

**AFRICAN IDEOLOGIES, HUMAN SECURITY AND PEACE
BUILDING: THE CASE OF CHILD ADOPTION IN IGBO
COMMUNITIES**

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Abstract

Childlessness is a major source of insecurity and conflict in most Igbo communities. The problems it creates for the childless are both social and psychological. Igbo society places a high premium on children. Children make for peace and stability in marriages. They serve as assets and assurance for security in old age; and they are generally seen as a blessing not only to the individual parents but also to the society at large. Childlessness on the other hand leads to problems bothering on peace and security of individuals in society in the form of marriage instability, mutual suspicion and distrust among couples, lack of peace in the home and in matters pertaining to inheritance and distribution of critical resources including land and property rights. This paper argues the need to promote the practice of child adoption as an urgent step for attaining the needed security, succor and peace for the childless in our society. There were various coping strategies and customary arrangements evolved by various Igbo communities in the past to mitigate the human security challenges posed by childlessness. These and other strategies worked perfectly well in pre-capitalist Igbo communities but most of them are no more compatible with the changing demands of the modern society. Similarly, the modern child adoption processes and methods have tried to address the aforementioned problems of childlessness but their expected impact has been vitiated by the failure to make them home-grown. Social institutions, notably the kinship-based institutions provide the necessary social context in which child adoption takes place, and through which human security and peace building are mediated and expressed in these communities. There is therefore the need to bring them into the mainstream of discourse and fashion out ways and means of aligning their operations with the modern system of child adoption.

Keywords: African, Ideologies, Peace-Building, Human Security, Igbo Communities

Introduction

Childlessness is a major source of insecurity and conflict in most Igbo communities. The problems it creates for the childless are both social and psychological. The society places a high premium on children (Adenike O. Omosun & Odeyemi F 2013, Nachinab G.T.et al 2019, Oladokun, A.et al.2009). Children make for peace and stability in marriages. They serve as assets and assurance for security in old age; and they are generally seen as a blessing not only to the individual parents but also to the society at large. Childlessness on the other hand leads to problems bothering on peace and security of individuals in society in the form of marriage instability, mutual suspicion and distrust among couples, lack of peace in the home and in matters pertaining to inheritance and distribution of critical resources including land and property rights. There is therefore the need to promote the practice of child adoption as a necessary step to attain the needed security and peace for the childless in our society.

Conceptual Framework

African Ideology

Eagleton T. (1991) defines ideology as “the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life; a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class” Perdue (1993) aptly describes it as a mirror and smokescreen reflecting and protecting the objective and material world. Its intricacies include legitimations, thought-patterns and mores which are transmitted over time through the day- to- day operations of familiar social institutions, customs and traditions. African ideology, therefore, is the theory and practice of African society, theory about its nature and operations. In the context of this paper it specifically refers to African systems of thought, ideas, norms and values which form the basis of social behaviour as it relates to child adoption.

Human Security

Human security refers to the protection of individuals from harm (Anderson-Rogers & Crawford, D. 2018). In the words of the authors of the United Nations 1994 Human Development Report: “human security has the characteristic of universality; as it applies to individuals everywhere. They thus defined it as “people’s safety from chronic threats and protection from sudden hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life.” (UNDP 1994). Human security means freedom from pervasive threats to

people's rights, safety and lives. It is freedom from fear, want and freedom to live in dignity (op cit). The focus is on the human individual or group in society in matters concerning their right as active participants in the society.

In the words of Paul, J. 2014, Gazizolun, A. 2016 "human security has ceased to be the vague, amorphous add-on to harder areas of security such as military or state security but to mean a shift in the discourse on security away from its traditional state-centered orientation to the protection and advancement of individuals within societies.". The Commission on Human Security (2003) defines this shift from the point of view of "strategies, set up by states, international agencies, NGOs and the private sector, to shield people from menaces," including the norms, processes and institutions required to protect people from critical and pervasive threats in society. Childlessness in Igbo society is one of such threats, and (indeed a major threat) to human security.

Peace Building

Peace is a necessary ingredient for human existence. It is one of man's highest, core values that cannot be divorced from good life. Rummell, R.J. (1981) talks of its indispensability when he said that:

...the most disadvantageous peace is better than the most just war. Peace is more important than all justice. I prefer the most unjust peace to the justest war that was ever waged.

Peace building is the application of the tools that guarantee peace. It is a set of values, relational skills, analytical frameworks and social processes to create sustainable, just and peaceful communities/societies.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 Report, *An Agenda for Peace*, defined peace building as action to solidify peace and avoid relapse into conflict. The Brahimi Report (2000) defines it as "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war." In this discourse peace building is, therefore, operationally defined as measures that address core human security issues that affect the functioning of the society, and that seek to enhance the capacity of the individual members of that society to effectively carry out their functions in their everyday life. Our position is that child adoptions essentially a peace -building process in marriages, families and communities.

The Child

A child is a biological offspring of a couple or a single person be it male or female.

The Children and Young Persons law of the Federation (2003) makes a clear distinction between a child and a young person. A child is any person who has not attained the age of fourteen years, while a young person means someone who is above fourteen years of age, but below seventeen years.

Child Adoption

Child Adoption is a process which ensures a dependent child a permanent family. It is a means by which the legal relationship hitherto existing between a child and its natural parents is cut and reconnected between it and a third person or persons (Friedlander (1992), Kigbu, Salome & Konkat, 2002).

According to Modell (2000), "adoption is the legal act of permanently placing a child with a parent or parents other than the birth mother or father." An adoption order has the effect of severing the parental responsibilities and rights of the birth parents and transferring those responsibilities and rights onto the adoptive parent(s). After the finality of an adoption, there is no legal difference between adopted children and those born to the parents. The children can inherit the ascribed status of the adoptive parents, that is, they inherit the same legal rights as biological children. In other words, if the parent dies, they inherit on the same basis as biological offspring.

Indigenous Ideologies

The African Ideology of the Child

There abound sentiments and emotional expressions of Africans depicting the importance of children, as shown in their dance-songs, proverbs, choice of names etc. we have these names as nwa ka aku (child is more valuable than wealth), nwa amaka,(child is precious) nwabundo (child is social security), nwa ka ego (child is more valuable than money) , ugwu di- na- nwa (child is source of honour and prestige), etc.

Children are a source of pride and social status for both men and women, and women often define success in marriage primarily in terms of having children (Karanja, 1987; 1994; Calve-Dominic, 1999). This preference for having children has been attributed mostly to traditional pro-natalist

belief systems that stress the importance of the lineage (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1987) and the economic advantages of children in terms of labor supply and support in old-age (Boserup, 1985). Ejiofor (1981) maintains that children are considered very precious and parents are expected to toil for their survival, suitable up-keep, and recognition in the society.

Africans value children more than any asset. Having children increases a couple's social status, and their chances of receiving economic support in old age. It guarantees the woman's access to her husband's property at death which is under contest if she does not have a child. Results of a study conducted on child adoption in Orlu North East Imo State (Ohachenu, 2016) shows that couples needed a child who would assist in chores, care for them in old age, replace them when they die and take over their inheritance thereby maintaining family lineage and continuity. According to these participants an Igbo man adopts to get someone who would answer his name.

Families are thus considered unfortunate if there is no child in the family. In fact nothing challenges the security of a family as childlessness. The insecurity occasioned by this condition is unparalleled and like all other human problems it brings with it discomfort, anxiety, and sometimes, guilt. It can make a marriage relationship grow sour. **In our society a woman perceives her inability to bear a child as an unbearable suffering especially as** loss of fertility means the loss of women's hope for future inheritance. Infertility and childlessness thus cause great personal suffering and distress. **Infertile couples** are socially isolated and emotionally very vulnerable (Hashmi, 2011). Most of the agony and misery are hidden from the public gaze. Some of the danger signals to be noticed among childless couples include being quarrelsome, harsh, rigid or erratic discipline or threat of divorce. Most of the studies indicate that marital breakdown is clearly associated with childlessness (Unisa, 1999; Kiernan, 1989; Tilson & Larsen, 2000). Results of a survey of families and households, in order to update and test earlier findings of negative consequences related to childlessness in later life, by Koropeckyj-Cox (2008) indicate that both loneliness and depression are significantly related to childlessness. Although a childless marriage may look solid and respectable, it conceals great bitterness and unhappiness. It is under severe stress and there is a great deal of marital conflict. Such circumstances cause chronic family disruption, loneliness and fluctuating living arrangements (Parkin & Nyamwaya, 1989). Results of FGDS conducted in a study conducted in Orlu North East of Imo State (Ohachenu, 2016) reveal that a family is not complete without children."

Couples without children felt they were incomplete. To the Igbo man children are regeneration of a family “*Uto ntochi*,” and they maintain family continuity. Childless couple’s lineage terminates at their death (*Ama oshishi*).

INDIGENOUS COPING STRATEGIES, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

There were various coping strategies and customary arrangements evolved by various Igbo communities in the past to mitigate the human security challenges posed by childlessness. They include:

The Institution of “Female Husbands” (Amadiume, 1987) otherwise known as woman to woman marriage:

There is a cultural provision of a childless woman marrying a wife in her name and she bears children for her husband. She cares for these children as her own and they are duly acknowledged as hers. This is done when the husband is still alive or at his demise.

The Institution of “male daughters” (Amadiume,1987) meaning a daughter assuming the position of a son in the family

This is a situation where a couple with only female children keeps one of their daughters from getting married but living with them and bearing children for them. They make her a male head and perfect that through traditional rites of notification (with ceremonies) to the kinsmen for the legitimization of the offspring from that arrangement. This and the above practice are what Amadiume (1987) branded as “male daughters, female husbands.”

Procreation through a kinsman:

A childless man can arrange with his relation to make children for him. It is a secret affair that is only known and arranged by the couple.

Bequeathing a child to one’s childless relation

This is a situation where a caring relation gives out his or her child to a childless relation. The child is to live with the couple until she gets married or dies. This is mostly done with female children as they are known to only belong to a family by marriage. For the male child he leaves for his family at a later time, probably when he’s ready for marriage.

About the end of the nineteenth century there appeared in African societies several new ideas and values. The colonization that followed had a definitive impact on African societies and Igboland in particular. In terms of values embedded in their laws and customs. That notwithstanding, the African norms and mores which explained social events in terms of rational motives and declared their opposition to the trend of the modern societies towards a new way of life still hold water. Hence there is perceived serious reluctance to yield wholly to the colonialists' philosophies and impositions. Till date, decades after the advent of civilization and colonialism most traditional practices are still in place.

The traditional social and political institutions namely, the patrilineage members {Umunna}, the patrilineage daughters (following the rule of sexual dualism) that is the Umuokpu or Umuada (in some places), the patrilineage wives - the Inyom di or Nwunyedi (in some parlance/language) still exist and perform their social functions and roles pertaining to birth, marriage, death, settling disputes and other ceremonies. Their interests and rights in the life-cycle ceremonies of their members remain the same. The only difference is that many of their judicial functions have been taken over by law courts. Some indigenous rituals have been replaced by Christian ceremonies or exterminated due to their inhuman and obnoxious nature. (Amadiume, 1987).

Child Adoption In Nigeria: An Overview

Before 1965, there was no statutory provision for adoption anywhere in Nigeria. This created a lacuna in our law and thus created untold hardship to many couples anxious to adopt children either because they had no children of their own or because they wanted more children in their families.

In 1958 both the Eastern Region and the Federal Government attempted the introduction of adoption laws to favour the interest and welfare of an adopted child but those genuine efforts failed. However, in 1965, the Eastern Region Government, after due consultation in harmony with the Federal Government of Nigeria produced a law that was enforced in Eastern Nigeria. This regional legislation kick-started other similar legislations in other parts of Nigeria (Kigbu, Salome & Konkat, 2002). Specifically, the Lagos State Adoption law of 1968 was enacted and other states subsequently followed suit viz, Bendel State (1979), Cross River State (1981), Ogun State (1983) and Oyo State (1984). All the same adoption was rare. Odujinrin & Lawson(1993) report that between 1972

and 1993 there were only 26 adoptions in Lagos State. Recently the Federal Government of Nigeria Young Persons Act (2003) stipulates that every State Government should institute adoption services in the state.

Adoption Laws / Child Rights Act 2003

The only person qualified to adopt a juvenile (i.e infants inclusive) is that person authorized by the court. Only one person is allowed to adopt a juvenile except in the case of married couples. Where the applicant is married, the consent of the other spouse is legally required so as to preserve family harmony. If the applicant is an unmarried male, then he would not be allowed to adopt a female juvenile. This prohibition guards against the danger of sexual corruption (FGN Child's Rights Act, 2003). The prospective adopter (couple) must have attained the age of twenty – five years each, if a single person he must have attained the age of thirty-five years, provided the child to be adopted is of the same sex as the person adopting or found suitable by the appropriate investigating officers to adopt the child in question.

The court makes such authorization *through* adoption orders to applicants that had duly applied. This includes presentation of applicant's marriage certificate if it is a couple, birth certificate or sworn declaration of age, medical certificate from a government hospital, two passport photographs and such other documents, requirements and information as the Court requires for the purposes of the adoption. It is worthy of note that the biological father of the child can be such an applicant. However, such adoption orders cannot be made in some cases especially where the applicant is less than 25yrs and not at least 21yrs older than the juvenile. (FRN Child's Right Acts 2003).

The applicant should be a citizen of Nigeria and must have lived in the state in which the application is made for a period of, at least, five years. The applicant should be in custody of the child for three months immediately preceding the date of the adoption order. After the investigation by the child development officer, supervision officer and such other persons as the court may determine, to assess the suitability of the applicant as an adopter and of the child to be adopted the Juvenile court then calls up the case and the welfare officer represents the child. The adoption order is granted generally to safeguard and promote the welfare and the best interest of the child. The adopter – where a husband and wife are joint adopters of a child, they shall stand to each other and to the child in the same relationship as they would stand if the child were

their natural child. The adopted child enjoys all the rights of a biological child. A licence is granted (FRN Child Rights Act 2003)

The welfare office and the Juvenile court maintain Adopted Children Register but the adoption exercise is secret. Adoption is also free, except with the sanction of the court. A person who contravenes this commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding thirty thousand Naira or to an imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or to both such fine and imprisonment ((FRN Child's Right Acts, 2003). An adopted child should not be transferred to any other person unless the Minister is satisfied that it is for the welfare and best interest of the child. The Minister shall in granting licence under this section give consideration to the wishes of the child having regard to the age and understanding of the child. Otherwise there is no revocation of adoption order. More so for an adoption order to be made, the applicant and the juvenile to be adopted must be residents of the State under whose law the application is sought. The applicant must be a Nigerian. However, in the case of joint application if either of the spouses is a Nigerian and the other is not it may be granted.

Those that may be adopted under Statutory Law

It is an essential pre-requisite that the person to be adopted must be a juvenile who has been abandoned or his/her origin unknown (FRN Child's Right Acts, 2003). For example, in some jurisdictions like Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Rivers state, adoption of a child with known origin or guardianship can be authorized by the court in circumstances where it is very necessary for the interest and welfare of the child. Usually, it is done as a corrective order but consented by the parents or guardian. Once such consent is given, the parent cannot withdraw the juvenile from the custody of the applicant except with the leave of court. Some of these states' legislations say the age of a juvenile is below seventeen years while others say below eighteen years (Nwogugu, 1990).

Legal Implication of Statutory Adoption

Child adoption under the statute carries along with it numerous important legal consequences, with regards to the rights and duties of the natural parents of the juvenile vis-à-vis the adopted. This is so especially when an adoption order is duly made. Thus, the effect of adoption order is two-fold in all the existing legislations on adoption. In the first place, parental rights and obligation between the juvenile and his/her natural parents are severed. Secondly, it establishes a legal relationship of parent

and legitimate child between the adopter and the adopted juvenile. Both ways put together have the effect of making the adopted child as if born in lawful wedlock by the adopter. Everything concerning the custody, maintenance and education of the child is taken over by the adopter as if they are the natural parents. Where the adopter dies, his estate devolves on the adopted child as if he/she is a lawful or blood child (FRN Child's Right Acts, 2003).

Apart from the issue of inheritance, there are legally prohibited acts that accompany adoption orders. Of utmost importance is the prohibition of marriage between the adopter and his/her adopted children. This restriction is basically to maintain and uphold the essence of adoption orders which supposedly created blood relationship between them. The violation of this prohibition is punishable with fourteen years imprisonment.

Finally, and of immense importance is the fact that once an adoption order is made, the Chief Welfare Officer or Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development is automatically conferred with the duty of being fully informed about such adopted persons. He can do this by delegating his officers to make periodic visits at reasonable times, in the homes of the adopted persons at least until the adopted child is of age. While on such visit, the juvenile is produced and every welfare information about the adopted child is expected to be willingly given. Any obstruction in this regard is an offence and is punishable by a fine not exceeding five hundred naira or imprisonment not exceeding three months or to both such fine and imprisonment (The Federal Republic of Nigeria Child's Right Act, 2003).

Customary Adoption in Nigeria

Under customary law, adoption is rare. This is so because children are seen as the greatest gift from God and as such parents are reluctant to let go of all parental rights and obligations as in the case of statutory adoption. Hence adoption is either done formally or informally. Under the customary formal procedure, some areas would ordinarily arrange a meeting of elders of both families (i.e, adopter and adopted). In this meeting, formal transfer of parental rights and obligation is done with both families' approval. In other areas, the elders of the adopter's family would meet and the adopter declares his intentions and if approved, formal initiation rites are done to adopt the person into the family. Informally, the adopter just brings in the adopted child into his family without consulting anybody and the child must remain with him for life.

Under this arrangement foster parentage matures into adoption (Nwogugu, 1990).

Another aspect of informal adoption is connected to widows or divorced women. In the course of the second marriage, if the new husband accepts the children of the former union and indeed allows them to answer his name, such relationship matures into adoption (Nwogugu, 1990).

Those that may be adopted under Customary Law.

Under customary law only infants may be adopted except where adoption of an adult is allowed (Nwogugu, 1990).

Customary Requirement of those that may Adopt

Only males of full age are capable of adopting children under the customary law. This is basically because men play prominent role in determining the membership of a family. Note also that marriage under the Marriage Act does not prevent customary adoption since it is not in any way inconsistent with the obligation of marriage under the Act.

Consent of the natural parents is not required here. However, the consent of the person to be adopted is fundamental. Where the adopted person is not of age, such consent is obtained on attainment of full age. This position contrasts with consent under statutory adoption where three types of consent may be relevant (that is, consent of spouse, parental consent and consent of a person interested in adopting the child) (Nwogugu, 1990).

Implications of Customary Adoption

The child bears the name of his/her adopter as well as being regarded as a legitimate child. The adopter and his family members are forbidden from marrying the adopted child. In addition, the adopted child has rights with legitimate children in terms of property.

Finally, it suffers one major defect that is very risky. This risk is the fact that the adopted child may eventually return to his parents in future. This is possible because the parents' rights and obligations between them and their parents were not severed. The effect of this aspect is the conferment of dual succession rights on the adopted child (Nwogugu 1990).

Statutes and Legal Provisions

In recent time, adoption rate has drastically increased and has become the order of the day, the reason being the increased anxiety and social

problems faced by barren women and married couples wanting to mix up the sex of their children. This quest had triggered national interest and indeed various states are responding positively to this need through the various adoption laws made (Nwogugu, 1990). Many legal provisions have been made to favour the interest and welfare of an adopted child both nationally and internationally. Each in its own part offers legal protections to the right and obligations of an adopted child (ibid).

In Nigeria some of them are:

- The Federal Republic of Nigeria Child's Right Act 2003
- The 1999 Constitution of the then Federal Republic of Nigeria Chapter IV S.42 (2).
- The various state legislations on adoption, e.g, Adoption Law, Cap 5, Laws of Lagos state, 1973. 1968
- The United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child- Article 21
- Adoption rules of juvenile courts existing in some states, e.g, Lagos State adoption (juvenile courts) rules, 1968.
- O.A.U Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child - Article xxiv.

Types of Adoption

There are various types of adoption as identified by many authors, namely Barth (1992), Borchers (2003), Miller (2008), They include inter - country adoption, trans- racial adoption, single parent adoption, subsidized adoption, relinquishment or agency adoptions, independent or private adoptions, and stepparent adoptions.

Also they identified several kinds of adoption which can be defined both by effect (eg, whether the adoption is open or closed and by location and the origin of the child (i.e., domestic or international adoption).

Types of adoption (by effect on the parties involved)

Open Adoption

Open adoption is defined as sharing of information and or contact between the adoptive and biological parents of an adopted child. This can occur before, during or after the placement of the child. The birthparents relinquish legal and basic childrearing rights to the adoptive parents. Both sets of parents retain the right to continuing contact and access to knowledge on behalf of the child Holden, L. Carroll, L. 2009).

Semi - Open Adoption

A semi-open adoption is similar to open adoption but the relationship does not include the sharing of information and typically involves the agency as an intermediary for on-going contact. After child placement, many semi-open adoptions include mailing photos and letters between adoptive families and birth families and the adoption agency mediates all communication to preserve confidentiality. The identity of all the parties is usually kept confidential and there is no complete exchange of identities or contact information.

The advantages include sense of control for the birthparents and reduced uncertainties and fears about the welfare of the child. It affords the adoptive parent, through the adoption agency the opportunity to request and obtain additional medical information about the child, based upon changing circumstances. Semi-open adoption provides adopted children with access to birth families through the adoption professional (American Pregnancy Association, 2016).

Closed Adoption

The practice of closed adoption, in contrast, bars all identifying information from being shared between adoptive parents, biological kin, and adoptee. All decisions about who adopted which baby were made solely by agency social workers. Closed adoption, normally does not stop exchange of non-identifying information such as medical history and religious and ethnic background (Berry,1993). The hidden identity/official documentation helps to guard against mother changing her mind after the baby is born - usually in the direction of keeping a child she had talked of relinquishing.

Step Parent Adoption

Stepparent adoption is adoption by relatives for example stepfather's adoption of his wife's children. Such adoptions are also subject to social investigation. Affinity is not necessarily a guarantee of effective parenthood. Stepparent adoptions refer to the adoption of the children of one's spouse (Findlaw,2019).

Relinquishment or Agency-Sponsored Adoptions

In agency-sponsored adoptions, social workers obtain consent from the biological parents or seek involuntary termination of their rights and then proceed to select and investigate adoptive applicants. Recommendations are subsequently made to the court. In addition, social workers provide casework services to the biological and adoptive parents and to children

to be placed. It follows the voluntary or involuntary legal severance of parental rights to the child and are overseen by a public or private agency.

Subsidized Adoption

Some adoptions are subsidized hence they call it subsidized adoption. It is another development designed to expand adoption resources in which a social agency makes financial payments to a set of adoptive parents beyond the point of their legal consummation of the adoption. Its purpose is to help poorer persons become adoptive parents, and it is especially helpful in providing special needs children with homes because of physical or mental disability, emotional disturbance, recognized high risk of physical or mental disease. The focus in this type of adoption is on the child and his or her needs rather than on the financial ability of the adoptive parents to meet those needs.

Types of Adoption (by location and origin) - Domestic, intra-family, international and adoption by same sex couple

International / Inter-Country Adoption

This is the act by which people in a country become interested in adopting a child from another country. It involves the adoption of foreign - born children by adoptive families (Borchers, 2003, Miller, 2008, FindLaw, 2018).

Factors contributing to inter country adoption include the mobility of families around the world, the increase in international marriages, the greater ease of communication between countries, the continuing large number of American military personnel stationed abroad, many of whom seek to adopt children during their residence in another country or father children outside of marriage with no means to care for them; and a humanitarian concern by many persons for the plight of refugees and other homeless children, many of whom are grossly neglected or discriminated against in their own country because of illegitimacy or mixed racial background.

Independent or Private Adoption

Independent or private adoption takes place when placement is arranged between the biological and adoptive parents, sometimes through a doctor or an attorney who serves as broker. The identified biological parent is typically an unwed mother, and the adoptive person generally pays for her expenses related to childbirth (Findlaw,2019).

Black Market Adoption

Barth (1992) also identifies a type of adoption he called Black Market Adoption. This involves purchasing a child from a third-party seller that is, not the child's parent. Such adoptions according to him are illegal across the globe.

Single-Parent Adoption

This means legal adoption by single parents either married, widowed or divorced. In the 1960s, the practice of single parents in the United States of America was given considerable publicity in newspapers and popular magazines, through appealing photographs and stories of successful adoptions. Social workers have reported instances in which they have been highly impressed by the positive development of children placed with single mothers and the recognizable "good parenting" that followed placement. Placement with single males have been made, but more rarely.

Method and Procedures Of Child Adoption Placement in Nigeria

Qualifications for Adopters/ Eligibility Requirements

The Adoption Home Study

Once you apply to adopt a child (whether you apply through an agency, an attorney or facilitator, or directly to the court in an independent adoption), the laws of all states require that you undergo a "home study" Home studies are conducted to evaluate your desire and commitment to adopt, to explore the reasons why you want to adopt, to evaluate you as a prospective parent, and to provide education about adoption (FRN Child's Right Acts, 2003).

Adoption agencies must follow the general regulations of their state, but they have the freedom to develop their own application package, policies, and procedures within those regulations. Some agencies will have prospective parents attend one or several group orientation sessions or a series of training classes before they complete an application. Others will have their social worker start by meeting with family members individually and then ask that they attend educational meetings later on (Adamec and Pierce, 2000, Adoption. Com, 2009).

The home study itself is a written report of the findings of the social worker who has met with the applicants on several occasions, both individually and together. At least one meeting will occur in the applicant's home. If there are other people living in the home, they also will be interviewed by the social worker.

On the average the home study process takes three to six months to complete, but it can take longer through public agencies or less time in certain situations. The home study process, the contents of the written home study report, and the time it will take to complete vary from state to state and from agency to agency. In general, the following information is included in the home study: Personal and family background-including upbringing, siblings, key events, and what was learned from them, significant people in the lives of the applicants, marriage and family relationships, motivation to adopt, expectations for the child, feelings about infertility (if this is an issue), parenting and integration of the child into the family, family environment, physical and health history of the applicants, education, employment and finances-including insurance coverage and child care plans if needed, references and criminal background clearances, summary and social worker's recommendation (Adoption.Com, 2009).

Conclusion and Recommendations

African ideology reveals the strength of African culture. One area in which Africans and Nigerians still hold firm to culture is the revered value placed on the child. Children are great assets that make for peace, stability, progress in marriages. Absence of children in a marriage challenges man's security and peace in life in Africa and in Igboland in particular. Child adoption fills the gap created by childlessness in a marriage.

The indigenous coping strategies and customs to address the social security problems and conflicts arising from childlessness worked perfectly well in pre-capitalist Igbo communities but most of them are no more compatible with the changing demands of the modern society. Similarly, the modern child adoption processes and methods have tried to address the aforementioned problems. Regrettably, their expected impact has been vitiated by the failure to make them home-grown. Indigenous social institutions, notably the kinship-based institutions, provide the necessary social context in which child adoption takes place (as noted above) , and through which human security and peace building are mediated and expressed in these communities. There is therefore, the need to bring them into the mainstream of discourse with a view to fashioning out ways and means of aligning their operations with the modern system of child adoption.

Our discussion thus shows a gap in child adoption actual practice. It is done without regard to the indigenous social institutions and this neglect creates relationship challenge for the adoptive family and endangers the acceptability of the adopted child and the adoption itself, In fact in most Igbo communities this exclusion of the indigenous cultural players fuels the expression of the negative attitude of the people towards the adopted child as “onye biara abia,” that is, a stranger. There are many cases of reluctance of other family members to confirm the adoptive parents as the child’s actual parents.

We therefore strongly recommend that the home study in the adoption process must include the relevant community groups and institutions to achieve the necessary synergy between the indigenous social institutions and the modern institutions that handle the process of child adoption in Nigeria. This will ensure the security of both the adopters and the adoptee, guarantee acceptance of the adopted child and the adoption process, and engender peace both within and between the relevant groups in the community.

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