



## **AN INVESTIGATING INTO THE EFFECTS OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGES ON WOMEN IN SIERRA LEONE.**

### **CASE STUDY: LUAWA CHIEFDOM, KAILAHUN DISTRICT**

#### **ABSTRACT**

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The definition of marriage varies not only between cultures or religions, but also within them throughout their histories, evolving to both expand and contract in what is encompassed. But typically it is principally an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually sexual, are acknowledged or sanctioned.

In some cultures, marriage is recommended or considered to be compulsory before pursuing any sexual activity.

When defined broadly, marriage is considered a cultural universal.

Traditional marriage isn't exactly the one man, one woman story often propagated by people. Politicians may claim that the definition of marriage hasn't changed in thousands of years, but it most definitely has. Marriage has been through a lot of changes over the millennia with both good and bad elements.

For example, in Mesopotamia of 4,000 years ago, marriage was similar to slavery. The laws even included the rules for getting a refund if you weren't satisfied with your wife.

Romans found public displays of affection offensive, and one senator had to resign after he was seen kissing his wife in public. Early church officials discouraged people from marrying altogether, since it distracted them from praying. And a thousand years ago, girls were married when their ages were still in the single-digits.

For centuries, marriage was a lousy deal for women. Bernard of Siena told his male parishioners that they should show their wives as much mercy as they would a pig, and even Martin Luther the Reformist said that he hit his wife for being “saucy.”

It’s only relatively recently that it’s been common to marry for love. About a hundred years ago, conservatives warned that love marriage would destroy the institution. And it’s within the last few decades that America overturned laws against interracial marriage, and giving husbands extra rights over wives.

Those interracial marriage bans, by the way, were justified as a form of religious freedom, language that seems awfully similar to the justifications given today for banning marriage for same-sex couples.

Throughout all those changes, one thing has stayed constant; marriage has always been an agreement between people. And as societies have changed for the better, they’ve updated marriage to change with them.

Traditional Chinese marriage as opposed to marriage in modern China is a ceremonial ritual within Chinese societies that involve a union between spouses, sometimes established by pre-arrangement between families.

Within Chinese culture, romantic love and monogamy was the norm for most citizens. Wedding rituals and customs often varied by region because of China's extensive and rich history and because of the numerous different cultures and ethno-linguistic groups that have been subsumed into modern Chinese culture.

In the history of traditional marriage customs in Africa, the institution has taken on at least three (3) principal forms:

- Marriage by capture
- Marriage by purchase
- Marriage by choice

Interestingly, research shows that marriage customs in other parts of world have patterns that are (or were) very similar to the history of marriage customs in Africa. Perhaps this is even more proof that we probably all do share the same roots.

In marriage by capture, the bride-to-be may be either kidnapped or captured prior to the official wedding ceremony or at some point during the marriage ceremony. During the wedding festivities, friends of the couple may kidnap the bride and will release her only after the groom negotiates for, and pays, her ransom. The kidnapping can be done multiple times throughout the wedding ceremony and it is up to the groom to notice when his bride goes missing.

In the other type of marriage by capture, the groom's family and friends abduct the bride. When the abduction comes to light, the groom's "posse" and the bride's "posse" meet halfway between their villages or half way between their family compounds if they are from the same village. When they meet, they will either engage in a mock battle or exchange gifts and/or payment for the bride. Such practices are seen among the Ganda/Bantu tribes of Uganda and the people of Nyanza in Kenya.

On the other hand, marriage by purchase has a theory behind it which is basically self-explanatory. However there are subtle differences from tribe to tribe in Africa when it comes to the actual execution.

In Zaire, the groom brings two copper rings or an arrow to the bride and her family. Upon acceptance of the gifts the couple becomes officially betrothed. More gifts are exchanged during the actual wedding ceremony, one of which is a knife given by the groom to the bride's father. The knife signifies that the new husband is now responsible for the wife's safety and well-being.

Among the Zulu, the groom gives cattle to the bride's family and father. The theory behind the cattle is that if for any reason the marriage doesn't work out and the bride has to return to her family, the cattle serve as insurance for her so that she will be able to support herself.

The Nyakysus people of Malawi consider a marriage legitimate only after the bride's representative has received cattle from the groom. The groom still has to work on his bride's father's land for some time. If the marriage doesn't work out then the cattle can be returned and the marriage will be dissolved.

Marriage by choice is now common among traditional weddings in Africa as ladies and men have to decide on the type of husband/wife to marry. This is deeply rooted on the level of love they have for each other. They may be in courtship for years before the parents come to the known.

Marriage is an important step in the life of every human on earth. Different cultures have different rituals and beliefs about marriage. Love, economic status, religious beliefs, and social acceptance are just a few reasons individuals marry across differing cultures.

Among the Akamba tribe in Kenya, a virgin bride brought shame to her family; her virginity was an indication of ill preparation before marriage. Therefore young women were ritually deflowered by elder men from whom they received sexual teachings (Nyuasa, 2011).

In the same vein, pre-marital sex was permitted for both boys and girls to prepare them adequately for their conjugal responsibilities in marriage. The Akamba tribe marriage had the specific purpose of perpetuating one's lineage and in the process, bestowing social status on the man and his wife (Ibid)

## 5.

In Sierra Leone, almost all ethnic groups have a unique culture of traditional marriage that is adhere to regardless their religious practices. Among the Mendes and Themnes who are majority tribes of the country, traditional wedding is regarded as the best marriages and therefore every female from this these tribes have to go through it.

To give it more importance in the country, traditional marriage has been accorded statutory status making it legal as passed by the House of Parliament into Law. The Three Gender Acts of 2009 clearly redefined traditional marriage in Sierra Leone and gave it a legal place in the lives of traditionalist. Every traditional marriage organized in any locality within the country should be certified just like any other marriage.

There are a few positive and negative influences of traditional marriage on an individual and more especially women. First of all, an individual becomes excited that they will begin to share their life with someone who cares for them, and whom they feel comforted by. They will feel excited to know that soon they will be starting a family of their own, and that they will become parents of their own children

On the other hand, there a few negative influences. The woman can become stressed out on the fact that they will need to make compromises and sacrifices, in order to form a good

marital relationship. Apart from that they are subjected to obey the African man no matter what, in which their good ideas and knowledge become dormant. This frustrates many women in traditional marital homes.

It was against this backdrop that this study was set to investigate the effects of traditional marriages on women in the Jaiama Bongor chiefdom, Bo district, Southern Sierra Leone.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Davidson (2010) marriage, also called matrimony or wedlock, is a socially or ritually recognized union between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between those spouses, as well as between them and any resulting biological or adopted children and affinity (in-laws and other family through marriage).

The definition of marriage varies not only between cultures or religions, but also within them throughout their histories, evolving to both expand and contract in what is encompassed. But typically it is principally an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually sexual, are acknowledged or sanctioned.

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It was against this backdrop that this study was set to investigate the effects of traditional marriages on women in the Jaiama Bongor chiefdom, Bo district, Southern Sierra Leone.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

In the African mind, tradition is considered as a serious affair and one that demands high commitment. There are no half-measures in traditional marriages. A man who engages in dubious marital relationships is considered a vagabond despised by everyone in the community.



Likewise, a woman without a proper husband is referred to as one who sleeps on the floor, a person of no fixed abode. It is a shame to the woman and her family. No matter your education or social status in typical traditional Sierra Leonean homes, traditional marriages are more revered to others because it is considered to be more respectful, less expensive and above all it promotes African culture.

Research carried out by Levy (2000) has shown that those individuals who live a stable marital relationship tend to live longer, have a better physical health, better functional health at old age and better emotional health than those in troubled marriages or who are divorced.

Women in traditional marriages has often recorded positive effects ranging from respect brought to their families to belonging to a man rather than their fathers who cares about them and their children.

But these wonderful effects are short lived as traditional marriages are plague with many bottlenecks particularly on women in rural Sierra Leone. There are many frustrations of traditional marriages on women particularly when women in such marriages stressed because their rights and human dignities are compromised and sacrificed to please the traditional man.

These frustrations can lead to a loss of hobbies, because there are restrictions about what the women can do; and these restrictions affects them for the rest of their lives in the relationship.

The adult may develop a sense of stress because they have a lot of responsibility ahead of them.

In addition, the individuals in the relationship can become upset by the fact that they have to make sure that their relationship has no betrayals, and it is kept loyal, throughout the couple's lives.

It was against this backdrop that his study was set to investigate the effects of traditional marriage on women in Gorama Chiefdom, Kono District.

## **AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed at investigating the effects of traditional marriage on women in Luawa Chiefdom, Kailahun District.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

Specifically the objectives include:

- i. To investigate the characteristics of traditional marriage homes in Luawa Chiefdom, Kailahun District.
- ii. To investigate the effects of traditional marriage on women in the study communities in Luawa Chiefdom
- iii. To suggest and recommends ways to mitigate the problems

## **JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is relevant and useful in many folds but not limited to the following:

The end product of this study will be useful and relevant to Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs in that it will come up with the present conditions lived by women in traditional marriages and its effects on women. This will help them plan and develop policies that will help women develop positive attitude towards marriage and the benefits its offers by law.

It is also believed that the end product of this study will be relevant and useful to local authorities and other stakeholders officiating traditional marriage in that it will outline their roles in making sure that all customary marriages are certified. This gives women more security to stay in such marriages.

The completed work of this study will also be useful to women in traditional homes/marriages in that it will outline the benefits of such marriage on them and their roles and responsibilities outlined. This will help them get the benefits that deserve them regardless traditions and customs of the husband after his death.

It will also be relevant to NGOs and CSOs enforcing Gender equality in the context that, the Three Gender Act be applied in the traditional marriage situation so that women may equally have right to inherit properties and their rights granted them in traditional marriage homes in the study communities and by extension the country at large.

Finally, the end product of this study will be useful to colleagues in the field of academia in that it will serve as reference material when and where the need arises.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, related literatures were reviewed based on the study objectives. Relevant but related citations were made from credible sources and it forms the bedrock of this study.

Marriage can be recognized by a State, an organization, a religious authority, a tribal group, a local community, or peers. It is often viewed as a contract.

According to Penwill (1951), Civil /traditional marriage, which does not exist in some countries, is marriage without religious content carried out by a government institution in accordance with the marriage laws of the jurisdiction, and recognized as creating the rights and obligations intrinsic to matrimony.

Marriages can be performed in a secular civil ceremony or in a religious setting via a wedding ceremony. The act of marriage usually creates normative or legal obligations between the individuals involved, and any offspring they may produce or adopt (Ibid).

In terms of legal recognition, most sovereign states and other jurisdictions limit marriage to opposite sex couples and a diminishing number of these permit polygyny, child marriage and forced marriages.

Over the twentieth century, a growing number of countries and other jurisdictions have lifted bans on and have established legal recognition for interracial marriage, interfaith marriage and most recently gender-neutral marriage.

Some cultures allow the dissolution of marriage through divorce or annulment. In some areas, child marriages and polygamy may occur in spite of national laws against the practice (Roy, 2004).

Since the late twentieth century, major social changes in Western countries have led to changes in the demographics of marriage, with the age of first marriage increasing, fewer

people marrying, and more couples choosing to cohabit rather than marry. For example, the number of marriages in Europe decreased by 30% from 1975 to 2005.

Roy (2004) examined traditional marriage among the Aamba tribes in Kenya and opines that when a boy and girl came to a secret agreement that they were in love and wanted to marry, upon agreement, the young man's father would approach the girl's parents on the matter. This was followed by the first sign of sealing an in-law relationship 'uthoni' with two goats 'mbuisyantheo'.

The young suitor then prepared the best beer 'uki', which was taken to the girl's father, followed by a negotiation on the bride-wealth.

The Akamba married woman was more or less the head of the family in the long run, since the husband had little control over her in the day to day management. If such a freedom to manage the home was absent, the husband had the danger of his wife becoming exasperated and running away.

At all costs, the husband had to avoid such situations of a wife running back to her parents, because he would definitely not recover the dowry he gave to her parents, which could only happen if his former wife re-married (Ibid).

In the case of re-marriage, the new husband was obliged to refund the entire dowry paid to the former husband. In the final analysis what this system did was to reduce exceedingly the number of divorce cases.

The Akamba men were socialized to worship physical power - fighting, cattle raiding, and so on. The women maintained a closely guarded culture of oppression in which men were excluded from all intellectual activities (Ibid).

The men's only tasks were to raid cattle and guard the community. When they were not doing that, they were allowed to spend their time drinking beer or socializing.

Most of the debate around marriage occurs because there are two competing understandings of marriage fighting for dominance in our society: the *conjugal* view and the *revisionist* view.

These two views of marriage have dramatically different implications for what marriage policy should look like. Whichever view of marriage informs state policy can have a dramatic impact on the legal and social norms surrounding families and children (Terry 2010). Cadigan (1998) had a question in mind with regards public interference or rejection of traditional marriage. What public interest does marriage serve? If civil marriage did not serve an important public interest, then there would be no reason for governments to formalize it.

Whatever the distinction between marriage and non-marriage, it should also explain the state interest in marriage. Further, whatever public interests are served by formalizing marriage should be unique to marriage relationships after all; we don't formalize friendship pacts in court.

The unifying good of procreation provides a strong rationale for government recognition of traditional marriage: traditional Marriage stabilizes homes, and provides a natural reason for both fathers and mothers to remain committed to the domestic life into which they bring children (Ibid).

It cultivates a climate where permanence and fidelity are expected of married partners; something that is vital for the welfare of children born into the union. This explains barriers to divorce, ongoing obligations post-marriage (such as alimony), and most other

legal norms associated with marriage. Because of the way marriage norms impact the lives of children, there is a public interest in promoting these norms (Ibid).

On the other hand, if the unifying good of traditional marriage is mutual personal fulfillment, why would we need or want the government involved? People engage in long-term personal relationships all the time without government even knowing about it (Dundas, 1913),

The primary public interest for civil marriage, from the revisionist view, is to arrange survivorship, hospital visitation, or end-of-life decision rights, among other things. However, there is no reason to restrict many of these benefits rights to sexual lovers. For example, why couldn't best friends, siblings, or roommates enter into similar arrangements? Thus, the public interests are not unique to marriage, and the idea of civil marriage (as a unique institution) is therefore drawn into question (Ibid).

According to Kimanga (2004) traditional marriage or wedding ceremonies among the Igbos of eastern Nigeria is not much different today to what it used to be 100 years ago. A wedding is called "*IgbaNkwu*" in traditional Igbo language, and it an affair that joins two families and villages together, not only the man and the woman.

In the olden days, parents contract a marriage affair on behalf of their son or daughter. A couple with a marriageable son visits a family friend or another couple with a marriageable daughter and asked for their daughter to marry their son. But today, a man is free to bring home whoever he chooses or a lady whoever she chooses insofar the parents approve of the other.

Nwosu (2010) vividly explains the steps involved in traditional marriage among the Igbos of Nigeria. In simple steps, below are the ways situations that take place before a marriage is perfected in Igboland:

- i. A man sees a lady of his choice and opens up his mind and intentions to her. If she agrees, they begin a discreet dating affair that must not be made so public.
- ii. The man then intimates his parents of his desire to marry the particular lady, and the parents inform the entire family who investigates the lady's family to be sure she's from a good and healthy family.
- iii. The man together with his parents then visits the parents of the lady, who entertains them with drinks and foods until the evening. Then a parent of the man or their spokesman clear his throat and reveals the reason for their visit to the family of the lady – to marry their daughter who is identified by name in case they have several marriageable girls.
- iv. In some villages, the parents of the lady might call her out and ask if she knows the suitor and interested in marrying him; and in some other villages the parents of the girl will only understand the purpose of the visit and ask for time to speak with their daughter.
- v. Before the next meeting which might take weeks, the parents of the lady would have investigated the family of the suitor to be certain he is from a good and healthy family.
- vi. On the day of the next meeting, the family of the man comes again to the bride's family who says they have accepted the offer of marriage; and then lists out the bride's dowry and other items that must be presented for the wedding to hold.

Similar situations exist among the Mendes and Themnes traditional marriages in Sierra Leone although with slight differences.

Approximately 70-80 million couples world wide are currently infertile (Bos et al., 1995) and it can be estimated that tens of millions of couples are primary infertile or childless. For most people, having children is immensely important; not being able to have children is a major life problem.

There is also a large group of women and men, who have children, possibly from a previous relationship, who desperately want to have another child. A considerable body of research in Western countries has shown that involuntary childlessness has strong psychological consequences (Fisher, 1998).

Most of the studies carried out in this domain are quantitative and some are qualitative. Both kind of studies, point in the same direction: there are various psychological and psychosomatic effects, and especially women are affected.

The most frequently mentioned effects of traditional marriage on women are distress, raised depression and anxiety levels, lowered self-esteem, feelings of blame and guilt, somatic complaints, and reduced sexual interest. For a small minority of women and men in the Western world these effects are at a clinical level or can be considered extremely serious (Greil, 1997).

It is interesting that social and cultural consequences are seldom mentioned in the reports on these studies. When these aspects are considered, they are often related to studies about elderly people without children, regardless of the reason for being childless.

It is stressed in the reports of these studies that frail old people without children from traditional marriages have less social support (Johnson, 2006) and a less robust network for independent living compared to old people with children in the same marriage situations (Wenger et al., 2009).

Wirtberg and co-workers (2007) however, carried out a study that is unique in the sense that it aims at elderly involuntarily childless women in traditional marriage. They reported on 14 women, and described that in all cases but one sexual life was affected negatively and that half of these elderly childless women were separated.

In the 1990s, studies were published about the effects of childlessness in traditional marriage households in developing countries. The focus of these studies was different from studies carried out in the West.

Although psychological effects are described, the main concerns are social and cultural effects (Inhorn, 2002). This study therefore set to investigate the effects of traditional marriage on women in the JaiamaBongor chiefdom, district.

## STUDY METHODOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents strategies, methods and instruments used to collect data from the field for the first time. It also explains the method of data analysis.

### STUDY SETTING

Gorama Chiefdom is found in Kono District Southern Sierra Leone. The chiefdom shares boundary with the Lower Bambara Chiefdom in the North West, Dodo Chiefdom in the South West and JaiamaSwefeh in the east.

The chiefdom has a population of 26,067 people according to the 2004 Housing and Population Census and 31,260 people according to the 2015 Housing and Population Census. That clearly shows that there was an increase of 78,000 people in the period of ten (10) years.

The chiefdom has ten (10) sections with the chiefdom headquarters of Kangama. Each section has a head quarter town with a section chief responsible to the paramount chiefdom stationed in Kangama.

The chiefdom is a typical traditional Konodominated community where customs and traditions were strongly held to high esteem. Most women at the age of marriage ages or even below were given into marriage with view of getting dowry from their in-laws and avoiding promiscuity amongst their girl children in the chiefdom.

The chiefdom held traditional marriage to high esteem and even frowned at other forms of marriages that were practiced by some tribe's and cultures in other part of the country. They regard it because it is less expensive and affordable by most young men growing

up in the localities. Their respect for it rose when it was passed in to law by parliament that it was now legally accepted form of marriage in the country.

In fact, the Three Gender Act of Sierra Leone (2009) is now enforcing traditional authorities to register all traditional marriages in their localities and failure is tantamount to prosecution by law. This was passed to give more credence to the institution just like other form of marriage in the country.



There are several primary schools and a secondary school located at the chiefdom headquarter town of Kailahun. The primary schools serve a feeder schools to the only Secondary School in the chiefdom.

The Community Health Centres are overburdened with health problems due to lack of adequate medical facilities, trained medical practitioners, remote nature of the terrain and above all strict adherence to their custom and traditions in treating health problems.

Women in traditional marriage homes were mostly living in poverty and in polygamous households. This had negative impact on the women and as a result, they were often stressed and live in isolation with their children when the husband takes a new wife.

Their right to family properties was low and their human rights abused by tradition and local authorities who interprets the local laws on marriage. Most of their verdict was bias against women.

Therefore, the study was carried out in this community to examine the effects of traditional marriage on women in Luawa Chiefdom, Kailahun District.

## **POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The population of the study includes all married residents of the Luawa Chiefdom as at the time of study. All inhabitants in the chiefdom headquarters and the surrounding communities' forms part of this population. Women who have gone through traditional wedding or marriages were randomly selected to form the size of this study.

The size of this study includes twenty (20) from Luawa the chiefdom headquarter, fifteen from (15) , ten (14) and eleven (11) from .

A total of sixty (60) respondents were randomly selected to form the size of the study. They were randomly selected from the chiefdom and those sampled has been in traditional marriage for more than ten (10) years.

## **DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Two major data collection methods or techniques are employed:

## **QUESTIONING**

Structured questions were used to gather data from the field. Some of the questions were close ended to capture the actual picture as it was in the field and few others are open ended to give the respondents free will to vent out their opinions on the activities. All the questions were designed based on the set objectives of the study.

## **DISCUSSION**

Discussions were also held with ten (10) respondents from the sampled population. They included; five (5) elderly women who had spent all their lives in traditional marriages and five (5) elderly men in traditional marriages and five (5) traditional authorities who officiate traditional marriages in the study communities.

## **INSTRUMENTATION**

For the completion of this study, two set of instruments were used.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

The questions developed are enshrined in the questionnaire (see Appendix One). The questionnaire was based on the objectives and divided into two sections.

The first draft of the questionnaire was pre-tested in other communities in the chiefdom that was not randomly selected to the sample size. An area that was not properly designed was adjusted and general corrections made where necessary. The final draft of the copy was then taken to the field and distributed to the respondents.

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

A well-organized discussion guide was developed based on the objectives. The respondents were grouped as suggested by them and each item on the guide was discussed vividly. Fifteen (15) respondents were involved in the discussion.

## **ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Data collected was analysed by means of qualitative technique which involves mere description of the study and they are presented in tables, analysed and discuss

## **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

In this chapter, data collected from the field was presented in tables, analyzed and discussed based on the study objectives.

## **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADITIONAL MARAIGE HOUSEHOLDS IN THE GORAMA CHIEFDOM.**

This objective investigates the present demographic characteristics of respondents as of time of study. Respondents' views were presented in tables, analyzed and discussed.

**TABLE ONE: AGE OF RESPONENTS**

<b>RESPONDENT'S AGE ( IN YEARS)</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE(S)</b>
Below 15	10	17
Below 30	30	50
Below 45	20	33
46years and above	60	100

**SOURCE: Field Survey, 2018.**

According to the table above, 50% of the respondents stated that they were below thirty(30) years when they got entered into traditional marriage, 33% indicated below forty-five (45) years and 17% claimed that they were below fifteen (15) years.

What came out clearly from the discussion was the fact that the Gorama communities gave their girl children into marriage at an earlier age because of cultural, traditional and religious reasons regardless the negative impacts it may have on them, their children and by extension their communities.

More women got married in their teens and an elderly woman registered that it helped her so much in that it did not allow her to be promiscuous and was satisfied because she yielded the advice of her parents.

Some recorded regrets as they thought life would have been better for them if not given to men at earlier ages. Some were living in stressful situations and low standards of living were also evident.

All the respondents were Sierra Leoneans and bulk were indigenes of the study communities.

**TABLE TWO: YEARS TAKEN IN TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE**

<b>MARRIAGE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE(S)</b>
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<b>YEARS</b>		
1-5	5	8
6-10	20	33
11 and above years	35	59
Total	60	100

**SOURCE: Field Survey, 2018.**

The table above shows that 59% of the respondents were in tradition marriage for eleven years and above, 33% have been in it for six to ten years and 8% claimed that they have been in it for one to five years.

It was discovered that bulk of the respondents were in traditional marriage for a considerable number of years and therefore had gone through crucibles and good things that traditional marriage provides for people in the study communities.

Those with long years experience had many children because they were married at an earlier age and have many children. Now at menopause, their husbands have gone in for another bride which has frustrated them. They have little or no time with their elderly women who add to their stress and frustrations.

The women were now glue to their children and have to fend for their survival. Most of their children were out of school due to lack of finance and support.

Their situation became worst when the husband redirects his attention to the young bride and property inheritance was not common with traditional marriages. They lived in poverty.

### **TABLE THREE: INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>INOME ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE(S)</b>
None	20	33
Farming	35	59
Petty trading	5	8
Total	60	100

**SOURCE: Field Survey, 2018.**

Findings revealed that 59% of the respondents indicating farming as the only income generating activities they undertake in the study communities while 33% stated none income generating activity.

However, 8% of the respondents stated that they were engaged in petty trading as a source of generating income for their survival. Those who were engaged in farming were doing that with their children and they lived on it. The surpluses were sold in the market store to address their financial needs.

Women who were advanced in age were just at home doing absolutely nothing but fed by their children. This shows that their household suffered from poverty regardless the intervention of the children.

As most families from where the women were married from suffered from poverty, the husbands mistreat the women and the families can defend their daughters for fear of the in-law asking for the repayment of dowry.

Conflicts were common in the households of traditional homes and women suffered most from physical, emotional and traditional laws of marriage which never favours them.

#### **EFFECTS OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE ON WOMEN IN GORAMA CHIEFDOM**

Under this objective, the effect of traditional marriage on women was investigated in the study communities and responses from the respondents were presented in tables, analyzed and discussed

**TABLE FOUR: DOES TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE OFFER MARRIED CERTIFICATE TO COUPLES?**

<b>ISSUANCE OF MARRIED CERTIFICATE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCNTAGE(S)</b>
No	45	75
Yes	5	8
Not aware of certificate	10	17
	60	100

**SOURCE:** Field Survey, 2018.

The table above shows that 75% of the respondents said they were not giving married certificate by the officiating members or local authorities in their communities, 17% claimed that they were not aware of certificate issuance for traditional marriage while 8% said they were given married certificates.

Discussions revealed that the elderly women were not given any marriage certificate but the officiating members or local court authorities were aware of the certificates but ignored it for cultural reasons such as pride of women when given certificates, deviance etc.

The very young women in traditional marriages were not giving certificates for similar reasons but the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs were not present in such marriages and therefore issuance of certificates were ignored by local authorities.

This had negative impacts on the women as tradition view women as mere properties rather than partners in development of the home.

The major cause was the fact that bulk of the women was not aware of the Three Gender Acts of 2009 and in a situation where the local authorities issued certificates; it was requested by educated spouses.

**TABLE FIVE: AWARENESS OF EFFETS OF TRADITIONAL MARIAGE ON WOMEN IN THS STUDY COMMUNITIES.**

<b>AWARENESS OF EEFFECTS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE(S)</b>
Fully aware	50	83
Not aware	4	7
Undecided	6	10
Total	60	100

**SOURCE:** Field Survey, 2018.

The table reveals that 83% of the respondents were fully aware of the effects traditional marriage on women in the study communities, 10% were undecided while 7% were not aware of any effects of traditional marriage on them.

Those who were not aware were living in a better live with full support from their husbands and even their own parents. Those who were fully aware had gone through problems in such marriage.

It was revealed that both positive and negative effects were identified that were envisaged in traditional marriages in the study communities.

**TABLE SIX: POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE ON WOMEN IN GORAMA CHIEFDOM.**

POSITIVE EFFECTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(S)
Less expensive	30	50
Excited for beginning a new life with some one she loves	10	17
Bringing respect to the family and community	5	8
Brings unity among households or villages	15	25
Total	60	100

**SOURCE: Field Survey, 2018.**

According to the table above, 50% stated that one major positive effects of traditional marriage was that it was less expensive while 25% indicated that it brought unity among households and villages from where the two couples were coming from.

However, 17% of the respondents stated that it brought excitement to women for given the opportunity to leave her family to form a union with someone she loves dearly and 8% claimed that it brought respect to the woman's family and by extension to the community in which she dwells.

Many young men can't afford to spend millions of Leones to marry a woman and after the marriage, there is nothing to eat or start life. Therefore, most people preferred to do traditional wedding which was less expensive.

It was also revealed during discussions that traditional marriage brought unity between and among families and villages from where the two couples were from. They join family together which goes a long way.

Research has shown that those individuals who live a stable marital relationship tend to live longer, have a better physical health, better functional health at old age and better emotional health than those in troubled marriages or who are divorced

**TABLE SEVEN: NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF TRADITIONL MARRIAGE ON WOMEN IN GORAMA CHIEFDOM.**

NEGATIVE EFFECTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(S)
Stressful	10	17
Loss of hobbies	4	7
Demands a lot of Compromise and sacrifices	20	33
Denial of property inheritance	13	22
Human right violation	5	8
No certificate	8	13
Total	60	100

**SOURCE: Field Survey, 2018.**

The table above shows 33% of respondents indicating that one major effects of traditional marriage on the women was the fact that it demands them a lot of compromise and sacrifices while 22% claimed that it denied them of inheriting properties.

However, 17% of the respondents stated that it was stressful on women, 8% claimed that it violated their human rights and dignity and 7% registered that it made them loss their hobbies and capability to chose what was right for them and at what time.

A woman can become stressed out on the fact that they will need to make compromises and sacrifices, in order to form a good marital relationship. This can lead to a loss of hobbies, because there are restrictions about what the individuals can do; and these restrictions weigh on them for the rest of their lives.

One elderly woman who had been in such relationship for decades opined that; they develop a sense of stress because they have a lot of responsibility ahead of them. In addition, the individuals in the relationship can become upset by the fact that they have to make sure that their relationship has no betrayals, and it is kept loyal, throughout the couple's lives

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

This chapter presents summary of the whole study, logical conclusions drawn and recommendations proffer for practical action.

### **SUMMARY**



Sierra Leonean culture is very diverse and full of tradition based on social norms that have been around for generations. Social life is patterned around a strong clan and extended family ties. This plays a vital role in the marriage process.

Sierra Leoneans attempt to maximize rewards and minimize costs. This is done by comparing what one gives up compared to what they receive in marriage. A husband may receive social status, sexual enhancement, increased labour, and the knowledge that his blood-line will continue, while giving up some sort of economic compensation to the family of the wife.

The wife may receive resources, adult status as a wife, and protection in return for her labour and obedience to her husband.

Even with the enactment of the Three Gender Act of 2009 in the country, people still down play the importance of traditional marriage but it has the same legal rights as any other marriage practiced in the country.

Women remain to be suppressed in traditional rural communities and households with issues of traditional marriage little realising its relevance in the country today. As they married in the traditional way, men and local authorities tend to subdue them and the effects is felt by the very women for the rest of their lives.

Therefore, this study was carried out to investigate the effects of traditional marriage on women in Luawa Chiefdom, Kailahun District.

It aimed at exploring the present effects of traditional marriage on women in the study communities and the objectives included; to explain the demographic characteristics of women in traditional marriages, and to discuss the effects of traditional marriage on the very women.

Related literatures were reviewed and the study communities were selected randomly with sixty respondents selected who formed the population and size of the study. Two data collection methods and instruments were used and data collected from the field were analysed by qualitative techniques.

It was revealed that bulk of the respondents have stayed in traditional marriages for decades. They were living in deplorable conditions with poverty and limitations.

It was also revealed that few had income generating activities while others were solely dependents on their children for survival. Bulk of them lived in wattle houses with thatch roofs.

The respondents were not given certificates after the marriage and bulk of them were not aware of it.

A few were given but even at that, it was not recognized by their husbands and local authorities who organized the marriage. Both negative and positive effects were identified by the respondents on them.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

That traditional marriage was highly revealed in the study communities because of it was less expensive and it gave opportunities to young men to wed and it also brought unity among and between villages of couples.

On the other hand it can be concluded that traditional marriage had negative impact on women in the study communities making most of them poor and vulnerable to the fangs of poverty. Many were abandoned after they reached menopause stage as their husbands to other young wives leaving them emotional and psychological disturbances. This situation also affected their children and the community at large.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were proffered for practical actions:

- That the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs deploy social workers across the country to make sure that cross cutting issues in development are addressed

- That more sensitization is carried out in rural communities on Three Gender Acts of 2009 and its importance to communities
- That laws be enforced to make sure that certificates are issued to couples in every traditional marriage organized in rural communities
- That women be educated on the relevance of marriage and certificate of marriage so that after the wedding, they pursue it until it is presented them
- Those local authorities are vigilant in making sure that certificates are issued to couples after marriage so that the revenue collected will help develop the chiefdoms.
- Property right and other forms of right are equally enjoyed by women rather than the husbands' family after the death of the man and is also applied to women.

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