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USE OF PROVERBS AS SOCIAL CONTROL MEASURES IN IGBO CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY: OYI OF ANAMBRA STATE AS EXAMPLE

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Abstract

The depository of most of the peoples' cultural values is found in proverbs. Among the Igbo, proverbs are used to inculcate in the people good values which they exhibit in their daily activities. Proverbs also point out the right conducts and warn against malicious acts. In most Igbo communities, proverbs are also used to establish justice in different arms of the society. It is obvious that those proverbs used to inculcate good morals are fast dwindling in Igbo contemporary society. Recently, most of the proverbs embodied with social control measures are rarely used by the elders and parents in admonishing the younger ones and therefore the retention of these proverbs cannot be guaranteed in the future. This study therefore, aims at reawakening and using, the values found in Igbo proverbs. This is necessary because, among Igbo societies, proverb has been one of the core avenues of character formation and means of imbibing good morals in the younger ones. The study, drawing primarily from Igbo culture with particular reference to the communities in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria, uses observation and oral interview for data collection. Analysis was based on Critical Discourse Analyses. It was found that among the Igbo, especially among the Oyi community, the use of proverbs to instil good morals and admonish the younger ones is declining. The onus is, therefore, on the parents and elders to ensure the regular use of proverbs to avoid total annihilation of Igbo proverbs.

Keywords: Proverb, Social Control, Oyi, Anambra State, Igbo Contemporary Society.

Introduction

In the past, proverb is used variously for communicating meanings, teaching and educating the young ones. Proverbs are also used to give advice, and more especially as a social control measures. However, the use of proverbs, especially for corrective measures which control the ills in the society has gone so low. It is on this premise that the study stance to bring to light those proverbs in Oyi Community of Anambra State, that portray social control measures. Proverbs as a social control measures aim at peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness. It is important to note that Oyi Community of Anambra State Nigeria is made up of five communities which are: Nteje, Ogbunike, Awkuzu, Umunya and Nkwelle-Ezunaka.

Proverb Explained

Proverb is a wise saying. On the meaning of proverb, Isidienu (2016:70) cited Kanu (2015) that proverbs are "The wisdom and experience of a people, usually of several ages gathered and summed up in one expression." Umezi (2020) explaining what Obiechina (1975) states on proverb avers that proverbs are words full of intense wisdom and a form used in educating

people. Proverb takes the most vital place in discussion and communication in almost all Igbo societies. The beauty of proverb resides in symbolism. The symbols are found in the environment of the people that owns the proverb. That is why a proverb in Igbo will simply say that *nkụ dị na mba na-eghere mba nri,* meaning that people use what they have to solve their problems. Proverbs anywhere therefore, are very much determined by socio-geographical experience of the place. The imagery in which they are expressed, the forms and situation of experience through which their truths are conveyed reflect the nature of natural environment in which the people's life is lived (Anuonye and Eneremadu, 2016).

Among the Igbo, proverb can be traced as far back as the origin of the people themselves. No wonder the elders are said to be the custodians of Igbo proverbs. Igbo language is adorned by proverb, in the sense that, it carries lot of meanings that makes it difficult for one without adequate knowledge to decipher. For this reason, proverb, among the Igbo is referred to as oil for words consumption. Isidienu and Onyekelu (2020:72) cited Isidienu (2018) that "proverbs speak much about people's religion, moral values, ethics, politics, economy and social life." Certainly, proverbs manifest almost in all aspects of Igbo peoples life. It is the wisdom of the people. Proverb is the peoples' intelligence and it uses indirect sayings to portray a fact. Generally speaking, it is only the wise who can understand the meaning which the proverb wants to reveal. The centrality of proverbs in Igbo oral tradition is manifested in the frequency of its use by the Igbo in their conversations, speeches, instructions, judgements, dramas, arguments, storytelling, and in fun making. This is based on the fact that the Igbo people regard proverbs as an essential vehicle through which a message can be adequately transmitted, (Kanu, 2015).

Social Control Clarified

Social control is a method through which a society sustains communal order and unity. Social control is adopted by the members of a community to manage persons that behave in an unacceptable manner, in attempt to achieve a cohesive society. Carmichael (2020) affirms that social control is typically employed by group members in response to anyone it considers deviant, problematic, threatening, or undesirable, with the goal of ensuring conformity.

Social control is established for the good and growth of the members of the society. For any society to exist and progress it has to exercise a certain control over its members since any marked deviant from the established ways is considered a threat to its welfare. Social control therefore refers to all the ways and means by which society enforces conformity to its norms, (Ksha, 2020). It is through parents and elders that good morals are inculcated into the children and younger ones. Children learn proverbs from their parents and generally elders make use of proverbs each time they speak, admonish and in every day activity to transmit wisdom and norms of the society to the younger ones. On the importance of social control, Shah (nd) states that, the aims of social control are to maintain old order, to establish social unity, to regulate or control individual behaviour, to provide social sanctions, and to check cultural maladjustment. Igbo people have varied means by which they control the excesses of its members; and one of these measures is through the use of proverb. The reason for applying the social control measures therefore, is to bring compliance, cohesion and stability in the society.

Proverbs and Societal Control

Proverbs are used as a means of social control in most Igbo societies. Isidienu (2016:70) states that "Proverb is a rule of conduct and behaviour. It is a veritable means of moulding character." Among Igbo societies, a proverb such as, *A na-agwa ntị, O nughị, e gbupu isi ntị esoro ya* meaning literally that, when ear refuses to hid to admonitions, if the head is cut off, the ear will go with it. This type of proverb is used to advise, admonish and instruct. As Kanu (2015:303) opines that proverbs "are sometimes employed, especially by elders while giving advice". In the same line of thought Opoku (1978:158) emphasizes that proverbs "May serve as prescriptions for action or act as judgement in times of moral lapses. Often a proverb, cited at an appropriate time during an argument can settle the dispute instantly." Proverbs are veritable means of settling disputes. Proverbs tactfully used is an assurance of peace to turbulent situations. Alhassan (1988:41) confirms that proverbs

> Are employed to reinforce and sustain the traditional respect for elders, and they also serve as a potent means of social control. In settling quarrels and disputes, a proverb comes in handy because it is only one who is knowledgeable in words and proverbs that can settle quarrels with the use of proverbs.

Proverb is used to give guidance and exhortation. It is a real means of making suggestions, giving information, notice and recommendations. In the gathering of the elders in Igbo land, proverbs are used in formal discussions to explain issues or settle misunderstanding or to communicate ideas. (Anuonye & Eneremadu, 2016). The type of situation or conflict situation determines the kind of proverbs to be used. For instance, a proverb in Igbo, such as, *E mee nwata ka e mere ibe ya obi adị ya mma,* which in literally terms means that, equal treatment to all, brings joy to a child. This kind of proverb and the likes would go a long way in ensuring societal control. Actually, when everyone in the same place or situation is treated equally, there will be no need for conflict or seeking for justice or redness. Isidienu (2018) affirms that proverbs are used for judgement, discussions and in giving a word of advice. Igbo (2012:197) added that "Most proverbs are rooted in folklore, local traditional stories, legends, myths, fables, characters out of fables, animal fables, and have been preserved by oral traditions." Igbo also added that "Those little tales always have a moral of some sort attached to them." In as much as Igbo acknowledged the moral aspect of proverbs, which forms the basis for social control, however, he was unaware that most proverbs, especially among Igbo societies carries a lot of moral teachings. The moral teachings which proverbs portray serve as corrective measures, admonitions and encouragement to people.

Proverbs in Oyi Community of Anambra State as Social Control Measures

The proverbs enumerated below are used to admonish people to desist from evil acts, and serve as means of controlling excesses in the society. For easy comprehension therefore, the proverbs were grouped under the following sub-headings: greediness, stubbornness, stealing, craftiness, justice, patience, laziness, pride, foolishness and selfishness.

Proverbs that control ills associated with greed

i. *Onye anya ukwu I ga ebi n'ala bili n'elu ?*----will an envious person reside on the land and the sky at the same time?
ii. *Anya ukwu bụ ohi*-----greed is as the same as theft

iii. *Okooko anya na-ebute ọdịda*-----greed leads to downfall
iv. *Onye adịghị ka eze, ọ sị ka e bue ya ka eze*----someone who is not like a king, says he should be carried like a king
v. *Onye ejighi ihe ibe ya ji na-ele ajọ anya*----one who is not prosperous in life use to castigate others
vi. *Ọ chọ ihe ukwu na-ezute agba enyi*----the greedy is never contented
vii. *Onye anyaukwu na-anwụ ma oge ya erubeghi*----greed can lead to untimely death

Proverbs against Stubbornness

i. *Isi kote ebu, ebu agbaa ya*---the head that attracts the bee shall receive the sting
ii. *Onye kpara nkụ arụrụ sịrị ngwere pụtara ya ọlịlị*---he who collected the firewood with ants is calling the lizard for a visit
iii. *A gwa ntị ma ọ nụghị, e gbupu isi nti e soro ya*---when the ear is admonished and it does not listen, when the head is cut off, the ears go with it
iv. *Ụkpala ntị ike bụ okpoko na-egbu ya* ----grasshopper that is hard of hearing is killed by okpoko
v. *Onye rie ihe ọ na-amụrụ anya ụra atụọ ya*----if one eats what makes one to be awake, one will sleep
vi. *Ọkụkọ adịghị anụ ihe na-anụ n'ite ofe agadi nwaanyị*---a fowl that does not listen to advice rests in an old woman's pot
vii. *Ụkpana okpoko buuru bụ ntị chiri ya* ----to be fore-warned is to be fore-armed
viii. *Ijiji adịghị anụ ihe na-eso ozu aba n'ili*---one who do not take advice usually ends up in grievous mistake / a heady fly enters the grave with the corpse
ix. *A na-agwa ochi ntị na-agha esu?*---no point telling a stubborn and heady person that trouble lies ahead
x. *Aṅụ gbaa nwata ọ tụba okpoloko ijiji egwu*---when a shocking thing happens to someone, he or she starts to suspect every one
xi. *Nwata bulie nna ya enu ọgọdọ ayọchie ya anya*----a child that neglects the advice of the elders usually stumbles

Proverbs against Stealing

i. *A na-adụ onye ohi ji ọdụ, ọ were obi na-apị mbazụ*----when a yam stealer is being admonished, he sharpens the digger in his mind
ii. *Ohi na-ebute ọnwụ ike*----theft causes sudden death
iii. *Ụbọchị niile bụ nke onye ohi mana otu ụbọchị bụ nke onye nwe ụlọ.*----every day is for the thief, but one day is for the owner of the house
iv. *Wepụ aka enwe n'ofe tupu ọ ghọọ aka mmadụ*---nip evil at the bud
v. *Onye ṅụrụ mmiri ọkụkụ abago n'ohi*----whoever shares in the booty is also a thief
vi. *Onye ahụrụ n'ukwu ose ka a na-etu ohi ose*----where you find the evidence is the thief also

Proverbs against Craftiness

i. *Ụkwụ na-aga warawara, anya na-aga warawara na-ahụ ya*---nothing is hidden under the sun
ii. *Ọma akwa awụ ahụ mara onwe ya.*---one who bathes tying a cloth should be careful
iii. *Onye aghụghọ nwụọ onye aghụghọ elie ya*----one who is scheming ends up with a crafty person
iv. *Wepụ aka enwe n'ofe tupu ọ ghọọ aka mmadụ*---desist from evil deeds before it escalates

v. *A dịghị ere ọkụkụ ọkpa jiri n'ụlọ*---you do not lie to those you should tell the truth
vi. *Ọkụkọ nyụa arọ ala achụba ya ọsọ*---when a fowl pollutes the air, the land will pursue it

Proverbs used in matters related to Justice

vii. *Ome mma meere onwe ya, ome njọ meere onwe ya*-----whatever one does, whether good or bad , he does for himself
viii. *A gbaghị ụzọ owere mgba ọ gaghị echi*---unless this anomaly is challenged it is bound to continue
ix. *Okwu dị mma nze ataa ọjị, okwu adịghị mma nze a taa oji*---life goes on no matter the situation
x. *Bili ka m bili*---live and let me live
xi. *Aka na-aga n'ike, ọ lụtaghị nsị ọ lụta arọ* ---one that is habitually perpetuating evil will eventually be wrapped with one of his evil acts
xii. *Ọchọ nke ya abụghị ajọ ihe*-----one that is looking for his own is not a bad thing
xiii. *Ọchụ nwa ọkụkụ nwe ada nwa ọkụkụ nwere mwemwe ọsọ*---a chaser of the fowl always fall but the fowl continues to run
xiv. *Egbe bere ugo bere nke sịrị ibe ya ebela nku kwaa ya*---let the kite perch and let the eagle perch, any one that says that each shall not perch, let it have a broken wing
xv. *Ọ bịara ga-egbu m, gbue onwe ya* -----let one who comes to kill me kill himself
xvi. *Mkpụrụ onye kụrụ ka ọ ga-aghọ*---whatever you sow you will reap
xvii. *Isi kote ebu ọ gbaa ya*----if you invite trouble, do not complain when it comes
xviii. *Ihe onye metara o buru*----you reap whatever you sow
xix. *Iko onye ji ama ka a ga-eji mara ya.*----the measure you give is the measure you receive
xx. *Onye zakọọ o kpobe*----whatever you sow you shall reap
xxi. *O gbu mma na-ala na mma*----him who live by the sword die by the sword
xxii. *Onye were otu mkpịsị aka na-arụ mmadụ, ndị ọzọ ana-arụ ya*----before you accuse others remember your own mistakes
xxiii. *Onye ji ihe nwata welie aka elu, aka lobe ya o wetue ya*---someone's destiny can only be delayed but cannot be denied
xxiv. *Ọnụ mmadụ abụghị ọnụ Chukwu*----the voice of man is not the voice of God

Proverbs used to encourage Patience

i. *Anụ gbalaa taa echi bụ nta*---if one fails to catch an animal today, tomorrow will be another hunting
ii. *Ebe onye ọsọ ruru ka onye ije ga-eru*---- despite delay in someone's destiny, he will eventually equalize with his peers
iii. *Anụ gbaa ajọ ọsọ, a gbaa ya ajọ egbe*-----when the going gets tough, the tough gets going
iv. *Nwanyọ nwanyọ ka e ji aracha ofe dị ọkụ*----one should approach life gradually
v. *Akụ fechaa ọ daara awọ*---what one dreams of will eventually come
vi. *E jighi aka atụrụ oke ọnụ*----you do not force nature

Proverbs against Laziness

i. *Nkụ onye kpara n' ọkọchị ka ọ ga-anya n' udu mmiri* ----it is good to prepare for the rainy day
ii. *Aka aja aja na-ebute ọnụ mmanụ mmanụ*----there is no food for a lazy man

iii. *Mmiri dọọrọ n'eju dọọrọ nwa nkịta*---if you do not do your bit it will continue to be unattended to

Proverbs against Pride

i. *Abụzụ na-ele n'ọkụ ọ chee na ọ na-ara mmanụ*----a fool at forty is a fool forever
ii. *Onye enweghi ọgọdọ dị mma na-asị na nke onye ọzọ yi dị mmanụ mmanụ*---someone who is unable to attain his goals in life, usually condemn other people's achievements

Proverbs used to warn against Foolish behaviour

i. *Onye a na-agwọ ibi, ọ na-eto afọ*----one day, one trouble
ii. *Anụ nwere ajị soro ngwere maa mmiri, ọ kọọ ngwere ọ ma akọ ya*----one with good behaviour that eventually join people with bad character will not be able to absolve himself when the time comes
iii. *Onye gba ọtọ adịghị etinye aka n'akpa*----you do not give what you do not have
iv. *Onye enweghi uche ọ sị ka onyedị cheere ya*---whoever that lack proper reasoning, whom does he expect to reason for him
v. *Onye otu anya anaghị aga ọgụ ebe a na-atụ iche*---one should not bet with his only resource
vi. *Ewu dine n'ala dine n'akpụkpọ ya*--- a goat that lies on the ground, lies on its skin

Proverb used to control ills associated with selfishness

Ọ ma nke ya ama nke onye ọzọ---caring much about his own affairs, without thinking about others

From the forgoing it was gathered that these proverbs serve as a catalyst for conveying meaning without having to talk much. In order words, these proverbs are used to warn people to desist from evil acts. They are used to let such persons know that wicked conduct is socially unacceptable. It also alerts people of the consequences of indulging in bad behaviour. In actual fact, a word is enough for the wise. These proverbs in essence are used to teach the citizenry the right thing to do and advice them on the benefits of good conduct.

The above proverbs can also be used to curb excesses in the society since the punishments given to culprits can help to reduce crimes in the society. Repeated and constant usage of these proverbs can bring self control and can also make for deeper understanding and assimilation of the proverbs. It was gathered that after information has been passed through proverb, anyone caught in any abnormal behaviour is treated harshly without fear or favour. It was however observed that in recent times, the use of proverbs in admonishing the younger ones is no longer common.

Furthermore, the above proverbs meant to let people know that they will reap whatever they sow; that, people should caution themselves and be of good behaviour or face the anger of the society. Whoever that commits any evil must bear the consequences and when one claims to be stubborn, the person will be treated according to the laws and customs of the land. Again people should not harm anyone who does not offend them because it will surely boomerang.

It was also gathered that the above proverbs meant that people should be contented and be very careful with their actions and of how they live their lives. These proverbs can be used to

curb excesses in the society, because it teaches and advices and also admonishes the younger ones on the consequences of deviant behaviours. When an elder uses any of the proverbs, it sends a warning to those with the intention of doing evil in which case they might desist and take corrections. When the proverbs are directed to an offender, he or she may reflect on it and then show remorse. Most of these proverbs also instil fears in people.

The above proverbs also taught that people should mind their business and live and let others live. There should be no contention. One should be allowed ownership of what belongs to him or her. When one is contented, there will be no need to steal or to be jealous. And it is believed that any wealth acquired through evil means varnishes easily. Igbo people also believe that people attain their destiny through hard work and so, there is no need for someone to be envious of another. Hard work pays while laziness and envy is very bad.

Proverbs can make someone to control and hold him or herself together and through them learn good behaviour as well as standing for justice at all times. Proverbs can also be used to curb excesses if the parents can inculcate them in their children. However, the greatest challenge is that most parents rarely use proverbs at home.

Based on the above, proverbs can curb excesses in the society if they can be taught. When an elder or a parent says any of the above proverbs, it sends a warning to those with the intent of doing wrong. When people understand the meaning of proverbs and apply it appropriately in their daily life, it will help in reducing unwarranted behaviours in the society.

In addition to the above, some of the proverbs teach that one should not try to revenge since revenge is like adding salt to an injury. Rather, it is believed that in all cases justice must surely prevail no matter the duration. It should also be noted, that when people indulge in evil deeds, it does not mean that they did not know the right thing to do or what the law says against their actions, rather they have made up their minds not to abide by the rule. It was advised that since it is impossible for one to live an isolated life in the community; people should therefore be careful with their actions.

These proverbs can also be used to curb excesses in the society by educating people the dangers and consequences of indulging in evil act. The proverbs should be applied at the right time and at the right situation, and should be taught as stated earlier, for easy comprehension. Proverbs act on people's conscience and by their meanings, people admonish themselves. It was however observed that the youths are lacking interest in the use of these proverbs.

Analysis of some of the Proverbs

a.Ọma akwa awụ ahụ mara onwe ya. The literally interpretation of this proverb is that whoever that baths putting on his or her cloth should mind him or herself. In the literal sense one does not meant to bath wearing his or her cloth, the cloth must be removed while bathing. In Igbo African sense therefore, it means one whom his actions or deeds were clothed with evil, one who has hidden agenda, one who has done some hidden evils and has concealed it. So this proverb is warning all the defaulters to mind themselves. The proverb is also pointing an accusing finger to an unknown or uncovered evil; reminding the person that the evil is manifesting but the culprit is not yet known, therefore the person should desist from such act. This kind of proverb summarizes everything including warning, and the consequences of the

action. This proverb can also lead to *ụbọchị niile bụ nke onye ohi mana otu ụbọchị bụ nke onye nwe ụlọ.* Literally everyday is for the thief, but one day is for the owner of the house, which means that one may be concealing evil or crime but one day his activities will be exposed. Human beings should try to become the best they can, not to involve themselves in bad conducts. Certainly these proverbs will therefore, make some people who have evil plans they intend to carry out to retreat; this will in turn help to maintain an orderly society.

b. ***Ọkụkọ nyụa arọ ala achụba ya ọsọ:*** literally, it means that when a fowl pollutes the air, land begins to pursue it. This proverb explains how some persons artfully dodge when they must have committed evil in the society. For instance one could be invited for the explanation of certain issues, he will continue to deliberately excusing him or herself from the group. This proverb shows that the person's activity has been known by people, he or she will not have any other option than to ameliorate his or her ways.

c. ***Egbe bere ugo bere nke sị ibe ya ebela, nku kwaa ya.*** Let kite perch and let eagle perch but which ever that tells the other not to perch should have a broken wings. Live and let live. This proverb is used to admonish people with envious behaviour. The belief on the right for everyone to live among Igbo societies should not be hindered by another person; and when it is obstructed or cursed to suffer pains without due justice, it negates the aim of the supernatural being who gives that life. Therefore if somebody appreciates his life and that of his family and property, he or she should not wish or do anything that will bring a downfall or failure to another person. If not his or her wilful act should boomerang. That could be part of the reason for *ọ bịalụ ga-egbu m gbuo onwe ya*. Meaning, whoever comes to kill me should kill him or herself. Life is very much valued among African communities and so whatever that should diminish, impede or terminate life should be negated. Diminishing life could also mean destroying someone's house, farm crops, and domestic animals among other things, since doing so is also regarded as *igbu ọchụ*, (murder).

d. ***Onye adịghị ka eze, ọ sị ka e bue ya ka eze:*** meaning literally that someone who is not like or who is not a king wants or tell others to carry him or her like a king. This proverb is against those claiming what they are not. It is against people wanting to attain or take what they could not do or afford. This attitude could lead to stealing, cheating, dispute among others; it could also lead to another proverb *okoko anya bụ ohi*. If that person is not admonished and changed it could lead to a more grievous offence.

e. ***Onye na-ejighi ihe ibe ya ji na-ele ajọ anya:*** literally, he who does not have what others have use to eye them. One who is not prosperous in life use to castigate others. *Ajo* means bad; so having a bad intention for someone who has progressed in life is roundly condemned among Igbo societies. One should not be envious of another person's property or other things. Doing so could lead to stealing, destruction of life and property, poisoning, witchcraft, murder among others. Therefore if one feels that other people have progressed more than him or her, the person should work hard; however, if the person could not retrieve from his or her bad wishes, but later manifest it; *onye zakọọ o kpobe*. The outcome of the deed could take years or a generation to cleanse; that is why among Igbo Africans *ome mma na-emere onwe ya, ome njọ na-emere onwe ya*, this proverb could still be a simple and universal law to judge one's actions.

f. ***Onye enweghị uche ọ sị ka onyedị cheere ya?*** Literally, he who does not have sense or cannot think; who did he want to think for him? Whoever that lack proper reasoning, whom does he expect to reason for him? Among the research communities what it implies is that, it is somebody's faculties that tell what he or who she is. *uche bụ mmadụ, uche bụ akpa, uche bụ afa*. Igbo Africans advocates right thinking and rational reasoning. So whoever that does not reason well in the society usually creates problems for him or herself and other members of the society. Reasoning also affects what one says, which means that, such an unreasonable person may not be useful in the society. He cannot be called whenever any serious decisions are made because he cannot give any useful information or advice. Irrational reasoning affects people's behaviours and readily disintegrates society if not in check. When one receives the above proverb, one will learn to fashion his thought, behaviour and speech in the right direction for the good of everyone and for the progress of the society.

g. ***Onye e nweghị ọgọdọ dị mma na-asị na nke onye ọzọ yi dị mmanụ mmanụ:*** The literally interpretation of this proverb is that a person who does not have good cloths use to say that other people's clothes are stained with oil. The proverb meant that someone who is unable to attain his goals in life usually condemn other people's achievements. This proverb admonishes against envy and jealousy which is usually the main root of hatred. Such hatred can also lead to varied grievous criminal acts. When one is not able to attain or be able to make progress in life, one might begin to condemn other peoples' achievements. That could lead to a situation where one may say that a family member who is more prosperous than others has tied other people's destinies. It could also lead to certain allegations. This could bring a very bad feud in the family or in entire community. The power of words in this proverb is likely to reshape such people, especially the lazy ones and never do well in the society. They will be forced to look for a meaningful job to help themselves and the society. Igbo African moral code is based on reshaping human character; therefore this proverb will go a long way in controlling human actions for a harmonious living.

h. ***Okwu dị mma, nze ataa ọjị, okwu adịghị mma, nze ataa ọjị:*** In literally terms if the outcome of a case is good, the titled men will eat kola nut, if it is not good, they will also eat kola nut. This means that the natural order of things should not be thwarted. Life goes on no matter the situation. Whether a situation favours one; or not, life must go on. One should not cause trouble or do something that will bring disunity just because things are not going on well with him or her. One should accept things when they are good and also accepts bad aspects of life. Most of the time life may turn around, to teach one some lessons. *Ife na-abụ mgbe ụfọdụ ọ tọtụ ụtọ, mgbe ufọdụ o nutụ inu, ụwa a wee na-aga*. These are ways of letting people know that they are not God, that they have limited powers. They must therefore depend on the supernatural being for survival. *Ife si na chi.*

These proverbs among others are used for societal control. The emphasis is on the need to behave well, act and relate well at all times. However, the use of proverb in training the younger ones recently is neglected.

Suggestions on the use of Proverbs for Social Control

One of the roles of social control is to maintain social order; families should therefore help to maintain the established family and societal norms. This can be done among other things by constant use of proverbs. Proverbs should be used to encourage good morals. Parents should

adopt the use of proverbs to correct and debunk wrong and ill ideas in their children. Actions are guided by thought, when wrong notion were corrected through proverbs, children will be able to behave in a more acceptable way. They can also apply proverbs in their daily life.

Elders should as a matter of urgency enforce their noble ideas on the younger generation. When the elders use proverbs that portray social control, in relating with the young, it will help to maintain continuity and uniformity in the society. This will go a long way to regulate behaviour in conformity to established behaviour which brings about uniformity of conduct.

Igbo societies have moral values they want to protect; to achieve this, proverbs remain one of the carriers of the people's wisdom and moral conduct. Proverbs that carry moral values should be upheld. The use of proverbs should be encouraged in different occasions and ceremonies, when people listen to these proverbs often, they will be able to comprehend, understand and apply them in their daily life. When people assimilate these proverbs, it will help to shape their behaviour for a more harmonious co-existence.

Teaching of proverbs should be encouraged in primary, secondary schools and institutions of higher learning; especially during cultural studies in the School of General Studies. Learning of proverbs as part of oral tradition will go a long way in preserving Igbo culture and maintaining the rich Igbo moral values.

In addition to the use of proverbs, encouragement and praise can also be a means of social control. When one behaves in acceptable manner, he or she will be encouraged to do more.

Conclusion

The study has focused on the use of proverbs as veritable means of social control. It is obvious that the moral decadence engulfing Igbo societies was caused by the neglect of Igbo moral values. Some of the carries of these moral values such as proverbs are no longer in use as they were in the past. Proverbs as an avenue for transmission of moral values and hence as social control measures were brought to light and should be a means of maintaining harmony in the society.

Furthermore, different proverbs that serve as social control measures were exposed and discussed. It is obvious that proverbs convey moral codes, and as such direct the minds of the younger generation towards acceptable behaviour for a more unified system.

Igbo culture is rich in proverb, and so, there are a lot of proverbs that serve the role of social control through which Igbo Africans admonish people for a better life. These proverbs can be of good benefits to the society. Proverbs teach, admonish and also advice against deviant acts and are able to change bad behaviour. Recently the usage of proverb is relegating to the background. All hands should be on deck to ensure that the use of Igbo proverbs is reawakened.

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