

**EGWUIKPEM ỤMỤNWANYỊ: IMPLICATIONS ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND SOCIETAL WELLNESS IN IGBO CULTURE**

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**Abstract**

This work examines the role of *Egwuikpem ụmụnwanyị* in enhancing societal stability in Igbo culture. This is achieved through the collection and analysis of various *egwuikpem* of women of which are rendered to satirize ailing, straying or wayward women and persons involved in other types of social vices in the society. It employed both primary and secondary sources of data collection which personal interviews, participant - observation method and review of literatures. The *Egwuikpem* in discourse include majorly those of Anaocha and Aguata local government areas in Anambra State. The discourse is anchored on social control theory which states that crime is merely the result of unsupervised anti-social behaviour which can be reduced with some sort of control. It was discovered that *egwuikpem ụmụnwanyị* really serves as a very effective instrument in checking people's excesses and a good deterrent to unaccepted behaviours among women folk and the society at large. The ability to reduce vices increases its potency of ensuring societal wellness. On the other hand, it interrogates the lop-sidedness it poses in a bid to maintain social stability. Therefore, it is recommended that our traditional music whose essence is to ensure societal stability be encouraged, and also taking into consideration the equal application of *egwuikpem ụmụnwanyị* and *egwuikpem ụmụnwoke* to maintain a balance.

**Keywords:** *Egwuikpem*, conflict and conflict resolution, societal wellness or stability, social control

**Introduction**

Societal wellness and stability is very vital for harmonious co-existence in any traditional or contemporary environment. People institute laws to guide people's excessive behaviours and in most cases take legal action against offenders. In primordial Igbo traditional society, many institutions are established to ensure relative peace and stability among citizenry. These institutions include: - *ụmụnna*, *ụmụada / ụmụokpu*, *ndi nze na ozo*, *ndi ichie*, *ndi nwunye di / inyom di*, and in some cases even the masquerades are employed. All these various groups operate at different levels of authority. Punishments are administered according to the gravity of offence, ranging from constructive advice, caution, reprimand, satire, to physical punishment or fine and in some cases ostracism, banishment and exile become imminent as the case with Okonkwo in Achebe's (1958) *Things fall Apart*. As exemplified above, both men and women institutions are involved in the enforcement of law and order in any Igbo traditional society. While men are concerned with more serious cases which may be political -such as leadership tussles, land disputes, managerial incompetence and mismanagement of group's assets, cultural - such as breaking of norms, ethos and values or socio-economical - such as civil unrest, child abuse, sexual abuse, rape, incest, fraud and so on. The authority of women is most significant in resolving domestic affairs and vices such as quarrelling, fighting, backbiting, role

negligence, gossips, waywardness, alcoholism, stealing and in some occasions meddle into cases that defy men's solution. When women are mentioned in this work it implies both the *umuada* and the *inyom di*, though institutionally, *umuada* exercise stronger authority than *ndiinyom di* in taking decisions. Women unlike the men folk enjoy dual recognition or citizenship in Igbo society. In her father's house she is a daughter - *ada*, whereas in her husband's place she is a wife - *nwunye*. Their collective names then become *umuada* for daughters and *ndinwunye di* or *ndiinyom di* for wives. Women in most cases consider the use of song more effective than setting up a jury when it involves scandal and men respect their authority. The fact that every traditional Igbo person (or Africa in general) is born with some measure of musical instinct is made manifest when it comes to *egwuikpem*. When it comes to *egwuikpem*, everybody becomes a composer.

### Clarification of Terms

*Egwuikpem*: *Egwu* here means music or song. *Ikpem* denotes satire. Therefore, *Egwuikpem* is a satiric music in song form designed specifically to cast aspersion on any person who is continuously in the habit of committing a particular crime or has remained a deviant in Igbo society. *Egwuikpem umunwanyị* therefore represents those satirical songs meant to address women vices. There are certain acts which society frowns at, how much more coming from a woman. Such includes, stealing, a wife who is a habitual late cook, indulging in abortion, waywardness, harlotry and so on. This goes on to support Obika (2017) who avers that "Igbo people from then till now have certain expectations from women...no woman even today is expected to be rough or be a rogue" (p. 18). Although men are not excluded when it comes to *egwuikpem* but it does not appear in the same proportion to those of women. *Egwuikpem* is most commonly used by women on notorious persons when all other measures applied in correcting them have failed to yield positive result. This use of pun languages, bitter satires or scathing remarks is considered the last option as its deformative implication normally sink skin deep on the bearer. Any person stung with such ridiculous rendition carries the stigma for life, and for that reason, it is normally avoided by every meaningful person in Igbo society. Udoh (2012) observes similar situation among Annang people of Akwa-Ibom State. In his report, "in *Ebre* music only women of good character are admitted into it. It restrains the conduct of women as when a woman who is a thief is ridiculed in songs and paraded through the village by the society" (p. 127). *Egwuikpem* is never palatable as far as women folk is concern because such a woman has lost her honour and credibility in the society. It is equally considered a dent on the husband's reputation and even worse in a situation where the man is a title holder. *Umuada* uses *egwuikpem* as their greatest weapon on anybody be it a man or a woman who maltreats his or her mother to death or the mother suffers abandonment or a situation where a man maltreats his wife to death. On the day of the woman's burial many *egwuikpem* will take on the stage. Nwafor, (2013) reports a similar incident in Amaokpala Orumba Local Government Area where a son abandoned her mother when she was sick and was left to die in that poor situation. On the day of her burial, the *umuada* demanded that the man danced to the insulting and derogatory music of *ikpem* publicly, which the man eventually obliged before the burial activities could continue. In this type of situation, the wealth of a person is inconsequential and does not absolve the offender from the associated ridicule. The researchers observed a similar incident at Igboukwu where a woman died and her children did not consider given her a worthwhile and befitting burial due to family crises. The *umuada* took it up and each time they were at any burial; they would be singing with the names of that woman's children to remind them that they have not yet given their mother a befitting burial. Two of such songs include;

i. **ONYE KWALU NNE YA**

*Onye kwalu nne ya, akwa n'onyakw'ogene,  
Onye kwalu nne ya, akwa n'onyakw'ogene,*

*onyia ogene o, onya ogene  
onyia ogene o, onya ogene*

Whoever gives his/her mother a befitting burial, wears a sounding gong

*Onye akwaghi nne ya n'onyakwo mkpume  
Onye akwaghi nne ya n'onyakwo mkpume*

*onyia mkpume o, onya mkpume  
onyia mkpume o, onya mkpume*

Whoever does not give to his/her mother a befitting burial, wears a heavy stone

*Nwanne gaa kwa nne gi k'inyal'ogene*

*onyia ogene o, onya ogene*

My brother/sister go and give your mother her burial rite so that you wear a sounding gong

*Igne gaa kwaa nne gi k'inyal'ogene*

*onyia ogene o, onya ogene*

Ignatius go and give your mother her burial rite and wear a sounding gong

*Nwakasi ga kwaa nne gi k'inyal'ogene*

*onyia ogene o, onya ogene*

Nwakasi go and give your mother her burial rite and wear a sounding gong

*Onye akwaghi nne ya n'onyakwo nnabi, onya nnabi o, onya nnabi*

*Onye akwaghi nne ya n'onyakwo nnabi, onya nnabi o, onya nnabi*

Whoever does not give to his/her mother a befitting burial, is an anathema



2

20  
C. *O-ny'a-kwa-ghi n-ne y'a-kwa o nya kwa n-na - bi*

Resp. *ne o, o ny'o-ge - ne. O nya n-na-*

24  
C. *O-ny'a - kwa-ghi n - ne y'a - kwa o nya kwa n - na -*

Resp. *bio, o nya n - na - bi.*

27  
C. *bi*

Resp. *O nya n - na - bio, o nya n - na - bi.*

ii. **ALUFO**

Alufọ gi bia fulu umunne gi  
Alpho (Alphonsus) come and see your relations (2ice)

Alufọ gi bia fulu umunne gi

Umenzekwe gi bia fulu umunne gi  
Umenzekwe come and see your relations

Alufọ gi bia fulu umunne gi  
Alpho come and see your relations

Ogboodiye gi bia fulu umunne gi  
Ogboodiye come and see your relations

Alufọ gi bia fulu umunne gi  
Alpho come and see your relations

Onye lulu unọ enu ma okwaghị nne ya akwa  
He has a duplex but has not done his mother's funeral,

Alufọ gi bia fulu umunne gi  
Alpho come and see your relations

O nwelu moto n'abọ ma okwaghị nne ya akwa  
He has two cars but has not done his mother's funeral

Alufọ gi bia fulu umunne gi  
Alpho come and see your relations

## EGWU IKPEM AKWAMOZU 2

Call *A - lu-fo gi bia fu-l'u-mun-ne gi* U-

Response *A - lu-fo gi bia fu-l'u-mun-ne gi*

5  
Call *men-ze-kwe gi bia fu-l'u-mun-ne gi* O-

Response *A - lu-fo gi bia fu-l'u-mun-ne gi*

9  
Call *gbo - di-ya gi bia fu-l'u-mun-ne gi* o -

Response *A - lu-fo gi bia fu-l'u-mun-ne gi*

13  
Call *nye lu-lu u-no e-nu m'o kwa-ghi n-ne y'a-kwa* o

Response *A - lu-fo gi bia fu-l'u-mun-ne gi*

17  
Call *nwe-lu mo-to n'a - bo m'o kwa-ghi n-ne y'a- kwa.*

Response *A - lu-fo gi bia fu-l'u-mun-ne gi*

What the first song is saying is that whoever that gives his/her mother a befitting burial wears a sounding gong (an honourable insignia) and is not hidden in shame. They can talk anyhow anywhere in public without being challenged or molested. On the other hand, the person that did not give his/her

mother a befitting burial is said to have worn heavy stone (mark of contempt) and is covered with shame in such a way that he/she cannot talk anyhow in public without receiving a slight from people. This happens mostly when the people concerned are capable of doing it but for one reason or the other they failed to give their mother her necessary burial rites. The cause of this delay (as said earlier) at times may be as a result of quarrel or dispute arising from the children of the deceased which results that each of them retires to his/her own house. So with the above song which awaits them each time they attend burial ceremony around their place they will find a way of resolving their problems and then get out of the scornful songs. This is where the power of women is held supreme because in a bid to avoid this ridicule and scornful situation, peaceful co-existence is maintained in families.

The second song is more specific than the first because the names of the people concerned are being mentioned in the song. The name of the most affluent of the deceased children is more frequently used because it was expected that he should do the funeral being the wealthiest among his siblings.

### **Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

Conflict in a simple language means disagreement. Nwadiakor and Uzoigwe (2013) aver that, "conflict means contradictions arising from differences in interest, ideas, ideologies, orientations, perceptions, phenomena, and tendencies" (p. 67). When there is conflict, there is friction, strife, insecurity, crises, chaos and disorder. Conflict can be micro - involving domestic or family matters. It can as well be macro affecting the entire societal framework such as political quagmire, social insecurity, cultural and economic crises or different kinds of disputes which result in societal instability. Conflict resolution on the other hand, implies keeping or maintaining orderliness and peace between two people or among different disagreeing or warring groups so that they come to terms with each other. In traditional setup, conflicts can be resolved on individual or group bases depending on the nature or gravity of the conflict. *Egwuikpem* is quite different from most songs of criticisms witnessed among various musicians of this present dispensation which most time are enshrouded in ulterior motive. According to Idamoyibo (2012) "the present day critics, attack government so that they could be noticed and appeased with political appointments, to enable them loot public treasury and forever keep quiet" (p. 102). *Egwuikpem* is purely a corrective criticism, - a sort of corrective measure with no personal interest attached and rendered without fear or favour not minding whose ox is gored. Ezeuko in Obi (2009) observes that, "*umuokpu* in every Igbo community apart from other functions, play the role of settling all family, village and town differences. When any conflict proved tough to settle *umuokpu* is always the last resort especially the conflict between husband and wife" (pp. 264-265). It could be seen even from political narratives that women are better instrument of social control and crises management than men. Ojiakor (2009) points out that, "among the Igbo of Nigeria, the *umuada* legislated on matters that defied solution by men" (p. 145) she identifies some other areas where women, apart from playing domestic role distinguish themselves in matters of insurgencies and colonial autocratic administration. These include Aba women's riot, Lagos Market Women's Association, Abeokuta Women's Union among others. The main purpose of forming the above mentioned groups was to protest against women inclusion in tax payment proposed by colonial administrators. In most of these marches towards expression of grievances by these different women's groups, music is the factorizing agent through which they chant and made their grievances known.

### **Societal stability and wellness**

Society involves or constitutes of people of different formations and characters, inhabiting a particular space, and guided by a common cultural institution. For one to appreciate social or societal stability and wellness one must have been exposed to or experienced some level of instabilities and insecurities either as an individual or as a group. There are so many ways one can face challenges of insecurity in ones lives endeavour. It could be health challenges, insecurity in one's place of work, job insecurity and so on. It may be domestic or family issues from children's restiveness, husband's or wife's insubordination or infidelity, it might as well involve extended family intrusion crises. Instability and or insecurity operating on societal level may include some of the following: - land disputes and political crises, herdsmen devastation and insurgency, kidnapping, robbery, rape, incest, epidemics or pandemic, hunger and so on. All these deplorable situations are what create unhealthy living among people. A society that enjoys social stability is considered healthy because those social vices that endanger the life of citizenry which had been identified above are absent or reduced to the barest minimum. Michael La Bossiere in Nweke (2013) observes that, "one aspect to maintaining social stability is ensuring that people are willing (or forced) to remain within the limits of the stability of the system in question" (p. 147). He also quotes Falade and Ekundayo thus, "to ensure social stability, every citizen needs to acquire and demonstrate appropriate civic attitudes and skills" (p. 153). The primary duty of *egwuikpem* is to ensure compliance to societal cherished values which therefore enhance societal wellness.

### **Theoretical framework**

As was said earlier, the work is anchored on social control theory. According to Boh (2013) social control theory "states that crime is merely the result of unsupervised anti-social behaviour which can be with some sort of control" (p. 110). He identifies different types of social control to include:

1. Direct control where all wrong actions receive punishments and right actions receive rewards from family or state authority.
2. Indirect control by quick identification of deviant behaviour by the family or others.
3. Internal control by the individual who tries to control deviant behaviour through the strength of his conscience.
4. Control through satisfaction. When all needs are met, the individual will not be tempted.

*Egwuikpem* falls within the first and second points where the *umuada* or the *ndi inyom di* are part of the extended family whose hands are always on the social control lever to criticize wrong actions or applaud right actions. Discussing music as a veritable instrument for social control, Okafor in Forchu (2012) asserts, "it leaves a mark on the psyche that re-directs the person towards a new personality, towards a new activity" (p. 215). Igbo society is very much aware of the potency of *egwuikpem umunwanyi* in protecting, sustaining and preserving Igbo people and culture, as a result nothing could demean its position in the scheme of things. Igbo society believes so much in communal living, one concerns one person concerns the other. No one lives in solitude. That is the reason why the job of social control falls on everybody irrespective of family affiliation or relationship.

### **Methodology**

A collection of five *egwuikpem* was made. Interviews were conducted on the origin and implications of the different songs collected. These songs were randomly selected as they are considered relevant to the subject of discourse. The contents of the songs were analysed based on the resource persons'



information to reflect the message they are meant to portray. The songs were also translated and notated for scholarly applicability. During the interview sections, the researchers met with the following: - Madam Theresa Okoye - an octogenarian, a native of Igboukwu, and Chief Godfrey Obiora from Agulu also an octogenarian. In her response to the origin and implications of *egwuikpem*, Okoye said that each *egwuikpem* is born out of the incident that preceded it. She narrated (in vernacular) one of the incidents and its attendant *egwuikpem* which the researchers translated thus:

In the olden days when she was still in her teens, her mother Mgbekwe Ezenwibe used to tell her and her siblings a story of one Mgbafor Chikelu from a neighbouring village who was too notorious in her waywardness. According to her mother, the woman was an epitome of beauty with good height and a ringed neck which was her greatest spot of beauty. This woman lived irresponsibly by sleeping around with men. On one occasion she went to Nkwo Market and after dropping her market basket she just left. At the close of the market she was nowhere to be found and when it was later discovered that she went to her boyfriend's house, the gossips went viral both in her village and in the neighbouring villages and even among her close associates. The villagers did not take it lightly with her as they made jest of her each time they saw her. This attitude they assumed, delayed her marriage since no one would recommend her for marriage, because marriage in those days was contracted mostly through recommendation. She stayed in her parent's house for a long time until at her later age, when an old man who was not reckoned with any good reputation from outside her village came and married her. Then after the incident, people would gather during moonlight plays and used her name in songs, detailing out what she did and with the exact description of her person so that anybody that heard the song would immediately get the picture of the person and the message therein. The song reads thus: -

|                          |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>O iye e</i>           | <i>o iye e</i>                       |
| <i>O iye e</i>           | <i>o iye e</i>                       |
| <i>Ogonogo nwagboghọ</i> | <i>Ogonogo nwagboghọ onu eke iye</i> |
| A tall young lady        | a tall young lady with ringed neck   |
| <i>O iye e</i>           | <i>o iye e</i>                       |
| <i>Ogonogo nwagboghọ</i> | <i>Ogonogo nwagboghọ onu eke iye</i> |
| A tall young lady        | a tall young lady with ringed neck   |
| <i>O iye e</i>           | <i>o iye e</i>                       |

*Oje e na nkwo Igbo, jelu na nkwo Igbo, dọsa abọ ahia ya*  
 Went to Nkwo market, on getting to nkwo market, she left her market basket there  
*Jewalu na be oyi ya nwoke*

And went to her boyfriend's house

*Zie Olieji bunataraya abọ*

And asked her neighbour Olieji to bring back her market basket

*Oche na Olieji na-ata mkpulu nkahie*

Did she think that Olieji would associate herself with such a shameful act?

O iye e  
O iye e

o iye e  
o iye e

### EGWU IKPEM IGBA N'ILO

Call  O-

Response  9 Oi - ye, — oi - ye! Oi - ye, — oi - ye!

Call  go-lo-go nwa-gbo-gho, o-go-lo-go nwa-gbo - gh'o-nu e - ke

Response  Oi - ye, —

Call  15 1. O 2. Jee na N-kwo I-gbo, je-ruo na N-kwo I-gbo

Response  23 oi - ye! — oi - ye! —

Call  do-s'a-bo a-hia ya, je-wa-ra na b'o - yi ya nwo-ke, — si O - lie - ji bu-

Response 

Call  31 na-ta-ra y'a - bo. O che-n'O - lie - ji n'a - ta m-kpu lu n - ka - nie.

Response 

Call  37 **D.S Al Fine**

Response  **Fine**  
Oi - ye, — oi - ye! Oi - ye, — oi - ye!

The song is translated not in a word for word pattern but in a way that will help bring out the meaning as it is. *O iye e* is just an onomatopoeic sound or response used to extend and beautify the song.

The narrator said that their mother would always use this story and its associated song to remind them of the consequences or implications of living a wayward life. According to her during that time people used the name *Mgbafor Chikelu* derogatorily on any woman that mingled or hanged around with men. Therefore, for any one not to answer or go by the name, *Mgbafor Chikelu*, one would refrain from living her type of life.(oral interview 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020).

The above narrative was taken by the researcher but not without some measure of interrogations. It is true and could be understood that the action of the village women were no doubts compelled by tradition, but arguably and logically too, and from the researcher's perspective, this particular judgement (*egwuikpem*) is lopsidedly applied. *Mgbafor Chikelu* was not all alone in the act. It takes two to tango. The reason why only her name was couched in such a satiric rendition beats the researcher's imagination. This is one of the areas where the society is not fair to women, where balanced judgement suffers at the altar of gender superiority or inequality. The obvious trajectory hinged on the fact that women are victims of these lopsided societal norms where two persons would be guilty of an offence, one goes scout free and the other pays dearly for the same offence. This is where Igbo tradition and that of the Jews have serious affinity. In Jewish tradition, an account was given where a woman was brought before Jesus for sex scandal while nothing was said of the man who was involved in the act with her (John 8: 3-7). Abeng (2020) succinctly decries these imbalances in her open letter to Chimmanda Adichie about her stand on feminism. She was of the opinion that no gender should be considered inferior to the other. She also blamed women for aiding and abating this imbalance by creating an enabling environment for the said suppression to thrive. She builds her facts on her personal experience as a growing girl child. In her own words she laments,

In finding my path, I first blamed women, because, in my short time of existence, women raised me and most of the people around me. They chose that I cook and clean while my cousins played. They said, "you are a woman, no man will take this from you", they said, "with this your attitude, you won't find husband", your opinions are too strong for a lady, you need to listen more when your man is talking", "Don't buy a big car or live alone o! You will chase men away", "why are you not married yet?" "you need to learn to cook o".

Women told me all these but never did I hear them tell the male kids around me the same thing. Instead, I heard "you are supposed to be strong for your sisters", "are you not a man? Why are you crying?" "The older babe slept with you, ahn ahn you are enjoying o". (all emphases are hers). (Social Media, April 23, 2020)

All these comments are from women which by implication are to prepare the minds of the female children for an inferior or subservient position the society prescribes for them while their male counterparts are treated like kings. Still tracing women's woes biblically, we refer to the first letter of Paul to Timothy where he (Paul) admonished women to learn in silence with all submission. In furtherance, he says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence" (1Tim 2: 11-12). All these submissions burdened women both as a victim of tradition and that of Christianity. The researchers were not condemning the *egwuikpem* but were bothered on the societal application or usage of it - the prejudice. The fact that in situations where both parties are involved in a crime, one is punished and the other culprit remained silent or anonymous is unjust, both

of them should share in the blame. The paper proposes a transformative approach to such oppressive societal norms, a situation where justice and equity hold sway. The researchers equally lend their voices to other African writers who held on to womanism as a more appropriate definition than feminism in this struggle for men - women inequality. Ezenwanebe (2008) in her own contribution asserts:

Womanism, unlike Western Feminism aims at a general social and cultural transformation. The starting point is not necessarily men. Rather it engages and interrogates culture and sees it as a platform for critical transformation. Womanism opts for an evaluation of men and women that will enthrone complementarity, instead of equality of sexes. Complementarity implies an awareness that neither men nor women can exist in isolation. (p. 188)

This is a more welcome opinion in a society where man-made laws are prejudicially instituted to favour a particular group to the disadvantage of the other.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, a similar interview was held with Chief Godfrey Obiora, (aka - Onyekwute ọdịariya) an octogenarian from Isiamigbo , Agulu in Anocha Local Government Area on whether male folk are free or exonerated from *egwuikpem*. He said, "Igbo tradition has no respect for any violator of cultural values but the fact that women are engaged in more musical activities than men gives room for more women's *egwuikpem*". He gave an account of a man called Ikemee who was into a relationship with a woman, in the process, the woman became pregnant. But according to Igbo tradition, a man has no claim over a child he did not pay dowry on the mother. So when the child was born Ikemee could not have the child as his. For this reason, people of the community started deriding him with the following *egwuikpem*

Song

Ikemee ọnahụ amụọrọ ị nwa  
Ikemee ọnahụ amụọrọ ị nwa  
Nwanne na-emereakụ, Ikemee ọnahụ amụọrọ ị nwa  
Ọchịchị elue akụ, Ikemee ọnahụ amụọrọ ị nwa  
Ụtaligwe nwanyị, Ikemee ọnahụ amụọrọ ị nwa  
Ịchọba eje mmiri, ikulu mmiri nọ, Ikemee ọnahụ amụọrọ ị nwa  
Ikolo eje mmiri  
Agboghọ eje mmiri  
Iyo yo ooyo

Translation

Ikemee she should have born the child for you  
Ikemee she should have born the child for you  
Nwanne na-emereakụ, Ikemee she should have born the child for you  
Ọchịchị elue akụ, Ikemee she should have born the child for you  
Ụtaligwe nwanyị, Ikemee she should have born the child for you, Ikemee ...  
If you want something good/beautiful go for it, get it and own it,  
A handsome man,  
A pretty woman  
Iyo yo oo yo

## EGWU IKPEM AKALIOGHORI NWOKE

Call 

Response   
*I-ke mee o na hu a-muo-ro gi n-wa. I-ke mee o na hu a-muo-ro*

7  
 C.   
*Nwan-ne n'e - me r'a - ku o o-chi-chi e we-r'a-ku o*

Resp.   
*gi n - wa. I-ke mee o na hu a-muo-ro gi n-wa.*

13  
 C.   
*u-ta-l'i - gwe nwa-nyi o I cho-b'e - je m-mi-*

Resp.   
*I-ke mee o na hu a-muo-ro gi n-wa. I-ke mee o na hu a-muo-ro*

19  
 C.   
*r'I ku-lu m - mi-ri nu-a I - ko-lo e - je m-mi - ri a - gbo - gh'e-je m-mi-ri*

Resp.   
*gi n-wa. I-ke mee o na hu a-muo-ro gi n-wa.*

25  
 C.   
*I - yo - yo - go*

Resp.   
*I - ke mee o na - hu a - muo - ro gi n - wa.*

29  
 C. 

Resp.   
*I - ke mee o na - hu a - muo - ro gi n - wa.*

On whether men and women receive equal criticisms for related offences, personal experiences have shown that in Igbo tradition, what should be regarded as a very big offense for a woman may not even be regarded as anything if a man is involved and that accounts for more number of *egwuikpem* for women than men. There are many other *egwuikpem umunwanyị* which are displayed during women's social gatherings. One of such reads thus-

Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko  
Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko  
Ndi ọgba ntu eje uka, ọgba ntu eje uka azọbikwone m'okpa na u biko  
Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko  
Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko  
Ndi osulu nni n'okụ, osulu nni n'okụ efele di n'ụnọ a na-asa asa?  
Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko  
Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko

Ndi oji eze akpọ biya, oji eze akpọ biya ma opina dika n'ụnụ, a na-achọ achọ?  
Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko  
Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko  
Ndi ọwa nika eje ahia, ọwa nika eje ahia ma ọgodọ dika n'ụnọ a na-asu asu?  
Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko  
Ụmụagboghọ itikanakpa na yu biko  
Ndi omegbu nredi ha , omegbu nredi ma nne ha nọ n'ụnọ, na yu biko


#### Translation

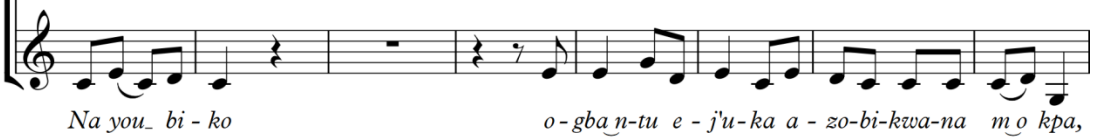
Illiterate ladies, it's you o (meaning I salute you- though derogatorily implied)  
Illiterate ladies, it's you o  
Who wear very pointed shoes to church, don't march on my legs, I salute you o  
Illiterate ladies, it's you o  
Illiterate ladies, it's you o  
Who eat from the pot, you eat from the pot while plates are in the house, are they washed?  
Illiterate ladies, it's you o  
Illiterate ladies, it's you o  
Who open bottles (beer) with their teeth while openers are at home, do they look for them?  
Illiterate ladies, it's you o  
Illiterate ladies, it's you o  
Who wear knickers/trousers to market while wrappers are at home, do they wash them?  
Illiterate ladies, it's you o  
Illiterate ladies, it's you o  
Who maltreat their mothers' in-law, maltreating their mothers' in-law while their own mothers are well catered for at home, I salute you

# EGWU IKPEM AKUKU

Call   
*U-mua - gbo- gh'i - ti ka-na-kpa U-mua - gbo gh'i - ti ka-na-kpa*

Response   
*Na you\_ bi - ko*

8  
Call   
*n-di o-gba n-tu e - j'u-ka*

Response   
*Na you\_ bi - ko o - gba n-tu e - j'u-ka a - zo-bi-kwa-na m o kpa,*

16  
Call   
*U-mua - gbo gh'i - ti ka-na-kpa U-mua - gbo gh'i - ti*

Response   
*Na you\_ bi - ko Na you\_ bi - ko*

23  
Call   
*ka-na-kpa n-di o - su-ru n-ni n'o-ku*

Response   
*Na you\_ bi - ko o - su-ru n-ni n'o-ku m'e - fe-re di-kwa*

31  
Call   
*U-mua-gbo gh'i - ti ka-na-kpa U-mua-gbo gh'i - ti*

Response   
*n'u- lo, a n'a-sa a - sa. Na you\_ bi - ko*

2

39  
Call *ka-na-kpa* *n-di o ji e-ze a-kpo bi-ya,*  
Response *Na you\_ bi - ko* *o ji e-ze a - kpo bi-ya m'o*

46  
Call *U-mua-gbo gh'i - ti ka-na-kpa* *U-mua*  
Response *pi-na di n'u-lo, a n'a - cho a - cho* *Na you\_ bi - ko*

54  
Call *gbo gh'i - ti ka-na-kpa* *n-di o yi ni-ka e - je a-hia*  
Response *Na you\_ bi - ko* *o yi ni-ka e -*

61  
Call *U-mua - gbo gh'i - ti ka-na-kpa*  
Response *je a-hia m'o - go-do di-kwa n'u - lo, a n'a - su a - su.*

68  
Call *U-mua - gbo gh'i - ti ka-na-kpa* *n-di o me-gbu n ne\_*  
Response *Na you\_ bi - ko* *Na you\_ bi - ko*

75  
Call *\_ di*  
Response *o me-gbu n-ne\_ di ma n - ne ha no-kwa n'u - lo, na you\_ bi - ko.*

The above rendition criticizes young ladies who the rural women see as social misfits by putting up awkward and bizarre behaviours that do not conform to the expected traditional ethnics of society, such as wearing unusual pointed shoes, wearing short knickers or trousers, opening drinks such as beer with teeth, and other domestic negligence such as leaving cooking utensils -plates, pots or spoons unwashed, maltreating one's mother in-law and so on. For rural women such attitude and ineptitude amount to illiteracy and therefore highly criticised.



### Conclusion

From the above discourse, it could be deduced that *egwuikpem* is a very potent instrument of achieving societal wellness in Igbo culture. Through its medium social vices and unhealthy behaviours are controlled to a certain limit. The fact that every Igbo person values and cherishes good name, it therefore becomes discreditably awful to be associated with any form of derisive song no matter how less offensive it appears. Nevertheless, and worrisomely too, it appears that women are more or less the architect of their own problem through upbringing and role definition. They are the main propeller of *egwuikpem* in Igbo culture and thus the reason for more number of *egwuikpem umunwanyị* than *egwuikpem umunwoke*. They seem to embrace totally what tradition packaged for them in terms of what a woman should do and what she should not do, which invariably determine her level of obedience and offenses in a society. Therefore, the paper contends that in as much as *egwuikpem* has come to stay as a veritable instrument to ensure social stability or societal wellness as the case may be, it should not be lopsidedly applied.

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