

STREET BEGGING: A DEVALUATION OF IGBO HUMANISM

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ABSTRACT

The trend of street begging has become a global phenomenon plaguing both the developed and developing countries of the world; notwithstanding its prevalence in the third world countries where there is acute dearth of social welfare and social support system that cater for the needs of the poor, the aged, the sick, the physically challenged, the less privileged and the downtrodden. The upsurge in the number of street beggars has been attributed to poverty, culture, religion etc. by scholars. The people of Nigeria and the Igbo in particular are not an exception to the universal trend of begging on the street. Major cities and towns in Nigeria are fraught with beggars from across the country. Street begging is viewed differently by people of different cultural, religious background and schools of thought. For the functionalists, street begging helps religious adherents to fulfill their religious obligation of practicing piety. Some scholars see it as a socio-cultural and security threat, an eyesore and a nuisance. For the traditional Igbo people, street begging is a taboo. In Igbo philosophy of humanism, it is considered demeaning for a man to beg. The human person is gifted with intelligence and everything needed to struggle and earn a living. Begging is a sign of failure and weakness. It undermines the Igbo sense of communal living. This essay, therefore, is concerned with the explication of the ways in which street begging constitutes a devaluation of Igbo Humanism.

Key words: Street Begging, Igbo Humanism, Human Dignity and Communalism.

INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, major cities and towns, marketplaces, motor parks, religious centres and junctions in Nigeria have witnessed a significant rise in the number of street beggars and panhandlers. It has become a serious challenge being that they constitute an impediment to the swift movement of vehicles and people going about their daily businesses.^{1,2} They also pose some socioeconomic challenges. Every city, motor park, marketplace and pedestrian bridge in Nigeria is rid with beggars of different sorts: age, gender, cultural and religious background.

Notwithstanding, the menace of street begging is not peculiar to a place, culture or country. It has become a global challenge confronting both developed and developing countries of the world. The problem of begging has attracted the attention of governments of some advanced countries leading to its ban in some major cities such as San Francisco, Chicago, Illinois, Santa Cruz,³ and Pakistan.⁴ In some African countries such as Ghana, begging is unlawful and punishable by law.⁵ Though some countries have enacted laws prohibiting street begging, it has become increasingly difficult to implement such laws since it is the activity of the most vulnerable in the society. Some government officials of Ghana said they have to apply human face to the law because it will be worse to arrest and

imprison someone whose means of survival is begging.⁶ Begging is also banned in some Nigerian states such as Borno, Lagos⁷ and other southern states where the criminal code is applicable.

Even though the government (of Lagos State for example) has made effort to curb begging by building rehabilitation centres (inadequate they may be), begging has continued to thrive with increasing number of people indulging in the act. This is primarily because the root cause of begging has not been addressed. The persistent surge in the number of beggars are influenced by a number of factors - poverty, religion, health challenges and even culture. With Nigeria overthrowing India as the poverty capital of the world, a lot of people has been forced into begging as their only means of livelihood. According to World Bank report, about 40 per cent of Nigerians, representing 83 million people live below poverty line in 2019.⁸ Premium Times also reported that inflation pushed over 7 million people into poverty in 2020.⁹ Labour force report released by National Bureau of Statistics reveals that 33.3 per cent of Nigerians are unemployed.¹⁰ All these points to why poverty is the primary cause of begging among Nigerians.

On the other hand, there is a surge and persistence of begging because it is seen by both the beggars and some almsgivers as a way of helping them fulfill their religious and moral obligation. Some culture in Nigeria encourages begging. In Yoruba culture for instance, the mother of twin is permitted to beg because the twin are believed to demands so and are believed to have divine authority to beg.¹¹ Begging by *iya-ibeji* (twin's mother) is an acceptable form of begging in Yoruba culture.¹²

Contrary to the above notions of street begging, it is a taboo in traditional Igbo culture for one to beg in the streets.^{13,14} The Igbo place High value on the human person that the act of begging especially by able-bodied and healthy individuals is absolutely unwelcome in all parts of Igbo society. Such individuals are looked down on, stigmatized and categorized as lazy people who have refused to use their gift as human persons to eke out a living through honourable, dignifying means. Their attitude towards begging can be attributed to the value which they placed on labour. There is dignity in labour. An average Igbo person strives to succeed. The greatest fear of an Igbo man is failure. This is what motivated Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* by Chin?a Achebe to strive for success. He abhorred his father for being a failure. To prove that he is not a failure, he went as far as killing the child who called him father. In order to achieve success and attain the status of *nnukwu mmad?*, the Igbo person does anything morally permissible so long as it has economic benefits and does not dent his dignity and family name. Good name was everything in Igbo worldview. The only circumstance where begging is permissible among the Igbo is where stealing becomes an alternative. There is an Igbo saying "*onye ar?r?? ka onye ohi mma,*" a beggars is preferable to a thief.

The Igbo position on begging regardless, the activity, like other parts of the world and culture, has being gaining momentum. For different reason and under different guises, some people has taken to alms begging on the street. While the problem of begging has continued unabatedly among Igbo, it has been understudied in relation to its impacts on traditional Igbo humanism. The idea and act of begging is unabatedly rubbing off on Igbo values for the human person. This paper, therefore, is aimed at exposing how the 'job' of

begging devalues Igbo humanism.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

THE CONCEPT OF BEGGING

The activity of begging is multifaceted and multidimensional hence there is need for clarification for a better comprehension. Begging under different guises and reasons, especially poverty has practically become a way of life, a permanent job for some people. It is, however, noteworthy that not all poor people are motivated into begging.¹⁵

To beg, according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, is "to ask somebody for something especially in an anxious way because you want or need it very much... to ask somebody for money, food, etc., especially in the street."¹⁶ A beggar is someone who asks for alms in the form of money, food, clothes and other life necessities as a gift or charity from people who in some cases are total strangers. Begging connotes asking earnestly and humbly for help from people. However, not all beggars approach their prospective almsgiver humbly; some are aggressive¹⁷ and profane in their choice of words whereas some subtly threaten and insult their potential helper.^{18,19}

As observed by Jelili, begging is not only peculiar to individuals but also engaged in by groups, organization or government.²⁰ Groups, organization or government ask for grants or cancellation of loans by richer organization or countries and wealthy individuals.. This is what Jelili termed "corporate begging."²¹ Notably, the Nigeria Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning took to Twitter on April 1, 2020 to beg for 100-500 ventilators from Elon Musk.²² On the same date, one of Buhari's aide, Bashir Ahmad also took to Twitter begging for the same ventilators from Elon Musk.²³ This indicates that with the advancement in technology, there is also a remarkable advance in forms of begging. Unlike few decades ago, there are numerous websites and domains where people use for begging. Websites like GoFundMe which was intended for people who are genuinely in need has been turned to where lazy youths looking for convenient means of making money come to beg for money.

It is important to note that begging has different forms such as house-to-house begging, panhandling, mendicancy, vagrancy, internet begging etc. Among these beggars are the sick, the physically challenged, the aged and needy, the poor, able-bodied men and women who for convenience decided to exploit human compassion as a means of earning their livelihood.²⁴ Inasmuch as some beggars are genuinely in need and deserves alms, some are, according to Jelili, "potential criminals"²⁵ portending latent physical, economic and security risk. Some are bombers who disguise as having one bandaged part of the body concealing bombs.²⁶

The condition of one notwithstanding, begging among Igbo is considered demeaning and stigmatizing, not only to the beggar but also the family and community at large. This is because, in Igbo ontology, the human person is the greatest of all things, he is at the centre of the created universe. In the same vein, the Igbo values the dignity of every member of the society - young and old, rich and poor, the sick and the healthy alike. They cherish good name above other things hence they avoid anything that brings blemish to the family name.

THE CONCEPT OF IGBO HUMANISM

Igbo humanism in this context refers to the philosophy that centres on the human person, human life, value, dignity of the human person. According to J.N. Dodds, "humanism is a way of looking at the world which emphasizes the importance of human beings - their nature and their place in the universe".²⁷ Human person in Igbo worldview and philosophy is at the centre of the created universe. All actions, policies, laws, values etc. are primarily concerned with the good and welfare of the human person. Igbo humanism is essentially focused on all it takes to better, prolong and preserve the life of man. The Igbo placed high premium on human life. It is the *summum bonum* a gift that only the supreme Being - God, can give. Human life is quite sacred to the Igbo hence every action, endeavour or human engagement is intended to preserve it. It is an abomination for one to take one's life no matter the circumstances. It is also a heinous crime for one to commit murder. The Igbo bear names that reflect the prize they placed on life. Such names like ndukaku (life is greater than wealth), ndubuisi (life first, life before anything else), etc. "These and numerous others tells the story of the priority of human over the materia and the economic."²⁸

Every other thing in the world gains its meaning in relation to its usefulness to man. Whatever exists exists for man. In Igbo worldview, "everything in it (the world) is viewed in terms of its relation to the human person."²⁹ This is because the "human person is the most valuable possession"³⁰ and everything including God is there to serve the needs of man. Igbo humanism, Oraegbunam writes, "is the view that man occupies the central position in any meaningful human activity including religion."³¹ This accounts for why man is highly dignified in Igbo cosmology to the extent that it is considered unbecoming and undignifying for him to engage in some kind of activity. The Igbo in his culture, ethics, religion and politics extols the good of the human person.

Igbo humanism, though it recognizes the autonomy of the individual person, is best expressed in a communalistic lifestyle. The Igbo in his individuality gains recognition and attains the status of a person in and through the community of other individuals. He maintains an important relationship with other members of the community in which he belongs. A person is a person in relation to other persons. As Eze rightly captures it, "To be human, it is not sufficient (to) be a living rational and intelligent being; the criteria include a recognition that one's humanity is dependent on harmonious balance and positive relationships with human beings..."³² The Igbo sayings *otu aka anagh'eke ngwugwu* and *otu osisi anagh'eme ?h?h* indicates that the Igbo abhors selfishness and individualism as encouraged and predominant in some Western cultures.

BEGGING: NATURE AND ITS DYNAMICS

As I said earlier, the activity of begging is multifaceted and multidimensional. Scholars in their studies view the nature and dynamics of begging from different but similar and complementing perspectives. Ogunkan and Fawole see begging as the idea of asking people for life necessities such a food, clothes, money etc.³³ This is necessitated in the third world countries especially by hunger, poverty, sickness and other related factors. Owusu-Sekyere, et al conceived begging as a means of "socially and economically"³⁴ dealing with the challenges of livelihood. Their study reveal that the activity of begging is

taken by the beggars as a full time job for their survival. It puts food on their table, pay their rent, and also builds the family finance.³⁵ According to Onebunne, beggars are people who are completely dependent on other for their survival. They contribute nothing to the society rather they reap or expect to reap what and where they did not sow.³⁶ They violate the basic principle of economics which emphasizes exchange.

Beggars adopt different strategies to suite their condition and their potential almsgiver. Some move from house to house rendering small services like the *babiyala* beggars³⁷ while some sit at a place, some sing while asking for alms, some humbly approach their target whereas other like the migrant beggars from Niger, cling to their targets. Studies have exposed different forms of beggars - mendicants, vagrants,³⁸ child beggars,^{39,40} panhandlers, jobless beggars, disguised criminals,^{41,42} fine beggars, *babiyala* beggars,⁴³ cyber beggars⁴⁴ and contractual beggars.⁴⁵ Mendicancy is a form of begging that is associated with religious beliefs.⁴⁶ Hanchao used vagrancy to describe the act of begging by wanderers who are often homeless and jobless or immigrants who are victims of war or natural disasters.⁴⁷ Child begging is a form of begging by children under the age of 18. The findings of Owusu-Sekyere, et al show that some children are recruited into begging for the sympathy they generate and some as apprentice under the tutelage of their masters who get a share from the daily 'earnings'.⁴⁸ There exist a form of contract between child beggars and their masters. According to the study of Jungudo, contractual beggars are often adult women who a hired on daily basis for the purpose of begging.⁴⁹ Manbe holds that contractual beggars are often adults, involving both genders.⁵⁰

Fine beggars are the well dressed beggars who often beg for alms in the form of transport fare in populated areas. They most times claim to be travellers who have exhausted their money and need money to transport themselves back to their destination. *Babiyala* beggars are mostly Hausa/fulani beggars who move from house to house singing and begging and sometimes render small services like fanning their prospective donor.⁵¹ Panhandlers are often referred to as street beggars. Disguised criminals are the kind of beggars Azam classified under beggarization.⁵² They pretend to be either wounded with bandages on a visible part of their body or handicapped. According to Azam, there are instances of beggar bombers in Pakistan.⁵³ Such criminals are used by mischief makers to vandalize public and government properties.^{54,55}

Moreso, scholars have classified beggars into different types. Reddy in his study identified two types of beggars - full-time beggars and part-time beggars.⁵⁶ Full-time beggars are those who lacked family support and resorts to begging as their sole means of livelihood while part-time beggars are those who despite family support choose to beg in order to support their lifestyle such as alcoholism, smoking, etc.⁵⁷ Onebunne identified three categories of beggars.⁵⁸ The first is the active beggars - they move from place to place seeking for alms. The second is the passive beggars - these ones sit at a place asking alms from passersby. These are the kind of beggars Esan referred to as sit-at-a-place beggars.⁵⁹ The last is the aggressive beggars: these type of beggars are always harsh, not contented with what they are given and sees anyone who fails to give them as a heartless person.

FACTORS INFLUENCING STREET BEGGING

There are many literature on the reason many engage in begging activity. Some of the reasons for begging, some scholars have argued is attributed to poverty.⁶⁰ According to him, it is an economic fact that all fingers are not equal. While some are economically bouyant, some lack the economic wherewithal to meet up to their basic needs. He avers that some lack the finance with which to procure land for farming purposes hence they resort to begging. Onebunne further argues that natural and/ or man-made disasters such as famine, drought, flood, fire breakout have also left people no choice other than begging.⁶¹ According to Hanchu Lu, sickness, family background and national disaster such as civil war could lead to a form of begging he referred to as vagrancy.⁶² This supports earlier findings of Fabregas which reveals that deformities and other related ailments accounts for begging.⁶³

The findings of Ogunkan and Fawole also reveals that there are higher number of begging is more common among the aged.⁶⁴ Their result further show that household poverty and uncontrolled migration is also a contributory factor to the high surge in begging in the cities. Ogunkan and his colleague also found out that there is a religious dimension to begging.⁶⁵

It is important to note here that religion plays a significant role in the menace of begging plaguing our society today. Among beggars in major cities and towns, findings show that they are predominantly Muslims. This is not unconnected to the fact that one of the pillars of Islam is alms giving. Although some Islamic scholars are of the view that this is as a result of misconception of the Koran, it cannot be denied that it influences alms begging and almsgiving. Some almsgivers see beggars as a means towards fulfilling their religious obligation - helping the poor. Similar to the Muslims, Christins are also enjoined by the Bible to cheerfully give to the poor amongst them. One who has two cloaks is enjoined to give one to one who does not have.

ATTRIBUTES OF IGBO HUMANISM

Igbo humanism like African humanism fundamentally centres on the human person. Man is the focal point of everything in Igbo worldview. He enjoys a prime of place in the created order. He is the greatest of all that is created. Unlike the humanism of the 16th century which is anchored on non-religious background by scholars who are predominantly atheists, Igbo humanism, like other African counterparts is about people who are "incurably religious."⁶⁶ The Igbo worldview including their Religious belief is basically anthropocentric.⁶⁷ Everything including the gods is for the service of man. An Igbo man threatens a god that fails to perform and better his lot with abandonment. The Igbo people "look for the usefulness of the universe in relation to humanity."⁶⁸

Being the "measure of all things" and at the centre of the created order, the human person is prized above anything else in the universe. For the Igbo people, the dignity of the human person is paramount in any discourse and endeavour. Ezenwa avers that "The Igbo people have a culture that values the dignity of the human person; a dignity that implies a new humanism, where man is defined before all else by his/her responsibility to his/her

brothers/sisters".⁶⁹ In ensuring the maintenance of the dignity of one another, the Igbo forms a cluster of relations that caters for the needs of one another. In Igbo philosophy, one does not live in isolation. The individual lives in a community for the other. While it appears the individual is subsumed in the community life, one still retains one's autonomy as a unique individual.

In order to live a more meaningful life and overcome the problem of insufficiency that is associated with individualistic life, man in Igbo society lives his life "within the community of interdependency, collectivism and mutual existence."⁷⁰ Asouzu argues that the individual having realized how insufficient he is, willingly formed a community of individuals that would enable him to live a fulfilled life.⁷¹ The challenges and difficulty of life become easily surmounted when it is collectively faced by the community. This forms the basis of Asouzu's *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy.

Igbo humanism is primarily communalistic and complementary in nature. The Igbo live a shared life of togetherness as a means of promoting the good of the individual and that of the community at large. The basic principle of Igbo social set-up is communalism. As a guiding principle for the economic arrangement, communalism ensures the social and economic security of the members of the society.⁷² Ezedike sees Igbo communalism as "the centre of cohesion and solidarity."⁷³ "By this," he continues, "we mean a relationship of being and life between each individual and his descendants, his family, his brothers and his sisters in the village, his antecedents and also with God, the ultimate source of life."⁷⁴ This is founded on the principle of being one's brother's keeper. Members of the society looked out for one another. Whatever happens to a member of the community happens to the community and vice versa. A person have to live such a communalistic life for him to be accorded the status of a person. One's recognition as a person is through the society in which one belongs. Mbiti succinctly captures this when he said "I am because we are and because we are, I am."⁷⁵ The belongingness of the Igbo person to a community makes him the responsibility of the community. The community ensures the protection of the rights, welfare and dignity of individual members of the community.

Within the community, the rich provides for the poor and the less privileged. The security offered by the social arrangement protects everyone in the community. M. A. Kanu elaborately and rightly out it thus:

The security is not just for the old age, but also for the poor and disadvantaged members of the family, who have been seen to have made efforts but have not been successful. Children of such unsuccessful adults are a legitimate economic charge on the wealth of the luckier members. In other words, the comforting family atmosphere is provided by the family system. It is a system that ultimately anchored and still rests on the philosophy of "Live-and -let- live" It is a principle which defines rights and duties, responsibilities and obligations towards the less fortunate, those incapacitated in one way or another. For instance, a man has the obligation to cater for the widow and orphans of his dead relative. Failure to do so earns

him strong public opprobrium and a result, it is difficult to find some in the community without help.⁷⁶

It is believed that one does not exhaust one's wealth alone. One's wealth is for one and the rest members of his family and community. Titles such as *z?ra*, *Omel?ra*, *Omep?r?onye?b?ara*, *ch?z?*, etc., are bestowed on people who have been exemplary in using their wealth to assist others. The concept of *ogbenye* as in *Onebunne* shows that it is the community that sees to the provision of life necessities of the less privileged. According to him, it is the community (*ogbe*) the gives (*nye*) to the poor.⁷⁷ The poor on their own part contributes by helping out during the planting and harvesting season. This way, none engaged in street begging in traditional Igbo society. It is important to note that age grades engaged in unpaid labour for their members reach the age of *?obi*; they contribute in building and roofing house for that individual. Everyone had a roof over his head.

BEGGING: A DEVALUATION OF IGBO HUMANISM

Many scholars in their studies have come to the conclusion that begging is an inglorious and incandescent activity that is demeaning, stigmatizing and dehumanizing.^{78,79,80,81} Begging does not only lead to the social relegation of the city but also to the stigmatization of the beggars and their entire family.

In traditional Igbo society, it is considered a taboo for one to beg. Igbo people exalt hardwork. They highly frown at laziness. The Igbo believe that every man is endowed with all he needs in order to eke out a living. To beg therefore is to undermine the value in which the Igbo place on labour and hardwork. In Igbo society everyone, especially able-bodied men engaged in their own farm work as a family to produce what they eat. Both the young and the old participate in the work according to their strength, hence the saying *nnukwu az? kpata nnukwu nk?*, *obere az? kpata obere nk?* (big fish should fetch big firewood while small fish fetches small firewood). During the planting and harvesting period, the less privileged who may not have lands to farm assist those who has and thereby get what they eat at the end of the day while they contribute to the workforce.⁸² It is strange in igbo land for one to fold one's hands and totally depend on another. Hard work is highly valued among the Igbo; there is dignity in labour. According to Iherue, "As a matter of fact, they (the Igbo) placed a high premium on hard work and so not only value the hardworker, but held him up for admiration they even had a special deity - *ikenga* to represent the idea."⁸³ Afigbo says that "A hard-woker provide the theme for edifying songs and tales, while the lazy man was the subject of ribald songs and jokes."⁸⁴ The Igbo man sees failure as damnation hence he strives and craves for success and achievement which *Chin?a Achebe* says that it is revered. The Igbo determination for success is encapsulated in the popular Igbo saying *onye kwe chi ya ekwe*. The Igbo engaged in any morally permissible endeavour so long as it is economically profitable. He can do any kind of menial job so long as he does not beg and receive freely without contributing or paying. It is only instead of stealing that begging becomes permissible hence the Igbo say that *onye ar? ka onye ohi mma* (a beggar is preferable to a thief). Stealing was an abominable crime with heavy punishment. The punishment for stealing could be death or ostracization.

Street begging does not only undermine Igbo values for hardwork but also human dignity. An average Igbo person has a sense of pride. He is a free man who exercises his freedom within the confines of the traditional moral values and acceptable work of life to make a living. He is driven by the quest for independency and achievement which guarantee his dignity and autonomy as a person. According to Ezenwa "Igbo people like other human beings love autonomy; they like to be self-sufficient, think freely and determine their life as it suits them."⁸⁵ To beg is a sign of weakness that no one wants to exhibit. The human person is gifted both intellectually and otherwise. It is therefore demeaning and undignifying for one to fail to use one's strength and intellect to earn one's livelihood.

Old age was no excuse for begging among Igbo. They believe that *nk? onye kpara na ?k?ch?ka o ji anya ?k? na udummiri*. If a person worked hard in his youthful age, then he must have a means of sustenance in his old age. In traditional Igbo worldview, the physically challenged and the sick are not allowed to roam the street begging as that brings shame and dishonour to the family. Such act dents the family's name; and also stigmatizes not only the beggars but the entire family. No one wants his name soiled because *ezi aha ka ego*. They, therefore, protect their names and integrity by providing for the less privileged among them. Even children whose parents are late are adopted by the brothers, sisters or the relatives of the late parents. The prevalent act of begging by children, the aged and the physically challenged people is an aberration, a devaluation of Igbo culture and humanism. Onebunne insists that the idea of begging is "foreign and odious"⁸⁶ in Igbo society. Also, the idea of begging runs incongruent with the Igbo idea of Igbo communalism. Igbo humanism encompasses and emphasizes communalism and 'complementarism'. A person's being is through the community. The problem of insufficiency that arises in individualism is defeated through interdependency, communalism and collectivism. This togetherness is founded and maintained through the maintenance of the rights, freedom and dignity of the individuals. There is shared mutual responsibility among the members of the community. Iroaga and Ugorji note that "another feature of the Igbo society is the belief that every member is one of "us". The "us" is an accepting community of Igbo who share mutual responsibility for one another."⁸⁷ This is corroborated by Egwutuorah when he stated that "Igbo communalism is expressed in living together and sharing responsibilities."⁸⁸ He further stated that "the traditional Igbo society has a great asset in its practice of a mode of life called communalism."⁸⁹ One of the assets of Igbo communalism is what Asouzu conveyed in his *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy.⁹⁰ There is strength in unity - *igwebuikwe*. Abandoning one's community to a strange land for the sole aim of begging for alms is tantamount to self-alienation in futile pursuit of individualism. It defeats Igbo value for the human person, human dignity, good name and communal living.

CONCLUSION

The problem of street begging has gotten a stage that it has become worrisome. In this paper I have conscientiously exposed the idea of street begging not only as alien to Igbo culture but also a devaluation of Igbo humanism. Regardless of the reason for the increased rate of begging among Igbo people, it does not negate the fact that it is primarily a contravention of core Igbo values. The human person is valued more than anything else, he enjoys dignity that is only peculiar to him as a human being. The Igbo cherish and respect human dignity to the core. They live communally and work hard enough, oftentimes, together in order to ensure better result and a meaningful life for all members of the community. To beg negates what Igbo humanism stands for - their value for human person and dignity, value for good name, communal life etc. Beggars are a threat to the well-being of the members of the society. They put the social and economic well-being of the society at risk.

Onebunne summarily captures it thus:

Nd?ar?r?? (beggars) is the destroyers of law and order. They equally breed disunity in the community. This is because; they sow not but want to reap bountifully. They are often greedy, selfish and are never contented with what is been given to them. Nd?ar?r?? also sees those who refuses to give them as enemies, wicked and heartless forgetting that they had not played their roles well.⁹¹

RECOMMENDATION

There is no gainsaying that mere banning or criminalization of street begging will never put an end to the activity of street begging. If street begging must be ended, the root cause of begging must be appropriately addressed. I hereby enjoin the government of Southeastern states, NGOs and individuals to put hands on deck to ensure poverty is eradicated. The government should also make provisions for a well equipped and a functional rehabilitation centres for the physically challenged where the physically challenged can be equipped with relevant skills. The government should also evolve a social welfare scheme/programme that will better the lots of the poor and the aged. While religious institutions in Igboland encourage charity and almsgiving, they should also be vocal in discouraging street begging.

I also recommend that hardworkers should be openly rewarded as a way of motivating others. There is an urgent need to revive, reinvigorate and reinforce the communalistic lifestyle of the Igbo. While the sweeping current of globalization and modernism have left a trademark of individualism, the onus lies on every well meaning Igbo to encourage communal living bearing in mind that *otu aka anagh? eke ngwugwu* just as *otu osisi*

anagh?eme ?h'a. Families and community members should take responsibility of their poor and less privileged members. One's wealth has never been entirely for one's consumption in Igbo land. The government and individuals should make effort to curtail rural-urban migration of people who have no relatives in the city especially those who may not constitute the workforce or be economically productive in the city.

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