

# Wife-Mother-in-Law Relationship and Violence among Yoruba Women of Southwestern Nigeria

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**Abstract** Policies that discourage violence against women and girls abound in Nigeria but have not been effectively implemented. Recorded history, recent events and happenings have shown that Nigerians still experience the occurrence of the most prevalent yet relatively hidden and ignored form of violence against women and girls. In Nigeria in recent times, findings from social research have shown that violence against women and girls is present in every ethnic group, cutting across boundaries of culture, class, education, income and age. However, significant percentage of all the social research findings, write ups and activities of the feminists in Nigeria identify male-induced violence as central to the perpetuation of women's oppression, thereby downplaying the incessant strained relationships existing between wives and mother-in-laws in Nigeria and therefore are yet to offer concrete and enduring explanations to the ever present violence between wives and their mothers-in-law. Building on cultural feminism, with a focus on women agencies the study examines causes, intensity and frequency of family violence which is rife among daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law of Yoruba extraction of south-western, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were gathered for the study. Primary data were obtained through questionnaire administered among 180 women (90 wives and 90 mothers-in-law) who were selected purposively from three communities in south-western Nigeria. In addition, three Focus Group Discussion sessions were conducted among wives, mothers-in-law and unmarried girls in 2010 for the study. The findings show common factors causing friction in relationship between daughters-in-law and their mothers-in-law especially among Yorubas of southwest, Nigeria. Multi-level analysis revealed that violence is common among educated daughters-in-law than their semi-literate and illiterate counterparts, though physical abuse is not very common. The results also showed that most unmarried girls wish to marry men whose mothers are dead. The study also reveals that mothers-in-law with excessive psychological and emotional attachment to their sons are over-protective of their sons. To reduce or contain this problem, it is suggested that both parties needed to be educated on how to play their different roles with the son or the husband as the case may be without resulting to violence. In addition, it is recommended that mothers-in-laws should develop the good sense of letting go in order to give the new couple enough space to establish themselves at the same time remain supportive to the couple and that daughters-in-law should be loving, tolerant, and respectful because they are going to become a mother-in-law one day.

**Keywords:** Wife, Mother-in-law, Daughter-in-laws, Domestic Violence, Yoruba

## 1. Introduction

Violence is unfortunately part of human social life (Fein, 1999). The inevitability of violence in whatever form it occurs in the day-to-day activities and interactions of man is well documented in social research. Anthropological evidences since pre-state era till contemporary times have shown that human violence and cruelty either to other humans or/and animals have been on for long and appear to be rule rather than aberration. Apparently to many, violence is an issue that no rational human being should desire; an issue many abhor and try frantically to prevent, yet its rate of

occurrence since the pre-historic period till now and how oft it occurs suggest that human beings, by nature, are not totally peaceable and that human' social relationship cannot be totally rid of violence.

In literature, several factors ranging from biological, psychological to sociological and many others have been attributed as causes of violence. But of all forms of violence globally, domestic violence occurs the most, in spite of the fact that actors involved are relatives (either by affinity, consanguinity), known to one another and more often than not live together or had lived together one time or another (WHO, 2008). Findings from social research have shown domestic violence to be a global phenomenon which only varies in patterns and trend in different societies of the world (UNFPA, 1999, UNICEF, 2000; 2005).

Research findings have described domestic violence as a form of violence that transcends colour, race, creed, age,

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education, social class and family lines. It occurs when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate or harm the other. The problem is exhibited in many forms, including physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, intimidation, economic deprivation or threats of violence. Domestic violence is recognized as most prevalent but relatively hidden and ignored form of violence mostly against women and girls. Most incidence of violence in home goes unreported and this makes it difficult to measure the true extent of the problem.

Of all forms of domestic violence, violence of men against women and girls dominates the academic circle more than any other and has been well researched into than other forms. It is the commonest and the most pervasive of all human rights violations. It is also a global epidemic that kills; tortures and maims physically, psychologically, sexually and economically (UNICEF, 2000).

As discussed above, a lot has been documented on domestic violence in general and the problem is widely reported by social researchers, civil liberties and international organizations, however, it is very rare to come across findings from social investigation about the ubiquitous issue that is known as wives/mother-in-laws form of domestic violence, especially in Nigeria. Feminists' activists that identify male violence against women as central to the perpetuation of women's oppression are yet to offer concrete and enduring explanations to the ever present violence between wives and their mothers-in-law. Consequence upon this (dearth of research work in this area in Nigeria), this study investigates the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationships and violence among Yoruba women of southwestern, Nigeria.

Customarily, among Yoruba people of southwest of Nigeria, a wife according to tradition is married to all extended family members (not only to her husband according to western culture, although her sexual obligation is restricted to her husband alone). This belief also forms part of the advice mothers give to their daughters as they prepare to join their husbands (Bascom, 1969; Fadipe, 1970). Hence, marriage is regarded as union between families of the bride and the groom, rather than just an activity between a man and a woman (The intending couple). However, despite this clear cultural position of the Yoruba people, most relationships between mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws are fraught with conflicts and problems.

## 2. Objectives

This study in a bid to explore all possibilities as far as issues relating to violence and relationships among wives and mother-in-laws among Yoruba people of southwest of Nigeria are concerned attempted to answer the following questions. Is it every relationship between wife and mother-in-law that is marred with violence? What are the likely/common causes of strained relationships and violence between wife and mother-in-law in Yorubaland? How far have generational gap and differences in values, norms, lifestyles,

expectations from the other party served as strong determinants of violence between the two groups? To what extent has this type of violence affected the relationship between mothers-in-law and their daughters-in-law? What are the contributions of both traditional and European cultures towards understanding of this violence? What role do educational level and religion affiliation of the parties concerned play in understanding of the feud? What are the effective means of curbing this violence among Yoruba women of southwestern Nigeria?

## 3. Methods

A total number of one hundred and fifty-nine women were sampled (both mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws) in six purposively selected communities in Oyo, Osun and Ogun state in Nigeria, i.e. two locations each in Ibadan (Oyo State), Ile-Ife (Osun State) and Mowe (Ogun State). Both the middle and lower-income levels women only were involved in the study due to difficulties the researcher and his assistant encountered in getting access to the upper-class women and the possible of convincing them to find time to fill the questionnaire. Middle-income category according to the study is the class of women who indicated that they earn or realize between N100, 000 and 500, 000 monthly. While their counterparts who indicated that they earn or make less than N100, 000 a month were categorized as lower-income level in accordance with the standard of living in Nigeria in recent times. Other criteria used in selecting the respondents were: mother-in-laws – women whose living son/sons are married and who is residing or had stayed with the married son. Whereas wives or daughter-in-laws according to the study were: married women whose mother-in-law is residing with her family of procreation or had once stayed with them. These criteria were used to control for intervening variables or variables that were not intended for the study.

Women in the age group of 50 years and above were excluded from wives/daughter-in-laws category in spite of the fact that some still have living mother-in-laws. Also, wives whose husbands are dead were also excluded from the sample for daughter-in-laws. Thus, the decision was made to exclude this age group from the study in order to avoid empty cells and spurious relationships between the variable in the final analysis of the data.

The respondents who indicated their willingness to participate in the study after their consents had been sought were recruited from differ locations such as market places, banking halls, offices, schools and worship centres (Churches and Mosques). The questionnaires were self-administered while structured interview was used to collect data from the illiterate ones among the respondents.

Questionnaire survey, semi-structured in-depth interview guide and focus group discussion were designed to elicit information from the respondents. The main reason these methods were adopted was to generate both qualitative and quantitative data on the topic under study. In the question-

naire survey, a total of 159 (80 mother-in-laws and 79 daughter-in-laws) respondents were interviewed. Data collected through survey, in-depth interview and Focus group discussion were triangulated to explore issues relevant to the subject. In a bid to collect data for the study, questionnaire which is the principal method used for data generation during the survey was designed and pre-tested among thirty (30) mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo state. The data generated through attest to the fact that

different ways of life (Traditional African ways of relating embraced by many mothers-in-law and Eurocentric pattern of interaction which underscore nuclear family embrace by daughters-in-law) to a greater extent engender rift between the groups. In order to ensure representativeness, the respondents for interview sessions and focus group discussions were selected from six different communities within three states (Ogun, Osun and Oyo) where the study was carried out.

**Table 1.** Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

	Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Wives</b>	20-29	5	6.3	6.3	6.3
	30-39	37	46.8	46.8	53.2
	40-49	37	46.8	46.8	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	
<b>Mothers-in-law</b>	51-60	26	32.5	32.5	32.5
	61-70	48	60.0	60.0	92.5
	71+	6	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	
<b>OCCUPATION</b>					
<b>Wives</b>	Self-employed	14	17.7	17.7	17.7
	Civil servants	33	41.8	41.8	59.5
	Teaching	32	40.5	40.5	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	
<b>Mothers-in-law</b>	Artisans	29	36.3	36.3	36.3
	Civil Servant	10	12.5	12.5	48.8
	Teaching	6	7.5	7.5	56.3
	Career women	4	5.0	5.0	61.3
	Trading	31	38.8	38.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0		
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
<b>Wives</b>	No formal education	5	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Primary edu	13	16.5	16.5	22.8
	Secondary education	13	16.5	16.5	39.2
	Diploma	16	20.3	20.3	59.5
	University education	32	40.5	40.5	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	
<b>Mothers-in-law</b>	NFE	39	48.8	48.8	48.8
	PE	21	26.3	26.3	75.0
	SE	4	5.0	5.0	80.0
	ND	10	12.5	12.5	92.5
	UNI	6	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	
<b>Religion</b>					
<b>Wives</b>	Islam	32	40.5	40.5	87.3
	Christianity	47	59.5	59.5	100
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	
<b>Mothers-in-law</b>	Christianity	32	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Islam	48	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	
<b>Marriage type</b>					
<b>Wives</b>	Monogamous	63	79.7	79.7	
	Polygynous	16	20.3	20.3	
<b>Mothers-in-law</b>	Monogamous	6	7.5	7.5	
	Polygynous	74	92.5	92.5	

Source: author's questionnaire survey.

During the period of data collection, a total of one hundred and fifty-nine respondents were sampled in the survey, adopting two different types of questionnaire schedule that was designed in open and close ended format for the mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. The schedule consisted of twenty-nine items that cover socio-demographic variables, and other issues like causes and nature of violence, other means of relating with one another and what mothers-in-law expect from the daughters-in-law and vice versa. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for the questionnaire distribution, starting with the purposive selection of two communities in each of the states (a city/town and one other rural area each). Then, market places and some organizations were located from which a random selection of respondents were made.

Focus group discussion sessions (4) were conducted among unmarried females and in two universities (Redeemer's University and University of Ibadan) and two other venues within Ile-Ife and Ibadan. Questions pertaining to the category or choice of men the unmarried ladies would like to marry were asked from them. For example, they were asked a question about what would be the choice of husband between men who have mothers and men whose mothers are dead?

Analysis of data was first carried out on the responses from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. These were translated and transcribed and the responses from focus group discussion were represented in the study using ZY-index tables and direct translation. Quantitative data, generated through questionnaire, were analyzed with the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software. A descriptive analysis of data was done using univariate frequency distributions. The demographic data included age, religion, marriage type, level of education, occupation, number of married sons etc.

#### 4. Discussion

As a matter of importance and because of the nature of this work, the study adopted a sample size which was intentionally designed to consist of large number of female respondents; hence the 79.4% of the respondents were married female while the other 20.6% were unmarried females (girls). This percentage of girls was deemed necessary in order to sample the opinions of the unmarried girls about their preferences for men whose mothers are still living and the ones whose mothers are dead as their husbands in future.

Also, the data collected shows that majority (71.8%) of the mother-in-laws involved in the study are self-employed while the remaining 28.2% are civil servants, teaching and banking job. On the other hand, 82.3% of the wives are into paid employments such as teaching, banking and other jobs in government ministries and other related employments, while 17.7% of them are self-employed. The data also revealed that 56% of the sampled mothers-in-law have lost their husbands due to death prior the time of data collection,

while the husbands of 4% of these mothers-in-laws have abandoned their homes and staying with other women.

Moreover, according to the analysis of the data collected, out of all these (80) mothers-in-law that have stayed either for a short or long period of time with their daughters-in-law, 37.5% indicated that their experiences were fair while the remaining 60% claimed that they had bad and terrible experiences when they were staying with their daughters-in-law.

The majority of the mothers-in-law (79.9%) were into polygynous marital relationship while quite a significant number of daughters-in-law (63%) were into monogamous relationship. Of the total daughters-in-law who were into polygynous relationship, 6.3% of them at the time of data collection were not living together with their husbands. In terms of the level of education of all the respondents 19.9% of the mothers-in-law had formal education beyond secondary school level while the remaining 80.01% did not progress more than secondary level as far as education is concerned. Putting into consideration the education attainment of the daughters-in-law, 39.3% of them did not proceed in education beyond secondary level while 60.5% progressed beyond secondary education.

However, as a whole, the demographic profiles of both categories of respondents have indicated that they were mainly Muslims and there were more polygynous relationship than monogamous especially among the mothers-in-law.

#### **Some Common Causes and Prevalence of Violence among Daughters-In-Law and Mothers-In-Law**

In a bid to determine the extent and the degree of relationship that exist between the mothers-in-law and their daughters-in-law in the study communities, a number of questions were asked from the respondents. To determine this, respondents were asked what their reactions and attitudes would be if they see a mother-in-law who quarrels with the daughter-in-law or vice versa. A number of behavior patterns that could lead to quarrel or fight between the respondents were listed and the respondents were instructed to indicate the ones that have caused rift in their relationships. These acts included: the wife making effort to control the son or dictate order to him on some issues even in the presence of the mother. Laying claim to the man (her husband) as if she is the one that gave birth to him, daughters-in-law listening or contributing to on-going conversation between the son and the mother especially when she is not invited, not giving necessary and due respect to the man when the mother is there, preventing or discouraging the husband from taking care of his younger one and other family members, wasting a large chunk of the husband salary on what they eat instead of building their personal house, the wife incessant complaints about the actions and inactions of the mother-in-law, and not taking good care of the mother-in-law whenever she is around. Other questions on the factors causing quarrel and sore relationship between them are mothers-in-law are difficult to please; they still treat the woman's husband (their child) like a kid despite the fact that he is married, not ready

to give helping hand to wives in doing the house chores, visiting too often thereby they deny the couple the freedom they desire, (table 2).

**Table 2a. Common Causes of Disagreement between Mothers-In-Law and Daughters-In-Law**

Action	Mothers-in-law	
	Frequency	Percent
Hate other family members of the man	72	90%
Treat her mother better than the mother-in-law	57	71.3%
Spend large part of husband's income on food	61	76.3%
Preventing the husband from taking care of his mother	72	90%
Do not know how to take care of husband and children	43	53.7%
Wanting to contribute to discussion between mother and her son	32	40%
Hiding information about her husband from the mother	27	33.8%
Verbal abuse & insult	39	48.8%

Source: author's questionnaire survey.

**Table 2b. Common Causes of Disagreement between Mothers-In-Law and Daughters-In-Law**

Action	Daughters-in-law	
	Frequency	Percent
Cannot be satisfied	63	79.7%
Not ready to help in the house	52	65.8%
Wasteful	47	59.5%
Complain to sibling and other neighbours	33	41.8%
Staying too long with the family	69	87.3%
Controlling the son	65	82.3%
(Verbal abuse & insult)	51	64.6%
Bareness or infertility	33	41.8%

Source: author's questionnaire survey.

According to the table 2a and 2b above, the majority of the respondents indicated and agreed that the relationship that exists between them is frosty, unhealthy and occasionally results to verbal abuse and other forms of insult. Table (2a) shows that most common causes or factors influencing strain relationship and occasionally causing verbal attack (and physical attack in rare cases) according to the mothers-in-law are the wife's hatred for other sibling of the husband especially the female and her ploys to discourage the man from rendering enough assistance for the mother. 90% of them were of this opinion. Another equally strong or common cause of violence between the respondents according to the mothers-in-law is the wives' wasteful practices which they believed must have robbed the man the opportunity of embarking on capital projects such as owning a personal house or cars, 76% of them had this belief.

On the other hand majority of the daughters-in-law respectively adduced reasons for sour relationship between them and their mothers-in-law due to the mothers-in-law's unsolicited visits and their willingness to stay more than necessary with the family of the son (98.3%), 82.3% claimed that mothers-in-law wanting to take the rein of the house by controlling the son, while 64.6% maintain that their mothers-in-law insult them verbally, 48.1% of daughters-in-law also opine that infertility of the wife/s or inability to give birth to a male child more often than cause sour relationship between wives and their mothers-in-law. However, among the Yorubas in the southwestern, Nigeria, it is a common practice for women who want to settle score with others to result to singing or using local idioms to abuse the other. This is an age-long tradition which is still thriving in recent times.

**Table 3. Determinants of Degree of Relationship and Violence among Mothers-In-Law and Daughters-In-Law**

Mothers-in-law					Daughters-in-law				
Factors	Occurrence/regularity of violence				Factors	Occurrence/regularity of violence			
Level of education	No.	Never	Common	Rarely	Level of education	No.	Never	Common	Rarely
No formal education	39	5 (12.8%)	33 (84.6%)	1 (2.6%)	No formal education	5	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)
Primary & secondary	25	5 (20%)	14 (56%)	6 (24%)	Primary & secondary	25	4 (16%)	6 (24%)	15 (60%)
Tertiary education	16	13 (81.3%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.3%)	Tertiary education	48	6 (12.5%)	29 (60.4%)	13 (27.1%)
<b>Religion</b>									
Christianity	32	25 (78.1%)	2 (6.5%)	5 (15.6%)	Christianity	47	9 (19.1%)	25 (53.2%)	13 (27.7%)
Islam	48	2 (4.2%)	9 (18.8%)	37 (77.1%)	Islam	32	4 (12.5%)	2 (6.3%)	26 (81.3%)
<b>Age</b>									
Young	26	3 (11.5%)	19 (73.1%)	4 (15.4%)	Young	42	1 (2.4%)	29 (69.04%)	12 (28.6%)
Old	54	49 (90.7%)	3 (5.6%)	2 (3.7%)	Old	37	4 (10.8%)	11 (29.7%)	22 (59.5%)
<b>Expectations/custom</b>									
Modern	21	17 (81%)	-	4 (19.04%)	Modern	48	4 (8.3%)	39 (81.3%)	5 (10.4%)
Traditional	59	7 (11.9%)	38 (64.4%)	14 (23.7%)	Traditional	31	22 (71%)	3 (9.7%)	6 (19.4%)
<b>No of sons</b>					<b>No. of wives</b>				
1	33	1 (3.03%)	28 (84.8%)	4 (12.1%)	1	42	6 (14.3%)	9 (21.4%)	27 (64.3%)
>1	47	2 (4.3%)	9 (19.1%)	36 (76.6%)	>1	37	-	11 (29.7%)	26 (70.3%)

Table 3 above shows various determinants of sour relationships and violence between the respondents in the study. Factors such as level of education of respondents, age, their expectations/orientation (either traditional or modern), number of sons of the mothers-in-law and the number of wives of husbands of the daughter-in-laws have shown significant impact on relationship between the respondents. According to the table, analysis shows that a significant number of mothers-in-law who have no formal education (84.6%) experience strained relationship with their daughters-in-law as against (81.3%) of mothers-in-law who have never had frosty relationship with their daughters-in-law. Also, the table reveals that (60.4%) daughters-in-law with tertiary education have problem in relating well with their mothers-in-law as against (20%) of daughters-in-law with no formal education.

Another related factor as indicated by the table above is that more mothers-in-law (64.4%) who expect their daughters-in-law to treat and serve them in traditional manner often experience strained relationship and violence than the mothers-in-law who are not rigid about being treated traditionally. To corroborate this, the result of case studies conducted encapsulates reasons for strained relationships and violence between the respondents.

#### Case 1.

This mother-in-law without formal education who has two married sons living in Lagos with their immediate families complained bitterly about how daughters-in-laws treat mothers of their husband differently from the way they treat their mothers. According to her,

*“My daughters-in-law do not relate well with me. I think it is because of their educational attainment that has made them do this. They are not ready to serve any mother-in-law but they expect you to give them helping hand in the house. In the morning they will not greet your neither would they tell you where they are going. They are lazy and our culture has no meaning to them”.*

#### Case2.

Another mother-in-law whose daughter-in-law has once accused her of frequently visiting her son retorted that

*“Many wives of nowadays are behaving differently from the way wives used to behave in our era. They do not want to see their mothers-in-law and other sibling of their husbands. My daughter-in-law told me that I should not always visit my son since she cannot be taking care of my son, children and at the same time shoulder my own responsibility. In recent times, she has even moved to the stage of expecting me to complement her in her house chores whenever I am around, which is wrong customarily”.*

#### Case 3.

Another mother-in-law remarked that

*“Wives nowadays have no respect for anybody especially their mother-in-law. They treat you like a piece of rag, I have learned my lesson, I do not visit any son, whosoever that wants to see me should come to my husband’s house”.*

Other variables that determine the extent, degrees and shape of relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law according to the analysis of data collected for the study are age, religion affiliations of the respondents, number of sons a mother-in-law has and also the number of wives a man has. This study reveals that older mothers-in-law (61 years and above) rarely or never had confrontation with their sons’ wives in recent times. This reason for this according to many of them is that they have learnt over the years that mothers-in-law usually have problems with daughter-in-law and vice versa because they both have interest in one individual which is the man. The older women concluded that in order to allow peace to reign and not to cause problem for their sons, many have decided to let the wives have their way. (90.7%) older mothers-in-law indicated that they experience fairly smooth relationship with their daughters-in-law while (73.1%) of the younger generation of mothers-in-law indicated that the relationship between them and their daughters-in-law has never been a smooth one.

Another factor is the issue of religion, the study also reveals that more Christian daughters-in-law face relationship problem with their mothers-in-law than their Muslim counterparts. According to the analysis (53.2%) of Christian daughters-in-law occasionally have problem with their mothers-in-law as against (6.3%) of the Muslim wives. This result is also supported by the case study conducted among the respondents.

#### Case 4.

This is about a daughter-in-law who recounted her experience with her mother-in-law.

*She said “my mother-in-law like many others is not a saint. Though she does not live with us, yet she does many things that I would not have tolerated if I were the only wife in the house. However, she goes scot-free with some of her actions to the wives of his son because everybody wants to be in her good book in order to curry our husband’s favour. Her son likes her very well.”*

*“Another claim from another woman goes thus: “my mother-in-law is not a good person. She is wicked, fetish and confrontational. She dictates to everybody in the house except the son. I have had many occasions in which I could have treated her badly but I was handicapped because of the fact that I do not want to do anything rash which could make her advise my husband to marry another woman. Though I was brought up as a Muslim and my husband is a practicing one, yet I hate the idea of my husband getting a second wife”.*

## 5. Conclusions

The issue of violence and strained relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law is not novel and also not limited to African society alone. Globally, the manifestation and reality of strained relationship between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law is as old as the planet earth and it cuts across social, economic, religious and ethnic

divides. Violence, bickering and multi-faceted ill-feelings among mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law are still rife in Nigerian society even in the contemporary times.

From the foregoing, violence between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law is deep-rooted in the southwestern region of Nigeria and this is recognized as a major domestic issue among family members. This form of violence has transcended the realm where it was viewed as strictly uncommon occurrence to a worrisome problem. It no longer comes as surprise the way relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law are frequently depicted in popular entertainment. More often than not, relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law in Yoruba speaking part of Nigeria have shown both groups portraying one another badly.

Also, this study reveals that the quality of mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law relationships in southwestern, Nigeria ranges between extreme conflict and resentment to extreme devotion. According to the finding of the study, there exists some daughters-in-law who still hold their mothers-in-law in high esteem but majority according to the study express less emotional involvement in their relationship with their mothers-in-law than with their mothers. The same is discovered among mothers-in-law.

According to the study, the main cause of friction and strain in relationship of the mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law is the women's understanding of their placement and position before the man (husband or son) who always wants to steer the middle course whenever issues relating to them are begging for his attention. To the mother, the son is the outgrowth of her emotional involvement who she expects to become security for her during her old age; hence she desires his 100% attention while the woman is still alive. This is a woman who never wished newcomer to have control on what she amassed for long time. On the other hand, the new woman (wife, who sees her mother-in-law as another woman) does not want to tolerate another woman with her husband because her of own sense of security expects 100% involvement from her husband in the areas of safety of children, security, comfort and sensual attachment, whereas to her the diversion of the husband's attention to another woman would jeopardize her own interest.

As pointed above, thought process and expectations of these two groups of women are not in sync with one another due to the fact that they are products of different generations with varied values. While the generation of the daughters-in-law is more open, free, and demanding, the Mother-in-law more often than not, supports the societal expectation among Yorubas, that daughter-in-law should play subservient role when her interest and that of the mother-in-law are before the son or the husband as the case may be. The conflict emanates as a result of ideological differences between the new and old generations. Two different identities of different ideologies fight each other to gain control of one man.

## 6. Recommendations

The enormity and oft occurrence of strained relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law among Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria, and the fact that the problem cuts across broad spectrum of all the segments of the society may want to lure one into the conclusion that the vice, especially in the modern era, has defiled all available and known solution.

However, the schism between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law is understandable because of the fact that the mother always sees him as a child and always wants to use her dominant behavior and egoistic approach to protect and secure him. Whereas the wife who enters his life has her own feelings and individuality and wants to live independently in a place she refers to as her 'own house'. She thereby wants to declare her territory the way she was doing in her parents' house before her marriage.

Since it the study has established that opinion and ideological differences lead to misunderstanding between the two female groups the study recommends that the man who is at the middle of the whole issue should endeavour to help both parties reach consensus as far as their ideologies and opinions are concerned. The two groups should try to understand each other's stand and responsibilities so as to eliminate feeling of insecurity from both sides.

The fact that this study has attributed that the cause of disconnection between the both parties is not a personal factor but psychological (personality issues) shows that the daughter-in-law should show more affection to the aged mother-in-law who must have developed her behavior pattern over time and cannot be easily changed.

On the other hand, the mother that has handed over her son to a new woman must realize that her influence on the son to a reasonable extent has being disconnected and she must embrace the reality by accepting the wife as her daughter and work with her to the good of her son. Finally, the son or husband should try to prove to both beloved women that none of them is lesser to him and they have separate roles to play for the success of the man.

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