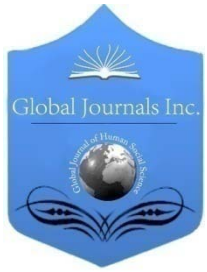
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The Effect of Christian Religious Education on Traditional Marriage Customs among the Tiv, Central Nigeria

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Abstract- Marriage over the years has served as the institution of social value and a symbol of maturity in the society. This was the case up to the eve of the coming of Christianity and western education. The situation however, changed after Christianity and western education took firm roots on African soil, leading to the erosion of Tiv traditional marriage in contemporary times. The introduction of monogamy (western form of marriage) has infiltrated Tiv traditional system of marriage to the extent that it now finds expression through elements proper to Tiv culture, transforming or remaking it to bring about a "new creation." This paper sets out to examine the effect of Christian religious education on traditional marriage customs among the Tiv, North central Nigeria. The paper utilized qualitative approach which makes use of secondary sources and participant observation in collection and presentation of data. The paper observed that Tiv traditional marriage has experienced an infusion into Christianity due to the advent of western civilization in Nigeria. The paper recommends among others, that an infusion of Tiv traditional marriage into Christianity should be made to contextualize those practices that are not in line with the Christian oriented practices.

Keywords: *traditional marriage; christian religious education and nigeria.*

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I. Introduction

For us to meaningfully discuss the effect of Christian religious education on traditional marriage among the Tiv, North Central Nigeria, it is pertinent that we have a thorough grasp of what marriage and Christian religious education are all about. It is rather unfortunate that Tiv traditional marriage has been misconstrued in the African context as well as many other parts of world. In African society for example, marriage is gradually becoming an issue of debate. The general outlook of marriage among the people is making it a bit difficult to critically discuss the Tiv marriage without being wrongly presented. This is because some people find it difficult to understand Tiv traditional system of marriage. And in an attempt to present issues as these, they end up "Confusing" the values of traditional marriage with Christian-Oriented-Practices. Traditional marriage as an institution created by God has a vital role to play in the sustenance of human society. The desire for Nigerians and Tiv to choose themselves what they desire, led to infiltration of traditional marriage and the embracement of monogamy form of marriage in contemporary times. The introduction of Christian religious education finally paid off when the European missionaries forced the Tiv to abandoned their calling and accommodate the spirit of compromise in the name of conversion. Consequently, this abandonment led the Tiv people to adopting western civilization for the destruction of Tiv culture, traditions and practices.

a) *Conceptual Clarifications*

The concepts that need to be clarified are as follows:

i. *Traditional Marriage*

The word "traditional" is part of ordinary linguistic usage. According to the author in [25], its general meaning connotes something that is old system, archaic or naïve. On the other hand, marriage is described by the author in [5] as:

> The state of being husband and wife… The legal union or contract made by a man and woman to live as husband and wife… it is also defines as a serious commitment between a man and a woman which involves social religious or legal ceremony formalizing them as husband and wife.

The Author in [19] sees traditional marriage as the union between a man and woman to live as husband and wife based on cultural laws and practices. This commitment makes people to comprehend human maturity and the need to continue the work of procreating human family. Based on this reason, Tiv traditional marriage is an instrument of human development and effective institution upon which the marriage system operates. In Tiv society, the traditional marriage system is viewed in line with something that is natural and a duty every individual has to perform in the society. It is in this context that the social and moral values of marriage are viewed in relation to the society.

ii. *Christian Religious Education*

The term education means different things to different people. It is better described than defined. Thus, the authors in [13] have indicated that education is the oldest discipline in human history; therefore, it may not be easy to come out with a definite and universally acceptable definition of the term. This

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notwithstanding, the author in [11] defines education as "the process by which an individual acquires knowledge, attitude, skills and values". The author in [8] defines education as the importation of knowledge that affects discipline and maturity in the recipient to enable him/her survive as an independent entity. Another author in [1] describes education as knowledge; a systematic cultivation of the mind and other natural powers of the mind and powers on the acquisition of knowledge and skills through training and instruction. In fact, we neither have the space nor time to consider such definitions of education which are numerous. However, in the context of this paper, Christian religious education can be defined according to the author in [23] as "the process of learning introduced by the missionaries to shape the minds, beliefs, attitudes, and values through acquisition of knowledge, skills and trainings or instructions". This definition in our view is the most acceptable one because it includes all aspects of formal education.

b) Traditional Background of Tiv Traditional Marriage Customs

Marriage as we all know is very important for the increase in population. The author in [4] underscores the importance of marriage as having a vital and organic link with the society since it is the foundation, which nourishes it continually through the role it plays in life. In his own words:

> Marriage is the most fundamental social institution in human society… A man's dignity consists in being a woman's head and a woman's dignity in being the glory of the man to preserve the husband clan and to continue the one that already exists.

The author in [17] referring to the purpose and importance of marriage in the society, elucidates that:

> Marriage is a covenant of undivided affection between a man and a woman, ordained by God for the purpose of increase of human family and the education of children… Marriage is a revocation consent which each partner freely bestows on and accepts from the other, the unity and fruitful love, which exists between them. This imposes total fidelity on partners and argues for unbreakable oneness.

He above views shows that marriage is the first school of social virtues, which, is the animating principles of the existence and development of the human family or the society. Thus, in Tiv society, marriage is the discernible and most encompassing reality of life. It is something of sacred obligation and any adult that refuses to Mary is seen by the society as either cursed or abnormal. Marriage being a social institution has societal values, most of which are the socio-economic and religio-political values. Based on the above understanding, Tiv people consider any gesture or favor done to parents-in-law as part of *kem* (dowry) and could always say that *kem kwase ngu* been *shie mon ga (*the dowry cannot be paid at once).

Marriage in this context is therefore, a community affair which involves a long period of preparations. The bride is chosen by members of the family based on moral standard, hard work, and level of obedience, politeness and honesty of the man involved. Sometimes, the choice of a lady for marriage is done considering her background or family lineage of the lady in question. This is why a Tiv man would tell a person looking for a woman to marry, "go and marry from so and so family" or vice versa because "so and so family is good." The Tiv person has a conviction that if such a lady is not from a disciplined home or good family, she could be a problem to her husband and the society where she is married at large. Other people also express the fear that the offspring's of such an undisciplined woman might introduce the gene of wickedness in their community or family. This makes the Tiv people to be inquisitive and selective in choosing a place and family to marry a woman since marriage is a serious commitment.

The author in [4] asserts that even in the case of divorce where a woman is abandoned to remain on her own, she is still called by her former husband's name. And if she eventually dies, her remains are buried in the compound of the former husband, especially when there are children born in the former husband. Before the coming of Christianity and Western Civilization, people cherished polygamous marriage. But with the tide of socio-cultural change brought about by cultural integration, most Tiv people now prefer monogamous marriage to a polygamous one. Even thought the traditional Tiv people view polygamous marriage as more appropriate because of their belief that a man's prestige is measured according to the number of wives, children and farms, which he has. Yet, due to Christianity and modernization contemporary Tiv people are made to see polygamy as an archaic way of life that is worthy of renunciation. These facts accounts for the problem involving different forms of marriage in contemporary Tiv society.

c) Taxonomy of Tiv Traditional Marriage

According to the author in [12] there are many types of marriage in Tiv society. These forms of marriage are products of the first system of marriage introduced in Tiv society but were later abolished by the colonial masters. The Tiv refer to this type of marriage as "Exchange marriage".

i. *Exchange (Yamshe) Marriage*

The word "*Yamshe*" literally means, "Buying by the eye. In the exchange marriage context, this emphasizes the importance of having a blood-sister with which one could make an exchange for the blood-sister of another distant fellow Tiv man as a wife. This exchange results in both men getting married at the

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same time, in the same way and having husband at the same time. The blood-sister used in exchange marriage must be the one assigned to the man that is using her in exchange marriage for his own wife. This system of marriage whereby a man used his own blood-sister in exchange with other distant fellow Tiv man's blood-sister as a wife was called "*kwase u ishe yamem"* (trade by barter). Exchange marriage (*Yamshe)* in traditional Tiv society was the first and fundamental form of marriage. It did not involve dowry, but rather, the marriage was based on mutual agreement between the two families.

The essence of exchange marriage was to foster continuity of the family lineage. By its very principle, exchange marriage terminates if one of the exchange sister fails to produce children. In such a case the parties involved agreed to share the children of the one that is productive and the exchange marriage continues. But in a situation where by the woman that produces children are reluctant to share her children equally with unproductive woman used in exchange with her, the marriage terminates automatically. The exchange of marriage system as earlier stated was aimed at filling the gap or vacuum created by exchange of both sisters in the two families. It is worthy to note that even thought no much material benefits were enjoyed in exchange marriage system; yet, it contributed in a way by uplifting the dignity of women in Tiv society due to the rights acquired by their children raised during such marriage. This system of marriage in the view of the author in [14] has divergent effects on Tiv family system and was later abolished by the British colonialists in 1939. As the saying goes, when one door closes, another is opened, so also did the collapse of (exchange marriage system) (*Yamshe*) which gave rise to *kem* (Bride-price marriage system) in Tiv society.

ii. *Bride-Price Marriage (Kem)*

The word "*kem*" in Tiv language according to the author in [24] literally means "little-by-little", or "bit-by-bit", "acquisition", "addition", "continuous multiplication of whatever one is doing either on the farm, financial enterprise or becoming increasingly knowledgeable. *Kem* (bride-Wealth) was a form of marriage based on the declaration of the consent of the bride and groom. This began when a man stated to make an overture for marriage. He was expected to offer gifts to the prospective mother-in-law like a hoe, necklace, dish, salt and money. Whilst he also gave presents, especially a piece of cloth to his father-in-law to tie round his waist as an indication that he is seeking an approval from the prospective father-in-law to marry his daughter.

Other relations, especially the eldest member of the family was equally offered material gifts to make him facilitate the marriage negotiations and to give his final approval. One thing that should be noted here is that *kem* (bride-price marriage) was less money involving in pre-colonial times. The ideal of using material things like money and other related gifts mentioned above was a super-imposed practice on Tiv people by the British colonialists. Since then the practice degenerated into a materialistic disposition in Tiv society, especially in matters to dowry. The author in [22] maintained that the effects of these changes on Tiv marriage system are that many forms of marriage have been introduced into Tiv land and today most Tiv youths look for alternatives since *kem* (bride wealth) is sky-rocketing day-in day-out. This financial and material increment in *kem* (bride-price marriage) coupled with the other difficulties involved in resettlement of divorced couples has really make it a heavy burden for people willing to get married in contemporary Tiv society. Consequently, some people prefer to indulge in another form of marriage system know as (*kwase uyevese amin*) elopement marriage.

iii. *Elopement Marriage (Kwase u Yevese Amin)*

Elopement marriage is one of the commonest practices of getting married in Tiv society. It is so pronounced because people find it easy to have a wife without going through the rigors of *kem* (dowry Payment). The interviewee in [2] states that elopement marriage can be in two ways: first, by running away with a woman when the man is unable to complete the necessary marriage rites. And second, when a young person captured a girl as his wife without paying dowry. This form of marriage is not so common in Tiv society. Another interviewee in [10] asserts that elopement was the system of marriage practiced in pre-colonial Tiv society, especially by the lords and warriors who could compel any beautified lady of their own choice to marry them. Sometimes, young people who found marriage difficult but had strong family members were able to marry in this way for them. This was done by capturing a woman of their choice when she was on her way either to the market square or farm or river to fetch water or any other place. The suitor sets an ambush with his friends or some of his relations to kidnap the lady in question as a wife for him. However, with the advent of modernization and cultural integration, Tiv society has experienced socio-cultural changes, especially in matters regarding marriage practices.

Today most Tiv youths and even adult no longer accept this form of marriage. Marriage by capture in contemporary Tiv society has become a barbaric form of behavior because it is viewed or interpreted as an abuse of the brides consent. This is why it is mostly referred to as *"kwase u eren sha mkiir*" (marriage by conquest or force). Even thought marriage by capture seems to be an unacceptable practice in modern Tiv society, promiscuous acts sometimes lead to it, especially when two persons are caught in the very acts of fumigation or adultery. This is even worse when an unmarried girl gives birth to a bustard child in her father's house. She is forced to marry anybody chosen

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by her parents or family relations without her own consent. This was done to curtail the re-occurrence of this ugly act and to serve as a different to other young ladies in Tiv society. The interviewee in [16] opines that the Tiv attach great importance to marriage and for a lady to know a man or break her virginity without any legitimate husband is a serious crime that involves drastic actions by her society.

In most cases, the man involved is asked to untie the virginal cowry or pay money for breaking the virginity of the lady if he refuses to marry her as the case may be. Sometime, both of them (the boy and girl) are forced by the society to marry themselves. This explains how Tiv society upholds in high esteem its cultural values, especially virginity. The most complex case that leads to the above form of marriage is when a lady is caught in an act of adultery with a man. In which case, if the husband of the woman rejects her as his wife, then, the man caught in the act of adultery is sometimes compelled to marry the woman as his legitimate wife hitherto, or alternatively, the man could be asked to pay a required amount as restitution for the damages done to the husband of the woman and the family. These practices are no longer respected by Tiv people due to advent of western civilization.

iv. *Leverage Marriage (Kwase u Tôôn)*

Leverage or inheritance marriage is the form of marriage whereby a blood relation of the deceased husband inherits all the properties including the wife. Sometime, the deceased son is asked to inherit the wife if the father was a polygamist. The essence of this system of marriage was to take care of the widow emotionally and other wise. It was also meant to raise more children for and on behalf of a deceased brother, father or kin as the case may be. One important thing to take note here is that, marriage by inheritance was mostly practiced in pre-colonial Tiv society. And the practice then was borrowed from Tiv neighboring ethnic groups such as Udam people (Cross- River States), Igbo, among others, which may have perhaps, imported it from the Hebrews as stated in [7] thus:

> If brothers dwell together and one of them dies leaving no child, his wife shall not be allowed to marry outside the family to stranger. But his brother shall inherit her and raise children for the deceased brother… However, if the deceased brother has children, then the brother should take care of them.

Though leverage marriage was an injunction given by God, it was an imposed practiced on Tiv people and because of the numerous effects it has on Tiv society, most Tiv youths and adults no longer accept the authenticity of such a practice. Many Tiv people are of the belief that leverage or inheritance marriage does more harm to Tiv culture than good. Some Tiv people even question the legality of leverage marriage by asking the following question: can a dead man give birth to a child? If not so, how can a child born after the deceased: person be named after him; rather than his/her biological father? Can the widow inherited allowed the man to marry his own wife? All these are legitimate question that could be asked by any thoughtful individuals, and such have been the problems associated with inheritance marriage. It becomes even more pathetic in cases whereby certain men end up not marrying their wives and at the same time not having their own children. Due to all these facts, contemporary Tiv society frowns seriously at this kind of marriage. Most Tiv sons and daughters consider this system of marriage as ancient, thereby, has no regard for it.

v. *Marriage by Self-Imposition (Kwase u Nyôron)*

Marriage by self-imposition is the most shameful from of marriage in Tiv society. It was the form of marriage practiced in pre-colonial times, especially by people who were considered as *agbenga ior* (those lacking in morals). Whenever such people were greeted *or nyor kwase* (an immoral man who marries by self imposition), he would reply shamefully, *kpa mfa kwagh u meren yo* (but I know what I am doing). The way Tiv society used to look at people of this kind indicated how the society frowns at marriage by self-imposition (*kwase u nyoron)*. Today, most Tiv people see this form of marriage not as completely useless as conceived in pre-colonial Tiv society.

Many enter into it as a means of substance or better still, enhancing their economic status in life. Though self imposition, the man in question completely avoids his home or family and pack into the resident of the woman. Yet some Tiv people still see this form of marriage as a good one. Whatever material benefits one derives from marriage by self-imposition, thing we must bear in mind is that the Tiv people frowns at it and those who imposed themselves on women in the name of this form of marriage are simply considered to be unserious minded.

vi. *Marriage by Convenience (Kwase u Sha Ime Mnger)*

Marriage by convenience was not common in pre-colonial Tiv society. It was the form of marriage contracted at convenience of the couples themselves. Marriage by continence *(kwase u sha ime mnger*) according to interviewee in [20] was usually arranged when a person felt that he/she has no body to take good care of him or her. In such a case, he/she may decide to marry a person of his or her type for convenience sake. In most cases, a widow or widower who has nobody to take good care of him or her but needs assistance may decide to marry a man or woman of his or her own choice without payment of dowry. This form of marriage was based on mutual understanding between the two adults involved. Even today, this form of marriage is still in practice. But one fascinating thing to know here is

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that, as against the Tiv culture of burying the dead woman in her husband's home, a woman who entered into marriage by convenience, was taken to her own father's home at death for burial, especially if the husband's people are not buoyant enough to give her benefiting funeral rites. Despite the repercussions involve in marriage by convenience, many Tiv elders, widows and widowers prefer it since it does not involve any payment of dowry.

d) Marriage Preparations in Tiv Society

In Tiv society, preparation for marriage is elaborate. Certain qualities are expected of a man or woman before marriage. The authors in [18] listed these qualities to include: good morals, respect, honesty, good family background, amongst others. A would-be wife is usually approved by the community. In pre-colonial Tiv society, a man searching for a lady to marry was often directed to a girl known to have possessed such qualities as numerated above. Thus, he may be told "go to so and so person's family and marry his daughter. She is not pretty but has good character". Even in contemporary Tiv society, nobody intends to marry a lady that is not approved by the society. There are few exceptional cases whereby some Tiv people decide on their own to marry a lady without the approval of other people in their families. The arrangements for marriage in Tiv society according to the author in [21] therefore, begins with courtship.

The two families (that of the would-be-husband, and that of the would-be wife) also check to see if there are any impediments to the proposed marriage. They have to ascertain that the planned marriage will take place according to the Ti exogamous principle. For, if it is discovered later that the marriage took place within the forbidden degree of consanguinity, it would be declared invalid, and both sides would have to kill the promise (Wuatia). This according to the author in [23] entails killing a goat and shaving it equally between the two families involved in the marriage. Due to the communitarian aspect of marriage, and the desire to avoid endogamy, when a Tiv man and woman meet far away from their homes, marriage may not take place until members of the two families get to know one another, and normal procedure is followed.

The formal marriage introduction precedes courtship period cautiously. During introduction great care was taken to see that everything goes according to acceptable procedures. The marriage event does not take place at one moment of time. It involves negotiations, financial supports, such as exchange of gifts, assisting the parents of the would-be wife in farming. Since marriage is an alliance between two families, it is desirable to be kept alive by mutual relationship and concerns. After the introduction, comes the payment of bride price (*Kem kwase*) on the day the parent. The suitor is expected to assist the parents of the lady in farming. This is done according to the author in [24] to show the parents-in-law whether he can take care of their daughter and assist them when the need arises for him to do so. Sometimes, the parents might decide to give their daughter to the suitor after he has farmed for them, as was the case in pre-colonial times. After the introduction, comes the bride price (*kem kwase)* on the day the parents, relative and children are expected to gather to perform all the marriage rituals such as: *ikyundi I orya* (money for the head of the household or family), *ikondo I ter kem* (the cloth of the prospective father-in-laws), *a toon a taav* (money for tobacco), *a suwa a tondom* a (money for silencing of the noisy youths), *adzenga a kem* (the amount of the bride price), amongst others.

Also, certain things are provided for the mother-in-laws (*ungo mba kemv)* for the completion of the bride price. The interviewee in [6] listed these things to include: soft drink, bags of salt, red oil, necklace for the prospective mother-in-law, pig and the like. The suitor provided all the above mentioned things through an intermediary (*or suur kwase*). After the bride-price, the family of the intended wife sends a delegation to the home of the intended son-in-law (*Wankem*) to see and assess the place where their daughter mighty be living. This delegation was made up of the would-be-mother-in-law, and other women. If the family finds the home of the would-be-husband suitable, then the final arrangements for the marriage may commerce. The Tiv parent makes sure that his daughter does not only have the securing of physical sustenance, and happiness where she is married, but also protection against those who may have evil intentions towards her. In other words, a Tiv father also seeks to prevent his daughter from harm of witchcraft. Thus, every Tiv woman about to marry has a paternal uncle (*tien*) whose duty is to act as a go-between broker for the marriage and protector of the woman.

Even after married she is linked with another personage in the patronage of her husband known as *Ishuul* (supporter). He is the man to whom the woman first turns for support and protection outside her husband's immediate family group. The *Ishuul* is actually the father's representative. The father entrusts the immediate protection of his daughter to him. If the woman has serious problems with her husband, or his family, she may appeal to the *Ishuul*. Because of the religious implications in the marriage affair, youths are not allowed to give final decision alone about marriage. Marital arrangement is therefore not concluded with a young man but with his father and the elders who "can see in the day and in the night (witchcraft capability) and would be able to protect the woman. In this way, traditionally, a married woman symbolically refers to her husband's father as husband (*nom*) and her real husband as her husband *nom uhe gambe*. After the bride-price (*kem kwase*), the lady is given to the suitor

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as his wife and some delegates, especially woman were chosen to accompany them to the family house of the groom. To herald their arrival the interviewee in [9] continues that a song is announced (*angwe yoon*) by one of the husband's relations saying:

> *Angwe kpeee, angwe, ka u ana? Ka angwe u via, via, angwe ye nyam, nyam, nyam, ikaa I ruam, Angwe kaa kpagba! Kpagba kpagha!! A we lelelee!!!.* This is translated as "Here is the breaking news, whose news is it? It is the news of Mr. so and so. This news involves heavy feasting with meant. It is marriage of a new wife, the one who is to cook food for her husband and his people. The news vibrates sonorously! Sonorously!! Sonorously!!! What a wonderful event, let the joy spread non-stop".

With this announcement, other relatives and well wishers who are waiting for the arrival of the new wife (*kwase Uhe*) responded to the heralded song with appropriate cries and dance. The interviewee in [6] explained that this announcement opened the celebration of the arrival of the new wife with the mockery song of bachelors and their insatiable eating habits in order to spur other bachelor into marriage as follows:

> *Or u kwa hemba ye na a hungwa pepe I gbaan iyough me ya! Or u kwa hemba yam, a hunga pepe, pepe nahan a gbaar agbo ve! Or u kwa ye nyi? A gbagh agho ve!!!* This is translated as "The bachelor eats more than married people. He complains of hunger very early in the morning and asks for roasted water-yam. The bachelors eat a lot. Early in the morning he roasted water-yam himself".

On hearing this song of challenge, the groom who is leaving the bachelorhood then would slaughter a chicken, goat, pig or even a cow for the marriage celebration, depending on his financial strength. This celebration in honors of a newly married woman according to the interviewee in [3] is called *kwase u kuham*. A day after the celebration, the new wife is brought out and introduced to the head of the household (*or-ya*), who explained to her the regulations of the family. This is usually done in company of elderly married woman in the family after which the new wife begins to carry out her marital responsibilities within and outside the community.

e) The Effects of Christian Religious Education on Tiv Traditional Marriage

Education played vital role in marriage in every human society, including the Tiv. It provided knowledge and understanding for the parents of the couple involved. The decisive role which parents played in traditional marriages of their children indicated that it was in the very centre of human existence. In traditional Tiv and Jews society, marriage was a communion of life and everlasting covenant which deals with interpersonal relationship between a man and a woman. Although there was no known affirmation of monogamous marriage in Tiv culture, yet through traditional education the people understood that marriage was a communitarian affair. For instance, the families of both partners are directly involved and bride-price was paid by the family of the husband-to-be.

The traditional Tiv also viewed marriage as a cultural practice necessary for the continuance of their race and made it an obligation for every young adult Tiv. Parents of the bride and groom arranged marriages with little interaction between the spouses to-be themselves. This in the view of the author in [18] was not in any way to deprive the young persons involved in the marriage of their rights to choose the partner's they would want to get married to. But rather, it was a precautious measure taken by the parents so as to avoid dangers of having their children make wrong choices that would ruin their lives, family and the community. The role which bride wealth plays in Tiv traditional marriage concerned both wife-givers and wife-takers. The issues of when and how much the bride wealth should be paid were addressed with care by both parties. However, with the introduction of western education, traditional marriage especially exchange marriage was abolished and replaced contemporaneously within the creation of a momentary economy as legal tender in marriage.

This brought a sharp drop in the age at which Tiv men married, as even young people who might have been waiting for an exchange found difficult to marry by paying money as bride wealth. This consequently led to competition for women, with a resultant increase in bride wealth. Since then the trend of bride wealth has been upwards. In recent years, many Tiv feared that high bride wealth would make it difficult for young people to marry. The author in [14] states that Tiv traditional council in 1979 met under the headship of the Tor Tiv, Dr. Akpelan Orshi, and Pegged the money to be paid as bride wealth at four hundred naira. This action did not however, tame the tide of high bride wealth. Today, the bride wealth is calculated with respect to how much parents have spent on the education of their daughters. There are instances where people have been made to pay as much as ten thousand naira as bride wealth. Many people think that bride wealth should be regulated by the government because high bride wealth amounts to the commercialization of women are just the same as other goods leave been commercialized in Tiv society.

High bride wealth is tantamount to the sale of women. Others, however, contend that bride wealth is solely a family affair and there should be no external interference in it. The author in [12] asserts that this second made up of women, believes that high bride wealth wins respect for women because one would not mishandle what has cost one dearly. One cannot help saying that high bride wealth has been born out of a monetary economic praxis. In this praxis money

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determines the consumer power of the family. The problem of high bride wealth can only be solved if the Ti again sees marriage as an alliance between families, such as view would de-emphasize the monetary aspect in marriage transaction, and instead focus on the friendship, and mutual co-operation that should exist between families. The author in [9] has the following to say about the changes that have accrued in Tiv land and the discontinuity of some cultural practices of traditional marriage rites in recent times:

> …the eradication of what was obtainable in traditional Tiv culture and the replacement with western education and Christian oriented system, on the other hand, on the other hand, the embracing of Christianity as the one true religion that must be firmly established in Tiv land, made the Tiv not to adhere to their culture and practices of marriage. Those who felt that they were free from all forms of traditional marriage desert the traditional rites; infiltrate the culture of preparing for marriage and the taboos guiding marriage practice.

Christianity and western education emphasized less on the old practices of traditional marriage without taking time to study what was obtainable in them. The author in [3.4] explained that as consequences of the changes partly discussed in the foregoing, the traditional practices of marriage rites that were obtainable in pre-colonial Tiv society began to disappear one after the other for good. The Tiv's belief in virginity and sanctity of marriage began to decline. Infidelity and promiscuity were substituted with the teachings about fake love as the basis for marriage. This new understanding and approach to marriage, built on western mentality, greatly influenced the continuity and discontinuity in the practices of Tiv marriage rites. The author in [4] attests to this fact thus:

> …the missionaries who introduced Christian religious education understood Tiv culture of marriage only to an extent; they were not eager to preserve it and therefore, engaged in a systematic exclusion from Tiv land of those elements, which were considered to be a contaminating influence.

Inherent in the above is the fact that with the effects of western education on Tiv world-view, marriage is now given a new understanding. People no longer respect all forms of traditional marriage in Tiv land. The Tiv no longer interpret their marriage life and activities in the light of sanctity and fidelity. More so, the disrespect for virginity and small dowry are being replaced by the belief in Church marriage and quest for money as vital criteria for marriage. In addition, marriage introductions and celebrations are today made through radio and television, and no longer through local means. Furthermore, the impact of western education has also introduced new methods of celebrating marriages to chosen locations. There is also participation of couples in Church marriage rather than traditional marriage rites in Tiv land. These dramatic changes are indicative of the fact that the introduction of western education and Christianity in Tiv land have contributed greatly to erosion of traditional marriage and values in contemporary Tiv society. Thus, the attitudinal orientations of many Tiv people have been grown-off including those that pertain to traditional marriage rites.

II. Conclusion

From our foregone discussion, it is clearly seen that Tiv traditional marriage customs have close links with Jewish Biblical marriage, thought it has been infiltrated due the advent of Christian marriage. The Tiv traditional marriage customs which has similar elements with the Jewish practice such as bride-wealth, exchange of gifts, bride price, exchange of rings, and the like is no longer held in high esteem by many Tiv people. However, the extent to which Tiv traditional marriage is in consonance with Christianity indicates that it can be infused into Christian Kerugma for more meaningful use by Tiv people.

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