

Socio-Religious Issues in the Debate on Masculinity in Yorubaland, Nigeria

GRACE OLAYINKA GBENLE
Mountain Top University, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract. The word masculinity is gender related but not limited to it. Masculinity is also related to socio-cultural cum religious values. From a young age, right through to manhood and beyond, men and boys in Nigeria are measured according to the social construction of masculinity. Father's drill values into their sons under pain of violence and shame for any transgression. From employment, to religious observance, to the style of their hair, boys are trained to be subservient to the masculine ideal; strong, heterosexual and anti-feminine. Thereafter, this paper shall examine the Yoruba culture and her concept of Masculinity and follow it up with various socio cum religious issues that has emerged from her debate on the understanding of masculinity in the Yoruba thought. In all of these, a quantitative method of research which involve the use of thirty Interview Respondents in all, 5 persons comprising of males and females from each State in South West Nigeria will be interviewed to gather information who will be primarily Yoruba in order to enrich this work. In addition, the experience of the researcher in the past as an indigene of Yoruba will also be of immense contribution to this research as a form of participant observation. I am also going to quote profusely from scholars and leading authorities whose researches, thoughts and

opinions have guided our own efforts in this submission.

Keywords: Socio-Religious, Masculine debate, Yoruba, Yoruba land, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The issue of domination features prominently in Africa. The males dominate the female who are in most cases reduced to the level of house keepers. They are made to see to the children upbringing as well as to look after their premises. Some of them are engaged in petty trading to support the home or look after their private financial requirements. This is in one line with the Jewish culture which confines the feminine to their premises (Odubiyi 2015). Son preference is one of the harmful traditional practices that constitute grave menace to the women particularly in developing countries, more importantly, in Nigeria, for which they need to be protected. From a young age, right through to manhood and beyond, men and boys in Nigeria are measured according to the social construction of masculinity. Father's drill values into their sons under pain of violence and shame for any transgression. From employment, to religious observance, to the style of their hair, boys are trained to be subservient to the

masculine ideal; strong, heterosexual, anti-feminine. (Gilia n.d.). This paper considers the socio-religious concerns accruing from the understanding and discussion of the concept of masculinity among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. The implications of this on the people as well as on the society at large will be raised and also, useful suggestions, on possible ways to stem the tide towards its control and management will be given in other to ensure a peaceful and fair co-existence among humans.

2. A Brief Origin of Yorubaland, Nigeria

There are thirty-six States in Nigeria, eight of which encompasses the Yorubaland, namely, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Lagos, Ekiti, Kwara and partly Kogi state. Yorubaland “*Ilè Yorùbá*” is the cultural region of the Yoruba people in West Africa. It spans the modern day countries of Nigeria, Togo and Benin, and covers a total land area of 142,114 km² or about the same size as the combined land areas of Greece and Montenegro, of which 106,016 km², representing about 74.6% within Nigeria, 18.9% in Benin, and the remaining 6.5% in Togo. The geocultural space contains an estimated 55 million people, the overwhelming majority of them are ethnic Yoruba. About 5.3 million people are estimated to practice Yoruba religion worldwide with the largest numbers found in Nigeria.

Yoruba in the Pre and post-colonial period: Colonialism was a force that shaped and reshaped many cultures in Africa. Not only did the colonial government control rules and regulations but social structures and people’s duties also became controlled by the colonial government. (Africa n.d.) The Yoruba people are located mainly in Southern Nigeria. In the political structure

and at all levels, in every hamlet, village and town, women were involved in every segment of governmental structure. For instance, of the thirty-eight rulers in Ilesha before Owa Agunlejika, "Five Obas' had been women" the last of them being ‘*Yeeyori*’, the eighteenth Owa of Ijeshaland. The Yoruba is a Monarchy. But it is a participatory monarchy where democratic norms are practiced and vigorously protected. Those who share power in the land include the Kingmakers, the War generals, The ‘*Ogboni*’ and Leaders of religious sects, The Judiciary, and the Chamber of Commerce. In all of these institutions, women play active and prominent role.

There are a number of secret and sacred societies or institutions which primarily have political and/or judicial functions. Chief amongst these are the ‘*Ogboni*’ cult, the twin-cults Oro and ‘*Eluku*’. The ‘*Ogboni*’ or ‘*Osugbo*’ (as it is called in Egba and Ijebu kingdoms) is a well-structured arm of government found in all Yoruba land and it is believed to have originated from Ile-Ife. It is the most secret, and most respected of all sacred institutions and membership is through vigorous ritualistic initiation. There is usually a woman member of the executive known as ‘*Erelu*’, the counterpart of ‘*Oluwo*’ (‘the head of the Mysteries’). The ‘*Ogboni*’ could take energetic and appropriate action in dealing with any threat to the social and political order. Women were also known to be involved in all wars, both as Calvary or Infantry. But when Europe and North America forced their political systems down our throats, we were inheriting systems from a people who, for centuries, did not allow franchise to their own womenfolk.

Until missionaries and colonialism influenced the area, most of the Yoruba

were genderless beings. Instead of having a culture that was divided through gender expectations and hierarchies, the Yoruba people used seniority as an organizing system. Christian missionaries specifically influenced the structure of society by altering family relations. For example, marriage practices of Yoruba were not in accordance with Christianity, so as missionaries' began penetrating society, they attempted to change the traditional marriage practices. One such practice, was that a newcomer who married into a family, would be obliged to marry the next oldest in the family after their first spouse died. During the colonization of Yoruba land by Britain and the influence of other outside factors, the delineation of power changed. When the west assigned gender to individuals according to sex, women had no sphere of influence. There were very few roles, women could maintain that would give them access to power. This is true because the Yoruba had no place for "women". All people had previously had no gender, therefore leadership, authority positions, decision making, productive roles, etc., were by all non-gendered people.

3. Religion of Yoruba People

The Yoruba believe in one Supreme Being variously called *Olorun* "the Owner of Heaven" or "the Lord who dwells in Heaven", *Odumare* or *Olodumare* "the Owner of destinies", *Oluwa*, "the Owner of Us" and who is believed to dwell in heaven. *Olorun* is the Creator of the Universe and all that dwell therein. All prayers are directed at Him or Her. The Yoruba *Olorun* is not gendered. *Olodumare*, the *Adiitu*, "the Inscrutable; limitless, timeless, ubiquitous, and genderless".

Subordinate to the Supreme Being are a number of deities who are held in an

elaborate hierarchical order, and to whom are attached special duties and functions. Each has attendant priests and followers. The most important of these Divinities is *Orisa Nla*, "the great Divinity" or *Obatala* the "Immaculate King" because of his legendary association with white colours who is believed to be the god who creates the human form and a close assistant to *Olorun*. He is actually an Archangel in the Yoruba pantheon, next to him is *Orunmila*, otherwise known as *Agbonniregun*, who is "the god of Divination". He is the all-wise Counsellor of *Obatala* and a spiritual link to *Olodumare*. The *Ifa* Oracle must be consulted through the *Babalawo* "Ifa Priest" before a Yoruba man embarks on any venture whatsoever.

Next in the pantheon is *Esu Elegbara*, believed to be youngest and cleverest of the three deities. He is the divine Messenger who delivers sacrifices prescribed by the *Ifa* priest to other gods. He is a trickster who delights in provoking troubles, but he serves the lesser deities by causing trouble for human beings who offend the code of conduct as given by the Supreme Being and interpreted by his/her Divinities. Another powerful god is Sango, the god of thunder and lightning. He is the deified third King of Oyo, and historically the son of *Oranmiyan* by his wife *Yemoja*. Other important deities whose shrines are found in most parts of Yorubaland include *Sonponno*, "the god of smallpox", *Orisa Oko*, "the god of agriculture", and *Oranyan* who has sizeable worshippers in Ife and Oyo.

Apart from these universal Deities there are lesser spirits who are nonetheless important to the individuals and localities that embrace their worship. These are gods and goddesses associated with physical or physiological phenomena, such as hills, rivers, the ocean, seas and lagoons, rocks, and the human

head. There are also cults which may have derived their existence from the traditional political structure since in the ancient times spiritual and secular matters were merged in one cult hero- the head of the community. Such cults include the *Oro*, the *Egungun*, and the *Ogboni*. Thus we have *Yemoja*, “the goddess of Ogun River”, *Oya*, “the goddess of River Niger”, and *Osun*, “the goddess of the river of Osun and of fertility”. *Kori* or *Orisa Oko* is also known as “god of the youths”. Olumo rock in Abeokuta, Idanre hills in Idanre and Oke-Ibadan in Ibadan are among several physical structures which provided protection for early settlers in the time of the ferocious intra-ethnic wars, and which till today are worshipped by some indigenes. The Yoruba also believe in reincarnation and in the spirit world the same way the Arab believe in their world of Al-jinn. Incidentally the Yoruba call spirits “*Alijonnu*”.

Each Yoruba town, indeed every household has its own shrine and it is not uncommon to prefix the names of members of a particular compound or clan with the Divinity they worship. And so adherents of Ogun bear names such as *Ogunwale*, *Ogunbemi* “Ogun has come home”, “Ogun is profitable to me” and of *Orunmila* with names such as *Ifalana* “Ifa paved the way”. *Ifafunmito* “Ifa has given me this (baby) to nurse”, while adherents of *Sango* could have *Sangodare* “Sango vindicated me”, *Sangoniya* “Sango has honour”.

The institution of *Egungun*, and the belief in the existence of witches and witchcraft need some elaboration. The *Egungun* is a masked representation of the dead, and because the Yoruba believe that the dead can still influence the living, these masked figures appear in every town and village of the Yoruba for several weeks annually during which the whole community celebrate in honour of the spirits of their departed

ancestors. Witches are feared and respected though not worshiped. They are regarded in the same light as *Esu Elagbara*. While the Yoruba hold witches in awe, they also believe that they perform some good function in the society. It is the abuse of the purpose of their craft which is heavily condemned. But there is no offering the Yoruba will make without venerating both *Esu Elegbara*, and *Aje* “witches”. Witches are euphemistically called ‘*Iya mi Osoronga*’, ‘*afinju eye ti nfo l’oru*’ “My mother, indigene of *Osoronga*”, “the sophisticated bird that flies in the night”, or *Iya agba*, “the elder woman”.

We should also note that the Yoruba are fatalistic in their view of the events in the world and believe that a man is born into this world with his own destiny “pre-destination” which he obtains from *Olodumare* on bended knees. Described as ‘*akunlegba*’ or ‘*akunleyan*’ “That which is received kneeling”, this concept sums up the Yoruba attitude to tragedy. Even with the advent of foreign religions, a Yoruba bishop or chief Imam will in a period of serious strife often goes back to consult *Ifa* oracle and offers sacrifices to his ancestral gods. If he shies away from doing so, his parents or relations will do it for him.

The presence of foreign religions (Islam and Christianity) in Nigeria has also influenced the Yoruba belief and their religion. Islamic religion although predominant in the North, but also spread across to Yorubaland. A large Christian community has been developing in Southern Nigeria since the middle of the nineteenth century. Christianity came to Nigeria through the Yoruba land in Badagry. Some convert of Yoruba accepted the Islamic religion because of its benefits such as opportunities for education (read and write), the religion was used as a means to establish diplomatic

links, trade and to win more friends (Falola and Adediran 1983). Islam allowed the converts to continue with some of their old practices such that they could still marry more than one wife, many African customs and institutions fitted in properly into the teachings of Islam.

4. Socio-Economic Life of Yoruba People

A Yoruba, whether male or female, goes through life as an integral part of his/her society. He/she plays the roles assigned to him/her by Nature and by the society. He/she cherishes loving others and being loved by others; and abhors alienating others or being ostracised by his/her fellow Yoruba people. To the Yoruba, the primary purpose of marriage is sustaining the Yoruba race through legitimate and responsible procreation. In the earliest times, great importance was attached to virginity. No sooner had modernity (literacy, colonialism, capitalism, individualism, etc.) crept into the hitherto preliterate, subsistence agrarian, communal Yoruba society than this great importance attached to virginity waned and almost disappeared. But it did not tamper with the aforementioned primary purpose of marriage among the people. (Olugboyega 2004). In a typical Yoruba household, the woman and the man shares responsibilities according to their sex. The woman is responsible for cleaning the house, preparation and serving of food. The husband is responsible for cultivating the farm land and also carrying out tedious tasks which cannot be done by the woman. The modern Yoruba husband and his wife remain as a complementary unit, each contributing according to his/her earnings to the keeping of their home. Salaries and wages nowadays, for employees (men and women) replace the proceeds from the agricultural production of the earliest times.

They share domestic chores as much as it is practicable.

The way of life of the people of Yoruba necessarily involves interaction between the males and the females in the Yoruba society. A males-only or a females-only society is, therefore, a misnomer in the context of Yoruba life. That is why male and female toddlers play together in separate Yoruba compounds (*Agboole*); adolescents play together in the same manner outdoors and indoors as the weather and circumstances permit; while adults as well as elders also stay and play together using appropriate games and drinks during leisure. This comes after a normal day of toiling together, severally and individually, to earn a decent living; whereby they contribute their respective quotas to the running of the society (Olugboyega 2004).

5. Masculinity in Yoruba Thought

Although it has been argued that the concept of masculinity means different things to different people with respect to political, cultural, religious affiliations and social class, to mention but a few. The concept of masculinity in the Nigeria discourse is one that varies from one locality to another. The Yoruba's belief of child birth either male-child or female-child has no reservation for a particular sex of the child. This is evident in songs, proverbs and rhymes among the people. For example:

According to human physiology, the bones in a female body complete their development sooner than those in the male body. Female bones complete their development around age 18, while men's bones continue to mature until around age 21. This is part of the explanation behind the difference in the average size of male and female bones as the male bones continue to grow and develop longer, they also become larger (on average)

and have more pronounced corners. Thus, this perhaps forms the notion among the Yoruba people why the male gender are allowed to do more tedious work on farmland and in the society because more strength and energy is required and more so, the Male skeletons also generally have longer, thicker bones in the arms, legs and fingers.

In females, a large part of the course of development from child to adult involves the body preparing itself for childbirth. This major difference between men and women is the cause of gender differentiation among the Yoruba according to the natural endowment of each sex. However, the debate in masculinity among the Yoruba people stems on the emphasis of delegations of duties and responsibilities to a man and a woman, most especially in political, social, economic and religious matters. In this light, this paper has been able to gather useful information on cogent issues that are subject to debate.

6. Socio-Religious Issues on the Debate of Masculinity among the People of Yoruba

The deliberation on the subject of masculinity has raised a lot of questions which calls for a revisit of our culture, religion and religious practices and also in day-to-day lives as members of the society. Some of these questions sages our thought systems. This paper answers some of these pertinent issues that are silent and overlooked but eating up families, groups, and culture like a virus, ranging from the society to our religion.

6.1 The Emergence of Civilization

In the Western World from where Christianity was brought to Africa, civilization has made women to be free from domination. There are equal employment

opportunities, education for both sexes. Women can now compete favourable with men virtually in all areas of life. The same changes are gradually taking place in Africa (Odubiyi 2015). The changing roles of male-female responsibilities is visible in the Nigerian society. Civilization has made it possible for many to become enlighten through the efforts of Missionaries, and also by the presence of foreign religions such as Christianity and Islam. With the presence of these two religions in Nigeria and in African, they did not just come with their theology but alongside their cultural values which has gradually been introduced and accepted by many Yoruba indigene. In spite of the influence of these religions on the cultural norms and values of the Yoruba person, there are still some areas in which it has not been able to penetrate.

6.2 Equal Educational Rights & Privileges

There is absolutely nothing new in the actual sense to the Yoruba people, there is only a level of modernity in which the Western education has been able to impact. The Yoruba have a form of education which involves an informal pattern whereby a child is made to learn from home either under the tutelage of his parents especially the mother who inculcates morality into her children, hence the Yoruba proverb '*Omo to ba da niti baba re*' meaning "a good child belongs or is the pride of his father. This could also otherwise mean that "a bad child belongs to his mother".

6.3 Name Change and Inheritance

This has generated serious issue over time. The Yoruba customs believes in patrilineal system of family pattern where by a man is known as the owner of his children. The wife (wives) and children bears the name of

the husband which is usually the family name of the extended family. With recent development and change, some women among the Yoruba prefers to add the prefix of their maiden name to that of their husbands. This negates the ancient Yoruba custom of “leaving and cleaving” in marriage. The practice of “leaving and cleaving” has been partially aborted because some claims that for the sake of fame, popularity, business connection, pride, continuity of their family’s existence especially in cases where there are no male children or heir and inability to detach themselves from their parent most especially in cases where the woman is from an affluence home (S. Owolabi 2017).

The influence of foreign religion on name change is also of interest. Many Yoruba men especially in Christianity believes that there are some names which should not be heard or used to address them once they had become convert of the new faith. Names in Yorubaland are rooted with deep meanings and also depict the circumstances that surround the birth of an individual. It is a form of identity. With a family name, anyone can easily trace the origin of a particular group, tribe, family, kingdom and kinship among the Yoruba. But as a form of religiosity and an evidence of genuine conversion, many Christians changes their names to fit into the theological teachings of the bible as brides of the lord Jesus who is referred to as the bridegroom. This calls for a rethink and evaluation of the authenticity of the Yoruba religion and their belief in God. Does it mean that a person who changes his/her name from that which depicts the essence and attribute of the Yoruba God is more sociable, wealthier and successful in all his/her endeavours. Names such as “*Ogunleke*” (the god of Ogun has added to us) is changed to *Oluleke*” (God has added to us), “*Ifabunmi* or *Fabunmi*”

(the god of the *Ifa* Priest has given me) is changed to “*Olubunmi*” or *Oluwabunmi*) as the case may be.

6.4 Family Pattern and Marriage

In Yoruba land, prominent and wealthy family heads ends up having up to fifteen wives and the number of children ranges between sixty and eighty altogether. A woman who marries more than one husband except in cases of death of previous spouse is labeled and stigmatized. This practice is common among the whole of African continent. The issue with this form of lifestyle is that sometimes the children might not receive total fatherly care and training because they are too many. Some of the children may likely not know each other and hence this gives room for incest and same family or blood marriage.

6.5 Rural-Urban migration

The influx of geographical location is of importance in cultural acculturation. Geographical and climatic situation of a place is a determinant factor of the life style of individuals and decision policies. The society is not static, things are changing. The migration of people from the village to cities plays a major role in shaping their identity. The characteristics of the urban centre most times are not in conformity with rural customs and laws. The presence of western culture and civilization has a tremendous influence in diffusing the African culture to which the Yoruba is one. The high standard of living, unemployment and underemployment ratio, over-population, competition for survival are part of the socio problems which had impacted on the tradition of the Yoruba people living in these environment and is subsequently changing the roles of male and female responsibilities and this has a way of

restructuring their understanding of the concept of masculinity. (Ratio of women to men working). The effect of influx of more male and female into urban centre gives room for competition especially in social, political and economic matters. As male are struggling for survival and daily bread, the females are not left behind, some females have better jobs and even earns better income than their husbands and males folks. This is a serious problem which has increased the ration of late marriage among many men and women alike, as many young people have lot of dependence on them.

More so, there are lot of graduates and able bodied men who are not gainfully employed and the fear of inability to meet the basis needs of a family has rendered them handicapped from decision of taking a wife unlike in the old traditional Yoruba society where a man can get married to a woman into his family house and also life in the rural area is a bit low. This shift in concentration and demand in which a male responsibility is defined has encouraged lots of illicit and anti-social vices such as armed robbery, ritual killing, kidnap, rape to mention just a few. The recent community invasion and killings recorded in Ikorodu a suburb area in Lagos State, Southwest Nigeria is one which has reportedly said to unjustly have claimed a lot of innocent lives.

6.6 Shift of responsibilities

The Yoruba people believes that the man is the head of the woman “Okunrin ni ade Obinrin”. Irrespective of the social statue in which woman attains, she must be under the leading of her husband. Due to this ceremonial and fundamental title of headship placed on the male gender, many has played away stylishly with the onus of leadership and responsibility accord to them

of providing for the home and meeting the needs of the family (Abidakun 2017).

6.7 Influence of Western Religion on Marriage and Family Patterns

Religion is one of the features that can distinguish one ethnic group from another (Kunhiyop 2008). The Yoruba culture allows a man access to more than one wife. The practice of the foreign religion especially on Christian marriage has a major effect of culture contact upon Yoruba marriage customs is that the marriage institution is in a state of flux as a result of the diffusion of foreign ideas and the quick process of economic growth. Some modern Yoruba Christians generally imbibe the foreign idea of “one man, one wife” by contracting Church or Registry Marriages (i.e. marriage under the Ordinance); and then go out to keep mistresses (concubines) or wives married neither according to Christian customs nor the Ordinance. They do this without letting the main wife know about it. When they die, the other women with their children come to the man’s family to declare and demand their rights. They are usually allowed to come and take up their own portion of his inheritance, which he might have included in his will. If he dies without having written a will, the elders in his family will use their customary discretion to share his property among all his children. It is not generally always easy to resolve the social complications generated by this ‘modern’ practice of “trying to imitate a foreign custom without being ready to carry the responsibilities inherent in it”. Muslim marriage among the Yoruba of today is more realistic than this. (Olugboyega 2004)

6.8 The problem of stigmatization

The Yoruba word “Omoluwabi” is a nomenclature that is used to describe a person who is morally inclined and upright. Name to the Yoruba people is of importance could be imprinted on a person as long as he/she lives. A woman who leaves the home of her marriage is called “dalemosu” among the Yoruba. Wrong label is placed on a woman who leaves her husband’s house because she could not conceive or as a result of her being maltreated by her in-laws or suffered from domestic violence in the hands of her husband. The Yoruba woman is expected to bear and endure every form of hardship as the home of her husband is termed as “ile-eko” training school where she is educated and believed to bring into practical demonstration all she had learnt from her home in the past before here betrothal. A man cannot be divorced by a woman on the ground of impotence

6.9 Taboos and rituals

The Yoruba culture is rich in “eewo” which means “forbidden or don’ts”. There are don’t for the males and those of the females as well. These rituals and taboos varies from various ethnic group and dialects. Among the Ilaje speaking group of Ondo state, Nigeria, a ritual of throwing a new born into the water to confirm if it is indeed a child of the soil is still valid. If the child comes up after been thrown into the water shows the legitimacy of the child and if otherwise, the woman faces the sanction of the gods. The religious practice of prohibition of certain food items such as pepper, salt, food condiments and seasonings, oil to mention a few among some group is of utmost concern. Usually, taboos relating to infertility, miscarriages, pregnancy, child birth and naming are restricted to the woman. This had prevented people from intermarrying with other tribes freely for

fear of taboos which could have as far as death penalty and grievous consequences.

6.10 Discrimination and segregation

The perception and separation of defining some socio-religious participation of male and female functions is alarming. Among some ethnic groups, the woman is not allowed to hold any social or political position that will boost her statue, because she will be seen as being in competition with the male gender. In a typical Yoruba political terrain, the only position allotted to the woman is the head of the women folks “yeye oba or Iya Oloja”. The women are secluded from taking active in rituals and some forms of worship which are strictly isolated for the male folks. In Yoruba medicine, women are only allowed to do domestic duties which include pounding of herbs and leaves together in preparation of medicine, taking care and cleaning of the utensils and environment where the medicine is being prepared. Although, there are evidences of female priestess, but their function are also limited to a few. This act of isolation of the feminine gender is also imbibed by the foreign religion- Christianity and Islam.

In some Christian denominations, like Celestial Church of Christ, Cherubim and Seraphim movement, Deeper Life Bible Church, and also in Islam, women are excluded to taking lead roles during worship. They are also restricted to certain areas in the mosque. It is believed by the Muslims that a menstruating woman is unclean and hence her participation in worship could form a source hindrance to their prayers and also pollute the medicine in the case of African Indigenous Religion. This act of discrimination and exclusion on what defines the role of a male or female calls for a redress, as to what exactly

determines and describes the cleanliness and uncleanliness of an individual, male or female. Should it be biological body metabolism and structure or that of the condition and sincerity of heart?

The tide of discrimination is also prevalent in attainment of social status and position among the Yoruba. The Yoruba believes so much in patrilineal system of family pattern. A son born to a woman who is from a royal family cannot inherit anything from his mother's household not even will he be given the ability to hold a traditional position there. The respect given to a woman from such lineage is at death, she is accorded as a princess and the necessary rite is performed (E. Owolabi 2017).

6.11 Denial of Child Training

The nature by which a traditional Yoruba society structure their understanding of the concept of masculinity and gender, has categorically spelt out the responsibilities of a father and a mother. The onus of child training is the responsibility of both father and mother and not one sided alone. There are some form of training that is unique to the father and mother in which both parents must take responsibilities for. Researches shows that a child that is brought up by both parents are better in their academics, and well-mannered and balanced than a child that is singled handedly trained by one parent. This is not to say that all children brought up by single parent are bad, but there are few exceptions to this. The joint collaborative efforts in child training help to build a balanced life style for the child irrespective of gender constraint. However, this is to buttress the fact that there are some masculine traits in which a girl or woman needs to possess and learn from a man such as boldness, ability to take risk, confidence, self-independence, and also the male child

or man must learn who to do some household chores, cooking and cleaning of the environment which will be beneficial to him/her.

6.11 Population and death ratio

In recent report on the statistics of death ratio across gender in Nigeria, it is revealed that the ratio of death of male folks is higher than the female. Factors that contribute to this rise are subject to the nature of work of a man which is usually more tedious than a woman and also the practice of polygamy and extramarital affairs makes up for this.

6.12 In-law relationship in marriage

The woman is asked to respect all members of her husband's family. She addresses every person irrespective of age with respect. In the traditional Yoruba society, the woman addresses her in-laws with a prefix of "auntie" or broda" to their nomenclature as a sign of respect. Although, using of these prefixes are borrowed language from the western culture. The male counterpart is not in any way restricted. When a woman loses her husband by death, she is made to observe some religious rites that are peculiar to her alone. Such burial rites includes but not limited to observance of a 40days mourning of the late husband by putting on dark colours of cloth, just a particular dress, prohibited from eating some certain types of food and sometimes restricted from participating in ceremonial functions. This practice has been one that has restricted a lot of women from taking up their social responsibilities and also many at the death of their husband are afraid of remarriage for fear of being tagged as responsible for the death of their husband. This act of discrimination has increased the rise of illicit marital behavior among women in this category and also is a high

contributor to loneliness and other health and psychological related issues.

7. Conclusion

Each sex and gender has their unique roles and functions. These roles and function are governance of the society. For stability and progress in the society, there must be the ability to adapt to change. These changes come along with trend towards civilization and modernity. Culture is not static, it is dynamic, and hence the Yoruba people should inculcate various ways by which to preserve its cultural heritage and values so that the wind of modernity and change is not caught up with it. However, the Yoruba people and in fact the entire African society needs be re-educated on their cherished value system, their spiritual and religious beliefs and their technologies. They must reclaim and restore their identity and dignity, and they must collectively reclaim their destiny. If submitting slavishly to foreign faiths will forever blind them to their true identity they should reconsider their options. The values that made them the first in every human endeavour within the context of Nigeria and even Africa should also be revisited.

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