

AFRICAN HUMANISM AND THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES OF FEMALE VIRGINITY

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ABSTRACT

The paper analysed the ethical evaluation of female virginity practices in contemporary Africa. It is observed in the recent past that virginity was highly prized in traditional Africa. But in the current civilisation of African humanism, the values of virginity have been very debatable, as the social and emotional values of it as a criterion for marriage and for married life are not highly valued. As it is observed, in the past, the virginity practices were based on the need to sustain family ethics for the validation of culture in the development of the female marrying adult as a person. In such communities, it was an ethical imperative for women to marry in their state of virginity and then give some encomiums to their parents for their proper upbringing before their families as married women. Adopting the phenomenological method of analysis, the paper clarified with logical critiques of the practices surrounding female virginity in reference to the values of African humanism in our contemporary times. Hence, the paper found that the ethical logic of virginity practices is heavily weakened or fading away because of imposing contemporary sexual orientation and challenging the values of marriage. Therefore, the paper concluded that the virginity practices will socially and necessarily limit how the young female and marriageable individuals, as ethical and cultural agents, view the workings of human nature (their biological and physiological maturities) to adapt to the growing nature of contemporary values relating to their virginity. It recommends that young female persons should assess some epistemic events, situations, and practices in societies in relation to their development as persons who desire to enjoy their sexual lives adequately and naturally without being influenced by some baseless cultural constraints and regulations.

KEYWORDS: African Society, Cultural Consciousness, Human Person, Integral Humanism, Morality, and Virginity.

INTRODUCTION

The changing faces of civilisation and socialisation of values and interests abound in cultural and moral practices, especially in Africa. Virginity, marital practices, and values are not an exception to this development. This concern has been widely attributed to the pulls of information and the strengths of the knowledge economy that

are actively affecting human persons and their sense of ethical integrity (Gyekye, 1999). This trend of development is dependent on the growing and rapidly changing cultural values of the people, which are enduringly changing the world without apologies to anybody or any groupings of persons.

In our humanistic integration of interests, actions, and responsibilities, especially in relation to the management of freedom and choices, morality is assumed to guide our conscience with some sense of liberality and authenticity of living. This has been for the sake of social order and justice in such a society where such social and cultural changes operationally abound (Isanbor, 2023; Egbonu & Isanbor, 2024). This projects the ethical concern for integral humanism in the face of promoting and sustaining African humanism. Such a projection remains a societal consciousness of development when it is centred on the full growth and acceptability of the human person in his or her material and spiritual essences (Ezekwonna, 2005; Fagothey, 2002). This is within the understanding that African humanism is situated on some conditions for social, cultural, and political policies, disciplines, and programmes that are ontologically recognised on the consideration of the fullness of the African person as a subject of lived experiences.

Observable in our African society, many practices of human integration and participation for collective growth and development are devoid of the values of integral humanism (Isanbor 2024). For instance, the practices of breast ironing, which is mostly practised in some rural parts of Eastern Cameroon, child marriage in most Muslim-dominated cities in Africa, and virginity (amongst the ladies of marriageable age), which is traditionally motivated in most parts of Africa. If not all, these practices are necessarily and indispensably begging for satisfactory answers (Isanbor, 2023; Egbonu & Isanbor, 2024). These are probably very potent worries for our contemporary living and question our social and moral relevance in the global community of persons. These also question the complexities of African persons, who are the centripetal forces of development, the subjects of experiences, and who rationally determine their living conditions that demand the moderations of their free will and high sense of duties and responsibilities (Ezekwonna, 2005; Fagothey, 2002).

As socially recognised, the exercises of freedom, especially sexual freedom, through the valued choices of actions, and these advocacies for freedom of actions and valued choices are contemporarily beclouding some cultural regulations for common developmental consciousness, and they are imposing some constraints in the courses of realising social order and moral justice (Omorogbe, 2011). These social constraints are seen as superimposing moralities against the ontologically valued freedom, unconditionally by those who care to know the ethics of such actions and valued choices (Lecleri-Madlala, 2002; Oguji, 2017; Ogundipe, 2018). With moral directives and dictates, culture has never been an objective reality when the issues of human freedom are socially and developmentally discussed or existentially analysed (Isanbor, 2024). To many of us who believe that freedom should be unrestrained, culture is subjectively directed to fashion some moral commands on human values and development (Ndulue, 1995). This deterministic existence of the human person is always shuffling for cultural, moral, and social relevance and liberation, especially in a society that is so beclouded with some unexplained and illogical ethical constraints or

regulations as cultural epistemological demands, and such practices remain ever indispensably dilemmatic and unrealistic, confusing.

Hence, the trending dilemmatic nature of moral development is being presented to us by the hedonistic and relativistic consciousness and orientations in our time, simply by opposing sexual orientations (Harol, 2004). Here, the some of the African existentialists like Kwame Gyekye, Ebenezer Owusu, Thaddeus Metz, Laurenti Magesa will help us to reaffirm the conviction that the society remains a product of the human persons, and in return, the society determines and shapes the human persons' character, motives and aspirations, indispensably determining how human persons are born, live and die (Lecleri-Madlala, 2002; Oguji, 2017; Ogundipe, 2018).. The society designs and redesigns the modalities in ascertaining and defining the beginning and ends of the human persons, especially by fashioning the directedness of their social actions and valued choices. They revolve around the values of human sexuality. Everything about the development of human persons is socially driven by their sexuality and its associated orientations (Isanbor & Ukagba, 2023). Human persons are positively integral when they act along proper exercises of the existential contents and influences of their experiences, driven by the values of sexual emotions and the socialization of their psycho-satisfactory sexuality, especially when they have attained some level of sexual maturity that needs to be naturally respected.

THE BASELINE CONCERNS

The concern here is to project the needs for the existential imports of the fading nature of the moral logic of virginity practices. This is especially to evaluate the needs of virginity practices in our contemporary societies, in which individuals need to exercise a level of rights over their bodies and how their lives are managed away from their family values (Edema, 2018; Isanbor, 2024). The concern philosophically projects the understanding and socially situates that the questions of human authenticity and subjectivity are also those of human self-interest and self-effacing, and that the social or societal conditioning for the practices of some cultural morality, such as virginity, remains the developmental properties in sustaining African humanism (Lecleri-Madlala, 2002; Oguji, 2017; Ogundipe, 2018).

Here, the ethical questions of the virginity practices are those of emotional situationism that need to be checked psychologically, whether culturally meaningful or otherwise, and they depend on how contemporary humanity has been associating with such mental convictions (Ndule, 1995). This posits that the individual psychology and morality are culturally situated and emotionally determined (Isanbor, 2023; Egbonu & Isanbor, 2024). The individual, as a being of emotion, in most cases, has to be counter-psychological to change the tones of deterministic culture imposed on him or her when such moral practices are against the currencies of integral humanism, especially the demands for the rejuvenation and reformation of African humanism for the realization of social order and justice.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. In what ways are virginity practices ethically relevant or reasonable to the contemporary African community of persons?
2. What is the fate of contemporary African humanism in the face of the fading nature of female virginity practices?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To emphasise the basic ethical imports of female virginity practices for growing African societies in the face of other imposing cultures.
2. To examine the reasons resulting in the fading nature of these practices as occasioned by the veracity of contemporary sexual and marital orientations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It has been a relative fact for the constant analysis that the human persons and their quests for healthy and integral civilization have given rise to so many ethical questionings that are mostly and culturally based on the dehumanising culture of some erotic sexual orientations, globally motivated by the developmental influences in achieving imperialistic opposing morality and social norms away from the adoption and respect for the dictates of natural law (Isanbor, 2023; Egbonu & Isanbor, 2024). Most of them are constantly demanding the giving out of some reasonable answers to the practice to regain some societal order, security, and justice (Lecleri-Madlala, 2002; Oguji, 2017; Ogundipe, 2018). In many instances, many thinkers made some issues out of the cultural practices of virginity, against the practitioners' willingness to accept the morality of the practices, and these have become debatable ethical issues for the authentic development of the human person as a subject of lived experiences in Africa.

For Nwansor and Robinson (2016), in African cosmology, we talk about virginity in relation to marriage and motherhood. It is due to the societal values attached to such moral state and conditioning. It is a state or condition where a particular individual claims to be or has been examined or observed to be a virgin, that is, such an individual is without involvement in sexual union or engagement and its associated abuses or pleasures. In support of them, Isanbor and Ukagba (2023) alluded that, with culture, religion, politics, and morality, the senses of social and developmental changes are peculiar to human acting and living, especially living in the *Otherness* of existence. There are always trending tendencies of cultural and social adaptation, assimilation, and even absorption of feelings and emotions.

Gyekye (2017) offered an influential philosophical reflection on the relationship between African traditions and modernity. Gyekye argued that African societies historically emphasized moral virtues such as self-control, respect, responsibility, and social harmony. Practices surrounding virginity before marriage were closely connected to these moral ideals, serving as expressions of personal integrity and respect for family institutions. However, Gyekye recognised that African societies are not static but continuously evolve through interaction with modern social forces. The spread of

education, urbanization, and global media has contributed to changing attitudes toward sexuality and personal freedom. As a result, traditional expectations concerning virginity are gradually fading in many parts of Africa.

For Oguji (2017), society can recognise, with ethical consciousness, that the world is growing in the fate and quest for human developmental and cognitive changes, and that culture activates such processes of change more obviously. Culture relates to life in the same way that life relates to existence, for there can be no life unless existential issues are attended to, and there can be no culture without life. As Oguji (2017, 131) puts it;

God (nature) did not create man a solitary being, but a socializing gregarious communing being. To achieve the desired development in the human society, therefore, male and female components, positive and negative, must be brought into full play. This is imperative from the fact that males and females have distinctive qualities that are complementary to each other.... The women's emotional responsibilities and the firmness and steadfastness of the man and co-relational and complementary... the natural search for Nirvana in man are therefore only be met vertically by connecting to the divine and horizontally by responding to the mutual attraction between the sexes, fully acknowledging the masculine and feminine components in nature.

This thought on the integrity of men and women beyond their sexuality by Oguji aligns with Bewaji (2026), that the consciousness of the *Otherness* of existence moderates the ways of African minds to accept whatever culture they are in, in the form of what an organized society offers to them. Such culturally motivated formality of integral humanism in most African societies is hinged on the methodologies of parenting that are adopted to socially indoctrinate the children, especially the girl-child.

For Ogundipe (2018), in traditional African society, most of these consciousnesses of parenting and guidance are mainly directed towards having honourable marriages for their girl-children by understanding the values of their sexuality. So, the parents go beyond some social restraints of the girl-children in most of their activities and relationships (Lecleri-Madlala, 2002; Oguji, 2017; Ogundipe, 2018). These positions are not unconnected to the patriarchal arrangement of most African societies. From regular socialization of moral interests and feelings, the parents know that moral character has a very weighty effect in influencing one's perceptions of acting and living, even shaping one's future. According to him

It is hardly surprising because the world loves sex. Sex permeates society. The commitment to sex transcends boundaries to the extent that the average individual indulges in sexual intercourse as a need more than a want. Humans are sexual beings, and sex makes the world go round. The urge for sexual intercourse is a basic instinct. Sex is one of the biggest human preoccupations, causing thrills, headaches, and confusion, and humans are reputed to be wired to crave sex more for good health and not just for procreation (Ogundipe, 2018: 10).

Eze (2018) provided an important interpretation of African humanism, especially through the philosophy of African communitarian ethics. Eze argued that the idea is that a person becomes fully human through relationships with others. Within traditional African societies, moral expectations concerning sexuality, including the

preservation of virginity before marriage, were understood as expressions of communal responsibility. Eze explained that virginity practices once symbolized moral discipline, respect for family values, and preparation for responsible adulthood. However, he notes that modern African societies are undergoing significant ethical transformation due to globalization, migration, media exposure, and the spread of liberal democratic ideals. These developments have contributed to the gradual fading of traditional sexual norms, including strict expectations surrounding virginity, by evaluated according to whether they promote human dignity and authentic community.

The virginity practices such as coercive virginity testing or social stigmatization of women may conflict with the deeper ethical principle of African humanism, which emphasizes compassion, respect, and shared humanity, as Ndulue (1995) puts it: “Apart from principles of good manners and high ethical standards inculcated in her by the family and particularly by her mother, the young girl is taught the handicraft, the trade of the family about women” (p. 57).

From this conception, it is not only on social restraints in ordering her to be a virgin before marriage as greatly expected from any proposing family that wants its honour to be sustained in the minds of society (Lecleri-Madlala, 2002; Oguji, 2017; Ogundipe, 2018). In all, they understand that the individuals’ authenticity as persons (subjects of lived experiences) is seated on what the individual makes of from culture (avenue of expressed feelings and desires) and other social institutions, which are products of the society they belong to. Such socio-cultural belongingness is determinable on the social intentionality of one’s emotions and passions (Isanbor, 2023; Egbonu & Isanbor, 2024). Understandably, the concern for the virginity ethics is on the psychology of human persons. This is not to misplace their identity and personality in pursuance of integral humanism, which is dependence on the values of human sexuality, especially that which relates to the satisfaction of the contents of their emotions, interests, and desires associated with adult or mature individuals.

DISCUSSION

Female Virginity Practice and the Culture of Human Authentic Living in African Humanism

In African society, many views about female virginity are upheld by the values of marriage, parenthood, and moral fidelity. Traditionally, it is the state when one has not had sexual contact or intercourse (Isanbor, 2023; Egbonu & Isanbor, 2024). As psychologically recognized by many African social and cultural thinkers, many deny it as a fairy tale. The reasons adduced for this conviction are that it can be achieved by masturbation, or involvement in sexual thoughts or sexual discussions (Dellenbory, 2024). As such, no one who has not had such sexual contact. Despite the possibility of any psychological criticism, female virginity is highly respected, just because of the patriarchal nature of Africa. They are expected to safeguard their virginity till marriage, so that anything contrary to that conviction could lead to the lady being single for the rest of her life or being segregated from any proposing spouses.

As a ceremony of trust and respect, virginity is highly celebrated in traditional Africa. There is a virginity rite, even on the night of the marriage. Every bride is

expected to be a virgin before the marriage night. And during the honeymoon, that is traditionally then, the first night of marriage, a white cloth is used as a bedcovering (Isanbor & Ukagba, 2023). After the first intercourse with the groom, if the hymen is broken for the first time, and blood is all over the white bed-covering. It will be taken as a sign of purity on the part of the lady. Such observations on the development of contemporary Africa, where in some tribes, the newly married women were given a piece of white to be used during their first marital act with individual husbands (Isanbor & Edema 2024). The husbands put their consciousness into getting a positive result at the end of the testing sexual exercise with their wives. They testify with the blood-stained cloth as the validation of the expected virginity of the newly married women. They returned the blood-stained clothes to their families as a mark of their virginity and moral uprightness.

Consequently, the mother-in-law will take it across the village to the bride's family house, rejoicing. Then she becomes a pride to her husband's family, her family, and the entire community. More so, if the blood fails to appear, she is considered impure, and not a virgin before marriage; she is then sent to her father with a heap of ashes (Isanbor 2023; Egbonu & Isanbor 2024). And the bride price (dowry) is later returned, while she became a laughingstock. But today, there are disparities regarding the hymen as a *sine qua non* for studying and ascertaining the virginity of a lady (Lecleri-Madlala, 2002; Oguji, 2017; Ogundipe, 2018). Some biological research has shown that a good number of women do not have a hymen naturally, and someone can lose her virginity due to sporting activities, medical operations, and accidents.

The cultures necessarily and indispensably respect the contents of human emotions in accordance with the dictates of natural law. But the rate of individualization of interests or desires in terms of cultural practices brings some questions for the contents of human authenticity in relation to human moral restiveness to the fore (Ezekwonna, 2005). The authenticity of one's culture determines the authenticity of the individual as a subject of experiences, mainly dependent on the values of human sexuality (Isanbor 2023; Egbonu & Isanbor, 2024). Authenticity of the individual means a personal conviction of the individual on the worthiness of one's existence, the power of one's freedom, even one's sexual freedom, in exerting his/her choice-making and determines the contents of social associations (Fagothey, 2002). It is a culture of socialisation that shapes and directs the courses of integral humanism when hinged on the recognition of the sources from which the human persons came into being. Within the ethical relevance of African humanism, sexual consciousness cannot be distant from human authenticity and subjectivity (Oguji, 2017, 131). God, through nature, recognises such sexual mentality and consciousness dependence on human maturity of minds and emotions.

The power of natural humanism over the weakness of nurtured humanism in terms of management of sexual providences presents to us some convictions that society is a matter of social properties simply designated by human persons to maintain some level of cultural order and sanity (Afariogun, 2018; Onokpite, 2008:79). Such developmental conviction is culture-bound. It is understandably posited that morality is a cultural factor that helps to regulate human actions, and any action that does not align with the dictates of moral norms of a particular society, which the individual will be /or

may be regarded as immoral (Isanbor & Ukagba, 2023). The regulation of motherhood, in relation to the institution of marriage, especially, cannot be outside the influence of the morality of that society.

Traditional Conception and Authenticity of Virginity Practices as Cultural Developmental Orientations

Here, we want to examine the cultural practices of virginity, especially female virginity, by trying to situate them within the sense of duty. The values of duty only are always within the sense of such duty, that is, the philosophy of “duty for duty's sake”, according to Kantian categorical ethics (Ndulue 1995). But, in African cosmology, the sense of duty beyond the consideration of one's individuality; it is communal. One's ethical consideration of duty is always in reference to the orderliness of one's community. In many traditional African communities, virginity is a matter of truth, a conscience-bound state of moral serenity and confidence, rather than the culture of duty to be done, for the sustainability of family authentic values and honour (Egbonu & Isanbor, 2024). With such consciousness of the social relevance of virginity, the following questions may be asked:

- If morality is the study of what is wrong or activities or actions, then what is right or wrong in being a virgin or not being a virgin before marriage?
- Does marriage determine the moral status of human virginity?
- Is it possible for one to desire sex, not marriage, and to be permitted to lose her virginity based on the demand of one's emotional or sexual nature?
- If one does desire marriage but it is not forthcoming, on the part of a female individual, because this process is initiated by the male individual, will she remain a virgin?
- Is one's exercise of the right of nature regarding one's sexuality not freely given?

The questions above are very logical in assessing human morality in the face of modernity and civilization, because they do not have one-sided answers, and may have satisfactory answers, since they are philosophical. These questions are about the valuation of the community's justice for the realization of integral humanism (Isanbor & Ukagba, 2023). If an individual participates in this community of shared values, practices, and webs of relationships, he will discover that what is obtainable in the community, in the name of culture, does not augur well with human dignity and is incompatible with his life as a person; he is thus free to question it.

The concept “he” is used to express the gender question in some cultural practices therein. This is due to the patriarchal nature of our traditional society. The women are not allowed to question anything, but they are just to practice any cultural norms and morality placed before them (Egbonu & Isanbor, 2024). Through sexuality, we understand that procreation and marriage are two inseparable developmental features of the African people. They believe that every marriage should constitute offspring, and they are regarded as God's gifts and fruits of such marital union (Ezekwonna 2005; Fagothey 2002). This is always possible when the desires are to the sexual satisfactions associated with the ontological gift of sexual urge, especially with the sense and desire of procreation in view.

Like the human fear as an emotional construct of the mind, the human sexual urge remains indispensably powerful as death, and it takes the irreplaceable relevance of morality to moderate the human power of socialization and civilization (Dellenbory 2024). For morality, here remains a check on the conditioning of an individual being truthful to the dictates of cultural constructs that are morally founded on the values of human personality (Oguji 2017). The properties of a human person are beyond what its culture can offer to and classify him or her for, but the culture has a morphological model for refining and redefining the human person as it develops along the power of its rationality and intelligibility.

For Africa in general, the issues of virginity have been of gender sectionalization and unbalanced gender-role classification, mainly within the weighty social classification, which is especially on the womenfolk. In traditional African society, before marriage, according to Jomo Kenyetta, “the girl is expected to be a virgin in the sense of having an un hymenal membrane when she marries” (Kenyetta 1961: 160). The hymenal membrane acts as a check or a window of verification for the moral and social epistemic confirmation. Kenyetta further asserts that “any intercourse which may result in pregnancy before marriage is strictly forbidden” (p. 160).

Here, marriage ardently becomes the actual reason why such practice of virginity is encouraged, and it indicates the values of the fidelity of such union are heavily on the womenfolk. Only before marriage, according to Kenyetta, should any young man who renders a girl pregnant (Kohira moireta ihu), and away from this, he is severely punished by the Kiama (tribal Council) (p. 160). If this happened, it would shame the girl to be presented before any interested suitor in such a society when found pregnant before marriage. She will be culturally forced to confess the person who had had sexual engagement with her, or maybe, eventually become pregnant before marriage, and, to the worst of all, “punishment is also extended to the girl” (p. 160). To society, she is morally loose since she cannot keep her chastity or virginity, and cannot give honour to her family through virginity before marriage.

Upon losing her virginity outside the traditional practice, she is punished for enjoying the gift of nature and knowing that she did not force nature to give such a gift to her. Her freedom remains within what society, through cultural constraints, defines for her (Isanbor & Ukagba, 2023). The most striking point for us in the attitude of the woman is when she is caught; it was that of individual consciousness against the consciousness of the community (Ndulue 1995). The individual will be guided by moral feelings and the will of the community towards her action. People struggle with the problem of shame more than the problem of sin or disobedience (Ezekwonna 2005). And contemporarily concerned and morally ingenious in maintaining social status, with the help of medical cosmetics, for the sake of shame for not being a virgin, the status of the hymenal membrane can be faked.

From the above conceptions of virginity ethics, it should be alluded that many epistemic reasons are humanly and culturally derived to evaluate the contemporary consideration of such practices in reference to the values of marriage. Such an ethic also questions the neglect of the need to promote and advance male virginity. This paper recognized that the male state of virginity may be very difficult and uncertain, or near impossible to ascertain, as it is epistemologically difficult to be checked, evaluated, or

determined. It is mainly accepted that the male individual admits that he is a virgin. But, the female virginity has remained very problematic, especially when considering the contemporary sexual orientations that have also preoccupied and have been preoccupying people's minds in the global waves of variable models of socialization that we are having now (Harol 2004). We traditionally questioned the status of the hymenal membrane in determining the moral sincerity of the female child as a virgin or otherwise. According to Harol (2004, 204)

The problem with die hymen begins with its lack of visibility on a live body, a problem not easily rectified by dissection. Because of cultural proscriptions against investigating (live) virgin females, as well as (presumably) a shortage of dead virgin females among bodies available for dissection, anatomists had little opportunity to dissect die hymen. Beyond problems of access and objectivity, the physical realities of the hymen also posed challenges to anatomy. Fragile (since investigating it could ruin it) and variable (since it may not be present in all women), the hymen resisted the kind of physical analysis that other body parts could undergo.

Anyways, the conception or perception of female virginity by Kenyetta may be or will be faulted due to variances of sexual and emotional reoccupations that are driven by sexually-engineered culture. This is because one wonders if a female genital membrane is perforated by a mechanized sexual vibrator or sexually engineered stimulator, being engaged by another female individual as a lesbian sexual partner, since sexual union has been contemporarily redefined. When such a union is engaged, and the hymen is perforated, is she still a virgin since virginity is defined as a state when the hymenal membrane of the vagina has not been perforated by the penetration of a penis?

From the consideration of the feminine training of the young girls above, the question can be asked: If the female individual is being pricked outside the conventional heterosexual engagements or involvements, whether self-induced or otherwise, does she remain a virgin, since the sexual/genital membrane is not perforated by the male genital organ? (Ezekwonna 2005; Fagothey 2002) Such questions need to be logically answered; otherwise, if one is not careful, he or she may be mopped by those who are driven by some contemporary sexual orientations against those driven by natural law (Fagothey 2002). These are sexual orientations that need to be revisited when the proximity of the importance of virginity in relation to the valuation of marriage, proper human socialisation, fatherhood, and motherhood are culturally and morally evaluated.

FINDINGS

From the foregoing, we have observed that human cultures are meant to instil some social control and harmony, especially in terms of promoting moral norms and practices for the realisation of integral humanism (Ndulue 1995). African society is not an exception to this pragmatic conceptualisation of values and morals, especially those that guide the ecology of the human family (Isanbor 2024). Such consciousness of development projects that cultural practices gain and lose some relevance and social operations over time and space due to the values invested and the reasonableness of their community practices. This is by staging the waves of challenges to the sustainability of

African humanism in contemporary times (Isanbor & Ukagba 2023). For the sense of sincerity, this virginity practice in Africa has come under ethical questioning:

- What is being a virgin before marriage in a society where young men don't care whether they are going to be married to virgins or not?
- What is the fate of the girls to be married as virgins in a current world of husband hostility and scarcity?
- What are the values of being a virgin where marriage proposals are no longer easily forthcoming?
- When will virgins enjoy their natural gift of intimate sexuality when marriage proposals and marital consummation are not forthcoming?
- At what age can or will a lady give up her virginity if marriage is not forthcoming?

It is on these questions that the conclusion of this paper is drawn, considering the ethical logic of virginity practices, based on the current values of human socialisation and civilization (Isanbor & Ukagba, 2023). This is attached to the values of marriage and parental pride that may not be relevant to the human sense of social and moral judgment on sexual discipline and continence of our contemporary valuations of interests (Isanbor & Egbonu, 2024). This consciousness is ultimately for parental respect and honour that are attached to it, and then enquire if it will help the individual as a true agent of development and as a subject of lived experiences to achieve integral humanism, especially as an African.

With all the above questions that derive their answers before the questions are asked, we can claim that the practices of virginity are morally engineered by parental virtue and by culturally driven family pride for the values of marriage (Ezekwonna 2005; Fagothey 2002). This may not be logically seated, for appearance is not reality. It will socially and necessarily limit how the individual, as a moral and cultural agent, especially as a girl-child, views natures/realities, or how she assesses some epistemic events, situations, and practices in relation to her development as a person who desires to enjoy her sexual life adequately and naturally. It is in line with these personal values that the girl-child or woman may not be ethically questioned when she exercises the gift of sexuality.

CONCLUSION

The concern has been on virginity practices and their fading values in our contemporary African societies in the face of agitations for the sustainability of African humanism. It has been observed that the fading nature of virginity practice has been contemporarily influenced by increased education, feminist activism, delayed marriage commitment, and global health discourse. While some communities continue to defend these practices as expressions of cultural identity, the paper argued that ethical reflection is necessary to ensure that cultural traditions align with principles of dignity and equality. Her analysis suggests that African humanism should emphasize compassion, justice, and respect for persons rather than rigid adherence to practices that may cause psychological or social harm. Also, the concern here for the examination of the ethical logic of virginity practices in contemporary African humanism projects that

such moral consciousness or conviction on the freedom to exercise one's sexuality or sexual powers, which is made manifest in our society based on the values and operations of natural law principles. It should be based on the condition that the individual does not want to be wasted away in reference to the demands of one's nature, not on societal pressures.

Therefore, the social and developmental conditionings of ethical values of virginity practice in contemporary civilisation demand proper and rudimentary education on the reasons for the practice, as its logicality is demanded to know how relevant such practice is for the sustainability of African humanism in the face of rapidly changing global civilisation and socialisation. This is because, if she continue to wait for the society to permit her on when to do so (that is, losing one's virginity out of the exercise of freewill and maximisation of the gifts of nature already bestowed), she may be wasting away and then losing of essence of her nature (that is, her sexuality) The individual should understand that nature has long permitted her, but, only being determined by cultural epistemic boundaries that subsumed her social and cultural power of choice and decision-making in the exercise of moral freedom that may be subjectively integral and indispensably neutral.

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