

## The Role of Religion and Morality in Social Control in Pre-Colonial Igbo Society: Panacea to Contemporary Social Ills

by  
**Samuel C. Nwankwo**  
Wesley University Ondo, Nigeria

### Abstract

Scholars in different fields of study have at one point or the other written on the various aspects of the Africa people. Unfortunately, the traditional systems of social control and policing of the various ethnic groups in Africa drew little attention, especially, those of Igbo land. It is worthy of note to reiterate that the unique and sometimes traumatizing methods of offender apprehension and disposal in many of Africa, remain hidden to scholars in various regions of Africa as well as scholars from outside of Africa. Historical/phenomenological approach was adopted together with secondary sources of data collection, in examining the problems of this research. It was discovered that the Igbo people had stringent methods of controlling deviant behaviours in the society and recommended that while the modern judiciary system has not actually solved the menace of societal evils; that traditional methods should be re-considered.

**Keywords:** Religion, morality, social control, pre-colonial, Igbo land, crimes, social ills, offences, judiciary, traditional

### Introduction

Africans and especially, the Igbo people have continued to witness breakdown of law and order in the society. This society has witnessed constant threat to human lives and property due to the culture of moral poverty that infiltrated the society; making most people not to have values for human life. No human society ever flourished in a state of chaos and anarchy, instead, societies tend to progress in an atmosphere of peace, love, tranquility, brotherliness and care for one another. Where these traits are missing in any society of human person, what follows is retrogression occasioned by myriads of social breakdown, incoherence, unrest, abominable acts and all manner of evils. This is the case with many societies in the past and in the present (Nwankwo, 2017).

However, the pre-colonial Igbo society has a well defined and culturally enshrined customary standard of conduct and negative sanctions for any breach. They have usually fashioned a way through which they controlled their people even before the advent of the Europeans. These methods of social control, no doubt curbed the menace of social breakdown to the barest minimum during the period under review. The fear of being

publicly ridiculed, sanctioned, ostracized, being struck down by the god of thunder and other deities, kept people's behaviour and activities in check.

This is not the case today; with the various modern means of check-mating moral decadence, yet, evil snowballs on daily bases. There are the police, the military, civil defense, agencies for corrupt practices, prison yards and other modern forms of tracking offenders like kidnappers and armed robbers; yet, the problem of crime shows no sign of abating. Many have argued that the society is better with the pre-colonial and traditional methods of social control than the modern methods; and have advocated for a return to the traditional means, which is the crux of this research.

Historical/phenomenological approach which according to Ituma (2015), refers to "the method which insists that no religious phenomena can be understood outside of their history" (p.38), was used in this research. It is a study of historical fact or event in nature (or society) as it appears or is experienced by the senses. It was applied in this work to enable the researcher uncover historically, how the Igbo people in the pre-colonial era were able to handle social issues that troubled them; and thus maintained peace and security in the society. The work shall equally make use of the secondary sources of data collection. This is basically the use of related and relevant literature in the libraries.

The research among other things aimed at understanding what constituted offences in the pre-colonial Igbo society. It as well examined how the people during the period were able to dispose of these offences in other to maintain peace and tranquility. The agents/agencies that specialized in offences disposal at the time was considered; as well as relevance of these agencies in curbing social ills today. Finally, the research suggested ways through which religion and morality can help in the maintenance of peace and order in the society.

### **Conceptual Analysis of Religion, Morality and Social Control**

A concise understanding of what religion is will be very necessary. Ayodeji (2003), defines the term religion as "faith in a divinely created order of the world, agreement with which is the means of salvation of a community and thus for each individual who has a role in that community" (p.523). Furthermore, Obilor (2010) conceptualized religion to mean, "the whole *complexus* of attitudes, beliefs, practices, gestures, rituals, emotions, convictions, and institutions through which we express our deep fundamental relationship with reality, and not excluding the created order" (p.317).

On the other hand, the term 'morality' according to Okere (2006) is defined as "that quality of human life by which it can be described as good or bad, good in the sense that it must be done, or bad or evil in the sense that it must be avoided" (p.38). Morality is a spiritual dimension of human action. Animals have no morality. Iroegbu and Echekwube (2005) understood 'morality' to mean "the conventionally approved rules of behaviour in the society" (p.32).

'Morality' in the words of Obaje (2002), in Kudadjie ed. (2002), "is usually considered as ways of regulating the conduct of individuals in communities" (p.22). In other words, human conduct must be guided in order to avoid chaos in the society. Morality is further defined as "the quality of conforming to the principles of good conduct, moral or virtuous conduct" (p.22). This boils down to the fact that morality covers good or bad, right or

wrong principles of human behaviour. That is why it can be said that some of human actions are bad, some are morally good, and some are immoral.

Social control in the words of Chukwu, Okonkwo and Kalu (2013) refers to “the techniques and strategies for preventing deviant human behavior in any society” (p.234). Obi (2013) accentuated that, “a social order is a relatively persistent system of institutions, patterns of interactions and customs, capable of continually reproducing at least those facts of society which remain relatively constant over time” (p.437). These conditions could include property, exchange and power relations, cultural forms, communication relations and ideological systems of values. Whenever, these conditions experience friction, the result is usually, unpalatable. There is always chaos in the society.

### **Delineating Crime Rates in Modern Society**

The threat and fear of crime are constant concerns that impact many people in modern society. In societies like Nigeria and other African states, many contemporary social problems have emerged which are against the norms, morals and ethics of the society and of course make life very uncomfortable. The challenge lies majorly on the rate at which it snowballs compared to what we have during the pre-colonial period.

George and Ukpong (2013) articulated such problems today to include:

The deviant behaviour toward the commandments of God, cultural norms and stipulations and moral principles as in the struggle for the control of available scarce resources wrongly and violently. This in turn creates problems in the society that affect all and sundry (p.167).

One major cause of crime increase in the modern society is the problem occasioned by science and technology and the breakdown of family value system in Africa. George and Ukpong (2013) further enumerated the many woes of science and technology by noting that:

Though a blessing seems to be a curse to man and humanity over time. It is a two way traffic affair. Although it is the mother of inventions, a breakthrough in modern business, facilitator of qualitative education and the controller or pivot of the modern day economy, expanding and covering larger frontiers of the universe in each new day, yet it is not without its own evil intentions. It has been responsible for the alarming rate of crimes, injustice, killing and robbery, kidnapping and many other social disasters (p.167).

These negative impacts of science and technology threaten to destroy the modern society and also serve as spring boards for the proliferation of small and large scale crimes that result in total breakdown of law and order in the society.

The erosion of African family value system is another strong reason why social ills are on the increase in modern society. Today the institution of marriage has received myriads of

attacks. Homes are broken and single parenting on the increase. Children are constantly exposed to violence because of what they watch and learn from peers. Home training has been left in the hands of people who do not understand family values and thus the morals of the young people are jeopardized. The result is obvious: lack of respect for constituted authority, cultism, lack of respect for human lives, kidnapping, promiscuity, pre-marital sex, abortion, emphasis on western values and the relegation of African values, homosexuality and in fact total breakdown of the moral system of the society (Nwankwo, 2017).

Other reasons for crime rate in modern time include: poverty, unemployment, population explosion, political and economic problem in the society. The difference between crime rate now and that of the pre-colonial period is that the pace at which crime increases now cannot be compared to what obtained in the past.

### **Offences Constituent and Social Disorder in Pre-Colonial Africa**

There is no clear cut definition of offences in pre-colonial Igbo land. Offences were rather categorized based on their degrees. Scholars like Onyeozili and Ebbe (2002), Chukwu, Okonkwo and Kalu (2013) agreed that the concept of crime does not apply in pre-colonial Africa. However, Onyeozili and Ebbe (2002) distinguished two types of offences which are: “abominations (public offences) otherwise called *aru* or something that earth abhors and delicts called *mmechie* (private offences)” (p.32).

Offences as murder of brother, sister or kinsmen, incest (that is a son having sexual coitus with one's sister or one of his father's wives when his father is still alive); killing or eating a domestic animal dedicated to the gods (totem), or any other offence against the gods are considered as abomination (Onyeozili and Ebbe, 2002). On the other hand offences such as burglary, fighting, quarrelling, stealing (not of yam), are considered as delicts or *mmechie*. Such offences do not receive grave penalty in most African societies. But when the stealing involves yam produce, it becomes an abomination in Igbo land.

An intentional breach of any various social norms, law and order (*iwu*), cultural taboos (*nso ala*), or abominations (*aru*), disrupts the inter and intra-harmony existing among God, the deities, ancestors, man, and nature, attracts fugitive measures as retribution, deferent, rectification or restitution. A process of ritual cleansing or purification as in the case of adultery, may accompany this.

Adeyemo (1979) agreed with other African scholars that wrong deeds are graded in terms of heavy and light offences. He states that “in Yoruba land, the heavy offences are termed *ese nla* or major sin while the minor sins are called *ese kekere*” (pp.54-55). He reveals that witchcraft ranks very high among the abominations. That the violation of the tribal taboos also ranks very high. To reveal the secrets of a cult to the non-initiate is also a great crime.

Awolawu and Dopamu (1979) noted that, “it is a great disaster for any person to be guilty of abominable acts. It is a disaster not only for him or her, but for other members of the family; sometimes, the whole community” (p.217). That is why it is abomination. This is because these acts constitute the pollution of the land. Such acts in Igbo land include

patricide, incest, stealing especially of yams, killing of totem animals and a woman climbing a palm tree.

Ajah (2007) observed that, “traditional Africans believed that when there is an upset in natural and normal system of life, it is believed that someone has broken the rule and offended the gods” (p.289). If nothing is done at this time, terror will be unleashed in the community.

Anigbo (1992) noted that, “there are also *nso ani* which are considered very outrageous and to which people are expected to react to spontaneously. The most known is *itikpo isi monwu* (to shatter the head of the mask dancer)” (p.51). The expression is however figurative for it means ‘an action or actions designed to pass information about the nature of the mask dancer to a woman or to the uninitiated male.’ This is a serious disrespect shown for the masking spirit and is considered grave and summarily dealt with.

### **Cardinal Offences and Methods of Disposal in Igbo Land**

Chukwu eds. (2002) and other scholars like Iroegbu (1994), discussed in detail some of the offences that were and are still considered abomination in Africa and especially Igbo land. They have been touched briefly in what follows.

#### **Homicide**

Mores require that human life be kept sacred. Homicide or *igbu ochu* or murder was the greatest abominations. Iroegbu (1994) said, “to kill a kith or kin or any member of one’s community merited either capital punishment or total banishment from the community” (p.91).

Chukwu, Okonkwo and Kalu (2002) asserted that:

Homicide is seriously frowned upon, even when it is unintentional; so much that an attempted or a demonstrated threat menace to inflict a machete cut on someone is forbidden. The sharp or a pointed end of the machete must be struck on the ground to douse or tamper the hot blood of anger (p.237).

In Bende, when homicide is committed, the murderer’s family often pleaded with the victim’s family to spare the life of the culprit and in earlier times, usually offered one of their children as substitute (*ikura ochu*) for the deceased. In most cases, homicide culprit fled the town to avoid the wrath of the community and the gods whose norms he had flagrantly violated. In any case, he must be banished from the community. This was the case with Okonkwo in Achebe’s Things Fall Apart. In this story Achebe (1958) noted that “the only course open to Okonkwo who mistakenly killed the son of the deceased Ezulu during his funeral was to flee from the clan. It was a crime against the earth goddess to kill a clan’s man and a man who committed it must flee from the land” (p.99). Not only did Okonkwo flee into exile, his houses were burnt down and he must spend seven years in exile before returning to his homeland. All these need to be done in order to cleanse the land (*iju ala*) to appease the offended gods, ancestors and the innocent blood that had been shed.

### **Stealing**

Iwuagwu (1998) said:

Stealing is a serious offence in the traditional society which was treated according to the gravity of the offence. It is a mark of bad characters. In the pre-colonial African setting, the notorious thief was either heavily fined or openly disgraced, or sold into slavery or killed.

There was no sympathy whatsoever for the thief (p.157).

On the other hand Okafor (1992) noted that “stealing of seedlings and other kinds of theft like removing a property on which a sample of earth is placed to indicate ownership are regarded as *aru* or *nso ala* (abomination)” (p.165). This kind of theft was regarded as fundamental break of the law.

When a thief (*onye oshi*) is caught and eventually with the stolen object or objects say yam seedlings or any other item, he is given a public beating, bald-shaven, stripped naked, draped with itchy weed and compelled to dance along the villages and sometimes around the market square with his loot and empty snail shells hung around his neck as a public odium and a powerful deterrent measure. People shunned the culprit and would at the slightest provocation spite him with the experience.

### **Suicide**

This is a crime against humanity. It is an act by which one decided to take owns life, either by hanging or poisoning oneself. Life is sacrosanct and must not be treated with levity. Africans and especially, the Igbo love their lives and value it. It is an offence not just for the offender but to the entire community. It is an abomination. Suicide victims are denied a decent burial to serve as a deterrent to those contemplating the action. Having desecrated the land and denied mankind his valuable contributions to life, he does not deserve a burial or mourning.

In Achebe’s work when Okonkwo took his life for fear of being manhandled by the white man, having killed one of them and discovered that his people were not ready to go to war against the white man, he took his life. This was a taboo in the land. The people cannot even touch his body not to talk of bringing him down from the tree. Achebe (1958) noted, “It is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against the earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansman. His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it” (p.165). Okonkwo, despite being a great man, died a disgraceful death and must be buried like a dog.

### **Other forms of Offences Disposal for Inclusive Social Control in the Past and Present**

There was no system of imprisonment during the period under consideration. When an abomination was committed as we have variously noted, depending on the gravity of the offence like murder; the offenders were sent to exile or may be perpetually dedicated to the gods. Such a person becomes (*osu*) outcast. In some communities, the length of time one spends in exile depends on the offence. Other forms offences disposals include ostracism or excommunication and public shaming.

Ostracism is a socio-economic embargo that prohibits economic and social interactions with a blacklisted culprit. Nobody buys from, sells to and renders assistance to or

interacts with him/her. It may be so total that nobody takes a burning coals from his/her fire place to stoke one's stove and he/she cannot take from anybody's either (Chukwu eds, 2002). Onyzili and Ebbe (2002) noted that, "a person excommunicated in pre-colonial Igbo land was lost in the crowd" (p.36). Such a person will have neighbours but will always be lonely. Even when he/she is in need, nobody will help him/her. It is also believed that in death, he/she would neither be able to transmigrate nor reincarnate. It is in fact the fear of communal sanction, the thought of non-reincarnation, and non-transmigration after death that keeps members' behaviours in check.

On the other hand, public shaming is another stringent method of disposing of offences in Igbo land. Crimes in Africa are punished by satire in the form of caricaturing songs that make jest of the repulsive and repugnant conduct of the culprit, sometimes for a crime that had already been punished. This method of bringing a culprit to social opprobrium is frequently employed during certain annual festivals. It is a social prick on the conscience of the culprit and his/her family. The aim is to correct and deter by condemning vices and upholding the positive norms and values of the society. Its efficiency lies in psychology. The substance of the satire lies in truth; they were not defamatory in content.

### **Agents of Social Control in Pre-Colonial Igbo Land**

It has already been noted that there was no law court as we have it now where people are formally reported and proceedings carried out for proper adjudication of offences. There were however, institutions and agents that were consigned with matters that contradict social order, whose responsibility, it was to intervene and administer appropriate punishment to offenders. Most of the times justice in traditional African society was never delayed, offenders were promptly judged and punishment or penalty meted out without delay to douse the anger of the gods and those who were offended. In pre-colonial Africa such responsibilities were vested into the hands of the divinities, ancestors, masquerades, the use of *ofo* and *ogu* symbols, through oaths and covenants and other institutions like men and women organizations. In what follows, we shall examine few of these agents in detail.

### **Divinities**

The divinities play intermediary roles between the supreme God and the people. Sacrifices are and prayers made to them are directed to the supreme God. They are powerful agents when it comes to social control. Some of the divinities that existed in pre-colonial Africa especially in Igbo land were: the mother Earth- *Ala*, the *Amadioha*, thunder divinity and the sun god *Anyanwu*. These were powerful agents of the *Chukwu*-Supreme Being. The Supreme Being vested on these divinities the powers to dispense justice and restore peace and order in the communities of Igbo land where they operate.

Iwuagwu (1998) said, "sometimes God may be asked to arbitrate in land cases, or to destroy a thing in order to establish justice or to remove charm or poison planted by an enemy" (p.113). Uchendu (1965) described the cult of divinities as the highest "court of appeal" in Igbo judiciary system in pre-colonial times. It was known as the "oracle." The most famous oracles in traditional Igbo land were the *Agbala* of Awka, the *Ibini Ukpabi* of Arochukwu (the long Juju) and the *Haba* of Agulu among others. The common

characteristics of the oracles and their operators were shrouded in a strict code of secrecy and an institutionalized intelligence service.

### **The Ancestral Spirits**

The ancestors are the past heroes of Africa traditional religious practitioners. They are the guardians of morality. Ifesieh (1976) described the ancestors as:

Those highly honoured, great, gentle, wise, faithful influential respected as *Dibuno/Dibiuno*, *Ndichie* and by virtue of their children (begotten) and their activities became fathers of clans, villages and towns but have undergone a physical change (death) in their good matured and ripe ages but then are still living and are still ‘members’ of their respective families whose *ide*/pillars they were and are ... (p.129).

The ancestors do not only guard morality, they equally enforce morality in African communities. The cult of the ancestors is thus a model for evaluating human behaviour. To this end, the ancestors help to enforce morality by encouraging or rewarding the living with prosperity and punishing the immoral and unjust in the society.

Ugwu (2002) carefully observed that, “it is palpable that the ancestors detest adultery, fornication, incest, suppression, gossip and witch-hunting” (p.122). In some cases an accused person is summoned to the ancestral shrine before the council of elders and ordered to pick a lobe of kola-nut from the ancestral altar and eat. If the accused is guilty but out of sheer boldness or instigation eats the kola-nut, he faces instant death. If on the contrary, the accused is innocent, provable only by surviving the oath after one full month of twenty-eight days (*izu assa*).

### **Masquerade Institutions**

The masquerade institutions or organizations or secret societies also help in the enforcement of morality in Africa. Orji, Awolalu and Dopamu argued that masquerades have a great responsibility of standing out for justice and fair play by helping to enforce the laws of the land. Orji (1999) observed that, “masquerade was successfully used for the maintenance of peace and enforcement of laws and regulations” (p.156).

Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) noted that:

Originally the secret societies were instituted for the purpose of self-preservation and for the preservation of the community. They enforced and maintained traditions, customs and regulated attitudes. In this way, they became the ‘power’ of the community where they functioned (p.220).

Describing the roles of masquerades in Arondizuogu of Imo State, Nwankwo (2014) citing Obioha articulated some of the reasons for the institution of masquerade in Igbo land and especially in Arondizuogu. He said, “the institution of *mmonwu* serves three-fold functions namely: entertainment, arm of government and a corrective instrument” (p.131). Masquerades serve as institution that dispenses justice, the last hope of the common man in Arondizuogu; through their roles the people usually experience peace and unity.

Okafor (1992) observed that “there were no specialized courts as such entrusted with judicial matters. Judicial methods may at times appear informal, but they follow recognized if diverse lines. These include among other institutions, the *mmonwu* (masquerade) society” (p.7). This corroborates with the observation made by Ilogu (1974) on the functions of masquerades in Igbo land. He said, “the *otu muo* (masquerade society) members also perform some political duties; they guard the village against thieves, collect fines from people pronounced guilty of offences and help in seeing that *aru* (abominations) are not hidden. They stand out for justice and fair play by helping to enforce laws of the land” (p.102). Similarly, Onunwa (1990) accentuated the above new points when he wrote that:

Offenders of public morality (thieves, adulterers, witches) are mercilessly beaten or flogged by masquerades. The maskers of these secret clubs are used to enforce the ruling or decisions of the council of elders of the village by the way they display uncontrolled power just like the *Muo* (Spirits) (p.29).

Masquerade as enforcers of morality as the plenipotentiary agents of the deities or spirits. They have full powers to punish any immoral conduct and restoring peace and harmony in the community.

#### **Council of Elders in the Village**

This is one of institutions that dispensed justice during the period under discussion. Council of elders is a conglomerate of elderly men who are family heads in the community. Each village was made up of people who were united by ties of consanguinity. The cases that reach the village or community council were inter-family, civil and criminal victimizations. Civil matters were settled amicably but criminal matters had double barreled penalty. The convicted offender had to pay back whatever he took away from the victim by restitution or compensation. If the person becomes a notorious offender, other stringent measures may be applied, some of which we have discussed before. However, this may vary from community to community (Nwankwo, 2017).

**Daughters of the Family (*Umuada*):** Nwankwo said that, *Umuada* play both social, religious, ethical and political roles in Igbo land. The roles of *umuada* as peace builders and conflict mediators within and outside their traditional maiden homes are well pronounced. *Umuada* are known as peace builders and conflict mediators (2014).

Onunwa (1990) writing on the roles of *umuada* in Igbo land said:

*Umuada* acting through their leaders exercise such moral powers that no one questions within the community. They act as the last court of appeal in traditional and unduplicated Igbo society. At times they are often invited to settle family disputes that deity the orders of the elders or in modern times, the law court (p.136).

When a person is accused of murder or sorcery, *umuada* in Arondizuogu would resort to administering oath when the matter is brought to them. The parties involved would be

required to swear an oath using *ekwu nji igwe* (three legged cooking stand) or *akpa aka umuada* and *ekwe oha* (hand bags belonging to *umuada* and the community wooden gong). It is very dangerous to attempt swearing an oath with these objects if one's hands are not clean. The bags are believed to contain some traditional items which can hurt anyone guilty of the offence he/she is being accused of.

Obi (2010) commenting on the functions of *Umuada* in Igbo land said:

The institution of *Umuada* (married daughters) is highly respected in Igbo land. They can hold the community to ransom for various moral reasons. They discipline erring women with various sanctions, support married women in any wise decision taken for the progress of the community maintain peace between husband and wife, family and family, community and community. They checkmate and balance their dual roles as married daughters and wives (p.174-175).

Onyike (2009) said:

Women are important peace makers in their ancestral villages as *Umuada* (daughter born in the village or town). In traditional Igbo culture, *umuada* are usually invited to resolve conflicts that men and *ndinyom* (women married into the town) were not able to resolve. In this case, their decision is final (p.7).

In some Igbo communities, they were seen as the last court of appeal. They sanction, penalize and enthroned sanity among family which constituted their maiden homes.

These functions or contributions are all geared towards the optimistic goals of ensuring and maintaining a morally just society. Their lifestyles are exemplary and the members of the society emulate them, thereby building a virile, morally sanctions Africa/Igbo society.

### **Religion and Morality as Panacea to Contemporary Social Ills**

The role of religion in the society when rightly applied includes the maintenance of social order or control; thus giving cohesion, meaning and purpose to life and the social construction of the sacred. Religion and morality or ethics correlate. African is notoriously religious according to Mbiti (1976). The importance of religion and morality in ensuring social control in Africa cannot be over emphasized. In fact throughout human history the positive values of religion have been adjudged to have outweighed its dysfunctional role (Manus, 2006).

Religion is however, good in itself. Through religion and ethics based social control, Africa have promoted social solidarity by reinforcing social values and principles that made the society then a habitable place for all. Obi (2013), citing Durkheim noted that:

Religion promotes social cohesion, uniting the members of the society through shared values and norms. Social life is impossible without shared values and moral beliefs that form the collective conscience. In their absence, there would be no social order, social control, and social solidarity (p.437).

Religion and ethics promote solidarity among members of the society through shared values and norms. Religious and moral values like, respect for human dignity and sanctity of life, respect for cultural and customary norms and constituted authorities, truth-telling, honesty, love for one another, empathy, innocence and hardworking, justice and fair play, are all enshrined in the religious and moral principles of a given society; written or unwritten. Any form of breach in the flow of the system through acts contrary to the statutory code of conduct will be detrimental to both the individual and the society at large.

In other words the people are supposed to be taught the tenets of religion, ethics and culture from the cradle. This will serve as a check to constant flagrant abuses of constituted authority and lack of respect to human life and worth, prevalent in our society today.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

This research started research by identifying the place of religion and morality in ensuring a stable society. The rate at which morality went down today cannot be compared to what it was in the pre-colonial Igbo society; the cause of which was said to be the negative impacts of science and technology. The paper uncovered various behaviours and practices that were categorized under serious offenses, whose consequences are detrimental not just to the offender but to the entire community. There were various means of disposing offenses in pre-colonial African societies, especially, those of Igbo land. The work further noted various agents involved in social control. Through these agents, African people were able to dispense justice, restore peace, order and tranquility to the society.

The researcher recommends that both the elderly people and the young ones be educated on the core moral values of their respective societies. Furthermore, that some of the stringent measures used in disposing of offences and ensuring peace and tranquil atmosphere during the period under study, be re-introduced. This could reduce the rate at which evil and social ills snowball in our society today. Finally, the government should ensure that stringent measures are put in place to checkmate the abuse of internet by young people in the society. The negative use of this has resulted in the many crimes the society witnesses daily.

## References

- Achebe, C. (1958). *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann.
- Adeyemo, T (1979). *Salvation in African Traditional Religion*. Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House.
- Ajah, P.O (2007). *African Traditional Religion*. Uburu: Truth and Life Publication Ltd.
- Anigbo, O.A.C (1992). *Igbo Elite and Western Europe*. Onitsha: Africana-Feb Publishers Limited.
- Awolawu, J.O and Dopamu, P.A (1979). *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Onibonje Press and Book Industries Ltd.
- Ayodeji, O.S (2013). "Religious Values and Corruption in Nigeria: a Dislocated Relationship. *Journal of Educational and Social Research. Italy: Vo.4 No.3. MCSER Pub.*
- Chukwu, C.C, Okonkwo, G.A and Kalu, E.O (2013). *The History and Culture of Old Bend and the Emergence of Umunna*. Lagos: Serenity Publishers.
- George, I.N and Ukpong, D.E. (2013). "Contemporary Social Problems in Nigeria and its Impact on National Development: Implication for Guidance and Counselling Services." *Journal of Educational and Social Research. Uyo: Vol. 3 (2) May 2013.*
- Ifesieh, E.I (1976). "The Igbo Family in a Changing Society." Ph.D Dissertation, University of Salzburg.
- Ilogu, E. (1974). *Christianity and Igbo Culture*. New York: Nok Publishers.
- Iroegbu, P (1994). *Enwisdomization and African Philosophy*. Owerri: International Universities Press.
- Iroegbu, P and Echekwube, A. (2005). "What is Ethics?" In *Kpim of Morality: Ethics General, Special and Professional*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc.
- Ituma, E.A (2015). *Basic Research Guide for Humanities and Social Sciences*. Nsukka: Timex .
- Iwuagwu, A.O (1998). *African Traditional Religion: Students' Handbook*. Owerri: Ager Publishers.
- Manus, C.U (2006), "Religion and Politics in a Multi-Ethnic Society," Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies XXVIII (June-December).
- Mbiti, J.S (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann.
- Nwankwo, S.C (2014). A Socio-religious and Ethical Roles of Igbo Women in Nation Building. An Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation Submitted to Imo State University Owerri.
- Nwankwo, S.C (2017). *Understanding Religious Ethics: An Exercise in Afrocentric Ethicalism*. Aba: Rainbow Printing Press.
- Obaje, Y.A (2002). "Religion and Morality as Instrument of Transformation in West African Society." In Kudadjie (ed.) (2002). Religion, Morality and West African Society. Accra: Wesley Printing Press.

- Obi, C, A (2013), “Religion as basis of Social Order” in Kpim of Social of Social Order. U.S.A: Xlibris Corporation.
- Obi, C.A (2013). “Religion as basis of Social Order.” In Kpim of Social Order. Edited by Ukagba, G.U, Obi, D.O and Nwankwor, I.K. U.S.A: Xlibris Corporation.
- Obi, D. (2010). “The Role of African Women in Nation Building”. In Kpim of Feminism Issues and Women in a Changing World. Eds. Ukagba, G.U, Obioma, D.O and Nwankwor, I.J, Canada: Tranford Publishing.
- Obilor, J.I (2010). *Many Religions one God*. Owerri: Matts Books Publishers.
- Okafor, F.U (1992). *Igbo Philosophy of Law*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Pub.
- Okere, T (2006). “Religion, Morality and Governance in Nigeria.” Lecture Delivered at Owerri: Multi Purpose Hall.
- Onunwa, U (1990). *Studies in Igbo Traditional Religion*. Obosi: Pacific Publishers.
- Onyeozili, E.C and Ebbe, O.N.I (2002). “Social Control in Pre-colonial Igbo land of Nigeria.” *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies: AJCJS*, Vol.6, Nos.1 &2 November.
- Onyike, N.B (2009). “Women as Peace Makers at Home and Outer Society.” Aba: Government Press.
- Orji, O.M (1999). *The History and Culture of Igbo People before the Advent of the White Man*. Nkpor: Jet Publishers.
- Uchendu, V.C (1965). *The Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria*. Chicago: Holt, Rinhart and Winston
- Ugwu, C.O (2002). “Sources and Enforcement of Morality in Igbo Traditional Society.” In Religion, Morality and West African Society. Accra: Wesley Printing Press.