PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING: A THREAT TO *ỌMABALA*-IGBO- AFRICAN COMMUNALISM DEEPLY ROOTED IN *IGWE BỤ IKE*

Dr. Charles Azubuike Nneke
Department of Igbo, African and Asian Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: ca.nneke@unizik.edu.ng
&
Dr. Cordelia Ifeyinwa Isidienu
Department of Igbo, African and Asian Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
E-mail: ifysidienu@gmail.com

Abstract
The study surveys the *Ọmabala*-Igbo people's communal lifestyle which is threatened by the Covid-19 pandemic's rule of maintaining physical social distancing. The *Ọmabala* people's communal and social lifestyle is deeply rooted in the Igbo philosophy that says, 'to live is to socialize,' backed up with another Igbo social philosophy that says, 'majority is strength-*igwe bụ ike*.' The study sets out with the objective of exposing the danger of contracting Covid-19 to the people. At the same time urging and encouraging them on the importance of keeping to the safety measures. The study is not concerned with the story of origin, myths and realities of Covid-19, rather it sets out to pacify the people to hold on with their social life, that Covid-19 like a stranger will soon out-stay its welcome and leave. On this note the study is propagating the philosophy that one has to be alive in order to socialize. The area of study is on the threat on the social life of *Ọmabala* people by the Covid -19's rule of maintenance of physical social distance. The data for the study are sourced through observation, library as well as internet. Psychological Theory is adopted for analysis of the study, to expose the depth of *Ọmabala* people's state of helplessness in their new lifestyle as result of fighting to stay alive in the Covid-19 pandemic. At the end of the study the findings revealed that one of the Covid-19's safety measures of maintenance of physical social distancing has inflected untold harm to the social, economical, and cultural existence of *Ọmabala* people. That it has brought the new culture of individualism and fear of one another as the people are trying to follow the rule in order to stay safe and stay alive. The study would be of great value to the general public, mostly to the teachers, students and researchers with keen interest in the study of the *Ọmabala* people's condition in their communal and social lifestyle as they are to keep the Covid-19's rule of maintaining physical social distance.

Introduction
Every society has their culture which helps other people to identify them. It is this culture determines what is acceptable to the people as well as what they frown at. *Ọmabala* people like every other society in Igbo Land, have been identified along with their social life within and amongst the communities that spread in the geographical location they are identified with. The communal and social lifestyle of *Ọmabala* people is deeply rooted in the Igbo philosophy that 'to live is to socialize,' backed up with another Igbo social philosophy that says, 'majority is strength- *igwe bụ ike*.' The *igwe bụ ike* philosophy of *Ọmabala* people captures their sociopolitical, economic, education and religious life. Prominent amongst them is *igwe bụ ike* technology-*igwe bụ ike*-tech, which is the offspring of *igwe bụ ike* economic. This is because the people believe that no meaningful social relationship could last for appreciable length of time without corresponding economic base. This circumstance makes life amongst the people of *Ọmabala* to become more of social activities from the sun rise to the dusk. Hence anything that becomes a stumbling block to their usual social life is a threat to both their individual and collective existence.

However the emergence of Covid-19 pandemic, has brought a paradigm shift from the status quo of the philosophy that 'to live is to socialize,' to the safety philosophy as we are propagating in this study. Hence the philosophy that one has to live in other to socialize in this era of Covid-19 pandemic takes the up hand. It is the above conflicting situations in the life of *Ọmabala* people make the rule of

maintenance of physical social distancing to become a thorn on their flesh. It is on this ground that the study is advocating and encouraging the people who are forced into a life of isolation with virtually nothing to live on to strive to 'stay at home and stay alive.' Hence it is also the objective of this study to serve as a check to their social life in order to prevent the spread of the Covid-19. Therefore we set out with the strategy to exposing the dangers of contracting the Covid-19, thereby urging and encouraging them on the importance of keeping to the safety measures of which maintenance of physical social distancing is one of them.

The study is urging them not to engage in social activities because the longer they stay in social gatherings to observe one social activity or the other without keeping to the rule of physical social distancing, the more risk of contracting the virus. Mostly in social activities such as wedding, display of new dance, child-naming ceremony, title-taking and funeral rites where people turn out in good number are the avenue of high risk of contracting the virus. In such gathering where people turn out in numbers crowd management could be difficult, because they are not used to lifestyle of isolation. It is in this regard that we set out to propagate the importance of maintaining the rule of physical social distancing as a risk reduction measure. We are advocating specifically in this single Covid-19's rule, because it goes a long way to distablize the *igwe bu ike* –lifestyle of the people where they are drawing strenght in majority. We know that other regulations such as wearing of face the mask, use of hand sanitizer etc won't be their problem, because average man from *Ọmabala* is hygiene conscious.

Therefore our major task in this study is to pacify the people to hold on with their social life, that Covid-19 like a stranger will soon out-stay its welcome and leave. On this note the study is propagating the philosophy that one has to be alive in order to socialize. Hence for one to be alive, one should abide by the Covid-19's rule of maintaining physical social distance for the time being. The study would be of great value to the general public, mostly to the teachers, students and researchers with keen interest in the study of the condition of *Ọmabala* people's communal and social lifestyle during the Covid-19 pandemic and its rule of maintaining physical social distance.

Review of Related Literature

Sigmund Freud's "Psychoanalytic Theory" is the literary theory adopted for analysis of this study. The theory explores the inner thought of the people that helps them to act and live the way they do. Dobie (2012:55) in line with the above says that psychoanalytic theory was propounded by Sigmund Freud in 9th century, with its central message on the role of unconscious in what we do, feel, and say even when we are not aware of its presence or operation. The theory has it that some events in one's life which are repressed in the unconscious mind find their expression in the form of dream. In the dream world the events appear in some specific symbols for identification. Freud began to use the psychoanalytical theory in the dawn of 19th century to interpret works such as religion, mythology, art and literature with more emphasis in unconscious. The above exposition shows that human actions are as a result of forces we do not recognize and could not control. The fact about unconscious mind is that conscious mind is not aware of it, hence the mistake of the real cause of our behaviours.

Kennedy and Gioia (2007: 1517) in line with the above say that Freud's greatest contribution to literary study is his elaborate demonstration of how much human mental process is unconscious. Hall and Lindzey (1967:30) in their view of this theory say that in the vast domain of unconscious are to be found the urges, the passion, the repressed ideas and feeling, which they call 'the great underworld of vital unseen forces.' The unconscious mind has overwhelmed control of the conscious thoughts and deed of man. Following the above background information of Freud psychoanalytic theory, the topic understudy revolves around emotional breakdown of the people under strict restriction from social gatherings and engagements. The researcher finds the theory quite at home for analysis of the state of affairs of the *Ọmabala* people in the Covid19 pandemic.

Social

The term social is one of the features of living organisms as applied to the group of humans and other animals. It is always referred to in the relationship or interaction amongst living organisms and their collective co-existence, irrespective of whether they are aware of it or not. This goes a long way to

include whether their interaction is voluntary or involuntary. Social life is very common these days in the human society through the help of technology. Socialization and visual presences are on the increase. Modern gadgets and applications in information communication technology (ICT) have greatly enhanced the social life of the people. Many authors have contributed to the definition of the term social of which one of them is Ogugua (2007:42) in his expression of social relationship amongst the people saying:

> On account of the fact that everyone is related to every other person, there is a strong sense of brotherhood and solidarity; and on this principle anchors every network of economic, political and social relationships. Irrespective of one's position in the ladder of society, he is linked to the others; the umbilical cord or mystical bond holding members of the family together is not severed and cannot be severed.

In line with this Blitz (1965:20) quoting Meek who gives account of the social life amongst Hausa says:

> Membership of the extended family is determined by consanguinity and not by affinity. The group normally includes the head of the family, his brother and cousins, his and their children and grandchildren. It may also include adopted children, slaves and their offspring.

Also in the issue of social relations in the society Jinadu (1980:30) says that social systems can be viewed as artifacts deliberately created by human beings to provide a bridge between the individual and society. These social systems are necessarily buttressed and sustained by a network of reward and sanction that not only provides the coercive, but cooperative environment for, but also shapes, the pattern of human interaction.

Eteng (2002:198) in his view of social life amongst the Igbo people stresses:

> The Igbo community, as indeed any social formation, is essentially a historical social being. In other words, the present and past Igbo community is basically a productive and self reproductive social system. As such, its moving essence is its economy and its creative and productive capacity anchored to its kinship system. …Production employed here in the widest sense possible, encompasses the generation of both the material and non material (ideological and normative) conditions of social life.

Also in the same thought pattern Stephen (2009:81) in his study on the social effects of poetry in the people's social relationship in the society says that the social dimension of poetry is essential to its very definition because all forms of social interaction take place within language. It is on the basis of this, that the social character of poetry, that is, relationship with the society is instituted.

However, social relationship could embrace both modern and conventional means of socializing with one another. Primarily one begins to experience social life from one's family, peers, and socialization agents such as schools, places of worship, and political associations as well as radio and television. The robust gadgets and applications presently use for social relationship have greatly enhanced the way people are socializing with one another.

Physical Social Distancing

Physical social distancing is a practice of avoiding social gathering, and meeting with people in social events such as wedding, funeral amongst others where people love to meet one another for the purpose of social life. It is an act of consciously increasing the physical space between people (often link to some factors such as fear or to avoid spreading disease as in the case of Covid-19). However, with regards to Covid-19 the measure of the distance apart from one another is yet to come by because of diverse results in some studies. Some of the studies are of the view that the distance to be observed is two metres, another set of people say four metres while others are saying that people should stay at least six feet away from other people to lessen the chances of contracting Covid-19.

Many authors have contributed in defining what physical social distancing resulted from Covid-19 pandemic is all about. One of the authors is Cross (2020) who is of the view that social distancing is an essential way to slow down the spread of Covid-19. So it is important that one should follow the social distancing recommendations in one's community, whether one is in the high-risk groups or not. The author further states that with the schools closed and people working from home, it may be tempting to

get kids together for play dates or sleep overs, or to think that gatherings of more than 10 people are safe. But the physical social distancing only works if we all participate in order to slow down or prevent the spread of the virus to save lives.

Cross (2020) goes further to say:

Social distancing means staying home as much as possible and avoiding crowded public places where close contact with others is observed. This is why stay at home order is in place in so many communities, canceling events and gatherings of more than 10 people and closing shops, restaurants and bars. It's also why many schools have moved to online learning. For essential trips like grocery shopping, the CDC recommends wearing a cloth face covering and staying at least 6 feet away from others. The introduction of physical social distancing and managing the potentials to reputational damage due to their response to the pandemic is made popular in the event of Covid-19 global outbreak. The physical social distancing involves putting space between people to avoid the further spread. Hence when the people infected with the virus stay away from others, they reduce the rate of passing it to anyone else.

The Covid-19 pandemic enlightenment campaign states that social distancing means that one should not go out unless it is necessary. It stipulates that the reasons one should go out include: buying food items, getting medical care, or going for a walk or a bike ride alone or with members of the household. It goes on to illustrate the measures to ensure that social distancing is maintained such as closing schools, restaurants, shops, movie theaters, and other places where people gather. These measures are put in place to make sure that the people are not getting together with friends. And this is the reason working from home is possible to avoid taking public transportation, such as buses, subways, taxis, among others.

Another dimension of the physical social distancing campaign is the philosophy of 'it's best to take a "better safety than sorry" approach. The philosophy further explains with emphasis the important of isolating individual families from one another. Hence one should keep one's family and home away from others as much as possible. You don't allow friends and extended family to visit you, and you don't go to their homes. The message boils down that people who look healthy still can be infected and can spread the virus, that's why it's important to stay away from everyone even if they appear to be healthy. Therefore physical social distancing should be adapted and used alongside other strategies to reduce the transmission of the Covid-19.

However, there are some contradictions in the studies in relation to the measure of distance to be observed. Some studies have suggested possible spread beyond two metres from an index patient. This state of confusion appears to worsen the situation to the extent that the only way to be safe is through isolation. It is in line with this that a study says, "There was significant heterogeneity between the included studies in terms of setting, indoor and air conditions, degree of physical distancing and identification of cases, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions as to the safety of respective distances."

Chu et al (2020) in their study is of the view that estimated key of physical socal distance had not been explicitly reported in some studies. They further state that there was no real accounting for other variables affecting transmission risk beyond just social distancing, and that may explain some of the variation between studies. In the same light, Cai et al (2020) in their study of outbreak of Covid-19 analysed a case of 17-person at a shopping mall in China.53 which they found out that several individuals who contracted the disease worked on different floors to the index case, raising the possibility of longer distance transmission through air. In line with this Xu et al (2020) in their study reported the case of 17 who developed Covid-19 but had not been in close contact with an index case. This was a retrospective model, and provides limited evidence as to safe distancing limits and routes of transmission in indoor spaces.With the controversy from the above studies, it is enough to put one off balance as for what should be the exact measure of physical socal distance to be observed.

Threat

The term threat is generic in its nature in the sense that it comprises both emotional and physical ideas which have relative effects to different people. Hence people's reactions to threat appear to differ from one or group of persons to another, even when they are faced with the same factor. As a generic in nature it comes in different forms depending on some factors such as people and circumstances. As it concerns the people, it could be seen from the point of view of facing with difficulty that is capable of breaking them down emotionally or physically. These factors are capable of killing people depending on the level of their emotional carrying capacities. People tend to react differently depends on their level of exposure, and personality involves when they are exposed to threat. On the other hands, the circumstances could be economic, social, political, cultural, war, crime among others that affect people in an adverse manner. Many authors have contributed in the study of threat and threat related situations. Their views are as follows: Carver et al.(2000) and Neuberg, Kenrick, & Schaller (2011) are of the view that social threats activate the avoidance system that governs a suite of affective and cognitive processes geared at facilitating adaptive threat-responding.

Dolan (2019) in line with this says that social threat seems to be one factor that is involved in malevolent creativity. It activates the avoidance system that governs a suite of affective and cognitive processes geared at facilitating adaptive threat-responding. Because when people are threatened by others, they become motivated to defend themselves in an aggressively malevolent manner. In their own view Baas, Roskes, Koch et al. (2019) say that social threat induces focused thinking as well as aggressive cognitions and readiness to fight, it leads to more malevolent creativity and less creativity in threat-irrelevant domains. Social threats lead to enhanced persistence as well as aggressive cognitions, inclinations to fight, and the recruitment of (cognitive) resources to attend to the threat. It evokes malevolent creativity through a stronger motivation to aggressively defend, particularly in people who are highly motivated to process-relevant (threat-related) information.

Dreu and Nijstad (2008) opine that when people anticipate hostility, they come up with more novel ideas to defeat their opponent but fewer ideas in neutral domains than when they anticipate cooperation. In the same light Elliot (2008) and Woody & Szechtman, (2011) are of the view that dangerous or harmful situations activate the avoidance motivation system, which instigates the recruitment of attentional and physical resources to evaluate and respond to the threat. The exact picture of the life amongst *Ọmabala* people is captured in the above expressions, because of the way their socioeconomic and cultural life is threatened by the Covid-19 pandemic and its safety measures.

Ọmabala

Ọmabala is one of the geographical locations in Anambra State. It is from *Ọmabala* River that Anambra State drives its name from, though in a corrupt version. *Ọmabala* people live in over thirty seven communities that settled in four local government council areas of Anambra East, Anambra West, Ayamelum and Oyi. They are mainly agro-based set of people. They are on the average poor people without access to mechanized farming system. The people depend on pull labour to encourage and help one another to maintain some level of productivity. Nneke (2019:74) says that the communities in *Ọmabala* are those communities in the four local government areas as follows: Anambra East: Agụleri, Ụmụeri, Ụmụọba Anam, Ịgbarịam, Nando na Nsugbe. Anambra West: Ifite Anam-(Iyiora, Mmiata, Umueze and Umuoba), Ezi Anam-(Oroma Etiti, Umudora, Umuikwu and Umuenwelum), Nzam, na Olumbanasa-(Owele, Ukwala, Odeh, Igbokenyi, Inoma, Odetemaka, Odemagu, Ala, Onugwe). Oyi: Nteje, Ọkụzụ, Ogbunike, Ụmụnya, Nkwele. Ayamelum: Anakụ, Ifite Ọgwarị, Ịgbakwụ, Ọmasị, Ọmọọ, Ụmụeje Ụmụlum and Ụmụmbo. Ekweoba (2007:3) in his view says:

> The word Anam-bra which first started to be associated with the River is an European invented word. The name we (Anam people) call the river is Onwubala. Our neighbours on the eastern bank of the river, Nsugbe, Umuleri, Aguleri call it Omambala. So, the name Anambra was neither given by Anam nor our neighbours mentioned above.

Aniako (2002:306-7) quoted Jeffreys (1934) who says: In his study of what he refers to as Igbo-*Ọmabala* civilization embodied in this priest-king in historical terms. In line with this Onwuejeogwu (1972) argues:

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> The germinal phase of this civilization is associated with Eri who founded an ancient kingship or theocracy in the Ọmabala basin from where, at his death; began the dispersal and growth of settlements founded by the children of Agulu (one of the sons of Eri).

The authors and their works reviewed above are all good in their respective context. However none of the authors and their studies is in the position to replace this research work. This is because none of the authors and their studies focused on the Covid-19's rule of maintaining physical social distancing and its threat to Ọmabala people. Therefore the study is seeking for a space in the corpus of literature of this nature as well to bridge the knowledge gap in this aspect of Covid-19 studies.

The Analysis of Threat of Physical Social Distancing on *Ọmabala*-Igbo Communalism Deeply Rooted in *Igwe Bụ Ike*.

The Covid-19's rule of maintenance of physical social distance exposes the people of *Ọmabala* whose lifestyle is rooted in *igwe bụ ike* both at family units and at their communal relationship to untold sociocultural and economic challenges. The people's lifestyle is rooted in social and communal relationship- *igwe bụ ike* as a result of so many factors, is threatened by the Covid-19 pandemic along with its rules of safety measures. These factors revolve around their state of so much banking on human beings and poverty which manifests in their life as follows: carefree life, openness, human receptivity, drawing strength in many, technological infantilism, lack of basic infrastructure among others. Epundu (2010:56) stresses in line with this saying:

> In Anambra East Local Government Area, there is serious lack of means of processing the perishable agricultural products which are mainly in the root, tuber forms and vegetable (leafy and fruits). This is as a result of inadequate electricity supply, lack of preservation tools due to meagre funds and poor knowledge of preservation method or technology.

These are the factors responsible for the great emotional gulf in the life of *Ọmabala* people in the Covid-19 pandemic. Critical look at the above mentioned factors alongside their economic base, shows that they are in a mutual discord with Covid-19's rule of maintenance of physical social distance in actual sense, so far as the people are concerned. This is because to them it appears to be suicidal without their usual life of social relationship that facilitates their economic base. The Covid-19's rule of maintenance of physical social distance, distablizes the *igwe bụ ike* –lifestyle of the people where they are drawing strenght in majority. In this circumstance they have to go extra miles in the act of self sacrifice in their efforts to be alive, which is informed by the choice of psychological theory for analysis of this study.

Covid-19's Threat to Socioeconomic Life of Ọmabala People

The people of *Ọmabala* are facing great economic challenges as a result of Covid-19 in the way they had not witnessed before. *Ọmabala* people are predominantly farmers, with pockets of few people engaging in a small scale business. These are men and women whose main source of capital are from their farms. The power house of their farming with which they earn their living came from the *igwe bụ ike* –technology. They support one another in their farms from pull labour sysem. The people have to come together in solidarity and encourage one another in order to make head way in their farms. They are doing this through use of the local-manpower generated from pull labour due to their state of poverty. In this way they could make ends meet in their little way because they have not been enpowered by the government to enjoy the mechanize system of farming. In view of this Idigo (2002:17) says:

> Efforts should be channeled towards the mechanization of Agriculture in Aguleri. Aguleri has enough fertile land to produce food enough to feed the whole of Anambra State. I call on the State Govemment to assist the efforts of individuals and co-operative societies towards the mechanization of Agriculture in Aguleri. Also the vast water resources in Aguleri should be looked into with a view to improving fishing activities. I urge the Federal and State Governments to resuscitate the Anambra River Basin Development Authority.

As a people that depend on the farm products for their livelihood on the average, they are still at the level of technological infantilism. It is at this point that they learn to drawing strength in many- *igwe bụ ike* in their farming activities in order not to die in their individual state of poverty. They have to share

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in their state of poverty and suffering with joy, backed up with *igwe bu ike* where they draw their strength from. This is because the believe that a problem shared is half solved.

One could appreciate the degree of what *Ọmabala* people are going through in the Covid-19 pandemic from the above background picture. Their source of livelihood is removed from them in their bid to observe the stay at home order of the Covid-19's safety measures, mostly the rule of physical social distancing in order to stay alive. Even at that state of near suicidal, the government did not make effective provision for them. In such ugly state of existence where the basic necessities of life mostly food items and water are provided in short supply and in some places not at all. The people have to stay in that condition along with the gross lack of basic infrastructures, which makes life in *Ọmabala* not only challenging but threatening.

It is in this regard that Dukor (2020) says:

> What matters for the masters of the universe, the philosopher-leaders in the West, is not only protocol and palliative but also ultimately meta-protocol, meta-physics, and meta-technology, all of which are philosophical perspectives to the crises which weigh heavily against food on the table.

The stay at home order of Covid-19 pandemic has instilled fear into the *Ọmabala* people. This fear makes it difficult for the people to visit their neighbor to collect one thing or the other as they used do before the Covid-19 pandemic.

The government and her agencies charged with providing and distributing the palliative to the people instead of solving the people's problem, help to inflict more problems to them. The government and her agencies lack the necessary data to share the palliative to the people. This gave them room to enrich themselves with the same resources they are charged to distribute to people. The same thought pattern is vividly captured in Dukor (2020) when he stresses that the black race is a vulnerable race, the poorest of the poor races without philosophy, presumptively without thinking capacity, eating from the droplets from the table of the advanced races. The above picture could be the reason for the poor data management in Nigeria to give the agencies charged with the distribution of the palliative room for manipulation and embezzlement of the resources mapped out for the people.

Covid-19's Threat to Sociocultural Life of Ọmabala People

Another dimension to take into consideration in the analysis of the negative effects of Covid-19 pandemic's rule of maintaining physical social distancing to *Ọmabala* people revolves around their sociocultural life. This is a people who live and maintain simple lifestyle. They have sense of pride as the ancestral home of the Igbo Race. They are not over ambitious set of people originally. They are known as a people with great sense generosity and hospitality. Hence Anambra as it is called today is a corrupt version of *Ọmabala*, which is the name of the river the old Anambra State got her name from. Ekweoba (2007:3-5) opines:

> The word Anam-bra which started to be associated with the River is an European invented word. The river is called Ọnwụbala by Anam people, while their neighbours on the eastern bank of the river, Nsugbe, Umuleri, Aguleri call it Ọmambala. Therefore, if Anambra State is number one in Nigeria and Anam is the mother of Anambra State, it will not be out of place if I write to inform the people of Nigeria in general and Anambra State in particular about the origin and history of Anam the mother clan of Anambra State.

This ancient place of prominence enjoyed by the people of *Ọmabala* manifests in their sociocultural life of carefree. In a typical *Ọmabala* setting, people built their houses without fense. They are not bothered over building fense to demarcate their neighbourhood. This lifestyle of carefree and openness is not as a result of lost of sense of security. They are security conscious, it is their belief that one's neighbour is one's brother as well. However they display this trait security conscious whenever new faces emerge in their various communities.

This carefree lifestyle manifested in the *igwe bu ike* philosophy of the *Ọmabala* people, revolves around the thought that a brother meant well. The same lifestyle is reflected in their expression of the core

human value in the act of human receptivity. The social life of Ọmabala people is summed up in their generosity and hospitality, which is not far fetch from the 'Home for All' which Anambra State had as its slogan and or moto which is recently change to 'Light of the Nation.' It is in the above background that they live together and share with one another in common in both at the joyous and sorrowful events. At the centre of joyuos activities in the sociocultural life and pattern of the Ọmabala-Igbo are rites of marriage, naming ceremony, title taking, the celebration of good fortune among others. On the other hands the people also gather in social trust to one another at the event of death, disease and other evil conditions that often befall mankind.

Many families' marriage rites and burial of their dead relations are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Irrespective of the fact that the pandemic affected the whole world, the situation did not go down well with the Ọmabala people. This is because it is not their culture not to be involved in anything that concerns any member of their community. Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted their socioeconomic and cultural unity nurtured and enjoyed amongst the people of Ọmabala with its rule of maintenance of physical social distance. They are exposed to extreme economic hardship. Not only that the people have become vulnerable to diseases due to malnutrition and lack of physical exercise. Even when there is no identifiable case of Covid-19 in this geographic setting, the people died in numbers because there is no effective measure from the government to make provision for them.

The Advocacy to Ọmabala People to Uphold the Safety Measures of Covid-19
The paradigm shift in the life of the people from the philosophy of 'to live is to socialize,' which revolves around their economic base, to the philosophy that one has to live in other to socialize. This grand safety advocacy is induced by the Covid-19 pandemic. The above conflicting situations are thorns on their flesh in the life of Ọmabala people. This condition makes the rule of maintenance of physical social distancing difficult for them. Hence the study is advocating and encouraging the people forced into the life of isolation, to try the best they could to manage it for the time being. It is also a way to enlighten them on the importance of keeping to the safety measures, mostly the maintenance of physical social distancing in the social activities. This is because they should be adequately informed of the importance of their safety no matter how the rule threatens their social life. We also urge them keep other regulations such as wearing of facemask, use of hand sanitizer etc because of the fact that maintenance of physical social distancing alone cannot guaranty one's safety from contracting the virus. The main social activitives that the safety measures should strictly adhered to are: wedding, display of new dance, child-naming ceremony, title-taking, funeral rites among others. This is because of how the people turn out in good number in the above mentioned events and the longer they stay the more the risk of contracting and the spread of Covid-19.

Ọmabala people are not used to lifestyle of isolation. So it could be difficult to manage the crowd if any social event is allowed to hold at that peak of Covid-19 pandemic. It is in this regard that we set out to propagate the importance of maintaining the rule of physical social distancing as a risk reduction measure. We are specific about the advocacy on maintenance of physical social distancing because other Covid-19's rules are not the major problem of Ọmabala people. The average man from Ọmabala is hygiene conscious. Hence the main task of this study solely hinged on educating, urging and encouraging the people on the importance of keeping to the Covid-19's safety measures, of which the maintenance of physical social distancing is at its centre. Therefore, the study is pacifying the people to hold on with their social life, that Covid-19 like a stranger will soon out-stay its welcome and leave, because one has to be alive in order to socialize.

Conclusion
The study is of view that one of the greatest calamity and threat to the people of Ọmabala in the Covid-19 pandemic, is the rule of maintaining physical social distancing. The people are asked to stay at home without adequate provision, as well they are denied access to their economic base. As people who are dominantly farmers along with pockets of traders whose main source capital is from framing, they are exposed to hunger and starvation. This ugly exposure of the people to harsh socioeconomic condition without due consideration, is the crux of the threat of Covid-19 pandemic's rule of maintaining physical

social distancing goes a long way to distablize the *igwe bụ ike* –lifestyle of the people where they are drawing strenght in majority.

The study is provoked with the passion for the safety of the people. Thereby pacifying the people to hold on with their social life, that Covid-19 like a stranger will soon out-stay its welcome and leave. Hence the main task of this study is to serve as a check to the social life of *Ọmabala* people in order to prevent the spread of the Covid-19. It is on the above background that the study is advocating, educating on the importance of keeping to the safety measures because one has to be alive in order to socialize. The people who are forced into the life of isolation with nothing to live on should be encouraged to try the best they could to restrain from their social life for the time being. Also in a way of suggestion and or recommendatoin, the study is urging the governmet to sit up in their efforts toward updating and using upadated statistics of people whenever there is something to share to the people. It is important that upadated data is used whenever they have some things to share to the people, else they may end up causing more harm than good to them.

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