

The Roles of Foreign Influences in the Evolution of Social and Filial Relations in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria, as a geographical entity is replete with various ethnic and cultural identities that have continued to evolve from pre-colonial times to recent times. Granted that civilizations from Europe and Arabia have dictated almost all spheres of living, both in the Northern and Southern geographies of the country and eroded nearly all traditional values that would have assisted in curbing social and filial tensions; it is pertinent to inquire into the social relations before this 'encounter.' This is important as this research seeks to invoke some aspects of the past that can be relevant for contemporary utility. Hence, through the method of critical analysis, this study takes a look at the socio-economic norms among the pre-colonial cultures that eventually evolved into Nigeria, paying attention to the place of slaves and women and laying emphasis on the filial and communal nature which allowed for a not too wide the gap between the rich and the poor. Even when this study is not unaware of the positive roles of foreign influence, it recounts the deficits of this presence and suggests that a proper way is to explore some indigenous ideas and apply them for contemporary living.

Keywords: Culture, Family, Moral Values, Nigeria, Pre-colonial.

Introduction

In this study, the task is to explore the transition of the place of family structures and social relations from the pre-colonial period to the contemporary period. This inquiry is both pertinent and tricky. It is tricky especially when one understands that the geography and the demography that is labeled Nigeria is not a homogenous space, where there are a popular or consensual culture and tradition that cut across the board. Granted that the usual commerce is to announce that Nigeria came to be as a result of the Amalgamation of 1914, it becomes pertinent to query whether or not these peoples perceived themselves as Nigerians (or whether or not it is apropos to call them Nigerians) prior to this time. This is one central question that has been considered deeply in other researches such as Hodgkin (1975, 1-2); (ISICHIE 1983, 1). Regardless of this ambivalence, we shall admit, in this study, the common denominator

among the various peoples that make the Nigerian geography, as an implication for a shared inheritance which also doubles as “a history of the bonds which unite them” (ISICHEI 1983, 1). This research is, however, pertinent since it seeks to diminish the emphasis on differences among these peoples while arguing strongly for the place of external influences such as foreign governments and religions. These two influences have also helped to shape the country and make the common denominator that we seek to extrapolate even more evident.

Consequent of the foregoing, this study explores the place of social and nature of family relations, paying close attention to the place of the women, among the peoples both in traditional and contemporary times. In the case of the latter, emphasis on the place of colonization, foreign religions, and more recently, globalization of culture, with its moral dimension, will be explored as prominent causative agents. This study will exploit the tool of critical analysis since it goes beyond mere reportage and description but seeks to establish a coherent and logical perception of social and filial relations in pre-colonial Nigeria by emphasizing the colossal role played by slaves and women within their respective communities. This is pertinent to counter the proposal of those who maintain that slavery has not been instrumental to ancient African empires and kingdoms but only for Arabia, Europe and the Americas. This research also seeks to divulge the way that patriarchy operated during these times. In the third section, the research explores how these relations have evolved in contemporary times. Here, we will highlight the influences wielded by Christianity and Islam on the one hand as well as colonization and globalization on the other hand. We also draw the negative implications for these, especially with regards to how they have influenced filial relations concerning the duties of the woman to the man in the family. In the fourth section, attempts will be made to show that some traditional cultural beliefs may have positive utility in curbing the spate of moral challenges in contemporary Nigeria. Here, the positions of some African feminist scholars will be articulated toward negotiating how some important indigenous lessons can be revived for contemporary adaptation. The fifth section concludes this disquisition.

The Social Relations and Filial Practices in Pre-Colonial Nigeria

A common ground that may be noticed among the cultures and subcultures that eventually evolved into the geographical entity called, Nigeria, is the emphasis on communal living. It is this common ground that will be used as a foil in the articulation of family and social relations in pre-colonial Nigeria. Another important factor that is usually taken for granted but which shall be avoided in the course of this analysis is the effort to draw parallels with Western society. Such a parallel is for us, both unfair and redundant especially because it places emphasis on the West as the

yardstick on matters of social and filial relations, thereby vitiating every effort at assessing the Nigerian indigenous unique perspectives to the phenomenon. Rather than drawing such redundant parallels, our research contrasts the pre-colonial and contemporary with the aim of deducing relevant ethnic-data from the former to enhance the challenges of the present era.

There is no doubt concerning the outlook that the family is the basic unit an individual naturally belongs to. This is the case for all the indigenous cultures that eventually make up the geographical entity called Nigeria. In essence, family in indigenous cultures of pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of the father, mother(s), children and slaves. Even when these cultures are polygamous in marital matters, there were very few cases of monogamy. In an era where agriculture determines the economy of political relations among the cultures, filial responsibilities are usually tied to the land. A man marries, caters for his wives, children and arrays of slaves, from the outputs of his commercial efforts. At this era of Nigeria's history, wealth was not measured on fixed assets beyond the land which they cultivate. Wealth at this era for the Igbo "could be acquired by trade, by success in war, or by successful farming; a wealthy man would be known by his numerous wives and slaves, by his armed retainers, by his ability to purchase titles" (ISICHEI 1983, 255).

Another important idea that needs to be lauded is that there was no widespread poverty and unemployment vis-à-vis contemporary Nigeria – usually deemed as the more advanced and knowledgeable. This was possible since "a certain amount of redistribution of wealth was ensured by the fact that open-handed generosity was always seen as an essential quality of leadership" (NADEL 1972, 82). It was, however, not until the nineteenth century that clear demarcation between the rich and poor became obvious (ISICHEI 1976). This, however, is incidental to the intrusion of Western powers into the socio-political space of 'Nigeria.' In the pre-colonial era, most of the individuals that may be classed as 'poor' are slaves who are usually spoils of war. In other instances, they spearheaded war campaigns. It has been documented that they were three thousand slaved in the Borno army in 1870, armed with rifles as well as traditional weapons (BRENNER 1973, 100). This is also true for Fulani Zazzau where slaves were elevated to a royal position to play an important role in the army. The titles – Sarkin Yara and Sarkin Giwa were created in the 1890s as commanders of regiments of slave musketeers (SMITH 1960, 134).

In Ibadan, it was documented that "the chiefs and head warriors have all extensive farms: some of them hundreds of slaves, and a few, I was told, even some thousands, working farms for them, for whom they built fortified hamlets and small villages" (ISICHEI 1983, 253). This was also the case in Old Calabar, which in the words of Isichei (1983) boasts of

gradation of slaves wherein the lowest comprises of emergent from the interior country. That one is a slave does not dissuade one from amassing considerable standard or living or improved lot. This is the case of a slave owned by Nju Olieme in Ibagwa, present-day Enugu State. It was documented that the “slave was very rich, and in turn owned many slaves himself” (HORTON 1954, 332-3). There was also a slave who became so prominent and powerful enough to dictate the economic life of a whole region. In the Niger Delta, Jaja of Opobo comes to mind (ISICHEI 1983).

In spite of the depiction of the social character of relations within the various indigenous cultures, it is interesting to note that there were peasants who lacked the capacity to acquire slaves. Whilst speaking concerning the Bassa-Komo of present-day Igala in Kogi State, Clifford Miles (1944, 14) writes:

Most people possess only the clothes they have on, some cooking pots and pots for brewing native beer, a long pipe with brass bowl and some native tobacco. To these may be added a mat or two, a bow and arrows, a knife, and perhaps a spear. In most Bassa Komo houses, this is all there is to be seen. The women sometimes have copper bracelets.

One would assume that women will be limited merely to the domestic front where they are to cater to their husbands and children. This is usually not the case since the demands are more cumbersome. Among the Tivs of central Nigeria, the housewife does all the chores of fetching water from the stream, preparing the family meal and caring for the children such that “By the time she had washed up everything it was dark, and time to sit around together. She took the cotton and began to spin, till drowsiness overcame her, and she fell asleep” (EAST 1939, 309-10). For the lucky few who were wedded to royalty, life was more pleasant as slaves were contracted to do these time and energy-demanding chores of a full housewife in pre-colonial times. There were, however, some others who were able to combine their filial and social obligations with trade and other levels of production such as pottery, cloth-weaving, salt mining which in turn contributes to the economic base of their families. While speaking concerning the Nupe, Crowther and Taylor (1859, 208) relay that: “The women are the active traders in produce...which they purchase from farmers, and load in their large hired canoes...The female population may be said to be the life of trade in this country. A great deal of labor is entailed to the woman...” it is also true that most Nigerian peasant women lived laborious lives with few possessions.

At this juncture, we need to stress that anthropological renditions of marriage and family structures in pre-colonial Nigeria have adduced that the woman is the oppressed class. These renditions also stress that, given

the polygamous nature of the traditional era, women are less privileged and degraded (ISICHEI 1983, 258). It is for this reason that scholars such as Oyeronke Oyewunmi (1997) and Oyeronke Olajubu (2004) have made an effort toward arguing that filial relations and the place of the woman was not so strict or fixed to domestic activities in traditional times in Africa. Speaking on the Yoruba, Oyewunmi (1997, 45) hints that “the Yoruba world is not dichotomized into male and female.” As a way of making her point that for the Yoruba, emphasis on a strict distinction between male and female is not popular, Olajubu (2004, 43) relays:

Specifically, I am a wife in some contexts, but at other times I am a husband to other women. Whereas my position as a wife is based on my biological anatomy (in relationship to one male) and marital affiliation (my relationship to male and female members of my husband’s extended family), my role as a husband is informed by my natal affiliation (my relationship to wives of male members of my natal family), which is independent of class or status.

One of the far-reaching implications of the foregoing excerpt is that “Biological anatomy is not a limitation to social status as that of husband, wives, mothers, or fathers among the Yoruba. In addition, the Yoruba language provides no pronoun for sexual distinction. The notion of gender among the Yoruba is complex and multidimensional” (OLAJUBU 2004, 42). It is, however, important to hint that though gender is not the focus of this discussion, the aim is to explore some findings that seem to show the ambivalent or inconclusive place of how women were treated in ancient times and then infer the places of positive filial and social relations for contemporary times. It is with the presence and influences of each of Christianity and Islam in these territories that the place of women and the establishment of patriarchy seem to deepen further. The position of Christianity on monogamy seems apt. However, the reinforcement of religious patriarchy seems sustained. Similarly, Islam foisted an Arabic culture of assimilation, preserving polygamy but further diminishing the expression of women, especially in Northern Nigeria. Hence, the presence of these religions and their tendency to enforce patriarchy in spite of their division concerning polygamy and monogamy, a large gulf of identity and social relations seems to have been cemented into contemporary Nigerian living. A clear manifestation of this ideal is one of the core concerns of the next section.

The Social and Filial Character of Contemporary Nigeria

By contemporary Nigeria, this study refers to the geographical and demographic entity that emerged from the Amalgamation of 1914 through

independent Nigeria and into the 21st century. For this era, colonial government through the principle of indirect rule was formalized, Christianity and Islam become more institutionalized as modernization in the garb of globalization of Cultures entered the fray to influence, and in some cases, erode the traditional Nigerian cultures. It is also important to note that the acquisition of slaves and their use for labor no longer wields general acceptance in modern times. However, individualistic mode of survival replaced the communalistic emphasis found in pre-colonial cultures in ‘Nigeria.’

It was the plan of the British to work through the traditional rulers. Hence, it is not surprising that in “the heyday of colonialism, the British and traditional rulers worked in close alliance” (ISICHEI 1983, 380). This is the Indirect Rule which became an “unquestioned creed. It became the practice to protect not only unsatisfactory rulers but the system itself, from every breath of criticism” (ISICHEI 1983, 380). This was the political system that allowed the traditional rulers some impunity which even traditional norms could no longer check. It bred divide and a foundation for nationalism leading to the struggle for independence by prominent nationalists such as Alvan Ikoku, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo who are clear cases of an admixture of the Western culture with the Nigerian model (FALOLA 2018).

With the arrival and acceptance of Islam and Christianity, traditional religious cultures in Nigeria began to wane. This is the case since the morality connected to these cultures seems to be diametrically opposed to these foreign religions leading to a clash of civilizations and religious cultures. With regards to Christianity however, there was a form of a blend, especially when one recalls the *modus operandi* of the *Aladura* Churches, whose “details of religious practices contain much of the African past...Another link is the way in which the witch is seen as the personification of evil, and purification and liberation from witchcraft is emphasized” (ISICHEI 1983, 463). This may be contrasted with other Christian denominations such as Catholicism which lays emphasis on piety and urges women to be fully submissive to their husbands. They were urged to be quiet and not hold priestly positions. This has, in some ways, affected the role of women in contemporary Nigerian society, especially in Southern Nigeria. The case of women in Northern Nigeria is even gloomier, especially with the inauguration of Shariah in places which were hitherto non-Islamic. On this note, Elizabeth Isichei (1983, 459) informs us that:

In 1953, Muslims were 73 percent of the population of the north. In Sokoto, Kano and Katsina, they were 94 percent or more of the population, the others being a declining handful of Maguzawa, and the southern Christians of the *sabon garis*. In Borno, the percentage of Muslims had risen to over 83 percent, and was to

be 93 percent by 1963. If Hausaland and Borno had become overwhelmingly Muslim, the Middle Belt was a striking growth area. In Kabba, Niger Province, and most of all Bauchi and Ilorin, the percentage of Muslims had expanded dramatically – 81 percent in Bauchi in 1963, and 75 percent in Ilorin.¹

And with the Islamic presence, the rights and place of women and filial relations became principally patriarchal in the aforementioned places. These are not unconnected to the injunctions of *Al-Qur'an*.

The Qur'an 2: 228 makes the case that men are better than women in status. This is one of the views that have made the freedom of women, especially in Northern Nigeria in modern times, to be curtailed. Elsewhere, in *The Qur'an* 4: 34, it is documented that: “Men are managers of the affairs of women because Allah has made the one superior to the other.” Regarding inheritance, it is explicitly stated that *The Qur'an* 4: 11 makes it clear “that women will always get half of what a man gets in inheritance.” There is, however, no passage as illuminating as *The Qur'an* 4:34, regarding GBV. According to the revelation:

Men are in charge of women by (right of) what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend (for maintenance) from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. But those from whom you fear arrogance – (first) advise them; (then if they persist), *forsake them in bed; and finally strike them*. But if they obey you (once more), seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand (*Emphasis mine*).

As a result, “One may infer validly from the foregoing, that cases of violence against women and homosexuals that are religiously induced most times, carry less weight in the face of the law in places where *Al-Qur'an* wields influence over a large followership” (AFISI 2019, 178). Granted, this does not hold in all places, and at all times, it is equally not false that women are usually the victims. One would think that *The Qur'an* serves as the basis for the condition of women. It is also true that the place of women in Nigeria has been further compromised by *The Holy Bible*.

When one gleans the lore of creation in the Book of Genesis; the epistles of Paul in the New Testament; as well as the various reflections of

¹At this juncture, a critic may want to know why in a 2020 research, we give emphasis to statistics that dates as far back as 1963. The reason is because the figures of 1963 are more reliable than the figures of 2020 which is based on estimates lacking coherent and rigorous representation of the Nigerian demography. We have, therefore, stuck to the former which is more reliable and allows the reader to make inferences whether or not the statistics still speak strongly for the region in contemporary times.

sin owing to these portions of scripture, women (beginning with the disobedient Eve), have been concluded to be not only inherently sinful but sinfully responsible than men (AFISI 2019, 177). These are related to harmful Christian theological traditions on suffering and forgiveness that “applaud” those suffering from gender-based violence to endure unjustly (CARTER 2014, 21). In Genesis 12: 10-20, Abraham finds Sarah expendable. In addition to this, Lot proposes to rapists, his daughters as to protect his male guests (Gen. 19: 1-11). King David refused to punish Amnon’s sexual assault on Tamar (2 Samuel 13). From Paul’s letter to Timothy, it is clear that women have been encouraged to learn in silence (1 Timothy 2: 11-12), just as they have been implored to submit fully to the man (Ephesians 5: 22-3) (AFISI 2019, 177). As if these negative and patriarchal descriptions and ascriptions of the woman are not enough, consider the position of the Catholic Inquisition, which states clearly that:

All wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman...What else is a woman but a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic anger, a delectable detriment, an evil nature, painted with fair colours...Women are by nature instruments of Satan – they are by nature carnal, a structural defect, rooted in the original creation. (KATZ 1994, 438-9)

These revealed scriptures, which have filtered into the social lives of Nigerians in contemporary times, are indicative of the move from tradition to modernity, owing to the fact that these are the inscriptions given to women that reinforce a patriarchal and hegemonic status quo. The deviation from the traditional cultures and filial character of the various cultural identities that make up Nigeria and the serenity that they enjoyed before foreign influences have been further compounded by globalization.

In the words of Frederick Stutz and Barney Warf, globalization “refers to worldwide processes that make the world, its economic system, and its society more uniform, more integrated, and more interdependent” (STUTZ & WARF 2007, 9). It is not to be contested that even when the economy of all countries of the world are not so integrated and interconnected, the attainment of these is the ideal. More so, it needs no elaboration that the countries of the world are now more integrated and interdependent than ever before. It is almost impossible for a country to isolate itself without serious economic and political implications. This is why “the globalization process is a useful way to explain the movement of people, goods, and ideas within and among various regions of the world and their cultural, political and environmental systems” (STUTZ & WARF 2007, 9). Elsewhere we peruse that:

Globalization can be perceived in terms of growing economic interdependence of nations worldwide through the increasing volume and size of cross-border transactions in goods and services and international capital flows, and also through the more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology.” (OKOSODO et al. 2008, 178)

It is glaring that with alarming and widespread interaction among the peoples of the world, the eating and food culture will definitely be affected too. It is in this connection that we can speak of the “globalization of culture” (STUTZ & WARF 2007, 10). When talking about the globalization of culture, it is important to understand that it lays emphasis on the surge in common beliefs and folk ideas among the peoples of the world. This allows societies to display fewer traits of cultural differences than in the past where diversity was replete. This has been made possible by telecommunications and global media (STUTZ & WARF 2007, 10). And this has brought more of a negative impact than positive for contemporary Nigeria since it has been gleaned as “the direct consequence of the expansion of European culture across the planet via settlements, colonization and cultural mimesis. It is also bound up intrinsically with the pattern of capitalist developments as it has ramified through political and cultural arenas” (WATERS 1995, 3).

Perhaps one will link the cankerworm of gender violence and poor family standards in contemporary Nigeria to the influx of foreign ideals, since such were not as replete and alarming in pre-colonial times. As the World Health Organisation puts it, “People of all classes and of all ethnicities in all nations suffer violence inflicted on them by others for reasons based on gender. While many different people, including men and boys, are affected by gender-based violence, women and girls are especially targeted” (WHO 2013). In a related vein, another research discourses that “globally, 30 per cent of women over the age of 18 have experienced sexual or physical violence at the hands of a current or former intimate partner” (TJADEN & THOENNES 1998, iii). In addition to this, “Of the 18.2 percent of women who have endured rape or attempted rape, 12.3 percent of those were younger than age 12 when they were first raped, and 29.9 percent were between the ages of 11 and 17” (TJADEN & THOENNES 1998, 11). Another disturbing fact, stressing the susceptibility of women to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) accentuates that girls within “the age range of 16-19 are four times more likely than the overall population to be the victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault” (WHO 2013). It is, therefore, important to seek palliative alternatives to these social challenges. This is the focus of the section that follows.

The Role of Traditional Values on Social and Family Relations for Contemporary Nigeria

There are torrents of researches with the principal character of diminishing the Western presence and calling for the return to the traditional African past. On the other hand, there are scholars calling for the embrace. One point to realize is that we cannot discredit the Western presence as entirely bad without being unfair as to the positive effects the contact has had on Africa at large and Nigeria specifically. This is the same idea that might have occupied the cogitations of Toyin Falola (2018, 8), who wrote that “there were three general ways to respond to the undeniable Western presence: to accept it without question; to reject it completely; and to blend traditional practices with foreign practices.” This study admits the undeniable Western presence and the indigenous approach which makes it to initiate a blend. In addition, we live in a globalized and multicultural setting wherein identities and backgrounds are gradually phasing into a cosmopolitan affair. It is important to be open to new ideas and positions. This is the case since multiculturalism entails acknowledging the validity of the cultural expressions and contributions of the various groups (ROSADO 1996, 4).

As a result, this study announces the urgency of blending positive aspects of the traditional Nigerian past that can be relevant in contemporary times. Much exertions and accentuations need to be adduced to the inculcation of the relevant aspects of social and filial relations in the distant past for contemporary times. Afisi who was thinking along this line also suggests that one of the best ways to make this work is to explore the communalistic character of the pre-colonial times through education for building a sound Nigerian mind. In his words, “the effort at integration in this respect is to bring this positive aspect of traditional education into contemporary education. Co-operative teaching methods and practices which uphold communalistic spirit of teamwork can be inculcated into the contemporary education system in Africa” (AFISI 2008, 10). This we, maintain will not only assist in the deep understanding and use of positive ancient ideals for contemporary nation-building but extends to an understanding that traditional Africans and pre-colonial Nigerians have the capacity for deep critical thought worthy of contributing to contemporary living. It is for this reason that Babs Fafunwa (1974, 34) hints that “physical education, vocational training, religious education, respect for elders and co-operative community efforts are considered necessary for the development of ‘good character.’” And these ideas which are already in the Nigerian national policy,² will need to be pursued spiritedly and faithfully as to guarantee equal economic and social opportunities for women and

²This document seeks to “inculcate community spirit in the students through projects and group action research” (FRN 2004, 34).

other minorities for a harmonious and peaceful coexistence to ensue. An important aspect that therefore needs to be discerned from the discussion thus far is the role of proper parenthood, one of the cogent relevant aspects of filial relations in pre-colonial Nigeria that may be revived. The essence of the filial relations, social structures and the place of women and men in pre-colonial times seem to have waned and needs to be initiated into contemporary living. Oladele Balogun (2013, 40) who was thinking along this line has come to the verdict that “many of the causes of problems of social degeneration and decay could be avoided if there are good fatherhood and motherhood in place to nurture, protect and guide the child for moral goodness and positive greatness.” The contention of Balogun is not disconnected from the revival of some important values concerning family relations in the distant past that can direct and improve the current status quo, which has been influenced by foreign influence. It is, therefore, important to seek ways through which values connected to social and filial relations can be inculcated into the minds of modern minds, via pedagogy. In an attempt to make this clearer, Balogun (2013, 42) expatiates:

The contemporary neglect of the African notion of an educated person has made literacy education a basis for the cultivation of abysmal ignorance, greed, individualistic acquisition, and all sorts of vices. In view of our craze for formal education without due consideration for the ethical dimension, social vices have escalated at a rate of geometric progression. Thus, all eyes are on paper qualifications, without consideration for moral probity, intellectual creativity or problem-solving capacity. The resultant effects of these are obvious: examination malpractices, nepotism, mediocrity at the expense of meritocracy, in public, private and corporate places, corruption, unemployment, and high crime wave with the long-run effects of all these anomalies leading to political instability, social disorder, and stunted growth.

One of the implications present in the foregoing is connected to the outlook that the influence of the undeniable Western presence seems to have done more harm than good. This requires a balance which can be invoked from some indigenous knowledge episteme that held sway prior Western contact.

More so, the patriarchal structure that seems to have dictated contemporary Nigerian lifestyle thanks to the influx of Christianity and Islam has reinforced the place of women to no more than wives and mothers. As a result, the exclusion of women in nearly all matters of social relations seems to be underscored subtly by these faiths. One way to overcome this hurdle is to disclose some positive depictions of the

relevance of women to both filial and social relations. In an *Ifa* verse in *Ose-Otura*, it is clearly written:

*In everything that we do
If we do not include women in it
It cannot succeed.*

The aim of this *Ifa* verse is connected to the fact that women are not mere wives and mothers but have roles in social relations that are beyond the filial aspects. The verdict on the consideration of women and extension of respect and self-worth to them is also divulged in another verse of the *Ifa* chapter, *Ose-Otura*, where a tradition evinces how the *Yoruba* Higher God, *Olodumare*, delegated sixteen males and just one female (the goddess *Osun*) divinities to order the world (AFISI 2019, 180).

Upon reaching the earth, these divinities excluded the female from decisions, sacred knowledge and oaths. “When *Osun* could bear it no longer, she congregated the women on earth and formed the *Iya Mi* group, a society of powerful women. With their hitherto unusual *ase* (life force), they interfered with the plans of the male deities. Consequently, there was chaos with humans and nature” (OLAJUBU 2004, 50). After exercising all powers with no avail, these male divinities returned to *Olodumare* to explain their difficulty. Realizing that they are sixteen instead of seventeen, the Supreme Deity asked after the seventeenth. They replied that she had not been considered fitting because she was female. At this point, *Olodumare* instructed them to meet, apologize and include *Osun* in the grand plan, otherwise, their efforts will be otiose. Upon heeding the admonition of the Higher God, “the sixteen deities went back to plead for *Osun*’s forgiveness, which she granted after receiving the promise that no longer would she be excluded from all functions and proceedings on earth” (OLAJUBU 2004, 50).

This understanding which was crucial in traditional times speaks to the need to correct the misleading and patriarchal undergirding of the religions from the Middle East. The need to improve the status of women in filial and social relations, therefore, needs to be given deeper privilege than what currently obtains. These are the kinds of ideas that ought to be given the relevant attention through the revision of the curriculum, away from the negative aspects of the Arabic and Western ideals that mitigate the place of women in filial and social relations toward the emergence of sound minds that portray a blend in indigenous and non-indigenous values. This is plausible and can be relayed for social relevance, thanks to the recent call from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) that philosophy is taught prior to university education. Though the advisory statement of UNESCO did not specify African philosophy be it ancient or contemporary, as part of the patrimony

of philosophy, teaching philosophy from the African place is subtly implied (FAYEMI 2019, 246). It is from this leaning that the contemporary Nigerian scholar needs to pick up the gauntlet to initiate a framework that can birth pliable filial and social relation that means well for the country and the continent too.

Conclusion

In this piece, we have been able to provide a succinct glimpse into the pre-colonial norms that persisted in the distinct societies that would later make up the geographical entity called Nigeria. Attention has been given to the roles of peasant farmers, slaves and women in some of the indigenous cultures of pre-colonial Nigeria. As a result of globalization of culture and its influx into the Nigerian space-time, with a specific bias to colonization, Christianity and Islam, traditional cultural values are both waning and on the intellectual defensive. It is the proposal of this study that since foreign presence may not be denied as it has dictated many cultural beliefs and norms for contemporary Nigeria, it is pertinent to consult and apply some positive and plausible aspects of traditional times to check the surge in patriarchal outlook, value deficits, negative or poor parenthood and unhealthy social relations, that are now replete in nearly all parts of Nigeria.

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