

## IGBO CULTURAL VALUES: IMPERATIVE FOR HUMAN SECURITY

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### **Abstract**

*The paramount responsibility of the leaders of any race is the protection of lives of their people. Life is precious and sacred and as such, all round structures need to be put in place to provide human security. It is unfortunate and disheartening that some humans endanger the lives of their fellow humans, while some leaders, either because of negligence or inaptitude fail to put in place those policies that provide human security. The Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria being aware of the sanctity and essence of life, entrenched in their culture, those values and practices that are capable of guaranteeing human security and peaceful co-existence. This paper therefore is aimed at highlighting the essence of those Igbo cultural values that promote human security with a view to sustaining and preserving them for the upcoming generations. The research framework, human security theory was formulated to direct the research effort in the areas of Igbo taboo system, Igbo covenant, Igbo vigilante, cola-nut presentation, Igbo medicine, Igbo apprenticeship and Igbo marriage procedure, as veritable avenues of providing human security in Igbo culture. This paper established that the aforementioned aspects of Igbo culture promote human security, and therefore recommends, among others, that those cultural values should be sustained and given adequate projection in Africa.*

**Keywords:** Culture, human security, taboo, values, kolanut.

### **Introduction**

Culture summarizes the way of life of a people. It captures, among other things, the belief system, attitudes, goals and aspirations, and the generally acceptable ways of living their lives. The dynamic nature of culture informs its variability from one group of the society and the other, hence a people adopt those cultural practices and values that best suit their needs and peculiarities. Ugwuenye, (2009:180), supports, "...no culture is static, rather every culture is dynamic. Every culture is susceptible to change" Over the years, man has been dealing with the problems and challenges in his environment through shared ideas and approaches among diverse cultures.

Notwithstanding the diverse nature of African cultures, they share some identifiable dominant features that mark them as Africans. Some features, like their world view, customs and traditions, economy, security and others.

### **Security defined**

Security talks about safety, as well as measures taken to be safe or protected. It involves freedom from anxiety or fear. Security could be precautionary measures against theft, espionage or sabotage. Security also guarantees that an obligation will be met. (<https://www.vocabulary.com.dictionary.11/05/2020>).

Security should also guarantee the health, economy and general well being of the people, hence it avails freedom from, or resilience against potential harm caused by others.

Those who stand to benefit from security include individuals, a people or social group, objects and institutions, ecosystems or any other entity or phenomenon vulnerable to unwanted change. (Wikipedia.org, 11/05/2020). From the above explanations, it is understandable that security could be for humans and non humans, but this paper focuses more on human security.

### **Human security**

Human security is multi-sectoral in nature because it involves the understanding of other forms of insecurities. It entails a widened understanding of threats, which includes causes of insecurity in relation to issues like economy, health, environment, person, community and politics. ([https://www.unocha.org >dms>hsu.12/02/2020](https://www.unocha.org/dms>hsu.12/02/2020).)

Human security provides authority and stand point for peoples of the world, both developed and yet to develop, to re assess and restructure the already existing policies as it affects security, economy, development and social affairs. Human security provides tangible and veritable opportunities for people's safety, livelihood and dignity, as the overall aim of security policies.

### **Human Security Theory**

Human security theory is an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities, whose proponents challenge the traditional understanding of national security through military security, by arguing that the proper referent

for security should be at the human instead of at the national level. ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org >wiki>Human](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human)).

Essentially, seven elements and issues are associated with human security, they are, economic security, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. Aligning the human security theory with the contention of this paper, receives mutual support in their contentions. Human security theory holds that a people centered view of security is necessary, for national, regional and global stability. In the same vein, this paper opines that in providing human security, people should look inwards and employ what they already have in their norms and values, as a way of tackling all round insecurity, as well as providing human security for the people.

The United Nations Development Program report's definition of human security, argues that the scope of global security should be expanded to include threats in seven areas:- Economic security, Food security, Health security, Environmental security, Personal security, Community security and Political security. This paper looks into these areas of security vis a vis their panacea in Igbo cultural values.

### **Economic Security**

Economic security gives assurance for an individual's income which accrues from an individual's productivity capacity, or being able to be remunerated by the employers of labor. Economic security has been a problem in developing countries in Africa, because of its underlying unemployment problems, hence the constant eruption of ethnic and political disharmony.

The Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria, have in their culture, means of achieving economic security, such that every child born in that area, grow with the norm, get used to it and grow into adulthood with a sense of economic independence.

### **The Igbo Profession, Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Culture**

The Igbo can be described as dogged and determined to survive, even under terrible condition; that is why they can be found in all nooks and crannies of the world, in search of economic welfare. The Igbo entrepreneurs are energizers of business; they take risks, provide jobs, introduce innovation and spark off economic activities for the sake of economic growth.

The Igbo Entrepreneur possesses special skill and take whatever risk associated with his investment, in order to derive profit. The Igbo entrepreneur is known for having special skill, risk taking, and is motivated by profit. (Asika, 2003:3)

In Igbo land, man is usually identified by his chosen profession. It is from a man's profession that he derives his survival and up keep. One's profession or handiwork could be on a part-time or permanent basis. In Igbo culture, a man's handiwork could be farming, trading, fishing, hunting, black smith, repairer of any sort or any other legitimate kind of work. What matters here is that the worker derives his remuneration or proceeds, with which he takes care of the family responsibilities and other social obligations.

It is noteworthy here that in Igbo culture, robbery, hired killing, trading on humans, prostitution and other illegitimate transactions, are not regarded as professions or handiwork. (Anozie, 2003:128).

Discussing the Igbo profession and handiwork, Okafo and Ewelukwa, (2012: 391), posit,

Ewumewu akụ na ụba bụ ihe akụ akụ na ihe enwe enwe nke ndi Igbo. N'oge gboo, akụ na ụba ndi Igbo gbadoro ụkwu n'ala na ihe ndi ufodu na-esi n'ala aputa. Ala na-enye uto di iche iche, dika nkwa, ukwa, ji na ede, dgz. N'oge ugbu a, akụ na ụba ndi Igbo agbadochaghi ụkwu naani n'ala, e nwere nnukwu mgbanwe di iche iche site n'izu ahia".

The economic institution in Igbo culture entails gathering of wealth by the people. In the olden days, the wealth of the Igbo depended on certain earth's resources. The earth gives a lot of plants like, palm tree, bread fruit, coco yam, etc. In the present age, the wealth of the Igbo is not solely dependent on the earth, there are great changes through trading.

Trading is a reputable profession of the Igbo. Because of their commitment in trading, they have made exploits in the general merchandise. Trading and general business transaction is accountable for the recognition of the Igbo, as the highest travelled and immigrants in the whole world. In Igbo culture, trading is neither discriminated by age nor sex.

Traditionally, trading takes place in the four market days of the Igbo, Eke, Ori, Afo and Nkwo. For those residing in the cities and foreign lands, trading could take place in all the days of the week. Supporting the role of trading profession in Igbo economic security, Ezeuko, (1986:30), asserts,

“N’oge gboo, site n’ihe n’ha ahụ ndi mmadu na-enwe kpatara ha jiri wube ahia. Mgbe amatabeghi ihe bu ego, ha na-azu ahia site n’igbanwerita ihe. Onye nwere ji na-achọ ede, nwere ike gakwu onye nwere ede na-achọ ji, ha abụo agbanwee. Onodu di otu a gagidere tupu a mata ihe bu ego... N’ala Igbo, ufodu weere ahia dika aka oru. Ha bu ndi na-atu mgbere bu ndi ga-aga n’Eke zuta ihe ma gaa n’Ori, Afo ma o bu Nkwo, ree ya. Uru ha nwetara n’ihe ndi ha na-ere ka ha ji eleta ezinulo ha anya, ma tukwa utu diiri ha n’obodo.

In the olden days, the people instituted the market because of the difficulties they encountered. Before the introduction of money, they traded through exchange of their products. Anyone who has yam and is in need of coco yam, can contact one who has coco yam, and both of them will make exchange. This method of exchange continued until money was introduced...In Igbo land, some took up trading as their profession, and those traders go to Eke market to buy their products and go to Ori, Afo and Nkwo, to sell them. The profit they realized from their sales is used to take care of their families, as well as pay their levies and other obligations in their communities”.

In Igbo culture, most professions and handiwork are learnt or acquired through the process of apprenticeship. Those who want to acquire skill in any type of work or trade, usually go to approach the nearest person who does that type of job. For instance, if one wants to trade, one will approach a trader, farmer, blacksmith, fisherman, hunter, etc, as the case may be. The apprentice is received as a son and will be availed the privilege of knowing the rudiments and intricacies of the work. The apprentice, on his own part, will be humble, as well as dedicate himself to the services of his master and the master’s family.

At the expiration of the agreed duration of apprenticeship, the master will settle and sponsor the apprentice to set up his own business. Anozie, (2003:145), explains:

Oge mmadu na-ano n'aka nna ya ukwu wee mutachaa oru, na-abukari ihe dika afo ise ma o bu isii. N'ikwu eziokwu, nke a bu site n'otu amamihe nwa oru ahụ siri di. Mgbe onye ahụ mutachara oru ahụ, buruzie onye nweere onwe ya, nna mụrụ ya na nna ya ukwu kuziiri ya oru ga-agbakọ aka zunye ya ngwa oru zuru ezu. Nke a gasia, onye ahụ nweziri ike iruwara onwe ya nke ya.

The duration of apprenticeship is usually 5 to 6 years. In reality, this depends on the apprentice's level of intelligence. When the apprentice is found fit to be on his own, his father and his master will put their resources together and provide him with complete tools or instruments. After this period, the person can establish and stand on his or her own.

From the above illustrations, this paper has been able to give an insight into some of the ways through which the Igbo traditional society achieved and are still achieving their economic security.

### **Food security**

Food security requires the ability of all the people to always have access to basic food, both physically and economically. By the United Nation's estimation and position, the overall availability of food is not an issue to be worried about, rather the major problem usually lies on inadequate spread of the food and lack of purchasing power.

Over the years, and re occurringly too, food security problems have been tackled, both globally and nationally, though their impacts were barely felt. According to the United Nations, the remedy is to address the problems in relation to "access to assets, work, work and assured income. (<https://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php>.retrieved 15/05/2020).

In Igbo culture area, the most effective and predominant way of achieving food security is through massive agriculture. Agriculture is as old as the Igbo themselves.

Talking about agriculture, Olaudah Equiano, (1788), as captured in Korie, (2007:126), explains, "Agriculture is our chief employment; and everyone, even

the children and women are engaged in it. Thus we are all habituated to labour from our earliest years”.

Agriculture is very important in the life of every Igbo, that attests to why every Igbo, irrespective of their profession, will always maintain a farm or garden, no matter how small it is, where they will plant crops and other edibles.

On the benefit of agriculture to the Igbo, Okafo and Ewelukwa, (2012:396), state:

Oru ugbo bara nnukwu uru n’etiti ndi Igbo. O na-enye ndi Igbo onu.  
O na-eme ka nri buru aja di n’ala. O na-achu aguụ oso. A na-eji oru  
ugbo anu aha mba di iche iche n’uwa. E ji ihe e wetere n’ugbo achu  
nta ego”

“Farming is very important among the Igbo; the people derive joy from it. Agriculture helps in abundant food production, thereby eradicating hunger. Agriculture helps in promoting the names of many countries of the world. The products of agriculture are used for commercial purposes

It is worthy to note here that the agricultural life of the traditional Igbo society is not restricted to planting and harvesting of crops. They also engaged in poultry and animal rearing. With this aspect of the Igbo cultural life, they are able to assure human security in the area of food security. Korie, (2007:149), supports, “Before the colonial period, the Igbo economy consisted of several different productive and exchange activities. The domestic economy was heavily dependent on agriculture, especially yam production. Other forms of economic activities are directly or indirectly linked to agricultural productions”. The ability to produce and secure food for the people is already among the cherished cultural values of the Igbo, in particular, and Africa, in general.

### **Health Security**

Health security is geared towards assuring basic protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles. The main causes of death in the developing countries were infectious diseases and those caused by parasites, while in the countries where there are many industries, the main killer diseases were of the circulatory system. In the present times, chronic diseases, which are traceable to life styles are the major killers in the whole world, with 80 percent of deaths in these diseases taking place in the low and middle income countries. According to the United

Nations, (1994), "... in both developing and industrial countries, threats to health security are usually greater for poor people in rural areas, particularly children. This is due to malnutrition and insufficient access to health services, clean water and other basic necessities"

Africa, as continent and the Igbo, as a people, are not exempted from the situation explained above; but this paper contends that the Igbo and Africa, in general, have provisions in their cultural values to provide health security to their people. Some cultural practices of the Igbo that provide health security to the people include:-

### **Igbo Traditional Medicare**

Healthy life is part of Igbo culture, as well as part of their identity. "Ahamefula" The Igbo world view of medicine is spiritually expressed in the saying, "Chukwu ka Dibia"( God is more powerful than the doctor) Tracing the origin of medicine in Igbo culture, it was observed that the first enemy or threat perceived or recognized by primitive man was death, not disease. The first refuge sought by man was protection from death, and not from disease. Religion, the recognition of, or belief in the Supreme being became the first refuge and armor against death. Later, man recognized disease as the fore runner, harbinger or messenger of death. At this point, seeking for medicine or medical care then became the second armor. (Okoro, 1998:15).

The ethno medical systems in Igbo culture were mainly oral, preserved and handed down from generation to generation, as part of the oral history and culture of the people. In traditional medicine, they have the herbalist, (Dibia mgborogwu na mkpaakwukwo), the diviner, (Dibia afa), and the spiritualist, (Dibia aja), as the major practitioners.

This section of the paper will dwell more on the role of the herbalist in achieving health security. In Igbo culture, it is the duty of the herbalist to use the natural herbs and roots in curing different diseases and ailments. Herbs and roots are prepared by the herbalist for the sake of curing diseases or prevention of different ailments. Therefore, the function of the traditional medical practitioner include:-

- a. Ensuring strong health
- b. Prevention of diseases
- c. Restoration of good health and



d. Healing or curing the sick. (Okafo and Ewelukwa, 2012: 440).

e.

The Igbo, and Africans in general, rely more and believe in the efficacy of traditional medicine.

According to Igbokwe, (2014:336),

The Igbo have different divinities that have control over different aspects of their life. Agwu deity has the power of divination, because of its extra ordinary intelligence and wisdom in the area of herbal and psychological healing. The traditional medical practitioners are said to have received their power and knowledge of medicine from Agwu, who interact with them through dreams, trances and interface with the forest spirits. Those spirits expose to them the efficacy of certain roots and herbs in the curing of certain diseases”.

The above citation stresses the fact that divination and herbal medicine are gifts from the gods, and as such, it is not common to everybody, rather for those who nature has destined to have it. Igbo traditional medical practitioners are well trained medical personnel, just as the orthodox doctors. This fact receives the support of The World Health Organization, (1976:3), saying, “ the sum total of the knowledge and practices, whether explicable or not, used in diagnosis, prevention and elimination of physical, mental or social imbalance, and relying exclusively on practical experience and observations, are handed down from generation to generation, whether verbally or in writing”.

Herbal medicine is part of Igbo culture. The Igbo and traditional African society are more conversant with their society’s understanding of the causes of diseases and their treatments, than the people of western and industrialized society, concerning the germ theory and complex scientific interpretation of diseases. (Okpoko, 1986:59)

The above view is shared by Okoro, (1998:18), as cited in Igbokwe, (2014:338),

Even modern medicine is firmly rooted in ethno-medicine. The use of traditional or natural medicine in health care started from God. The Igbo received the knowledge of roots and herbs in curing diseases as a gift from God, and it became part of their culture. The Igbo transfer this knowledge to their children through traditional

education. In Igbo culture, it is a common occurrence for people, especially the men, to prepare one herb or the other to relieve certain symptoms in their households.

From all these instances, it is established that the Igbo make use of the available natural resources, their norms and values to deal with their health challenges, thereby assuring health security for the people; this has worked over the years, it works presently, and will continue to be effective, if given the desired attention.

### **Environmental Security**

Environmental security is geared towards protecting people from the short and long term ravages of nature, man made threats in nature and deterioration of the natural environment. In developing countries, lack of access to clean water resources is one of the greatest environmental threats. In the same manner, air pollution is the greatest threat of industrialized countries. Another contending threat to the environment is global warming. (<https://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php>, retrieved,22/5/2020).

Environmental hazards, is one of the forms of insecurity prevalent in the Igbo culture area. Because of the prevalence of environmental hazards, the Igbo forbears developed those norms and cultural values that helped, and still helping people to contend the menace. Some of the ways used to tackle environmental insecurity in Igbo culture, include:-

#### **i. Culture of Road Clearing.**

Apart from the annual Mbomuzo (road clearing) festival which is celebrated by many communities in Igbo land, the Igbo have in their character, the habit of keeping their surroundings clean. They usually map out a day in a week or monthly to clear the bushes on the roads leading to their streams, farm, market, or village square, where they usually gather for meetings and festivities. This road clearing behavior, which is aimed at maintaining cleanliness in the community, goes under the following arrangements, or names, depending on the disposition of those practicing It :- .Iza ama (road sweeping), .Iza ahia (market sweeping), .Ibo uzọ (road clearing), .Ibo ama (clearing of the surroundings), etc.

Osuji, (2009:149), posits, " another important aspect of Igbo way of life is road clearing,(Mbomuzo). This event takes different shapes in different towns and villages... villagers organize themselves for weekly or monthly clean up of village and market square."

These behaviors are already part of the norms and values of the Igbo, and they have been employed to provide environmental security to the people.

**ii. Culture of Pond-water Reservation**

Pond water reservation in Igbo culture is an act of digging a massive hole at a designated or strategic place in the community, where floods from the rains that fall in the village will be collected and preserved for use, all through the dry season, until the next rainy season.

A personal communication account reveals that the pond water reservation, not only stores water for the people, but also helps in drawing out floods from the environment, thereby protecting the roads and streets from pot holes, erosions and gullies.

**iii. Igbo Land Use System; Shifting Cultivation Method of Farming, Preservation of Forests and Trees**

These methods are already part of Igbo culture, geared towards protecting the people in the environment. The shifting cultivation method of farming leaves a particular farm land fallow for certain number of years, before it could be farmed on again. By so doing, the land would have grown with trees and shrubs, as well as accommodated some wild animals and other nature creatures.

In the same manner, the Igbo cultural area have some forests which people are prohibited from entering or farming in, also some massive trees that cannot be cut. Some mythical stories and taboos are attached to such forests and trees, in order to deter people from violating the order. These massive trees provide shade for people in the environment and also prevent violent wind and storm from blowing down people's huts and houses. Talking about the importance of these massive trees to the environment, Aguwa, (1995:56), affirms, "...man cannot easily climb to their top, therefore, they serve as the most suitable place for

the birds to make their nests...for human beings, the trees supply expansive shade...”

It is visibly clear that the roots of those massive trees and shrubs solidify the soil where they grow, and this helps to protect the earth surface from erosion.

**iv. The Igbo Refuse Disposal Mechanism**

It is in the culture of the Igbo to sweep their houses, starting from the fire place to the entire compound, and carrying the gathered refuse to the farm for disposal, either on the root of plantain plants, for manure or inside a burrow pit, which was dug during the excavation of mud sand which would have been used in the construction of mud houses. In Igbo culture area, those pits serve as a controlled dumping of refuse site, as well as incinerator, where refuse and trash are burnt.

With these norms of the Igbo people, they are able to protect their environment in the area of sanitation and refuse disposal.

**Personal Security**

Personal security works towards protecting people from physical violence, either from the state or external states, from violent individuals and sub-state actors, from domestic abuse or from predatory adults. For many people, the greatest source of anxiety is crime, particularly, violent crime.

The African culture and Igbo culture in particular, instituted some mechanisms to ensure human personal security. Some of those mechanisms include:-

**i. The Igbo Taboo System**

Taboo stands for religious tradition and culture, it talks about restriction, prohibition and sacredness. In this way, traditional life is deeply rooted in natural order and the common life of humanity. Taboo, in the words of Mairi, (1998:1488), “... is anything which is forbidden or disapproved of for religious reasons or by social custom...it is any system which forbids certain actions as being unclean or unholy, forbidden or prohibited...”

The Igbo ancestors, sort for the meaning of life, peace, order and co-existence, and how man could be placed on check. The solution to these

questions gave rise to religious sanctions, which have remained a common inheritance of the people. (Uche, 2009:240).

The Igbo placed taboo on certain acts and behaviors in order to deter the people from engaging in them.

Anozie, (2003:158), explains,

...o nwere ụdi agwa ma ọ bụ omume mmadụ ga-eme, ndi Igbo asi na omume ahụ bụ nsọala ma o bu aru. Nsọala pụtara omume ala na-asọ nsọ, omume na-emeru ala, na-ebute nnukwu mgbaru ihu n'ebe ndi mmadụ nọ".

...a certain kind of act or behavior exhibited by someone could be regarded as forbidden or a taboo, in Igbo culture. Taboo means the kind of behaviors forbidden by the earth, the kind of behavior that desecrates the earth, which the people seriously frown at.

Whoever commits the forbidden act has desecrated the land and has to receive punishments that go with it.

Some of the acts regarded as taboo in Igbo culture include, :- Suicide, shedding of blood, killing of fellow human, poisoning, incest, etc.

The provision of these taboo and their sanctions in Igbo culture go a long way in preventing the people from indulging in the acts, as well as falling victims of them, hence the human personal security.

### **Igba ndụ; covenant making and personal security**

Covenant making in Igbo culture is another way of ensuring human personal security. Certain disputes in Igbo land are capable of claiming human life/lives. In the course of disputes, the persons or people involved usually avoid themselves, there are suspicions, lack of trust, confidence and above all, fear of either being killed, poisoned, or even being set up by the opponent. This situation of personal insecurity is solved by Igba Ndu - Covenant Making in Igbo culture. Okafo and Ewelukwa, (2012:417), say,

Mgbe ọ bula mmadụ na ibe ya na-enyo onwe ha enyo maka igba ama ihe ha mere na nzuzo, ha na-agba ndụ mgbe ha na-ekwe onwe ha nkwa. Nwoke na nwaanyi nwere ike igba ndụ na-ekwe onwe ha nkwa na ha ga-alụ di na nwunye ma ọ di mma, ma ọ di njo.

Any time man begins to suspect each other for fear of revealing what they did in secret, they go into covenant as they assure each other. A man and a woman can go into covenant as they propose to get married, despite all odds.

Covenant- making also entails that one cannot keep quiet over any danger or tragedy that is about to befall their counterpart. Whoever violets the terms of the covenant, dies. Because covenant helps protect life, and its violation may result to the death of the violator, the Igbo ancestors adopted its use in order to arrest moral degeneration. With taboo placement, a considerable number of vices and crime are being remedied, because those who violet the taboo, receive stiff penalties.

Osuji, (2009:58) highlights the role of palm wine in the *igba ndu* - covenant making:

a collective drinking from one gourd/cup may indicate a process of oath-taking (*igba ndu*) because there is a common traditional belief that those who have drank from one cup have bound themselves together and should not contemplate any evil against the others.

The Igbo culture of hospitality, especially as it relates to kola-nut presentation is another element that is capable of bringing human personal security. Kola-nut is a symbol of peace, respect, good-will, acceptance, forgiveness as well as love and unity. The Igbo believe that kola-nut is life and he who brings kola-nut brings life, hence the mouth that eats it, eats life.

The mutual prayer said, at the presentation of kola-nut touches all aspects of human life and relationship, in such a manner that the people who are present to partake of a blessed kola-nut, no doubt have gone into covenant amongst themselves and will not have the mind to hurt each other, because of the content of the prayer and invocations on the kola-nuts.

The Igbo marriage process, because of its strict search process or investigation, is another cultural element that can generate personal security, such that the two families that want to come together as in-laws must have investigated each other enough with the help of their witnesses to avoid getting into danger through marriage.

### **Community Security**

Community security has the objective of protecting people from the loss of traditional relationships and values, and from sectarian and ethnic violence. Local communities, especially minority ethnic groups are always threatened. Most countries of the world have experienced one form of inter-ethnic crises or the other; hence the United Nation's declaration in 1993, as the year of indigenous people in order to highlight the persistent risk associated to 300 million indigenous people in 70 countries as they encountered an alarming spate of violence.( <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php>. retrieved 26/5/2020.)

The culture of vigilante/community guards can account for personal security in Africa, and Igbo in particular. The community guards and other self-defense groups are formed by the age-grade in the local communities, to defend their people and community against any threat or attack from other areas.

Village guards have lived with the Igbo right from the onset, and the aim is to safeguard the people (<https://www.hrw.org>nigeria0502-02>. retrieved 25/05/20.)

### **Political Security**

Political Security looks into how far the basic rights of people in the society are guaranteed. The United Nation's human security report (1992), referred to a survey conducted by Amnesty international, which reveals that political repression, systematic torture and ill-treatment was still practiced in 110 countries. Infringements on human rights are mostly experienced during political upheavals.

Taking the issue of political security to the grass root, from the point of view of Igbo culture, The Eze (Traditional Ruler), being the first citizen of a community, and duly selected or elected by the citizens of the community, has the onus of assuring political security to the people.

The Eze, by his quality should be widely knowledgeable and wise in the history of the community and its citizens. The opinion of the Eze must be regarded as an authority in matters concerning the culture and tradition of the people. In Igbo culture, in the course of selecting or electing an Eze, though granting of hereditary right to a particular family, village, town or clan, is considered, but

the underlying historical reasons behind the selection should not be overlooked. Some historic attributes like gallantry, wrestling prowess wit and wisdom are what the Eze needs, in order to provide political security to his subjects.

About the functions of the Eze in a traditional community, Osuji, (2009:99) posits:  
A traditional ruler is primarily the number one traditional citizen of a community. He is the custodian of the people's tradition, custom and culture... A traditional ruler is a link man between his community and the local government in certain matters. In recent times, local and state governments, moreover, the federal government has tended to extend in practice the role of traditional rulers in the country by depending on them for advice on vital national issues.

The Eze has the duty of settling minor land disputes, marriage, conflicts, family friends, inter or intra village or town quarrels. In the legislative process of the community, the traditional ruler is like the president, the chairman of the Town Union is the traditional prime minister, with his cabinet members Eze-in-Council, (upper house). The traditional ruler makes some legislative proposals for the lower house' the Town Union. The Chairman of the Town Union considers the proposal and makes a resolution that must not be in conflict with the custom and tradition of the people, which the Eze represents.

If this atmosphere of respect, responsibility, mutual trust and confidence exists in any community, it is likely that conflicts, which have become rampant in many areas today, will be curtailed. (Osuji, 2009:105)

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Human Security is fundamental to human living. It includes continuous protection and provisions of those essentials that make life worth living. It is therefore pertinent that efforts and programmes about human security should be focused on the vulnerable in the localities, where they are bedeviled with hunger, diseases and natural disasters. The United Nations Development programmes classified human security under economy, food, health, environment, personal, community and political security.

Having considered human security vis a vis these subheadings, this paper contends that African Cultural values, especially those of the Igbo, of



Southeastern Nigeria, have some structures in place, that can assure human security for their people.

### **Recommendations**

In order to employ the cultural values of a people, as veritable instruments of providing human security, this paper recommends as follows:

- Threat agenda on human security should spread its tentacles to include hunger, diseases, natural disasters, because they are inevitable concepts in tracing the root of human insecurity.
- Entrepreneurship should be embraced and encouraged at all levels of leadership in order to provide economic security to the people.
- The Igbo/African ethno-medical systems need to be documented as a way of preserving them for the upcoming generation as well as positioning them in a place of relevance in today medicine, in such a way that there will not be any dichotomy between ethno medicine and modern scientific medicine.
- Traditional measures should be employed in taking care of the environments at the community levels, in view of governments' inability to be everywhere at the same time.
- Cultural studies should be encouraged at all levels of African educational programmes to keep the present generation informed about their norms and values.

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