A Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Christian Marriage among the Edo (Bini) People

By

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Abstract

The tradition of Benin people is as old as the creation of the world. The title of this paper is "Christianity and Benin (Bini) traditional marriage a comparative appraisal". Traditionally, lay down principles from fore-fathers exist in relation to marriage. This paper will examine marriage as a crisis that required urgent solution. It also aims to educate the society no the need to follow the traditional way of marring as lay down principles from our fathers. This is based on a fundamental experience between the researcher and some married persons in Bini Kingdom. The findings of this work shall be critically analyses to portray the extent to which traditional marriage as of old can help ameliorate the issue of marital problem. The ways and manner Christian marriage is in Benin Kingdom is becoming alarming. That some woman despite they are married, they still involve infidelity and unfaithfulness to their husband at home. This has coursed a lot home breakage, fathering another's children, untrained and wayward children in the society. Due to the essential nature of this research work, this research made used of historical and analytical method as well as personal communication (interview), books journals and internet sources. The researcher recommend amongst others that a review of traditional marriage that in other to avoid high cost and in infidelity in marriage, the style or pattern of marriage life should practice.

Key words: Christianity, Benin, traditional, marriage, comparative, appraisal".

Introduction

Marriage, also called matrimony or wedlock, is a culturally recognized union between people, called spouses, that establishes rights and obligations between them, as well as between them and their children and between them and their in-laws.

The definition of marriage varies around the world not only between cultures and between religions, but also throughout the history of any given culture and religion, evolving to both expand and constrict in who and what is encompassed, but typically it is principally an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually sexual, are acknowledged. Like

many social terminologies, marriage is an essentially contentious concept. Marriage and the idea of marriage are universal but there is no one generally acceptable definition of marriage.

Wikipedia Encyclopaedia defines "marriage/wedlock/matrimony as a socially or ritually recognized union or legal contract between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between them and their children, and between them and their in-laws". The importance of this definition is that where there are no children, there is no marriage. The Wikipedia Encyclopedia also traces "the origin of marriage to the Middle English, marriage which was also a derivative of Old French *marier* which means to marry. *Marier* is also derived from a Latin word *maritare,* meaning to be provided with a wife or husband".

Ayisi (1997:7) defines marriage as "the process whereby a man and a woman come together to form a union for the purpose of procreation." However, marriage can be seen as an intended temporary or permanent union between a man and a woman that is socially, culturally or legally recognized. In other words, marriage is not just an agreement between a man and a woman to live together without the knowledge of others of the kind of relationship that exists between them. Marriage is a public matter. Labels Tonizek (2008) identities three different types of marriages which are: traditional, court and white marriages. White marriage is done in the churches and mosques where clergies preside over the affairs. The court marriage is done under the law of the state. The traditional marriage is the local form of marriage.

This looked at marriage in African context. Through the concept of Christianity and Edo (Bini) traditional marriage as a comparative appraisal.

African Conception on Marriage and Family

According to Ogoma, Daniel Ebun (2014:93) "Marriage occupies an important position in the affairs of Africans, especially in the past. Without marriage, there is no family and without a family, one could not bear children. The connection between marriage and family can hardly be separated among the traditional Africans." Ayisi (1997:15) stated that, the family is then the logical outcome of marriage. A family consists of a man, his wife, and child or children. By this definition, a childless marriage is not a family. An individual belongs to at least family in his lifetime.

Since the family is the basic unit of any political and social organizations, the process of erecting it should and was given serious attention among the traditional African societies. Marriage, for Africans, though is purposely for procreation, is more than that. Marriage

serves other purposes. According to Mbiti (1969:133) "For African peoples, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet unborn. All the dimensions of time meet here and the whole drama of history is repeated, renewed and revitalized. Marriage is a drama in which everyone becomes an actor or actress and not just a spectator."

The family is not just a component of the man, the wife and their children. The departed souls, relatives and the unborn generations are regarded as members of the family. That is why marriage is not the union, or the joining of a man and a woman for the purpose of becoming husband and wife. Marriage is basically a family or even a community affair. The involvement of the departed souls in African traditional marriage makes it a sacred affair. According to William Abraham (1987:22) "Marriage in African tradition is the joining of two families through the union of one man and one woman and their children, always to the exclusion of all other men as regards the woman, and in monogamous societies, to the exclusion of all other women as regards the man."

African traditional conception of marriage is teleological. It is primarily for procreation. Marriage can be dissolved on the ground of childlessness. The importance attached to children is however without basis. One major reason for that attachment is summed up in what Mbiti (1969:131) calls 'personal immorality.' When a man dies, he needs somebody to bear his name, so that his name does not die. According to Awolalu and Adelumo (1979:172), "The Yoruba attach importance to child-bearing. Unfruitful marriage is not only a misfortune but also a curse since the couple have not contributed to the community of the family and therefore, of the society. A barren woman, however rich, famous or prosperous is a shame to her race.

Importance of children among the traditional Africans can be rationalized. In an agrarian society, especially in the past, the manliness of a man was measured by his farm produce. The higher the produce, the greater the respect accorded a man. Many hands in the farm led to greater output. Also, leadership roles and chieftaincy titles were reserved for men who had many wives and children under him. In Edo tradition the strength of a man is measured by the number of waives and children he bear. The reason behind this is that, a man who could control many wives and children, if given leadership roles, would be effective. Africans were not taught how not to die, but they believed that if they have many children, some of them would outlive them even if some of them would die.

Concept of the Edo (Bini) Marriage

For thousands of years, Bini have been getting married. It is unfortunate that there is no more powerful corresponding word in Edo lexicon than "Oronmwen", which means marriage in English Language. Another phase closer to "Oronnmwen" is "Okhiaye Omo ye Oronmwen" meaning he wants to give the daughter away in marriage. For the male "Okhia rie okhuo" meaning he wants to marry a woman. For formal "okhia romwen odo" she wants to marry a husband. According to Ademola Uyi-Eweka who stated that before 1897, girls were generally regarded as ready for marriage between the age of 15-18 courtship can begin among individuals during the trip to fetch water or during the moonlight play "eviontal." Nit sometimes, parents actually go looking for a wife or husband for their children. www.edofolks.com

According to Osahon Igbinidu (personal interview 2021),It was this act that is believed to have birthed the betrothal system where marriages are sometimes conducted without the consent of the children involved. Such betrothal was mostly done when a baby girl was born. Suitors would begin to approach the parents by sending a log of wood or bundles of yams to the parents of the child. On the other hand, when a boy decides to get married and his parents have accepted the bride as a prospective daughter in-law, messages are expected to go up and down between the two families. Before the traditional marriage ceremony is done, both families carry out series of investigations per the lineage, disease, scandals, crimes and many others that would have affected their child.

Historical Background of Edo (Bini)

Egharevba (1998) claims that the Binis migrated from Egypt and eventually occupied the heart of the present Oredo, Orhionmwon, Ovia North East, Ovia South West, and Egor local government areas of Edo State with headquarters of Benin City, Abudu, Ehor and Iguobazuwa respectively. The Binis practice various forms of religions ranging from the traditional religion to Christianity, the traditional dresses and white clothe with coral beads as necklace and in the ankles. The woman dresses in wrapper (igbegbe) with coral beads as their necklace. Today, most of the men dress in buba and wrapper like the Yorubas. Although Christianity had influenced the traditional religion, it is important to note that Bini tradition has not been erased from the society.

According to Festus Osagie (Personal interview 2021), Traditional religion still exists and most things in Bini are done traditionally despite the influence of Christianity. For instance, the traditional marriage ceremony of the Bini as it affects the youths and the culture of the people called Bini still function till date despite the influence of the westernization and inflammation of foreign religion. The foreign culture has brought educational

enlightenment into the various aspects of the culture that created a big gap between the people and the culture. There is education, food, drink, music, language and even to the marital life of the people. Based on this, the youth has now modernized the culture to suit their purpose thereby destroying the inherited culture from our fathers.

The Symbolical Aspect in Bini Traditional Marriage

In Benin culture and tradition, marriage rites are very symbolical and are held in very high esteem, in fact almost religiously. It is often said that marriage is one of the important cardinal points of anyone's life, the others being birth and death. In Benin culture, the family forms the bedrock of any community and hence the norms and values imbibed at the family level goes a long way in the achievement of success or failure of the entire community. Marriage is seen as the starting point for the formation of this all important bedrock. For proper understanding the symbolical aspect of marriage will be discuss.

Okaegbee

According to Igbe "The okaegbee" (senior man in the family) of the host family or his representative informs their daughter that the guests are in the house to request for her hand in marriage. They ask her whether she touching him and confirm her wish to marry him. The okaegbee is the one that eventually does everything as far as the ceremony is concerned whether the okaegbee is the father of the bridle or not, hence he is the head of that family. He is the one that will fist the date of the ceremony and also send the messenger (P.R.O) of the family to pass the information to other family members about the marriage ceremony.

Dowery:

According to Pa Obasuyi (December 2020), in an interview with him states that on the selected date, the groom family will be expected to arrive at the girl's house in company of friends. A member of the girl's family will welcome them and offer kolanut and drink, the senior man in the groom family will pray and then give the drink to the father of the girl. In turn the family of the groom will present kolanut and to inform the bride's family the purpose of their coming, in other to make their intension known. The ceremony then begins with the oldest male from the girl's father's family (*Okaegbee*) taking charge of the ceremony, and acting spokesman from the family will be chosen. The groom's family will also select a spokesman who will also represent their *Okaegbe.* According to Nosa Esosa (personal interview December 2020). After all the pleasantries, the groom's spokesman then informs the bride's family on the purpose of their return visit. He would normally say something like "we were walking past your compound and we saw a beautiful flower which we have come to pluck with your permission". The bride's *Okaegbe* then responds

by saying "I have plenty beautiful flowers in my garden, let me bring them so you can identify the one you are after" He then tells the senior female in the family to bring out the maidens in the family. In order to make it more interesting, they will bring a maiden covered with a veil who is not the intended bride, and ask *ọnọ̀ na nọ̀ a,* meaning "is it this one" and the groom will reply éo, meaning no. This is repeated for four or five times before they bring out the bride who will stand out prominently because of her *Okuku* (traditional hairdo). The groom will then answer *Ehn*, meaning yes. The payment of the dowry under Benin customs is N24:00 but the bride's family usually request millions of Naira as a matter of procedure. In response the bridegroom will present more drinks and kola nuts to appease the bride's family. At the end of this exercise, N24:00 will be accepted by the bride's family and funny enough some amount of the money will be refunded to the bridegroom with a directive to use it to take care of his wife.

According to Uwa Sunday (personal interview 2020). After confirming her identity, she then goes to sit with her family while the groom's family presents her dowry. After the acceptance of the dowry, the bride's *Okaegbe* then hands her over to the groom's father by placing her gently on his laps while counting aloud up to seven times. At the seventh time, she then sits on his laps. The groom's father then hands her over to his son by placing her on his lap. This action symbolizes that she has been officially handed over to her new family, and they have accepted her. Both families then offer prayers and blessings for a fruitful, loving and lasting marriage. After the prayers, the new couple then move out along with their friends and immediate family members to appreciate all those who have come to grace the occasion. They normally wave hands and chant (*wa ruese)* meaning "thank you". After the appreciation, food, drinks and other refreshments are served to guests.

Excursion

Eki Osunbor (personal communication 2020). The escorting of the bride is another interesting aspect of the marriage rites. The bride is usually escorted along with her personal belongings by elderly females and some youths from her family. Her parents are not involved in this ceremony. The brides escort party will normally get to some distance from the groom's family house, and then send one of the youths to inform them of their arrival. A delegation from the groom's family will then proceed to meet them. On getting there, the bridal escort party will act like they are tired from a long journey and the groom's delegation will have to drop some money on the floor for them to continue the journey. This "drama" is repeated a total of five times along the way before arriving at the groom's family house. As they approach the house of the bridegroom, you can hear the echo of OVBIOHA GHA MIEN ARO-ARO, meaning "Bride! be proud, the Bride is proud." Arrival

at the bridegroom's house is immediately followed by the ceremony of IKPOBO-OVBIOHA-washing of the bride's hands. Osunbor (personal interview 2020) further states, A bowl of water with money in it would be brought out. A woman in the bride's family, sometimes his senior wife would bring out a new head-tie, wash the hand of the Ovbioha in the bowl and dries her hand with the head-tie. Both the new head-tie and the money in the bowl belong to the bride. After the washing ceremony, prayers are then offered for blessing and success of the union after which the bride is finally handed over to the groom's family amidst singing, dancing and merriment. Her escort party then leaves her behind at her new home.

Virginity/ (Ivihen) Oath in Bini Traditional Marriage

According to Eki (personal interview 2020), in an interview with her stated, A few days later, the bride would be taken to the family altar and prayers are said for her. She undergoes what is called the IGBIKHIAVBO ceremony-beating of OKRO on the flat mortar. This would be followed by a visit by the bride's mother in-law and other female members of the family to the newly wed, if they are not living in the same house. She would demand the bed-spread on which they both slept when they had their "first sexual relationship" after the wedding. If the bed-spread was stained with blood, the bride was regarded as a virgin and she would be given many presents including money. If it is proven that she was not a virgin, then the preparation for the ceremony of IVIHEN-OATH TAKING ceremony would be set in motion. First, she has to confess to the older women, the "other men" in her life before she got married. The husband would never be told any of her confessions. Then, she would be summoned to the family shrine early in the morning, without warning to take an oath of Fidelity, Faithfulness, Trustworthiness, Honesty, etc, to her husband and family.

Christian Nature of Marriage

Today, many people are confused about what a marriage is. Some insist that two people living together in a so-called "meaningful relationship" form a kind of marriage. Others claim that a group or communal relation can be a marriage. Some even refer to a relation of a man and a man or a woman and a woman as a marriage. In contrast, the Bible presents a clear picture of God's ideal for marriage: the uniting of a man and a woman to share life together and to be faithful to each other until death. Let's take a look at what the Bible says about the nature of marriage.

God's Good Gift

According to (sola and Esther 2008), states that the major truth about marriage is that God, who initiated it did so in order to achieve a purpose". Marriage as an institution is a gift

from God, not a human development, a legal fabrication, or a governmental invention. The Bible makes it quite clear in the Genesis account of creation that God instituted the first marriage: a man and a woman united in the will of God for companionship, sexual relations, and the bearing and rearing of children. The Bible says God surveyed all he had created and declared it to be good (Gen. 1:31). Because marriage as an institution is a gift from God, we can be sure that it is good; the Bible says that every good and perfect gift comes from above (Jas. 1:17). And Jesus said, if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him (Matt. 7:11).

A Part of Creation

Not only does the Bible view marriage as a good gift from God, but is also looks upon marriage as a natural part of creation. God created us in such a way that marriage and family are part of life. The Bible declares, marriage is honourable in all (Heb. 13:4). This statement is probably recorded in scripture to counter the view that married persons are somehow second-class citizens in the kingdom of God.

Because marriage is part of the natural order, marriage between a non-Christian and a Christian or a marriage between two non-Christians is nonetheless marriage according to the Bible. It is not ideal for a Christian to marry a non-Christian, and non-Christian marriage will differ in quality from Christian marriage. However, marriage is not just a Christian institution; it is a part of God's created order.

A Sacred Union

The most characteristic word for the biblical ideal of marriage is union: the union of one man and one woman by the will of God into the relationship for life. In God's marital mathematics, one plus one equals one. The union is a sacred one; God has established the institution of marriage and planned for it to function according to certain norms. According Sola and Esther (2003), opine that Marriage is a sacred union that God approves noly a lagel, pure and blameless marriage. Marriage should be kept holy; the bed should be kept undefiled, because marriage is sacred". The Bible is quite clear that the union is to be between a man and a woman; it is to be heterosexual, not homosexual. The Bible states that homosexuality does not fit into God's purpose for mankind, no man is to have sexual relations with another man; God hates that (Lev. 18:22). The Bible declares: Even the women pervert the natural use of their sex by unnatural acts. In the same way the men give up natural sexual relations with women and burn with passion for each other. Men do shameful things with each other, and as a result they bring upon themselves the punishment they deserve for their wrongdoing (Rom. 1:26-27).

Wedding Symbols in God's Covenant

Two people standing at the altar before family and friends professing their love and commitment to one another are surrounded by wedding symbols: from the colour of the bridal gown, the exchange of marriage vow, to the signing of dotted lines, weddings are rich in heritage and tradition. Here are some spiritual traditions that surround weddings; what they mean and how they can affect one and the wedding day:

- **The Covenant Ceremony:** Odunayo (2019), opines that God's relationship with His people is often described in covenant terms, and these same terms are used for marriage. Therefore, the matrimonial covenant taken at the altar is a vow by which a man and a woman establish for themselves a partnership of the whole of life, to live for better or worse for the purpose of complementarities, as well as the procreation and education of godly offspring. Baptists believe that the marriage between two baptized Christians is sacred as it is a rite, but cerxztainly, not a sacrament with a saving reality as the Roman Catholic teaches. It is symbolic of Christ's love for his church (see Ephesians 5:25-33). In every marriage, the spouses enter into a covenant with one another and with God in whose love their love is sealed and strengthened. In other words, during a wedding ceremony, the bride and the groom make vows before God, family and friends to love and support one another in the martial union throughout their lifetime.

- **The White Wedding Gown:** Odunayo (2019), further states that, although most weddings are performed for their religious significance, one may be surprised to discover that several wedding symbols originated from pagan or decidedly non-religious roots. The tradition of brides wearing white was not in vogue until over a century ago, when, according to history, Queen Victoria married Prince Albert in 1840, and she chose to wear a white satin wedding gown lavishly trimmed in white lace. And, of course to her, colour white represented wealth and luxury.

  But, be that as it may, does the tradition of wearing white which began as a fashion choice denigrate the spirituality many feel is now associated with the colour? Certainly not! Colours, as we know, have different meanings: A blue wedding gown suggests femininity and purity and it symbolizes stability, security and life-long loyalty. White is associated with light, goodness, innocence, purity and virginity. Christians always associated the wedding dress of the bride with the colour white because white is associated with holiness and purity in the scriptures. Thus, the white wedding dress has a two-fold significance: It is a symbol of the wife's purity in heart and life, and in reverence to God. It's also a picture of the righteousness of Christ as described in

Revelation 19:7-8. This choice of colour for the traditional bride is, and will always remain basic in bridal fashions.

- **The Rings:** Odunayo (2019), The Romans are credited for pioneering the use of the signet ring as a betrothal. The Jews and the Christians borrowed the practice from them and this has become a practice for them since the 9th century AD. The custom of wearing the wedding ring on the fourth finger of the left hand is based upon a romantic, although unscientific, Greek fable that the artery from that finger flows directly to the heart.

  However, as the custom of using the wedding ring developed, it is seen today as a symbol of an unending commitment to the marriage relationship. As such, certainly it has a biblical basis that marriage is to be a life-long commitment (Romans 7:2). It is an outward symbol of the couple's inward bond, illustrating with an unending circle the eternal quality of love. It signifies so much more in the light of a seal of authority. When the couple wears a wedding ring, they demonstrate their submission to God's authority over their marriage; thereby recognizing that God brought them together and that He is intricately involved in every part of their covenant relationship. A ring also represents resources. When the couple exchanges wedding rings, it symbolizes the giving of all their resources their wealth, possessions, talents, and emotions, to the other in marriage.

- **Unveiling the Bride:** Olu Timothy (personal interview 22021), Today, few understand that the essence of the veil is to illustrate the fact that the bride is chaste and undefiled. Divine order is that the bride is married to the groom. The free exchange of consent properly witnessed by the church establishes the marriage bond. Sexual union consummates it – seals it, completes it, and perfects it. Sexual union, then, is where the words of the wedding vows become flesh. The very "language" that God has inscribed in sexual intercourse is the language of the marriage covenant: the free commitment to a union of love that is indissoluble, faithful, and open to children.

  If spouses willfully contradict any of these tokens of marriage in their sexual expressions, marital intimacy becomes less than God intended it to be. Marriage must be founded upon fidelity and chastity on the part of those who are married. To foster this, and secure it against outbreaks of malice and evil lust was he design and object of the law of chastity and marriage.

Similarity between Christian and edo Marriage

The marriage ceremony of the Christian and Bini are similar in some aspect:

1. **Veil:** the Bini traditional marriage and Christian both are similar in the use of veil. In order to make it more meaningful and symbolical, the Bini will bring a maiden covered with a veil who is not the intended bride, and ask *ọnọ̀ na nọ̀ a,* meaning "is this one" and the groom will reply éo, meaning no. This is repeated for four or five times before they bring out the bride who will stand out prominently because of her *Okuku* (traditional hairdo). The groom will then answer *Ehn*, meaning yes. Today, few understand in Christianity that the essence of the veil is to illustrate the fact that the bride is chaste and undefiled. Divine order is that the bride is married to the groom. The free exchange of consent properly witnessed by the church establishes the marriage bond. The use of veil is symbolical in the sense that it reveals to both families if the groom will identified the bride at any time. Another symbolism of unveiling is that the groom has unveiled the bride sexually and in all ramifications of life as a husband.

2. **Oath "IVIHEN"/Covenant:** this is another similarity between the two religions intense of marriage ceremony. In Bini traditional marriage, if it is proven the bride is not a virgin, then the preparation for the ceremony of IVIHEN-OATH TAKING ceremony would be set in motion. First, she has to confess to the older women, before her husband will have sex with her. The husband would never be told any of her confessions. Then, she would be summoned to the family shrine early in the morning, without warning to take an oath of Fidelity, Faithfulness, Trustworthiness, Honesty, and so on, to her husband and family. In the same way, Christian therefore take matrimonial covenant at the altar and is a vow by which a man and a woman establish for themselves a partnership of the whole of life, to live for better or worse for the purpose of complementarities, as well as the procreation and education of godly offspring. The existence of oath/covenant taking is to bring trust, fidelity, and so on. In Bini tradition is only the woman that does take oath of fidelity. The man is believe to be free from unfaithfulness that man is free to marry as many wives he can control, but in the case of the woman the moment she is marry to a man she will never think of practicing unfaithfulness because she is under the family oath and if she does otherwise the family shrine will either afflict the husband, child or the woman will die.

3. **VIRGINITY:** there is similarity in the virginity between the Christian and traditional marriage in Bini. After the dowry is paid in Bini tradition the women will spread white linen on the bed for their first meeting immediately the bride has being escort to the husband's house which is her first assignment as a test of her virginity if she is or not. While in the Christian certain though virginity is also tested through the

use of medical report to ascertain if the bride is pregnant or not. Even though it's similar in nature but it cannot be compare to that of the tradition, and the church can also be deceive by the report from the hospital.

Dissimilarity between Christian and Edo Marriage

Life is a circle that revolves round, therefore whatever one does today if not properly handle it becomes a challenge issue in the near future. Hence the dissimilarity is as follows:

1. **Dowry:** In Bini traditional marriage, the payment of the bride dowry is very important. Without dowry marriage has not been consummated the lady will not be respected in the home she is going. This implies that the groom has not marriage and whatever happiness to the girl he will be responsible. Payment of dowry is recognized by the deity and it is a thing of joy for parents to eat/take the dowry of their female child. While in the Christendom, dowry is not paid to the church or pastor.

2. **Okaegbee:** The role of the Okaegbee in Bini traditional culture is very important just as that of the parents of the bride and groom is important. The Okaegbee is the presiding officer of any occasion as far as the family tradition is concern in Bini, he is the one to bless the union and if there is any issue during and after the marriage is the okaegbee that will mediate as a father of the bride and as a judge as well. But in the church certain the pastor cannot act as the okaegbee of the family rather the pastor will act as God representatives from the church and okaegbee from the family traditionally. For instance it is the okaegbee of the family that breaks the kolaunit and doubled as the mediator between the coupes and their ancestors.

Implications of Christian Marriage to Edo Traditional Marriage.

As a result of the frequent act of insubordination in the matrimony among our women, the following implications are reached in order to bring sanity to the Bini traditional marriage.

1. In other to bring faithfulness and peace to Bini marriage, taken of OATH should be encouraged. This is because our mothers who lived under the oath knows how to respect and honour their husbands. It will also help to checkmate the conduct of our wives with opposite sex and reduce the frequent rate of divorce and infidelity that is prevailing in the society, all in the name of Christian marriage. The other name for Christian marriage is called white wedding which is a borrowed culture from the westerns' which has influence our culture thereby leading our women (wives) and children negatively in the aspect of keeping and honoring matrimony.

2. Parental concept should not be downplayed in the children marital choice of who to marry. Far back years, parent where shadowed with the responsibility of marrying wives and husband for their children. They know the type of person that suit their children, but now, our children are the one bring to their parents the nature of the man or woman they like to get married to. This has not helped our cultural heritage we inherited from our parents, thereby contributing to poor rate in today matrimony.

3. The role of the family in marital preservation in traditional marriage in Bini kingdom is very important as coupes themselves. Many years ago, when a man marry the bride is automatically married to the groom family as tradition demands, "she is called our wife" she is not just married to her husband alone but to the entire family members. After the acceptance of the dowry, the bride's *Okaegbe* then hands her over to the groom's father by placing her gently on his lap while counting aloud up to seven times. At the seventh time, she then sits on his lap. The groom's father then hands her over to his son by placing her on his lap. This very accept of tradition is very important and symbolical; it means that the bride is married to the entire family and not just the man alone. But, Christianity has gradually taken this accept of tradition away, the moment a bride is back from the church she forgets the family members and stick to the husband alone waiting for the day problem will come before she will remember her family in laws.

4. The moral standard in traditional marriage in regard to wives submitting to their husbands. The old pattern of wives submitting to her husband is still the best compare to this contemporary ways of submission. For instance, women there not talk back at her husband, she submits to him without any reservations. Today, it has been proven that women of this age doesn't accord respect to their husband all in the name of Christianity.

5. The financial burden in contemporary traditional marriages. The traditional of the Bini "imiomo" meaning (meeting with the brisde's family), the groom family provides twenty kolaunts, twenty pieces of coconuts, and two bunbdles of seven tubers of yem each, two legs of antelope, a calabash of palm oil and "ugiamwen" or six penc (an equivalent in Naira today) and a bottle of gin. The coupes also dress in traditional attires. Today, traditional marriage ceremony has become so financial burdensome

Conclusion

The society we live in today is quite different from what it used to be some decades ago. In the same vein, our cultural heritage has been thrown into the wind. For instance,

children no longer honour their parents; wives have become so wayward, that due respect was no longer accorded their husbands. The infiltration of foreign culture or civilization had not helped matters. People now tend to adopt what is referred to as French policy of acculturation by assimilation; which implies bringing out a French man out of an average African. People now want to speak like a white man; eat like a white man; dress like a white man, and even behave like a white man. Lo and behold, the society is now heavily bastardized to the extent that anything goes. The morale of the people seems to have reached its lowest ebb. What used to be considered a condemnable behaviour is gradually becoming a norm in the society. The Bini traditional marriage and it symbols is still the best way marriage should be done if peace and harmony will be in our homes.

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