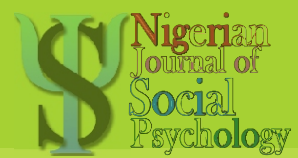


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Incest Taboo and the Maintenance of Social Order in the Society: A Study of Adun People of Cross River State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study was empirically undertaken to examine incest taboo and the maintenance of social order in Adun clan of Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State. After investigation, the findings depicts that a lot of factors determines for the enactment of incest taboo in Adun clan. These factors range from the construction of the kinship system which would otherwise not exist; the formation of non-competitive family bonds which provided the building blocks for more complex societies; the establishment of social order where everyone would be afraid of the law to avoid punishment or public embarrassment and the maintenance of stability, authority and compatibility of social roles. However, the negligence of incest taboo by Adun people, due to rural-urban settlement, lack of orientation and proper socialization made those who engaged in incest practices to realize the following manifest consequences: physical and emotional defeat; family disintegration; divorce; disobedience; procreation of illegal children, etc. This thus suggest the need for all African societies to appraise incest taboo with an aim of maintaining social order in society most especially among the Adun people of Cross River State and Nigeria in general.

Keywords: *Adun people, incest, kinsmen, punishment, taboo.*

Introduction

Incest taboo is a basic feature of all societies ranging from pre-industrial to industrial. Numerous theories have been proposed to explain re universality of these prohibitions. Anthropologists generally prefer sociological explanations, which consider *sexual* restrictions as a function of psychological theories, which focus on the incest taboo per se. This perspective results from the emphasis on social and *cultural* conditioning of individual behaviour and on detailing and explaining cultural variation, (hence societies vary in the range and definition of relatives who are considered prohibited sex and marriage partners.

According to Brian Schwimmer (2003), prohibitions thus reflect actual biological distances and vary from group to group from less to more inclusive definitions. For example, England and Canada prohibit marriage between uncles and nieces and aunts and nephews but allow first *cousins* to marry. Thus, incest as a phenomenon usually occurs in families where there is extreme dysfunction and disorganization and generational boundaries are no longer recognized. Although it is thought that incest between a slightly older sibling or cousin and a younger sibling is less traumatic than incest from a parent or uncle, unless a rape occurred.

Enang (2021), opined that sexual relationship between members of elementary families other than husband and wife is regarded as incestuous. Therefore, incest taboo could mean the prohibition of marriage and sexual relation between two kins. The particular categories

inhibited vary a great deal but marriage between parents and child and between sisters and brothers seem to be prohibited in all societies. Sexual relations between these people occasionally occurs and may or may not be severely punished, but marriage is impossible except in certain circumstances like the getting of the right heir for the king or queen in the past as it existed among the Pharaohs of Egypt. Among the people of Onitsha in Eastern Nigeria, only people from Umuezechime can become the Obi and not anybody from Ugwunobankpa. In Egypt, there is what can be referred to as dynasty marriage because they are allowed to marry their daughters and sisters for the sake of replacement. In England, the law against incest prohibits sexual intercourse between a woman and her grandfather, father, brother, half-brother or son. Thus, incest is universally condemned and viewed with horror. Among the Igbo, for instance, it is an abomination, which requires an elaborate cleansing ceremony without which the offender cannot be integrated into the society. It is therefore the concern of this research to enable us understand why people get involved in this phenomena and also to examine the significance of incest taboo on the society as well as providing or suggesting solutions to these negative practice.

The Problem

The issue of incest is complex and its occurrence prevalent in all societies including Adun clan. It is also one of the most underreported forms of crime. The reasons are because of its dynamics; the victims are usually young children who are either threatened or manipulated into acquiescence or silence. The dilemma is increased especially if the offender is the father, uncle or other close relative of the victim. The government response has been quick and in many ways, reactive; calling out for harsher punishment and citing reasons like street laws (incest taboos) surrounding polygamy being the cause of incest. However, it is observed that much has been written about incest taboo as a cultural trait that regulate our sexual conduct, race relations, political institutions, and economic mechanisms virtually every realm of life in the society. But there appears to be a neglect of the real goals for incest taboo, which involves its role as a catalyst for maintaining social order.

The negative effects of this negligence according to Gilman (1998) include truancy, dishonesty, disobedience, assault, incrust wickedness, rape, prostitution and many more not mentioned have become predominant in the life style of Adun people, which requires urgent mention. This study therefore, is an attempt to examine how incest taboo results in the maintenance of social order in Adun clan.

Research Propositions

The study is proposed to address the following research proposition to guide the research.

1. To what extent has incest taboo fostered the maintenance of social order in Adun clan?
2. What are the causes of incest practices in Adun clan?
3. Why has the issue of incest continued to persist despite all attempts to curb it?
4. What are the consequences of incest practices on the victim(s)?
5. Of what significance is incest taboo in Adun clan?
6. What are the possible measures of eradicating the problem of incest and abuse in human society?

Objectives

This research is primarily designed to:

- (i) Examine the extent to which incest taboo has fostered the maintenance of social order in Adun clan.

- (ii) Identify the causes of incest practices in Adun clan
- (iii) Ascertained why the phenomenon has continued to persist despite all attempts to curb it.
- (iv) Evaluate the consequences of incest practices on the victim(s)
- (v) Examine the significance of incest taboo in Adun clan.
- (vi) Lastly to solutions to the problem of incest and abuse in the society.

Review of Literature

Many writers have contributed immensely to the implication of incest and abuse, many have focused their attention on the causes of incest and abuse, while others have treated its consequences on the society, others have also established correlation between incest taboo and social order.

However, in this chapter attempt shall be made to review those views presented by different scholars. From the exposition of Okerefoezeke (2001) incest Ochu (homicide) is a crime against public morality and defilement of important community institutions, such as a shrine. These are more serious than other crimes in society. Thus, they are known as crimes that pollute the land. They are aru, alu, nso (taboo, abomination). The community coerces a person convicted of a crime against public morality to expiate his or her evil conduct by offering sacrifices to the land and begging to be forgiven. After the offerings, the offender is expected to leave the community for an extended period of time, probably years. In case Number 24 (1994), as cited by Okerefoezeke, the criminal offender has an incestuous relation with his daughter aged about 14 years. He is tried and convicted by the community. In addition to being made to offer specific sacrifices to cleanse the community and ana or ala (the land), he is forced to leave the town for about seven years.

In essence, going by Okerefoezeke's viewpoint, whosoever that commits incest in any given society should be tried and convicted by the community for polluting the land. This shall be followed with a cleansing ceremony for the offender to appease the shrine.

Alwaysyourchoice.com (2004) stressed that overt incest is one of the most truly terrifying and traumatic event a child can be expected to experience. There is a loss of choice, of power, of trust that a child feels when she or he becomes sexually abused by an adult, most often, her family member. Because the child feels insecure and threatened, either directly or indirectly, by the perpetrator into keeping quiet, a wall of silence builds and the child often endures the sexual incest out of fearfulness to anger the abuser or out of guilt that by revealing "the secret" the family structure, even if built on quick-sand, will dissolve and that somehow the child will be at fault.

From alwaysyourchoice.com (2004) survey, it is estimated that over 40 million adults in the U.S. were sexually abused as children. It is not something that "only happens to others" or is a rare incident, as many people assume it is a wide spread problem that has the ability to leave unhealed scars not only on the childhood years but all through the adult years of the sexually abused child as well. They argued that most sexual abuse cases involving children in the U.S. are incestuous, involving sexual intercourse or molestation by a family member or member of the family household. Thus, the child already knows the perpetrator and is dependent on this person. People in dependent relationships rarely challenge or "speak up to" those in authority - this is especially true of a child who is dependent on a parent. Even if a child feels anxious, uncomfortable and violated, the child is either too frightened or too afraid of losing affection to break the wall of silence.

Also, he or she may eventually come to believe that it is the parent's right to do as he or she pleases with the child. Often the parents indicate directly or indirectly that the child is his or her property and can be sexualized at will. Thus, the child, often terrified and bewildered, cooperates with the abuser. These children are victims who have no say in the matter and have not yet matured enough to feel enlightened about the true nature of abuse they are suffering. In fact, adult survivors of overt incest often report that sometimes they even enjoyed the sexual feelings, having confused the adult's selfish advances with appropriate affection. This can be a cause of great guilt and shame as can the feeling that they themselves as children somehow seduced the adult sexual abuser - that they "brought it on themselves" by somehow unconsciously inviting the sexual lusts and unwanted advances of the adult. This is called internalizing fault.

Moreso, Always your choice .com (2004) went ahead to prove that 5% of incest cases involve father and daughter, and brother and sister. Nearly 80% of cases involving father and daughter incest involve men other than the blood father i.e. a stepfather or live-in boyfriend.

From the work of Alwaysyourchoice.com, overt incest can be defined to include sexual abuse in any dependent relationship between an adult and adolescent such as teacher and student, doctor and patient or minister and member of the church.

According to Abel and Becker (1987) Diagnosing Sexual abuse due to incest in a child is often difficult, as evidence in a clinical setting may not be brought forth by either child, out of fear, or by parent, out of embarrassment and avoidance of legal ramifications. Signs in a child of withdrawal, shyness, depression, or, especially in boys, of aggressiveness, anti-social behaviour may be indicative of sexual abuse but not conclusive as they may be symptomatic of other disorders. Physical evidence can be conclusive. Testing the child for sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, and herpes may be indicated and smears taken from the child's orifices may show evidence of sperm, pointing to the probability of sexual abuse. They further argued that often an adolescent girl will reach the stage where she rebels at her father's over control and authority when it comes to dictating her behaviour in social situations and at school and she may confide in a counselor about her incest experience. It can be deduced from the above assertion that most times it is always difficult to diagnose sexual abuse due to incest in a child as the victim may feel shy and embarrass to reveal the truth to public awareness.

Schwimmer quoting Murdock's work of (1949) contend that every society within the sample of 250 that he investigated based its marriage system on the prohibition of marriage and sexual relations between nuclear family members. He accordingly said at least a few societies permits marriage or sexual relations with other close kin including parent's siblings and sibling's children, (Schwimmer does not mention grandparent - grand children relationships, which are probably universally considered incestuous). He also observed that no society prohibits sexual relations between nuclear family members only, but all cases on the sample applied prohibitions to relatives in some other categories. However, the range and type of prohibitions vary considerably from case to case.

This assertion has clarified that societies vary in the range and definition of relatives who are considered prohibited sex and marriage partners. According to Enang (2021), sexual relations between close kins occasionally occurs and may or may not be severely punished, but marriage is impossible except in certain circumstances like the getting of the right heir for the king or queen in the past as it existed among the Pharaohs of Egypt. He further stated that in Egypt there is what can be referred to as dynasty marriage because they are of the same blood and

therefore allowed to marry their daughters and sisters for the sake of replacement.

Copyright (2002 - 2004) Cool Nurse quoted the work of an Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1927 - 1929) who said that the lack of an incest taboo would disrupt the socialization of a group's children. That the family is essential for transmitting a society's customs - its way of life - to the next generation. It is in the family - no matter what form it may take in any part of the world - that children are initiated into the custom of their group. Moreso, if incest were generally allowed, said Malinowski, it would disrupt socialization, which is essential for society. For example, if fathers and mothers were allowed to have intercourse with their children, what would their role be? Would they still be able to guide their children as parents? Or would their role change to that of lover? What we expect of people as parents and lovers are quite distinct matters. Specially, to permit incest would lead to role conflict - the expectations and obligations that are attached to one role would conflict with those attached to another role. In analysing Malinowski's work, it has been observed that if children are to be properly socialized by their parents, there should be need for the enactment of incest taboo in any given society.

Ramsey (1943) argued Malinowski's idea by saying that because the incest taboo developed somewhere in the ancient past, leaving us no records, we are left with theorizing not fact. This explanation of roles and socialization that anthropologists have developed may be correct, but we don't know for sure. We do know that every human group has some form of incest taboo, and that it pushes children outside the family for marriage (what we call exogamy). By doing this, the incest taboo extends people's relationships and forces them to create alliances. In early human history, this would have been important for survival, as alliances would have diminished war-making between small human groups. In contemporary society, uniting people in larger networks leads to more cohesion (or unity). This functional analysis of the incest taboo, however does not explain its origins, which are lost in history.

A sociologist, Diana Russell (1986) in her survey interviewed a probability sample (a representative sample from which we can generalize) of 930 women in San Francisco. She found out that before they turned age eighteen, 16 percent of these women had been victims of incest, but only 5 of 100 cases had been reported to the police. Even though Russell interviewed a probability sample, we have to be careful of this conclusion. Her operational definition of incest was so broad that it included, not only sexual touching, sexual intercourse, and rape, but also unwanted kisses and even "stealthy looks". It also included any relative. While this study does not adequately reflect common assumptions about incest, Russell found that many cases of sexual intercourse had not been reported to the police. We can conclude that the actual rate of incest is much higher than the official statistics. Russell was able to discover that the most common offenders of *incest* are uncles, followed by male first cousin. Then come fathers, brother and *finally* a variety of the male relatives from brothers-in-law to step-grand fathers. She founds little *incest* between mother and son, a finding *supported* by other researchers (Lester 1972). Far from being random, *Incest* shows specific pattern. This is because it increases as the relationship to the victim decreases. *Gender* is also especially strong, for seldom do women break this taboo (Women's Aid Organization W. A. O: 2000).

Levi - Strause *et al* (2004) posits that incest taboos promote alliances between families and reinforce their social interdependence; the Zulu have a saying: "they are our enemies, and so we marry them". According to Hughes *et al* (1999), Regulations relating to exogamy are based primarily on kinship and usually entail incest taboos; rules that prohibit *sexual* intercourse with close blood relatives and exist today in virtually every society. They cited Olson and Defrain

(1997) who said that such relationships are not only prohibited but also bring reactions of aversion and disgust in society. A one-time social scientist singled out incest taboo as the only universal norm in a world of diverse moral codes. But sociologist Russell Middleton (1962) found that brother-sister marriage was not only permitted but also frequently practiced by the ancient Egyptians. He speculated that brother-sister marriage served to maintain the power and property of a family and prevented the splintering of an estate through inheritance. A similar arrangement apparently occurred among the royal families of Hawaii, the Inca of Peru, and the Dahomey of West Africa. Hutter (1998) on the other hand noted that there have been numerous attempts to account for both existence and the prevalence of incest taboos. Some have argued that incest taboos came about because of real or imagined negative effects of “inbreeding”. However, the incest taboo has been found even in cultures where people were unaware of the father’s role in reproduction.

Causes of Incest

The causes of incest are many and varied from one another. These includes:

- (1) Ignorance:** incest could occur out of ignorance. This explain the issue where those involved in the act may not know that they are related in one way or the other. Most times, it is prevalent among cousins who may meet each other in a strange environment and eventually proposed to marry themselves. However, during the process of courtship may decide to have sexual intercourse before making it known to both families. When the truth is been revealed, marriage becomes impossible but the offence has been committed.
- (2) Frustration:** Incest could occur as a result of frustration. This is so because when an individual is totally frustrated in one way or the other, he/she might not be able to gain self-consciousness. The lack of self-control may make such a person to commit incest with any of his/her close relative not minding the implication. Most times, this occurs between father and daughter, mother and son, and probably uncle and niece.
- (3) Ritualistic Demand:** Incest could occur as a result of ritualistic demand. This entails a process where an individual say (father) may go for money rituals and may be asked by the herbalist to sleep with the daughter in order to appease the gods. Without objection, the father may decide to commit incest so as to please the condition of the herbalist.
- (4) Lack of adequate accommodation:** This could also be seen as one of the causes of incest. This factors goes in line with poverty where a man may decides to live with his wife and children, say (five of opposite sex) within a single room. The implication most times is that the children are always aware of the time and hour the man makes love to the wife. This may eventually affect the erotic condition of the male child to commit incest with the sister on a good day.
- (5) Intimidation:** Incest could occur in society as a result of intimidation. It is all about a situation where an adult, (say father, mother, uncle, stepfather, aunt etc), could intimidate a teenage girl or boy to commit incest with him/her. At times, the child is been threatened that if he/she insists, there will be no further education for him/her. Also, the child may even be denied of food and other privileges. However, the teenage child as a dependent person may not be able to withstand all these trials, as a result would reluctantly succumb to the wish of the adult person and eventually commit incest.
- (6) Retaliatory tendency:** This is another factor that could lead to incest. It involves a process where a brother whose sister has been incestuous abused or sexually molested for time past by his cousin may want to retaliate in order to please his mind. He may consciously have intercourse with a cousin who is also related to the person that incestuous abused the sister.

Most times, this result into inter-family conflict or quarrel.

- (7) **Spiritual manipulation:** Incest could be spiritually manipulated or motivated. It involves a process where an individual may commit incest with a close relative before realizing the consequences. Most times, the devil uses the father to commit incest with the daughter in order to disorganise the home. Consequently, the mother to such a daughter may decide to divorce the husband to avoid shame. Truly, most persons that do commit incest in society do not just do it willingly. They are always spiritually motivated to accomplish selfish goals in the under-world. And when such is done, the offender and the victim physically feel embarrass.
- (8) **Heredity:** This is another factor that causes incest in society. It is all about a situation where an individual who commits incest may have inherited it from his/her patrilineal or matrilineal family. For instance, if either of the families was engaged in incestuous habit for past generations, it is very possible that some of the grand children would eventually involve in such a practice too. That is why most times you hear people saying, “It is not a new thing, the father was like that” showing that such a practice has been prevalent in that family.

Meaning of Incest Taboo

Incest taboo in Hyper Dictionary means “the prohibition of sexual intimacy between people defined as close relatives”.

According to encyclopedia Britannia (2002 edition) incest taboo regulate our sexual conduct, race relations, political institutions and economic mechanisms - virtually every realm of our life. Incest taboo means the prohibition of marriage and sexual relation between two kins (Enang: 2003, p.69).

From the above extract, one could summarize that incest taboo involves rules and regulations that prohibits unlawful sexual intercourse between persons belonging to the same family (e.g. between brother and sister, father and daughter, mother and son, etc.) in any given society. Moreso, incest taboo could be seen as customary laws that forbids or guide against sexual interaction between two kins. Any offender could be brought to book by the village council for a cleansing ceremony to appease the gods of the land.

Significance of Incest Taboo

Perhaps the most fundamental formation between kinship and family on one hand and the larger pattern of social organization (Society) on the other hand is the ordering of personal and group relationship. By forbidden relationship within families except of course between husband and wife, absolutely means that incest taboo helps to maintain stability, authority and compatibility of social roles. In essence, if you are a daughter, you perform the role of a daughter and not a wife. Take for example, a union between a father/daughter would undermine the authority of both parents and disrupt the coalition of husband and wife.

Secondly, incest taboo serves as a boundary setting mechanism as it defines and reinforces boundaries by establishing the degree of freedom and restraint. In the nuclear family, affection can be expressed without sexual overtone.

Thirdly, as a result of the taboo and the rule of exogamy, a wide range of co-operation is established and exchange takes place where the children of one family marry the children of another. It therefore helps in the extension of kinship wall and thereby helping to create a community.

Fourthly, incest taboo helps in the establishment of social order where everyone would be afraid of the laws to avoid punishment or public embarrassment.

In summary, the researcher stress that incest taboo has the following significance:

It enabled the formation of non-competitive family bonds, which provided the building blocks for more complex societies.

It enabled the construction of the kinship system, which would otherwise not exist.

It helps to reduce severe conflict among family members and between generations.

Finally, incest taboo extends people's relationships and forces them to create alliances.

Consequences of Incest Practices

It has been deduced from research that incest practices has some consequences, which affect the individual, family and the society at large. These consequences include;

- (1) **Economic lose:** This is where the victim or the offender will spend money during the cleansing ceremony to appease the gods of the land. At times, the offender may not be able to meet up with the requirements, by so doing, he or she may be forced to leave the community for some years depending on the people's culture.
- (2) **Withdrawal:** Due to emotional defect, the offender may no longer be able to interact or associate with other persons both within and without as a result of feeling of guilt.
- (3) **Social stigma:** It becomes a social stigma to the offender and the entire family because the persons in question might now become an object of ridicule in the society.
- (4) **Family disintegration:** Incest practices bring about family disintegration among members of the same family setting.
- (5) **Physical and emotional defects:** - Incest practices bring about physical and emotional defects to an infant girl who is raped by an adult member of her family either brother or a father.
- (6) **Erosion of moral values:** Incest practices may lead to the erosion of moral values (sexual promiscuity), where the child now grow up to become a sex addict in the society.
- (7) **Disobedience:** Incest practices may lead to disobedience where the child will no longer have respect for the parents.
- (8) **Divorce:** Incest practices may lead to divorce where any of the parents commits incest with the daughter, son or either in-laws.
- (9) **Procreation of illegal children:** Incest practices may lead to the procreation of illegal children or child born out of wedlock (bastard).
- (10) Incest practices may lead to the maintenance or continuity of a specific trait in the family, for example, royalty.

Finally, incest practices can create enormous burdens for its victims, from lower self-esteem and higher promiscuity to confusion about one's sexual identity (Finkelhor, 1998; Bartoi and kinder, 1988; Lewis, 1998).

Theoretical Anchor

It will not be out of place to appreciate at the onset that a number of theories are of value in our attempt to understand the issue of incest taboo. A prominent theory that falls within this purview is the sociological theory.

Sociological Theory

This theory is propounded by Brownislow Malinowski. The theory is accepted as the real background to incest taboos. It has no biological or instinctive background as other theories

have propounded above. Its existence hinges on sociological aspect. In his view, the sexual impulse is in general very upsetting and socially a disruptive force. That once this sexual impulse exist in man, it produces a revolutionary change is therefore incompatible with any family relationship whether parental or between brothers and sisters, if erotic passions were allowed to invade the home, it would not merely establish jealousy and competitive envy but would also subvert the fundamental bond of kinship on which further development of ail social relation is based. Moreso, the theory posits that a society, which allows incest, would not develop a stable family, it would therefore be deprived of the strongest foundation of kinship. Regardless of how the taboo arose in the first instance, the reasoning now is that it was handed down as part of the heritage of human civilizations. The variations in its applicability are related to socio-cultural and other factors which condition the development of any given society.

Methodology

The study adopts the descriptive survey research design which is seen as a mode of enquiry that combines a distinct method of data collection with a distinct form of analysis. The survey design is seen as the best method available to the social scientist who is interested in collecting original data and designing a population too large to observe directly. Moreso, the essence of choosing this type of design is because it is particularly well suited for the study of individual's attitudes, feelings and opinion. The study population comprises of indigenes residing in Adun kingdom. The sample size was 80 respondents selected from men and women aged 15 years and above. The data analyzed here were obtained from 80 men and women aged 15+ as well. The eighty (80) population was used based on the fact that the researcher will not be able to cover all the total population of forty-nine thousand, six hundred and ninety-five (49,695) people as documented by the Cross River State National Population Censues (2006) due to the large number of the population. To determine the sample size from the population of the study, Taro Yameni formula for sample size determination was used. The probability sampling techniques was adopted using simple random sampling. Here, it gives each element of the population equal chances of being selected. Samples resulting from the application of this procedure are said to be unbiased and are therefore representative of the population. The researcher distributed the structured questionnaire to indigenes of Adun kingdom residing in the study area and equal opportunity was given to them to complete their questionnaire without discriminating against them base on gender. However, in-depth interview was equally carried out by the researcher.

Method of Data Analysis

Analysis was mainly quantitative involving the tabulation of important variables. To enhance accuracy in the analysis of data and in resting hypotheses, the simple percentage was adopted using the formula:

$$\frac{NR}{TR} \times K$$

Where NR = Number of Respondents

TR = Total number of respondents K =
Percentage (100)

Study Area

Adun clan occupies an area positioned in the middle of Cross River Basin with a total area of only forty-nine square miles. Yet it has the highest population of all Mbembe groups. Its average density, which is invariably the highest among the groups is 250 per square mile. It is

flanked in the north, northeast and by the Okum clan in the south and southeast by the Yakurr clan and in the west by the Cross River.

As presently constituted, Adun is a composition of a number of villages including Oderegha, Ababene, Ofat, Ofodua, Obubem, Ovonum and Ofatura being the traditional villages as founded by the Abagana Royal family as far back as 1905. Subsequently, other villages were founded namely Ahaha, Onyadama, Okorokpana, Ovukwua, Arobom and many others from the already existed traditional villages which made the population to increase up to forty-nine thousand, six hundred and ninety-five (49,695) people as documented by the Cross River State National Population Commission Census (1991). The concentration of this population within such a small area has made Adun a compact political unit and this has greatly influenced political development in the area.

It has been suggested that there was probably a wider geographical spread of villages speaking Adun dialect than that which today constitutes Adun territory, the cause being enemy attack and pressure. The two villages of Okokoma and Ararah are said to be the most easterly evidence for the spread of the proto-Adun villages. These areas, which now form part of Ofunbongha administrative network, are said to have been ousted from sites by the advancing Osopong. Meanwhile, they have no traditions that they came from further downstream and yet speak dialects very close to Adun.

The term “Adun” has been subjected to diverse interpretations. A work interprets Adun to mean Oderegha. According to another work, Adun means “Down, Down There”. Yet, Adun is also said to mean “strong, brave, and powerful”. Hence, the Adun people were equated to the elephant and addressed as Adun Onyi, Onyi meaning elephant. The purported interpretation of this meaning is that Adun have had to live by fighting victoriously as it was a center of attack in all sides by enemies.

To ascertain the authenticity of the issue, a brief reaction to some of these meanings is worthwhile, starting from the last meaning. In as much as this researcher concedes to the fact that Adun was subjected to massive attacks on all sides by enemies, he contends that if the term Adun, by which the group is known was the result of the bravery of the people, then the people had not been known by it from the beginning as stressed. It suggests that the name came later after the people had manifested their bravery perhaps, in one of the following dimensions or both. The original inhabitants of the land now called Adun who had their hegemony established, or that after the people later called Adun were settled in this area, they successfully repelled attempts by enemies to exterminate them or both. In each of the cases, it implied that the people manifested intense prowess and brevity and it was through this that they had to survive in the area. Then, they may have chosen this name for themselves or it may have been given them by other people.

The second meaning means not more than what is written. The author could not analyse on it equally as my informants lacked the ability to do so. However, I am quite skeptical of the first meaning, most especially as the author could not expatiate on it. Though, some informants have explained it in relevance to Oderegha being the first place settled by the Adun people. The assertion that Adun means Oderegha could be riddled on the following grounds: In an earlier work, Oderegha is said to mean a land of cool minded and peaceful people. The fact that the generally accepted meaning of the word Oderegha do not harmonized with any of the purported meanings of the term, Adun shows that either of the words cannot mean the other.

Secondly, it is asserted that the Adun people originated in and migrated from the Cameroon. According to this source, the people were already known as Adun maintaining that several factors motivated their migration from Cameroon, prominent of which were their disastrous defeats by enemies who forced them into- sterile and unfavourable areas. This source further maintained that when they had been migrating they settled at a place called Oderegha.

This school of thought in part, lends credence to the assertion that the term “Adun” may not have been the original name of the people. The reason is that if the people who had been known as Adun, a term meaning brave, strong and powerful, and a people who had to live by fighting and defeating their enemies, and if they also had to migrate from Cameroon due to enemy attack and defeat, then they may not have been that powerful and the term invariably may not have meant so. This researcher do not rule out the probability of so many enemies surrounding them but the magnitude of brevity conveyed by the meaning of the term “Adun” is that of a people who are not defeated despite the degree of enemy onslaught. It could be suggested from this school of thought that the people while migrating from Cameroon met weaker people whom they either drove away or imposed their dominant culture on them. And it is only natural that to have done this, force would have been required, a force which they maintained when attacked by subsequent enemies. This may have earned them the name Adun.

More importantly and arising from the same school of thought is the question for the rationale for the assertion that Adun means Oderegha considering from the account that it was when the people had been migrating that they saw a place called Oderegha and decided to settle there. This implied that the people would not have known Oderegha but for their migration. Secondly, it could be deduced that Adun as a group was already known as such before migrating from its homeland. Thirdly, it is further explicit from this school of thought that Oderegha was the first area the migrants settled from which they spread to other areas within the clan. This is still fallacious as it is evident that Adun is a composition of diverse social groups with inconsistent migrations at different times into the area.

From the foregoing, the term Adun could not have meant Oderegha. However, the group current arrangement would have tempted one to infer that the term Adun actually means Oderegha. By this arrangement, Oderegha is accorded the greatest status producing the paramount Chief Ovarr Kudiden accordingly. This Ovarr has an Okpobang called Oyirawumo, said to “own” the whole land of Adun. The position is hereditary in a Patrician in Oderegha. Above all, the Ovarr has control over political segmentation.

This arrangement is suggestive of many things; it suggests a situation whereby a people forced to settle in a new area sought the permission, of a village already resident there, and in the process forge with its Okpobang cult. It is also suggestive of a situation whereby a people faced with internal or external chaos or both which they cannot control sought the leadership of a more powerful chief in so far as he could bring peace in either cases such as a chief may have been resident at Oderegha and may have unilaterally resolved that the people be known as Adun which may mean Oderegha.

Nevertheless, the same may not hold for Adun because it is commonly alleged that the Okpobang Oyirawumo was owned by a Patrician in Ababene village. This source maintained that the Ovarr at the time gave it to a Patrician brother at Oderegha, who was also an Ovarr. This marked the ascension of that Ovarr and the village of Oderegha to the greatest position in the clan. Corroborating this source, another source maintained that based on this incident, the village of Ababene came second producing the Kudiden’s Prime Minister, called “Odukwa” and indeed for the group. The Odukwa had the exclusive power to enthrone and dethrone the Ovarr Kudiden. The reason predicted on the belief that the Ababene Ovarr only lost his

Okpobang and not the medicines -and since he alone can see the Okpobang; he only was reputed to act as the Kudiden's Odukwa. Therefore, the group's arrangement is not a panacea to the assertion that Adun means Oderegha.

Based on the inability to arrive at a common meaning for the term Adun coupled with information gathered from Elders, two hypotheses could be attempted; firstly the group now called Adun may not have had a common name originally, but the term became used of them or they adopted it as the people became increasingly conscious of themselves as a group most especially in the expression of unity. This is rationalized on the fact that Adun appears to have been a conglomeration of many scattered and disparate interests who forged a united front over time and space. Secondly, Adun is alleged to have been under protracted enemy attack. Accordingly, it may have become imperative on the people resident in that area to unite, a phenomenon, which perhaps, was thought, in part, to find expression in the adoption of a common name. If so, then historical factors may have been a brain behind the name Adun. Also, Adun may have been an association of many social groups who over time became absorbed into a culture perhaps, more dominant and ancestral Adun, and may refer to either Ababene or Oderegha or both. This is because the autochthonous claim of both communities has settled in their present locations from the dim past and has in all probability forgotten their ancestral homelands. Secondly, the Okpobang Oyirawumo issue depicts ancestral relationship between both villages.

Origin of Adun People

The origin of the Adun people is still obscure. The reason is that Adun was a pre-literate society and much of what is known about it is based on fragmentary oral tradition. However, two genres of this tradition exist to explain the origin of the people, one claiming autochthonous theory and the other pointing to the Cameroon. These traditions shall be analysed below.

The first tradition and indeed, the most popular posit that the people now called Adun originated in their present environment. In the words of an informant;

"I have never been told that the Adun people originated from any other place than Adun. My father told me Adun people have been here from the beginning".

It should be noted that apart from such generalization, each of the villages claims autochthony. And it is obscured that even those who claim to have left their original sites claimed to have had these sites within Adun territory. Below is a sample of the story,

"The Ovonum people originated in Adun. Our original homeland was Ogomo, which was deserted for this new site because of the discovery of this water (pointing to the Cross River) by one chief Ajake. Ogomo has been in Adun from beginning".

The question is a typical and an apt example of the claim made by people in all the villages to illuminate and emphasized their origination in their present location. However, this claim by people from the villages of Ofodua, Okorokpana, Ofatura, Ofat and Ahaha is refuted by people from the villages viz: Ababene, Oderegha, Ovonum and Obubem. It is also evident that even people in the group of aforementioned villages also refute each other such claim.

The below sample of the story could clarify the issue,

"The ancestors of Ofodua, Ahaha, Ofat, Ofatura and Okorokpana originated from Igbo Imabana, Ofrekpe, Assiga, Ominka and Okirkori respectively".

Similarly, an Ofodua informant, excluding his village spoke of the village of Ahaha, Ofat and Ofatura in precisely the same way”.

From the above, it could be deduced that no corpus of oral evidence exist in Adun, but rather, a plethora of interpretations in which case each village attempts to vindicate its origination from the land. It is equally explicit that the autochthonous claim of the villages of Oderegha, Ababene, Obubem and Ovonum is not challenged. Be that as it may, if the autochthonous claim of the Adun people is worthy of consideration, it pre-supposes that the ancestors of the various Adun villages originated from their present location. Though this theory has long gained momentum, it has attracted searching strictures due to its repugnance to modern methodology and contemporary standpoint. Accordingly, no credence is lent to it.

In fact, no ancestors of the various Adun villages, until after their claim to have evolved did not see any large body of water such as the Cross River. Rather, Adun territory has small streams, which were responsible to seasonal variations. This assertion is substantiated by the fact that all those villages that claimed to have remained in their present locations from the beginning are in abject scarcity of water. Similarly, those who allege to have left their original sites (although within Adun) claimed to have done so in their search for water.

From the extract above, it could be tentatively proposed until further researches prove otherwise that no man ever evolved in Adun. And that modern Adun clan was a conglomeration of diverse elements that assumed a unified socio-cultural front over time and space perhaps due to environmental relatives. More importantly, the probability that they have lived in that land from time out of memory validates their claim to ownership of the land they are occupying. The second view on the people’s origin claims the Cameroon. Below is a profile of the story;

“The Adun people originated from Manfe, in the Cameroon. We later left Cameroon due to enemy attacks. In the process of migration, we settled at Oderegha”.

However, to another source, the Adun people left Cameroon, passed through Oban to Adun. From these accounts, one needs to clarify certain issues. Manfe is a town along the Nigerian-Cameroon border. This suggests that the Adun people originated from the Nigerian-Cameroon border. We could also posit that migration into Adun was not coherent but in bit. In this case, one could attempt a synthesis. The Nigerian-Cameroon border from an indeterminate period was a cradle of considerable antiquity of Bantu origins. So therefore, the Adun people have a legitimate claim to this area as their original homeland. And that exodus out of this zone was embarked upon at several intervals. In conclusion, which is rationalized in consonance with the above discourse, one is tempted to dismiss the autochthonous claim of the Adun people without any element of doubt. This is because, in all ramifications, it is probably more highly that the Adun people originated from the Nigerian-Cameroon borders. However, this conclusion is still tentative. It is not immutable and susceptible therefore, of refutation when further researches conveniently prove otherwise.

Adun People’s Migration

The history of the migration of the Adun people like their origin is still uncertain. The reasons are obvious; ambiguity in the probable routes and lack of chronological framework to have put the process in clearer perspective.

However, evidence gathered from the elders revealed that migration of Adun people was both internal and external. The internal perspective still upholds the people's autochthonous claim and links the migration of some Adun people purely to the confines of the Cross River State region. While the external view apart from harmonizing with the claim of the Nigerian-Cameroon borders origin is also consistent on the migration of the people therefrom. Despite the unanimity of this school of thought on the origination and migration of the Adun people from the Nigerian-Cameroon border, its proponents still differ in the actual migratory process. While an aspect upholds the migration of the people from their original homeland through Oban to Adun, the other posit that the people left their original homeland directly to Oderegha from where other villages later emerged. Though, it could be recalled that several waves of migrations were made into Adun. However, what is uncertain is which of the waves was the first.

Whatever was the real situation, the Mbembe were settled in their present location by the 16th century as evident in Erim's (1991) sketch of the settlement pattern of the upper Cross River in said period. This probably implies that by the 16th century, there had been settlements in Adun. Accordingly, it should be noted that Adun clan was originally made up of seven villages. These included Ofat, Oderegha, Ofodua, Ababene, Obubem, Ovonum, and Ofatura. Subsequently, two additional villages were founded namely Okorokpana and Ahaha. It should be further noted that this aspect of migration is very uncertain as it is disheartening to note that none in all the villages could accept that their ancestors migrated elsewhere. However, information about a village is given by information in other villages.

Ofodua - Its ancestors are said to have migrated from Igbo Imabana due to inter and intra-tribal wars. Its ancestors are not said to have arrived late.

Obubem - Its ancestors are said to have migrated from Oderegha on the request of the then Ovarr Kudiden. It is said to have been there quite early.

Ofat - Its ancestors are said to have migrated from Asiga. They are said to have stopped over at Okpechi before finally migrating to Adun for asylum. They are said to have arrived late.

Ofatura - Its ancestors are said to have migrated from Ominka in Osopong. They are said to be late arrivals.

Ovonum - Its ancestors are said to have migrated from Ogomo, within Adun.

Ababene and Oderegha - There are no indications that their ancestors migrated outside their present locations. This could imply that they were the earliest settlers and their ancestral homelands may have been probably forgotten.

Okorokpana - Its ancestors are said to have migrated from Okikori in modern Akamkpa Local Government Area. Though, the exact period of their arrival is still uncertain. It was probably in the 19th century. When most of what is known in Adun oral historiography as "late arrivals" of which it forms part are said to have taken refuge with the Adun people, they are said to have been motivated by inter-tribal wars, and on arrival were given land in between Ababene and Oderegha based on compromise by the donor villages.

Ahaha - Its ancestors are said to have migrated from Ofrekpe across the river. They are said to be late arrivals.

We could attempt a synthesis from the above. By 1750, the present pattern of Adun settlement had almost taken its shape except for some villages. This position is arrived at by using the village of Ofat as a yardstick whose ancestors are also said to be “late arrivals”. Ofat ancestors are noted to have introduced the “Awtawa” festival, one of the most important festivals in the area, which is said to have been in practice for more than two centuries. Accordingly, it is logical to posit that if a festival introduced by people who arrived lately would have been practiced for more than 200 years then by 1750, Adun had almost taken its present shape. In the case, the allegation that all other villages of Adun emanated from Oderegha is untenable and probably false. Adun is a multi-cultural settlement with different people coming at different times.

Settlement of Adun People

The Adun settlement probably developed earlier than 16th century and the probable people reflected in Erim’s (1991) settlement scheme were the ancestors of Ababene and Oderegha. This may have been represented in the alleged two waves of migrations. It should be noted that as in most other societies, the human drama which took place in Adun spanned several centuries and not within a decade. And that it probably did not involve a mass movement of people under a putative ancestor. It is misleading to assume that all the Adun ancestors left their ancestral homeland at the same time. Adun ancestors probably entered Adun at different times and places through different routes and in the search for new homelands.

Whatever was the real situation, the Adun people now live as a district entity. They have equally interacted in several ways with neighbouring people. They have also conducted massively to the political, economic, social and cultural development of their environment. The present evidence does not indicate that the Adun people originated from their present location. It is, however highly more probable that modern Adun was a melting pot of diverse cultures.

The Major Findings

Socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents

Sex	Male	35	43.75
	Female	45	56.25
	Total	80	100
Age Bracket	15-19	5	6.25
	20-24	13	16.25
	25-29	19	23.75
	30-34	23	28.75
	35-39	12	15.00
	40+	8	10.00
	Total	80	100
Education Qualification	No Education	11	13.75
	FSLC	16	20.00
	SSCE/GCE	21	26.25
	B.SC/HND	32	40.00
	Total	80	100
Occupation	Farming	30	37.5
	Business/Trading	8	10.0
	Civil/Public Servant	22	27.5

	Students	20	25.0
	Total	80	100
Marital Status	Single	25	31.25
	Married	26	32.5
	Divorce	16	20.00
	Widowed	13	14.25
	Total	80	100
Religious Background	Catholics	23	32.5
	Protestants	16	22.00
	Traditional Religion	28	32.5
	Islam	13	16.25
	Total	80	100

Source: Field Work Survey, 2023

In the course of this study, it was revealed that incest taboo brings about social order in Adun clan. Thus, incest taboo has also foster the maintenance of social order in Adun clan. However, the positive responses concerning the issue of incest taboo were seen to be greater than the negative ones, hence making the result significant. Moreso, it was observed that incest practices have great consequences in the society both on the individual, family and the society at large. Likewise, responses were indicative of the fact that incest taboo has great consequences on the society in disagreement of the assertion that incest taboo has low consequences on the society. Finally, the result of the research proved that incest taboo has a significant impact on the lifestyle of Adun people

Conclusion

In conclusion, one could positively agree with the fact that the available evidence on the causes of incest in society, particularly the Adun people is as a result of the following factors” lack of adequate accommodation; ignorance; intimidation; frustration; ritualistic demand; retaliatory tendency; spiritual manipulation; and hereditary. Based on this viewpoint, the researcher could conclude that incest and abuse is more pronounced in societies where people do not have the orientation (socialization) from their nuclear family concerning the implication of incest. Moreso, the researcher could also conclude that people commit incest as a result of low income. Because of the approach, we tried to link the phenomenon of incest and abuse to poverty and economic system of the country. However, the sociological approach adopted in this research revealed that a society, which allows incest, would not develop a stable family, it would therefore be deprived of the strongest foundation of kinship. Therefore, there is need for every human society to have incest taboo (law) so that whosoever that commits incest would be tried and convicted accordingly by the community for polluting the land. This shall be followed with a cleansing ceremony for the offender in order to appease the gods (shrine). Finally, the consequences of incest practices on the individual, family and society has been enumerated in the research work

Recommendations

This research would be meaningless and in fact wasteful if recommendations are not made. For result-oriented recommendation, the researcher shall base his suggestions on his findings. Therefore, I wish to make the following recommendations: That there is need for every society, be it industrial or pre-industrial to enact laws (Incest Taboos) that would have binding forces on the individuals in order to regulate our sexual conduct in society as we interact with each other. By so doing, the society would be stable.

Viewing the position of the family as the principal agent of socialization, parents should learn

to be firm in the training of young ones (offspring) towards societal rules and regulations (Norms and Values) in order not to indulge into this evil practice. In essence, children should be given proper orientation as regard the repercussion of one who commits incest. By so doing, there would be order and stability in society. Also, since incest is a crime against public morality and defilement of important community institutions, such as a shrine, the researcher would therefore suggest that those in charge of the punishment bureau should increase the sacrificial items for the offender during any cleansing ceremony and also, should ostracise the offender from the community totally and not to allow him/her return back after seven years as research had it. It is my sincere belief that if these recommendations should be adhered to, incest practices and its effects on the society would be drastically reduced.

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