



EQUIPPING THE BRIDE, SUSTAINING THE FAMILY: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF *ÍDŪ ỤLỌ* IN ECONOMIC CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY IGBO SOCIETY

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Abstract:

In traditional Igbo society, the practice of Ídū Ụlọ the ceremonial gifting of household items, foodstuffs, and domestic animals by the bride's family to their daughter at marriage, is more than a cultural formality. It functions as an indigenous economic strategy designed to ensure the stability of the new home and mitigate economic tensions that may lead to conflict. This research explores Ídū Ụlọ not merely as a customary rite, but as a deliberate economic assemblage that fosters resilience, encourages wealth redistribution, and promotes peace between kinship networks. In the 21st century, where economic instability has become a major source of family disintegration and marital disputes, this rite offers a localized model of pre-emptive conflict management rooted in cultural values. Drawing from oral interviews, ethnographic fieldwork, and indigenous knowledge frameworks, the study will investigate the evolution of this rite in both rural and urban Igbo contexts. It aims to uncover how this practice has adapted to modern realities and how it continues to serve as a tool for economic empowerment, gendered support systems, and inter-family cohesion. By critically reinterpreting Ídū Ụlọ rite through the lens of indigenous conflict resolution and economic anthropology, this project offers new insights into the sustainability of traditional institutions in the contemporary African societies. Ultimately, the research advocates for a deeper recognition of some of the Igbo cultural practices as viable models for economic security and social harmony in family life today.

Key Words: *Ídū Ụlọ* Igbo Marriage Customs, Economic Conflict Management, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Family Stability.

Introduction

In Igbo society, marriage is not merely a union between two individuals; it is a communal and economic alliance between two extended families. One of the most culturally significant elements of this alliance is the practice of *Ídū Ụlọ* a traditional rite whereby the bride's family equips their daughter with essential household items, food crops, and domestic animals as she transitions into her husband's household. Often regarded as a symbolic gesture of love and responsibility, this rite is in fact a deliberate economic intervention that has long served to stabilize the new home and reduce the likelihood of future conflict. Customarily, it provides the bride with the material means to begin her domestic life with dignity and self-reliance. Items such as cooking utensils, grinding stones, yams, livestock, farm implements, crop seedlings and woven materials serve as both practical resources and symbols of economic empowerment. It is a manifestation of the Igbo communal ethic of *onye aghala nwanne ya* (no one should abandon his kin), where the welfare of the woman in her new home is seen as the responsibility of her natal family. By providing these resources, the bride's family contributes to economic balance in the marital home, pre-empting dependency-related tensions, especially in times of hardship.



However, in the wake of globalization, urbanization, and changing family structures, traditional practices like the rite of *Idu Ụlọ* are facing reinterpretation, decline, or outright neglect. The modern economy has introduced new pressures that threaten the sustainability of indigenous systems of family support and conflict prevention. Yet, economic instability remains one of the leading causes of marital strife, domestic violence, and family breakdowns in Igbo society today. This study, therefore, seeks to re-evaluate this rite as more than a cultural artifact, as a functional economic model for conflict prevention and household stability. By exploring its traditional significance, contemporary adaptations, and socio-economic implications, this research aims to highlight the enduring relevance of this rite of passage as Igbo indigenous practices in navigating modern challenges. In contemporary Igbo society, rising economic hardship, urban migration, and the erosion of traditional values have contributed significantly to increased marital tension, family instability, and economic conflicts within households. While much scholarly attention has been given to bride price (*imé ñgwú* or *imé ego*), little focus has been placed on *Idu Ụlọ* - the indigenous practice whereby a bride's family equips her with essential household goods, food items, and livestock as part of the marriage process.

Traditionally, it served as an economic cushion and a peacebuilding mechanism, ensuring that the new bride had sufficient material resources to contribute meaningfully to her new home, thereby reducing early dependence, financial disputes, and tensions. However, in today's socio-economic landscape, this practice is being diminished, commercialized, or even discarded altogether, often under the pressure of modern lifestyles, individualism, and Western marriage ideals. As a result, many families have lost access to an indigenous framework that once fostered economic resilience, gendered support systems, and conflict prevention within marital unions. The absence of such traditional support mechanisms is contributing to the growing crisis of domestic instability and economic incompatibility in marriages across Igbo communities. Yet, there is a dearth of academic research exploring how the practice of this rite can be critically examined, revitalized, or reimagined to meet the realities of the 21st century.

This study is therefore driven by the urgent need to investigate *Idu Ụlọ* as a culturally embedded economic practice, with the potential to serve as a model for conflict management and sustainable family development. It asks: what happens to the economic balance of marital homes when such indigenous practices are weakened or lost? And how can it be re-integrated or transformed to address present-day challenges within Igbo society?

Literature Review

Works written by renowned scholars were reviewed to give credit and justification to this article.

Idu Ụlọ

This is a rite of passage in Igbo culture that herald the sending forth of a bride by her kith and kins to her husband's house. It is an Igbo traditional marriage custom where the bride's family provides her with property, household items, foodstuffs, and sometimes livestock to take along to her husband's home. The term literally means "setting up a home" (*Idu* = to establish/settle, *Ụlọ* = home). It is done after the bride price and other marriage rites have been completed. Items given may include cooking utensils, furniture, clothing, jewellery, yams, palm oil, goats, and other necessities to help the bride start life in her new home. It is not just material but also symbolic - it shows the bride's family's love and continued connection to her, ensuring that she has dignity, respect, and some measure of independence in her husband's house.

Different scholars have various views about *Ídū Ụlọ* yet expressing similar opinions. Base on that, Isidienu (2016:134) refer to *Ídū Ụlọ* as Bride Present, which is a seal of marriage and is very symbolic. She asserts that "It gives the wife dignity in her marital home. It is the first early items by which she starts a new life in her husband's house. It shows that her parents appreciate her and the items cannot be removed without her permission." Mbiti (1969) refers to *Ídū Ụlọ* as Marriage gift. It is the symbols of marriage bond or covenant. They are the legal instruments which authorize the husband and the wife to live together. Kenez (2013) cited by Isidienu (2016) submits that *Ídū Ụlọ* known as Bride Wealth is the property that a bride's/wife's family gives to their daughter as she is escorted to the husband's home upon marriage; it includes all culinary utensils and farm seedlings that a young wife needs to start playing the roles and duties of a married woman. Culturally, *Ídū Ụlọ* strengthens kinship ties, reduces early economic conflict in marriage, and promotes family stability. Gennep (1960), made us to understand that a rite of passage is a socially recognized ritual that marks an individual's transition from one life stage or social status to another. In the Igbo cultural context, bride property assemblage functions as such a rite of passage. It symbolizes the movement of a woman from daughterhood in her natal family to wifhood in her husband's household. The provision of domestic property - such as utensils, furniture, clothing, and farm tools, not only equips her materially for her



new role but also ritually legitimates her incorporation into her husband's lineage. This process reflects what Turner (1967) describes as the three stages of passage: separation (leaving her natal home), liminality (the preparation and presentation of property), and incorporation (her acceptance into the new family). Thus, bride property assemblage is both a material and symbolic practice that secures the bride's transition and the community's recognition of her new social identity.

Ídū Ūlọ often referred to as *bride property assemblage*, is a significant aspect of Igbo traditional marriage rites. Uchendu, (1965), opines that this rite involves the bride's family equipping her with essential household items, food crops, and sometimes domestic animals as she transitions into her husband's home. Scholars like Amadiume, (1987), emphasizes that *Ídū Ūlọ* is more than symbolic; it is a material foundation for marital stability and an expression of the natal family's continued investment in their daughter's wellbeing. Through this rite of passage, the bride maintains dignity in her new household, while her natal family reinforces inter-family solidarity.

Moving further, Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, (1950), observe that the institution of marriage in African societies has long served as a socio-economic, cultural, and political arrangement that goes beyond the union of individuals to encompass kinship networks and community interests. In Igbo culture, marriage is a multilayered institution governed by customs and practices that include bride price (*imé ñgwú* or *imé ego*) and *Ídū Ūlọ* the latter being a domestic provisioning ceremony whereby the bride's family equips her materially for her new life. Ottenberg (1958); Nzegwu, (2006), note that while much of the literature has focused on bride price as an economic exchange little attention has been paid to this edifying rite of passage as an indigenous strategy for economic empowerment and family conflict prevention.

Studies such as that by Okeke (2015) have explored the social functions of Igbo marital rites but have often lumped together all pre- and post-wedding rituals without distinguishing *Ídū Ūlọ* as a unique phenomenon.

Yet, this edifying rite is more than a gesture of parental goodwill, it represents a localized form of wealth transfer, gendered support, and pre-emptive conflict resolution. Ezeanya (2019) maintains that the bride is empowered with tools: such as cooking utensils, beds, mats, yams, fowls, and sometimes goats, necessary for domestic independence, which reduces economic strain on the husband's household and strengthens marital harmony.

The feminist re-reading of indigenous African systems Oyěwùmí, (1997); Nnaemeka, (2004) further show what practices like *Ídū Ūlọ* can function as cultural rites of women's empowerment, challenging Western notions of economic patriarchy in marital institutions. In Igbo society, the woman is not just a recipient of wealth but a strategic actor whose family reinforces her agency and worth through material support. Mbiti, (1969) affirms that this rite aligns with the broader African philosophy of communalism and interdependence where the well-being of one household is intrinsically tied to the welfare of another.

However, modernity, urban migration, capitalism, and changing gender roles have led to the decline or transformation of this rite. Scholars such as Nwachukwu-Agbada (2011) have warned of the loss of intangible cultural heritage in the face of globalization, which has contributed to the rise of marital disputes, domestic violence, and family breakdowns. Modern couples, often left to fend for themselves in urban settings, face challenges that traditional support systems like it once mitigated.

Moreover, the rise of Western-style weddings has overshadowed indigenous rituals, framing of such rite as outdated or burdensome. Yet, according to Umeasiegbu (2001), reimagining traditional practices is crucial for cultural sustainability. Scholars in indigenous knowledge studies such as Battiste and Henderson, (2000) advocate for a reclamation of traditional systems that are relevant, adaptable, and community-oriented.

Igbo Marriage Customs

There are so many marriage customs and rite that are performed by the bride, groom and their relative before a man can culturally lay claim that a woman is his wife. All these rite and rituals are very important and symbolic in Igbo culture. Mbiti, (1969) Nwoye, (2011) say that Igbo marriage customs have been documented as multi-staged processes that combine economic, social, and spiritual elements. In support of the above two scholars, Nzegwu, (2006), observes that practices such as bride price (*ikwu ego isi/ime ego isi nwanji*), gift exchange, and *Ídū Ūlọ* reflect a communal approach to marriage, where extended families play active roles in the stability of the union. These customs not only unite two individuals but also integrate entire kinship groups, thereby serving as mechanisms for cultural continuity and social regulation. On the other hand, Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019), notes that in contemporary contexts, however, these practices are under pressure from globalization, Christianity, and Western-style weddings, raising concerns about cultural erosion.



Economic Conflict Management

Economic resources are widely acknowledged as one of the most common sources of marital conflict. Scholars like Okeke (2015), argue that indigenous practices like *Ídū Ụlọ* historically functioned as a conflict-preventive mechanism, reducing financial strain at the early stages of marriage. By equipping the couple with basic resources, it minimized potential disputes over survival needs, thus ensuring smoother marital adjustment. In his own opinion, Mbiti (1969) explains that in African societies more broadly, traditional marriage institutions often embed redistributive economics to stabilize households and prevent conflict. This underscores the importance of revisiting indigenous systems for sustainable conflict management models.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

This refers to the local, traditional, and community-based knowledge that is developed and sustained by indigenous peoples over generations. It is deeply rooted in culture, history, and lived experiences, and it helps communities to adapt, survive, and thrive in their specific environments. Greiner (1998:1) asserts that indigenous knowledge is “the unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographic area.” Scholars such as Battiste and Henderson, (2000) say that Indigenous Knowledge Systems provide frameworks for understanding cultural practices as valid epistemologies that solve social problems within their contexts. In the Igbo worldview, marriage is not merely a personal contract but a communal and spiritual institution, supported by customs such as this rite. These practices are examples of indigenous systems that blend economic redistribution, moral values, and family responsibility. Odora (2002) notes that recent scholarship calls for re-centering such indigenous systems in contemporary policy and development discourse. Thus, *Ídū Ụlọ* exemplifies an IKS approach to economic empowerment, family stability, and conflict resolution.

Family Stability

Family stability in African contexts is often tied to communal values, kinship structures, and resource-sharing traditions. Practices like *Ídū Ụlọ* help create a foundation of economic security that strengthens marital resilience and family cohesion (Nwoye, 2011). The Igbo belief in *igwebuikwe* (“strength in unity”) manifests through such customs, ensuring that the burden of establishing a household does not fall solely on the couple. Scholars note that when these cultural safety nets decline, marriages become more vulnerable to breakdown due to economic pressures (Okeke, 2015). Thus, this rite serves as a cultural mechanism for promoting family stability across generations.

Therefore, a gap exists in the literature concerning *Ídū Ụlọ* as a practical economic mechanism and indigenous model for conflict resolution. This study aims to fill that gap by providing a critical exploration of it within the contemporary Igbo context, drawing from oral traditions, ethnographic inquiry, and indigenous epistemologies to examine its evolving roles, meanings, and potential for revival.

The traditional elements, processes, and meanings associated with *Ídū Ụlọ* in Igbo culture

Rite of passage in relation to bride property assemblage refers to the culturally structured process through which an Igbo bride moves from the status of a daughter in her natal home to that of a wife in her husband’s household. The assemblage of property (such as cooking utensils, furniture, clothing, and other domestic items) serves not only as material preparation for her new role but also as a symbolic ritual that affirms her readiness for marital responsibilities. It embodies the transition, legitimates her incorporation into her husband’s lineage, and reflects the community’s endorsement of her new social identity. A rite of passage is generally understood as a culturally recognized ritual or ceremony that marks the transition of an individual from one stage of life to another. Anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (1909) popularized the term, showing how such rites often involve three stages: separation, transition, and incorporation. Scholars such as Amadiume (1987) and Ezeanya (2019) highlight *Ídū Ụlọ* as a symbolic and material practice involving the gifting of cooking utensils, food items, mats, animals, and other household tools. It is a communal event demonstrating the bride’s worth and the natal family’s support for her new household. Ugorji, a woman from Awgbu, Anambra State, narrates: “*Ídū Ụlọ bu uru nne na nna na-emere nwa ha nwaanyị ka ọ ghara ịla n’ụlọ di ya n’efu. Ọ na-eme ka e nwee nsopurụ n’etiti ezinụlọ abuo.*” (*Ídū Ụlọ* is a gift from the bride’s parents to ensure their daughter does not go to her husband’s home empty. It promotes respect between the two families). The practice functions to symbolize unity, promotes social continuity, and ensures that the new family has a material base to thrive. It reinforces economic solidarity between kinship



units, strengthening inter-family alliances. This ritual is not just ceremonial, but functionally essential in the transition into marital life.

Participants consistently identified *Ídū Ụlọ* as a practical form of economic empowerment for the newly married couple, especially the bride. Items such as cooking utensils, foodstuffs, livestock, and even small-scale farming tools equip the bride with both dignity and a means of household productivity. When a woman enters her husband's house with food, yam, oil, and goats, nobody can insult her. She becomes respected. - Ibelosi, Anambra. This empowerment reduces dependency on the husband's family and mitigates early financial strain, which can lead to quarrels.

***Ídū Ụlọ* as a means of economic harmony and conflict mitigation in Igbo marriages**

The provisioning of material goods through *Ídū Ụlọ* reduces financial dependency and household strain. According to Mbiti (1969), such practices reflect African communal ethics where family success is a collective responsibility. Nzegwu (2006) notes that these systems protected young couples from early economic stress. Odoh from Enugu-Ezike said: "*Tupu ego ako uko ma e mesia mmemme alumdi na nwunye, Ídū Ụlọ na-eme ka di na nwunye ghara ịgba mgba n'ihe ha ga-eri. Ọ bụ ihe na-eme ka ụmụnwunye mara na ha so n'ihe a na-eme.*" (Before money became scarce after marriage ceremony, *Ídū Ụlọ* helps prevent couples from struggling over what to eat. It made the bride's siblings feel a sense of shared obligation.)

The above explanations showed that *Ídū Ụlọ* reinforces gendered expectations within Igbo society. The bride's family, particularly the mother and extended female relatives (Umuada), bear the responsibility of preparing and presenting *Ídū Ụlọ*. The men do the bride price. The women do the rite of *Ídū Ụlọ*. That's our custom. It's how we give our daughter pride. - Ubauike Umuada Leader, Imo State. While empowering, this also reflects the culturally assigned roles of women as homemakers and supporters of domestic continuity. Here, *Ídū Ụlọ* serves as a social safety net that ensures economic balance and reduces potential points of conflict. Its role in conflict prevention lies in equipping the household to survive early pressures, allowing relationships to develop in peace.

***Ídū Ụlọ* in the era of modernization**

Umeasiegbu (2001) and Nwachukwu-Agbada (2011) note that the influence of Western wedding practices and economic hardship has diminished *Ídū Ụlọ*. Many families now prioritize expensive white weddings, sidelining traditional rites. Urban couples may even consider *Ídū Ụlọ* irrelevant. A newly married woman in Awka Benedicta states: "*Mama m gwara m na nne na nna ya mekwera ya mmemme Ídū Ụlọ mana n' Ọka ebe m bi ugwu a, enyi m gwara m na ọ dighị mkpa. Anyị zụtara gas cooker na TV anyị n'onwe anyị.*" (My mother told me her parent did *Ídū Ụlọ* for her, but here in Awka, my friend told me it's not important. My husband and I bought our gas cooker and TV ourselves.)

This decline in *Ídū Ụlọ* disrupts traditional social functions that ensured economic support and family integration. As modernity shifts focus to individual achievement and nuclear living, the functional bond between kinship units weakens, leading to fragile marital foundations and potential for unmanaged conflict. Participants expressed concern about the decline of *Ídū Ụlọ* due to Christianity, urbanization, and globalization. However, many argued for its reimagination, suggesting modern equivalents like gas cookers, cash, electronics, houses, landed property or even business start-up kits. "My daughter's *Ídū Ụlọ* rite of passage included a freezer and POS machine. That's today's tradition." - Abigail an Igbo Mother in Lagos. This theme reflects the dynamic negotiation between tradition and modernity in Igbo marital practices.

***Ídū Ụlọ* and economic and emotional impacts**

Okeke, (2015) says that modern Igbo marriages experience higher levels of stress due to lack of familial support systems. Studies show that financial pressure is a leading cause of early marital breakdown. Without *Ídū Ụlọ* couples often begin life without basic resources, creating room for conflict. Nkemka, a divorcee from Nsukka says: "*Mgbe m lara di, ọ bụ naanị enyi m nyere m ngwa e ji esi nri abụọ. Di m ji ya akọ m ọnụ oge ọbụla na-asi na mụ enweghị ihe. Ebe nna m si na ọ dighị mkpa i mere m emume Ídū Ụlọ.*" (When I got married, only a friend gave me some kitchenware. My husband was abusing me all the time saying that I do not have anything, whereas my father said it was not necessary to perform the *Ídū Ụlọ* rite for me).

The absence of *Ídū Ụlọ* disrupts the economic function of cultural marriage systems, creating a vacuum that can manifest in emotional resentment, power imbalance, and conflict. By failing to equip the bride materially, the natal family unintentionally removes a functional layer of social security. Several interviewees noted that the presence of this noble rite of passage in a new marriage prevents early conflict, especially those



stemming from lack of basic household needs. "Without pot, without spoon, how will peace stay in the house? *Ídū Ụlọ* stops that shame and fight from the beginning." – Nchedochukwu, a traditional marriage counsellor, Enugu. The practice also promotes family involvement in the marriage, which serves as an accountability and mediation system when conflicts arise.

How *Ídū Ụlọ* can be reimagined or institutionalized as a viable framework for family conflict resolution in the modern Igbo context

Scholars like Nnaemeka (2004) advocate for reclaiming African traditions through re-negotiation, not rejection. *Ídū Ụlọ* could be adapted to include modern household items or financial contributions, integrating tradition into contemporary realities. Uwakwe, a cultural consultant in Onitsha stated: " *Ídū Ụlọ ka dị mkpa. Anyị nwere ike ime ya n'ụzọ ọhụrụ - kpọọ ya 'start-up support' ma mee ka ndị nne na nna na-enyere ụmụ ha aka site n'uzo di otu a.*" (*Ídū Ụlọ* is still important. We can do it in a new way, call it 'start-up support' and ensure parents assist their children.")

As society evolves, functional structures must adapt to maintain relevance. Institutionalizing *Ídū Ụlọ* perhaps as "marital start-up kits" or through cultural associations, can preserve its stabilizing role while bridging tradition and modernity. Finally, the interviews highlighted how this rite of passage promotes inter-family relationships and cohesion. It is not just a bride's preparation, but a ceremony of familial unity and shared responsibility. "It is not only our daughter going; it is our name, our pride. That's why we gather food, kitchenware and other valuable things." - Bernard, an uncle to the Bride, Nsukka. This strengthens communal ethics, binding the two families in cooperation, mutual respect, and emotional investment in the success of the marriage.

From what has been discussed above, it shows that this rite of passage functions beyond ritual; it is a strategic indigenous institution for economic support, gender role performance, conflict prevention, and inter-family solidarity. While it is undergoing transformations in form, its foundational values remain resilient and culturally relevant. Reinforcing *Ídū Ụlọ* may offer a homegrown solution to economic and social instability in young marriages within Igbo society. It equally reveals its deep significance in promoting economic harmony, inter-family cooperation, and marital stability. Though weakened by modern influences, it retains the potential to function as an indigenous conflict management tool if culturally reimagined to suit 21st-century realities.

Findings

Ídū Ụlọ as a rite of passage is more than a ceremonial custom: The study finds that this rite of passage is not merely a cultural tradition but a functional socio-economic support system. It plays a vital role in helping new couples begin life with some level of economic stability, thereby reducing early marital tensions.

Ídū Ụlọ contributes to economic harmony and family integration: Through oral interviews and literature, the research shows that it builds bridges between the bride's natal and marital families, encouraging cooperation and shared responsibility. This integration often prevents or diffuses potential economic disputes within the new household.

Decline of *Ídū Ụlọ* in urbanized and Christianised Igbo contexts: In modern Igbo society, especially among urban, Christian, and Western-influenced families, this rite is either neglected or considered optional. Many young couples now start marriages without the traditional support system, leading to increased financial strain and emotional isolation.

The Absence of *Ídū Ụlọ* exacerbates marital conflict: The research reveals that when it is not performed, couples often face unanticipated hardships such as food insecurity, lack of household essentials, and dependency on loans. These hardships sometimes translate into domestic quarrels, blame, and instability.

There is Potential for Cultural Adaptation and Policy Re-imagination: The study finds a growing awareness among elders, cultural custodians, and community leaders that *Ídū Ụlọ* can be reimagined to fit contemporary realities, such as providing digital gadgets, cash support, or furniture. This opens the possibility for its institutionalization as a conflict-preventive economic intervention.

This rite reflects Igbo communal ethics and gender empowerment: The practice affirms the collective responsibility of the bride's family and community in ensuring the well-being of the marriage. It also empowers the bride by providing her with tools that elevate her dignity and reduce her vulnerability in the husband's home.



Recommendations

Reinstitution of *Ídū Ūlọ* in Modern Marriage Practices: Igbo families should be encouraged to revive and adapt it even in modern or Christian wedding contexts, as a form of *economic empowerment and familial support* to prevent early marital stress.

Community and cultural organization support: Town unions, cultural groups, and women's institutions (e.g., *Ụmụada* and *Ndi Ichie*) should formally include this rite or similar initiatives as part of premarital counselling or marital support schemes for young couples.

Policy integration into local Government Customary Affairs: Local and state governments through cultural affairs departments should document, support, and recognize it as a viable indigenous method for conflict prevention and youth empowerment, especially in rural development policies.

Modern Reimagination of *Ídū Ūlọ*: This rite should be restructured to include relevant 21st-century items such as kitchen appliances, electronics, financial support, and even small business equipment. This reimagination will make the practice relevant and practical for modern couples.

Further academic and gender-focused research: More research is recommended to study how this rite of passage can contribute to gender equality, emotional wellbeing, and long-term household sustainability, particularly in low-income and peri-urban Igbo communities.

Conclusion

The study has shown that *Ídū Ūlọ* is not merely a traditional rite, but a deeply rooted indigenous economic system that sustains marriages, prevents conflict, and affirms the collective nature of family support in Igbo society. Despite its decline under the pressures of Westernization, urbanization, and religious shifts, it remains a viable and culturally resonant institution.

Reviving and reimagining this rite for the 21st century offers the Igbo society a homegrown, culturally sensitive solution to growing rates of marital breakdown, economic hardship, and intergenerational disconnection. The tradition reflects the Igbo belief in communal living (*igwebuike*), and when harnessed properly, it can become a sustainable indigenous model for economic conflict resolution, youth stability, and family cohesion.

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APPENDIX - LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Name	Age	Occupation	Venue	Date
Ugorji Nneka	65years	Trader	Awgbu	08/06/2025
Ibelosi Obioma	52years	Seamstress	Anam	10/06/ 2025
Odoh Augustine	60years	Dirge performer	Enugu-Ezike	14/06/2025
Ubabudike Gladys	69years	Retired Civil Servant	Ibiasoegbe	17/06/2025
Umunna Abigail	52years	Teaching	Arochukwu (residing in Lagos)	19/06/2025
Nkemka Nwakaego	38years	Civil servant	Nsukka	22/06/2025
Benedicta Uche	25years	Fashion Designer	Awka	24/06/2025
Nchedochukwu Ugwu	75years	Traditional Marriage Counselor		27/06/2025
Uwakwe Ugochukwu	71years	Cultural Consultant	Onitsha	30/06/2025