline by Black (2010). The choice of this technique was due to the fact that the participants were well known within the Builsa community for their expertise in widowhood activities.

**Table 3. 1: Population Distribution**

Type	Number of Respondents
Widows	50
Traditional Leaders	25
Opinion Leaders	20
Religious Leaders	6
Queen mothers	4
Dressmakers	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>

Source: Field data, 2021

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

In this study, the instruments used to collect data was questionnaires and participant observation. The questionnaires were design in two forms. The first questionnaire was designed for all respondents and that was structured to collect data on the historical evolution of the widowhood costume, preferred costumes designs, fabric type, fabric colour, reasons for the choice of colour. The second questionnaire was designed solely for only fifteen (15) dressmakers to evaluate their technical understanding on pattern making, pattern layout and pattern cutting and sewing. This was because that particular questionnaire was technical and was related solely to dresssmakers, therefore not all respondents could answer it. However, the preliminary designs and pattern layout were along side the questionnaire and administered to the respondents. After retrieving the instrument, the data was extracted and analysed into simple frequencies and percentages (Hyman & Sierra, 2016, Züll, 2016).

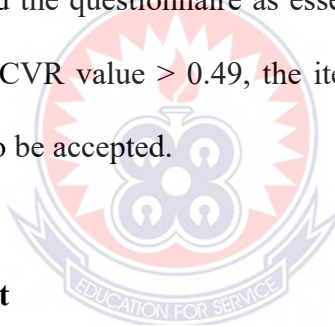
The observation aspect was done by the researcher during funeral performances which assisted in the research work. In this study, the researcher performed overt observation; that is, the subjects were aware they were being observed. This was done by watching people at widowhood rites events and noting physical characteristics of the widowhood rites activities. The purpose for this observation is to collect data for the reseach.

### **3.6 Validity of the Instrument**

Validity explains how fit the collected data covers the area of study (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). It measures the projected data to be collected (Field, 2005). Different types of validity test exist. This include face validity, construct validity, criterion validity and content validity. Content validity is the degree to which items in an instrument replicate the content of which the instrument is intended (Straub *et al.*, 2004).

In this study, the content validity ratio by Lawshe (1975) was applied. It is a linear transformation of proportional level of agreement on how many subject matter experts within sample rates an item correct. This maintains confidence in the most correct matter in an instrument. In this way, the experts specify whether an item in the instruments is relevant for operating a construct in a set of items or not. The content validity ratio (CVR) varies between 1 and -1, with the higher score indicating further agreement of members.

Therefore,  $CVR = (N_e - N/2) / N/2$ , where  $N_e$  is the number of subject matter experts' panelists indicating "essential", and  $N$  is total number of subject matter experts' panelists. In this study, 120 panel members were tasked to ascertain the validity of the questionnaire. Out of the 120 respondents, 100 rated the questionnaire as essential at CVR of 0.66; confirming Lawshe (1975) assertion that at CVR value  $> 0.49$ , the item in the instrument is within an acceptable level of significance to be accepted.



### **3.7 Reliability of the Instrument**

The Cronbach Alpha reliability procedure was adopted to validate the reliability of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951 measures reliability of a research instrument. Thus, a threshold of  $\geq 0.70$  shows an acceptable, sufficient or satisfactory level (Griethuijsen, et al., 2014). This study had Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of 0.73 resulting from a selected ten widows and ten opinion leaders from Sandema in the Builsa North



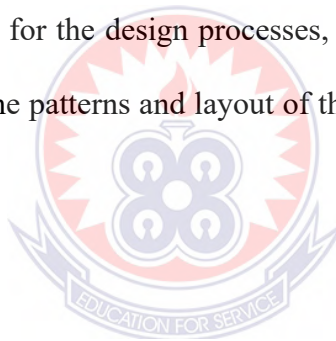
### **3.8 Data Analysis**

In this study, responses from the questionnaires collected were tabulated and processed using Excel 2016. The questionnaires were tallied into frequencies and entered into excel columns to obtain tables and bar graphs. Comparisons of treatments were then made.

### **3.9 Materials/methods (Studio Practice)**

This part of the research is based on the practice of the researcher as a fashion designer and a person with a desire to understand traditional costume designs among the people of the Upper East Region. The studio work involved the use of materials, tools and methods relevant to the design and production of garments and accessories.

Table 3.2 presents the tools used for the design processes, the preliminary designs, the basic blocks, adaptation processes of the patterns and layout of the final patterns, cutting as well as sewing.



**Table 3. 2: Tools and Materials**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Application</b>
1. Pair of Scissor(s)	For cutting out paper, patterns and fabric into pieces
2. Ruler	For ruling straight lines
3. Pencil	Used for drawing
4. Pins	Used to pin tracing paper or hold other items together position.
5. Tracing Paper	To aid transfer pattern mark into fabric
6. French Curve	To assist design accurate curves and drafting
7. Tracing Wheel	To transfer marks from the pattern onto the fabric
8. Cello tape	Assist to put paper work together
9. Eraser	To erase any unwanted drawings
10. Brown Paper	Use for sketches of the costume designs
11. sewing machine	For constructing the widowhood costumes
12. Loom	The structure on which yarns are mount for weaving
13. Bobbin	Where yarns are wind unto to be carried as weft
14. Bobbin Winder	Used to wind yarns unto Bobbins
15. Shuttle	That carries the loaded bobbin across the shed for interlacing
16. Warping Mill	The equipment use for warping
17. Yarns	The threads used for weaving
18. Wooden Frame	Used to frame the mesh of the screen
19. Mesh	On which chemicals are coated to produce the design
20. Squeegee	This is used to rub on the screen to force an ink unto the fabric

**Source: Field data, 2021**

### 3.10 Procedure for Project Work

The practical work was grouped into six (6) stages. These were; the production process of the mood board, preliminary and final designs, fabrics production, screen printing designing of the costume and accessories and photographs.

#### 3.10.1. The Mood Board

The components of the shea tree were picked on the internet and merge together to form the mood board. These included, the fruits, seed, leaves and shell. Pictures which also portrayed how widows in other parts of the Northern Regions dress similar to the Builsas were added. Colours in the mood board also symbolises the proceeds and residue of the shea tree.

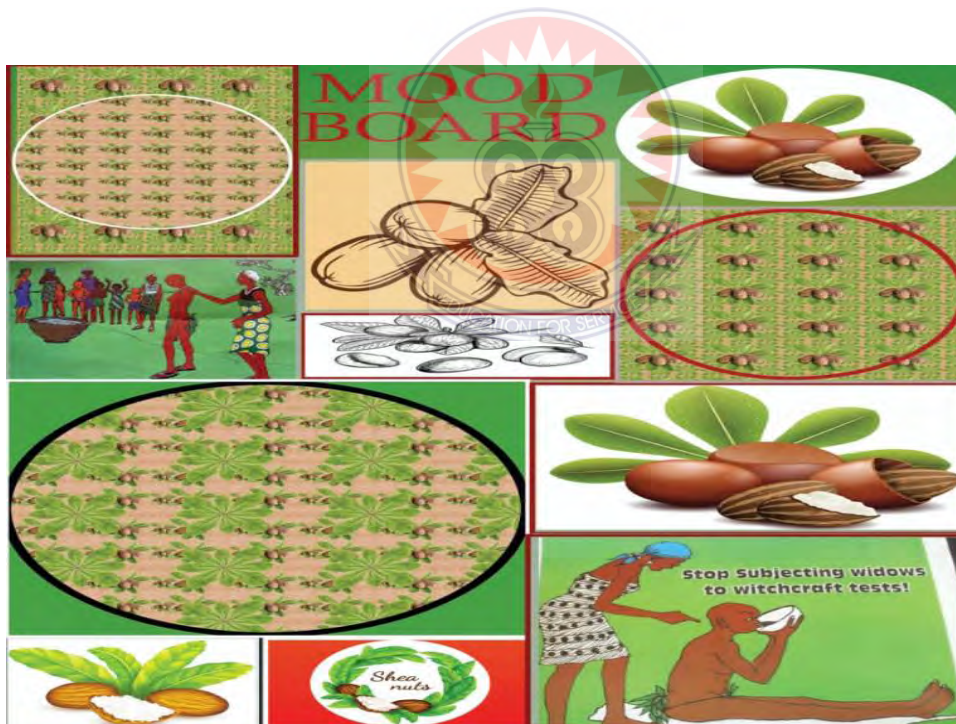


Figure 3. 1: Image of Mood Board (Researcher's field work)

### **3.10.2. Preliminary and Final Designs**

The mood board served as a source of inspiration from which the preliminary designs were created. A questionnaire was designed to seek the views of the population as to which of the designs would be suitable for the widows. Responses from the questionnaire brought about the chosen designs. Refer to figure 4.11 of chapter 4.

### **3.10.3 Fabric Production**

The production of the fabric involve different stages that is warping, heddling, reeding tying the warp to the fly rod of the cloth rollers apron and test the weave to see if things are in place as planned.

#### **3.10.3.1 Warp yarns on the Warping mill**

The warping of the warp yarns was done on the warping mill. The number of yarns produced was due to the plan that the researcher has for this project. Heddling was done after warping then reeding was follwed. Refer to figure 4.3 of chapter 4.

#### **3.10.3.2 Winding of Weft yarns on the bobbins**

The researcher used the bobbin winder to wind threads onto the bobbins to be used as weft yarns for weaving. Refer to figure 4.6 of chapter 4.

#### **3.10.3.3 Weaving of the Fabric**

This stage, the researcher interlaced the two sets of threads; the warp threads which runs vertically through the length of the fabric and weft threads which is also known as horizontal yarns inter lace to form the fabric. Refer to figure 4.7 of chapter 4.

### **3.10.4 Screen Printing**

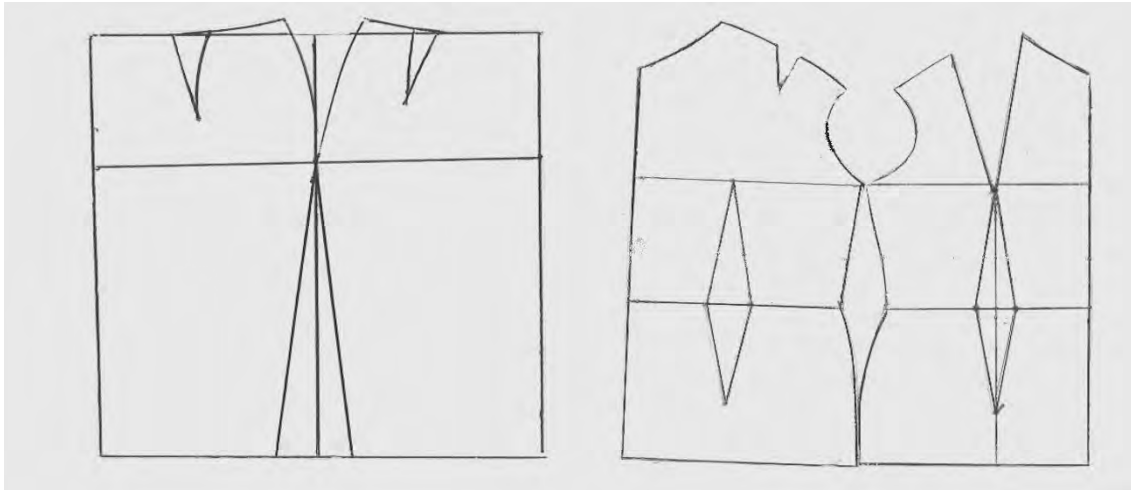
With the aid of a padded table, screen and squeegee the selected shea tree components were printed onto the fabric. Refer to figure 4.9 of chapter 4.

### **3.10.5 Pattern Preparation**

The researcher after weaving and screen printing the fabric then have to prepare basic blocks in order to adapt into patterns of the chosen styles.

#### **3.10.5.1 Drafting of Basic Blocks (skirt and the bodice) and adaptation of styles**

The basic blocks were drafted using the size twelve body measurements. The main constructional lines were drawn out first with the aid of tape measure, ruler and meter rule (yard stick). The constructional process further involved the division of circumferential measurements into quarters and halves that formed basis for the drafting. The key points considered in drafting the skirt were the waist and the hip while that of the bodice were the bust, waist and the hip. The chosen design patterns were then obtained from the basic blocks through slashing, spreading and overlapping where necessary.



**Figure 3. 2: Drafting of Basic Blocks (Melliari, 2015)**

Adaptation of basic blocks into style



**Figure 3. 3: Adapted Patterns for style A and C (Source: Researcher Field work)**

### **3.10.6 Pressing/Sewing of costumes**

The researcher cut out vilene for the neck line and the front and back patterns. This was ironed onto the fashion fabric. The darts and the panel for both the outer garment and lining were sown first and pressed opened. The brassiere cup was attached to the appropriate

costume. The researcher proceeded to fix zipper, attached lining and made eyelet holes. The garment was then given a final pressing.

### **3.10.7 Making of Shea Tree Seed Shell Accessories**

The shell were pounded in a mortar and sieved. This was then mixed into paste like substance and glue added as adhesive. This was then moulded into the desired beads shapes. Refer to figures 4.18 and 4.19 of chapter 4

### **3.10.8 Photography**

The costumes were finally fitted on the models in a studio and the photographs taken as the final work. Refer to figure 5.3 of chapter 5



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the results of the biography of the respondents, the evolution of the widowhood rites costume and the actual practical works of the costume.

#### 4.2 Biographical Data Analysis

*Category of respondents* - In the view of the Women's Health of the USA (2011), population characteristic is a diverse social, demographic, and economic feature of a nation. For this reason, demographic features including gender, age, and ethnicity serve as positive indicators for policy making decisions and planning. Hence, this section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents such as the category of the respondents, age, gender, and religion background as key indicators for the study of the widowhood rites costume of the Builsa society. The data in Table 4.1 represents the various categories of respondents from which data was collected. The results are presented as frequencies and percentages.

**Table 4. 1: Category of Respondents with their Frequencies and Percentages**

Category of Respondents	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Widows	50	41.7
Traditional Leaders	25	20.8
Opinion Leaders	20	16.7
Religious Leaders	6	5
Queen Mothers	4	3.3
Dress Markers	15	12.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field data, 2020



#### 4.2.1 Age distribution of Respondents

The age distribution of the respondents were ascertained for the purpose of the study. As presented in Table 4.2. Ten of the respondents were between the ages of 26-30 constituting 8.3%. Meanwhile those in ages 31-35 represented 10%. Also, 12.5 % and 15% were within the age category 36-40 and 41-45 respectively. Moreover, 17.5% of the respondents were within the age bracket of 46yrs -50yrs whereas 36.7% were 51 years or above that age.

**Table 4. 2: Age Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Age Distribution</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
26-30 years	10	8.3
31-35 years	12	10
36-40 years	15	12.5
41-45 years	18	15
46-50 years	21	17.5
51 years and above	44	36.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data, 2020**

#### 4.2.2 Gender of Respondent

As shown in Table 4.3, the gender distribution of the respondents were ascertained and illustrated as follows: Male respondents stood at approximately thirty seven percent (36.7%) whereas the females stood at sixty three percent (63.3%). The percentage of male respondents was due mainly to the fact that leadership among the Builsa people is male dominated. Also, knowledge regarding widowhood rites performance makes use of chiefs, landowners, and family heads.

**Table 4. 3: Gender of Respondents**

Gender distribution of Respondents	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	44	36.7
Female	76	63.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field data, 2020

#### 4.2.3 Religion of Respondents

The religious groupings of the respondents are presented in the Figure 4.1. Basically, three different religious groupings were identified in the study area. This responses helped the researcher to the tradition that most practice the widowhood rites. They were Traditional religion, Christianity and Islamic religions. The traditional religious dominated among the respondents. 70 respondents (58.3%) represented the Traditional religion, followed by Christianity with 48 respondents (40%) and 2 respondents (1.7%) were adherents of the Islamic religion.

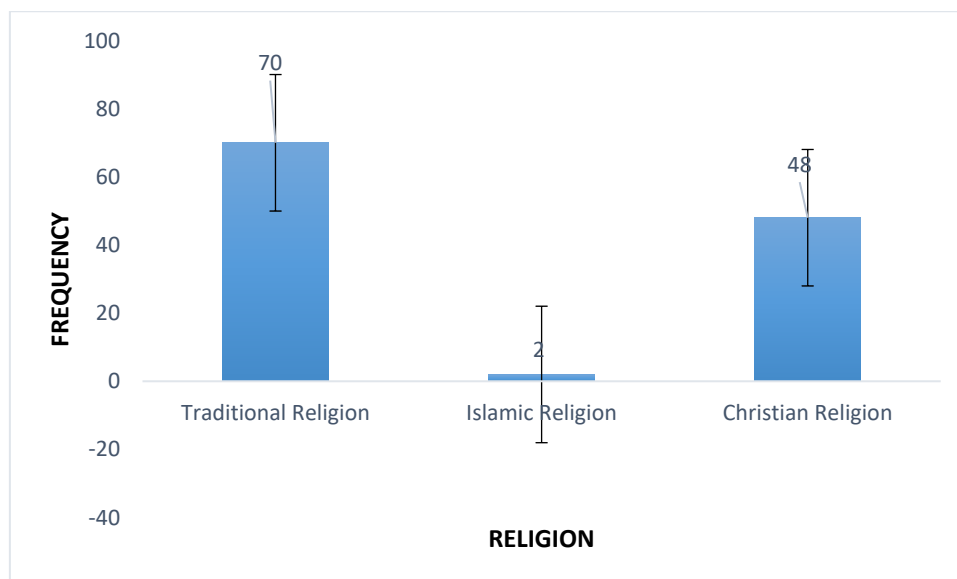


Figure 4. 1: Religious inclination of Respondents (Field data, 2021)

### 4.3 Analysis of Research Objective 1

#### 4.3.1 Historical evolution of the Widowhood Costume of the Builsa

As part of widowhood rites ceremonies, the costume use is of great significance. The results of the study concerning evolution of widowhood rites costume are presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4. 4: Evolution of Widowhood Rite Costumes**

Variables	W	TL	QM	RL	DM	OL	Freq. (n).	Per. (%)
Introduction of shea tree component by pre-colonial ancestors	48	25	4	5	10	20	112	93.3
Adoption of shea tree component from other cultures in the Upper East Region	30	9	3	0	8	20	70	58.3
Commercial and medicinal value of the shea tree components	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of fabrics during the ancestral ages.	49	23	3	6	8	19	108	90

**Source, Field data, 2021**

*W =Widows, TL =Traditional leaders, QM= Queen mothers, RL = Religious leaders and OP=Opinion leaders DM=Dress markers*

Each of the items; introduction of shea tree component by pre-colonial ancestors, adoption of shea tree component from other cultures in the Upper East Region, commercial and

medicinal value of the shea tree components, and lack of fabrics during the ancestral ages were considered in unearthing the evolution of the widowhood costume. In this regard, 93.3% alluded that the use of the shea tree components by widows is ancestral heritage. The introduction of shea tree components according to 90% of the respondents was due to lack of fabrics during the ancestral ages. Some respondents comprising 58.3% however believed the use of shea tree components could be a borrowed tradition from other tribes of the Upper East Region.

#### **4.4 Analysis of Research Objective 2:**

This part presents results of the entire practical work. It outlined the processes leading to the design of the costume under analysis of the research questions.

##### **4.4.1 Widowhood Fabric preference**

This was administered to the population (120) of the Builsa land regarding their likeness for a type of fabrics on which the traditional shea leaves and its components would be woven into a fabric or printed without compromising the culture of the people. The researcher decided to select some few fabrics based on what is already in the market for the respondents to make their choice. The category of fabric from which the respondents chose included “fugu” fabric, African print, Wooden, Kente, gabardine, crimplene, silk, organza, khaki and leather. The results were put into frequencies and percentages as shown in Table 4.5. The most preferred fabric was Fugu fabric as alluded by 60% of the respondents followed by African Print; 20% and wooden Fabric 14%. The less preferred were kente, gabardine, silk, crimplene, organza, khaki and leather

**Table 4. 5: Widowhood Fabric Preference**

<b>Preferred fabric on which the shea leaves will be integrated</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Fugu Fabric	30	60
African Print	10	20
Wooden Fabric	7	14
Kente	1	2
Gabardine	1	2
Crimplene	0	0
Silk	1	2
Organza	0	0
Khaki	0	0
Leather	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Source, Field data, 2021

#### 4.4.2 Widowhood colour preference

Regarding colour preference of a fabric as in Table 4.6, the results showed that green, Wine, black and cream were the colours dominantly preferred as stated by 40% of the respondents. Aside this combination, Black, Wine, cream was another preferred choice by respondents as indicated by 30% responses.

**Table 4. 6: Colour Preference of the Fabric**

Preferred colours	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Black, Wine, cream	36	30
Green, Wine, black, cream	48	40
Black and white	5	4
Green, brown, white	2	2
Black and Brown	5	4
Green, Brown, Black	24	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source, Field data, 2021**

Also, the reasons for the choice of the preferred colours as in Table 4.6 are presented in Table 4.7.

**Table 4. 7: Reasons for the Colour Choice**

Reason	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Because of their medicinal, domestic and food benefits	12	10.0
Because the colours reflect the component of the shea tree	96	80.0
Funeral colours	12	10.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data, 2021**

The reason for the choice of the colours was due to the fact they reflected the colours of the shea tree components (and its products) as alluded by 80 % of the widows. Also, the 10% respectively responded to the medicinal and funeral colours.

#### **4.5 Weaving of the Fabric for the Costume**

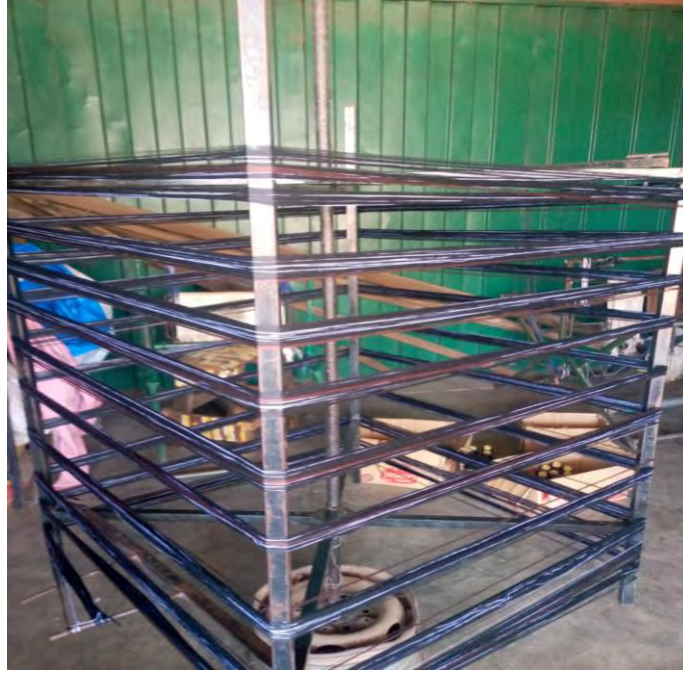
The choice of colour scheme and type of fabric by the respondents determine the type of the colour of yarns for the woven fabric. The researcher pre informed by the test of the respondents therefore relied on the assistance of traditional weavers in the Bolgatanga community to assist in the weaving process. The weaving involved the following processes:

##### **4.5.1 Warping**

Traditional weavers prepare their warp by driving pegs unto the ground and load their yarns on cones or on spools on a bar or structure that looks like a spool rack. They go round the pegs for some number of times to achieve the number of warp yarns meant for their work to be produced. Below is a picture displayed showing how traditional way of warping is done in Figure 4.2.

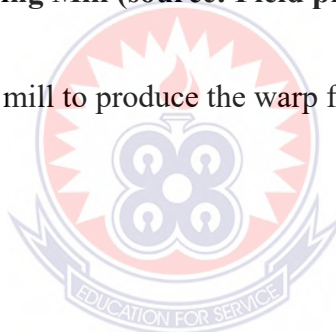


**Figure 4.2: Traditional way of warping (source: Field practical work, 2021)**



**Figure 4.3: Warping Mill (source: Field practical work, 2021)**

This researcher used the warping mill to produce the warp for this project this is shown below in Figure 4.3.



#### **4.5.2 Heddling of Warp Yarns**

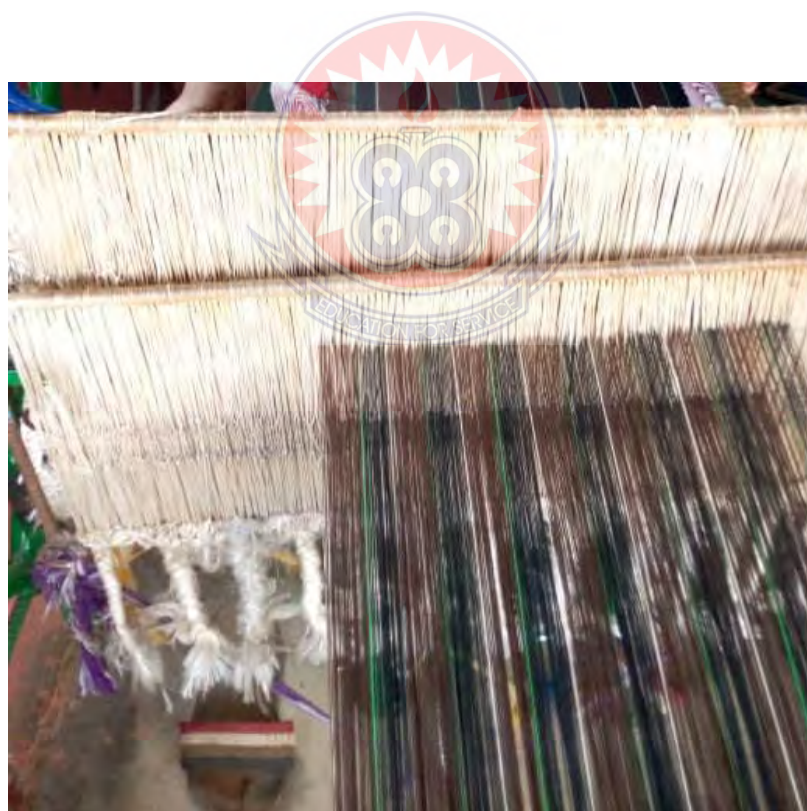
After warping the yarns was hedded into the eyelet of an empty loom which is known in Bolgatanga as “*motani*” in the “*frafra*” language. The loom known as *motani* is shown on the picture displayed below in Figure 4.4.

The threads of varying colours in the warp were made to pass through the heddle in a sequential order to enable the warp yarns to be raised or lowered for shedding to take place for weft to propel through. The typical heddles were made of cords of nylon threads and suspended on a shaft of a loom and a reed made of the back of raffia palm as shown in See Figure 4.5 below.





**Figure 4.4: Picture of the loom used (source: Field practical work, 2021).**



**Figure 4.5: Heddle yarns on loom (source: Field practical work, 2021).**

### 4.5.3 The Weft Yarns

The weft yarns were used for interlacing during the course of the weaving. weft yarns were wound onto bobbins and drop into shuttle. Four threads were wound together unto a bobbin to enable the cloth to be slight heavy. The result is shown in Figure 4.6. Eight or more threads are normally wound together as weft yarn for weaving.



**Figure 4.6: Winding of Weft yarns onto the bobbin (source: Field practical work, 2021)**

### 4.5.4 Weaving

The interlacing of the weft and the warp yarns on a loom resulted in creation of the fabric required for the design of the costume as in Figure 4.7. This process was carried out with the collaboration of traditional weavers in Bolgatanga town.



**Figure 4.7: Weaving of the Fabric (source: Field work, 2021)**

#### 4.5.5 The Woven Fabric

The sequential processes of warping, heddling of warp yarns, the weft yarns and weaving resulted in the production of woven fabric as shown in Figure 4.8.



**Figure 4.8: The two completed woven Fabrics (source: Field practical work, 2021)**

#### 4.5.6 Screen Printing

The key elements for the screen printing included coating of the mesh, burn screen, rinse image, tape-up screen and printing.

##### 4.5.6.1 Making of the frame

The frame for the screen was made with soft wood. Measurements of the size were applied on the wood and cut out with a carpenter's saw. The length was 40 inches whilst the width was 30 inches. The ends were nailed to form a rectangular frame. This is ready for application of the mesh.

#### **4.5.6.2 Framing of the mesh**

The mesh which is a fine fabric known as organdie was stretched firmly on the wooden frame and the edges stapled round. This was done with a stapling gun. The researcher ensured that the mesh is well placed on the wooden frame.

#### **4.5.6.3 Coating of the mesh**

This is done through the use of photo emulsion composed of potassium dichromate, glue and colour. The photo emulsion was poured onto the mesh and spread evenly with a straight edge such as a rule. The coated mesh was dried in a room where it is not exposed to sunlight.

#### **4.5.6.4 Development of the screen**

The dried coated mesh was then placed on a development box. The light was switched on for five minutes. It was then removed from the development box and the positive areas were washed off under running water. It was dried in the sun for all the moisture to escape from it. At this stage, the screen was ready for printing.

#### **4.5.6.5 Printing of the designs of the screen onto the fabric**

The fabric was spread on a large table and straightened. Location of the design of the design was determined on the fabric and demarcated before the screen was placed on it. The researcher poured the printing paste on the reservoir of the screen. A squeegee was used to draw the printing paste from the one side to the other. The printing paste was registered onto the fabric. The print of the fabric is shown in Figure 4.9.



**Figure 4.9: Screen Printing of the fabric (source: Field practical work, 2021)**



**Figure 4.10: Printed woven fabrics (source: Field practical work 2021)**

#### **4.6 Research Objective 3: Preliminary Designs and the Preferred choice for Widowhood Costume.**

Preliminary design is the initial stage of a design phase. It stands for improvement in order to acquire the detail designs as one progresses. Preliminary design is said to be the focuses on creating the general framework to build the project on.

##### **4.6.1 Inspirational Designs**

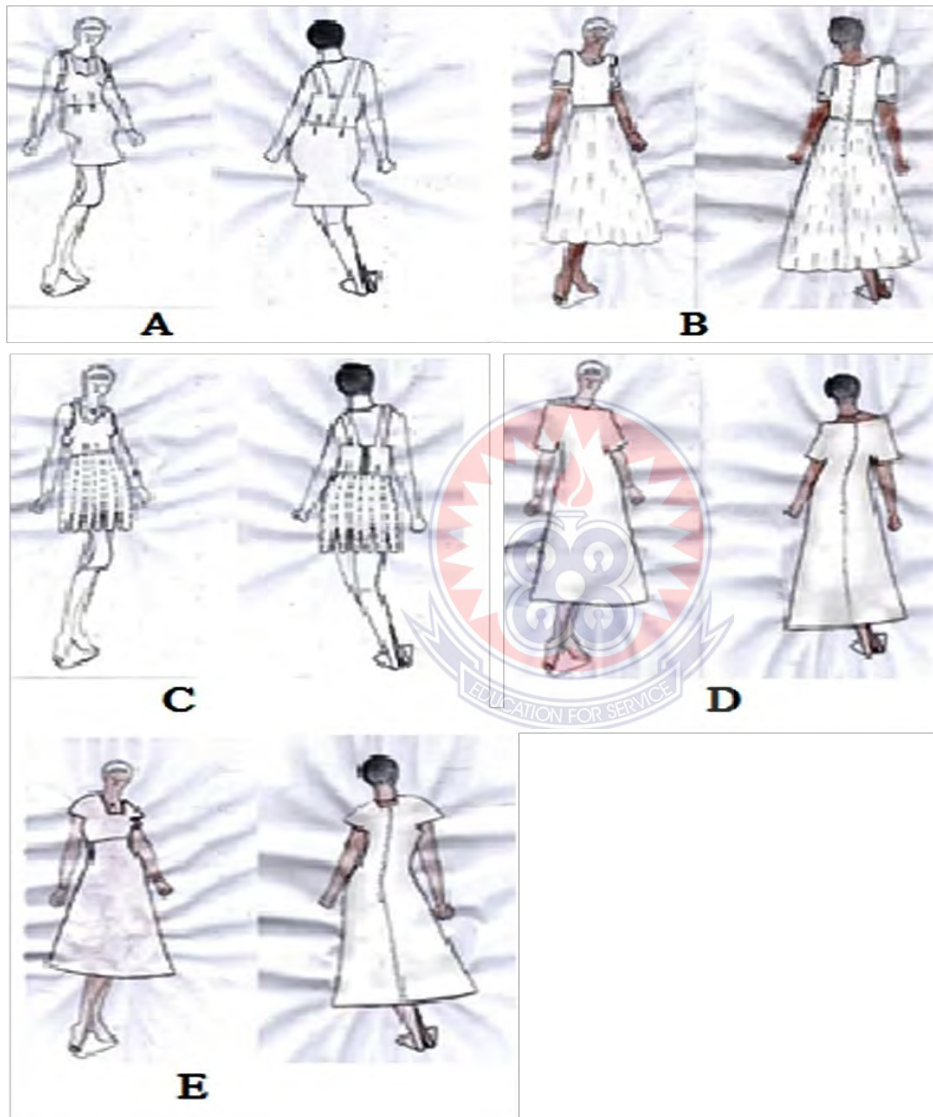
The designs used in this project were inspired by the respondents to the research questionnaire about their colour preference and choice of fabric. The shea tree and its components, such as the leaves and seeds and the choice of colour preference was used as the source of inspiration. These were then composed into a mood board ref. to figure 3.1 of chapter 3. In designing the mood board the researcher's focus was strictly on the motifs and the colour scheme. The seed, leave and the shell used as motifs were picked from the internet for designing the mood board. Pictures of other tradition within the Northern part of Ghana that perform funeral similar to the Builsas were added to the mood board. Aside the motifs in the mood board the colours are of great significance to the Builsa people as it plays a symbolic role arising from the benefit accruing from the shea tree For examble green symbolizes the leaves as medicine and fruit as food; wine represent the shea fruit seed that could be processed for oil and the processd residue used as waeste for heating; black corresponds to the burnt residue that could be used for lighting and the crean represent shes butter as edible oil.

##### **4.6.2 Initial Designs**

The initial designs were done with the aid of figure templates (back and front). The sketches were done on pieces of paper and then traced onto a glossy paper with the aid of tracing

pepper. These were then cut out and glue to the figure templates and scanned. The results are shown in Figure 4.11.

In terms of choice of appropriate costume designs, a questionnaire was administered to allow the respondents to have a choice from designs A-E.



**Figure 4. 11: Preliminary Designs of Widowhood Costume**  
(Source: Practical Field data, 2021)

**Table 4. 8: Responses for the Costume Design**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
A	41	34
B	3	3
C	52	43
D	14	12
E	10	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source (Field Data)**

The results showed that style C was the most preferred with 43% followed by style A with 34%. The least preferred were style B and E with 3% and 8% respectively. The chosen designs were therefore C and A. These were further subjected to the respondents including widows, traditional leaders, opinion leaders, religious leaders and queen mothers and dressmakers to assessment to their cultural relevance. The results as in Table 4.9 confirmed dress code style A with 100% responses followed by dress code style C with 92%.

**Table 4. 9: Responses to Preferred Style**

<b>Dress Code Style</b>	<b>Frequency(n)</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>	<b>Reason for Preference</b>
Style A	120	100	The style is similar to the original leave
Style C	120	92	Cover nakedness

**Source (Field Data)**



#### 4.7 Pattern Layout and Cutting

Pattern layout and cutting is a very essential point in garment construction. It requires care and patience to enable the designer come out with the expected results. If the designer do not exercise patience in the cutting out process this can lead to the distortion in the size of the garment. In view of that certain principles were followed in the cutting out process. For example in a situation where the fabric has folds and is not pressed before laying out may cause distortion in the garment size.

The following principles were therefore used in the laying out and cutting of the patterns for widowhood costume.

1. A large flat table surface was used to accomplish the task
2. The fabrics as well as the pattern pieces were pressed flat before laying the pattern on the fabric.
3. Each pattern piece was placed such that the grain line arrow runs lengthwise on the fabric. That is, grain line arrows were made to run parallel to the selvedge irrespective of the manner in which the fabric was folded.
4. The fabric and paper patterns were then pinned together to hold them in place firmly. The pinned work was then cut out using long and short strokes depending on the part of the garment the researcher was cutting. The same patterns were used to cut out the linings but made a little shorter than the outer fabric.
5. The patterns markings were then transferred onto the fabric before separating the patterns from the fabric





**Figure 4. 14: Cutting out of Widowhood RitesCustom (Source: Researcher practical work, 2021)**

After the pattern were laid, photographs were taken of the layout patterns and the cutting processes. A questionnaire was then designed along side with the photographs for only the dressmakers to evaluate the technical understanding of the pattern layout, cutting and sewing. The assessment was based on level of agreement and disagreement. Each item was assessed as independent variables and the results presented in Table 4.10.

In Table 4.10, dressmakers were required to provide their technical understanding to the practical work as in Figure 4.15. In terms of visual interpretation of the layout, 100% of the dressmakers strongly agreed that patterns are easy to interpret and understand. However, 80% strongly agreed that the pattern layout in Figure 4.15 could be manipulated and shaped to conform to curves of the human figure of varying sizes whereas 20 % were uncertain. Also, 86.7 % strongly agreed that the pattern layout could be graded easily to create different size patterns either manually or digitally using computerized pattern drafting software while 13.3% were uncertain. Moreover, 80% of the respondents strongly agreed that the layout

patterns are economical; thus easier to use than free hand cutting. 6.67 % strongly disagreed and 13.3 % were uncertain. Likewise, 100% of the respondents strongly agreed that the pattern layout would assist the designer to obtain the right grain of the fabric. Also, 71% strongly agreed that the sewn garment would portray the garment beauty than only the pattern work whereas 8% strongly disagreed and 21% were uncertain.



**Table 4. 10: Dressmakers Responses To understanding of Pattern Layout**

Independent Variables	Levels of Agreement					
	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		Not Certain	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
The pattern layout is easy to interpret and understand.	120	100.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pattern layout can be manipulated and shaped to conform to curves of the human figure of varying sizes	96	80.0	0.00	0	24	20.0
Pattern can be graded easily to create different size patterns manually or digitally	104	86.7	0	0	16	13.3
Pattern layout is economical/ easier to use patterns in cutting than free hand	96	80.0	8	6.67	16	13.3
Cutting out using pattern is easier and more accurate than using free hand cutting	120	100.0	0	0	0	0
A sewn garment can easily be fitted to check faults and to access the drape on the figure.	120	100	0	0	0	0
The sewn garment will portray the garment beauty than only the pattern work.	85	71	10	8	25	21
Pattern marks should be transferred immediately after cutting out to avoid erasing out.	100	83	20	17	0	0

**Source: Field data, 2021**

#### 4.7.1 Sewing and Accessories

*Sewing* - The various cut-out pattern pieces were joined together to form the costume. The process leading to the sewn garment is shown in Figure 4.15 and sewn costume is shown in Figure 4.15.



**Figure 4. 15: Sewing the Costume (Source: Field Practical work, 2021)**



Front

Back

Style C

**Figure 4. 16: Sewn widowhood Costume for style C depicting front and back**



Front

Back

Style A

**Figure 4. 17: Sewn widowhood Costume for style A depicting front and back**

Making the sheanut shell Accessories: The sheanut shells were used to create some beaded fashion accessories. The process of making the accessories involved pounding of the shells, sieving, mixing into paste like substance, addition of glue as adhesive and forming the beads. The results are shown in Figure 4.16 and figure 4.16.



**Figure 4. 18. Powdered sheanut shells mixed with glue.**

**(Source: Researcher field practical work, 2021)**



**Figure 4. 19: Processed shell beads. (Source: Researcher field practical work, 2021)**



## Research Objective 4

### 4.8 Analysis of Observation

#### 4.8.1 The costume

In this study, widowhood rites of the Builds traditional area was observed during funeral performance where widowhood rituals were initiated. Picture of the observed was taken and shown in Figure 4.20.



**Figure 4. 20: Widows wearing shea leaves (Researcher Field work, 2021)**

The results of the study are presented qualitatively as shown. The dress code, composition of the dress code, and colours of the dress code were keenly monitored. The costume composition and the colours observed are presented in Table 4.20.

**Table 4. 11: Observation of Costume of the Builsa Widow**

<b>Costume</b>	<b>Common observed characteristics among Widows</b>
Components of the dress code and associated colours	Shea Leaves (worn round the waist), Jute ropes (as necklace)
Common colours of the dress code	Green cream black wine

**Source: Researcher Field Survey (2021)**

#### **4.8.2 Demonstration of the Designed Costume**

After the designed of the costume, it was demonstrated on some selected females in order to assess the fitting, draping and motif of the dress code. The observed results are presented.

**Table 4. 12: Observation of the Designed Costume on a human figure**

<b>Widow Costume</b>	<b>Observed characteristics</b>
Fitting	Style A: well fitted, takes the shape of the shear leave, and the colours of the shea residue Style C: well fitted, takes the shape of the shear leave, and the colours of the shea residue
Draping	Style A: well draped based on the direction the fabric was cut Style C: well draped based on the direction the fabric was cut,
Motif	Motifs well arranged on the costume

**Source: Researcher Field Survey (2021)**

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a vivid discussions of the bio-data, evolution of widowhood rites costume and technical design of the fabric, costume style and patterns layout cutting and sewing of the costume.

#### 5.2 Bio-Data of Respondents

*Age Distribution* - Among the respondents, the age group of the widows were ranged between 31 and 51 plus. Unlike widows, the other respondents who took part in the survey were aged between 26-51 plus. The study can confirm that the age group of the respondents has vast experience in widowhood rites, exception of those between the age group 26 -30. This might be because their husbands are alive.

*Gender* - In terms of gender classification of respondents, the females dominated the males. The reason for this choice was because they were directly involved in widowhood rites activities and therefore were better informed.

*The Religious Inclination of Respondents* - Religion plays a crucial role in the activities of widowhood rites. Each religion is distinct in its mode of ceremonies. Unsurprising, the traditional religion dominated the respondents followed by Christianity and the least being Islam. This information was relevant to this study since widowhood rites are largely traditional. This notwithstanding, the results of the study presuppose that a Christian widow could compromise her religious stance and blend that with traditional widowhood rites, hence making the traditional rites relevant.

### 5.3 Historical Perspective

*Historical Evolution of the Costume* – In most African society widows have a peculiar dress code that is unique to the culture. Regarding the Builsa widows' costume, personal observation and the questionnaires were used to ascertain the type of costume used for the ritual rite and the dress colours code. The responses indicated that leaves are used for covering essential body parts of the widows. This finding is similar to Atinga (2006) works on Frafras, Talensis (Dery, 2006) on Kusasis. In this regard, historical evolution of the shea tree leaves as costume and preference colours of other costumes used were sought.

According to the results of the study, the traditional leaders and queen mothers of the Builsa traditional area revealed that originally shea tree leaves were used as a costume since the pre-colonial era largely due to reasons that are probably environmental. This notwithstanding, widows and the opinion leaders maintained that the shea tree components were used due to the numerous benefits it offers. This includes the leaves used to cure diseases, the fruits used as food, the oil extracted from the fruit as cooking oil or pomade and the wood as fuel for lightening. Aside from this, the majority of the widows believe that the shea tree components are not used by the Builsa people alone but other ethnic groups in the Upper East region.

### 5.4 Widowhood Costume Design Processes

*Fabric preference by Widows* - The widows were not happy that only shea leaves should be used to cover their nakedness but rather woven fabric with a component of the shea tree. Regarding preference for a type of fabric which the traditional shea leaves and its components will be printed without compromising the culture of the people, the study catalogued a list of fabrics from which the widows would choose. The fabrics were fugu fabric, Africa print, wooden, kente, gabardine, crimplene, silk, organza, khaki and leather. The study can confirm that widows most preferred fabrics as costume included in the order of

fugu fabric, African print and wooden. The least preferred fabrics by widows included kente, gabardine silk, whereas, crimplene organza and khaki and leather were uncertain.

***Costume colour preference by Widows*** - Wearing dark colours for mourning is a cultural tradition in many parts of the world for a very long time. Despite the use of dark colours, white symbolizes purity and re-birth and is a popular colour of mourning for many East Asia countries. In South Africa, red is chosen as a colour of mourning to represent the apartheid era and the bloodshed that occurred during that period and the wearing of skins have been replaced by the widow cladding herself from head to toe with black attire (Ndlovu, 2013).

In various cultures, red, black, brown are most dominant. However, this study of costume among the Builsa people of the Upper East region of Ghana revealed for colours is skewed towards a mixture of these colours with green inclusive. Though other cultures may consider these colours peculiar to their traditional settings, the Builsa people prefer green, wine, black and cream to reflect the components of the shea tree. In this case, the study found that the choice of these colours plays a symbolic role arising from the benefits accruing from the shea tree. For instance, green symbolizes the leaves as medicine and the fruits as food; wine represents the shea fruit seed that could be processed for oil and the processed residue used as waste for heating; black corresponds to the burnt residue that could be used for lighting and cream represent shea butter as edible oil.

***Designed Fabric*** - The shea components and the corresponding colours were used to design the fabric. The most preferred were green, black, wine and cream representing the most components of the shea tree. These colours were then designed into a fabric to contain all these essential colours as shown in Figure 5.1.

It contains almost all the four basic components of the shea nut tree. Though these colours represent the shea tree components, they are equally funeral dress codes in Ghana except the green colours. The next preferred fabric was designed to include only three of the shea tree; Black, wine, and cream. This presupposes that fabric made of shea tree components would be well embraced by the Builsa widows. However, preference was in the order of the combinations: (Green, Black, Wine and cream) followed by (Black, Wine and cream).

In terms of weaving the fabric as in Figure 5.1, a traditional loom was used with the warp yarns on the weaver's beam. The warp yarns were passed through the eye with a hooked needle, through the eyes of heddles and through the dents of a reed. These were then stretched in front of the weaver with weight to create tension in the yarns. Therefore, the actual weaving was carried out through shedding, weft yarn insertion and beating up to make the fabric firm.



**Figure 5. 1: Preferred Woven Fabrics for Widows (Source: Researcher practical work, 2021)**

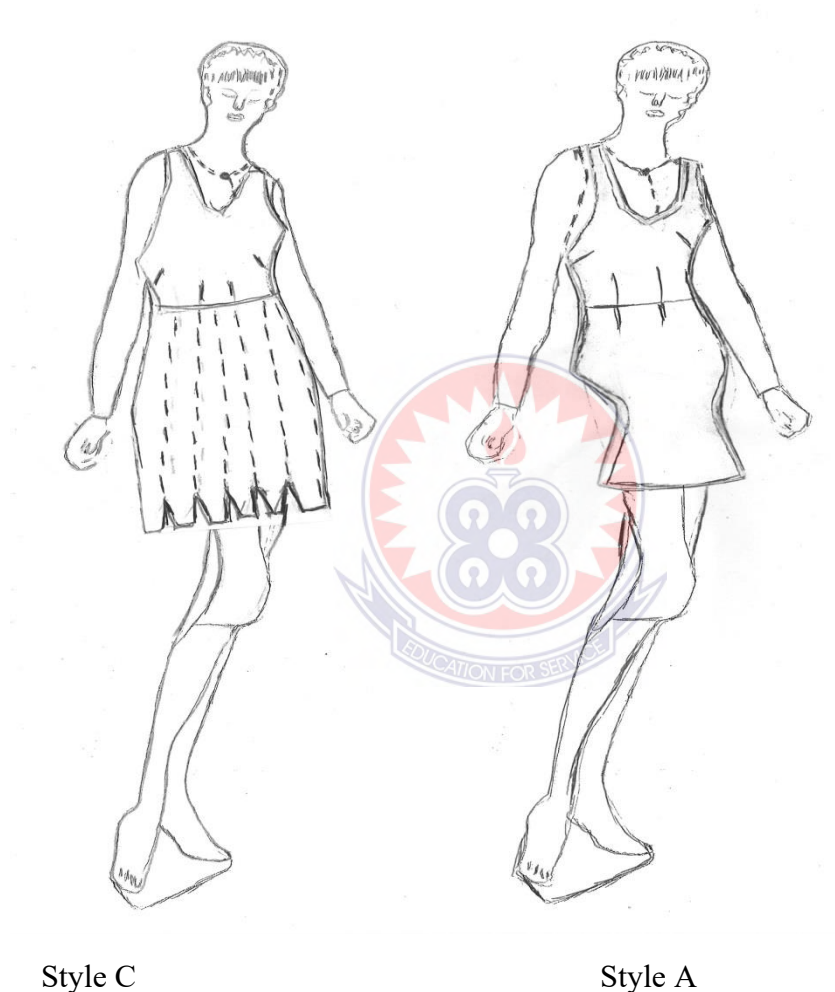
**Preliminary Designs-** In this study, the preliminary design was carried out with the aid of figure templates (back and front). The process included sketches of the designs on papers and traced onto a glossy paper using tracing pepper. This was then cut out and glued to the figure templates and finally scanned.

Following this, some designs were selected from the preliminary which led to the pattern making processes. In terms of processes leading to acquire the chosen style A, the basic block was adapted into style patterns. That is, the brassiere cup was adapted through extension of the shoulder darts to create more space for the brassiere cup. The constructional lines were then put in and cut out. The skirt pattern was also attained through the skirt pattern. This was done by reducing the skirt length and drawn in the desired style line and cut out. Seam allowances were then added to both patterns.

In acquiring the style C patterns, the basic block skirt was divided, (front and back) into three equal parts. This was cut through to form the panel patterns. The bodice which also is sleeveless and panel lines was constructed by taking off the shoulder and breast darts. Seam allowances were then added to both skirt and blouse patterns

**Dress code Design style -** The dress code suitable for widowhood rites was done in two different styles with accessories. The styles were then examined to ascertain the most suitable without cultural altercation. On the part of the widows, the style that looks like the leave and the panel design was chosen. The reason has been that when the costume has worn the idea of the shea leave will be in mind. The costume also covers their half nakedness as compared to the actual leave and makes them smart and ideal. The widows also suggested beads to replace the jute fibre robes worn around the head and neck. The order of preference by widows is A followed by C. However, the traditional leaders, queen mothers, religious leaders, opinion leaders and dressmakers placed a premium on C followed by A as shown in Figure 5.2. Also,

the motifs in the fabric used in the design styles are well arranged and could be adapted to different sizes and sewn with ease. The design style could be modified by adding trimmings and other dress accessories to the design. Also, the colours of the fabric could be lightened or darkened to provide different shades. This can influence the printing of the fabric into stencil or batik (Lucie, 2018).



**Figure 5. 2: Style preference by Dressmakers**  
(Source: Researcher practical work, 2021)

*Sewing and Accessories of the costume* - This was done by constructing the darts and panel lines for both the skirts and blouses. The same was done to the linings. The various parts were then put together with lining and attached zipper and eyelet holes as in Figure 5.3.





Style A

Style C

**Figure 5. 3: Final widowhood rites costume depicting front and back view (Source: Field Practical work 2021).**

Also, the beading accessories followed a process of pounding the shea nut shells physically into powder using a mortar and pestle. The powdered substance obtained was mixed with water to form a paste-like substance with high viscosity in order to make rolling into smaller balls easier. An adhesive (Polyvinyl Acetate) was added to assist in bonding. The paste-like substance was then rolled into balls and a broom stick made to pass through the centres to create holes for threading. The freshly formed beads were then spread in the sun to dry. Depending on the weather conditions, it could take a day or two to dry completely. The lacquer was then applied to form a glossy coat around the beads as shown in Figure 5.3.



**Figure 5. 4: Sheanut Shell Accessories**  
(Source: Field Practical Work, 2021)

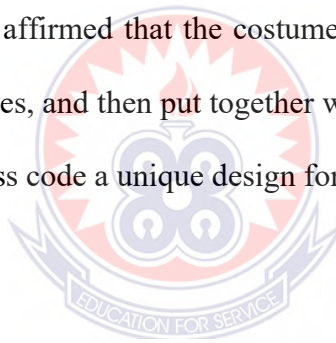
*Patterns layout* - In this research, the laying, pinning and cutting out of fabric was done based on the direction of the grain and the print of the fabric (Marjorie & Baker, 2007). This was to attain a good drape of the garment. The layout of the garment was done on a cutting table. Layout followed a specific pattern but this depended on the type of garment, the pattern pieces and the width of the fabric.

The direction of the grain for the cutting was done based on the style of the garments. The patterns for this work were all laid on the straight grain to obtain the right drape of each garment similar to (Kamrun, Tabraz & Sultana, 2017). In the layout, the print of the fabric was also considered. The patterns were laid to pick the motifs in their full print to avoid cutting off of the motifs which can disorganize the flow of the garment. Also, patterns bearing the cut on fold symbol were placed along the fold while those with openings were cut two including the zipper extension. The costume with eyelet holes at the bodice was cut without extension since they are to meet.

From the perspective of the respondents, the layout of the patterns is easy to interpret and understand. Based on this, the layout patterns can be manipulated and shaped to conform to

curves of the human figure of varying sizes. Also, the pattern layout could be graded easily to create different size patterns either manually or digitally using computerized pattern drafting software. Moreover, the layout patterns are economical; thus easy to use than the application of freehand cutting. Also, the pattern layout has the potential of assisting a designer to obtain the right grain of the fabric similar to the finishing of Tonje (2017).

Notwithstanding, the sewn dress together with the beading accessories were exhibited on a human figure for demonstrational purposes as in Figure 5.3. The responses were positively correlated from the population as a perfect substitution to the leaves and jute fabric worn during widowhood rites activities. Reasons assigned to the acceptance of the costume was due to the fact that it contains the necessary colours of the shea tree and its products, and sewn to modernity. Also, it was affirmed that the costume constructed with darts and panel lines for both the skirts and blouses, and then put together with an attached zipper and created eyelet holes, thus making the dress code a unique design for its intended purpose.



### **5.5 Analysis of Observation**

In this study, the widowhood rites costume of the Builsa traditional area was observed during the rites. The results of the study showed that the shea tree leaves were worn around the waist whereas jute ropes worn around the neck. The leaves covered only the genital parts and portions of the buttocks with the thighs explicitly exposed. The breast areas (the entire chest) was left bare. The figure 4.19 in chapter four is a typical example.

Also, the study design costume shaped to conform to the shape of the shea tree leaves and colours as replacement to the leaves in order to cover nakedness of widows. This was demonstrated on a human figure. The observation drawn was that the costume was well fitted with clear draped based on the direction the fabric. It was also observed that the motifs were

well arranged on the costume. Also, the necklace designed with sheanut shell as replacement to the jute fibre worn on the necks of widows conformed perfectly to the designed styles when viewed on the human figure.



## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Summary of Findings

The study adopted the descriptive survey design to investigate the historical evolution of widowhood rites costume among Builsa widows. The purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents. Also, the moodboard was adopted as source of inspiration in the practical work in the design of the costume.

The following are the summarized findings of the study:

1. The study revealed that widowhood rites costume among the Builsa people is ancestral heritage and not influenced by missionaries, though the similar costume is used by other tribes such as Frafras and Talensis in the Upper East Region.
2. The study indicated that traditional costume is the most preferred. This included the shea tree components such as leaves, shea fruits and shea butter. The relevance of these components to the people is borne out of the fact that they offer medicinal and nutritional benefits.
3. It also came out through the study that the costume and design adorned by the widows require modification to sustain the widow dignity while maintaining the culture of the Builsa tradition.
4. The study discovered widows prefer the shea tree leaves to be printed on fabrics such as fugu fabrics, African and wooden with green, wine, black and cream colourations to reflect the components of the shea tree.
5. In terms of the design of the costume, preference is in the order of the following combinations: Green, Black, wine and cream followed by Black and wine and cream.

6. Concerning the technical analysis of the costume, the study also found that the motifs in the fabric are well arranged and that the costume styles can also be modified by adding trimmings to the design.
7. Additionally, the colours of the costume fabrics could be lightened or darkened to provide different shades, thus can be stencil or batik printed.
8. Also, the study can confirm that the layout of the patterns can be interpreted easily. Based on this, the layout patterns can be manipulated and shaped to conform to curves of the human figure of variable sizes.
9. In addition, the study found that the pattern could be graded easily to create different size patterns manually.
10. Moreover, it also found that the layout patterns are economical; thus easy to use than freehand cutting.
11. Also, it was affirmed that the costume was constructed with all the darts and panel lines for both the skirts and blouses, and then put together with an attached zipper and eyelet holes, thus making the dress code a unique design for its intended purpose.
12. The study also found that, the sewn dress and the beading accessories were properly correlated on a human figure, thus admired by the population.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

From the study, it can be concluded that the people of Builsa still practice widowhood rites but Western Education has influenced the practice. Despite this, its relevance is still prominent with the most costume used and shea tree leaves for symbolism. This study can therefore conclude that the use of shea leaves for widowhood rites is ancestral though modernity is gradually creeping into its use. The sewn costume and the beading accessories produced by the practical work of this study depicts all the characteristics colours of well

adored shea tree by the Builsa people, and therefore admired by the population after it has been displayed on a human figure for exhibition.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that the design costume of the cotton woven fugu fabric should be adopted by the traditional leaders for use by widows of the Builsa people. This, if accepted will bring about sanity during funerals performance and also preserve the nudity of widows while preserving the culture of the people on the other hand.
2. It is also recommended that costume for widows should be sewn by the dressmakers into 'kaba and slit' using other Africa prints in order to bring about variety to enable widows make their choice and also avoid monotony.
3. It is also recommended that a presentation of the costume should be made at a durbar of chiefs for them to see the need for change and to cause the change.
4. In designing the dress code style, dressmakers should place emphasis on the components of the shea tree by ensuring that the motifs are well arranged in the finished work.
5. Also, traditional costume designers should include the use of plain fabrics to sew the costume and incorporate into it the shea components using various means like embroidery, applique screen printing etc.

### **6.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

The following are suggestions for future research:

1. Future research should assess the economic impacts of acquisition of costume for widow.

2. Other works can also be done by assessing the traditional impact or effects of using this dress for funeral performance by widows.
3. Also a further reseach can be done on the costume to consider various styles and sizes of the costume.





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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

WINNEBA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

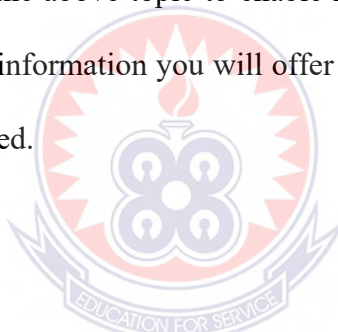
DEPARTMENT OF FASHION DESIGN AND TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

**TOPIC: ASSESSMENT OF THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF WIDOWHOOD**

**rites costume of the Builsa traditional area of the Upper East**

**REGION OF GHANA**

The researcher, a student of the University of Education, Winneba - Kumasi Campus is soliciting information regarding the above topic to enable her use the data towards a Master of Philosophy degree. Therefore information you will offer is completely academic work and your confidentiality will be secured.



#### **Bio-information**

1. Which of the following categories of Builsa people do you belong to? Tick as appropriate

Widow

Queen mother

Opinion leader

Chief

Religious leader

Dress markers

Which of these age groups do you belong to?

26-30

31-35

36-40

41-45

46-50



50 +

[ ]

Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

Educational Level: Tertiary [ ] Second Cycle [ ] Basic School [ ]

Religion: Christian [ ] Moslem [ ] Traditionalist [ ] Others [ ]

Marital Status: Married [ ] Single [ ] Separated/Divorced [ ]

2. How did widowhood rites costume among the Builsa people historical evolved? Tick the reason at the appropriate column

Reason for introduction	Respondent				
	W	TL	QM	OP	RL
Introduction of shea tree component by pre-colonial ancestors					
Adoption of shea tree component from other cultures in the upper east region					
Commercial and medicinal value of the Shea tree components					
Lack of fabrics during the ancestral ages					

W=Widows, TL= Traditional Leaders, QM= Queen Mothers, RL= Religious Leaders and OP=Opinion Leaders

3. Which category of fabric (s) would you prefer to use without compromising the culture of the people of Builsa? Tick

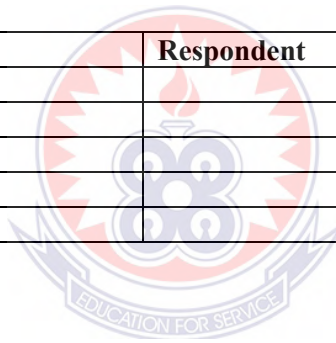
Preferred fabric on which the shea leaves will be integrated	Respondent
Fugu fabric	
African print	
Wooden	
Kente	
Gabardine	
Silk	
Crimplene	
Organza	
Khaki	
Leather	

4. Which category of colour (s) would you prefer to be used for designing the widowhood fabric without compromising the culture of the people of Builsa?

Preferred colours	Respondent	Reason (s)
Green, Wine and black		
Green, Wine, black, cream		
Black and white		
Green, brown, white		
Black and Brown		
Green, Brown, Black		
Green		
White		
Brown		
Black		
Red		

5. Which of the designed dress code styles would be desirable by widows of Builsa? Select the appropriate design A-E and thick in Table below

Item	Respondent
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	





6. State the reason for the preference in question 5 using the table below

Dress code style	Reason for preference
Style A	
Style B	
Style C	
Style D	
Style E	

**APPENDIX B****QYESSTIONNAIRE FOR DRESSMAKERS**

7. Dressmakers Respondent to the variables in the Table below using the levels of agreement: Strongly agreed, Strongly disagreed and Not certain

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Levels of Agreement</b>		
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Certain</b>
Pattern layout is easy to interpret and understand.	( )	( )	( )
Pattern layout in can be manipulated and shaped to conform to curves of the human figure of varying sizes	( )	( )	( )
Pattern can be graded easily to create different size patterns manually or digitally	( )	( )	( )
Pattern layout is economical/ easier to use patterns in cutting than free hand	( )	( )	( )
Cutting out using pattern is easier and more accurate than using free hand cutting	( )	( )	( )
A sewn garment can easily be fitted and faults corrected	( )	( )	( )
The sewn garment can be fitted to access its drape on the figure.	( )	( )	( )
The sewn garment will portray the garment beauty than only the pattern work.	( )	( )	( )
Pattern marks be transferred immediately after cutting out.	( )	( )	( )