

**COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AS  
CORRELATES OF LECTURERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study examined communication and human resource development as correlates of lecturers' job performance in Nigeria Universities. It looked at how communication and human resource development are related to lecturers' job performance in the Universities. The descriptive survey design was used for this study. The population of this study consisted of 154 Deans, 849 Heads of Department and 11,828 academic staff in Southwest Nigeria Universities. The sample was one thousand eight hundred (1,800) respondents, comprising 20 Deans, 70 Heads of Department and 1,710 academic staff. Multistage sampling procedure which involves simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and proportional stratified random sampling techniques were used to select them. Two self-designed instruments were used, Questionnaire on Human Resource Management (QHRM) for academic staff and Productivity of Academic Staff Questionnaire (PASQ) for Deans and Heads of Departments. To establish the reliability of the instruments, the test-retest method was used. They were found to be 0.74 and 0.71 for QHRM and PASQ respectively. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentage; mean and standard deviation and Pearson's product moment correlation. The hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that communication and human resource development were significantly related to lecturers' job performance. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that human resource managers should communicate effectively with lecturers on all matters relating to their job in order to improve their performance. Also, human resource managers should encourage the academic staff to develop themselves through seminars, workshops and conferences.*

**Key Words:** Communication, Human resource development, Lecturers, Job Performance.

**INTRODUCTION**

Communication is a very necessary ingredient for the survival of any organization. The success of any school head depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of communication between him and the subordinates.

Communication as well as human resource development are some of the pronounced variables in improving Lecturers' job performance in Nigeria Universities. In as much as communication will present in details the responsibility of University lecturers, human resource development will advance the performance of lecturers in any given University.

Communication is the life blood of every organization. Sometimes, human resource managers appear not to adequately communicate job description to academic staff. Sometimes, academic staff may not have prompt information regarding meetings and organizational changes. Again, human resource managers may not be patient enough to receive feedback from the academic staff about their work. Also, academic staff may not be informed regularly about happenings of the work place. This may immensely contribute to the low performance of academic staff.

The research of Epstein (2002) reveals that strong positive relationships between communications and job satisfaction occur. The study also shows that clear and positive pattern of relationships between an employee's perceptions of communications and his or her job satisfaction do aid performance. The research of Lee (2007) reveals that both task and person communication roles were significantly predictors of job performance in the faculties.

Hermon (2014) presents few ways to easily enhance the internal communication channels for lecturers' job performance as follows: using of newsletters, engaging the team members with poll questions, during meetings be clear in your instructions, demonstrate your expectations, and foster a sense of empowerment. The bottom line of the above to the researcher is to encourage feedback and to remember the mission, goals, and personality stem from the core.

According to Sheikh (2003), communication is important in the sense that, it helps in providing necessary information to begin an action. It makes planning easy and that the type of information needed can easily be collected through communication which helps in human resource planning. Above all, communication is an important tool in coordinating the effort of various people at work in the organization.

Csoka (2009) finds that communication satisfaction dimensions impacted the employees' job performance. Although such dimensions as "communication with coworkers," "meetings and memos;" and "corporate-wide information," impacted performance somewhat, employees in both organizations perceived

"personal feedback" from their supervisor to have the highest impact on performance. Also, satisfaction of an employee with a particular dimension of communication did not necessarily mean his or her job performance was affected.

The research conducted by Tolorunsagba (2015) reveals that a great relationship occurs between communication functions of principals and teachers productivity. In the view of Linda (2014), management should put in place good communication channels that are meant to converse information both ways, from the employees to the management as well as from the management to the employees. The channels should remain open so that communication can be done at any moment when there is information that might be needed.

The study carried out by Goris and Pettit (1997) that was aimed at investigating the moderating influence of organizational communication on the relationship between job performance and job satisfaction. They find out that appropriate and accurate information enhances both performance and satisfaction with work. This finding implies that individuals receiving proper, correct, and clear information may perform adequately, which in turn may give rise to positive feelings about their jobs, or vice versa. Supervisors will be able to promote adequate levels of job performance and job satisfaction among their employees by providing them with appropriate and accurate information.

Nevertheless, the research of Dobbins (2004) indicates that communication tends to have an inverse relationship with job performance. Thus, communication in an organization is not likely to improve performance. However, the research conducted by Downs (2006), on the relationship between communication, satisfaction and productivity: a study of two Australian organizations; he comes out with the fact that communication with co-workers, meetings and memos (Media Quality), and corporate -wide information had relatively low impacts on productivity.

It can then be inferred from the above review that communication is important to lecturers' job performance. The study gave much evidence to roles that communication play in job performance. Nevertheless, communication is a way of making all workers part of the system and be productive. This study will explore the relationship between communications as correlates of lecturers' job performance in Nigeria

Human resource development is also very vital to Job Performance of lecturers' in Nigerian Universities. Lecturers' development involves regular

improvement through seminars and workshops and by attending conferences and in-service training. From observation however, it seems the personnel managers do not encourage lecturers to develop themselves or mandating their continuous development. The academic staff appear not to be inspired to improve themselves. This type of situation may affect the job performance of lecturers. According to Michael (2007), employees today need continuous training beyond initial qualifications to maintain, upgrade and update skills throughout the working life. This will make them more effective in the present and future works. It will also improve individual and organizational productivity.

In view of this, Sandra and Lisa (1996) carried out a study which reveals that adequate human development and training has much impact on their performance and productivity. Manpower training and development is an important tool for improving human power and productivity in both skills and orientation; many organizations do not take it very serious which always undermines their performance and growth (Owusu-Acheaw 2007).

In the study carried out by Majekodunmi (1999), he discovers that there was a significant relationship between training programmes and improved performance of employee. He equally found out that training activities have significantly improved productivity in NISER. Also, that personnel training have significantly led to advancement, upgrading, promotion or re-designation of NISER workers. It was then recommended that more training should be conducted for the staff of this organization to perform better.

According to Cole (2002), the amount and quality of training carried out varies from one organization to the other. He analyzed the factors influencing the quality and quantity of training and development activities in an organization as degree of change (new process and new markets), availability of suitable skills within the existing work-force, adaptability of existing work-force and the extent to which the organization supports the idea of internal carrier development. He went further to add the extent to which management see training as a motivating factor in work and knowledge and skills of those responsible for caring out the training.

The results of a set of studies as Davar, and Parti, (2013) report, indicate that there is a positive relationship between training and employee performance (Monge 1986; Delame &Kramarz, 1997). But, a number of research studies report

a low level of relationship (correlation) between training and employee productivity (Taymaz, 1998). Also, previous studies based on meta-analysis do not indicate a clear picture about the relationship between training and job performance.

In another study carried out by Iwuoha in Ezeani and Oladele (2013), aimed at identifying the adequacy of development programme provided to the secretaries in the selected business organization in Owerri. They discover that if development programmes is adequately provided for the secretaries by the management of these organizations in such areas as seminar, conferences, workshops, their performance will be enhanced.

A study carried out by Okotoni and Erero as reported by Ezeani and Oladele (2013) on Manpower Training and Development in the Nigerian Public Service. It was aimed at identifying the experience of Nigerian public services on manpower training and development with the view to understanding the problems being faced. The researchers find out that training and development helps to ensure that organizational members possess the knowledge and skills they needed to perform their job effectively, taken on new responsibilities, and adapt to changing conditions. They also discover that the experience of manpower training and development in the Nigerian public service has been more of ruse and waste. They recommended that the government should avoid the use of quack consultants in training the public servants.

Hamid (2011) in a study emphasizes that training is an important human resource development tool and that training should be provided to employees of different levels, specially the middle level managers in the organizations to cope with social and technological changes and improve their performance.

In another study conducted by Babaita (2010) which sought to determine if productivity is a driving force for investment in training and management development in the banking industry in Nigeria. The population was made up of 320 old and new generation banks. Babaita finds that productivity is really one of the driving forces for investment in training and management development. He recommended that it is vital that managers, senior executive, as well as all employees receive training.

Davar and Parti (2013) conducted a study for the purpose of assessing the importance of training to job performance. The study reveals that the training provided to employees/workers does have a significant effect on productivity.

Moreover, the training affects productivity across-the-board that is, for top-level managers, medium level managers and bottom-line employees. In another research carried out by Kotey and Folker (2007) it revealed that employees need to be trained to fill the new positions that open with firm growth.

It can then be inferred from the above review that human resource development is vital to job performance. The study gave much clue to how important training is to productivity. However, training as the process of aiding employees to gain effectiveness in the present and future works, must be regularly emphasized for more productivity. This study will investigate the relationship between human resource development as correlates of lecturers' job performance in Nigeria

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to examine how communication and human resource development correlate with lecturers' job performance in Nigeria. This means that the study examined how communication and human resource development relate with lecturers' job performance. The study then made recommendations based on the findings.

### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

1. T  
here is no significant relationship between communication and lecturers' job performance.
2. T  
here is no significant relationship between human resource development and lecturers' job performance.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study made use of descriptive research of survey design. The population of this study consisted of 154 Deans, 849 Heads of Department and 11,828 academic staff in Southwest Nigeria Universities.

The sample of this study was (1,800) respondents, comprising 20 Deans, 70 Heads of Department and 1,710 academic staff. Multistage sampling procedure

which involves simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and proportional stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the states, universities and individuals that were used for the study.

Two sets of self-designed instruments were used for this study. The first instrument was Questionnaire on Human Resource Management (QHRM). The second instrument was Productivity of Academic Staff Questionnaire (PASQ). These were used to collect relevant data from the subjects. The instruments were validated based on the judgments of experts in Educational Management and tests and Measurements in Ekiti State University. Reliability coefficients of 0.74 and 0.71 were obtained for QHRM and PASQ respectively using test re-test method. Two hypotheses were postulated. The data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage, mean, standard deviation and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

### Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant relationship between communication and lecturers' job performance.

In testing the hypothesis, scores relating to communication were computed using items 8-15 of QHRM while lecturers' job performance scores were computed using items 1-27 of PASQ. The scores (communication and lecturers' job performance) were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result was presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Pearson Product Correlation of Communication And Lecturers' Job Performance**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-table
Communication	1495	14.63	4.139	0.392*	0.195
Lecturers' Job Performance	1495	113.00	9.061		

\*P<0.05

Table 1 showed that the relationship between communication and lecturers' job performance was not statistically significant at 0.05 level. ( $r= 0.392$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Thus the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between communication and lecturers' job performance. Hence, there was a positive relationship.

### **Hypothesis 2:**

There is no significant relationship between human resource development and lecturers' job performance.

In testing the hypothesis, scores relating to human resource development were computed using items 16-21 of QHRM while productivity of academic staff scores were computed using items 1-27 of PASQ. The scores (human resource management and productivity of academic staff) were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result was presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Pearson Product Correlation of Human Resource Development And Lecturers' Job Performance**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-table
Human Resource Development	1495	18.97	3.491	0.908*	0.195
Lecturers' Job Performance	1495	113.00	9.061		

$P < 0.05$

Table 2 showed that the relationship between human resource development and lecturers' job performance is statistically significant at 0.05 level. ( $r= 0.908$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Thus the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant positive relationship between human resource development and lecturers' job performance.

## **DISCUSSION**

The finding of this study showed that there was significant relationship between communication and lecturers' job performance. It implies that communication influence lecturers' job performance. It equally means that the lecturers need the human resource managers to remind them about their responsibilities in relation to teaching, research and community services. This



finding may result from the fact that workers need regular information to do their job efficiently and effectively.

The finding contradicts the outcome of the research works of Dobbins (2004) and Downs (2006) that indicated that communication tends to have an inverse relationship with job performance. Thus, communication in an organization is not likely to improve performance. The finding supports the research outcome of Goris and Pettit (1997), Epstein (2002), Lee (2007) Csoka (2009) and Tolorunsagb (2015) that presented strong positive relationships between communications and job performance.

Again, the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between Human Resource Development and lecturers' job performance. It implies that lecturers will be highly productive if regular development is encouraged. This will come through seminars and workshops, attending conferences both locally and internationally and in-service training. What could be responsible for this finding is the fact that formation and training do from time to time have influence on performance. The finding is quite close to the outcome of the study of Sandra and Lisa (1996), Majekodunmi (1999), Kotey and Folker (2007), Babaita (2010), Hamid (2011), Iwuoha in Ezeani and Oladele (2013) and Ezeani and Oladele (2013). They discovered that human resource development and training has much impact on their performance and productivity. They also found out that there was a significant relationship between training programmes and improved performance of employee. The finding contradicts the result of the study of (Taymaz, 1998) which reported a low level of relationship (correlation) between training and employee performance.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that communication and human resource development are important factors in lecturers' job performance in the Universities.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

In view of the fact that communication is significantly related to lecturers' job performance, human resource managers should communicate effectively with lecturers on all matters relating to their job in order to improve their performance and productivity. Since human resource development is significantly related to lecturers' job performance, human resource managers should encourage the academic staff to develop themselves through seminars,

workshops and conferences. Those to be trained should be identified and be allowed to have in-service training.

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## **AFRICAN CULTURE AND VALUES IN A WORLD OF CHANGE: A PHILOSOPHICAL APPRAISAL**

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### **Abstract**

*Culture is the defining element of a people and the varieties of culture among the world's populations make life beautiful and interesting. Since culture is often seen as the sum total of the peculiarities shared by a people, a people's value can be seen as part of their*

*culture. In discussing African culture and values, we are not presupposing that all African societies have the same explanation(s) for events, the same language, and some mode of dressing and so on. Rather, there are underlying similarities shared by many African societies which, when contrasted with other cultures, might reveal a wide gap of difference. It does appear that while so-called African culture and values have positive, soul-lifting and humanistic dimensions, it also has some negative and dehumanizing aspects. In this paper, we try to show the relevance of African culture and values to the contemporary society, using Igbo-African society as an example, but maintain that these values be critically assessed, and those found to be inimical to the well-being and holistic development of the society, be discarded. In this way, African culture and values can be reevaluated, their relevance established and sustained in order to give credence to authentic African identity. We recommend that there is need to harness the cultural resources of Africa to enrich the process of education, and indeed, greater emphasis is on the need to harness all our cultural dimension towards a common goal of development understood as human wellbeing so as to identify with other civilized populations of the world rather than remaining backward. The method we employed in this paper is the critical method of philosophy.*

**Keywords:** African, culture, change, values, Igbo

## **Introduction**

Among the human societies, it is the culture of a people that marks them out and makes them distinct as this and not that people. Culture as it is usually understood entails a totality of traits and characters that are peculiar to a people to the extent that it marks them out from other peoples or societies. These peculiar traits include the people's language, dressing, music, work, arts, religion, and so on. It also includes a people's social norms, taboos and values. Values here are to be understood as beliefs that are held about what is right and wrong and what is important in life. A detailed study of values rightly belongs to the discipline of philosophy. Axiology as a branch of philosophy deals with values embracing both ethics and aesthetics. This is why philosophical appraisal of African culture and value is not only apt and timely, but also appropriate.

Moreover, the centrality of the place of value in African culture as a heritage that is passed down from one generation to another, will be highlighted. We shall try to illustrate that African culture and values can be appraised from many dimensions in addition to examining the method of change and the problem of adjustment in culture. Here we hope to show that while positive dimensions of our culture ought to be practiced and passed on to succeeding generations, negative dimensions of our culture have to be dropped in order to promote a more progressive and dynamic society. However, before we can have an

appraisal of African culture and values, it is necessary for us to have an understanding of the concept of culture and its meaning. This will help us grapple with the issues we will be dealing with in this paper.

### **The Concept of Culture**

Culture is the social behaviors and norms found in different human societies. It comprises the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies. Some aspects of human behavior and social practices are said to be cultural universals, found in all human societies. These include culture-expressive forms such as music, dance, ritual, religion, and technologies such as tool usage, cooking, shelter, and clothing. The concept of material culture covers the physical expressions of culture, such as technology, architecture and art, whereas the immaterial aspects of culture such as principles of social organization (including practices of social organization, political organization, and social institutions), mythology, philosophy, literature (both written and unwritten), and science, comprise the immaterial/intangible cultural heritage of a society (Macionis, 2011, p.53).

According to Edward Casey, the very word *culture* meant 'place tilled.' It goes back to Latin *colere* (to inhabit, care for, till, worship) and *cultus* (a cult, especially a religious one). Therefore, to be cultural or to have a culture is to inhabit a place sufficiently as to cultivate it, to be responsible for it, to respond to it, and to attend to it caringly (Sorrells, 2015). *Culture* should be understood in terms of all the ways in which human beings overcome their original barbarism, and through artifice and knowledge, become fully human (Velkley, 2002, p.11). Hence, TerrorManagement Theory posits that culture is a series of activities and worldviews that provide humans with the basis for perceiving themselves as person(s) of worth within the world of meaning - raising themselves above the merely physical aspect of existence in order to deny the animal insignificance and death that homo sapiens became aware of when they acquired a larger brain (Greenberg, 2013, p).

In the words of E.B. Tylor, it is 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tylor, 1974, p.1). Alternatively, culture is understood as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses and material expressions, which, over time, express the continuities and discontinuities of social meaning of a life held in common (James, Magee et al, 2015, p.53). The Cambridge English Dictionary states that culture is the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at

a particular time (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2017). The term is also used to denote the complex networks of practices and accumulated knowledge and ideas that is transmitted through social interaction and exist in specific human groups using the plural form.

The concept of art as an attribute of the individual has to do with the extent to which a society has cultivated a particular level of sophistication in the arts, sciences, education, or manners. The level of cultural sophistication has also sometimes been seen to distinguish civilizations from less complex societies. Some schools of philosophy, such as Marxism and critical theory, have argued that culture is often used politically as a tool of the elites to manipulate the lower classes and create a false consciousness. Marxism is also of the view that human culture arises from the material conditions of human life, as they create the conditions for (physical) survival, and that the basis of culture is found in evolved biological disposition.

A culture is the set of customs, traditions, and values of a society or community, such as ethnic group or nation. Culture is the set of knowledge acquired over time. In this sense, multiculturalism values the peaceful coexistence and natural respect between different cultures. Sometimes, the term, culture, is also used to describe specific practices within a subgroup of a society. Within cultural anthropology, the ideology and analytical stance of cultural relativism holds that cultures can hardly have objective evaluation because any evaluation is necessarily situated within the value system of a given culture. Yet within philosophy, this stance of cultural relativism can be undermined and made inapplicable since such value judgment is itself a product of a given culture.

In fact, there are as many definitions of culture as there are scholars who are interested in the phenomenon. Culture embraces a wide range of human phenomena, material achievements and norms, beliefs, feelings, manners, morals and so on. It is the patterned way of life shared by a particular group of people that claim to share a single origin or descent. For this reason, Bello sees it as the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempt to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms thus distinguishing a people from their neighbors (Bello, 1991, p. 189). Affirming the notion that culture serves to distinguish a people from others, Aziza asserts:

Culture...refers to the totality of the pattern of behavior of a particular group of people. It includes everything that makes them distinct from any other group of people; for instance, their greeting habits, dressing, social

norms and taboos, food, songs and dance patterns, rites of passage from birth – through marriage – to death, traditional occupations, religious as well as philosophical beliefs (Aziza 2001, p.31).

It should be noted that culture is passed on from generation to generation. The acquisition of culture is a result of the socialization process. Throwing more light on this point, Fufunwa observes that the child just grows into and within the cultural heritage of the people and inherits it. He made it clear that culture, in traditional society, is not taught but caught instead. The child, according to him, observes, imbibes and mimics the action of his elders and siblings. Therefore, it is impossible for the child in a traditional society to escape his cultural and physical environments (Fufunwa 1974, p.48).

This is to say, again, that anyone who grows up in a particular society is likely to become infused with the culture of that society, whether knowingly or unknowingly during the process of social interaction. This work attempts to portray culture as the total way of life of a particular group of people; and as Etuk rightly observed, an entire way of life would embody, among other things, what the people think of themselves and the universe in which they live: their world view – how they organize their lives in order to ensure their survival.

As Idiong (1994, p.46) rightly noted, there are some misconceptions that are widely held about culture as a word, which can lead some people to have a negative perception of the term and all that it stands for. “Such persons raise their eyebrows and suddenly frown at the word ‘culture’ as they in their minds’ eyes visualize masquerades, idol worshipping, traditional jamborees and other activities they consider bizarre that go with culture,” said Idiong (1994, p.46). This misconception, we believe, does not appear to be widespread but the posture may have arisen from a partial understanding of the meaning of culture because culture as it were is like a two-side coin. It has soul-lifting, glamorous and positive dimensions, yet it is not immune from some negative outcomes.

### **Aspects of Culture**

Culture has been classified into its material and non-material aspects. While material culture refers to the visible tactile objects which man is able to manufacture for the purposes of human survival; non-material culture comprises of the norms and mores of the people. While material culture is concrete and takes the form of artifacts and crafts, non-material culture is abstract but has a very pervasive influence on the lives of the people of a particular culture. Hence beliefs about what is good and what is bad, together with norms and taboos, are all instances of non-material culture. From the foregoing, it is obvious that



culture is shared since it consists of cherished values or beliefs that are shared by a group, lineage, and religious sect etc. Apart from this, culture is dynamic in the sense that it is continually changing.

### **Changing Cultural Dynamics**

Culture is not static. We are not alone in this observation as Anita (2005, p.17) states that culture is not fixed and permanent. It is always changed and modified by man through contacts with and absorption of other people's culture, a process known as assimilation. Etuk has also observed that cultures are not static; they change. In fact, cultures need to change. Any culture that wishes to remain static and resistant to change would not be a living culture. As we know, culture is carried out by people, and people do change their social patterns and institutions, and beliefs and values and even skills and tools of work. Then culture cannot but be an adaptive system.

Once an aspect of culture adjusts or shifts from within or outside the environment then other aspects of the culture are affected, whether directly or indirectly. It is necessary to know that each element of a culture (such as material procedures, food processing or, greeting pattern) is related to the whole system. It is in this respect that we can see that even a people's technology is part of their culture.

Raimon Panikkar identifies several ways in which cultural change can be brought about. These include growth, development, evolution, renovation, re-conception, reform, innovation, revolution, progress, borrowing, modernization, indigenization, transformation, etc (Strong et al, 1992). **Cultural innovation** has come to mean any innovation that is new and found to be useful to a group of people and expressed in their behavior, but which does not exist as a physical object. Humanity is in a global accelerating period of culture change, driven by the expansion of international commerce, the mass media, and the human population expansion among other factors. **Cultural repositioning** means the reconstruction of cultural concept of a society (Ali 2007, p.79). Cultures are internally affected by both forces encouraging change and forces resisting change – factors which are related to social structures as well as natural events. Social conflict and the development of technologies can also produce changes within a society by altering social dynamics and promoting new cultural models, and spurring or enabling generative action. These social shifts (changes) may accompany ideological shifts and other kinds of cultural change. Cultures are externally affected via contact between societies, which may also produce or inhibit social shifts and changes in cultural practices. Again, cultural ideas may

transfer from one society to another, through diffusion or acculturation. In diffusion, the form of something moves from one culture to another. Acculturation has different meanings but in this context it refers to replacement of the traits one culture with those of another, such as what happened to many parts of Africa during colonization.

### **Is there an African Culture?**

From the foregoing it follows that there can be no people without a culture nor can there be a culture without a people or a society. Culture is selective in what it absorbs or accepts from other people who do not belong to a particular cultural group. To claim that there can be a society without a culture would, by implication, mean that such a society has continued to survive without any form of social organization or institutions, norms, beliefs etc; and this kind of assertion is obviously untrue. This is why even some Eurocentric scholars who may be tempted to use their cultural categories in judging other distinctively different people as 'primitive,' often deny that such people have history, religion and even philosophy, but cannot say that they have no culture.

In this paper, we shall be dealing with African culture and drawing examples from Igbo culture of Nigeria to avoid unnecessary generalization. This is because based on the consideration of culture as that which marks a people out from others, one can rightly say that there are many cultures in Africa. Africa is inhabited with various ethnic nationalities with their different languages, modes of dressing, eating, dancing and even greeting habits. If an individual can have a philosophy (of life) then, each group in Africa certainly have world view as well as philosophy.

But in spite of their various cultures, Africans do share some dominant traits in their belief systems and have similar values that mark them out from other peoples of the world. A Nigerian culture, for instance (if there is any such thing) would be closer to, say, a Ghanaian culture on certain cultural parameters than it would be to the oriental culture of the Eastern world, or the Western culture of Europe. It is true that culture is universal and that each local or regional manifestation of it is unique. This element of uniqueness in every culture is often described as cultural variation. The culture of traditional African societies, together with their value systems and beliefs are close, even though they vary slightly from one another. These variations are made manifest when we compare an African culture with others. Certainly, African cultures differ significantly from the cultures of other regions or continents, yet we believe that the term

'African culture' is vague and ambiguous. To enforce a belief in collective African culture is a dogma of the Africans.

It will be safe to say that in a debased sense of the word, there is an African culture; but in the strict sense, there is no such thing. And we believe there is no need to over-labor this point since there are sufficient dissimilarities to justify this argument in as much as we still find some similarities to justify our usage of the term 'African culture.'

The culture of Africa, so-called, is varied and manifold, consisting of a mixture of countries with various tribes that each have their own unique characteristics from the continent of Africa. It is a product of the diverse populations that today inhabit the continent of Africa and the African Diaspora. African culture is expressed in its arts and crafts, folklore and religion, clothing, cuisine, music and language (Bea, 2016). Expressions of culture are abundant within Africa, with large amounts of cultural diversity being found not only across different countries, but also within single countries. Even though African cultures are widely diverse, it is also, when closely studied, seen to have many similarities. For example, the morals they uphold, their love and respect for their culture as well as the strong respect they hold for the aged and the kings and chiefs.

Africa has influenced and been influenced by other cultures. This can be portrayed in the willingness to adapt to the ever-changing modern world rather than staying rooted to their static culture. The Westernized few, persuaded by European culture and Christianity, first denied African traditional culture, but with the increase of African nationalism, a cultural recovery occurred. The governments of most African nations encourage national dance and music groups, museums, and to a lower degree, arts and writers.

### **Expressions of African Culture**

Africa is divided into a great number of ethnic cultures (Haseeb 1991, p.54). The continent's cultural regeneration has also been an integral aspect of post-independence nation-building on the continent, with a recognition of the need to harness the cultural resources of Africa to enrich the process of education, requiring the creation of an enabling environment in a number of ways. In recent times, the call for a much greater emphasis on the cultural dimension in all aspects of development has become increasingly vocal.

During colonialism in Africa, Europeans possessed attitudes of superiority and a sense of mission. The French were able to accept an African as French if that person gave up their African culture and adopted French ways. During the

Roman colonization of North Africa (parts of Algeria, Libya, Egypt and the whole of Tunisia) provinces such as Tripolitania became major producers of food for the republic and the empire, this generated much wealth in these places for their 400 years of occupation (Maulana 2010, p.19). The French were able to accept an African as French if that person gave up their African culture and adopted French ways. Knowledge of the Portuguese language and culture and abandonment of traditional African ways defined one as civilized (Pankhurst 1997). Mwitimugambi argues that the future of Africa can only be forged from accepting and mending the socio-cultural present. For him, colonial cultural hangovers, pervasive Western cultural inundation, and aid-giving arm-twisting donors are, he argues, here to stay and no amount of looking into Africa's past will make them go away. However, Maulana states (2010):

Our culture provides us with an ethos we must honor in both thought and practice. By ethos, we mean a people's self-presentation in the world through its thought and practice in the other six areas of culture. It is above all a cultural change. For culture is here defined as the totality of thought and practice by which a people creates itself, celebrates, sustains and develops itself and introduces itself to history and humanity. (P.20).

African culture is expressed through many different art forms, such as music, dance, art, etc.

### **Arts and Crafts in African Culture**

Africa has a rich tradition of arts and crafts. African arts and crafts find expression in a variety of woodcarvings, brass and leather art works. They also include sculpture, paintings, pottery, ceremonial and religious headgear and dress. Maulana Karenga states that in African art, the object was not as important as the soul force behind the creation of the object. He also observes that, "All art must be revolutionary and in being revolutionary it must be collective, committing, and functional.

Certain African cultures have always placed emphasis on personal appearance and *jewelry* has remained an important personal accessory. Many pieces of such jewelry are made of cowry shells and similar materials. Similarly, masks are made with elaborate designs and are an important part of some cultures in Africa. Masks are used in various ceremonies depicting ancestors and spirits, mythological characters and deities.

In many traditional arts and craft traditions in Africa, certain themes significant to those particular cultures recur, including a couple, a woman with a child, a male with a weapon or animal, and an outsider or a stranger. Couples may represent ancestors, community founder, married couple or twins. The couple theme rarely exhibit intimacy of men and women. The mother with the child or children reveals intense desire of the women to have children. The theme is also representative of mother and the people as her children. The man with the weapon or animal theme symbolizes honor and power. A stranger may be from some other tribe or someone from a different country, and more distorted portrayal of the stranger indicates proportionately greater gap from the stranger.

### **Folklores and Religion in African Culture**

Like all human cultures, African folklore and religion represent a variety of social facets of the various cultures in Africa. Like almost all civilizations and cultures, flood myths have been circulating in different parts of Africa. Culture and religion share space and are deeply intertwined in African cultures. In Ethiopia, Christianity and Islam form the core aspects of Ethiopian culture and inform dietary customs as well as rituals and rites (Mwangi, 1970).

Folklores also play an important role in many African cultures. Stories reflect a group cultural identity and preserving the stories of Africa will help preserve an entire culture. Storytelling affirms pride and identity in a culture. In Africa, stories are created by and for the ethnic group telling them. Different ethnic groups in Africa have different rituals or ceremonies for storytelling, which creates a sense of belonging to a cultural group. To outsiders hearing an ethnic group's stories, it provides an insight into the community's beliefs, views, and customs. For people within the community, it allows them to encompass their group's uniqueness. They show the human desires and fears of a group, such as love, marriage, and death. Folklores are also seen as a tool for education and entertainment. They provide a way for children to understand the material and social environments. Every story has a moral to teach people, such as goodwill, generosity, courageousness etc. For entertainment, stories are set in fantastic, non-human worlds. Often the main character of the story would be a talking animal or something unnatural would happen to human character. Although folktales are for entertainment, they bring a sense of belonging and pride to communities in Africa (Strong 1993).

### **Clothing in African Culture**

There are no general ways of dressing in Africa. Women's traditional clothes in Ethiopia are basically cotton cloth woven in long strips which are then sewn

together. Sometimes shiny threads are woven into the fabric for an elegant effect. Men wear pants and a knee-length shirt with a white collar, and perhaps a sweater. Men often wear knee-high socks, while women might not wear socks at all. Zulus like Nigeria wear a variety of attire, both traditional for ceremonial or culturally celebratory occasions, and modern westernized clothing for everyday use. Traditional male clothing is usually light, consisting of a two-part apron (similar to a loin cloth) used to cover the genitals and buttocks. The front piece of the apron is usually made of animal hide twisted into different bands to cover the genitals. The rear piece is made of cattle hide, and its length is usually used as an indicator of age and social position. The longer ones are worn by older men and men of high social status. Zulu men will also wear cow tails as anklets during ceremonies and rituals, such as weddings or dance. In the Muslim parts of Africa, daily attire also often reflects Islamic tradition.

### **Cuisine in African Culture**

The various cuisines of Africa use a combination of locally available fruits, cereal grains and vegetables, as well as milk and meat products. In some parts of the continent, the traditional diet features a preponderance of milk, curd and whey products. In much of tropical Africa, however, cow's milk is rare and cannot be produced locally (owing to various diseases that affect livestock). The continent's diverse demographic makeup is reflected in the many different eating and drinking habits, dishes, and preparation techniques of its manifold populations (Bowden 2000, p.40).

In central Africa, the basic ingredients are plantains and cassava. Fufu-like starchy foods (usually made from fermented cassava roots) are served with grilled meat and sauces. A variety of local ingredients are used while preparing other dishes like spinach stew, cooked with tomato, peppers, chillis, onions, and peanut butter. Cassava plants are also consumed as cooked greens. Groundnut (peanut) stew is also prepared, containing chicken, okra, ginger, and other spices. Another favorite is *bambara*, a porridge of rice, peanut butter and sugar. Beef and chicken are favorite meat dishes, but game meat preparations containing crocodile, monkey, antelope and warthog are also served occasionally.

In inland savannah, the traditional cuisine of cattle-keeping peoples is distinctive in that meat products are generally absent. Cattle, sheep and goat were regarded as a form of currency and a store of wealth, and are not generally consumed as food. In some areas, traditional peoples consume the milk and blood of cattle, but rarely the meat. Elsewhere, other peoples are farmers who grow a variety of grains and vegetables. Maize (corn) is the basis of *ugali*, the East African version

of West Africa's fufu. Ugali is a starch dish eaten with meats or stews. In Uganda, steamed green bananas provide the starch filler of many meals. The main traditional dishes in Ethiopian and Eritrean cuisine are stews served with flatbread made from wheat or sorghum as well as paste made from legumes such as beans. After meals, homes are traditionally perfumed using frankincense or incense, which is prepared inside an incense burner.

Over several centuries, traders, travelers, invaders, migrants and immigrants all have influenced the cuisine of North Africa. Most of the North African countries today have served similar dishes, sometimes almost the same dish with a different name. To add to the confusion, two completely different dishes may also share the same name. Moreover, there are noticeable differences between the cooking styles of different nations: there is the sophisticated, full-bodied flavors of Moroccan palace cookery, the fiery dishes of Tunisian cuisine, and the humbler, simpler cuisine of Egypt and Algeria (Abdul 1996).

The cooking of Southern Africa is sometimes called 'rainbow cuisine,' as the food in this region is a blend of many culinary traditions, including those of Khoisan, Bantu, European and Asian populations. Basic ingredients include seafood, meat products (including wild game), poultry, as well as grains, fresh fruits and vegetables. Fruits include apples, grapes, mangoes, bananas etc. There are also several types of traditional and modern alcoholic beverages including many European-style beers.

A typical West African meal is heavy with starchy items, meat, spices and flavors. A wide array of staples is eaten along the region including those of fufu, banku, kenkey, garri, which are served alongside soups and stews. Fufu is often made from starch root vegetables such as yams, coco-yams, or cassava, but also from cereal grains like millet, sorghum or plantains. The staple grain or starch varies region to region and ethnic group to ethnic group, although corn has gained significant ground, as it is cheap, swells to greater volumes and creates a beautiful white final product that is greatly desired. Banku and kenkey (originating from Ghana) are maize dough staples, and garri is made from dried grated cassavas. Rice-dishes are also widely eaten in the region.

### **Music in African Culture**

Traditional African music is as diverse as the region's various populations. The common perception of African music is that it is rhythmic music centered on the drums. African music is polyrhythmic, usually consisting of multiple rhythms in one composition. Dance involves moving multiple body parts. These aspects of African music were transferred to the New World by enslaved Sub-Saharan

Africans and can be seen in its influence on music forms like jazz, blues, rock & roll, rap music, etc (Abdul, 1996). Other African musical traditions also involve strings and horns. Dancing involves swaying body movements and footwork. Modern African music has been influenced by music from the New World.

### **Language in African Culture**

The continent of Africa speaks hundreds of languages, and if dialects spoken by various ethnic groups are also included, the number is overwhelming. These languages and dialects do not have the same importance: some are spoken by only few hundred people; others are spoken by millions. Among the most prominent languages spoken are Arabic, Swahili and Hausa..... Very few countries of Africa use any single language and for this reason several official languages co-exist: African and European. Some Africans speak various European languages such as English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, German and Dutch.

### **Value in African Culture**

The value of a thing whether an object or a belief, is normally defined as its worth. Just as an object is seen to be of high value that is treasured, our belief about what is right or wrong that are worth being held are equally treasured. A value can be seen as some point of view or conviction which we can live with, live by, and can even die for. This is why it seems that values actually permeate every aspect of human life. For instance, we can rightly speak of religious, political, social, esthetic, moral, cultural and even personal values. So, there are many classifications of values. For, as people differ in their conception of reality, so do they have diverse ideas of values. Sometimes, life itself seems to force people to make choices regarding their standards of values. Depending on the way we perceive things, we can praise and blame, declare actions right or wrong or even judge the scene or object before us as either ugly or beautiful. This is why Idang (2007, p.4) concluded that each person has some sense of values and there is no society without some value system.

Whether we are aware of it or not, the society we live in has ways of constantly forcing its values on us about what is good, right and acceptable. We go on in our daily lives trying to conform to acceptable ways of behavior and conduct. Persons who do not conform to their immediate society's values are somehow called to order by the members of that society. If a man, for instance, did not think it wise to make honesty a personal value, and it is widely held by his immediate society that truth telling is a non-negotiable virtue, it would not be long before such an individual gets into trouble with other members of the



society. This shows that values occupy a central place in a people's culture, making it more down-to-earth and real. The idea of African culture, therefore, means that there is peculiar way of life, approach to issues, values and world views that are typically African, even if, as we have noted, in a loose sense.

Some forms of behavior, actions and conduct are approved while others are widely disapproved of, based on cultural considerations. To show the extent of disapproval that follows the violation of values that should otherwise be held sacred, the penalty is sometimes very shameful, sometimes extreme.

African culture, with particular reference to the Ibibio people, for instance, has zero tolerance for theft. The thief once caught in the act or convicted, would be stripped necked, his or her body rubbed with charcoal from head to toe and the object he or she stole would be given to him or her to carry around the village in broad day light. The sense of personal shame and the disgrace the thief has brought on him or herself, family, relations and friends would be enough to discourage even the most daring thief. Anita (2005, p.17) writes that what a people hold to be true, right or proper with regard to those things, explains much of the cultural traits by which they become identified. What Anita calls 'trait' here could as well be called 'value,' and Etuk (2002, p.22) noted that no group of people can survive without a set of values which holds them together and guarantees their continued existence. Having seen the centrality of value in culture, it can be stated that the values of culture are what gives it uniqueness and identity.

### **The Role of Values in Igbo-African Culture**

A culture is an embodiment of different values with all of them closely related to each other. That is why one can meaningfully talk about social, moral, religious, political, aesthetic and economic values of a culture. Let us now look at these values piece-meal, as this would give us an understanding of how they manifest in Igbo-African culture and the importance being attached to them. As we shall discover, these values are inextricably bound together and are to be understood in their totality as African cultural values. Let us begin with social values.

**Social Values:** These are simply those beliefs and practices that are practiced by any particular society. The society has a way of dictating the beliefs and practices that are performed either routinely by its members or performed whenever the occasion demands. Hence, in Igbo culture, we have festivals, games, feasts, rituals, and dances that are peculiar to the people. These activities are carried out by the people because they are seen to be necessary. Some social values, especially in Igbo-African society, cannot be truly be separated from religious,

moral, political values and so on. This is why in Igbo culture, one can see that festivals which are celebrated often have religious undertone. They often ended with sacrifices that were offered to certain deities on special days in order to attract their goodwill, support, and blessings of the members of the society

Sometimes, social values are backed by customary laws. They comprise of those traditional carnivals that a people see as necessary for their meaningful survival. The New Yam Festival, for instance, as practiced in Igbo land has a way of encouraging hard work and checking famine. It was a thing of shame for a man to buy yams within the first two or three weeks after the festival. Doing so would expose a man as being lazy. Again, no one would dare to eat a yam before this festival, and this is kind of discipline to the people.

### **Moral Values**

African culture, as exemplified in Igbo-Africa, is embedded in strong moral considerations. It has a system of various beliefs and customs which every individual ought to keep in order to live long and to avoid bringing curses on them and others. Adultery, stealing and other forms of immoral behavior are strongly discouraged and whenever a suspected offender denies a charge brought against him, he would be taken to a soothsayer or made to take an oath for proof of innocence. In Igbo land, for instance, *ajo chi* (ordeal) is very popular as a method of crime detection. This in turn becomes a means of checking crimes in the society.

African proverbs and wise sayings have a rich repository of wisdom. The proverbs warn the African against evil conduct and, as Mbiti observed, they are a major source of African wisdom and a valuable part of African heritage. Igbo-African culture has a moral code that forbids doing harm to members of the society, a relative, a kinsman, a foreigner and a stranger; except when such a person is involved in an immoral act. And if that is the case, it is advisable to stay away from such an individual and even at death, they would not have dignified burial. Mothers of twins were not welcome and were regarded as the harbinger of evil, hence, unacceptable.

### **Religious Values**

Religion in Igbo-African society seems to be the fulcrum around which every activity revolves. Hence, religious values are not toyed with. Igbo-African traditional religion has some defining characteristics. For instance, it possesses the concept of a supreme being which is invisible and indigenous. It holds a belief in the existence and immortality of the human soul. The Igbo-African

traditional religion also has the belief that good and bad spirits do exist and that these spirits are what make communication with the Supreme Being possible. Above all, it holds a moral sense of justice and truth and the knowledge of the existence of good and evil (Umoh 2005, p.68).

Igbo-African religious values seem to permeate every facet of the life of the people and the Igbo believes that anything can be imbued with spiritual significance. The worship of different deities on different days goes on to show that the Igbo people hold their religious values in high esteem. Sorcerers and diviners are seen to be mediating between God and man and interpreting God's wishes to the mortal. The diviners, sorcerers, and soothsayers help to streamline human behavior in the society and people are afraid to commit offences because of the fear of being exposed by these spiritual agents.

### **Political Values**

The Igbo-African society definitely has political institutions with heads of such institutions as respected individuals. The most significant thing about the traditional society is that the political hierarchy begins with the family. Each family has a family head; each village has a village head. From here, we have clan head and above the clan head, is the paramount ruler. Prior to the coming of the Western colonization and its subsequent subversion of the African traditional political arrangements, Igbo-African society had their council of chiefs, advisers, cult groups, etc. It was believed that disloyalty to a leader was disloyalty to the gods; and the position of leadership was either hereditary or by conquest. In Enugu state, Nigeria, for instance, even though the traditional political institution was overwhelmingly totalitarian, there were still some checks and balances. Any ruler who attempted to usurp powers was beheaded by the *odo* (masquerade) cult. Anita observes that such checks and balances were enforced by the existence of secret societies, cults, societal norms, traditional symbols and objects, as well as various classes of chiefs who performed different functions on the different aspects of life (Anita 2005, p.145). From here it is clear that political values are linked with other values in the society.

### **Aesthetic Values**

The Igbo-African concept of aesthetics is predicated on the fundamental belief system which gave vent to the production of the art. Now art is usually seen as human enterprise concerned with the production of aesthetic objects. Therefore, when a people try to produce or create objects that they consider admirable, their sense of aesthetic value is brought to bear. Let us take an example. The fattened maiden adorned with beads characterizes the sense of beauty of the Igbo people.

This is unlike the Western mode of beauty often pictured as slim looking young lady who move in staggered steps. Indeed, aesthetic value is what informs a people's art and craft as it affects their sense of what is beautiful as opposed to that which is ugly.

### **Economic Values**

Economic values of the traditional Igbo-African society are marked by co-operation. The traditional economy which is mainly based on farming and hunting was co-operative in nature. In Igbo and, friends and relatives would come and assist in doing farm work not because they would be paid but simply to show solidarity and team spirit, and at the same time expect a return of such gesture when the need arises. Children were seen to provide the main labor force. That is why a man took pride in having many of them, especially males. Apart from farming, the people even co-operate in building of houses and doing other things for their fellow members. When any of them was in difficulty, all members rallied around and helped him or her. Hence, we can state that the economic values of the traditional African society, such as the Igbo, were founded on hard work and co-operation.

### **The World of Change and the Problem of Adjustment of African Culture**

It is expedient at this point that we examine some of the changes in culture and the problem of adjustment. Within this context, change means a significant alteration or departure from that which existed before. As we have noted earlier, invention, discovery, diffusion, etc, are some of the ways by which a culture can change or grow. Invention, for instance, involves the re-combination of existing cultural elements to fashion new things. There is no doubt, from our previous discussion, that the culture base or the cultural elements (objects, traits, and knowledge) in the pre-colonial Igbo/African society were limited in types and variation. Therefore, few inventions which could profoundly alter the culture could take place. Most appliances and utensils used then were made of wood and mud, as metal was not a commonly known cultural element of the people.

For example, a canoe was the only available means of transportation and it was wooden in all aspects until it was recently modified. Building materials too were wooden frameworks, sand and leaves knitted into mats for roofing. In spite of introduction of new inventions from other cultures, most houses are still built in the traditional methods using traditional materials, probably for economic reasons and sheer conservatism. Again, the pre-European-contact Igbo-African pattern of exchange was mainly by barter. The need for currency did not arise and so none was invented. Trade by barter, sale without standardized weight

and measure and the general non-contractual pattern of exchange, all went a long way to foster, enhance, and sustain social solidarity.

The introduction of currency generated acquisitive propensities and profit orientation among the people, thereby gradually articulating social inequality based on purely economic criteria. This cultural change was bestowed on us through the process of diffusion. Diffusion involves the spread of cultural traits from one society into another through cultural contact. It entails intentional borrowing of cultural traits from other societies with which the beneficiary society comes in contact, or it may be an imposition of cultural traits on one society by a stronger society intending to assimilate the weaker society.

The likelihood of bringing about cultural change (or reducing the period of culture lag) is dependent on the desirability of yielding to change in the non-material culture, the compatibility of the anticipated change with the existing culture, and the nature or magnitude of force available to exact or induce compliance. However, the desirability of yielding to change in the non-material culture depends on whether the people perceive the new mode of conduct to be better than the former. In many cases, a change which calls for the replacement or total abandonment of pre-established and originally preferred modes of behavior is less likely to be accepted than one that is preservative of the status quo – that is, one which either provides other alternatives and/or extends the culture by merely adding new things to it.

Now, it should be known that force has its own limit in bringing about change as it is impossible to spell out every bit of a people's ways of life and formulate legislation to cover them. Most contemporary Igbo-Africans find it difficult to adjust between their primitive beliefs in certain aspects of their culture and the supposedly modern mode of accepted behavior. For instance, in explaining the phenomena of disasters, deaths, accidents, and other misfortunes in the family, a new Christian convert would run to the Church for explanation and comfort, but if the Church's reaction is not immediate or prompt, the person may turn, in secret, to the native medicine man for immediate remedies. If the relief comes, he or she finds himself having to hold dual allegiance – one to the new found faith, and the other to his primitive beliefs. This form of dichotomy goes beyond misfortune and permeates most aspects of the person's life. In Egede of Enugu state, for instance, a ritual called *ikpa* was performed few days after the death of a male member who has duly identified with his age-grade in order to pave way for his peaceful admittance into the land of the spirit. This practice, of course is not supported by Christian doctrine, yet even the most devout Christian in the community takes this primitive culture to high esteem till date.

The point is that cultures always try to maintain those values that are necessary for the survival of their people. This is because values are integral part of culture and culture is what defines a people's identity. For the Igbo-Africans, for instance, we have seen that close kinship relations are held at a high premium, and this is unlike the Western individualistic model.

In those 'good old days' as some would say, it was usual to see a neighbor, friend, or relative correcting an erring child whose parents he/she knows. This was based on the true belief that the churning of a well-behaved child would be to the benefits of the entire society. In the same vein, it was believed that if the child turned out to be a failure, it is not only the immediate family that will bear the blunt; neighbors, friends, and acquaintances could also fall victim of his nuisance. But today we see people adopting more and more nuclear family patterns and the individualistic style of the West. A friend or neighbor who tries to correct an erring child will in no time, to his/her embarrassment, be confronted with the question, "What is your business?" Kinship ties and love are what characterized the traditional African culture. Love makes a community.

Furthermore, it is part of the Igbo-African world view to treat the environment in which he finds himself with respect. For as Enyi (2013) observes the African cooperates with nature and does not try to conquer it. There were taboos against farming on certain days as a way of checking the activities of thieves who may want to reap where they never sowed. It was also against the custom to cultivate on certain areas of the community or even fish on, or fetch water from, certain streams for some time. The system may have been founded on a myth but it has a way of conserving and preserving nature.

Nevertheless, if by conquering nature, we mean the transformation of natural resources for man's benefit, then we would encourage the present Africans to rise up and conquer nature by means of technology in line with other civilized populations of the world. And if today, some members of the society have violated the custom meant to check criminal activities and conservation of nature, it is largely for the reason of insincerity on the part of the custodians of culture who would often attribute all things as coming from the gods with consequent calamities as punishment to defaulters. The beliefs were not expected to deter anyone anymore once it was found out that the beliefs were lies and unfounded. Rather than clinging to unreasonable beliefs, the African should endeavor through education and learning to acquire the technological know-how to make his society life-enhancing while retaining and promoting those beliefs and values that have proved significant for his positive identity.

Again, it takes only a little reflection to see that marital rites and practices are usually carried out in line with the custom of the society concerned. In Igbo-African society, for instance, the polygamous marriage was more preferable because of its association with wealth, power, influence, social status and the desire to be surrounded by many children seen as not only gifts from God but as social security and economic assets. So, if a wife is unable to bear children, or unable to bear as much as required, the husband is compelled to take more wives. In this way, marrying of many wives became a demonstration of greatness. Indeed, many women encourage their husbands to take more wives to relief their pains of child bearing and to avoid appearing selfish, as though she wishes to enjoy the husband's wealth all alone.

This practice has become obsolete. Reproduction of children must have genuine desire, and inability to bear children is not sufficient reason to invalidate a marriage which is a loving union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. It should be clear too, that the suspicion for childlessness should not only be directed to the woman as is often the case; instead, the man as well as the woman should undergo proper medical examinations in order to remedy the situation of childlessness where possible.

Besides this, some societies are still practicing the system that if a man dies leaving behind a young wife, the widow is required by custom to name someone in the family of the deceased husband for whom she will stay on and fulfill the life-time obligation that she owes her dead husband. In some cases, the elder brother of the deceased takes up this right. Very often do they stop to wonder about the welfare of the widow and that of the children left behind by their brother's demise. These instances show that marriage practices and the cultural values that are held about them are due and in urgent need for revision in some African societies.

It does appear that while so-called African culture and values have positive, soul-lifting and humanistic dimensions, it also has some negative and dehumanizing aspects. Prior to the arrival of Mary Mitchel Slessor (1848-1905) in Africa, ignorance, superstition, and negative values made multiple births to be seen as an abomination and a herald of evil. Explaining how twins were looked at in those dark days, Udo (2007, p.103) notes that one of the twins was said to be genuine, the other an imposter. But by sharing the same cradle bed together, they were both infected and cursed. Their parents were equally guilty of defilement, particularly the mother.

The birth of twins was seen as a very bad omen in traditional Igbo-African society. In order to save the community from the anger and wrath of the deities, the twins were killed together – sometimes with their mothers. Since this barbaric custom was stopped by Mary Slessor, multiple births are now seen as multiple blessings. Members of the public freely make donations for their upkeep and we do not experience any wrath of those deities that demanded the heads of twins today. Twins have grown up to become normal, healthy, respected and respectable members of our society contributing economically, socially, morally, politically, religiously, and intellectually to the development of the African society.

### **Conclusion**

We observed that while the so-called African culture and values have positive, soul-lifting and humanistic dimensions, it also has some negative and dehumanizing aspects. Our recommendation is that those positive dimensions of our culture: our synergetic society, our conservation of nature and our native arts, dances and games that offer us interesting, and morally justifiable, sources of entertainment and happiness, should be encouraged given the fact that culture ought to be knowledgeably innovative and instrumentally beneficial to people in such a way that the society can move from one level of development to another. Unfortunately, some of our traditional practices cannot be demonstrated to be development friendly, and such go against the spirit of globalization, science and technology. Therefore, negative and harmful traditional practices that dehumanize people and portray them as primitive, unimproved, and backward people without future, should as a matter of urgency be discouraged and discarded. This can be achieved through the persuasion of religions, enactment of laws by the government, and most importantly, education and enlightenment of the traditional leaders and custodians of culture as well as every member of the society. The African, while retaining those culture and values that positively makes him distinctive, must dance the tune of the world of change in areas where the latter is comparatively apt to uphold the dignity and wellbeing of the human person in the society.

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## **THE RISING HERDSMEN MILITANCY AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Does human life still matter in Nigeria or have cows better economic values than human beings? These questions agitate the minds of these scholars hence the choice of this research topic. It is unfathomable and unimaginable the magnitude of violence and security challenges facing the Nigerian state in recent times. Human beings are slaughtered almost on daily basis and given mass burials following the recent phenomenal wave of the rising herdsmen militancy especially the northcentral states of Nigeria. No doubt, this new phenomenon has added to the surging wave of Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast. The main thrust of this paper is to examine the causes of this obnoxious herdsmen militancy and the incessant attacks on farmers, farmlands and communities. We shall be investigating the sources of the deadly weapons at the disposals of these herdsmen and efforts so far by the federal and state governments at quelling the violence and bringing the perpetrators to book. This will lead us into the assumption that since they are sponsored by some powerful unseen hands hence their untouchable nature. Descriptive approach will be used in the gathering of data. The nature of this research also warrants the conduct of interviews which the writers will not ignore but explore as a means of eliciting useful information on the issue under discourse. This research identified that these groups of militant herdsmen are no foreigners as claimed but bunch of incorrigible Fulani dancing the tune of some unseen drummers. This paper recommends that federal government must show sincere commitment towards disarming these herdsmen and to ensure that justice is served in this issue. Furthermore, the communities in collaboration with the state governments should not fold their hands but must rise up to the occasion to protect their communities instead of desertion.*

**Keywords:** Militancy, Herdsmen, Security, Nigeria, Fulani

### **Introduction**

The Fulani Herdsmen crisis remains a major issue in Nigeria. So far, thousands have either been maimed or killed and many have been forcefully evicted from their homes with properties worth millions destroyed, while the Nigerian federal government appears to be indifferent and unwilling to initiate any forceful action against the perpetrators of this obnoxious crime. Rather, they are requesting for pieces of land from states in order to provide the rampaging herdsmen with permanent feeding ground. This act leaves the researchers with the perception that cows' lives matter more than human lives. This unfortunate phenomenon as

pathetic as it is must be addressed quickly before it escalates to an unmanageable magnitude.

The Nigerian state has never encountered enemies as terrifying as the Fulani herdsmen. They are the heathen hordes that seek to conquer and enslave our people as they rape, murder and pillage their way across the country and no one seem to curtail and tame this rampaging marauders. They are obsessed to destroy, conquer and take over ancestral lands from their owners. To Wole Soyinka, they are 'marauders' who 'swoop on sleeping settlements' and whose 'weapon is undiluted terror.'

**Suffice however to observe that Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity which has made national security threat to become a foremost issue for the government and has prompted huge allocation of the national budget to security. Unfortunately, there is little to show for this huge resource allocation especially in tackling the issue of herdsmen militancy.**

**With the lingering security challenges posed by the rising herdsmen militants and the inability of the security apparatus of the government to guarantee the security of lives and properties in the Nigeria, the question that agitates everyone in Nigeria today is "do human lives still matter or has it been replaced with that of cows? Is security of lives and properties achievable? In the views of these writers the present Nigerian government at all levels has not done enough at confronting bluntly the situation and dealing with it decisively. This leaves the researchers with no other option than to conclude that the situation has a political undertone or inclination calculated to serve the interest of certain sections of this country.**

## **Concept Clarifications**

### **a. Militancy**

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, defines militant as "Having a combative character; aggressive, especially in the service of a cause." The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines militant as "aggressively active (as in a cause)." The English word militant is both an adjective and a noun, and is usually used to mean vigorously active, combative and aggressive, especially in support of a cause, as in 'militant reformers.' It comes from the 15th century Latin "militare" meaning "to serve as a soldier." The related modern concept of the militia as a defensive organization against invaders grew out of the Anglo-Saxon Fyrd. In times of crisis, the militiaman left his civilian duties and became a

soldier until the emergency was over, when he returned to his civilian occupation. The meaning of militancy does not usually refer to a registered soldier: it can be anyone or group who subscribes to the idea of using vigorous, sometimes extreme, activity to achieve an objective, usually political.

For this paper, militancy represents a new form of local resistance against internal and external oppressions. In the case of the Niger Delta, it is a coordinated resistance by the youth against the oil companies who they blame for environmental pollution and degradation. It is also believed that the Federal Government of Nigeria has aided and abated the marginalization suffered by the region. Therefore, militancy in the Niger Delta manifests itself in forms of kidnapping of oil workers, hostage taking and incessant attacks on oil installations as well as the use of confrontational or violent methods in support of a political or social cause.

#### **b. Security**

According to Nwagboso, (2012) security is the act of being safe from harm or danger, the defense, protection and preservation of values, and the absence of threats to acquired values. Security is about survival and the condition of human existence. Security also exists when people live together in a certain environment without disturbance or violent. Adejumo (2011), states that security is the act of keeping peace within the governing territories. This is usually done by upholding the national law and defending the internal security threats in different areas of the country.

Furthermore, Adebakin,(2012) also observes security as freedom from danger or threats, and the ability of a nation to protect and develop itself, promote and cherish values and legitimate interests and enhance the wellbeing of its people. This can be maintained through internal security system. Usually, internal security system in any society is very important because it is use to prevent violence and criminal activities in different societies. Internal security also ensures freedom of people from any criminal disturbances and ensures the absence of criminal tendencies which can undermine internal cohesion and co-operate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its core values and meet the legitimate aspiration of the people.

Rather than experiencing the above defined situations as expressed by these scholars, what has become the recurrent scenario in Nigeria is the situation of insecurity leading to gratuitous loss of lives. **Ubong King, described insecurity as “the state of fear or anxiety, stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of**

protection.” It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects the situation currently witnessed in Nigeria where citizens can no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. The level of insecurity in Nigeria is becoming heightened by the day from physical insecurity which nourishes into other forms of insecurity such as economic security and social security.

### c. Herdsmen

These are largely group of nomads who parade through streets and towns with their cattle mostly of the Fulani extraction. In Nigeria, the Fulani and the Hausa people dominate the northern states, with a sizeable population. Notably, Fulani herdsmen are seen on major roads, streets and farmlands and with impunity, crops are destroyed without living the poor rural farmers at the mercy of these marauders who are ready to kill at any slightest challenge.

### **Who are the Fulani?**

The Fulani are an ethnic group, thought to be the largest in the Sahel with a population of 20 to 30 million. Traditionally the Fulani are semi-nomadic cattle herders, and communities who would travel vast distances along grazing routes to find places for their herds to eat. In Nigeria, the Fulani are mostly concentrated in the north. But a combination of political instability and drought is pushing them further and further south, where they are coming into conflict with local farming communities. Over the past few years, tensions between farmers and herdsmen have risen sharply ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)).

### **Why the violence?**

**There are divergent views on why the herdsmen turned violent. While some are of the view that it is as a result of climate change result in desert encroachments, others are of the view it is due to shortage of grazing land space in the north. Whichever reason that may be accepted by anybody, the fact remains that there are enough open and empty lands to graze in the north but these herdsmen have willy-nilly decided to take to the south causing mayhem and untold economic hardship on their host communities.**

These herdsmen, move from one place to another in search of pasture. In this process and for whatever reason the herdsmen have reportedly been seen carrying arms about and the authorities seem to wink at this ugly phenomenon. During their journey, they frequently trespass farmlands owned by locals in their host communities, destroying crops and valuables. Attempts by farmers to

prevent them from causing havoc are met with stiff and violent resistance. Often, the farmers are overpowered, injured and killed, while other remnants are evicted from their homes. Sometimes, the herdsmen are accused of taking these opportunities to steal, rape, raze houses and kill innocent members of the communities they pass through. Most of these acts do not result from confrontation from the farmers but stems from state laws banning open grazing. Most of the communities attacked by these militant herdsmen were conducted either early in the morning or late at night while the members of these communities were asleep leading many either burned alive or butchered with machetes.

The conflict has increasingly been ethnic (Fulani vs other Nigerian ethnicities), religious (Muslim herders vs Christian south), and cultural (nomadic vs sedentary) in dimensions, says Dr Roudabeh Kishi, director of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), which monitors and maps conflict ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)).

Fulani attacks on farmers are primarily practical rather than ideological; competition for suitable grazing land over the autumn and winter months. Though this has historically been seen as a reoccurring seasonal problem for many of the area's farming communities, last month's uncharacteristic level of violence has demanded attention of the national government and military,' says Kishi.

For Buhari, it is a core issue on which he has campaigned for over a decade. In several interviews, he has warned that if the livelihoods of the herdsmen, mostly from his own Fulani ethnic group, are not protected as part of a coherent agricultural and livestock strategy, mayhem will ensue. No doubt, this declaration is the true picture unfolding over the past three years of the President ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)).

### **Implications of Herdsmen Militancy in Nigeria**

Prior to 2016, herdsmen have been conducting their activities around the country without crisis what has turned these Fulani herdsmen into militants is inexplicable to these writers. Another pertinent question that must be asked is why are these herders not grazing the farmlands in the north but prefer the south and most especially the "food basket of the nation". The economic implication of this new found militant grazing cannot be overemphasized. The loss of lives is already alarming while the food insecurity in the long run will be unbearable.

The food crisis is already looming as many farmlands have been destroyed and many farmers sent to an untimely grave.

From Agatu in Benue State, Akure in Ondo State, Bukuru area in Plateau State, Oke Ogun area in Oyo State, Gassaka and Bali local government areas in Taraba State to Nimbo in Enugu State, rampaging militant herdsmen seem to be on a mission of bloodletting. Almost on weekly basis since 2017, bloodbath seems to be a recurrent decimal especially in the north central states highlighted above. Everywhere these herdsmen appear in recent times, sorrow, tears and blood trail them. Curiously however, they operate in such audacious manner that makes mockery of our national security arrangement. Herdsmen militancy has also exploited the existing fault lines of religion and ethnicity in Nigeria. It's evolving into a complex identity conflict that is sowing seeds of destabilisation throughout the Middle Belt, which runs through central Nigeria. In Kaduna, Taraba, Plateau and Nasarawa States, herdsmen attacks have been focused rather selectively on non-Muslim communities in a fashion that suggests a religious character to the attacks. In other places like Zamfara and Kebbi States, the attacks have been targeted on non-Fulani villages. So, in most of the attacks, it would seem victims are targeted on religious or ethnic grounds.

An observation by a former Chairman of the US Federal Reserve Bank, suggests that "if you allow an intolerable economic situation to persist without solution for too long, suddenly there are no good solutions left." Nigeria might be reaching that stage when the intractable problem of herdsmen/farmer clashes will evolve into mini-wars between herdsmen and entire communities. It is obvious that farmers can no longer farm peacefully because of the activities of herdsmen who are bent on unleashing terror on the famers. This Unfortunate development has led to the distrust of President Buhari, by the majority of those affected by the conflicts. Buhari has allowed himself to be boxed into a corner without any form of solution sight. He is now widely perceived as a strong and subjective advocate of the herdsmen such that the tough solutions that will be required to avert further economic losses cannot possibly come from him ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)).

The development as pointed out earlier has added to the humanitarian challenges in the country. Equally very disturbing is, the fact that the activities of the herdsmen have without doubt aggravated the feeling of mutual suspicion between host communities and herdsmen. The herdsmen who before now



peacefully coexisted with communities all over the country are now perceived to be enemies.

A cautious assessment of threats to national security reveal the activities of the armed herdsmen more than any other security challenge in the country at the moment constitutes, the most dangerous. In the last one year, the activities of the armed herdsmen have resulted in unimaginable destruction and displacement of many communities and loss of thousands of lives. Communities especially in the North and elsewhere never had serious disagreements with Fulani herdsmen in the past. It was a common practice in the north to invite them to stay on the farms in communities after the harvest for purpose of enriching the farmlands. All these seem to have eroded due to the ongoing attacks. Also, seen in the context of peaceful coexistence the attacks by herdsmen are heating up the polity and deepening the already existing polarization of the country along ethno ethnic and religious divides. This phenomenon is seriously compounding the rather fragile situation. In addition to this, the utterances of some individuals, as well as the inactions on the part of government are leading into a bitter herdsman – host communities war that may become intractable. It is rather unfortunate that people from some quarters are criticizing those calling on the communities to defend themselves, saying that the call for self-defence is unjustified and smacks of subversive intent that can only happen in a failed state. What more is the evidence needed to prove that the security challenges confronting Nigeria is clear evidence that it is typical of a failed state?

The Fulani Herdsmen have unabatedly continued to wreak havoc, mostly in the north central states area of the country. The inability of the Nigerian security agencies to contain them may spell greater doom for lives in susceptible areas. This situation is made more precarious by the silence of President Muhammadu Buhari on the herdsmen crisis.

### **Incidents of Recent attacks by the Fulani Herdsmen**

The Fulani herdsmen have been known to inflict mayhem in certain communities in Nigeria, and the rate at which they commit these obnoxious crimes has increased exponentially. According to statistics provided by the Institute for Economics and Peace, 1,229 people were killed in 2014, up from 63 in 2013 and Benue State seems to be the hardest hit in recent times. Barely five days to the end of Governor Gabriel Suswam's administration in May 2015, over 100 farmers and their family members were reportedly massacred in villages and refugee camps located in the Ukura, Per, Gafa and Tse-Gusa local government areas of

the state. According to reports, in July 2015, suspected herdsmen attacked Adeke, a community on the outskirts of the state capital, Makurdi. Last December, six persons were killed at Idele village in the Oju local government area. A reprisal attack by youths in the community saw three Fulani herdsmen killed and beheaded.

One afternoon in February, 2016, late that month, the villages in Agatu LGA a community in Benue came under attack by Fulani herdsmen. The invaders came prepared - dressed in war gear, armed with Ak47 riffles - and unleashed mayhem on the community. They razed houses, destroyed crops and trees and killed hundreds of people, including women, children and old people. In Logo and Guma LGAs of Benue State between January 1 and 6, 73 people were massacred by herdsmen during co-ordinated attacks on communities.

In February, 2018 as a result of a clash between herdsmen and farmers in Benue State, 40 more people were killed, about 2,000 displaced and not less than 100 were seriously injured. Most recently, more than 92 Nigerians were massacred by suspected Fulani Herdsmen in Benue and Niger states. Also, before this time, there have been reported attacks by the Fulani Herdsmen in southern states of the country, including Enugu, Ekiti and Ondo states.

From March till May a number of deaths occurred and victims were given mass burial as typified in the pictorial displayed below. Besides those given mass burial by the Governor of Benue state, 2 priests and some worshipers met their untimely death also in Benue state ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)).

Attacks attributed to Fulani herdsmen have become recurrent in Benue in recent months. Since the introduction in November 2017 of a controversial law banning open grazing by herders in the state, attacks have been carried out on an almost daily basis.

In January 2018, 80 people were killed and 80,000 forced to flee in a spate of violence in the state. The funerals on 11 January for 73 victims in Makurdi, Benue's capital, were broadcast live. Among those killed were seven members of the Benue State Livestock Guards - a special paramilitary unit set up by the state governor to ensure the full implementation of the grazing law.

In February 2018 Benue state witnessed one of the deadliest attacks in Nigeria in recent years, when over 500 villagers were massacred and over 7,000 displaced

from 10 villages. In Taraba, which neighbors Benue state, 38 members of a United Methodist Church were killed during a village-wide siege that same month. Following the Fulani herdsmen violence, it is found that more than 1000 Christians had been killed since November 2017 a typical evidence of ethnic cleansing.

In an account published in the Nigerian Vanguard newspaper of April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 “The services had barely started and worshippers were still coming for the Mass, after which a burial ceremony would take place, when sounds of rapid gunshots rent the air.

“People started scampering and wailing: 19 persons, including Reverend Fathers Joseph Gor and Felix Tyolaha, who were holding the morning Mass, were gunned down in cold blood, while many sustained injuries, including bullet wounds. “After attacking the church, the invaders descended on the community and razed over 60 houses, farmland, food barns, after carting away what the people had in their barns. “As usual, after killing the helpless worshippers and razing the community, the attackers fled from the scene.”

### **Responses from Various Stakeholders**

Many Nigerians had expected the president to come out openly and vehemently condemn these incessant attacks but has deliberately shied away from commenting on the crisis, as it is widely known that he is nourishing sympathy for his kinsmen the Fulani ethnic group.

As a result of attacks by herdsmen in Ekiti State, the governor of the state, Ayodele Fayose, came out openly and instructed his people to take up arms to defend themselves. He also gave the go-ahead to vigilante groups in the affected area of the state, charging them to kill any Fulani Herdsmen attempting to rape their wives or kill their children. In the same vein, Gen. T. Y Danjuma called on his people also not to run away from their homes but to rise up to defend themselves.

It is rather unfortunate that the Interim National Secretary of the Gan Allah Fulani Association (an umbrella body of Fulani associations in Nigeria) sentimentally, rose in defence of his kinsmen specifically on the Fulani Herdsmen attack in Agatu (LGA in Benue) in February, saying it was a reprisal attack, meant to revenge the killing of a prominent Fulani man.

A lawmaker, Zainab Kure, sponsored a bill in the Senate. This unpopular bill regarded as the 'Land Grazing Bill,' is aimed at securing areas for Fulani Herdsmen across the federation and for the mapping out of grazing routes. Beyond that, the bill seeks to establish a National Grazing Reserves Establishment and Development Commission.

The successful signing of this bill into law means there will be a limited areas reserved for the Fulani Herdsmen and their cattle. On the land required for the grazing routes, Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture, Audu Ogbeh, said that many northern states have donated several pieces of land for the project. However, states in the southern part of the country have kicked against the idea, noting that they cannot be forced to give out their land for this purpose. Despite the controversy that comes with the proposal, the bill has scaled the first reading in the Senate. We do hope this unpopular bill dies a natural death because it will not be in the interest of the south drawing the lessons of history.

### **Recommendations**

In order to ameliorate the incidences of this herdsmen militancy, the federal government should as a matter of urgency embarked on criminalization of the activities of the herdsmen. There is no gainsaying in the fact that they are terrorists and should be labelled as such. Recently it went on record in Nigeria as the Indigenous People of Biafran movement was declared a terrorist organization though without arms and has never maimed any life. There is need for fundamental surveillance as well as investigation of these herdsmen criminal related activities that is heightening the physical security around the country especially in the Middle Belt region. This should be targeted at deterring or disrupting these wanton attacks. The security agencies if they are really sincere should wake up to their responsibilities by harnessing the security facilities within their disposals at nipping in the board the reckless killings perpetrated by the Fulani hoodlums posing as herdsmen. Despite the massive acquisition of arms and quantum spending on security, the level of insecurity in the country is still on the increase. The writers therefore call on the Buhari led government to overhaul the security chiefs of Nigeria to prove there is no undertone attachment to the level of killings going on in this country. A situation where all the security chiefs of a multi-ethnic nation such as Nigeria are people from the North calls for scrutiny and this anomaly must be corrected if the security challenges confronting the nation will be addressed. In addition, the state governments as chief security officers of their states should as a matter of urgency push strongly

for the establishment of state police through the state houses of assembly in order to effectively secure their environments.

### **Conclusion**

Herdsman militancy has been ongoing in Nigeria for a long time but in recent years the incidents have become a lot more organized, sophisticated and complicated. With security compromised due to the Boko Haram insurgency, attacks have increased.

At a glance, these conflicts seem to be fuelled by the quest for grazing land by Fulani herdsman. But a closer look shows a complex mix of politics, identity, religion, terrorism and criminality. All flourish because of a weak political and security environment. Conflict between herdsman and farmers are often triggered by attempts to prevent the cattle of nomadic herdsman from grazing on crop farms.

Arguably, nomadic herders are struggling due to political and environmental changes. Their livelihoods are being threatened by changes in weather patterns as well as modern land-use policies and urbanisation. Most African countries don't support their itinerant herding and nomadic lifestyle. What this means is that the average nomadic herder lives in an environment he considers hostile and indifferent to his needs, where he must struggle to fend for himself and to survive. This struggle for survival has become a way of life for herders who are ready to defend or redeem their endangered livelihood with their blood.

It has become pertinent to check the excesses of the herdsman through strong regulations. Open itinerant grazing should be restricted and grazing routes and reserves established. The ranch system of animal husbandry should be promoted as a substitute to mobile pastoralism. The above suggestions must be implemented with caution and should be established within the northern region of the country. This suggestion is better understood in the light of the Usman dan Fodio jihad in northern Nigeria in 1804. The usurpation by Usman of the political apparatus of the north was conducted under the pretext of purification of Islamic religion but ended up in changing the political landscape of northern Nigeria. This single incident that brought the Fulani to dominating the political space of the north cannot be taken lightly in view of the federal government's position on the creation of cattle colonies across the states in Nigeria. In addition, all perpetrators of violence under the pretext of farmer-herder conflict should be

brought to book and punished severely to deter impunity and wanton criminal behaviours.

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**AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA,  
ANGLICAN COMMUNION IN A WORLD OF CHANGE**

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**Abstract**

*There is no gain saying the fact that the world is dynamic and daily under-going changes in every sphere of human endeavor. The Anglican Church in Nigeria is not left out in this change especially since it became an autonomous Church of the Anglican Communion. This is evident in the changes it has experienced in its leadership structure. Leadership is a human phenomenon instituted by God for the purpose of maintaining order in society. The Anglican Church in Nigeria as a human – religious organization has leaders whose duty it is to maintain order by offering quality control of the organization according to set guidelines. This paper set out to x-ray what leadership is, using the analytical descriptive method of data collection and interpretation in arriving at the finding. The finding revealed that prior to the inauguration of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion in 1979 leadership in the Anglican Church in Nigeria was in the hands of foreigners, but that has changed since then with Nigerian Clergy and Lay being in charge of the day to day administration of the Church. It further revealed that as people who possess certain level of authority, the Bishops and Clergy as leaders are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly manner. No leader can lead without people hence it becomes imperative for the leader to possess rational skills to be able to carry the people along. In conclusion, this work recommends that both secular and religious leaders should recognize the place of the divine (God) in leadership, in the exercise of their authority over the people they lead for the good of all.*

**Key Words:** Authority, Leadership, Church, Anglican Church

**Introduction**

Authority and Leadership are major requirements in any given society or organization. These two are not new in life and living. What is new however is the way different people exercise their authority and the ever expanding interpretations and analysis of styles of how people are led or should be led. In every human setting, right from the smallest unit which is the family to the larger society, there has always been the need for a leader whose duty it is to maintain an organized society. The absence of a leader in a society or

organization has the tendency of turning such a society or organization to a Hobbesian society where people behave any how they like without control.

The place of authority and leadership in the effective running of any organization either in religious, political or otherwise cannot be overemphasized. There are many kinds and degrees of authority and leadership. Authority exercised is a kind of legitimate power and people follow figures exercising it because their position demand so, irrespective of the person holding the position. Leaders in organizations and elsewhere have many formal authorities but they mostly rely on the informal authority that they exercise on people to influence them. Leaders are trusted for their judgment, respected for their expertise and cherished for their integrity, hence not followed because of the position they hold but because of the role they play in the life of those they lead. An example is Mahatma Ghandi who for most part of his life did not hold any official position to lead the Indian Freedom Struggle, yet exerted so much authority and exhibited unequalled leadership that won freedom for his nation.

As a well-structured Christian organization, the Anglican Church in Nigeria has leaders vested with authority to ensure that there is order in the system. These leaders did not thrust upon themselves such leadership positions for “no one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was” Heb.5:4, but are believed to have been chosen by God, using human instruments hence accountable to Him that choose them; and also respected and cherished by those they lead because of the integrity they exhibit.

### **Authority**

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines authority as “the power to give orders to people” (p.83). It is the power or right to direct, influence or to do something. Authority from the knowledge point of view is the power to influence people because they respect your knowledge or official position, while in the organization. It is usually the people or a group of people who have the power to make decisions or who have a particular area of responsibility in an organization. It is often said that the leader possesses authority which enables him lead. Authority determines leadership, for what makes a leader the leader he is, is the level of authority he or she wields or controls.

Giddens (1997) defining authority from the sociological point of view said:

Authority is a legitimate or socially approved use of power. It is the legitimate power which one person or group holds over another. The element of legitimacy is vital to the notion of authority and is the main



means by which authority is distinguished from the mere general concept of power. Authority by contrast depends on the acceptance by subordinates of the right of those above them to give those orders or directives (p.581)

Authority derives from subordinates. Without the acceptance of subordinates, there can be no authority, hence authority differs from power. Authority is not forceful upon the subordinates but earned. The position one finds himself or herself determines the level of authority such a person commands. Authority as the heart of leadership according to the scripture is servant hood (Mark 10:42-45), and the Holy Bible teaches that legitimate leaders have authority in the sense of a right to direct others. Authority comes from God and is delegated to human leaders for the good of all.

### **Leadership**

Leadership has been defined by different scholars from their various backgrounds and disciplines. Cole (1998), described leadership as “a dynamic process in a group whereby one individual influences the other groups task in a given situation” (p.9). Yukr (1987), on his part said “leadership is a process by which a person exerts influence over other people and inspires, motivates and directs their activities to help achieve group or congregational goals” (p.27). Rue and Byars (1997), talks of leadership as “the ability to influence people to willingly follow ones decision” (p.28). On his part, John Stott (1984) posits that “leadership is not restricted to a small minority of world statesmen or to the national top brass”.

Going further, Stott said:

In every society, it takes a variety of forms. Clergy are leaders in their local church and community; parents are leaders in their homes and family; so are teachers in schools, and lecturers in colleges. Senior executives in business and industry; judges, politicians, social workers and union officials, all have leadership responsibilities in their respective sphere (p.327)

Leadership therefore is that act whereby someone stands out to show others the way to follow. There can be no leader without followership. Every leader must have followers who look up to him or her for direction and guidance. It is therefore expected that leaders must lead well in a bid to maintain order in the organization for the good of all. The disposition of the leader goes a long way to

determine the attitude and response of the followers hence it is expected that the leader must exhibit very high leadership potentials and qualities.

### **Church**

The New Concise Bible Dictionary (1989) says that “the English word ‘Church’ comes from another Hebrew word ‘*qahal*’ (to assemble), meaning ‘a local assembly’ of people” (p.90). Church is the people of God who come (assemble) together to worship. According to Schilling (1998), the first Old Testament word used for Gods people are ‘*QAHAL*’ (from Hebrew *qhl* - to assemble)” among the Hebrew of the Old Testament.

The New Testament word for Church is “*ecclesia*” derived from the Greek verb ‘*ek-kaleo*’, which simply means ‘to call out of’. In secular Greek, ‘*ecclesia*’ was used for various types of assemblies that came together for political or religious purposes. However, in the New Testament, it is a term which designated the people of God - those whom God has Himself called out of the world and made a special people of faith. Schilling sums it up when he said that “the Church is a group of people that God has called out of the world through Christ for the purpose of worshipping and serving Him (p.9).

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines Church as “a building where Christians go to worship”. From the Biblical definition, the Church is the people of God who come together to worship. It is a local assembly of believers called out for a special purpose. This assertion agrees with Okwueze (2003), who opined that “Church is an organized body of followers of Jesus Christ, the people of God as such”, which is also corroborated by Uche and Obi (2011) when they opined that “the Church is the sanctified body of believers, purchased with the precious blood of the Lamb, and called out for the purpose of worshipping God” (p.102)

The church therefore is a called out people by God for a special purpose. No matter how one looks at the Church, it is a gathering, assembly, community of God’s people, called out by God Himself for the sole purpose of worship - an organization where people share a common doctrine in an organized manner in a building or a designated place for that purpose. It could also refer to a particular group of Christians such as the Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church, Roman Catholic Church, Deeper Life Christian Church, etc.

### **Anglican Church**

The Anglican Church in Nigeria also known as the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) is a part of the universal Anglican Communion. The word Anglican is derived from an ancient Latin name for the 'Church of England' '*Ecclesia Anglicana*'. This means a Church which arose from and has root in England (Wotogbe-Weneka: 1997:17). Anyone therefore who upholds the teachings of, or system of the Church of England and emphasizes the authority of that Church, is called an Anglican. The Anglican Church is a Catholic Church in the sense that it has a Universal acceptability - extending and existing throughout the world - hence the word Anglican Church itself refers to any Church in Communion with the Church of England.

Emphasizing the Catholicism of the Anglican Church, Boettner (1962) said that "the Anglican Church is Catholic because it is found throughout the world and teaches universally and completely all the doctrines which ought to come to man's knowledge concerning things visible and invincible, heavenly and earthly (p.2). The Anglican Church in Nigeria from its "very beginning understands itself to be part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. It also shares the teaching of the Reformed Church that sheds off the excesses of the Roman Catholic Church to maintain the Apostolic Faith" (Fape: 2010:65).

The Anglican Church in Nigeria prior to 1979 was part of the "Province of West Africa which stretched over the area of Anglophone West Africa and included hundreds and thousands of ethnic groups, languages and cultures. Again the countries concerned were of varying political status" (Nwankiti: 1996:23). The Province of West Africa contained two kinds of Churchmanship - the 'High Anglican and the Evangelical'. The former was the tradition from which sprang the Society for Propagating the Gospel (SPG), which evangelized the Gold Coast - present day Ghana; while the later was the tradition from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) which evangelized Nigeria. According to Nwankiti (1996) this was why "someone humorously said 'the General Synod was merely "cosmetic", indeed so for the differences stated above did not allow in-depth discussions of many matters of common interest to all the Dioceses.

By 1979, Anglican Dioceses in Nigeria numbering sixteen were constituted into a Province. This was on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1979 with the Rt. Rev. Timothy O. Olufosoye as its first Archbishop. On that day in history all the churches started by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Nigeria, including Bishop

Crowther's Niger Mission churches all fused together to become what is known and referred to today as Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion.

This Church which started with sixteen dioceses has grown to fourteen Ecclesiastical Provinces, one hundred and sixty-four dioceses in Nigeria and overseas. There are fourteen Archbishops and also one hundred and sixty-eight Bishops (including the Archbishops), at leadership positions in the various dioceses and in Church of Nigeria Universities and Theological institutions.

### **Authority and Leadership in the Anglican Church in Nigeria**

No matter how authority and leadership are defined, one basic fact that stands out is that there is always someone who every other person looks up to, to show others the way – that possesses the charisma and ability to make a difference by way of authority and leadership. That person is referred to as the leader and some of his or her functions include directing activities through motivation and by inspiring the led. These are the roles various leaders in the Anglican Church such as the Bishops and the Clergy play in the day to day running of the Church organization in Nigeria.

Authority and leadership in the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion is clearly expressed in the maxim that “the Anglican Church is Episcopally led and Synodically governed” (Fape 2010:65). What this means is that the Bishop is vested with the authority to lead the Church and this authority is provided by the Diocesan Synod.

According to Wotogbe-Weneka (2014), a diocese is the centre of church government in Anglican Communion. In fact a Diocese can be said to be the apex of government in the Anglican Church. This is because the other ones higher than it are mere consultative bodies eg., the General Synod and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC). At this level, the head of administration is the Diocesan Bishop through the Diocesan Synod often described as the pool of power in the Anglican circles. The executive arm of the Diocese is the Diocesan Board which takes all the decisions of the Synod.

The Anglican Church in principle recognizes the existence of three houses viz: the house of Bishops, the house of Clergy and the house of Laity. The Bishop governs and leads the Church unit (the diocese) committed to his charge with the assistance, advice and support of the Clergy and the Laity which makes up the Synod which is the highest decision making body of the church (of course led by

the Bishop). The concept of authority and leadership in any organization cannot be divorced from the total ministry and mission of such organization. Religious concepts of authority and leadership must be differentiated from the leadership concept of the world. Jesus Christ Himself observed a parallel line between the concept of authority and leadership and leadership in the world (Matthew 20:25-26).

Omeire (2000) posits that authority and leadership in the world contrasts that of the church since that of the church is designed after the priorities and characteristics of the Kingdom of God. Quoting Dennis Roberts, Omeire wrote "the pattern of Christian authority and leadership are simply Christ like leadership which involves to serve and to lead by example" (p.161). A leader must be a person of authority. He must be in a position to issue commands to his subjects. That is the position and privilege the Anglican Bishop occupies and enjoys in the Anglican Church in Nigeria. He wields much authority and sometimes uncontrollable powers to the extent that his word is often seen as law and policy statement in his diocese which is binding on his subordinates (Clergy) and parishioners (Churches) alike. He is the trail blazer and rallying point for all in the diocese and the Anglican Church at large. The Anglican Bishop is referred to as the 'Diocesan' meaning the 'Diocese personified'.

Nwachukwu (2008) description of a leader fits adequately with the place of the Anglican Bishop in the Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion. She said:

Power resides on the leader, and that power implies action, doing something; while authority connotes position or office that ignites the power. Outside the office of leadership, a person has no such powers (ability) over others to command, lead, order or direct them. Power resides with the authority holder (p.11)

The Anglican Bishop is the power holder upon which authority resides in the diocese which is why he is expected to be one that is endowed with leadership qualities and special attributes that commends him to those he leads. Christian leadership should be characterized by selfless humble service. This is the kind of leadership that the Anglican Church in Nigeria displays in its seven levels of administrative structure starting from the Station, Parish, District/Deanery, Archdeaconry, Diocesan, Provincial and Church of Nigeria levels. The leaders see themselves as servant leaders under Christ who must give account of their stewardship to God.

### **The place and importance of People in Leadership in the Anglican Church**

The place and importance of people in authority and leadership in the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion cannot be overemphasized especially in the present times we find ourselves when religious organization are becoming more worldly than even secular organizations. The Anglican Church leadership has remained focused guided by those Biblical principles which stand it out as a pacesetter in Nigeria. Modernism and secularism has not done much damage to the authority of those who lead. The whole issue of authority and leadership still revolves around the ability of the leader to obtain and retain people. The Anglican leadership recognizes the importance of people, for without the people, there can be no church, and without the church there can be no one to lead. This understanding places great demand on leaders at every level to value their greatest asset which is the people. People are the most important asset of the leader and his authority derives from the people. The truth of the matter is that no matter who the leader may be, or his level of leadership, he (the leader) cannot get far without the support of the people, and this support is made possible by the leader's ability to relate well with the people.

Every leader needs relational skills. If a leader both religious and secular possesses relational skills, the crisis situation experienced by many organizations in recent times would be a thing of the past. Many Christian organizations today face crisis to the extent that one begins to wonder the real meaning and aim of setting up such Christian organizations and what they actually set out to achieve. The Anglican Church is devoid of such rancor and leadership crisis because it has set up defined administrative structures to address such crisis when it rears up its ugly head. This is because every leader and follower alike understands where his/her authority ends and where the other person's right begins. This accounts for the growth experience in the Anglican Church in Nigeria acclaimed as the most well administered and fastest growing Church in the Anglican Communion worldwide.

There is no gain saying the fact that the problem confronting and breaking Churches today is people oriented. The place of people in any administrative set up should be appreciated and nurtured. Leaders should improve on their relational skills to carry the people along. According to Uka (2003) "if your relational skills are weak, your leadership will always suffer. Rules and regulations minus relationship equal to resentment and rebellion - R + R - R = R + R" (p.26). You cannot but need the help of people. People are the reason for the rise and fall of organizations, the church inclusive. This is the secret which the

Anglican Church has discovered, harnessed and adopted in it's over 160 years of existence in Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

No human organization or society can thrive and grow without acceptable administrative structures which places premium on people. Wherever there are people, authority and leadership become essential ingredients for harmony or else everyone would live as it pleases him or her hence such society or organization would become a Hobbesian society. No wonder Theodore Roosevelt quoted in Uka (2003) said that "the single most important ingredient in leadership is, knowing how to get along with various kinds of people" (p.27). When this is done, the led will be respected and their support will be guaranteed. The result will be peace and progress in every strata of such organization.

The place of God in leadership must not also be compromised since God has a leadership template of degree and kind for every human endeavor. This has been the secret of the Anglican Church leadership. Leaders therefore are expected to exercise their authority by first seeking God's will and leadership with all their heart for divine grace and direction. The Anglican Church pattern of leadership is well-organized and structured hence this work seeks to recommend it to not only other religious organizations, but to secular administrative organizations as well since we are living in a world of change. By so doing, the objectives that such organizations have set for themselves will be realized for the general good of humanity.

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## **SOFT SKILLS FOR RETAILING OF NATIVE AFRICAN ARTS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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### **Abstract**

*Visual arts of native Africa – modern and historical sculpture, painting, pottery, textiles, masks, personal decoration - are natural, beautiful, appreciated and patronised by people all over the world. However, the fact that many of the local artists who create these works have not shown improved economic status over time is an indication that they are not selling their products effectively. Thus, it appears that the artists possess the technical skills required to create the arts but do not have the soft skills required to attract and sustain buyers, negotiate effectively and sell their works at sufficient profit. This study identified the soft skills for effective retailing of African arts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Subjects were 124 artists and retail workers drawn from local art galleries that sell African arts in Lagos. The subjects responded to a 28-item questionnaire on soft skills for effective retailing of African arts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The respondents also provided information about their age, sex, arts retailing experience and type of art. Analysis of data was done using percentages, mean and standard deviation. The results obtained revealed that the retailers agreed that most of the identified soft skills in areas of communication; critical thinking, collaborative problem solving, negotiation and follow-up were required but not possessed by them. This finding call on art schools, faculties and institutions to integrate the teaching of the soft skills into their curriculum. It also underlines the need to organize workshops and seminars to help practicing teachers of art as well as African arts retailers to enhance their soft skills.*

**Keywords:** African Arts, Retailers, Soft Skills, 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## **Introduction**

African traditional art including sculpture, painting, pottery, textiles, masks, personal decoration possess rich, diverse aesthetic properties as well as unique characteristics that are attractive to people from different parts of the world. African arts have been in existence for centuries. The earliest art of the African continent - excluding the controversial Stone Age quartzite figurine from Morocco known as the Venus of Tan-Tan (200,000-500,000 BCE) - consists of the engravings in the Blombos Caves on the Cape coast of South Africa, dating from 70,000 BCE, followed by the animal figures from the Apollo 11 Cave in the Huns Mountains of southwestern Namibia, dating from around 25,000 BCE (Izevbigie, 2000). African art has impacted arts in other continents, for example, it refreshed and inspired pioneers of modern European art painters such as Pablo Picasso, André Derain and Amedeo Modigliani; and sculptors such as Constantin Brancusi, Alberto Giacometti, and Henry Moore. (Chanda, 2008; Meggs, 1992). African artists, are still being called upon to generate visual communication that reflect s the identity of the African continent (Lange, 2001). The arts are usually multifunctional, serving for religion, economics and entertainment among others. Whatever reason for the arts, they are created by artist and most times, sold to the users.

The concept of selling to users, also known as retailing, is important in the art world given that it is a function that links artists to the consumers of their products. Retailing typically includes all the activities involved in selling products or services directly to final consumers for their personal, non-business use (Kotler and Keller, 2015). Thus, a retailer is a business that sells products and services to ultimate consumers (Dibb, Simkin, Pride & Ferrell, 1994:317). Arts retailing can be non-store or in-store. It is non-store when the sale activities performed outside a store such as door-to-door or street selling of arts. It is in-store when sale activities are performed within a retail facility such as a store or an art gallery. This study focuses on in-store arts retailing.

Arts retailing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not just about selling beautiful art works and making profits. It is more about customer relationship management, satisfying customer needs and solving problems (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009). It is also about ethics, trust and adapting to change. Unlike few decades ago, consumers are now educated and more informed owing to the explosion in ICT that makes available an ever-widening range of information from authoritative sources. In addition, customers now interact with increasing number of retailers - in-store, on street and online and have generally become choosier and more assertive, exerting

control over purchasing and consumption decisions unlike few decades ago when they were passive recipients of retailers' offers (Kanu, 2017).

In light of the above, artists require a new skills set for effective arts retailing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While the technical skills for creating the works and the traditional retailing skills such as displaying the arts attractively remain critical and fundamental to success, retail workers must also possess some important soft skills. The term 'soft skills' is used to indicate all the competences that are not directly connected to a specific task but are necessary in any position as they mainly refer to the relationships with other people (Cimatti, 2016). Matteson, Anderson and Boyden (2016) provide a similar definition of soft skills as a collection of people management skills. They emphasise that soft skills is not synonymous with attitudes or values. Thus, in this study, soft skills are behavioural competencies that relate to dealing with people such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving and negotiation. These skills are not necessarily new but they have become basic requirements for succeeding in retailing African Arts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since retailing involves dealing directly with customer, retailers will be more successful if their retail workers can communicate effectively, negotiate appropriately and collaborate with customers to achieve their shopping objectives (Kanu, 2017).

In spite of the role that good levels of soft skills could play in aiding arts retailing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, education and training of artists and retail workers in art stores do not seem to integrate these important skills. One likely reason for excluding the soft skills is the confusion about what exactly to integrate. Indeed, soft skills such as, collaboration and critical thinking are highly dimensional and the dimensions that apply to arts retailing have not been fully identified and integrated into Art Education and training programmes. Thus, many artists and art retailers do not have the skills required to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century customers. Some artists and workers in arts retail stores cannot communicate effectively with customers using the right words, tone and body language. Some cannot listen attentively and ask appropriate questions to aid their understanding of customers' needs. Instead, they cut customers short and use languages that are not only poor and confusing but deliberately deceptive and manipulative. Some cannot collaborate with customers to achieve their shopping goals and negotiate appropriately to create a win-win situation for them and their customers.

Meanwhile, art customers are usually not low class people who are constrained by money and distance. Thus, as poor customer relationship skills become more and more unacceptable to them, they seek out other alternatives which includes

buying African arts physically or over the internet from other continents such as Europe and America. Thus, African artist's find it difficult to sell their works to high-profile customers. In fact, many African artists end up selling their works to art collectors who pay a little amount and later, sell at a high profit. In light of the foregoing, this study identifies the soft skills required by in-store retailers of African arts for inclusion in education and training of artists and their retail workers.

## **Method**

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study was conducted in Lagos because the State has the most retail facilities as well as the most organized retail structure in Nigeria (Business Day Intelligence, 2014). Subjects were 124 artists and retail workers drawn from local art galleries that sell mainly African arts in Lagos. The art retailers were identified through physical visits. During the visits, the researchers enquired from the retailers about their tenure in retailing African arts. Retailers who did not have up to 3 years retailing experience were excluded from the study. Stratified random sampling was used to select 124 art retail workers of 45 art stores proportionally from 3 shopping malls (The palms, Ikeja mall and Leisure mall) and three hotels (Eko Hotel, Southern Sun and Sheraton). A maximum of three retail workers were selected from each store. The subjects were randomly picked if such workers were more than three in a store.

A 4- point likert-type structured questionnaire adopted from Kanu (2017) was used for the study. The adapted questionnaire was validated by two experts in Fine Arts, two experts in Marketing and one expert in Psychology. It consisted of two sections (A and B). Section A comprised four items that solicited personal information about respondents (age, sex, years of African arts retailing experience, and educational background) while Section B comprised 22 items on soft skills in communication, critical thinking, collaborative problem solving, negotiation and follow up. Respondents were requested to indicate the degree to which the skills were required by checking (i) Highly required (ii) Required (iii) Not required (iv) Highly not required. The questionnaire was pre-tested using 20 retail workers in Enugu who had up to three years African arts retailing experience. The pre-test results showed no ambiguity in the instrument and produced a Crombach Alpha Reliability Coefficient (for internal consistency reliability) of 0.88 for section B.

The questionnaire was administered by the researchers and 2 research assistants based in Lagos. The assistants were engaged to enhance timely distribution and collection of questionnaires. Prior to the data collection exercise, the research assistants were briefed on the research objectives as well as when and how to

approach the subjects in order to get their cooperation. In addition, they were taught to explain the individual items on the questionnaire should the subjects require explanations. Ninety eight (98) copies of the questionnaire were eventually retrieved, representing 79% retrieval rate. Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation were used to analyse the data collected. For section B, any item with mean value from 2.50 and above were considered required while items with mean value less than 2.50 were considered not required. All computations were done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16.0.

## Results

The results of the study are presented in the table below.

**Table 1: Respondent demographics and characteristics**

*Respondents (N=98)*

	%
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	77
Female	23
<b>Age range, years</b>	
18-25	48
26-35	19
36-40	31
41-50	2
<b>Years in African arts retailing</b>	
less than 5	42
5 to 10	26
More than 10	32
<b>Role</b>	
Artist and retailer	44
Retail worker	56

**Table 1: Mean responses of retail workers on soft skills required for successful personal selling in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

S/N o	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
<b>Communication</b>				
1	Holding effective oral conversation with customers	3.57	0.37	Required
2	Creating high-impact messages to aid selling	3.58	0.51	Required
3	decoding customers' non-verbal cues	3.41	0.48	Required
4	Tailoring words and tone to customer needs	3.75	0.61	Required
5	Listening attentively to customers	3.58	0.56	Required
6	Asking open-ended questions to get information from customers	2.24	0.68	Not Required
7	Engaging customers on social media platforms such as <i>facebook, instagram</i> and <i>twitter</i>	4.58	0.37	Required
8	Sharing good quality images of art works on social media	2.51	0.76	Required
9	Explaining the meaning of an art to customers to enable the customer take a decision	3.22	0.58	Required
<b>Critical thinking</b>				
10	Seeking clear understanding of customers' situation before talking about products	3.61	0.51	Required
11	Distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information provided by customers	2.54	0.51	Required
<b>Collaborative Problem solving</b>				
12	Respecting customers' beliefs	3.89	0.66	Required
13	Helping customers achieve their	3.54	0.71	Required

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	shopping objectives by allowing and helping in trials among other measures			
14	Responding quickly to customer complaints	3.62	0.46	Required
15	Advising customers to return arts (after payment) if they are not suitable for their purpose	2.50	0.67	Required
16	Effectively handling objections raised by customers	3.52	0.48	Required
	<b>Negotiation</b>			
17	Reaching a favorable win-win resolution with customers	3.42	0.62	Required
18	Stressing value for money rather than price	3.70	0.59	Required
19	Improving customer relationship while negotiating	3.13	0.63	Required
20	Cheerfully allowing customers to walk away if no favourable agreement is reached	3.50	0.54	Required
	<b>Follow-up</b>			
21	Appreciating customers for their patronage	3.71	0.51	Required
22	Requesting feedback to ensure that customers are satisfied with the purchase	2.58	0.72	Required
23	Visiting places where the arts used to ensure they are well suited or satisfying to customers			
24	Remembering customers' important events and sending greetings	2.11	0.61	Required

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Table 1 shows that only item 6 (Asking open-ended questions to get information from customers) has mean score below 2.50. This indicates that all the skills are required for effective selling of African arts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century except item 6.

## **Discussion**

The finding that holding effective oral communication was highly required is consonant with the body of knowledge in retailing (e.g. Van Staden, 2004; and Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn, 1995). Good quality artworks do not sell themselves all the time. Artists and their retail workers need to communicate with customers to create awareness, stimulate recognition, and provide information to help customers evaluate the arts, present and demonstrate the arts and encourage them to make a purchase decision. These set of activities require strong oral communication skills to perform successfully.

The findings that listening attentively to customers, handling objections presented by customers and tailoring words and tone to customers' needs and are required, align with Marshall, Goebel and Moncrief (2003) who found that listening skills, verbal communication skills, ability to adapt sales style from situation to situation; and ability to overcome objections are among the top ten success factors in selling. The finding that asking open-ended questions to get more information from customers is not required was not expected given that effective and appropriate questioning allows the seller to get adequate information that would enable better satisfaction of customers' needs.

The high mean scores of the items in the negotiation cluster is not in consonant with Kanu (2017) whose study showed low mean scores for the items. This may mean that artists and art retailers in the arts industry appreciate the value of negotiation skills in selling more than retailers in other industries.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has endeavoured to identify the soft skills and attitudes required by in-store retailers for successful selling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The aim was to provide clarity about the dimensions of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that relate to personal selling in retail context. The study has identified 19 relevant soft skills related to communication, critical thinking, collaborative problem solving, negotiation and follow-up. The researchers encourage stakeholders in retail education, especially teachers and curriculum planners to weave the teaching of the skills into the teaching of core retail management contents in order to improve the competence of retail workers and ultimately help retail institutions in becoming more competitive and successful.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:



1. Curriculum organisations and personnel should support innovative changes in fine arts and retail education by reviewing their curriculum to reflect relevant soft skills required by artists and retail workers for successful retailing of African arts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
2. Teachers of fine and applied arts as well as those who educate and train retailers should develop their capacity to teach the required soft skills in the context of core subject topics. Teachers would need to embed the teaching of relevant soft skills into the teaching of the core subject. Teachers should also use teaching techniques that promote 21<sup>st</sup> century skills learning such as group projects, making presentations, etc. Since projects allow students to work in groups, teachers have opportunity to help them become good communicators, team players and respectful people, working with others to solve problem creatively. Teachers should also use interactive classroom instructions and assessment practices that allow students to create their own answers and write extensively can help students and trainees develop relevant soft skills while mastering the core contents.
3. Researchers in fine arts and retail education should support African arts retail education by developing rubrics to help teachers in assessment of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as well as assist students in developing themselves using the rubrics.

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**TRADITIONAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS IN OGBA AND  
IKWERRE - NIGERIA AND THE INFLUENCE OF CHANGE**

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**Abstract**

*Throughout the world, dispute is a common phenomenon in human relations. Covertly or overtly, humans have the tendency for vested interest. Therefore, at any point one individual or group crosses the prescribed boundaries of accepted cordial relationship, dispute ensues. Without over stating the obvious, the concept of dispute resolution is predicated on the assumption that an equitable society can only be brought about by an equitable decision. According to (Otto 2015) dispute is one of the inevitable phenomenons of every human society. However, what exemplifies the greatness or quality of life in any society is how such society is able to administer their affairs. Merely looking at the face of the lion, a fickle mind will not be able to draw it. However, with courage, a great mind can tame the lion. To adjudicate on disputes, requires courage, forthrightness and selflessness, since an unbiased mind will not border whose odds in gods. Perhaps, this is*

*why it is often said that “to be firm, is to be prudent”. In the administration of justice, there is no doubt that parties may like to tempt adjudicators so as to win their sympathy, however, a good knowledge of the rules and traditional mechanism of dispute resolution, will make for efficient performance. The preference for non violence informs in dispute or conflict management, informs the traditional mechanism for dispute resolution (Ogoloma 2013). In most cultures, it is noted that order cannot be obtained through disorder. In corroboration, Iheanacho contend that in traditional societies, law and justice prerequisites and holding blocks of every society. Ogba and Ikwerre are progenies of a common ancestry. Their forebears Akalaka and his half brother Ochichi having traced their origin to the ancient Benin Empire. Ogbaland and Ikwerre are situated in the northern margins of the Niger Delta. They live in village clusters. Ogba and Ikwerre are patrilineal cultures. The family is the smallest unit of administration. This extends to the bound family which stretches to minor and major lineages. Next is the kindred and community. Each of these, exercise a degree of administrative powers as shall be further explained in the course of this exposition. In Ogba and Ikwerre common ownership of property is one of a common experience. At the death of a progenitor, decedents and share whatever wealth or liability that may be left behind. Unfortunately, some deviants dispute the formula of property disbursement. Often times, this leads to intractable dispute. The purpose of this study is to identify the causes of dispute resolution in the areas. It further examines the different mechanisms adopts the ethnographic and historical method in the discussion. It notes the need to maintain order and equity in the society. It concludes that traditional means of dispute resolution mechanism which have been eroded owing to western style of legal system should be revived for a more peaceful co existence.*

## **Introduction**

Throughout the world, dispute is a common phenomenon in human relations. Covertly or overtly, humans have the tendency for vested interest. Therefore, at any point one individual or group crosses the prescribed boundaries of accepted cordial relationship, dispute ensues.

Peace as a social reality is invaluable and an inevitable human need in any given society. According to Iheanacho (2013), it is ‘essentially the order of human subjects, in which human consciences are free from all the fragmentation, open to the true, good and drawn to the awareness of common destiny and interdependency existing among members of the human family’.

Without over stating the obvious, the concept of dispute resolution is predicated on the assumption that an equitable society can only be instituted by an equitable

decision. According to (Obodoegbulam, 2015) dispute is one of the inevitable phenomenons of every human society. However, what exemplifies the greatness or quality of life in any society is how such society is able to administer their affairs.

The preference for non violence informs in dispute or conflict management, informs the traditional mechanism for dispute resolution (Ogoloma 2013). In most cultures, it is noted that order cannot be obtained through disorder. In corroboration, Iheanachor contend that in traditional societies, law and justice prerequisites and holding blocks of every society.

Ogba and Ikwerre are progenies of a common ancestry, their forebears Akalaka and his half brother Ochichi having traced their origin to the ancient Benin Empire (Ellah 1995,Osia 1999,Erediauwa 1995). Ogbaland and Ikwerre are situated in the northern margins of the Niger Delta. They live in village clusters. Ogba and Ikwerre are patrilineal cultures. The family is the smallest unit of administration. This extends to the compound family, minor and major lineages, the kindred and community. Each of these, form a layer of administrative authority as shall be further explained in the course of this exposition.

In Ogba and Ikwerre, joint ownership of property is a common experience. At the death of a progenitor, progenies share whatever wealth or liability that are left behind. Unfortunately, some deviants dispute the formula of property inheritance. Often times, this leads to intractable dispute.

It is in this regard that this paper x-rays the approaches adopted in the alternative dispute settlement among the Ikwerre people of Rivers State as against the conventional methods, using the time tested approaches of customary laws and values in tandem with the social realities of the people for the purpose of achieving forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, re-integration and harmonious living.

### **Dispute Resolution Mechanism in Ogba**

In Ogba, disputes are of different types, there settlements equally vary. The cause and magnitude of a particular dispute determines how or which solution will be sort.

Major causes of dispute include but not limited to ownership of land and landed property, boundary adjustment. Marriage incompatibility and the care of

dependent members of such aborted relationship equally results in dispute. Ideological differences on public matters none the less give rise to dispute. Any challenge to the vested interest of an individual on matters of general interest often leads to misunderstanding. Inheritance and issues concerning bequest, also result in dispute. In some instances, relatives seek interpretation from outside. Here, the fact is that Ogba society, like other part of African relies on traditional dispute resolution mechanism to maintain society in equilibrium.

Among Ogba people, many avenues serve as the center for dispute resolution. This is determined by the gravity of the offence and the parties to the dispute. The compound family, daughters of the lineage or kindred, age grade, maternal kinsmen, council of elders and the shrine are usually approached by an aggrieved person or party to seek redress. In this regard, Newington (1930/31) "Observes that among the Ogba, council of elders serves both legislative and judicial functions". According to Ogba tradition, when a matter is brought before the elders, the offending person or party is usually invited to explain his own side of the matter. After listening to both parties and witnesses, a pronouncement which represents the opinion of the elders is made. The disputing parties are asked to express their feeling concerning the pronouncement whether they accept the verdict of the elders or not. In most cases, positive respond follow. However, were any of the parties feels otherwise the party has the option to appeal the judgment elsewhere.

The shrine is another important centre of dispute resolution in Ogbaland. In Ogbaland like many parts of Nigeria, deities are recognize as impartial adjudicature of justice. According to Okafor 2013, people make petition to shrines of deities whenever they are aggrieved. According to Ogba custom, shrines of deities are located at entrance of the living room of elders. The family halls are used as meeting places to listen to aggrieved parties for amicable resolution.

When a dispute appears irreconcilable practical steps are taken to obtain settlement. Okafor (2013) avows that oath taking maybe the next option. Several incidents may call for oath taking. For instance, where one of the parties refuses to accept a simple resolution, where a party fails to admit guilt, where a party is unable to accept responsibility or insists on his stand, the adjudicating audience may recommend oath taking. Again, where none of the parties refuses to shift ground or come up with the simple truth, oath taking may be contemplated to get a settlement. (Obodoegbulam 2003).

Possible locations where oaths are administered include the shrine, water ways, and center of a family compound, the farmland, or the T-junction. Normally, a particular case at hand, determines where an oath will be administered and who will administer it. It also determines the items of oath. Some oaths are reversible while others may be for a life time. If a person is accused of murder he may swear an oath for a period of six month to one year, within which he is expected to die if at fault. However, where he survives the period of suspension, the oath will be revoked to mark his innocence (Okafor, 2013). Disputes relating to land ownership or boundary adjustment are often resolved this way.

Among Ogba people, deities and other spirit forces is unbiased umpire. Where a dispute cannot be resolved by words of mouth the spirit is called into play. At such instances, everyone merely watches.

According to Ohia and Onyedibia (2003), the life stick “Oko-ekru” is a significant symbol of boundary demarcation in Ogba. Obodoegbulam (2002) holds that where ever the life stick is planted, everyone automatically recognizes such a place as a demarcation. Any trespasser commits an infringement.

Another significant ritual object commonly applied in dispute resolution is the ritual staff (owhor). This is usually in the custody of the eldest male of every lineage. At anytime there is mediation of a dispute the eldest male uses the object to make his final pronouncement and once he strikes it on the ground, it marks a seal on the conclusion of the matter. (Stanfield, 1935).

Minor disputes are resolved differently. A formal complaint is made to members of one’s age grade, in-laws, maternal kinsmen, the compound family, kindred, or council of elders as earlier stated. Both parties will be invited and given the chance to state their case once again, to the hearing of the audience. When the parties have stated their case, they are excuse from the audience who consults among themselves to arrive at a reasonable and acceptable verdict. After agreeing on a final decision, the feuding parties are invited once again while the spokes person delivers the decision of the adjudicatures. This is a very important way of resolving conflict among some parties in Ogbaland.

### **Ikwerre as a People**

The Ikwerre ethnic nationality properly called Iwhnuroha, is among the tribes that inhabit the Niger Delta formally known as the Oil River (Okajile, 2009 in

Ogoloma, 2013). Ikwerre constitute one of the major ethnic groups in Rivers State of Nigeria, with estimated population of about 1.5 million people and, inhabits at present four Local Government Areas namely, Emohua, Ikwerre, Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt (Ogoloma 2013). Ikwerre is a small but distinct tribe in Nigeria having its linguistic, social and cultural practices, values, norms, customs and formation that distinguishes them from the neighboring tribes like the Ijaws and the Ibos though not without some intercultural influences.

### **The Ikwerre People and Dispute Settlement**

The Ikwerre people like many other tribes in Nigeria are very religious. They believe in God as the supreme judge and with all seeing eyes, rewarding good and evil accordingly. God as the Supreme Being alongside many other deities, exist. Who are believed to be guardians of morality and social order in their own immediate environment. While serving as the intermediaries to the Supreme Being, they are believed to be dependent on the Supreme Being in other to function effectively. These deities serve as the watch dogs of the communities, detecting crimes and punishing same as they also serve as medium for seeking redress on alleged infringements (Iheanacho, 2013).

The Ikwerre traditional dispute settlement are the outcome of the understanding that humans' need to symbolically understand and appreciate who they are, their experiences and social realities and their immediate environment. Until the advent of the European with the colonial and missionary enterprise, the Ikwerre ethnic nationality like other nations had their own institutions, customs, values and ritual that guaranteed social harmony between the various groups and components of the villages, clans and the tribe. However, the foreign invasion of the traditional system distorted the value system and sought its suppression and even outright extinction from the psyche of the indigenous people. Until then, the Ikwerre people had a well organized institution and mechanisms for resolving disputes using their norms, customs and rituals which embodied moral authorities without resorting civil courts.

Iheanacho (2013), Mbennah (2001), Ntabona (2001) and Kagabo (2001) have shown the propensity of the African indigenous methods of peace building and reconciliation mechanisms. The efficacy of this approach goes further to show its inclusive nature. Traditional African societies sought active players in the society who included the family and clan heads, chiefs and elders, age grades, women groups, spiritual leaders.



Ikwerre dispute settlement approaches include rituals which are very vital to the process of reconciliation in three ways. Ritual can transform people's identities, create new or shared identities for people in conflict, and heal the wounds that may result from disputes (Schirch, 2001). Moreover, rituals regulate relationships in communities between individuals and among groups. They serve as ways of defining identity and providing the social lubricant to relate to others and to the surrounding world. Therefore, rituals are special contexts conducive to the symbolic transformation of identity and reframing of dispute towards sustainable and harmonious relationships. The approaches so applied in dispute settlement are dependent on the nature and their causes. In any case, most disputes are between individuals, groups, communities and so on.

Bob-Manuel (2000) while relating on conflict transformation in Africa avers that as a matter of practicality social realities within societies should be taken seriously and viewed as non-isolated events in their social contexts. The elders from a family, clan or tribe see their traditional objectives in dispute settlement as moving away from accusations and counter-accusations, to soothe hurt feelings and to reach a compromise that may help to improve future relationships. They also dwell on values, aspirations, perceptions and visions. In many of the disputes, this cultural heritage plays a decisive role (Bob Manuel, 2000). The family ties and community networking are constantly respected, maintained and strengthened. When there is a dispute among various parties, priority is given to restoring relationships. During dispute settlement, which would normally involve supporters of the disputing parties and the elders meant to talk the matters through. Here, relationships are given prime attention. Indirect relationships are analyzed along with direct ones to see cross-stitching potentials. For example, if both of the disputing parties happen to be wrestlers, this commonality may be utilized as a converging factor. The fear of sorcery or divine punishment is also used to show what the breach of peace would bring upon the society and the conflicting parties (Iheanacho, 2013, Bob Manuel, 2000).

Unlike a western mediator who may begin the exploration by retracing the steps of the parties to the point of the initial dispute. But an experienced Ikwerre elder, taking cognizance of the socio-cultural milieu start from a vintage point further back and try to form a frame of social reference. In this instance knowledge of the disputants' identity may be sort like their family, clan, and other personal history within the community. In doing so, clues are got on the proximate and remote causes of grievances and dispute. Often times, it is discovered that parties have similar needs where in conflict of interest arises. Critical questions may include:

Who are you, and where are you from? Explain your family link. Where did you grow up? What do you like doing? These may provide clues, not only about immediate causes, but may reveal long-standing grievances, thus offer a wider and deeper insight into the differences and similarities among the parties. Parties often have fairly similar needs, but rather different interests. They may also have similar or different ideologies and beliefs. The age and power differences must also be considered. All these help the Ikwerre elder in the discussion to get at the remote and immediate causes.

In the traditional society, mediators play active roles in dispute settlement by suggesting an agreement and get as far as pressurizing the parties into accepting it. Pressurizing can be done through talking, shaming and ridiculing. This method can be used in contexts where it is acceptable and in instances where the cause of the dispute is self-evident. In an effort to change the behavior of troublemakers, through ritualized or ordinary conversations, anti-social and conflict-causing conducts are put to shame.

### **Forms, Mechanisms and Procedures of Dispute Settlement**

The common types or forms of dispute in Ikwerre as in many other tribes in Nigeria and beyond are Family dispute, Intra-community and Inter-community dispute, Boundary and Land dispute, Marriage dispute (childlessness, infidelity, divorce) Age grade dispute, Chieftaincy and Ancestral leadership dispute among others.

The mechanism for dispute settlement among the Ikwerre people includes; Prophecy, Divination, and Oracles which is the ability to obtain knowledge of hidden realities by transcending into the metaphysical realm to get answers to questions and problems beyond the reach of ordinary mortals (Iheanacho, 2013). It also involves the appeal to the divine power through oat taken to determine the falsity and veracity of claims by the disputants. This however, is usually among the last resort when appeals and other forms of negotiations fail. According to (Isokun and Ezeaku, 1990 in Iheanacho, 2013) oat taken is 'a solemn affirmation of truth involving the pledging of one's conscience or life to the cause of truth so affirmed'. In this instance, the divine entities are employed as the final arbiter to foster justice on peace.

The stages and procedures of dispute settlement among the Ikwerre people in which cases can be established as outlined by Ogoloma (2013) includes; summon

by the aggrieved individual or group seeking for justice through family or clan head, Chiefs, Elders in Council.

The second involves payment of token that is, a summoning fee which may include other material requirements like cola-nut, dry gin and other edibles. The third is the invitation to the accused party which may also indicate the venue and time of the hearing and settlement.

Other stages are information on the requirement for hearing from both parties, prosecution and cross examination, investigation and evaluation of the mater so presented by the disputants and finally, the procurement of judgment / verdict.

### **The Influence of Change**

Introduction of the Pinal code in Nigeria cum Ogbaland and Ikwerre, unleashed devastating blow on the traditional dispute resolution mechanism in the area. The above, coupled with the collapse of some traditional institutions associated with dispute resolution mechanism in the area made the situation worse. Comparing this with what happened to Ikwerre, the experience is not better. Ogbaland and their Ikwerre brothers with a common ancestry witnessed the denigration of traditional institutions. Worse still is the sighting of police stations and court complexes in and around various communities in Ogba and Ikwerre. Matters which used to be tabled before the council of elders or the other traditional institutions are now reported to the police. Lawyers have also been trained to represent client on cases involving them in the court of law even without the parties being physically present.

At such representation, emphases are placed on the logicality of cases instead of the simple truth. Emphases are also placed on verifiable evidence instead of observable truth. In some cases, offenders are set free because they presented a logical argument.

Unfortunately, while the court can give judgment, they cannot give peace which used to be the concern of traditional societies. Thus, many litigants have judgment but not peace. Aggrieved opponents harbor grudges for years despite court rulings. This scenario makes some to take laws into their hands by employing on orthodox means to vent their anger. Today, criminals hide under the erroneous belief that their ability to put up a logical defense can set them free if they are not caught at the scene of crime. Murder which was one of the worst offence any man can commit, is common with headless bodies found in many

corners in Ogba and Ikwerre. Land dispute is common with some getting up to the Supreme Court for years without attention.

### **The Way Forward**

The indigenization of the judicial process in Nigeria will go a long way in ensuring efficient dispute resolution in Ogba and Ikwerre. On this note, the following are necessary:

1. The age grade system should be revived as no member no matter his personal achievement is considered greater than his age mates when they are together.
2. Communal ownership of property should be upheld. This is the bond that hold indigenous people together.
3. Some traditional laws should be incorporated into the Pinal code.
4. Kindred and community heads should be given sti-pence for supervising the traditional dispute resolution system at the local level.
5. Centers for the teaching of traditional laws should be established and trainees issued certificates as is the case with those who attend conventional university to study law.

### **Conclusion**

The desire to institute order in the society is the under guarding factor in Ogba and Ikwerre concept and philosophy of dispute resolution. It is understood that a society that desires peace, must encourage equity and fairness in its administration of justice. To achieve fairness, impartiality and open mindedness stands very tall.

Owing to the fact that peace comes through compromise and consensus, Ogba and Ikwerre societies should encourage their indigenes to be their brother's keeper. To this end, the spirit of give and take is important. Obviously, peace will remain elusive in any society where every individual claims to be right. In as much as we insist on our right, the fact that others equally have theirs should be remembered. In this regard, the spirit of live and lets live ought to over ride all relationship.

Customary Law and Judicial System has been an effective institution that has helped in the maintenance of law and order in the society. This is sequel to the fact that the communitarian system predicated on the people social realities -

their value orientations and cosmology are put to play. Dispute settlement in the system is not intended to produce a victor and award charges, but rather to entrench harmonious relationship. Their verdicts are not dependent on the legal logic of the conventional court system where the outcomes are essentially based on evidence and ability to hire the services or the best legal counsel. Unlike the civil system, the traditional court is concerned about forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, re-integration and harmonious leaving in the society.

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## **AN APPRAISAL OF INDIVIDUAL-RELATED CONSTRAINTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**

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### **Abstract**

*Every aspect of human life has its own prospects and challenges. The same applies to rural development communication. It is plagued by a host of constraints. This ranges from individual-related constraints to environment-related species. Nonetheless, the focus of this research is on the former. Hence, this research undertakes a critical appraisal of the various ways individual members of rural communities, especially in developing countries, can contribute to the mal-functioning of their development communication. Here the stress is on how actions or inactions of some individuals in rural communities can contribute to underdevelopment via poor communication output. Among these individual-related factors, this research underpins poverty, illiteracy ignorance/prejudice and greed/corruption as the ones that bear particular negative impacts on the said*

*development. Besides, while admitting the subsequent benefits derivable from a reversal of these individual-related constraints, the work argues that proper working of the said development communication requires more than the actions of the individual members of rural communities. Collaboration of all the stakeholders of rural development communication is vital. Further, participatory development communication is imperative.*

**Key Words:** Constraints, Rural Development, Communication, Individual, Government.

### **Introduction**

Development is a common aspiration of every community and government. To embark on development, certain things are involved. These range from the need to understand the nature of the development at issue, as well as the ability to reach the locus of operation of the project. This is because projects are not cited in the air. Every project must have a location. Then, to engage the attention of a local community in the sighting of the project, among other things, entails a lot of discussions. These interactions do not end abruptly. It is an ongoing activity. The interactions are required before, during and after the project. They exist at short term range and long term range, directly and by proxy, at interpersonal, group and through mass media. At interpersonal level, in a situation where the two parties lack common communication ground they can seek the aid of an intermediary. Unfortunately, the communication is not always smooth as a result of certain factors arising from individuals, government, society, culture, religion and environment. Nonetheless, the focus of this research is specifically on the individual related factors. *Ipsa facto*, this research inquires into the parts the individual members of each rural communities play in reducing the momentum of rural development communication. Notably, this work is not ignorant of the mega role the government plays but only tries to show that she is not solely responsible for every constraint on rural development communication. Some constraints come from the individual members of rural communities. Of course, no development programmes can survive in any community if the inhabitants of the communities do not cooperate with the agents of the programme. To succeed every programme must enjoy local support - that is the support of the community in which it is situated. In a situation where the reverse is the case, the atmosphere is often inclement for development. Thus, this research sets forth to unveil those individual-related restraints that constitute a major clog in the wheel of development communication in view of adducing possible remedial measures. But before wading into this factor, suffice it to undertake clarification of the basic terms used in this research.

## **Conceptual Analysis**

For a better insight into the nature of this research it is necessary to explain some of the key term apparent in this work. They include: development, communication and development communication

## **Development**

The term development is often taken from various perspectives. It can be conceived from the angle of politics, economy, culture, religion, communication, just to name but a few. Correspondingly, the definition of the term takes diverse perspectives, though they converge at a point. This work, however, looks at it from integral viewpoint. In this sense development is taken in the inclusive sense. To this effect, it is defined as "a process" as well as "a status." As a process, development is understood as a way of harnessing the potentials of a given community to achieve their integral good. This notion of development is, of course, in tandem with its etymological meaning. The French term that designates development is *développer*; which originates from both old and middle French word *desvelope*. In this sense development is a combination of *des-* (undo) and *voloper, veloper, vloper* (to wrap, wrap up). Hence, literally, development means unfold, undo, unwrap, unfurl, uncover, divulge, disclose, uncover; reveal the meaning of, explain and so on.

In this context development is the process of unfolding of the inner potentials of a given reality or nation for a specific end - basically, for the common good of the nation concerned. "Development is the progressive unfolding of the inner potentialities of a given reality. It is to de-envelop, that is, to bring out to light: existential, functional, and epistemic, what was enveloped, folded or hidden" (Iroegbu, 81). Here the potentials embody the latent good of a given community that yearns for manifestation. These are the embryonic qualities of a nation which can be put into practical use if appropriate actions are taken. On these potentials reside the people's abilities for internal and external development. Internal development involves the application of the potential for symbiotic engagements within the country concerned. Conversely, external development harps on those potentials that make for intercultural and international interactions and cooperation. This factor is vital as no nation is an island or a monad (a windowless entity). Each engages in symbiotic relationship with other nations for meaningful growth and development. Simultaneously, external development is measured against the backdrop of other nations that are already in that realm of development.



Another term prominent in the above definition is the phrase "integral good." It implies that development is not limited to any particular end of a nation. Rather it embraces all her positive end. Defining development just from a particular aperture is contextual rather than holistic. Definitely such is bound to be lopsided. Therefore, development as a phenomenon involving all of a nation's integral goods signifies that it underpins anything that makes for the welfare of the society concerned. It does not consider a specific common good in isolation from the rest. What this indicates is that the principle of integral good as applied in the above definition conceives development as a body where each part of the body contributes to the growth and development of the other parts, and where a dissonance in any part of the body has a resultant effect on the rest.

Besides, development can be conceived as a "status" attainable by any positively evolving society. In this case development underscores a situation where a nation has attained her expected potential realization status vis-à-vis other nations of similar status. The underlying point here is that development entails unwrapping of a nation's positive potentials. The stress on expected positive potential underscores two basic facts. First: that not all development is positive. Second: that development involves a yet and a not yet. It is, in fact, a continuum. A hermeneutic of the Igbo concept development brings this continuum status of to bear. The Igbo term "that denotes development is *imepe/mmepe*. Connotatively, *mmepe* can be used in five senses as in: *icho imepe* (about to develop), *omepewala* (developing), *omepela* (is developed), *Omepechala* (it has developed), *omepere/imepere/mepere gawa* (continuous development)" (Nnaemedo, 2017, 293). In every development issue there is always an aspect of the nation's development agenda that is realized and the one yet to be realized. This is why development is a school which no nation totally graduates from. Thus,

Development involves bringing into light various aspects of a thing's life. In relation to man, it is a critical and responsible contextualization (downloading) and uploading of all human values for the integral well-being of a given society. It involves not just the natural endowments (values requiring upload) of the said society, acquired values (values borrowed from elsewhere or values in need of contextualization or download) are involved. This creates room for the possibility of reciprocal or symbiotic relationship among societies (Nnaemedo 2017, 296)

First, development involves downloading of the potentials of a nation via identification, elimination and retention process respectively. At identification level, the development engineer/planner earmarks various indicators of development. This is followed by elimination of factors that portend danger to development, even though some of them may appear to be development-prone. Elimination process is informed by the fact that development is not only via *positiva* (positive). As well, it can be via *negativa* (negative). Elimination process is followed by retention phase at which the true 'positive development genes' are sorted out and preserved for onward journey to the second phase of development - the uploading sphere. At this phase, the downloaded potentials, now "actualities" or "positive development genes," are uploaded to concrete human situations.

### **Communication**

The term communication is as all-encompassing as it is ambiguous and pervasive. This leads to divergent views on what constitutes its definition. To this effect, many scholars conceive it from diverse pedestals, namely: philosophical, medical, psychological and sociological perspectives respectively. However, this research takes it from the domain of mass communication. Then, within the perimeter of mass communication it is considered from two angles, basically: etymological and scholarly viewpoints. From the etymological purview, Online Dictionary traces the term to the Latin word *communicationem* (nominative *communicatio*) which is a noun of action from *communicatus* which is the past participle of the Latin verb *communicare*. Conversely, *communicare* means "to share, divide out, communicate, impart, inform, join, unite, participate in." Literally, it means "to make common." *Communicatus* is also related to the Latin noun *communis*, which means "common, public, general" (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/communication>). For Smith, *communis* signifies "shared together, common to several or to all, common, general, universal" (128). Likewise, for *Collins Pocket Latin Dictionary*, *communis* means "common, general, universal" (67). From these etymological derivatives, communication simply stands for commonness that is obvious in communal/shared understanding. This, of course, correlates with Schramm's (1965) concept of communication as a purposeful effort to establish *commonness* between a source and receiver.

Communication is also seen from scholarly purview. Among the diverse approaches to this scholarly outlook, this work stresses the functional perspective. This functional approach is categorized into three; comprising

definitions that underscore sharing, those that deal with intentional influence, as well as the ones that are inclusive in character. Definitions bordering on sharing are akin to etymological definitions already discussed. Viewed from the dimension of sharing, communication can be defined as "a process of sharing or exchange of ideas, information, knowledge, attitude or feeling among two or more persons through certain signs and symbols" (Hasan, Seema, 3). The distinguishing feature of this approach to communication is that it does not concern itself with intentional influence.

Nevertheless, communication can also be seen in terms of intentional influence. Here, communication aims at influencing the behaviour of others. This species of definition employs persuasion as its working instrument. It is, of course, apparent in Horne et al (1965). In this work, the authors conceive communication as the process through which a person motivates and influences others to control and modify their behaviours (Horne et al and Keegan quoted in MAC III: <http://nouedu.net/courses/introduction-mass-communication>). Similar approach to communication is obvious in Keegan (1980) where he conceives the term as "all forms of information transfer and persuasion concerning a product" (Keegan quoted in MAC III). All said and done, intentional approach to communication is defective. The pitfall lies on its limitation of communication solely to conscious level of human interactions. On the contrary, communication happens at conscious and unconscious level of human existence. Reasoning in this direction Heidegger notes:

Man speaks. We speak when we are awake and we speak in our dreams. We are always speaking, even when we do not utter a single word aloud, but merely listen or read, and even when we are not particularly listening or speaking but are attending to some work or taking a rest. We are continually speaking in one way or another. We speak because speaking is natural to us. It does not first arise out of some special volition. Man is said to have language by nature (27, <http://teachlearn.pagesperso-orange.fr/Heidlang.pdf>).

Speaking is a kind of communication. From Heideggerian thesis above it is obvious then that communication cannot be restricted to conscious level of human existence. Definition of communication requires a more comprehensive spectrum. This informs the inclusive perspective to communication.

Therefore, besides signifying intentional influence, communication is also seen from inclusive sense. In this understanding, the end of communication is neither

in the sharing of meanings nor intentional influence. Alternatively, communication involves the sharing of meaning as well as intentional influence. Taken from these dimensions, communication is defined as a word used to refer "to multitude of activities in which people engage such as talking, touching, writing, looking etc" (Lederman 1977 in MAC III). From this definition, it is glaring that communication is holistic in nature. Hence, this research adopts inclusive perspective to communication. *Ipsa facto* it defines communication as a conscious or unconscious process of sharing of information between a sender and a receiver in order to simply share information, influence behaviour, or as a manifestation of the intrinsic nature of human beings as an animal that communicates.

### **Development Communication**

In the previous section the emphasis was on defining development as a separate term. Here, the stress is on the meaning of the phrase "development communication." Pairing the two terms is necessary for understanding their relationship. This informs the reason Fraser C. and Ville sustain that communication is the key to "human development and the thread that binds people together" (5). On his part, Ukaegbu argues that development communication can be defined from the perspective of development channels. He followed this approach as a way of drawing a clear cut distinction between development communication and "development journalism." In this context he notes that vis-à-vis "development communication", the phrase "development journalism" is narrower and refers to the use of mass communication (the mass media: radio, television, newspaper and magazine) in the promotions of development (Ukaegbu, 2017, p.14). Development communication includes development journalism but supersedes it by integrating all facets of communication process in order to achieve its objectives. In this light, Coldevin (1987) defines it as "the systematic utilization of appropriate communication channels and techniques to Increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate, and train rural populations, mainly at the grassroots" (4). In the above definition, no specific communication channel is mentioned. The accent is rather on the appropriateness of whatever channel is chosen with respect to the desired objective. In a similar vein, Balifs (1988) conceives development communication as a social process aimed at producing a common understanding or a consensus among the participants in a development initiative. However, it is good to remark that there are some definitions of development communication that emphasize social change. These comprise Okunna (2002), Middleton and

Wedeneyer (1985) and Roger (1976: 93) who discussed communication in the function of socioeconomic development.

Rural development communication therefore comprises the use of the diverse means of communication in view of the development of rural areas. It deals with the ways various means of communication are used to effect the integral development of rural areas. Through the application of all the medium of communication, it enables the target rural audience to achieve their desired developmental objectives. These desired objectives can be that they set for themselves, that they ought to set for themselves, or that set for them by governmental/ nongovernmental agencies. As communication has been underpinned above as a key to every human development, the end or aim of development communication is to help a given rural community realize her developmental goals through inclusive application of every necessary communication apparatus. To realize these set objectives is not always easy. Hence, the next section of this work is on the individual-related restraints on rural development communication.

### **Individual-Related Restraints**

Rural development communication in Nigeria is characterized by a lot of constraints. These comprise: individual-related factors, government-related factors, socio-cultural factors, religious factors, and environment related factors. However, in this research the rational beam of inquiry is on individual-related restraints. This species of restraints embodies all those constraints to development communication originating from some of the members of rural communities. The restraints prevent them from effective acquisition and use of various means of communication for enhancement of their rural development. These constraints include: poverty, illiteracy ignorance/prejudice and greed/corruption.

### **Poverty**

Good education goes with financial involvements. No good education comes so cheap. As one of the constraints on rural development communication, poverty disenables individual members of a target rural community from obtaining requisite intellectual endowment for subsequent engagements in societal interactions. A poor person lacks the means to secure the basic communication facilities that can keep him/her abreast of the rural development communication issues. Even when a poor person is able to secure a communication system, it is possible that most of these gadgets cannot function well in some rural areas due

to network problem. Those living in remote areas are often outside network areas. In effect, they are cut off from mass media communication. It may be surprising that some in rural areas do not even receive radio messages. Should they receive any, it is only faintly and most of the time not audible. Because of poverty such individuals cannot even afford to buy network boosters to enhance their network services. Annoyingly too, some are located at network areas outside their state and that means that they are automatically cut off from all development communication issues in their state which, of course, is the channel of their rural development communication.

Again for those poor ones who manage to buy some of the communication facilities, another danger they face is that of keeping the system on. It is no longer news that many rural communities do not have electricity. Face with such reality those who have phones cannot charge them. Their phones at most are left in their houses as mere ornaments. To make the matter worst, they cannot even buy small electricity generating machine. Even if they have one, the money to buy petrol for the generating plant may not be there. Then, with all these challenges before them, it is obvious that poverty poses serious problem to rural development communication. Thus, with poverty at their beck and call, a rural community may even consider issues of contemporary development communication as extraneous and so not worth attending to. Instead, they may prefer going in search of their day's bread to going for orientations that may earn them greater economic upturn.

The agents of development communication are not left out in the poverty-related challenges. At times it may happen that some of them are not well remunerated or their monthly salaries not paid as and when due. Under that condition of poor payment, those of them living among rural communities that do not have basic amenities may be cut off from what happens at their headquarters. As a result of the disconnection, they may end up cyclostyling old and outdate development communication plans to the detriment of the rural community involved. The agents also require electricity to power some of their gadget which can be used to show the beneficiaries of the development scheme the pictorial representation of the project. Demonstration as this is always necessary as it aims at building trust between the agents and the beneficiaries. In the event such fails to take place, the natural consequence is mistrust and mutual suspicion. Situation as such can lead some miscreant in the community to vandalize the project. When such happens the agents may abandon the project on security issue. Consequently, the rural community involved may end up not achieving the

development at issue. Development communication agents require good working environment to work better and be happy. In the event such environment is not feasible, the result is adjustment to unbearable situation. It is obvious that working under that kind of environment certainly, cannot give them job satisfaction. What obtain rather are absenteeism, neglect and possibly exit from the job.

### **Illiteracy**

It was Francis Bacon who in his *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597; Works 14.95; 79) asserts that "Knowledge itself is power (*ipsa scientia potestas est*)." In this one sentence, Bacon left for humanity a perennial statement that forms the bed rock of subsequent human quest for knowledge. In this statement is embedded the fact that without knowledge it is impossible to achieve desired development in any sphere of human life. In the contemporary society one of the problems bedeviling rural communities is illiteracy. An illiterate does not know how to read or write. For such a person, rural development communication may be quite alien. The person may have interest in the scheme only to be deterred by lack of the basic ingredient to embark on the necessary dialogue that can bring it about. When someone is an illiterate there is the tendency for counterpart attitudes like timidity, fear and the likes. Of course, Ukaegbu captures it thus: "people at this condition of life are always characterized by timidity, inferiority complex and unqualified to be engage in any meaningful development exercise" (133). So, with illiteracy in place, rural development communication is bound to be stunted in growth. This is for the obvious reason that not all kinds of communication are possible for such illiterates; even if they are, they may not be put into proper use. Consequently, such wastes away, and the community fails in her development communication bid. This is understandable: "For it is clear that whatever is received into something is received according to the condition of the recipient - *Quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur* (Aquinas, Thomas, 1a, q. 75, a. 5, <http://www.documenta-catholica.eu/d>). What Aquinas actually sets out to affirm is that:

...Knowledge is regulated according as the thing known is in the knower. But the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower. Hence the knowledge of every knower is ruled according to its own nature. If therefore the mode of anything's being exceeds the mode of the knower, it must result that the knowledge of the object is above the nature of the knower. (Aquinas, Thomas, 1a, q. 12, a. 4).

In precise term, illiterates receive issues about rural development communication with respect to their level of intellectual exposure. The implication is that communication apparatus requiring lots of intellectual exposition to handle are certainly not for them. The information contained therein subsequently is not for them. Resultantly, under such selective use of communication devices, the requisite communication for engaging in certain development project in the target rural community is seriously hampered.

### **Ignorance/ Prejudice**

The term ignorance is from the Latin word *ignorantem* which means "not knowing" or "ignorant." On the other hand *ignorantem* is the present participle of *ignorare* which stands for "not to know, to be unacquainted; mistake, misunderstand; take no notice of, pay no attention to." It is also derived from assimilated form of *in* and old Latin *gnarus*. The term "*in*" stands for "not" or "opposite of"; while *gnarus* means "aware" or "acquainted with" (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/ignorant>). This means that ignorance means lack of awareness. Outside the etymological meaning the term is used in other senses. For instance, Plato used it in the sense of one pretending to lack knowledge when in reality the person is the one who actually knows. This is obvious in Plato's dialogue, *Theaetetus*, where Socrates in what is considered as Socratic irony takes the position of an intellectual midwife, helping to deliver his interlocutors of ignorance and filling them with knowledge in return. Thus, Socrates argues:

...The triumph of my "art is in thoroughly examining whether the thought which the mind of the young man brings forth is a false idol or a noble and true birth. And like the midwives, I am barren, and the reproach which is often made against me, that I ask questions of others and have not the wit to answer them myself, is very just—the reason is, that the god compels me to be a midwife, but does not allow me to bring forth. And therefore I am not myself at all wise, nor have I anything to show which is the invention or birth of my own soul, but those who converse with me profit. Some of them appear dull enough at first, but afterwards, as our acquaintance ripens, if the god is gracious to them, they all make astonishing progress; and this in the opinion of others as well as in their own. It is quite dear that they never learned anything from me; the many fine discoveries to which they cling are of their own making. But to me and the god they owe their delivery. (Plato, *Theaetetus*, plato the complete works - Cakravartin).



So, ignorance taken in the context of Socrates would amount to "pretended or feigned ignorance." It is similar, though not identical to the Cartesian methodic doubt (Descartes in Beardsley, 33), Husserlian phenomenological *epoche*, or Rawlsian veil of ignorance (Rawls in Marino, 381). Socratic ignorance is also reflected in Peels' four species of ignorance, namely: disbelieving, suspending, conditional disbelieving, and conditional suspending ignorance respectively ([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226906490\\_What\\_Is\\_Ignorance](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226906490_What_Is_Ignorance)). In all these cases, an inquirer attempts to bracket or feign ignorance of certain reality in view of arriving at a target objective. But it is important to emphasize that some of these approaches though theoretically feasible, are nevertheless, practically untenable. For while one can in principle feign to bracket all realities in order to arrive at *indubitandum* - in the case of Descartes, or to achieve 'justice as fairness' in line with Rawls, these procedures are for sure too abstract to be practical.

In this work, nonetheless, the term ignorance is conceived rather in its etymological perspective. Judging from this standpoint, ignorance is defined as "lack of that knowledge which one ought to have when one acts....Ignorance also differs from error which is false notion of a thing... Lastly, ignorance is different from forgetfulness which is ignorance of what was once known" (Pazhayampallil, 76). With this notion of ignorance one can readily see its impact on rural development communication. Its effect is similar to that of illiteracy, which can be described as its twin sister. An illiterate lacks the ability to express himself either through reading or writing. But in the case of an ignorant person, he/she is totally alienated from rural development communication issues. An ignorant person does not even know that there is such a thing as rural development communication in his/her area. Similarly, the individual is unaware of the pros and cons of different rural development communication activities. As such, he/she may ignorantly delight in operations that are detrimental to the development of his/her rural community. Again, when one is unaware of measures that should be taken in relation to the end of development there is often fixity in the process. Ignorance creates such a chasm between the members of a rural community and the rural development agents that each operates on different wavelengths. Under such condition rural development communication is constrained to exist only in principle without any practical bearing on the life of the citizens. It is important to highlight here that this work is not interested in whether the ignorance is "vincible" or invincible" (Peschke, 239). Besides, it is not focused on whether it is ignorance of law or of fact. What is uppermost in this work is the fact that ignorance impedes rural development communication.

Another individual-related factor that impedes development communication is prejudice. According to Rupert Brown, prejudice is "...the holding of derogatory social attitudes or cognitive beliefs, the expression of negative affect, or the display of hostile or discriminatory behaviour towards members of a group on account their membership of that group." (<https://www.hse.ru/data/2011/04/03/1211638026>). However, authors like Akrami criticized definitions that conceive prejudice in terms of favorableness or unfavorableness of feeling toward people on account of their membership of a group (Akrami, Nazar, <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2>). The major pitfall of this definition, in spite of their logicity, Akrami argues, is that they discussed prejudice in positive term. Instead he subscribes to such definition as that of Allport who conceives prejudice as "an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization" (9). In various rural communities instances of such prejudices abound. A typical example is the boko haram phenomenon which grew out of hatred for Western education. As an accompaniment to hatred for Western education, of course, is the counterpart denigration of developmental benefits from the West. Naturally, such prejudice often results in poor response as regards rural development communication as most of these are Western products. Any attempt to engage in such development is usually met with outright resistance. Subsequently, that signals the death of the programme. Related to the above is the ethnic prejudice. At times people respond to development communication as a result of bias against the agents of the scheme. In a situation where the beneficiaries of the scheme do not feel free with certain individuals on account of his/her race or tribe development communication is hampered exceedingly. A worker will always be at his/her optimum performance when he/she feels welcomed in a community. But in a situation of denigration and ill feeling, the result is often withdrawal and *laissez-faire* attitude in rendering of service to the designated community. Certainly, such portends serious danger for rural development communication and restrains it greatly.

### **Corruption/Greed**

Corruption is a term that is most often misunderstood and subsequently misapplied. Two reasons account for this. The first accrues from the fallacy of overgeneralization and the second stems from the error of 'substitution of a part for a whole.' The two errors are evident in Aristotle's concept of corruption. For instance, in the book *De Generatione et Corruptione*, Aristotle draws a nuance between corruption and the "alteration" which occurs "when the substratum is

perceptible and persists, but changes in its own properties, the properties in question being opposed to one another either as contraries or as intermediates" (Aristotle, *De Generatione et Corruptione* Bk1, CH4, No10, 319<sup>b</sup>, 484). For him corruption is a kind of change which takes "when nothing perceptible persists in its identity as a substratum, and the being changes as a whole..." (Aristotle, *De Generatione et Corruptione* Bk1, CH4, No15, 319<sup>b</sup>, p. 484). Besides, Aristotle presents coming-to-be of realities as of the same kind of change as corruption though on a reverse direction. Thus, he argues:

When the change from contrary to contrary is *in quantity*, it is 'growth or diminution'; when it is *in place*, it is 'motion'; when it is in property, i.e. *in quality*, it is 'alteration': but when nothing persists, of which the resultant is a property (or an 'accident' in any sense of the term), it is 'coming-to-be', and the converse change is 'passing-away' (Aristotle, *De Generatione et Corruptione* Bk1, CH4, No.30, 320<sup>a</sup>, 485).

It is important to indicate here that Aristotle's version of corruption does not fit into the description of the term in this work. The reason is simple. Aristotelian idea of corruption is that of total annihilation. It indicates complete decay of the reality in question; which run contrary to what corruption is in *strictu sensu* (in the strict sense). For that reason it is necessary to begin the explanation of the term via its etymology.

The term corruption is the noun form of the verb "corrupt." From etymological perspective, the word, "corrupt" is from the Latin word *corruptus* - the past participle of *corrump, corrumpere*. (<http://www.merriam-webster.com>). *Corrumpere* on the other hand comprises two words: *com* (together) and *rumpere* (to break in pieces). "This means that *corrumpere* signifies the breaking in pieces what was formally together. It is to ruin, destroy, injure, and spoil, and so on. Hence, to corrupt means to destroy, to taint, and to pervert" (Nnaemedo 2016, 47). Following the etymological standpoint, a person is said to be corrupt when he/she is morally depraved. Likewise, a thing is said to be corrupt when it is full of error, shifts from the path of originality or authenticity. What this indicates is that the term corruption is applicable to both human beings and other empirical realities. Hence, corruption is a term used to describe a "situation which exists when a reality disposes and allows itself to transit from the status of originality to either inauthentic or near-inauthentic condition, by factors that are inconsistent with its integral meaningful existence" (Nnaemedo 2016, 47). From the definition above, it is clear that corruption can affect a thing in part or as a whole. But experience has shown that most often the latter is the case.

As a societal problem, corruption affects everything that stands for the good of human beings in the society. It stands for rot and retrogression. This is why discussion of individual-related constraints on rural development communication is incomplete without a discourse of the impact of corruption. In most developing countries, corruption has become a cliché. There is no gainsaying that corruption constitutes an endemic problem and serious constraint to their development plan; and indeed that of every other nation. For instance, corruption explains why most African leaders employ dysfunctional development models. It also explains why most development programmes embarked on by these leaders failed. Corruption is the only reason some of them siphon money meant for various development projects. Most often they alienate the people so that nobody can take proper note of what actually transpire in the project. Good examples of such projects/programmes are: River Basin Commission, Niger Delta Development (NDDC), Green Revolution, Operation Feed the Nation, to name but a few. Today some these programmes are either dead or epileptic. Therefore, where corruption is the order of the day, rural development communication is restrained. In effect, the desired objective is never realized. Rather it exists as a figment of imagination, quite incapable of concretization. Of course, it retires to its ancestors, packaged with the phrase: "there was a rural development communication plan initiated by so and so."

Besides, it is pertinent to remark that corruption is only an indicator of many societal ills. Prominent here is greed. At the surface one readily perceives corruption. Underneath corrupt practices is greed. That is why one cannot discuss issue of corruption adequately without reference to greed - the father and the foundation of corruption. So, alongside corruption, greed constitutes a serious constraint to rural development communication. Often, to satisfy their greed for power some leaders prefer to loot funds meant for one rural project or the other. Many cases pending in the various courts in Nigeria concerning some past and present Nigerian leaders of all categories on allegation of looting is a clear indication of this greed/corruption index. Surprisingly, in most of these states their basic infrastructures are nothing to write home about. Even some who care to invest on infrastructures end up providing sub-standard ones, all in the bid to cut some money for their selfish political interest. Unfortunately, some beneficiaries of the said development are not innocent of this. At times they are accused of collaborating with agents of development thereby compromising the standard of what should come to their community. This shows that corruption and greed are inimical to development communication. Hence, for development

communication to thrive, both development communication agents and the beneficiaries of the programmes ought to eschew greed and its indicator - corruption.

### **Evaluation**

Rural development communication is a vital tool for building and emancipation of rural communities. It ensures rural development programme is available to rural communities. Such inform and equip them on their involvements in the development agenda. As well, it exposes them to government's role in the whole process. Further, it brings to their door steps innovation on development through the application of various means of communication. The essence of such grass root communication pattern is to enable rural areas keep abreast of the basic developmental techniques to be able to follow the development trend in their area. Where these communication techniques are properly in place, one cannot underestimate the level of development such community can experience. For sure, their development would transit from "top-down" model to participatory model. With participatory model the members of the rural communities are carried along. The project changes from *their-thing* to *our-thing*. Unfortunately, in most rural communities the reverse is the case as a result of some individual restraints already discussed. However, this work is of the view that one can avoid those limitations if certain remedial measures are put in place. These counteractive measures require collaborative efforts: the rural community as well as the government.

Government can intervene through:

- i. Good governance;
- ii. Provision of functional education to rural communities as a counter illiteracy and ignorance.
- iii. Embarking on periodic orientation/re-orientation campaigns in rural communities as antidotes against prejudice and ignorance.
- iv. Adoption of participatory model of rural development communication to foster people-oriented projects.
- v. Employment of experts in rural development communication policy-making.
- vi. Provision of adequate security to secure the available development projects.
- vii. Deployment of more resources to areas with natural disasters.
- viii. Proper monitoring of rural development communication projects to ensure proper and prompt delivery.

The members of the rural communities on their part ought to embrace the spirit of patriotism, altruism and avail themselves of the opportunities provided by the government for the development of their communities. To ensure this, the leaders of the rural communities should cooperate with the rural development communication agents to ensure grass root awareness campaign among their subjects. This requires involvement of sub-groups within the communities: such as age grades, religious organizations, to name but a few. Unarguably, these sub-groups are powerful avenues of achieving social harmony and integration in various rural areas. Besides, the community leaders are required to intimate the rural development communication agents about the basic requirement for easy communication with the rural dwellers. Without communicating with the people in the language they understand best a rural development communication scheme is certain to end in abysmal failure. Further, the leaders of the rural communities should help in ensuring sanity in their communities through reasonable application of their societal norms on anti-rural development communication human agents within their communities. Likewise, the leaders should set up mechanisms that motivate and encourage behaviours conducive to development communication. This stimulates them to embrace the rural development communication collectively and individually.

## **Conclusion**

In an age where communication has transited from analogue to digital, one cannot underrate its influence on development. This research argues that the reason some rural communities are not yet as developed as one expects is not solely on account of government actions or inactions. It sustains that there exists myriads of actions emanating from the individual members of rural communities that most often conflicts with rural development communication. The work concludes by suggesting how the government can help in removing individual-related constraints on rural development communication. Further, it advocates that the leaders and members of rural communities should not wait passively on the government. They have their part to play. Thus, this work calls for a synergy among all the stakeholders of rural development communication. The success of the agenda lies in their collaborative efforts.

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## **THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS DYNAMICS OF INTERNAL MIGRATION IN NIGERIA: THE FULANI PASTORALISTS AND MIDDLE BELT INDIGENES**

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## **Abstract**

*Internal migration is the internal movement of people and goods from one place to the other. In Nigeria, the Fulani pastoralists have in recent times been migrating from the north to other parts of Nigeria, especially the north-central preferably called middle belt by the indigenes. These migrants have a distinctive feature of violence, killing inhabitants of the middle belt in their large numbers, women and children largely displaced. It was discovered that these militant Fulani pastoralists continuously molest their host community due to Religious differences, grazing law, boundary disputes and expansionist tendencies, among others. It is on this base, with the usage of the descriptive phenomenological research, this paper examines the social and religious implications of domestic migration on Nigeria's development. It assesses methods and strategies in which these violent domestic movements could not hamper the achievement of the sustainable development goals.*

**Keywords:** Migration, Fulani in Nigeria, Middle Belt and North Central, Conflicts.

## **Introduction**

The spate of killings being witnessed in the middle belt area of Nigeria has multiplied in recent times. These killings mostly affecting the middle belt of Nigeria is believed to being orchestrated and actualised by the Fulani herdsmen. These herdsmen usually carry their cattle from one place to another, preferably from the north to the middle belt region otherwise known as north-central states in search of pastures. Little wonder, the crisis between nomadic Fulani herdsmen and "farming communities in Nigeria is centred on land use for agricultural production" (Anih & Björkqvist, 2018, p.3).

In the present 21<sup>st</sup> century, pastoralists engage in grazing fields (ranching). They engage their cattle and their feeds in a particular location. The herdsmen are predominantly Fulani, a primarily Muslim people scattered throughout many parts of West Africa (Olalekan, 2018). This is what is obtainable in developed and enlightened societies. In Nigeria the matter is different. Due to the fact the Fulani's move from the north to the middle belt regions and their movement not questioned, they have gathered the courage to engage in destruction of lives and

properties of their host community as a showcase of their grievances. Sad enough, since the inauguration of Buhari's administration of the fourth republic, the activities of herdsmen has gone haywire.

Fulani herdsmen which initially began their violent pastoral life in the southern part of Nigeria diverted their activities to the north-central of Nigeria. The north-central is preferably known as the middle belt by its inhabitants, hence, the researchers' ideal to adopt middle belt as the working nomenclature. Apart from killings of man and animals, destruction of property of mostly the poor and unprotected in rural areas, there is the rape of the old and the elderly women, destruction of farm crops, chanting of spiritual incantations as a curse on the indigenes and blatant abuse of security measures and intelligence gathering by security forces. It is on this premise that the paper examines the Fulani assault on the middle belt inhabitants and the dynamics of domestic migration abuse in Nigeria.

Due to the fact that the situations on the ground on the activities of Fulani pastoralists and the middle belts inhabitant has become an affair of a daily base, the situation will be described and the questions become: What really informed this change of behaviour of Fulani pastoralists? Is Nigeria ready to keep abreast with the globalisation being witnessed by world countries? Are the Fulani pastoralists legally empowered to decide which area to graze their animals on? With the none arrests of any of this militant Fulani's, could it be that the military have been the ones carrying out this disastrous act, or the Fulani herdsmen are being backed up by the Fulani soldiers in the Nigerian army? It is on these questions that the descriptive phenomenological method of qualitative research was employed. This is because situations and better described and based on the findings, conclusions could be drawn.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical underpinning in which this work is based is the Karl Marx's class conflict theory of 1922. According to Parkin (1971), individual's position within a class hierarchy is determined by his or her role in the production process and argues that political and ideological consciousness is determined by class position. The struggle between the classes is the causative factor to a change in this structure. The conflict theory has been used to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including wars and revolutions, wealth and poverty, discrimination and domestic violence (Investopedia 2018). According to Rummel (2018), there are six elements in Marx's view of the class conflict.

- Classes are authority relationships based on property ownership.
- A class defines groupings of individuals with shared life situations, thus interests.
- Classes are naturally antagonistic by virtue of their interests.
- Imminent within modern society is the growth of two antagonistic classes and their struggle, which eventually absorbs all social relations.
- Political organization and Power is an instrumentality of class struggle, and reigning ideas are its reflection.
- Structural change is a consequence of the class struggle.

There is the struggle between the Fulani pastoralists (herdsmen) and the indigenes of middle belt considered to be of a different class. Each class or groups claim ownership of the means of production of the middle belt. The Fulani feel that the middle-*beltans* are a threat to their existence while also the middle *beltans* feel the same. Furthermore, religion and ethnicity determine who belong to either to pastoralists' side or the inhabitants of the middle belt.

### **Conceptual framework**

Cattle rearing are done all over the world. It involves the raising of cattle for meat, milk and for hides. According to Moran (2002, p.3),cattle rearing is “aimed at good animal performance, optimum growth rate, and the maximum utilisation of existing facilities such as sheds for rearing and pastures for grazing.”

Grazing involves the repeated consumption of smaller amounts of food over an extended period of time (Carter & Jansen, 2012). Animal grazes by consuming predominantly herbaceous forage (Allen, 2011). Grazing is done on grazing land. Grazing land is any vegetated land that is grazed or has the potential to be grazed by animals (domestic and wild). This term is all-inclusive and covers all kinds and types of land that can be grazed (Allen, 2011, p.4). A grazing land may be a cropland (land cultivation forage crops, forestland (dominated by trees) or pastureland (dedicated to the production of forage for grazing by animals, or rangeland (growing of natural grasses, forbs and shrubs).

All over the world, cattle grazing are carried out in much of a way that the human community is not affected. This is ensured in the ranching of their animals. In these ranches, the vegetation of the grazing lands may be a monoculture, a mixture of two or more species of grasses. In developed societies, there is grazing management and also grazing land used to support grazing animals over a defined time, generally a year. Grazing management is the

manipulation of grazing in pursuit of a specific objective or set of objectives (Allen, 2011). In the United States, for instance, Holechek (1981, p.17) reveals that:

Toward the end of the 1970's and into the present, concern over the world population explosion has generated renewed interest in using public rangeland for livestock production. This is because lower energy inputs are required to produce red meat from range- land than cropland. In addition, range forage can only be converted into products usable by man with grazing animals. Range improvement on private lands accelerated during the 1970's because of improved information and education programs by state and federal agencies. Another factor of considerable importance was that the 1970's rancher was much better educated than those from previous periods. Watershed and wildlife aspects of range management attracted more public attention and research dollars than in the 1960's. It appears that range watershed management will receive more and more emphasis in the future because of restricted water supplies and increasing human population.

Much of the grazing land in the United States can be used more efficiently for livestock grazing on rangelands. Rangelands are a type of land on which the natural vegetation is dominated by grasses, forbs and shrubs and the land is managed as a natural ecosystem (Rinehart, 2008). Renewed interest in rangeland is due to a number of reasons. It is covered by natural vegetation and provides grazing and forage for livestock. In the United States there are about 312 million hectares (770 million acres) of rangelands (U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, 1989). Rinehart (2008) writes that these rangelands based livestock production systems can naturally maintain soil and plant integrity while growing healthy ruminants.

### **Fulani Pastoralists in Nigeria**

The Fulani pastoralists practised the nomadic system which is based on the extensive movement of their cattle in search of forage and other grass species. Glew (2001, p.730) explains that the Fulani of northern Nigeria is "semi-nomadic pastoralists who consume a diet rich in saturated fats, do not use tobacco, are lean, and have an active lifestyle."

The Fulani pastoralists lack a clearly defined family system. More captivating is their inability to maintain the extended family style. Sutter (1987, p.201) reveals

that the various “conditions of pastoral livelihood militate against the formation of extended kinship groups.” These Fulani pastoralists are cultured in the form of a man, wife and their children, especially the dependent children.

In northern Nigeria, due to the acclaimed lack of good forage or green grasses, the pastoralists are forced to migrate to the middle belt region which is believed to have better precipitation of rainfall and humidity. These migrant pastoralists in Nigeria are made up of many ethnic groups and the largest being the Fulbe or Fulani; constituting over 90% (Abbass, 2014, p.331). Also, Tarig (2011) reveals that these pastoralists are traditionally a nomadic, pastoralist, trading people, herding cattle, goats and sheep across the vast dry hinterlands of their domain, keeping somewhat separate from the local agricultural populations. Also worthy of mentioning is the fact that the Fulani were the first people in West Africa to convert to Islam through jihads hence becoming a political, economic, and a religious force. It is believed that the nomenclature Fulani is given by the Hausa to these Fulbe immigrants. Adebayo (1995) explains that the Fulani are well integrated amongst the sedentary Hausa farmers, who immigrate to Northern Nigeria from the Senegambia Valley several centuries ago.

### **Fulani and Middle Belt Clashes**

The middle belt region of Nigeria is populated by minority ethnic groups. Johannes (2008, p.38) recalls that it draws a “separation between the principally Islamic North and the mainly Christian south.” It states include Benue State, Plateau State, Kwara State, Kogi State, Taraba State, Nasarawa State, Niger State, Adamawa State, and Abuja.

Due to the different and very controversial cultural, religious, social and religious histories, the middle belt has continued to be the victim of mass killings due to struggle over land, cultural or religious identity and political power. Blench, (1988) lucidly observes that the region continues to hold an attraction for these herdsmen as a result of the promise of vast, arable grazing lands.

The Fulani pastoralists are made of two types. They are the nomadic herdsmen and the religious herdsmen. The nomadic herdsmen are only involved in their cattle grazing on available forage and others grasses and weed around while the militant herdsmen are usually armed heavily with guns, machetes and charms. They are the ones that use force on anyone that tends to stop their animal grazing on their land. In the descriptions of the second category of herdsmen, Uhembe (2015) disclosed them as terrorists disguising as pastoralists with the primitive

motive of the forceful acquisition of the land of the host communities through the re-launch of jihads or by acting out the script of the Boko Haram group.

The mayhem the militant herdsmen have done to the middle belt region cannot be underestimated. On January 1, 2018, 70 persons were killed in attacks on Logo and Guma LGA of Benue (Biodun, 2018). On the 7th May 2018, in the Agatu LGA of Benue State, Mr. Andrew Ataboh and his son, Benjamin, while they were working on their farm at Inahem were killed by herdsmen (Aluko and Charles, 2018). On May 1, 2018, No fewer than 10 persons have were killed and 15 persons injured in Tse Iortyer, near Yelewata community in Guma LGA of Benue State (Ameh, 2018). On April 19, 2018, Anyiin community in Logo LGA of Benue State, the militant Fulani herdsmen killed several people, also set over 30 houses on fire and destroyed farm produces worth millions of naira (Ameh, 2018). On the 12th April 2018, 56 persons were killed by suspected herdsmen in last Thursday's attack on Gbeji town of Tsaav ward, Tse-Akaanya and Tse-Hiityo of Lumbuv council ward of Ukum Local Government Area of the state (Duru & Udama, 2018). On the 24th April 2018, in Ayar Mbalom village in Gwer East local Government Area of Benue State, 19 persons were killed and over 35 houses were burnt. Among those killed was Rev Fathers Gor Joseph, Felix Tyolaha of St. Ignatius Quasi Parish Ukpor-Mbalom (Ameh, 2018). Other middle belt states have also had their unfair share of the militancy of herdsmen. On the 11th April 2018, over 66 people were killed in Taraba (Daniel, Duru & Mkom, 2018). On the 16th January 2018, a monarch in Taraba State and 28 others were killed (Fanen & Uja 2018).

### **Triggers of Fulani herdsmen and middle belts fracas**

So many factors have been put forward and motivators in the wanton destruction of lives and property by the militant Fulani herdsmen. They are hereunder enumerated.

1. **Religion and Grazing Law:** The Fulani herdsmen see to the propagation of their Islamic religion whether peacefully or violently. They see the middle belt region as a conquered territory by Usman dan Fodio. Stopping them from behaving anyhow they want on the soil of middle belt region is a call for war. This is the reason why the introduction of anti-grazing law by the Ortom administration in Benue State was seen as an opposition to Islam, which signalled

the commercialisation and mass destruction of lives and property by the herdsmen. Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association reveals that anti-open grazing law in Benue State aimed at regulating cow grazing in the state must be modified for peace to reign in the state (Seun, 2018). On the 25th of January 2018, Minister of Defence, Mansur Dan-Ali blatantly and obscenely identified the implementation of anti-grazing law in some states as the immediate cause of the killings.

2. **Boundary Disputes and Expansionist tendencies:** Benue state, for instance, has been revealed to be a conquered territory of the Fulani. Professor Umar Labdo Muhammad of the Faculty of Humanities, Northwest University, Kano has alleged that Benue State belongs to the Fulani by right of conquest. According to Seun (2018) Umar boasts that:

Benue State belongs to the Fulani people by right of conquest. This is because half of the state is part of the Bauchi Emirate and the other half is part of the Adamawa Emirate. Benue is therefore part and parcel of the Sokoto Caliphate. So no one has the right to expel the Fulani from Benue under any guise. Second to the Arabs, perhaps the Fulani are the most benevolent and merciful conquerors in history. If they had applied the Nazi final solution to the natives, or if they had treated them the same way the European settlers treated Red Indians in North America or the Aborigines in Australia, the story would have been different today. The Fulani are the largest single nation in West Africa and, perhaps, on the whole continent and they have remained unbeatable throughout their history. You can hate the Fulani, you can call them all sort of names, you can blackmail their spineless political leaders, you can conspire to wipe out the entire Fulani leadership in a single day, you can stage a coup and “orkarize” (excise) the core Fulani states from Nigeria, you can hate them to he’ll, but you can never beat them. Fulani’s main problem remains their meek, spineless, incompetent leaders that have lost all sense of responsibility and abandoned their people. But this problem, thank God, is not insurmountable.

However, Prof Akintoye in an interview with Omoniyi on June 12, 2018, refutes this. He stated that that

...the theory is very different from what we know about the history of the Tiv, the black African people generally and the people who now live in Nigeria. What we know about the Fulani is that they originated in the



far West of West Africa, in the areas of the Futa Jalon and Futa Toro and then migrated slowly eastward. By the time of the Empires of Mali and Songhai, they had reached the centre of West Africa in what is now known as the Republic of Mali.

He further revealed that until the 18th century, they were not part of the country called Nigeria. Until this time, there were no Fulani in the area called Nigeria. They migrated into Nigeria and established themselves in Hausaland. They can claim right over Hausaland because they became the rulers of the Hausa people. When they began to bring pressure to bear on the people of the Middle Belt, destroying their farms and villages like what they are doing now, a few of the ethnic nationalities there tried to make peace with them, but they soon discovered that the peace didn't pacify them. This forced many of them to move away from their homes to part of the grassland where the Fulani could not easily reach them. But for the large nationality like the Tiv, nobody conquered them. They were too strong to be conquered. They are one of the most warlike people ever in black Africa. Nobody ever conquered them. Though the Fulani raided the fringes of the Tiv territory, they could not conquer the Tiv people. When the Tiv march out with their poisoned arrows, nobody can stand in their way. Even when the British came in 1900 to invade the Tiv land and they marched out with their poisoned arrows and faced the British, the British had to withdraw. They couldn't face the Tiv. The Tiv are one of the most developed people in Northern Nigeria (Omoniyi, 2018). Expansionist tendencies are expressed in circumstances where the pastoralists either move to claim ownership of the lands which were allocated to them by the indigenous groups on trust and based on predetermined agreements (Genyi, 2014).

### **3. Politicking Strategy**

Politicians have hijacked some of the gruesome activities of herdsmen to further their political popularity. Some opposition party members in the bid to place a state governor in the bad light and as incredible and unfit to hold that office, resort to this cheap political campaign of calumny, with the aim of gaining political points. They give information and shed these Fulani terrorists from security agencies. They don't mind that their kinsmen are the

ones affected. Their political career is of utmost importance to them. Thus political cleavages, scramble for insufficient political gains, weak state structures, feelings of deprivation and thirst for power has continued to sustain this ugly development (Justino, 2007 in Nanji 2017, p.17).

#### **4. Religious Solidarity and Sympathy of the Nigeria Security Agencies and Outfits**

The Nigeria security agencies like the Nigerian Army, Navy, Airforce, DSS, FSARS, Police, Civil Defence, amongst others, have been suspected to be shedding Fulani herdsmen. Some locals have insisted that the Fulani soldiers aid and abate the activities of herdsmen. It is even believed in some quarters that the soldiers and police are the ones carrying out these blatant activities of ethnic cleansing. On Saturday, March 24, 2018, a former minister of defence, Gen TY Danjuma (retired), said:

The armed forces are not neutral, They collude with the armed bandits that kill people, kill Nigerians. They facilitate their movement. They cover them. If you are depending on the armed forces to stop the killings, you will die one by one The ethnic cleansing must stop in Taraba State. It must stop in all the states of Nigeria, otherwise Somalia will be a child's play. I ask everyone of you to be at alert and defend your country, defend your territory, defend your state. You have nowhere else to go (Magaji, 2018).

Furthermore, the military according to locals in Benue and Taraba states were in the act of disarming the indigenes, while the Fulani militants' herdsmen move without molestation.

#### **Socio-religious Implications of these clashes**

The implications of these unabated clashes include:

1. **Religious Bigotry:** Indigenes of the middle belt region have now seen the Fulani as a dangerous group to the practice of their Christian religion. Furthermore, their acts have polarised the nation along religious and ethnic affinities. Christians in Nigeria see the Muslims as an accomplice of the rampaging. The Fulani mayhem is polarising Nigerians along religious

and ethnic lines and putting the spotlight on the federal government for failing to curb the violence (Updated, 2018).

2. **Social Disintegration:** There is a high level of suspicion among the religious groups. Christians are suspicious that the Muslims may join the Fulani herdsmen in fermenting attacks at any point in time. Furthermore, there is the mass movement of people from places populated by Muslims or from places that have continued or suspected to be affected by the Fulani rampage. For instance, according to Channels (2018) residents of some communities in the southern part of Nasarawa State have fled their homes due to killings and attacks by armed men suspected to be herdsmen. This has led to overpopulation of certain areas.
3. **Famine and Starvation:** Food crops and farms are burned down by herdsmen militants. Most of those affected are commercial farmers. With the destruction of farmlands and its produce, there is the shortage of food crops in the market. Farmers, whose source of livelihood is their farm produce, may face starvation in the succeeding year. This famine is possible because these attacks were accompanied with the burning of the homes of the farmers, destruction or looting of their food storage facilities or the occupation and grazing on their farmlands by cows and herdsmen (Okogba, 2018). Chijioke (2018) elucidates that the renewed attacks on Benue communities are coming at a time when farmers are harvesting their produce and the crops are being used as feeds for cattle after invading and displacing farmers.
4. **Bad Image to the International Community:** The international community now sees Nigeria as part of the countries being ravaged by Islamic fundamentalist. Nigeria is not recognised as a safe haven for investors. Little wonder the number of companies and industries that have shut down or have refused to stay in the country due to the security challenges orchestrated by Fulani unchecked rampage.

## **Recommendations**

As part of the way forward, it is advised that:

1. Herdsmen should be made to have a distinct area of land which they can use in the growing of forages to feed their animals. This is known as a camp.

2. If getting a camp is problematic, they should get a grazing area which is enclosed and separated from other areas with a fence.
3. The federal or state government should stop playing politics or religious solidarity with the lives of the ordinary Nigerian. Security should be beefed up to forestall any actions or militancy of the Fulani herdsmen in both affected and unaffected communities.
4. There should be the checking of the number of migrating Fulani herdsmen into a locality. When they are allowed in large number, they tend to be a source of security challenge to the community in question.
5. Farmers in agrarian communities in the middle belt should be guarded the same way that farmer in the northeastern part of Nigeria is being guarded.
6. There should be the arrest and sincere prosecution of herdsmen caught. Since the marauding herdsmen began their activities, the federal government paid lip service, which many Nigerians interprets as hypocrisy.

## **Conclusion**

The migrating of Fulani herdsmen to the middle belt regions has been a source of the security challenges in this region. The impacts of their activities on the locals have affected their total livelihood ranging from economy to education and to social integration. The government needs to avoid this I-don't-care attitude of protecting the herdsmen. There should be serious checks on herdsmen activities and those found wanting should be publicly tried, molested and imprisoned. Since the Fulani began their onslaught no arrest had been made and it is very disheartening. When arrests are made, it will, in the long run, serve as a deterrent to other militant herdsmen.

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**'AFRICAN LITERATURE AND THE CHANGING WORLD: THE  
ANTITHETICAL IDEOLOGIES OF INDIVIDUALISM AND  
COMMUNALISM IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S NOVELS.**

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***Abstract***

*The synergic nature of African culture is endowed with cultural values that promote peace, oneness, harmony and care for one another. Thus, the ideology of communalism is a highly esteemed African practice which works for the survival of the people and for the common good. This principle and practice of communalism have held the African culture from total annihilation. This is even in spite of occasional individual dissidence found among those communities. African literature has dealt with matters of cultural importance, highlighting individual and collective tendencies which have reflected certain ideologies in fictional texts and narratives. Chinua Achebe, a leading literary African writer has extensively promoted African communality in fictional texts. Hence to explore the fact of African Communalism and the conflict of individualism, selected novels of Achebe including; Arrow of God, Things Fall Apart and No Longer at Ease, are to be examined to present characters that are seen as non-conformists. This study is aimed at making a literary exploration on the longstanding ideology of communalism, in the spirit of ofuobi/anyibuofu. It will specifically make a critical evaluation of the dissenting activities of the key individuals in the texts and the consequences of their actions. The conclusion will promote a re-orientation and re-ordering of individual psyche to the assimilation of cultural ideologies in our changing world.*

**Key words:** Ideology, Communalism, Individualism, Antithetical, Re-orientation, cultural values.

**Introduction**

African Literature has come a long way in dealing with issues concerning Africa and its cultural facts and ideologies. It is an expression of African countries' social structure and concerns about the past and present history reflected in literary narratives. A. N. Akwanya in *Literary Criticism from formal to Questions of Method* potends that, 'African Literature represents an African experience, with a mode of imagination derived from the African background...' (13). These experiences are captured in writings of different genres of literature. Speaking about literature in a wider Sense, *50 years of the Nigerian Novel (1952 - 2001)* explains 'literature as a movement of thought or fantasy coming into being as,



and in one of the forms sanctioned and hallowed by tradition's (A.N. Akwanya and Virgy A. Anohu 3). Literature as a movement cuts across the globe in their types and functions. African literature therefore, is literature about African society. African society is communal and collective in nature and structure, thereby 'the structure and functions of African society define the individual identity within a cosmic context which approximates Elliot's synthesis of "the timeless" and "the temporal" the past and the presents' (Lloyd Brown 28). Thus, individuals in the community share relatively common ideas and facts that become societal ideology or philosophy. These ideologies are cultural values that promote harmony in the community among individuals. This is however, in spite of individual differences and interests.

These ideologies act as strong guiding principles and code of conduct for members of the community. Most of these are represented in literary writings by African fictional writers focusing on the relationship between the individual and the community. This situation is described as 'a humanist approach to literature and explains that it obviously has a serious limitation. Its idea of the business of the novel as centered on the interface between the individual and society is demonstrable' (A.N Akwanya 2). Thus, such relationship between the individual and the community is demonstrated in the texts of Chinua Achebe and lends credence to the fact of individual interest and perception in spite of the held ideologies.

Individual's dissension becomes antithetical to communal ethos thereby putting pressure and chaos on the community and threatens the peace and harmony therein. Thus, African writers have in their fictional narratives represented the conditions of African communal society guided by unwritten laws articulated in forms of aphorisms or witty sayings, and philosophies such as *Onyeaghana nwanne ya, Igwebuike, nwanne di na mba* depicting the oneness among the people. These communal dictates are represented by Asouzu (2007a) as complimentary philosophy of *Ibuanyidanda*, as a new approach to African philosophy for resolving problems, advancing the quality of life, human life and contributing to the quest for meaning within and beyond Africa'. (Kanu Ikechukwu 226). There is however, a lacuna in these dictates of communal ideologies which leaves the individual to his choice but at a cross road.

Chinua Achebe in his fictional works has made great impact and exerted much influence and impression in the themes and plot narratives representing the typical African traditional communities living and bonded by these ideologies.

However, the crux of the matter is that there are instances of non compliance to the wisdom inherent in these communal ideas though with attendant consequences borne by dissident individuals. As observed by D.A Masolo in a paper, 'Community, Identity and the Cultural Space' that, 'our complex lives of multiple choices and interests, ranging from occupation to friendships and amusements and to participation in public Policy-oriented activities, all bring us into bonds with others in yet more complex ways' (Masolo Online). This complexity is equally seen in the acceptability of the guiding norms in the community. Masolo while highlighting the importance of individual and community interface asserts that 'individuals and community were related in a constant mutual dependency. The specific behaviour of individuals in various contents gave the community its cultural boundaries' (Online). Individuals are indispensable component of the community and will remain so regardless of difference.

While affirming the novel as a means of promoting cultural values, it is observed that 'from the beginning therefore, the Nigerian novel has been traditional in so far as it has sought consciously to be art. It comes of age, that is, at the time it first impresses itself on the general consciousness, by taking place in a form which is also traditionally very important for a literary culture' (A.N. Akwanya and Virgy .A. Anohu 5). Literary scholars have leveraged on the rich thematic culture of the novels to critically analyze diverse themes and issues around communal norms and African cultural values. For example, the essay 'African Cultures and Values' expands the context of culture to include 'a totality of traits and characters that are peculiar to a people to the extent that it marks them out from other people or society.... It goes on to include a people's social norms, taboos and values. Values are to be understood as beliefs that are held about what is right and wrong and what is important in life' (Gabriel Idang Online). African values are however appraised with time and age for better adaptation. The essay further highlights the relevance of African-culture and values to the contemporary society and 'maintains that these values be critically assessed and those found to be inimical to the well-being and holistic development of the society be discarded. In this way, African culture and values can be revaluated, their relevance established and sustained in order to give credence to authentic African identity' (Idang online). This illustrates the fact that there are issues of contention in the application of these value and therefore a need for appraisal and re-examination for general acceptability.

The essay, 'Language and Action in the Novels of Chinua Achebe' has the central theme of *No Longer at Ease* as espousing 'the distance between what is said to be and what is. For example, the morality of public office offered by Mr. Green, the white civil servant, is a facade, like the accountant's clean collar on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. It asserts an ideal, but one irrelevant to the problems of the time and place, and it is bitterly exposed in Mr. Green's tired and cliché-ridden sermon on the effects of the climate on the 'African character' (Gareth Griffiths 71). The paper reveals the issue of failed morality and corruption in the Nigerian civil service.

Bernth Lindfors writing in 'The Palm Oil With Which Achebe's Words are Eaten' observes that '*Things Fall Apart* is the story of Okonkwo, a famous warrior and expert farmer who has risen from humble origin to become a wealthy and respected leader of his clan. His entire life has been a struggle to achieve status, and he has almost attained a position of pre-eminence when he accidentally kills a kinsman' (C.L. Innes & Bernth Lindfors 51). In this essay Achebe uses proverbs to promote the image of Okonkwo as a person who tries to remain relevant and gain respect in his community through individual efforts but fails. The essay further highlights the fact that Achebe's use of proverbs 'tells more about the values of Igbo society, such proverbs also serve as thematic statements reminding us of some of the major motifs in the novel e.g. the importance of status, the value of achievement, the idea of man as shaper of his own destiny' (C.L. Innes & Bernth Lindfors 53). The essay clearly highlights Achebe's creative talent in the use of proverbs and promotes the great depth of value and beauty of African culture and philosophy. In 'Re Thinking of African Culture and Identity: The Afro-Politan Model', the writer argues that 'afropolitanism is an enunciation of the ideas of contamination, hybridity, hyperculturality and other postmodernist terms that disrupts essentialist and oppositional notions of African culture and identity' (Chielozona Eze Online). These new ideas and infiltrations in the understanding of the African culture come with destabilizing effect with its divergent voices.

The review of literature has taken a look at some of the critical works done by scholars around the ideas of cultural values and individual and community interests, but there are still areas not yet covered. One of such is the chaos between the interface between individualism and communalism created by the overriding influence concerning the acceptability of cultural norms. This is what this paper aims to deal with by making a literary study of dissensions witnessed between individual protagonists in the selected novels of study and their cultural

communities, namely; Okonkwo of *Things Fall Apart*, Obi Okonkwo of *No Longer at Ease* and Ezeulu in *Arrow of God*. This study is based on the framework of African social philosophy and ideology of communalism, hinged on the Igbo maxims of *ofuobi/anyibuofu* to examine the activities of these individuals that are in antithesis to communal dictates. The paper will in conclusion observe the negative consequences of individualism and promote the long standing communal values as better acceptable codes of conduct for the sustenance of peace and harmony in our changing world.

### **Conceptual Issues**

The concepts of individualism and communalism are key in the discourse of this paper. They are to be studied on the standpoint of African social philosophy and ideology. However, related concepts like socialism and communitarianism are used with the same understanding of communalism. Specific issues of African cultural values hinged on the ideologies of *ofuobi* and *anyibuofu* form the tone of the discourse. The communal or communitarian aspects of African moral and political thoughts are reflected in the communitarian features which have been subject of much discourse. Using African social philosophy as the stand point of analysis, Kanu writes that 'it is not to say that there is a unitary or uniform perspective on issues in Africa in the sense that every African adheres to it, but the fact that these ideas are indigenous to Africa, seen, interpreted and analyzed by African philosophy' (Kanu 17). Explaining the meaning of Ideology in *Tradition and Modernity* Kwame Gyekye writes that the term 'Ideology was first used to mean "the science of idea". It was to be used to improve social and political conditions of the human beings through the creation of sociopolitical norms. Ideology is defined as a dominant set of ideas about the nature of the good society' (Gyekye 164). Thus philosophies scripted as ideologies and maxims are adopted to African culture and for the good of the people. These ideas are unique in their *africanness*.

Thus 'the "africanness" and "philosophiness" of African philosophy speak of its particularity and universality which are basic ingredients in the philosophical process' (Kanu 22). Hence African philosophy and ideology speak to African problems and situations. Accordingly, Odimegwu avers that 'just as in the family, every member is a blood relation so in communalism every member of the community was treated as brother or sister who had natural rights of belonging' (Kanu 3). For this reason, the problem of one member of the community was the problem of another, especially if it had to do with an outsider. Contributing, the essay, 'The Place of the Individual in the Traditional

African Society' explaining the seeming cordial relationship between the individual and the society, opines that 'this does not suggest a lack of dispute or dissension among members of the same community, it only suggests that even if at home they quarreled and fought, they united to fight an external aggression' (Oliver Ona and Hyginus Ezebuilo 227). But going further, the superiority of communal ethos over individual will and interest holds sway in entrenching the communal spirit. Thus, the essay, 'The Individual in African Communalism' affirms that:

This community structure of African societies, especially within the sub-Sahara, engenders a high spirit of communalism. Every one contributes something to the common stock. Their cooperative community spirit goes a long way to portray their altruism: community interests come before personal interests, as the power of the community is superior over that of an individual. This is evidenced in such Igbo sayings like (the relatives or community is one's strength/power); *Umunna bu ike*, *Anaghi eleli-amala eleli* (you cannot neglect the community); etc. Africans carry out their civic and social responsibilities according to the provisions of community tradition (Ogbuja, Columbus Online).

The key philosophy in this study is communalism in African cultural milieu in relation to individualism. Communalism explained as a communitarian doctrine is described as a socioethical idea and doctrine about 'social relations as well as moral attitudes: about what sorts of relationships should hold between individuals in a society, and about the need to take into account the interests of the wider society not only in designing sociopolitical institutions and in evolving behavior patterns for individuals in their responses to the needs and welfare of other members of the society' (Kwame Gyekye 149). In the same vein 'Communalism in African setting promotes unity, togetherness, brotherliness and cooperation which are vital elements that propel the wheel of globalization' (Etta Emmanuel, Dingba and Offiong 303). In affirming this interdependency, Kwame Gyekye further states that:

There is some truth in the view that communalism or individualism as applied to a social arrangement is a matter of degree. For this reason, we should expect a human society to be either more individualistic than communal or more communal than individualistic. But, in view of the fact that neither can the individual develop outside the framework of the community nor can the welfare of the community as a whole dispense with the talents and initiative of its individual members. I think that the most satisfactory way to recognize the

claims of both community and individuality is to ascribe them the status of an equal moral standing. (Gyekye 41).

The inter-relationship between the individual and the community becomes complementary as each needs the other to survive. Man as an individual belongs to a social or cultural society. Therefore the 'central place of the community and the individual has strong implications for African ethics' (Kanu 170). However, in African cultural space, the community is seen as the guide to the ethical and value essence of the individual and is seen to occupy a higher stance in the ladder of the relationship.

Affirming the ideology of a communal spirit 'Prophecies and Protests-Ubuntu and Communalism in African Philosophy' we read that:

In the notions of *Ubuntu* and communalism the African community spirit is epitomized. The meaning of these notions shows that there is a high estimation of the community in African thought and practice, higher than that of the individual, but not at the cost of forgetting the individual person. A person is a person in the community and through the others of his or her community. This implies a culture of mutual help, of caring for each other and sharing with each other. This is not only expressed in the African languages; it is also practiced by talking to each other, by means of dialogues. Of course, this culture should not be understood in an idealized way. But in spite of struggles between members of a community, envy and hatred, every member can rely on support from somebody of the extended family when in serious trouble or in danger of life. (Heinz kimmerle Online).

Communalism is expressed as a stronghold for communal existence. The idea of individualism is linked to personhood in African philosophy, whereby.

However, the overriding precedence of community over the individual is perceived as unjust and unfair to some who take pride in their self and personal ego. Therefore:

As a consequence of the central place the community occupies in African ontology, personhood is strongly linked to the community. African philosophy accepts that personhood is something attained in direct proportion as one participates in communal life through performing the various duties imposed on him or her by living in the community. A person is defined by reference to his kinship, and

as such, the reality of communal world takes precedence over the individual. (Kanu 170).

This inadvertently causes a problem of adherence and dissension among the people. One of the problems of non adherence as posited by Kanu stems from 'lack of indigenous written philosophical tradition in Africa .... Not implying that it cannot be written, but that it is basically embodied in proverbs, aphorisms and pithy sayings. Its philosophicality is not determined by writing' (Kanu 2). The unwritten nature of the philosophy makes it open to individual perception and rationalization giving rise to frustrations and doubts.

According to Quinton (1995), Teichmann and Katherine in explaining the nature of the non philosophical counterparts of the three elements of theory of philosophy posit that, '...Everyone has occasion to doubt and question beliefs, their own or those of others, with more or less success and without any theory of what they are doing' (Kanu 5). The question of individual doubt of the ethics and values of the community very much occupies an alarming space in the sphere of this reality. Again, Kanu quoting Gyekye observes that for most of these individuals, 'their understanding of philosophy has been conditioned by their experience of western philosophy. Thus, they judge the validity of African philosophy from what they know as western philosophy or from the categories forged by the West' (Kanu 3). Dissension or doubt usually emanate from individuals who have come into contact with western ideas or education.

Apart from doubt, communalism makes room for loneliness for the individual who have embraced another philosophy. Gyekye argues that 'the consequence of this will be that one individual will come to be suspicious and fearful of the other and will keep to himself or herself. Leading a lonely life will thus become a preferable (or a preferred, way of life. This need not be so if we have a clear and deep understanding of the value of community life for our individual lives' (276). A well ordered community life has far reaching advantage for the wellbeing of the individual.

In this study the challenges of doubt, frustration and consequent isolation of individuals will be explored in the select texts of Achebe. Kanu Ikechukwu has classified such studies as belonging to the 'literary or artistic school of African philosophy' (54). This issue will be examined on the philosophical aphorism of *Ofuobi* and *anyibuofu* as evidenced in the novels' narratives.

### **Issues of Individualism in Antithesis to Communalism**

In revealing the maxim of *Ofuobi* and belongingness in the texts of Chinua Achebe, the issues of individual interest and rejection of the collective consensus will be explored through the actions of the key characters namely; Okonkwo of *Things Fall Apart*, Obi Okonkwo of *No Longer at Ease* and Ezeulu of *Arrow of God*. It is evident in all the fictional narratives the central role of communal living. They are situations whereby communities are guided by maxim and shared values. The communities of Umuofia in *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*, and Umuaro of *Arrow of God* represent the ideal African cultural communities. The main characters of Achebe's novels are projected as always feeling the endemic tensions of conflicting cultural values.

In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, 'Umuofia was feared by all its neighbours. It was powerful in war and in magic, and its priests and medicine men were feared in all their surrounding country. Its most potent war-medicine was as old as the clan itself. Nobody knew how old. But on one point, there was general agreement ...' (*Things Fall Apart* 10). This general statement confirms the fact of the people speaking with one voice. The Umuofia Progressive Union Lagos State living out the communal love, rallies round a member who had lost his Job and solicit help from among them for Joshua who is now without a job. 'That is why we say that he who has people is richer than he who has money. Every one of us here should look out for openings in his department and put in a word for Joshua. This was greeted with approval' (*No Longer at Ease* 72). The Umuofia of *Things Fall Apart* is the same with *No Longer at Ease*, which is termed a continuation of *Things Fall Apart*. The people of Umuaro believe so much in the sighting of the new moon by Ezeulu so as to pronounce the new yam festival. Therefore in 'this season of the year his task was not too difficult, he did not have to peer and search the sky as he might do when the rains came' (*Arrow of God* 1). The new yam festival heralds the harvest and eating of the new yam.

For these cultural communities, close kingship relations are held at a high premium. This idea highlights the fact that 'the synergic nature of the society that allows people to build houses and work on farms together is directly opposite to the western individualistic model' (Gabriel E. Idang Online). Thus Obi Okonkwo in *No Longer at Ease* is a product of communal effort as he receives his education abroad through community effort. Thus, 'six or seven years ago Umuofians abroad had formed their union with the aim of collecting money to send some of their brighter young men to study in England. They taxed themselves mercilessly. The first scholarship under this scheme was awarded to Obi Okonkwo five years ago' (*No Longer at Ease* 6). Such communal effort reflects the maxim of *Igwebuike*.



However, the individuals in the three novels have issues against the common belief of the communities. This creates contention and pressure in the space. Remy Oriaku observes in an essay 'When Brothers Fight to Death': Internal conflicts and the Tragic Resolution of *Arrow of God*, that 'Each of the novels has its dominant figure. Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, and Ezeulu in *Arrow of God* and it is with them that the novels open. There is the wrestling match in *Things Fall Apart*' which shows Okonkwo as a man of action and imitates his rise to greatness' (Okike 48-49). In *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu is shown to be 'contemplative, he is seated in his Obi watching for the appearance of the new moon' (49). Still describing the person of Okonkwo, A.N. Akwanya observes that:

Though one of the greatest in Umuofia, Okonkwo never becomes a member of the coterie of elders who make all the political decisions in Umuofia. Unconsciously, it is this warlike image that he projects in public. So it is in the function of a warrior of uncommon standing that he is identified within the Umuofia public, his personality almost entirely subsumed in that function. In the social space he stands out as one who has little to say to other people, although he converses quite well with his friend Obierika, he is given to dialoguing with himself (82).

It is this trait of being on his own which is antithetical to communal life that predisposes his acting against the expected communal ethics. Akwanya similarly writes that 'Ezeulu is even more thoughtful than Okonkwo, and lives alone with his thoughts all the time. This lonely existence seems to be imposed by his office as chief priest, and he accepts it with equanimity' (Okike 83). Ezeulu's exalted status as the chief priest shapes his perception which is in contradiction with the general community ideas. Perhaps, his position makes him allocate and exercise power of personal interest.

The scenario with Obi Okonkwo is different. He is shaped by exposure to western education and experience, thereby, forming opinion different from the community. Hence, in 'Language as a Theme in *No Longer at Ease* Felicity Riddy says, 'Obi Okonkwo is what Clark calls a citizen of two world' as the first person in his village to receive a university education and a post in the senior service ... The difficulties which confront and finally overcome him stem from his inability to identify himself wholly with either the traditional or the modern way of life, and his lack of a sense of identity is most clearly reflected in his speech' (Felicity Riddy 151). It is evident that Obi Okonkwo's problem with his clan and his family stems from his conventional ideas to issues. The major dissention between his people and himself is his desire to marry Clara who is an Osu.

This issue attracts vehement opposition from the President of Umuofia in Lagos who does not mince words in trying to call Obi to order, he tells him openly at the gathering of his kinsmen. 'I have heard that you are moving around with a girl of doubtful ancestry and even thinking of marrying her...' (*No Longer at Ease* 75). Obi reacted to this with disrespect and eventually walked out on the president, and the entire Umuofia Progressive Union in Lagos, all in a bid to assert his interest. Obi shouted in English. 'This is preposterous ... I am not going to listen to you anymore ... But don't you dare interfere in my affairs again...' (*No Longer at Ease* 75). And he stormed out of the meeting place in spite of the efforts of some people to pacify him. Back in the village, Obi argues with his father on his choice. When his father declines his consent to his proposed marriage to Clara, he says, 'what is this thing? Our fathers in their darkness and ignorance called an innocent man Osu, a thing given to idols, and thereafter he became an outcast, and his children, and his children's children for ever. But have we not seen the light of the Gospel?' Obi used the very words that his father might have used in talking to his heathen kinsmen' (*No Longer at Ease* 121). This shows his frustration especially when his arguments could not change his father's mind on this. This situational argument between Obi and his father presents a society where system is more basic than the rights of individual members. Here, the concepts of justice and fairness are sometimes ignored in favour of preservation of the groups. Thus, to confirm Obi's father's reason for opposing the marriage merely on existing belief whereby 'Osu is like leprosy in the mind of our people ... if you do, your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generations will curse your memory' (*Things Fall Apart* 121). At the end, the traditional belief however triumphed in spite of Obi's expectation.

Therefore, if a man comes into conflict with his society, he must either accept these differences or be destroyed. This nightmare comes to life in Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*, when Okonkwo clashes with his society's beliefs. The conflict that exists between Okonkwo and his society is what ultimately leads him to his downfall. Okonkwo disagrees with many of his culture's most important values. These are held sacred in the clan and have been practiced generations before him. Okonkwo battles the new religion but not in total support of the men of Umuofia. He seems to stand alone in most of his decisions, including the decision to kill Ikemefuna. Okonkwo's growing resentment about the missionary and government makes him act violently towards them. With all these 'Okonkwo as he lay on his bamboo bed he thought about the treatment he had received in the hands of the white man's court messenger, and he swore

vengeance' (*Things Fall Apart* 159). In fulfilling his threat, Okonkwo in a struggle kills the white man's messenger, knowing full well he is left to his fate, he hanged himself. Thus the episodes surrounding Okonkwo and his actions are more of personal ego, hence it is 'forced by his own dogged insistence on masculinity to deal the fatal blow'. So determined is his effort to be known for achievement, which his society reverses, that Okonkwo gives no heed to the wisdom of age, which his society respects (*Things Fall Apart* 101). Eventually, Okonkwo suffers the implication of his actions by taking his own life to avoid further humiliation by the white men.

In *Arrow of God* Ezeulu's quest for power and authority wedges him against the collective wishes of the people of Umuaro. He refuses to eat the yam to herald the pronouncement of the new yam festival. This also stems from resentment and vengeance on the people for abandoning him when he was detained at Okperi. He also gets blinded by exercise of power. Hence to understand Ezeulu one must comprehend his deep concern over the way his world is changing. This concern is expressed both in his decision to send one of his son's to a mission school. After a long period of silent preparation Ezeulu finally revealed that he intended to hit Umuaro as its most vulnerable point, the feast of the new yam. Before it, a man might dig up a few yams around his house to ward off hunger in his family but no one will begin the harvesting of the big farms. And, in any case, no man of title would taste new yam from whatever source before the festival. Ezeulu held on to his personal ego against communal wishes to punish his perceived enemies. Unfortunately, he suffers the consequence. Thus, the voice of dissension is antithetical to collective ethos.

## **Conclusion**

The African cultural society is community oriented. In spite of the changing dynamics in the system caused by infiltrations of other philosophies and cultural experiences, cultural ideologies are still relevant. African literary writers all through the periods have represented the struggle between individual personhood and the community in designing the cultural values and norms. Chinua Achebe's novels studied here observed that dissension and struggle witnessed in the activities of the individuals attracted negative implications which the individuals suffered alone while the community survives. The paper suggests the reorientation and disposition of the individual in the community towards a better understanding and acceptance of cultural values in consonance with the general existing ideologies of *ofuobi*, of speaking and acting with one voice. Hence, in our changing world, communalism and its apparatuses should

be entrenched over individualism in order to maintain a peaceful and harmonious society. \_

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**NTE-OSWINA ORACULAR DEITY IN IKWO TRADITIONAL SOCIETY: A  
HISTORICAL SYNTHESIS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION, 1800-1970**

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**Abstract**

*Nte-Oswina was one powerful deity unknown to the Europeans during the processes of colonialism. A deity whose powers were used to resist British invasion of Ikwo, became prominent following the outbreak of the Nigerian-Biafran war of 1967-1970 about a century ago when the people used the oracle as an instrument of protection. Within this period however, and when the Nigerian soldiers conquered the old Ogaja province and detonated bomb at "Eke Igboji Market", there were several Ikwo people who ran into the Nte-Oswina's forest for protection hence, there were heavy smokes that appeared and covered the forest and began to hypnotize the soldiers until they were driven away by bees. Against this background, this paper seeks to unveil the mystic powers of this deity with the aim of finding out whether the failure to document the activities of Nte-Oswina especially in the area of conflict resolution by Igbo historiographers like other powerful deities such as "Ibinukpabi" and "Igwekala" whose records dominated African history was a deliberate attempt or lack of interest from Igbo historians. Data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary methods while data collected were analyzed through the application of historical narration. Preliminary investigation revealed that the unpopularity of this powerful long "juju" wasn't deliberate but rather, lack of interest particularly from the Ikwo people who refused to provide information to early historian that sought to reconstruct the history of the preliterate people like the Ikwo society.*

**Key words:** Nte-Oswina, Oracular Deity, Traditional society, Historical Synthesis, Conflict Resolution

### **Introduction**

The nature of Igbo societies in the pre-colonial times revealed that Ikwo evolved into strong decentralized political system headed by paramount chiefs who became the leaders of the autonomous communities that exist in Ikwo Local Government today. Peopled in the five principal communities of Alike, Echara, Mgbabu, Unweka and Okpuitumo, the people traced their ancestral father to Enyi Nwegu, who is believed to have migrated from Igala sometime around the mid 10<sup>th</sup> Century except the few war captives of Nkala-Oswo and Ebiem of Ekpa-Omaka in Echara and Mgbabu Autonomous Communities respectively. Each principal community has its own spiritual deity that guides, protects and blesses their farm products every year. This implies that the Ikwo society was highly religious that they believed in spiritualism prior to the incursion of the European imperialism. Among the deities that existed in Ikwo Noyo clan, Nte-Oswina became the most revered and accepted deity among the people and beyond. It was worshipped as the Supreme Being in Ikwo traditional society hence Ikwo was dominated by traditionalists.

Just like other ancient traditional societies, Ikwo imbibed African traditional religion which according to J. Uwalaka was couched most often in mythological, anthropomorphic, mystical, metaphorical and symbolic language that at times defies the logic of contradiction and non-contradiction, while at other times it would require a sound hermeneutic to disengage the latent meaning.<sup>1</sup> whether or not the practice was iconoclastic remains to be determined by Africans themselves but in a strict sense, the people favoured their religion more than the orthodox religions that tend to decimate African cultures, traditions and discriminate between Christianity and other forms of religions. To this extent, one would say that African traditional religion is not a bundle of codified and systematic dogmas but rather belief systems of symbols which provide explanations for the apparent mysteries of existence and also prescribe behavioural patterns through rituals.<sup>2</sup> The Nte-Oswina oracular deity provides such belief system for analytical discussion of African traditional religion in Ikwo traditional society.

Nte-Oswina was and still a religious doctrine of what was typical of African societies. It is a religious practice of those who believe in its mystical powers to

obtain a direct justice against wrong or evil dowers. By this, it punishes offenders of justice such as those who involved in poisoning, murderers and ritualists. Without equivocations, it's powers are so mysterious that can visit his name sakes in the night and men of good hearts with crabs, butterflies, bees and flame of light, while diabolic men and those who incur his wrath are warned with thunder storms and lightening of strange fire on their houses. Appeasement by those warned with thunder lightening is done through sacrificial goats, cow, tubers of yam, pepper, salt, kola nuts and ram. Those whose sacrifices were accepted are usually visited in the mid night with strange crab which will appear at the centre of the parlour, while those who seek the mercy of the oracle normally consult the chief priest and pick a date with him "*ogba te oge*", he will give them list of items to buy and he will on that day perform many incantations. He will call on the deities of the land by breaking the chambers of kola nut into four and uses them for incantation after which he will throw them up and if two fall facing downwards, then it is presumed that the gods have accepted the sacrifice otherwise the man will go back and announce to his family members about his anticipated calamities and sudden death. By this, B. N. Amiara supplied information about the oracle as being mighty whose powers transcend human imagination that people believe he is the creator of the universe. According to him, Nte-Oswina's powers are beyond human explanation, no mortal can explain it and whosoever that incurs his wrath, will be killed with his head chop-off.<sup>3</sup>

According to their philosophy of life and as a super natural deity, it is believed that Nte-Oswina operates independent of any other god. Its operational areas stretch from Opfia Nkpoke of Ndufu-Echara to Obegu-azu Azuoswe in Ndiagu-Echara where he kills some evil men as he makes a journey away from his shrine. Imperatively, those who die within this period of brief journey are usually not buried at home as lizards often climb on their graves to show that they were diabolic and evil. This is in connection with the cultures, customs and traditions of Ikwo Noyo clan. Aside this, basic contentious issues are decided in the shrine through sacrificed cocks that will be denoted by the contesters. The cocks will be killed by the chief priest while the observers of the judgment will carefully cook the cock to determine whose claim is true. Therefore, cock without any dotted spot on its testis is presumed winner while the loser of the case will be asked to appease the god or face its wrath. In fact, this was mainly to serve as an act of maintaining justice among the people of Ikwo local government and to reduce the rate of injustice usually meted out the commoners in the area.



### **Tradition of Origin**

The historical origin of Nte-Oswina is shrouded in mystery. The mystery provides the empirical search for which our understanding on when and how the Nte-Oswina came to be found in where it is today. By this, those who made excursion toward revealing its historical origin ended up creating another myriad of information that seems to demystify such mystery as transcendental of human experiences. For them, the tradition of origin, history and existence of Nte-Oswina is as old as the evolution of Ikwo Noyo clan. This account is held by some elders of the entire Echara Nkpoke autonomous community and does not represent the opinion of the people in general. However, while the protagonists of this earlier presupposition seem to be more comfortable with that account, they further maintain that Nte-Oswina originated from one woman called Ugbala. According to them, Nte-Oswina was found by a barren woman who went into the forest to fetch firewood. While she was fetching firewood, she saw a maggot-like insect that called her "Ugbala, Ugbala come and carry me...I am the child you have been looking for".<sup>4</sup> As she wanted to run away, she kept repeatedly hearing her name till she went and carried her and immediately a cry of a new born baby began to echo from the forest. Others who didn't subscribe to this proposition maintain that Ugbala, was an Unwuche-uphere woman from Arom Ugbala kindred who was married into the family of Uche Nwaka of Unwenyita kindred. She was barren and left to fetch firewood where she saw Nte-Oswina crying in the forest and she went and carried him home from where he became a spiritual father to Echara Nkpoke as whole.<sup>5</sup> This argument represents how the people accord themselves respect during the festival of the oracle and reflects in the traditional sitting arrangement of all the kindred that make up the Echara Nkpoke autonomous communities. In the traditional stool of the oracle called "Ugba Nte-Oswina", the Unwenyita kindred will stay closer to the oracle and will be preceded by Arom Ugbala kindred before Nducha kindred. This explains the order of seniority and how they share their items at individual communities and in the shrine particularly. According to Aku Okpara, whenever we converge to make some sacrifices to Nte-Oswina, Unwenyita who own the deity will be the first to collect from the share of items before Unwuche-uphere can collect.<sup>6</sup> In this way, N. B. Amiara maintains that in Nte-Oswina's shrine, Unwenyita hold the custodian of the shrine and produce the chief priest while the Unwuche-uphere from Arom Ugbala maintain the second in command, collect and provide the chief priest with all items for sacrificing to the oracle.<sup>7</sup>

From the foregoing, it appears that there is a logically interrelated intuition from the two schools of thoughts even though both have failed to establish whether the deity was a man-made who was found abode in the forest by his maker or would have originated there by himself? This line of argument is capable of provoking a sound rhetorical question like what is the metaphysical ability of a man-made deity to call a woman whose name, he has never known before? An insight to what might have constituted its mystical powers could be found from the fact that our forefathers reported that at the time Nte-Oswina was found in a thick forest of Opfia Nkpoke, it was talking and calling peoples' name just like human beings but had since become speech impaired after Nchifpu Alike and Igbeta became its chief priests.<sup>8</sup> They hold that when " Ugbala returned home with this strange deity...he summoned for the kinsmen particularly the elders whom he narrated how they could worship him to. Nchifpu Nwanchor Oke added that he further told them that he came in peace and not to fight the righteous but those who are sinister.<sup>9</sup> Since then, there has been untimely death of people with evil minds especially when there is a movement away from his shrine at Opfia Nkpoke to Ndiagu-Azu on what is called "*Ogborogbu uzo Nte-Oswina*" (the road). People who passed on this road in the night usually confirmed that during this period, there were evidences of strange signs like butterfly, bees, crab and smoke being witnessed on the road. While those named after him are identified with the bees and butterfly parching on their left side chest as a symbol of peace, others who just believe in him are visited with crabs while returning back home. In fact, women who give birth within that night usually name their children "Nte" for male and "Nte Nwanyi" for a woman to signify the peace he has brought to the family. Therefore, Nte-Oswina is a spiritual being who communicates with human beings; people consult him for solutions to their problems and it has assumed to be the highest god in Echara Nkpoke and Ikwo in general.

Another historical challenge confronting those who accounted for the origin of Nte-Oswina is the inability to establish the exact period this oracle might have existed in the forest of Opfia Nkpoke before it was found by Ugbala. There was no information as whether Ugbala was among the first inhabitants who lived within the vicinity of Nte-Oswina's shrine or had she known that she would come across the oracle before leaving to fetch firewood? This question left much to be desired from the origin, period and ownership of the oracle. In fact, it is possible that this oracle might have belonged to the non-Ikwo speaking people of Okum who were driven away by the powerful Ikwo warriors who engaged them with internecine wars during the migration times. Or they had completely lost

the memories of how the powerful oracle came to be found in where it is. Therefore, one common feature that can be derived from this rhetoric is that linguistically “Oswina” is Ikwo phonology, it does not show non indigenous of the deity but unanimously a deity that might have come with our ancestors. However, there is also a consensus that Ugbala was his mother and was barren before she found the deity in the forest. This statement was both accepted by Unwenyita and Unwuche-uphere of Arom Ugbala kindred that Ugbala is the mother of the oracle.

Again, there are confusions created by those who made inquiry to ascertain the use of Ugbala with Nte-Oswina. While some people would use the name “Ugbala” as the wife, others would use it as the mother but in general, it could have been more appropriate if Ugbala is referred to as his wife instead of his mother hence he is more often called Ugbala Nte. Secondly, there is also another confusion concerning about his paternal father. While those who made inquiry to ascertain his divinity and supreme existence have linked Nte-Oswina to Ibinukpabi of Arochukwu, others have rejected such claim doubting the reality of its origin. According to them, Nte-Oswina is an artificial man-made god that does not have any power. They have asked that if Nte-Oswina is not man-made, who is his father? This question again left much to be known of a deity whose powers were so transcendental that nobody could delve into questions that surround its history of origin. However, this issue has been debated but has also been confirmed and agreed that the deity is from Aro Chukwu and his father is Ibinukpabi.

### **The Mystical Signs of Nte-Oswina and Their Significance**

There are several signs used by Nte-Oswina to indicate his presence, pay homage and carry out functions within its locality and Ikwo in general. The type of sign to be adopted is depended on the kind of mission it wants to embark on at that particular time. However, there are instances where thunder lightening will be used as a sign of warning to its offenders or crab, bees and butterfly for reciprocal gesture or sacrifices made to him by his adherents. Implicitly, each sign connotes different meanings or interpretations. For instance, the meaning it conveys when he visited a man with crab in the afternoon is not the same meaning it conveys when it does the same in the night. Therefore, the choice of sign depends on the kind of sacrifices made individually to the deity and not whether the person is evil, diabolic or kind hence each of these items for visitation will be adumbrated one by one.

**Crab:** An Oxford Advance Learner's dictionary defines a crab as a sea creature with hard shell, eight legs and two pincers.<sup>10</sup> It moves sideways and often lives in swamp land hence it is rarely found in upland. It is practically based on this that people usually found the crab strange and eerie whenever it is seen in someone's house. The interpretation is that when a crab appears in someone's house, it is perceived that the oracle has come to remind the person of a promise he made before which was and has not been fulfilled. According to the chief priest, Onele Nwite, the appearance of a crab in one's house represents a sign of reminder. It is carried out by the oracle to remind followers of a promise that has not been kept and at times to inform such person whose house the crab appears that Nte-Oswina had fought a war on his behalf and prevented the evil plans that would have befallen on him from the evil men.<sup>11</sup> In other words, crab is mostly used for reminding of unfulfilled promises and the people have seemed to be aware of that.

**Bees:** Bees are highly respected in Ikwo. They are not expected to be killed. The assumption is that when a bee hovers around someone's head, it is Nte-Oswina that has paid visit to such person. This implies that bees in Ikwo are significant to the existence and operations of the oracle. B. N. Amiara revealed that in 1984, there was an occasion of a traditional marriage ceremony at the neighbourhood where beers were served to them, each person got a bottle of the beer and before he could open it there was a bee that hovered around him and the next thing was that the bottle broke at the heel and fell on his thigh.<sup>12</sup> He interpreted the presence of the bee as a fortune revelation of what was planned against him which Nte-Oswina did not want to happen to him. He further maintained that he consulted a soothsayer who told him that the deity intervened in order to protect him from being poisoned by his enemy. Therefore, it is agreed that Nte-Oswina uses bees to reveal to people about the evil plans against them. Hence there is a common agreement among the people that there are instances, in which bees would appear and start stinging someone on the road without any reason and investigation has revealed that those kinds of people usually go home and die mysteriously.

**Butterfly:** The symbolic meaning of butterfly in the operation of Nte-Oswina is peace. It represents happiness, care and love for the adherents hence it is adjudged that those the oracle visited with butterfly are those who are in his state of mercy and do not have stains in their hands. Meanwhile, it showcases the serenity of the oracle towards his followers hence James Nwite opines that the

people Nte-Oswina visited with butterflies are those whose hands were clean. They have not committed or wronged the deity that is why sometimes, you see butterfly perching on their shoulders, beds and heads.<sup>13</sup> Indeed within the period of this study, it was learnt that even though butterflies are common in Ikwo however, they don't just perch on people. James Nwite collaborated in the above statement when he asserted that you can only see a butterfly perching on a man especially when he is walking, drinking palm wine in his house or sleeping. According to him, there would be instances in which a man will be drinking palm wine and a butterfly will fly and perch on his cup when you ask he will tell you it is Nte-Oswina that pays me a visit. He further reveals that he has witnessed a butterfly perched on him, sometimes in the presence of his father who would always carry out some incantations on the deity for my protection as his name sake.<sup>14</sup>

**Thunder or thunder lightening:** Thunder lightening is one of the negative signs of Nte-Oswina. It is used as a warning to the offenders of the deity and before it will strike you with thunder it must have given several signs like lightening of your house with thunder or appearance of strange flame of light. People who ignore these signs were usually struck with thunder and this can be avoided when this there is always quick response to its early warning signal.

### **Early Missionaries Activities in Ikwo**

There are diverse opinions on the time Christian missionary activities started in Ikwo. One of those opinions as represented by Oliver, N. U. Eze holds that the Europeans arrived first at Ndegu Igbudu where they met one prominent man, Alobu Nweke.<sup>15</sup> He narrated that it was one Alobu Nweke and his brother Oreke that was popularly called Kidim and others that helped them to establish the first church in Ikwo at Igbudu and by 1905-06, they established their first school. This was refuted by some informants who maintained that the first crop of Christian missionaries to come to Ikwo were the Presbyterians, who came through Obubra in the Old Ogoja province passing along Enyibichiri Alike to first settled at T-junction in a place called "Ngangbo Azugbu" in Nzashi Echara.<sup>16</sup> From that junction, they proceeded to establish Presbyterian Church in Ndiagu Echara before establishing the Rural Improvement Mission (RIM) in 1959 by E. M. Hutchison and his wife. Elder Chukwu Omenyi maintained the hospital was first known as Dispensary and Maternity.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, it was learnt that what is called Abakaliki town today was to be established in a place called T-junction at Nzashi Echara in Ikwo and according to Nwomege Gladys Amiara, "we were told that the white men first wanted to establish Abakaliki at Ngangbo Azugbu but due to the hostility of the Echara people, they scarified a ram to Nte-Oswina who used bees and chased the people way".<sup>18</sup> The T-junction is located at Ndiagu Echara ward 1 in Ngangbo Azugbo in the present Ikwo Local Government Area. It is evident that these people might not have wanted any white settlement in their land hence they imposed a fierce resistance to the missionaries and like Prof S. C. Ukpabi wrote that Ikwo clan was the last to resist missionary activities in the northeastern Igbo. According to him, by 1918, Ikwo were still fighting colonial wars with the Europeans, they were used by the Aro to resist the British penetration of northeastern Igbo by fighting from the flank of Cross River. Evidences of this stern resistance reflected on their inability to produce one priest up till 2009 before Eleke Echara community became the first to produce one Roman Catholic Priest after 100 years of missionary activity. However, within these periods of evangelism, those who were converted newly tried to desecrate the shrine but were struck death except one Daniel Nwanchor that was left almost paralyzed. Therefore, the Ikwo people used Nte-Oswina to disrupt the propagation of christianity between 1800 up to 1950. In fact parents refused their children to be converted and communities were not willing to denote plot for the building of churches. Private individuals who offered their land were banished and some handed over to BOFF to be killed.

### **Nte-Oswina and the Nigerian-Biafra war**

Between 1800 up to the September 30, 1960, the seed of destruction had already been planted in what was to be known as Nigeria by the British imperialists. The activities of the colonial governors polarized the people along ethnic and religious considerations despite the purported attempt to unite the people with diverse languages, cultures, customs and traditions. For the Brit, the attempt was aimed at civilizing Nigerians and preparing them for independence but on the contrarily, it was a grand design to rob the people off their senses of identity. Eventually, the October 1, 1960 saw a transition away from colonial chauvinism to national statehood that was built on ethnic discrimination, domination and supremacy and continued to provide a litmus test for a country that was newly created to experiment her independent political administration. From that period up, the country was committed to finding national cohesion and a system that will be generally acceptable by all the ethnic groups that made up the country. The quest for this workable political system deepened the ethnic distrust that

came with lot of coups and counter coups and engulfed the new state of Nigeria into festering crises which resulted to the proclamation of the independence of Biafra on 30 May, 1967. One of the advantages of such problems and instability of the Nigerian political system was the unity in the Biafran spirit to defend their newly created country from the attack of Nigerian soldiers. According to S. C. Ukpabi, by 5.00 am on July 6, the federal forces crossed the starting line into Biafra, thus heralding the commencement of the civil war.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, he further maintained that the Army Headquarters in Lagos had planned the war in four phases to capture Nsukka, then Ogoja, Abakaliki and finally Enugu. Nworie Nwanchor who narrated her experience during the war maintains that as civil war intensified, the Nigerian troops came into Ikwo through Obubra and detonated bomb at Nsobo in Cross River State before moving along Agubata to land at Igboji Market.<sup>20</sup> She further maintained that the soldiers were at Igboji molesting young women, killing their goats and eating up their food however, community leaders ran to Nte-Oswina and pledged a cow to him and immediately bees appeared from nowhere and started stinging them. At Onunebonyi Echara, the Nigerian soldiers that came through Ogoja to Abakaliki moving easterly to Ikwo had shot down the Ebonyi bridge and those living within that axis ran into Opfia Nte forest for protection. Otubo Uneke reported that those who sought protection from the oracle were not harmed but rather they were smoke that covered the whole place and the soldiers were chased back.<sup>21</sup>

### **Nte-Oswina and Conflict Resolution in Ikwo**

Ikwo is a warlike area that has intermittently witnessed different kind of wars ranging from intra communal to inter communal wars. Some of these wars were never allowed to last long except that occasionally, they would resurface like an ember of fire. By the end of the missionary activities and the Nigerian- Biafran war, Ikwo, particularly the Echara people had learnt how to use Nte-Oswina as an instrument of war. During this period, Nte-Oswina assumed a powerful instrument that used bees to fight for his people. This is usually not the case in intra communal wars. War among people of the same community is often seen as a taboo and whenever there is an occurrence of such war, negative signs such broad day cry of a dog would begin to occur, premature death of young people and appearance of vulture within the village square. Community leaders usually converge to deliberate on such issue and a selected delegation would be sent to consult the oracle and possibly enter into covenant before the oracle.

In the case of inter communal wars, the chief priest would consult the oracle to speak on the fortune of the war and communicate back to the entire community. If it is a just war, a sheep would be sacrificed to the deity and dropped in the enemy's border who would come and take it thinking that they had caught their enemy's sheep. Investigation reveals that as many as those who ate the meat usually died. Therefore, it was a tactics employed during the war to create fear to their enemies and like Nworu Igwe, this was the strategy adopted against the people of Nsobo when a war broke out between them and the people of Echara community in 1987.<sup>22</sup> The Ofenikpa Ikwo-Nsobo war broke out on April 9, 1987 following the abduction of two primary school boys from Ofenikpa by Nsobo warriors. The causes of the war hinged on the border dispute between the two communities and long contested portion of land lying along "ebe" in Ofenikpa and Nsobo forest. The two communities have both maintained the authority to cultivate on the land till war broke out between them on April 9, 1987. The war, seen by many as minor skirmish, dragged on for eight years when Colonel Temy Ejoor, the then sole Administrator of Enugu State and Franklin Ogbuewu, the then Executive Chairman of Ikwo Local Government decided to broker peace between the two communities. However, neighbouring communities such as Eburu, onyirigbo, and Ndiagu-azu all got the spill-over effects. As the Nsobo attacked Ofenikpa from the flank of Onyirigbo, the latter decided to ambush the former and shell them from Nsobo-Echara border. This led Nsobo to launch a surprising attack against Echara who were driven up to five kilometers away to Opfia tsitso before they were able to repel the Nsobo by the unprepared Ikwo warriors who managed to put up little resistance through local den guns denoted by some private individuals. This resulted to Echara community sacrificing sheep and dropped at the border for which the Nsobo came and took away and a day later they bought their first Ak47 rifle.

### **Why it could no longer talk**

There are two groups with different opinions on why Nte-Oswina is no longer talking. One of those groups hold that the Nte-Oswina was talking when Ugbala found him in the thick forest of Amagu Echara but had since become speech impaired immediately he came in contact with evil men who first served him as chief preists. They hold that the great deity stopped talking after one or two chief priests became his first servants. About their name, they could not remember but they could be the first set of servants who did not want the oracle to expose their evil deed, so they went as far as impairing his tongue with poison.<sup>23</sup>



Another group maintains that the oracle stopped talking because the people were so immoral and committed a lot of abominations which angered the oracle and it stopped revealing them calamities that await them. According to this group, the practice of human poisoning, envy and other different abominations became so common that the oracle was angry to our people. They further hold that those first priests might contribute to his inability to talk but the scores of evil men who found abode in this deity could be more responsible. This raises series of questions and doubts on the deity whose powers the people depend on to instill good moral practices in the land. Therefore, it could be that those who serve him have known the intricacy of his mystical powers and went as far as finding a means of stopping him from communicating their evil deed.

### **List and the choice of Chief Priests**

The list of the chief priests may not have followed the order of service simply because the people have lost the memory of how they came on board. But accordingly it was learnt that nobody chooses for him who becomes the chief priest except the oracle himself. By search for who will become the chief priest, the oracle will visit the person he wants to serve him with a flame of light in the night and the fortune teller will carry out some incantations to convey the choice of the god to the congregations. In doing that, the person will move his family into the compound designated for those who serve oracle. They are not expected to wear cloth or pant inside that compound, they only tie strip of cloth to cover up their nakedness. As time went on this method became abolished and people went on search for more easy means of choosing the chief priest. With the profanity of the whole order, the people reverted into self imposition of the priesthood. According to Otubo Uneke, when the oracle could no longer choose his servant we started going to Nchipfu for consultation, it was there that we were directed to see one woman at Amiara Egboma's compound for directives and it is always after the serving chief priest has died. The following are names of the past chief priests:

1. Ukoro Enyita
2. Nchipfu Ogboji
3. Egbata Ogozho
4. Onwe Ucheoke
5. Onwe ka Ima
6. Onwe Onele Uche
7. Onwe Okauche
8. Onele Nwite

## **Conclusion**

The history of Nte-Oswina Oracular deity may not have been comprehensively exhausted in this study. The powers, history and mysteries of this deity require that a complete full text of research documentation however, what we have done here is to attempt its brief history of origin in what would be a guide for other researchers. Therefore the origin of Nte-Oswina could be associated with the evolution of Ikwo clan. It is one of those powerful deities that existed during colonial era which the Igbo sub-group of Abakaliki found very useful in resisting the seed of colonialism. However, its activities, role and powers were not documented by Igbo historians simply because they might be dearth of information about it or the people were not interested in studying about the oracle. Scores of information derived from our informants revealed that this oracle possessed equal powers with other powerful long juju that were predominant in Igbo society like the Igwe kala, Ibinukpabi, Ugbala and the host of other deities that dominated African literatures. Thus, this negligence made this study prominent particularly in this period the curiosity for new knowledge is high.

Basically, Nte-Oswina is a super-natural deity whose existential powers are transcendental. However, there are special understandings attached to its modus operandi, history and communication developed with the people by this deity. On the one hand, there is a conviction that the oracle is committed to instilling morality among the people of high immoral practices, while on the other hands there is the assumption that the origin of Nte-Oswina came so that evil men will die for the good land of Echara Nkpoke to be liberated. This is a manifestation of evil men who usually lost their lives whenever the oracle embarks on sojourn. Therefore the deity has become a powerful instrument that was used to prosecute wars, resist the propagation of christianity and restoration of good moral practices.

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**A REVIEW OF EMMANUEL EDEH'S "TOWARDS AN IGBO  
METAPHYSICS"**

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At a time when there was much talk about the reality of African philosophy, as is evident in Paulin J. Hountondji's *African Philosophy: Myth or Reality*, as to whether it does exist or not, and if it does exist, how can it be articulated? Even though Placid Tempels, the Belgian Catholic missionary, in the 50's had written about Bantu philosophy, Edeh believes that a philosophy written by an African about a particular African people as a context would advance African philosophy. He wrote,

The idea of African philosophy will remain a figment of the imagination until it is formally presented by a people of Africa just as western philosophy was presented by the Greeks. The aim of this study is to attempt a presentation of African philosophy by a people of Africa (the Igbos). My effort will consist of a presentation of Igbo metaphysical thought patterns (p. 1).

In another piece he wrote,

But Africa's contribution cannot be given a fair chance without serious efforts on the part of the African elites. These elites are born into and live African culture. It behoves them, therefore, to engage in the actual doing of African philosophy. That is, to articulate and present in a coherent manner the specific ways in which African peoples have conceived existence, beings and being. With this aim I have undertaken to present African philosophy as articulated in the metaphysics of the Igbos of Nigeria in West Africa (p. ix).

As a background to his study, he discussed the geographical and historical roots of the Igbo people of Nigeria, West Africa. This he believed would help the reader understand the Igbo people's philosophical mentality in general and their grasp of the metaphysical question in particular. In terms of methodology, Edeh employed the empirical pedagogy of enquiry, basically interviews and

questionnaires from among the Nkanu elders of Enugu, Nigeria. The materials gathered through interviews and questionnaires were articulated through analysis and interpretation. Like Placid Tempels and Kagame, Edeh believes that the avenue to a people's thought content is their language and culture, he wrote, "It is through language and culture that Igbo metaphysics, or any African philosophy for that matter, is preserved and transmitted" (p. 45). The use of both language and culture is because one leads to the other. According to Edeh, "Our brief consideration of the Igbo language leads us into the culture of the people since it is obvious that language cannot be divorced from the culture which it expresses" (56). In this analysis, Igbo proverbs, folklores, and other dimensions of Igbo culture, such as community, tradition, social group structure etc, were the object of analysis.

### **Origin and nature of the universe**

He began his description of Igbo metaphysics with an attempt to understand the origin of the universe, which does not seem to pose a problem to the Igbo person. The Igbo has a proverb which says that "Ife welu mbido g'enwe njedebe" (whatever that has beginning will have an end). The origin of things are usually described in myths, tracing them back to the land of the unseen (noge gboo gboo, noge uwa n'adiro obu so ndi mmuo di). Thus Edeh wrote that "Visible objects are to be understood as gifts from the head of the inhabitants of the unseen" (p. 72). The idea of the visible and invisible brings out the Igbo duality, which recognizes the existence of two worlds: uwa (world) and ani muo (land of the unseen). The belief in the existence of these two worlds is expressed the Igbo way of life. For example in the way the traditional Igbo man begins his day by calling all the members of his household (the living dead) during *igo ofo* (morning prayer). The belief in reincarnation also evidences the duality of the world, for "If human beings after passing away from this visible world can come back after a certain period has elapsed and be born again, there must have been a place where they remained within that period" (p. 75). That place where they stay until their return is the invisible world. The Igbo concept of death as transition also points to the existence of another world to which they make their transit. The idea of two worlds also speaks of two dimensions of the human person, the body and soul. In a spiritual sense, the soul is distinct from the body, but metaphysically, the soul is in the body and is united to the body, thus inseparable entities. This duality is not common only to human beings, there is an invisible element of everything. Edeh writes that "In the minds of the Igbos the invisible element in any material object is equally as real as the visible aspect of the same object. If we judge from the degree of attention paid to the visible

element, it would not be wrong to conclude that the unseen element is much more esteemed than the visible” (p. 78). The duality of the universe in Igbo ontology does not in any way exclude the unity of the world. According to Edeh, “Regardless of the fact that they believe in the existence of two worlds, the Igbos, like other Africans, have an extraordinarily harmonious view of the universe” (p. 114).

## **Being**

Edeh further discussed the nature of being, a fundamental issue in metaphysics. He posits a notion of being that is derived from a dual *loci*: from the Igbo language and the Igbo concept of the human person Edeh says that it is born from the fact that human beings are the principal focus of the Igbo physical world, basically comprising the human and non-human. This is expressed in Igbo names and proverbs: *madu-ka* (Human beings are the greatest) *madu-bisi* (Human life is the first). From the foregoing, one becomes aware of *what is* through an awareness of the human person as a visible concrete instance of what exists. But this would not be the area of concern in this piece. The researcher is primarily concerned with Edeh’s derivation of being from the Igbo language.

### *From Igbo language*

Edeh’s presentation of being in Igbo metaphysics reveals a deep search by a pioneer African thinker of an African concept that would equal the concept of being employed by his Western contemporaries. And since the Igbo language has no exact equivalence of being in English as he argues “The Igbo language has no word that exactly translates the English word” (Edeh 1985, p.93), he draws out two hypothesis that approximates this notion: the *onye* and *ife* hypothesis.

### *The ‘onye’ hypothesis*

He employs the concept of *onye* in Igbo language to test-denote the concept of being. But he discovers that *onye* hypothesis is basically applicable to human beings only. What then becomes of non-human existence that cannot be described as *onye*? According to Edeh (1985), the concept of *onye* has three applications:

1. **Onye as a pronominal clause:** as a pronominal clause it means ‘who’, as in “Jonathan who is the president of Nigeria” (Jonathan *Onye bu* president Nigeria).
2. **Onye as an interrogative adjective:** as an interrogative adjective, *Onye* is used to introduce interrogative statements. ‘*Onye?*’ For instance, if someone knocks at your door, you can ask, *onye?* That is ‘who?’ Then the

person responds, *obu Kanu* (It is Kanu). One can also speak of '*onye ma echi?*' (who knows tomorrow?)

3. **Onye as a noun:** 'In this category, its nearest but not exact English equivalent is person' (Edeh 1985, p.94). *Onye* in this sense refers to all living entities, both human and superhuman. However, each time it is employed, it is always precedes an adjective or another noun. For example, *onye okike* (creator), *onye uko* (Intermediary), *onye nzuzu* (fool), *onye mmuta* (scholar).

Although most of his informants prefer the use of *onye* to speak of being in Igbo language, especially since it conveys the idea of human beings and designates spiritual beings, Edeh (1985) realizes that it cannot be employed to adequately designate the Igbo notion of being. This is based on the principal defect that *onye* cannot include inanimate objects, vegetation or nonhuman animate entities. Things like stone, wood, house, book, pen etc cannot be referred to as *onye*. If for instance a piece of stone falls on my roof or a vulture lands on my roof, I cannot use *onye* to make enquiries. The limitedness of the *onye* hypothesis makes Edeh to seek an alternative concept for the designation of being in Igbo ontology.

#### *From 'onye' to 'ife' hypothesis*

Having understood the limitations of *onye*, Edeh (1985) in his indefatigable spirit moves on to make further investigations on a more appropriate concept for being. In his investigation, he arrives at *ife*. According to Edeh, "the Igbo word *ife* primarily means thing, anything material or immaterial. It is used to refer to a happening, an event, an occurrence. *Ife* can also be affixed to any adjective to mean specific things" (Edeh 1985, p.95). For instance, *ife obuna* (anything), *ife ebube* (thing of wonder), *ife ojoo* (bad thing), *ife oma* (good thing). After a wide and profound investigation, he realizes that there is no word in Igbo language outside *ife* that approximates the Igbo concept of being.

And thus, he subscribes to the *ife* hypothesis for the following metaphysical reasons: the Igbo notion of being embraces all categories of being. The *onye* hypothesis on the one hand, already fails in covering all dimensions of being since it only concerns human and spiritual beings, leaving out inanimate, vegetative and non-human animate beings. *Ife* on the other hand, although it primarily refers to inanimate things, by expansion can include human and suprahuman beings (Kanu, 2012c). For instance, Edeh (1985) says that if an elder asks the question: *kedu ife kelu madu?* (what thing created human beings), any person conversant with the language knows that *ife* in this context refers to

*Chineke*, the Igbo name for the highest of the suprasensible being, the unmade maker of all things.

### *From 'ife' to 'ife-di'*

Having arrived at the *ife* hypothesis, Edeh (1985) realised that *ife* as a concept does not bring out all that being means.

However, we must note that *ife* does not bring out completely all that being means. *Ife* does not emphasize the important aspect of being, namely, the fact of existence. *Ife* standing on its own can be used to refer to both existent and non-existent entities. Hence we have to search for a way of using *ife* to highlight the fact of existence and exclude the possibility of nonexistence (Edeh 1985, p.96).

To find a solution to this problem, Edeh (1985) combines *ife* and *idi* to get *ife-idi*. *Idi* is the Igbo verb *to be*. It can be used as an adjective and can also be suffixed to anything to show that it exists. For example, *okwute di* (the stone that exists), *Nkita di* (the dog that exists), *Kanu di* (Kanu who exists). He does not end here, but goes further to bring out the categories of *ife-di* that corresponds to different kinds of being.

1. The suprasensory category: in the suprasensory category are beings like *Chineke* and *Ndi muo* (spirits).
2. The human category: the human category is subdivided into *Ndi din du* (the living) and *Ndi Nwuru* (the dead).
3. The thing category: the thing category is divided into three major groupings: *anu* (which means animals), *ife nkiti* (this covers all inanimate entities), and *ogu* (beings that have no existence of their own).

Edeh's work titled *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* is a courageous and purposeful attempt of not only to articulate the Igbo people's theory of being, but also to name and defend it as a veritable metaphysics. The work as a pioneer thought, provides a good starting point for further reflections on African metaphysics in general and Igbo metaphysics in particular.

### **Problem of evil**

Like other people, the Igbos are also concerned with the perennial problem of moral and physical evil. They have three groupings of evil: physical evil in the universe, physical evil in man and moral evil in man. However, the Igbo ontological position that all things are good because they are created by an absolute good God, who causes goodness in what he creates, raises a question as regards how and why there is evil in the world. Thus Edeh writes that "The



problem of evil involves not only the question whether God is really all-good, but even that regarding divine omnipotence" (p. 102). To explain this, the Igbo believes that the proximate cause of evil are evil spirits or elemental forces. But again, these elemental forces are created by the good God. Edeh argued that the Igbo way of reconciling this problem which puts into question God's goodness is that God does not cause evil proximately; however, indirectly he causes evil since he originally created the proximate causes of evil not as evil but as good. Edeh further argues that evil has a community dimension. When an individual commits evil, it is the concern of the community, not only the individual, he wrote "From the Igbo idea of community, founded on love and brotherhood, it is easy to discern that for the Igbos any evil, physical or moral, even though personal, has a community dimension" (p. 106). Both the effect and remedy concerns the community, thus he further writes, "...the whole community comes out to eradicate the evil" (p. 106), so as to "... safeguard the integrity and well-being of the whole" (p. 109). It is considered a community affair "because it fractures the ultimate whole of life; it causes a break in an existential unity" (p. 106). An Igbo proverb says, "A kinsman who strays into evil must first be saved from it by all, then, afterwards be questioned on why and how he dared stray into it to start with".

In his analysis of causality, Edeh reflects profoundly on the Igbo concept of God as the source of all things, thus the cause of all things, including elemental forces. In the Igbo world, there is a functional unity, everything is connected to and caused by one thing or the other, and this, through reason and faith unveils God as the ultimate source. And here, though the question of God's existence could arise, it is not a problem to the Igbo man whose religious atmosphere constantly remind him of God's presence. According to Edeh, "... the Igbo normally does not bother about a proof of God's existence. God is so near to man, so involved in man's existence, that one does not question Chukwu's existence" (p. 118). However, the existence of God could be arrived at through the contemplation of the things of nature that wouldn't exist if not for his existence; though Igbo nomenclature, such as *Chukwudi*, *Chukwuno*, etc.; through the Igbo concept of *chi* which is a participation in *Chukwu*. Since Chi is a part, it then means that Chukwu the whole does exist; through the Igbo idea of life and death, for the phenomenon of being and not being is controlled by an infinite being. This infinite being according to Edeh can be viewed in seven ways: Onye-okike (a being who creates), Okasi-okasi (the highest highest), Amama-amasi (known but never fully known), Ife-anyi (for whom nothing is impossible), Eze-pgholigho-anya (ing of knowledge who knows all), Chi-gboo (Chi for ever), Eke-ji-mma (creator who holds goodness). Furthermore, because of the practical nature of the

Igbo rather than speculative, his concept of God is practical as evidenced in the basic and commonly used Igbo names for God: Osebuluwa and Chineke. The ideas of God as Osebuluwa (as the one carrying, supporting and providing for the world) and Chineke (one who is creating) places God at the apex of causality “as the ultimate cause of being” (p. 147).

### **Evaluation**

Iroegbu (1995) criticized the method employed by Edeh in doing metaphysics. Edeh himself says that he would employ the empirical method, but Iroegbu objects that the empirical method as employed in the natural sciences which deals with concrete physical beings and elements of the universe cannot be employed in metaphysics which deals with the rationale behind being as being. He further pointed out that Edeh confused the word ‘field work’ with empirical method. But even so, Iroegbu asserts that philosophy begins not during the field work and as such cannot be considered a method for doing philosophy. Field work is about gathering materials for doing philosophy. Thus he maintains that Edeh began with a false start. He uses the analogy of cooking, separating the gathering of the food ingredients from what he called the ‘actual cooking’. But again when Iroegbu talks about actual cooking, it means that the preparation is cooking, even though not actual, and he seems to forget that the manner of the preparation of the ingredients and what is collected together cannot be separated from the quality and quantity of the cooking. When one understands the separation Edeh makes between the empirical method and the method of articulation employed in his research, one might begin to suspect that Iroegbu’s criticism on method is only a play on words.

He further criticizes Edeh for developing a collective thought or worldview of a people and calling it philosophy. One cannot but see how he relies heavily on Hountondji to make his point. One would also imagine that he would not call a collective worldview a philosophy. But I doubt if he would escape that too.

Over the years, many African thinkers have made attempts to criticize Edeh’s work on metaphysics and his concept of being in particular. Critiques like Iroegbu (1995) argue that the designation of Edeh’s philosophical reflection as Igbo Metaphysics is wrong, that it should rather be called Edeh’s Metaphysics. He sees Edeh as a man who was not courageous enough to own his metaphysics, as such, feels more comfortable designating it to a people. Contrary to this opinion, the researcher sees Edeh’s step as a courageous one, because it is easier to own a thing to oneself than to attribute it to a whole people. Moreover, the fact

that it was Edeh who wrote the metaphysics does not mean it has to be called Edeh's metaphysics. Edeh is not saying that he is not aware that he wrote it by himself. All he is saying is that it represents the philosophy of the Igbo people. We read different works by different philosophers from the West and we call them Western philosophy. What problem do we have calling Edeh's articulation Igbo Metaphysics? In the same way that Gyekye's work is called Akan philosophy, is Edeh's work also called Igbo metaphysics. If Iroegbu has no problem calling Gyekye's work Akan philosophy, why should he have a problem calling Edeh's thought Igbo metaphysics?

These notwithstanding, Edeh's work titled *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* is a courageous and purposeful attempt of not only to articulate the Igbo people's theory of being, but also to name and defend it as a veritable metaphysics. The work as a pioneer thought, provides a good starting point for further reflections on African metaphysics in general and Igbo metaphysics in particular. And if there are loopholes in his thought, they are only loopholes that are associated with the courageous act of pioneering.

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## A REVIEW OF PANTALEON IREOGBU'S "METAPHYSICS: THE KPIM OF PHILOSOPHY"

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In his work *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy*, Pantaleon dedicated the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter to the development of his *uwa ontology*, which is a synthesis of his perception of reality. For him, "Uwa defines being. It summarizes being and beings for me- it englobes all beings in the bossom of Uwa- being-... Whatever is, in so far as it is, is Uwa. Uwa is reality and reality is Uwa" (p. 338). To deepen his search, he studied the meaning of Uwa. Translated from the Igbo to the English, it simply means world, however, Pantaleon took advantage of the richness of the Igbo meaning and defined it thus,

The entirety of existence, from God the highest being to inanimate beings of our cosmos, can be summarized in the englobing concept of the Igbo term *Uwa*. *Uwa* is all inclusive. It mirrors being, existence, entity, all reality. It englobes all that is animate and inanimate, visible and invisible. It is comprehensive, universal and global. It is transcendent and immanent scope as well as explicative and prospective elasticity (p. 339).

### **The connotations of the Uwa**

He further developed the connotations of *Uwa*: first as life, as in when the Igbo says *Uwa m* (my world) or *Uwa m aburo uwa gi* (my world is not your world) in all these, it means my life. Secondly as Cosmos, as when the Igbo says *Elu uwa* (surface of the earth). Thirdly, field of action, as in when the Igbo says *Uwa ndi nta* (the world of hunters). Fourthly, space and time, as in *Uwa mbu ka mma* (the old and ancient world is better than ours). Fifth, destiny, as in *uwa oma* (good destiny). Sixth, Condition as in *Uwa afufu* (world of difficulties). Seventh, tragedy, as in *uwa ike* (tragic life). Eighth, fate, as in *uwa ojo* (bad world). Ninth, age limit, as in *Uwa umuaka* (children's world). Tenth, nature, as in *uwa uwa osisi or*

*mmiri* (the world of trees or rivers). Eleventh, nation, as in *uwa anyi na ha mekoro ihe* (the world {people} we had dealings with). Twelfth, person, as in *ndi uwa* (people of the world). Thirteenth, land, as in *uwa Igbo* (Igbo land). Fourteenth, earth, the globe, as in *uwa nile* (the whole earth). Fifteenth, totality, *uwa*, in this case whatever is, in so far as it exists, is *uwa*.

### **The Zones of the Uwa**

Pantaleon further divides the world into six zones: the cosmos, where “we human beings live and die” (p. 341). The divine world, the world of Chukwu, the Supreme Being. Godian-world, the world of powerful spirits, like Ala, Amadioha etc. the good-spirit world, the world of “ancestors who have graduated into spirits because of the loss of living memories and concrete kith and kin relationships with their families” (p. 341). Bad-spirit world, where people who were evil in the world live, who cannot reincarnate. Ancestral world, where the ancestors live. These six zones of the world are highly inter-related, with the cosmos, the world of human beings as the centre. Pantaleon writes, “The central locus of all the operations of the worlds is the cosmos, the *uwa anyi* in which we live. This is understandable because it is man who posits the question of the worlds, who reflects on the existence, and who is the subject object of their operations. Even the most sublime, the *uwa chineke*... is still related: creatively and providentially to the cosmos” (p. 342). The gods relate with the world, maintaining order and continuity; the good and bad spirits relate with the world according to their natures, the ancestors assist human beings. Human beings on their part relate to these other worlds through prayers, libations and sacrifices. In this relationship Pantaleon avers that “The meta-empirical geography of the zonal existence of the worlds has no fixed boundaries. They co-penetrate each other’s world-zones... This affirms our argument that, in fact, there are not ontologically a multitude of worlds but one world, *Uwa*” (p. 342). These worlds, which are broadly dual, spiritual and physical, are not six worlds as such, but six different nuances or connotations of the world. It speaks more of the inhabitants of the world, which makes the *uwa* a universalizing concept.

### **The Community and Individual in Uwa**

Once a child is born, it is confronted by the *uwa*, moving from the security of the mother’s womb into a crude world, it begins to cry. The cry is a reaction to the new reality of the *uwa*. As the child is born he or she is welcomed by the mini-community that represents the larger community where the child will live for the rest of its life. The Igbo world into which the child is born is made up of common origin, common world-view, common language, shared culture, race, colour,

habit, common historical experience and common destiny. It is to this world that the child's being, performance and destiny is enshrined and construed, even without his consent. The community is the centre of existence. According to Pantaleon, "Without the community there is no remaining in existence" (p. 345). This is not to say that individuality is lost because one still realizes himself as "someone, distinct, individual or simply part of, a function of the group" (p. 347). The community and the individual are not two poles contrasting each other, it is rather a relationship of mutual and functional co-existence, in which the community provides the foundation for the autonomy of the individual. A beautiful interaction between the individual and community helps the individual to belong, and in belonging he earns integrity.

### **The Human Person**

Iroegbu (1994) began his analysis of the human person from analysing the Igbo concept for person, *mmadu*. The human person is not a pure spirit but a corporeal being. According to Iroegbu, a human person is "thus body: limited, fragile, contingent and human, merely human. The conclusion from this is that, part of the essence of *mmadu-ness* is body, *ahu*" (p. 352). The corporeal dimension of the human person is very significant to the understanding of person that often *ahu* (body) is as thought it were the person. For instance, the Igbo would say, *Ahu adighi m* (my body, meaning I, am not well). It is not enough to have a body to become a human person, for animals do have a body. The Igbo also speak of *Uche*- reason, mind, intellect. Thus Iroegbu avers that to be truly human, "It is important that one is able to reason, to dialogue reasonably, to do things in a way different from other beings with bodies, i.e., brutes... One is more excellent human person who can reason more excellently" (p. 352). A third constituent of the human person is the spirit *mmuo*, which determines a lot about the personality of any given person. It is that which persists in existence even when the body disintegrates. It is the indestructible immortal element of a person. After death is sojourns to the world of the ancestors and through re-incarnation returns to the family. Another essential component of the human person, according to Iroegbu is the communal, he is a being-with.

### **God, Gods and Spirits**

When a human person is born into his community, he shares in the religious worldview of the community, where life is religion and religion is life. The knowledge of God is not taught to him, it is obvious and innate. Pantaleon wrote, "God is ubiquitously involved in the life and practices of people. He forms the ontological foundation and explanatory ground of what they are, what they do

and what they have. He determines the way they relate to one another, to nature, and to their cultural data (givens)" (p. 359). He is called variously by the Igbo, as *Obasi di n'elu*, which means God on high, speaking of his nature as transcendent, and thus not being of the same composition with other realities; he is also called *Chukwu*, the Supreme God. The idea of *Chukwu* suggests that there are other minor gods. They are his deans, servants, as such function at the instruction of *Chukwu*.

### **Causality and Essence**

Pantaleon defines causality "as the act of bringing into reality what was not in reality" (p. 364). It asks the dual question of for what? (*maka gini?*) and why? (*gini kpatara?*) He said that "The two questions are actually one question, but posed from two different ends: the end point (for what?) and the starting point (why?)" He contrasts the 'why' question with the 'how'. While the how requires a description of the process, event or reality the way it has come to be, which is empirical question, the how goes deeper to the ontological level, far beyond the empirical, it explores the reason, explanation and justification for. In the entire process of cause, God is the cause who remains uncaused, while every other reality outside of God are the effects of God's power. However, even as effects, they could also cause other realities. Thus effects could both be effects and causes. Pantaleon distinguishes between ontological cause and functional cause. The ontological cause explains the being or coming into existence of the effect, and without it, the effect wouldn't be in existence. There is also the functional cause which explains the reason for the operations of a being. As a dualist, Pantaleon avers that there are two mighty forces: good and evil, while good things come from the force of good, evil things come from the force of evil. The human person possesses these forces within himself. The question that arises then is the source of evil. Pantaleon argues that if God is the source of good, bad spirits are the source of evil. However, above is God who has the power to put evil in check if human beings cooperate and carry out their legal, natural and customary responsibilities. Man, however, has the ability to manipulate the forces of good against evil, and also evil against good. Pantaleon wrote that, "The result of his being, his life, his community is the fruit of his work in manipulation. In his contribution is his responsibility. In his responsibility is his freedom. Freedom is participation in good. His reward is thanks to his responsibility" (p. 370). He defines responsible freedom as "... an active involvement in, and a successful contribution towards the increase of the good, and the decrease of the evil in man and his world" (p. 370).

### **Being as Belongingness**

In response to the questions, 'what makes being, being?', 'what does it mean to be in the Uwa?' Pantaleon argues that it is belongingness, thus *Being* is *Belongingness*. What then is belongingness? He defines belongingness as 'the synthesis of the reality and experience of belongingness' (p. 374). In this case, the recipient-subject of belonging is involved: something belongs and it belongs to something. Belongingness is a special noun from the verb 'to belong'. It means to be part of, Daisein-with or to be a member of a group. This act of belongingness gives me rights and privileges that others who do not belong do not have. There is also a possessive nuance of the verb 'to belong'. I can say that the soap belongs to me. In the first nuance, to belong creates a situation of participation and in the second, it creates a situation of possession. There is an ontological nuance of belongingness, which specifies that a thing is because it belongs. *To be* is *to belong* and *to belong* is *to be*.

Pantaleon argues that the Igbo principle of *Egbe bere Ugo bere* (let the kite perch, let the eagle perch) re-enacts the contents and significance of belongingness as the essence of reality. He believes that what a being is, is its activity of perching (belonging). To perch is to be. To be is to perch. To be is to belong and to belong is to be. Pantaleon expressed this in a diagram showing the relationship between perching, belonging and being. And this diagram reveals that when one perches, one belongs and when one belongs one becomes.

When *Egbe* perches and *Ugo* perches, they come face to face with each other. They are with each other. They are present to each other. They relate to each other deeply and directly as well as have relationships with other inhabitants of *Uwa* (world). To relate is to share something: to give and take. They have common projects, needs and desires. Together they struggle to overcome their difficulties and share their joy.

Obviously, the idea of 'To be is to belong and to belong is to be' may sound tautological, but it is the definitional circle involved in any description of being as being. This circle will however be clarified as the four Pantaleonine analytic connotations of belongingness is explored.

### ***Be-(I)-on (Be on)***

In this case, 'to belong' involves 'being on' in the *Uwa* (Uwa is the world in English, but in Igbo it takes up a meaningful depth. It is the entirety of existence, from God the highest being to inanimate beings of our cosmos) from which all concrete realities derive their being. To be on in this sense is to escape the contrary of being off. For either one is on or he is off. To be off is to cease to exist and to be on is to be.



### ***Be- (l)-on-going***

Having been given existence in the *Uwa*, this aspect of belongingness speaks of the being now going on in its *Uwa* and *Uwaness* (Pantaleon, 1995). In this case, Pantaleon suggests that *Uwa* is the underlying principle in Igbo Metaphysics. This particularly speaks of the process of being, for to remain in being is to proceed in being and not out of being. In this process of being, he makes a difficult synthesis of change and permanence. As the being goes on in being, it maintains its identity even though something in it changes. In ancient philosophy, change and permanence was a bone of contention between Heraclitus and Parmenides, but in Igbo Metaphysics it is no problem at all. For *uwa naeme ntughari* (the world changes), even though, in the midst of the change *Uwa bu otu* (the world does not change).

### ***Be-long***

To be-long means to abide, to stay or live long. In this case, it means that belongingness lives long. As such, the subject of *Uwa* lives long. This brings in the issue of space and time, for belongingness is expressed in space and time. Be-long extends into eternity in Igbo ontology; it goes beyond the present dimension of the *Uwa* to the *Uwa* of the ancestors, such that to be and not to be-long is not to be at all. While *on-going* belongingness may be open-ended, *being-long* belongingness stretches into everlastingness. As such, in Pantaleon, one becomes through being-on so as to be-going, in other to be-long.

### ***Be-longing***

This speaks of being and longing to be. It stresses the longing for life and being. It is founded on the awareness that nothing is higher a value than life. Expressions in Igbo bring this home: *nduka* (life is greater); *Ndubuisi* (life is the principal thing). To long for life is to want to be, not in the abstract *Uwa* but in the concreteness of what *Uwa* offers.

For Pantaleon, the essence of being or existence is belongingness. That is what we are and that it what we are made for. He wrote that “When all is said and done, what matters is belongingness. Do you belong here and after?... That we belong to being and being belongs to us” (p. 382).

### **Evaluation**

Asouzu (2007) sees the work of Iroegbu as one of the very few that have gone beyond describing worldviews of their people and presenting them as scientific ontology, at least since the time of Tempels and Kagame. Distinguishing him

from Edeh (1985), Asouzu avers that while Edeh tried to explain what all the Igbo people believe, regarding their worldview, Iroegbu who is equally an Igbo undertook a personal critical enquiry to explain his Uwa and its content. And since philosophy is an enterprise that requires a thinker taking clearly identifiable positions, in the contention of Asouzu, Iroegbu's approach and effort is praise worthy.

The idea of belongingness in Iroegbu metaphysics can be criticised variously. First of all, the idea of being as belongingness speaks of the characteristic of being and not of being itself. Being pre-exists belongingness, for a being would have to be before it can belong. Belongingness is a modality of being and not being itself. Furthermore, the idea of being as belongingness in Iroegbu is central to human beings, and even when he tried to apply it to other created things, he did that in relation to human beings. This constricts the power and capacity of being, as its capacity to encompass all that exists is limited. Pantaleon's opinion that existence is not only meaningful, but also possible only in a community raises questions about the extent of the power of the community over the individual. Pantaleon presents it as though it is the community that gives being to the individual. Contrary to his opinion, it is more reasonable to argue that the community cannot give a being its existence, but can only give meaning to existence. Iroegbu gives to the community powers it has no audacity to exercise. His equation of individual being with the community being raises difficulty as regards differentiating the individual from the whole. This is a problem of identity, with the potentiality of causing traffic in the order of being.

These criticisms notwithstanding, the philosophy of belongingness is one that touches virtually on every aspect of the human life, be it political, economic, social, ethics, etc, and demands an inextricable reciprocity with the act of acting, relating and communing. It is also one that identifies with the categories of the African people. As an idea, it is substantive, egalitarian, communalistic, transcendental and yet concrete. At a time when globalization with its weapon of individuality, among others, is eating deep into Africa and her values, the philosophy of belongingness is in tandem with the call for an African cultural renaissance. Above all, the philosophy of belongingness answers the fundamental question of the reason for existence, not just abstractly but concretely: the reason to be is belongingness.

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