

LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROMOTION OF RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN DOUBLE- DECKER MARRIAGES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In Nigeria, most marriages are conducted under the customary law and the Marriage Act. The parties rarely feel adequately married until both are contracted. There exist two different streams of law that meet harmoniously in the marriage life of the parties. The aim of this work is to espouse the legality of this variant marriage, which is entered into by either of the two different processes and analyze the controversy regarding its effects and incidents on women's rights and empowerment. Essentially, this article adopted the doctrinal research methodology aimed at investigating the impact of double-decker marriages on women's Rights and Empowerment. Accordingly, it was found that the issue of women's rights and empowerment in double-decker marriage is much affected by the competing values of these multi-systems of law; that the area of marriage is still one in which customary law still applies even to those who subscribe largely to the common-law system. It also found that many of such double-decker marriages are contracted illegitimately, in an offending reversed order. The study recommended a legal reform that amend the Marriage Act and the Matrimonial Causes Act to recognize and integrate customary marriage rites, values and procedures, ensuring compliance with international human rights standards. And establish a regulatory body to oversee marriage registrations ensuring uniformity and standardization across both customary and statutory marriage system.

Keywords: Double-Decker Marriages, Women's Right, Empowerment, Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

It is predominant that Nigerian couples tend to opt for the celebration of at least two types of systems of marriage referred to as "double-decker" marriage. This area of marriage is still one in which customary law still applies even to those who subscribed largely to statutory law system. Even where marriages are validly contracted under the marriage Act, most women still feel unprotected. In fact, they are regarded as having cheaply given themselves away and denigrated by both their own family and their husband's family¹ for want of consent.

Thus, the issue of parental consent remain relevant to marriages in Nigeria under the Act, no parental consent is required once both parties have attained the age of eighteen years. It is only when one party is a minor that such consent is required by the party. However, under customary law, the bride's parents' consent is an essential requirement of a valid marriage even where the female has attained majority, although there is no such requirement of parental consent on the part of the male. The reason for this is that the bride price is mandatory and it is in fact the acceptance of this which seals the marriage contract under customary law. It is the consideration for the contract. It is in this area that the woman's right is to be treated with dignity as any other human being is much abused.²

The issue of weather women's rights and Empowerment is possible in double-decker marriages will be analyzed in this work. When I talk of women's rights, it means that body of claim which women by virtue of their sex-gender classification may exact from men. Empowerment in marriage become a reality when two people who come together are able to stand strong in knowing who they are, where they come from, where they're going and what they bring to the table. Indeed empowerment is the idea that we don't work to limit others through control and manipulation, which

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¹ A.O Obilade, *Women in Law* (Lagos: Mayodele Ajayi Enterprises Nigeria, 1993) p.119

² This is in spite of the fact that this right is constitutionally recognized and protected in S.34 of the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria.

is common in marriage, but instead we freely give of ourselves to lift the other up. This work shall concentrate on conceptualization of Double-Decker marriage.

Women's Right Empowerment: The contract of double-decker marriage and the validity of the subsequent customary marriage; the contract of double-decker marriage and validity of the later Act marriage. Then Legal framework promoting women's Rights and Empowerment in Double-Decker Marriage.

3.1 The Contract of "Double-decker" Marriage and the Validity of the Subsequent Customary Marriage.

While customary law does not preclude a couple already married under the Act from subsequently marrying under it, the marriage Act expressly forbids it. Under Section 35³ "Any person who is married under this Act, shall be incapable during the continuance of such marriage, of contracting a valid marriage under customary law". Section 47⁴ then prescribes the penalty where the above is breached, it provides thus, "whoever, having contracted marriage under this Act, during the continuance of such marriage, contracts a marriage in accordance with customary law, shall be liable to imprisonment for five years".

There are reasons and cases where statutory spouses still marry under customary marriage law⁵ notwithstanding the invalidity under **section 35** of the marriage Act. The main reasons for the subsequent marriage under the customary law are that 'our tradition makes it imperative and it is the traditionally recognized of the two marriages. If such a couple failed to marry subsequently under the customary law, they would be regarded as mere cohabitantes'⁶.

There is a case where initial Act marriage was celebrated by a couple because the parties envisaged opposition to their marriage from their families and so sought to side track customary marriage, they still perform the traditional marriage at the earliest opportunity. This is the case of *Oloko v Oloko and Anor*⁷, Here the couple married first in a London Registry in 1955. In 1958, they celebrated a subsequent marriage under customary law. During the proceedings, the husband averred that they were obliged to celebrate the statutory marriage first in order to avoid foreseeable family opposition to their marriage and the second marriage under customary law was celebrated to show the community that they were actually husband and wife⁸. Akin to this is where there is a child of the marriage. The rationale here is the avoidance of any dispute about the ownership of the children of the marriage. A subsequent customary law marriage enables the families involved to assume that they can decide questions of the ownership; and inheritance rights of the children of the marriage. The truth of the matter is that couples in Nigeria rarely do feel adequately married until both customary and statutory marriages are contracted. This confirms the extent to which even those who have become westernized still subscribe to customary values and norms and the legal systems which uphold these.

According to Morgan, 'there is hardly a marriage by Nigerians at which the customary form of marriage is not celebrated.'⁹ Another fact leading to the inducement of the subsequent customary marriage is that the marriage Act is still regarded as an imported form of marriage. That is why a non-Nigerian who married a Nigerian girl under the Act is subjected to perform a customary law

³ Marriage Act Cap M6, Law of the Federation 2004.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Even though the initial Act Marriage Carries Legal rights and obligation.

⁶ People speak of a woman acquired without the customary marriage ceremony as a "Lover or Concubine. Even when the dowry is paid without the accompanying handing over ceremony the public is not convinced.

⁷ (1959) W.N.L.R.

⁸ C J Morgan "The interaction of English and Customary Law in Western Nigeria" A Lecture delivered at the Ahmadu Bello University, 2000.

⁹ *Fonseca V Passan* (1958) W.R.N.L.R. 41 at P.42.

marriage.¹⁰ The issues of bride price being sure was given to the family and parental consent already discussed are equally inducement of the subsequent customary marriage ceremony.

3.2 The Contract of Double-Decker Marriage and the Validity of the later Act Marriage.

The marriage Act¹¹ sustain the preservation of double decker marriage in Nigeria while setting out circumstances under which marriages celebrated with the parties' acquiescence are to be considered null and void. Although customary law neither encourages nor prohibits a couple married under it from subsequently contracting an Act marriage, the marriage is not entirely silent on the issue. To this end, marriage Act S.33(1), S.35 and S.47 are germane.

S.33 (1)¹² "No Marriage in Nigeria shall be valid where either of the parties thereto at the time of the celebration of such marriage is married under customary law to any person other than the person with whom such marriage is had". By implication of S.33(1) a customary law couple may marry again under the Act, this has resulted in the celebration of double-decker marriages which involves the performance of legal essential to each of the two marriage types.

S.35¹³ Any person who is married under this Act or whose marriage is declared by this Act to be valid, shall be incapable, during the continuance of such marriage of contracting a valid marriage under customary law; but, save as aforesaid, nothing in this Act contained shall affect the validity of any customary law, or in any matter apply to marriages so contracted.

And then the marriage Act¹⁴prescribes the penalty where the above is breached. It provides thus "whoever, having contracted marriage under this Act, or any modification or re-enactment thereof, or under any enactment repealed by this Act, during the continuance of such marriage contracts a marriage in accordance with customary, shall be liable to imprisonment for five years".

Notwithstanding the above legal protection for the practice of double-decker marriage, the legal essentials of the two marriages differ, a couple who had the capacity to marry under customary law and who wished to remarry under the Act might find they lacked the capacity to do so in the latter. Integrated consideration of Section 11 (1) (c) of the Marriage Act "that there is not any impediment of kindred or affinity or any other lawful hindrance to the marriage", no doubt prohibits a man from celebrating a statutory marriage with the widow of his father. However, under the customary law rule of "widow's inheritance", a man may marry his deceased father's wife.¹⁵

3. 2.1 Practice and Procedure of Double-Decker Marriage

Irrespective of the Legal Protection for the practice of double-decker marriage stated above, it is noteworthy that an acceptable double-decker marriage has its order. The customary marriage must precede the statutory marriage. The proceedings for the two marriages must not be held simultaneously or about the same time or thereafter. This is because the marriage Act section 47 outlaws the contract of customary marriage to any person either between any of the couple or any person out there. The section prescribes the punishment of five years imprisonment. The pathetic woe of double-decker marriage in Nigeria is that about 80 percent of double-decker marriage contracted constitute criminal proceedings by reason of the order of proceedings of such marriages

¹⁰ Marriage Act Cap M6 Laws of the Federation 2004.

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Section 47

¹⁵ M C Onoka, *Family Law* (Ibadan: Spectrum Book Limited 2003) P147

being wrongly reversed. Most couples run early enough in the morning to conduct the statutory marriage and, thereafter, conduct the customary marriage perhaps with the reception of the statutory marriage either together or as different proceedings¹⁶. This is wrong in Law because after the statutory marriage is contracted, no other marriage, either statutory, is allowed, any longer either between the couple or with either of them with any other person. Under the Nigerian marriage legislation, the couple risk a five-year imprisonment. The import of this part is to bring to the attention of the reader the proper order of proceedings in a double-decker marriage to avert being victimized in one's own engagement.

3. 2. 2 Summary of Factors Leading to Later Marriage Act

Marriage Act Section 33 (1) impliedly authorizes the celebration by the same couple of the subsequent Act marriage following their initial customary law one. There are several reasons which people may choose to celebrate a statutory (Act) marriage after a customary ceremony¹⁷.

- a. **Legal recognition:** Statutory marriage provides Legal recognition and protection, which may not be available under customary law.
- b. **International recognition:** A statutory marriage certificate is recognized internationally, it's an evidence of marriage and it makes it easier to travel or conduct business abroad.
- c. **Social status:** Having a statutory marriage certificate may be seen as more prestigious or modern.
- d. **Security of monogamy and its benefits,** however, the decision of the English court in *Ohochukwu v Ohochukwu*¹⁸ was to the effect that a potentially polygamous customary law marriage cannot be converted into a monogamous marriage merely because the parties intended it to be so. Although the marriage would have become monogamous, the fact of a statutory marriage in Nigeria is not necessarily a guarantee of monogamous marital union. The learned author¹⁹ concluded that "Here the expectations of the woman married under the Act are frustrated in that she had married the man with the hope that he would not take another wife.
- e. **Religious reasons:** Some couples may want to have a religious ceremony in addition to their customary ceremony.
- f. **Family pressure:** Families may pressure the couple to have a statutory marriage to ensure legal recognition and security. This is supported in the statement of Uwais C.J.N. in the Supreme Court case of *Jadesimi V. Okotie-Eboh*²⁰ that "some refer to customary marriage as 'traditional engagement' while others simply referred to it as 'solemnization of customary marriage'".
- g. **Personal preference:** Some couples simply prefer to have a statutory marriage ceremony for personal or emotional reasons.
- h. **Legal Benefits:** Statutory marriage grants access to legal benefits like health insurance, inheritance, property rights and tax benefits.
- i. **Certainty:** Statutory marriage provides a clear legal framework for the marriage, which may not be the case with customary law.
- j. **Integration:** Celebrating both customary and statutory marriages allows couple to honor their cultural heritage while also accessing legal benefits.

¹⁶ E F Ijalana and JO Agbana, A Criminal Appraisal of the Concept of Double-Decker Marriage under the Nigeria family Law. <https://www.Scrip.Or/journal/Paper information>>accessed 14th July, 2024

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ (1960) 1 All E.R. 253

¹⁹ *Op cit* 24

²⁰ (1996) 2 N.W.L.R. 128 at P.132

Another inducement to celebrating the later Act Marriage is that “Act Marriage is enforceable. It presupposes that customary marriage is not a Legal enforceable contract of marriage.”²¹

4. Legal Framework Promoting Women’s Rights and Empowerment in Double-Decker Marriage

The institution of marriage is a fundamental aspects of Nigerian society, this work found it crucial to state the rights of women and how women are empowered in double-decker marriage. The rights, obligations and empowerment of spouses are regulated by various Laws and Legal Principles as Nigerians Law have undergone considerable changes.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) forms the foundation of all law relating to women’s rights and Empowerment. Under section 42 of the CFRN²² gender discrimination has been abolished. Accordingly, “a woman shall not be subjected, either expressly or impliedly to any law, executive decision or administrative action, disabilities or restriction because of her sex or circumstances of her birth”. The section 42 actually opened all opportunities and privileges for women to the empowered and enjoy the rights in double-decker marriage. Granting women the right to work and earn a living. Free to pursue their careers and earn a living, Right to equality right, to education, right to dignity of human person, right to private life, right to freedom of movement, right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria, right to personal liberty²³.

The Married Women Property Act, 1882 emancipated the double-decker married woman from most of her contractual disabilities. She can now enter into binding contract and to maintain action against anyone in respect of her separate property as if she were a female sole (S.1&12 MWPA)²⁴. The Act removed the procedural principle against actions between husband and wife; she now has a separate action by or against her. Under the law of contract, there is a possibility of wife acting as husband’s agent in purchase of necessities²⁵

The Marriage Act

Under the marriage Act, these sections 33(1) 35(1) and 49²⁶ are major laws which make extensive specific provisions for the validity of double-decker marriage in Nigeria. Section.33(1) provides that “No marriage in Nigeria shall be valid where either of the parties thereto, at the time of the celebration of such marriage, is married under customary law to any person other than the person with whom such marriage is held”.

²¹ *Op cit* 24

²² CFRN: Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended 1997).S17 of the constitution outline the elimination of demographically derived disparity as a fundamental objective of state policy)

²³ Section 18 (34) (35) (37) (41) (43) CFR (as amended) 1999

²⁴*Edet v Edet* (1966/67)10 ENLR 90

²⁵ The “agency of necessity in a marriage contract refer to a legal doctrine that grants a wife the authority to act as an agent to her husband in certain situations, particularly when it comes to managing the family’s daily needs and expenses. In essence, the agency of necessity doctrine implies that a wife has the implied authority to: Enter into contracts, in cure debts & manage the family’s financial affairs. The doctrine is based on the idea that a wife should not be left without the means to provide for herself and her family in situations where her husband is unable or unavailable to do so

²⁶ Cap m6. Laws of the Federation 2004

Section.35 Marriage Act provides that:

Any person who is married under this Act, or whose marriage is declared by this Act to be valid, shall be incapable, during the continuance of such marriage, of contracting a valid marriage under customary law; but, save as aforesaid, nothing in this Act contained shall affect the validity of any marriage contracted under or in accordance with any customary law, or in any manner apply to marriage so contracted.

Marriage Act S.47 then prescribes the penalty where the above is breached “whoever, having contracted marriage under this Act, or any modification or re-enactment thereof, or under any enactment repealed by this Act during the continuance of such (and) contract a marriage in accordance with customary law shall be liable to imprisonment for five years”.

Thus, these provision expressly allows the validity of both the customary marriage earlier contracted by the parties and the statutory marriage subsequently contracted by the same couple. Accordingly, the couple is entitled to rights and empowerment provisions of the nation.

The Matrimonial Causes Act established the principles of equality between spouses, sections 70, 71 and 72²⁷ are apposite. Right to maintenance and support, equal right to child custody and distribution of marital property: Section 15 of the MCA provides grounds for the grant of a decree of dissolution of marriage allowing either spouse to file for divorce.

The violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 The main thrust of the law is to eliminate violence in private and public life: Prohibit all forms of violence against persons, particularly women who are disproportionately affected. It provided maximum protection and effective remedies for victims, Violence is identified as the most pervasive human rights violation in the world, affects 1 in 3 women in their life time. The Act is the first criminal legislation which expanded Nigeria criminal jurisprudence by recognizing various forms of related crimes hitherto unacknowledged. It addresses a broad – spectrum of violence – physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, economic, psychological abuses, forced financial dependence and discrimination against persons, particularly women. The right to personal security and safety definitely will pave way for women’s right and empowerment.

The wills Act²⁸. The law governs the testamentary disposition of property in Nigeria. It ensures that women have the right to make wills and bequeath their property to whomever they choose, including other female relatives. This is adequate exercise of women’s right and empowerment.

The administration of Estate Law: various state in Nigeria enacted Legislation relating to the administration of estates. These laws generally aim to ensure that widows and female children are adequately provided for in the distribution of the deceased’s estate. Examples, Lagos State Administration of Estate Law²⁹, Ogun State Administration of Estate Law; The Oyo State Administration of Estate Law,³⁰ Administration and Succession (Estate of Deceased Person) Law, Cap 4 Laws of Anambra State of Nigeria, 1986. Thus by these Laws Women in double-decker marriages have the right to inherit property from their husbands. Property such as land is the anchor of all that is valuable and key to empowerment.

²⁷ Cap m7. Laws of the Federation 2004

²⁸ Wills Act Cap w8, LFN 2004

²⁹ Administration of Estate Law Lagos State. Section 46, 2005

³⁰ Administrative of Estate Law, Cap 1, 1959, Laws of western Nigeria

International legal frameworks

Many international laws equally impacted on Women's Rights and Empowerment in Double-decker marriages. **The universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** Article 2 "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". This section promotes the equal rights of men and women, thus energise social and better standard of life.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Right (ICESCE) 1976. This law recognized that the ideal of free human beings from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his/her economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his/her civil and political rights sections 1-11 are germane.

International covenant on civil and political Rights (1 CCPR (1976) Article 3 State parties to the present covenant undertake to ensure that equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all and political rights set forth in the present covenant; also sections 23, 24, 25, 26, 40 are apposite.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights 1980;³¹ the charter considered that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African people. Article 2, talked about non-discrimination. 'Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in the present charter without discrimination of any kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status.

Article 3 (i) "every individual shall be equal before the law 3 (2) every individual shall be entitled to equal protection of the law. Article 18, 27, 28 are also very relevant.³²

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).³³

This is a culmination of the standard-setting work of the CSW and the burgeoning forward of the women's right movement. The convention is often described as an "International bill of rights for women. The CEDAW provisions are meant to respect, protect, prevent and promote women's right. The convention, unequivocally, prohibits discrimination against women on the basis of their sex and enjoins state parties to take all appropriate measures, including Legislation to modify or abolish existing Laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women. Article 1 defines discrimination against women and state that denying or limiting as it does their equality of rights with men, is fundamentally unjust and constitute offence against human dignity. Article 2, All appropriate measures shall be taken to abolish existing laws, norms, regulations and practices which are discriminatory against women. To repeal all national penal provisions which constitutes discrimination against women. Article 3-11 are apposite.

Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa³⁴ Better known as Maputo protocol. The protocol recognizes and guarantees a wide range of women's civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights, thus reaffirming the universality, indivisibility and interdependency of all the internationally recognized human rights

³¹ Article 26 (ICCPE) "All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without discrimination to the equal protection of law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit by discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

³² F. Fulana, cases and material on women's Rights Law (Lagos; Legal Text Publishing Coy Ltd, 2008) p. 164

³³ Adopted by United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and came into force in 1986

³⁴ Better known as the Maputo protocol, 2005

of women. Main articles are; Article 2: Elimination of Discrimination Against women, Article 3; Right to dignity; Article 4; The Right to life, integrity and Security of the Person, Article 5, Elimination of harmful practices; Article 6 – 24 are appropriate.

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993, Article 3, Women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

International Conference on Population and Development³⁵ (ICPD) 1994 chapter IV discussed gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of women. Chapter IV (9) espoused Empowerment and status of women. The empowerment of women and improvement of their status are important end in themselves and essential for the achievement of sustainable development. The objectives are to achieve equality and equity between men and women and enable women to realize their full potential; to involve women fully in policy and decision-making processes and in all aspects of economic, political and cultural life. Recommendations include, establishing mechanisms for women's equal participation and equitable representation at all levels of the political process and public life; promoting women's education, skill development and employment; and eliminating all practices that discriminate against women, including those in the workplace and those affecting access to credit, control over property and social security. Countries should take full measures to eliminate all forms of exploitation, abuse, harassment and violence against women. In addition, development interventions should take better account of the multiple demands on women's time with greater investments put in measures to lessen the burden of domestic responsibilities, and with attention to laws, programme and policies which will enable employees of both sexes to harmonize their family and work responsibilities.

Institution frameworks. Apart from legal framework (national and international) much judicial and academic thought have impacted on women's rights and empowerment in double-decker marriages. Judicial pro-activeness on women's inheritance cannot be overemphasized. Despite initial resistance, recent Supreme Court judgments in the landmark case of *Ukeje v Ukeje*³⁶ have affirmed the right of Nigerian women to inherit from their deceased parents, reinforcing constitutional provision. In *Onyibor Anekwe & Anor v Maria Nweke*³⁷, the Supreme Court found that any custom that denies women, particularly widows, their inheritance, is repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience and is condemned by the Supreme Court.

*Mojekwu & others v Ejikeme & ors*³⁸ The Court of Appeal held that a female child is generally entitled to inherit her deceased father's estate and does not need to perform any customary ceremony such as *Nrachi* to exercise that right. The court held that the custom of *Ili-Ekpe* also is discriminatory against women *Mojekwu v Mojekwu*³⁹.

These pivotal courts' decisions on women's inheritance have challenged discriminatory customary law and highlighting the unconstitutionality, thereby advancing Women's Rights and Empowerment in Double-decker Marriages.

³⁵ ICPD was held in Cario, Egypt in 1994 to finalize a programme of action on population and development and development but focuses on meeting the needs of individual women and men rather than achieving demographic targets.

³⁶ (2014) 11 NWLR (Pt. 1418) 384

³⁷ SC. 129/2013

³⁸ (2000) 5 NWLR 402

³⁹ (1997) 7 NWLR (Pt. 512) 283, 304 – 305 (Nig.CA)

5.0 Conclusion

The universality of marriage within different societies and cultures are attributed to the many basic social and personal functions for which it provides: It serves as a foundation for establishing families, nurturing emotional connections and promoting stability and harmony in the larger community. Marriage grants Legal rights and benefits thus the essence of marriage in the Society cannot be overemphasized. Given the diverse nature of the Nigerian Legal System, there exist three forms of marriage in the Country viz the customary law marriage, Islamic law marriage and the statutory law marriage while both the customary law and Islamic law marriage are potentially polygamous, the statutory marriage is monogamous in nature. Thus, it is prevalent that couple tends to opt for the celebration of at least two of these system of marriage, known as double-decker marriage. This work had x-rayed reasons for the practice of double-decker marriage, and legal affects of double-decker marriage on women's right and empowerment. The writer realized the need to harmonize customary marriage and statutory marriage to avoid double-decker marriages and harness the full benefits of marriage.

6.0 Recommendations

The paper recommended as follows:

- 1 Legal reform by amendment of the marriage Act and the matrimonial causes Act to recognize and integrate customary marriage rites and procedures, ensuring compliance with international human rights standards.
- 2 Establishment of a regulatory body to oversee across both customary and statutory marriage systems.
- 3 Conduct of public education and enlightenment campaigns to inform citizens about the harmonized marriage system, its benefits, and procedures.
- 4 Registration of marriages under both customary and statutory laws and standardization of marriage certificates that acknowledge both customary and statutory marriages, serving as proof of marriage for legal purposes.
- 5 Establishment of mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms to address conflicts arising from cultural or legal differences between customary and statutory marriage systems.
- 6 Training and capacity building for marriage registrars, judges and legal practitioners on the harmonized marriage system with emphasis on the importance of respecting cultural diversity and uphold human rights.