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In not more than 3000 words, discuss the cultural changes that have taken place in your local community upon the advent of westernization.

What is cultural change?

Culture change is a term used in public policy making that emphasizes the influence of cultural capital on individual and community behavior. It has been sometimes called repositioning of culture,[1] which means the reconstruction of the cultural concept of a society.[2] It places stress on the social and cultural capital determinants of decision making and the manner in which these interact with other factors like the availability of information or the financial incentives facing individuals to drive behavior. These cultural capital influences include the role of parenting, families and close associates; organizations such as schools and workplaces; communities and neighborhoods; and wider social influences such as the media. It is argued that this cultural capital manifests into specific values, attitudes or social norms which in turn guide the behavioral intentions that individuals adopt in regard to particular decisions or courses of action. These behavioral intentions interact with other factors driving behavior such as financial incentives, regulation and legislation, or levels of information, to drive actual behavior and ultimately feed back into underlying cultural capital.

In general, cultural stereotypes present great resistance to change and to their own redefinition. Culture, often appears fixed to the observer at any one point in time because cultural mutations occur incrementally. Cultural change is a long-term process. Policymakers need to make a great effort to improve some basics aspects of a society’s cultural traits.

In every society, culture shows the way of life in that particular society. The culture of a society is the bedrock and pivot on which all relations stand. Societies of the world today, whether ancient or modern, had cultural variables that determined what they were and what they did.Thus, no society in the world can survive without culture.

The issue of culture transcend mode of dressing, dancing, music, morals, festivals and language because it involves the generality of human actions. The importance of culture lies not only in its intellectual spectrum, but also in the fact that it marks the missing link between man and the lesser animals. It is the totality of human actions which is socially as opposed to genetically transmitted values from one generation to the other. However, western Europeans in this perception is derogatory. History shows that African societies developed like other groups in the world and that the emergent civilization was later spread and modified by other nations and group. Africa is one of the most exploited as well as exploitable continent because of her rich cultures and resources that has been overwhelmed by foreign cultures. In the light of the above, this paper discusses cultural

aspects of Ughievwen people of Western Delta of Nigeria especially areas of marriage and healing practices in the pre-colonial times to show the extent to which the introduction of colonialism appears to have adulterated and exterminated them. It is therefore imperative that African and indeed, Nigerian culture needs to be preserved because it is the only link between the past, present and the future.

The entire Ughievwen area is said to have been occupied by four main families that sprang from the four children of Ughievwen, the eponymous founder. They are Orhowe, Owahwa, Ukpedi and Uvburie. Even though there are dearths of written works on the early history of the Ughievwen people, recent research shows that the area now occupied by the people may have been occupied by the same people as far back as at the beginning of the 18th century. Upon settlement in the area, the people had their culture and related amongst themselves harmoniously before the advent of colonialism in the 19th century. Aspects of the people’s culture that marked and will continue to easily distinguish them from their peers are marriages and healing practices .This appears to have changed with the advent of colonialism and even the post colonial period.

In Ughievwen land, like other African societies, marriage evolved out of the people’s traditional beliefs and was therefore regulated by custom. As a result of this, marriages contracted which fell short of the traditionally accepted standard was customarily frowned at, and socially stigmatized by the people (Okpohie, 2008). For instance, couples who were not lawfully married under the traditional system were denied certain traditional and social privileges. First, the male was not regarded as son- in-law to the parents of the wife. Second, the male was not allowed to perform traditional burial rites if either parents of the wife died; third, the woman or wife was regarded as Osen (a concubine) or treated as prostitute.Traditional marriage in pre-colonial Ughievwen land was conducted in six stages. The first stage was courtship. This starts right from the time the man saw lady whom he liked and signified interest in her before the parents. At this stage, the man made occasional visits in the evenings to the parents of the would-be wife. The parents of the lady also used such opportunity to investigate the man’s background. Once there was confirmation, the man was asked to pay a specified amount of money to the mother of the girl. This payment was called Igho-Esheren. The suitor was also expected to buy a wrapper and blouse for the girl called Amwa-Esheren (Pippah). These requirements were expected to be fulfilled by the suitor before he was traditionally allowed to sleep with the lady. The amount of money paid was not fixed as it depended on the prevailing economic situation. However, as asserted by my informant, such amount was within the neighborhood of £1 or more (Okpohie, 2008).

The second stage was introduction and acceptance. At this stage, the man was asked to come with his relations for formal introduction to the in-laws. Kolanuts and native gin (called Ogogoro) were presented by the man to the family of the would-be bride and their purpose was made known to the bride’s family via the oratory skill of a spokesman (Otota) brought for that purpose. Where the family of the bride accepted the proposal, the suitor and his family presented acceptance drinks referred to as Udi-merhovwenren. The quantity of this however, varied among villages, but in Owahwa village, it included a bottle of native gin, a plate of kolanuts with alligator pepper and the sum of twelve and half pounds (Okpohie)

The stage of introduction and acceptance was followed by Oko (bride wealth). A list of items to be presented by the suitor was made known by the family of the would-be bride to the suitor. In Owahwa community of Ughievwen area, these items included: two wrappers (Ileleji), two headgears, one umbrella, a pair of shoes, a golden necklace, wrist coral beads, a suitcase, one lamp, tubers of yam, two Otovwe fish and cosmetics (Okpohie). These items were compulsorily expected to be provided before the next stage called Udi-Eghiekuotor. It should be noted that while most of the items were meant for the bride, the consumables were shared by the parents of the bride among their relations.

The stage of Udi-Eghiekuotor preceded the payment of dowry (Emuebro). The basic things required at this stage were not significantly different from that of Udi- Eghiekuotor except that before the day of the payment of dowry, the son-in-law was expected to provide a hat, walking stick and a wrapper for the father-in-law, while the mother-in-law was expected to be given money for taking care of the bride, called Igho-Gberharen (Koyor, 2009). Other payments expected to be made by the suitor was Igho-Oyanvwen (money for circumcision), which was a token and the amount was not static and three bags of salt, one for the mother-in-law which she shared among her relations, the remaining two bags were given to the Ewheya (married women of the extended family).

The last stage of marriage activities in Ughievwen area was called Aje-Esuo (escortion). This took place only on certain days of the traditional week (Koyor). These days were known as Omamede and Edebi, which according to tradition, was to avoid other fresh and protracted arrangement. On the date of escorting, the family of the bride (Opha, plural: Epha) delegates two or more responsible married ladies, joined by two or more ladies sent by the bridegroom, both of whom teamed up to bring the bride (Opha) home in a colorful ceremony

Impact of Western Culture on Traditional African Society: Problems and prospects

Deviation from the Traditional Politics: Consequent on African ontology, authority and power belongs to the entire community just like the vital forces. Every member has the share of the power. In African traditional politics, the power to govern is invested on a group of persons and at times, a worthy leader to act on behalf of the community. The community confers the authority on the persons to exercise power on behalf of the living and the dead. By so doing, they become symbols of unity and agents of maintaining the ontological harmony of the community. Due to cultural change, Okon (2016) avers that the political atmosphere in African land is now a problem which has made the contemporary African politician no longer see themselves as leaders who have the mandate of their people to serve. Today, people now fight, kill and bulldoze their ways into positions of power. This shows deviation and abandonment of values, especially the sacredness of human life. High values and respect should be reposed in African leaders and there is a need to re-evaluate the traditional leadership systems which are more of hereditary in nature. We should also embrace the democratic aspect of leadership to check the excesses.

The Challenge of Worship

In the contemporary era, culture of African people has been greatly erodedduetoWesterncultureinfluence.Alloy holds that it’s very clear that the traditional ways of worship has drastically changed and modernized. The local or traditional drums that makes the music of the people very significant and meaningful has greatly being replaced with band-set and English songs. Africans should return back to their heritage and revive the locally made drums and music which makes them distinct in their nature of worship. The acrobatic dance of the Africans when drums and music are played is far richer than the Western pattern of worship which has gradually turned African worshippers into iroko trees that stand very erect in the place of worship.

**Communication Barrier**: According to Venkatesh, it is a means by which interpretation and transmission of ideas between individuals or groups are made because of cultural change. Vast number of Nigerians today which speak English instead of their ancestral language has caused a barrier in communication between the young ones who migrated to the Urban Areas, some people living in the rural areas, and old men and women. As native African societies continue to do this, most communities will be experiencing a corresponding loss of their traditional culture. There is a need for Africans to teach and educate their children in the midst of acculturation so that the local language of the people will not be completely lost to Western languages. Government should see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or language of immediate community and at a later stage, English language.

**High Rate of Divorce:** In the old Igbo set up, a young man or woman does not tell his/her parents who to marry. It was the full right of the parents of the girl and the man to begin to find a wife for their son, and give their daughter to anybody of their choice. The next was for him to wait for them to tell him where and when the marriage would take place. According to Ubani, the work of doing the investigation, finding money and other things is not in the hand of the man. Investigation here means finding out whether the girl's people can give birth without difficulties, a trace of rampant adultery, stealing, and premature death and so on.

Due to cultural change, men find their wives on their own without the consent of their parents. They are not willing to know or investigate things about who to marry; they make decisions on where and when the marriage will hold. Which has often times resulted to regrets, abandonment and even quarrel between the two parties. In Africa, both the living and the dead gather during marriage. It is a conglomerate that no single individual must stand alone. In order to avert frequent divorce cases in Africa, it is imperative for young men and women going into marriage to listen to their parents especially when there is a sense of danger.

**Indecent Sexual Behavior:** This is an unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men. Sykinner avers that due to cultural change, women especially go along the road, school, and churches and so on half-naked. Putting on sexy clothe that reveals special part of their body all in the name of fashion which negatively leads to sexual harassment, raping etc which at times opens way for divers Sexually TransmittedDiseasesinoursocietyisrampant. All hand should’ve on desk to stop this deadly practice in our society.

**The Challenge of Education and Technology:** Westernize accompanied by advanced technology stepped down the pace of African local technological development and oral tradition. In fairness however, Western technology has tremendously improved the lifestyle of Africans in various areas such as Medicine, Communication, Transport, Agriculture, Sports, Education, Clothing, and so on. However, we should not keep basking in the euphoria of Western technological achievements and forget to improve on our local technology as stated by Arinze. We should appreciate the products of our local art works of painting, sculptures, and molding just for what they are and it will encourage development.

**What is westernization**

Westernization has been a growing influence across the world in the last few centuries, with some thinkers assuming Westernization to be the equivalent of modernization,[2] a way of thought that is often debated. The overall process of Westernization is often two-sided in that Western influences and interests themselves are joined with parts of the affected society, at minimum, to change towards a more Westernized society, with the putative goal of attaining a Western life or some aspects of it, while Western societies are themselves affected by this process and interaction with non-Western groups.

Westernization traces its roots back to Ancient Greece. Later, the Roman Empire would take on the first process of Westernization as it was heavily influenced by Greece and created a new culture based on the principles and values of the Ancient Greek society. The Romans emerged with a culture that would lay the new foundations of Europe[anachronism] and grow into a new Western identity based on the Greco-Roman society.

Westernization can also be compared to acculturation and enculturation. Acculturation is "the process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between cultural groups and their individual members."[3] After contact, changes in cultural patterns are evident within one or both cultures. Specific to Westernization and the non-Western culture, foreign societies tend to adopt changes in their own social systems relative to Western ideology, lifestyle, and physical appearance, along with numerous other aspects, and shifts in culture patterns can be seen to take root as a community becomes acculturated to Western customs and characteristics – in other words, Westernized. Westernization can include Christianization, Americanization and Europeanization, with historical versions including Romanization, Hellenization, Francization, Russification and Germanization. The phenomenon of Westernization does not follow any one specific pattern across societies as the degree of adaption and fusion with Western customs will occur at varying magnitudes within different communities.Specifically, the extent to which domination, destruction, resistance, survival, adaptation or modification affect a native culture may differ following interethnic contact.