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Between Tradition and Modernity: Imbalu of the Bamasaba and Human Rights Discourse

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Abstract

The *Imbalu* culture of the Bamasaba people is well known in scholarly works as a rite of passage, which involves a series of rituals that culminate into circumcision among the Bamasaba males. The cultural practice is also recognized by UNESCO under the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and protected in various Human Rights instruments as a right like article 37 of the 1995 Uganda constitution, and the United Nations' International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The paper sets out to explore human rights abuses, embedded in culture which in some circles have called for either its abolition or modifications to suit the modern cultural trends. This enlists questions. How can *Imbalu* be celebrated with respect to contemporary human rights discourses? How can the cultural heritage of the *Imbalu* be preserved and maintained in the face of mounting pressure to change some of the cultural values of *Imbalu*? This paper is descriptive and analytical, based on the ongoing research study on *Imbalu* among the Bamasaba people of Eastern Uganda.

Keywords: Bamasaba, Culture, Human rights, *Imbalu*, Modernity, Tradition

Introduction

The ritual of *Imbalu* among the Bamasaba people of Uganda is a deep-rooted cultural practice that transits boys into Men. The ceremony carries a philosophical connotation to the community and symbolizes maturity, social cohesion, identity and acceptable belongingness to the society of men and the tribe. The ritual is perceived as sacramental and obligatory for all males whose paternal ancestry stems from among the Bagisu. The ritual is very detailed with a tapestry of activities, which culminate into the surgical operation which removes the foreskin of the penis. This has however generated a stiff dispute within the wider perspective of human rights. While the rite of passage is celebrated as a cultural and community right, calling for community or tribal adherence and participation, the rite is controversial when it relates to individual rights of the same people and also rights of other tribes and individuals within communities where *Imbalu* is celebrated.

This article explores the ritual of *Imbalu* in light of the human rights discourse, examining the tension between cultural rights and practices and individual rights. The article also considers the ethical and legal dimensions and calls for an approach that balances respect for cultural rituals but also respect and protection of individual human rights. It provides a synopsis on the issues pertaining *Imbalu* in relation to human rights and sets the discussion within the cultural,

legal and ethical contexts. The significance of *Imbalu* and challenges presented are all examined within the borders of human rights.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that underpins the study is postcolonial theory. This theory, among other things critiques dominant power structures which emerged from African colonial experiences with the West. In the context of this article, *Imbalu* culture and colonialism are associated with dominion and power control. The colonial motif of divide and rule is ensconced tribal identities. Among the Bamasaba people, they were identified as the circumcising tribe in defining a tribal identity against other tribes like the Bagwere and Banyole (Khanakwa, 2019). In doing so, forcible circumcision was practiced, in which the Bamasaba would force non-circumcising tribes who wanted to share colonial imperatives with them like Mbale town to be circumcised, as it was seen tabooed to socialize with non-circumcised people. In the works of Khanakwa, it is demonstrated that the *imbalu* cultural practices was reformulated by the colonial experiences, and weaponized under tribal nationalism in demarcating spheres of inclusion and exclusion (Khanakwa, 2019). Forcible circumcision is inevitably a human vice, as it affects human dignity. The postcolonial discourse condemns African cultures which disadvantage people. The brutality of circumcision and other associated human rights issues makes the practice a veritable subject for postcolonial criticism. It instructs that culture is not monolithic, but diverse and dynamic (Breakfast & Chindoga, 2022; Nkomo, 2011; Ojo & Clarke, 2021).

Imbalu and Human Rights

That the *Imbalu* rite of passage as a right presents a paradoxical situation when understood within the broader conceptualizations of human rights discourses. When juxtaposed with individual human rights, a conflict ensues when the collective cultural right conflicts with the individual human rights. Various sources have defined Human Rights (Cranston, 2018; Dembour, 2010; Nowak, 2022; O'Byrne, 2014), but their assertions are more or less pointing what we can call ample conditions and freedoms, which all people have to enjoy by virtue of being human. Human rights are perceived to be inherent and inalienable. This signifies that they cannot be waived in situations of violation. They are interdependent: realization or enjoyment of one right contributes to the realization or enjoyment of other rights. Human rights are indivisible, and cannot be granted, taken away or ignored. One person's or group enjoyment of human rights should respect in anyway be done in respect to other members' or individual's rights. Human rights are protected under the law, which has evolved over time into covenants, treaties and national constitutions with propagated rules and standards that demand for protection, respect and safeguards against the abuse of people's freedoms.

In the case of Uganda, society is governed by the rule of law. The 1995 Uganda Constitution guarantees a wide range of fundamental human rights and freedoms, which include the right to personal liberty, respect for human dignity, property rights, privacy, and freedom of conscience, expression, movement, religion, assembly, and association. Under the 1995 constitutional dispensation, the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) was put in place to monitor the Human Rights situation in the country. The security organs like the police, courts of law and legislative assemblies are in place to augment the UHRC in enforcing laws against all human rights abuses. Furthermore, like many countries, Uganda to which Bamasaba pledge, is a signatory in the international human rights pacts and protocols. Uganda has ratified many UN human rights conventions like International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention Against Torture (CAT), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Attoumane, 2023; Gumisiriza, 2023).

The cultural significance of Imbalu

Imbalu ritual is a complex mechanism by which the Bamasaba initiate their young males into adulthood (Baker. 1992, Harrison. 2003, Kivoi 2015). The rite involves a series of rituals which are climaxed with a tough surgery of circumcision. Traditionally, the surgery is carried out without anesthetic treatment, with the intention of subjecting the bearer to the test of withstanding pain. The toughness of the knife is compared to the burning hot red coal, that society maintains in a chant "*Imbalu Mulilo*" meaning *Imbalu* is (like) fire. This means that as fire burns painfully, so is the experiences of *Imbalu* circumcision. Khamalwa (2018) states that *Imbalu* is pain and willing-full pain. It is re-echoed in daily conversations within and without the *Imbalu* celebrations. The young solo it, the adults keep chanting it, the multitudes emphatically chorus it, so the initiates keep hearing and singing it until their minds internalize it. This pain is to be mandatorily endured for proper identity and acceptability for full membership of society (Audrey 1956; Watsusi 2014). The procedure begins at childhood whereby a boy - child is reminded that he is male and prone to endure future pain. Young ones are tutored into

being strong and not to cry anyhow like girls. Young males are physically and psychologically helped to increase their passion for the ritual without expressing any signs of cowardice.

The long procedure is locally titled '*Khukhwingila Imbalu*' which literally means to enter or to join *Imbalu* as one would enter a stage, a sphere or a house. *Khukhwingila* is a verb related to the common East African Bantu root of '*ingila*' which means 'getting in.' The underlying implication of '*khukhwingila*' is that the entrant is being initiated into another domain of what the ritual offers (manhood domain). The initiated male becomes *umusaani* (man) brave and mature, and the uninitiated is *umusinde* (boy) young and immature (Heald, 1989), and conceptually a novice in terms of traditions and cultures (Khamalwa, 2024). Phrases like '*Umusaani Burwa*' are used to behold a circumcised man, as brave person in accordance to the tribal standards. During the act of circumcision, the circumcision candidate is expected to stand firmly in an open space. The candidate is expected to withstand the pain, without any physical support. He is not expected to shake any part of his body, blink his eyes or make any sound or movement during the operation. He is to stand firmly as if there is no pain at all while the surgeon, traditionally called *umukhebi* does the operation. Every *Umukhebi* has an assistant called *umunutsi*, who assists him in turning and positioning the penis to the right position for the surgery. The knives used are razor sharp, and the operation is often very fast lasting between 20-60 seconds. Both the outer and inner layers of the skin are removed. The cut-off on the penis (locally called *imbala*) covers a surface of 2-3 inches exposing the penis head and sheath, to ensure that the skin doesn't grow back during the healing. The moment of *imbalu* circumcision is very definitive not only for the candidate but also the family he belongs to. The ability or inability to withstand pain is conceptualized within the constructs of shame and fame among the Bamasaba people. At an individual level, a brave candidate would be celebrated with fame, while the coward is ascribed with shame. At the family level, the bravery of the candidate is received with glory and optimism for strength and security, while the cowardice brings shame and uncertainty to the family.

Upon completion, the surgeon would blow a whistle to signal to the clansmen and spectators that he has completed the operation. Significantly, even after the successful completion, the candidate is expected to remain calm, jovial and even dance to signify that he can withstand the pain. At this point, the candidate is praised for bringing fame and glory to the family. The family is broadly conceptualized in extended terms—involving the immediate family, distant relatives and the living dead. The elders are near to inspect the scar to ensure that the cut *imbalu* or *imbala* given is real, '*Imbalu Ingene*, a real traditional cut which involve full removal of both skin layers, and the appropriate dimensions of the cut. The candidate, who at this time has graduated to manhood, is then seated on a chair and served with locally made refreshments purposely to rejuvenate the fatigued body. In the event where there is more than one initiate on the particular circumcision courtyard, they are supposed to share the refreshments from the same vessel. This is symbolically done to introduce the candidates to an adult life of sharing in the full privileges of adulthood and duties of the community (Mbiti 1992; Makwa, 2010), as well as identity formation as an act of firming an age-set locally called *Bamakoki* (Khamalwa, 2004, 2018; Khanakwa, 2019).

On the other hand, there are occurrences where some individuals demonstrate cowardice, which is manifested in largely two ways. The first one is dodging the *imbalu* rituals by either avoiding traditional circumcision in preference for the medical circumcision, or completely avoiding circumcision. For individuals who opt for medical circumcision, society seems lenient to them, although the cultural society cannot accord them with the cultural fame and respect or entrust them with cultural responsibilities. But individuals who dodge circumcision completely are often hunted down and circumcised forcefully no-matter their age and status. This is a critical moment, when cultural rites are in conflict with individual rights as we shall discuss later.

There are occasions when a candidate is overwhelmed with pain during the operation. Such candidates may react to the pain in different ways like falling down, crying, attempting to escape or running; beating the surgeon or even defecating. In such events of perceived cowardice, the candidate would be held down firmly by strong clansmen, until the surgeon would complete the operation (Wamamela, 2024). Such reacts of cowardice can attract punishments, which range from physically assault (like manhandling and beatings) to fines and shaming. The candidate who touches or beats the surgeon is fined heavily as well as one who defecates on the courtyard. Furthermore, the cowardice would earn the person perpetual shame and ridicule in the community throughout his lifetime as a villain (Khanakwa, 2016). While heroes would be sung in songs of praise, the villain is also sang songs of shame.

The Bamasaba circumcision is associated with so many controversies of human rights nature, so much that, from the outsiders it is seen as barbaric act which has no place in the modern world. The cultural practitioners themselves, nevertheless value *imbalu* as a cultural heritage that identifies the Bagisu people as an ethnic entity. The *imbalu* rituals, which often take place during the even year is a mixture of so many things. It is an entertainment for many people (including the non-Bamasaba people) characterized by music, dancing and merry making. The signature instrumental

music from the array and assortment of drums and shakers produce a euphoric melody locally known as *Kadodi*, which evokes all sorts of excitements and dance styles. The intense excitement draws mainly young and youthful people of all genders. There are no rules and regulations that govern the processions, hence, all the vices done are taken to be part of the events. These vices can happen in broad days, while others nocturnally. Some of these include deliberate and indiscriminate destruction of personal properties especially farms, vandalism and destruction of plantations, acts of rape and defilement of young women, as well as indiscriminate acts of sexual intercourse, which have resulted into unwanted and teenage pregnancies and contraction of various diseases (Heald, 2001; Mukooli, 2024; Nampala, 2023).

Additionally, there is utmost lawlessness. Celebrations are accompanied by uncontrollable use of alcohol and other intoxicants especially *marijuana*. The euphoria, heightened by intoxication blur people's consciousness to the law, as cultural revitalization take the center stage. In 2020, for instance, government forbade gatherings as part of the protocols to deal with Covid-19 pandemic. However, there were cultural diehards who defied government directives, which resulted in skirmishes with security organs and the consequent loss of lives (Wabwire et al., 2024). In the District of Namisindwa, defiant cultural diehards attacked a police post with pangas and machetes. This attack was made against law enforcers who were on their lawful duties (Tusiime, 2020). Defiance against well intentioned directives in the face of the international health crisis constituted a very big risk to the celebrants of the *imbalu* and also facilitated the transmission of Corona virus to other people.

During festivals, there is always commotion as processions unlawfully block roads and slow traffic. In some incidences, impatient drivers have killed some of the celebrants. In 2021, five people were rammed down and killed by an irritated truck driver in Mbale city (Nampala & Mukose, 2021), in 2018 over 40 celebrants were killed by an impatient driver along Sironko-Kumi highway (Etengu, 2018), just to mention a few. These incidences have often made security forces to issue strict guidelines forbidding the dancers from carrying their operations within the busy parts of towns and highways, however, this has achieved limited success due to defiant celebrants (Omagor, 2024). The processions are always filled with all kinds of people, including irate youths armed with pangas, sticks, stones—which they readily use to cause harm at slightest provocation. Where police presence is vigilant, some of the errand lawbreakers have been arrested and charged in courts of law (Mandela, 2024).

Whereas the Imbalu ritual is supposedly meant to target the male Bamasaba teens who consent to ascend towards adulthood, there are reports and incidences which have violated this ethic. This is in the case of forceful circumcisions, indiscriminate circumcisions of non-Bamasaba people, and circumcision of infants. There are isolated cases of some people, albeit Bamasaba, who chose not to be circumcised. Such people are often unlawfully arrested, mopped and forcefully circumcised against their will. In 2008, some Bamasaba trailed, mobbed and forcefully circumcised a 70-year-old man known as Stephen in Kampala. Mr. Mujoroti had, in the cultural thinking of the Bamasaba dodged circumcision and had not fulfilled the cultural obligation (Kijjambu, 2008). Similarly, a 64 year old was forcefully circumcised, together with non-Bamasaba residents who come from non-circumcising tribes like the Japadhola, Teso, Bagwere, Banyore, Baganda, Basoga etc. (Mafabi, 2021). This forceful and painful cultural imposition on non-consenting individuals constitutes human rights abuses. It is culturally normative to circumcise dead bodies among the Bamasaba. In the event of death of any man, if it is discovered that the dead hadn't been circumcised, the family organizes for the dead body to be circumcised (Wabyanga & Kisitu, 2024).

Moreover, cultural consciousness has made some parents to circumcise young children. Although the objective is to save the children from the future disturbances as they grow-up, the practice could be a violation of the child's right to bodily autonomy, as well as the right to make decisions about their own health and well-being. The practice is equally against the very values of the cultural practice—as the graduating mark to adulthood. Circumcision of young children may have severe psychological damage in various ways. Firstly, it may create a false identity of manhood, and it isn't surprising that teenage boys begin indulging in illicit sex activities early in life as a way of exercising their manhood.

Human rights perspectives on the Imbalu

To reiterate, the *imbalu* ritual is a cultural heritage, and cultural right of Bamasaba, as a community of people in Uganda. These rights are protected by the local and international human rights instruments like the national constitution specifically article 37, Article 15 of the ICESCR, and international humanitarian laws (IHL). Under these legal frameworks, the Bamasaba can enjoy their right to circumcision as an inalienable right. This right give the Bamasaba a unique cultural identity locally and internationally. In recent days, the Imbalu has bolstered local tourism, as both local and international tourists flock Masabaland to view the cultural events (Kitunzi, 2021; Muhumuza, 2024). Because of its international significance, the festivals are occasionally graced by powerful national and international politicians and visitors.

The Imbalu rite and right is ironically associated with so many wrongs of human rights nature. Some of the excesses in the ritual practices have earned the *Imbalu* culture sharp criticisms as a violation and abuse of human rights. Arguments against *Imbalu* from human rights perspectives revolve around social and cultural rights, informed conscience, public order, bodily autonomy, rights of children and women etc. To begin with, forceful *Imbalu* as a treasured cultural practice of the Bamasaba, has come under scrutiny in the context of human rights discussions. In 2008 when Stephen Mujoroto was mobbed and forcefully circumcised in the open view of the public in Kampala city, this act was viewed locally and internationally as barbaric and violation of freedom of conscience (Editorial, 2008). On the media discussion boards, various responses were aired: One commentator, identified as Lloyd called the act criminal. Lloyd, opined that no culture is above the law and suggested that Mujoroto could press for prosecution of his tribesmen for causing grievous bodily harm, and demand for compensations for the damage caused (Ahabwe, 2008). Another view from one Wandera viewed Mujoroto's situation as awkward. To Wandera, the Bamasaba people need to be conscious about constitutionalism and the rule of law. That, although circumcision is healthy with many benefits, the Bamasaba circumcision has remained static and refused to blend with other cultures. It has remained brutal and pristine, which conflicts with the rule of law. Another writer identified as Anthony posited that forced circumcision should be outlawed, arguing that not only does it inflict pain on the victims, but also strips bare a man of his identity. Anthony equated Mujoroto's captors to other criminals like kidnappers and violators of human dignity (Ahabwe, 2008).

There are so many other people who like Mujoroto have been victims of forced circumcision. A re-known story is told of the 80-year-old Muduku of Bufumbo in Mbale district, who was equally arrested and circumcised in December 2022 (Ankole_Times, 2024). However, probably the worst scenarios are forced circumcisions inflicted on members who don't belong to the Bamasaba tribe. As earlier stated, Bugisu sub region is neighboured by other tribes like the Itesots, Japadhola, Bagwere and Banyole. There are also people from other tribes who live within Bugisu especially Mbale city either for work or business. There are several accounts of errand cultural diehards who impose their Imbalu surgery on other peoples who don't belong to the tribe for completely unknown motives. Andrew Green (2012) a Voice of America media reporter recounts the ordeal of some none-Bagisu who resided in Mbale about their experiences in the face of forced circumcision: In 2012, One Charles Mukwana, from Bunyole, who worked as a local transporter in Mbale town stated: Folks from Bugisu made me fear, because they were bothering me with circumcision. They asked why I live among them when am not circumcised. They wanted to force me. They demanded that I should be circumcised if I am to live in their land (Green, 2012). In that year, 20 men, who belonged to other tribes were forcefully circumcised, some of whom ended up being hospitalized (Green, 2012). The demand and emphasis that people of other tribes should be circumcised if they are to live among the Bamasaba people is problematic and unfortunate. It infringes on other people's cultural rights, and right to bodily autonomy, and freedom of movement. Article 29(1) (b) states that every Ugandan has the right to move freely throughout Uganda and to reside and settle in any part of Uganda. It is an act of discrimination against other tribes, which contravenes the Ugandan Constitution of 1995, specifically Article 21, which prohibits discrimination against people based on ethnicity and religious culture, among other factors; and Articles 24 and 44, which prohibit acts of torture, cruelty, inhuman and degrading treatment of any person.

As noted earlier, *Imbalu* involves long processions where celebrants sometimes interfere with the activities of other people as they enjoy their rights. For instance, they affect traffic flow and businesses sometimes close for fear of eventualities that can cause damage and losses. While it is their right to celebrate and perform their cultural rites, the Bamasaba people interfere with other peoples' rights. Article 43 prohibits the enjoyment of any right from prejudicing the fundamental rights of others or the public interest. By blocking road, for example, the Bamasaba constitute a public nuisance as they interfere with the fundamental rights of other road users. Other human rights abuses indulged in include destruction of personal property, sexual harassment, child abuse and so on.

Like many countries, Uganda to which Bamasaba pledge, is a participant in the international human rights pacts, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a child. The convention sets out the principles that nations should follow to protect the rights of children. Children are sheltered from harmful observes and permitted to have personal decisions that touch their lives, their health and their whole being. Currently, there are human rights organizations that have maintained that rituals such as circumcision and Imbalu carried out on minors are an absolute violation of their rights. The children act (1997), in Uganda endeavours to shelter children from unnecessary harm and secure their rights to self-worth and bodily honour. Much as the law does not exactly address the Imbalu cultural ritual, it enforces a right to personal freedom to conscience. Meanwhile, the law considers the significance of cultural practice in an attempt to strike a balance with the individual rights. The most challenging situation is one of finding a balanced state between maintenance of the cultural-social value of Imbalu as expected by the Bamasaba community and ensuring that it as well honours the rights of individuals especially the young people in society. The young are labelled as minors because they

may not have the full ability to perceive the consequences of the practices they indulge in as formatted by society to which they belong.

According to UNAIDS (2008) program on HIV/AIDS, mandatory or coerced male circumcision is a violation of a range of human rights. This includes rights of dignity, bodily integrity and personal autonomy. The Bamasaba will not tolerate uncircumcised male amidst them. They will ensure that the fearful are helped by force to undertake the ritual, against the will. Even an uncircumcised corpse of circumcision age is circumcised with an intention to scare away the haunting spirit '*Kimisambwa kye Imbalu*' (Wawomola 2009). It is an abomination for one to die uncircumcised, it guaranteed a rare burial. B. Simiyu narrates that a dead body was held upright, circumcised and left to fall, assuming that the spirits are scared off by the unceremonious fall. If unfortunately, he was unfruitful and bore no children in his lifetime, the outlet (*Inuma*), was made behind the house and the body pulled out through it and even burial is done on the land boundaries with the neighbours (December, 3rd 2022). An 80 year old Muduku of Bufumbo in Mbale district had masked as a circumcised man and become very vigilant into holding special places in the ritual including circumcision of candidates in his courtyard and hosting Inemba dance. It dawned one morning when it was discovered that Muduku was uncircumcised. The next morning he was surrounded, caught and circumcised publically in his 80's. Out of shame, discomfort and constrained pain, the elder died in less than a year. One elder said that medical circumcision would be friendly to that age, but Imbalu and its furiousness, definitely reduced the victim's life.

Medical circumcision, popularly known as Safe Male Voluntary Circumcision (SMVC) is human right friendly yet uncherished among the Bamasaba. SMVC is a deliberate national campaign for all males to engage in male medical circumcision as an attempt to control the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) pandemic. According to USAID (2006), the Ugandan National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2007/08–2011/12 recognizes safe male circumcision as a cost-effective HIV prevention intervention. Though it is acknowledged that it is not 100 percent effective, however, it has the capacity to alleviate the vice (Amir Sabet Sarvestani 2012). Much as this research largely concerns the less circumcising communities, it is alleged that the careless proceedings of the mandatory Imbalu among the Bamasaba have attracted it to Masaba land. The DHO's under the umbrella of international Health bodies like USAID, RHITES-E, are out to advocate for the performance of SMVC even on the culturally destined Imbalu males. Recent evidence suggests that in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, where HIV rates are extremely high, there is aggregate advocacy to circumcise many males as a remedy to HIV control (Anwar, 2010; Kaufman 2016; Gilbert et al, 2018).

In conclusion, this research has explored human rights abuses in the Imbalu cultural rites. The paper has examined the contradictions that exist between the cherished and celebrated cultural heritage, and the contemporary human rights discourses. This article has attempted to answer the following questions: How can Imbalu be celebrated with respect to contemporary human rights discourses? How can the cultural heritage of the Imbalu be preserved and maintained in the face of mounting pressure to change some of the cultural values of Imbalu? The study is anchored on postcolonial theoretical frameworks, which, among other things critique contemporary identity formations that characterize modern African societies. In this theory, colonialism created hybrid identities and binary spheres, by blending indigenous and Western colonial ideas and thought patterns, which manifest in various forms including the Imbalu cultural rites. Both Imbalu culture and colonialism are controversial subjects in human rights discourses. The Imbalu culture and identity was greatly shaped by the colonial presence and activities, more so in determining what came to be calling the Bamasaba people in Eastern Uganda in relation to other tribes in the sub region. Using descriptive and analytical approaches, the article revealed that there are significant conflicts between the traditional cultural practices and the contemporary human rights discourses as enshrined in various legal documents. These controversies reflect the conflict between the individual rights and the community rights, which further complicates the question of the African concept and notion of belonging. Furthermore, the controversies raise questions about the future of the African cultural heritage and its associated values as the global society become largely legalized and westernized. However, in its recommendation, this article posits that, the human rights discourse should be conceptualized in proper terms as pro-human and pro-life. Cultures cannot be static. Cultures evolve and any culture which reduces the dignity of individuals has no space in the contemporary society. Moreover, Imbalu as a cultural right should be enjoyed responsibly and in respect to other people's rights. Furthermore, due to the challenges, the global society (Bamasaba inclusive face), like HIV and AIDS and other pandemics; poverty, unemployment etc. the traditional model of Imbalu may possess significant danger to the Bamasaba people and the nation at large. These realities call for innovative modalities which may be medically considered safer than the traditional models which can pose danger.

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Competing interest

We the authors of this article affirm that the research in this article was conducted impartially, without any competing interests of any kind; financially, professionally or personally. The outcome is not influenced therefore not biased results or interpretations.

Author's contribution

The researchers are the sole authors of this paper '**Between Tradition and Modernity: Imbalu of the Bamasaba and Human Rights Discourse**'

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