

Of Wine Carrying and Bridal Train: A Portrayal of Traditional Igbo Marriage in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine and The Slave*

O. Victor Ogbeide

*Department of English and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ado-Ekiti,
Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria*

Phone: +2348062159450, E-mail: ogbeide_v@yahoo.com

KEYWORDS Tradition. Marriage. Love. Bride Price. Polygamy. Village

ABSTRACT Marriage, the special kind of union whereby a man and woman are joined together for the purpose of making a home and raising a family is as old as man. As unique as it is, the institution of traditional marriage in Africa has been grossly misunderstood by many prejudiced foreigners who claim that love has no place in the social enterprise. This paper, therefore, explores traditional Igbo marriage as portrayed by Elechi Amadi in two of his novels. It posits that love not only exists among the Igbo in particular and Africans in general but that it is actually celebrated in marriage which is a whole community affair. It concludes however, that like many things, traditional Igbo marriage has undergone some changes courtesy of the grinding wheel of time.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a social institution that is as old as man as evidenced in the Genesis account of creation when the Almighty God himself performed the union of the first man and woman. Marriage is a special kind of union whereby a man and woman are joined together for the purpose of making a home and raising a family. According to Mitchel (1978: 213), "it is a socially sanctioned sex relationship involving two or more people of the opposite sex whose relationship is expected to endure beyond the time required for gestation and birth of children." Similarly, Nwoye defines marriage as a:

sacred and permanent contract which is enacted when

two people (man and woman) decide on their own accord

and in the presence of at least two witnesses to exchange

the formal consent to live a life promoting their mutual

growth and welfare as persons in their journey together

through life (1991: 23)

Marriage is a veritable rite of passage whereby a man and woman come together from different families for the purpose of living together, procreation and to ensure the continuity of community life. Marriage also serves the purpose of providing mutual interest and understanding of spouses. Human needs for affection are better

served through marriage. Apart from ensuring economic and financial security, marriage serves the purpose of regulating relationship between the sexes as it gives rise to legally and socially approved sex partners and thus checks indiscriminate sexual activity.

In modern western society, marriage is regarded as the end product of a heterosexual dating, courtship and engagement. It is culturally limited solely to the nuclear family. In the African setting, however, marriage is not only between a man and a woman but largely a concern of the kins both in its contraction and maintenance. In other words, marriage in Africa goes beyond the immediate partners involved in it to the members of the whole family on both sides. However, whether western or African, marriage is regarded all over the world as an important phase of life worth celebrating. The truism of this assertion can be found in the popular belief that of the three crucial ceremonies that are meant to celebrate a man viz. naming ceremony, marriage ceremony and burial ceremony he only accounts for one namely marriage. Little wonder, therefore, that the prospective husband and wife eagerly look forward to the day of their marriage. Indeed, it can hardly be over emphasized that in the timeless words of Marcus Tullius Cicero "the first bond of society is marriage" (1994: 80).

As stated earlier, marriage is a significant aspect of a people's culture worldwide. Many people often find it difficult to understand other

people's culture on account of its seeming strangeness to their own. For example, the institution of traditional marriage in Africa has been woefully misunderstood by many a foreigner. Misunderstanding often leads to prejudice which in turn leads to derogation. It is this kind of misunderstanding borne of prejudice that must have instigated Joyce Cary's observation some years ago in his *Mr. Johnson* that in Africa a wife is just like another commodity that can be bought in the open market. G.T Basden was even more prejudicially ambitious when he averred that the word love does not exist in Igbo language. The nearest approach to the idea according to him is "Ifunanya" which he says is "to look in the eye in a favourable manner" (1966: 68). According to Chukwu Stanley, an Igbo man however, this is far from the truth. Hear him:

Any Igbo man who comes across this assertion may not help laughing because Basden has ended up translating Igbo language directly to English language. As far as the Igbo are concerned "Ifunanya" mean love (2004: 3).

But Basden has not yet finished his bogus interpretation of misunderstanding of Igbo traditional marriage for he goes on to add that after marriage, the woman is ranked with the other property of the husband with a proportionate value attached, but little greater than that of the cows and goats. This paper, therefore, sets out to explore Igbo traditional marriage as portrayed by Elechi Amadi in *The Concubine* (1996) and *The Slave* (1978). The aim here is not only to clear the load of misconceptions about traditional marriage in Africa with specific reference to the Igbo people in the mind of Basdens of this world but also to put the record straight about traditional marriage. This is, perhaps germane, for as Achebe has said, "the story we had to tell could not be told for us by anyone no matter how well gifted or well intentioned" (1975: 70).

THE IGBO PEOPLE

The Igbo country covers an area of over 15, 000 square miles lying north of the Delta swamp lands. The portion of the country east of the Niger river and west of the Cross river is a low tableland. In the south it cuts into three equal parts by the Imo and Kwa-Igbo Rivers; in the north it rises gently to the Awgwu-Udi-Nsukka hills which run in the south-north direction. In

the north-east, it is bounded by the Anambra River, the most important tributary of the River Niger and in the east and south-east by the Cross River whose general basin covers the Nigeria-Cameroon border. According to Ifemesia (1979: 15), "Igbo people have migrated, settled and lived in various parts of the country and beyond through the centuries."

GT Stride (1971: 350) has stated that oral evidence and settlement patterns suggest that about AD1300 to 1400, the Igbo people "began to move south and east from the region of Awka and Orlu." Today, however, the Igbo people who are estimated to be in the region of fifteen million, live in Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Aba and Ebonyi states of Nigeria. Besides these states, the Igbo people who are basically traders are found all over Nigeria and beyond. Among the Igbo people, the basic social unit is the patrilineage which usually occupies a single hamlet made up of several homesteads or compounds. The council of elders and the village assembly of citizens constitute the village government with the head or Eze. Traditional religion is a unifying factor among the people. Notably republicans, the marriage system among the Igbo dictates that women marry into different villages from the one in which they were born thus creating a system of affiliations and communication larger than that of autonomous village. According to Utibe Uko (2002:15),

Marriage has a foremost place in the Igbo social economy. It looms upon the horizon of any maid and youth as an indispensable obligation to be fulfilled with as little delay as possible after reaching the age of puberty.

IGBO TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE IN THE CONCUBINE AND THE SLAVE

Amadi's novels which are set in the past away from the lure of artistic immediacy are typical examples or demonstrations of Achebe's view that:

Africa people did not hear of culture or the first time

from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless

but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and

value and beauty, that they had poetry and above all,

they had dignity (1973: 8)

Of the two novels that constitute the major plank of this article, Amadi (1979: 10) says:

I adopted another approach in my two novels; I do not even mention the foreign gods. I ignore them utterly concentrating only on our ancestral gods and showing them as powerful and as influential as Christmas deity.

Apart from concentrating on the religious aspects of the Igbo people of the former Eastern region of Nigeria, Amadi also celebrates his people's traditional marriage in the two novels in focus. *The Concubine* (1968) is set in the villages of Omokachi and Omigwe while *The Slave* (1975) has its setting in the village of Erekwu. Two kinds of traditional marriage can be identified in *The Concubine*.

The first is what can be called child marriage. Child marriage is marriage between two children which is undertaken by their parents. Although it is also called marriage, in the real sense of the word it is more like an agreement entered into by the parents of the girl and the boy to get married in the future when they are mature. The essence of this kind of agreement is to strengthen the relationship between the two families. None of the marriage rites is carried out or performed at this stage. Ahurole, for example, was engaged to Ekwueme when she was merely eight days old. Ekwueme was then about five years old. It was a simple ceremony:

Ekwueme's father, Wigwe, merely put some kola nuts and the shoots of a young palm wine sapling into the vessel from which Ahurole drank. Thereafter, he kept an eye on her casual (99).

It is pertinent to emphasize here that although the children are betrothed to each other they are never to come together as husband and wife until they are of age. Practically, it means that no other suitor would bother Ahurole's father. According to Amadi, not all marriages are contracted in this way but "when they were, they flattered the parents of the girl" (99). Clearly, only the baby girl of trusted parents could be engaged in this way.

When the two children are of age, the father of the boy goes with a keg of palm wine to the father of the girl to begin negotiations for mar-

riage. At this stage, a guide becomes highly indispensable to the father of the groom because he plays a significant role during negotiations. According to Amadi, a guide:

introduces the prospective bridegroom (or his representative) to important relations of the bride. He gives him a good idea as to their order of importance. More important still he fights tooth and nail to slash down the bride price.

Although related to the bride, he is expected to side with

the bridegroom in all things. The choice of a guide makes

all the difference in marriage proceedings (121).

Marriage negotiations are not concluded in a day. Several journeys are often made to the bride's parents place with several kegs of palm wine before negotiations are concluded and the bride is led by some mature women and her contemporaries or age mates to her prospective husband's place amidst celebration. Marriage negotiations can last for a year.

In the case of Ahurole, Wigwe, Ekwueme's father goes to Wagbara, Ahurole's father with a keg of palm wine to ask for permission to begin negotiation for the marriage between Ahurole and Ekwueme. Nwenike is chosen as the marriage guide because of the role he had played during the birth of Ahurole. After so many visits for negotiation the day finally comes for the formal presentation of wine by Wigwe. This time Wigwe is accompanied by several village elders neatly and flamboyantly dressed singing all the way to Omigwe. Wigwe too is fully ready for his guests as neighbours join him in preparing a great feast for his guests. After all, a child in the African setting "belongs" to all apart from his/her biological parents. At the end of the day Ahurole comes to her husband's place, first to spend four days, after which she goes back to visit her parents with the empty calabash of palm wine from her husband's place.

During the first four days, at her husband's place, Ahurole receives visitors from her new village. Girls of her age group also come to formally welcome her to their village and show solidarity with her. Wine carrying is an expensive gambit between the two families involved in the marriage. This kind of marriage is highly

celebrated by both families. It is the joy to see their children get married responsibly and when this is done it is celebrated in a grand style with each family feeding guests in lavishness that borders on the prodigious. Singing and dancing always take up the greater part of the night when the bride finally arrives at her bridegroom's house. Amadi tells us that:

Wigwe was happy and proud. Nothing reveals his happiness more than the brief dancing he did when Mman, now twice a genius under the good influence of several blends of palm wine, beat the drum as he had never done before. The audience was thrilled and several neighbors presented Wigwe with money. It was worth doing for who knew when, if ever he would dance again (124).

Marriage to a widow does not attract the glitz and razzmatazz like the first marriage discussed above. No widow is under obligation to be inherited in Igbo Land. It is very much in her will to decide. After mourning her deceased husband for a period of one year the widow is free to remarry if she so desires. Among the Igbo, marriage proceedings in respect of a widow are not protracted. The main thing is the payment of the bride price to the family of the former husband of the widow.

According to Igbo tradition, Namdi has every right to inherit Ihuoma, his brother's wife. She is just twenty-two and still within child bearing age but since it is not obligatory on her to be inherited, Namdi only offers her protective services. Ihuoma could not help remarking that "it is as if Emenike were still alive" (13). Ihuoma does not only refuse to be inherited by any of her late husband's relations, she initially refuses to marry again. She loves Ekwueme and does not make any secret of it but when he proposes to her she objects. Hear her:

Not so Ekwueme, I shall not leave my husband's compound, I intend to stay here and bring up his children. It should never be said that his compound was over grown with weeds (92)
But love even in the traditional setting en-

dures. When Ihuoma eventually gives her consent, all Ekwueme needs to do is to pay back the bride price to Namdi and to perform the necessary rituals.

The phenomenon of divorce is not encouraged in Igbo culture. Every Igbo man goes into marriage with a mind to raise a family of his own. A woman is established in her husband's house when she produces a male child. Amadi says that "it is a most annoying thing for a woman to bear her husband female children only"; but even in case of childlessness, the husband is only advised to take another wife and not to divorce his wife. Madume in *The Concubine*, though evil, would rather marry another wife than divorce his wife because she bears her only female children.

When a sensitive quarrel ensues between husband and wife to the extent that they live apart as the case with Ekwueme and Ahurole, the elders of the immediate families try hard to bring them together again. But if it is obvious that a life is likely to be at stake as a result of such relationship, divorce is encouraged and it is taken in good faith. In *The Concubine*, Ahurole runs home after a quarrel with her husband, Ekwueme. Their immediate families intervene and they are reunited. But when Ekwueme's life becomes threatened, they have to separate and nobody raises any eyebrow.

Marriages in Igbo lands are never a do or die affair. Nobody fights over the choice of somebody to marry. There is nothing strange if a girl turns down the proposal of her suitor. In *The Slave*, Berekwi, tells his son Nyeche that men don't fight over things like, that if a man can't marry one girl, he can always marry mother" (79). Olumati loses Enaa, the beauty of the town to Wizo his friend. Enaa refuses Aso's proposals while Adibua turns down the proposals of her suitor due to his laziness. Nyeche prefers Aleru to Enaa and they all take it in good faith, though it is not without pains of the heart.

Similarly in *The Concubine*, Emenike has been Nenda's dream and an ideal husband whom she is never married to. Ihuoma initially turns Ekwueme's proposal down and he does not bear her grudges. Ahurole is divorced and it is taken in good faith. Ahurole's father only tells Ekwueme's father that "whenever (he) comes to Omigwe-his village-do not pass" (193).

Polygamy which Mbiti (1969: 98) says "is an attempt towards a partial recapture of the lost immortality", is a cherished aspect of the

Igbo culture. It is believed that more wives, more children and the more the children, the stronger the power of immortality. In *The Concubine*, Ihuoma swears never to obstruct Ekwueme in getting a second wife. In fact, she encourages it because it is an important aspect of their culture. She knows that more children through many wives are “reborn” in the multitude of descendants and the more productive her husband is, the more he contribute to the existence of the society, Wolu too would rather say “over my dead body” than prevent her husband from taking a second wife. A man’s worth among the Igbo is measured, besides other things, by the number of wives and children he can feed.

Custom demands in Igbo society that the father should get his son his first wife. The first wife is accorded certain respect unlike other wives. At Nwakibie’s “Obi” for example, in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, other wives of Nwakibie could not drink palm wine because “Ananbi, Nwakibie’s first wife has not arrived” (22). It is believed that whosoever will be a man’s first wife should be a responsible woman because of the sensitive position she is to occupy. As a result of this, personal judgment of a young man when it comes to choosing his wife is ruled out because it is assumed that he is not mature enough to know a suitable “wife material” for himself. This is why some children would be betrothed to each other even when they could not differentiate their mother from other women. In a study carried out by Owuamanam (2010:9) “a potential factor that caused Igbo marriage to endure was the involvement of parents and relatives in partner selection”.

The personal judgment of a young man could be considered when it is in line with his father’s will. But in a situation where his will and his father will clash, the father’s will prevails. In *The Slave*, Minikwe has initially shown interest in the will of his son, but since he has something different in his mind, he insists that he marries Enaa instead of Arelu his heart desire. Rarely does the preference of a young man prevail over his father’s. It is almost impossible in the case of a maiden. The exceptional case in *The Slave* about Enaa, gives her elder brother headaches. Oriji, while speaking with Olumati expresses surprise at his sister’s (Enaa) refusal to marry a young man like Aso, the type every woman wants for protection. She is considered unnecessarily choosy. Oriji recalls how he mar-

ried his wife:

I remember when my father and I went for negotiation.

My father-in-law called in the girl and said “Oriji has

come to ask you to marry him. He is a good youngman

who comes from a good family. He wants to hear

you say “yes”, she said yes. They gave her a cup of wine,

she drank half and offered me the other half to

signify acceptance, and that was that (60).

However, Berekwe, Enaa’s father would gladly welcome any suitor but finds it difficult to give his daughter away against her wish. He knows full well that he has authority over her, but he would be happier if she likes the marriage. He makes it clear when Nyeche and his father ask for Enaa’s hand in marriage that “Enaa is my mother reincarnated. She was very good to me, the best mother anyone ever had. Now I too have a chance to care for her. I shall not force her into anything she does not like” (77).

Marriage, observed Mbiti (1969: 133), “is the focus of existence ...marriage is a duty, a requirement for the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which anybody must participate” Chukwu (2004: 55) even compares traditional Igbo marriage to a drama “in which every normal person is an actor or an actress and nobody assumes the position of an audience”. In deed, the enthusiasm that often overwhelms the very being of young man when it comes to marriage is always unparalleled. Young men can go extra mile to get the love of their life. In *The Slave*, Aso tries to humiliate Olumati before Enaa. But it does not take Olumati much time to prove himself a worthy suitor for Enaa as he labours tirelessly to acquire wealth and build his compound. He also defeats Aso in a wrestling match. Ekwueme in *The Concubine* would leave no stone unturned to win Ihuoma. He is so desperate that he would not mind marrying her today and dying the next day if necessary.

On her own part, a typical Igbo maiden undergoes any kind of physical discomfort in her vigorous campaign for a good husband. This ranges from becoming gap-toothed, staying with the consciousness of not rubbing off the indigo she is wearing to look attractive to going into

seclusion or “*mgbede*”. Amardi tells us in *The Slave* that:

Erekwi girls were thrilled by it. In fact, all it meant

was that at puberty, a girl was given a long holiday before she took the burden of marriage... while in

“mgbede”, a girl’s mother taught her the secrets of

marriage. If as was usually the case she was already

engaged to a man, “mgbede” gave her a chance to

study and assess her future husband before setting

up house with him. An engagement could be broken during “mgbede” though this was rare. (23)

Amadi dwells extensively on the activities before, during and after Enaa’s “*mgbede*”. It is initiated with feasting and ends with feasting. During her “*mgbede*”, she receives numerous suitor and gifts. It involves a lot of physical discomfort. She could stay for two years in seclusion. She is shut out of anything happening in the village. She only hears about them. During this period, she wears big spiral brass rings on her ankles and must be taught how to get accustomed to them so that they do not hurt her. The discomfort, notwithstanding, Aleru could not bear the pain of foreseeing the impossibility of going into “*mgbede*”. Amadi says, Aleru’s eyes were now red and heavy with moisture. Enaa went to her and embraced her. “They both began to weep” (18).

Parents are expected to teach their children the cardinal principles of traditional African education in order to prepare them for maturity which is indispensable in marriages. According to Fafunwa (1974), these principles are physical, moral intellectual, vocational development, community participation, character development and the promotion of cultural heritage. Any child who does not live up to expectation is considered vain. Such is the types that were sold out during slave trade or allowed to go to church during the colonial era.

The traditional education is directed towards securing a good and responsible husband for their daughters or well behaved and chaste wives for their sons as the case may be, Idowu (1962:4) says that “chastity before marriage on the part of women is essential. A woman who is not virtu-

ous at marriage is a disgrace both to herself and her family.” Similarly, a man who cannot keep his thoughts under control or who cannot show his ability to rule his family, provide for it and protect it, is not considered a real man.

Although Adibia, the younger sister to Wizo the carver in *The Slave* walks with a limp yet when an offer of marriage comes to her, she rejects it because “the suitor was a very poor lazy man who could not even mend the roof of his house” (21). On his own part, Olumati, realizing the task involved in raising a family of his own, would either wait than discuss marriage yet. He says that he has no money and no farm; therefore, he would have to wait. It is clear to him as Amadi points that:

Nothing did a husband greater credit than the well

fed look of his wife. In the first year of her marriage, Ihuoma had been slim and quite a few

of her more slumpy mates had remarked that food was being wasted on her.

Now, she had shamed his critics (10-11).

As stated earlier, marriage negotiation after the proposals could last up to a year. After the first stage of the negotiation traditionally called “*Ikuaka Nuzo*” (knocking at the door) negotiations go on till the last stage which is the formal “presentation of wine”

Geoffrey Finch has stated that in the Igbo society portrayed by Amadi the gods are not just “somewhere there”. They are actually “woven into the very bodies of their worshippers for one was born only at their pleasure, one worshipped them as long as one lived and died when one had committed an unpardonable offence against them” (1975: 146). This means that there is a relationship between a typical Igbo man and the uncanny supernatural deities of the Igbo society. The gods can assume the form of a living creature like the snake in the case of the sea-king who kills Madume for insulting his “wife” in *The Concubine*. This being so, marriage between a girl and a supernatural being like the sea-king is no surprise to the local people. Ihuoma in *The Concubine* is said to be married to the jealous sea-king. This is why no man can ever take Ihuoma as a wife since she is already a wife to the sea-king; she can only be a concubine to another man.

Since one is born at the pleasure of the gods, the gods themselves have a way of determining

the life span of a man. The gods are seen to be responsible for Ahurole's "agwu". Men are helpless in the hands of the gods and have to resign, therefore, to fate. Ihuoma for example, is chosen by the sea-king as a wife and yet allows her to be born as a human being, but it only allows her to be a concubine to man. Ihuoma innocently goes into marriage and is indirectly responsible for her husband, Emenike's death.

As presented by Amadi, the whole of *The Slave* is completely taken up with the premarital activities of the youths of Erekwí village. Every character in the novel is busy preparing himself or herself for the most cherished aspect of Igbo culture—traditional marriage. It ends with the finding of a worthy wife-to-be as the case is with Wizo and Enna. With Ihuoma and Ekwueme in *The Concubine*, the negotiation starts and ends with their living together as husband and wife in their own house.

Marriage as earlier observed may be viewed as a drama of a kind in which initially everybody participates. But certainly this kind of drama does not include the "Osu" in Igbo society. An "Osu" is a person dedicated to the gods. He or she is viewed as an illegitimate citizen of the community although he/she is born in such community. If a man runs to a god for protection, he becomes the servant of such god who lays claim to all his/her children. He/she is deprived of every right and obligation to the community. This is what Amadi shows in the case of Olumati in *The Slave*. By all standards, Olumati is more than qualified to marry Enaa. But the ground on which he is declared a legitimate member of Erekwí village is questionable. "Amadioha" the god to which is thought to belong says it does not claim what does not belong to it, but the village would have preferred a direct answer rather than an indirect answer that makes the people none the wiser. So, since the people are not completely convinced that Olumati is not an "osu" Enaa his heart-throb cannot marry him. Adibia tells Olumati that "many in Aliji are still not sure you are not a slave of Amadioha" (136). So, in such a dramatic celebration called marriage in Igbo society the "osu" are not participants. Even if an "osu" decides to marry an "osu" it will not involve any formal celebration as the society would not have anything to do with him.

OBSERVATIONS

This paper has all along been preoccupied with the analysis of traditional Igbo marriage as portrayed by Elechi Amadi in *The Concubine* and *The Slave*. The analysis has shown that as narrated by Amadi, traditional marriage is a very strong uniting factor among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria. It has a very sensitive place in the life of the people. As seen, parents are highly involved in partner selection for their children. Parents normally carryout a thorough back ground investigation before deciding on whether their child would choose the suitor as a marriage partner. The parents would like to know if there is any genetic inheritable disease like sickle cell anaemia or insanity. They want to know if the lady or the man has good morals, is hardworking and humble. The involvement of parents in the choice of a marriage partner may seem preposterous to many young persons today who often determine their future partner by themselves.

There is no doubt, however, that the traditional marriage institution has some inherent weaknesses. Child marriage for example, is riddled with a few problems. How do the parents of both children know that both would live to be married? Death could claim either of them before they are of age. Worse still, like Ahurole, either of them could be under the influence of the gods thereby creating a mismatch. Even so, either of them could be suffering from a disgraceful disease like the much dreaded epilepsy. Ahurole's failed marriage is no doubt Amadi's vote of no confidence in this aspect of marriage.

As shown, virginity in a maiden is a priceless treasure that is highly celebrated. But virginity alone is not enough to guarantee a successful marriage. Both novels are set in the pre-colonial past where the gods held sway. But for beads that hardly cover their private parts maidens go stark naked. Ahurole in *The Concubine* is described as walking "more briskly, her full breasts vibrating in unison.... The indigo she had on made her darker still... Her waist was heavily beaded" (95). Contrary to Basden's view, love really does exist in the traditional Igbo society as seen in the case of Ekwueme and Olumati. As seen too, marriage is often a serious business that usually involves virtually all the members of the village. It is not a situation whereby an individual can just "buy" off a girl

from her parents like an article in the market as the Carys of this world would have us believe. Today however, the Igbo society portrayed by Amadi hardly exists. Christianity has greatly reduced the powers of the traditional gods and goddesses. The “osu” system has almost vanished. Modern day Igbo girls no longer go half-naked just as going into seclusion or “*mgbede*” before marriage no longer holds. The society portrayed by Amadi, like all societies, has been subjected to the grinding wheel of time. In deed, the forces of societal dynamism have had their day.

NOTES

1. “*Mgbede*”. It is a seclusion a girl of marriageable age deliberately goes into to get prepared for marriage. While in “*mgbede*”, a girl’s mother teaches her the secrets of successful marriage.
2. “*Obi*”. This is a typical Igbo family household meeting
3. “*Agwu*”. It is an eccentric behaviour traceable to the gods. Ahurole’s peevishness for example is traceable to the gods.
4. “*Ikuaka Nuzo*”. Literally translated as “knocking at the door”, it is actually the first stage in the marriage negotiations which eventually culminates in the presentation of wine.
5. “*Osu*”. An “osu” is a person dedicated to the gods. If a man runs to a god for protection during any calamity he becomes the servant of such a god who consequently lays claims to all his children hence such persons become illegitimate citizens in the community where they reside.

REFERENCES

- Achebe C 1975. *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. London: Heinemann Educational Books. Ltd.
- Amadi E 1966. *The Concubine*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- Amadi E 1978. *The Slave*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- Basden G 1966. *Niger Ibos*. London: Franc Cars.
- Chuwkwu W 2004. *Traditional Igbo Marriage in Nigerian Novels*. Unpublished Long Essay Submitted to Department of English, University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.
- Fafunwa B 1974. *History of Education in Nigeria*. London: George and Unwin.
- Finch G 1975. Tragic design in the novels of Elechi Amadi. *Critique*, 17(2): 5.
- Idowu B 1962. *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*. London: Longman Group.
- Ifemesia C 1979. *Traditional Humane Living among the Igbo: An Historical Perspective*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers Co.
- Marcus T Quoted in Geddes and Grosset 1994. *Dictionary of Quotations*. New Lanark: David Dale House.
- Mbiti J 1921. *African Religion and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Mitchel C 1974. *A New Dictionary of Sociology*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Nwoye M 1991. *Marriage and Family Counselling*. Jos: Fab Education Books.
- Owuamanam T 2010. When Things Fall Apart in Marriage, What Next? *Being the Text of the 30th Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria*. Ado-Ekiti: University of Ado-Ekiti Publishers.
- Stride G 1971. *West African History*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Publishers.
- Uko U 2002. Marriage the Igbo Way. *This Day Newspaper*, Daily, July 26, 2002, P. 15.