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The Value of Human Dignity : A Socio-Cultural Approach to Analyzing the Crisis of Values among Igbo People of Nigeria

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The Value of Human Dignity: A Socio-Cultural Approach to Analyzing the Crisis of Values among Igbo People of Nigeria

Paul Chinedu Ezenwa

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Forward

In this work Chinedu Ezenwa delves into Igbo cosmology to deal with what may seem an abstract concept but at the same time one that is very central to the Igbo conception of life: human dignity. The idea of human dignity as a central cultural preoccupation may seem a luxury to an outsider already steeped in the derogatory view of the African. Yet, it is a concept and practice that must be understood for one to stand a chance of understanding in full the life and culture the Igbo.

Facilitating this access for the benefit of scholarship is the onerous task Ezenwa has undertaken in this study, showing in the process that the deprecìation of the respect previously accorded human dignity among the Igbo is both a symptom and an outcome of a social malaise.

Ezenwa sets about the task by approaching it with a new perspective different from the dominant stance of the "civilizing mission," which was at best Manichaeist, whereby everything African was condemned as bad and everything European was good. Ezenwa is more circumspect as he picks through his evidence, situating every piece in it's context, while working out their significance. The importance of this approach can only be appreciated when taken in context with the current Pentecostal movement in Igboland that seeks to destroy relics of the past and condemn practices that evolved from local realities without making efforts toward understanding them.

Ezenwa's work seeks and aids understanding, using the facility of examining the subject of dignity in Igbo culture to throw light that casts much farther than the subject matter, begging for even further inquiry into other complementary aspects of the culture. He does it rather concisely in six chapters.

First he establishes that there is a crisis of values among Igbo people, occasioned by colonial conquest and the advent of Christianity. For the sake of clarity, Ezenwa parses through terms such as value, crisis, dignity, culture and the concept of humanity in Igbo ontology.

The second chapter looks at the terms and practices that confer dignity to the human person in Igbo culture. This includes the examination of the meanings, both literary and otherwise of the words and expressions applied to the human person under certain circumstances.

By the third chapter, this research work is focusing on the concept of of the human person. Here the individual is located in his geopolitical, social and communal context. He describes a democratic system in which the rights of the individual are fully recognized, there no kings or potentates, with different segments of the community such as elders, titled people, the age grades and women's groups act as checks and balances on one another, with the sanctify of life and the dignity of the human person always paramount.

The fourth chapter assesses the impact of colonial conquest and the coming of Christianity on these age-old concepts and practices. It was this clash of culture, in which modernism worsted tradition, which has engendered what is identified as a waning of the influence of the traditional concepts of human dignity and the depreciation of the value which the human person was accorded in the Igbo society of yore.

In the fifth chapter, this study focuses on salvage efforts, what could be done to stem the observed trend, and how to make a positive outcome for Igbo culture from the confrontation. Much of the efforts in this regard are coming from non-governmental organizations, the churches and multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations.

The sixth and final chapter returns to the critical evaluation of the extent of the crisis of values and of ethical challenges. Ezenwa here harps on the necessity of return to an approximation of the concept "Onye biri ibe ya ebiri" (Live and let live).

General Introduction

Man occupies a very exalted position on earth. When man surveys his environment he sees other things but because of his higher status he controls those other things with which he shares existence. Man´s greatest difficulty, however, seems to be the control of man in relationship to his value of others. This is necessary because man does not live in isolation; he lives in community and in relationship with his fellow human beings. Community is understood to mean "a close group of individuals who are held together by common aims and aspirations, interests and objectives."[1] The need to investigate the causes of the conflicts in values and relationships calls for an examination of the concept of human dignity from the perspective of a particular culture. My research will focus on the Igbo people of south eastern Nigeria, drawing from their socio-cultural values and experiences. Insights drawn from the Igbo experience can help to evaluate the concept of human dignity in the larger African society.,

The Igbo society, like other African communities, saw a dramatic change in their socio-cultural, religious and political life patterns with the advent of colonialism andChristianity in the 18th and 19th centuries. The experience came with its merits and demerits. Thus, notwithstanding that colonialism brought modernization, it was followed by i treatment that devalued the dignity of the human person. This experience, Ferdinand Ezekwonna stated, "can be seen in double perspectives, which we call the dual face of the missionary legacy and Western technology in African culture."[2] Thus the Western scientific and technological development in our day can be said to have put into human hands magnificent possibilities for humanity, such that human have the unlimited capacity to produce or destroy. Thus, "wars, economic dislocations, bureaucracies and tyrannies all are human products."[3] These have also existed in the traditional Igbo setting but not in comparison to the scale being experienced at present. Corroborating the above assertion, Pius Oredipe surmised that "the major paradox of the 20th century is therefore the horrifying co-existence of extraordinary progress and descent into the dark and barbarous violence of humanity."[4] What is at stake here is the dignity of the human person in the natural universe.

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[1] Abanuka, B., Holosism a Political Theory, Snaap Press Enugu, 2007, p. 3

[2] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethics; The Basis for the Moral Conscience and Autonomy of the Individual, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2005; p. 22

[3] Tinder, G., Against Fate; in: Kraynak, R., & Tinder, G., (Eds.), *In Defense of Human Dignity*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2003, p. 15

[4] Oredipe, P., Integral Humanism an Ethical Challenge in Faith and Reason; in: Iroegbu, P. and Echekwube, A., (Eds.), *the Kpim of Morality, Ethics*, Heinemann Edu. Books, 2005, p. 57

Every human research and endeavour should be geared towards raising the quality and worth of the individual in an integral way. Current events suggest that the reverse is the case. John Paul 11 indicated that "this is, perhaps one of the most obvious weaknesses of the present-day civilization which lies in an inadequate view of man. Without doubt, the present age places man at the centre of every academic discussion. It is the age of man´s deepest anxiety about his/her identity and destiny, the age of man´s abasement to previously unsuspected levels, the age of human values trampled on as never before."[5] The exploration of the concept and value of human dignity is therefore central to every discussion about the human person. In effect, research should centre on the exalted value of the human person, what accounts for this importance and the factors that contribute to its devaluation.

The decline in the value placed on the dignity of the human person in many societies demands attention. The question has been posed: "Is the concern with enhancing the dignity of man something that people used to worry about but no longer worry about because the effort seems futile and unnecessary…Or is human dignity something we care for but take for granted as a cultural inheritance that no longer needs defence?"[6] This question provokes thoughts on the value of human dignity. The pace at which the world is developing and inventing sophisticated and at times, dangerous technologies, may, if left unchecked, could accelerate the erosion of human values. This presents a serious threat to the Igbo socio-cultural values with special regard to the value of human dignity. There is an existential fear that the Igbo people already in contact with this trend of modernity may have started to compromise their most cherished values. Hence, values attached to life and the human person seem to be going own on a daily bases. Individualism, which used to be a foreign concept to the Igbos, is gravely affecting the people's appreciation of the value and dignity of the human person. (Individuality isn't a foreign concept to the Igbo, in fact that is their hallmark. I think you can say that the fine balance between the individual and the community that the Igbo people had is being lost or has been lost to crass individualism and materialism.)

An observation of current sensibilities of the modern man with unchecked attachment to technology and materialism, points to an ethic that places material value before any other values; an ethic in which no room is created to promote the existential values of the human person. Not surprising, therefore, is the fact that gross violation of human dignity is being

[5] Address of Pope John Paul II to Meeting of the South American Bishops Conference at Puebla, 28th January 1979, Published in Briefing, Vol. 9, No. 6, 9th Feb., 1979

[6] Kraynak R. P., Defending Human Dignity: The Challenge of Our Times; in: Kraynak, R. P., and Tinder G., (Eds.), *In Defense of Human Dignity*, op. cit., 2003, p. 6

terribly and extensively carried out. The Igbo people as a group find themselves seriously enmeshed by this venom of destruction.

The Igbo situation, as stated, has been made complex by cultural contacts embedded in modernization resulting in a clash of cultures. The effect is evidenced in the cultural identity crisis afflicting the contemporary Igbo society. Determining what really counts as Igbo values and culture, especially with regard to human dignity, has become a daunting task. Much of the societal ills and violence against humanity in the Igbo society today seem to stem from this lack of the sense of value, responsibility and character. This existential crisis in Igbo society today poses an inevitable challenge with apparent anthropological dimensions as evidenced in the depersonalized and utilitarian view of the human person. The Igbo individual has become one who searches for what works for one's personal interest and no longer what works for all. The Igbo world view has turned to one devoid of communitarian logic; a world view which tends to impoverish human relationship and devalues the human person. Regrettably, the new situation reveals a departure from the known features of life of the Igbos of the so-called good old days. As a matter of fact, the speed at which this erosion in values is penetrating and polarizing the Igbo ethical system is a matter of grave concern. In the light of the above, the need arises to work more on the advancement of things that build the feeling of acceptance and appreciation of one another as fellow human beings.

Consequently, questions should arise about the effects of globalization and whether a single ethical system works for everyone. Corroborating this view, Ezekwonna argues that there are as many ethics as there are cultures, traditions, religions, and systems.[7] Credence must be given to the rule of thumb that there ought to be general principles of ethical validation from which different peoples, cultures and traditions draw their reasoning for cultural and ethical values. This reinforces the notion that human dignity and values are universal values from which individuals draw their ethical leanings. Pertaining to this work, a re-evaluation of some core Igbo values and the effects of colonialism and Christianization to the tradition, culture and life of the people would take central place.

The subjugation of Igbo traditional heritage by colonization and the adoption of Christian religion/civilization seems to have placed the Igbo people at a crossroads. With the coming of colonization and missionaries, a plurality of beliefs and value concepts seemed to have taken place in the Igbo system resulting in a rapid social change.[8] The Igbos became neither

[7] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethics, op. cit., p. 19
[8] Ilogu, E., Christianity and Igbo Culture, University Pub., Co., Onitsha, 1985, p. 63

Western nor core Igbo in character and approach to reality. Hence, the centre no longer held for them culturally, ethically, socially, and otherwise. As a result of this conflict, their core values like human dignity became affected in a significant manner. The purpose of this work is to address this issue in the context of cultural dialogue by looking at human dignity from the perspective of the Igbo culture and tradition in relation with other cultures that crisscrossed them.

The work is intended to study the situation theologically and ethically for a sound understanding of the problem. Research on Igbo world-view and the result of that research in turn would enhance the position taken on this work. A look at the research objectives of the work will help situate the narrative and highlight the method for investigating and tackling the problems posed.

0.1 Research Objectives

The Igbo society at present is confronted with widespread disorientation of values. Yet, the issue of human dignity depends on ethics and values.[9] The aim of this work is to bring to limelight the values attached to the human person as an entity of dignity in relation to Igbo ethics on human life. As an Igbo, it comes as a natural desire to undertake this task of exploring the value of human dignity from the socio-cultural aspect of the Igbo ethics in the communitarian Igbo domain. My desire is born out of the need to unravel the reasons behind the perceived contemporary features of the Igbo way of life and value of the human person which is departing from traditional norms. It must be admitted that any ethics, culture and religion that have to integrate Igbo ethics cannot overlook the values attached to the human person by the Igbo. That is why the purpose of this work is to show how fundamental place of human dignity in Igbo society. . Notably, among the Igbos, the human being and his dignity are regarded as vital in interpersonal relationships. Without the human person in the Igbo setting there is no humanity and no community. In the Igbo worldview, it is the human person who gives meaning and value to community and existence. Therefore, this work will explore that aspect of Igbo ethics and culture. The choice of the ethics and how it relates to the value placed on human dignity in this work is deliberate. It will help to identify some of the factors that militate against this vital value in Igbo society today and explore the ways forward. For

[9] Taylor, J. B., and Günther, G., Religions for Human Dignity and World Peace, World conference on Religions and Peace, Geneva, 1996, p. 75

the Igbo person, this will serve as a way of acquiring a proper perception of his nature, dignity and destiny, if his problems and that of the society are to be adequately approached.[10]

There are many ways to look at the problems presented above. However, to guard against bias and unfair judgment, I will present a step by step approach to what I consider the root causes of the conflict in the current valuation of the human person among the Igbos. Granted that colonization with Christianity have their effects on the Igbo people, it would be naïve to argue that they are the causes of the problem of the Igbo man on the value of human dignity today. Christianity, after all, is an encounter with a living God who sought at a great expense to dignify the human person. One must consider, therefore, factors and personal idiosyncrasies that come in between those posed by cultural mobility. I consider it crucial to clarify my position before proceeding gradually as we will come across them in the subsequent chapters.

0.2 The Challenges to Be Resolved

The challenge of recovering a true and authentic understanding of human dignity among the Igbo poses a fundamental problem. Human dignity is an issue that the Igbos care about but seem to have taken for granted today as a cultural inheritance that no longer needs defending. A resolute search requires to be conducted to proffer solutions to the problems posed by the conflict of tradition and modernity in relation to the value of human dignity in Igbo society.

In the recent times a lot of discordant thoughts and approaches to understanding this vital aspect of the Igbo culture. What are the causes? What are the ways forward? How can this noble culture and tradition be restored and made to be meaningful again? How do we resolve this latent crisis that is almost eroding the whole Igbo generation of today to an unending destruction? Has it a cultural undertone? Has it anything to do with losing the Nigeria-Biafran war? Has it to do with culture contact with other races? Or is it a trait natural with the Igbo race? How positively or negatively has colonization, modernization, urbanization or Christianization affected this value of the Igbo people? How has the culture, tradition and modernity helped the people in resolving this problem? Has there been any further effort from other quarters to abate this crisis. These are questions to be addressed in this work.

[10] Iwe, N. S. S., Socio-ethical Issues in Nigeria, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1987, p. 72

The Igbo situation here calls for a re-examination of the present cultural development with regard to the value of the human person and proffer some solutions forward. It will stress once more the problem of understanding the important fact that all human persons are entities of equal values and rights. But with a perceived problem of lack of apparent compassion and tolerance in the life of the Igbo and in the dispensation of the events of life, how can the value of human dignity be realized? With the foregoing then can we see the need to include the human person as one of the constituents that has value? As an Igbo, the value of the human person is believed to be structured intently in the cultural setting. Thus the ethics for this phenomenon needs an evaluation, aimed at restoring this lost value and improving on it. It points to the need to reconsider and appreciate some good cultural values inherited from the ancestors and to take cognizance of the emerging world ethical values and realities.[11] This need is supported by the fact that many of the Igbo cultural values discarded as uncivilized have good qualities in them that help in upgrading the value and dignity for the human person.

0.3 **Scope and Methodology:**

This work falls into the broader circle of qualitative research and it adopts an inter-disciplinary methodological approach that includes historical, ethical, philosophical and theological approaches in the collection, processing and analysis of data. The nature of this work necessitates the use of concepts and terms that are not common to the vocabulary of some readers. Many Igbo concepts will be adopted in this work. For the sake of those who do not speak the language and, even for those who do, there is need for the application of the analytical method for explanations. The use of this method will help clarify and define the terms and concepts relating to both the Igbo ethical philosophy and catholic theology, as used in this work. Though the bulk of this work relates to the Igbo situation in reference to the value and dignity of the human person, an appeal will be made to a wider understanding of the African perspective of the same issue. This is to make some valid comparisons between the Igbo anthropology in particular, and African and other anthropologies in general.

The scope of this work would lead to ideas that would contribute to the understanding of the Igbo value of human dignity, theologically and ethically, in order to accentuate or emphasize the connection between the human person and the value and dignity inherent in the life of the individual. Further exploration of the concepts of value (*uru*) given to the human person as dignity (*ugwu*) will be made. The issues involved are going to be analyzed from the catholic theological view of man, made in God's image and embedded in Igbo tradition on human

[11] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethics, op. cit., p. 27

dignity i.e. *Omenala*[12] *Ndigbo* on *Ugwu mmadu.*[13] In relation to the value or importance of human dignity in Igbo society, the question will be posed: How real is this value in Igbo society? In what form or ways has it been lost? And how can its full appreciation be restored? The answers to these questions are to come from analyzing the terms and concepts involved and establishing criteria for interpretation of the concepts and texts used. This work will focus on some of the Igbo ethical values that deal with the Igbo value for the human dignity and the concomitant effects in the society.

For the application of the ideas contained in this work, a study of value and its place in the Igbo cultural context will be explored. A dialogue engaging the catholic theology of man, made in God's image and *Omenala Ndigbo* (Igbo culture) as aforementioned will be a watershed idea for this work. The work is to serve as an inroad into the perceived reasons why the author suspects that "things have fallen apart" and people "no longer at ease" today among the Igbo in their interpersonal relationships. Above all, a reminder will be made that the concern on the value of human dignity is not a thing of the past but a living issue of importance that needs urgent attention.

As aforementioned, many African and other thoughts and sources in relation to the topic are to be used in this work. Equally, due to the limited literature on this topic, several of the sources consulted are not recent works, although they remain relevant to the investigation. A definition of terms used in this work is deemed appropriate at this stage, and will be presented forthwith.

[12] *Omenala Ndigbo* means the religious tradition of the Igbo people and the means which the social ethos are measured, the values of the society are continued from one generation to another.

[13] *Ugwu mmadu* means the dignity of the human person.

Chapter One

Introduction

This part of the work will present the definition of various terms used in the work and how relevant they are to the entire work.

The need for the value of human dignity is for all times a true assignment of all. It must neither be considered to be relevant only for a time in the life of a people nor only for a select group of individuals. Thus special attention should be given to this idea especially in the modern day Igbo society. My concern with the concept stems from a conviction that this important aspect of Igbo existence at this time needs profound attention and consideration. The definition of terms will focus on only few core-terminologies that demand elaborate explanations while other ones will come within the body of the work.

1.1 The Term Igbo

The term `Igbo` refers to both the aborigines of this territory, their language and their culture. It can be used as a noun or as an adjective depending on the context in which the user applies it. Hence one can speak of Igboland, Igbo people, the Igbo or Igbos as well asIgbo language etc.[14]

The term is spelt as "I-g-b-o". The term Ibo, as found in some literatures, was an adaptation by foreigners and non-Igbo authors who could not adequately pronounce the double consonants "gb." There are other corrupt forms of the term which gives room for the differences in orthography in Igbo literatures. In this work I shall be adopting the correct term I-g-b-o. But for the sake of faithfulness to original texts and works, I shall abide by the authors designation in my various citations as they appear in the original work

1.2 Crisis of Values: It´s Meaning in the Work

I have frequently employed the expression "crisis of values" in the general introduction of this work to explain the motive of the thesis as well as find the reason for this crisis on the value of human dignity. In the same vein also one sees the meaning of crisis in relation to the value and dignity of the human person in Igbo society today. Crisis means, "a stage, or sequence of events at which the trend of all future events especially for better or for worse is determined; a

[14] Ochulor, H. O., The Function of Dialogue in the Process of Evangelisation,Edu-Edy Pub., Owerri, 2006, p. 23

condition of instability, leading to a decisive change." [15] It indicates a moment of danger, difficulty and uncertainty. Crisis implies a distortion, a perversion, a misrepresentation, a misconception in ones idea of something. Using crisis of value, reference is made to the distortion, misplacement or wrong ordering of one's value system.[16] These meanings and clarifications lead to the topic at hand, which is the crisis of value of human dignity as a threat to the contemporary Igbo.

1.3 **The Notion Value**

Every people and society have values that are largely cherished and shared by their members. The term value is more frequently used in economics, where it means the power of a commodity to command other commodities in exchange. Broadly it refers to the process of weighing relative considerations and the motivations for arriving at a decision.[17] However, it is also applied to other aspects of life. According to the Encyclopaedia of Religion, it serves as "the utility of objects for human purposes and their capacity to satisfy a desire or serve a purpose."[18] They are precious items in human life which form the essential ingredients that make up life´s joys and inspirations. It means "what appeals to us which may supply a need, satisfy a desire, arouse an interest, stimulate an emotion, provoke a response, motivate a deed or merely draw an approval."[19] From this perspective, it is seen as the broad preference concerning appropriate cause of action or otherwise, which reflect the individual's sense of right or wrong, or what ought to be. It is therefore that which makes something to be cherished and a special type of property, rank, dignity and character of something.[20] As a property, value can influence attitudes and behavioural patterns, like the life pattern one cherishes and serves as an influence on the individual. It can serve as a changing and challenging factor in one's life. It positively expresses what is good, beneficial, important, and constructive. It also answers the question of why people do what they do and relate to things the way they do. It deals with what is of relevance to people.

For the Igbo, what is of value is usually described as, "*ihe di mma*" what is good or, "*ihe oma"* what is beautiful. Corroborating the above use of the term, Edmund Ilogu explained

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[15] Webster Encyclopedia ,Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, Gramercy Books, New York/Avenel, 1974, p. 334

[16] Adani, C., Crisis of Value and Violation of Human Rights in Nigeria: In Asogwa, C., (ed.), *Human Rights in Niger,ia*, op. cit., p. 40

[17] ibid, p. 36

[18] Hastings, J., Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XII, Charles Schibners Sons Edinburgh, 1954, p. 529

[19] Fagothey, A., Ethics in Theory and Practice, CVM. , Company, St. Louis, 1959, p. 72

[20] Ukagba, G., In: Iroegbu P. and Echekwube E., (Eds.), *Kpim of Morality, Ethics*, op.cit. p.183

value as, "the quality of a thing that makes it more or less desirable or useful. It expresses the significance, which is ascribed to a particular experience, activity or life in general."[21] This significance serves as a guide in relation to the decisions the human person makes in daily life and activities and relationship with fellow human beings. From this background, value can be seen from two perspectives, objective value and subjective value. According to Edmund Ilogu, "value is objective when it is guided by laws and customs, but subjective when it is guided by individual whims and caprices".[22] This implies that objective value has the laws and customs of the society as guiding principles. Similarly, it relates more to communal significance and interest than personal significance, whereas subjective value is guided by personal interest and significance. Hence, value serves as a communal/societal and personal property at the same time.

The essence of value in relationship with the human person and the society is an important factor, in that "they reflect the personality of individuals and they are the expressions of cultural tone, affection, social and spiritual, marked by family, school, the institutions and the human society".[23] This indicates that values showcase the ideals of the individual expressed in cultural patterns, but communicated through sub-social institutions such as the communities, families, and schools. It means that they are transmitted through the process of socialization and education. This argument can be logical if there is agreement about the meaning of socialization, which according to Pat Hutcheon , "is a process by which people acquire habits, intuitions, attitudes, standards, values, concepts, and beliefs of their species in general…It provides for all encompassing humanization without which members of our species are incapable of functioning in civilized society …"[24] Values therefore are incorporated and inculcated into communities for the good of the human person and the society at large. Their resultant effect is that, they are meant to build a human society with common interests that are of benefit to every person. This is in agreement with the idea of Peter Worsley that "values hold the society together because they are shared in common."[25] As a matter of fact, this brings to light the precise importance of values to humanity and the society.

Since values are operative in and on human persons and find expression in human acts and embodiment in human institutions, it has a lot, therefore, to do with people, their culture and

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[21] Ilogu, C.,Christianity and Igbo Culture, op. cit., p. 119
[22] ibid., p. 119
[23] Ukaegbu, J. O., Igbo Identity and Personality: In Adibe, G. E., *Igbo Issues,* Mid-Field publishers Ltd., Onitsha, 2009, p. 8
[24] Hutcheon, P.D., Building Character and Culture, London, Praeger Publishers, 1999, p. 115
[25] Worsley, P., Introducing Sociology, Maryland, Penguin Books, 1973, p. 362

society.[26] This observation highlights the socio-cultural values to be seen in the next chapter, which deals with the people's life and culture in the society given that people and society give meaning to values. Values, therefore, cannot stand alone; they need the human person and the society. They are the two elements that make value relevant and functional, evidenced by the human person's quality as an entity with rationality. The human person possesses rationality as well as sensitive and instinctive knowledge. His rationality endows him with cognitive knowledge, which other entities do not have; marking him out as a relevant and valuable entity. When an entity/object lacks value, its dignity, regard and respect are diminished. Hence, the value of the human person's dignity remains dominant in this work.

1.4 The Notion: Dignity

The term dignity derives from the Latin word *dignitas,* which means virtue or worthiness, or alternatively, honourable. Dignity and value are related and juxtapose each other. Dignity is observed as "an intrinsic value which expresses the worth of something in relation to something else."[27] To have dignity, therefore, is to have value that makes one (something) priceless, or without equivalent. It also refers both to a kind of deserving and to something deserved.

This work discusses human dignity (HD), not just dignity as a word. The emphasis is on the value and worth of the human being (man) in Igbo world view (*Weltanschauung*). As a way of explanation, the "expression human dignity seems to emerge rather slowly from a context where the term dignity is used in appreciation of the importance of human individuals."[28] The fact of their being human earns them respect. Humanity is an intrinsic value which affects them at all levels. As an attribute dignity refers to the authentic nature of a human being. It embraces any activity or concept that brings out the true nature of the human person and distinguishes mankind from all other beings in the universe. Similarly, dignity refers to that which in a being or a person induces or ought to induce respect.[29] Human dignity as an attribute places the individual in the position of one who deserves to be treated with respect. Hence, the dignity attached to the human person indicates the value, worth and respect attached to him/her and because of the higher value humanity has against other beings. In a

[26] Hastings, J., Encyclopaedia of Religion, op. cit., p. 587
[27] Shell S., Kant on Human Dignity: In Kraynak, P. etal (eds.), *in Defense of Human Dignity,* op.cit. p. 58
[28] Correa, V., and Segreccia, (eds.), Towards a Definition of Human Dignity: Article in.*La cultura della vita*: Fondamenti e dimensioni, Supplemento al volume degli Atti della VII Assemblea Generale 1-4 Marzo 2001 (Citta de Vaticano:Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2002), pp. 87-101
[29] Readers Digest Creative Illustrated Dictionary. Readers Digest Asso., Ltd., Guinnes Pub. Ltd., London, 1990

similar sense, dignity is the quality of being worthy of esteem or honour and importance. Rahner Kahrl defined it as "the fact that a being has of its very nature a determined objective position within the manifoldness and heterogeneity of being which demands respect and protection as well as realization both in its relations to others and itself."[30]

The term, "human dignity" indicates an expression of appreciation of the importance of the individual which as an attribute is meant to be inherent in every human person, and in essence, a fundamental value of every human being. The concept had general acceptability as a basic ethical and legal principle drawing upon the universal experience of the dynamics of recognitions. It is clearly in everyone's interest to be respected as having human dignity.[31]
The inalienability of human dignity in the life of the human person lies on the fact that it is an essential part of their being, an intrinsic quality that can never be separated from other essential aspects of their existence. As a result of this natural awareness of the sense of dignity, its abuse is normally met with resistance, whether intended or as a reflex action. Affirming this general position, the father of the Second Vatican Council, in *Dignitatis Humanae* affirm that "at the same time, however, there is a growing awareness of the sublime dignity of the human person, who stands above all things and whose rights are universal and inviolable. He ought, therefore, to have ready access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life…"[32] This indicates therefore that the awareness of the dignity attached to one's existence as a human being is natural and general to all. Corroborating this idea of the inalienability of human dignity, the Virginia Bill of Rights (1776, VI.1) asserts that, all people are born equal, free and have certain inborn rights that, as soon as individuals accept the status of society, may not be taken away by any later agreements made by their descendants.[33] The respect for human dignity can in no way be separated from obedience to this principle. It is therefore pertinent to "consider each neighbour without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity." [34] From this perspective then the respect for human dignity cannot be realized in a vacuum as it is all about the basic good of collective and individual life which involves people and a system of doing things. This way of doing things has to do with the norms and patterns of living where human dignity and value are expressed in a system which is found in the culture of the people.

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[30] Rahner, K., Theological Investigations Vol. II: London; Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975, p. 236
[31] Correa, V., and Segreccia, (eds), Towards a Definition of Human Dignity, Article in *La cultura della vita*: op.cit., pp. 87-101
[32] Vatican 11 Document: Gaudium et Spes, Art., 26, p. 927
[33] Virginia Bill of Rights, 1776, VL.1, Art., 1
[34] Vatican II, op. cit., Art., 27, p. 928

1.5 Culture and Human Dignity

The term culture refers to the pattern of living in a given environment. It is one of the properties of the human person by which one can achieve true and full humanity. The Second Vatican Council explains culture as "all those things which go to the refining and developing of man´s diverse mental and physical endowments. He strives to subdue the earth by his knowledge and his labour; he humanises social life both in the family and in the whole civic community through the improvement of customs and institutions, he expresses through his works the great spiritual experiences and aspirations of men throughout the ages; he communicates and preserves them to be an inspiration for the progress of many, even of all mankind."[35] Culture here is described as a medium through which an individual or a group of individuals become developed and directed on the way to live, especially in their relation to other human beings. Culture contributes toward the shaping and forming of humans to be conscious of what they ought to be and do in society. In line with this conceptualization, Joseph Ratzinger explains culture as "the social form of expression, as it has grown up in history, of those experiences and evaluations that have left their mark on a community and have shaped it."[36] This implies that culture serves as a trade mark by which the community is known, identified and formed. Reiterating its social effects, Ratzinger further explains that "culture as a social form of expression has to do with perception, which opens the way for practical action... This suggests that culture, which has in itself a historical character, has to be docile and assimilative, but not ejective and exclusive."[37] Culture in this form is open and serves as the totality of a people's way of life and conduct. It creates the environment necessary for perceiving and accepting people for practical life purposes.

In a broader perspective, culture embraces other things in relation to humanity, like expression of life, a mode of becoming oneself, a way of relating to one another and to nature. From this perspective, Gerhard Droesser views culture as the "interaction of individuals based on common socio-cultural practices and historical antecedents."[38] It serves as a bond and one of the properties that unites the human person to achieve true and full humanity. For the Igbo people it serves as a way of life which aids in their maintenance of the value and dignity of

[35] ibid., art., 53, p. 958

[36] Ratzinger, J., Truth and Tolerance, Christian Belief and world Religions, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2004, p. 60

[37] ibid., p. 63

[38] Droesser, G. and Schirm, S., Ethischen Moderieren- Bestimmung demokratischer Lebensformen; in Ojoajogwu, N., *Social and Cultural Identity of an African Society*, op. cit., p.197: Das Individuum nimmt die Beziehungen, von denen es Material gebunden ist, in seine Lebenspraxis auf. Es engagiert sich an Orten und in Rollen, in die es durch die Zufälle der Geburt und der Biographie geraten ist, in je verschiedenen Handlungskonstellationen",

the human person. From the above setting, Toyin Falola indicates that in Africa, "culture shapes the perception of self and the interaction between people and their environment. It explains habits such as why people respect old age, have many children, and take care of their children."[39] In the same vein, according to Chibueze Udeani, culture is conceived as "the totality of the answers of which human beings give to the questions of life."[40]

In line with this perspective of the answers to the questions of life, culture is the people's way of life derived from the dynamic relationship between man and his environment. It embraces language, tradition, beliefs, institutions and customs that bind peoples and communities together**.** According to Ray Ofoegbu, "it represents the pool of ideas, goals, means, and products of man in society. It serves as man's social conscience, and represents the basis of consensus within a given human community or social order".[41] This refers to the dignity by which people conceive themselves and likewise are conceived by others within their environment. In this line of thought, Edward Taylor sights culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other capabilities and habits, acquired by man as a means of society."[42] It similarly establishes man in his environment with his fellow human beings, thus Eugene Azorji describes culture as "a transmitter that aids man to understand and comprehend his or her environment. Culture here, therefore, serves as a means of man's self-realization of himself in the world, with others and among others".[43] Considering the various ideas expressed above, culture serves as a helper of the individual in realizing one's value and dignity in relation to other humans in the society. It creates social order and transmits knowledge and other ideas in relation to life.

As a transmitter of knowledge, culture is acquired or learned by individuals as members of a society. It influences their perception of reality and offers them a system of meaning in several ways. It shapes the individuals' understanding, feelings and behaviour and gives them a group identity.[44] This identity is realized in respect of the value they have for each other as an entity with dignity. In the course of identifying the individuals, culture deals with the natural environment which greatly affects the lifestyle of the people and shapes their way of

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[39] Falola, T., The Power of African Culture, University of Rochester Press, New York, 2003, p. 50

[40] Udeani, C., Inculturation as Dialogue, Igbo Culture and the Message of Christ, International Society for Intercultural Theology and Study of Religions, Rodopi B. V. Amsterdam- New York, 2007, p. 2

[41] Ofoegbu, R., The Contribution of Igbo Culture in Nigeria Political Culture: In *Igbo Language and culture Vol.11*, University Press, Ibadan, 1982, p. 23

[42] Taylor E. B., Primitive Culture, SCM., Press Ltd., London, 1971, p. 4

[43] Azorji, E., Faith and Culture in Dialogue: The Recurrent Issues of Inculturation, Vol. 1, IBTHO printing Press Enugu, 1988, p. 4

[44] Aylward, S., Inculturation; Win or Lose the Future: in Scherer, J. and Bevans, S.B. (eds.) *New Direction in Mission and Evangelization*, Orbis books, Maryknoll, 1999, p. 51

perceiving realities. From this perspective culture can be viewed from the pattern of human activities and the symbols which give significance to their lives.

Given that culture embraces human activities in every given environment, one may ask how it came about. Chukwuemeka Umeh gives his perspective to the question by explaining that "culture is not a product of nature but manmade, brought about by both mental and physical exertion. It involves things seen, heard, touched and felt. Culture is not static, complete and fulfilled. It develops with time, dynamic and open for interaction with other cultures, and with the honest willingness to accept what is good in other cultures".[45] In this regard, culture could be described as a manmade structure always in search of what is good and dignifying for the individual and the society through the cultivation of the goods and values of nature. As a product of man, culture is transmitted from generation to generation through tradition; otherwise it can easily be forgotten or cast aside. On this note, the ultimate concern of any human culture should be the sanctification and preservation of human dignity in the society. Hence, culture should ascend beyond the behavioural pattern to the objective spirit and motive of the society. This objective spirit should aim mainly at the protection of the integrity of the human person which is essential to human living.

For the Igbo people, their culture and life are intimately interrelated; their life is their culture, and invariably, their culture is their life. This idea accords with the words of the fathers of the Second Vatican Council that "whenever therefore there is a question of human life, nature and culture are intimately linked together."[46] Hence, nature and culture adds value to life which, in turn, is viewed as the highest gift of nature. Value for the dignity of the human person is a natural part of Igbo ontology that gives room for the respect of human life. 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. Thus the human person is at the centre of every activity, and the maintenance of this value of his/her dignity is that which should interest all. It serves as a common bond that brings the people together and unites them as an entity for the maintenance and progress of each other. This value and the dignity attached to it is enshrined within the cultural setting of the people, becoming part and parcel of the people's cultural norms and providing the setting for effective realization of each other.

[45] Umeh, E.C., The Promotion of Human Rights and Social justice; A Call for Liberation Theology for the Church in Nigeria, Peter Lang, 2004, p. 112
[46] Vat. 11 Document, Gaudium et Spes, N.53

As a shared concept in Igbo culture, human dignity serves as a bond that ties people and their community together. It serves as a channel through which human value is expressed and the bond of unity that is manifested through the regard they have for each other as well as their cultural ties. A particular relevance of culture noted by John Mbiti includes "the fact that it is the foundation of effective socialization and citizenship training and education. It is a means of inculcating preferences and inducting members into the mainstream of the society's shared ways of life and conduct. On a wider view culture constitutes a model of norms which can be internalized and accepted as higher reference points or guiding standards in a society."[47] Culture then becomes a means through which honour and respect are maintained in relation to the sustenance of life through tradition. For example, killing a human being is a taboo in Igboland because of the value and importance attached to human life. On this note, culture serves as a way of social control where values like life are protected and preserved with dignity.

Furthermore, culture links people and their value systems for the further development of self. As observed by Damian Ezeh, "the integral development of the human person is the test for the broader meaning of culture. A culture is relevant to the extent that it promotes the perfection of the human person, that is, the attainment of the human teleological end."[48] This means that culture is a product of the human person which directs the individual's social and behavioural relationship with the society. On this note, culture forms individual persons and helps them to participate in the promotion of the general well-being of all in the society. According to Sigmund Freud, "through culture humanity achieves almost everything that it has dreamt of and men and women themselves virtually become gods."[49] Invariably, it means that culture as a product of mankind, shapes and upgrades human status and through this means elevates the value and dignity of the human person. This idea, hence, opens the path to a discussion on the concept of the human person.

1.6 The Concept: Human Person

The concept of the human person (HP) in this work is used in a generic sense to refer to man as a human being and not in terms of specie or sex (male or female). There are many views

[47] Mbiti, J. S., African Religions and Philosophy, Nairobi, 1982, p. 23
[48] Eze D. O., The Eucharist as Orikonso, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2008, p. 42
[49] Freud, S. J., The Future of an Illusion: In Scherer, J and Bevans, S. (Eds.), *New Directory in Mission and Evangelisation,* op. cit., p. 163

about man; some of which are divergent and sometimes contradictory. Some views refer to man as the measure of all things while some refer to him as a creature utterly debased to the point of despair and despondence. Hence, there are doubts in ascertaining what man actually is. Man is conceptualized in some quarters as a being of double existence, meaning that as a human person man is made up of body and spirit. Kwame Gyeke succinctly pointed this out in his brief remark that "African philosophy of the person is rigidly dualistic: The person consists of body and spirit."[50] In his bid to offer explanation to this, Nicholas Ojoajogwu highlighted that, "this dualistic nature of man does not mean that man operates on dual levels at different times as spirit and body. Rather the dual nature is an organic whole which is referred to as man."[51] He further explained that "this understanding of man is, in essence, man as the Hebrew Adam, Latin Homo, Greek Anthropos or German Mensch other than man as an individual male sex."[52] So "man" in this work signifies man as humanity in general without distinction.

In furtherance of this analysis, Ikenga Metuh sees the human person as "the nucleus around which revolves a number of other forces- the body, the shadow, the person, or destiny soul. These by themselves are individual forces in the universe. Taken together these form one individual life force, man."[53] These explanations, therefore, speak of the human person (man) not as an individual sex but as a being that is in existence like other existing beings but with different characteristics. The term "human" as it concerns man is an English predicate that is used to refer to people as opposed to animals or other related objects.

In respect of this his/her status, in the system of nature, man (*homo phenomenon, animal rationale*) is a being of slight importance and shares with the rest of the animals as offspring of the earth, a common value (*pretium vulgare*) but man has in his understanding something more than they and can set himself ends… Man considered as a person … is lifted up (*erhoben*) above all price, for as a person (*homo noumenon*) he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in himself; that is, he possesses a dignity by which he necessitates respect.[54] As the end, therefore, human values, moral, ethical, cultural and religious are to be practised to uphold the respect accorded to man as an end himself. By necessitating respect, the duty is laid upon him to safeguard this value by his reasoning and will, and to accord same to fellow human beings. In trying to explain

[50] Gyeke, K., An Essay on African Philosophical Thought, Cambridge University, 1987, p. 198
[51] Ojoajogwu, N. O., Social and Cultural Identity of an African Society, IKO- Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation Frankfurt am Main, 2006, p. 109
[52] ibid., p.109
[53] Metuh., E. I., Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religion, Imico Pub., Onitsha, 1987, p. 185
[54] Shell, M. S., Kant on Human Dignity: In Kraynak, P. &Tinder, G., (eds.), *In Defense of Human Dignity*, op. cit., p. 65

man from this perspective, the second Vatican Council stated: "For by his power to know himself in the depths of his being he rises above the whole universe of mere objects."[55]This places man above other animals among which he belongs to the specie of "rational animal," also called human person. He exists as a unique and unrepeatable being, as an entity capable of self-understanding, self-possession and self-determination.

1.6.1 The Igbo Ontology and the Human Person

Ontology is a study of the nature of existence.[56] The human person in the Igbo world-view is defined ontologically in relationship with the involvement of the society on the human person. This is because it is in relation to the society that the existential identity and value of the individual person is realized. According to Ikenga Metuh, the human person "is a life-force in vital relationship with other life forces in the universe. Sociologically, the human person is defined with reference to his positions in the different groups to which he belongs. As he grows biologically, and assumes more responsibilities in society, his social position may also change."[57] No man then, in Igbo society, is an Island, as the saying goes. The real Igbo person is like, "the nucleus around which revolves a number of other forces-the body, the shadow, the personality or destiny soul. These by themselves are individual forces in the universe. Taken together these form one undivided life-force man."[58] This nucleus of forces that form one undivided life-force in the human person can be said to be a natural force. From the discussion so far, it can be surmised that one may not be able to exist alone except corporeally. In the Igbo understanding of human existence, one owes his existence to the past generation, the ancestors, and his contemporaries. He remains without doubt part of the whole…[59] The individual therefore exists in relation with the present, past and the future within the society. To this effect Aja Egbeke highlighted that, "the first element that impinges on the case of traditional Africa is the ability of the members of the community to trace their origins to the same blood. This explains why in the thickening and thinning sense of blood relationship which each African feels with regard to units of social action, there is also a deepening and weakening sense of loyalty and commitment. The corporateness of the community means that somebody belongs to the next higher unit of community on the basis

[55] Gaudium et Spes, Art., 14,
[56] Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1995, Edition, p. 989
[57] Metuh, E. I., Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religion, op. cit., p. 185
[58] ibid., p. 177
[59] Mbiti, J., African Religions and Philosophy, op. cit., p. 108

of his membership of the next smaller unit."[60] With this in mind, human person in the Igbo worldview is a corporate entity with relations to others and the environment.

As a living being in active communion with others, humanity becomes for the Igbo a nexus of interacting elements of the self and the society. Generally, the Igbo anthropology sees the human person as one unit with the society; a unit made up of many individual persons with different ideologies and approaches to life. There is need then for a united front as social organs to make these different entities that exist as units to live together in harmony. The socio-political and cultural structures, as a matter of fact, bind all Igbos together. In effect, Benezet Bujo highlighted that, "without communitarian relationship there is no identity for the African person. Only together with others can one become a human person and achieve individual freedom, which again should be exercised in a communal manner."[61] This is consistent with the words of Donatus Nwoga that, "the Igbo concept of the human person is expressed in terms of multiple relationships between humans. The Igbo person per se must be seen as an identity (*mmadu*- a person). The Igbo use of pronouns like *Mmu* (I), *Ngi (*You*)*, then reflexive pronouns, *Nginwa* (yourself), *Mmunwa* (myself) *Nyanwa* (Himself/Herself), shows their understanding of a person. When an Igbo person talks of myself (*Onwem or Munwa*) it does not portray an image but a primary statement of reality."[62] This statement of reality portrays that individual identity can be realized in the midst of others. It implies that within the community one can be known and identified as a full human person.

In Igbo society the human person is defined in relation to the group to which one belongs. The active participation in the community life helps the individual to attain full identification with the society. This means that a mere belonging to the community does not authenticate the Igbo person but the interaction and solidarity with others in the community building.[63] Participation and solidarity with the community gives an Igbo person a sense of belonging and value. In line with this thought, Gyeke Kwame affirmed that, "Africans see a human person as a being who is inherently and to the core communal and who is entrenched in social relationship and in no way as an isolated individual who acts alone."[64] In view of this the Igbo person is first ontologically a member of a particular family, or community and this defines

[60] Egbeke, A., Individuality in an African Communal Universe: In Oguejiofor O. (edit.), *African Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Proceedings of an International Conference held at Bigard Memorial Seminary Enugu, 1998, p. 390

[61] Bujo, B., The Ethical Dimension of Community, Pauline publishers, Nairobi, 1998, p. 148

[62] Nwoga, D., Nka na Nzere, Ahiajoku Lecture, Owerri, 1984, p. 46

[63] Bujo, B., Wider den Universal Anschpruch westlicher Moral, Verlag, Herder Freiburg, 2000, p. 123

[64] Gyeke, K., Person and Community in African Thought: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washignton, DC., 1992, p. 104

who he/she is and who he/she becomes. In the traditional Igbo setting one is not asked who you are but whose child are you (*Nwa onye ka ibu?*) From birth an Igbo person believes that he/she is because he/she belongs. Belong here is of the society, for an individual is a 'nobody,' which implies a mark of bad living for Igbo people. With relationship with others emphasized as a way of being a person, the question arises whether one could contemplate a person if there are no other human beings. The answer is not farfetched for it is through association with other human beings that an individual achieves something or has feelings that are unfamiliar to other lower animals. The person feels that he/she is human only as a result of the interaction and relationship with others. Therefore, John Mbiti asserts: "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am."[65] The community needs me as an individual and I need the community too for my identification as a human person. The human person, in effect, is the foundation, the cause and the end of the society.

Conclusion

The above chapter has centred on identifying and explaining the value which the Igbo person attaches to the dignity of the human person and why. The need to delve into the ontology of the human person from the Igbo standpoint is occasioned by the complex situation that the Igbo people currently find themselves. Current events appear to suggest that they can no longer for certainty establish their stand on long established values of the Igbo society. As a way of explanation, accurate definition of terms is deemed necessary in this work to shed light on the direction the work is taking. The terms help to identify the aims and objectives of the work. The pertinent nature of the topic to the Igbo is underscored by the current social-moral climate in which maintaining the value of the dignity of the human person appears to be fast depreciating. Yet, in order to clearly examine this question, the focus of attention must be directed both inwardly and outwardly to determine the extent to which the culture of the people and other extraneous factors has contributed to the quandary. This will be the focus of subsequent chapters of this work. This chapter primarily has sought to introduce the problem, define terms, and state the aims and objectives of the work. The next chapter will focus on the socio-cultural values of Igbo people and their concomitant effects on human dignity and value.

[65] Mbiti, J., African Religions and Philosophy, Heinemann, Oxford, 1987, p. 141

Chapter Two

Igbo Sources of Human Dignity and the Socio-cultural Values

Introduction

By socio-cultural values are meant those objects, conditions or characteristics that members of a society consider important and valuable in relation to their way of life. Socio-cultural values form the founding principles of the life of the human person. They influence an individual's principles and philosophies of life. They affect and impact the individual's way of living and social life in general. Adani refers to them as "those values that pertain to human beings precisely as humans."[66] Thus socio-cultural values are the values, ideals or customs acceptable to a group which identifies it as a human society.

Following from the proceeding line of thought, any discussion on human dignity in the Igbo socio-cultural setting can hardly be logical without considering the values they represent. In the first chapter attention was concentrated on the concept of value and its meaning. This chapter will examine some vital Igbo socio-cultural values and why they act as sources of human dignity. Though socio-cultural values are numerous in the Igbo society, only those values that are considered essentials in the promotion of the dignity of the human person and life will be examined. These values deal specifically with individual persons as well as the society at large. This is because the socio-cultural values are manifested in relationship with individual human persons. They are primarily meant for the maintenance of peace, harmony and order in the Igbo society. They serve as guiding principles to the Igbo people and help in protecting the values attached to the human person's dignity in the society. These values deal with the respect for the human person, in relation to life, God, culture and tradition. These socio-cultural values also have a lot in common with the people's interpersonal life with one another, especially within the society. Since the Igbo live a communal life and their communities are made up of persons who engage in constant interactions, their socio-cultural values centre on the human person who is the architect of these values and whom the values are meant to serve. The values serve as their ethics, religion and means of sustaining the society. This chapter will explore some of the socio-cultural values starting with the Igbo ethics, bearing in mind that the values cannot operate in a vacuum. NB: (From this chapter the human person will be intermittently abbreviated as HP and human dignity as HD).

[66] Adani, C., op, cit., p. 38

2.1 The Igbo Ethical World Views

Igbo is one of the ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Igbo worldview is complex because of the interplay of forces, material and spiritual. Their religion is not different from their ethics; the two are interwoven in their worldview. In explaining the term world-view, Ikenga Metuh asserts: "A people`s world-view is described as the complex of their beliefs and attitudes corresponding to the origin, the nature, structures, organization and interaction of beings in the universe with particular reference to man. A world-view seeks to answer fundamental questions about the place and relationship of man with the universe, which provides man with the blue print for controlling his environment and for establishing his social and political institution."[67] From this foregoing, understanding a people's world-view is considered essential for knowing their thought patterns and way of living. The Igbo ethical world-view as the study of the standard of conduct, serves as a means through which the Igbo people organize and control their environment socially, politically and otherwise. The Igbo ethical world-view is life oriented. The entities and forces that make up the Igbo world-view influence the life of the people. This streams from the Igbo idea of the universe as a conglomeration of cosmic forces where the inanimate and the animate are always in interaction.

Consequently, the human person is the link between the inanimate and the animate world. The inanimate controls and directs the proceedings of the animate world through the human person. Regarding this cohesion, Ikenga Metuh highlighted the dangers that erupt when it is disrupted: "All the beings in the Igbo world-view are linked together by a network of relationships guided by fixed laws, *Omenala.*[68] Any deviation from these laws by one being even inadvertently can upset the order and bring disaster for others."[69] In effect, the Igbo world-view emphasizes the need for order in the organization of human thought patterns and life; hence, reference is made only to one world, not two worlds. This is born out of the unity that exists in the Igbo world-view strengthened by the interaction of the inanimate and animate beings. Thus the Igbo world-view is said to be peopled with visible and invisible beings...[70] The interaction or cohesion with the living and non-living entities in the Igbo world creates no room for misbehaviour or going contrary to the norms, owing to the belief that the action of one person affects others and even beyond. On this note, the Igbo people are

[67] Metuh, I. E., Comparative Studies op. cit., p. 50
[68] *Omenala* - has to do with the entire Igbo tradition, culture and system of doing things.
[69] Metuh, I. E., God and Man in African Religion, Snaap, Press, Enugu, 1999, p. 84
[70] Izekwe, A. C., Women´s Reproductive Rights ,Ethical and Religious Implications, Unpublished work in the Faculty of Humanities, Imo State Univ., 2009, p. 88

ethically active and responsible as guided by the *Omenala* or tradition. *Omenala* has to do with *Ala,*[71] the earth goddess which Igbo people, as a largely agrarian society, revere for its bounties and believe to be the custodian of all their ethical values. These ethical values are structured into the socio-cultural and socio-political fabric of the Igbo world. The socio-cultural values will be further discussed.

2.2 Sense of the Sacred:

The term "sacred" is associated with a god or religion which is greatly respected or believed to be holy.[72] To discuss the Igbo sense of the sacred a direct connection should be made with their religiosity. According to Arinze, religion expresses the natural tendency of human beings to associate with the transcendent being.[73] The Igbo world-view is fundamentally theocentric, always attached to their belief in supernatural beings.[74] Among these supernatural beings is one whom the Igbos regard as the Supreme Being or *Chukwu*. The usage of this name *Chukwu* varies among the Igbo; thus there are three fundamental names often used for God. These names are: *Chukwu, Chineke* and *Osebuluwa*. *Chukwu* and *Chineke* are derived from two component words: *Chukwu* (*Chi-ukwu*) meaning the great God; *Chineke* (*Chi-na-Eke*) meaning the spirit who creates. *Osebuluwa*, on the other hand, means `Lord` who upholds the world.[75]

The question of God's existence is so obvious among the Igbo that they are not worried about formally? (Something missing) it. They are just conscious of the existence of this transcendent or Supreme Being and their dependency on him. In view of that, George Basden noted that among the Igbo there is "a distinct recognition of a supreme Being – beneficent in character – who is above every other spirit good or evil."[76] This Supreme Being for the Igbo is the maker of all things and they feel His impact through these His creatures. The question may be asked: "How did the Igbo arrive at the conclusion on the existence of such a Supreme Being?" Two reasons might explain this: "the Igbo religious background, and man´s sense of dependence. These are interconnected. An Igbo feels insecure when he is on his own, that is without reference to higher powers. This sense of insecurity naturally arouses in him a tendency to seek shelter of superhuman powers, who in his judgement, are strong enough to

[71] *Ala* is the earth goddess which is the custodian of Igboland and its properties and components.
[72] Longmans Contemporary Dictionary of English, 1995, p. 1252
[73] Arinze, F. A., Sacrifice in Ibo Traditional Religion, 1970, op. cit., p. 8
[74] Alston, W. P., Religion: In Edwards, P., (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1967, pp. 141-142
[75] Iloanusi, A. O., Myths of the Creation of Man and the Origin of Death in Africa: A Study in Igbo Traditional Culture and Other African Cultures, Frankfurt am Main, 1984, p. 79
[76] Basden, G. T., Among the Ibos of Nigeria, Lagos, Univ. Publ. co., 1983, p. 215

assure him maximum protection in every sphere of insufficiency."[77] This attachment and inclination to God shows that, "man is an integrated whole. His physique and spiritual elements are one and indivisible. Man's spiritual element links him with God and makes him aware of his creator. Thus man is aware of God and is dependent upon him. The divine part in him urges him to seek after God and at the same time to maintain fellowship with his fellow man."[78]

Considering this belief, the Igbo dependence on God for everything makes God a household name that is revered with awe in all things. In view of this, Igbo people hold as sacred several things in relation to God and treat them with respect and attach value and dignity to those objects and institutions, beginning with the human person. Explaining this phenomenon, Bernard Idowu asserts that Africans have "institutionalized patterns of belief and worship practised by various African communities from time immemorial in response to the "supernatural" as manifested in their different environment and experiences."[79] Due to their religious attitude and affiliation, John Mbiti referred Africans as being "notoriously religious."[80] This notion indicates that African ways of life and experiences are not separable from religion. Religion serves as the pivot and the axle around which other Igbo values like other Africans rotate. John Mbiti states: "Religion in general terms permeates into all the departments of life of the African so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it."[81]

The Igbo sense of the sacred explains their spirituality which is expressed in their life, words and actions. Their manner of approach to spiritual matters goes a long way to show-case the kind of reverence they have for the sacred. This is a people that see the absolute reality God as the ultimate goal of the human person; a result of the belief that God fashioned man out of his own image and man has the spirit of God in him. God is therefore man's image maker. Thus religion is for the Igbo an interplay between *Chukwu na mmadu* (God and human being). This idea of the ultimate reality makes the Igbo person always aspire to live a good life in order to have a good death and finally reach the spirit world of the ancestors where they believe God is. In view of this, the Igbo person always aspires to please God by relating well with Him and fellow human beings.

The Igbo sense of the sacred can be said to be categorized under three levels of divine beings: the highest level is the Supreme Being, *Chukwu okike* (God the creator), which has mentioned

[77] Edeh, E. M. P., Towards an Igbo Metaphysics, Chicago, 1985, p. 118
[78] Quarcoopome, T. N. O., West African Traditional Religion, Ibadan, 1987, p. 162
[79] Idowu, B., African Traditional Religion, A Definition, op cit., p .104
[80] Mbiti, J. S., African Traditional Religion and Philosophy: In Chigere, M. V., *The Foreign Missionary Background and Indigenous Evangelization in Igboland*, Verlag, Münster, (West) Univ., DISS, 2000, p. 50
[81] ibid., p. 51

above, followed by the deities called *Umuagbara*, and finally the ancestors referred to as *Ndi-ichie*. Chukwu as the Supreme Being and creator of all other beings is worshipped while the *Umuagbara* and *Ndi-ichie* are referred to as the messengers of God. These later beings are also revered because of their affinity to the Supreme Being. As messengers of God, they are believed by Igbo people to be sacred and the means through which sacred worship and sacrifices are made to *Chukwu*. Thus many things in relation to God or the deities like shrines, the objects sacrificed to them and the norms that are attributed to them are also treated with dignity and seen as sacrosanct.

The sense of the sacred summarily for the Igbo as stated is seen primarily in their relationship to God, life, sacred things, institutions, and their religious rituals. On this note, one observes that the sense of the sacred and religion are part and parcel of the Igbo life and culture and are interwoven from the social, psychological, ethical and moral dimensions.[82] The Igbo sense of the sacred is anchored mainly in their religiosity and belief in the Supreme Being. Many things about Igbo people circle around the value and dignity they attach to their belief in religion which they see as the connecting point between them their fellow human beings, ancestors and God the creator.

2.2. 1 Human Life

In traditional African society, the highest good or the *Sumum Bonum* of everything is life. Among other things, Igbo values life as the most cherished and the centre on which other aspects of life revolve. Life is the consciousness of being or existing. In a deeper metaphysical note it is for the Igbo not understood only in the sense of bodily mortal life or abundant physical prowess but also as existence, being.[83] As a result of this, everything possible is done to protect and prolong it. In his ethical explanation of the value of life, Panthaleon Iroegbu argued that "the ethical value for life is ultimately founded on its sanctity and quality as a precious gift to be protected, nurtured and made to flourish for the good of both society and the possessor of life itself."[84] Supporting this view of teh African society on life, Uzodimma Nwala narrated: "While almost all societies have respect for life, Africans have a deep reverential deference for life, especially human life. Its beginning is elaborately celebrated in pregnancy, birth, naming and initiation ceremonies. Its growth and continuity is feasted in adulthood, and adolescence rites, family rites and communal festivities. Its end is

[82] Okoye, M., The Embattled Men: In Chigere, M.V.., *The Foreign Missionary Background:* op. cit., p. 15
[83] Onyewuenyi, I. C., Igbo African Philosophy: in Ofomata, G. E. K., (Ed.), *A Survey of Igbo Nation*, op. cit., p. 419
[84] Iroegbu, P., Kpim of Morality, op. cit p. 80

buoyantly celebrated in death rites, departure rituals and funeral festivities."[85] This is real of Igbo people because the true essence of existence for them is life (*Ndu*) and they value it to a high degree. Explaining the extent to which the Igbo value life, Eugene Uzoukwu attested, "because of the value attached to life in general and human life in particular, Igbo people make every effort and invest resources to sustain and preserve life. Life for them is neither an abstract concept nor a generic term. It is the life of every organism, at the apex of which is the human life. This is expressed in the Igbo word *Mma-ndu.*"[86] *Ndu* (life) is the foundation on which the understanding of the human person (*mma-ndu)* and the community (*umunna*) is built. This important belief in the supremacy of life is reflected both in the cosmological order and in the life and activities of the people. When prayers or sacrifices are offered to God and ancestors it is always for the interest of humanity and preservation of life. Most of the works and purposes of Igbo people circulate around life preservation. Even when they make human sacrifices as in the primitive era, it was claimed to be of a positive end, which was to appease the gods and protect the human family. This will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Mma-ndu literally means the beauty of life, so human beings are the beauty of life. Man as *Mma-ndu* (*mmadu*) is made up of life (*Ndu*) intellect (*uche*) and body (*ahu*). It is the sole function of life to hold body and intellect together for others cannot function without it. Keeping to this togetherness, man is said to be a human being. These three aspects, in addition, make man a rational being. As a result of their rationality, human beings act for their end by the use of their intellect, adding meaning and value to existence. Consequently, the right to life is a natural, inalienable and fundamental right in Igbo society. And the desecration of life is a direct assault on "*Ala.*" For the Igbo, the basic ethical value is to promote life and to eliminate obstacles that will hinder life and individual aspirations ...[87] In effect, human life is the highest cherished value in Igbo society. Names such as *Ndu ka aku* – life is greater than wealth, *Ndu bu isi* – life is of supreme importance are common names given to children by the parents. *Ndu*-(life) refers to the human person and these names indicate that no matter the achievements of the individual, if those successes do not lead to the preservation and increase of life, they are meaningless. Therefore, life is not a cheap property but rather what makes man a noble and valuable being.

Mma-ndu is noble and good; yet, what determines man´s nobility and goodness is *Ndu* (life). Survival in a tolerable way is a major concern of the Igbo people and this has in a large

[85] Nwala, T. U., Igbo Philosophy, Lagos, Lantern Publication, 1985, p. 145
[86]Uzoukwu, E. E., Igbo World and Ultimate Reality: In *Lucerna Journal vol. 4, No 1*, Bigard Memorial Seminary Enugu, 1983, p. 9
[87] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethic, op.cit., p. 118

measure aided in determining their attitude to life. Life for them is priceless and good health is regarded as the highest value, for it relates to life's sustenance. As a result, ill-health or sickness is seen as a depreciation of the worth and quality of the human person.

In a similar vein, childlessness is considered a threat to life in the Igbo setting as it is seen as a curse striking the very root of the traditional value of life. It is bad omen for an Igbo person to leave no issues behind, who will help to increase the *Ndu* or vital force of the family, especially through male issues. Due to the importance and sanctity attached to human life, any action that promotes it is *ihe oma* – a good act; on the contrary, any action that militates against life is *ihe ojoo,* a bad omen, *aru* or *nso ala* - abomination. Following this line of thought, Placid Tempels noted that "in African societies, life force is a central value. Whatever increases it is good and whatever decreases it is bad. Wrong is anything that destroys or harms one´s life-force or the life force of others."[88] Accordingly, life is intrinsically valuable and it is everyone's duty to support and nourish one's life as well as that of others. This "sacredness" attached to life is extended even to the life of the unborn; hence, abortion is extremely intolerable in Igbo society.[89]

From the perspective of the Igbo, blood represents life. Hence, the act of murder is referred to as "spilling of blood."[90] The Igbo regard killing as an abomination because life is considered sacred and should not be taken away with impunity. Thus a justifiable punishment for the act of killing is paying with one's life too or banishment. For the Igbo, taking the life of another denies the offender the right to live as well. The sacredness attached to human life has a lot to do with the Igbo understanding that life comes from God (*Chukwu-okike*). Consequently, no one has right over the life of the other for every life belongs to God. With such theological undercurrent a social mutuality is maintained among the people and humanity is treated with dignity.

From the Igbo theological perspective, respect for human life serves as a way of relating and pleasing God. Ethically, it expresses the value and dignity attached to the human person as a being in relationship with others. For this reason anything that affects human life adversely is taken seriously. For example, the Nigeria-Biafran war of 1967-1970 was not a coincidence by the Igbo but was fought to preserve life. Another insight into how the Igbo people cherish life and savour its sanctity is presented in Chinua Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*. In the cast, Achebe's character, Okonkwo inadvertently killed a young man during the funeral rites of a clan's man called Ezeudu. Though the killing was not intentional, he committed a serious

[88]Tempels, P., Bantu Philosophy, Paris, Presence Africaine, 1959, p. 45
[89] Okafor, F. U., The Igbo Philosophy of Law, Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publ. Co., 1992, p. 79
[90] Ezeh, D. O., The Eucharist as Orikonso, op. cit., p. 70

offence for which he would face serious consequences. The only course open to Okonkwo was to flee from the clan or be banished. It was a crime against the earth goddess to kill a clansman and a man who committed it must flee from the land. He could return to the clan after seven years.[91] Okonkwo fled with his entire household. His property and compound were razed down. Achebe pitiably described the incident thus: And before the cock crowed, Okonkwo and his family were fleeing to his motherland. It was a little village called Mbaino. As soon as the day broke, a large crowd of men from Ezeudu´s quarter stormed Okonkwo´s compound, dressed in garbs of war. They set fire on his house, demolished his red walls, killed his animals and destroyed his barn. The act was the justice of the earth goddess who was offended by the death of a clan's man by another, and they were his messengers. They had no hatred in their hearts against Okonkwo. His closest friend, Obierika was among them. They were merely cleansing the land, which Okonkwo had polluted with the blood of a clansman.[92] This action of the clansmen indicated that there is nothing to be equated with life and that life must be treated with the utmost care. Life for them is a never ending process and its sustenance and not termination represents the goal of Igbo minds. Respect for life is for the Igbo a vision, a mission and a commitment, it is a communal affair as well.

2.3 Sense of Communalism

An Igbo ethical value which is centred on the human person whose operation is community oriented is the sense of communalism. This is made up of multifaceted relationships through kinship. Communalism centres on one's life in the community within a social kinship. It is a symbiotic identification with one´s community as an authentication of self in relationship with others. With regard to this authentication of self with others, kinship stands as that, "which controls social relationships between people in a given community: it governs marital customs and regulations, it determines the behaviour of one individual towards another. Indeed, this sense of kinship binds together the entire life of the tribe and is even extended to cover animals, plants and non-living objects... Almost all the concepts connected with human relationship can be understood and interpreted through the kinship system."[93] Kinship serves here as a strong connection to which the sense of togetherness and communalism find their setting. As a result of this world-view the Igbo human person is not considered as a self-

[91] Achebe, C., Things Fall Apart, London, 1958, p. 87
[92] ibid., p. 88
[93] Mulago, V., Vital Participation; The Cohesive Principle of Bantu Community; In Bansikiza, C., *Consolidating Unity and Peace in Africa,* AMECEA Gaba Publications Spearhead, Nos., 167-169, p. 21

subsistent being, but as being in solidarity with others.[94] This supports the African principle which states that I am because I have relations. Relationship with others is not limited to the living alone but also to the dead ancestors and those yet to be born. This idea fuels the practice among the people to live together in communities. The Igbo people see their community orientation as an advantage to every individual. According to Gerhard Droesser, "the advantage of the community affords the individual life, security and solidarity."[95] Therefore, the integration demonstrates fraternity, sense of belonging, solidarity and an awareness of dependence.[96] Thus the human person needs the other to sustain existence.

The mention of community primarily portrays interpersonal bonds, biological or otherwise. In the community, intimacy and relatedness is the real life's organ and characteristic. The communal feature of the traditional Igbo society can be observed through the Igbo extended family system practice, characterised by mutual help and interdependence. Igbo people as a group do not have sharp distinctions between "brother" and "half-brother," "half-sister" or cousins, etcetera. The real Igbo person treats and calls any relation brother or sister and treats each other as one. In a community, the relationship becomes a life organ because there is a common ancestry.[97]

Reflecting on the importance of community life in Africa, Mercy Oduyoye wrote, "Africans recognize life as life-in-community. We can truly know ourselves if we remain true to our community, past and present. The concept of individual success or failure is secondary. The ethnic group, the village, the locality, are crucial in one´s estimation of oneself. Our nature as beings-in-relation is a two way relation: with God and with our fellow human beings."[98] This supports the Igbo notion that no one is an Island. Given this principle, it is not surprising that traditional Africans abhor individualistic and isolationistic tendencies in life. In fact, "it is a community trait that all the members live in close association dictated by common values. They fraternally share a sense of belonging, solidarity, an awareness of dependence and personal identification which prompts the individual to claim the particular community as his own and as the place where he belongs..."[99] In essence this relationship is a double carriage

[94] Umeh, E. C., African Theology of Solidarity; op. cit., p. 29

[95] Droesser, G., Institutionen und Soziales Handeln: In Heimbach-Steins, M. (HG.), *Christliche Sozialethik*, Ein Lehrbuch, Pustet, Regensburg, Bd. 1, 2004, 231. „ Der Vorteil der Gemeinschaftsform für das individuelle Leben ist der der Sicherheit und der Solidarität,…

[96] Nzomiwu, J. P., The Concept of Justice among the Traditional Igbo, An Ethical Inquiry, Fides Publ., Awka, 1995, p. 5

[97] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethic, op. cit., p. 33

[98] Oduyoye, M., The Value of African Religious Beliefs and Practices for Christian Theology: in *African Theology en Route*, pp. 110-111

[99] Nzomiwu, J. P., The Concept of Justice Among the Traditional Igbo: An Ethical Inquiry, Fides Pub., Awka 1999, p. 5

that is both vertical and horizontal; indicating that what happens to the individual touches the community and what happens to the community touches the individual.

Notably on this factor, in Igbo society, "the concept of human person is dependent on and subordinate to social entities and cultural processes."[100] This mutuality is very fundamental to the understanding of the Igbo concept of community and humanity. Highlighting this idea, Emmanuel Umeh, added "that man is made to live in solidarity and relationship. The human person makes a composite whole with others; he authenticates himself through solidarity and in relationship with the community. This entails that African concept of human person is understandable in terms of subsistent relationship".[101] In this context then one cannot speak of a person in Africa outside the community, for one is identified through the community one belongs. Corroborating this view, Uzoukwu poignantly infers that "the African experience of person takes in one fell swoop the community and the individual".[102] The individual cannot do without the community, for it is in the community that the individual finds his/her identity as a person.

To realize this shared identity, the individuals in the community are obliged to have common interests and objectives. Agreement on common interests and objectives is the sufficient condition for the existence of the community.[103] Common interests and objectives unite and keep them together as an entity. The Igbo adage *Onye aghala nwanne ya* (do not leave your relation behind or unattended) summarizes the sense of communalism prevalent among them. The adage explains the unalloyed relational relationship that exists in the family and within the kinship, clans and community at large. In the opinion of Josephat Oguejiofor, the Igbo person "views his community in relation to other communities just as he views his family in relation to other families, and his person in relation to other persons."[104] In line with this view, no one is seen as man alone and success is attainable in co-operation with others. Therefore, a successful man is the one who sees his success as a calling to take responsibility for the betterment of his people and community. Socially and culturally, the individual in many ways is indebted to the different levels of the community for the individual's success. In all situations, one´s community is always his/her last resort towards the perpetuation of the community life.[105]

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[100] Umeh, E. C., African Theology of Solidarity, op. cit., p. 26
[101] ibid. p. 26
[102] Uzukwu, E. E., Human Rights in Africa-Contextual Theological Reflection: in *Bulletin of ecumenical Theology, Human Rights, The African Perspective*, p. 99
[103] Abanuka, B., Holosism, op. cit. p. 6
[104] Oguejiofor, J. O., The Influence of Igbo Traditional Religion on the Socio-Political Character of the Igbo Fulladu Pub. Coy.,1996, p. 20
[105] Nwala, T. U., Igbo Philosophy, Lantern Books Publishers, (Ikeja-Lagos), 1966, p. 145

In the Igbo context, to exist is to belong to a community. In effect, solitary life is unimaginable in Igbo society; hence, serious efforts go towards maintaining a good life in the community, especially, with regard to the ethics of interpersonal relationships. Supporting this idea from the overall African perspective, Bujo Benezet highlighted that "an African does not consider his freedom as being independent of the community. This is because the individual and the community are in continuous interaction. The individual cannot be free or exist if the community is not free or does not exist. Therefore the freedom and the existence of the community depend on the individual. To that effect the individual leads the community as a community to freedom and at the same time gives himself freedom."[106] This indicates a real interdependence on the side of the individual and the community as the two complement each other. On this ground communitarian ethics considers the community as a fundamental human good that advocates a life of mutual consideration and interdependence, a life which provides a viable framework for the fulfilment of the individual's nature or potentials, a life free from hostility and confrontation: such a life is most rewarding and fulfilling.[107] In my opinion, such a life advocates, promotes and upholds the value and dignity of the human person.

The symbolic relationship between individuals and the community also can be explained with the Igbo adage *Igwe bu ike*- united we stand. This adage enunciates that the potentials of each individual are realized and actualized in the community, meaning that the usefulness of the individual lies authentically on the individual's achievement through useful identification with the community.[108] The individual's identification with the community goes a long way to make the individual a community oriented person with the interest of others at heart.

2.3.1 Importance of Being Community Oriented

John Mbiti enumerates the advantages and implications of being community oriented: "Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. An Igbo maxim stated it thus *ometu anya, ometu imi* (when the eye is affected the nose feels it too) The individual can only say I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am."[109] The Igbo individual can be said to exists only through belonging to a community. It follows that the authentication and usefulness of the Igbo individual lies in his or her identification with the community. Community orientation is a vital force in the life of the Igbo person because the existence and importance of the

[106] Bujo, B., The Ethical Dimension of Community, Nairobi, 1998, p. 27
[107] ibid., p. 27
[108] Umeh, E. C., African Theology of Solidarity, op.cit., p. 28
[109] Mbiti, J. S., African Philososphy and Religion, op. cit., p. 99

individual is realised only in the community in association with others. The community supports is the individual and his or her success is the success of the community and vice-versa. According to Oswald Nell-Breuning "each individual depends on the community and the community on the individual."[110] The implication is that the actualisation of personal potentialities is attainable in actual authentic identification with the community and the community with the individual.

From the foregoing the being of an Igbo person is essentially dependent on the individual's solidarity and relationship with the community. The community is "the custodian of the individual, and offers the person psychological security and provides physical and ideological identity as well."[111] That the success of an individual is the success of the community is evidenced by notable acts of community support. For example, the community might team to sponsor some brilliant individuals whose parents lack the means to sponsor them in school because they believed that the achievement of the individual is the achievement of the community. In relation to this Kwame Gyeke wrote, "The community alone constitutes the context, the social or cultural space, in which the actualisation of the possibilities of the individual person can take place, to acquire and develop his personality and fully become the kind of person he wants to be..."[112] Consequently, the community serves as an organ, where every person is valued and has a contribution and role to play.

In juxtaposition, Chukwuemeka Umeh noted that "identifying with the community and the concept of human person as subsistence being in relationship does not deny the individualization of each person. The individual person possesses a clear concept of himself as a distinct person of volition. But the fact remains indisputable that communities are always stronger than individuals and identifying with the community serves as a social security."[113] This implies that identifying with the community does not in any way devalue the person's individuality but raises the value and dignity of the person. Thus, since the individuals in the community are distinct, they have different desires and aspirations and pursue similar interests and objectives in different ways. As an example, if an individual participates in community shared values and practices, and in the process discovers values against human dignity, the individual is free to question and take decisions on them. The individual can take a distance from them... In this capacity one can assert oneself in the community and the intelligibility of

.[110] Nell-Breuning, O., Baugesetze der Gessellschaft, Herder, Freiburg, 1990, p. 16
[111] Ukagba, G., Afroxiology: The Ethical Study of African Values: Iroegbu, P. and Echekwube, A., *Kpim Of Morality*, op.cit., p. 185
[112] Kwame, G., Persons and Community in African Thought, Washington, 1992, p. 106
[113] ibid., p. 28

the individual's autonomous choice and plans in life is made possible.[114] The point being made here is that despite the fact that the community influences the individual it does not prevent the individual from taking personal initiatives in life. Rather it compromises with individual ideological philosophies taking what is best in each for the good of the community.

This suggests that the community's support to the individual should not warrant the denial of individual self-assertion and capabilities, rather that the individual needs the community in bid to make ends meet. The symbiotic approach is not imperative but is to be understood as a socio-ethical approach to life, so that the individual is not seen as an entity outside the community. Agreement with this logic then implies a necessity to have others in mind, which means having a common responsibility to others. These German words "*Gemeinverstrickung*" – common involvement, and "*Gemeinhaftung*"[115] – common responsibility expounds this idea vividly. These are important concepts because man´s social existence is characterized through those concepts.[116] Based on this the community respects the individual's value and dignity and the individual also respects the community status on the individual's life, for without dignity there is no volition and without volition there is no humanity. Thus in their autonomy, the Igbo person is never unmindful of the sense of solidarity with others. The Igbo daily expression *aka nri kwuo aka ekpe aka ekpe akwuo aka nri* – let the right hand wash the left hand and the left the right and they become clean lends support to this position. From this perspective of common interest, the individual in his/her autonomy cannot do without the other. The autonomous individual in the community needs others for continuous development.[117] Therefore every Igbo needs other fellow humans in the community in order to survive.[118] Life, as it is, is not an individual venture.[119]

2.3.2 Sense of Hospitality

Hospitality is an important value in Igbo society in general. It is an aspect of the Igbo communal system of living and sharing. Worthy of note is that hospitality is one of the few African traditional values that has not yielded to the intrusions of modern culture. Thus "despite the destabilization of traditional life by colonialism, foreign world views, technology and modern living, ... African hospitality has held rather well to the extent that it could be

[114] Kwame, G., An Essay on African Philosophical Thought, op.cit., p. 106
[115] Kliemt, H., Solidarität in Freiheit, Karl Alber, Freiburg, 1995, p. 50
[116] Kwazu, F. C. B., Developing a Viable Strategy., op. cit., 2013, p. 224
[117] Bujo, B., Wider den Universalanspruch, Westlicher Moral, Herder Verlag, Freiburg, 2000, pp. 127 -128
[118] Taylor, C., Philosophy and the Human Sciences, Philosophical Papers 2, Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 190-191
[119] Arinze, F. A., Sacrifice in Ibo Religion, Ibadan Univ. Press, Nigeria, 1970, pp. 4-5

described as a way of being an African."[120] This is an Igbo practical way of expressing love and acceptance of each other. Hospitality as a way of life bounds up with personal relationships with the people and the communities. It is an unconditional readiness to share.[121] It aims at establishing and sustaining human relationships, one with another and with the community.

As a way of life, hospitality is part and parcel of the social values that the Igbo people cherish. It ethically regulates people's attitudes towards their fellow human beings, especially strangers, visitors and guests. The Igbo people accept their visitors as their own, in acknowledgment of the fact that they would also be strangers somewhere, someday. Hospitality is therefore an encounter of the host and the guest. It is a cultural virtue and a major social obligation, and because of its simplicity it is expected of everybody, rich or poor.[122] As a way of life, it is an act every Igbo person expects from kith and kin. On this note, Victor Uchendu notes that, "any sign of unwillingness to meet the demands of hospitality results not only in loss of prestige (human worth) on the part of the inhospitable person in the society, but in calling him all sorts of derogatory names such as *onye aka chichi* (a tight fisted person) and *oribe enyeghi mmadu* (an ungenerous person)."[123] This attitude is ethically abhorrent in the Igbo setting, for it is a sign of lack of charity and acceptability which is part of Igbo ethics of living. Hospitality aids in the regulation of human relationship and identification in the society. The very first sign of hospitality by an Igbo to a guest is to offer him/her kolanut *(ọji).* This serves as a sign of acceptance and communion with the guest.

Hospitality elaborately extends to other social matters like attending funerals, weddings, naming ceremonies and other activities that constitute a major part of the people's traditional life. It involves the gathering of the people as a group in doing things and identifying with each other in a social manner. Covertly, "hospitality in terms of socialization therefore could be said to be an inseparable link with social mobility goals where the amassing of followers, friends and well-wishers are more important than the amassing of wealth itself."[124] This affirms the Igbo saying *Madu-ka-aku* – meaning that human beings are greater than wealth or *onye nwere madu ka onye nwere ego* – meaning he who has people is better than he who has wealth. Igbo hospitality as a value aims at amassing and accommodating people for good and giving them sense of belonging.

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[120] ibid., p. 159
[121] Olikenyi, G. I., African Hospitality; A Model for the Communication of the Gospel in the African Cultural Context, Snaap, Press Ltd., Enugu, p. 102
[122] Uchendu, V. C., The Igbo of South East Nigeria, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965, p. 71
[123] ibid. p. 72
[124] Chigere, M. V., The Foreign Missionary Background…, op. cit. p. 25

Hospitality as a system of life has a lot of significance in the life of the people, especially with the dignified manner the Igbo attend to their guests as humans showing how they value individual persons and their cordial sense of accommodation. There exists varied levels and gradations of hospitality - from adult and adolescent ranges, yet, the message remains that hospitality is part and parcel of Igbo ethics of living. A brief explanation of the two important parties that are involved in this hospitality event is warranted.

2.3.2.1 The Host

A host in the ordinary English understanding is someone who invites another or others as guests and provides them with food and drink.[125] In the Igbo parlance, the human person as a host is not limited to one who invites a guest or guests but one who as well serves as host to any stranger that comes around. Gregory Olikenyi gives a compelling explanation of being a host in the Igbo context: "It is not restricted with regard to space and time. In other words, one can be a host – i.e., one who receives or welcomes a guest- at any place at any time."[126] In the Igbo context of hospitality nobody is exempt from the practice because anybody can be a host. Equally the host can be also in form of a group, the family or community depending on the situation or occasion in play. In a situation where the family or group is the host every member is involved in attending to the guest, but the head of the family or the group plays the role of the guardian.

2.3.2.2 The Guest

The guest is the visitor and is treated with some sense of inviolability, care and respect in Igboland. Describing the value attached to a guest, Eugene Uzoukwu characterizes the stranger as a baby who must be welcomed and protected.[127] Naturally, Igbo people treat their guests well because they believe that their ancestors and even the gods visit them in these forms. On this note the presence of a guest is seen as a good omen, for the guest in other words is believed to have come with good luck. In some cases, however, the guest can constitute... both threat and luck.[128] This is one of the unfortunate realities of the sense of hospitality. Despite this unbecoming situation, the Igbo often dwell on the good aspect to welcome their guests with open arms, always seeing their gesture as service to humanity and to God.

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[125] Longman Contemporary English Dictionary. Neue Entwicklung, p. 693
[126] Olikenyi, G. I., African Hospitality, op.cit., p. 104
[127] Uzoukwu, E. E., Igbo World and Ultimate Reality, in *Lucerna Journal, vol. 4, No. 1,* op. cit., p. 159
[128] ibid. p. 159

2.4 Respect for Elders

Scripture enjoins us to respect our father and mother so that things may go well with us and our days may be long (Deuteronomy 5:16).[129] The Igbo people in their understanding did not stop at just father and mother, they extended it to all their seniors. An elder for the Igbo is one who is older than any person, one who also is advanced in age. An elder is believed to have a lot of wisdom as a result of accumulated experience in life. To be advanced in age in the Igbo society is an honour and a sign of good living and dignity. Hence, elders are accorded high respect and regard in the society. They are believed to be the custodians of the culture and traditions. The elders are the policy makers and preside over the affairs of the society. Adibe Ejiofor writes that, "in the primordial Igbo-land the decision of the elders constituted laws that would be binding on all members of the community. Problem and cases were tried with sacredness and laws were enforced...." [130] Ethically, elders are believed to literally conduct themselves well, to be steadfast with the truth, and sincere in their life. As custodians of the societal tradition and culture, they settle indifferences and see to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the society. The elders intrinsically are expected to be sincere and straightforward in their dealings. A real traditional Igbo elder is supposed to be a just fellow who does not lie and stands for the truth in all circumstances. For these reasons enumerated, they are accorded a lot of respect.

The Igbo people long for a prolonged life because they see long life as a gift and blessing from God. Hence, people respect the elders so as to receive such blessings from God. This explains the Igbo aphorism that *Onye fee eze, eze eruo ya aka* (when you venerate a king you will get your share of kingship). It is a serious offence and ethically wrong to insult or abuse an elder or one's parents, regardless the situation. The place and respect accorded the elders in the community makes old age a glorious stage to which all aspire. Even in prayers one of the primordial intentions of the Igbo person is long life. Hence, being an elder is considered a blessing and an honourable status. Ferdinand Ezekwonna pointed that, "the elders become the sage of the community and are always consulted once there is an issue in the village, clan or family."[131] The elders by effect of their age and experience are consultors in all aspects of Igbo society. This marks them out as the custodians of wisdom and consolidates their

[129] Good News Bible, Todays English Version, Pauline Pub. 2009, Deuteronomy 5: 16 Respect your father and mother, as I, the Lord your God, command you and so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you. NB: All other biblical quotations will be from the same bible version.
[130] Adibe, G. E., Igbo Issues and Manipulation of Divinities, Mid-Field Publishers Ltd., Onitsha, 2009, p. 30
[131] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethic; The Basis for the Moral Consciousness and Autonomy of the Individual, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2005, p. 85

presence as resource personnel who are highly needed in the community.[132] The role of elders in Igbo affairs is summarized with the Igbo statement that *-ihe okenye noduru ala hu nwata kwuru oto ogaghi ahu ya* (What an elder saw while sitting down cannot be seen by a child while standing up).

The value, respect and love for the elders by the people are manifested by the various ways they are cared for, especially in sickness and their dying moments. The Igbo do not leave their elders and sick ones to die alone in agony or regret. The family, friends and the community always are in communion with their sick until they pass on. They are always in contact with the elders and in that way the individual does not lose his/her personhood and the dignity attached to it. Culturally, no one wants to give another the chance of accusing him or her of negligence in the duty to care for an aged parent, thus making the care for the elderly by the children and relations one of the most important positive social values. The Igbo belief that as one treats one`s parents so will the children in turn treat the person adds additional spur to the desire to care for the elderly. No one wants to experience an unhappy old age, for each one, in turns, feels the need to be loved and cared for. This accounts for the reasons why the idea of old people's home or home for the aged is incongruous with Igbo worldview. Even in old age or sickness, the community, family and friends still value the contact and relationship of the individual. Taking care of their aged and elders as an obligation is a sign of respect and love for them. Through interaction and care for elders they are integrated into the community and family. Through communal living they also express the value and dignity they place on the human person and life, irrespective of age and disability.

The important position and role of the elders in Igboland is a symbiotic reality because as the society needs the elders, the elders in turn need the society and the young. The youths are needed to take over from the elders as a way of biological regeneration and cultural transmission. Ethically the elders are needed to participate in the life of the community to enrich the community with their wisdom and traditional knowledge of the land. Commenting on the importance of the elders in the African community, Tempels Placiders stated that "the young cannot know without the elders...if the young were left to themselves, the village would go nowhere... They would stray to disaster."[133] The idea of "knowing" here means that the ethical, social, religious and cultural norms of living together with respect and care for each other can only be transmitted to the youths from the elders. Many of these thoughts and

[132] ibid. p. 85
[133] Tempels, P., Bantu Philosophy, Presence Africaine Pub., 1959, p. 73

ideas are transmitted orally as many are not yet documented. The elders serve as guardians and light to future generations.

The elders also are seen as the bridge between the living and the dead ancestors; hence, they stand and serve as a linkage that cannot be broken. Reflecting on the hierarchy of beings, Bujo Benezet asserts that, "life coming from God "flows" in a hierarchical order. At the peak of it are the ancestors, who are followed by the elders of the community, and these, include, father, mother of the family, the clan head, and the chief, or king. According to their function and task in the community, they form the link between the ancestors and the living, who only in this way can participate in the fullness of life."[134] This life chain helps the Igbo to subsist because there is dependency and ethical regard for one another. No group is secluded from the community life; each makes its own impact on the other. This gives meaning and fulfilment to life which is the aspiration of every Igbo person. Through this means the Igbo individual is nurtured and cultivated to have value for one another.

2.4.1 Truth and Justice

In close association to respect for elders in Igbo society is the bi-value of truth and justice. In the above society, it is the good life that is cherished, a life lived in truth and justice. In the words of George Ukagba, "truth affirms or confirms the order of things. It does not paint reality; rather, it represents it as it is."[135]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.[136] On this note the Igbo often aspires to the truth, to respect it in order to make a more responsible living.

Justice is a central value. It means, "Making things to take their positions according to proper order in nature and arrangement in society."[137] That indicates doing things the right way in sincerity and truth. Truth and justice are inseparable values in Igbo society. Life is meaningful when it is lived in justice and truth, and for this, the Igbo would say "*Eziokwu bu ndu*" (truth is life). Justice is related to the rights of the individual and begets duties as well. It is a right and as well a responsibility of every member of Igbo society.

As justice is giving to all what their due is, it serves as the bedrock for the promotion of the human person's value and dignity. It is to the ethical culture of the Igbo one of the

[134] Bujo, B., The Ethical Dimension of Community, Pauline Publications, Nairobi, 1998, p. 197
[135] Ukagba, G., Afroxiology: in Iroegbu, P., (Ed.), *Kpim Of Morality*, op.cit., p. 184
[136] John XXIII, Encyclical, Pacem in Terris: AAs 55 1965, 265-266
[137] ibid., p. 184

fundamental values expressed succinctly with the Igbo adage, *"Egbe bere, ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebela ya gosi ya ebe oga ebe"* (let the kite perch and let the eagle perch, which ever tries to prevent the other from perching, let him show the other where to perch). Therefore justice entails equality and fair play in all dealings with others. It is that concept which recognises the rights of all individual persons, excluding any act of discrimination and ill feeling based on colour, race, sex, religion or social status.

Justice as value holds the Igbo society together with the spirit of live and let live. It emphasizes equality, enhances each person's value, dignity and right as equal partners in all things. Thus in asserting the equality of all HP there is a deep reflection of the concept of justice in such sayings as *ogburu onye na onye ga-ala* (The murderer will perish with the murdered). Reflecting on it, Emmanuel Umeh describes justice as, "a natural right of man, a must for every human person." [138] Justice, more than an Igbo value, is universal to all humans. To act justly is to act according to the universal law of nature.[139]

Because of the fundamental importance of justice in the ethical life of the HP, Igbo people are always desirous of it. They go to any length to seek for justice when it is needed. Their quest for justice at times leads them to waging wars, bringing in deities, and engaging in other acts that could make justice reign. The Igbo human person always solicits and advocates for justice in all situations and never plays down on it, especially when life is involved or issues that relate to people and their belongings. Hence, truth and justice serve as enhancers to the value and dignity of the HP and serve as means of sustaining them in the society.

2.5 Emulation and Adaptability

The Igbo spirit of emulation and adaptability is seen primarily in the manner in which their culture is being handled. As it is, culture is not static, rather dynamic, and open to interaction and communication. For the Igbo, it is transferred from the elders to the younger generation who have the onus to further transmit it. Hence, it creates room for emulation, adaptation and acceptance of new things and ideas. The Igbo youths are obligated to learn from the elders and to preserve and promote culture. They emulate from the elder the qualities of good living and a positive approach to life while adapting these qualities to their own time. Their ability to adapt to change is a testimony to the Igbo pragmatic and receptive character. A vivid manifestation of this could be seen in the manner they imbibe and accept their culture as their nature in all their dealings. The same inclination and sense of acceptability led the Igbo

[138] Umeh, E. C., African Theology of Solidarity, Dr. KOvac Hamburg, 2008, p. 10
[139] ibid. p. 10

people to see and accept western education and other enterprising events many years ago. Reflecting on this, Josephat Oguejiofor stressed that "looking at the Igbo and their sense of adaptability and receptivity, it must be borne in mind in all circumstances their readiness to do certain things is owed to some underlying traits which can be channelled to laudable and sometimes despicable goals."[140] In response to this aspect of their life, they are ready to take giant strides and risks in order to achieve their goals in life. They are unrelenting and never discouraged. In view of this attitude of theirs, Igbo people have been described by some of their neighbours and foreigners who encountered them as being "proud, too pushy, domineering, intelligent, difficult to manage or control, novelty-loving, industrious, virile, democratic, chameleon-like, ambitious and a go–ahead folks"[141]

Given their pragmatic and flexible approach to life, other cultures are assimilated into the Igbo culture through this manner of emulation. The Igbo people, according to Michael Olisa, "are one of Nigeria's most dispersed people, a phenomenon attributed to the high degree of empathy, physical adaptability and receptivity to change."[142] Based on this, they are willing to relocate to other localities and cultural settings in search of gainful employment. For George Basden, "whatever the conditions, the Igbo immigrants adapt themselves to meet them, and it is not long before they make their presence felt in the localities where they settle."[143] This shows their openness to adapt to new situations, including assimilating anywhere, adding the habits and dress style of their host culture to their own. Their predilection for adaptability is centred on the principle that it is what is new that enhances what exists. By doing so they add to, rather than replace what they have. As people who value other people and cultures and have interest in other people and their affairs, the Igbo adapt easily to new environments and situations with the hope of emerging with success based on their efforts with truth and justice. This is not just for the enhancement of one's personal prestige but a way to add value to their personality. It exposes them more to other aspects and events of life and enhances their struggle for human development and self-authentication.

The first missionaries arrived in Igbo-land in the second half of the 19th century. They were received, but Missionary work did not attract many adherents then. The first converts were mostly slaves bought by the missionaries. However, it was not until the missionaries started the work of education, a thing that promised a better future for Igbo people that the missionaries experienced an explosion or boom in conversion of the indigenes to Christianity.

[140] Oguejiofor, J. O., The Influence of Igbo Traditional Religion, op. cit., p. 27

[141] Agu, C., Secularization in Igboland, op. cit., p. 234

[142] Olisa, M. S. O., Igbo Socio-Political System: in Ofomata G. E. K., (ed.), *A Survey of Igbo Nation*, Africana Fep. Pub., 2002, p. 218

[143] Basden, G. T., The Niger Ibos, op. cit., p. 25

2.6 Autonomy of the Human Person

The concept of autonomy of the human person has close relationship with ownership as a right but with subtle distinction in that it is more holistic in nature than ownership which is based more on material possessions. Autonomy is an Igbo characteristic trait that refers to the individual as a person with freedom of thought and action but within the framework of the society. It is, "the ability to make your own decisions without being influenced by anyone else."[144] Independency is a general craving of every HP, not relative to Igbo people alone, especially in decision making. It denotes having the ability and freedom to make personal decisions about issues of life without coercion. The Igbo person is not completely swallowed up in the community relationship as a mere object or thing. Hence, the Igbo society operates a system that encourages communal identification and power, yet with personal achievements and identification.

From the above perspective, Igbo people like other human beings love autonomy; they like to be self-sufficient, think freely and determine their life as it suits them. Autonomy cannot however be at the detriment of the community. Ferdinand Ezekwonna summarized the Igbo understanding of autonomy as, "the individual's freedom of action in and with the community."[145] This indicates that the individual's autonomy is realised and expressed within the community. The individual's autonomy is in response to the community's interest in relation to others and vice versa. Relatively, Bujo Benezet affirms that "freedom and the ethical responsibility of the individual within the black community cannot be expressed more forcefully. Once more, the reciprocal relationship between the community and the individual has to be stressed. When we say that, as a way of participation theory, an individual person is not in position to live outside the community, the same community as well must be eager to promote and support the interest of the individual. The clan community must not destroy the individual freedom, but must do everything to enable each one to have fullness of life."[146] This shows that the essence of individual freedom is to serve the good of the community and the community serves the good of the individual as well. In a further clarification of this notion, Iroegbu argues that "individual autonomy is not absolute but relative: limited, but nevertheless real. This means that there are certain constraints which the community imposes on the individual. Autonomy does not rule out all constraints. It is not anomy. These constraints include certain moral and ethical conventions and cultural traditions of the

[144] Longman Dictionary of contemporary English, op.cit., p. 73
[145] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethics, op. cit. p. 173
[146] Bujo, B., African Christian Morality at the Age of Inculturation, Nairobi, 1990, p. 97

community as well as the shared values and goals of the community..."[147] With this in mind, the emphasis on individual autonomy does not automatically give the Igbo person freedom in all things. The individual is a community oriented being who is integrated in the community with norms and values that are to be observed. As a member of the community, the individual is obliged to keep by the norms and values as stipulated by the community. In effect, the Igbo individual is autonomously free but limited at the same time. Otherwise, injustices will be perpetuated and might become right resulting in chaos within the community.

Due to the autonomy of the Igbo person, the individual is seen as a person whose fate is not totally determined by the community from which one cannot disengage himself. The individual rather is to be seen as a free active participator with a critical mind towards community values and actions. This helps the individual to be free to challenge and, even at times, checkmate the happenings in the community without bias. Individuals can engineer effective change within the community because they are part of the community and know what is best for it. As an appraisal of this autonomy of the individual in the Igbo community Pantaleon Iroegbu stressed that, "this possibility of people being able to challenge the structures in place shows how the traditional Igbo communities value individual autonomy and how in practical terms free and autonomous people are."[148] This as a result widens the individual's sense of responsibility for oneself and repudiates social parasitism which is abhorred in Igbo society; equally solving the problem of labouring hard and earning low. As a result, it creates room for fair-play and justice in all dealings in the community.

By providing a conducive and protective atmosphere for the individual, the community helps the individual to be strong and firm in character. To this effect, Raymond Egwu pointed out that naturally the Igbo person, "…abhors being controlled or conditioned by others. He detests relying on others for his livelihood, for the expression of his opinion, for the guidance of his conduct and does not cherish being unduly influenced by somebody or something."[149] Igbo people known for their self-confidence are of the strong conviction that one person is as good as the other and what one can do, the other can equally achieve. As a result, dependency as a way of life is never cherished, rather a spirit of positive emulation is always encouraged. This mentality on the other hand does not make the Igbo to be contrary to the African culture and worldview, which considers the human person as a being in solidarity with others. It rather makes them to be more self-reliant and solidly integrated in their society and culture. It is a positive move from dependency to independency mainly in economy and expression but

[147] Iroegbu, P., Communalism Towards Justice in Africa, "Kpim of Politics", Owerri, 1999, pp. 51-52
[148] ibid., p. 52
[149] Egwu, R., Igbo Idea of The Supreme Being and the Triune God, Echter, Würzburg, 1998, p. 46

culturally and otherwise they remain beings in solidarity with one another. A common reality on the ground is that the Igbo person is a social being like any other social entity and cannot be otherwise. The Igbo human person as a communal being savours and participates in the community's ethical welfare rather than fashioning one's own ethical standard. George Ukagba emphasized that "the individual and community are in dialectical complementarities."[150] Therefore, the person acts within the framework and dictates of the community; made so because the individual is a product of a particular milieu or culture which has its own communal *modus Vivendi* and *Operandi*.

As an articulation of the uniqueness of autonomy and individual identity in relationship to the value and dignity of the human person, Charles Agu stressed that "Igbo people are self-conscious, value personal initiatives; detest dictation, likewise self-sustenance is valued and encouraged. An Igbo person believes in the efficaciousness of hard work. Thus economic individualism serves as another impetus to hard work rather than selfishness. They also have a passion for achievement and status motivation, competition and healthy rivalry in addition to a high sense of superiority, emulation and adaptability".[151] This serves as a boost to Igbo people to always aspire to be autonomous and not dependent on others. The average Igbo loves competition and merit. This in line makes them assert their dignity and that of their families and society at large. It serves as status making tool for creativity.

The autonomy in Igbo life practically manifested in their economic organizations and pursuits "is described as economic individualism."[152]This does not minimize mutual help but rather encourages it; hence, economic individualism serves as an impetus to hard work. The Igbo people are very astute in entrepreneurship, as a result of which Basil Davidson remarked: "These people have always enjoyed a reputation for restless enterprise in trade."[153] And this led to the notion that, "the Igbo are astute in trade."[154] It demands a lot of hard work to make enough wealth, because, for them one is judged according to one's achievement in life rather than what others achieved for the individual. The spirit of hard work prevalent among the Igbos gives room for healthy competition and progress. Each person wants to convince oneself and others of one's personal capacity and desire to make ends meet. Nevertheless, the Igbo never forgets that one cannot make it alone or enjoy alone. The individual carries his or her family and community interests along. The Igbo saying that no single tree can make a

[150] Ukagba, G., Afroxiology, op.cit., p. 185
[151] Agu, C., Secularization in Igboland: Socio-Religious Change and its Challenges to the Church among the Igbo, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1989, p. 234
[152] Oguejiofor, J. O., The influence of Igbo Traditional Religion, op. cit., p. 22
[153] Davidson, B., The African Genius, Little Brown and company, 1969, Boston, p. 92
[154] Basden, G. T., The Niger Ibos, In Oguejiofor, J.O.,*The Influence of Igbo Traditional Religion,* op. cit. p. .25

forest buttresses this. Due to the Igbo attachment to the community, all things pertaining to life and achievements are embedded within the family and community interest.

The Igbo sense of human autonomy is to be seen positively as freedom from and with one another. The role of the community then serves as a help to gain a comprehensive autonomy.[155] The community becomes a community of autonomous individuals with common interests aimed at upholding and giving value and dignity to humanity. The autonomy of the human person creates room for the right of a person to work and own things as an individual in the community.

2.6.1 Ownership as Right and Value

In the traditional Igbo society, there is a strong belief and practice of the right of ownership of property. Essentially, the right to own property streams from basic human instincts. It comes from nature to own things, consume or determine how to use them, depending on the circumstances.[156] This implies that acquisition and ownership of property is an aspect of life helping to sustain human existence. Regarding the right of ownership of property, Austin Fagothey wrote: "A thing is said to be one's own when it is reserved to a certain person and all others are excluded from it ...an owner is a proprietor, ownership is proprietorship, and belongings are property. Ownership may therefore be defined as the right of exclusive control and disposal over a thing at will"[157] The operative words are right, exclusive control and disposal over a thing at will. Hence, to own a thing, the owner must have the exclusive right of possessing it. An absolute owner of a property acts at his own will by deciding what to do with his property, and does not need to consult anyone before disposing of it. Primarily, the right to property as a concept in the Igbo communal setting is a value that adds dignity on the HP. It makes the person a rightful owner to things that belong to him/her. No one has the right to intervene except in matters of disputed property. Ownership of property dignifies the person and affords him or her an inalienable right.

Every person has the fundamental right to work, to use and keep whatever is due to the individual that comes from the labour. This accords with the words of scripture that human beings should subdue the earth and manage it for human purposes with reasonable sense of responsibility.[158] Consequently, "the right of human beings to manage and organise all other

[155],Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethic, op. cit., p. 187
[156] Obiora, I., Value Meaning and Social Structure of Human Work, Peter Lang , Frank Furt am Main, 1986, p. 61
[157] Fagothey, A., Right and Reason, Ethics in Theory and Practice, CVM Company, St. Louis, 1959, pp. 445 ff.
[158] Gen. 1: 28

God's creations is a right of control over the goods of the earth."[159] There is no gainsaying the fact that the freedom of human control over the things of the earth makes private property inevitable. Property can therefore serve as a means of ensuring human life and its sustenance. According to Fidelis Okafor, "while one is not supposed to own everything at the exclusion of others, the right to property is a basic right for one to flourish."[160] The right to property bolsters one's share, one's rightful place or space in all things. Respect for the right to private property is demanded by justice as it is a fundamental human right for all persons. The international declarations of human rights of 1948 recognised the right to private properties as a natural right of man that should be respected.[161] The declaration serves as a re-affirmation of the Igbo belief, lending support to their acceptance and observation of the right to private ownership of property. Certain Igbo names affirm the right to ownership of property, for example, *Okemefuna* – (let my share not get lost), *Okechukwu* – (share from God). These names depict an Igbo sense of distributive justice. Both names pointing to Igbo social justice indicate the Igbo social reality that the share or right given to the individual by God or by inheritance cannot be taken from the individual; in other words, it is inalienable.[162] Based on this socio-moral reality, stealing, defrauding or the forceful taking of a person's property are ways of denying an individual's right to property and the Igbo people and culture find that extremely abhorrent.

To guarantee the respect and maintenance of the right to private property at every level, the Igbo people employ the idea of distributive justice, which implies giving all their due. To give everyone what is her or her due indicates that humans are born with rights and the means to preserve and enjoy them. On this note of distributive justice, Aristotle underscored that, "...for every man's attention being employed on his own particular concerns, will prevent mutual complaints against each other; nay, by this means industry will be increased, as each person will labour to improve his own private property; and it will then be, that from a principle of virtue they will mutually perform good offices to each other..."[163] As a matter of fact, the idea of distributive justice improves the manner of living of a people and forces every individual to be more responsible and to work hard to earn private properties that sustain life. That the Igbo people recognize this aspect of life implies that they are a people whose social reality is enveloped by mutual understanding and the sustained struggle to make ends meet.

[159] Umeh, E. C., African Theology of Solidarity, op.cit., p. 56
[160] Okafor, F. U., Igbo Philosophy of Law, op. cit., p. 83
[161] Universal Declaration of Rights, Art., 17
[162] Okafor, F. U., Igbo Philosophy of law; op. cit., p. 79
[163] Benjamin, J., "Aristotles", The Politics, Dover Pub. Inc., New-York, 2000, p. 33

The Igbo community as a whole is involved in the struggle to maintain and secure the right to private property, lest the weak be deprived by the strong. An expression coined by Fidelis Okafor to demonstrate the community support of the individual in the attainment of the right to property is "*Ohacracy.*"[164] According to Okafor, "*Ohacracy"* is the equivalent of modern day democracy.[165] The concept of "*Ohacracy*" is employed in relation to ownership of property and the role the community plays to ensure that justice is maintained and rights respected. It bestows on the Igbo the freedom to engage in whatever struggle or economic activity that is justified to acquire property as independent beings with the support and protection of the community. The interplay between the individual and the community determines the scope and possibilities of ownership. Though ownership can be considered to be unlimited, it is not uncommon to have limitations placed from other sources, such as demands of family ties in solidarity of sharing, and in modern times through the civil law.

The right to private property does not end with the individual. Generally, there is a mixed system of property and ownership. The family and the community as a body are equally entitled to some form of private properties. These properties can be lands, farm settlements and agricultural materials. These solely and privately belong to the group and the proceeds are used to help one another for community or family development. In such situations, the social character of private property is applied where the welfare of others are considered in the acquisition and use of property rights. In support of this form of social ownership, John XXIII emphasised that " it is not enough, ... to assert that man has from nature the right of privately possessing goods as his own, including those of productive character, unless, at the same time a continuing effort is made to spread the use of this right through all ranks of the citizenry."[166] Therefore, the right to private property either as individual or as a group should aim primarily at addressing and solving the problems of the citizenry as a boost to human value and dignity.

2.6.2 Character *(Agwa*) and Social Competence

Character is a quality that makes someone a particular kind of person. It is the combination of traits and qualities distinguishing the individual nature of a person.[167] It defines who the individual is by one´s behavioural patterns. In the Igbo setting character, (agwa) concretizes the way people behave and act in the events of life. It is a valuable asset in Igboland in that

[164] Ohacracy is the government where the community as a body participates in decision making events: A system where the people rule.
[165] Okafor, F. U., Igbo Philosophy of law, op. cit., pp. 79-82
[166] John XXIII, Mater et Magister, art., 113
[167] Collins English Dictionary; Complete and Unabridged, Herpa Collins Pub., Glasgow, Great Britain, 2003, p. 285

through it the individual's life pattern can be deciphered and observed. Igbo parents always aim at character formation of children at all levels. Through character formation, parents teach their children how to live with others and how to think of themselves and others. They are taught such ethical cultural values as chastity, hospitality, generosity, kindness, justice, truth and rectitude, respect for elders, the poor and avoidance of hypocrisy, etcetera.

In the course of character formation, a child may sometimes not respond positively to the values and social norms inculcated by its parents. This has been found to be deeply problematic in many cultures. However, character has both positive and negative perspectives. The Igbo expression for positive character is *ezigbo agwa* (good character) while bad character is designated as *ajo agwa*. The social situation when the Igbo focus intensely on character is marriage. Prior to any serious and formal marriage proposal the Igbo persons engages in multiple forms of enquiry to ascertain the character of the family from which a bride or groom hails. Character is such a fundamental aspect of Igbo life that it is equated with beauty, for example, in the Igbo saying, *agwa bu mma nwanyi* (character is the beauty of a woman). Character is viewed as the determining factor for marriage given that no person or family would want to marry a woman or man without a good character. Hence, character is the real basis for harmonious existence and interactions among the Igbo.

In the Igbo social construction, character has a strong significant effect and determines a person´s status in the community and the degree to which the person will be entrusted with certain responsibilities. Good character creates better opportunities of trust and confidence, elevating the dignity of the individual. It attracts respect and attention on the person while bad character repels people from the individual. Good character makes one a responsible member of the community and elevates a person's dignity and value.

2.6.3 Work as Value in Igbo Cultural Setting.

Among Igbo people hard work and industry are highly cherished and esteemed. These are characteristic values that are traditionally associated with them. This places food and other valuables on their table of life. According to Raphael Egwu, "The Igbo are noted from their activity, their persevering effort in pursuit of their objectives, they are always meaningfully occupied in one useful activity or the other."[168] This quality of being industrious is evident in the everyday life of the people. With the exception of the very old and the very young, no one is exempted from manual work. One must work hard in other to earn his living.[169] Work in

[168] Egwu, R., Igbo Idea of the Supreme Being and Triune God, op. cit., p. 46
[169] Afigbo, A. E., The Warrant Chiefs; Indirect Rule in Southern Nigeria, 1891-1929, Longman, London, 1972, pp. 282-283

Igboland is not only an individual affair but has communal interest as well. This is as a result of the fact that the Igbo works not just to improve one's quality of life but also that of the community which one finds oneself. The various clans work together to protect their interest and as well provide the basic needs of life. During such group works, the exceptionally hard working and industrious people are spotted and rewarded in the community. This though an honour spurs many to work hard and to be honoured and appreciated as well. This increases productivity and reduces laziness and its concomitant negative effects against others. In the area of business, trade and education, in Nigeria Igbo people seem to dominate the scene. This is attributed to their hardworking nature.

Team spirit is a means of obtaining maximum output in work. This is primarily so among the Igbo communities where agriculture is mainly manual. The Igbo nuclear family gives an example of team spirit where the man and his family work together in order to earn their living.[170] Friends of the same age group also work for one other which makes work less a burden. This is a manifestation of the statement that "there is dignity in labour". Dignity in the sense that it gives credit to humanity for through its products life is sustained and maintained. Work creates room for all to be up and doing without room for idling. It provides man with the basic needs of life as against total dependency on others for the basics. It cuts short so many abnormal practices that go contrary to the ethics of living and fending for oneself.

2.7 Igbo Personal Names as a Proof of the Value and Dignity of Human Person.

In the Igbo setting, names often depict and express the value and dignity attached to the human person. Names are means of identifying individual persons in Igboland. Igbo names have meanings that are reasonable and personal. An Igbo name always bears a message, a meaning, a prayer, a history and a record, as the case may be. To this effect, Ferdinand Ezekwonna states that "a name is the first mark of personal identity in African communities and it is impossible to talk of somebody without a name which has a meaning among Africans."[171] In the Igbo society, the description of a person starts from the name the person has. An Igbo adage expresses this idea: *Ihe di na aha* (there is something in a name). This is consistent with the statement of Placid Tempels about Africans: "The first is the name. The name expresses the individual character of the being. The name is not a simple external courtesy; it is the very reality of the individual."[172] Names embody rich information on the

[170] Nnoruka, S. I., Solidarity; A Principle of Sociality, Verlag Für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Frankfurt am Main, 2007, p. 189
[171] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethics, op. cit., p. 73
[172] Tempels, P., The Bantu Philosophy, op. cit., p. 106

Igbo idea of reality and life. Names depict the value, the love, the feeling and every positive thought of the person. Mostly a name is given according to the circumstances of birth, personal experiences in life, expectations and feelings at the moment of birth, etcetera. From this perspective, "Igbo names are not mere tags to distinguish one thing or person from another; but are expressions of the nature of that which they stand for; they contain memories of a human experience, every shade of human sentiment and emotions in the struggle for existence ... an everlasting and imperishable record of their life and death struggles and their attempts to live in harmony with other men..."[173] Through names the Igbo express their life and feelings.

Names in the Igbo setting are generally given in relation to the value attached to the new-born child or in relation to the child's life. Consequently, most Igbo persons are named sometimes out of life events. It establishes the individuality of the person and helps in the identification of the individual in the society. Names form an ontological link between the person and the family or community. Hence, the name of the individual serves as an indicator of the person's personal identity within the community.[174] The name is the person and many names are often descriptive of the individual.[175] The Igbo communities are not structured in a manner different from the Western world with its technological advancement. In the Igbo community individuals are not known by their social security numbers or other categories; they are known and essentially called by their names. In this way the person's name serves as a means of identifying the individual anytime, anywhere. Names are intrinsic to the human personality of the bearer. They are also conveyors and transmitters of history.[176]

Through names the value, dignity and importance of a person against other material things is emphasized. For example, names such as *Madu-ka-aku* (humanity is greater than wealth), *Aku-abia* (wealth has come), *Ndu-bu- aku* (life is wealth) are ways parents express their wishes for the child and the priceless value they attach to the life of the child. Through names they also express their value and dignity for life and the human person.

The importance that the Igbo attach to names can equally be perceived in the elaborate ritual attached to the naming of a child. Naming ceremonies are observed with feasting and great joy and take place generally seven weeks after the birth of a child.[177] This is a great feast that

[173] Obiego, C. O., African Image of the Ultimate Reality Analysis of Igbo Ideas of Life and Death in Relation to Chukwu, Berlin, 1984, p. 78
[174] ibid., p. 108
[175] Mbiti, J., African Religion and Philosophy, op. cit., p. 119
[176] Anyanwu, C. C. U., The Rites of Initiation, op. cit., p. 243
[177] Ezeanya, S. N., A Handbook of Igbo Christian Names, Portharcourt, 1967, p. 9

involves the families of the parents. The naming ceremony dismisses the idea that the child as an anonymous entity and creates awareness of the child's belongingness to the family and community. Thus the great importance of given names among the Igbo is consistent with some practices of other cultures. For example, the Germans observe feast days associated with people's names, often expressed with the German word "*Namenstag.*" Equally the Church attaches importance to names, especially names of Christians who lived in accordance to the dictates of their faith. Hence, name is a value cherished in almost every culture as it has the power to evoke the sense of distinction, reputation, character, esteem, honour, eminence and celebrity.[178]

Conclusion

This chapter has presented some aspects of socio-cultural values and their relevance in relation to Igbo people. Their meaning, importance and usefulness in relation to mankind represent the value and dignity given to the HP. As expressed values of Igbo tradition, they mould and guide them in sustaining HD. Due to their relevance they form aspects of the life of the people that should not to be treated or discarded as irrelevant. Careful study and due understanding of their meanings and applications in the life and conduct of the Igbo person bring harmony. They create an atmosphere for deeper understanding of the value attached to the HP as a being with dignity in the society. The chapter examines their importance and why they should be upheld in Igbo society. This is echoed in a 1980 address of John Paul II to the bishops of Ghana: "…Cultures and values themselves must be uplifted, transformed and permeated by Christ's original message of divine truth, without harming what is noble in them. Hence, worthy traditions are to be preserved as patrimonies for theologizing…"[179] These Igbo traditional socio-cultural values are sources of knowledge and wisdom to them because they enhance interaction and interpersonal relationship. In this regard the Igbo need to value and uphold their good cultural heritage, appropriate and make judicious use of them for service to humanity. These socio-cultural values affect the life of the people in several ways. They influence their day to day activities and direct them on the course of life. The people depend on them for the maintenance of their living situations. The socio-cultural values are not just there to be observed; they are controlled by the various Igbo socio-political structures and instruments which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

[178] Anyanwu, C. C. U., Rites of Initiation , op. cit., p. 244

[179] Pope John Paul 11, "Address to the Bishops of Ghana: in *L´ Osservatore Romano*, English ed. June 2, 1980, pp. 10-11

Chapter Three

Human Person in the Igbo Socio-Political Setting:

Introduction:

The Igbo people constitute one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. They inhabit the South-eastern part of the country. While a majority of them are found in Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States, there is a small minority who live in Delta, Rivers and Akwa-Ibom States. The Igbo people have cultural contacts with other ethnic groups in Nigeria. Their socio-political structure like their socio-cultural values is principally communitarian and democratic. Politically, they don't have large, centralized organizational structures as other tribes in Nigeria that have structured monarchical systems. Their political structures are decentralized and built around the family, kindred, village and town. This happens to arise from the fact that over the ages and in recent past they have lived in fraternal, democratic, village and clan units, each independent of the other. The Igbo have had no recognized supreme ruler or king from the onset, yet, over the years they have been able to organize themselves and their affairs well.[180] In their socio-political state the exaltation of the value of the dignity of the human person created a wide spread ferment by prompting a far reaching desire for the transformation of social life…[181] Politically this ferment or fruit gives birth to a new type of polity, the society where the HP is valued and respected. This is a society where religious, intellectual freedom and equality before the law and right of participation in public affairs are prevalent. These in turn, find expression in the idea of constitutional democracy, a government that is limited in its scope, subject in its operations to the rule of law, and responsible to those it governs.[182] Generally, at the hub of the socio-political set up is the human person. The discussion in this chapter we will focus on the HP within the aforementioned setting. (NB: Some of the points are intertwined with each other and might sound the same but they are of a different status in the Igbo political setting. The first part focuses on the Igbo socio-political structures).

3.1 The Igbo Socio-political Structure

[180] Okere, T., Identity and Change: Nigerian Philosophical Studies, Paideia Publishers, Washington DC., 1996, p. 11

[181] Grasso, K. L., Saving Modernity from Itself: in Kraynak R. P. and Tinnder ,G.,(Eds*)., In Defense of Human Dignity*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2003, p. 207

[182] ibid., p. 208

The assertion that man is a political animal enjoys a universal acceptance given that every human being by nature cherishes interaction with others. The desire for togetherness and coexistence gives rise to the formation of society in order to meet the demands and impulses which man's rational nature requires.[183] The essence of living together in a society is for the attainment of the common good and the good life. To realise a good life in a society the individual members are obligated to work for it by putting in their best. As Pope Pius XII said, "man as such, far from being an object or, as it were, an inert element in society, is rather its subject, its basis and its purpose; and so must he be esteemed."[184] Consequently, the socio-political structure of a society covers issues that pertain to the protection and promotion of the HD of each member of the society. It entails avoidance of discrimination, promotion of justice, peace and progress. To make these ideas real, humanity needs an order of events which can be realized through the socio-political structure of the people.

The Igbo socio-political setting has been described as stateless, segmented, egalitarian, etcetera. The Igbo society have also been known to angle toward the principles of solidarity and to be communally oriented. Its socio-political structure is equally organized as such. Though the Igbo political society has undergone a lot of changes following the impact of Western civilization, its major features nonetheless have remained the same.[185] Invariably the various changes like in other systems and cultures did not affected the core values in their modalities and applicability. Simon Ottenberg observed that "…the Igbo have probably changed the least while changing the most. While many of the formal elemenst of the social, religious, economic and political structure, such as lineages, family groups, age grades, and secret societies, have been modified through culture contact, many of the basic patterns of social behaviour such as the emphasis on alternative choices and goals, achievements and competition, and the lack of strong autocratic authority, have survived and are part of the newly developing culture."[186] These cross-cultural changes are introductory to the present political orientation. The objective in this essay is to elucidate and analyse this orientation in Igboland in relation to HD.

The political system or structure notable in the Igbo society is democracy. This form of democracy is organized from the local level with an appointed or hereditary leader who

[183] Umeh, E. C., Promotion of Human Rights and Social Justice, op. cit., p. 106
[184] Pope Pius XII's Broadcast Message, Christmas, 1944, AAS37 (1945), 36-46
[185] Amucheazi, E., Politics and Pressure Groups in the Igbo Political System: in Ofomata, G. E. K., (Ed.), *A Survey of the Igbo Nation*, op. cit. p. 242
[186] Ottenberg, S., Ibo Receptivity to Change: in Amucheazi, E. (Ed.), *Politics and Pressure Groups in the Igbo Political System*, Africana First Publishers Ltd., 2002, p. 242

governs with the council of elders and other titled men. Considering this system of leadership, the ultimate repository of authority was obviously in the community as a whole. This system replicates the modern system of government where power is said to belong to the people. The leader and councils or titled men, elders, all act as the executive with standing committees which take decisions on the understanding that these will be upheld by the people when they meet.[187] This system still exists in the various Igbo communities as town unions, improvement unions, community in councils, progressive unions. Because of this structure, the monarchical system was either non-existent or not strong among the Igbo people before the advent of colonialism; an idea that is buttressed by the saying: *Igbo enwe eze* (the Igbo have no kings). The repository power is on the community in which titled men, age groups, women's groups and kindred groups acts as checks and balances on each other. Hence, the leaders have no private control or power over the community. Thus the democratic way of leadership with consultative and consensus spirit is what obtains in the various Igbo communities.

Similar to other political systems, the Igbo political structure is their administrative structure too. As noted by Humphrey Nwosu, "political processes determine the mode of administrative behaviour of any society."[188] Therefore, most of the Igbo institutions of authority perform both political and administrative functions. A deep look into the main features of Igbo political system needs to be made as a way to facilitate and analyse the political and administrative processes in the society.

Considering the point of departure, the Igbo communities both in the pre- and post-colonial era have structures that direct them, starting from the family to the kindred, village and town. These have institutions and tools they use for governance. According to Simon Ottenberg "…the dispersed and segmented political institutions and structures aided rather than constrained the process of public decision making. They were sufficiently flexible to the extent that individuals of outstanding ability were able to work through and across them in order to achieve desired goals."[189] Hence, the political structures were meant to project the interest of the individual and the community at large. Through the prevailing structure the people engaged in many progressive enterprises were successful in realizing their goals. The interest of all is what matters as everybody is meant to be carried along.

[187] Amucheazi, E., op. cit., p. 245
[188] Nwosu, H. N., Politics and Administration, op. cit., p. 235
[189] ibid., p. 235

In many Igbo communities, the council of elders, titled men, family heads, community leaders, and heads of secret societies, *Umuada* (daughters of the land) and age grades are among the authorities that make up the legislative, administrative and judicial body. These make decisions for the good of all. According to Robert Levine, one of the remarkable features of such public decision making in Igboland was that the decision makers try to make their decisions in response to the popular will.[190] This implies that decisions are reached through majority vote of those grouped within the administrative structure. Decision making is never a one-man affair, especially in matters that concern all. Consultation and participation by all is emphasized.

The Igbo administrative system consists of laws, regulations, values, customs and practices. These are employed as materials and means of governance in the various communities. Everybody is treated and considered within the framework of these materials. The dignity of all, whether rich or poor, is considered in concord with the aforementioned materials. The administrative system therefore utilizes these materials to maintain the ethical values of the community members. On this note, a number of social controls are applied to regulate individual and group behaviours. In the absence of modernized legal mode of administration, legitimacy and order are not left unaccomplished in the Igbo administrative practices and behaviours. Rather they are maintained through social controls and self-regulations, primordial ties and the efficacy of supernatural sanctions.[191] Such control is exemplified by the necessary corrective measures applied in relation to the seriousness of the issue in question. A more stringent action follows, especially when the value of HD is undermined or threatened. For example, to check and discourage criminal behaviour, stringent measures are undertaken as deterrent to would be offenders. Administrative decisions are practically not left to all but to a select few based on their status or the responsibility reposed on them. The criteria for eligibility in the political administration of the Igbo society will further be discussed.

3.1.1 The Role of Gender

Gender plays a very significant role in Igbo life and politics. Certain political roles are exclusively reserved for either men or women to perform. According to Olisa Metuh, "political roles in Igbo community setting are the prerogative of men; women come in only

[190] ibid., p. 235
[191] ibid., p. 236

occasionally and through indirect process."[192] Women are never heads of household, villages or town assemblies... such positions as the Okpara, the Ezeani, the titled societies, are rarely, if ever, held by women."[193] This does not mean that the womenfolk cannot exert pressure when the need arises in the community. Women pressure groups like the *Umuada,* from the kindred to the town level exercise judicial power where necessary.

3.1.2 The Role of Citizenship

The discussion in this section focuses on the Igbo communities where the inhabitants are subdivided by circumstances into the groups of *Di-Ala,* meaning free citizens, and *Ndi- Obia,* which implies visitors. The societal status of the individuals or groups in question comes into play, whether they are freeborn, strangers or slaves. Although modern attitudes would like to suggest that emphasis on them is diminished today, when matters of traditional institutions or political power come into play in Igbo communities, history is always revisited. In pre-colonial period an *Osu* (outcasts dedicated to shrines) or *Ohu* (slaves) in Igboland cannot take a traditional title in the formal community social setting, but can within the *Osu* community. Therefore, they have no political rights as the free citizens (*di-ala*). In the post-colonial period, however, the *Osu* are free from those limitations and their human rights are recognized on the governmental level. In many Igbo communities, even at present, the full acceptance of the *Osu* into the fold and community still constitutes significant challenge; a challenge that often spills into Christian faith communities. The challenge is most prevalent in such cultural and traditional matters like marriage and community leadership where the *Osu* live side by side the so-called free-born. At play also is the position of strangers (*Ndi Obia*) who are accorded a status different from the free-born´s, the *Ohu* or the *Osu*. They like the others are identified with specific lineages in the Igbo community setting. Given that *Ndi Obia* are strangers in the community, their socio-political positions are limited, for example, in land ownership, taking of political offices and participating in the assemblies of the town at various levels.[194] All these are the characteristics and qualities that are put into consideration in the formation of the socio-political structures of the modern Igbo community.

[192] Olisa, M.S. O., Igbo Traditional Socio-Political System; *in a Survey of the Igbo Nation*, op. cit. p. 226
[193] ibid. p. 226
[194] ibid. p. 228

3.1.3 The Role of Lineage

Lineage refers to the assortment of lines and pedigree in which members of a given family are descended from other members. There is hierarchy of lineage depending on whether the lineage is younger or older in the ancestral line. Each lineage falls into the seniority pattern according to age observed from the kindred to the town level. The *Ofo*[195] of the oldest lineage takes precedence over others and the holder of the oldest *Ofo* and the lineage he represents in the community stands before others as the oldest, the age of the holder notwithstanding. The *Ofo* holders are organized hierarchically and they are part of the decision makers of the community. The oldest in the scale of hierarchy pronounces the decision of the elders. Olisa Metuh stated in confirmation that "the senior elements simply act as leading assessors among collectivities of equals, not as oligarchies."[196] The various elements in the political construction of the Igbo point the way to some of the political structures that enhance these elements and put them in place, starting from the family.

3.2 The Family (*Ezi-na-Ulo*)

The family is the micro-unit of a society and is highly treasured by Igbo people. It is an important part of the community, made up naturally of father, mother and children. The nature of the Igbo family derives from their worldview. In the Igbo society, the family is more than the parents and children. It is rather an interconnectedness of beings, visible and invisible that mutually coexists. As an integral whole it comprises the living, the dead and even the unborn. The life activity of an Igbo person revolves around the family. For the Igbo people, the family is characterized by interpersonal relationships and mutual understanding.

The family´s social importance lies first and foremost in its being the basic membership unit within the Igbo social structure and the centre of political socialization of the individual. "A typical traditional Igbo family comprises two configurations namely the nuclear and the extended families."[197] The nuclear family comprises father, mother and children, while the extended family is more extensive with uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, grandparents and blood relations. John Mbiti in his observation of what the traditional African family

[195] *Ofo* this is a stick that represents the image of the ancestors only used by the heads of families as a sign of authority, it is cut from a tree of the same name (*detarium senegalense*). It will be treated elaborately later.
[196] Olisa, M. S. O., Igbo Traditional Socio-political System. op. cit., p. 229
[197] Chigere, M.V., The Foreign Missionary Background and Indigenous Evangelization in Igboland, Verlag Münster, 2002, p. 46

constitutes stated that "in the traditional society a family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters, who may have their own children and other immediate relatives."[198] The Igbo family in this context refers to the traditional Igbo family that is not contaminated by external influences and ethics. This arises from the fact that there are some families in Igboland that are no longer in touch with the reality of the extended family system because of various reasons.

The concept of family is as elastic as it is encompassing. As stated earlier, the family in the Igbo understanding comprises relatives and members of the same kindred who are descendants of the same great great-grand fathers, as far as human memory can go. Before the modern day surge to urban areas and development, the large family setting did live together in a village setting. In view of this the Igbo are so attached to their village background that wherever they are they still have contacts with their kits and kin in their villages. Even those who live far away outside their home village with children born in distant lands still regard themselves as full members of their extended family with full rights to the family heritage. Francis Arinze observed that "Africans are at home both in the nuclear family and in the extended family. The sense of family belongingness is rather strong. Many African languages have the same word for brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews, and nieces, the same name for fathers and masters. The sense of family belongingness pervades all these scales on the genealogical ladder."[199] This really applies to Igbo people and their attachment to their family ties despite the influence of secularism and globalization, which currently appear to seriously weaken some aspects of Igbo life.

The Igbo idea of family also goes beyond the living members. The departed ancestors, as noted previously, are still counted as members of the family, and are referred to as the living dead. To demonstrate how attached the departed are to their families, the body of dead relatives are customarily brought home for burial in the family, regardless where the individual lived or resided. The ancestors, therefore, live on in the memory of the family members and are invoked occasionally as participants in family affairs through libations. Libations are signs of respect and invitation on them to share in the affairs of the family, culturally, socially and otherwise.

Politically, Igbo people see the family as a mini-political structure which serves for order, growth, maturity and the overall discipline and upbringing of children. According to

[198] Mbiti, J. S., African Religions and Philosophy, op. cit., p. 107
[199] Arinze, F., Sacricifices in Igbo Religion; in: Umeh E. C., *African Theology of solidarity*, op. cit. p. 34

Humphrey Nwosu, "the political importance of the family lies first and foremost in its being the basic membership unit within the Igbo social structure and its being the centre of political socialization of the individual."[200] This is because it is within the family that the norms of living together with others are learned and passed on. The family too inculcates within the individual the knowledge of being one another's keeper as brothers and sisters. One equally learns the politics and relationships among the families, kindred, villages and even the town. In the family the spirit of individual achievement is tutored and the norms of the land are drilled into the person. In the family one is taught to observe and learn the multitude of traditional laws and customs so that as an adult the person can easily transition into a veritable participant in the social life of the community. Respect for family authority is always the starting point of the civic life of the individual. Reiterating this idea, Chieka Ifemesia expressed that, "all over the world one can observe that family is the first agency of socialization. The family is the bed-rock of every social and political community. It is a cradle of life and natural environment for growth and well-being of all its members, particularly the young children and young people."[201] In his remark on the family as a fundamental aspect of the society John Paul II stressed that any relegation of it "to a subordinate or secondary roles, excluding it from its rightful position in society would be to inflict grave harm on the authentic growth of a society as a whole."[202] The family, therefore, is very essential because it is in the family that the values and virtues including the ethical, moral, social and cultural are inculcated and habituated. It possesses its own specific and original social dimension as the principal place of interpersonal relationships, the first and vital cell of society.[203]

The family name in Igbo setting adds to one´s status, especially families known for greatness and goodness. Due to the favours and recognitions that go with such greatness and goodness, identification by name with such families opens many avenues in the community politically, socially and otherwise. Because of this, many struggle to make and retain the good names of their family. Family members equally strive hard not to disparage the family name, hence, the Igbo would sqy, *Ezi afa ka ego*, (a good name is better than money). On the same note families with bad names are not well accepted in certain areas their progenitors are found wanting. The importance attached to family is made manifest in the Igbo identification of a person in terms of the family of origin. According to Chukwuemeka Umeh, the family is "a

[200] Nwosu, H. N., Politics and Admin in Igbo Society, op.cit., p. 220
[201] Ifemesia, C., Traditional Humane Living among the Igbo, Enugu, 1979, p. 55 ff.,
[202] John Paull, II, Letter to Families *Gratissimum Sane*, 17; AAs 86, 1994, p. 906
[203] Vat. II., *Apostolicam Actuositatem,* Art., II

school for human enrichment."[204] The enrichment brought about by the family centres mainly on the value of human existence and life.

The Igbo family is hierarchically structured and organized. It is largely patrilineal in character. The father is the head and directs the family affairs. As the family head he offers prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors and deities of the family. He works to promote the interest and good name of the family and as well carries the family identity or sacred staff called *Ofo.* They are called *Ndi ji Ofo Ezi n`ulo* (holders of family *Ofo*). To be the holder of the family *Ofo* has many implications. It demands moral rectitude and knowledge of most Igbo traditional religious rituals for the elder in question.[205] He represents the family in the gathering of *Umunna* (kindred). When the father dies, the eldest son in the family continues the father's role. Relationship with other families is maintained by the family head and all conflicts are resolved within the family between the members. The head of the family holds informal court to resolve conflicts. His personality counts much in the performance of his role, but he can always invoke the authority of the ancestors and *Ala* (earth goddess) whose authority is dynamized in the family *Ofo* held by him.[206] On a wider range the different families with a common origin or progenitor come together and form a larger body called "*Umunna"*[207] (kindred) on which the proceeding discussion will be based.

3.2.1 The Kindred (*Umunna*)

The kindred is another socio-political unit of the community. This is a typical Igbo social organization formed under a definite socio-political umbrella called the *Umunna*. *Umunna* is the central or basic social unit of Igbo society. The term *Umunna* literally means children of (the same) father. [208] The *Umunna* is a corporate body that holds allegiance to an ancestor father, one shrine and a common *Obi* or central place of gathering. It is an exogamous body/entity that does not admit intermarriage among members. The *Umunna* includes a body of families organized on the basis of male descent, whose membership also involves duties and rights.

[204] Umeh , E. C., African Theology of Solidarity, Dr. KOVAC Hamburg, 2008, p. 33
[205] Ejiofor, G. A., Igbo Mysticism: Power of Igbo Religion and Society, Imagine Realities Ltd. Onitsha, 2008, p. 192
[206] Nwosu, H. N. Politics and Admin., op. cit., p. 221
[207] Umunna is a territorially kin-based unit of subdivided families with same patrilineage who gather together for political, social and religious reasons and form one kindred called *Umunna.*
[208] Ilogu, E., Christianity and Igbo Culture, op. cit., p. 11

The *Umunna* is made up of more than one family, thus the scope of the term is wide and extensive, often referred to as the extended patrilineal family. Members have blood ties, restricted to the father's side only. According to Anyanwu Uzoma, "it connotes the ties of extended families as distinct from the Western notion of family as nuclear."[209] The families that are descendants of the same grandfather or great grandfather come together for socio-cultural and political interests. The unity is as a result of this common ancestral descent and the bond of exogamy keeps them together. The *Umunna* as the basic socio-political unit serves as the foundation stone of all political power and authority in Igbo society consequent to their descent from a common ancestor. Olisa Metuh in affirmation of this pointed out that, "unity within the kindred is strengthened and emphasized by the fact of descent from a common ancestor, or great grandfather usually traceable within living memory by the elders of the kindred."[210]

The kindred comprise the descendants in the male line of the founder ancestors whose name the lineage sometimes bears. Thus, "membership into the *Umunna* automatically is by blood through birth or by blood through entering into a covenant with the members of the particular *Umunna."*[211] This shows that each *Umunna* is an entity bound by blood (covenant). In this case *Umunna* stands for a covenant community, bound together by a mystical cord that holds the people together as a body. By this covenant, respect for the life and welfare of each member is guaranteed. This is the matrix of the bond of the *Umunna.* Here the group life with its web of social life is very strong and the ties of relationship are far spread out and the pattern of life in the *Umunna* is communalistic. Due to their communal pattern of living, the *Umunna* have a lot in common, for example, land and some cash crops. The *Umunna* encourages and sometimes mandates solidarity, especially with the less privileged, and never encourages individualism. It is therefore a duty for anyone who is a member of the *Umunna* to help the members in need when he has the means. Social life in the *Umunna* is intensive as it maintains a form of sovereignty. The *Umunna* operates more at the level of mutual understanding and respect for each other.

The *Umunna* politically is patrilineal in nature and "the most important figure in the *Umunna* is the *Okpara.*"[212] The *Okpara*[213] who has to be a male, may be elderly or young yet

[209] Anyanwu,,C. C. U., The Rites of Initiation in Christian Liturgy in Igbo Traditional Religion, Peter Lang , Frankfurt am Main, 2004, p. 31
[210] Olisa, M. S., Politics and Administration in the Igbo Traditional Society, op.cit., p. 221
[211] Eze, D. O., Eucharist as Orikonso, op. cit., p. 72
[212] Meek, C. K.., Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, London, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 2
[213] The term *Okpala* is a generic term which means the first male child in a family. The Igbo communities are

he takes leadership responsibilities. He leads all the members of the families that make up the *Umunna*. However, in his status as the first son and head of the families that make up the *Umunna,* he does have limited powers. His service is in conjunction with the elders of the lineage among whom he retains the position of *primus inter pares* in matters relating to the *Umunna*. He acts as a representative of his *Umunna* in the gathering of various patrilineages. He holds the *Ofo* of the kindred and performs the duties attached to his leadership position. The *Ofo* is the binding ritual symbol of the kindred. With it justice is dispensed and executed. When new rules are enacted in the kindred and strict adherence on the rule is demanded the final sanction is demonstrated with *Isu Ofo* (knocking of the *Ofo* on the ground). The *Ofo* has a ritual which assists the *Okpara* to discharge his leadership roles and achieve a high level of compliance with his kindred. His leadership comprises duties which, according to Nwosu, include "performing sacrifices for members on request, representing the kindred vis-à-vis other kindred's at the village level, presiding over the kindred members where conflicts and other problems are resolved."[214] In this form he fulfils his duty as a guardian and leader of the kindred.

The bond of the *Umunna* in Igboland is so strong that it influences every aspect of the life of the people. This has a positive and negative side. It is positive in that the life and well-being of each member of the *Umunna* is looked after. No member of the covenant community can take the life of another member without having recourse first on the disastrous effect the action will have on him/her, his/her family and on the community in general. On this note trust is built and exhibited by the people as each one becomes a keeper and protector of one another. As a result, when one suspects a member of planning evil or of having done evil against another, the actions are addressed in the way tradition stipulates: the accuser and the accused enter into a covenant to once more re-establish trust.[215] This particular feature of the Igbo manner of living is currently experiencing significant setback due to modernization and globalization.

From a different perspective, according to Onwuegbuchunam, "the fact remains that there are still some lapses and negative aspect of this *Umunna* bond. First, it is very exclusive and the range of those who belong to the *Umunna* is very limited to the members; as one *Umunna* is normally at most a communion of blood relations from within. This means that other people

somehow nuclear families with large kins and kiths. Every *Umunna* has its *Okpala* and the villages has theirs too.

[214] Nwosu, H. N., Politics and Admin., op. cit., p. 221

[215] Ekejiuba, F., Igba-Ndu; Igbo Mechanism of Social Adjustment: in African Notes, vol.111 No.1, *Bulletin of the institute of African Studies*, University of Ibadan, 1971

who do not belong to that body and who have no covenant relationship with it are regarded as outsiders and are treated as such. The reason for this lies in the nature of Igbo close nature of settlement. Igboland is a sedimentary society. Before the influence of colonialism, each clan had its "sovereignty."[216] It creates room for segregation and ostracism, especially when one is not originally a member of the *Umunna* directly by progenitor. As a matter of fact, this arrangement often creates room for the different perceptions and approaches to issues based on the perceptions of the various groups of *Umunna*. In spite of this obvious limitation, the bond of the *Umunna* is very strong because of the Igbo belief in the interconnectivity among the Supreme Deity or God (*Chukwu*), the ancestors, the universe and the human society. This bond so pervades every aspect of the life of the Igbo that on a larger and wider setting, different *Umunna* on coming together forms a body called *Ebo or Ebe* (village) with a head as a leader and with other subordinates from the various kindreds that make it up.

3.2.2 The Village (*Ebo or Ebe*)

Village in its composition is more expansive than the kindred and is an amalgamation of the kindreds gathered together. This means that the unification of different *Umunna* forms a village, but each kindred maintains its autonomy. In the village setting there is freedom of association and interaction. It is not mandatory though it is necessary for mutual interaction and development. Therefore, "the village in this sense is mainly a geographical unit providing some considerable solidarity based on neighbourhood rather than on immediate blood relationship."[217] The village is a strong base of unity and solidarity, united under one goddess *Ala* (the earth goddess). The goddess *Ala* monitors the activities in the village in terms of fostering justice and peace among members. This implies that the village level of governance is higher and broader than that of families and kindred; thus the need for a higher and much stronger spirit as the earth goddess.

The machinery of government at this level is the village council made up also of the *Okpara* and the council of elders. The *Okpara* of the most senior kindred or lineage stands as a leader of the village religiously and politically with other *Okpara* from the number of kindred that make up the village. And the *Ofo* of the oldest lineage supersedes the *Ofo* of the other lineages. According to Olisa Metuh, "seniority in this case is often being determined by the order of the birth of later ancestors as children of the greatest ancestor from whom all

[216] Ezeh, D. O., Orikonso, op. cit., p. 72
[217] Egwu, R., Igbo Idea of the Supreme Being and the Triune God, Echter Verlag Würzburg, 1998, p. 31

descended."[218]Each lineage falls into the seniority pattern according to its age. So even if one is young but is the *Okpara* from the oldest lineage he certainly becomes the village leader or head. So the system can be said to be gerontocracy according to lineage.

In the village gathering, the *Okpara* and the other *Ofo* holders *(oji Ofo)* preside over the ritual. They are the custodians of the customs and norms of the community. They are, according to Meek, "a body of mediators and referees rather than of prosecutors and judges, and the community was a republic in the true sense of the word that is a corporation in which government was the concern of all."[219] The opinion of Meek is however contested because matters of outright infringement of the rights and privileges of the common person as against the value of the HP are never treated with levity, and when an abomination *(Aru)* is committed the stringent punishments incurred are normally executed as at when due. So they are not mere mediators but are also legislators and prosecutors as well as executors, who ensure that the rule of law is upheld and necessary punishments meted out to offenders as the rule allows through their instructions.

The village administration concerns itself with matters affecting the solidarity of the members, such as common civic assignments like the maintenance of roads, markets, and sharing of common property, like farmlands. Its absolute interest is for the betterment of mankind as a means of uplifting human value and dignity. In the village government, each kindred speaks as one voice and votes as one unit. The village as a body enacts its laws which the *Umunna* (kindred) and families adhere to. This certifies the village as having its socio-political and economic system. The village administration also works to attract governmental presence and developmental project to the village. They are the means by which political activity from the town or local government, state and the federal level gets to the grassroots. Through it developments like schools, churches, hospitals and other facilities that enhance progress to the HP are executed. When villages merge together they form a town.

3.2.3 The Town (*Obodo, Mba*)

The town, in the words of Raymond Egwu, "is the highest socio-political unit and centre of the modern forms of development and co-operative activities."[220] It is structurally a collection

[218] Olisa, M.S. O., Politics and Administration, op. cit., p. 223
[219] ibid. p. 223
[220] ibid., p. 32

of villages which as well are themselves collections of several kindred. A town is not necessary made up of individuals connected by blood ties. It is the largest single collection of lineages which share several things in common. According to Olisa, "the strongest common interest which keeps the Igbo town together is attachment to one *Ala* goddess just as in the village level. Common ancestral origin is still cherished but is not so strong at this level due to some factors (such as distance in chronology and the presence of substantial groups not traceable from the ancestral tree) that its strength as a factor of unity is quite nominal."[221] Other common factors include the habitation and possession of one territory, one central market, or at times subscription to one shrine or deity of importance. In other cases also religious unity involves observing a common festival of the year in which the sense of community is reaffirmed and demonstrated in established rituals and festivities such as the *Iri ji ndigbo* (Igbo new yam festival).

Government at the town level is an extension of the system in play from the kindred to village level. Leadership primarily falls on the town union with the *Eze* (king) and his cabinet. The town union comprises representatives from various villages. Various title holders are also involved in the leadership of the town. The heads of various villages or lineages participate in the town assembly where matters of social and political interests are discussed for the good of the general body. Decisions are reached by consensus from the villages. According to Donatus Nwoga, "since the entire village group is allowed participation in the assembly, consensus is reached through long and tedious discussion as everyone has the opportunity to make a contribution."[222] Freedom of speech, opinions and ideas are allowed without fear of intimidation. On this ground the town operates democratically. With no established military or police service in the Igbo socio-community setting prior to colonization the enforcement and ratification of decisions were upheld by other means like sanctions, ostracism, and use of Para-militaries like the masquerade group under the authority of the *Ofo* holders and community leaders.

Diplomatic relations with other towns is an essential element of the government of any town. Chinua Achebe observed that "the town's external relation (i.e. interaction with other communities) is one of the most important concerns of the town assembly."[223] They maintain the common properties of the community, settle disputes, and ensure that there is peace and order in the community. They equally propose and work to implement developmental projects

[221] Olisa, M. S., ,Politics and Admin., op.cit., p. 223
[222] Nwoga, D. I., Nka na Nzere: The Igbo world view, in: Ahiajoku Lecture, 1984, p. 43
[223] Achebe, C., Things Fall Apart, New York, Anchor Books, 1994, pp. 9-14

for the community. The civic rights of their individual town members are protected against external attack and abuse, as well as other vital issues that add value to human dignity. For project execution, a system of division of labour is employed according to villages, kindred and at times age grades, as the case may be.

The judicial functions of the town union include settlement of disputes between villages, at the kindred level, and even between individuals. Adults present at meetings to resolve disputes have right to their opinions. In the final analysis a decision is reached and announced by the elders and *Ofo* holders. The decisions of the elders and *Ofo* holders are accepted because of their relevance to established ritual beliefs and prevailing norms that are for the good of all. Acceptance of decision reached is necessary to avoid incurring the wrath of the gods whom the elders and the *Ofo* represent.

It needs to be stated that as the Igbo people migrate to the urban areas they retain their territorial identity wherever they find themselves as established in their ritual of unity. In this regard, the activities and government of the town unions are carried to the urban centres. The orientation of these sub-unions is towards modernization of their home-towns. The town community´s individuality, as a political self-oriented, self-contained, and self-sufficient unit has been of much help to the community government. It serves as one of the many units of a local government and provides room for grassroots politics and governance. It also serves as a means of identifying with one another, and a means to render invaluable help to less privileged members.

In addition to the three major forms of socio-political system of operation in Igboland, there are other sub socio-political bodies in the administration which contribute to the socio-political organization of the Igbo community. Some of the administrative bodies and what they stand for in Igbo world setting will further be discussed.

3.3 The Title Holders

In Igboland traditional title is a sign of recognition for one's achievements or invaluable contribution to the life of the community. The essence of awarding titles to individuals is to encourage them to continue their good works for the community and to motivate others to follow their footsteps. A title is given in association with an individual's accomplishment or chosen by the title-bearer to signify the achievement the individual wishes to celebrate. Title

also symbolizes authority and influence. Some titles are taken as a preservation of ancestral functions and dignity of reverencing *Ala*, the earth goddess through whom wealth is made and life sustained.[224] To this effect Uzoma Anyanwu stated: "On the entire socio-political frame, one can see that on the one hand the lineage system encourages a sense of belongingness and participation at all levels. On the other hand the titled institutions promote individual industry with the prestige, power, and authority attached to it."[225] The titles result from their hard earned and honest labour, therefore, many aspire to be titled individuals to share in the respects, rights and privileges that go with the title. The prestige that goes with titles demand maturity, transparency and sincerity. Based on this, no person of questionable character is honoured with a title, because it disqualifies the person from being one of the pillars that hold the community together. Thus titles serve as vehicles contributing to the enforcement of morals in the Igbo society. An examination of one of the most cherished and respected titles in Igboland will help buttress this assertion.

3.3.1 The *Ozo*

The highest and the most important and respected title among the Igbo is the *Ozo* title. The *Ozo* title is discussed here as a socio-political organ in the life of Igbo people. Prior to colonialism, the *Ozo* title holders exercise authority and leadership at the community levels. The *Ozo* title is exclusive to men and indigenes of the town that are free-born. The *Ozo* title is a symbol of peace, unity and truth. It is only conferred on men of impeccable character regarded as the elites of Igbo traditional society.

The origin of the *Ozo* institution is not clearly discernible but, according to Edmund Ilogu, "it is safe to say that it (*Ozo*) grew out of the need for priests who would preside at extended family and lineage worship and supervise the cult of the ancestors and keep the family *Ofo* stick."[226]The *Ozo* itself is a religio-social association into which eligible men are initiated. It is not a cult with any seasonal or annual religious celebrations and has no shrine attributed to it. Majority of the initiates rely on the purely religious origin of the *Ozo* title as the reason for their taking it. Ilogu reasons that, "the continuity of the lineage, clan or village depends on the existence of God fearing men who share in the spirit of the land through their relationship with the earth goddess (*Ala),* and also know how to placate the spirit of dead ancestors and

[224] Adibe , G. E., Igbo Mysticism, op. cit., p. 196
[225] Anyanwu, C. C. U., The Rites of Initiation, op. cit., p. 35
[226] Ilogu, E., Christianity and Ibo Culture, op.cit., p. 30

uphold the ordinances of the land."[227] This is why the individual that takes the *Ozo* title has to live authentic life of sanctity by upholding publicly and privately the ethics of the land, observing all the taboos and religious ceremonies of the community.

As a result of the honour accorded to the *Ozo* title holders, they serve as guardians of the community ethically, socially and religiously. According to Humphrey Nwosu, "they guard their order and privileges very jealously since their esteem in the society depends on their maintenance of the age-long image of integrity and respectability."[228] An *Ozo* titled man is not expected to lie or take bribe; he is expected to stand always on the truth and never reveals secrets entrusted to him. The *Ozo* title holders direct the discussions and decisions in the assembly of the community and carry out other socio-political activities like settlement of disputes as a result of their status and the trust reposed on them as being upright. They help in executing the laws of the land for the good of all in the community. The socio-political nature of the *Ozo* society is identified by their numerous juridical roles.

3.3. 2The Secret Societies (Masquerade)

The secret societies in Igbo political setting as indicated by Chieka Ifemesia "constituted some of the most important instruments of discipline and government, as of socialization and recreation, in traditional Igbo communities."[229] As the name implies they are closed association open only to the initiated male members of the community. They are so to speak the traditional police charged with the enforcement of sensitive political, administrative and judicial pronouncements in the land. The most effective among these secret societies is the *Mmanwu* or *Mmuo*, (Spirit-masked). According to Udoye, "they represent the spirits and the ancestors and wield an unquestionable influence in both social and cultural life of the community."[230] They enforce discipline and order in the community and their wraths are dreaded by all in the community.

Besides acting as the societal public executioner of discipline, the masquerade acts as the main watchdog of the society. No one before the advent of modern civilization was above the influence and power of the masquerade. It acted as an effective check on the behaviours of

[227] ibid., p. 31
[228] Nwosu, H. N., Politics and Admin., op. cit., p. 246
[229] Ifemesia., C. C., Traditional Humane living among the Igbo: A Historical Perspective, Fourth Dimension Pub., Enugu, 1979, p. 88
[230] Udoye, E. A., Resolving the Prevailing Conflicts between Christianity and African (Igbo) Traditional Religion through Inculturation, Lit. Verlag: 2011, p. 124

public functionaries.[231] The masquerades are also employed for the arbitration of inter and intra-town disputes.

The masquerade as administrative machinery plays unique and important roles in conflict management in Igbo communities. It serves as a check to so many anomalies against one another and the community. Every member of the community is subject to the surveillance of the masquerade.

The secret societies as the masquerade were and are still important to the Igbo communities because they continue to be effectively utilized to ensure that individuals and groups properly live and discharge their duties and other obligatory services to the community. Accordingly, they serve as the traditional Igbo police and security agents.

3.3.3 The Patrilineage Daughters (*Umuada*)

In every Igbo town there exists an influential political pressure group and committee of women called *Umuada*, which exercises jurisdiction over all women affairs. This women socio-political group organizes and promotes the interests of women in Igbo societies. The *Umuada* comprises all women both married and unmarried who are daughters of the community different from the associations of women married into the kindred (association of wives). They are formed from the family to the town level. The *Umuada* serves as a veritable body through which women access and exercise their socio-political role in the community. As daughters of the land they are the most powerful women pressure group in Igbo communities, often acting as watchdogs for socio-moral life and promoting ethical activism in both the public and private lives of individuals, especially but not limited to women in the communities.

At *Umuadas* meetings, issues affecting the women and the community in general are paramount topics of deliberation. They render customary services as well as settle problems. In the political terrain the *Umuada* often serves as the supreme court of arbitration and conflict managers. Their decisions are final in the resolution of conflict situations. Pointing out how grave it is to relegate their decisions, Charles Meek observed that “anyone repudiating their authority would be regarded as guilty of sacrilege, and would be punished by

[231] Nwosu, H. N., Politics and Admin., op. cit., p. 238

the priests and titled officials to whom the *Umuada* would report the offence."[232] Their position is highly revered in Igboland, likewise their stand on issues that affect the family or community. The men appeal to them on serious issues they are unable to resolve, pertaining to them or the community. They decide issues with justice and fairness, and give their just verdict without fear or favour. "They act as the village disciplinarians, confronting individuals who perpetrate injustice against others or bring disrepute to the village."[233] They are always firm in their stand and treat all with value and dignity.

The *Umuada* take various measures to enforce rules and exercise dominance over aspects of community life, among which is organized withdrawal from community gatherings where they are normally prominent and to which they add much glamour. Given that their organized absence is perceived as a grave threat to peace and concord in the community, the menfolk, and in fact, the community go extra length to handle the situation which gave rise to their non-cooperation. As sisters and members of the extended family and community their support, presence and cooperation are deemed vital to the overall well-being of the community. In light of this the Igbo culture offers their womenfolk the right of association upon which rests the basis for women's political power in Igbo society. In the Igbo assembly decisions of community interest are taken and resolutions binding on all members are reached after due deliberations. By emphasizing the role of *Umuada* and their inclusion in the political life of the Igbo society the myth of invisibility that has characterized some of the earlier research works on Igbo women in the Igbo socio-political life is diffused. It equally validates the significance attached to them as persons with dignity and rights as against the claim that Igbo women are mere domestic stooges.

In addition, it is not only in their father's communities that women wield influence. In their marital homes, women equally have the *Otu Nwunyedi* (association of wives) which unites all married members of the kindred. This additional women association and pressure group plays significant role in maintaining peace between the wives, their husbands and relations. The political associations of women in Igbo society presented discussed show that, contrary to widespread notions, African women are not just as objects but as actors with value and dignity in the socio-political life of their society. This does not suggest, however, that abuses and gender discrimination are inexistent in the Igbo society. Such issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[232] Meek, C. K., Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, Oxford Univ. Press, 1973, p. 160

[233] Nnamani, A. G., Feminism and the Future of Nigeria: In Asogwa, C., (Ed.), *Human Rights In Nigeria,* op. cit., p. 162

3.3.4 Age Grade (*Ogbo*)

The age-grade system is another major socio-political organ of the community assembly. An age-grade *(Ogbo)* embraces persons and individuals born within a given time period in the community ranging between three to five years. As such, there are various age-grades in the Igbo society. Remarkably, "when each age-grade is inaugurated (through initiation process) it receives a name through which the group is known in the community. The age-grades help to collect levies, fines, run errands for the village and protect properties belonging to the village."[234] They are responsible for specific areas of service to the community acting as custodians of public and communal ethics and morals. They have established norms that prescribe the general rules of behaviour of members both in public and private life. The age-grades exhibit a sense of egalitarianism, companionship and cooperation. "They usually develop an *esprit de corps* which enables them to undertake actions or projects for the benefit of the community. They guard jealously their reputation in the town and sometimes punish members who tend to smear this reputation."[235] Members of an age-grade maintain a high regard for their integrity as close-knit association of individuals with value and dignity for each other and the community.

The different age grades serve the community on different capacities. For example, "the five to ten years group sweeps the village square, the fifteen to twenty years group makes the road, and the newly married wives clean the springs".[236] They contribute immensely to community developments. They execute such important communal functions as construction of roads, foot-paths, markets, community centres and other things. They also engage in self-help programmes by helping themselves in farm work and rendering of other possible social services. They equally extend their social service work to others like offering scholarship to indigent bright students of the community. Through these avenues they help in protecting the value and dignity of each other and their community as well. From these socio-political structures we get into the part of this chapter which I call the socio-political instruments.

[234] Uchendu, V. C., The Igbo of Southern Nigeria, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston inc., 1965, p. 43
[235] Oguejiofor, J. O., Influence of Igbo Traditional Religion, op. cit., p. 34
[236] Ilogu, E., Christianity and Ibo Culture, op. cit., p. 15

3.4 The Laws of the Land (*Iwu Obodo*)

Every society or community has its mechanisms for regulating the social behaviour of the members in order to achieve its desired goals in life. Laws (*Iwu*) are socio-political phenomena. The nature of Igbo laws wavers between their ethical, moral, religious and customary norms. They occupy a central place on the views of individuals and communities. The traditional Igbo society has uncodified or unwritten laws. There are no courts in the modern sense but laws and legal imperatives exist through which judicial matters are handled. Legal imperatives or beliefs are for the Igbo justified in so far as they cohere with the rest of the belief system and so long as they do not contradict other beliefs they have. The primary and most important of the laws is the law governing the protection of life and the value of the HP.

The Igbo laws of the land are for the maintenance of peace, tranquillity and order in the society. The laws are meant to promote the fundamental human rights and dignity of the people. These laws guide the day-to-day activities of the people. They are promulgated, first as prohibitions that are first contemplated by a group or community that has a common culture; before the intention to employ them in guiding them in their ethical, religious and social life.[237] So the laws are meant to serve the general interest of the community as a body. For the execution and maintenance of the laws, Olisa Metuh indicated that "the maintenance of law and order in Igbo traditional society, as well as the enforcement of political decisions or political authority, rests on various categories of sanctions which can be applied on different occasions."[238] The sanctions are employed to check crimes against humanity in the society. They can be seen from the perspective of positive laws to uphold the value and dignity of the HP in Igbo communities.

The traditional Igbo believes that laws are graded according to their importance. Laws with ethical and moral worthiness have a higher degree of justification since they may be founded on God or on natural law precepts. Human laws have lesser degree of justifiability in comparison with divine laws.[239] These higher laws that originate from God are called divine laws, and in Igbo custom (*omenala*) command behaviours that affirm the order of things. The characteristics of these laws are that they are not manmade. Any violation of the divine law is not just an act against the society but one directed against the supernatural. The offenders,

[237] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethics, op. cit., p. 120
[238] Olisa, M. S. O., Politics and Admin., op. cit., pp. 231-232
[239] Okafor, F. U., Igbo Jurisprudence, op. cit., p. 120

according to Igbo belief, are never left unpunished. Divine laws primarily aim at protecting lives and boosting ethical principles in the society. The divine laws help to guide and direct the society and are always in order with nature as it is. Attempting to give meaning to the mystic nature of divine law, Festus Okafor highlighted that, "this apparent inability to trace these laws to any historical source or to any source whatsoever brings to the fore the other side of the divine law as the natural law."[240] Expounding further, nature, as it is, must have a source and a force that directs it; hence, law posits an ideal greater than man and originating from the divine, implying that God is behind the law of nature too. Thus natural law is defined as "the emanation of Divine Providence, rooted in the nature and reason of man. It is both anterior and superior to positive law."[241] This implies it is the outcome of human reflection which may not absolutely exclude human error.

Nature in itself is, "the way things happen in the physical world when it is not controlled by people."[242] Illustratively, the nature of things suggests their origin. Therefore, Igbo laws have a natural law component, which refers to the way things are naturally born to be; hence, the natural order obeys the natural law, (and) natural law is recognized by sound human reason in the domain of man's free conduct. [243] This shows how natural creatures are governed by man through the operations of latent reasoning as a rational being. The concept of natural law is built on some kind of regularity in nature which is applied in the observation and actualization of the world order. In his explanation of the influence of natural law on the life of the people, Festus Okafor argued that, "the concepts of the world, physical and metaphysical, held by a people have vital influence on their attitude to and evaluation of life. So do our cosmological and metaphysical ideas determine the basic notions underlying our cultural, religious and social activities? In fact, these notions necessarily though sometimes covertly shape our behaviour and thus guide our actions."[244] It has its place in the people's lives. The natural law as a law of reason in the Igbo parlance is also a law of justice. The natural law renders natural justice which comprises rendering to everyone his due. As a result it ensures equality among humans and gives no room for inequality or devaluation of the individual's value and dignity.

On a general note, the idea of natural law for the Igbo human person can be said to be in relation to the significance of "*Ala*" the earth goddess which represents the Igbo totality of

[240] Okafor, F. U., Igbo Philosophy of Law, op. cit., p. 35
[241] Osborn's Concise Law Dictionary 8th Edition, Leslie Rutherford & Sheilabone (Eds.), Sweet & Maxwell, London, 1993, p. 225
[242] Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 7th Edit., Oxford Univ. press, p. 1016
[243] Okafor, F. U., op. cit., p. 42
[244] ibid., p. 13

nature. For the Igbo, to violate the law of *Ala* is to breach the law of nature, considered as a taboo (*Nso-ala*). In the words of Talbort, "certainly taboos are almost invariably thought to apply to acts which are displeasing to the gods, jujus, or ancestors and particularly to the earth goddess. In fact among the Igbo, they are usually called *Nsaw ani*, (*nso ani or ala*) the taboos of the earth, and throughout the country, the sacrifices of purification are generally offered to the goddess, if these prohibitions are not observed, the earth will be unable to give forth her increase and the women to bring forth children."[245] Taboos are not meant for some people in the community only; they are for all and serve as check for all, big and small. Ferdinand Ezekwonna, stressing the serious emphasis on taboo stated: "Even when a king commits an offence that is taboo, he would get his punishment like any other person and he might as a result, lose his kingship. So taboo is not used to oppress the common man but to guide individuals to live a proper life that will help the community."[246] In a typical Igbo society, an act is bad either because it offends God or the ancestors or because it is contrary to *Omenala* (law and customs of the land). Consequently, Igbo people are always concerned with whether or not their actions are in keeping with these.

God, ancestors and *omenala* forbid all actions which are ontologically evil and promote the good ones. Taboos are, therefore, meant to be for the protection and sustenance of life and posterity. When this aim is achieved, the value and dignity of man is promoted. On the contrary, when in the process of establishing taboos some anti-human elements are manifested and projected, its aim is defeated as well.

From the discussion above, the Igbos consider the laws, whether divine, natural or ethical as interwoven. An act is bad in Igbo society if it goes against the ethical norms that relate man to God, the ancestors or the laws and customs of the land (*Omenala).* This is so because ethics as a way of life and religion overlap in the Igbo traditional society. Hence, there is hardly any distinction between an act that is against religion and one against the ethics of the land. Religion and ethics are intertwined for the Igbo person. Religion is synonymous with life and anything against religion is against life and anything involved in it. Accordingly, the laws of the land, be they divine or natural are intertwined with the religion and ethics of the people. They are not mutually exclusive.

[245] Talbot, P. A., The People of Southern Nigeria, Vol. 111, in Emefie Ikenga Metuh, *African Religions in Western Conceptual Schemes,* Pastoral Institut Bodija-Ibadan, 1985, pp. 76-77
[246] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethic, op.cit., P. 121

3.4.1 The *Ofo*

The term *Ofo* has been used in this work as a strong element of cultural value, belief, and leadership among Igbo people in their community structure. As an authoritative emblem its symbolism lies not in the piece of wood as it is used in the context of ritual ratification of accepted norms of behaviour passed into laws. Rather it is seen in its contextual ritualization or application and performative role.[247] The *Ofo* is seen in the Igbo setting as a symbol of justice hence, "every action performed by the individual is normally assessed by how just it is. That is why even in dispute as a word one would ask the other *ijikwa ofo* (literarily meaning: do you have justice)."[248] As a further clarification of its importance, Stephen Ezeanya stated: "The *Ofo* is the Igbo traditional symbol of justice and truth. It occupies a place of honour in the religious (and political) life of the people."[249] The *Ofo* stands as a symbol of justice, peace, righteousness and love. The person who is the custodian of the *Ofo* ensures that justice, peace and tranquillity are maintained in the community. It checkmates individual human actions ensuring that "individuals will want their actions to be part of what builds a healthy and progressive community. In other words, before one acts he/she would ask, is this just *(Ofo)?* Are the ancestors and the community with me in this act and when he/she feels that he/she is acting alone he will discontinue."[250] So *Ofo* serves as a value that unites the individual with the community and motivates people to work towards the common good. For John Paul Nzomiwu, "*Ofo* symbolizes the ancestors as well as justice. In it is enshrined, both the authority of the ancestors and the importance of justice. In a sense, both justice and ancestors are united in *Ofo*; since *Ofo* is also the summary of the traditions of the ancestors and justice consists in following the straight path of the ancestor. The justice symbolized by *Ofo* is the more perfect justice. It is the justice which the Igbo aspire to achieve."[251]

The values and ethics attached to the *Ofo* are judged sacred and powerful because they are believed to have come from the ancestors and are sanctioned by them. The ethics and forces of the *Ofo* for the Igbo person have a divine power and cannot be violated carelessly by any

[247] Okafor, F. U., Igbo Philosophy of Law , op. cit., pp. 43- 66

[248] Arinze, F., Sacrifices in Igbo Religion, op. cit., p. 16-17. Arinze explained what *ofo* is, from what it is made of and the significance. "this is not a spirit but the symbol of authority which descends from the ancestors, a guarantee of truth, and sometimes part of the regalia of the umu alusi(spirits). *Ofo* is a piece of wood cut from a tree of the same name (detarium senegalense). At its first consecration it has all appearances of a charm, but its most important aspect is its symbolism of ancestralwhen it has been handed on to the first-born son (*Okpara*) for several generations."

[249] Ezeanya, S. N., Oaths in Traditional Religion of West Africa, In Nzomiwu John Paul, *The concept of Justice Among the Traditional Igbo, An Ethical Inquiry*, Awka 1999, p. 106

[250] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethics, op.cit., p. 95

[251] Nzomiwu, J. P., Concept of Justice, op.cit., p. 106

one for fear of disastrous repercussions. Anthony Ekwunife explained further that, "when the Igbo say that *Ofo* is a symbol of justice, it seems that what they meant is that it validates the demands of laws and customs of the land as enunciated by the religious and political leaders of Igbo people. Thus as a ritual of agent for consecrating the day in the morning, *Ofo* is used to communicate, express and unify the basic religious, social, political and economic values articulated in the texts."[252] As the *Ofo* is religiously, ethically and socially a source of justice, especially in relation to issues that pertain to human life and destiny, it serves as an instrument for establishing and safeguarding the values and dignity of the HP.

3.4.2 The Deities (*Alusi*)

The *Alusi* in Igbo society is a deity which the people revere as a powerful force. A deity is an invisible being with mystical attributes, whether positive or negative. Going by the claim of their performances, many attributes are linked to the Igbo deities. Roberta Lenkeit suggests that all cultures have belief in invisible beings who exhibit, form personality, attitudes and powers. These beings are believed to have the ability of doing things which human beings cannot accomplish. One can make petitions through them for assistance in difficult moments.[253] The Igbo belief in deities streams from this belief in their ability to do things beyond humans. In the African traditional setting, the worship of divinities (deities) play important role as they are regarded as the agents of the Supreme Being. "God is sparingly approached directly, hence the pan-theon of many divinities scattered all over the communities."[254] As a result, the Igbo deities are images revered by Igbo people as important divinities through which they approach the supreme deity – God. They come in different forms and sizes. According to Gregory Adibe, deities "are invisible elements personalized in the visible emblems of their shrines."[255] They are instituted as shrines and worshipped for different purposes but primarily for protection of life. Their coming to existence is due to individual and communal urge for human wellbeing and a way to identify with the mysteries or elements that confront the human person and the individual's existence. Furthermore, Paul Ogugua states that, "man from time immemorial worship the forces he could not understand and termed them gods. In the process he used his imagination to grade them into shapes, shades, and sizes. In the course of practice and intelligent projection, the dynamics of the

[252] Ekwunife, A., Consecration in Igbo Traditional Religion, Jet Publishers Enugu, 1990, p. 112
[253] Lenkeit, R. E., Introducing Cultural Anthropology, New York, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 1999, p. 212
[254] Adibe, G. E., Igbo Issues, op. cit., p. 236
[255] Adibe, A. E., Igbo Issues, op. cit., p. 234

relationship between men and the mysterious elements of priest-craft developed and this improved the sacred interaction." [256] Therefore, deities are the products of mankind's quest for the meaning surrounding the mystery of human existence and wellbeing. They also serve as protective agents to life and humanity as an entity of value.

Belief in deities among the Igbos can be said to have arisen from the inability of the human person to account for all events that surround his existence. Hence, appeal to supernatural powers as agents of life and destiny is core to the Igbo cosmology. The Igbo people believe that situations in human life: success, happiness, anger, luck, thunder, rain, flood river, good harvest, draught and sickness must result from strange forces that are operative in nature. In effect, Barnabas Abanuka observed that, "deities are spirits who supervise the various cosmological facts as earth and sky from which they take their names, to ensure universal order and avoid chaos or conflict. It is man who invented and named gods, which he (man) conceives as ontologically different from the various spheres they supervise for maintenance of universal order and harmony. Man by experience took note that laws abide and operate in nature."[257] In the bid to adhere to nature and its laws, the HP in Igbo society, invented deities as controllers and supervisors of natural realities which are beyond human comprehension. In affirming this quest for meaning and knowledge of natural realities by the Igbo HP, Barnabas Abanuka highlighted that, "Man in his ignorance invented the earth goddess (*Ala*), the sky god (Igwe) and the other gods to account for the regular and irregular operation of nature. For instance, *Igwe* (the sky god) enables man to explain the movement of the clouds, the appearance of rainbow and rainfall. *Amadioha* (the god of lightning and thunder) is human invention to explain lightning and thunder. Similarly man conceived the earth goddess (*Ala*) to explain fertility and the awe-inspiring moral law."[258]

Abanuka appears to suggest that the Igbo/African's quest for knowledge and definition of the cosmic events surrounding life stem from deep-seated ignorance of the actual relations of the range of existing material forces. Taken to its logical conclusion, Abanuke might be suggesting that the origin and purpose of the material universe and the forces operative in nature are settled questions that require no further investigation. While Abanuka is entitled to his opinion, many scholars in Igbo cosmology posit a different view. An accepted belief

[256] Ogugua, P. I., Understanding Deities in Igbo-African world: A Religio-philosophical Perspective: In M.Dukor (ed.) *African Philosophy and Pathology of Godhood and Traditionalism*, Lagos, Essence Library, 2005, pp. 84-88

[257] Abanuka, B., Philosophy of Igbo World a Revisitation: In Aja, Ebo, E. B. O., and Njoku, F. O. C., (eds.), *Uche, Journal of department of philosophy,* 2007, Nsukka, Vol.13, p. 68

[258] ibid., p. 68

among the Igbo holds that nature and its elements are God's creatures, and humans as rational beings are equipped with the faculty to unravel these natural phenomena. Reference to deities and gods form part of Igbo philosophical interpretation of the complex natural phenomena operative in their life. Characterising this Igbo-African quest as ignorance is inconsistent with the nature of the human person to seek answers to questions surrounding human existence. The allusion to the deities as supervisors of the created elements is therefore an intelligent exercise and not an expression of ignorance.

The various deities have emblems and through consecration these emblems are no more within the level of material beings; they are rather regarded as spiritual entities. The consecration of the deities creates room for the interaction with the spirits the deities represent in moments of need. Human beings interact with these spiritual beings through prayers and sacrifices. To buttress this point, Koech asserts that "Africans believe that no one can fight nature and live happily with oneself. Therefore to find harmony with the spirit of forces, man makes prayers and ritual sacrifices to the spiritual entities."[259] This suggests that deities serve as intermediary between God and human beings; hence, the deities are respected for their powers. These supernatural beings are concerned with human welfare. They sustain the dignity of the HP as higher beings and help to maintain harmony and peace in the community. They protect the HP and fight for the rights of mankind in the society. This is achieved through the protection they provide to humanity against negative forces and disasters that might befall them. The traditional Igbo person depends on his deity for several personal effects like life, longetivity, procreation, rich harvest of farm produce etc., hence, Josephat Oguejiofor highlighted: "The Igboman appeals to his chi for his personal needs. There are some other needs for which he considers his personal god inadequate. To meet these there are *Alusi* who take care of them."[260] This suggests that there are different categories of deities with varying levels of operation. They generally stand for justice and righteousness, though manipulations by unconscionable humans have led to some abuses with regard to these roles. Deities are not treated literally but only as the term concerns the topic of this discussion. The postulation of the existence of these deities is a philosophical enterprise exercised outside the domain of the positivist sciences and the use of the scientific method.

[259] Koech, K.., African Mythology: A key to Understanding African Religion: In N.S., Booth, (ed..), *African Religions*, Symposium New York, NOK Publishers, 1977

[260] Oguejiofor, ,J. O., The Influence of Igbo Traditional Religion the Socio-Political Character of the Igbo, Fulladu Publishers, Nsukka, 1996, p. 59

As already noted, every Igbo person is believed to have a personal deity that serves as his guardian. This is called the *Chi* which serves as a personal god and the spark of the Supreme Being in the human person. Through it the human person has divine essence in him or her. By this principle in Igbo cosmology, *chi* is accepted as God, who is personal to each person. On the other hand, *Alusi* or deity serves as caretaker of the welfare of the Igbo person and serves as an intermediary between one´s *chi* and the individual involved. Hence, the *Igbos* respect and often dread their *Alusi* (deity). They believe that the *Alusi* is more powerful than the human person and the fate of the Igbo person depends on the uncontrollable behaviour of these spiritual entities. The *Alusi* has taboos, which should be strictly observed. The deities, on the same note, are expected to protect the people, enrich them, or at least take charge of the particular sphere for which each is invoked. Worthy of note is the imperfect nature of the deities and their operational methods; yet, they serve as means of social control among the people. They mostly serve humanity, especially in relation to the protection of life with its value and dignity.

3.4.3 The Priest

The Igbos have sacred objects and places of worship and designate priests to attend to these objects and places of worship. The Igbo priesthood begins from within the family circle. The *Okpara*, being the eldest male in the family, plays both political and religious roles. The *Okpara* as a living link between the living and the departed members of the family is often referred to as *Pater famillias*.[261] He mediates on religious and civil matters in the family. Therefore, his duties are within the family. Outside the family and in the various Igbo communities, there are hosts of deities with priests attached to them too. These are known as *Eze Mmuo* or *Eze Arusi.*

The priest serves as a mediator between the people and the deities. The priests consciously offer reasonable guidance and assistance to the people in their dealings with the spiritual forces. A priest must be a man of peace and impartial in handling cases.[262] Given that there

[261] Arinze, F. A., Sacrifice in Ibo Religion, op. cit., p. 78
[262] Okorie, C. P. A., Priesthood in Igbo Traditional Religion, EOS Verlag Erzabtei,, D- 86941 St, Ottilien, 1989, p. 183

exists no demarcation between the civil and religious rites, most of the time, the priest stands as a religious figure and a judge in political situations.

3.4.4 King (*Eze*)

Kingship in several African societies suggests the existence of a kingdom with a clearly defined office of a king occupied by a male king accepted by the people. This was uncommon or absent among the Igbos prior to colonization, hence, the term "*Igbo enwe eze"* (The Igbo have no king). As traced earlier in this paper, prior to the pre-colonial era, the Igbos lived a communitarian life and abhorred any and varied forms of individualism. Vestiges of kingship however existed among the Igbo kingdoms of *Onicha, Nri, Ugwuta, Osomala* and parts of western Igbo of Delta state with influence from Benin. The issue of kingship (*Eze, Obi, Igwe*) came to the fore in Igboland from the time of colonization as "indirect rule."[263] This followed the imposition of warrant chiefs by the colonialists for easy access to the people.

The *eze* is the monarch, or as it is called, the traditional ruler of the community or town. In Igboland, the *eze* (king) and kingship has become the apex of the Igbo political organization. There are two aspects of the *eze's* job – the spiritual and the secular. The spiritual involves traditional ritual performances, handled originally by the title holders. The secular involves the political aspect. The power and authority of the king is based on the belief that the occupant of the office has spiritual and political authority over his people and that these authorities were conferred on him by the ancestors for the maintenance of peace and order in the society. On the same vein, he does not rule alone, rather, he rules with his council of elders and titled men called *Ndichie,* and recently town union groups. The *Ndichie* are appointed from reputable men of the kins and lineages that make up the town. They represent their people and work as the *eze's* cabinet. Chieka Ifemesia, noted that, "the full council of *Ndichie* are summoned when there is need to widen the scope of discussion if the issue needed fuller deliberation in other to sample various opinions and facilitate the general enforcement of laws on which a consensus had been achieved."[264] This is because the *eze* does not hold sole authority but operates with his council as consultors and advisers. The ultimate repository of power and authority is in the community itself that appointed him as the *eze*. He is a mere representative of the community. Consequently, the *eze* and his

[263] Indirect Rule-This was a system used by the British colonial masters on the Igbo people who then have not statutory kings. It was an attempt to rule through the indigenous institutions of the colonized Peoples.
[264] Ifemesia, C. C., Traditional Humane living, op. cit., p. 73

council or titled men function as servants of the people and as executives who take decisions on behalf of the people. In spite of the honor accorded the *eze* and his cabinet of elders, the community still maintains necessary supervision on their activities. The community and the people are the ones who implement the decisions of their representatives and as such could easily point out deviations in instructions from decisions of the council and the *eze*. The *eze* depends on the community to function effectively. The major function is to maintain peace and harmony among the citizenry, especially as regards respect and value for each other.

Conclusion

The Igbo socio-political structure depicts a society that recognizes the complementarities of men and women in their socio-cultural development and civilization. Instructively, power is diffused in each sex or gender group in recognition of the indispensability of each other. On this note, men and women in this network of socio-political structure and institutions are defined by their positions. From these positions, they derive their power and participate in the sustenance of the various values, precepts and norms that shape the peoples world. The position of men and women in the Igbo socio-political setting to an extent shows a clear element of gender collaboration and mutual interdependence.

Thus, from the discussion in Igbo socio-political structure the interrelatedness of groups inherent and instituted in the body polity ensures that power is not placed on a single individual or gender group. On this note, Olisa made a few observations: "One is the segmentary nature of the social structure. Each level viz kindred village, town, is a federation of lineages or segments each of which speaks as one voice and reacts to decisions on the same axis."[265] The next observation is the individuality of the Igbo society as seen in the independence of the units of the social structure. Here "all lineages regard themselves as independent of one another; the same thing applies to individual villages and individual towns, each unit recognizing no superior."[266] Summarily, one can argue that the Igbo political system permits everyone to participate actively in one way or the other in policy making. For the Igbo, power belongs to all. Freedom of expression is cherished and maintained while imposition of any kind is abhorred. This reflects a culture that rejects intimidation or oppression or hegemonic control of power by a few. Power as a major resource for the Igbo must be accessible to all, irrespective of sex. With equitable access to power, truth, justice and

[265] Olisa, M. S. O., Politics and Admin., op. cit., p. 224
[266] ibid., p. 224

equity thrive and become the bedrock of life in the society. Through these means, the Igbo socio-political institutions and structures are made to maintain status-quo in relation to respecting and valuing the dignity of every HP.

In the Igbo society, transparency in human relationship, respect and protection of life are regarded as utmost values. Despite all effort to construct a unified system, the Igbo society, like many others, was never a perfect society. Elements of abuse in the socio-political life abounded among the Igbos. Similarly, today's Igbo society experience challenges that would cause one to question how real and effective these socio-political characteristics remain. Abysmal disregard of some of the socio-cultural/political controls put in place has, in the modern times, been on the increase. Some attribute this decline to interaction with other cultures, urbanization and modernization which are the after-products of colonization and Christianization. These challenges will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Generational Decline of the Value of Human Dignity; Dilemma of Contemporary Igbo

Introduction

Igbo society like any other society has gone and is still going through transformative changes. European Colonialism and Christianity are among the factors that ignited the fire of change in Igbo society and culture. These new changes can be seen in the name of development in many aspects of Igbo life and culture. Development as it is known involves the whole person. It involves the cultural, social, political, economic and religious dimensions of the individual person. Development affected the Igbo culture and value system seriously from the above perspectives. The rights and duties embodied in Igbo culture as an aspect of their inter-human relationship are also affected. The traditional Igbo laws and rights concerning the worth of the human person are not left out though they have their own lapses and pitfalls as seen from their operational bases.

Looking at the whole scenario, apparently today these Igbo rights and obligations towards one another as stated in the second and third chapters are to an extent profoundly no longer functional from the practical bases. These can be ascribed to the after effect of culture contact and modernism which has to do with civilization, urbanization and Christianity. These to an extent are seen to have ostracized the Igbo traditional doctrines and ethics especially the ones that deal with value for human dignity. The message of this trend of modernism and enlightenment indicates that the inherited traditions and cultures should be overcome to be more modern. As a warning against such moves especially, the discarding of primary cultural values that makes us human, David Ray Griffin argued that, "a wide spread conviction exists in our time that many of our most important qualities are in imminent danger of being lost. Historians can show that the feeling is not unique to our time. In our century, however, the concern seems to be more enduring. It makes sense, therefore, to ask about the root cause of this crisis, and what we can do, if anything, to preserve and strengthen what we consider our most valuable human qualities."[267] In the Igbo setting, the crisis has to do with the fact that they and their society today are struggling with three sources of value orientation viz Igbo traditional values, Christian ethics and modernity. There is conflict of influence as a result of which neither the traditional ethics nor the Christian or modern ethics can now claim prevalence on them. This is informed from the fact that the search for truth, love, respect, and

[267] Griffin, D. R., God and Religion in the Postmodern World: *Essays in Postmodern Theology*, New York University Press, Albany, 1989, p. 13

transparency in dealings with fellow human beings is becoming a mirage in Igbo society today. The traditional norms and ethics are becoming something merely external. As a result of this each one grasps them from one's own point of view, without considering the objective view of others and the community.

For the above reason we shall examine in this chapter the various factors militating against this value of human dignity in Igbo society. In line with this, a little ex-po-se´ of some of the not too humane attitudes of Igbo culture, Christianity, and colonization which is the foundation of modernity towards the maintenance and keeping of the value of HD are to be considered. This chapter will expand its view to Nigeria in some aspect during the course of the topic because Igboland belong to Nigeria as a nation and some of the problems are more of conditional and general than peculiar.

This chapter is not in any form against modernity but serves as its collaborator in redefining things for the progress of modernity in Igbo world-view. It will evaluate modernity taking cognizance of the ways it affirms and values the human person and reality. It will equally point out the various ways it departed from safeguarding human value and its effect on Igbo people. As well some of the deep-seated currents in modern life and thoughts that are part of the crisis that threaten the Igbo value and dignity of the HP will as well be touched.

4.1The Pre-Colonial Igbo and Culture Contact

I do not intend here to survey historically the pre-colonial era before the Western Colonization, but to point out what the Igbo traditional ethical value in relation to the human person was in this era. Hence the question, how did the Igbo fare ethically in relation to the value of the HP before the advent of colonization and Christianity? Before their arrival in Igboland the traditional norms and ethics laid the basics of behaviour and conduct as stated in earlier chapters. The Igbo are attached to their cultural and ethical norms and traditions. Such cultural norm as value of HD was established but the same culture that ascribed non-killing of human beings equally advocated the killing of twins, human sacrifices and other acts that threatens human dignity in the name of cultural demand. Twins among pre-colonial Igbo people were construed as a radical perversion and a terrible threat to the basic order and harmony, which if not curtailed would certainly precipitate catastrophic consequences on the community. Twin-birth was termed abomination "because it was considered unnatural for human beings to be born more than one at a time only lower animals like hens, goats, dogs

and the rest can give birth to more than one at a time."[268] Though the killing of twins amounted to a serious infringement on the basic right to life, it was a matter of erroneous perception of the reality by the people than non-appreciation of the worth of life or cruelty on their part. It took the efforts of the missionaries to stop this barbaric practice in Igboland.

Human sacrifice was another threat to the value of HD which was practised in Igboland before the advent of Christianity. Such sacrifice was done when extreme abomination that leads to the breach of harmony between the spirit world and the community was committed. This was of course for most part applied in *extremis extrema tendenda sunt* (in extreme circumstances extreme measures are adopted). The next was the burial of chiefs and some noble men with their slaves for a smooth passage to the land of the spirits where the slaves will also serve their masters in the life after death. [269] Then in such situation one cannot talk of genuine value for human dignity in Igboland from the cultural and ethical setting. Reason being that the law that was made to serve the common interest instead favoured some privileged group in the society. Then in such situation one may ask is value and dignity for life meant for a certain class and not for all? Are some lives more important than others? In some quarters it was argued that in most cases when human beings were killed or sacrificed the traditional Igbo saw such as a fulfilment of convinced religious obligations and for the good of the land. For them sacrifice was different from killing a fellow human being for which life must go for life.[270] So then sacrifice or the societal stigma makes the victims condition no longer murder or spilling of blood which is an abomination in Igbo land? This is a deprivation of a fellow human being the right to live and an abuse of the person's right to life. These are areas in Igbo life that Christianity and civilization have done tremendously well in the life of the people for which Igboland has every course to be grateful.

4.1.1 The Osu Caste System

The *osu* caste system is a system that deprives people of their right of citizenship. The *Osu* is an outcast or a person or group of people dedicated to a deity, to be serving the deity and have nothing in common with the commoners. It was a legacy of traditional religious belief and a

[268] Ilogu, E., Christianity and Igbo Culture,University Pub. Co., 1985, p. 65

[269] Arinze, F. A., Sacrifice in Ibo Religion, op. cit., pp. 85-91, His view that "such killings were not at all sacrificial" is not upheld by my findings. An element of sacrifice to the ancestors for easy passage and entry into the bliss of life after death existed, though it was not the most outstanding reason for burial of chiefs with slaves.

[270] Onwu, E. N., Towards Understanding of Igbo Traditional Religious Life and Philosophy; *Ahiajioku Lecture*, 2002, p. 9

reflection of inherited ancestral religious attitudes.[271] It degrades the human person socially and makes one to suffer a deliberate deprivation of the higher cultural values of the society as a human being.

This is a case of man's inhumanity to his fellow human being and a devaluation of the HP`s value and dignity. In the life of the Igbo there has always been the so called free-born *Diala* and the outcasts *Osu* just as in every other society that practise the caste system. These at times are so complicated social structures with a highly developed class consciousness in its members.[272] The issue cannot be classified as class consciousness which I believe is a general phenomenon that is not bad in itself as the *osu* caste system is more of degradation of the human person. This is so because it relegates them to a people of less importance without right unless within their own small grouping. They are being segregated from, and castigated.

An *osu* in the community is a person with a social stigma, a tribal and communal scapegoat. He/she is a sacrificial animal, deliberately condemned to infamy, bastardization and everlasting segregation and servitude; yes condemned to the local gods and deities of the various Igbo communities, to serve them in perpetuity. They are: (a) the class marked out for absolute humiliation (b) They are people to be seen, but not heard; (c) people who must not intermix with other members of the community to which they belong- a supposed accursed group of the rejected. A non *Osu* dares not shake hands with them, since doing so contaminates one to join in the faith.[273] It is painful to be an *osu.* In Igboland an *osu* is symbolically sacrificed and made to serve the deity or god (Arusi) of the land.

In further explanation of the situation of an *Osu*, Chinua Achebe in Things Fall Apart gave us a vivid definition of *osu* as, "a person dedicated to a god, a thing set apart- a taboo forever, and his children after him. He could neither marry nor be married by the free-born. He was in fact an outcast, living in a special area of the village, close to the Great Shrine. Wherever he went he carried with him the mark of his forbidden caste-long, tangled and dirty hair. A razor was taboo to him. An *osu* could not attend assembly of the free born, and they, in turn, could not shelter under his roof. He could not take any of the four titles of the clan, and when he

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[271] The inclusion of the osu in the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the synod of Bishops Special Assembly for Africa in 1993 is of great importance. It made a firm assertion on the Osu caste system as a negative aspect of African tradition. The *Instrumentum Laboris* rightly located the Osu problem within the negative religio-cultural sphere of African traditional religion. Cf., Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops: *Instrumentum Laboris*, Vatican City, 1993, no. 106, p. 84

[272] Okonkwo, E., Marriage in the Christian and Igbo Traditional Context Towards an Inculturation, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2003, p. 48

[273] Akinlolu, A., "Origin of Igbos Osu Caste:" Nigerian Sunday Times 11, 1994, p. 14

died he was buried by his kind in the Evil forest."[274] The system though has gone through several stages and generational influences. But some people especially those who gain from it see it as an integral part of the culture which cannot be easily abolished or changed. All efforts to abolish it are yet to yield much fruitful result.

The problem goes beyond socio-cultural to political economical and more devastatingly philosophical and ethical issue. This created a gulf in the people's socio-cultural, economic and political life. This is as a result of the fact that it is an affront and abuse of HD. It endured due to the tyranny of the ancient beliefs and ideologies on the minds of those communities and individuals involved. As a structure, this institution edges people out due to the accidental history of their birth or social status. The worst problem that befalls them is the denial of basic human rights to freely associate with others, the right to marrying spouse of their choice, social recognition and they cannot participate in making policies that also affect their life, they are denied the right to take positions of leadership in their communities.[275]

The discrimination and dehumanization of the so called *Osu* are ethically wrong. They have negative effects in their personality development causing people anguish, psychological trauma and identity crisis. For Chinua Achebe, "it was scandalous that in the middle of the twentieth century a man could be barred from marrying a girl simply because her great grandfather had been dedicated to serve a god, thereby setting himself apart and turning his descendants into a forbidden caste to the end of time. Quite unbelievable." [276] The dehumanizing social segregation against the *osu* runs through the entire gamut of their existence from birth to death. Thus nothing can make an *osu* to become a freeborn (*diala)* at least for now in some Igbo communities. So it is a sort of generational curse.

The *osu* caste system has defied both Christian and modern education. As a matter of fact this caste system violates the United Nations Universal Declaration of human Rights which states "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in the spirit of brotherhood."(Art.1)[277] The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria had similar legislation that protects the individuals from deprivation and discrimination, "No citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the

[274] Achebe, C., Things fall Apart, London, 1958, p. 111
[275] Okonkwo, E.,Marriage in the Christian and Igbo Traditional Context, op. cit., p. 50
[276] Achebe, C., No longer at Ease, London, 1960, p. 65
[277] Okafor, J. .N., The Challenge of Osu Caste System to the Igbo Christians, Onitsha, 1993, p.52

circumstances of his birth."[278] (sect. 39 & 2). These laws have made some impact but more awareness needs to be made as many people are still suffering the effect this age.

Regarding these, where stands the ethical norm of the value for the human person when an individual sees another as valueless, inferior and less human just because of some cultural misconception or belief? Thus Osu´s suffers social avoidance, discountenance, isolation, denigration, as they are victimized, abused, dehumanized and denied fundamental human rights. In some schools, the children of *osu* are cajoled, mocked, spat upon, ridiculed by pupils and their leaders, while in villages, they suffer all manner of opprobrium and odium.[279] This is an abuse, a disvalue, a disgrace and humiliation to humanity.

From all indications, *osu* caste system rationally is unethical. It is inhuman to discriminate, subject or force a fellow human being to a life of recluse in the very society they live. This contradicts the Igbo claim to common humanity and brotherhood. The ethical implication lies on the fact that the *osu* caste system fails to respect the equality of all human beings which states in Igbo *mmadu bu otu* (humans are the same or equal). Equality here is all about sharing in the family of human entities with equal rights of existence. It is an unjust system; therefore to deprive one of the rights and attributes that accrues to him/her as a human being. It is ethically wrong and condemnatory.

4.1.2 Ohu or Oru (Domestic Slave)

Igboland is among the areas that experienced the most intensive slave trading activities which started about 1445 and ended in 1888. But we are not going to dwell on this at this point, but on the local slave trade in the hinterland. An *Ohu* is one who is bought for the services of another human being or is used as an exchange for a debt. This was a practice in Igboland before the introduction of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. A typical example could be seen in Chinua Achebe´s *Things Fall Apart* where Okonkwo of Umuofia was sent to Mbaino as the proud emissary of war and in two days' time he came back to his community with a lad of fifteen and a virgin.[280] This is restitution for the killing of a wife of one of the *Umuofia´s*. So in such situation an *Ohu* is not totally an outcast but a victim of circumstance. An *ohu* can grow up marrying from the village one is brought up and is not dedicated to any deity but to

[278] Joye, M. E. & Igweike. K.., Introduction to the 1979 Nigerian Constitution, London, 1982, p. 330
[279] Ezeala, J. O. L., A Lecture on the discrimination in Nigeria Society, in *African Concord Magazine,* 7th Jan., 1988, p. 6
[280] Achebe, C., Things Fall Apart, op. cit., p. 12

serve fellow humans. But before the full right of marriage and association is attained, the *Ohu* must have been cleansed and declared free by the master. This is because slaves have no rights once they are still under their master and are treated as a property of their master.

These slaves are mainly individuals that violated the sacred laws of *Ala* the earth goddess either by committing homicide, incest or stealing of farm produce. They are held liable and responsible for their actions. The victims are sold as slaves to other lands or at times killed.[281] Some slaves were war captives or kidnap victims. As indicated earlier a slave (*ohu*) like the *Osu* has no right but the only difference is that the slave is not ostracized and belonged to no shrine. Thus the slave was free to an extent but under the chains of the master as a property. The slave's life lies at the mercy of the master. The slave is not the owner of himself unless he or she pays back what the master charges for ones freedom. A slave can be used for human sacrifice or sacrificed to a shrine and he/she becomes an *osu*. Ethically slavery of any sort is unethical and violates human rights and dignity of the person. This will lead us to the status of women in Igbo society.

4.2 The Question of Value and Dignity of Women in Igbo Traditional Society

The traditional Igbo society values and respects women. This is because women play very vital roles in the family and society at large. But there are some cultural norms and traditions that act as threat to their dignity and value. An example is the patrilineal nature of Igbo culture and society where women are meant to be seen and not heard. Their position normally is supposedly in the background. According to Rose Uchem, "socially constructed gender roles and stereotypes have been used to limit women´s opportunities for full human development and exercise of their fullest potentials."[282] In the same vein Patrick Obinabu stated that, "the Igbo cultural set-up is highly patriarchal, the male role is concerned with the defence of status and entitlement while the female role is preserving the consciousness of group boundary…as a patriarchal culture it precludes women from assertiveness in public life, inter-personal and social issues, while the male task determines the challenge and response to the nature of any inter-personal or social encounter where honour is defended."[283] This entails that culturally and socially women are yet to attain equal status with men. They have no right

[281] Meek, C. K.., Law and Authority in Nigerian Tribe, Oxford Univ. Press, 1937, p. 5
[282] Uchem, R. N., Beyond Veiling: A Response to the Issues in Women´s Experience of Subjugation in African Christian Culture, Snaap Press Ltd., Enugu, 2002, p. 50
[283] Obinabu, P., The Osu Caste System: A Critical Challenge to the Discipleship of the Church In Igboland, Chimavin Prods., Ltd., Orlu, 2004, p. 7

of property inheritance in their father's house, no wonder they are not counted as members of the family materially.

Counting on this, the male child is always sorted after and more attention is bestowed on him. In old Igbo setting even in some places today the consecutive birth of females in the family constitutes a threat to the family lineage. This is because of the Igbo belief that the male child remains in the family while the females are meant to be married outside the family and belong to other families. From infancy the pattern of socialization of the two sexes is different. As a result of this, the superiority of males over females is emphasized. In this modern time some families are in crisis due to lack of male issue and often the blame goes to the woman. The whole problem is shifted to the woman because the Igbo marriage setting is structured in such a manner that it favours the men-folk. Every problem in relation to child bearing is the woman's fault.

The position of men as heads of families is at times over-stressed. Men are always right as the women are meant to obey them always in the family and society as well. This denotes male chauvinism or misogynism of sort. In affirmation of this misogynism an Igbo proverb says "*Ugwu nwanyi bu di ya"*, (a woman´s pride is her husband). This definitely indicates that for the women folk to find their footing or make any impact in life they must depend on men. In such a background the position of women is considered subordinate to that of a man. Is this not a devaluation of the pedigree of women as human beings? In further clarification of this abuse Ralph Madu pin-pointed that in Igbo setting, "Women, regardless of their background, education or beauty, remain weak and fragile. If unmarried, she is subjected to menace and ridicule by the male world. When married, her pride and worth fades or persists depending on her relationship with her husband." [284] This is dehumanizing and disvalues women as entities with dignity and right. Even in such paltry issues as dietary habits and family etiquettes men are favoured to the disadvantages of women. It is known that in the pre-modern era, Igbo women were prohibited from eating such things as eggs and certain parts of meat as mark of respect for men. In his criticism against the status of women in Igbo cultural setting Innocent Ibeh stated "the many plights of women seem to suggest that they are created by a lesser slave god by virtue of which they are slaves. As a consequence they are rendered powerless, and being powerless are not self-assured. Not self-assured, they feel inferior, and in their

[284] Madu, R.O., Principal Elements of Traditional Igbo Life in African Symbols, Proverbs and Myths, Peter Lang, New York, 1992, p. 201

inferiority complex are exploited and marginalized, suppressed and oppressed."[285] Are such cultural practices not useless, exploitative, enslaving and as well dehumanizing?

On a more serious note at times on the death of one´s spouse women are meant to go through many inhuman treatments to prove their innocence of the death of the husband. But it is not so with the men when their wives die. Rose Uchem, on the treatment meted on widows also hinted that, "Except for the shaving of hair, which applies equally to both widows and widowers, widowers do not go through the same treatment as women do when their spouses die. In some communities, widows are expected to be in ritual conferment for a year. Go bare foot. Wear tattered wrappers. Have their hair shaven or worn unkept and dishevelled. Keep indoors in a dark room. Sit or lie on bare floor…This is said to be the idea behind customs that require the woman to go into a specified bush unaccompanied. Prove their innocence of the man´s death."[286] Their movements are restricted as they are considered ritually impure. This as an insight on the status of women in the Igbo cultural setting is very unethical and an infringement on their right as human beings. They are sometimes compelled against their will to attend to so many inhuman rituals to avoid problem from the relatives of the husband. In some communities widows are at times compelled by their husband's relatives to remain in the family after mourning period and beget children in the husband's name.[287] It is either they are remarried by their late husband's relations or begetting children from them. Often these are done out of cultural compulsion and not out of the free-will of the woman in question. In addition, sometimes the widows are denied access to their husband's inheritances by the relatives especially when they have no male child and at times even when they have male children. These and other similar cultural practices violate and infringe on the fundamental rights of women and devalue their dignity. They are infringements because for example, as next of kin to their husbands, widows are supposed to inherit their properties at death and not the other way round. This is punitive, uncivilized and only intended to protect the selfish perpetuation of male dominance which is aimed at suppressing the right of the women folk in the society. This as well is a gender issue because these never apply to the men-folk when they lose their wives.

[285] Ibeh, I. I., The Woes of African Woman, Jothol, Printing Press, Aba, 2008, p. 81
[286] Uchem, R. N., Beyond Veiling; op. cit., p. 37
[287] Nwanegbo, A. N., Challenges of Widowhood, Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2003, p. 23

4.2.1 Gender Inequality

Gender as it is has to do with what the roles of women and men are in the society. It has to do with how equal the two are. In the Igbo worldview the feminine gender seems to be of the disadvantaged, thus, "socially constructed gender roles and stereotypes have been used to limit women´s opportunities for full human development and exercise of their fullest potentials."[288] As stated earlier in the tradition and culture of Igbo people the male gender is always on the preferable side and the female as a result of this are at times denied their statutory benefits as beings of value. Thus in some cases she is entitled to maintenance like an object rather than an entity of dignity and value. It is generally assumed that almost every society does have the test of gender discrimination thus Martha Nussbaum observed that generally, women in most parts of the world lack support for the fundamental functions of a human life. They are not full equals under the law and as such do not have the same property rights as men.[289] This denial of right and privileges increases the abuse women suffer in the society.

The relegation of women as properties to the men folk has been in the strata of Igbo culture before colonization stepped in. What one can say is colonization did not out-rightly condemn it. So, it is clear that part of what the Igbo are suffering is a conflict of gender paradigm arising from a syncretism of inherited Western norms and surviving Igbo cultural provisions regarding women.[290] As earlier indicated threat on the status of women in Igboland has been a cultural problem from onset. The men-folk starting from the family setting to the societal level are often regarded more. Thus these traditions that rigidify and differentiate the roles played by men and women according to sex, are obstacles to the realization of the value of women. In the traditional Igbo, an event like education initially was not accessible to the women-folk and this made them lose some relevance economically, socially and politically. And when they were opportuned to study they were constrained to those areas that limit their horizons. Such current of thought relegates women to the state of things, objects, ornaments, appendages or the property of the men folk.[291] Even in employment or leadership status there are some positions in the Igbo community that a woman cannot attain even if she is more intelligent than the men-folk involved. In line with this UNICEF[292] pointed out that,

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[288] ibid., p. 50
[289] Nussbaum, C. M., and Glover, J., Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 1
[290] Uchem, R. N., Overcoming Women Subordination, op. cit., pp. 114-115
[291] Izekwe., A. C., Women Reproductive Rights, op. cit., p. 36
[292] UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Education Fund

"Discrimination is evident 'from birth' when girls are less valued than boys; within family; when girls are taught the inferior and stereotyped roles considered more appropriate for girls and women; and are given less educational, employment, recreational and other opportunities; and burdened by a disproportional amount of domestic work and childcare; and are denied the right to own property…"[293] By this act they are coerced by the society to see themselves psychologically as less intelligent, and derivative of men. Ethically this attitude is dehumanizing, unethical and can be traumatic. This can cause complex and identity crisis.

In some Igbo settings there is inequality in distribution of resources within household and families and who controls the resources and determines expenditure.[294] In some Igbo communities the men are seen as determinants on what the woman would do for living as jobs. This right of the men to dictate jobs for their wives keeps their wives ever dependent on their husbands, placing them often at the risk of poverty.[295] Even when they work, got paid and contribute to the family, the value is often not recognized because they are referred to as support to the budget of the family.[296] This is an act of degradation on their personality as human beings endowed with intelligence and freewill. It is a subjugation of their value as entities of dignity.

In all things the efforts of Western Civilization and Christianity which positively impacted on the war against these odds in Igbo culture and people is highly commendable. The efforts being made notwithstanding, women are yet to gain their full position as fully fledged entities of equality with men in Igbo society. That is identifying that the difference between man and woman lies in their respective beings as man and woman, and never in their value and entity as human persons.

4.3 The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the Inhuman Effect on the Igbo

The advent of some European countries and Arabs in Africa recorded a bitter historical experience. Their appearance broadened the institution of slavery to an international and modern form. The Portuguese and the Spaniards, in their search for an alternative solution to

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293 UNICEF, Girls for Sale, in Gender Equality, Development and Peace, for the Twenty-first Century (A/55/341), Beijing, New York, 5th to 9th June, 2000

294 Oppendheim, C., and Harker, L., Poverty the Facts Reversed and Updated, Action Group, London, 1996, pp. 109-110

295 Machin, S., and Waldfogel, H., *The Decline of the Male Breadwinner;* Changing shares of `husband s` and ` wives` earnings in family income, Welfare State Programme Discussion Paper WSP/103, School of Economics, London, 1994, p. 82

296 Morris L., the Working of the Household, Polity Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 39

the weak Indian workers, found their way to the coast of West Africa.[297] Modern slavery or the Trans-Atlantic slave trade which supposedly happened from 1526, when the first shipment began, to 1870 when it was abolished[298] was a cause of pain on the Igbo and other African world. The negative impact of the slave trade had a serious effect on Igbo people. This is because it was their healthiest and fittest personnel's that were the victims of this man´s inhumanity to man. They were captured as captives either during war or raids of various communities in Igboland by the slave masters and sold off. The slaves were reduced to human machinery, a substantial fraction at the disposal of their plantation owners and masters. Into this ticket that took them to the New-world was built, misunderstanding, humiliation, racial discrimination and devaluation of their value as entities of dignity. This was one of the most dehumanizing incidents in the history of mankind. The Black Holocaust as one may call it.

Demographically the trade decimated the Igbo population and no compensation or apology for that was made. The trade stunted the political, economic and cultural growth of Igbo people as well as other African world victims. But the questions that beg for attention are who were the victims and the agents that were used to perpetrate the atrocities? The answer is not far-fetched: Igbo people were the victims and the agents for the perpetration and the Portuguese and Brazilians were the receivers and the sponsors. What was their intention or motive? Then after the abolition was there compensation or benefits which accrue for the people from this odious trade? What form does the reparation take? What price do we put on human life? How do we quantify the trauma and emotional injuries to these individuals and relatives? No respect was accorded them as none of these questions were attended to. "The slave ship itself was the ultimate in human degradation, for the slaves were packed like sardines and left in chains. Stubborn or sick ones were thrown overboard."[299] This as a matter of fact puts a question mark on the sense of value placed on the human person by the slave masters.

These so called slaves were human beings and neighbours of their captors and were transported in inhuman conditions to the so called New-world. The slave "trade was totally extractive of human resources, negated political, economic, social and cultural development

[297] Davidson ,B., The Growth of African Civilisation: A History of west Africa 1000-1800, Long man, London, 1965, p. 195

[298] Lockard, C. A., Societies, Networks, and Transitions: A Global History, Houghton Miffin Comp. Boston, 2008, p. 471. This trade in human lives affected lots of Africans who were captured, transported and sold. It also affected many African communities, where these slaves came from. The American states that imported them as slave labour , the European and North American merchants, shippers and planters were the ones who profited from the trade.

[299] Umozurike, U.O., The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, Martin Njihoff Press, Boston, London, 1997, p. 17

and stultified the growth of civilization. It destroyed kingdoms and prevented the development of legitimate trade. Personal insecurity was highest during the slave trade era with consequent degradation of the quality of life."[300] It dealt a severe blow on the economic strength of Africa because of this forceful mass exportation comprising mainly of the youths. As a matter of justice serious apology and compensation are still being awaited from the perpetrators of this atrocious inhuman act. Thus as a way of consolation and encouragement to the Africans Pope John Paul 11 pointed out that despite the effect of the slavery "The church which at this moment is speaking through my words rejoices in the fact that the people of Africa with their cultures and traditions are living in their own states and systems, that they are sovereign in their own continent..., it also enables them to judge critically all the injustices suffered during the colonial period and even earlier, resulting from the cruel practice, which lasted so long, of reducing to slavery many sons and daughters of Africa in order to deport them into the new world."[301] These words of the pope show how dehumanizing the Trans–Atlantic slave trade was. It devalued the dignity of the human person and made man an object or tool unto the hand of his fellow man, a sheer typification of man being a wolf unto his fellow man. Then what are the lessons of the slavery, how did it help the Igbo to value the dignity attached to human person? This will be attended to in the cause of identifying some of the effects and defects of colonization and Christianity on the people.

4.4 The So Called Era of Civilization and its Effects

The 19th century could be termed the era of partition and scrambling for Africa by the Europeans who struggled for political and commercial supremacy. As in all African countries the history of the coming of the Europeans had three Cs as their main purpose, these were Colonization, Commercialization and Christianization. This was seen in the combined action of the British politicians, philanthropist's commercial interests, educators and missionaries in Igboland. This coming of civilization coded in Christianity and commerce involved many factors in the life of Igbo people. These can be seen from the perspective of hindrances as well as racial and cultural misunderstandings. The Igbo are enthusiastic about enlarging their views on reality and nature thus some modern anthropologists conceive them as, a people of strong cultural adaptability that do not close their minds to a new teaching like that brought

[300] Umozurike, U.O., Internationmal Law and the African Slave Trade, Howard University Law, Journal, Vol., 16, 1971, pp. 334-335

[301] Africa Exhort …Homily by Pope John Paul 11 at the Mass of the Inauguration of the African Synod,1994, N:3

about by Christian missionaries.[302] The British colonial authorities with their sister organ the Irish missionaries and their seductive approach to the people with facilities like education, learning of craft, and the Christian faith are really commendable. Other forms of social services were made available too to the people. These are good but not without their detrimental effects on the psyche and cultural life of the people. Edmund Ilogu on this effect stated that, "What all these social welfare activities, including more developed educational systems later added up to, was to overload the Christian message with Western cultural values to the detriment of the Igbo traditional culture. This early in the history of Christianity in Igboland overloaded the gospel message with foreign elements which have stayed ever since."[303] This atmosphere was what produced the Igbo elites of today. Thus these so called elites are struggling to balance what they learnt and the values and ethics of their Igboland of which the resultant effect is crisis of values. This has placed the Igbo in dilemma. They end up neither Europeans nor core Igbo as the case may be. Here began the journey to destruction of the cultural values and identity of Igbo people.

4.4.1 Effect of Christianity on Igboland

Missionary penetration into Igboland occurred during the latter half of the 19th century, the pioneers being the British Church Missionary Society (CMS). The Advent of Christianity became one of the forces of change in Africa, including Igboland traditionally and culturally. It is worth giving due applause to the underestimated good work of missionaries in Africa. They fought relentlessly in getting rid of some of our cultural practices that are anti-human, like human sacrifices and other ones and worked for the abolition of slave trade. The provision of Western education is equally a credit to them.

The introduction of Christianity into Igboland as seen brought a new vision of life but not without conflicts. It threw the people into cultural confusion which eventually culminated into what I call cultural identity crisis and syncretism. The problem is with the manner in which Christianity was introduced into Igbo land as in other African lands. The missionaries approached the culture and cultural values of the people with aversion. Their effort was focused on getting the Africans to abandon their way of life and follow the new way. They devalued many of the socio-cultural values terming them fetishism and paganism. The

[302] Ottenberg, S., Ibo Receptivity to Change in Bascom, W.R., and Herskovits, M. J., (eds.), *Continuity and Change in African Culture*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1959, p. 130 ff.
[303] Ilogu, E., Christianity and Igbo Culture, Univ., Pub., Co., Onitsha, 1985, p. 76

customs and practices of the local people were regarded as being positively anti-Christian and the measures taken by the missionaries themselves to stamp out these habits are evidence of this … This method of Christianizing is indicative of the fact that the missionaries … believed that they have to ´root up and pull down` in order to build …[304] They made not much allowance for many of the existing values of Igbo society. This is owing to racial bigotry, personal idiosyncrasy and lack of sympathetic approach to the cultural view of the people of the missionary area.[305] This goes contrary to the notion of culture as that where man humanizes social life both in the family and in the whole civic community through the improvement of customs and institutions…[306] In this situation there was neither humanization nor an improvement on the culture rather desecration and devaluation. Chinua Achebe summarily in his view of the general Igbo person whose unifying traditional values made no meaning to the colonial masters and missionaries said: "The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peacefully with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan no longer acts like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart."[307] Thus, many of the prominent Igbo socio-cultural values as family unity, communalism, even value for human dignity were subverted. The converts to the new religion no longer keep the norms and practices of the community. They no longer keep the laws of the land and do not interact with their relations as before. The fear of immediate repercussion on one's negative action which makes one to be careful in ones dealing with others was no longer observed. The Igbo unity was polarized as converted Christians and Traditionalists can no longer relate and this came up with a lot of negativities. The missionaries may not be completely blamed the reason may equally be out of ignorance due to language/communication barrier as a result the lack of true knowledge of the state of things can be a cause of this. But its effect is still being felt today in the various Igbo communities as many because of religion cannot come together as relatives.

Though enlightenment and development were realized but the loss of the core values of Igbo life becomes a problem. This is as a result of the foreignness of Christianity and colonization which are supposed to be systematized into the cultural patterns of the people involved but did not. The Igbo with their attachment to their culture perceived them as imposition of incoming new culture over their traditional cultural values. Clearly put when an incoming culture seeks to totally replace the existing cultural value, it causes social frustration and generates

[304] Kalu, O. U., (Ed.), The History of Christianity in West Africa, London, 1980, p. 55
[305] Ilogu, E., Christianity and Igbo Culture, op. cit., p. 86
[306] Vat., II., Gaudium et Spes, nr. 53
[307] Achebe, C., Things Fall Apart, Heinemann Educ. Books, London, 1976, pp. 124-125

maladjustment of group members to the new system.[308] This destroyed the Igbo traditional socio-cultural structure. Once the Igbo system of civilization does not include its traditional system of socialization and intermingling with one another it will not always be without friction. Hence for civilization and Christianity to be deep rooted in Igbo life and system they have to be made to find root in the culture of the people.

Another factor that helped in destroying some Igbo cultural values was the close association between C.M.S. (Church Missionary Society) mission and the commercial European merchants on the Niger coast. This close association was inevitable due to lack of commercial banks, postal and transport facilities and these were provided by the trading company along the Niger for the missions. This became a source of embarrassment considering the immoral life style of the commercial personnel who apply sharp practices in trade. And the speedy way with which the converts started imitating these trade merchants in their greed for commercial gains and immoral life.[309] This caused a sort of crisis between them and the cultural norms of the society they belong. They lost their original way of communal life where they are bound by cultural ethical values in the bid to acquire western knowledge and way of living. As a result greed, materialism, and other abnormal attitudes were being recorded. On this note one of the early missionaries Perry in his reports to the C.M.S., headquarter in London said "riches has come to "Onitsha"[310] and have brought temptations which some of the native Christians are ill able to resist."[311] It was reported that some of the missionary agents in Igboland paid more attention to trading than to evangelization. Others had dealings with natives in a corrupt and unbecoming manner.[312] Thus some of the Igbo adherents saw the Western teachings and culture to be the easy way out of the cultural ethical bounds. This made them to take it as an escape from the clutches of their own demanding cultural values. Mostly the easy ways they took were the negatives of the merchants. Ajayi Crowther's report on visitation to the Niger mission in 1875 said, "To my pain and grief, it was found out that the formed habits of these men, uncultivated for mission work totally unfitted them for a connection with the mission, on which work would cast a lasting reproach in the country, instead of being helpful to its commendation."[313] The missionaries later realized the mistake in collaborating with their merchant brothers in the exploration of Igboland and separated

[308] ibid.
[309] ibid., p. 77
[310] Onitsha is a Town in Igboland with the local Sea-port through which Evangelization and Civilization came into Igboland
[311] C.M.S., CA 3/30 Perry to Hutchinson received at C.M.S. London, 10th January, 1874; In: Ilogu, E., *Christianity and Igbo Culture*, op. cit., p. 77
[312] Ilogu., E., Christianity and Igbo Culture, op. cit., p. 77
[313] C.M.S., CA 2nd Sept. 1876; in: Ilogu, E., op. cit., p. 82

from them. Then a lot of harm has been done on the psyche of Igbo people the Christian ethics and their cultural heritage.

This collaboration of missionaries and the European merchants had a serious effect on the economic mindset of the people. In the traditional Igbo society, a man's wealth is measured by his large adherents and extending relationships. The services he renders to the community through his wealth and fame. Otherwise if one has all the wealth and renders no patronage on his fellow human and other social services he was never reckoned as wealthy or honourable. Thus this collaboration created another way of life to the people. They became so attached to wealth acquisition without considering the other fellow. Craze for things that multiply profit not minding how and the outcome became the order of events. Collective participation in meaningful labour and the exercise of skill is abandoned. Craftsmanship was no longer held with dignity and honour. The fear then that failure to execute skilfully in craftsmanship or cutting corners in the bid to make more money could incur the wrath of the ancestors was lost. No thanks to colonization, education and technology, from which such fear was destroyed.[314] As regards this new approach people now work only for money without the inner urge for good and dependable workmanship. With this the love of work as a means of welfare rather than means of wealth diminished. Communal working effort which diminished class consciousness was lost. Within this trend individualism developed as a system that encouraged greed and unhealthy class consciousness. This broke the Igbo old age culture of being one another's keeper. Lamenting on the effect Jude Uwalaka stated that "today excessive individualism is on the Igbo throne; egocentrism and selfishness have become the driving force, personal interest has subdued common interest; there is personal agenda over group agenda; nothing is sacrificed to the interest of the group. Internal destructive competition has taken over from co-operation and collaboration. All is now permissible in order to out-manoeuvre the other in the pursuit of personal ambitions."[315] With this we get into the Igbo situation as one of the ethnic groups in the nation called Nigeria.

4.5 Nigeria Pluralism and Its Effect on the Igbo

Nigeria as a nation is a creation of British colonial masters. It is held that Miss Flora Shaw suggested the name Nigeria to the British protectorate under Royal Niger Company in the

[314] ibid. p. 94

[315] Uwalaka, J.,The Struggle for an Inclusive Nigeria, Igbos to be or not to be? Snaap Press, Enugu, Nigeria, 2003, p. 30

Niger Delta in 1894. The present day Nigeria dates from 1914, when the British protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated as one political entity for easy administration. Nigeria gained political independence on 1st Oct. 1960 after 75 years of British dictatorial Colonial administration. [316]

Prior to the amalgamation and independence, there were well-established kingdoms, city-states and organized independent communities in different parts of today's Nigeria. Igbo ethnic group being one of them. These ethnic groups developed along ethnic lines of which the major three are the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo with many other minor ones. The Igbo in the South Eastern Nigeria are predominantly farmers and petty business men. They practiced a decentralized government which operates as democracy without dynasties. The British colonialists which ruled by indirect rule was either ignorant of the cultures, the existing different political systems or refused to consider the system and chose the one that will suit their wish. According to Emmanuel Umeh, "from all indications, it is clear that the amalgamation of Nigeria is an accident of history that has its foundation on the rapacious nature of British colonial administration. The motive for the forced unification of independent ethnic communities by the British administration was mainly of economic interest."[317]

On this ground Igbo people like other ethnicities in Nigeria lost their political power, independence and almost their cultural identity and authenticity. Thus Emmanuel Umeh succinctly pointed out, "It cannot be an overstatement therefore, to maintain that the political instability in Nigeria since after political independence is connected with the British colonial disruption of already existing political systems."[318] This amalgamation merged together several ethnic groups with different ideologies and policies. Since economic and selfish interest is the root for the amalgamation, the nation seems to be built on false hood and deception. The various ethnic groups started with scrambling for power and private interests at the detriment of the unification of the nation. This is so because man by nature is a response to the system, the concept and to the environment to which he is exposed.[319]Thus Nigeria political stance from onset was very much influenced by tribal, ethnic and regional considerations.

[316] Umeh, E. C., The Promotion of Human Rights and Social Justice, op. cit., p. 105
[317] ibid., p. 106
[318] ibid., p. 106
[319] Onyioha, K. O. K., Human Dignity, Social Justice, and Development of the Whole Person; In: Taylor, J. B. and Günther, G., *Religions for Human Dignity*, op. cit., p. 161

The nation in this state is seen to be more of pluralistic in nature with people of divergent backgrounds, ideas, views and problems forced together. The forced marriage of these diverse ethno-national groups has succeeded in producing tension and difficult moments for the country. This has a serious negative influence on the governance of the nation. Thus Chinua Achebe wrote that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership."[320] Personal example: yes on the ground of non- partisan ship to any group or ethnicity. As a result of this, abuses of different forms are experienced but more from the leaders. From this perspective Michael Anyaehie sighted that because of the abuse of office by the leaders "… there is high wave of corruption, injustice, and inefficiency in government circles which translates into socio-economic instability... Most Nigerians have lost interest in the sacredness of the law and its ability to make for a stable and orderly society where people are encouraged to work hard and invest…"[321] This breeds greed and mistrust which are some of the main causes of political instability in the nation. These degenerated and caused the Nigeria, Biafra war few years after Nigeria got independence.

4.5.1The Nigeria-Biafra War

We have discussed the pluralistic nature of Nigeria nation as a result of the forced amalgamation of the various tribes in Nigeria. Then we come to one of the concomitant effect of this forceful merging together of the various ethnic societies and the Igbo after independence which was the Nigeria/Biafra. Thus the civil war of 1967-170 "was as a result not of pre-colonial political arrangements but of new interethnic relations resulting from Britain's unification of previously separate geographical areas."[322] This war was between the Nigeria nation and the secessionist group "Biafra."[323]

[320] Achebe, C., The Trouble with Nigeria, Fourth Dimension pub. Co. Ltd., 1983, p. 1
[321] Anyaehie, M. C., Rule of Law Panacea for National development in Nigeria, in: Ugwu, C. O. T. and Ituma, E. A., (eds.), *Nigerian Journal of Huamnities and social Sciences* Vol. 3., 2009, p. 132
[322] Howard, E. R., Human Rights in Common Wealth Africa, Rowman and Littlefield, New Jersey, 1986, p. 94
[323] The Republic of Biafra was a secessionist state in South-Eastern Nigeria- Igbo. Efik, Ibibio, Annang and Ekoi- but was inhabited mostly by the Igbo people and existed from 30 May 1967 to 15 January 1970. The secession was led by the Igbo due to economic, ethnic, and religious tensions among the various peoples of Nigeria.

In his analysis on the after event of Nigeria independence Enoch Okechukwu remarked that "the centrifugal forces of maladministration, nepotism, corruption, economic mismanagement, blatant rigging of elections, political intolerance and ethnic competition also have crept into the polity along with the attendant instability. This resulted devastatingly in the breakdown of law and order in the western region, restiveness and violence of ethnic minorities (the Tiv and Izon revolted).[324] This led to the first military coup and subsequently to war. The journey to the nation's arbitrary dehumanization of the Igbo race began.

4.5.1.1 Consequences of the War

Like every other war; when one goes to war one destroys everything including values and ethics of living and Nigeria-Biafra war left Igbo people with nothing less than these. It inflicted a long lasting effect and defect on them. The war destroyed Igbo historiography and the pre-colonial history and tradition. There are little mythology and lack of traditional authorities to control the events on ground. The war cost Igbo people a great deal in terms of lives, culture, money and infrastructure. In his personal history of Biafra, Chinua Achebe narrated the harrowing experience thus, "the Nigeria-Biafra conflict created a humanitarian emergency of epic proportions. Millions of civilians-grandparents, mothers, fathers, children, and soldiers alike-flooded the main highway arteries between towns and villages fleeing the chaos conflict. They travelled by foot, by truck, by car, bare foot, with slippers, in wheel barrows, many in worn out shoes. Some had walked so long their soles were blistered and bleeding. As hunger and thirst grew, so did despair, confusion and desperation. Most were heading in whatever direction the other was headed, propelled by the latest rumours of food and shelter spreading through the multitude like a virus. Refugees were on the move in no specific direction, anywhere, just away from the fighting. The refugees learn to travel by nights and hide in the forests in the day."[325] This led to thousands being uprooted from their homes and brought to where they had no relatives, no property; and many lived in make-shift homes. In these camps poor sanitation, high population density, and shortages of supply of amenities for living made life miserable. There was a bitter tale of despair, which according to Achebe gave rise, "to social pathologies and psychological traumas of all kinds-violence, extortion, physical and sexual abuse."[326] With this war many lost their identity.

[324] Okechukwu, E., Vanguard Newspaper, Nigeria, 29, September 2009, p. 29
[325] Achebe, C., There Was A Country, A Personal History of Biafra, Penguin Books Ltd., London, 2013, p. 169
[326] ibid., p. 170

The post Nigeria-Biafra civil war era saw the Igbo and the entire nation saddled with a greater and harsher reality. But Igbo people were the worst hit in that the war was fought in their land and they lost more resources as well as humanities. Having lost the war they were seen as rebels and treated as such. It opened a new page in Igbo traditional society as they were plagued by indiscipline, ethnic-bigotry, segregation and dehumanization of all sorts. Also there was anarchy and unhealthy scramble for survival. It led to the loss of many traditional values like respect for human dignity and human life. The stronghold such as unity, and communal spirit that Igbo people were known gradually slipped away. It created room for materialism and over-ambitiousness which are detrimental to the value of human life.

The Igbo people that ran for safety during war returned to find their positions and businesses taken over by others and the government saw no need to re-instate them. The war according to Chinua Achebe gave Nigeria a perfect and legitimate excuse to cast the Igbo group in the role of a treasonable felon, and a wrecker of the nation.[327] The consequences were hatred, injustice inequality and these constitute threats against the Igbo ethnicity. Their properties were regarded as abandoned and confiscated by others. The Nigerian government economically disabled them after the war through the change of currency. Twenty Pounds was given to each Igbo individual irrespective of how much you have in the bank before the war. In the face of such economic hardship many were left with nothing to fall back to. A lot of thoughts and unethical ideas of survival started emerging. There was wanton break of laws in the search for survival. There was no line again between what is permissible and what is not, what is ethical and what is not, what is right and what is not. The war devastated the people and in the bid to survive, many of the Igbo ethical value systems were lost.

Though there was a reconciliatory program to unite the Igbo into the Nigeria body but the stigma is always there. The idea of socio-political exclusion as an aftermath of their initial attempt to be independent from Nigeria still reflects. The Igbo are still struggling to locate their fate in the nation's economic, social and political systems. Their socio-political and economic benefits are seriously affected. The war aggravated the sense of tribalism and marginalization etcetera in the nation.

[327] Achebe, C., The Trouble with Nigeria, op. cit., p. 57

4.5.2 Tribalism

From the discussions above nothing in Nigeria's socio-political history summarizes her problem of national unity than this uncensored word tribe. As stated above tribal mentality began before and after Nigeria became an independent nation. This ethnic and regional consciousness characterizes Nigeria's socio-political structures and gave rise to the fragile nature and instability of the country. It is "the behaviour and attitudes that are based on strong loyalty to your tribe."[328]In this sense one can see tribalism as any attitude that wields strong obedience to one's own tribe and society. This literarily has no negativity in it unless in the cause of projecting it one becomes anti- others. Tribes are known by their cultural settings, traditions and values like language and other things. There are indications of tribal cultures which are very commendable like peculiar habit of dressing, food, language, cultural events etc. But the major objection to tribalism is that it exposes the citizen to unfair treatment and social injustice which is a disvalue on the human dignity.[329] When tribal consciousness is manifested in a discriminatory nature with tribal ties negatively or exclusively, promoted, then tribalism is being projected. Chinua Achebe describes such as, "discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth."[330] Thus tribalism in this form is the exclusive and improper attachment to one´s tribe and culture and interest at the detriment of others.

The inappropriate manifestation of tribal consciousness and identification had a lot of bad and negative influence in Nigeria and world over. In a more global sense Okwudibia Nnoli, stated that tribalism is a problem of humanity in the world and not just Nigerians, thus, it was the cause of the Swiss animosity against immigrant workers in Switzerland, it accounts for the demands of the French-speaking peoples of Berne for political separation from their German-speaking compatriots; South Tryoleans dissatisfaction with Italian rule; French Canadian separatism in Canada. It is equally the cause of the racial violence in the United Kingdom and the United States.[331] So historically it is not only a Nigerian/Igbo factor but more of human/ global problem.

[328] Longman Dictionary of contemporary English, 1995, p. 1543
[329] Achebe, C., The Trouble with Nigeria, op. cit., p. 19
[330] ibid., p. 7
[331] Nnoli, O., Ethnic Politics in Nigeria, Fourth Dimension Pub., Enugu, 1978, p. 5

4.5.2.1 Effect of Tribalism on Nigeria as a Nation

In Nigeria, tribalism is manifested in many forms from the government to the local ethnic groups that make up the nation even in the local community settings. In fact, "its impact permeates all sectors of national life."[332] It is like a canker worm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerians. Tribal and ethnic chauvinism breed jealousy and selfishness which jeopardize the national character.

A Nigerian child seeking admission into a federal school, college or admission to a university, a graduate seeking employment in the public service, a business man tendering for a contract, a citizen applying for a passport, filling a report with the police or seeking access to any of the things controlled by the state is required to feel out a form where his/ her tribe is required to be confessed and even state of origin.[333] With this attitude tribal consciousness is unconsciously implanted on the individual and the nation as well. Tribal consciousness though not bad as said can equally be a distraction when not utilized for a good purpose. This can be seen from the Nigerian perspective where tribal consciousness is abused and used for discrimination and other forms of social injustice. These are manifested in the areas of governance, job opportunities, housing, quota system in admission to higher institutions, infrastructures, business transactions and social welfare services. As a result of this the situation of tribalism in Nigeria encourages nepotism, breeds mediocrity, sycophancy and opportunism.[334] This ugly incidence creates room for the situation where positions of influence attained are no longer by merit but by belonging to a particular tribe. The "less privileged" and other minor tribes are exploited on this ground and discriminated against. This is an experience in almost all the sectors of the nation where certain higher posts like state judge appointment are most of the time assigned on the ground of coming from the state. An example was the case of retired justice Abiodun Kessington who served in Rivers State judiciary up to the level of being the state judge and the government of the state asked him to leave. His only offence was that he was from Lagos State and because of that unfit to be made a judge in another State.[335] But many Nigerians are made judges and heads of departments in many parts of the globe but in their country they are found unfit by tribalism. This equally applies in many departmental offices where the heads of departments, managerial posts are

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[332] Nwankwo, A., The Military Option to Democracy: Class, Power and Violence in Nigeria Politics, Enugu, Fourth Dimension, 1987, p. 43

[333] Achebe, C., Trouble with Nigeria, op. cit., p. 7

[334] Umeh E. C., The Promotion of Human Rights and Social Justice, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2002, p. 129

[335] Saturday Sun on Deporting *Ndigbo* from Lagos, August 3rd., 2013

apportioned to indigenes even when they are less qualified. There is lack of equality in the scheme of things.

Tribalism has been the major cause of Nigeria's instability, politically, socially, economically and religiously. Chinua Achebe gave an insight on how Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe was robbed of the leadership of Western Nigeria in the 1950's simply because was not Yoruba. He narrated: "As a student in Ibadan I was an eye-witness to that momentous occasion when Chief Obafemi Awolowo 'stole' the leadership of Western Nigeria from Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in broad daylight on the floor of the Western House of Assembly and sent the great Zik scampering back to the Niger whence (he) came.[336] This attitude has equally a reversal implication on the people because an Igbo may not allow a non Igbo also to rule them in their land. The negative influence of tribalism has gone bad to the extent that Igbo people themselves even in their small villages, towns and states discriminate against each other. Of recent, many states in Igboland segregated among themselves in the civil service affairs. Many Igbo people working as civil servants in other Igbo states are treated as second class citizens and at times have their appointments terminated or salary scale and promotion not of the same rate with the indigenous candidates. This is an after effect of the negative tribal consciousness. This happens despite the fact that preventing a citizen from living or working anywhere in his country is not allowed in the Nigerian constitution. Even in marriage tribalism still comes in even children are trained to be conscious of it as well. Where lies the equity, fairness and value of the human person? So it is an infection that has affected the Nigerian system and Nigerians as well. On this effect the society suffers as Chinua Achebe pointed out that, "the greatest sufferer is the nation itself which has to contain the legitimate grievance of a wronged citizen; accommodate the incompetence of a favoured citizen and, more important and of greater scope, endure a general decline of morale and subversion of efficiency caused by and erratic system of performance and reward."[337]

It is disturbing and inhuman that a Nigerian should be regarded as an alien in his own country, state or town. These acts of discrimination are against the principle of human rights and social justice. It is a disregard for the value of human dignity. It is equally contrary to the 1979 and 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that prohibited any act of discrimination either by way of granting favour or deprivation based on tribe, sex or religion or by holding a particular political opinion.[338] The problem is actually not in the constitution

[336] Achebe, C., Trouble with Nigeria, op.cit., p. 5
[337] ibid., p. 19
[338] Nwabueze, B. O., The Presidential Constitution of Nigeria, p. 452; 29, Articles 39 paragraph 1 and 2 and the

but in its enforcement and implementation. The essence of this discussion is to show how endemic tribalism as an issue is in the Nigerian society and life. This has polarized every facet of the life of the people that often the people who see themselves as victims of this vice are also perpetrators of the same vice and guilty of the same offence in their own local environs. The main reasons for this are greed and material gains. An example of this can be seen in "leadership" status in Igboland, as in other parts of the world where the leader must come from the so called *diala* or *nwafor* (sons of the soil) the labelled *ndi obia* (visitors) have no right over the traditional stool of the community as the head even if they have the most eligible candidates. Is this not denial of merit and abuse of human right and dignity?

The so called Federal Character formula adopted by the government to reflect the principles of democracy and social justice defined as: "the distinctive desire of the people of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation as expressed in section 14: 3 and 4 of the Constitution"[339] This is only a paper work yet because tribalism still thrives in all sections of the nation. It serves as a cog on the wheel of development on the life of the people socially, religiously and economically. Unless a serious measure is taken in the balancing of the Federal character so that all states and other institutions are set to be on equal par. By this means many would not be denied of the benefits that accrue from the national royalty. It is an unhealthy development in that it causes social, injustice, exploitation, and is a stumbling block to the collective goal for a united living. It is a negation of true love, enthrones corruption and thwarts justice. With this we come to one of the negative effects of tribalism in Nigeria.

4.5.3 The Igbo Marginalization

The war as said ended but the spirit that brought the war still lingers. According to Fidelis Kwazu, there is more insidious and destructive "war" against the Igbo people[340] which has

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constitution read thus: (1) A citzen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person- (a)Be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religious, or political opinions are not made subject; or Be accorded either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any such executive or administrative action, any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religious or political opinions.
(2) No citizen of Nigeria shall be subject to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth.

[339] See also Section 277(1) of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos p. 91

[340] Kwazu, F. C. B., Developing a Viable Strategy of Solving the Problems of Poverty. op. cit., p. 129

been classically called "the Igbo question"[341] This affects the general welfare of the people as a group. This marginalization of Igbo people is a source of concern to the Igbo elites as manifested in some actions against them in some parts of the nation. Thus in the words of Chuba Okadigbo (According to when this article was written) Destruction of property of strangers wherever it may be in Nigeria be it Lagos, Kano, or anywhere is a continuation of the war, burning down of markets just because people from other places are making some profit, that is war. Failure to promote people from Igboland for jobs which they are qualified or removing them from their jobs just because they are Igbos is continuing the war. Failure to give the Igbos a place in Nigerian Military in proportion to their population and ability is part of that war.[342] His argument reflects the injustices being meted on Igbo people in the nation.

Further the Igbo of today are compacted into five states while their Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani counterparts have seven and nineteen states. This stifles their share of the national resources and political appointments in the nation. This accounts to why the old Hausa/Fulani can produce 30 appointees if taken two per state, the Yoruba about 18 while the Igbo both those on the heartland and (South East) and the Igbo minorities (in Delta and Rivers) can produce a maximum of 10 appointees… [343]And it continues so in all other governmental policies and benefits.

This becomes a political strategy to restrict the political participation of the Igbo in the political stance of the nation. This attitude has generated social ills in the land. Indeed, the economic neglect and deprivation of the Igbo people has had very deep visible effects on their quality of life leading to a brain drain in Igboland and to an incessant increase in social vices. They continue with decaying infrastructures, insecurity of life and property, dilapidated schools and hospitals, inadequate provision of water, power and communication, menace of erosion, landslides and other ecological disasters.[344] This is an unaccommodating attitude meted to the people and questions the national unity and interest as claimed by the government. It is equally a devaluation of their HD as full Nigerians with equal rights.

[341] Uwalaka, J., The Struggle for an Inclusive Nigeria, op. cit., p. 19
[342] Okeke, E., Vanguard Newspaper, Nigeria, 19th April, 2011, p. 9,
[343] Chimaroke, N., For *Ndigbo* let the Future Begin now, Address at the Odenigbo Forum held in Eko Meridien Lagos, 17 March, 2001
[344] Synod of Bishops from Onitsha and Owerri Ecclesiastical Provinces held at the Daughters of Divine love (DRACC) Enugu 18, Dec. 2003, On building a Just Democratic Nigeria; Restoring the Rights of the Igbo People; .in: *Igbo world Time* (Igbo International Quaterly Magazine), Issue 6, Vol. 2, U,K, 2004, p. 5

4.5.4 Corruption

This is the noun form of corrupt which means dishonest, illegal, or immoral and unethical behaviour. Literally it means a changed form of something.[345] It is a misuse of the power entrusted to someone for private gain. Corruption occurs when public officials who have been given the authority to carry out goals which further the public good, instead use their position and power to benefit themselves and those close to them. This, of course, is not peculiar to Nigeria alone. The developed and advanced countries have their own share of corruption. However in this study the focus is on Nigeria, as a developing nation. Corruption is a pervasive problem affecting the Nigerian society and is a threat that holds Nigeria's development to ransom. It is a recurring problem which admits of no yet effective solution. It can be said to be thriving as a result of the docile attitude of some managers of the nation's wealth towards corruption which makes it easy and profitable. The craving for wealth, pleasure, success, power, authority and fame are the sources of this malignant disease called corruption. This is one out of a million crippling political and sociological factors affecting the development of the nation. It constitutes endless, wrong impressions of the nation both within and outside of the nation. It moulds governance into a game of a few; a field of self-convinced ineligible politicians; and institution to enriching the pockets of the survivors but prolonging the misery of the helpless, the harmless, and the establishing mountainous clutter in the nation.[346] It makes one lose sense of respect, devoid of good character, social etiquette and even the value of HD. In fact it threatens social justice and human rights.[347] In his own view on the mind-set of the perpetrators of corruption Chinua Achebe argued: "Their amenability to manipulation is not always a result of ignorance and innocence but often of a cynical determination to play their part in compounding the national confusion… corruption has become the normal mode of national life, that there is no altruism in social life but calculated self-interest."[348] This has a serious influence on the Igbo because they are part of the system and shares from the proceeds of the corrupt system.

In January 15th 1966 few years after independence, Nigeria witnessed the first military intervention in political history. The leader of the coup in his broadcast cited corruption as the inevitable reason for the coup. According to him: "Our enemies are the political profiteers, the men in the high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 percent; those that seek to

[345] Longmans Dictionary of English, 1995, p. 310
[346] Kwazu, F. C. B., Developing a Viable Strategy, op. cit., p. 92
[347] Umeh, E. C., Promotion of Human Rights, op.cit., p. 134
[348] Achebe, C., A Man of the People, Heinemann, London, 1966, p. 18

keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIPs[349] at least, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds."[350] These articulated words indicated a good intention to save the country from conscienceless swindlers. Nevertheless, history later unveiled that corruption rather has built itself a home. The most unfortunate thing was and is still that, some of the nation's leaders were and are deeply involved in the practices. The makers of the law infringe the laws and others follow suit.[351] These are meant to be the law makers turned law breakers. The Igbo people are not excluded as a result of which they are either players or receivers of the exploit. This indicates that corrupt activities in the nation are not limited to those with immunity in office and as well not all in office are corrupt. In his explanation on how pervasive and extensive corruption in the nation is, Ikechukwu Ani observed that "cheating consistently multiplies in the public as well as the private sectors of life."[352]

Corruption is an acquired trait and according to Emmanuel Umeh, is not intrinsically inborn in human being; it is rather a reflection of the social structure in which one finds oneself.[353] It is a threat to human and societal development. It manifests itself in general obsession for material wealth among the people. Public probity is thrown to the wind. For Felix Onwukike "the generality of Nigerians worship material success, no matter by what means the success is achieved. This goes to the roots of our sense of values…. …A junior official who lives far beyond his means and rides cars, builds houses annually, is regarded with envy and admiration by the generality of the Nigerian public. When they speak about him they say that he is making it. They regard him as particularly fortunate."[354] This has a tremendous effect on the mindset of many. It is very obvious that a society where fraud and embezzlement of public fund is a norm the appreciation of the value of HD and rights is endangered. It could as well be said to be a forgotten issue.

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[349] V.I.P., means Very Important Personalities

[350] Adewale, A., Why We Struck: Story of the First Nigeria Coup, Evans Brothers, Nigeria Pub., Ltd., 1981, p. 328
Vanguard Newspaper, May 22, 2012 Thus Olusegun Obasanjo the former Nigerian president lamenting on the crop of politicians Nigeria has said, "Today rogues, and armed robbers are in the State House of Assembly, Nationals Assembly

[351] Kwazu, F. C. B., Developing a Viable Strategy, op. cit., p. 86

[352] Ani, I. Something must be Wrong, Snaap Press, Enugu, Nigeria, 1996, p. 39

[353] Umeh, E. C., The Promotion of Human Rights, op. cit., p. 135

[354] Onwukike, U. F., Democracy in Nigeria, its Anthropological and Social Requirements, Peter Lang, 1997, p. 228

In Igboland before now wealth from persons with questionable character are not accepted in the family and society. This creates an ethical environment which controls the avaricious aspect of man. From mid-1980's the military dictatorship through its leadership policy of looting public funds brought a tremendous change in the life of Nigerians. People with no clear source of income suddenly started appearing, and controlling events in the society. As a way of explaining the emergence of these super rich and their attitude, Lucius Ugorji analyzed the situation thus, "…Unnecessary display of wealth, luxury …intended to impress others and win applause from them. It is also manifested in unrestrained desire for honour and respect; showing off, fishing for compliments. It assumes various forms like, exhibitionism, self-bloating, self-complacency, boastfulness, exaggerated self-importance. Ostentatious life-style is gradually eating deep into the fabrics of our society. It is easily observed in the pomp and pageantry that usually accompany wedding, birthday ceremonies, jubilees, ordinations, etc in our society today."[355] This is a case of crisis of value typified in people's apparent deification of wealth. In what can be called the echo of the crisis "wealthy Igbo ruffians are now crowned as owners and leaders of their community and they end up enthroning crisis, stealing, and intimidating of opponents. Riches become the yardstick to measure responsibility and acceptance in the society unlike before. What they fail to understand is that greed is like a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction…"[356] This celebration of wealth and neglect of excellence and integrity is costing Igboland and the nation a lot.

The scope of corruption in Nigeria is seen to be on the increase daily and rises to an unimaginable degree. Many atrocities are being perpetrated to make ends meet, in the words of Francis Arinze, "Bribery and corruption have eaten into many of our social institutions that some people have said that our society is sick …It is the common belief in Nigeria that the way to pass interviews and win contract from a government or big organizations… the way to get proper attention in hospitals and even justice in court, the way to avoid paying custom duties and dodge tax… in short, to get on in our society is to give bribes."[357] This entails that bribery has become a norm in many aspect of Nigerian life. In fact looking at this unruly attitude, the value systems with regard to HD have been distorted and affected in different ways. The public services, political appointments or elections are not given in terms of qualification and competency. Ethnicity, tribalism, bribery etc. takes precedence over

[355] Ugorji, L. I., Unconditional Return to Christ, Lenten Pastoral, Umuahia, 1992, p. 9
[356] Nnaji, B., Ahiajoku Lecture, *Ka Ihe Di*, The Power of Light Energy as a Fundamental Instrument for Socio-Economic Development., 27th Nov. 2009, p. 15
[357] Arinze, F. C., More Justice to the Poor, Lenten Pastoral, Onitsha, 1972, p. 11

competency and merit. As a result many times some public services suffer as a result of being handled by mediocre. These are mischievous band of self-seeking opportunists whose only interest is to feather their nests…They are too willing to grab the splendour of office but rebuff the sacrifice of leadership.[358] This neglects the principle of common good. Such state of event never encourages development it rather encourages underdevelopment and hardship.

Though Nigeria in all ramifications is seen as one of the corrupt nations in the world and poverty level is high but the leaders are yet to come to terms with a reasonable solution to it. Many of the accused public officers have not been brought to face the law accordingly for official embezzlement. As a result of this corruption has passed the alarming stage and entered the fatal stage; and Nigeria may be wiped off because of corruption one day.[359]

Corruption is on the high size because the system has no adequate comprehensive social security program and poverty rate increases on daily bases. The well-being of the people is endangered. Consequently the need to amass wealth legally or illegally to secure one´s future also increases. This need to amass wealth has profound negative effect on the HP and human life. In such situation often the value attached to the dignity of the HP is downtrodden and sometimes swept under carpet. These observations go to conclude that corrupt practices have in many ways contributed to the devaluation of the HD in the country.

To forestall corruption, there is need for an integral development that will promote the value of HD, rights of every individual irrespective of geographical location and status. There should be equitable distribution of goods and services devoid of favouritism. Structural injustice of any sort needs to be eliminated and selfless service to the society encouraged. Nigerians will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient.[360] The government should get rid of all persons who have scandal records no matter how little. Corruption as a social malady has lack of working culture and non-creativity as side effects.

4.5.5 Non-creativity and Lack of Working Culture

Work has to do with a job one is paid to do to earn money or a living.[361] Working culture is that virtue in human life which challenges one for improvement and to explore new ideas and

[358] Ojakaminor, E., Nigerias Ghana must go Republic: Happenings, Ambassador Pub., Ogun state, Nigeria, 2006, p. 17
[359] Achebe, C. A., Trouble with Nigeria, op. cit., p. 38
[360] ibid., p. 38
[361] Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, op. cit., p. 1651

opportunities in areas of work and service. It could be understood or analyzed as part of human nature. Through it one can achieve a lot of things. On the other hand when this is not maintained creative achievements would not be realized. And it rather encourages laziness. The idea of not working and getting paid or expecting payment for a job not executed becomes a norm and a disgusting attitude. In this form, work is no longer seen as a value to be honoured and labour as a thing of dignity is no more appreciated.

Work being one of the most essential factors that differentiates the HP from other creatures serves as a factor through which the HP improves life and cultural standard of living. Through work the human value is expressed with its dignity. In support of this background John Paul II argues that man's life is built up every day from work, from work it derives its specific dignity…[362] This does not mean that human value and dignity are dependent on work, but they find in work their fulfilment.

From the foregoing, it is then ascertained that through work man gets self-realization and fulfilment. On this note the question of how the Igbo and Nigeria people in general view work is inevitable. Analyzing work from the perspective of some Nigerians, it is seen that, many of our country men and women view work from the toil and drudgery perspective. They seem to tolerate it as an unavoidable and necessary evil to be endured to provide the means of livelihood for oneself and one´s dependants.[363] This idea of work from the perspective of unavoidable necessary evil places work as an imposition. This makes it no longer to be seen as service one owes oneself and the society or as a means of sustaining life and making meaningful living. As a result of this many put up several unwanted attitudes towards work. The most unethical aspect of it is that at the end those who put up these non-chalant attitudes expect good payments and many do get it.

Another problem is the employment system. A critical observation reveals that often people are employed not on the basis of competence but rather on nepotism or friendship. Consequently, the effect is a dysfunctional growth on the developmental aspect of the society. Equally many over aged workers due for retirement and many with forged certificates are being recycled in many prominent jobs. Social justice obliges workers to conscientiously render the services for which they were paid. But how can this be realized in a corrupt society? For, "…where you have corruption, you can never get things right, corruption

[362] John Paul II, Laborem Exercens, art., 1
[363] Okpalaonwuka, J. M., Morality and Politics in Nigeria, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1997, p. 129

distorts, corrupts, corrodes and destroys."[364] This means that corruption destroys the right way of doing things. It breeds injustice, and selfishness, it creates no room for new positive ideas and ensures neither accountability nor correct judgment. On the other hand, it encourages laziness. This is empirical in Nigeria working situation today most people have no interest in agriculture and manual jobs. The craving for office and white collar-jobs takes precedence not minding ones field of excellence.

4.5.6 Lack of Discipline (Indiscipline)

Indiscipline as a word is the opposite or negation of discipline. It is the lack of control with the result that people behave badly.[365] On the other hand discipline implies self-control, willingness to learn and function in an acceptable and orderly manner while indiscipline is the reverse of this order. The question of indiscipline in the society is a complex human problem congenital and almost endemic with all societies. The end-point of indiscipline is often selfish interest and lack of self-restraint. Chinua Achebe defines indiscipline as, "a failure or refusal to submit ones desires and actions to the restraints of orderly social conduct in recognition of the rights and desires of others."[366] On this note one who is not disciplined does things contrary to organized system. Indiscipline does not apply fair-play due to the human selfish impulse. The line between indiscipline and lawlessness is very subtle. Indiscipline does not have room for value for one another thus it threatens HD and undermines the right to it by going contrary to the things that create harmonious coexistence.

Indiscipline as an issue is a thing of serious concern it pervades the life of the people. Due to its overriding influence on the people in various sectors Chinua Achebe sighted it as a condition par excellence of contemporary Nigerian society.[367] I see this as overgeneralization in the sense that in spite of all things many Nigerians still have some sense of discipline in them. In as much as ironically some leaders in Nigeria are the arch-protagonists and propagators of indiscipline. From them it spread automatically to the general body of the followers. This is why its control is always a herculean task. It is fatal because often the leaders are covered with immunity and therefore correction or arrest of the situation is almost on an impossible state. When some leaders lack discipline, the effect equally spreads and the

[364] Obasanjo, O., "Our Problem as a Nation", an Interview in: *Newswatch Magazine*, October 30, 2000, p. 13
[365] Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, op. cit., p. 727
[366] Achebe, C. The Trouble with Nigeria, op.cit., p. 27
[367] ibid., p. 27

society suffers and rots. In such situation, there will always be sporadic incidents of indiscipline. An example is the siren mentality of some Nigerian leaders on the road where the leaders with their cohorts move in a caravan chieftain's progress. Their security escorts chase other road users and poor masses who voted them in with furious intimidation out of the way to make way for the so called leaders. At times their orderlies end up maiming and wounding people which at times leads to loss of life all in the name of making way for the celebrating status of the so called leader. In other places, the movement of political leaders is normal business-like affair. As a follow up on this many money bags in the Nigerian states see it as a norm and practice same. The poor citizens remain intimidated always and they struggle by every means to meet up with life demands. This generates indecent attitudes toward life and events.

On a more serious note the indiscipline among some of the prospective officers in charge of discipline is an open show. This has led a lot of people to be taking laws into their hands because the security officers can no longer be trusted. When people take laws into their hands, the result is always disorder and anarchy. The case of four students of University of Port-Harcourt who were mobbed and set ablaze on an unproved allegation that they were robbers of Oct 5th, 2012 is an example.[368] The reason could be that at times when criminals are handed over to the security agents they may not be prosecuted. At times, they are left free after some bribery conditions are met. These are equally experienced in some legal quarters where people bribe their way through and the case against them closed inconclusively or without any fine or punishment. As a result of this people take laws into their hands and at times innocent souls become victims. Based on the social malady, some people on account of their immaturity, mental incompetence or even innocent exuberance are unable or unwilling to apply the internal brake of self-discipline.[369] This act of indiscipline has affected almost every other sectors of the nation. Thus without discipline, rule of law can never be maintained. This is because disciplined leadership breeds disciplined followership. This will be followed with observation and respect of the rights of each other as an entity with value and dignity. Indiscipline is a hindrance to Nigeria development. And the youths are the most affected as their future is bleak and many are not sure of their destiny. As they struggle in search of survival many are dehumanized and become victims to child labour and human trafficking.

[368] Nigerian Punch Newspaper of Oct, 17th, 2013
[369] Achebe, C., Trouble with Nigeria, op. cit., p. 28

4.5.7 Child Labour: A Threat to Human Esteem

The problem of child labour is a phenomenal problem in Nigeria and sub-Sahara Africa. The reality of child labour becomes a problem because it is not certain who should be considered a child. "The universal agreement and legal age of maturity is 18 years. But most studies on child labour concentrates from 7-14 age groups, suggesting that work by an adolescent should not be considered child labour."[370] The International Labour Organization stipulates child's labour in accordance with the Minimum Age Convention from "5-11 years –olds are "all children at work in economic activity". From 12-14 year-olds are all children at work in economic activities minus those in light work. Light-work is defined as "non-hazardous work for up to fourteen hours a week. For 15-17 year olds all children in the worst forms of child labour, child soldiering, child prostitution, and use of children in drug smuggling and other criminal activities."[371]

Naturally "children are developing human beings with physical, psychological and social needs which they, on their own, cannot satisfy. They need physical protection, sustenance, affection, education and training for adult life…For the realization of these needs parental support is indispensable."[372] In Igbo society a high value is placed on children and they are regarded as sources of hope and inspiration for the future. Most parents often wish to give the best of life to their children. However due to poverty, corruption, hardship, ignorance, negligence and societal imbalances in Nigeria, many children are not being taking care of. Child labour is a form of child abuse where children are physically, economically psychologically and socially abused. It is a work situation where children are compelled by situations to work so as to earn a living for themselves, their families or employers. As a result of this, they are disadvantaged educationally, socially and at times are psychologically damaged. It is a situation where they work in an exploitative and damaging condition, detrimental to their health and to their physical and mental development. Many are exploited in this form for material end either from their nuclear family or their masters. Child labour is exploitative, illegal and inhuman. It deprives the child the opportunity to obtain formal education and its benefits. The UN Convention on Rights of the child observes that child labour is work that is likely to be hazardous, or interfere with the child´s education or to be

[370] Kielland, A., and Tovo, M., Children at Work, Lynne Rienner Publ., London, 2006, p. 1
[371] ibid., p. 2
[372] Kasenene, P., Religious Ethics in Africa, Fountain Publ. ltd., Kampala, Uganda, 1998, p. 92

harmful to the child´s health or physical, mental, spiritual development.[373] As such child´s labour deprives the victims of their childhood, compromises their dignity as human beings with value. It endangers the capabilities of growth.

The picture below is a photo-image of child labour.



[373] United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child; CRC., 1989, Art., 32

4.5.7.1 Causes and Effects of Child Labour

The remote causes of child labour in Igboland as in other African Lands include poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, culture, large household sizes, broken marriages and early loss of parents, ineffective laws and policies against this and lack of appropriate social security worth. As a result of these, children are exposed to the dangers and inhuman practice of child labour at a very tender age. As a result of poverty, parents may not be able to pay the school fees of the child and this increase the rate of drop out in school. This state of event has exposed a lot of Igbo children to street hawkers, or to assist in shops or other menial jobs, just as in most African countries.[374] These children are abused in several forms emotionally and some especially the girls are sexually molested, which makes them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other veneral diseases. At the end, economically the family remains poor, psychologically the child is destroyed and devalued.

Physiologically, child labour causes defects of various forms on the child. Normally, the children's skeletons are always on the developing side. As a result, they need the things that will promote their physiological growth. Children under child labour face the danger of physiological deformity because of exposure to things like physical pressure, dangerous substances and accidents.[375] Over working hinders the healthy physical growth of the child in many ways. That is when children work more than they should or lifting too heavy objects for their skeletal system and taking some harmful working positions. This might lead to strain injury and even disability. Also due to abuses, records of psychological disturbances are bound to arise in some cases. Children who grew up with deception and manipulation learn to distrust their own intuition; this creates a fragile self-confidence and they often express great insecurity. This could lead to extreme stress and irrational fear and aggression.[376] Thus, the life situation by which child's labour takes place can be destructive to the child's entire life system.

Large house hold also is another cause of child labour "to supplement family income some families go by child labour"[377] They are exposed to all sorts of menial jobs to make ends meet and help out in the family income. Some are sent out to serve as house maids and money that

[374] In vielen Ländern Nordafrikas wurden Kinder anstelle einer Schulausbildung schon früh in den Arbeitsprozess eingegliedert. Cf. Informationen zur politischen Bildung, Afrika II", in: *Bundeszentrale für politischen Bildung*, Heft 272, Bonn, 3 Quartal 2001, 52 In Kwazu F.C. B., *Developing a Viable*. op. cit., p. 151

[375] Kieland, A., Children at Work, op. cit., p. 126

[376] ibid., p. 130

[377] Aguigwo, G., The Problem of Poverty in Nigeria and the Role of the Church, Shaker Verlag, Aachen Germany, 2002, p. 159

comes from it is taken to the parents while the child suffers in the hands of their mistresses. Others are sent to learn some trade or serve as aids in various firms and many after serving their masters for years come out with nothing to fall back on. This is both emotionally and economically disadvantageous to the children and families. It has led to the frustration of many youths and many turning to criminality and other inhuman attitudes to make ends meet. This act devalues human dignity and increases societal problems because as human beings they must find a way to survive. This also makes them to be vulnerable for human trafficking.

4.5.8 Human Trafficking

Trafficking in persons is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.[378] This is thus in the context of commercialization of human beings as goods for trade. Human trafficking can be seen from the perspective of both in-country and cross border transfer of humans. Children and adults in rural areas are trafficked to the urban centres to work as domestic workers, street peddlers, merchant traders and beggars. Human trafficking from the above perspective is an economic or money making venture very much in relation to child labour.

The victims often are denied their basic human rights of education or learning work and family care. They are exposed to many dangers like, rape and abuses of different sorts. It is a sort of modern slave trade of the twenty first century. Many are trafficked for the purpose of forced labour. They are trafficked for domestic and other menial servitude mainly and at times they end up being exploited and abused too. This is an upturn of the words of Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa that, "Slave trade ravaged West Africa for nearly three hundred years."[379] Granted that slave trade has become a thing of the past but the art is still in vogue in another shape and form today. Some people are still being treated as slaves even in their country especially in African lands. Their value and dignity as human beings suffers because scrambling for survival and wealth is the ultimate in such conditions. Survival of the fittest becomes the state

[378] Palermo Protocol to the United Nation Against Transnational Organized Crime Art. 3: In Kiellan, A, *Children at Work,* op. cit. p. 35

[379] Fafunwa, A. B., History of Education in Nigeria, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. London, 1974, p. 75

of events. Thus, they are exposed to all sorts of materialistic influences and respect for the human person is always endangered in such atmosphere.

At times, they are trafficked to other African lands or even Western world. Many of the women-folk involved are trafficked for prostitution and other subhuman jobs and activities. And at times, the individuals involved make the decision themselves in order to make ends meet. The act is illegal but it is seen as the easiest medium of making a leap from poverty to prosperity. The German Newspaper, *Die Tageszeitung,* authenticated the current activity on human trafficking.[380] Thus the named newspaper presented the view that some people wants to be rich at all cost and do so at the detriment of others. The person trafficked as often is poor and wants to escape from poverty with the promises made.

Thus, with this quest for material gains at the expense of value for human life and dignity, a lot of abuses to life are experienced. Most of the abused females got stocked in this weird way of life and when impregnated in the process resort to either abortion or sale the baby. This becomes a source of income too for them through their agents. Thus, in many localities, clinics and hospitals that serve as infant breeding and trafficking links abound. Here, teenagers with unwanted pregnancies are lured and locked up until they give birth. They are coerced to give up their babies for some token and the babies sold off to buyers at a higher cost. The inhumanity is not in giving out the babies for adoption or the life being saved but the illegal process which lacks a follow up to know how genuine the buyers are. Many are not buying as a result of keeping and preserving the life and the baby but for other ulterior motives like human sacrifices and ritual killings. What an inhuman and unjust treatment to an innocent victim just to be materially up to date. These baby factories present themselves as motherless baby homes but are agents and centres of human trafficking and baby merchants.[381] This demeans and threatens the dignity of the HP, bodily integrity and esteem for life.

The after effect of this act is that it diminishes the Igbo sense of respect and value for human life. For most of the ladies involved in it sees child bearing as a money making tool and no longer a means of procreation thereby waning off the sense of sacredness attached to life. It is dehumanizing and a social malady that is ravaging the Igbo communities today. The cultural

[380] Tausende junge Nigerianerinnen hoffen Jahr für Jahr auf ein besseres Leben in Europa- und landen auf dem Straßenstrich. Ein Mädchen musste auf dem Straßenstrich von Mailand die 5,000 Dollar verdienen, die die Madame von ihr forderte. Das Mädchen lebte als Prostituierte in Italien. Sie ist zurück nach Nigeria geschickt worden. In *Die Tageszeitung,* 28 September, 2011

[381] This Day Newspaper, "Baby factory in Imo State Nigeria." 22, May, 2013

and ethical value for life is getting eroded and the yearning for money and material things are instead taking precedence.

4.5.8.1 Kidnapping: A Threat to the Value of Human Dignity

As the situation of things in Nigeria is getting worse daily and no eventual remedy is forth-coming; the crisis of values continues to increase. This creates a serious challenge to Igbo cultural values, ethics and developments. This is due to lack of trust, loyalty, honesty, solidarity and cooperation. As a result of this, cultural values and ethics are no longer respected, instead material wealth takes precedence. The quest for material affluence has adversely affected the people. This could explain the increasing rise on robbery, stealing, murder and kidnapping which were anomalies in traditional Igbo society. The cause of this situation can be seen from the resultant effect of value crisis typified in the apparent deification of wealth by Igbo people.

Kidnapping, literally means to take someone illegally by force in order to get money as ransom.[382] In the pre-colonial era of slavery and through the trans-Atlantic slave trade kidnapping was booming as a way of making money until its abolition in 1888. If at the time of trans-Atlantic slave trade kidnapping and slavery were claimed to be out of ignorance, which excuse can one give of today's kidnapping saga? Igbo culture cherishes honour, integrity, trustworthiness, hard work and has profound respect and value for the dignity of HP. But these values are fast being eroded and are dramatically collapsing and giving way to this new development and quick way of making money.

Kidnapping in Nigeria began in the last few years in the Niger-Delta States of Nigeria.[383] It was ostensibly a protest by young men and women against official neglect and ecological damage of their area which is the oil producing part of the country. Petroleum resources account for up to 75% of government earnings as well as 33% the Gross Domestic Product. In the process of extracting these natural resources enormous environmental damages and problems are recorded. Eventually this turned out to be a lucrative source of income for vandals. From kidnapping expatriates the youths turned to kidnapping wealthy Nigerians, including indigenes for ransom.[384]

[382] Longmans English Dictionary, op. cit., p. 777
[383] Barth. Nnaji, Ahiajoku Lecture, *Ka Ihe Di*, op. cit., p. 15
[384] ibid., p. 15

In some states in Igboland today, kidnapping is more pronounced than in the Niger-Delta states where it started. Unlike in the Niger-Delta where youths protest against government over environmental neglect and injustice, in Igboland the activity is rather born out of greed. This is one instance where the people demonstrated in a very negative and derogatory manner their value for the HD and the ethics of life. Economic gains are placed at the detriment of the individual and the communitarian ethics that existed. It is like a declaration of war by Igbo people on their folk in their own land. These kidnappers are putting fear into the masses and things have started fallen apart, culturally, ethically, economically, politically and socially. As a result of this anomaly cultural values as sense of the sacred and sacredness of life and other ones are no longer respected. The erosion of the sense of shame, courtesy, right and wrong takes precedence in all things. The traditional and ethical values of honesty, hardworking, integrity, equity on communal and societal bases are swallowed up by materialism. The centre can no longer hold and anarchy has become the order of the day. Looking at the whole scenario, it shows a situation of foundation once destroyed what can the just do. For the just and hardworking ones are in trouble because their efforts and progress make them targets of the vandals and development suffers. This is so because vices like kidnapping, nepotism, financial corruption and fraud generally are fundamentally incompatible with development.[385] This act of kidnapping is setting the Igbo at the climax of destruction developmentally, socially and otherwise. It is an ethical decadence in Igbo society that needs urgent attention.

The kidnappers are the reincarnation of the slave raiders; they are guided by material benefits, and with no respect for human life. Like his precursor, the modern Igbo kidnapper is more a victim of greed than of acute hardship. The ransom he demands is not the type to enable him get by but engage in opulent lifestyle, indulging in all kinds of debauchery. He does not belong to the class of poor people whose offences can be excused on ethical and moral grounds. Borrowing the words of Pope Leo XIII, “They are moreover, emphatically unjust, for they rob the lawful possessor, distort the functions of the state, and create utter confusion in the community”.[386] The disturbing thing is most times the people involved are not the poor though claims are that the motivation is out of poverty, unemployment and other societal ills.

This has adverse effect on the people especially those who have been victims. Many never survived the after effect. This is as a result of the psychological trauma they go through in the

[385] ibid., p. 5
[386] Pope Leo, XIII, Encyclical Letter on Capital and Labor, Rerum Novarum, p. 2

hand of their captors. Many also lose a lot of capital and it affected their life, means of livelihood and family as well. So economic growth is stranded and many people are suffering without help coming from their relations because of fear of the unknown. Psychologically people are living in fear of each other; Igbo ethical sense of communalism suffers. Lack of trust is on the reign as things are no longer at ease and the centre can no longer hold. This "threatens the common interest of being one another's keeper that the Igbo are known for."[387] From here we will turn to urbanization, modernization and globalization and their effect on Igbo people.

4.6 Urbanization Globalization and Modernization

Urbanization and globalization are the by-products of modernization and they have a lot of influence on the life of the Igbo. After the Nigeria-Biafran war due to hardship more quests for survival and search for better means of living caused a mass exodus mainly among the Igbo youths from the village to the urban cities. The urban towns with better developed infrastructures and a concentration of public utilities and possibility of better jobs had a pull on the rural population. Thus urban migration on a scale previously unknown started.[388] This has a lot of influence and effect on Igbo people, culturally, socially and economically especially in their relationship with fellow human being.

4.6.1 Urbanization and Urban Migration

Urbanization is an off-spring of Western technological market with dominated value and secularizing influence through modernized technology. Its influence on the people is enormous in relation to their ethics, culture and value systems …[389] On the side of Igbo people the emergence and attraction of urban cities and development centres like Aba, Onitsha, Enugu, Owerri and Lagos created an attractive atmosphere for the relocation of the people in search of better options in life. The urban cities with better developed infrastructures, public utilities and social amenities, attracted different job opportunities, business and commerce. This urban-migration is thus a phenomenon that describes a

[387] ibid.
[388] Okoye, T. O., Urban Life and Urban Development In Igboland: in Ofomata, G.E.K. (Ed.), *A Surcvey of the Igbo Nation*, op. cit. p. 188
[389] Ilogu, E., Christianity and Igbo Culture, op. cit., p. 97

movement of people from rural areas to urban areas.[390] This is not bad on its own if for no other thing it creates room for culture contact, but not without its side effects. Urbanization thus with its urban-migration influence is seen to be engendered as a result of infrastructural and economic deficiencies in the rural areas. Thus "this migration is premised on expectation of better economic opportunities and social benefits in the urban areas."[391]

This massive movement to urban areas has its negative effects on the people. It is responsible for over-population and at times increases unemployment rate. It creates room for individualism with its concomitant effect of unhealthy competition spirit as against the Igbo communalistic way of living. In this state the people often live independent of their relatives as a result of coming from different places and tribes. The cultural ethical norms and values are distorted because people are no longer constrained by the environment and situation to adhere strictly to the norms. The Igbo traditional norms and culture are forgotten and are no longer determining factor in the people's way of life. In this new trend of living, one´s next door neighbour may be a stranger of another tribe and culture with different understanding of living. Many things assigned in the Igbo ethics as taboos or *aru* (abomination) are no longer observed and children born in such environ have not the basics of Igbo cultural ethics. For example, the Igbo traditional way of living and educating children. This is based on extended family system by which everybody helps in the education is no longer functional. As a result many do not even know their relations anymore and have no recourse to traditional family issues and matters. In view of this at times instead of the urban dwellers bringing in good ideas and manners to the family, "they carry new problems into their families with which the tradition of the elders finds itself at a total loss how to deal."[392] This has estranged some people from their kiths and kin's. It has caused a breakdown of the unity with the order that has been in existence among Igbo people and the assertion of individual independence gains ground.

Another side effect of urban congestion is that it creates room for lack of privacy which is useful in personality development. Thus security of life and properties are not assured. Many of the migrants are youths who due to pressures and obligations from home migrated in search

[390] Kwazu, F. C. B., Developing a Viable., op. cit., p. 95

[391] Onibokun, G. A., and Kumuyi, J. A., Urban Poverty in Nigeria, Towards Sustainable Strategies for its Alleviation in Cassad, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1996, p. 50

[392] Benetez, B., African Christian, Morality, op. cit., p. 122,. See also Okolo Barnabas, Urbanization and African Traditional Values: In Okere,T., *Identity and Change,* "The obvious consequence is a gradual, but inevitable break up of families. For the African, that is a tragic reversal of values since African families are close-knit. Unity and togetherness in the family are the basic values. In these days the quest for more money and better living conditions has pushed him out into the city; gradually it is alienating him from his family; worse still is; it is tearing the family apart".

of jobs. The promise of urban prosperity forced youths out of rural areas, withdrawing many hands from agriculture and causing short supply of food. Many of the aged in the rural areas were abandoned, and traditional society was no longer cohesive. Many of the urban migrants live in poverty and suffered material and psychological wants.[393] Thus when job opportunities as expected is not forth-coming some resort to crime, drug addicts and other abnormal attitudes. This endangers the life of people and devalues their understanding of the HP whom they now see as a prey to be fed upon and no longer as an entity with dignity to be valued.

4.6.1.1 Secularization

In as much as I would not like to dwell much on the history of secularization and its spread which began in Europe especially through the 1789 revolution in France. Secularism is to be approached briefly here as a mentality that sought for change through reason and discussion, which sought for a basic concept of secular ideology of liberalism in almost everything. This fermentation in the world of ideas was mightily reinforced by the rapid development of science, technology, industrialization and urbanization, which continued ever accelerating throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. The activities of these together generate secularist way of life.[394] Through secularization humanity seems to have the inclination of achieving a greater control over nature, social environment as well as his life. Through these ventures humanity tends to see itself as self-realizing and self-controlling being, one who has come of age and is at the centre of the universe. On this state of event, the ethical inclination for valuing ones activities, decisions and achievements is "worldly" and materially.[395]

In the course of time secularism started spreading outside Europe and Nigeria/Igboland is one of the victims. This as a way of life started having influence and acceptance among Igbo people. It is already noted that naturally Igbo people are religious cultural beings as stated in chapter one and all about them circumvents around their religion and culture. So secularism is like anti-nature to their natural way of life. It takes them away from their attachment to their cultural values and belief. Its influence polarized Igbo ethics and cultural norms as materialism takes precedence in all situations. This also affected their sense of value for HD in the society as everything now counts on what one can offer materially.

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[393] Clifford, W., A Primer of Social Work in Africa, Nairobi Oxford Univ., Press, 1966, p. 6
[394] Ilogu, E. Christianity, op. cit., p.121
[395] ibid.

Furthermore, the Igbo values of modesty and justice are being undermined by the unhealthy competitive spirit of secularism. Igbo people apply this unhealthy materialistic attitude in place of the traditional motivation spirit already present before the advent of Western technological culture.[396] This creates the culture of survival of the fittest without regard to the neighbour-concern value and etiquette of Igbo tradition. The worship of wealth, the vulgar pursuit of material gain, the spirit of mercantilism as well as the abandonment of ethical values and social norms are the factors that define the contemporary Igbo.[397] This Igbo over-attachment to material gain is now becoming a disaster to them. The proposition that wealth no matter how acquired, is the measure of man is now a threat. It presents the supremacy of wealth over mind and life. This devalues the dignity attached to the HP and instead encourages materialism and economic values at its detriment.

4.6.2 Science and Technology

The global movement of science and technology from around the 19th century, the influence of the Western system of living reached its journey to Africa at a particular troubled period in the history of the continent. It came at a moment in history when Africa is depressed by the shoes of the economic ideologies of the Western nations.[398] This has a serious impact on the Igbo as in other African lands. The Igbo and their culture were confronted with the secular modernity that deals with technological scientific values. This multiplied the Igbo crisis because it made them to be on the cross road of accepting the juicy pleasures of modern science and technology at the expense of their culture and values.

The word science is from Latin verb *scire* - to know and knowledge belongs essentially to a HP. Science and technology are very important facets of national development, for the results of scientific research, particularly in its applied form, play a serious role in the life of the citizens.[399] They have become the two most powerful invincible gods of the time. Technology is the practical conversion of the results of scientific research and experimentation into instruments that promote life.[400] Science and its expression in technology have opened great treasures to human expertise. They have both positive and negative influence as well. It has

[396] ibid., p. 130
[397] Agulanna, C., Ezigbo Mmadu: An Explanation of the Igbo Concept of a Good Person, In Journal of Pan-African Studies, Sept., 2011, Vol., 4: no. 5
[398] Nwaigbo, F., Faith in an Age of Reason and Science, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2003, p. 198
[399] Abanuka, B., Holosism, op. cit., p. 76
[400] Iroegbu, P.,The Kpim of Morality, op. cit., pp. 339-340

power to create and power to destroy at the same time. It possesses power endowed with many promises and charmed with too many threats.[401] One of the strategies of this modern technology according to Edmund Ilogu is "its ability to break barriers between races of mankind and constitute mankind into a global-world community."[402] They have made in roads to many human enterprise as can be seen in the words of Panthaleon Iroegbu who said, "…we need only to take a look at the present high-speed of communication systems, machines and networks, the fantastic space and distant-shuttles even space wars with dissection bombs, the ever increasing efficient medical therapies and above all the high technology engineered by the multifarious Monsieur computer."[403] Science and technology becomes man's instrument for progress. They grant man the power to function more efficiently. Man seems to adjust more to nature through science and technology because they opened an opportunity on which the world is viewed. Nevertheless in the pursuit of scientific progress man should be careful and never neglect to respect nature and environment. This is because it is nature that is the basics of science for science cannot operate in a vacuum. The abuse of nature causes the deformation of the totality of the human environment. According to Bentley Glass, "man is a member of the entire community of life on earth. If he wrecks that community, he destroys his own livelihood."[404] Then we need at this point to ask whether all the scientific inventions in all ramifications have solved the problem of humanity? Have they improved the value of human person or complexified it?

Technology and science should be at the service of the entire humanity. It is not meant to rule human being. A proper technology and science is supposed to be a servant of the human person and not a master. It must be committed to the values and interests of the human person about what to do and what not to do of the cultures and peoples…[405] This "what to do" and "what not to do" make for the necessity of ethics, the science of right and wrong. Science in this form as knowledge involves us as human beings and not just the presentation of facts of experimental data. It involves our being and our expression of that our being in the world and among fellow human beings. As science above all deals with the social aspects of humanity and confronts our human values, it is ethically accountable to us in those areas that we relate to one another. Science by this basically and ethically has a pact with the HP.

[401] Nwaigbo, F., Faith in an Age of Reason and Science, op. cit., p. 52
[402] ibid., p. 123
[403] ibid., p. 293
[404] Bentley, G., The Ethical Basis of Science, in *the Journal Science, BFX* 207, 1965, 150, 1254,-1261
[405] Iroegbu, P., Kpim of Morality, op. cit., p. 338

Counting on this pact, science and technology need to take into considerations the socio-cultural realities of the people, when they fail, they can only have little idea of the people and dwell only on their scientific findings. This is as a result of the notion that often the goal of these scientific and technological cultures is success and achievement through the utilization of the new powers that it provides. Often in the bid to achieve their aim not much concern seems to be shown about the relevant effect of such success and organization to human beings nor to community both present and future, nor to the individual character of the human personality…[406] In this way, the *raison d'etre* (reason for existence) of science and technology is truncated as it concentrates only in the race for what it can gain. Does development in this form actually satisfy the needs of the human person or is it for its selfish end as the case may be? Does the progress in science and technology, make human life on earth 'more human' in all ramifications? In his explanation to this John Hallowell stated, "It is a curious fact that the Age of Reason ushered in so confidently by the philosophies of the eighteenth century has given way in the twentieth century to an Age of anxiety. The extension of reason through science and technology, the ever-increasing mastery of the human environment, while it has led to unprecedented human power on the one hand, has led on the other to the diminution of individual freedom and humanity."[407] In the same line of thought Ferdinand Nwaigbo stated, "Because of the self-centeredness of the people of the twenty-first century, the good purpose of science and technology are constantly being thwarted. Those who had gained information, power, and wealth through scientific development use it for their own ends and not for the good of others. War, famine, and disasters become most daily occurrences."[408] Technology and science on this note as it is today can be said to be both creative and destructive.

Let us at this moment examine the counter-productive effects of science and technology. The first effect has to do with development or scientific progress for its own sake. This is a process where some scientific and technological devices are stated only for the sake of their material gain and the integral well-being of the human person is not considered first. For

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[406] ibid., p. 123

[407] Wild, J., Human Freedom and Social Order,: An Essay in Christian Philosophy, Duke University Press, 1959, p. 67. Illustrating this issue, David C. Thomasma writes:" rather, the problem is that we have lost control over technology. Put in a more challenging way, we no longer design technology to serve the fundamental needs and aspirations of persons. While human beings have been technological in the sense that we have always created tools, these tools, or machines, were previously designed with the objective of fulfilling the needs. Human needs dictated the design and control of the machine. This is no longer true. Today, technology itself often dictates the new design. Thus the standard for accusation: technology has become dehumanized and dehumanizing." *An Apology for the Value of Human Life* (St. Louis, MO; The Catholic Health Association of the United states, 1983), p. 99

[408] Nwaigbo, F., Faith in an Age of Reason and Science, op. cit., p. 55 - 56

example the production and use of nuclear energies and armaments for war. What good benefit are they to humanity and how have they helped in alleviating the problem of man? They are just for fame and supremacy and destruction of man at the detriment of the well-being of humanity. Thus value for life becomes secondary. As a result of this, "Every nation in the world builds weapons with the aim of destroying the others and creating structures for its own protection and that of its people."[409] Then who is liable to be saved and who is liable to be destroyed?

Thus Economists and Scientists tell us that if even a fraction of what the developed countries are spending at the moment on armaments and luxuries were converted to help the developing countries and the poor and unemployed, human prospects and prosperity could long be assured.[410] However through this desire for quick material results, the humane aspect of technology and the development seem not to be considered. Thus some technological feats are achieved, forgetting, the finality of man and humaneness in society.[411] This much recourse to authority and material development many times lead to the challenge and neglect of socio-religious and cultural aspect of human development. Technology in this form devalues some important aspects of man as the values of the family, the human person, care for the community and interpersonal relationship, sacredness of life, religiosity, and care for nature to near extinction. Without much recourse to the value of human dignity, the results will be dissatisfaction, instability, wars, and etcetera.[412] Thus Oleko Nkombe maintains, "The basic problem of technology and its development is the ability to articulate humanity's intellective, behavioural and ethical reasons. Only a combination of these three elements will produce worthwhile and lasting development for any given people."[413]

Our environment is our life is not only a slogan but a maxim at the core of the survival of humanity. The right to life applies to our environments as well. The traditional African has value for nature and the environment. They feed from nature and the environment and conserve the two as part and parcel of their life. Animals and trees are sources of their livelihood. Thus nature and environment are conserved by Africans both for the present generation and the ones to come.[414] For a number of reasons we have environmental crisis out of the capitalistic scientific mode of production which also places profits before people and

[409] Taylor, B., and Günther, G., Religion for Human Dignity and World Peace, p. 84
[410] Nwaigbo, F., Faith in an Age of Reason and Science, op. cit., p. 56
[411] Taylor, B., and Günther, G., Religions for Human Dignity and World Peace, p. 83
[412] Wild, J., Human Freedom; op. cit., p. 344
[413] Oleko, N., In: Iroegbu, P., (Edit,), *The Kpim of Morality ethics*, op. cit., p. 294
[414] Akaeze, A., The Right to Integral Education; A Basic Foundation for Achieving the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa, (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis), 2014, p. 97

their lives. There is abuse and environmental degradation of the earth.[415] Thus "science and technology have provided us the tools and instruments to exploit, pollute and destroy our natural environment on which the life and existence of our future generation rests".[416] In view of this the discovery and exploitation of mineral resources in Africa has given way to a large scale of pollution of the environment. It can be likened to a slow growing cancer destroying the heart of life, and cores of human values. This results to environmental degradation and natural disaster. An example is Nigeria where the contemporary state of the Nigerian environment is frightening. Nigeria is a major contributor to global warming. Thanks to the contributions of the various trans-national oil corporations like Shell, Chevron, and others. Nigeria is the number one leader in gas flaring, releasing over 35 million tons of carbon dioxide per year and about 12 million tons of methane per year into the atmosphere.[417] Nigeria is rated to flare 76 percent of natural gas according to a World Bank, report.[418] It is obvious that gas flares harm and affect people and their livelihoods and nobody cares about this effect. The firms and government are busy scrambling for the money that accrues from oil and gas at the detriment of the life and health of the poor masses living in the zones affected. The oil spillage makes the land infertile and affects the ecosystem and the people. The depletion of the ozone layer is a major environmental problem in Nigeria through gas flare. It is a problem because the ozone layer serves as a shield to cover the earth from ultraviolet radiation from the sun. In his explanation of the side effect of the depletion of the ozone layer Salau Ademola stated that "The depletion of the ozone layer will lead to an increase in the amount of ultra-violet radiation reaching the earth. There is substantial scientific evidence that ultra-violet radiation is extremely dangerous to human beings. It is estimated that each one percent drop in ozone layer concentration will result in four-six-percent increase in cases of two of the most common types of skin cancer (squamons and basal cell carcinoma). Increased levels of ultra-violet radiation are also expected to weaken the human body's immune system and parasitic infections could become more common…[419] Then what is being done to forestall this and the preservation of life by science and technology on this regard? There are supposed to be many ways to control this depletion of the ozone layer, why are they not being applied if not man's inhumanity to his fellow man coupled with selfish ulterior motives?

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[415] Merchant, C., The Death of Nature: Women , Ecology and the Scientific Revolution, San Francisco, 1908, p. 23

[416] Nwaigbo, F. Faith in an Age of Reason and Science, op. cit., p. 236

[417] Doifie, O, Greed or Need? The Environment Question in Nigeria: In Asogwa, C., *Human Rights in Nigeria*, op. cit., p. 249

[418] World Bank, Defining an Environmental Development Strategy for the Niger Delta, 1995; in: Doifa Ola, *Greed or Need, The Environment Question in Nigeria* op. cit., p. 249

[419] Salau, A. T., *Global Environmental Change*: A Research Agenda for Africa, Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa, CODESRIA; Darar, Working Paper, p. 2, 1999

Equally industrialization which is the product of science and technology creates problem for the people also. Many of the industries are sighted in the living environments as no adequate plan of events is made as regards the location of such industries. People are exposed to health hazards due to the industrial pollutions. Often wastes from these industries are channelled to rivers and streams thereby polluting the source of drinking water.[420] The circuit of our airs and soil are always endangered by these pollutions and wastes from industries. Many times these are ignored or underestimated at the detriment of the people, their lives and dignity.

Furthermore scientific and technological developments at times do not provide the individuals with internal qualitative content of life that gives ultimate meaning to their being in relationship with others. Often such developments are not realized due to lack of concern for individual`s interaction with one another. As a result of this the foundations built on the traditional values of communalism and spirit of doing things together, are being challenged and questioned by the concomitant effect of technology and modernity. This is with emphasis on technological expertise, interpersonal relationships, markets, profits and possessions…All these sometimes tend towards destroying the traditional values of consideration of the individual as a human person and society as a community of fellows linked together by bonds of kinship.[421] The machine here is replacing man and chasing away human warmth and as such limits man´s humanistic appraisal of things.[422] Thus by this the normal interpersonal contacts and communal mode of doing things that was the norm in the Igbo traditional society are being lost. From this setting, individualism, selfishness and uncultured approach to wealth and values are the results. The whole situation can be summed up in the words of Jean Maria Domenach that, "in many respects the modern man is like a wild animal sending its life in a zoo. Like the animal, he is fed abundantly and protected from inclemencies, but deprived of nature stimuli essential for many functions of his body and his mind. Man is alienated, not only from other men, not only from nature, but more importantly from the deepest layers of his fundamental self."[423] Technology has its legitimacy in so far as it is at the service of human beings especially in relationship with one another. We will through this inquest turn to globalization and their influence on the value of human dignity in the world with regard to the Igbo.

[420] Akaeze, A., The Right to Integral Education; op. cit. p. 97
[421] Ottenberg, S., Ibo Receptivity to Change, op. cit. p. 130 ff
[422] Talyor, J. B., Religions for Human Dignity and World Peace, op. cit., p. 83
[423] Domenach, J. M., The Attack on Humanism in Contemporary Culture; in Iroegbu, P., *Kpim of Morality* op. cit., p. 295

4.6.3 Globalization

The colonial and post-colonial changes triggered off a wider range of functional adjustments and approaches to life events. Globalization is one of such changes and one of the 21st century products of Colonization. Globalization is from the word-noun "globe". And globe according to the 20th Century Oxford Dictionary, simply means "…a round body, a sphere, the earth … Looking at the term from its transitive verb "to globalize means to make into a globe, to make global."[424] Globalization becomes a new trend of living where humanity has interactive activities within the earth globe. It has much to do with communication, economic and social content. George Ritzer, analyzed globalization as, "…the spread of worldwide practices, relations, consciousness, and organization of social life…that transforms people around the world…"[425] This as a matter of fact entails connecting the world together in social realities. This closer integration of the countries of the world should imply greater interdependence, and therefore a greater need for more collective action. Other words that make the meaning of globalization more explicit are generality, universality, general applicability, catholicity, ecumenicalism, macrosm, inclusiveness, comprehensivity, something for everybody, open house, dragnet, whole, indiscrimination, internationalism, et cetera.[426] By globalization one talks of the human entities in the world and their interactive ability with one another. Globalization is attainable as a result "of increased human mobility, enhanced communication, greatly increased trade and capital flows"[427] It is a sort of cultural transformation that affects people's cultural identity either positively or negatively.

Approaching this from the ethical perspective our question reads, can globalization benefit all or harm some at the benefit of a few? Would it not become another colonialism, another imperialism and hegemony of some world powers over others? Can globalization be focused so that it does not become abused, manipulated, and counterproductive as well? These are the questions globalization has to attend from ethical perspective which is our area of focus. What then is the main aim of globalization? Could it be seen from the philosophy of some humanity, in recognition that all peoples in the world are one? Of course the differences in the international scene will not allow one to see globalization from the above perspective. To see all as one will always be a theory and a mirage. Example is a situation where globalization is trumpeted but racism still upholds in the world with its negativities. Then what is the essence

[424] Kikpatrick, E. M., (Ed.), Chambers 20th Century Dictionary, Richard Clay Ltd. Britain, 1984
[425] Ritzer ,G., Sociological Theory, New York, Mac Graw, 2008, p. 573
[426] Betty Kirkpatric (Ed.), Roget Thesaurus, England: Penguin Group, in. Ezeani G., *Globalisation Ethics in Kpim of Morality and Ethics*, op. cit. p. 71
[427] Ezeani, G., Globalisation Ethics, in, Kpim of Morality, Ethics, op.cit., p. 71

for the call for globalization by the trumpeters? To each trumpeter, from the developed and developing nations, globalization has a selfish and material end because all in it operates it the way it will favour or benefit her. To each there is a selfish bent.[428]

Globalization from this perspective suggests a situation whereby the powerful nations absorb the weak. Globalization with its concomitant free trade has created a superhighway for international commerce that is asymmetrical and monopolistic. It actually favours the rich and the rest of the people are nothing but disposable window shoppers. They are disposable because they are poor and not just poor but are excluded from civilization because of their status. When the world was rural a social cultural fabric protected the poor. But with the emergence of urbanization, industrialization with globalization the poor are isolated, abandoned without community and belongings.[429] Thus this negative effect of globalization is more noticeable in the developing countries. The developing nations like Nigeria where Igboland belong stands the greater inhuman risk of losing not only their resources and important personnel's but their core cultural and ethical values as well.

Globalization in this form creates the processes in which each nation attempts to push for those policies which are narrowly in its own self-interest and these are not likely to produce outcomes which are in the general interest.[430] This as a matter of fact creates an unjust world order that fits into Darwinian principle of the survival of the fittest. In such situation one tends to ask, what happens to the identity and autonomy of those who lose out in the process? As a way forward and to avoid the fears that come with the intent of the so called globalization John Paul II, stated, "Globalization will be what people make it. No system is an end in itself. It must be reaffirmed that globalization, like any other system, must be at the service of the human person: it must serve solidarity and the common good."[431] This means that globalization would be a blessing if it can be devoid of selfish interests and works for the common good. In other words it should be wary of counter-balancing the situation where things, instead of getting better for the generality of the people get worse. Often the negative aspect tends to take the lead when the intention is often for materialistic and economic end.

[428] ibid. p. 71
[429] ibid. p. 72
[430] Stiglitz, J. E., Ethics, Market and Government Failure, and Globalisation: in Malinvaud, E and Sabourin, L., (Eds.), *The governance of Globalisation*, Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences Vatican City, 2004, p. 264
[431] Pope John Paul II, in Magazine: *from the Bees to the Roses*, August/ September, 2001, Vol. 6, p. 21

4.6.3.1 Globalization the Question of National Identity

As a system globalization tends to break down the national borders by removing the boundaries of relative cultural values and bring people of different cultural backgrounds and different values closer. According to Don Browning Bonnie Miller Mclmore, "globalization shrinks the globe and yet escalates acute consciousness of differences and ambiguities; it inspires growth and yet increases personal and social strain; finally, globalization relativizes the hegemony of presumed universal values of freedom, justice, the worth of the individual and yet absolutizes lesser values of materialism, consumerism, technical rationalism, and the pursuit of profit."[432] It has made the world to be, "a global village where everybody knows, or at least can know what is happening to others, and therein can influence or be influenced by others."[433] In this state of events liberty becomes the watch-word as a result of the removal of relative cultural values and nation-state restrictions which abhorred easy access to each other. As the name suggests globalization has the capacity of influencing every aspect of the people. But care should be taken so that the material development should not exclude the socio-humane welfare of the people, nor the economy muzzle the religious integrity of the human person in the society.[434] This becomes a thing of concern for from the above perspective, it is not only economy that is globalized but it goes to other areas as it affects every aspect of the people.

How helpful this globalized closeness and togetherness is to the people and how it compromises the distinct cultures and traditions remains part of the problem of this work. The answer may be positive, yet I think it is not just to be the ultimate aim for approving globalization. It is not the objective of globalization to emasculate independent states in their autonomy and sovereignty. The right of self-determination must be guarded. Otherwise it becomes an infringement on the nation and peoples right. Moreover the non-recognition of the plurality of culture, tradition and "Weltanschauung" (worldview) constitutes a major problem. As far as the worldview is not the same, one can only speak of dialogue here which has to do with carrying every person along. Otherwise the so called closeness will always ignite conflicts which emerge from the differences in cultural, social and value backgrounds.

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[432] Don Browning, Bonnie Miller-Mclemore, Globalization and the family, A Practical Theological Analysis, in; Paul Ballard, Pam Couture (Edit.), Globalization and Differences, Cardiff 199, 86; See Bujo Benezet, Welches Welt Ethos begründet die Menschenrechte? In: Jahrbuch für christliche Sozialwissenschaften, Band 39,36. „Es ist (…) auf das Problem eines Weltethos hinzuweisen, das Letzen Endes doch auf Grenzen stößt und erheblich Schwierigkeiten mit sich bringt. Daraus folgt dann aber, dass auch die Menschenrechte, die das Ethos voraussetzt, nicht ohne weiteres nach dem Globalisierungsmodell vereinheitlicht werden können, Sie sind von Natur aus auf einen interkulturellen Diskurs angelegt."

[433] Iroegbu, P., Globalised Ethics: The Kpim of Morality Ethics, op. cit., p. 21

[434] Ezeani, G., Globalisation Ethics, op.cit., p. 73

Looking at the problem stated above how can there be a universal closeness which the Westerners are projecting through globalization? How realizable is a universal ethics in approach to every issue and who makes the laws and for whom? How will this law be a representative of all cultures? And since we have several cultures in the world which one will take precedence? How sure are we that the propagators of these laws and their proposals are not going to be determined by a certain groups philosophy and in the end be understood in any group's context? This indicates that the protagonists of globalization are presuming and proposing ethical and moral values which they feel should be universal and global in scope. Luke Mbaefo in his view pointed out that "… The Europeans invaded Africa with the assumed crusade that there was only one cultural destination for the whole human race, namely the one that had emerged from the Western Europe… They sought to model the whole world in their own image. They would have been surprised if somebody hinted at the fact of the plurality of cultures.[435] This in no form points to the fact that there are many cultures as well as ethics and values in the universe. And these need to be considered when globalization is being discussed. As an example Magesa Laurenti sighted the present *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and questioned on how the Church in Africa can use such a catechism which does not have any reference to African culture and thinking."Globalization under the Christian Church in Africa is as old as the missionary movement itself. It is deeply ingrained in the transplantation model of mission; a model which predominated until recently although today, theoretically, emphasis is placed on the inculturation model. It must be stressed, however, that largely inculturation is still academic and does not touch the real world of those religiously oppressed by Christian globalization. Among these, as I fear the use of the catechism will prove, the transplantation model unconsciously retains its strength."[436] The Church needs to actually look into this aspect in order to avoid absolutizing a particular principle without considering pluralism. The same thing is applicable to globalization in relationship to other people's cultures and ethics. This is to avoid superficial imitation which alienates people from themselves and their culture. Through this means people are made to be what they are not as they live and act artificially as well.

Regarding this, the idea of global culture becomes a problem and may not evenly apply in all things. For example the Igbo human person is communalistic by nature who values his/her inter-personal relationship with his/her fellow human being more than anything material.

[435] Mbaefo, L., The Reshaping of African Traditions, Spiritan Pub., Enugu, 1988, p. 89
[436] Magesa, L., Africa's Struggle for Self-Determination During a Time of Globalization: in *African Ecclesial Review*, Volume 40, 1998, 329-327

Globalization deprives him/her of the direct linkage with this core value of his/her ethnicity and cultural background in that its end-point is mainly material. As a result of this it becomes a hindrance to him/her and conflicts with his/her culture. It creates room for unhealthy and selfish search for wealth and material gains and this threatens the Igbo socio-humane welfare and the value for HP. Since globalization's end-point lies on economic achievement therefore everything in relation to it has economic value as an end. On this note such Igbo cultural and traditional institutions and structures which have no economic values suffer neglect. The ethical concerns of justice, peace, truthfulness, respect for elders and the value and dignity of human person become threatened. Based on this, struggle for conscienceless acquisition of wealth is on the increase. This cultural conflict creates profound problems that are not so easy to resolve.

Globalization, from this perspective becomes a misguided notion to the citizenry. Following this Mark Rupert pointed out that "the main thrust of globalization is in favour of corporate finance and nongovernmental organizations and not for the social and political empowerment of the citizens."[437] From this perspective then, how can globalization then benefit the common people if it is not for their empowerment? What is its benefit when it cannot serve the citizenry? What is then the difference between the non-globalized and the globalized situation in the world? Is anything changing for the better, for the welfare of the common man, the poor nations and the underdeveloped regions of the globe? Is the respect for human dignity improving or retrogressing? Then we turn to Communication and mass-media as aspects of globalization.

4.6.4. Communication

Today the advancement in science and technology has made much impact in the area of communication such that we can describe it as communication age. This is the chief agent of globalization. It has very easily as well made the people of the world quite close to one another in spite of being miles away. The word communication is derived from latin word "*communicare*" to make common. Communication serves as a means of making common to several people what was the monopoly of one or some persons.[438] It is commonly made to educate, inform, and to, act as watchdog of the society. This system makes known or lays bare

[437] Rupert, M., Globalisation and the Reconstruction of Common Sense in the U.S., Syracuse Univ., 1997, p. 5ff
[438] Alexander, D., The Process of Communication, An Introduction to the Theory and Practice, Rinehart Press, San Francisco, 1959, p. 23

what has been sectional to a group to a wider society. Communication has developed over the ages and as the world advances the task of communication becomes more complex. This is as a result of the development of new devices in communication system. It is almost impossible in this modern world to do without them.

Communication as a system for the exchange or sharing of information and message requires basic components for its realization. These include "the source of the message, the medium of communicating it, the audience and the feedback which is the reaction of the receiver to the message." [439] In this system the message shared is the constant factor or content, the feedback is the reaction or response from the receiver of the message. This is as a result of the fact that for communication to be effective it involves a two-way process of exchange between the sender and the receiver. This process as a social interaction can come in form of messages which are in both human and technological form. In all things the messages are for the masses as a result are to dwell more on mass media as a means of communication and its effects on the global world.

4.6.4.1 Mass Media

Obviously mass media is a strong means of communicating information. Mass media deals with those organizations that produce popular culture like, television, radio, books, magazines and newspapers even the modern day internet with its gadgets. Others are museums, advertising agencies and sporting organizations.[440] These influence the life style of the people. They serve as dominant sources of definitions and images of social reality for individuals and groups. They help many to make judgments and express values intrinsically imbedded in given cultures.[441] Through it people are offered the opportunity to exchange ideas which reaches and affects the society positively or negatively. This has a lot of influence on the people as it affects their life and culture and often shapes them. The proper use of the media is tremendously beneficial to humanity. It helps mankind to have sufficient information

[439] Mbazu, I. O., Communication as an Instrument of Effective Instructional Supervision, in Ugwu, C.O.T. (Eds.), *Nigeria Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences Vol. 3,* Rabboni Press Nsukka, 2009, p. 110
[440] Abercrombie, N., The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology, London, Penguin Books, 2000, p. 82
[441] Alumuku, T. P., The Church and Effective Communications and Strategies in Nigeria, in Encounter, *A Journal of African Life and Religion,* Vol. 2, 1993, p. 101

and thus, contribute effectively to the common good.[442] From the above perspective mass media is beneficial to humanity.

On the same vein it can serve as a powerful instrument that can dismantle the barriers that time and space erected between persons and culture. It can disengage the individual from the cultural and environmental idea of sensing and viewing things. And to see and accept some things that are not in congruent to one's societal, cultural and ethical belief. In the words of Edmund Ilogu, "traditional society of Igboland, before the advent of the white man, either as missionary or colonial administrator, trader, or industrialist, provided for the people satisfactory living with only the necessities of life. Lustful desire and insatiable wanting of possessions were not part of that society's vice. Today with the skilful manipulation of the media and advertisements people are daily being told about the many hundreds and one things they need. As a result of this, desire and greed are in such ways multiplied in the appetites of people."[443] This affected some of the Igbo cultural ethics, traditional values and approach to some issues like pursuit for material possessions and value for the dignity of the human person. As a way of criticism against this influence Magesa Laurenti puts it that, "Superficial imitation promoted by globalization and fostered by the modern means of mass communication, which in a fundamental sense alienates Africans from themselves, is an enemy of Africa, and must be seen as such. The African imagination must devise ways and means to counteract these and other alienating trends."[444] Here he meant that through some of the media shows many Africans are turned around from becoming what they are not and thereby acting artificially and estranging themselves from their real nature.

The media as a means of social communication creates awareness into people's subconscious and these cut across every aspect of life. It educates and transmits ideas to a generality of persons in different locations. The mass-media can re-enforce or disorganize a prior knowledge of cultural value. Hence it can serve as a means of social formation or deformation, and can equally be of service or disservice to humanity. The society and culture of the recipients need to be considered on media transmissions to avoid giving wrong signals and debased approach to some issues and values that involve them. The media is supposed to be careful on the kind of information it sends across and consider the disposition of the recipients of the message and their environment. Example abounds on the numerous network executives and film producers who always offer entertainment that glamorously defies

[442] Vatican II, Inter Mirifica, art., 5
[443] Ilogu, E., Christianity and Igbo Culture, op. cit., p. 98
[444] Magesa, L., Africas Struggle, op. cit., p. 331

conventional standards such as violence, and war films. These have negative impact on the value the Igbo placed on human dignity and life. Another is the media devaluation of women through sexual-objectification. This is abhorred in the Igbo traditional setting but as seen, most business adverts today use images of partially clad men and women even when these adverts have practically no connection with the products. So in the world of today it is sometimes difficult for anyone to escape the pervasive, influential effects of sexual-objectification. This is anti-Igbo culture that sees the human sexuality as sacrosanct and a thing of privacy. The various film-shows that depict some immoral acts, action films where guns are being used recklessly, shooting, killing and maiming people are having serious side effect on the people especially children's psyche. This is endangering their value for life and humanity which is a vital aspect of Igbo people's cultural value. For this is a culture that abhors shedding of human blood even when it is done unknowingly a subsequent cleansing and appeasing of the land goddess is demanded. In his reaction to this John Mbiti pointed that mass media, "is creating two worlds for Africans, as most of the ideas propagated are alien to African way of life, exposing half-nude women, highlighting individualism, advocating competitions in economy…In the pursuit to meet up with the fast growing world of the developed countries, they the Africans end up in making a lot of mistakes. Consequently the speed has led to the breed of the unstable social structures, strange and inconsistent political ideologies and economic dilemma of the century in Africa."[445] On this note the mass media renders good as well as bad services to the Igbo. Positively it exposes them and keeps them abreast with the realities of the time. Negatively it exposes them to what has not been in their culture and things that were deemed as taboos and unacceptable are becoming a way of life, thereby polarizing their cultural setting especially in relation to the value of HD.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have tried to give a resume` of some of the various ways the value of HD is being threatened today in Igbo society. As noted some are found in the Igbo traditional cultural setting in some form before colonization and modernization. The Igbo traditional society though preservative of the value of human dignity was to an extent sectional in its bases of operation as regards preserving this value.

[445] Mbiti, J., African Religion and Philosophy, Anchor Books, New York, 1970, pp. 288-289

In view of this it becomes pertinent to ask, is it necessary to promote Igbo traditions and cultural past as they were and thereby ignore modernity in its entirety? This rhetoric question is important to avoid the pursuit of a theological thought that is retroactive instead of progressive. As a concerned African Bujo Benetez, stated, "I am of the opinion that a truly black and incarnate theology has to be something vastly more complex. It seems to me that we simply have missed the opportunity to save many of our black traditions from disappearance. If now we are not ready and honest enough to face this deplorable fact, I am afraid that we shall be wasting our time trying to produce an artificial theology of paradise lost."[446] Two fundamental points are made here by Bujo Benezet. First he warned against doing theology that is devoid of contemporary reality. That is theology that only tries to resuscitate the lost past. Secondly he pointed out that several things have been lost and more are getting lost.[447] This last point is where the argument of the work lies. So the fact that modernity is getting these values eroded away and no new suitable ones fitted in becomes a thing of concern and interest. It led us to the state of in-between where one is neither African (Igbo) or the Western.

This chapter actually is in no form anti modernism but indicates that modernism with its features and characteristics should take enough cognizance of the cultural life of the people. Their culture is the source of their history and life. There is need for modernity to create a balance in the cultural values of Igbo people and their society, where all will be treated as equal. That is where this crisis of values and interests in Igboland lies. The modernity needed is the one that will not polarize the already existing norms but one that will strengthen the good ones, reform and bridge the gap Igbo culture created in relation to human dignity. We need modernity but not to the outright detriment of the cultural values and ethics, there is need for a give and take relationship between them. Without this, the fear of the widening of the crisis of values especially in relation to HD not being abated will always be felt. This is as a result of the fact that naturally the Igbo HP directly or indirectly is a cultural and traditional being. Thus Leopold Senghor pointed out that, "First and foremost, however we may be influenced by Europe, our realities are not identical"[448] And there is no way we can be like them in all things.

[446] Bujo, B., African Christian Morality at the Age of Inculturation, Nairobi, 1990, p. 43
[447] Ezekwonna, F. C., African Communitarian Ethics, op. cit., p. 220

[448] Senghor, L., On African Socialism, New York, London, 1964, p. 103

In such situation then, are there no efforts made in relation to this regard? In the next chapter we will see some efforts being made by various Universal organs and nations to keep the value of the HD to an extent above other values. These moves we will see briefly in the next chapter of the work.

Chapter Five

Some Efforts and Suggestions in Resolving the Devaluation of Human Dignity

Introduction

The various problems as observed in the previous chapters on the value of HD as stated are seen to have their background from the Igbo cultural setting, Nigerian pluralistic status and influence of modernity. They have their causes and effects, merits and demerits. In this chapter, we will briefly examine some efforts made to preclude these causes to enable us proffer some further solutions to the problem. Modernity here is used to mean the Western culture. It confronted the Igbo culture on many issues with regard to the value of HD.

Such confrontation opens room for cultural symbiosis as well, which, according to Luke Mbefo is possible if there is good interaction between peoples of different culture and tradition.[449] Of course it is explicit that every confrontation could be positive or negative. We are after the positive effects. To arrive at these, some questions need to be answered, namely, how can a balance be struck? And where are the possible areas for such synthesis? To answer these questions Dower Nigel mentioned three ways in which one can respond to the disagreement between the two positions. The first is to accept the conflict as fundamental, and argue for one against the other. The second is to adopt a strategy of mutual accommodation, and argue that both theories have a part of the truth about the nature and source of ethical values. The third strategy is one of assimilation that is of taking one approach as fundamentally correct but interpreting various features of the other approach as derivative from the basic theory (and mistaken by its advocates as being fundamental)[450]

We will adopt the second approach in this chapter, because it is more appropriate to the discussion on ethical values. This approach proffers some efforts made by some groups and organizations in forestalling the value of HD. An example is the effort by the United Nations Declaration on HD.

5.1 United Nations Declaration on Human Dignity

We cannot discuss the international convention on HD in isolation from human rights (HR). This is because HR are the conventional means through which the value of HD is realized.

[449] Mbefo, L., The Reshaping of African Traditions, Spiritan Publications, Enugu, 1998, p. 76
[450] Nigel, D., World Ethics, Edinburgh University Press, 1998, p. 105

Through its recognition and observation, the value and dignity of the human person (HP) can be expressed and maintained in the contemporary world. These HR are inherent, indivisible and inalienable to every human person. In fact, according to Callistus Asogwa, "They.... are held as attributes of the human personality."[451] They "... are applicable to every person and should not be denied to any person."[452] For Onyekpere Eze, "Human rights represent demands or claims which individuals or groups make on society, some of which are protected by law and have become part of the society while others remain aspirations to be attained in the future."[453] Fidelis Kwazu disagrees with this opinion because "...individuals or groups can make claims on the society that are ethically not justifiable. As a result of this some individuals demands can infringe on the rights of others."[454] We quite agree with him since one´s rights are not to encroach on others rights. These rights "...are like armour because they protect us, like rules since they tell us how we can behave, like judges since we can appeal to them. They are also considered to be abstract: They are like spirit in as much as they cannot be destroyed, like emotions since everyone has them. They are like time because of their equality character. They are like nature since they can easily be violated. These rights among others are; the rights to life, freedom from torture, freedom of religion, rights to a fair trial, rights to political activity, rights to health and education..."[455] Our interest here is not actually to discuss different views on HR, but to emphasize that these rights are pretty necessary in the daily living of the HP as they enhance the HD.

It is indeed expedient to foster the right to HD. To deny man of it is anti-human because, according to Jean Paul-Sartre "man is condemned to be free"[456] We use freedom in this context to mean to exist and be human with all the qualitative dignity attached to it. But how attainable is this if the value of the HD and the right to it is not considered? This right ... "exists irrespective of sex, race and nationality, as well as from life style. Every human being has been provided with it…Dignity is related to human subsistence (Mensch-sein) itself; no one can take this right to dignity away. This right is owned not only by the honest, but also by dictators, children molesters or other asocial individuals…"[457] Ị differ with Alfonsas Vaisvilla on his argument that no one can take the right to dignity away. If not then on what basis

[451] Asogwa, C., (ed.), *Human Rights in Nigeria,* op. cit., 2004, p. 3
[452] Chukwudozie, C. M. N., Introduction to Human Rights and Social Justice, Enugu, Ochumba Publ., Nigeria 2000, p. 5
[453] Eze, O. C., Nigeria and Human Rights, Prospects and problems, in; Uzukwu, E. E., (ed.) *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, Vol. 4, Snaap Press, Enugu, Nigeria, 1991, pp. 1-2
[454] Kwazu, F. C.B., Developing a Viable., op, cit., p. 59
[455] ibid., p. 60
[456] Satre, Jean-Paul., Being and Nothingness; Trans. by Barnes Hazel and, E., Washington Square Press, New York, 1956; Cf.; also Stumpf, S. E., Philosophy and Problems, Mcgraw Hill, New York, 1994, p. 514
[457] Richter, H. P., Juristische Grundkurse Band 20, Jochen Zehthöfer Philosophie Berlin.

do we have to argue that some peoples respect and honour are not being recognized? In most countries in Africa, like in Nigeria, the poor for instance are hardly respected, many suspects are taken to prison and are abandoned, and some severely tortured. In these cases what happens to their right and dignity as HP? We quite agree that every person has the right to his/her dignity but both the right and dignity in most cases are thrown under the carpet and downtrodden. It was actually against this that the mission of the United Nations strove to achieve. To drive home its message, a universal declaration was issued. The ethical undertone in this declaration was that human beings irrespective of their colour, sex, domicile and circumstances of birth have inherent dignity and equal right.

The Universal Declaration was not meant to impose legal obligations on states, but to establish goals for states. The declaration reads "Now therefore, the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, both national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, among the peoples of member states themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction."[458] This declaration serves as a means of preserving the dignity of the HP as well as a model of social control. A critical inference from this declaration is that the principle is well spelt out, but the modality of its execution was not discussed. Based on this, the problem is left unsolved. It is therefore reasonable to consider the efforts of Africans on this issue. The first to be considered is the African Charter.

5.2 African Charter on Human Dignity

In African Charter the picture of HD so far painted has been considered in the perspective of HR. Many African scholars have tried to disclose the concept, practice and the regard of Africans to HD. For them like Emmanuel Umeh, human right is as old as African traditional society, although its concept and its West-centric interpretation could be foreign to Africa, but the contents and their essence are not.[459] This argument is to disprove the view that the regard

[458] Brownlie. I., Basic Documents on Human Rights in the World; op. cit., p. 28
[459] Umeh, E. C., The Promotion of Human Rights; op. cit., p. 71

for human beings was not realistic in Africa, but came into effect through European rule – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.[460]

Generally, Africans have respect to life and properties enshrined in their norms. In his clarification of this Oji Umozurike sited, "The society was socialist and humanistic, leading to the recognition of the rights of individuals as well as of the group."[461] The recognition of rights accentuates the evidence of consciousness of human worthness. This expression "consciousness" is important. It signals the awareness and depth of knowledge of others, "beingness"; that the other has the same human characteristics like you. Based on this, he/she deserves respect worthy for every human being. An instance is that he/she has respect for life.[462] African culture propagates this gospel message which agrees with Edward Kannyo`s argument that preservation of life and the promotion of human welfare are part of the mission of many cultures and the concept of human rights are not alien to non-Western cultures.[463] This Mission was invoked before civilization in Africa. The carrier of this mission today is the African Charter, whose content is rooted in the African norms and traditional customs. It is expressed in traditional African humanism institutional participation in decision making process, human dignity and so forth.[464] From these arguments we can deduce that the African effort so far is spelt out in this mission- the consciousness of human value. But how is this consciousness demonstrated in Nigeria's effort on HD?

5. 3 Nigeria Efforts on the Value of Human Dignity

Nigeria as a nation in its multi-pluralistic nature has reverence for life as a social value. The 1979 constitution of Nigeria like many other modern constitutions and the United Nations Declaration of HR are in accord with their recognition of the dignity and rights of the HP.[465] It guarantees the equality of all Nigerians in the sense that all have the same claims to means of survival, happiness and cultivation of their natural potentials. [466] Based on this awareness

[460] Shivji, I. G., The Concept of Human Rights in Africa, Codesria, Dakar, 1989, p. 10
[461] Umozurike, U. O., The African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples Rights, Martin Njihof Press, Boston, London, 1997, p. 13
[462] Though there were some human abuses in pre-colonial epoch, like torture and human rituals and sacrifices based on African belief. African religion and tradition admitted such activities as a way of appeasing their gods against calamity on the land.
[463] Kannyo, E., Human Rights in Africa Problems and Prospects: A Report Prepared for the International League for Human Rights, New York, May 12, 1980, p. 4
[464] Silk, J., Traditional Culture and the Prospect for Human Rights in Africa: in Shivji, I. G., *The Concept of Human Rights in Africa Series*, op. cit., p. 303
[465] The 1979 Nigerian Constitution, Ch., IV, Sect., 30- 42
[466] Ahmadu, I. M., The Rights of Christians in Islamic States; in: *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology, Human*

the Nigerian constitution has the necessary provisions that can protect all and sundry from actions that demean their dignity and infringe on their rights.

This constitution gives room to socialization which aids individuals for proper development and self-dependency. In this respect, individuals will tend to assert their rights as individuals and develop their emotional reaction.[467] To help establish this, Nigeria government gave room for some foreign social organizations to bridge up areas they are lagging behind. One of these is UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Education Fund). They support the government in such areas as child survival, maternal health care and other health related issues especially in the rural areas. In addition is UBE (Universal Basic Education) which helps in education. It provides free and compulsory educational programmes for children irrespective of socio-economic circumstances. [468] But despite these and several other contributions, the situation of HD is still deplorable, going from bad to worse. To the extent that, man has almost lost the sense of the dignity of one another. Warning against this trend of event James Kavanagh sighted that "The concept of the dignity of man is fundamental ... if we err in our estimation of what man is worth, we shall err in our treatment of man. A good deal of the confusion and distress in the modern world is due to the fact that so many are ignorant of the dignity of man."[469] To combat this ignorance is basically the responsibility of parents and the governments through education on issues related to human relationships. Unfortunately, the nation has poor leadership organ which poses problem in implementing some important issues as provided in the constitution. Lamenting on this Ahmadu Ibrahim bitterly commented, "Despite the constitutional indemnity against human rights violation various sections of the nation have been subjected to systematic abuses and dehumanization in the hands of those charged with protecting their rights. Successive governments of this country from the colonial period to date have been operating an uncodified constitution that has given the franchise to act ultravires. In the end what constituted human rights in Nigeria has been dictated by the whims and temperaments of contemporary governments on the scene."[470] Based on this comment and the reality on ground, there is much neglect on the HP leading to devaluation of HD. It is not just that the dignity of the HP is not upheld and valued, but since independence, there has been a constant degeneration and sporadic decline which

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Rights, the African Perspective, Vol. 4, Snaap, Press, Enugu, 1991, p. 47

[467] The 1979 Nigeria Constitution; op. cit., sect., 30-42

[468] Iyidobi, C., Human Rights Situation in Nigeria; in Asogwa, C., (Ed.), *Human Rights in Nigeria*, op. cit., p. 51

[469] Kavanah, J., Manual of Social Ethics, Gill and Son, Dublin, 1964, p. 14

[470] Ahmadu, I., M., The Rights of Christians, op. cit., p. 48

may lead to an awful end.[471] As a result of the situation there is need for help from different quarters as the government alone is not so competent in handling the situation. Such helps at times are gotten from some internal diverse groups or organizations as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

5.4 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Contribution towards Human Dignity in Nigeria

The NGOs refers to organizations that are mainly for charitable works and other social purposes. They are neither a part of the government nor meant for profit ventures. They help improve the ugly conditions of people, especially the less privileged, in various societies. Some of these people are generally sick and poor. According to Jeffrey Sachs, such poor "know about the development ladder: they are tantalized by images of affluence from halfway around the world. But they are not able to get a first foothold on the ladder, and so cannot even begin the climb out of poverty."[472]Hence they are in need of assistance and support.

According to Fidelis Kwazu, they need physical, socio-economic and political support to begin to climb out of these their dilapidating status.[473] The various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria (claim to) offer such support. They are relevantly important especially in such areas where government lacks public services like in Igboland. They have provided many public services to the people in different forms especially in providing social services. There are many NGOs such as Guidance for Community Development Foundation (GCDF). They dwell on caring for orphans, vulnerable children, Aids victims, Tuberculosis. They equally have outreach to various associations as National Union of road Transport workers and campaign on the awareness of HIV and other avoidable infections. Through these means awareness is created and sense of belonging is given to victims and non-victims of such status. The activities of these organizations in developing nations such as Nigeria are meant to serve as a means to give and care for the rejected poor and the abandoned in the society. Through NGOs they are given some sense of belonging and value as human beings. To achieve this, some NGOs try to provide some self-dependency by offering Jobs and other assistance to the people to aid them execute their duties in the societies.

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[471] Iyidobi, C., Human Right Situation in Nigeria, op. cit., p. 51

[472] Sachs, J. D., The End of Poverty, How We can Make it Happen in Our Lifetime, Penguin Books, London, 2005, pp. 19-20

[473] Kwazu, F. C. B., Developing Viable Strategy, op. cit., p. 166

5.5 Igbo Effort towards Human Dignity

Igbo people as well view the HD from the perspective of HR. This is due to the peculiar meaning given to HR. For them according to Fidelis Kwazu it is, *ikikere diri mmadu dika mmadu.* Literally *ikikere* means "right that empowers" *diri* literally means "belongs", "entitlements", *mmadu dika madu* means "human being as human being".[474] Therefore this *ikikere* becomes the intrinsic innate power to operate and to exist. It is natural to everybody though in some situations they are subverted by some cultural practices like in the cases of slavery, human sacrifices and ritual killing as mentioned in chapter four. Analytically, it is seen as entitlement that belongs to someone because he/she is a human being and not just an entity. The pivot of the above judgement is the Igbo evaluation of life which provides them with the character of action which is centred on *Ndu* (life), its increase and preservation. This as a right was and is valued and respected in Igbo society. The Igbo in the same vein is aware of his/her relational existence with others. The most important consideration in his/her action is not how it affects Him/her personally but how it affects others and the community. Therefore what to do or avoid to preserve, increase and strengthen *Ndu* constitutes the ethics of Igbo living.[475] Through this effort the importance attached to the HP as an entity of dignity in the community is strengthened. This is because the community for them is the guardian of HD. Thus, it is unacceptable to shade the blood of the other or neglect the persecuted and needy. Thus the bond of *anya bewe, imi ebewe* (when the eye is crying the nose is crying also) comes to play in the Igbo community and societal living.

This is observed through the Igbo kinship system which is a veritable instrument of social and individual security. Through cooperation and mobilization of resources it enjoins the members as those in need are not abandoned. Through this measure the dignity of the HP is retained and maintained. In this regard in Igbo society a person who does not identify with the community loses his/her identity and one who loses his/her identity can have no claim of rights and dignity. This means that a person who consciously refuses to identify with his/her community through the fulfilment of his/her duties and obligations invariably surrenders his/her claim of rights.[476] This is because in Igboland as stated in chapter three the community serves as a protector and provides value to the individual as an entity of dignity. On the same note the attention given to the community does not override the importance of the individual but is for the good of the individual members of the community. The Igbo effort towards HD

[474] Kwazu, F. C. B., Developing a Viable Strategy: op. cit., p. 72
[475] Iwu, M. M., Igbo Ethnomedicine: in Ofomata, G. E. K., (Ed.), *A Survey Of Igbo Nation,* op. cit., p. 583
[476] Umeh, E. C., Promotion of Human Rights., op. cit., p. 73

is therefore disclosed in the role the community plays to the individual, which is protection as stated in chapter three. But to what extent has the community achieved this role? This question is necessary because there are some activities, like human trafficking, women's right abuse that are still empirical. However the Igbo people still never underrates the right to life. Thus the law of *ogburu onye na onye ga ala* (the murderer will perish with the murdered) as being upheld in Igbo society serves as a means of curtailing arbitrary devaluation of the HP. Security groups like the vigilante in the various villages and communities are also applied to checkmate criminality and protection of lives and properties.

On another note man´s survival on the planet is dependent upon his/her ability to exploit his/her environment for nourishment and sustenance. The Igbo people to deal effectively with the maintenance and restoration of optimal health and sustain life developed their ethno-medicines. To this Maurice Iwu stated that "the resultant pharmacon are profoundly influenced by the interplay of a complex of social, economic and political factors ... The healers may use medicines from local plants, minerals, or animal substances, prescribe special exercises and incantations ... They may use sacrifices and purifying of a religious nature all to maintain or restore optimal health."[477] In this regard the Igbo in their effort use what is within their reach for the restoration, protection and preservation of human vitality. Through this means they sustain and maintain the value of HD.

5.6 Human Duty a Pre-requisite for Human Dignity

Duty here has to do with doing something that is obligatory and legally right. As a result of this the HP as an entity has duties and responsibilities that are obligatory and legally right to perform in preservation of his/her dignity and that of others. It is an effort that is obligatory for all for the realization of HD. In the words of Pope John XXIII, every right of the individual human person has a correlative duty in the society.[478] There are no social rights without a correlative social responsibility. Right in this situation is found in relation to duty: according to Francis Njoku it is seen to mean "how I ought to act, and how others ought to act towards me."[479] These two meanings originated from the ethical concept of ought-ness, the duty I owe others and the duty they owe me. In Igbo it is explained as, *ihe kwesiri mmadu ime*

[477] Iwu, M. M., Igbo Ethno-medicine; op. cit., p. 583
[478] John XXIII, Pacem in Terris, arts. 8-27
[479] Njoku, F. O. C., Igbo Jurisprudence, Snaap Press Ltd., Enugu, 2009, p. 41

dika mmadu, (what man ought to do as human person). Thus the pursuit of one's right in this form becomes a legitimate claim, by an individual or group of individuals.

For HD and rights to be realized these "ought-ness" are involved which come as obligations or duties. Naturally therefore the pursuit and demand of one's rights requires equally the responsibility and duty to respect the rights of others. These rights and duties originate from the same source. They sustain each other and work hand in hand with one another. The right to just wage, live in a decent environment, involves equally the duty of working hard accordingly to earn the money. Equally, the right to life is correlative with the duty to preserve it and his right to investigate the truth freely, with the duty of seeking it ever more completely and profoundly.[480] Following this line of thought Leo XIII stated that, "in human society one man´s natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men: the duty, that is, of recognising and respecting that right in others too. Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it the respective duty. Hence, to claim one`s rights and ignore ones duties, or only half fulfil them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other."[481] His argument pinpoints the necessity of human obligation in recognizing and respecting the dignity of the other. The symbiotic relationship between them is strong. One cannot talk of his/her rights without the obligatory duty that goes with it.

The relationship of man with each other brings the social nature of man as man in the midst of others in the fore. To this effect rights and duties should act as guiding principles. In Igboland where culture strongly dictates the *opus operandi* of the people, communalism still defines this relationship in most of the societies. Here the adage, *egbe bere ugo bere nke si ibe ya ebena ya gosi ya ebe oga ebe* (let the kite perch; let the eagle perch; any who refuses the other from perching should show him where to perch) still comes to limelight. It buttresses their awareness to perceive the dignity of the other and to respect it accordingly. This principle defines rights and duties, responsibilities and obligations towards each other. The Kite and the Eagle in the adage have the rights to their dignity and the duty to respect accordingly that of each other. The recognition of this principle is imperative for the harmonious functioning of any human society. To support this argument, Pius XII stated, "Each individual will make his whole-hearted contribution to the creation of a civic order in which rights and duties are ever more diligently and more effectively observed."[482] But the

[480] John XXIII, op. cit., art., 29
[481] Leo.XIII., Encyclical Epistle Immortale Dei, Acta Leonis XIII,V, 1885, p. 120
[482] Pius XII., Broadcast message, Christmas, AAS 37, 1945, p. 15

question here is: Does the duty and obligation to respect the other's dignity satisfy our hunger to seek solution to the devaluation of HD? Certainly not! This is because, some actions and activities are still launched in various socio-political and ethical aspects harming HD, irrespective of the consciousness of the duty to resist it. So the problem remains unresolved and HD endangered.

5.7 The Church and Right to Life

The right to existence is the apex of all HR in that it has to do with the "beingness" of the HP. It is a right which springs directly from the very nature of man. In this realm man is seen as an entity of dignity and value. "The right to life belongs to man as a human person independently of his status and roles in the society."[483] Thus, "Mans right to life, grounded in his divine origin, is the basis of all other human rights and foundation of civilized society."[484] In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, it is clearly stated that, "God alone is Lord over life and death. Nobody has the right to his own life or directly the life of another person. This is a serious offence against the dignity of the human person, and it is an offence against the golden rule of the holiness of God's creation."[485] This teaching emphasizes the necessity to value life. It is to see life as a gift from God, sacrosanct and valuable. Its sanctity demands respect in its apex, individually, culturally and from government as well. Recognizing this sanctity, the Church teaches that "human life should be protected from the moment of conception …"[486] The Igbo society thus agrees on this Church's position and views that the shedding of human blood for them naturally attracts the highest traditional punishment of ostracization. This as a matter of fact upgrades man's right to life and value of HD in the society. In line with this thought the compendium of social doctrine stated that," a just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the dignity of the human person. The person represents the ultimate end of society, by which it is ordered to the person.[487] It is this sanctity of life that gives meaning to the value to HD. Otherwise it will be illogical to discuss the value of the HP and its dignity. This discussion on the right to life by the Church is only an aspect on treatment to the value of HD. There are other aspects. We will consider here the discussion by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) on this issue.

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[483] Iwe, N. S. S., Socio-Ethical Issues in Nigeria, op. cit. p. 117
[484] Wood, T., Life Sacredness: in Macquerrie, J., (ed.), *A Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, Westminster Press, 1967, p. 196
[485] Catechism of the Catholic Church, art., 5, Num., 2258- 2262, p. 574- 575
[486] ibid., art., 5, Num., 2270, p. 577
[487] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2004, Par., 132, p. 74

5.8 The Role of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria

The state of events in Nigeria creates a clear class distinction between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak in the society. The situation often favours the rich and powerful who are majorly of the political class. They milk the economy of the nation, starve the people of basic amenities, and commit many atrocities against humanity without recourse to the law. They are being treated as sacred cows and to be above the law in almost everything while the poor and weak are the scape-goats sacrificed to serve the interest of the former. George Ehusani succinctly pointed this out, "The majority of Nigerians are living in abject poverty, though their land is rich and their people are intelligent, they are living in misery... side by side with this state of near destitution are few super-rich Nigerians whose wealth and privileges have multiplied to about the same degree as the misery of the masses."[488] Why is it so? Because the powers that be always strive for their private interest at the detriment of the masses as a result poverty status is on the increase and human dignity is often neglected. It is not just that the dignity of the HP is not upheld and valued, but since independence, there has been a constant degeneration from the bad to the worse, the worse to the ugly, and the ugly to the awful.[489]

Thus in view of this the greater population of Nigerians live in sub-human and dehumanizing situations. Lack of basic amenities as shelter, food, clean water, medical attention, qualitative education and insecurity abounds in most communities. As a result of this many are handicapped and are at times helpless. Due to lack of proper education, many are ignorant of their rights and don't even know when their dignity is devalued and their rights denied or what to do even when they are aware. Institutions like the church in Nigeria are often handicapped too; they can only make efforts to conscientize the people which remain largely on the level of admonitions. George Ehusani summarily asserted that, "What is clear to many however is that the Church's participation in social transformation has remained largely on the level of social analysis that is unaccompanied by social action, except of course that type of social action that is equivalent to providing succour to the oppressed while letting the oppressor go free to continue his or her exploits."[490] Then is this social analysis enough? Thus there is need for more effort from the side of the Church in the bid to help to the people.

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[488] Ehusani, G., A Prophetic Church, Ibadan Provincial Pastoral Institute Publications, 1996, p. 4
[489] Iyidobi, C., Human Right Situation in Nigeria, op. cit., p. 51
[490] Ehusani, G., *"Evangelization and the Socio-economic Circumstances of Africa"* paper presented at the 7th, CIWA Theology Week, Port Harcourt, March, 1996, p. 6

The Church in her temporal function shares a common interest with the society on certain issues, namely on the HP and a common goal to aid man improve on life. The HP and his/her dignity therefore remain a major link and base between the Church and the world.[491] HD depends predominantly on the respect of HR and fundamental freedoms. In fact the roots of human rights are to be found in the dignity that belongs to each human being.[492] When we mention the Church here, we particularly mean the Catholic Church in Nigeria. Through the bishops, she has shown interest on issues that involve HD. Thus value for HD has a remarkable development in the Catholic Church.

The strength of the Church lies not in any technical, economic or political power, rather in the light she draws from the Gospel. It is a light which illuminates life, brightens the consciences of humanity, and transforms their personal and communal relations and activities. Being equipped with these, the Church has not been silent on issues pertaining to the rights and dignity of the HP in Nigeria. To indicate the concern of the church on the rate of the abuse of human rights and devaluation of the dignity of the HP in Nigeria, Bishop Hassan Kukah noted with concern that "the country has gone through a most convoluted and chequered history… The frustration of our people with corruption, tyranny and exploitation has led to the burning question as to what the role of religion ought to be in national life."[493] In the face of such situation the Church is challenged towards developing a culture that can identify and ensure the rights and dignity of the HP across the nation. He indicated that "beyond the argument that our role (the bishops) is to offer a direction to the larger society, frustrated citizens have continued to press for a greater and direct participatory role for even the bishops and priests in the affairs of the state."[494] This entails that the Church remains the hope of the common people especially those whose dignity is being trampled upon. The Church therefore has the task of ensuring that the dignity of man is respected and promoted through their practice and teaching of love among individuals and groups. This is necessary because right from the beginning, Nigeria unity is beclouded with diversity. As a way forward there are peculiar areas in which the Church tries to execute its input on uplifting the value of HD as stated below.

[491] Asogwa, C., Human Rights in Nigeria, op., cit., p. 7
[492] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, op.cit., Par., 153, p. 153
[493] Kukah, M. H., Mapping Human Rights and Justice in the Light of Africae Manus, *Paper presented in the First Plenary Meeting of CBCN,* Compass Newspaper, 11 March, 2012
[494] ibid.

5.8.1 Justice

Nigeria like many countries in Africa and the world has problem in areas of corruption, hunger, unemployment, neglect of the poor by some political leaders. In most cases the stand of the Church amidst this onslaught and devaluation of HD is always being queried, either as a challenge to her relevance or whether the Christian biblical ethics can proffer valuable resources for building nations fit for human existence.[495] The Church has not been silent nor waited for the battle to be brought to its door post before reacting to these inhuman treatments. Rather through the Bishops conference it has made effort in safeguarding human rights and dignity. To do this, they lay emphasis on justice. They wrote that "justice governs our relations to our fellow men, and the relations between the state and its subjects. Each man must give to his fellow man what is due to him; he must seek from him only what he can demand as a right. The state through its officers distributes the wealth of the nation and the benefits at its command, according to its just laws and regulations. Bribery disrupts the order of justice. It sins against communicative justice by the wrongful appropriation of wealth. It sins against distributive justice and unfair distribution of benefits."[496] If justice is properly executed, then HD will be uplifted in the nation. Therefore, the Church attempts to stand against injustice rather than drift along silently with the flowing tide in the nation that devalues HD.

Furthermore the Church in propagating strongly the demands of justice made it emphatically known that "we recognize and wholeheartedly accept the principles enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights: (a) That no person be impeded from retaining his personal freedom in the domain of spiritual values; (b) that each person has at his disposal adequate means for sustaining an acceptable standard; (c) That in the societies of which they are members they always be treated as persons, that is, as free and responsible subjects and never as simple instruments. In union with other churches we take up specially the defence of the poor subjected peoples in our continents as we assert the requirements of justice with respect to nations; (d) that nations be not impede from developing along the lines appropriate to the cultural characteristics of their people; (e) that through mutual co-operation the people of each nation be assisted in becoming the architect of their own social and economic progress; (f) that the people of every nation be enabled to a role in the achievement of the

[495] Kalu, O. U., Protestants Protest for Human Rights, in: *Human Rights the African Perspective*, op. cit p. 71 The Church used here in this part of the work represents the bishops and the church the Catholic itself being represented by the bishops as its spokesperson.

[496] Peter, S., (Ed.), The Voice of the Voiceless, *Pastoral Letters and Communiques of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria,* Daily Graphics Nigeria Ltd., 2002, P. 48

universal common good, as active and responsible members of the whole human race and on a level of equality with all others."[497] To what extent these have been realized remains rhetorical.

The Church bridges the barriers of different languages, customs and sub-cultures, mould families and local communities together and preserve the extended family system that Africa as a whole is known for. It also preaches on renewal and liberation from all forms of social enslavement and works towards its elimination. It preaches equity, fairness, freedom of expression respect for the individual person, and the protection of HD. The Church with other numerous organizations contributes to the culture, economy, and development of the HP. In its bid to achieve and establish the value of the HD the Church encourages its agents on the need for development and liberation, …"We encourage, and must continue to encourage our Christian communities, schools, colleges, and Catholic lay organizations to join their forces to those of other movement for development and liberation…"[498] Through these agents, it strengthens and makes a clarion call to all to the awareness of the human value. Another aspect considered by the Church is human welfare.

5.8.2 Human Welfare

The Church places emphasis on human welfare like the dignity in human labour. The emphasis spreads its tentacles to the importance of just wages, social security and adequate conditions of living for workers. It condemns the exploitation of workers whereby the governments collects the golden eggs and throws away the goose that laid the eggs. This attitude invariably threatens the value of HD. It places such workers to the level of nonentities. In other words, they do not have existence. Such treatment embraces discrimination. The Bishops Conference loudly speaks against it, thus: "all members of mankind share the same basic rights and duties as well as the same supernatural destiny. Within a country which belongs to each one, all should be equal before the law, find equal admittance to economic, cultural, civic, and social life and benefit from a sharing of the nations riches."[499] It rather suggests that citizens be accommodated as a family where all could be accorded the right to settle and work for their daily survival. Ones value as a human being is uplifted if this is considered by all not just the government.

[497] ibid., p. 62
[498] ibid., p. 63
[499] ibid., p. 66

Another aspect of the human welfare projected by the Bishops' Conference is the health sector. Health security to every citizen is an evidence of the awareness of the value of humanity. Any nation that has seventy per cent of health insecurity of the citizens is gradually dilapidating. This is because the strength of every nation is the health condition of the citizens. Although Nigeria has one of the largest pools of human resources for health in Africa, the status of healthcare delivery in Nigeria offers little to cheer about.[500]

The Church therefore deemed it necessary to make provision for health care as part of its mission. It does this through provision of hospitals, clinics and primary health care programs. It attempts to reach out to communities especially in the hinterlands where government presence is lacking. Through these means lives are saved and the value of HD propagated and maintained. But this can hardly be achieved if the country is wrought in violence and destruction of lives and properties.

The Church equally encouraged the building and establishment of schools, colleges, and institutions of higher learning to augment the ones already established by the government. Through this means they help in instilling morality in the life of the youths which is one of the undoing of the society and provide job opportunities to many people.

5.8.3 Religio-politico Violence

Violence is a major threat to HD. It is a worldwide awareness of the current wave of violence against humanity politically and otherwise, particularly in Middle-East and also in some nations in Africa. In Nigeria it is a religious-politico problem. The insurgence of Boko Haram, a Muslim group, is much outstanding. They massacre non-Muslims and sometimes fellow Muslims and innocent citizens. We are not after its causes but the effect on HD. This effect is spelt out on how other fellow human beings are regarded and treated. The treatment on fellow Nigerians by this group is indeed a perpetration to humanity. A situation whereby a human being is massacred or butchered is indicative of how he/she is regarded. This in fact, indicates no respect to life. The Nigerian Bishops Conference has vehemently condemned this violence, arguing on the right to and security of life, and also expression of freedom of religion by every citizen. This freedom is a right and is guaranteed with its tolerance and free practice according to one's conscience. But if the activities of Boko Haram impede this freedom, then the authenticity of the nations constitution is questionable, and also persecution,

[500] Uzodimma, H., The Health of Nigeria and Nigerians; Vanguard Newspaper: May, 1, 2014

oppression or discrimination against other religions[501] in all parts of the nation will arise. The bishops urged the governments therefore to urgently sort for means to protect the life of the citizens and their property. Otherwise it will continue to affect the public affairs. Let us discuss these affairs.

The Church in strict words condemns and never supports violence on whatever ground. And above when its perpetrators blasphemously and fraudulently claim religious justifications. The Sharia legal system as against the law of the land is an example where victims are not legally and constitutionally tried and punishment meted out on them on flimsy reasons of religion even when they do not profess the same faith. The bishops often reiterate on the rights of security of life and property as the first obligation of the state, stating that, "a government that fails in this regard cannot succeed in any venture."[502] Also embezzlement is another upheaval task that impoverishes the nation and denies the citizenry their various amenities that help them sustain life. This could be seen in the likes of the fuel subsidy removal of January 2012 which shut down the economy of the nation and led to loss of lives and trillions of naira. The church and the people as their right are looking up to the government to give account of the investigation into the sector. Hoping that those found to have unlawfully enriched themselves in this sector will be made to face justice. Thus the Church maintains that as an obligation and right people rightly expect from the government, justice, fair play and protection from internal and external aggression, as well as provision of essential needs and social amenities.

In the public and political services, the Churches preach that "the juridical-political structures should without any discrimination afford the subjects the chance to participate freely and actively in establishing the constitutional bases of determining political community, governing the state, determining the scope and purpose of various institutions and choosing leaders."[503] Hence, "let all citizens be mindful of their simultaneous right and duty to vote freely in the interest of advancing the common good."[504] Not just to vote but to vote and be voted if the opportunity is available and the Christians political activities must be guided by truth so as to partner with God in the divine tasks of creation and preservation of life and properties.

[501] Kukah, M. H., The Church on Human Rights: Compass Newspaper, op. cit. p. 5
[502] Peter, S., (Ed.), Voice of the Voiceless; op. cit., p. 67
[503] ibid., p. 90
[504] Vatican II Document; The Church in the Modern World, no. 75

5.8.4 Public Affairs of Families

The public affairs of the citizens through the families are another concern of the Bishops' Conference. They discussed these affairs in respect of decent life. A decent life of every person is necessary. Its basis springs up from the root of socialization which is the family. The bishops recommit themselves in studying the ways to meet the new and growing needs for care of the victims of the families in distress; abandoned children, widows with no support, the neglected and the aged.[505]

Therefore, family welfare as the nucleus of every nation is paramount. The bishops emphasized that the government should put the family and people at the centre of all economic, health and other developmental programs. They are to promote whatever makes for good and stable homes. For this reason, the "Government policies must be concerned not just with the general indices of economic performance, but also above all, with the impact of such policies on people, and especially on the family."[506] This is because the genesis of the knowledge of the value of another person begins in the family. It is nurtured in the family. There, children and parents learn to respect the right and dignity of the other. Thus, to neglect the necessity of each family's survival is a complete blow to the common good. And when the common good is downtrodden, then the government operates for itself and not for the people, which is dictatorship. Nigeria, like in many countries in Africa, is today democratic. But there are still elements of dictatorship running in the political-stream of the nation. The control of economy is one of them. These indirectly influence eighty per cent of the family survival. Therefore, "a sure and effective way to start rebuilding the nation is to renew and revitalize the family".[507] This is so because the family remains the micro-cosmic aspect of the society and the basic foundation of the society and humanity in general.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we tried to expose the different views and efforts made towards recognizing HD. The efforts and emphasis point to the profundity of the value of right to life as the most important of all the rights. All HR circumvents around the protection of life. Every society even before the declaration of HR has its own way of protecting the life of its citizenries. This

[505] Peter, S., Voice of the Voiceless; op. cit., p. 303
[506] ibid., p. 302
[507] ibid., p. 303

is due to the social nature of man which makes it inevitable that human beings should live in solidarity with each other. The inseparability of rights and duties is seen to be of utmost importance for harmonious co-existence in the society. In this way the dignity and value of the HP is made a priority by the various organs in the society. But the question remains: How functional and effective are the efforts of these organs? Certainly it will be illogical to deny completely their effectiveness so far, but the percentage is meagre. Therefore, further recommendations are necessary. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

A Critical and Ethical Solution to the Devaluation of Human Dignity

Introduction

Considering the fact that the problem still lingers despite the efforts made to abate and find a lasting solution to what contributes to the devaluation of HD, I obviously find it very logical to present my personal view to resolving the problem. What I think should be the summary of the whole problem will be to submit to the Igbo spirit of *Onye biri ibe ya biri* (live and let live). To this I deem it expedient to make some observations and findings. This will eventually lead us to the evaluation, recommendations and general conclusion.

6.1 Observations and Findings

In the work we observed that in Igbo society *mmadu* (beauty of nature), human being is regarded as the highest of value in relation to other entities. This is because the life *Ndu* in the HP is of highest value, thus the Igbo saying and-*Ndubuisi.* It is *primus intepares* the first to be considered before any other thing. But this *Ndu* of recent is not often valued, which invariably reflects the doubt on the respect to HD. It is based on this that we have debated in the other chapters the need once more for, "human being to be valued." If it is otherwise, then there will be no reason for this research. We find out that there are some difficulties in upholding this value. The problems come in different forms as human sacrifices, slavery, human trafficking, child labour, kidnapping and many others enumerated in chapter four of the work. These problems can neither be pencilled down solely on colonization which is interwoven with Christianity and modernization, nor would they be placed emphatically on Igbo tradition and culture. They are rather an inherent human malady.

In spite of the ethical and cultural values attached to life by Igbo people many abuses and compromises were and are still visible in the attempt to safeguard human life in certain situations. For instance in Igbo worldview one can observe that there is still that segregation complex especially as regards the free born (*Di ala)* and non free-born (*Osu)* relationship in some Igbo communities. Just in the words of Francis NJoku on the Igbo world, "to injure a being is to fail to recognize or cognize him as a being … and attacks on life are injuries that

hit at the heart of one´s being."[508] In this state of event the notion respect and value for HD can often be propagated and projected but the elements of segregation remain pronounced. In this case the privileged as discussed in chapter four are favoured. This glaring contrast is a typical observation. This with others, do not offer a logical atmosphere to solving the problems presented in the work. They form part of the weaknesses of the Igbo cultural elements that are meant to protect and preserve the value of HD. Apart from the weaknesses of the culture and other factors mentioned in chapter four there are other imminent causes observed that as well contributes to the devaluation of HD.

6.1.1 Decline of Parental Authority and Domestic Values

The family is generally acknowledged as the fundamental and indispensable unit of all human societies. Thus Leo XIII stated that "the family may be regarded as the centre of civil society, and it is in great measure within the circle of family life that the destiny of the state is fostered."[509] The family on this note as the indispensable and fundamental cell in human society comes first in human development. This indicates that the family stands as a determining factor to what the society should be. Hence family ethics are important. In Nigeria and Igboland today unfortunately the family and its traditional values and influence on the life of the people are undermined.

Respect for parents and what they stand for with the positive impact of the paterfamilias is losing ground. The loyalty of the children to parents is taken for granted. Equally in some families the parents have ceased to lead by exemplary lives thus adult delinquency is matched by juvenile delinquency. Many are becoming over permissive with the children and this has led to indiscipline of various degrees.[510] Thus a child that lacks home and family discipline and ethics cannot be the best of products in the society as well. The cause of these can be attributed to some factors as struggle to meet up with the financial demands, pressures of life and the family. As a result many family and parental cares are left to house helps who have little or no fundamental idea of what to do.

[508] Njoku, F. O. C., Igbo Jurisprudence, op. cit., p. 43
[509] Leo XIII., Encyclical; *Sapientiae Christianae,* The Chief duties of Christians as Citizens, Paulist Press, New York, 1941, par. 42
[510] Iwe, N. S. S., Socio-ethical Issues in Nigeria, op. cit. p. 55

6.1.2 Materialism

Besides the above issues and causes of crisis to value of HD in Igboland the issue of avarice is an aspect that affects it equally. Personal interest and over-ambitiousness towards material and economic things are always on the fore. Bernard Ukwuegbu in his *Open letter to Dives and Lazarus* stated, "It is avaricious mentality that lies at the root of all our problems in Nigeria."[511] This is the core problem of the Igbo in their relationship with their fellow human beings. Its root cause is as a result of the more importance and relevance attached to materialism and accolades accorded to people of wealth not minding their source of wealth in the recent time in Igboland. Today the economic man is dominating all facets of life.[512] This has led to the continued sacrifices of life as value and human relationship at the altar of material acquisition in form of wealth, and fame.

Replacing man´s respect and quest for others, for direct personal touch for friendship and companionship by the over-craving for material gain leads to the violation of life and dignity of the HP. Such material attachment and relationship could only establish connection not communication. This is devoid of common humanity with common resemblance that goes beyond selfish and shallow economic interest. The integrity and value attached to the HP suffers in such situation as economic value and celebration of wealth takes precedence instead.

6.1.3 Poverty

Poverty is a serious contributor to the disrespect of HD in Igbo society. A lot of the people are poor, living below the poverty level. There are multidimensional approaches and views with regard to measuring poverty. It could be seen in terms of lack of food, medical care, shelter, education and other amenities. A person or family is impoverished when they cannot afford (i) enough food to avoid malnutrition, (ii) enough housing to not freeze in the winter (and from rain or sunshine) (iii) enough clothing to satisfy minimum cultural standard of dignity, and (iv) enough medical care so that all members of the family have better than a 50 percent probability of living to age 60.[513] But poverty is not in this work to be measured only from materials as food and shelter. Rather it goes farther to include the lack of all human basic

[511] Ukwuegbu, B. O., An Open Letter to Dives and Lazarus, Snaap Press, Enugu, Nigeria, 1993, p. 50
[512] Uwalaka, J., Inclusive Humanism in: Oguejiofor, J. O., (ed.), *Africa Philosophy and Public Affairs*, *Delta Pub*. 1998, p. 105
[513] Petrone , A. F., Causes and Alleviation of Poverty, Nova Science Publ., Hauppauge, New York, 2002, p. 22

amenities; it is holistic in nature. The gap between the rich and poor increases daily and people are suffering. The causes of poverty in Africa as enumerated by Emmanuel Umeh are man-made. Some of these arise as a result of "oppression, exploitation, suppression, injustice, and irresponsible leadership."[514] Thus it can be seen as a product of conscious decisions made by a people or imposed on them by their leadership. As a result of this and in the bid to overcome this state of events some people tend to strive to overcome poverty through many unbecoming ways that are detrimental to themselves and to others.

This issue of poverty leads us beyond material to another state of it called poverty of the mind which Emmanuel Umeh explained to be built on a life of contradictions.[515] This type of poverty according to Prof. Innocent Asouzu, "reinforces all forms of deviant behaviours."[516] These deviant behaviours contribute immensely to the frustrations of the people. Poverty of the mind permeates the beingness of the person and does not demarcate between the rich and the poor. It makes the rich to see themselves as the privileged without any consideration of the poor. It makes the poor not to see their situation as a challenge to hard work. But resign their situation to fate. As a result they become victims of their imagination, living in a dream world. It makes the poor worship the rich as demiurge, adoring them not because of their humanity but because of their wealth.[517] This is dehumanizing from the side of the so called poor who made themselves victims to such belief and situations. It has removed the natural "can do" spirit and replaced it with subservience and dependence.

Poverty of the mind makes some people to believe that wealth is not the product of hard work but an outcome of some forces both spiritual and otherwise. This is setting humanity back to the pre-colonial period of ritual killing and sacrifices of fellow human beings. But this time unlike the pre-colonial period it is for wealth and not to appease the gods. The Igbo people refer to this ritual action as *Ogwu Ego.* And such attitude relegates the efficaciousness of hard work as a means of success. This is not limited to Igbo people alone it is also seen in some African societies as well. It alienates Africans from themselves: Makes them not to be in full control and appreciate their situations, culture, social relationship, Religion, policies etcetera. It conditions the mind to continue blaming others and situations as: slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and globalization as the causes of their woes.[518] Though these

[514] Umeh, E. C., Opting for the Poor, An African Liberation Theology, Snaap Press Ltd., 2004, p. 143
[515] Umeh, E. C., African Theology of Solidarity, Verlag De Kovac Berlin, 2008, p. 143
[516] Asouzu, I. I., Effective Leadership and the Ambivalence of Human Interest: The Nigerian Paradox in a Complementary Perspective, Univ. of Calabar Press, 2003, p. 16
[517] Umeh, E. C., Opting for the Poor, op.cit., p. 144
[518] ibid., p. 145

factors are not all that free from the blames but they belong to history. Our fate now is in our hand. Do we lack the capacity to challenge the orthodoxies that have kept us down and stalled our developments? It is not about material poverty but the persisting mentality of being less human and accepting such irrationality and abnormality as norms of existence. What effort have we made to alleviate this problem? This is as a result of the fact that when individuals become aware of the means at their disposal and use them judiciously such issues as the poverty related excuses that are often put forward would have been avoided. And the negative effects that go with poverty which destroys human dignity can be put under control. Also if individuals and government are steadfast with good planning and efforts, there would have always been better results in relation to tackling poverty.

The evidential proof that many Nigerians are living below poverty level indicates that something is basically wrong with the social structure. The fact that many are unemployed signifies a social malady in the nation. Of course, poverty and its concomitant effect cannot disappear completely. But it can instead be on the marginal level when conscious and responsible means are put in place.

6.1.4 Privileged Social Strata

This is a follow up from the result of poverty. It is a phenomenon where the rich seclude themselves from the poor and have everything they needed at their beck and call. Here, they do not need much effort because everything is available due to their relativity either by birth or connection to the powers that be. Initially, ability and talent were decisive factors in social advancement. Many of the people on top today were from poor family backgrounds. Today the reverse is the case. The people on top make sure they place their likes on top. Power moves around them and the poor have no hope. The gap between the rich and poor is increasing as the poor become poorer and the rich richer. For example, the poor have a rough ride through public schools with some unqualified and unpaid teachers. This ill prepares them for fair competitions with the children of the rich academically who alone can only afford the expensive elitist schools. The hospitals are not functioning while they have enough money to travel abroad for medications and the poor die of poor medications. The roads are not repaid while they have jets to fly with and the poor are dying on the roads daily. They have better houses and many poor are sleeping on the streets without a place to lay their heads. Their children have better job opportunities while the poor are suffering from unemployment.

With such strategy the poor are always at the mercy of the rich. This is turning to a generational local apartheid. Their children become proximate candidates for leadership stools and various positions of power and economy. So the better situations and conditions of life circumvents around the small privileged group at the detriment of the majority underprivileged. As a result, the poor strive at all cost to come out of their situational status through any means which at times can lead to devaluation of HD.

Recommendations

6.2 A Re-awakening of some Igbo Socio-cultural Values

Colonialism as aforementioned has a lot of influence on many Igbo cultural values. These values so far have been transformed and modified. Many of the relevant ones have given way to Western tradition and culture, thereby affecting some key Igbo values. Some of them need to be identified again and be named. These can be valued and interiorized as good and necessary for the well-being of the society. They can also be advertised, promoted and be given right of city in our public life.[519] This possibility was already in practice. An example is the practice of Igbo communality through solidarity which was at a high peak before the Western contact and unification of the various ethnicities in Nigeria as a nation.[520] At that time the protection of human dignity was communalistic. It was an art of living that respects the diction of live and let live known as *onye biri ibe ya biri*. Communalistic spirit deals with group identity which individuals share with one another. This is so because humans, from cradle to death, live in interdependence of each other. As a result the value for each other's dignity is of utmost importance.

Unfortunately this practice could not last long due to cultural intercourse and other reasons. For instance in his observation, Fidelis Kwazu pointed out that, "the post-Nigeria/Biafran war period opened a new page in Igbo traditional society…The stronghold, the unity, the communal identity and spirit, that was earlier practiced was lost and gave way to individualism".[521] This is the undoing of the Igbo sense of some values. Misplacement of values and interests thus began. This unprecedented dynamic process indeed affected the value of HD. We must not forget to mention at this point that individualism ordinarily is not

[519] Iwe, N. S. S., Socio-ethical Issues in Nigeria, op. cit., p. 83
[520] Kwazu, F. C. B., Developing a Viable Strategy, op. cit. p. 222
[521] ibid., p. 222

against HD but it does when it separates rather than unites. In this case it is negative. Negative because it makes one not just to be recognized as an individual person but further creates room for the loss of care and communal interest. Thus, in places where individualism is virtually too pronounced at times it breaks down social conscience and responsibility, poisons social, cultural, economic, and political structures. This affects the value for HD as it gradually dwindles in such situation. Personal interests take precedence to the detriment of the value of HP. This new wind has disrupted the Igbo socio-cultural spirit of living for one another as against living on one another which kept them together and made them value each other.

In such condition of radical individualism the need for the re-awakening of the communal spirit in the various Igbo communities becomes pertinent. The spirit of *onye biri ibe ya biri*, live and let live, needs to be restored. And caution against portioning blames and dwelling in the past that have come and gone needs to be observed. Instead a return to the spirit of communalism in relation to one another as against radical individualism is to be built and nurtured once more. Then the value of HD can through this means be rekindled in the life of Igbo people and value for life improved. Through this means the sense of humane humanity in man can be restored.

It will also be of veritable importance if the Igbo value for the sanctification of the environment and nature are not neglected. These are to be used to fight environmental exploitations and misuse of nature which adversely affects the HP ecologically and economically. This is a problem that science and industrialization as aforementioned pose to the environment which at times poison the land, the water and the air. In his warning against this, Dennis Meadow sighted, "if the current increase in world population, industrialization, pollution of the environment and exhaustion of our raw materials continues, we shall suddenly find ourselves with our absolute growth limit, and shall have to accept catastrophic restrictions on our lifestyle simply in order to survive."[522] This is because life can be sustained and saved in co-operation with nature through a responsible management of the gifts of nature. But if the levels of environmental deterioration continue, the delicate life-sustaining qualities of this planet will collapse.[523] So there is need for some cautions on the application of science and technology on the environment to avoid economic and ecological crisis which is already rearing its ugly head. For example the Igbo before pre-colonial era

[522] Meadow, D., Die Grenzen des Wachstums, Stuttgart, 1972, p. 134
[523] Sitarz, D., Agenda 21: The Earth Summit Strategy to Save our Planet, Boulder, 1993, p. 1

have reserved areas made special for wild reserves or sacred centres. Today most of those areas have been destroyed in the name of development and no new ones erected. This is causing ecological problem in some places in Igboland and human life remains endangered. This is against Igbo planned system of living where some areas are sacred environments and some meant for farming and should be left so. This environmental/human exploitation demeans the HD as it creates more hardship, economic and health hazards. Considering this therefore the Igbo tenets of sacredness of nature and environment can as well serve as a weapon to avoid this misuse of nature for the good of the HP.

6.2.1 Rekindling the Sense of Humanity

This is a process where humanity should denote consideration for others, project humane attitudes, express leniency to the needy, and react philanthropically to the less privileged and the society at large. This sense will humanize and temper the already charged anti-human aggressive society. This will moderate the absolute power that dehumanizes humanity, and humanize the attitude of man towards his fellow HP.[524] It needs to be rekindled in the life of the people. This is for the total development of man`s personality sentiments and attitudes to fellow human beings.[525] Here, it entails dealing with fellow HP not as an object but as a subject of dignity and value. Accepting and appreciating one another as fellow human being and not lowering the esteem of the other. Sense of humanity in this state is a natural concept based on the natural dignity peculiar to man`s personality. And to realize this there is need for the combination of ethical, moral and intellectual formation. It indicates goodness, sympathy and the restraint of one´s will especially inconsideration of others. It means ones rights and advantages are not ruthlessly pursued…that one considers the other person in all dealings.[526] This is imparted in the life of the individual from the family to the society. If this is to be achieved, then respect for the dignity and sacredness of the HP will be restored. Treatment that degrades human personality will be eschewed. Active concern for the welfare of all especially the weak and the poor will be borne in mind. Thus a truly human society can always be animated by this “live and let live” consciousness. A way of intensifying this is through education.

[524] Iwe, N. S. S., Socio-Ethical Issues in Nigeria, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1987, p. 93
[525] Schulz, F., Principles of Roman Law, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1936, pp. 189-222
[526] ibid., p. 190

6.2.2 Education

Education is the basic foundation of any society. It implies the transmission of what is worth-while to those who are committed to it. It involves knowledge and some kind of cognitive perspective, which are not inert.[527] Education gives that freedom and creativity that any society feels it needs to be self reliant. With education comes enlightenment and development. The provision of education enhances individual productivity, versatility and status in the society. [528] It changes the mentality of the individuals and helps to make the HP more responsible. Also it creates a mental environment where man and the society would be more open to master and use their sensitivity for positive ends.[529] For education to be much balanced the curriculum needs to involve the program of education that projects the people's cultural values. This is because the Igbo and their culture are intertwined and it will make a deep impact in the life of the individual. This equally can lead to a better knowledge of their rights and duties, and a deeper understanding of HD itself. Thus the focus of education should be integral where knowledge and values are merged.

But there are major problems facing education in Nigeria. The most striking one is the lopsided distribution of educational facilities where basic facilities and manpower are sometimes not equitably supplied in some areas. As a result there are schools in some villages that lack of conducive atmosphere and structure hinder learning. Some of them lack trained teachers, library or science laboratories etc. Many of them are in shambles. Some of the governments pay less attention to the public schools. Due to this, education has turned out to be only what the rich can afford. They send their children to private institutions or to other countries to have better education. On the other hand, poor parents hardly afford to send their children to attend school since they are unable to pay their school fees. This is not only the problem there is also chronic irregularity in payment of teacher's salaries and other entitlements.

Another problem is lack of adequate co-ordination and control of development in general education programs. This has to do with different standards in growth and population. Though the Igbo states often have greater population growth in school enrolment but at times the schools are understaffed. There is also lopsided distribution in terms of enrolment between the sexes. But no obvious restrictions on either of the sexes have been made and no statistical

[527] Peter, R. S., Ethics and Education, op. cit., p. 114
[528] Kwazu, F. B. C., Developing a Viable., op. cit., p. 228
[529] Taylor, J. B., and Günther, G., Religions for Human Dignity and World Peace, op. cit., p. 82

proof of evidence as regards the enrolment distribution at the various levels of education is available. However empirical evidence shows that recent enrolment of the female is more in higher institutions as against earlier time when the reverse was the case. The problem is that most of the Igbo male-folk are recently more inclined in capital market of buying and selling than in education. Education takes time and investment and many are not willing to sacrifice that. They think more on money and material benefits in place of human value and dignity. This creates lapses in their interpersonal relationship with one another as they at times feel inferior and intimidated in the midst of the educated. This attitude sometimes can lead to aggressiveness and thwarts the spirit of togetherness and love in the society.

Due to this the main purpose of education which is to impact and share new ideas and to aid people protect themselves and their lives against abuses is declining. It has led some to joblessness as many have no educational qualification and acquired no other skill. This constitutes a serious problem in Igboland with regard to its educational, social and economic developments.

The Church and the government as two main organs in every society can do more on this by propagating, encouraging and instructing the people on the importance of education. Besides, we cannot deny the fact that Igbo people do not know its importance. They know it and also know that it is their right to acquire education. But due to hindrances aforementioned many divert their interest to other things. The diversion of interest is not neglect to the right, but due at times to some factors as economic powerlessness. This is where the Church and government have a major role to play, to re-echo and emphasise the view in Second Vatican Council that, "All men of whatever race, condition or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons, have an inalienable right to education."[530] They can pursue and achieve this by making education available and simpler for all. This will to an extent uplift our primary root, *onye biri ibe ya biri* – to solving the problem of HD in Igboland. Achieving this is aimed at forming the totality of the person. This argument however, does not prove that the formation will solve the problem *in toto*. Of course, there are lots of Igbo people who are educated today. But they still constitute harm, in one way or the other, to HD. Therefore, the educational impact can only reduce the harm and orientate the consciousness to live and see reason why others should live as well. This is a mutual understanding every Igbo needs that comes mostly through education. The Second Vatican Council emphasized further on this that, "in nurturing the intellectual faculties which is its special mission, it develops a capacity

[530] Vatican II, Gravissimum Educationis, Art., 1

for sound judgment and introduces the pupils to the cultural heritage bequeathed to them by former generations. It fosters a sense of values and prepares them for professional life. By providing for friendly contacts between pupils of different backgrounds it encourages mutual understanding."[531] This entails that for a balanced education it must go beyond mere academic work but a holistic education that covers a whole of man's life and attitude especially in relation to his/her fellow human being.

Furthermore the government on its side has to make education affordable and attractive by providing the necessary infrastructures and resource materials. Improvement on the educational quality of the teachers is necessary too because the quality of education depends on the quality of the teachers.[532] The teachers should be updated and equipped always with the necessary modern teaching aids and skills for effective teaching. This improvement needs to refocus on teaching and learning for better living purposes. Babs Fafunwa pointed out that the colonial education was purposeful and focused on training interpreters who were able to read, write and carry out simple arithmetic. The colonial teachers had quality because they focused on achieving the stated aims. In Nigeria, educational programme can be made to enable teachers carry out purposeful teaching and learning. The "mad rush" to catch up with "millennium goals" places undue pressure on teachers. Hence, teaching is not purposeful and focused. The "mad rush" leads to low quality of education and teachers.[533] So to achieve a purposeful educational and academic development, government needs to be ready to spend and produce qualitatively trained teachers who will identify education not just with the school curricula but with what covers the whole of a child's development.[534] This kind of education is focused on liberating the mind from ignorance of the ideal HP and what is expecting of him/her and inculcates ethical values for a better HP.

Having stated all these, there is a good reason to see that the basic issue concerning value of HD lies basically on education in the developmental processes of the HP. It will help the present-day man to emerge a better human being, devoted to human values without boundaries.

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[531] ibid., Art., 5
[532] Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2004), National Policy on Education, Abuja: NERDC; in: Ugwu, T., (ed.), *Nigeria Journal of Human and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, Raboni Pub. Co., Nsukka, 2009, p. 46
[533] Fafunwa, A. B., History of Education in Nigeria, in, *Nigerian Journal of Humanities.*, op. cit. p. 51
[534] Annas, J., An Introduction to Plato's Republic, Oxford Univ. Press, 1981, p. 82

6.2.3 Health Sector

Health is a fundamental value in all human cultures. In the natural sphere health and life are highly regarded. To express its importance the Igbo say; *anaghi ebu oria akpa nri,*- This implies that in unhealthy situation all attention is focused on the health aspect as the basis of everything and an unhealthy fellow is ineffective. Thus the right to healthcare is implicitly linked to the right to life. Human life as a fundamental value is always of paramount importance at all times. According to Panthaleon Iroegbu, "the general value of health is that it empowers man to perform. To be enabled to work is what good health does."[535] This implies that with good health the HP can achieve his/her life ambition and be of help to the community as well. To be enabled to be active with our lives is what good health does for the HP. Highlighting more on the value of health Dennis Sansom wrote; "We value health because it is a condition by which we have enough strength (whether physical, psychological interpersonal and/or spiritual) to live as humans, having a good centre from which we hope to organize our lives into a meaningful whole.[536]" Health therefore foreshadows a happy and fulfilled living.

The government because of the importance has the onus of caring for the life and health of its citizenry. This implies the need for the construction and running of health care centres and other institutions that tend to the good health of the populace.[537] Since it is the responsibility of the government to make such provisions through both infrastructures as hospitals, clinics, health centres and personnel's, she equally has to make it affordable to the people. It is appalling and unfortunate that lack of basic health institutions and facilities are one of the prevalent problems facing the Nigerian populace today. In this situation the sick are not adequately taken care of medically.

Due to its imperative nature to humanity, any responsible society and responsive government is supposed to provide basic and minimum health care to its people. The health resources are meant to be properly harnessed and justly distributed. This will improve the life status of the populace and even provide job opportunities for unemployed doctors, nurses and other workers as well. In the same vein, in the situation where the resources are scarce they need to be evenly rationalized. "These also include proper personnel: number, standard and quality.

[535] Iroegbu, P., Kpim of Morallity and Ethics, op. cit., p. 494
[536] Sansom, D., Why do we want to be Healthy? In: Lammers and Verhey, (Eds.), *On Moral Medicine,* Eerdmans Publ. co., Michigan, 1987, p. 262
[537] Iroegbu, P., Kpim of Morality and Ethics, op. cit., p. 561

This is as a result that the better the paraphernalia, the better the results to be achieved."[538] Equally the hospitals are not to be sighted only in the urban areas the rural communities need to be considered as well.

Better sufficient investment in the healthcare of children, youths and the aged also needs to be considered since we do not have health insurance that covers them. This is because the future of the nation lies with its children and youths. The government and other organizations like the Church and companies that can afford it can assist each other to achieve this for the people. This as a matter of fact is to be a collective responsibility that is for the well-being of all. Thus, when doctors are committed to their professional art of caring, treating and healing the patients, if they work in harmony and cooperation for the interest of their patients, and have a conducive atmosphere with good remuneration, things would change. When nurses give the right professional helping hand and the laboratory attendants and technicians are efficient, if the pharmacists are up to their duty and make the right drugs arising from proper research. Then if the patients and families cooperate well with the handling team and the government is serious and provided what should be there within the limit of their resources then the problem of health will be well addressed.[539] Not just that, the functional proverb which proposed a solution to the devaluation of HD – *onye biri ibe ya biri*- live and let live, falls into play. The goal will be for the physical, mental and psychological well-being of the members of Igbo society. On this note, we need to take cognisance of the fact that a healthy nation will always remain a happy, progressive and wealthy nation.

6.2.4 Agricultural Sector

Agricultural interest in Igboland is diminishing and people are getting hungry and impatient daily. As the saying goes a hungry man is an angry man. Hunger can cause lots of harm to a society. It can arouse anger against the other. It can also lead to the loss of consciousness of human value. Due to the local and non-mechanized system of agriculture in the rural areas it is no longer attractive to the youths and its productivity is low as well. The modern system of agriculture is very important. It will make it more attractive and more productive. And when more people are engaged in agriculture, then the agricultural sector will contribute in the reduction of the alarming rate of unemployment. This will serve as one of the means of keeping people out of hunger and other obnoxious activities that might endanger life as well.

[538] ibid.
[539] ibid.

To realize these, an empowerment programme can be designed in Igboland by the government by providing good seedlings and fertilizers. In some arid zones means of irrigation for all year round food production is needed. The low scale farmers can be given loans as means of encouraging them. This will help them to achieve an increasing output and productivity. Equally the need for the farmers to be updating their awareness on agricultural developments is necessary. This is to maximize production. Technologically, improved and mechanized agriculture is necessary to make agriculture more productive. These can be realized if the use of modern farming machineries is introduced.[540] This will reduce unemployment rate as well.

6.2.5 Reducing the Unemployment Level

The current level of unemployment among Nigerians poses a serious threat to the Nation and Igboland as well. The problem of unemployment is one that begs for immediate attention. An unemployed person is an impoverished fellow without hope of basic needs for survival. The government and various social organizations and individuals need to come up with some tangible solutions. Employment is important because when people are gainfully employed, they will be able to solve their day to day needs. It equally helps in the reduction of poverty. Through it steady income to more people will be possible. This helps to sustain them daily above poverty level and it will reduce the various anti-human vices to a minimal state. Provision of employment also expands productivity and promotes human development.

Gainful employment in the offices alone may not be the only solution to the problem of unemployment. The involvement of private sectors can also contribute in reducing unemployment. Foreign private sectors can as well invest in Nigeria and this will reduce unemployment. Training in technology and various skills acquisition in resourceful areas are to be deployed as well. Empowering the unemployed with capacity building with financial support and other necessary amenities can equally be of help in alleviating this problem of unemployment in Nigeria society. Learning self-sustaining jobs is of importance and help as well. With such database for intervention, many will be gainfully employed on their own without depending on the government. Thus, job opportunities "can be achieved by laying emphasis on the informal sector, creating small-scale projects, initiating guided self-initiative, creating and encouraging private investors, including cooperative and neighbourhood

[540] Kwazu, F. C. B., Developing a Viable Strategy. op. cit., p. 232

groups”[541]and not just depend on government and social welfare. This is because providing social services may not be enough but what is important is “building a world where every man can live a fully human life free from servitude, imposed on him by other men or by natural forces over which he has no sufficient control.”[542] This can as well cause mental and physical frustration which endangers HD and the value attached to the HP.

6.2.6 Political Stability

The value of human dignity is not just to be considered a socio-cultural value but a political value equally. This is as a result of the fact that political stability aids the individuals to actualize their full potentialities. For politics to be stable the need for the human persons respect and value for each other is important. But this is one of the major factors that elude the nascent Nigerian political terrain today.

Political stability serves as a prerequisite for human and structural development. The attainment of political stability requires accountability, transparency, and providing the necessary basic amenities with sincerity of purpose. As in most developing nations, Nigeria is politically unstable. This is because the politicians are more interested in their positions filled with vested interests than in rendering service to the masses and nation. This fuels political unrest whereby lives and valuables are destroyed.

Election manipulations and thuggery constitute a severe problem to Nigeria polity and it affects the general societal harmony. These cause instability in the political life of the nation. Against this background, political stability on itself reduces insecurity; saves life, enhances peace and harmony in the society. It promotes human development and reduces many social ills.

6.2.7 Observance of the Rule of Law

A society marked by justice and the rule of law favours human cooperation and peaceful co-existence. According to Barnabas Abanuka, “In such a society, social and economic positions,

[541] Onibokun, A. G., and Kumuyi, A. J., (Eds.), Urban Poverty in Nigeria, op. cit., p. 65
[542] Toton, S. C., World Hunger, the Responsibility of Christian Education, Orbis Books, Mary knoll, New York, 1982, p. 112
[542] Abanuka, B., Holosism, a Political Theory, op. cit, p. 148

characterized by equal inequality, are properly understood as opportunities for self – actualization…"[543] These in terms consists of equality before the law, supremacy of the law and civil liberty. In this content, differences in social and economic positions would not necessarily lead to conflict or suppression of any sort. All will be at peace and respect for each other upholds.

Most of the African nations with particular reference to Nigeria are not finding it easy to come to terms with this aspect of life. Due to Nigeria's pluralistic situation,(having different ethnicities) arbitrary abuses of law by government functionaries in the execution of their duties are imminent. As a result, laws are truncated to satisfy the interest of some individuals which most times create double standards in the application of the law. This gives room for instability and non-systematic approach to several issues. To have a stable government, there is always the need for rule of law. Rule of Law simply means "supremacy of law in the governance of any society… It removes arbitrariness in governance that gives room for corruption and abuse of office. It standardizes governance and legal procedures, protects people's rights and encourages enterprise and investment."[544] Rule of law calls for accountability, stability, orderliness and efficiency in all the affairs of the state. These are veritable conditions for development and proper placement of value on the dignity of the HP. It mainly focuses on fairness and justice in the implementation of the law in all situations.

It has two basic functions: "It limits government arbitrariness and power abuse, and it makes the government more rational and its policies more intelligent,"[545] It needs to be noted here as well that rule of law does not mean whatever pleases the people all the time. Rather it serves as a check on government's arbitrariness and the people's excesses too. It requires the leaders to defend their actions before the law. The rule of law means that all the members of a given state are equal before the law. It enhances good planning, discipline and curbs corruption. Transparency becomes a watch word in the rule of law and it removes fear of intimidation or victimization. Rule of law trains the citizens to be law abiding. Rule of law will provide an enabling environment for development in Nigeria as contracts will be respected and this attracts more investments and job opportunities will be created. It increases the value and dignity of the people as it makes all to respect each other as an entity of value.

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[543] ibid.

[544] Anyaehie, M. C., Rule of Law for National Development in Nigeria; in Nigerian Journal for Humanities op. cit., p. 132

[545] ibid., p. 137

6.2. 8 A Balanced Judiciary System

For the realization and actualization of rule of law in Nigeria the institutional framework and general mobilization of the people are pertinent. There is need for a balanced judiciary. A clear separation of power in the three arms of government: legislative, judiciary and the executive are indispensable. Each arm of government should be independent in carrying out their function. They need to be well equipped for the execution of their job. The judiciary should be independent of the executive. The judicial process needs to be affordable to the people as well. It should not only be impartial but fair in the execution of judgements as it is supposed to be the last hope of the common man. Nigeria judiciary is still poor in this aspect.

Obedience and respect for the constitution of the country stands out also as the most crucial civic virtue that is to be observed by all. It should be regarded as inviolable and fundamental to the nation that respect for it should be regarded as almost a religion and violation of it as a sacrilege.[546] So an attitude of self-restraint and moderation of political power is to be upheld. Public censure is to be guaranteed against abuse of rights and devaluation of HD. The Nigerian populace has to be active about the rule of law. They are to sit up the leaders to desist from (against) using their discretions in leadership rather than applying the rule of law. The force of public opinion needs to be sufficiently established as a watchdog of the nation's ethics. Any action that constitutes an abuse of HR and devalues the dignity of the HP and HD has to get public condemnation. Punishment and stiff penalty on confirmed defaulters by the judiciary serves as a veritable means of curbing corruption and the likes that devalue HD.

6.2.9 Commitment of the Church through Justice, Development and Peace Commission

The faith and religiosity which Christianity and Catholic Church in particular unfolds as stated in James 2, 14-26 is meant to be translated into the practical life of the people.[547] This can be done through the involvement of Justice, Development and peace arm of the Church in Igbo land/Nigeria. This is in conjunction to these relevant words of John Paul II, as regards the Church making the lay faithful assume their civic responsibilities in the light of the Gospel saying "this is certainly a task belonging to Christians: to bring to bear upon the social fabric

[546] Umezuruike, I. A., Towards the Stability of the Third Republic; in Onah, R,. *Political Power and the Question of Human Rights in Nigeria,* op. cit., p. 119

[547] James, 2: 14-26. My brothers what good is it for someone to say he has faith if his actions do not prove it? ... Show me how anyone can have faith without actions, I will show you my faith by my actions… So then as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without actions is dead.

an influence aimed at changing not only ways of thinking but also the very structure of the society."[548] This is important because the social structure of the society through interaction affects the people, their life and relationship with others.

In view of this, the church as a protagonist of justice should never relent in creating awareness about the people's rights. They are to be ready always to lead the people in the struggle for their rights and its protection. The Second Vatican Council takes careful note of this as it admonishes Christians to be greatly in accord with truth and justice saying "truth and justice in all human dealings with one another in recognition of the inherent dignity, equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the only factor that can establish freedom, justice and peace in the world."[549] This implies that, respect for human freedom and justice as fundamental rights can never be de-emphasised in any form at all, for it is a determinant factor for social, economic, political and religious harmony and progress in the society.

In line with this thought that the Church is the hope of the poor, a lot of positive approach to the alleviation of the state of things in the life of the poor is expected from it. The Church therefore is to contribute positively in life oriented character formation through its JDPC. Through this the Church in relation to the words of the scripture "come to me all ye that suffer and are heavily burdened and I will give you rest",[550] can offer hope and solace to the poor in different ways. It can do this for example by not keeping quiet when justice and other rights of man are denied him/her. The denial of the rights can lead people to a state of hopelessness as bad conditions can make one lose ones sense of civility and they become victims of any pseudo solution to their problems. But with the Church's JDPC a lot of these can be addressed and value of the HP maintained.

The Church equally can contribute in human development through practical engagement in the developmental ventures like workshops, technical, computer and electrical trainings. The various church organizations and dioceses can set up such centres. These will be a sort of learning and orientation homes for the unemployed youths who are vulnerable to all forms of societal vices. Thus, these words of the Scripture "give them something to eat yourselves"[551] can through this means be realized from the Church to the world and not just alms but something to live on through life. It will reduce the sense of brigandage at the expense of the

[548] John Paul II, Ecclesia in Africa, nr., 54
[549] ibid.
[550] Matt. 11: 28-30
[551] Mark, 6: 37

community peace, life and property. This will help in forming the HP to make proper decision in life and to aspire for what is good and create good neighbourhood where peace and love reigns. This will also serve as part of the Church`s means of evangelization and development in several areas..

6.3 General Evaluation and Conclusion

Every age has its peculiar problems and anxieties. In Igbo worldview today the value of HD is struggling to keep its stead in the life and stand of the people. This as mentioned has been attributed to many factors.

The respect of HD as discussed is a value of importance that needs to be protected and promoted in every human society. This is because the respect for HD serves immensely as an inherent factor to the harmony and peace of the society. This calls for a firm commitment by every HP to the sustenance of this value. Man naturally is very conscious of this dignity bestowed on him/her and expects it to be expressed in all dealings with him/her. In line with this awareness Pope John XXIII wrote that, "a sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man, and the demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgement, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty. The demand is likewise made that constitutional limits should be set to the powers of government, in order that there may be no encroachment on the rightful freedom of the person and of associations. This demand for freedom in human society chiefly regards the quest for the values proper to the human spirit..."[552] The need for the sustenance of this value becomes imperative for Igbo people because a lot of their culture, tradition and ethics are seen to circumvent around it.

In view of this, we reviewed in this work, the Igbo culture and tradition known as *Omenala Ndigbo* and their contact with the Western culture through colonialism and Christianity. Their influence and effect are also mentioned. The work surveyed some of the causes of devaluation of the value of HD and their effects on Igbo people and their culture. This is in line with the thesis mission. The aim is to lay bare the fact that there is crisis in relation to the value of HD in contemporary Igboland. The crisis as aforementioned is a shared responsibility by the various stages of Igbo life and other external influences. An example of external factor can be

[552] John XXIII., op. cit. p. 279

seen in the relationship between the missionaries that brought Christianity in Igboland and Igbo culture/tradition. The missionaries did not give the culture much room to express itself. As a result conflict of ideas and belief even where there is no cause to disagree was created. As a result the missionaries through their teaching and approach did not enrich the cultural values of the people. The Igbo culture and Christianity were presented to be incompatible when they are supposed to be a source of enrichment to each other. This affected their followers in their relationship with one another.

This situation affected the life pattern and sense of value of the contemporary Igbo. It created a sort of dichotomy in their hold on some of their cultures and values which are part of their life and how the Western/Christian faith and life they acquired addressed these cultural values. This causes some frictions and a sort of dual personality in them. Pointing out the above problem in Africa, Nasimyu- Wasike stated, "African Christians had to develop dual personalities, that is, a Christian personality and an African personality…"[553] In such situation crisis arises and the possibility of losing what is already on ground and not having a well-established form of events. This is just the problem of the Igbo culture contact with Christianity and Western culture.

The Church with her religious and social status in Igboland needs to improve her interaction with the culture and the people. This has to do with the way it handles affairs that deals with the people and their culture. In the words of John Mbiti, "in order to allow the religious realities of Africa to flow into the universal religious realities of humanity and be preserved in Christianity for the African; it is important to correct the notion of African Traditional Religions as Animism..."[554] Not condemning everything African tradition and culture has, as paganism and fetish without a human face, but to have a critical evaluation on them. Following the implicit ethical implications in Vatican II, Document, "Every–one should look upon his neighbour without any exception as another self, bearing in mind above all, his life and the means necessary for living it in a dignified way"[555] Life and means of living it is embedded in the culture of the people and it need not to be neglected or trampled upon.

In the bid to find solution to this state of event there comes the problem of the risks of either over dwelling in the past which has to do with the pre-colonial Igbo tradition and culture at the detriment of the present modern tradition. Or over dwelling in the present which is the

[553] Nasimiyu-Wasike, A., Africa and the North: Dialogue of Solidarity; in walter von Holzen and Fagan, S. (ed.), *Africa the Kairos of a synod:* Sedos Symposium on Africa, Rome, 1994, p. 136
[554] Mbiti, J., African Religions and Philosophy, op. cit., p. 17
[555] Vatican II., Gaudium et Spes, No., 27

product of colonialism, Christianization and modernism at the detriment of the past. From every indication dwelling so much on either can make one lose sight of the main reasons behind the present-day situation. Then a harmonization of the present and past approach is needed to get the required solution. The human society is a process that upholds change. Likewise is Igbo society and culture. Their culture in its dynamic process is not to be at the detriment of its fundamental cultural elements. The socio-cultural background of the people has to be considered for an effective policy of valuing HD. Thus in assimilating other cultures and ideas the people and the society are to be taken cognizance of. In view of this, the value of HD is to be developed in a manner that preserves the culture of the people. On the other hand, the culture of the people can be viewed to address the trends of the time in respect to the rights and dignity of the HP. "This is because human life, which is not detached from HR, is larger than the culture which forms only a part of human society that comprises both the political and social life of the people."[556]

For the realization of the goal of preserving this value, there is need to start with what I refer to as the internal approach. This has to do with the re-evaluation of some Igbo cultural value like the spirit of communalism where *onye biri ibe ya biri* is the norm. In this communal life the HP as an entity is rated high and valued and thus is referred in Igbo as *mma nke ndu (mmadu)* the beauty of life. This practice of live and let live projects freedom and interaction between human beings without friction where love and care reigns. It can be conceived as a covenant, bearing a symbiotic significance[557]where the care for each other is the order of living. Thus equality in all settings is to be the way and standard of the society. The society should be devoid of all segregations and without societal or cultural stigma of any sort.

Furthermore, there is need for good governance for the effectiveness of this equality on the value for HD, where people are valued, protected and accepted as humans and there interest preeminent. On this note such likely German key words as "*Verantwortungsbewusstsein, Gerechtigkeit, Achtung der Menschenrechte und Rechtstaatlichkeit"*[558] (sense of responsibility, justice, respect, to HR and rule of law) are the qualitative nature of good governance. These qualifications lie on the leaders having the interest of the led or citizens at heart. Thus the country (Nigeria and Igboland) in general needs good governance that is

[556] Kwazu, F. C. B. Developing a Viable, op. cit., p. 238
[557] Marie de Paul Neiers, The People of the Jos Plateau of Nigeria, their Philosophy, Manner and Customs, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 1965, p. 117
[558] Informationen zur Politischen Bildung, Entwicklungspolitik, Nr. 286, 1, Quartal 2005, p 17

sensitive to the plight of the citizens.[559] Through such good governance essential security measures and awareness on the value of HD can be accomplished and the spirit of live and let live maintained.

The laws on the value of HD and rights therefore are not to be twisted to satisfy the interest of some individuals. Rather the "rule of law" which standardizes governance and legal procedures which protects people's rights and encourages mutual respect and understanding for each other should be the mode of operation. But why rule of law? It serves "as a power regulator..."[560] as a result, it standardizes and controls both the government and the governed. To avoid the abuse of HD and rights, it has to be made to be pro-active in the life of the people and the society. And the rulers should see themselves as servants and *primus inter pares* (first among equals) and not Lords over their subjects. Hence, the rule of law in this state enhances planning, discipline and rationality in all. It protects human rights and ensures a free society. On a more positive note, the transparency in the rule of law stabilizes the system, abhors marginalization and develops confidence in governance.[561] Armed with this, the value of HD in Igboland and the world can once more come to be and the spirit of *onye biri ibe ya biri* maintained.

[559] Vanguard Newspaper, Nigeria, 9 January, 2012, p. 2, by Anthony Idowu, " Nigeria lacks good governance, considering the present event of insecurity in Northern Nigeria caused by *Boko Haram*, an Islamic sect, and the removal of fuel subsidy that brought the economy of the nation to a standstill,"

[560] Anyaehie, M. C., Rule of Law: Panacea for National Development in Nigeria: In Ugwu, C. O. T., op. cit., p. 137

[561] ibid. p. 138

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Abbreviations

1 HD—Human Dignity

2 HP—Human Person

3 HR Human Rights

4 NCAA—Nigeria Civil Aviation Agency

5 NHIS Nigerian Health Insurance Scheme

6 UNICEF United Nations Children's Education Fund

7 VIP Very Important Personality

8 LG Lumen Gentium

9 GS Gaudium et Spes

10 CCC Catechism of the Catholic Church

11 DH Dignitatis Humanae

12 GE Gravissimum Educationis