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## **In Search of Solution: Images of Insecurity and Their Traditional Management System in Selected Igbo Novels**

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### **Abstract**

*Insecurity is a major global challenge, and Nigeria has had its share of it. Current discussions are aimed at providing a better understanding of the drivers of insecurity as well as possible solutions or ways of mitigating it from a range of perspectives including language, culture and literature. Literature not only mirrors societal challenges such as insecurity which is a fall out of social vices but also offers insights on ways to their traditional management system. This study, therefore, examines images of insecurity and the traditional approaches to the management system. More specifically, the study analyzes some Igbo novels with the images of insecurity in order to identify some social vices which harbor images of insecurity and their traditional management systems. The study reports on data collected via primary and secondary sources. The study adopts the content analysis method to analyze the collected data from the selected Igbo novels. The findings of the study include the following traditional management system such as mediation by elders, equal human rights, oath taking, establishment of indigenous security outfit, empowerment of the youths, communal bond application, use of cultural symbol, among others. The study advances that more researches on the management system of insecurity challenges in Nigeria should be carried out.*

**Keywords:** insecurity, traditional management system, Igbo novels.

## **1. Introduction**

All over the world, insecurity which is a fall out of social vices have been on the rise and Africa as a whole of which Nigeria is an integral part of it is not left out of this issue ravaging the globe. Insecurity threatens the unity of Nigeria, and has resulted in deaths of innocent citizens and foreigners alike, farmers, government officials, students, market women, security personnel and people from different works of life. In Nigeria, this situation on ground has crippled a lot of socio-political and economic activities. This manifests in form of various crimes such as armed robbery attacks, incessant kidnappings, assassinations, ritual killings, ethnic clashes and other high-risk attacks to human life.

Nigerian government on its own part has put in efforts to curb this societal menace but all efforts put together have not yielded the much-desired results which is protection of lives and properties of citizens. Extant studies focus on providing a better understanding of the causes of insecurity and how best to proffer lasting solutions through varied perspectives of which language, literature and culture are inclusive.

This study focuses on literature as huge insights can be drawn from traditional management system of insecurity, which is a fall out of social vices. This is because literature mirrors the society. Insecurity, being an age-long societal menace is represented and or portrayed in different literary works expressed in some indigenous languages and culture. This is a way of providing a bottom-up management strategy, and advance discussions on images of insecurity particularly in Igbo cultural milieu.

### **1.1 Objective of the Study**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine images of insecurity in the selected Igbo novels
2. To examine the traditional approaches suitable for the management system of these images of insecurity as represented in the selected Igbo novels

## **2. Traditional Systems, Literature and Insecurity: A Conceptual Analysis**

Traditional systems refer to tradition-based method of customs or belief systems running from generation to generation to manage issues. In the Vanguard Newspaper of 17 August, 2021, Dapo Akinrefon, writes with the caption “Insecurity can easily be tackled through traditional methods”, the views of Iba Gani Adams, the Aare Onakakanfo of Yoruba land on the best way to handle insecurity challenges ravaging our country, Nigeria and with particular reference to the Yoruba people. Adams boldly advocates that it is possible to adopt traditional methods to handle insecurity challenges in Nigeria and with particular reference to the Southwest region. He made this assertion during the Ifa Festival at Alagbole, Ogun State. He reiterates that until Nigerians and Yoruba people redirect their steps to the basic principles of “our being, we cannot make any meaningful progress as a race”. He further states that Ifa divination is consulted in event of any important individual or collective decision is to be made. His position is that any race that fails to hold on to its culture, traditions and heritages cannot make success. Our cultural heritage should be our binding force and not religion and politics.

Security simply means safety to the average man or woman in the street or protection from harm and risky situations (Onifade (2013). For Onukawa (2012), security is a basic psychological need

for human beings. The Igbo place high premium on security and do everything possible to ensure their security anywhere. Avoidance of dangerous situations considered to be free from negative vibes in Igbo traditional ethics is most paramount to them. Insecurity is the opposite of security. To Achumba (2013), insecurity means lack of safety or existence of danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of trust; doubtful; inadequately guarded or protected; lack of stability; disturbed; lack of protection and unsafe.

The importance of Literature in every given society cannot be over-emphasized. It is a very useful mirror through which humans and the society are viewed. It consists of three genres, namely: the ignored in spicing our oral and written discourse. According to Nwabueze (2004:6), cited in Eze (2014), “Indifference to literature is the bane of societies like Nigeria. Any society that abhors literature is incapable of humanistic thinking and cultural behaviours”. Notable scholars have given their view on what should consist as Igbo literature. To some scholars like Emenyeonu (1978), Igbo literature consists of literature written about the life and times of the Igbo people in Igbo language and English language by Igbo scholars. To him, *Achebe's Things Fall Apart* and other literary works of life about Igbo world view and belief system are classified as Igbo written literature. Whereas to scholars like Ugonna, Maduka, Emenanjo and Onyekaonwu, what determines Igbo literature is the language in which the imaginary ideas are presented. Therefore, Igbo novels, the focus of this study are literature written in Igbo language by Igbo authors for the Igbo people. The first Igbo novel, written in Igbo language by an Igbo author, Pita Nwana, in 1933, an award-winning masterpiece that ushered in Igbo written fiction, is *Omenuko*, a biographical novel about a legend, Igwegbe Odum, who hails from Arondizuogu in the present-day Imo State, Nigeria. After this remarkable outing, other authors followed suit

with various themes not only in fiction but also in drama and poetry to get us to the level we are in at the moment.

## **2.1 Context of the Study**

The issue of insecurity is on the increase in Nigeria and this has attracted the interest of different scholars from different perspectives. Some studies have focused on insecurity in Nigeria. Some of such studies include Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim (2013), Osawe (2015), Okonkwo, Onuigbo, Eme & Ekekwe (2019), Zubairu (2020). Onifade et al (2013) carried out research entitled “Addressing the Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria: The Imperative of Moral Values and Virtue Ethics”. The objective of the study is to focus on the need to revive moral values and virtues within the socio-economic, political, religious and educational institutions in the country. They are of the view that Nigerian leaders, politicians and all citizens must be forced to embrace moral values and virtues in all their conduct to enable them live by example and avoid heating up the polity capable of inciting violence which tends to disrupt peace and unity of purpose. The findings among other things include that the Nigerian political leaders should clamp down on their quest for power by all means for no citizen’s blood worth being spilt just to gain power. The observation is that the security challenges in Nigeria throws a very big moral challenge to all and sundry to imbibe the quality of high moral standards which places high premium on the lives of the citizenry thereby enhances equity, unity, justice and fair play in Nigeria. Osawe (2015) carries out the study on the “Increase in Wave of Violent Crime and Insecurity: A Threat to Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria”. Within the framework of deprivation theory, the paper critically examines the issue of high rate of violent crimes in Nigeria, its implication on socio-economic development. To him, the government should do all within her powers to ameliorate the rate of unemployment of the youths in the

country in order to curb the rise in crime rate. Okonkwo et al (2019) examine the recent security challenges in Nigeria via the: “Traditional Rulers and Community Policing in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects”. They emphasize on the involvement of traditional rulers in community policing which seems to increase in tempo with the emergence of every new Inspector General of Police, all points to a rising appreciation of the place of traditional institutions in the search for peace and order. Zubairu (2020) researches on the “Rising Insecurity in Nigeria: Causes and Solutions”. The study reiterates the high level of insecurity issues in Nigeria and tries to proffer solutions for its eradication. The findings reveal that causes of rising insecurity in Nigeria include: the menace of unemployment and poverty, elite exploitation of ethnicity and religious differences, corruption, weak security apparatus, porous border, marginalization and inequality in the country, bad governance and poor leadership. The study concludes that solution to the issue of insecurity in Nigeria range from opposing the aforementioned causes of insecurity.

In the studies reviewed, the scholars delved into the issue of insecurity challenges from different perspectives. One scholar approached it from the angle of moral values and virtue ethics, the others looked at it from the causes and solutions effect, high rate of crime effect and the involvement of traditional institutions especially the traditional rulers as the custodians of the people’s culture and tradition. These studies are different from the present study in the sense that it discusses solution to insecurity challenges being sought through literature by identifying images of insecurity and the traditional approaches to the management with reference to selected Igbo novels.

### **3. Methodology**

This study uses qualitative research approach and the thematic method of analysis of data. The technique of content analysis is used to analyze these data. The primary source of data is from the selected Igbo novels- *Mmiri Oku E Ji Egbu Mbe* and *Ukpaka Okpoko Buuru* by Ubesie, T. U. The study focuses on images of insecurity as seen in the two literary texts while the secondary sources were derived from other library materials and the Internet. At the end, images of insecurity challenges were identified through thematic approach from each of the texts as well as some traditional approaches to the management system of insecurity. After careful scrutiny of the texts, the expressions indicating the existence of images of insecurity challenges were identified just as the experience in Nigeria broadly and in Igbo land and culture of today.

#### **4. Synopsis of the Selected Igbo Novels**

In this section, a summary of the selected literary texts were presented starting with the first novel, *Mmiri Oku Ji Egbu Mbe* (1974).

##### **4.1 ‘Mmiri Oku E Ji Egbu Mbe’**

Ubesie’s novel *Mmiri Oku E Ji Egbu Mbe* (1974) is a fiction which centers on Enyi, an orphan, whose parents-(Uzodimma and Chinyere) death was as a result of the feud between Chinyere (Uzodimma’s wife) and Okafọ’s wife whose name was not mentioned. Out of hatred, jealousy, and unestablished facts concerning his son, Enyi’s (health issues, Uzodimma took laws into his hands to end Okafọ’s life. Justice took its course and Uzodimma was sentenced to death by hanging. Shortly after, Chinyere, Enyi’s mother out of stomach ache, joined her husband leaving Enyi, their only surviving son at the mercy of his uncle, Ebuzo and his wife, Nneka, as foster parents, as custom demands. Enyi’s stay with them

brought untold deprivation and hardship to him at a very tender age which made him to flee from their home to start a wild kind of life in the society.

Enyi's abode becomes classroom block, and market places which exposes him to meet and join bad gang in the society. His nefarious activities gradually move from pickpocketing to armed banditry. His escapades took him to various cities like Enugu, Ndiabia and Zengu. The robbery attack at Maazi Anagbogu's house landed some of his gang members in prison while he, Enyi escapes due to ill-health resulting to his being hospitalized. While waiting for his gang members to serve out their prison term, Enyi relocates to his home town to become a terror to them. His people, being tired of his terrorizing activities, made him the chief security officer. He met his Waterloo after the robbery attack at the bank at Zengu. Through the help of Chukwudi, the young man Enyi was nurturing to be a member of his gang, Enyi was caught, tried at the law court and sentenced to five (5) years jail term. At the end of his imprisonment, he travels back to his home town as a rich man to squander the remains of his ill-gotten wealth. Not too long, his state of bankruptcy makes him to have a rethink about his personality to face reality. He decides to venture into farming to maximize his God-given potentials and with the help of his community; Enyi becomes a successful farmer and a figure to reckon with amongst his people.

#### **4.2 'Ukpana Okpoko Buuru'**

Ubesie's *Ukpana Okpoko Buuru* (1975) is a fiction about a town, Ifite-Amaeke which is characterized by insecurity challenges such as: armed robbery activities, drug addicts, bad Leadership, kidnapping, assassinations and ritual killings. The perpetrators of these criminal activities branded themselves 'Ndi Odogwu'. They

have no respect for constituted authority or anyone who dares to caution them to desist from these criminal activities. That was why they threw caution to the wind and defiled the advice of their king to stop dragging the name of their town to the mud instead they left their town, Ifite-Amaeke and encamped in the bush to form their own town named Ifite Ukwu from where they re-strategized to dethrone Obi Udejaja, the king of Ifite- Amaeke and crowned one of their members, Okoye as the new Obi, who will always give them his maximum support. The god of the land, (Ogba) warned them against using snake bite as a cover up whenever any of them is wounded during robbery attacks at their neighbouring towns- Umufafa and Agbagwu, but the warning fell on deaf ears until Ogba decided to be killing them truly by snake bites.

After, a robbery attack at Obi Okoye's, palace, they saw it as an abomination and summoned the entire town to a meeting. They give special title to their members who successfully returns from robbery adventure severally without being caught. It was during Maazi Ezekwe's title giving ceremony in which Maazi Obijiofo, an upright and out-spoken man, who was asked to bless the kola nut for the occasion condemned in unequivocal terms the various atrocities previously committed in their town. This his boldness to openly challenge the activities of 'Ndi Odogwu' marks the beginning of a new way of life for Maazi Ezekwe and a very strong relationship ties with Maazi Obijiofo and at the same time the beginning of his (Obijiofo's) travails in the hands of 'Ndi Odogwu'

'Ndi Odogwu's first robbery attack on Maazi Obijiofo's house with the intention to kill him was foiled by Maazi Ezekwe's prompt information before hand, the outcome of which remains an unforgettable nightmare to 'Ndi Odogwu for a long time. After this incident, Obijiofo left Ifite Amaeke to Umufarof with his entire family where he was tracked down and killed by 'Ndi Odogwu during a

hunting episode with his sons but with an instruction to his sons-Jideofọ and Obiọra in case of any eventuality to bury him with his gun. On their return to Ifite-Amaeke, Jideofọ and Obiọra faced a lot of armed robbery, kidnapping and assassination attacks in the hands of ‘Ndi Odogwu’ until they (Jideofọ and Obiọra) come to terms to deal decisively with them to broker permanent peaceful co-existence.

However, ‘Ndi Odogwu’ of Ifite-Amaeke vows never to stop their notorious lifestyle. This time, they kidnapped Kasie, an only child of his mother Mgbafọ, from Umụikenga, their neighbors and used his skin to beautify their musical instrument, *Edere* regardless of the warnings from one of them, Maazi Onyia to desist from such dastardly act capable of culminating into chaotic situation. War broke out between Ifite-Amaeke and Umụikenga but not without Obijiofọ’s transfiguration to warn his sons about the impending danger, instructing them to flee from Ifite-Amaeke and Ogba’s warning, too. ‘Ndi Odogwu of Ifite-Amaeke together with their war lord, Meenihu were completely wiped out from the face of the earth. After the war, a new Ifite-Amaeke emerged and is called, Amaeke, ably led by Jideofọ and his brother, Obiọra.

## **5. Images of Insecurity in the Selected Igbo Novels**

In this section, the various images of insecurity challenges in the selected novels were identified:

### ***Mmiri Oku E Ji Egbu Mbe***

In Ubesie’s *Mmiri Oku E Ji Egbu Mbe*, the following images of insecurity were identified:

- Hatred, quarrel and unestablished accusations abound (Uzodimma and Okafọ).
- Inhuman treatment and denial of the basics of life (Nneka).

- Pickpocketing, stealing and armed robbery in the society (Enyi & his gang).
- Corruption tendencies in the society (Nduka's case).
- Trapping a culprit through a closest associate (Enyi & Chukwudi).

### ***Ukpana Okpoko Buuru***

In Ubesie's *Ukpana Okpoko Buuru*, the following images of insecurity challenges were observed:

- Many criminal activities such as: armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination, ritual killing, drug addiction (all perpetrated by 'Ndi Odogwu' of Ifite Amaeke).
- Disobedience to constituted authorities at all levels (Obi Udeaja, elders, Ogba, the god of the land by 'Ndi Odogwu')
- Bad leadership fuels corruption (Obi Okoye instituted by 'Ndi Odogwu').
- No place like home. Home is the best (Jideofọ & Obiọra).
- War wipes off a nation. Peace is better than war. (Ifite Amaeke & Umụikenga)

## **5.1 Traditional Management System**

From the forgoing, it is an indisputable fact that literature is the mirror with which people and the society are viewed. Contemporary societal events have been predicted by fictional writers before such events come into physical manifestation. Insecurity challenges are one of such situations already in place from the time past. This study identifies the traditional approaches to manage them whenever the need arises. Just as insecurity challenges do not occur in vacuum without human agents propelling it, traditional approaches to the management of insecurity in the land cannot be achieved without the involvement of human beings as agents for accomplishment.

Some of the traditional approaches to the management of insecurity challenges present in the selected Igbo novels include: mediation by elders, equal treatment, oath taking, empowerment of the youths into agricultural ventures, establishment of traditional security outfit, good leadership, communal bonding (Igba Ndu), use of traditional symbols (Omụ Nkwụ), sound of the drum (*Ikorò*) banishing or ostracizing the immoral persons amongst us, etc. and human agents designated for their accomplishments are parents and foster parents, family and friends, elders, age grades, traditional rulers, entire members of the community and government. Let us take a quick look at them one after the other.

### **5.1.1 Mediation by Elders**

In our traditional Igbo culture, it is not in our character to allow two warring parties to destroy themselves without intervention. Our people say, *okenye anaghị anọ n'ụlọ, ewu amụọ n'ogbu* (an elder does not stay at home and watch the goat delivers in thither). If elders were able to mediate into the situation between the two families at the appropriate time, Uzodimma would not have taken laws into his hands to end Okafọ's life abruptly. All avenues for finding out the truth and settle the matter amicably were not fully explored so as to sanction the erring party to serve as a deterrent to others for future occurrences. War is an evil wind that blows no one any good. The war between Ifite-Amaeke and Umụikenga completely closed up the generation of 'Ndi Odogwu' of Ifite-Amaeke because they bluntly refused to listen to the advice of well-meaning elders in their town and the warnings from their god, Ogba. The 'Ndi Odogwu' of Ifite-Amaeke became the proverbial *Ukpana* (Grasshopper) who refuses to adhere to the instructions to go into hiding while *Okpoko* (another stronger insect) is around the corner, hence, it, *Ukpana* (Grasshopper) ended up as food for the *Okpo*

(another stronger insect), While the family of Jideofọ and Obiọra, the sons of late Maazi Obijiofọ who adhered to the advice of their father were ushered into a new town of Amaeke. Truth, our people say is life. We should endeavor to live in peace no matter what it will cost us. If this traditional approach is applied in the management of the insecurity challenges identified here, things would have turned out better for the benefit of all concerned.

### **5.1.2 Equal Treatment**

Children are special gifts from God and as such should be handled with extreme care. Parents or foster parents are the first agents of socialization of a child, therefore, bear the responsibility to see that the children God has placed in their care will not derail early in life as to negatively affect the society at large. When we bring up these children in love and provide them with the basic amenities of life such as shelter, food and education, they grow up to become blessings to the society they belong rather than being a curse. In *Mmiri Oku E Ji Egbu Mbe*, Nneka, Enyi's uncle's wife threw caution to the winds by the way she was maltreating Enyi, the orphan. She constantly denied Enyi of good nourishing food simply because he, Enyi was not her biological son and this forced Enyi out of the house to become a social misfit. The Igbo people say, *e buru nwa n'afọ ọ buru sọ nke onye, mgbe a mụrụ ya amụ ọ buru nwa ụwa niile* (when a child is in the womb, it belongs to one person, but when born, it belongs to the society). Again, *otu onye anaghị azu nwa* (child upbringing is a collective responsibility). We therefore, advocate for equal treatment for every child irrespective of any biological accident of birth. In *Ukpana Okpoko Buuru*, Maazi Obijiofọ brought up his two sons- Jideofọ and Obiọra as tradition demands and they were able to maintain the led down precepts even after the demise of their father. Such good moral upbringing will go

a long way to curb these insecurity challenges which is a fall out of social vices. A child that is not well brought up grows up to become a social miscreant terrorizing the society at large.

### **5.1.3 Oath Taking**

The traditional rulers are said to be the custodians of our customs and traditions. Whenever there is an issue in contention between individuals or entire community of jurisdiction, a means must be devised to find out the truth and one of such means is by oath taking. Oath taking is a vital traditional approach to the management of insecurity in Igbo land. This approach came into play in the life of Enyi and Obijiofo's sons-Jidefo and Obiora to ascertain the truth about a robbery incident. Enyi was found guilty of the offence while the oath exonerated Jidefo who took the oath on behalf of his brother, Obiora and the entire family. They use to say that, *Agburu otu onye na-an uru iyi maara onwe ha* (a kindred where one person can take an oath on behalf of others are truly trustworthy).

## **5.2 Establishment of Traditional Security Outfit**

Another traditional approach to the management of insecurity in Igbo land and culture is the establishment of an indigenous vigilante security outfit to take charge of the safety of the community. Oftentimes, the vigilante group is constituted by those people with questionable character because the Igbo do say that *Nkita anaghi ata okpukpo a nyawara ya n'olu* (The dog does not chew the bone hanged on its neck). This means that one is expected to safeguard tenaciously whatever is entrusted in one's care. It is an abomination to go contrary to the expected societal norm because it is meant for preservation. The perpetrators of these dastardly criminal acts are already known to the members of the community. Hand them over the security watch over the land with enough incentives and watch

sanity return to the land speedily. In *Mmiri Oku E Ji Egbu Mbe*, Udenze, implored this method to track down Enyi by making him the head of the local security outfit in his home community of Ndiabia at some point and his people enjoyed some respite within this period before he joined his gang again at Enugu. This is a very good traditional approach to curb the menace of insecurity challenges in our contemporary society. Community policing, Vigilante or any other indigenous security outfit formed at the local level will go a long way in ensuring a firm control of our insecurity challenges. Anyone found guilty faces banishment or being ostracized from the community. At times, jungle justice is applied on very extreme cases.

### **5.3 Empowerment of the Youths:**

Age grade system has been an age-long social institution practiced in every society of which Igbo land is not an exception. They are fully involved in our traditional education activities and can also be a very useful tool for traditional approach to the management of insecurity challenges in our land. As the saying goes that ‘an idle mind is the devil’s workshop’, and that the youths of today are our hope and future leaders of tomorrow, engaging the youths in every society with meaningful means of livelihood should be paramount to the society where they belong. Everybody must not go to school in pursuit of white-collar jobs which is no longer within reach except for the privileged political class and well to do who have the connections. Unemployment is the root cause of poverty which gives birth to evil tendencies because the living must take good care of themselves. The youths must be gainfully employed at the local, state and federal levels to enable them to take care of their basic needs which is their fundamental human right.

‘Ndi Odogwu’ of Ifite-Amaeke do not believe in suffering before pleasure, therefore, failed to put to use their youthful strength by engaging in agricultural activities for the benefit of all. To them, armed robbery is the quickest and easiest means of being wealthy. They are likened to the youths of our present dispensation who engage in Yahoo ventures, ritual killings and kidnapping for ransom to earn a living. People in Diaspora are even afraid of coming home for fear of hoodlums spread everywhere. Jideofọ and Obiọra his brother proves that there is no place like home. Enyi ventured into farming later in his life and realized how he misused his potential youthful life. Traditionally, the Igbo people are predominately farmers but we abandoned it in pursuit of white-collar jobs. Our large expanse of lands are wasting away and being used as hide outs for criminals as well as the so called herdsmen attacking innocent lives and properties to perfect their kidnapping activities. ‘Ndi Odogwu’ of Ifite-Amaeke is not left out in this type of lifestyle. Our youths should be engaged in serious agricultural activities to earn a living instead of involving themselves in youthful exuberance of get-rich-quick syndrome very likely to cut short their lives. Association with people of same interest is a motivating factor to watch one another’s back to dictate the culprit in the case of any eventuality. Enyi’s association with Chukwudi no doubt paved way for his arrest, trial and subsequent sentence to five (5) years imprisonment.

#### **5.4 Good Leadership**

Our traditional rulers are said to be the custodians of our customs and traditions; therefore, efforts should be made in the careful selection of the right persons. Good leadership enhances peace and orderliness while bad leadership is a serious threat to peace and unity. We know our local routes and can easily block intruders as

well as deal mercilessly with them if they try to escape. Obi Udejaja of Ifite-Amaeke is an example of a good leader who was not allowed to complete his reign but was rather forced into exile while Obi Okoye is a clear example of a bad leader who supports as well as fuels the anarchy in the land. Such leaders are not supposed to lead the people. Peradventure such bad leaders do exist, the people will pass a vote of no confidence on them and they will be automatically dethroned.

### **5.5 Communal Bond (Igba Ndu)**

In the Igbo culture, we live a communal life that there is the belief system that we are one in a community and are not supposed to think evil against one another. But peradventure we harm one another purposefully or inadvertently through words of mouth and actions involving shed of blood, we have disorganized the cosmic nature of the universe and as such demands a sort of communal bonding amongst the parties involved to forestall future adverse effect and for peace to reign. In *Ukpana Okpoko Buuru*, 'Ndi Odogwu' of Ifite-Amaeke terrorized Maazi Obijiofo through armed robbery attacks and eventually ended up his life. They did not stop at that but also terrorized his children, Jidefo and Obiora and their families greatly through armed robbery attacks, kidnapping and assassination. After the last incident of kidnapping and killing one of their daughters, the duo decided to fight to finish. When the heat from the reprisal attacks become too hot for 'Ndi Odogwu and their families, they solicited for peace, hence the communal bonding for peaceful coexistence devoid of all forms of attacks.

### **5.6 Use of Cultural Symbol**

In Ifite-Amaeke town, and the entire Igbo land in reality, the tender palm frond (omụ nkwu) is a revered cultural symbol. It is a symbol of peace as well as a warning sign to keep off someone's property. Any unauthorized intrusion is a violation of the rights of the individual owner or the community at large. Any enemy attack from wherever the tender palm frond (omụ nkwu) crosses will meet very strong opposition. In the event of the war that broke out between Ifite-Amaeke and Umụikenga, due to the killing of Kasie and the subsequent quarrel at the *Agu* river, the chief priest of their god, Ogba warned them of imminent war while they were celebrating their Nnekeeji festival, and left them with the instruction to cross the tender palm frond (Omụ Nkwu) in the land as seen in the following excerpt:

Mgbe ha na oriri na-eme, onye afa Ogba b́ara sị ha gechie omụ n'obodo, na agha na-abia. Ha bidoro ruwa uka. Ihe ndi Amaeke niile ji egechi omụ ma agha na-abia bu na ha nwere okwukwe na ndi agha si ebe e kechiri omụ bata, na ala obodo ga-eso lusa ha ogu.

As they were deeply engrossed with their celebrations, Ogba's chief priest came and told them to cross the tender palm frond (Omụ Nkwu) in the land, for war is approaching. Argument ensued between them. The Amaeke people do cross the tender palm frond (Omụ Nkwu) in the event of war outbreak because they have the belief that if their attackers enter the land through such route, it is assumed that the entire land will join forces to fight for them.

The sudden sound of gun shots in the land awakens the Ifite-Amaeke people from slumber to reality but their saving grace was that the Ifite-Uṅo people already carried out Ogba's directive. This automatically gave them victory over the Umụikenga people as

Maazi Onyia later explained to them as the reason behind their defeat.

### **5.6.1 Sound of the Drum**

The *Ikoru*, (a traditional wooden gong) is another highly revered symbol in Igbo land that people of the community are compelled to gather at its emergency sound especially in the night as it portends life or death situation that demands urgent attention. By this sound of the *Ikoru* as advised by Maazi Onyia, the Ifite-Amaeke people, highly populated by 'Ndi Odogwu thought that the representative of Ogba, their god is summoning them for a meeting at that ungodly hour of the night to discuss further actions about the war between them and Umukenga, responded accordingly, but unknown to them, they have been ambushed by their enemies.

## **6. Conclusion**

In this study, efforts have been made to substantiate the fact that insecurity is an ill wind that blows no one any good. It has been in existence over the years and has resulted to loss of lives and properties. People and the society do not exist in vacuum. Just as other cultures all over the world do have their literature which mirrors the happenings around them, the Igbo people are not left out. The Igbo written literature has recorded the existence of images of insecurity challenges also prevalent in the present-day society. Since government alone cannot curb the menace associated with these high-risk societal ills posing a serious threat to peaceful coexistence, efforts should be made to adopt the traditional approaches represented in the selected novels as x-rayed by this study. The study also advances that more researches be carried out from other perspectives in finding lasting solution to the management of insecurity in Nigeria as a whole. The time to act is now.

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