Dynamics of Change and Traditional Marriage

(Igbo Marriage: A Study of the People of Orlu Imo State)

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of social change on marriage institutions in Orlu Local Government Area, Imo State. With the aid of the general objectives, three hypotheses were formulated for the study. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample size of (399) was adopted from the population of the study (117,349) using Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The simple random sampling technique and proportionate sampling techniques were variously applied in the study. The simple random sampling technique was used to select seven out of fourteen communities in Orlu Local Government Area, while the proportionate sampling technique was used in assigning number of respondents selected from each of the communities in Orlu Local Government Area. The summation of all the responses was presented using frequency distribution tables and simple percentages, while the Chi-square statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study. The test statistics reveals that; there is a significant relationship between social change and marriage customs in Orlu Local Government Area; the number of children produced in families in Orlu Local Government is significantly related to social change; and there is a significant relationship between social change and dissolution of marriages in Orlu Local Government Area. The study concludes with recommendations which include that; the issue of bride price deserves serious attention and there is no need to enforce various decisions that were taken to reduce bride price and other costly ceremonies associated with marriage.

Keywords: Social change on marriage, social change and marriage customs, communities & ceremonies associated.

1. Introduction

Marriage is said to be the gateway in order to establish families. Every society engages in marriage but, it has different effects on different cultures. This is because the expectation of marriage varies in societies, cultures and descents.

Marriage can be defined as an institution whereby a man and woman are joined in Holy matrimony to become husband and wife, In Nigeria; marriage is a very important institution, people look up to it with high expectation. Each ethnic group in Nigeria has its own defined customs and traditions that guide marriage. Orlu community, just like any other community in Imo State and Nigeria in general has some procedures that must be followed in marriage contract. The stages of marriage are Mmii A juju at this stage; the man goes to the girl's family to nnake inquiry pertaining to the girl and

her family, Mmii Shiehu at this stage the man informs the girl's family members about his intention to marry her. Mmii Nkalezi- at this stage both families discuss about their background. They would enquire if there is any blood relationship between both families and if the man and his proposed wife are compatible. Ngwa Efere or Ahia NNE which is the next state involves buying of gifts for the bride's mother by proposed husband and his family. Mmii Ukwu is the final stage and the formalization of the traditional marriage which is always witnessed by the entire community. The bride price is paid to the girl's famiiy, the exchanged of marital vows with palm wine takes place afterwards they are now pronounced husband and wife,

The procedures enumerated above explain the recommended way a marriage is conducted in Orlu community. Modernization appears to have influenced marriages in some other societies, the social changes that have swept across some of the institutions.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Permanent, that is to say that in some other community the wind of social change appears to have permeated all the social institutions. Bride price which is an integral part in marriage may have turn into money making venture as it appears that people now increase the money and other necessary requirements needed in the marriage especially if the girl is a graduate. Care and love for husband appears to have reduced as opposed to marriage before social change. This may be due to the enhanced educational and occupational position of women and the nature of their jobs which makes them come home at late hours and would not have enough time to prepare food and take care of the house, they may buy snacks and junks as alternative, dissolution of marriage appears to be at a very high rate this may be as a result of exposure, wealth, enlightenment and pride. With development of social change the number of children appears to be reduced, couples now prefer to have two or at most four children in the family.

But in Orlu community, the marriage institution seem to be unaffected by the change. This is because the procedure involved in marriage appears to be the same overtime. Does it mean that social change has not influenced Orlu community? This research work is saddled with the responsibility of determining the influence of social change on marriage institutions in Orlu community, Imo state.

1.2 Research Questions

a. Does social change affects traditional marriage customs in Oriu?
b. Local Government Area, Imo State?
c. Does social change affects the number of children produced in families in Orlu Local Government Area, Imo State?
d. Does social change have any effect on dissolution of marriages in Orlu Local Government Area, Imo State?

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework
2.1 The Concept of Social Change

Change is the replacement of an old thing or way with a new one, or the alteration of something from one another. Change occurs in terms of the character, sizer form, appearance and cornposition of an entity. The change which results in, or is evident in social life is social change.

Perceiving social change as a continuous process in any given society or community, Lundberg, Schrage and Larsen (2008) submitted that it is the representation of any observable difference in any social phenomena over any period of time. Social change is a continuous process of variations in social behavior which is present in all society, as in other forms and modifications of life. While assuming a pragmatic analysis of exiting and various conceptuaiizations of social change technically concluded that social change seems to be concerned with non-material aspects of things such as belief, language, knowledge and values. No matter what quarters social change is considered, it is any measurable or observable alternation or shift from existing or sociai approved and accepted pattern of life of an organized social group. Such a shift or alterations could be planned or unplanned and could either be totally or partially welcomed or frowned at.

2.2 Causes of Social Change

The causes of social change are sometimes hard to define, some social change is caused by changes in technology, including things like agricultural development or an advancement industrialization these changes lead to a movement of society from rural areas into more urban areas, and also from prirnitive lifestyle, to modern lifestyle. Social change can also be caused by modernization, invention, discovery, innovation or even a diffusion of traits of many cultures caused by cross cultural interaction. Social change often happens slowly and can include revolution or even war when unstructured.

A. Innovation: which can cause social change simply means a new thing introduced in a society. It can also be defined as an idea, practice or object which is perceived as new by an individual or a group. (Ban and Hawkins, 1996). (Njoku and Uwaoma, 2009). States that innovations can take the form of a new idea, belief, policy, technology materiais, knowledge, ideas and services. An innovation can bring about social change only if it is desirable, accepted or adopted by the people. Innovations are usually propagated through campaigns, advocacy and extension services, and the process by which they propagated is called diffusion, (Njoku and Uwaomar 2009). It is worthy to note that, every innovation is a human products which serves some social purposes or is intended to do so and it implicates change which is often improvement oriented, An innovation in one society may be an old thing or practice in another thus; the impact of innovation is not uniform on the members and groups in society. (Njoku and Uwaorna, (2009), This simply implies that the degree of adoption of an innovation may vary with individuals and groups.

B. Cross cultural interaction: which is caused by a diffusion of traits of many cultural is also a cause of social change. Kenez, 2006). Maintained that, as people from different cultures interact, they exchange cultural ideas which foster social change. For example the "'Asoebi" and "Igba Nkwu" have been popularized in Igbo traditional marriage which was originated in the Yoruba land. Asoebi entails different Ankara costume that is being sold to friends and relatives to generate money for any occasion especially wedding ceremony. Groups have their own unique costume with matching headgears or caps. The Yoruba s are known for this kind of flamboyant and colorful Asoebi exhibited by the Igbo's has made the Igbo marriage traditions very elaborate and expensive. Thus, though there may be crumbs of benefits accruable from colonialism, the adverse effects that the hordes of westerners brought to bear on Africa were grave. Different facets of the socio-cultural existence of Africa were affected in different degrees these areas include religion, education, economy, politics, marriage and other cultural values, (Njoku and Uvvaoma, 2009). Abstract Social Change: as viewed by Moore (2005), is a type of social change which takes place in the non-material culture of society such as music, language; laws, norms, values, ideas etc. This type of change is mostly man-made. The changes in the marriage institution of Igbo community can be referred to as abstract social change.

D. Manifest Social Change: as explained by Uwaoma, (2009) is an intended and noticeable form of sociai change e.gn change On gender role, mode of dressing etc.

E. Total and Physical Social Change: Total social change the change that transforms the entire way of life and social institutions of a people while physical social change is the change that occurs in the internal culture of a society e.g. working tools, dresses, cooking utensils etc. although this type of change is brought about by man but it can also indirectly caused by forces of nature.

2.3 Social Change and Marriage Institutions

The following issues below are discussed. Social Change and Traditional Marriage Customs. Nowadays, the modern system of marriage arrangements does not consider the consent of the bride as a necessary element. The girl is a type of tool in her fathers and later in those of her husband. From her father's authority she is passed unto that of her husband (Anameze, 1996). The old traditional system approach to bride section has also witnessed some changes. Marriages today result from identity of interest, either of the couple is not carried along and the aforesaid show that the modern system of bride selection does not confirm with what it used to be in the older days (Anarneze, 1996).

Uwakwe (2005) maintained that/ bride wealth which was an important practice in traditional marriage system of the old has witnessed some changes, and also the marriage ceremonies or

arrangements which is a protracted process of ceremonies, negotiations, and procedures has also witnessed certain changes. Suitors do not consider such requirements and demand that cash payment should be accepted in discharge of those traditional obligations. Uwakwe (2005) further stressed that, "Now the payment of bride price has assumed a more important aspect in marriage system than other practices, exorbitant demands are often made. And for this reason, new threat has been raised to the continuance of bride price".

Anameze (1996) observed that due to the influence of social change the modern system of traditional marriage negotiations for payment of the dowry money and bargaining money (Ego Arunomu) are paid on the same day. He pointed out that the final wine carrying is done at the same time. A large crowd from the bride and grooms side including friends and well-wishers would be in attendance, At the end of the ceremonies he concluded that the parents of the bride hands her over to the husband. The traditional marriage customs and laid down procedures are not been adhered to properly as people believe that it is better to pay huge amount of money in order to complete marriage proceedings in one day instead of the numerous visits that it entails, all these alternations is because of social change (Anameze, 1996)..

Education which also brought about by social change has contributed in the changes in the traditional marriage customs in Orlu community. Citing instances in traditional Igbo society, the choice of spouses was not husband or wife but, rather the families of both parties had great influences on the choice made, making sure that couples suit each other. (Anameze, 1996).

Nwachukwu (2009) opines that, in traditional Igbo societies, emphasis was placed on the choice of a wife not one on the health and character of a woman but also on all members of her descent group. However, in contemporary period, the Igbo marriage is such that extended families were brought in lather after choice has been made. (Nwachukwu, 2009).

This reason has been observed, because young men and women through the attainment of western education now believe they cannot just marry spouses chosen by family members but rather for in love with a person well known to them before getting married, this is a typical case of the dating system, education changes the family economy thus redirecting family wealth flow (Nwachukwu, 2009). Also, Ayodele, 2001), believe to an increasing extent that educated young people apparently want a compassionate marriage on western liens. (Ayodele, 2001), point out that societies do not only permit people to within certain kin groups, they also stipulate the category of people whom the man or woman may be married, but with the influence of social change and education these things are not taken serious.

This is further compounded by the fact that premarital conception is increasing as is no longer severely punished, (Omari, 2003).In contemporary society a young girl and boy may decide to marry without the knowledge of their parents in the name of "modernization "and "civilization" being an interpretation of westernization and social change. They may even decide to marry away from their home which is unlike the traditional marriage customs and are both aware of and give consent to a new a marriage. (Omari, 2003).

2.4 Social Change and Number of Children

Since the Igbo are a patriarchal people, marriage is deemed on indispensable factor for the continuation of the family line of descent. Children occupy the central point of Igbo marriage, the first and foremost consideration is the fertility of the couple, the love for having many children is manifested in Igbo names. Prior to the influence of social change, couples usually beget a large number of children because they cherish children and by extension large family. This is one of the reasons why polygamy is practiced. Social change brought about by Christianity which emphasized on monogamy and frowned polygenic. In propagating the Christian idea of marriage, missionaries have insisted only on monogamy. The church frowned at polygenic and encourages couples to accept monogamy as normal way of life, this will automatically reduce the number of children being born in the family (Adenuga, 2011).

In a situation whereby a couple has just one child or none at all, they are encouraged to keep believing and hoping on God for miracle. Instead of the husband to marry a second wife to remedy the

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situation when it has faith preaches against polygenic, the couple result to a very low number of children in the family as influenced by Christianity (social change)

2.5 Social Change and Dissolution of Marriage

The rate of dissolution of marriage was very low prior to the influence of social change and couples resolved issues amicably, but with the influence of westernization and cultural diffusion, dissolution of marriage seems to be on high side. Anameze, 1996). In the case of tempers to cool down before kinsmen and relatives intervened. There is also the Umu-Ada of any kindred that can be formally invited by the aggrieved to mediate in cases

where feminine expertise was considered crucial to a lasting peace. These practices were carried out in the primitive era before social changes were marriage was greatly valued and respected.

Nwachukwu, (2009) maintained that, modern day marriages are always on the verge of crashing, because people tend to marry for the wrong reasons which give room for infidelity. The sacredness attached to marriage is now over looked and people who engage in extramarital affairs do not see anything wrong with it. This could be as a result modernization and social change which has changed people's ideology towards marriage and make them emulate the westerners who engage freely in divorcee

He asserted that/ the real cause of family disorganization and dissolution of marriage is the individualization tendencies that modern civilization has brought. According to him, civilization has brought new types of value such as desire by the individual for economic security, recognition and sexual instinct which do not appeal to a group as a whole.

According to (Anameze,1996) it must be admitted that marriage is undergoing changes both within itself and in relation to the rest of the society which tend significantly to weaken its solidarity. The changes experienced in marriages includes loss of functions by couples, increased personal mobility within society, declining of status assumption and the increase in status achievement and ascendancy of materialistic values. All these changes within the marriage institution tend to precipitate more crisis and adjustment difficulties, strip the marriage of external support at the very time of heightened stress (mobility) and weaken traditionally, means of resolving such difficulties as divorce. He ennbarked that, technology has brought marriage to a stake of transition, there seems to be a correlation between level of technological development and marital instability. (Anameze 1996) postulates that, the higher income and education of couples, the higher the marital instability which consequently leads to divorce. Dissolution of marriage is on the increase today because it is permitted much more freely than in former times. He added that as divorce become much common, unhappy marriage which previously would remain intact solely because of the power of tradition is dissolved (Anameze 1996).

Therefore, the sample size of 399 was chosen for the study. In choosing the sample for the study, the first sampling technique adopted was the simple random sampling technique. This technique was adopted to select seven communities out of fourteen communities in Orlu Local Government Area. The names of each of the various communities were written on a piece of paper dropped jn a container and shuffled, This was how the seven communities were randomly selected.

Again, on the basis of effective coverage and because the communities do not have equal number of population, the proportionate sampling technique was adopted to select the representative sample from the population of the various communities.

Table.1 Proportional Allocation of Sample Sizes

Selected communities	Population	Sample size proportion of the communities
Okporo		
Amaifeke		
Umudioka		
Eziachi		
Umuna		
Ogberuru		
Iheoma		
Total		

13,705	71
11,631	61
6,557	34
5,518	29
15, 744	82
7,725	40
151806	82
76,686	382

Source: Field Survey, 2017

3. **Data Presentation**

Table 2. questionnaire returned — Copies of distributed and

Selected communities	Population	Number of copies of questionnaire distributed	No. of copies of questionnaire returned
Do you agree that, marriage customs is changing with time in OrluLocal Government Area?	112 (29.3)	Okporo 13,705	71
		Amaifeke 11,631	61
		Umudioka 6,557	34
		Eziachi 5,518	29
Changes in marriage customs in the Orlu Local Government Area could be attributed to social change such as economic recession and religious beliefs.	107 (28)	Umuna 15,744	82
		Ogberuru 7,725	40
		Iheoma 15,806	82
		Total 76,686	399
Currently, people no longer cherish traditional marriage customs in Orlu Local Government Area.	129 (33.8)		

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents on Social Change and Marriage Customs

114 (36.9)	63 (16.5)	66 (17.3)	382
138 (36.1)	65 (17)	72 (18.8)	382
117 (30.6)	81 (21.2)	55 (14.4)	382

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Traditional marriage customs has continued to remain unchanged in Orlu Local Government Area.	92 (24.1)	68 (17.8)	119 (31.1)	103 (27.0)	382

Table 2: shows the distribution of respondents on social change and traditional marriage customs. In question 6, out of 382 respondents, (29.3%) strongly agreed that marriage customs are changing with time in Orlu Local Government Area, (36.9%) agreed, (16.5%) disagreed, while the remaining (17.3%) strongly disagreed. In question number 7, out of 382 respondents, (28%) strongly agreed that, changes in marriage customs could be attributed to social change such as economic recession and religious beliefs, (36.1%) agreed, (17%) disagreed, while the remaining (18.8%) strongly disagreed. In question number 8, out of 382 respondents, (33.8%) strongly agreed that people no longer cherish traditional marriage customs in Or\u Local

Government Area, (30.6%) agreed, (21.2%) disagreed, while the remaining (14.4%) strongly disagreed. In question number 9 out of 382 respondents, (24.1%) strongly agreed that traditional marriage customs has continued to remain unchanged in the society. (17.8%) agreed, (31.1%) disagreed, while the remaining (27.0%) strongly disagreed. This impiies that the respondents responded greatly that traditional marriage customs can be influenced by social change in Orlu local government area Imo state.

Table 3. Social Change and Number of Children in Families

Do you agree that, the numbers of children couples give birth to, are reducing drastically in most families?	139 (36.4)	106 (27.7)	73 (19.1)	64 (16.7)	382
Reduction in the number of children couples give birth could be attributed to social change.	131 (34.3)	111 (29%)	78 (20.4)	62 (16.2)	382
As a result of modernization, couples no longer give birth to lar e number of children	136 (35.6)	122 (31.9)	83 (21.7)	41 (10.7)	382
No matter the level of societal change in the society i.e. (recession), couples give birth to the number of children they decide.	74 (19.4)	87 (22.8)	107 (28%)	114 (27.8)	382

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3: shows the distribution of respondents on social change and number of children in families. In question 10, out of 382 respondents, (36.4%) strongly agree that, the number of children couples give birth to be reducing drastically in most families. (27.7%) agreed, (19.1%) disagreed, while the remaining (16.7%) strongly disagreed. In question number 11 f out of 382 respondents, (34.3%) strongly agreed that reduction in the number of children couples give birth to could be attributed to social change, (29%) agreed, (20.4%) disagreed, while the remaining (16.2%) strongly disagreed. In question number 12, out of 382 respondents, (35.6%) strongly agreed that, as a result of modernization, couples no longer give birth to large number of children, (31.9%) agreed, (21.7%) disagreed, while the

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remaining (10.7%) strongly disagreed. In question number 13, (19.4%) strongly agreed that, no matter the level of societal change in the society, couples give birth to the number of children they decide, (22.8%) agreed, (28%) disagreed, while the remaining (29.8%) strongly disagreed. This infers that the respondents responded firmly that the number of children in families reduces due to the social change in Orlu locai government area Imo state.

Table 4. Social Change and Dissolution of Marriage

Do you agree that, dissolution of marriage is increasing rapidly in Örlu Local Government Area?	121 (31.7)	(38.7)	86	27 (7%)	382
	125 (32.7)	133 (34.8)	81 (21.2)	43 (11.2)	382
	134 (35.1)	113 (29.6)	61 (15.9) (22.5)	74 (19.4)	382
Dissolution of marriage could be attributed to social change such as change in attitudinal behavior of individuals in Orlu Local Government Area.					
Western culture has brought about, increase in divorce in most families in Orlu Local Government Area.					
Changes in the society, do not contribute to dissolution of marriages in most families in Orlu Local Government Area.	33 (8.6)	(20.1)	128 (33.5)	(37.7)	382

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4: shows the distribution of respondents on social change and dissolution of marriage. In question 14, out of 382 respondents, (31.7%) strongly agreed that/ dissolution of marriage is increasing rapidly in Orlu Local Government Area,(38.7%) agreed, (22.5%) disagreed, while the remaining (7%) strongly disagreed. In question number 15, out of 382 respondents, (32.7%) strongly agreed that, dissolution of marriage could be attributed to social change such as change in attitudinal behavior of individuals in Orlu Local Government Area, (34.8%) agreed, (21.2%) disagreed, while the remaining (11.2%) strongly disagreed. In question number 16, out of 382 respondents, (35.1%) strongly agreed that, western culture has brought about increase in divorce in most families in Orlu Local Government

Area, (29.6%) agreed, (15.9%) disagreed, while the remaining (19.4%) strongly disagreed. In question number 17, (8.6%) strongly agreed that, change in the society do not contribute to dissolution Of marriage in most families, (20.1%) agreed, (33.5%) disagreed, while the remaining (37.7%) strongly disagreed. This infers that the respondents responded greatly that social change affects dissolution of marriage in Orlu local government area Imo state.

4. Discussion Findings

The result of statistical analysis of hypothesis (one) of this study revealed that, there is a significant relationship between social arrangements and marriage customs. This is in line with the views of ngakwe (2005) who maintained that, 'bride wealth which was important practical in traditional marriage system of old has witnessed some changes, and also the marriage ceremonies, negotiations, and procedures has witnessed certain changes'. The result of statistical analysis of hypothesis (two) reveals that, there is a significant relationship between social change and number of children in families. This is consonance with Nwachukwu (2009), who maintained that 'in situation whereby a

couple has just one child or none at all, they are encouraged to keep believing and hoping on God for miracle. Instead of the husband to marry a second wife to remedy the situation when it has faith preaches against polygenic, the couple result to a very low number of children in the family as influenced by Christianity (social change). This is also in line with Adenuga (2011) who stressed that 'the church frowned at polygenic and encouraged couples to accept monogamy as normal way of life; this will automatically reduce the number of children being born in the family'.

The result statistical analysis of hypothesis (three) reveals that, there is a significant relationship between social change and dissolution in marriage. (Anameze, 2004). Who postulates that 'the rate of dissolution of marriage was very low prior to the influence of social change and couples resolved issues amicably, but with the influence of westernization and cultural diffusion, dissolution of marriage seems to be on high side'.

5. Conclusion

When change which is the only phenomenon that is permanent in human existence is taking place within a society, the institution of such society is not left untouched. These institutions move alongside the social dynamics and the marriage institution is one of such institutions that follow the wind of change diligently.

The research also investigated into the impact of social change on marriage institution in Orlu Local Government Area. The falling standards of traditional marriage institution and moral eruption in the society have reinvigorated the old maxim "survival of the fittest" or most recently "using what you have to get what you want". The dilemma is believed to be the cause of current society, where success is equated to material acquisition. The study reveals that bride price is on more as low as it was before the influence of social change, this change in bride price is sequel to the introduction of western education which makes girls explosive due to the education they receive. Also, the high rate of urbanization and harsh economic condition make people to inflate bride price to enrich their families.

This study also shows that dissolution of marriage is on the increase and couples no longer see the need to produce large number of children in a family. The present day marriage institutions as enumerated in the case study Orlu Local Government Area have undergone change of modifications in the form, pattern, structure, and content. The process is becoming less rigorous in settlement, more expensive in consummation, less difficult and more permissive in dissolution.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends amongst others the following.

The issue of bride price deserves serious attention and there is no need to enforce various decisions that were taken to reduce bride price and other costly ceremonies associated with marriage.

The number of children produced in a family has also reduced as a result of social change and the imitation of western culture as a part of development and civilization, and due to the high cost of living, people should seek for medical advice on birth control or family planning in other to meet up their unending needs.

Efforts should be made by Religious institutions to step up admonitions on negative implications of divorce to reduce the rate which the phenomenon occurs. Furthermore, marriage seminars should be made compulsory for partners before wedding in other to understand themselves better.

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