

African Indigenous Religions as Clinical Diagnosis and Mechanical Curative Remedy for Monstrous Truth, Human Dignity and Justice System in Nigeria: Igbo and Okulosho Traditional Societies as a Paradigm

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Abstract: *This paper addresses the perennial problem affecting morality and the political and socio-economic systems in Nigeria. A society where truth is perceived as a far distance horizon and acidulous substance, human dignity is trampled upon and justice is scuttled and jostled with, be rest assured that anarchy is very much eminent in such a society. It is discovered in this paper that Nigeria is in the state of moral precipice and jeopardy presently because of the neglect for truth, disregard for the sanctity of human life and perversion of justice. It observed too that the common man on the street is wallowing in melancholic poverty because of the injustice in the land like the Biblical Amos' society. As it stands now without a recourse to African indigenous religions to remedy the present situation we are navigating in, Nigeria may be engulfed with an endless revolution or be in a state of Biblical Armageddon for a long period of time. In Igbo and Okulosho traditional societies where African indigenous religions held sway, truth was sacrosanct, and human life considered as a gift from the Supreme Being (God), which must be protected by the entire society, hence the issue of shedding of blood, murder, abortion and suicide were seen as abominable acts and offence against the Supreme Being and the deities of the land. This paper therefore recommends that for the restoration of morality to the Nigerian society, African indigenous religions should be given a chance to function while we reshape some of its practices that may not be in tandem with established ethos in a civilized world on how best religion should be practiced for the benefit of the entire human race. For a meaningful research of this nature, we are going to adopt a historical-phenomenological methodology.*

Keywords: African indigenous religions, truth, human dignity, justice, Nigeria, Igbo and Okulosho traditional societies

INTRODUCTION

Writing outside the boundary of equivocation and opacity, there were some sorts of values in traditional African societies generally. Some of those values include but not limited to honesty, fidelity, life, peace, kindness, fairness/justice, liberality/benevolence, etc. In addition, African traditional societies were ultra-religious, with the above values firmly rooted in their respective indigenous religions. In fact prior to the advent of Christianity and Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, the Igbo and Okulosho traditional societies were religious societies. Then there were little or no issues of exhibition of megalomaniac, narcissistic and avaricious behaviors. The people lived a communal life for, according to Mbiti (1969) in Husien and Kebede (2017:58), there was no "me" but "us", and no "my" but "ours" in traditional African societies. But at the incursion and imposition of these two foreign religions – Christianity and Islam – on the people through colonial militarization, the existing traditional societies in Africa in general, and Nigeria in particular gradually became harbinger of colonial imperialism. The Indirect rule system in Nigeria and Policy of Assimilation in some West African countries employed by the colonial masters were not meant for the mental and physical development of the people, but rather to impoverish and enslave the people. Throughout the colonial enslavement, there was a mixture of two strange cultures that dovetailed to human chemical reaction that produced an acephalous society we are today. Our core values that carved us out as Africans were thrown to the wind and replaced with mixture of foreign and indigenous ones and turn the people to harbingers of colonial imperialism (we are neither white nor black), a confused society without a clear identity.

In spite of the incessant tribal wars that ravaged the African traditional societies for the defense of their territorial boundaries and integrity, there was a high regard for truth, sacredness of life and justice. Among the Igbo and Okulosho people, truth, sacredness of life and justice were not politicized as we have it today in our contemporary society. The fear of the deities at the time in question was the beginning of wisdom. The only known religion then was African indigenous religion which involves the veneration of the ancestors, deities and the worship of the Supreme Being. This indigenous religion, as we've mentioned earlier, emphasizes the communitarian system of living whereby the entire society was like a family unit. Instead of the foreign religions to

build on what they met on the ground, they rather distorted it by introducing divide and rule system, religious bigotry, religious crisis, religious superiority complex and outright condemnation of the people's culture, customs and tradition. They used superior weapons like western education to obliterate the already established system they met on ground.

This paper will address the concept of truth, human dignity/sacredness of life and justice among the Igbo and Okulosho traditional societies, and the role of African indigenous religion in entrenching these core values in the aforementioned societies. It will further argue why African indigenous religion should be employed to address the social-economic and political anomaly in Nigeria based on evidential facts of how this indigenous religion had shaped most traditional societies in Nigeria most especially Igbo and Okulosho traditional societies. We shall employ historical and phenomenological methodology, though once in a while we may delve into metaphysical aspects of these two societies to bring out salient points to a sharper focus.

THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE, TRUTH AND JUSTICE IN TRADITIONAL IGBO SOCIETY: INDIGENOUS AFRICAN RELIGION AS THE REASON

The Igbo people constitute one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria as well as in Africa. They are mostly found in the south-eastern Nigeria, or rather from the east of River Niger to the southern end of the Middle Belt. Some of the cardinal, prominent groups that make up the Igbo society include but not limited to Owerri, Mbaise, Nkanu, Ohaji, Ngor, Ekwulobia, Nanka, Agwu, Mbano, Mbaitoli, Ukwa, Ohafia, Afikpo, Nnewi, etc. They speak Igbo as a language, and have unique, interesting custom and cultural heritage. They had, worshipped and revered *Chukwu* (the Supreme Being) who is believed to dwell and have the sky as its abode, *Anyanwu* (the Sun god), *Igwe* (the Sky god), *Amadioha* (the god of thunder), *Ani* (the Earth goddess), *Agbala Mmiri* (the Water deity), and the ancestors. It is believed that the Supreme Being had sovereignty and control over the natural and the preternatural worlds and over all that dwelt in them. All the deities listed above, the ancestors inclusive, acted as an intermediary between divinity and humanity and/or between the Supreme Being and man (see Owete and Iheanacho, 2009:8; Adeboyejo, 2018; Nwoye, 2011:307).

The traditional Igbo society cherished among other things life truth and justice. In Igbo dialectical parlance, life is called *Ndu*. In everything the Igbo people did, they believed that 'life is first' – *Ndubuisi*. In other words, anything that came first before life was deemed unacceptable as well as unimportant. Life was valued more than anything else, wealth inclusive. No wonder the Igbo named their children *Ndukaku* – Life is greater than wealth. Bearing this in mind, Ofomata (2002:419) in Anozie (2013) made it crystal clear that:

No matter the achievements of the individual, if those successes do not lead to the preservation and increase of life, then they are meaningless. Again, they mean that the primary consideration in every situation one finds oneself must be life, its increase and preservation.

Aside from the names we've seen above, there was (and is) a lot more that showed that life was indeed a thing of extreme value in the traditional Igbo society. Such were: *Nduka* – life is greater, *Nduamaka* – life is good, *Ndubuisi* – life is ethos of consensus [i.e. that people are able to come together and discuss and even agree on something is because they have life], etc. (Kanu, 2014).

Moreover, the Igbo of the time past saw suicide as a threat to life hence it was highly abominable for anyone to take his/her own life. People were barred from engaging in anything that could, intentionally and unintentionally, lead to the termination of their lives. In fact according to the now deceased Igbo legendary writer, Chinua Achebe in his epic novel – *Things Fall Apart*, we are meant to understand that an act of suicide was an offence against *Ani* – the earth goddess. Obierika in the novel confirmed this when his bosom friend – Okonkwo took his own life. He said to the District Commissioner: *It is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen. His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it* (p.147). To shade more light on how abominable it was for one to take his own life, it ought to be noted that it was mandatory and based on the people's traditional religion that there must be a 'cleansing of the land' after every act of suicide to prevent the wrath of the gods. Obierika said: *We cannot bury him [Okonkwo]. Only strangers can... When he has been buried we will then do our duty by him. We shall make sacrifices to cleanse the desecrated land* (p.147).

The above notwithstanding, the Igbo were barred from killing no matter what. Even, twins who were then deemed evil were never killed because killing them involved bloodshed. They were rather thrown into the Evil Forest. People who committed serious crimes or people who had certain diseases [e.g. swollen stomach] were also cast into the Evil Forest. The only time blood was shed was maybe when the gods demanded human sacrifice for one reason or the other [the case of the killing of Ikemefuna in Achebe's novel, for example], and during battle/war times. But because bloodshed of all sorts was a crime against *Ani*, the people went for

ablution after each battle/war. They also made sacrifices of atonement to please and placate the gods for shedding blood, blood of the enemies for that matter.

Truth [*Eziokwu*], the antithesis of falsehood [*Asi*], was also very cardinal and capital in traditional Igbo society. It occupied the position of primacy among the people. The people knew quite well that anything built on lies can never enjoy longevity, and that truth leads to the preservation of life and society. That is why the people believed firmly in this maxim: *Eziokwu bu ndu* – truth is life. It is based on this singular maxim that the Igbo sought the truth in any and every matter. And in obtaining the truth, *Ofo* was used. *Ofo* [otherwise known today as Mace and used in national and state Houses of Assembly] was used in oath-taking. It was given to the accused and the accuser – the plaintiff to swear before a deity that what they are saying is nothing but the truth (see Anozie, 2013; Ejeh, 2019; and Ikegwu, 2012).

Truth, and/or desistance from mendacious lifestyle made men pure and perfect before the ancestors and the gods. Truth never ‘painted reality; rather, it represented it as it was’. It made men unassailable and pugnacious to filth and lies, for the mind dedicated to truth can hold on against falsehood, misconception, illusion, pressures and attacks. Truth, when revealed or spoken, engenders prosperity and fecundity. Ezenwa (2017:42) confirmed this by noting:

Living in the truth has special significance in social relationship. Following this thought, when the coexistence of human beings within a community is founded on truth, it is seen to be well ordered and fruitful, and it corresponds to their dignity as persons. On this note the Igbo often aspires to the truth, to respect it in order to make a more responsible living.

Very important to note is the fact that in the traditional Igbo society, anything that wasn’t *eziokwu* (truth) was *asi* (lie). In fact, one who wasn’t *onye ezi okwu* (a truthful person) was *onye asi* (a person of falsehood). If it wasn’t *ihe mere eme* (what actually happened) then it must be *ihe emeghi eme* (what never happened) (see Ejeh, 2009:6-7).

Concerning justice in traditional Igbo society, the Igbo believed in *Ikpenkwumoto* – truthfulness in making judicial decisions. In ensuring this *Ikpenkwumoto*, there were various traditional institutions that had settlement of dispute fairly and equitably as one of their sacrosanct responsibilities. Such include: the *Umunna* – an association of kinsmen, the *Umuada* – an association of women born into a particular kindred, the Age Grade, the *Mmanwu* – the masquerade cult, and the Village Assemble. Aside from the above institutions, the *Ezemmuo* – the Chief priest [otherwise called *Okala mmadu*, *okala mmuo* – half human, half spirit] and the deities also administered justice especially in difficult and complicated cases (Obiwuru, 2020).

To the traditional Igbo people, every crime¹ had a punishment attached to it. Serious crimes [*nso* or abomination] such as spilling the blood of a townsman/woman, yam theft, incest, unmasking a spirit, etc. came with punishments like death and banishment because they were mostly considered as a crime against *Ani*, the earth goddess. Minor crimes [called *Mmehie* or sin] such as telling lies, stealing, disobedience, fighting, etc. attracted punishments like fine, flogging, restitution, etc. (Obiwuru, 2020).

Back then in the traditional Igbo society, there was hardly anyone that was above the law. In chapters four and thirteen of Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* we saw how Okonkwo was made to pay a fine of one she-goat, one hen, a length of cloth and a hundred cowries for beating his wife and thereby desecrating the Week of Peace, and how he was banished from Umuofia and his properties destroyed after mistakenly killing one of his clansmen. All these were carried out on Okonkwo despite his fascinating fame, wealth and strength. They were all done for the purpose of justice. Back in chapter ten of the same novel, we also saw how the gods, or rather the spirits of the ancestors, emerged to handle a complicated case in a sage manner, for the same sake of justice.

Still on the subject of justice in traditional Igboland, the people believed in and had an absolute sense of fairness and impartiality, for they often said *Egbe bere, Ugo bere nke siri ibe ya ebena nku kwaya* – let the hawk perch and the eagle perch too; but let the wing of the one between them that opposes the other fail it. On the basis of this, Ezenwa (2017) affirms that justice in traditional Igbo society entitled “equality and fair play in all dealings with others”, thereby rejecting discrimination. Justice also entitled *ihe onye metara o buru* – one bears the consequences of one’s actions/decisions, and *ogburu onye na onye ga ala* – the murderer will perish with the murdered.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OKULOSHO PEOPLE

¹ Crime is categorized into two major classes which are: *nso* – abomination, and *mmehie* – sin

Okulosho is a heterogeneous community comprising of Dagbala, Ojah, Ojirami and Makeke in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. It is one of those ancient communities whose historical origin is traceable to Ancient Benin Kingdom. History has it that this community comprising of four villages migrated from Benin in 12th century during the tyrannical reign of Ogoiso Owodo, and settled in far Edo North in Kukuruku region. They were ravaged by Nupe slave merchants till late 18th centuries when they arrived in Kukuruku region as they shared boundaries with the Northern part of Nigeria. This Nupe's assaults and other tribal wars with neighbouring communities had adverse effects on their population.

According to Mabolaji (1984, 63), in his book, *Slave Trade in the Heartland of Okulosho*, the term 'Okulosho' designates 'Enclosure'. It was during the colonial era that the Europeans were said to have referred to these four communities as 'Enclosure'. This is because they were bounded by some contiguous hills (Kukuruku hills), and owing to faulty pronunciation by the natives, 'Enclosure' came to be pronounced as 'Okulosho'. The people are mostly agrarians and hunters. They cultivate crops like yam, cocoyam, cassava, beans, cocoa, coffee, groundnut, and melon. They occupy a forest zone in the southern part of their land and savanna grassland in the northern part where they share boundary with Kogi State. They have abundance of rain between April and November to support their farming which is the means of their livelihood. They also engage in petty trading to supplement their income from farming.

Until the advent of Christianity and Islam, the people of Okulosho were deep rooted in polytheism. They have so many deities, but they recognized the existence of the Supreme Being (God). Like other Africans, they strongly believed that man was too little in the presence of God to make any request in prayer form at the time of needs; it was better for them to pass through the ancestors and the deities who were said to be closer to God than the humans to intercede on their behalf to God. The fear and respect they had for their ancestors and deities played a significant role in their day to day living. Their ancestors and deities were their symbols of truth and justice which encouraged a communitarian living. Nevertheless, the infiltration of foreign religions and the suppression of indigenous religions paved way for an egocentric society where the individuals put their interest above the generality of the community. This singular mentality has betrayed the sense of truth, the sanctity of life and justice in the community in comparison with what was obtainable in this same community before the incursion of Christianity and Islam.

The Conceptual understanding of Truth in Okulosho Traditional Society

'Ata' / Esheshe in Okulosho with its English equivalent 'Truth' means a statement of fact that is not subjective, unconditional, raw, pure, simple, eternal, immutable, unchangeable, permanent, constant, unadulterated and can stand the test of time. Among the Okulosho, Ata/Esheshe is honorable, noble and pride that anyone who wants to earn respect from his kinsmen, friends, close associates and relatives as well must possess. It places one in a position of honour and trust. According to Ananafe (2020), one of the major characteristics to be considered before giving anyone a position of authority is 'truthfulness', which assures the people that one is trust worthy. For Okulosho, 'Truth' is the property of heroes and men of valour because it is acidulous in the mouth of cowards who wallow in falsehood to survive. The first lesson an Okulosho parent must impart on their children is how to tell the 'Truth' at all time to earn their pride. The Okulosho notion of truth is in tandem with that of Plato and Aristotle. For Plato, truth is the reality that transcends the external world of the senses and is something that must be seen by the soul, which is also the remembering of our divine origin. While in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Meta 1011 b 25), he alleges that 'truth' is to say of what is that it is not or of what is not that is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true. The resume of Plato and Aristotle assertions about truth is that which that cannot be falsified and faulted. Their approach to the concept and nature of truth is more or less abstract and metaphysical as it involves soul and divine.

Among the Okulosho, truth is one of the basic constituents upon which the morality of any given human society is built, and any society devoid of truth has immorality to contend with in all spheres of life. Their understanding of 'truth' had spore them to establish some instruments to institutionalized 'truth' in the community. These instruments used by the Okulosho people to ensure people always tell the truth and toe the part of truth are all under the umbrella of Okulosho indigenous religions. According to Adekoye (2018, 36), in his book, *The Preservation of Culture and Customs of the Okulosho People*, the deities in Okulosho act as agents of peace, justice and stability in Okulosho. The deities are seen as the custodians of the tradition and customs of the people. He opines that the council of elders (Ejah), and the council of elderly women (Igbedegua) are directly under the control of the deities in discharging their duties. At the elevation to these two councils, the members are expected to take oath before the deities that they will always say the truth and fight for the truth unconditionally. They are given staff of office that stands as a symbol of truth.

According to Amedu (2020), the Okulosho community was a unified community before the advent of the colonial masters with their religions. For him, it was not only political colonization, but social-religious colonization that changed the entire lifestyle of an average African. The bastardization of the people's culture and customs affected the Okulosho core values. In our contemporary

era according to Unumose (2020), truth is subjective and it is found in the eloquence of man and not in the fact of a statement. He cites the Roman laws and British Court system that permeated our jurisprudence and judicial system as clear example whereby a criminal is not guilty until it is proved beyond a reasonable doubt by a competent law Court. That some of the criminal gain their freedom or discharged and acquitted when they have a brilliant and eloquent advocate to defend them at the law Court. In such a scenario, 'truth' is constantly stampeded and paves way for perversion of justice. He explains further that in Okulosho traditional society, people were not forced to speak the truth even when they were in serious trouble because of the fear of the deities. Their deities according to him act as the Old Testamentary Yahweh of Israel that punished criminals instantly and no forgiveness. Nevertheless, with the advent of foreign religions those deities were neglected in their various shrines and no adherents to venerate them any longer, as a result of this negligence the deities became inactive and withdrew to the spirit world where they properly belong (deusoteosus and deusascondetus). It is a case of withdrawn deities. Now that the deities have withdrawn from the people in the community, they can now lie without fear of any repercussion or consequences.

The Sacredness of Life among the Okulosho People

Among the Okulosho, life is a gift from the Supreme Being which is why the birth of a baby in Okulosho heralds jubilation and joy in the community. It is a firm belief among the Okulosho that it is only the Supreme Being that can give life, any contrary is an aberration. According to Kayode (2015, 82), in his book, *Abortion : An Offence Against the Community Deities*, shedding of blood in any form, especially abortion of innocent and helpless unborn child is first class murder that is unforgivable by the community deities, because it is a total rejection of God's gift. Therefore, life is to be protected at all cost by the entire community and it does not belong to an individual. One cannot be so selfish to take his own life, because his life does not belong to him but the Supreme Being. Suicide is therefore highly prohibited in Okulosho community. Victims of suicide are deposited in the evil forest without proper burial, because they have desecrated the land. Before the corpse is taken to the evil forest, there is proper cleansing of the land with blood of animals to appease the community deities.

In Okulosho traditional society there were incessant tribal wars to protect lives, properties and their territorial boundaries. Nevertheless, there was high regard for the sanctity of life, and the wars were only fought when all negotiations failed. Igbe (2018, 79), in his book, *The Nupe War and Its Social-Economic Effects on the Okulosho People*, points out that warriors were thoroughly cleansed at the end of the wars because of shedding of human blood as it was against the tradition of the people to take human life. The deities of the community, according to him, have never demanded for human sacrifice no matter the request the people made of them. They were not blood thirsty deities, but rather they were for the protection of life.

Those who accidentally killed their kinsmen in Okulosho traditional society were cursed and banished from the Okulosho community; and those who killed deliberately were buried alive. According to Irejere (2020), the action of the community against murderers in Okulosho traditional society was to discourage any form of inhuman act against man. Okulosho traditional society was also against any form of euthanasia, being it direct or indirect euthanasia, no matter how incapacitated one looks. They believe in natural cause of death that may come at any time or day through natural means. Egbe (2020) holds that taking ones' life because of poor health or for any reason relating to health issue is playing the role of the Supreme Being, which amount to a sacrilegious act. He opines that the Supreme Being who creates and gives life knows the right time to call us to eternal rest. He claims playing the role of Supreme Being by terminating the life of fellow human beings is a heinous crime against the ancestors, deities and of course the Supreme Being. According to him, before even the deities terminate the life of a wicked member of the community they seek permission from the Supreme Being as his agents and delegates. The deities, who act as the guardians, and custodians of the culture and customs of the Okulosho people, see their duties as the protection of life of the people placed under their care by the Supreme Being. This singular fact does not allow them to demand for human sacrifice, since no parent who is not under demonic possession sheds the blood of his/her own child.

Social Justice in Okulosho traditional Society

The egocentric nature of man has constituted an ancestral problem in all human societies where social justice is concern. It is the very nature of man to always consider himself first before others, and it is part of the law of self-preservation. Social justice centres on fair treatment unconditionally of every existing human being in any given human society; being that we are from the same source in spite of colour, race, social-economic and political status in the society. The hierarchical structures or stratifications that do exist in the society do not make some people more human than the others. The most important thing is the humanness in all of us that cannot be taken away from any man.

In Okulosho, traditional society is a communitarian society where fraternal love is encouraged and everyone is given fair treatment no matter your status. In that case, nobody is above the law. Those who are noble because of their noble birth must live by

examples to maintain their reputation. If a Prince or Princess contravenes the law he/she will be treated like any other person who contravenes the same law. According to Omurebe (2020), the bedrock of corruption in any society is social injustice, where some people because of their status in the society are treated like sacred cows. Among the Okulosho people, the ancestors and the deities are watching every action of man, and they always fight for the oppressed and the down trodden in the society. For instance, you cannot forcefully collect the land of a weak man, widow, orphan, and one who is incapacitated because you are rich or influential. Also, godfatherism is not required to get justice or what lawfully belongs to you. The Council of elders who constitute the legislative and judicial bodies are very careful in dispensation of justice for that they will not face the wrath of the ancestors and the deities of the land. The Council of elders are very mindful of their actions for the fear of the community ancestors and deities.

Martins (2014, 101), in his book, *The Judicial System in Okulosho before the Advent of Colonialism*, recommends the turning back the hand of the clock. For him, the judicial system of the pre-colonial era encourages a fraternal and an egalitarian society. According to him, those who appeared before the Council of elders to seek for justice were to state the obvious in a raw manner and not been colourful and eloquent to get favour or justice from Council. The witnesses must state the truth without fear or favour for any of the parties under dispute. Again, all these were possible because of the fear of the community ancestors and deities. In complicated cases, the spirit of the ancestors and deities were invoked as witnesses and final judges. According to Martins, with the influence of foreign religions, Western education and civilization, the entire society is in total disarray where justice is concerned. People now lie with reckless abandon without fear of God just to get unmerited justice. The elders, according to him, because of exposure to foreign ideologies western judicial system, now accept bribe and manipulate justice.

What is happening at the National level in Nigeria today as regard to social justice is a complete replay of what we have in almost all our localities. The elders in our villages or communities are as corrupt as our politicians in Local Government Council, State and Federal National House of Assembly. They cooperate with politicians to ring, manipulate and falsify election results in favour of their candidates to represent the few selfish individuals in high places. According to Otuibe (2003, 101), in his book, *Amos: A Challenge to Nigeria Church and Society*, points out that social injustice is endemic in the whole national fabric. The whole nation continues to experience a social system that is corrupt and repressive. The national wealth and amenities are never evenly distributed. Sometimes the distribution is based on imaginary census figures which had been very controversial from the publication. The provision and maintenance of public utilities now constitute an avenue for a privileged few to exploit the populace and enrich themselves.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

With the exhaustive analysis above, one can, without fear of committing blunder, and authoritatively, conclude that morality, rectitude, virtuousness and decency characterized African traditional societies generally. The unalloyed respect people had for human life, truth and justice in the traditional Igbo and Okulosho societies was predicated on the indigenous African religion, for they [the people] feared incurring the wrath of their respective deities and progenitors/ancestors who were great, jealous lovers, embodiment and promoters of truth, human dignity and justice. Heartbreakingly however, the introduction of foreign religions which, directly and indirectly, led to the displacement and relegation of the indigenous religions paved ways for foreign crimes such as cyber-crimes, cultism, perversion of justice, disregard for the sanctity of human life, bribery, rape, sexual immorality, nudity, pornography, promotion of single motherhood, gay marriage, homosexuality, lesbianism, looting, misappropriation of public fund, blood money, ill-gotten wealth and juvenile crimes. The advent of the foreign religions and the missionaries even caused disregard for our gods/deities and ancestors, the gods and ancestors the people trembled and shivered on hearing just their names. They were made to understand that the deities were powerless entities that ought to be belittled and discarded like a piece of toilet paper. In the good olden days, the above listed crimes were strange and imaginable to the people because they were nearly nonexistent.

Further, there is no doubt that the suppression of truth, disregard to the sanctity of human life, and manipulation of justice in our modern society has contributed massively to the problem of corruption in all fabrics of our society. Truth is becoming strange and acidic in the mouth of those in position of authority, hence Nigerians find it difficult to believe the existence of Corona Virus pandemic that is ravaging the entire world today. The Nigerians believed that it is another means for the Federal Government and politicians to steal money, because the people in position of authority in Nigeria see truth as a far distance horizon that is almost impossible because it looks metaphysical and abstract to them. The lack of trust and confidence for those in position of authority in Nigeria contributed to civil disobedience among our vibrant youths in Nigeria, because they do not know what to believe as truth again. Our youths in collaboration with our politicians have turned the entire society to a theatre of bloodbath through cultism, which is against our original culture and tradition. The sacredness of life means little or nothing to our people today because of

greed, wealth and ambition for high positions in the land. Our Imams, Pastors, Prophets, Prophetess, Evangelists, Apostles and other spiritual leaders functioning in those foreign religions imposed on us are not doing enough, because some of them are materially inclined and even preached against simple way of life and poverty making their adherents to believe that poverty is a curse. Instead of them to preach against the ills in the society, they emphasize on ‘God loves cheerful giver’ to get more money to buy expensive cars, jets and building of Church auditorium and expansions of miracle centres, whereas, their adherents are wallowing in various strides of heinous crimes. Our ancestors and deities do not accept offering from those who are immoral, unclean (witches) and criminals; whereas our Churches and Mosques accept offerings and gifts from rich ritualists, occults, internet fraudsters (popularly called “yahoo boys”), scammers, dubious politicians and other people with questionable characters. Those who live simple lives among their adherents are not recognized and given any position, yet they are in charge of the daily and weekly cleaning of the worshipping centres.

The oppressed cannot approach the competent Court of Justice to seek for justice because of poverty. You must be financially buoyant to approach the Court to cry out for justice even if it is a case of murder, or rape that are known to be State cases, if the victims are from poor families no one listen to them. The families of the victims are even discouraged by government law enforcement agency to withdraw the cases from the Court for settlement outside the Court. If the victim is the Church type people will beg the Pastor of the victim to prevail on him/her to withdraw the case from the Court because Jesus demanded from us to forgive our enemies no matter the offence committed against us. In such a scenario, one does not expect justice because it is expensive, abstract, unimaginable, and unjust judicial system in favour of the few rich ones that can afford it.

Finally, to help remedy the tragic and unfortunate situation [which is one of the cardinal and capital objectives of this research], the work recommends the following:

- In proffering a solution to any problem within our local setting, we should always go back to our traditional ways of resolving such a problem, because every local problem has a local solution.
- There should be revitalization and re-empowerment of traditional African institutions [such as the *Umunna* – an association of kinsmen, the council of elders (Ejah), the council of elderly women (Igbedegua), the Age Grade, the Village Assemble, etc.] that are in moribundity, for they had and still will have important role to play once it comes to preservation of African heritage and values.
- Retributive justice, which was evident in most traditional African societies, should be adopted in this contemporary time. [The Igbo for example believed, for the sake of absolute justice and deterrence of crime, that *o gburu onye na onye ga-ala* – the murderer will perish with the murdered.] This criminal justice system was the main reason for the prevalence of justice and low crime rate in the traditional African societies and thus, if adopted, will surely lead to drastic reduction of crime in the present Nigerian society in particular and Africa in general.
- Administration of justice in the contemporary time should be made immediate as it was in the traditional African society, for the fact that any justice delayed is tantamount to justice denied.
- Indigenous religions should be encouraged in our localities above other foreign religions that are alien to us in spite of our level of western education.
- Our traditional judicial system should be reintroduced and recognized by our constitution so that those that cannot approach the conventional approved Courts for financial reason can seek for justice in our traditional Court.
- Indigenous Religions should be properly taught in our primary and secondary schools the way Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Religious Studies are taught.
- The study of African core values should be part of all institutions curriculum which should be taught in all departments in tertiary institutions under General Studies Department (GST), and at all level in our primary and secondary schools.

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