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AN ETHICAL EVALUATION OF TRADITIONAL SURROGACY IN IGBO CULTURE, SOUTH EAST NIGERIA.

OKWUOSA IKECHUKWU KENNETH
Department of Philosophy/ Religion and Cultural Studies
Alex Ekwueme Federal University
Ndufu Alike Ikwo.

Abstract
Surrogate motherhood has been an acceptable means of child acquisition in Igbo culture. This is basically a practice in which a woman who could not have children of her own gets another woman to carry a pregnancy and bear children for her. Existing studies on surrogacy have been approached majorly from social, psychological, legal and ethical perspectives. Most of these works however discuss the issue as it relates to modern advancement in medical science with little attention paid to surrogacy as a traditional practice in Igbo culture. This is the gap this research intends to fill. This work evaluates the ethical issues in traditional surrogacy in Igbo culture which includes: the commodification of the female body, the exploitation of the vulnerable female, the promotion of promiscuity and adultery, woman-woman marriage (same sex marriage), and the possibility of the surrogate changing her mind and deciding to keep the children away from the intending mother. The paper observes that childless women desperate to have children of their own as a means of securing their future and preserving their family lineage throw caution to the background in this quest and recommends that those who are involved or intending to engage in the practice be properly guided to avoid unpleasant consequences. Furthermore social intervention projects should be developed to protect vulnerable females who are coaxed into these arrangements and childless women who are desperate for children as a means of securing their future. Adoption which has been a legal and relatively easy means of child acquisition should be encouraged.

Keywords: Evaluation, Surrogate Motherhood, Surrogacy, Ethical Issues, Igbo Culture.

Introduction

Children are considered to be of great importance in human existence. Childlessness of whatever sort is abhorred. Childlessness among married couple has been seen as a source of pain and distress (M'Carthy, 1997). Kunhiyop (2004) notes that:

> Many couples have difficulty becoming pregnant and bringing children to birth. This has always been a source of stress and conflicts that often lead to undesirable consequences such as adultery, polygamy, divorce and children born out of wedlock.

Nwahaghi (1995), notes some effects of childlessness to include causing psychological trauma, and leading to divorce, suicide, abandonment etc. Hence most couples are willing to stop at nothing to have children of their own. Nowadays new reproductive technologies and advancement in medical science makes it possible for childless couples to have children of their own by providing treatment options to the fertility condition that had hitherto hindered them from doing so. These treatments options which include: in-vitro fertilization (IVF), intra

uterine insemination (IUI), and surrogate motherhood, are however are not without limitations. The treatments are quite expensive thereby making it accessible to only those who can afford it. Furthermore, not many people are aware of these options due to low literacy level especially in rural communities. Additionally, the success rate for these treatments are usually far below a 100%. This means that it is possible for couples to spend so much money on these treatments and have them fail.

These limitations lead childless couple to explore more reliable and cost effective means of child acquisition some of which has its roots in culture. The Igbo culture is no different from other cultures in Africa and other parts of the world in acknowledging the importance of having children and ensuring that childlessness among married couples is dealt with by any means possible.

Surrogacy as a means of child acquisitions has been in existence for a long time (Teman, 2010). Surrogacy which is basically a practice in which couples who for some reasons are unable to have children of their own contract a woman to carry a pregnancy and bear a child for them. The child so produce might or might not be genetically related to the surrogate depending on the type of infertility suffered by the couple (M'Carthy, 1997). In any case, the birth mother - the surrogate loses all rights to the child after its delivery. The child completely belongs to the contracting couple.

Childless women in different cultures have used surrogate motherhood as a means of procreation. The woman so contracted is usually impregnated either by the husband of the infertile woman through sexual intercourse or by another man. This was the case with Abraham and Sarah in the Bible. Hagai Sarah's maid was had to sleep with Abraham the mistress' husband to have children for the childless couple (Gen. 16:1-2). The child to be produced was to be Sarah's. This was in line with the customs of their time where an infertile wife could offer her servant girl who would be her surrogate to her husband (Dickson, 2010). The case of Jacob's wives Leah and Rachel giving their maids to their husbands to bear children for them (Gen. 30:1-3) are further examples of surrogacy in the Bible. In all these cases, the women were impregnated by the mistress' husband through sexual intercourse but the children so produced were not considered that of the maids but that of their mistresses. Advancement in medical technology however, has made it possible for women to become pregnant without sexual intercourse (M'Carthy, 1997). In any case however, the surrogate who is the birth mother loses all rights to the child as the child completely belongs to the contracting couple.

The Igbo culture even to the present times accepts surrogacy as a legal means of child acquisition. Childless women who are interested in it are at liberty to contract by marriage a fertile young woman to be their surrogate and bear children for them.

A number of legal, sociological, economic and psychological implications are associated with this practice. Existing studies have extensively considered these implications. Many of these works however have focused on the forms of surrogacy occasioned by advancement in medical technology with very little or no attention to the form of surrogacy in traditional African culture especially as it pertains to Igbo culture. This is the gap this research intends to

fill. This work is the authors attempt at inspiring further academic work on the moral implication of this practice. The divine command theory shall be employed in our analysis of this practice. This theory is based on what is thought to be in the will of God (Ayantayo, 2009). This theory holds that morality is judged based on what is considered to be in the will of God. A matter is considered to be right when it is in keeping with divine injunctions and wrong when it goes against such injunctions. Idowu (1962), notes that God who created man placed in him the consciousness of right or wrong. The Igbo like other Africans are very religious and have religion in all aspect of life. Kunhiyop (2004) observes that to attempt to understand African ethics apart from religion would amount to an effort in futility. This framework is therefore considered apt for this analysis. We employed the following as our research methods: experiential approach, interview, and participant observation. Our findings were used complementarily to draw our conclusions.

Surrogate Motherhood concept and practice

The term Surrogate motherhood refers to an arrangement in which a woman agrees to bear a child for another woman or a couple who for some reasons could not bear children by themselves. This intending mother or couple takes full legal custody of the child so produced. In this arrangement a woman acts as a surrogate for another and carries a pregnancy to term. The child produced from this arrangement becomes legally that of the intending mother.

This arrangement can be accomplished in a number of ways. In some ways the sperm of the husband of the intending mother is implanted in the surrogate by Artificial insemination or through sexual intercourse (Falana, 2013). Here the surrogate is also the genetic or biological mother of the child. This form of surrogacy is sometimes called traditional surrogacy. In other cases where the intending couple is able to produce eggs but is unable for some health reasons to carry a pregnancy to term, her eggs are fertilized with either the sperm of her husband or some other sperm via a process known as in-vitro fertilization and implanted into the womb of the surrogate who then carries the baby for the woman. In this case the child has no genetic ties to the surrogate. This form is referred to as gestational surrogacy.

Surrogacy arrangement could be commercial or altruistic. In commercial surrogacy, the surrogate mother is paid an agreed sum for her services which is usually above and beyond reasonable expenses and is bound by a contract which she must obey. In Altruistic surrogacy on the other hand, the surrogate does not get paid for her services, the intending couple however may take care of all the reasonable expenses incurred by the surrogate during the pregnancy or may not pay at all (Garrify, 2000).

Traditional surrogacy

Traditional surrogate motherhood as stated above may refer to the form of surrogacy in which the sperm of the husband of the intending mother or from another man is inseminated into the surrogate with the intention of getting her pregnant. In this form of arrangement the surrogate mother is both the birth and the biological mother of the child, while the intending mother is the legal mother of the child produced (Storey, 2019). The biblical account of Abraham and Sarah leading to the birth of Ishmael is the first recorded account of traditional surrogacy in the Bible. In that arrangement Sarah who was barren gave Hagai her maid to her husband to get her pregnant so she could bear a child for her. By that arrangement the child

so produced was to be that of Sarah. The account of Jacob and his wives Rachael and Leah who gave their maids to be impregnated by their husband to bear children for them is another recorded account of traditional surrogate motherhood in the Bible. The practice therefore is not new and has received wide acceptance in many traditions and cultures all over the world.

Traditional surrogacy in Igbo culture

The Igbo culture like many other cultures in the world accepts the practice of surrogate motherhood as a means of child acquisition. It is culturally allowed for a woman who is unable to bear children or who does not have a male child to marry another woman to bear children for her (Igwe, 2009). This surrogate is either impregnated by the husband of the woman or by another man and the children she bears belongs to the intending mother. Akalonu (1987) describes it thus:

> Some people are force to engage in it when a marriage fails, and to fail means that no procreation is possible with the first wife. This situation is sometimes remedied by a form of marriage called "woman marriage". In this 'marriage' a barren but wealthy woman performs all the marriage requirements and "marries" another woman for her husband, she regards the children coming from this arrangement as her own and cares and provides their needs with so much intimacy.

In some cases, women whose husbands have died leaving them without children also marries other women to bear children for them as surrogates. Igwe (2009), notes that this practice still exists. Igbanoi (2013) reports its as follows:

> Under the customs, according to Igbo for instance, a woman who has been married for several years without a child is permitted to choose a young fertile bride, pay her bride price and 'marry' her with the full compliments of a properly traditional wedding. The new bride would then do the bidding of her female "husband", which is essentially to procreate through her husband. This is said to be common amongst the Onitsha people of Anambra state. Another form of this kind of marriage is when a man has all female children and he gets old, his wife is allowed to 'marry' another woman. But in this situation, the woman may start bearing children by other close relations of the family and not necessarily the aged husband.

Some childless individuals in many Igbo communities engage in this practice. To be sure that the surrogate in able to bear children, most of the women engaged as surrogates are young girls who have either become pregnant outside wedlock or had previously had children outside marriage. These classes of young girls due to their social status require very little persuasion to accept such arrangement. Since any form of pregnancy outside of marriage is viewed seriously in traditional Igbo society, any young girl who falls victim becomes vulnerable and is willing to accept any form of arrangement that would take away her shame. The same applies to the family of the young girl whose reputation in the society is also negatively affected by the pregnancy. They are also happy to accept the surrogacy arrangement as it offers them a way out of a shameful situation.

This practice is however common not just among the Igbo but also in many cultures in Africa. A recent article by an Al Jazeera reporter documents a similar practice in a southwestern village in Migori county in Kenya. Pauline Gati a childless widow is reported to have married Grace Boke who had previously become pregnant outside wedlock, to serve as her surrogate and at the time of the report she had had three children already for her. Grace's father had married her off to Pauline when she became pregnant outside wedlock. Since Pauline's husband was dead, Grace was to meet with different men for the purpose of raising a family for Pauline. Men that get her pregnant have no obligation what so ever towards the children so produced. As a matter of fact they are not contacted to take any form of responsibility towards the children for fear of being harmed by them. This practice is reported to be widely accepted in the community and Grace is one of many young girls reported to be in similar practice.

In Igbo culture, to acquire a child one has to be married to the woman who gives birth to the child. Any child given birth to by an unmarried woman belongs to the parents of the birth mother. In some Igbo communities such as Umeri in Anambra state, anyone who marries a woman who had had children before getting married becomes the legal parent of the children as well. Marriage is viewed as the legal contract that qualifies the intending mother or couple to own the child legally. The paternity of a child is determined by marriage. The husband of the woman who gives birth to the child is the father genetic ties and the kind sex of the husband notwithstanding. This is why a woman who requires children could marry another woman to bear children for her. Marriage in this regard entails the payment of the bride price and satisfying other customary requirements. Once this is satisfied the woman and the children she produces belongs to the person who has fulfilled the rites irrespective of the person's gender.

Why Surrogacy

Children in Igbo cosmology are considered to be very important. A woman without a child has no security in her husband's family. Basden (1921), posits that a childless woman in Igbo culture is not a human being since she cannot fulfill her being . Children are also a source of social prestige in Igbo culture. This is evident in the names: Nwabueze- child is king, nwabuaku - child is wealth. Also, Igbo societies are Patrilineal, properties are pass on from parents to children, a family that has no children risk having their properties being inherited by their relatives. This is something to be greatly abhorred in Igbo culture. The security of one's property is of great concern in Igbo culture, this is evident in some Igbo sayings such as "***a rapu ndu kpa aku ndi iro erie***" literally meaning if one neglects life t acquire wealth the wealth will eventually be enjoyed by the enemy. Properties are meant to be enjoyed by the parents and their children not by an enemy. Additionally, it is the children that give their parents 'befitting' burials in Igbo societies. Burial ceremonies are quite expensive in Igbo culture and it is ones children particularly the first son that are considered ***onye nwe ozu*** i.e the owner of the corps, and as such it is their responsibility to ensure that all the rites of the funeral are observed and a typical Igbo person would like to be given a 'befitting' burial. As a result couples are willing to stop at nothing to ensure that they have children of their own who take up the responsibility of ensuring that they are properly laid to rest when they die.

In explaining the importance of family lineage and the very essence of marriage in Igbo culture Ele (2016), further elucidates:

> "A woman who "married" another woman has the motive behind her action as the very essence and significance of marriage in Igbo culture namely: *Eziechina, Obiechina, Obodoechina, Amaechina, Afamefuna* – family/ lineage continuity. It is grossly undesirable among the Igbo to have relational poverty (*Mgbenye* that is, *enweghi mmadu*) where a family has few or no persons for generational continuity. It is an honest prayer of the Igbo person that his/ her line does not go into extinction and neither should his/her "*compound grow weeds*" as it is metaphorically put. She married the "wife" for a man who handles the aspect of the male factor in procreation. She did not marry the bride for her pleasure".

Women are at the receiving end in terms of infertility. The traditional Igbo society places a lot of burden on the woman to have children as the primary reason for marriage is procreation. A woman who is unable to have children is viewed to have failed in this fundamental function hence is usually stigmatized. This is not minding whether or not she is the cause of the childlessness. Most times when the man is infertile the woman is encouraged to have children for him either by a close relative or in some cases any other man of her choice especially in situation where the infertility of the man is to be kept secret. But is a situation where the woman is infertile, the husband is permitted by culture and tradition to marry another woman who would give him children. The position of the childless woman in such polygamous arrangement is threatened. The patrilineal nature of the Igbo societies would ensure that the property of the family are passed on the children and in this case the children belonging to the woman who is able to have children leaving the childless woman and the mercies of the woman with children and her children. This is notwithstanding the fact that she and her husband might have acquired the property together. Furthermore, properties in Igbo society are transferred from fathers to their sons, hence the desire to have male children by every family, this explains why women who have had female children and are unable to have more children probably due to age also get surrogates to have male children for them. To secure her future and place in the family a woman is under pressure to have children by any means possible.

Surrogacy being an acceptable practice in Igbo culture is seen as a reliable source of acquiring children due to the control which it to give to the intending mother over the surrogate. The woman who marries the surrogate i.e the 'woman husband' has the right of a husband over the surrogate. And since the society confers on the husband the right of ownership of the wife, the intending mother/ 'woman husband' practically owns the surrogate. This right gives the intending mother/ woman husband a lot of control over the surrogate and this makes surrogacy an attractive means of child acquisition for childless women. Furthermore, surrogacy arrangement is to a large extent more affordable considering the fact that most of the women who are given off as surrogates in this arrangement are young girls who become pregnant outside of marriage which is considered to be a disgrace to their family. The families therefore are more than happy to give them out to anyone who desires to marry them. This is done majorly to removing the shame and stigma that they bring to the family. This therefore

means that under normal circumstances many families will not allow their daughters go into such arrangements.

The fact that these surrogates are already considered as sources of disappointments by their families makes them more or less indebted to the intending couple that marries them and gives them a sense of identity and honor in the society. The arrangement therefore satisfies all the parties involved. The surrogate and her parents get to have their shame wiped away, and the contracting woman get to have the child or children they desire. Though this arrangement may seem to satisfy all the parties involved, it is not without its bad sides. A consideration of the ethical issues arising from the practice is indeed necessary.

Ethical issues in Traditional Surrogacy in Igbo culture

Ethics examines the rightness or wrongness of an action in consideration of how the action affects the person performing it, the person or persons to which it is directed and the environment where the action is performed (Ayantayo, 2009). Omoregbe (1993) posits that not all actions are befitting for the nature of man bringing happiness and self fulfillment. While certain kinds of action are befitting and leads to happiness and self fulfillment, others are antithetical to the nature of man and militates against his well being and general fulfillment. Hence man has to behave in certain ways to achieve internal harmony, happiness and self fulfillment. Living under the moral law is in the final analysis in mans best interest for the moral law is man's own very nature. Surrogacy practices in Igbo culture no doubt have a number of ethical concerns some of them are evaluated below:

Commodification of the female body

Child bearing is a normal biological function of a woman's body as ordained by God; surrogacy turns this function into a commercial contract. The commercialization of surrogacy raises a baby breading farm turning impoverished women into baby making machine. Women in the form of surrogacy arrangement in Igbo culture are practically sold off to be used as a machine for raising a family for childless women. The surrogates are viewed as being purchased for the purpose of making babies. The woman who pays the bride price and fulfills other traditional requirements over the surrogate is viewed to own the surrogate as a husband would the wife. In this case the surrogate's sole function in the family shall be to procreate. She is required to produce children for her woman 'husband'; she is more or less viewed as a vessel for the production of children. Child bearing function should be a function that women are meant to perform naturally with the joy of bringing a new life to the world and sharing an intimate relation with the new life being so brought. Surrogacy however turns this function into a commercial venture, where the surrogate being fully aware of the fact that the child she carries does not belong to her is careful of developing much intimacy with the child and I Igbo culture would have another woman share in such intimacy. Ethical issues arise in the degradation of a woman's body for child bearing function as a commercial venture. Treating women's labor as a commercial venture violates the precious emotional ties between the mother and her child and abuses the sacred nature of the process of procreation.

Exploitation of the vulnerable female

Another major argument against surrogacy practice is that it is seen as exploiting women economically, emotionally and physically. The demography and socio-economic profile of most surrogate mothers reveals that most of them are desperate for money or care. Nwosu (2018), indentifies the desire for survival as the major reason why women opt to become surrogates. This suggests that most women who go into surrogacy have sense of insecurity and views surrogacy arrangement as a means of finding security. In the forms of surrogacy practice in traditional African societies, most of the surrogates are either social mothers i.e young girls who become pregnant outside wedlock and are either abandoned by their families or are given out into such arrangements by their families in other to remove the shame and disgrace occasioned by their condition. These girls are more or less forced into the marriage others willingly accept it as a way out of the social stigma which society places on them for being pregnant outside marriage. They therefore end up as surrogates for other women largely not by choice but by necessity. Others could be poor orphans with no one to take care of them or may be from very poor families that sees marriage to wealthier woman as a way out of poverty. Many of them would have to drop out of school and have to sleep with different men to raise a family for the intending mother or 'woman-husband'. Additionally, they may have to work to fend for both themselves and the children they bear especially in cases where the intending mother or 'woman husband' are old and are unable to adequately cater for them. In some cases they do not only fend for themselves and their children, they also would eventually have to cater for the intending mother or 'woman husband' as well. They care for the woman husband as would a wife as required by the society.

The practice of surrogacy is described as a new form of slavery. Most surrogate mothers in the form of surrogacy in Igbo culture are vulnerable females. Many of them would happily have opted out of the arrangement should they have the opportunity. Many of them are young girls who have been disadvantaged by one circumstance or another and because they are mostly too young their opinions are not being considered in the decision to give them up as surrogates to other women. This decision is largely made by their parents or legal guardians. The arrangement therefore could very well be defined as the exploitation of their vulnerability.

The ethical question here is how right is it to exploit the vulnerability of these young female for the singular purpose of raising a family for another woman? No doubt most of the surrogates do not willingly go into the arrangement. They are more or less compelled by circumstances which are propelled by their vulnerability. It is certainly against morality to exploit one's weakness or vulnerability for the benefit of another. It is most certainly not right to force someone into what might be a lifelong relationship without her consent or informed decision. A more ethical function would have been to give proper assistance and support to these females even in their vulnerability. And for the social mothers it is certainly more ethical to encourage them to give their children up for adoption while they are encouraged to return to school.

Surrogacy and promotion of promiscuity and adultery

In many cases of the surrogacy arrangement in Igbo culture the surrogates who are young vulnerable females are made to sleep with different men to bear children for the intending

mother. This is arising from the fact that most of the intending mothers are either widows or have husbands who are old. The men they sleep with have no form of commitment to them and are mostly one night stand of a sort. Typically they would have to keep different men that make them pregnant. This promotes promiscuity among them. They soon learn to have sexual relationship without the emotional attachment. By this, sex which is meant to be consummated in a relationship of commitment becomes for them an act to be practiced without emotions and without restrictions. They have somewhat received a license to be promiscuous. An issue of ethics presents in the indiscriminate practice of sex by this young girls.

Some of the men who make these surrogates pregnant are married men. It is culturally unacceptable among the Igbo for a man to impregnate a woman who is not his wife (Igwe 2009). An issue of ethics is now further presented by this practice. These men commit adultery with these young girls to produce children for the intending mothers. This promotion of adultery presents a serious ethical issue arising from this practice.

Corruption of family lineage and relationship

Every child has the right to know his/her father and mother. Whether or not both parents are alive, married, or living together, the child reserves the right to know who his/her father is. Ethical concerns arise when a child is denied this fundamental right of knowing his/her genetic parents. In arrangements where the surrogate is meant to go after men who will make her pregnant and the men being allowed to walk free devoid of any form of responsibility towards the child is a denial of the child's right to know his/her father. This practice also promotes irresponsibility among these men. It is certainly irresponsible to have children and to feel no obligation whatsoever towards them.

Corruption of the normal order of marriage

Marriage is a sacred union that is meant to be between a man and a woman. The form of surrogacy practiced in Igbo culture allows the intending mother to marry the surrogate to bear children for her this amount to woman- woman marriage. Ethical issues arise from the whole arrangement of a woman marrying another woman. Gay marriages and homosexual relations are general prohibited in Nigeria, it is actually viewed as a crime. The intending mother marrying her surrogate which is a same sex marriage is no doubt unethical.

Marriage is also a relationship of not just companionship but also a relationship where one's sexual desires are satisfied. In this forms of surrogacy arrangement there is certainly no intimate relationship between the couple. The marriage is therefore a social contract accepted by the society which gives the intending mother or 'woman husband' the legal right to the child/children produced by the surrogate. By the marriage, the child/children produced by the surrogate belong to the intending mother culturally and legally in Igbo culture. There are certainly ethical concerns in bringing a woman into a marriage relationship without any prospect of intimacy.

What if the surrogate decides to keep the baby?

The tie between the mother and her child is very strong, this makes is difficult for women to let go their children or hand over their children to other women. The case of baby M in the

united states of America which is the classic case of a Surrogate who changed her mind after the birth of the child and decided to keep the child for herself despite the fact that the child is genetically related to the contracting father, and she has been paid off based on the terms of their contract. This case brings to the fore the obvious fact that the surrogate could at a point in the arrangement develop strong affection towards the child and decide to change her mind and refuse to hand over the child.

In the context of the Igbo culture the surrogate could decide to turn her children against the intending mother. It is well known that some of the reasons why women seek surrogates to bear children for them in Igbo cosmology is to give them security in their husbands family and to take care of them in their old age. Ethical issues arise in cases where the surrogate turns her children away from the intending mother and denies her the protection and care she seeks. If she feels no obligation what so ever towards the intending mother.

Other scenario arise where the husband of the intending mother falls in love with the surrogate and relates to her more as a wife than as a surrogate to his wife. This has the tendency of generating disaffection between the intending mother and the surrogate. Could this also be viewed as a breach of contract? is the surrogate meant to fall in love with the husband of the intending mother? Is she meant to be a co-wife or a baby making machine? Ethical issues no doubt arises when a woman that is meant to be a surrogate eventual becomes a co-wife and keeps for herself the children which are meant to belong to the intending mother legally. Could this not amount to stealing another woman's family? Taking over what she has labored for for years. In this situation what becomes of the intending mother, what rebate does she get knowing that the bond between a mother and a child cannot be denied.

Furthermore, the surrogate could have other suitors and may decide to marry and begin a family of her own and this is well within her rights. Ethical concerns could arise when this happens and she and her new husband decide to raise the children she had previously had for the intending mother. Though the society would still regard the children as that of the intending mother, the society cannot compel the children to return to the intending mother without the full consent of the birth mother. And since the children have no genetic ties to the birth mother they may feel no commitment to her and thereby deny her the security and care which the primary reason for the entire surrogacy arrangement is. A question of fairness arises when this intending mother I being denied of the very thing that she had invested into and had hoped to gain.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The Igbo's are mostly Christians with many Igbo people subscribing to the Christian religion. Some of the people who practice surrogacy in Igbo culture subscribe to the Christian religion. This means that the ethical issues raised in the practice are realities that the Igbo Christian must deal with. The traditional Igbo relations also demonstrate a belief in the Divine and accept the divine command as the standard of morality. This command is built mainly on the principle of fairness and equity. The ethical issues that arise with the practice of surrogacy certainly have a place in these religious beliefs. There is therefore the need for key players in these religions to give closer consideration for these issues.

No doubt having children is important; they guarantee the future existence of a family. Childlessness puts a couple under pressure and this could make them do desperate things without giving much thought to its implications. Traditional Surrogate motherhood in Igbo culture as has been shown above holds a number of ethical implications for those involved in it and the society. There is no doubt a serious need to evaluate this practice and in ensuring that those who engage in or are considering it are properly guided to avoid unpleasant consequences.

There is the need for proper social interventions to be developed to protect these young girls who get pregnant outside wedlock who are usually given- up as surrogates. The creation of homes for such vulnerable females where they could be cared for and allowed to deliver their babies safely and guided towards deciding whether or not to give up the baby for adoptions so that they could get back to their lives. People must be made to understand that the fact that a young girl makes the mistake of becoming pregnant outside marriage does not make her a complete write-off. Religious and social organizations should champion programs that are aimed at protecting such vulnerable females.

Adoption which is a proper and completely legal means of child acquisition should be encouraged. Childless couple should be encouraged to see adoption as a viable and legal option of having children of their own. A major difficulty in adoption is that the number of babies available for adoption is far below the number of couples looking for children to adopt. This therefore leaves many couple having to remain on the waiting list for years before getting one and most couples do not have the patience to wait. It is however important that couples or persons desperate to have children be guided to fully understand the implications of getting children the wrong way , the need to exercise patience and the value that could be derived in doing things the right way should be emphasized.

As shown above what makes women desperate for children in Igbo culture is the need for security as they are afraid that without a child or without a male child their continued stay in their husband's house and their rights to their husband's properties when he is no more is not guaranteed. There is the need for religious and social organizations to speak out in defense of women's right. A woman's marital partnership with her husband guarantees her a place in his family and rights to his property whether she has a child or not. This intimidation of women by the society should not be allowed to continue. Policies protecting the rights of woman as contained in the laws of Nigeria should be evoked in defense of women being intimidated due to childlessness. Rural women especially who due to their lack of exposure fall victim to this intimidation should be educated on their rights and encouraged to stand for it. This will remove the pressure to have children that childless women feel and would give them the opportunity of carefully and patiently considering their options before making a decision concerning the means of child acquisition to adopt.

Furthermore, people feel the need to have children as a form of security for old age. In tradition Igbo culture, it is the family that takes care of their aged persons. In that regard every couple would like to have children that would take care of them as they age. There is the need for religious and social organizations to invest in social care programs for the aged. This will

ensure that they are properly taken care of and would remove the fear of being abandoned with no care giver at old age which is a factor that makes people desperate for children.

The ethical issues involved in surrogate motherhood in Igbo culture places serious concerns that Igbo religious bodies and policy makers must not ignore. The need for further study on the practice has been advocated and the need for religious and social organizations to intervene and place checks on the practice has been recommended.

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