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TRADITIONAL CONFLICT MECHANISMS AND RESOLUTION OF MARITAL DISPUTE: A STUDY OF IBOLO KINGDOM OF KWARA STATE

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Abstract
The Ibolo communities of Kwara State in recent years have witnessed marital conflicts in diverse areas, including those between husband and wife, conflict between co-wives and in-laws. In many instances, the conflicts are often resolved through litigations with many of such resolutions ending in divorce and prolonged court litigation. Despite the persistence of this problem, there are limited studies on the traditional resolution mechanisms of Ibolo kingdom. The study aims to identify the causes and mechanisms for managing marital conflict, to determine its effectiveness, and the challenges of using traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in contemporary times. The study relied on a qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting (8) In-depth interviews and (4) Key Informant Interviews with traditional leaders and community members in the study area. The IDI and KII data were content analyzed and the emerging theme formed the basis of discussions. Findings from the study were that the major causes of marital conflict in Ibolo are infidelity, lack of good care for women and the children, and irresponsibility by the husband, interference from the third party. The traditional mechanisms hitherto adopted to manage marital conflict have succeeded in preventing divorce and litigation by restoring the relationship between the husband and the wife. The challenges identified are the influence of modernity and Western religion on traditional mechanisms and the rise in nuclear families that are isolated from extended families. The study concluded that the traditional mechanisms for managing marital conflict in the Ibolo kingdom is moderately effective having reduced the greater number of marital litigation and improved intra-marital bliss. The study recommended among others that the Kwara State government should integrate modern and traditional mechanisms to manage marital conflict to reduce divorce cases and court litigation in the State.

Keywords: marital conflicts, traditional mechanisms, conflict resolution, Ibolo kingdom

Introduction

There is no society whether traditional or modern that is free from conflict across the globe, especially in Africa where it existed long before the colonization of many countries (Ishola, 2022). Even in foreign societies like Europe, and Asia that rely more on modern techniques

of conflict resolution like policing systems to fight crimes and resolve conflicts, there exists traditional mechanisms. In Nepal**, traditional community mediation is an increasingly common strategy to address tensions caused by urbanization, humanitarian crises, scarce resources, resettlement, etc.** Communities in India like the Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo Tribes of the Meghalaya state use their traditional mechanisms like Nokma which is also known as peacemakers, to resolve petty quarrels, thefts, and marital discord cases (Jyoti, 2020).

In Nigeria, marriage represents vows of the intimate relationship between husband and wife and serves as a platform for deep love, companionship, and everlasting partnership between couples while also serving as the primary source of human procreation to continue the sustainability of the human race on the surface of the earth. However, since marriages involve at least two different individuals with distinctive characters and different backgrounds, the likelihood of conflict is high. For instance, among the people of South-east Nigeria, the traditional dispute resolution mechanism entrenches the principles of fair hearing in case disposal processes. Parties to a dispute are allowed to present their cases and call witnesses or witnesses where the need arises. Decisions in matters are taken openly and in the presence of the parties, members of their family, village, or community (Igwe, 2020).

Marital conflict is a natural part of every culture, which sometimes threatens social stability across kingdoms in Nigeria. In particular, Ibolo kingdom in Kwara State has witnessed marital conflicts in diverse areas such as financial responsibility, lack of communication, lack of mutual respect, and infidelity among others. Cases of marital disputes among couples are rampant in the Kwara State of Nigeria, leading to a significant rise in the spate of divorce, separation, single parenthood, and domestic violence (Raji & Olounoje, 2017).

The records obtained from Kwara State Judiciary revealed that marital conflict handled by courts in the States for the year 2021 stood at 143, while that of 2022 was 153 cases. Also, as of January 2023 to December 2023, the courts across the states have received one hundred and eighty (180) divorce cases filed (Chief Court Registry, 2023). The attendant repercussions of marital dispute in the State have severe implications for the family, the society, and the country at large. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the conflict resolution approaches for resolving marital conflict in Ibolo Kindom of Kwara to identifying their areas of effectiveness or otherwise and to recommend appropriate strategies to strengthen the application of traditional approaches in the Ibolo kingdom.

Statement of the Problem

Marital conflict is a natural part of every culture, which sometimes threatens social stability across kingdoms in Nigeria, including the Ibolo kingdom in Kwara State. In particular, the Ibolo communities have witnessed marital conflicts in diverse areas, including those between husband and wife, conflicts between co-wives, and those between wives and in-laws. These conflicts often lead to divorce, separation, and single parenthood. However, before it gets out of hand, traditional methods are often deployed to resolve such conflicts. Despite the adoption of such traditional methods of conflict resolution, marital conflict is on the increase in the Ibolo kingdom of Kwara State.

Contemporary marital disputes are often resolved through litigations with many of such resolutions ending in divorce, delay in the delivery of judgment, high cost of marital litigations, alien, and promotion of retributive rather than restorative justice. The persistent failure of the Western adjudicative process, which is largely rooted in litigation has brought to the fore the re-introduction and placement of more emphasis on traditional institutions for managing marital conflict in Nigeria.

Considering the increase in divorce cases in regular court, this study is anchored by the following questions: What are the causes of marital conflict in the Ibolo kingdom? What are the traditional mechanisms for resolving marital conflict? What are the principles guiding the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms? How effective are the traditional mechanisms for resolving marital conflict? What are the challenges of using traditional conflict resolution mechanisms?

Literature Review

Marital Conflict

Conflict in marriages is unavoidable. However, the way and manner in which the conflicts are handled determines whether or not the conflict will prolong, escalate, or lead to separation or divorce. According to Amadi (2014), marital crises could originate from different sources some of which could be psychological and/or psychosomatic in nature. Marital conflicts can happen under physical, social, and economic causes. Marital conflicts are caused majorly by the inability of the couples to meet each other's sexual needs, and especially the inability of the family heads to provide for both the economic and social needs of the family among other causes.

According to IFRA-Nigeria (ND), the issues often leading to conflict between spouses in Ibadan include lack of care for women and children by the husband; the decision of the man to take a new wife; and infidelity by the woman. As a result of conflicts arising from any of these factors, a woman might be beaten and choose to leave her husband's house.
Awake (2008) in his study revealed that crises are bound to ensue in a situation where a marriage partner sets high and unrealistic standards in the home. The fallibility of man is unquestionable and as such it is not possible that such idealistic standards are realized. This is capable of degenerating into a crisis in the home.

Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Ademowo, Johnson (2015) opined that Long before Africa was colonized, and way beyond the advent of the slave trade, African societies had institutional mechanisms as well as cultural sources to uphold the values of peace, tolerance, solidarity and respect for, and of, one another. These structures were responsible for "peace education, confidence-building, peace-making, peace-building, conflict monitoring, conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution. Ajayi and Buhari (2014) revealed that the methods of performing conflict resolution in traditional African societies include mediation, adjudication, reconciliation, arbitration, and negotiation. It also includes employing extra-judicial devices and the usage of legal maxims to persuade or convince the disputants about the implication or otherwise of their behavior.

Oladipo (2022) revealed that Traditional Africa's approaches to conflict resolution are believed to be largely guided by unique norms, values, as well as cultural and traditional settings of the community. These promoted their capacity to co-exist peacefully, to commune together, to respect one another, to forgive, and to reconcile.

Ajayi and Buhari (2014) submit that in the pre-colonial days, the disputants who wanted their conflicts resolved must have confidence in the tribunal that would resolve the dispute. These include elders, chiefs, priests, priestesses, secret cults etc. The disputants must have confidence in them and be ready to submit themselves to the constituted authorities.

In Nigerian society, marital disputes and family strife have traditionally been resolved using traditional conflict resolution techniques. These techniques, which differ between different locations and ethnic groups, are profoundly ingrained in local traditions, rituals, and beliefs. It is essential to know the many traditional conflict resolution techniques used in Nigeria to

fully appreciate how these techniques affect family coexistence. This section delves deeper into these techniques while demonstrating their cultural relevance and widespread usage (Neff & Karney, 2009).

Okafor and Adediran (2019) stated that family mediation is a frequently used conventional technique for resolving disputes. It entails the involvement of elders or respected family members who act as mediators to encourage dialogue and settlement between spouses. These mediators, who are frequently picked for their wisdom and objectivity, work to find a solution that pleases both sides and brings harmony back to the family. Respect, collective decision-making, and the preservation of family unity are cultural values that serve as the foundation for family mediation. Kasali et al., (2010) contend that African traditional systems of conflict resolution refer to principles of reconciliation based on long-term conflict transformation, peaceable relationships, and values and that the efforts seem to be effective in addressing individual, intra-community, and even inter-community conflicts where relationship and shared values form the bases of the reconciliation processes.

IFRA-Nigeria (nd) states that in some families, supernatural means are used to resolve conflicts. Mogaji Lekan Oladeji, one of our informants, noted for example, that where two co-wives went to the extent of assaulting each other, the mogaji would give the order that the clothes worn by the women should be seized and affixed to the regalia of the family masquerades (*egungun*). If the women did not come from families that revered egungun, the clothes might be burnt. However, if any of the women were still stubborn in her behavior thereafter, the mogaji could order that she should move out of the family compound until she could comport herself better.
Cases brought before the baálé usually include conflicts among co-wives, brothers and sisters; truancy, and street fights involving his children and his foster children. Minor conflicts are usually resolved immediately by scolding the troublemakers and appeasing whoever was offended. What could be deduced from the above narratives is that the traditional African system of government was still open and inclusive, where all people including disputing parties could participate in the decision-making process. Ayittey (2014) revealed that the traditional African system of government was open and inclusive, where all people could participate in the decision-making process. While the Western world practiced majoritarian, or representative democracy, Africans practiced participatory democracy, where decisions were taken by consensus at village meetings. African traditional mechanisms of conflict prevention, management and resolution were largely effective and respected, and their decisions were binding on all parties, mainly because “the identity of an individual is linked to that of his or her family and these families are formed by the acceptance of marriage alliances (Ademowo, 2015).

Challenges of Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Nigeria

According to Park and Lee (2017), the traditional institutions' long-standing position in Nigerian dispute resolution is currently beset by several complex issues brought on by the country's changing socio-political climate, mutating value structures, and the quickening pace of modernization. Even though they are complex and multifaceted, these problems capture the delicate balance that traditional institutions must achieve between their rich cultural history and the needs of modern dispute resolution

IFRA-Nigeria (nd) revealed that the authority of these lineage heads has been usurped by modern courts and bureaucrats and, therefore, ‘local influence is often exercised by men of wealth rather than by men of noble lineage’. Abada, and Tenkorang (2020) in their submission revealed that the traditional mechanisms have problems in terms of acceptance and legitimacy due to the constitution's lack of acknowledgment of traditional authority.

In a similar view, Pham and Vinck, (2018) argued that the major obstacle is the traditional conflict settlement methods' lack of legal recognition. Traditional solutions frequently don't meet current legal requirements, which can cause conflicts between informal judicial systems and customary practices. (Adeyanju, 2018) contends that there may be less opportunity for mediation and resolution since extended family members can no longer offer the same level of support and direction.

Brief History of Ibolo Kingdom

The Ibolo people are a sub-ethnic of Yoruba that can be found in the Osun and Kwara states of Nigeria. Offa is the traditional headquarters of Ibolo dialect of the Yoruba-speaking people. Olofa was regarded as the head of the people of the Ibolo dialect (accent) of the Yoruba language. Ibolo dialect speakers comprise people of the surrounding towns and villages within the state of Kwara and the neighboring Osun State. The Ibolo ethnic group shares a similar dialect with Oyo. The prominent knighted chiefs of Offa include Esa, Ojomu, Sawo, and Balogun. The major towns in the Ibolo dialect include Okuku, Odo-Otin, Ijagbe, and Erin Osun in Osun state, while Offa, Erin ile, Ganmo, and other towns are located in Kwara state.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Traditional Theory of Conflict Management as its theoretical framework of analysis. The central assumption of the Traditional Theory of Conflict Management as posited by Verma (1998) were that emphasis on the use of traditional methods of conflict resolution, which the local people understand better, is necessary as effective conflict resolution methods. All conflicts are bad and caused by troublemakers and should be avoided and subdued (Verma, 1998).

Conflicts should be suppressed, resolved, and eliminated through people's cultural affiliations, which they understand and respect. The African Traditional conflict management mechanisms of adjudication, mediation, reconciliation, cross-examination, and negotiation promote restorative justice rather than retributive justice, it is, therefore, more useful in conflict resolution than the modern methods which involve litigations in the law court. Olaoba (2005) equally posits that the traditional conflict management system is a customary means of resolving conflict by the traditional people who sometimes sit down informally to discuss and resolve conflict. The central advantage of the traditional method of conflict resolution, according to the author is that it is open and inclusive, where the majority of the people are involved in the collective decision-making process, and where decisions relating to conflict resolution are sometimes taken by consensus at village meetings. The traditional method of conflict resolution is more relevant to this study as many marital conflicts in Igbomina land are being resolved successfully, using the traditional methods.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research method using semi-structured interviews to elicit responses from the respondents to have a deeper understanding of the causes of marital conflict, traditional methods of resolving marital conflict, the principles guiding traditional conflict resolution, and the challenges of using traditional methods in resolving marital conflict. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to reach the target audience. The study population comprises couples, and traditional leaders (Mogaji, Chief, Baale Oba). Primary data was sourced from In-depth interviews and Key Informant Interviews, while the secondary data was sourced from journal articles, documentaries, and online material. The data generated from both in-depth interviews and Key Informant Interviews were analyzed

using content analysis of transcribed interviews to generate meaning and discussion was built around it.

Results and Discussions

What causes marital conflict in the Ibolo kingdom?

According to the respondents, there are many factors responsible for marital conflicts in the contemporary Ibolo kingdom of Kwara State. While commenting on the causes of marital conflict, a participant expressed that:

> *If the wife says she wants to go to her parent's house and the husband refuses, then the wife go not mind what her husband said or she goes to a place and comes back late, it causes conflicts. When the wife goes against her husband's instructions, it always leads to conflict. (KII/Female/Women leader/ Offa/2023)*

According to the senior chief in the Offa community who is also the Asalofa of Offa land;

> *What causes marital conflict are many, are in many ways and they are divided into three ways; some may be from the husband, some may come from the wife, and some from the couple's family. The ones that are usually from the husband is when he is not performing his duties as he is supposed and you know God has assigned some duties to us men as husbands, like dropping money for feeding on time etc could cause conflict. (KII/male /Chief/ Offa/2023)*

In account of the chief of Staff to the Olofa;

> *Some women who are well trained from home and she is acting on their own will in their marital home can cause differences in character. Women in yorubaland, in Offa land, are taught that "Marital home is a place of learning". All the training from your father's house is not in vain but under her husband, she will learn new lessons because she is now in another family. A woman who is not well trained at home, who is hot-tempered, impatient, can't do house chores, and most importantly Cooking, there will be conflict. (KII/male /chief/ Offa/2023)*

In a focus group discussion conducted in the palace of Olojuku Kingdom, the council of chiefs and other religious leaders spoke extensively on the causes of marital conflict in the communities

> *The parents albeit from the husband's or from the wife's, if they are intervening in what is not their business. If anything happens between their son and his wife or daughter and her husband, it should have been settled amicably(FGD/Community members/Ojuku/2023)*

A community leader representing the traditional leader in the Ipe community said thus;

> *Well, there could be so many factors, especially when we want to see these marriage conflicts in terms of recent events. Today, most families cannot afford the kind of means that is expected of marriage. And we know the emotion of women; they are after the welfare of the family, particularly their children. (KII/male /Chief/ Ipe/2023)*

It could be inferred from the above results that marital conflict is caused by many factors. The majority mentioned that marital conflict happened when a wife or husband came from an irresponsible home (poor socialization or upbringing especially those from abusive homes or lacking skills in cooking), interference from the extended family, refusal to be submissive to husbands and family members, laziness (non or poor performance of domestic responsibilities), promiscuousness among others.

What are the approaches for resolving marital conflict in the Ibolo Kingdom?

To gain insight into the approaches used for resolving marital conflict in Ibolo kingdom, KII, and FGD responses from the interview sessions conducted showed that approaches to marital conflict entail the intervention of an immediate compound chief or community leader to mediate and ensure a win-win solution of the conflict. According to the high chief in Offa town;

> *In Offa land, according to the tradition from the past kings and the current king who is also making adjustments to it as it is from the olden days till this day, if an issue comes up in a family, they don't just bring it to the palace. Each family has the head of the family; they have the mother of the family, if conflict arises between husband and wife and they are unable to settle it themselves, they will bring it to the head of the family and the mother of the family and if they are still unable to settle it. Offa is divided into 5 districts; Esa district, Ojomo District, Balogun District, Sharo District, Asalofa District. (KII/male /Chief/ Offa/2023)*

Another chief in Offa stressed further;

> *In my district where I am the Asalofa of Offa, there are two political wards under me, about fifty compounds in the two wards under me and I have four chiefs. If one of the chiefs has any issue, he will come and complain to me, if I also intervene and am still unable to settle it that is when we can inform the King of the matter. If after we have discussed the issues and are still unable to resolve it, we don't usually like taking issues to court to avoid them divorcing because God too does not want a divorce. (KII/male /Chief/ Offa/2023)*

In the Ojuku community, the Olojoku expressed the approaches used in resolving marital conflict in his palace. According to him:

> *I called on other kings to help settle it as well as the Alfas to preach to the couples and explain to them, that if they listen all well and good if not it's all good but if they fight I would make some arrangements with the police to intervene, should they want to fraudulently do what they are not supposed to. In the olden days, ODU is used to appease the couples. (KII/Male/Ojuku/2023)*

According to the high chief in the Ipe community, he explained thus:

> *In Ipe community, we are very lucky in the sense that we have a stand-in rule. Even by the nomenclature of the title of the Onipe, we are supposed to be settlers of conflicts because the title is Onipe. Ipe means settlement. So our Kabiyesi is not Onipe of Ipe. He is Onipe of Ipe. "Keyansipe."; Appealing; So you hardly can see us fighting here and there. Other communities may fight. A mechanism is already in place. If the husband is so angry with the wife, we encourage them to get in touch with the Kabiyesi first, instead of resorting to domestic violence and once one of them brings this report, then the Kabiyesi calls on his chief. Then he uses Ori-ade to beg and to plead (KII/male /Chief/ Ipe/2023)*

Guiding Principles of Resolving Marital Conflict

The in-depth interview and Key Informant Interview conducted in Ibolo kingdom revealed that the guiding principles of the resolution mechanism are openness, monitoring the full implementation of their resolution, and forgiveness.

According to the respondents;

> *We generally called it IPETU SAWO because as it is for husband and wife issues same goes for land conflicts, property sharing, and so on. All the resolution used before it gets to the palace, some steps that will have been taken before the king will*

be informed. We use ALALEOFFA to hold them when the king has intervened. ALALEOFFA, because it represents the ancestors of OFFA land, it also represents our spiritual leader because when they speak, it is with authority. When they are talking, they use the ALALEOFFA to hold them down because no body will want negative talks against him/her in the name of ALALEOFFA, (KII/Male/Offa /2023)

Also, the representative of of Ipe of Ipe said thus;

We don't want to, and we are not going to encourage divorce. We are not going to encourage divorce. Having exhausted all... Available means. You can be encouraged to go to court without resorting to violence. But quite often than not, we surely get a resolution to it. Because we will not be biased, we will not try to support any, and we will not even show any sign of support to any. Our own objective is to get peace back to the family so that everybody can live together and there is an adage that usually propels us, I'm going to say that in Yoruba, I don't know how you would, we usually say ***"Bi ile o ba dun, be igbe ni igboro ma nri";*** *the family is the first unit of the community, If there is a problem within the first unit, the entire unit is not... Do you understand? So that's the meaning of that.* ***Ileodun;*** *Whatever we are doing in the town, it will not be... It will be* ***begbeluri****. It will not be peaceful, when there is happiness between...husband and wife which is the first unit of the community. We bring that happiness to bear on the entire community and for everything we are doing, everybody does it peacefully. we have to also go back to our origin, Ipe as a guide. (KII/Male/Ipe /2023)*

Effectiveness of the traditional approaches in resolving marital conflict

A participant revealed the reason for the effectiveness of traditional mechanisms in managing marital conflict. As he put it:

*The reason why it is effective is because of the respect that they have for that institution, nobody wants to go and appear before that institution for any unnecessary or petty issue. The traditional rulers maintain peace, unity, and orderliness, the palaces in the past are meant for marital conflict resolutions***.** *Once a matter gets to the Kabiesi everybody just respects it. But today when you go to court, you start from customary court, area court, high court to court of appeal, court of appeal which will take you a very long period of time. It can span in some cases 20-40 years, the couple will die in the process unlike what is obtainable in the palace where within one or two postponements you've come to an end. (KII/male /Chief/ Offa/2023)*

In the words of another respondent:

The traditional institutional mechanisms are very effective in short compared to the court system where you will have to adjourn repeatedly and in the course of adjournment, the magistrate might even be transferred from one division to the other. Then you start all over again, in the present court system for example your magistrate or the person presiding over your matter may be pregnant, and she will go and put to bed until she comes back before the case will continue. Unlike what was obtainable during the old days the Kabiesi would preside and come to the end of the matter within the shortest possible time. KII/male /Chief/ Offa/2023

Another respondent also gives credence to the effectiveness of the traditional approaches in resolving marital conflict. As he put it:

We should advocate for traditional institutional mechanisms more now because it appears very effective in resolving not just marital issues but other issues in between parties in a way that parties will still have to continue with each other, unlike the

court. Traditional institutions try as much as possible to mend marriages and make couples to see reasons that are not the reason in the court system. In court, it's just an order. (KII/Male/Ipe /2023)

Challenges of Using Traditional Methods in Resolving Marital Conflict

While commenting on the influence of modernity on the use of traditional methods for resolving conflicts, a participant expressed that:

Christianity and Islam as well as modernity have seriously affected the use of traditional methods of resolving conflict. There is a case in our town where I said we've sworn with the Bible and Quran but we don't see any repercussion. (KII/Male/Ojuku/2023)

Another participant expressed that modernity brought about by colonial rule affects the effectiveness of traditional methods in resolving marital conflicts. A participant expressed that:

The arrival of colonial rule that brought about the Western system including foreign constitutions has eroded the power of the traditional rulers.

Based on the qualitative analysis, it is evident that Christianity and Islam as well as modernity have seriously affected the use of traditional methods of resolving conflict. The majority of the participants mentioned that the advent of Christianity and Islam affected the utilization of traditional methods. Further analysis revealed that modernity due to colonial rule affected the adoption of traditional methods of resolving marital conflicts.

Discussion of Findings

Causes of Marital Conflict in Ibolo Kingdom

Among the causes are infidelity between couples and lack of good care for women and the children by the husband disobedience to husband and irresponsibility on the part of the husband. The majority of the key informants interviewed revealed that some husbands are irresponsible in discharging their duties in the home by not providing for the family financially and in some other aspects, ensuring that the basic needs of the children and wife are met.

The study identified interference from the third party (father-in-law, mother-in-law, or friends) in marriage as a cause of conflict between married people. As obtainable in every part of Nigeria, extended family plays a key role in the success and failure of a marriage. This is because the in-laws of both spouses will not want their child to have any causes to suffer or be cheated by his/her partner. In Ibgomina Land, respondents submitted that family and friends could influence the spouses' behavior towards each other, and that is why couples are advised to be careful of third parties regardless of how close is the person, but unfortunately father and mother-in-law's influences, by telling their children not to submit or cooperate in some certain grey areas were identified as part of the factor fueling disagreement and possible violent conflict

Added to this is the issue of disrespect to the husband. Evidence from this study showed that disrespect and disobedience on the part of the wife cause marital conflict in the Ibolo kingdom. There are instances where the wife is not ready to submit to the husband or disrespect the husband in the home which is in total regard to the cultural heritage of Ibolo kingdom.

Another cause of marital conflict identified is the issue of infidelity. This happens when a man or woman engages in extramarital affairs and if not managed by the couple could lead to conflict. It was observed that such cases are rampant among men and it divides the attention

of such husbands in discharging their duties at home and in some cases if not well managed, may lead to the women separating from the husband. The findings of this study are in line with Amadi (2014), who argued that marital crises could originate from different sources some of which could be psychological and/or psychosomatic in nature.

Mechanisms for Resolving Marital Conflict in the Ibolo Kingdom

The findings show that many traditional mechanisms are being used by the Ibolo kingdom to resolve marital issues. The most popular mechanisms include using elders' experience and wisdom to mediate between contending couples, negotiating through an admission of wrongdoing, and enlisting the assistance of a skilled third party from the community. These age-old techniques are meant to encourage communication, mending, and settlement between partners.

In Offa, for instance, there are different grades of chiefs which include high and lower chiefs that manage conflicts of different types in their respective domain before they can get to the Olofa palace. Invariably, the lower chief reports issue that are beyond his control to the high chief, while the high chief will report such matters as well to Olofa in council in the case of matters that go beyond his control. In resolving matters at Olofa palace, holy books like the Bible and Quran can be used to appeal to and persuade parties to embrace peace. In some instances, the Olofa may invoke his ancestors and some oracle names to uncover facts appeals, and settle conflict. The Ipe community believes in "*sipe";* meaning appealing, that regardless of what has happened, the custom and tradition of the town does not encourage, tolerate, and empower anyone be it indigenes or non-indigenes residing in the community to engage in unending or violent conflict. Though conflict is an inevitable occurrence, nevertheless, the Ipe community in the Ibolo community has an existing platform to peacefully resolve marital conflict for the sake peaceful co-existence of the entire community. This platform is what is called "sipe" (appeal) being carried out by the chiefs in council or delegated chief in the kingdom.

It is safe to suggest based of the findings of this study that In traditional African society, conflict may generally exist whenever or wherever incompatible events occur and may result in ―a win-lose character so the resolution, transformation and management of conflict may however produce a win-win situation too. In line with this study is the argument of Ajayi (2014) who contends that In Africa, there were levels or phases of conflict resolution, there were dispute resolutions at the inter-personal or family level, the extended family level, and village or town level (chief in council). These tiers represent the political units making up the community.

The Principles Guiding Resolution of Marital Conflict in Ibolo Kingdom

The research question addressed the principles guiding the resolution of marital conflict in the Ibolo Kingdom. The study found that expression of confidence in mediators, verification of truth, demonstration of impartiality, flexibility, openness, and inclusiveness, enhancement of transparency, accountability, and reconciliation, display of fairness, social justice, and adherence to forgiveness and tolerance are the principles guiding the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms for marital conflict in the selected communities. The principles did not only reconcile the relationships between couples, but also the relationships of the extended families and the communities which provides room for peaceful co-existence in the entire town.

The principles of fairness and impartiality adopted a focus on preliminary investigation, secret inquiry of fact, and ascertaining truth before face-to-face reconciliation of the conflict. For instance, in Offa town, respondents asserted that the essence of interference is to secure peace and harmony in the community because when respective homes are in trouble, the

entire community will not be at peace. In this regard, traditional institution in the area is expected to be fearful, open, and transparent in their intervention so that the process of intervention will not lead to escalation of the conflict. The calls of ancestors such as "Alale, Ogunwoye, Egun, Oya" and many other ancestors of Offa ancestors and oracles are part of the guiding principles to secure lasting peace and order in the Offa community. At this stage, the matter has gotten to the palace of Olofa where it is necessary to appeal for peace with the use of the ancestors. What could be deduced from the above findings is that even though some were influenced by foreign religious, the traditional African system of government was still open and inclusive, where all people including disputing parties could participate in the decision-making process. The findings are in agreement with the work of Ayittey (2014) who submits that the Western world practiced majoritarian, or representative democracy, while Africans practiced participatory democracy, where decisions were taken by consensus at village meetings

Effectiveness of Traditional Methods in Resolving Marital Conflict

The research question addressed the effectiveness of the methods in resolving marital conflict in the Ibolo Kingdom of Kwara State. The findings revealed that traditional methods are effective in preventing marital divorce and litigation by restoring the relationship between the husband and the wife. It has successfully prevented marital disputes from escalating into the crisis stage. The procedure for marital resolution in the study area did not only reconcile the relationships between couples but also the relationships of the extended families with their communities which provides room for peaceful coexistence. As it was observed from the study area, the principles of confidence in mediators, verification of truth, demonstration of impartiality, flexibility, openness, and inclusiveness among others were closely linked with the importance of relationships communal relationships. This finding is in agreement with the work of Ademowo (2015) who contends that African traditional mechanisms of conflict prevention, management, and resolution were largely effective and respected, and their decisions were binding on all parties, mainly because "the identity of an individual is linked to that of his or her family and these families are formed by the acceptance of marriage alliances

This finding also corroborates the work of Kasali et al., (2010) that African traditional systems of conflict resolution refer to principles of reconciliation based on long-term conflict transformation, peaceable relationships, and values and that the efforts seem to be effective in addressing individual, intra-community and even inter-community conflicts where relationship and shared values form the bases of the reconciliation processes.

Challenges of Traditional Resolution Methods in Resolving Marital Conflict

The research question addressed the challenges of traditional resolution methods in resolving marital conflict. Findings demonstrate that modernity and Western religion (Islam and Christianity) are the biggest challenges facing traditional methods of resolving marital conflict in the Ibolo kingdom. Other identifiable challenges were the increasing number of nuclear families as couples are living away from their extended family. There are issues with negative views toward cultural traditions as well as the influence of modernism and Westernization. These beliefs and influences may lessen the value placed on conventional approaches and principles, which would reduce their efficiency in settling marital disputes. Traditional dispute resolution is also challenged by the rise in nuclear families that are isolated from the assistance of their extended families. This argument is in line (Adeyanju, 2018), who contends that there may be less opportunity for mediation and resolution since extended family members can no longer offer the same level of support and direction.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the traditional method of conflict management in the Ibolo kingdom is moderately effective having reduced a greater number of marital litigation and improved intra-marital bliss. The use of traditional mechanisms is relatively cheaper to litigation and less cumbersome to implement, it also enthrones restorative as against retributive justice. Traditional resolution mechanisms allow for wider consultation and input of fast ideas and experiences to arrive at a completely satisfactory judgment between the couples. Traditional methods of marital conflict resolution are cheaper and faster because there is no payment of court charges or lawyers and resolution often ends up in restorative justice through plea bargaining, cajoling, and panegyric rendition rather than retributive judgment which is based mainly on punishment. The challenges of using traditional mechanisms for resolving marital conflicts in Ibolo kingdom land include modernity and Western religion (Islam and Christianity), unfavorable and changing dynamics of nuclear families which discourages the use of traditional methods of conflict resolution**.**

Recommendations

i.. The study recommended that Ibolo traditional councils should train their youths in traditional methods of conflict management to enhance marital harmony in the Ibolo kingdom.

ii. There is a need for the integration of modern and traditional mechanisms to resolve marital conflicts. The strengths of both the traditional and modern mechanisms should be encouraged as this will promote family peaceful coexistence and collaboration between traditional institutions and the judiciary to prevent escalation of marital conflict from reaching litigation.

iii. Also, the use of traditional methods of conflict resolution in Igbomina Land should be sustained and be formally legalized by the Kwara State government to enhance the capacity of traditional conflict mechanisms.

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