

Abolition of *Osu, Ume, Ohu* and *Diala* castes system in Igbo community: approach through Fundamental Cultural Liberalism

By

Nwaocha Ogechukwu DSR
Dean of Studies, Bengray college of Remedial Studies

Abstract

The abolition of *Osu, Ume, and Ohu* Caste system has suffered several backlogs despite the involvement of many political and Religious stakeholders due to the implications of socio-cultural vices which cause marital crisis, social class discrimination, inequality, limited and disrupted human social interaction, violation of human right etc. As a result, there was legislative intervention of enacting the South Eastern Regional Law of 1956 followed by various initiatives of Religious stakeholders in Catholicism and Anglicanism in South Eastern Nigeria, and the recent liturgical services of trado-spiritual gathering of Igbo custodians of culture in Nri of Anambra state in 2018. Still the belief in the caste system has remained a social dogma practiced in many Igbo communities due to the dogma of sacred prohibition, fanaticism in Igbo belief system, the dogma of hereditary Curse and the practice of gender and social inequality in Igbo tradition. This article explains the reason behind the sustenance of the belief of caste system as a dogma, highlights the factors that hinder the success of those initiatives developed for the abolition of the caste system, and suggests Igbo Fundamental Cultural Liberalism (FCL) as a diplomatic approach through which the abolition can be achieved permanently.

Keynotes: *Osu* Caste System, *Ume, Ohu, Osu*, Abolition of *Osu*

Introduction

Initiatives developed for the abolition of obnoxious culture and traditional practices in African societies have remained integral factor of modernity which enhances human value and consolidate right to freedom and liberty as a post-modern ideology. However, African culture plays integral role in African development and is a model for development inspired by modern world views which reflects people's hopes and aspirations, determines their life, goals, and molds the notion of what constitute the good life and the type of society African people construct to achieve, shapes the institutions they create to sustain that society, and influences African choice of solution for the problems that confront it (Mervyn Claxton, 2007). Perhaps the close links that exist between African's tradition and African development imply that any model of development which ignores, marginalizes, or rejects culture is unlikely to be successful. The current challenges to the African culture include politicization Of culture, inequality, self-dependence, right to property and other right need an understanding of the global cultural set up, should be addressed critically as emerging solutions that can be developed by stakeholders who adhere to global culture and are susceptible to cultural diffusion of global forces in African (Suresh Kumar 2010).

With the introduction of cultural reform policy, African communities resort for consolidated policies to ensure that African oriented culture and traditions are reformed to conform to international policy and Global culture. The reformation of Igbo culture should be used to foster social change and enhance human cultural values as well as preservation of cultural heritage which is free from the vices and obnoxious tenets of the ancient Igbo civilization. In their quest to retain their cultural identity, the Ibos should not retard progress and ignore useful influences that they come across during their contact with other cultures both within and outside Igbo society. With the formation of UN charter of human right and later Nigeria constitution on fundamental human right, approaches towards the abolition of Igbo castes system become prominent due to three reasons:

The first reason is the Christian theology against discrimination by African theologians. Basing their judgment on St. Peter's encounter with Cornelius and st. Paul's teaching and spiritual perception of the gentiles, most African Christian theologians see Igbo caste systems as a mere human wickedness, a pure social set up which has no basis in human creation, though experienced inside the church (Rev. Joshua, N. Dimorji, 1983). In the contribution against sustainability of ideology of Caste systems, the Arch-Bishop Dr. Anthony Obinna (1999) expressed the traditional syndrome as psycho mythical diseases of fear and prejudice which can only be destroyed by a higher psycho-mythical positivity. Furthermore, the catholic Archbishop explained that the Igbo cultural system needed to be freer from bondage to "Ala" divinity which was part of lingering heritage of superstition. This was where a more acculturated Christianity would free Igbo Christians from lingering fear and syndrome of both the castes.

The second reasons entails Western influence of the later Igbo generations with Western Education, enlightenment and philosophy which as a result caused the modern Igbo men to perceive the contradiction the system imposes on their social life more than their fore-fathers knew, when there is need for abolition of castes system as the whole world became a constituency for the modern Igbo society reducing it in terms of time and

space to a global village. In so doing, the abolition of castes system entails elimination of undesirable elements in Igbo culture which are retrogressive.

The third reason is the uniqueness of Igbo culture and the need to amend the culture without destroying it entirely. Igbo culture originated among the Igbos as creators and transformers of their environment. In its widest and most complete sense Igbo culture enables the Ibos to give shape to their lives and future as their system of thought, philosophy, science, arts and language and as part of African philosophical life, Igbo culture embraces the social, political, economic, scientific and technical field of the Igbo society. As a dynamic culture, Igbo cultural life can be modified to retain only those elements which are valid, bringing up to date and enrich them with the benefit of the scientific, technical and social revolution in order to bring Igbo society into line with what is modern, civil and universal. The Igbo society should abolish the practice of obnoxious culture and traditional vices which exist in the name of culture.

Therefore, cultural practices can be changed without destroying it. Cultural practice can be changed in as much as it is the vital ways of learning our world and can be achieved through its transformation through structural mechanism into a modern culture to fulfill the aspiration of the modern Igbo man and solve the problems set by African society. Igbo caste system is a social structure upon which the function of discrimination and the practice of Odium are built, and since Igbo's social structures are changing because of modernity, Igbo caste system as a social structure should be changed.

With the growing trend of African modernism, the need for abolition of traditional and socio-cultural vices becomes prominent due to the western influence on the ideology of human right and equality. This philosophy of liberalism is based on man's increasing demand for a decent and civilized life in which inherent dignity of each human being receives respect and protection following the frequent agitation for equal human and material resources as battlefield expanded to cover the entire world, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Right was established in 1948 by the commission on Human Right to grant men of various background their right to freedom and liberty. But the international law contradicted the Igbo socio-cultural norm on state jurisdiction in that the pledge by member state cannot be ignored and that the domestic jurisdiction clause do not apply because human right have ceased to be essentially within the jurisdiction clause of states. In as much as Igbo society was part of Eastern region of the British protectorate by then, the African region alienated itself from the international state policy depending on native and monarchial policy as Igbo traditional law.

Contrary to the provision of the UN charter, this Igbo indigenous norms remain stagnant in its nature as policy and contradicts most of the provision enunciated in the human right charter. Under the Igbo traditional law, the culturally suppressed are not protected and has no right to fair trial when dispute arises. There is no security of life and property and no Right to expression of opinion in ancient Igbo public gathering. With the intervention of Christian missionaries and political elites in Nigeria, approach was initiated to enact a law in 1956 made Eastern Nigeria edict to abolish the Osu castes system and made its practice Illegal as a state policy; the law prescribed practice of castes system both a criminal and civil offence. The poor impact of this law was a result of its conflict with the general sentiment of the Ibos upon whom the law was to operate. For this, legislative approach seems powerless to eradicate social segregation and other cultural vices that are deeply rooted in Igbo people's culture, even with the enforcement of the 1990 Nigeria constitution. The intervention of Christian clerics with the theology

of equality as a liberation theological movement caused pronounced controversy due to the conflict of Christian doctrine with African tradition. While the church missionary society failed in his adoption of Bini method of 1486 by targeting most influential class, the Roman Catholic Missionaries undertook a school apostolate method to improve the economic state of Igbo beneficiaries among the castes. In fact, when the educated Osu, Ume and Ohu were employed by the white man's administration as clerks and interpreters to improve their economic status, the Diala refused to recognize them and opposed the white man's policy of imposing the culturally depressed as court clerks, interpreters and messenger on them.

When the Missionary education was introduced, converts became teachers and catchiest, but the Diala mounted pressure against the culturally depressed and the church through blackmail and propaganda and with their domineering attitude to usurped power from the culturally oppressed. The Diala reverted the trend of Western Missionary Education and gradually edged the culturally suppressed out from being teachers, catchiest, Priests, and church committee head over them. While the missionaries preached equality of all men before God, the Diala converts consolidated their power in the church. With much pressure mounted by the diala Bishop Shannaham tolerated the discrimination reflected in his *propaganda fidei* he wrote to Rome with the intention that there would be disrepute if church of slaves and Osus are formed. Up till date, the orthodox and Pentecostal Christian churches are still pushing forward towards the abolition of the castes system in South Eastern Nigerians with the Christian theology of oneness and equality before Christ and God involving many clerics like Luke Rev. Fr. Joseph Nwanma (the parish priest of St. Dennis Catholic Church, Bariga, Lagos), pastor Elias Okoro (senior pastor, Wind and Fire Ministries/PFN Chairman, Festac Zone), Rev. Raphael Chibuzo Opoko (secretary of conference, Methodist Church Nigeria), pastor Austen Ukachi, general overseer of He is alive chapel, Amuwo Odofin) and other Anglican and protestant churches, but the effort yields limited positive results due to the conflicts of Christian theology of equality with that of the Igbo tradition of inequality and social class system (Christ Irekamba, 2015)

Western education brings Igbo man to limelight of productivity and human resourcefulness with a view to enhance human capital development. The introduction of western education by the colonialists poses a threat to the native Igbo man and challenged his cultural orientation of equality and human cohabitation. With the introduction of Western Education in Igbo society, the Diala refused to adhere to white man's policy and way of life and held on to the traditional customs, but the culturally suppressed responded positively to the English Education. The Diala mounted a propaganda by which they discouraged the white man from empowering the culturally suppressed as masters over them. The propaganda gained momentum and gradually suppressed the effort of the colonialist in favour of the Diala.

Finally, the effort of the Western Educators failed because the colonial administrators was only interested to establish British rule and are ambitious in using any available diplomacy to achieve their aims. As Western Education gained moment in Nigeria, South Eastern Nigeria remained the cultural habitat for the striving of Igbo man as a conservator of Igbo culture despite various alternative projects diffused from global culture and western ideologies to promote human cohabitation and right to freedom and liberty. All the efforts remained failed hypotheses because of the contradiction of a foreign ideology with indigenous culture that based its philosophy on the superstition of metaphysical realities. In attempt to use Igbo cultural practice in resolving the conflict of

Osu, Ume, and Ohu caste system from a traditional perspective, effort was made by conceived stakeholder who involved the chief priest of the Nri shrine for trade-spiritual approach as of December 2018 in Anambra State towards abolition of the castes system, but the approach did not gained momentum at the grassroots communities due to the under listed factors.

Igbo system of governance does not recognize absolute monarch. The system is based on quasi republican system of Umunna with various but distinct kind of cultural practices through feudal system of traditional rulership. Therefore, Nri kingdom, though believed by oral tradition to be the originator of Igbo kingdom, does not have super-impose power over other Igbo communities to influence them. The dogma against Osu, Ume and Ohu castes are developed from different cultural orientation of Igbo communities and, as a belief attitude, it is mainly a behavior of an illiterate Igbo man. Therefore, the approach lack grassroots reach to unlearned Igbo men in the rural communities.

The shrines where the original Osu of ancient Igbo society were dedicated and sacrificed, and the shrine where most of the priest of Ume deities serves vary with their deities. Some of the ancient shrines priest and dedicated monks were consecrated in Aro shrine, Nri shrine, Igwekala shrine and Ala Ogbaga shrine in Imo State, Okiga shrine, Aro shrine and Ube shrine in Nsukka of Enugu State. The ritual act for consecration of the Osu and the service of Ume priests varies and the system of the religious rite involved are different. Therefore the ritual act in Nri shrine is not sufficient enough to propitiate for all the culturally suppressed who have link to metaphysical Liturgy. Furthermore, many of these shrines have been destroyed and their carved images stolen or sold as artifact for Museums. Since the legislative system, Christianity, secular and western approaches did not reach the community's grass root reach due to the above factors bothered against Igbo tradition, and belief systems, a dynamic conflict resolution method is needed to tackle fanaticism and dogmatism in Igbo tradition and belief systems, enhance grassroots reach, and ensure deities involved are reached through the appropriate community oriented propitiation. In other to achieve this, a **Fundamental Cultural Liberalism (FCL)** should be implemented as diplomatic strategy to reform the African culture and tradition to ensure proper reform of African modernity.

Objective of study

- To explain the implication of continuous sustenance of cultural ideology of caste system in modern African society
- To determine Factors which hinder the already abolition exercise in modern Igbo society and disrupt several efforts for it
- To pinpoint various initiatives developed prior to this research paper as a way of determining African long quest to strengthen the cohabitation of African families
- To suggest alternative approach through which the caste system can be abolished completely in Igbo society
- To explain the meaning and the application of Fundamental Cultural Liberalism for cultural reform in Igbo society

Research question

- What are the implications of continuous sustenance of Osu, Ume, and Ohu caste ideology in modern African society?
- What are the factors that prevent stakeholder's initiative towards the abolition exercise?
- What are the failed initiatives and why are they failed hypothesis?
- What are the three phase Model for Community's grassroots reach?
- What is Fundamental Cultural Liberalism (FCL)?

Statement of the problem

Originally the practice of Osu shrine service, Ohu profession, and the belief of Ume priesthood and deities have all been an aged long cultural dogma of Igbo tradition which can be preserve by the chief custodians of Igbo communities as part of Igbo cultural heritage. According to the philosophy of Igbo's Odinani dogma, the objective of presenting Igbo culture vis-à-vis the socio-cultural castes system in Igbo society Is not to mystify or ossify igbo tradition, but to ensure harmony and prevent a mindless of sweeping away Igbo's Cultural heritage, i.e. a situation which can only result in disorderly change, societal instability and eventual creation of a people completely cut off from their cultural roots. Perhaps any protagonist initiatives towards the abolition of the cast system will result to loose of vital culture that has given Igbo society a place among others tribes and nations in African society.

However, the practice of Igbo castes system is universal in Igbo society, and there may be some minor differences in various communities but the essence is the same. The practice is one of the cultural elements that bind all Ibos together because the general concept of equality is not significant with Igbo ideology and philosophy, but a western concept. The knowledge of the Ibos increases with time as African society is gradually been modernized with the advancement of human productivity and resourcefulness. Igbo man has come to realize the importance of communalism and cohabitation to achieve certain political, industrial and economic objectives and has attained a developed barometer to measure standard human thinking. Fortunately, most concerned stakeholders for abolition of Igbo socio-cultural discrimination through the legislative system, social and civic activities, and the Christian Religion would have provided the ideal base and force towards abolition of castes system in Igbo society, but major Igbo urban dwellers are field to their roots and frequently visit their places for origins which influences their persistent cultural orientation against various initiatives developed to gain momentum. While different projects are developed for abolition of caste system, what still lies ahead are the determining factors that prevent the initiative from reaching community's grassroots and consolidate those project to be a civic culture in the maintenance of social law and order in modern Igbo society, namely:

Confronting fanaticism in Igbo belief system: Fanaticism entails a belief or behavior involving uncritical zeal or with an obsessive enthusiasm. By this definition, the fanatic displays very strict standard and little or not tolerance for contrary ideas or opinions through defense mechanism, most times violence. Igbo fanaticism is a reflection of violent religious dogma which involves the belief attitude of Igbo traditional stakeholders who act on defense of their traditional beliefs. A case study of Igbo traditional fanaticism was involved in the case of the

crisis Of marriage between Duru and Ngozi Ugwu in Anambra State as of 1980s. The case ran into turmoil when the Nze na Ozo titled men discovered the Duru was on Osu, and banished the young lady. To consolidate their belief on the Igbo traditional tenet of Osu discrimination, the elders and the village women protested naked in the market square as a fanatical action practice against the gravity of the taboo. Furthermore, Ngozi was exiled to save the entire village from embarrassment and generational curse. Another case of fanaticism in action was in the case of marriage between the son (Peter) of an Ozo titled holder (Onuchukwu Ofo) in the same Anambra community and that of his wife who is a culturally suppressed Igbo woman as an Osu as of 1924 when Christianity was making its advancement in Igbo community. To prevent Peter, who had Christian philosophy of equality, from marrying this Osu lady, his father and his kinsmen poisoned him to death with a belief that his death saved the entire village from Osu's spiritual infection. From the above two case, it is obvious that fanaticism as dogma in action is a major hindering factor that should be confronted with a counter dynamic mechanism of enforceable law to enhance the grassroots reach of initiatives developed for abolition of socio-cultural discrimination in Igbo society.

Remodeling the dogma of hereditary sin and generational curse: Originally Osu was a free born who was consecrated to different deities of various shrines, perhaps a profession equivalent to a traditional monk in other Religion. They had the privilege of reverence as a highly respected group, leading a life of pious dedication as befitted the servants of a god. (Basden, 1966) As the discriminator of the castes gained momentum in Igbo societies across the colonial era, a belief of hereditary sin and generational curse was conceived as a dogma which contradicted the modern scientific ideology of genetic traits; as concept developed from African methodology that has similarity with the theology of sin in Christian dogma. According to Igbo tradition (Lemchi, 2011) when an Osu is consecrated to a deity the sins of the community or the individuals are transferred to him in a symbolic manner and the castes will bear the community's sin all his life. By procreation, he transfers the sins to his offspring; this goes on from generation to generation as hereditary traits carrying the curses related to the caste. Or there is an inward transformation of the culturally suppressed which remains permanent and passes from generation to generation through procreation. The difficulty encounter most in the abolition of caste system is failure to see the castes system through the lens of Igbo trado- spiritual metaphysics. The history of the Ibos is distorted with superstitious belief in the powers of mystical gods and ancestral superstition which attach mysterious of the environment to mysterious supernatural forces of religion which result in taking drastic in human measure as human sacrifice and dedication of human beings to deities to exist with generational curses and superstitious hereditary errors. Modern approaches developed for the caste's abolition should incorporate a model of remedy through superstition and trado-metaphysical approach.

The problem of sacred prohibition in Igbo tradition: Sacred prohibition in Igbo tradition is essentially a religious phenomenon which entails prohibitions that has sacred value in Igbo tradition or essentially religious rules associated with spiritual beings. In relation to castes system, "Nso Ala" (prohibition of the Earth-Mother) is the major type of the serious group of sacred prohibition observed in Igbo tradition. Nso Ala is a characteristic of the life existence as a forbidden act which may currently be termed bans, as, strictly speaking, can be view as taboos by some Igbo authorities. A breach of Nso ala is taboo or abomination which in Igbo tradition denotes prohibition of the Mother Earth. Sacred prohibition can be regarded as breach of sacred- pollution, which in

relation to the trado-spiritual philosophy of castes system is referred to defiling the land (Talbot, P.A. Opuscit, P. 708) or defilement. (Thomas, N.W.). As defilement, caste systems are regarded as spiritual offences which are believed to threaten the cosmic and social order. Its breach generally incurs for the offender a state of defilement and the threat of supernatural sanctions which can only be removed by the purification rite known as Ikpualu (dragging pollution). The term Ikpu (drag) involves dragging or rubbing the sacrificial victim over the place or persons who may have come in contact with a castes or polluter. In fact, taboos in Igbo tradition are almost invariably thought to apply to acts which are displeasing to the gods, jujus or ancestors and particularly to the earth goddess. Among the Ibos, they are usually regarded as “Nsaw Ani” or “nso ani”, 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 (Talbot, P.A. Opus Cit. P 708). The practice of sacred prohibition breaches the enhancement and advancement of initiatives developed to abolish castes system in Igbo society due to lack of spiritual understanding and practice of defilement and sacrifice of purification because those intuitive centers mostly on state policy, implementation and reintegration of Christian doctrine in Igbo traditional policy which will definitely cause conflict and controversy, and enhancement of British Neo-colonial policy on western education instead of promotion and restructuring of African culture for international value. To tackle the cultural practice of sacred prohibition, either an enforceable law is enacted punish fanatic in their fanatical actions or the fanatic is denied from leading cultural position, or entirely denied from taking cultural decision or emerging cultural leadership.

Inequality in Igbo tradition: Gender and social inequality in one of the integral cultural practice in Igbo society but what lies ahead of the socio-cultural discrimination became paramount when Igbo men started questing for social status in ancient Igbo civilization. As a social capitalist society, the ancient Igbo society foster social status as a means of recognition and achievement, indirectly creating a dichotomy in their social class struggle as well as caste system with some well limitations in political, social, religious, and cultural life. As an enslaved person to a deity, the Osus have no right of life as the culturally suppressed and could be sacrificed to a deity with or without his consent, liberty and security of the person involved. The Osu or Ume has no freedom to activities, own a land and is fully subjected to Diala people. As Marxists classified the Igbo society is socially stratifying unto Diala (freeborn), the Ogaranya (Aristocrats), the Ozo titled men (the political class) and the socio-cultural suppressed as castes (Osu, Ume and Ohu); all under the control of the political capitalist- Nze na ozo titled men. The Ozos are the controller of the government as political capitalist and politics of their respective communities and are viewed as men of distinction and honor.

As the political capitalists of Igbo Society they design the social structure and set the limitation of every class and caste level, because they capture the power of Igbo society and acts as dictators of “burgeous” against the lower class and caste as preliterate. The diala assumed themselves as the freeborn and a recognized status in Igbo community prior to Ozo title conferment; they enjoy all the privileges of citizenship. The second classes of people are the “Ogarayas” who were assumed the aristocrats or economic capitalist and becomes popular through their humanitarian services. Their popularity and influence increase because they are reward with captives, Slaves and maids which a turn enhance their economic position. The third class who remained the first class in castes system are the Dialas who regarded themselves as freeborn as the one who has a recognized status in Igbo

community. This diala has the privilege of becoming an Ozo, Ogaranyan or Oji-ofor, and can be a traditional ruler including other traditional titles. He can be a high priest or a medium man and can purchase a slave and dedicate him as Osu. Socially, diala has nothing in common with Osu, umeh, and ohu. Whenever the diala visits a market or a common place diala might have come in contact with the castes, the diala purifies himself and casts out defilement from himself with an elephant tusk, a fresh egg or small chickens. The lower class and castes are the Osu, Ume, and Ohu; the “preliterate” whose rights and privileges are denied and limited due to social irregularities bothered on Igbo tradition.

The ohu is enslaved to a master but can regain his free born by paying off his debt. Ohu’s diala privilege is suspended when on services and when freeborn is regained, Ohu can aspire to any position in the Igbo society. Ume are discriminated against as “ndi ume” because of the taboo associated with the deities served and ancestral curse believed to be involved. Here, no privilege is entitled to Ume because of inheritance of generational curse. The Osu as well is dedicated to a deity who transmit the same generational curse to the next generation. The Osu has no single privilege, right and freedom to anything in the community, but can be used for sacrificial propitiation to atone for the sin of Ogaranya or community, on a simple diala. Approach towards the abolition of the caste system in Igbo communities should first restructure the social class ideology through policy development and functional mechanism to give Igbo man a sense of equality.

The problem of Igbo political structure and diffusion of power: Igbo political structure is a quasi-republican structure that defines the democratic system of public administration or governance. In each autonomous community is a traditional ruler who act as the Chief custodian of culture and tradition, according to traditional and allied matter act, followed by the cabinet and other groups like the aged group, the community youth, the indigenous women association, the council of elders, and the community council and the village heads who are the titled members of the Eze’s cabinet. Leadership in Igbo communities resides in the Okpara, the eldest son of the family or the eldest in the village who take leadership role in exhaustive deliberation and ratification of community’s problems, but lacks the right of independent action, Unlike the oriental monarchy where the monarchy is too powerful as a god. The Igbo community practices the age grade system where every group established and formed according to the age range of both males and females but serve the community in many spheres. The men’s group formation throws men into position of responsibility in village government, but not all be involved in legislative roles. Women are also active in the affairs of every Igbo community with the formation of Umuada that arbitrate in cases involving women.

They also intervene in settling quarrels difficult for the authorities to resolve and help preserve presence peace in the community. They are dutiful and obedient wives, but are forbidden to be vocal (Nlemchi, 2011). Each of this group has its own political stake as a socio-political structure that contributes its own quota in the community. The problem that hinders the grassroots reach of initiatives developed to abolish the castes system centers on the community. the case study of Irrete community in Owerri West and that of Ogwa in Mbaitoli LGA revealed that in most communities, the tradition rulers lacks the influential power to implement a program or change policy that affect cultural value and tradition. The case of Owerri West LGA, the traditional ruler wielded influence on the subject to mandate for abolition of castes system, while that of the Ogwa hinges on the council

of the elders. Approach towards the abolition of the castes system should diffuse through the structural group that wields the community's political influence or ensure total compliance of the group for a realistic grassroots reach.

Other major problems the Igbo communities are still facing towards the abolition of the social cultural problems are Mindset control problem, The dogma of unchangeable "Odinani", and the Misunderstanding Osu's and Umeh's philosophy: *Osu practice* is a trado-religious practice in Igbo tradition while *Osu caste system* with its discrimination in social cultural dogma. This class distinction due to social status sake and the institution of caste discrimination were conceived and nurtured by Igbo man against his fellow man and woman which gradually became a valued social dogma practice with integrity by the Igbo title holders who consolidated it as the ultimate cultural and traditional value in the life of an Igbo man. As a result marriages have been affected and shattered, class discrimination and distinction were skyrocketed, inequality is paramount in human social interaction, the denial of traditional and cultural title-ship is a culture, and, ultimately, violation of human right became a daily hybridized social-cultural practice embraced by all.

Significance of Igbo tradition

Most societies in Africa survive with the concept and practice of social stratification which in one way or the other causes discrimination, prejudice or injustice as its later consequence. In as much as human societies are confronted with different types of social, cultural, political and trado-religion problems the Ibos of South Eastern Nigeria have encountered three phases of socio-cultural problems across centuries, namely the practice of Osu and Ohu (G.T. Basden) as cultural and trado-spiritual challenge and the establishment of the superstitious ideology of Umeh as pre-colonial social challenge. The second phase is the social discrimination of the culturally suppressed as a caste system during the colonial era (Lemchi, 2011) and the challenge of complete abolition of the caste system as a post-colonial socio-cultural problem for the third phase. The significance of the research paper centers on proper address of castes' identity in relation to Igbo tradition, pinpointing the real conflicting factors that prevent the acceptance of abolition initiatives at grassroots and the provision of the acceptable dynamic model for the abolition of castes system in Igbo communities to cover trado-spiritual, cultural, social and legislature philosophy for a proper grass not reach.

However, most civic initiatives fail because of misunderstanding of the nature and position of the concept of castes system. For instance, the law of 1956 for South Eastern Region was enacted to prevent violation of the human right but did not tackle social stratification in Igbo concept of social status. Other circular initiatives were established for promotion of equality in African society but in most communities the practice of caste system has religio-spiritual link that requires intervention of Igbo spiritualist or shrines priest for propitiation and atonement. Lastly, if an intervention towards abolition of Osu, Ume, and Ohu profession will definitely results to complete abolition or disruption of Igbo cultural heritage, as most proponent of castes system believed, therefore effort towards the abolition exercise should concentrate on castes system as a consequence of social stratification, but reserve the fundamental profession of original Igbo profession as a dynamic mechanism of enhancing Igbo cultural heritage. To correct the misconception, Osu practice is a trado-religious profession formed as a privileged and highly respected group with Liturgical profession that retires a leading life of pious dedication as befitted the servant of a deity in Igbo shrines (G.T. Basden). In other word, the Osu is equivalent to a Monk in other religions.

The trado-spiritual profession was held as an honorable position that requires the service of religious tasks that require many arduous and difficult conditions like serving as a sacrificial shield to shine's priest, Ozo titled men, and the "Ogaranyas" (the Wealthy) in times of community conflict, and saving those who had been presented to spiritual charms at the request of a diviner. (Talbot, 1921).

In their quest to heighten their social status ideology, Igbo man developed a theological tradition out of superstition to consolidate their class system and alter the Ume and Osu's social recognition and later developed hoax and propaganda through the Nze na Ozo titled men to edge them out from public service and confiscated the Osu and the Ume from economic, political, and social, and traditional encounters as "Outcaste". As a result, a mythical stigma was devised against the "caste" as agent of hereditary error/generation curse to frighten the primitive Igbo as mischievous and pernicious heritage bequeathed to Igbo's recent generation through innocent ignorance (Lemchi, et al). To consolidate their belief against Osu, a religio-political approach was initiated by first enforcing a ritual act of bond between the dedicated and the deity worshiped. The part of the Osu's body was cut with a knife or any sharp object to let out blood which will be sprinkled on the special part of the shrine that bears the symbol of the spirit. As a result, scary superstitious hoax was placed on the Osu as a curse to scare people away and barricaded indigenes from interaction with the dedicate believing that Osu is by this ritual a permanent property of the god (deity) and Ume is also a property of deity for death. Therefore, any people who harms the property of the deity or injure the property through bleeding should perform costly sacrifice of reparation. To dominate them, developed superstition confiscate their right and socially suppressed their interaction with Igbo social classes, a retribution curse was developed from superstition and placed against the Osu as a generational stigma, which made Osu first and foremost affected in the present from which he should be excluded by the domineering upper class group of the free born. The major confusion in understanding the heredity phenomenon in caste system is the belief of "curse and sin" traditional concept. The curse attached against Osu is a superstitious stigma hoaxed to demote Osu social worth and prevent the culturally suppressed from interaction with the social world. The stigma is not a sin as some illiterate Ibos hoaxed against, but a superstitions hoax believed to demote their self-worth which conveys notation of cultural suppression and depression, and not iniquities as some communities paraded.

The sin's relation to Osu is Igbo man's superstitious alternative to sacred prohibition, or taboo, or forbidden act which may not include a criminal activity. But the Osu's dedication came from different processes; some were dedicated by the community as propitiation (Lemchi, 2011), some willingly offered themselves for the shrine's services as a divine call (Nkwocha, 2018), others were forcefully dedicated through slavery (Lemchi, et al), while others committed a heinous or unforgiveable crime that warrant the forcefully dedication. An approach which involve theological model for Osu's abolition in a community should seek for culturally depressed family whose originally Osu ancestor committed a crime prior to become Osu or Ume, if history is documented, to perform the ritual act of atonement if the modern community still has shrine not destroyed by Christian fanatics or colonial or for state infrastructural projects towards community development. The complications of social structure in relation of the castes in Igbo society is the misconceived actions of the political class in Igbo society. The Ozo class formed the policy of Osu's permanent residence in the shrine which opened the opportunity of livestock development for the dedicate. Again the Ozo reformed another policy of gross

discrimination and opposed any foreign influence against Igbo tradition as tradition fanatics. The Osu and umeh class first and foremost responded to colonial and Christian provisions and took advantage of the opportunity provided by both colonial masters and Christianity. While the diala and the political class refused western education by holding onto the traditional custom, the culturally suppressed took advantage of the western education and religion to enhance their economic status through Whiteman's administration for better employment opportunities, higher pays, economic and status' improvement through capacity development and productive human development.

Also the Ohu gradually took advantage of the influence and exposures of the master and improved his economic status when the Ohu liberated himself from the enslaved bondage. Till date, the wealth and beauties of foreign marriage of the culturally oppressed are passed over to the next generation as hereditary blessing of the present generation where there are judges, lawyers, beautiful queens, academic and political magnets (Lemchi, 2011). Approach for abolition of Osu and Ume precisely must incorporate the theo-mythical stigma of the political superstition which entails a respect of Igbo trado-religions belief system. The theo-mythical stigma surrounding Osu and Umeh are symbolic notation of their spiritual bondage. For being those consecrated, dedicated and offered to a deity, the Ibos believed the Osu carries the symbolic curse that is transmissible to generation which is a similar doctrine of sin and redemption in Christian theology. As Osu is believed to carried a hereditary spiritual bondage, so also the concepts of generational transmission of Adamic sin is conceived in Christian doctrine. According to Christian doctrine, the initiate is redeemed from the Adamic sin through baptism (according to Orthodox Church) or through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (according to Pentecostal and New Religion Movement). However, both baptism and the doctrine of faith in Christ's redemption are ritual performance in Christian liturgy as symbol of redemption from "bondage" (sin). therefore, a redemption of Osu as absolution is required through either "Ikpu aru" as many Igbo traditionalists suggested (Lemchi, et al), where an abominable is made unabminable by performing strange traditional rites to stop ancestor from punishing the living, which would have resulted to unusual incidence on the living from the ancestor.

The Igbo's concept of Ume is a long evidence of pathological superstition of african primitivism which for a long time had held modern African mentality to bondage of myth. The origin of Ume is known from oral tradition passed on from generation to generation in Igbo communities and the idea is conceived from the different perspectives. The first superstitious concepts of Ume are a free born family with history of sudden and premature deaths. Here, evidence showed African man's misunderstanding of misunderstood natural event as mystery due to lack of scientific knowledge. In any case the Ume is believed to be a set of Igbo people who are prone to death or die prematurely for mystery or inexplicable reasons (Archbishop Anthony Obinna, 2019). But scientific evidence revealed that the causes of the premature death are sickle cell anemia, severe neonatal jaundice and sudden infant death. The second concept holds Ume to be a free born who became a shrine's priest, an ancestral authority, a priest of a powerful and merciless deity -Ume- that prescribe instant punishment when provoked or offended. As a result, the deity and its priest became feared by the people. The fear passed on to the descendant of the Ume priest as well as to their household from generation to generation as a hereditary stigma.

In other word, Ume is fast and foremost a free born (diala) who became Ume by his priestly function at a point in time. Because the deity the priest worshiped is wicked and feared, the Ume priest too is feared and

associated with wickedness. The major feature identity in the first and second concept of Ume is death. According to Igbo belief, Ume deity is a jealous deity that always progresses its Ume worshiper at the expense of the Diala. Ume deity hinders any progress coming to the Diala by killing all the free born and their animals in a compound where Ume and Diala live together in mysterious ways. Ume is believed to live longer than free born in marriage, and sexual intercourse with Ume will result to the death of the Diala (Lemchi, et al). The third superstitious concept of Ume in other Igbo communities is a cursed child born out of wedlock of incest. Incest is a gross taboo in Igbo tradition up till date, and a child produced through incest will be cursed if proper sacrifice of atonement and cleanliness is not done, and the descendant of this cursed child will be regarded as Ume due to curses of death placed of the child.

The Ibos also believed that death from Ume can occur in mysterious ways. Till date marriage between Osu, Ume and diala is still considered abomination due to belief of generation curses which causes the stigma of odium, hatred and discrimination. In the case of the abolition exercise, approach towards Ume's abolition should first rule off the medical condition behind the supposed death in Ume's family, if the family has a genetic history of Hemoglobinopathies or a lineage of AS genotype as well as sickle and infant jaundice before proceeding to the abolition model. If not, a family case history of mysterious death should be investigated to engage the cultural suppressed in Model 3 which involves, not spiritual cleansing atonement of "Ikpuru aru" in the case of Osu, but a spiritual sacrifice of propitiation and appeasement of community deity or the shrine's deity served by the Ume's ancestor for the redemption of the modern descants from the curse of death.

Ohu (slave) practice significant in Igbo tradition and as a result contributes to identity of social stratification in Igbo society. There is a ritual ohu that is equivalent to the Osu (Archbishop Obioma, 2019) and as such requires a spiritual performance of model 3 of the abolition exercise which requires a ritual act of abolition, otherwise Ohu, in most Igbo communities is a slave bought by an Igbo master or willingly offer himself for slave serve to the Igbo master for monetary gains. Originally, the Ohu was a free born prior to the slave condition which thrown the Ohu into an uncertain future and unwanted dehumanization. The Ohu is totally submissive to his lord who could use the Ohu as the master wished. As a result, the Ohu could be used to bury great Igbo free born or political class or the aristocrats. Possibly, the Ohu can be free from life enslavement of the service in a scene of "loan-payment scenario" where the free born is enslaved to master due to loan borrowed. But can be redeemed from the social degradation an cultural deprivation as soon as the debt is offset, and his free born of "Dialaship" is regained. When the Ohu becomes free from the enslavement the freeborn can aspire to any position in the Igbo society and is entitled to any right as other freeborn (Lemchi, et al).

The Ibos are essentially social and in the fulfillment of their lives. The Ibo strive for a communalist life. Prior to colonization of the African communities by the westerners, the Igbo society was unclassified. As the philosophy of heroism and cultural capitalism become glaring in Igbo's Cosmo-philosophical worldview, the sense of class struggles for social stratification evolved and different social classes emerged for recognition against egalitarian. As long as the Ibos have allegiance to the Ala-deity the Diala still remains a slave to the pride that distorts mankind's cohabitation in Igbo communities, paralyzes Igbo unity and peace, promotes cultural prejudice, and consolidated pathological discrimination embedded in African myths. With the pressures of various initiatives developed for the abolition of Igbo socio-cultural castes system in our contemporary age, Igbo man's

sense of cohabitation and equity in dealing with Igbo's contemporaries has been restricted to understand the principles of human value but the Igbo's integrity and inclination towards the mythical fear of trado-spiritual mystery remain problematic, thereby causing fanatical attitude of parent administering poison to their children in defense of their socio-cultural faith and tradition, disinheritance, ostracism, denial of membership in social club, violent disruption of marriage, denial of chieftaincy titles, deprivation of property and expulsion of wives (Madiebo Nwankwo, 2002). Currently, the increased pressure of numerous initiatives developed for abolition of Osu, Umeh, and Ohu castes system has caused the begging of the death of the socio-cultural castes system both in the spirit and minds of the generation that perpetrated the abuse in human treatment in Igbo land. And the present modern targets of Igbo's young generation in most communities are less concerned about such social dogma which has been regarded as an ancient trado-cultural phenomena developed from superstition. Still the pressures of the older Igbo generation are inducing the younger generation to abide by the cultural concept of inequality despite the scientific evidence discovered against Igbo myths due to three psychological factors.

The first factor is the Psychological factor of "Thinking Fast and Slow Model" of superstition (Professor Jane Risen). According to this dual thinking model, the error detection in thinking process does not automatically involve error correction. In other words, people can realize that their belief is wrong but still act on it due to believing that superstition has a soothing effect of relieving anxiety about the unknown and gives people a sense of control over their lives. In regards to the pathological superstition of Osu and Umeh belief, it has its roots in Igbo society when the Igbo ancestor could not understand the forces and whims of (the) natural world and its natural mechanism. Perhaps the survival of our ancestor became threatened by predation or other natural forces. As a result, superstition evolved to produce a false sense of having control over outer condition and reduce anxiety. That still today, superstition is prevalent as an "enforceable culture" on the Igbo younger generation in conditions of absence of confidence, insecurity, fear and threats (Fatik Baran Mandal, 2018) and the threats and dreads of superstition are still inducing the mysteries of Igbo socio-cultural castes system. While Igbo man is restructuring Igbo tradition through legislature and legal policies, initiatives of civil service organization and the influence of Christianity, and through the diffusing culture of western education, effort should be made to enhance abolition initiatives via a Grassroot Receptive Mechanism (GRM) the first method of GRM is Evidence Based Mechanism (EBM) as a scientific fact to counter superstition. Here the initiative must bear the characteristics of practical case studies that have humanistic approach based on the context of Igbo tradition than basing on speeches that focus on the objective of sensitization, seminar and lecture alone. Use practical cases of various successful marriages between the culturally suppressed and the cultural aristocrat and seek for the same approach in the community. in other word every facet and lfe style of this community should be evidence based as a cultural system of life.

Another psychological factor that induces resisting influence against abolition exercise at the grass root level is belief perseverance. Belief perseverance is a psychological bias that involves maintaining a belief despite new information that firmly contradicts it (Baumeister, R.F. eds., 2001). It can be strengthened via back fire effect when others attempt to present evidence debunking them thoughts. Some philosophers like F.C.S. Schiller () maintained that this bias deserves to rank among the fundamental laws of nature but consistent with the view that human beings act at times in an irrational manner (Beveridge, W.I.B. (1980). The Ibo's modern view of castes

system is maintained as a psychological bias based on the superstitious fear of unknown and as a dogma where belief is the foundation for the sustenance of the ideology. In his practical research, Miasani and Moti (1990) concluded:

Even when we deal with ideologically neutral conceptions of reality, when these conceptions have been recently acquired, when they come to us from unfamiliar sources, when they are assimilated for spurious reasons, when their abandonment entails little tangible risks or costs, and when they are sharply contradicted by subsequent events, we are, at least for a time, disinclined to doubt such conception on the verbal level and unlikely to let go of them in practice. (Pg. 1384-1385).

To counter this psychological bias, effort should involve cultural reorientation and reform by the traditional stakeholders of the community through cultural policy development to maintain the sacred tenets of Igbo tradition. Here, the stakeholders involved in the development of cultural policy are the traditional rulers, the cabinet members of the monarch, the Nze na Ozo title holders, the community council of elders, the priest of the community shrines and the chieftaincy group. As one of fundamental developmental mechanism, this effort seeks to enhance cultural heritage through development of cultural policy that will support the practice of Osu practice as a profession like that of a traditional monk, and Ume priestly practice as one of the priestly services into African traditional liturgy, but abolish the contents of discrimination and cultural prejudice as policy for social reform. As a cultural heritage, Osu is a traditional monk and should be retained to enhance the functional services of traditional monks in Igbo tradition. Likewise, the priestly role specifically stipulated for Umeh priest and that of “master and slave” practice which has been existing in varying aspect of Igbo life including trade and commerce. With the involvement of the traditional stakeholders in the cultural reform policy, the reformed cultural practices should be developed as a sacred tenet and serve as the resource foundation to enhance the belief Perseverance of both the traditional fanatics and “dogmatics” in the consolidation of their cultural integrity.

The last psychological factor is parental transmission due to theory of social influence and parental attachment. Here Igbo tradition had not sacred archives or exist through the means of sacred scripture as a writing word, but are preserved via oral tradition that should be in the tablet of the heart through age grade tutorial or parental transmission. Normally the development of the parental attachment starts from imprinting which can be detached at adult stage. One of the major pattern of sustaining the ideology and tradition of castes system is through constant and transmission of the dissemination as a sacred social dogma from father to a son and from mother to a daughter. And in most cases the conceived youths of the family are left with no intellectual autonomy to make self-decision due to parental pressure and influences. To counter these strong barriers as a GRM objective, Parental reorientation through cultural reform by the traditional stakeholders of the concerned community and Youth’s intellectual autonomy are involved.

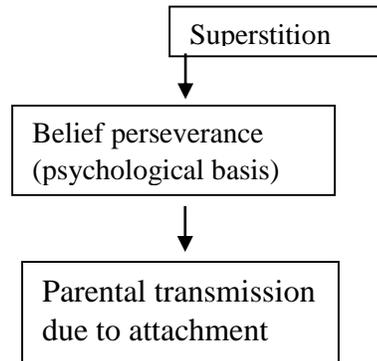


Fig 1.1: The modern day dogma of socio-cultural dissemination at the grass root level is being sustained by three factors at the community.

The way toward through Igbo Fundamental Cultural Liberalism (FCL)

Culture is one of the major social factors of identity developed by man. The same culture can be abolished, restructured, amended by the same man to enhance human value and promote certain political objectives for societal and human benefit. Approach towards reformation of culture entails the need to conform to the trends of modernity which require understanding the consequences of obnoxious cultural practices, legal and social implications of the destruction of Igbo co-habitation against Igbo slogan “onye-aghala nwameya”; as in the case of Osu, ohu and ume castes system. Another implication is the Igbo Oath taking in oracle that involves capital punishment of death on civil matter. Another example is masquerade violation of innocent person with flagellation. In as much as cultural practices and social norm are developed to enhance the Philosophy of human value, certain measures should be taken to constantly adjusting the contents and the philosophy of the tradition and cultural practice for positive objectives which should portrays the concerned community as a society that is susceptible to cultural diffusion through conformity. Since many African societies are advocating for cultural heritage approaches towards cultural reformation can be frustrating. With the influence of cultural capitalism this practice of cultural fundamentalism has become consolidated and unreceptively indigenous traditional dogma against foreign policies. To achieve desired objectives of cultural reformation a dynamic approach of retaining the originality of the cultural practice and reforming its objectives are required through fundamental cultural liberalism (FCL) based on principles of fundamentalism and reform practices with liberal contents.

Fundamentalism can be explained as unraveling attachment to a set of irreducible beliefs, i.e. a tendency that is characterized by a markedly strict literalism as it is applied to certain specific tenets, dogma, ideology, or tradition. By the cultural dogma of “odinani” in Igbo tradition, the cosmo-philosophical understanding of Igbo’s socio-cultural and traditional practice hinges on strict application of ancestral norms which remains unchangeable; as a fundamental approach developed for prevention of loss of cultural heritage and consolidate Igbo culture against foreign influences because indigenous concepts and advocates of fundamentalism argued that globalization has caused significant levels of insecurity for people thus depriving people from divergent answers to reality. Furthermore, faith with very clear rules and absolute truth in tradition and religion proved very attractive in a world of uncertainty and confusion (Anthony Gideon,). By this theory, Igbo society has experience loss of

cultural identity due to influences of globalization and diffusion of western concept and secularism which affect the conceptual sustenance and practice of indigenous culture and traditional practices. On the other hand liberalism entails an intellectual tradition, moral concept based on liberty, consent of the governed and equality before the law.

As a modern and post-modern phenomenon, Liberalism bases objectives of its initiatives and movement of equal rights, freed Liberty, respect to freedom of the governed with the concept of diversity because it is an idea about the meaning of humanity and society. According to John Rauls (1971) Political theory of Liberalism which is based on the fundamental principles of social justice, people chose principles behind the experiment of the original position of people living without talent abilities or what position they hold in society or their race or financial background on equal right to the most exterior basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others, social and economic inequalities must be arranged so they are reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage and attached to position that are open to all. The second principle is intended to ensure equality of opportunity, and these principles are meant to be applied in order. This equality of right has a higher priority than equality of opportunity. Furthermore, Rauls argued that justice requires that everyone has a wide range of basic liberties, and those rights that are essential to personal integrity, such as the right to personal property and right to cultural reform.

By Rauls theory, Cultural liberalism can be seen as a post-modern ideology which entails restricting cultural practices from principles of dogma, tenets, doctrine with the objectives of advocating and advancing free liberty against a tradition, proscription or dogmatic idea which contravenes and contradicts certain dogma that undermine human value and dignity, and human right advocacy as opposed to cultural and traditional dogmatism. FCL is cultural dynamic mechanism through which a community can retain the original cultural practice but subject the functions and objectives of the culture practice to conform to the trends of modernity and also serve as counter resisting forces against traditional and cultural dogma. By fundamental cultural liberation, this article means diplomatic approach of systematically adjusting fundamental belief system and culture of a society through three mechanisms and ensures that the culture conforms to the international and modern policies to liberate Igbo man from the practice of obnoxious culture and prevent violation of human right and Liberty, namely:

- Cultural Policy development
- Structural mechanism
- Functional development.
- Cultural Policy Development entails developing policies to comply with the trends of modernity and international policies that requires grassroots reach in which they operate as well as to build goodwill with both the community and members of the community. Cultural policy can be formed, studied, created and be implementing laws, regulate other actions on a specific public issue by a rural community.

Community public policy for cultural reformation entails developmental stages of:

- Identifying the issue to be addressed by the proposed policy.
- Placement on the agenda
- Formulation of the policy

- Implementation of the policy
- Evaluation of the policy.

In following the principles of policy development, some traditional stakeholders have taken bold steps in formulating policy for abolition of Osu/Umeh/Ohu castes system but these policies lack the principles of fundamentalism through which Igbo cultural heritage can be preserved. For instance, the abolition exercise instituted by two traditional rulers, Eze, E.C. Ekwelibe, of Irete community in Owerri West, Imo State (Rotimu Agbama (2018) and that of the abolition decision by traditional rulers of Oguta L.G.A. in Imo state (NAN, 2018) were conducted without formal process of policy development most especially on the process of regular evaluation because evidence revealed that most fanatical had a parental transmission of this castes system from parent to children on confidential basis. To safeguard Igbo cultural heritage, the policy should be developed to adjust Osu profession practice and Ume priestly profession with dignity as a way of retaining Igbo cultural heritage, but with the view of abolishing discrimination on innocent generation of this descendant of the trado-religion profession. Osu, Ume and Uhu were identified in ancient Igbo tradition by professional practice with reverence and dignity and not by heredity and prejudice.

- **Structural Mechanism.** This approach is one of the greatest challenges encountered in the enhancement of developmental policies for cultural change. In the Igbo communities, structural mechanism involves the political structure of the community. It includes the nature of traditional titled personalities and roles of their cultural institutions, the fate of the age-grade association, the belief attitude of the traditional ruler and dynamic role of the rulers cabinet, the hierarchy of the community women association, the type of cultural and traditional institution established and its hierarchy of the community association, the type of cultural and traditional institution established and its hierarchy etc. The mechanism of the community political structure will determine the mode of the abolition exercise and the community's susceptibility for a grassroots reach. There will definitely be conflict in the administration and tension when the hierarchy of Nze na Oze titled group, chieftaincy group, masquerade group, elders' council etc. are fanatics or many illiterates who are dogmatic with Igbo traditions. Therefore, the hierarchy of every community's cultural institutions should be adjusted with liberalist who had western education with track records of understanding the principles of human value and dignity with peace making and peace keeping ability. The tendency that initiative developed for abolition of caste system will not have a grass root reach is certain when the community's political and structural hierarchies are fanatics and dogmatic, for such will prevent this inflow of the initiatives information in the community and prevent receptive approach as a defense mechanism maintained to sustain the discriminating ideology in the community. Therefore, culturally structural mechanism entails deploying a hierarchy of the community's political structure to enhance the receptive approach of the community toward certain objective.
- **Functional Development** entails the fostering and activities of certain developed policies to achieve targeted objectives of the policy. From time to time it occurs in many Igbo communities when town crier made public announcement concerning the change, amendment and sanctioning of concerned community or village related issues. In the process of this three phase model, public policies are made to reflect good objectives or certain political objectives for the good and peace of the community, but what matters most

is the functional development. In relation to the abolition exercise the enhancement of most factors of public policy depends on the nature of the community's political structure and the hierarchy of the community's political structure and the hierarchy of the community's traditional institutions. For instant, a rural community where the executives of youth association and that of women association are fanatics or dogmatics of Igbo tradition, there is the tendency of maintaining the new policy that support the accepted traditional practices like new policies for installment of traditional rulers, new policies for new yam festival, perhaps the functions of these policies will run smoothly to enhance the functional development of traditional policy. Policies will be frustrated when there is a change against a contradiction of dogma and fanatical view of the hierarchy, but function of the policies will be easily achieved when the hierarchies of both the community's political structure and the cultural institution of the community are liberal in relation to the abolition exercise.

Many stakeholders of Igbo culture have given different suggestions on the way forward toward abolition of the castes system to ensure equality among the Ibos promote social cohabitation and social justice, but their efforts have failed due to several factors bothered on the context of Igbo tradition. Igbo Fundamental Cultural Liberalism is a mechanism through which the Ibos can retain their original cultural value and subject Igbo tradition and culture to conform to the trend of modernity. By FCL, this article means dynamic approach of systematically adjusting Igbo fundamental belief systems and culture through structural and functional mechanism to conform to the current modern policies (UNESCO Constitution, UN Charter of right and Nigeria Constitution). The chief pillars of Igbo tradition are the traditional rulers and other titles holders who can help build the structural mechanism towards realizing the objectives of restructuring Igbo culture and tradition. Culture is one of the major factors of identity, but culture is made by man, and the same culture can be abolished, restructured, amended by the same man. One thing that can help the Ibos to achieve the abolition exercise is by seeing the consequences and implications of their attitude, and the destruction of their co-habitation against Igbo slogan "*onye aghala nwanneya!*" going by this idea of social cohabitation, there are three diplomatic methods through which the Osu/Umeh/Ohu castes system can be achieved, namely Cultural Peace Treaty Approach, Community Participation Method, and Igbo COAAP theological Method.

Cultural peace treaties approach

This is one of the fundamental approaches employed for peace movement and the settlement of conflict between two parties, peace treaty involves an agreement between two or more hostile parties, which formally ends a state or war between parties involved. This can be achieved through *Lex pacificatoria* (Law relating to agreement or treaties to end a conflict or established a permanent peace between belligerent) or through Jus Post Bellum (a concept that deals with the morality of the termination phase or war, including the responsibility to rebuild. In other word, cultural peace treaty involves some initiatives to permanently end socio-cultural and traditional vices discrimination that cause conflict, Odium, hatred, discrimination between a cultural class or culturally divided people in a community through a legal proceeding to make it binding and prevent further future conflicts. In the treaty are:

- Process for resolving future discrimination, odium and hatred.
- The universal equal right to culture, tradition, and social activities to every member of the community.
- Equal right of every person to traditional, cultural and social title-ship.
- Statement to end social status classes and castes.
- Definition of the unjust behavior and penalizing anyone who contravene the binding agreement.

The treaty will be drafted by a lawyer (human right lawyer) and can be signed by the traditional rulers, prime minister, Eze's cabinet member, major stakeholders of the community, and the culturally depressed and oppressed. They fix a date to launch the end of socio-cultural discrimination in their community, and possibly involved the media for public announcement.

Community participation methods

This method entails the involvement of the entire community as a community project designed to solve their own problem, since the youth of the community, the aged and the women can participate in sanitization, masquerade dance, new yam festival etc, so the involvement of the entire community towards these initiatives. A date will be fixed and the venue stated through town crier (after private meeting with the culturally oppressed and suppressed). Invite a major or respected stakeholder to deliver an encouraging lecture to end the socio-cultural discrimination – either a bishop of the church, a judge, a professor, a renowned politician or a major stakeholder in the community to give the talks on:

- Community peace; the way forward
- End socio-cultural discrimination.

A clergy must be involved in the opening and closing prayer. After the lecture, the traditional ruler will involve the community on a solemn agreement to end Diala/Osu/Ume/Ohu castes system. The traditional ruler may pour a libation and make a solemn pronouncement through ofor (staff) against anybody who defy or disobey and disrupt the peace of the community by promoting discrimination of all source. A penalty will be pronounced publicly by the traditional ruler against anybody who contravene the agreement and disobey the order. That day will be celebrated by the entire community every year as a remembrance of their future success through peace. Also involve the media through press conference.

Igbo COAAP Theological model

This is the most challenging and the most promising of all the models explained because it involves a traditional practice that harmonies with Igbo's traditional philosophy. It is challenging in the sense of involving the priest and chief priest with major traditional practices. Since Osu is a traditional practice, Ohu is a cultural practice, and Ume is a traditional belief, the Igbo theological model sound promising in reversing the tradition by remodeling it to cultural value. In as much as its practices can contradict a Christian's faith, the method should be conducted subject to the individual's consent with a view of relieving the spiritual stigma from the oppressed since there is a belief of generational curse. It follows the COAAP theological model of.

- C - Consultation of the gods by the priest to ascertain if the forefathers of the oppressed committed an atrocity or sin that requires atonement and absolution
- O - Opinion of the culturally oppressed is the paramount value prior to anything committed an atrocity or sin the requires atonement.
- A - Atonement will be conducted as a practice that may require provision of traditional material and items according to the specifications of the priest to appease the gods; based on the tradition of the community.
- A - Absolution which involve a traditional practice by the priest to absolve, acquit, discharge, release and relief the oppressed from any generational curse (and perhaps pardon for what was not a just cause of theirs but of their great grandfathers thy never knew)
- P - A public notice will be sent to the entire community through any means (town crier, announcement, villages meeting and gathering etc) to inform the entire community that the culturally oppressed has been relived from any curse, therefore no more Osu/Umeh/Ohu in the community. A good example of this practice is “Ikpuaru” (Lemchi, etal) i.e. where an abominable is made unabominable by performing strange traditional rite to stop ancestors from punishing the living which would have resulted to unusual incident on the living from the ancestors. The practice will be conducted by the priest or “*onye isi muo or onye isi amala*”, to be witnessed by the traditional rulers and the Nze na Ozo in that community. The sacrifices usually are performed by the heads of the kindred or the traditionalist staff holders (Oji Ofor) which medicate between the living and the dead ancestor. The materials require for this sacrifice depends on the magnitude of the matter involved and includes;
- White and black rams
 - Black and white sheep
 - White and black hens and cock
 - Blind he goats
 - Vulture
 - Male and female lizard
 - Camelon, white ants and tailor ants
 - Palm fronts
 - Anunuebe
 - Uzungwo snake
 - Kola nuts
 - Kola nuts paper
 - White and brown chalk and empty pots.

The sacrifice should be made by the traditionalist or priest in the presence of the community and observe in the most important shrine when the original Osu was dedicated and the ceremony should be made on the day time. After offering prayer, one of the live sacrificial animals is killed and its blood spread around the shrine and poured into the pot a little beat of each of other non-living sacrifice is put into the pot. The pot is then buried in the ground

up-side down and covered with sand. The ends of the abolition ceremony of the Osu system among the traditionalist. Other remaining living sacrifice item are slaughtered and cooked and a communal sacrificial meal is held among all in the community. Every other thing for the “*Ikpu aru*” will be heap together in the shrine immediately after the ceremony.

Conclusion

The future of the Ibos depends deeply on their communal and continuous effort to sustain African cultural revivalism via fundamental cultural liberalism by integrating ground breaking projects that have humanistic potential towards human development, enhance cultural value, and build peace and unity. In as much as various Initiatives were developed by concerned stakeholders to uphold social justice by addressing inequality in Igbo cultural practices, adjust marital Crisis caused by socio-cultural discrimination, prevent human right violation and denial of free liberty, some of the initiatives have ignored the traditional and religious contingency that shape African superstition and metaphysic, as such remained failed hypotheses. Every custom is an instrument of positive change and a handmade of civilization, and as such the religious contents of the community should be factored into the context of the community’s custom for a comprehensive analysis of the community’s identity.

The Igbo as an organized ethnic tribe in Nigeria has an indigenous religion and sort for explanation of realities through metaphysical world views. In attempt to solve their mysterious and understand there realities of life, the Igbo communities sort for appeasing the forces that were responsible for the mysteries which gave birth to traditions that were treated not as much as dealing with the “first beginning” but as dealing with the complex of causes and inter-relationship which helped to bring about the cultural constellations known as Igbo. So in treating the Igbo’s castes systems in particular, all the dynamic aspect of Igbo cultural system should be considered as a whole. for instance, in as much as concerned stakeholders on Igbo cultural reform are basing their initiatives on legislative and judicial policies, and civic actors to tackle caste system as a post colonial mandate, there is need to factor in the African superstition caused by inadequate understanding of the scientific explanation of life processes which cause instinctive cultural practices that were based largely on ancient belief in the powers of mythological gods and age-old superstition and served as the fundamental origins of castes system in Igbo culture. By instinctive cultural practice the mysterious of the environment as deaths, epidemics, drought, birth of twin babies were all ascribed to mysterious supernatural forces of religion resulting in taking in human measures of human sacrifices and dedication of life-blood animal including man to appease various deities and counter their action; as a result, the practice of Osu/Ume and spiritual Ohu practice began.

Currently, the Ibos have initiated the conscious effort to give up the practice of human sacrifice and dedication of human being to various deities at various shrines due to the intervention of Christianity and government political effort to integrate infrastructural development which destroyed many shrines in Igbo communities thereby opened up the way for secularism and humanistic approaches to dominate Igbo social and spiritual life. As a result, there is a fortunate call for abrogation of castes system through fundamental cultural liberation to restructure and reform Igbo tradition and culture to add value to Igbo identity and Igbo system of life and at the same time retain Igbo’s cultural heritage.

One of the major challenges the Igbo's are facing as a post-colonial social threat in South Eastern in Nigeria in relation to caste system is the marriage taboos associated with marriage union between the freeborn, according to Igbo culture, and the caste; due to the principal trado-metaphysical beliefs of hereditary curses which is transmissible from generation to generation and believed to be existing as spiritually inborn error with various unverifiable hoaxes attached to the superstition. Generally, the Diala is believed to be naturally endowed with superior and thicker blood; a superstition idea which extol the superiority of the Diala over the castes in their creature power in the manifestation of Igbo culture, every product of Igbo and technical skills are exclusively the manifestation of Diala creative power of stronger and super blood. The believe also portrays Diala as a creature with dominant and purer blood who should not mate with the weaker (the caste) because the Diala will be sacrificed, and the unity will invoke punishment of the gods and ancestors as a transgression of the whole community (Uzodima Nwata, 1982) (Michael Olisa, 1989)

This superstitious belief also forbids extra-marital relationships and prohibit social interactions between the freeborn and the caste. But contrary to this trado-mythical belief and erroneous misconception of marital incompatibility in Igbo culture, the fundamental and natural objectives of marriage between a man and a woman are procreation, companionship and sex which are the basic natural right of every living person regardless of your background, race, community, sex etc, and fundamental to the very existence and survival of a race. It is unsupportable to deny this fundamental freeborn from man and should be morally and legally wrong to use this mythical classification to form a base for social stratification or to justify the basis of stronger or weaker blood which restricts the assumed castes from choosing a marriage mate and violate the person's right. This misconception is directly subversive of the principle of equality and trado-cultural right which is surely to deprive the citizen of Igbo communities of liberty of choice, thus a violation of human right, a criminal offence in the propagation of falsehood and defamation of character and an alternation of nature

Another challenge the culturally suppressed is facing in Igbo society is their right to culture and tradition. The conscription of the castes freedom and privileges and their subjection to eternal prohibition as taboo is a gross violation of human right which originated from a traditional hoaxes propagated by Igbo traditional fanatics for continuous sustenance of cultural prejudice. The hoaxes propagated against the culturally suppressed remain the taboo of the community to keep both members of the community in conformity to action acceptable to the concerned community and by superstitiously believed to the gods. When such taboos are proscribed by the traditional hierarchy, the entire members of the concerned communities will be enforced to accept the proscription as unavoidable law. The hoaxes behind the proscription are tenaciously held as a transcendental policy of which the consequences of breaking the law will be accepted as a divine threat.

The whole members of the community will be engaged in the general surveillance, adjudication and execution of the proscription because of the collective entity which enhances a collective action that will be based on the community's insistence on its claim to the conformity of the individual to its institutions and practices and also belief in the superior powers of African deities believed to be constantly involved in human affairs. In relation to caste system, the cultural hoaxes propagated the consequences of caste as a divine retribution which involves pestilence, famine, infertility, sudden and unexplained death, ill fortunes etc. with this cultural propaganda, the members of the community makes the considerations of the good of the community override that of the individual

suffering became the entire members of the community have been indoctrinated into the cultural practices of a accepting the collective decision of the community's member to testify and believe the confirmation of guilt. With the cultural propaganda on ground, the castes are limited of right to life, liberty, property and security.

The caste can be enslaved to a deity and is not protected; therefore is confiscated of life and right to cultural and traditional practices and subjected to inferior class with social limitations (Ogbula Fredrick Chidozie , 1967) Contrary to this cultural politics played against the culturally suppressed, every human being borne of woman has the fundamental right which is fundamental to our nature and allows the person to fully develop and use human qualities of intelligence and conscience for self-determination. There is no empirical evidence for justification of the cultural hoaxes in relation to caste system and with its contradiction of Christian doctrine, as a religious issue, the occurrence of the assumed consequence is the evidence of Igbo man's established ignorance of unexplainable phenomenon about cultural occurrence that have scientific base like death, natural disasters, accidents.

In as much as the marital right and right to culture and tradition are the two major challenges the culturally suppressed are suffering in our contemporary modern Igbo society, the movements towards abolition becomes a conceptual dilemma due to the problem of loss of cultural heritage. It is not therefore surprising that many Igbo traditionalist or cultural conservatives would want the caste system to be retained due to several reasons bothered on the belief of unchallengeable tradition, restrictions in traditional hierarchy and titleship, belief in deital curses and caste cycle as a cult, problem of social status in Igbo social life and inequality, the custodian role of traditional rulers, and most importantly, the misunderstanding of the cultural policy of Nigeria which seem to suppressed the non- abolition of castes system which explained that *"the objective of preserving culture vis-avis the culture of castes system is not to ossify or mystify the practice, but to ensure the harmony and prevent a mindless of sweeping away Nigeria cultural heritage a situation which can only result in disorderly change and societal instability and eventual creation of a people completely cut off from their cultural roots"* (Cultural Policy for Nigeria, 1988). To balance the weight of prevention of loss cultural heritage and abolition of socio-cultural discrimination in regard to caste systems in Igbo society, Fundamental Cultural Liberation should be employed to retain the fundamental principles of the original practice of Osu and Ume profession in Igbo land which related to traditional priesthood as regard to Ume service and a traditional Monk (in the case of Osu).

Originally, the practice is professional equivalence of a monk in other religion which involves pious dedication with ascetic life as a hermit with monastic role. when the word Osu, Ume and uttered, they usually convey the concept of fear, mystery and prejudice in modern Igbo society but with the role of a monk as a traditional and religious profession, there will be reverence and great respect attached to them as assistants and intercessors of man and deities in Igbo society. By Fundamentalism this article means retaining the basic principles of Osu shrine practices which will be professional vacant position of monks practice in Igbo tradition for prevention of loss cultural heritage and Ume priestly serves as a specialized traditional priesthood profession in Igbo tradition; such trado-religious profession attracts reverence since the practitioners are agents of the gods and add value to the transcendental concept of Igbo tradition. While the principal practices of trado-religious profession are retained as a fundamental African tenet Of Igbo tradition, a diplomatic integration of post-modern humanistic policy should be implemented as an enforceable liberal mechanisms like constitutional development

for cultural reform to end social prejudice and promote cohabitation of Igbo families there by ranting the culturally suppressed the right and full privileges to marriage, culture and traditional practices without limitations, because Igbo cultural tag of identity is identified by profession only and not a later innocent descendant who chose secular and civic profession as a professional carrier.

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