

**CULTURE, CRIME, PUNISHMENT AND MORALITY: A
PHILOSOPHICAL APPRAISAL OF ANCIENT
OKPANAM VALUES**

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ABSTRACT

The conflict of ideologies, characters, values and personal interest in the human nature necessitated the establishment of laws and punishments founded on moral principles. This paper examines traditional African morality with regards to crime and its equivalent punishment vis-a-vis morality in Okpanam world view. The authors examined what constitutes crime in ancient Okpanam, the various types of crimes, as well as the justification for the various punishments meted out to offenders. It was observed that in every society, there are persons prone to committing negative vices such as stealing adultery, incest, murder etc, thus confirming David Hume's assertion "that crime and self interest is the original reason for the establishment of laws and justice in the civil society" Using hermeneutics, the paper argued that the traditional Okpanam society had well

structured traditional values, rules, regulations as well as laws founded on the principles of morality. These societal laws fostered, peace, unity, stability and progress within the traditional Okpanam ancient society. The conjecture of the authors is that traditional Okpanam society had their systems of fundamental laws and morality. The benefits of this paper cannot be overemphasized because among others, the government, civil societies and the general public will draw immense insight from traditional values of the ancient okpanam people.

KEYWORDS: Izu –ani, Nso-ani, oshu, Incest, ostracise

INTRODUCTION

According to Ebigwei, the history of Okpanam dates back to over 800 years (2023). The political institutions of the town evolved through 600 years of subtle integration of both foreign and indigenous ways of life. It is an ancient town located in the east of the River Niger. The present political structure evolved through the mid western Province, Bendel state and presently Delta State and represents a substantial part of Oshimili North Local Government Area in Delta State, Nigeria. This community is an epitome of tradition and culture which include those it values and cherishes, and those it abhors.

In the early days of European incursions into the interior of West Africa, it was one of the few communities taken over by the colonial masters. This could be explained by the central location of the town and the salient role its market played during the colonial era, more especially in the field of slave trade, sale of food and cash crops. Okpanam is primarily an agrarian town. This feature of her avails her to many neighbouring communities, far and near, who sought to buy agricultural products for consumption and marketing. The early European civilization caught up with the indigenes of Okpanam; being the reason why some of the earliest churches, hospitals and schools in the Eastern part of Nigeria are found there. The activities of the colonizers contributed a lot in making the history of Okpanam very thrilling, especially in the realms of tradition and culture. However, in spite of the influence of European culture on the people, most of Okpanam's values subsisted. A major handicap a research in African studies encounters is the absence of documented records. Where a scholar could rely on original and unadulterated information is on the works of arts whose hand-prints are still very much intact.

Nonetheless, Okpanam is blessed with intelligent elders who are well versed and up to date in the culture and tradition of the community, which is to say that the methodology of oral literature and history is of immense value and assistance to any researcher here. Therefore, the absence of documented records is a surmountable problem to any scholar that is deeply interested in this people's ways of life. This work has relied heavily on oral tradition and history. This research is a product of rigorous and meticulous interviews held

with numerous traditional chiefs of the same community namely Ogbueshi Mac Okonkwo, Ogbueshi Peter Chukwuedo, and Ogbueshi Goddy Okafor. A revelation to them of the essence of this work made them to be as interested as ever to expose all the ingredients that form thought system or world view. All the interviews belong to “IZU-ANI” i.e. “Assembly of elders and men of title”.

The views of the interviewers are unhampered with in order to safeguard its authenticity and originality. Our own analytic work will manifest in a later part under the sub-heading: Appraisal. In essence, this field work is a narration and analysis of the concepts of crime and punishment in Okpanam community. It is to be remarked here as Onwujeogwu (1995) points that the “Igbo customs are basically similar, with local variations occurring”. Thus a report of the narration of the ways the ancient citizens of this community view crimes, the punishment that each carried, its ontological and social features and finally, a philosophical analysis of the topic are presented. The account does not vary so much with what obtains in other parts of Anioma land.

DEFINITION OF CULTURE

Onwuejiogwu further opined that the term culture is used in various ways with different meanings. It could either be used in the colloquial or scientific senses. In colloquial terms, culture or cultured is used to state that someone has or does not have good manners or behaviour. For instance when quarrelling, Mr A may tell Mr B that Mr B has no culture, meaning that he is not refined. But this colloquial usage may not carry some scientific meaning behind it, especially where A and B are from same cultural background, that is to, say, that anyone misbehaving as objectively defined, has not acquired the behaviour expected of him as a member of that particular society. In the scientific usage, culture is often defined in blanket terms as the total way of life of a people. More particularly, Lloyd opined that “culture is the complex totality of a man’s acquisitions of knowledge, morals, beliefs, arts, customs, technology, etc which are shared and transmitted from generation to another” (1975). For the purpose of this essay, we shall be using culture in the scientific usage

MEANING OF MORALITY

According to Omoregbe (2000) morality comes from the word *moralis* which means conduct or custom or a way of life. It can also be defined as the system of rules that really should govern human behaviour with respect to what is right and wrong, good and evil. The concept of morality also refers to the direction of conduct or the guidance of human

act. It is in this sense that we speak of honesty, murder, abortion, forgery, embezzlement, charity, loyalty, fairness, justice, slavery etc as moral problems or issues. This is the crux of this paper.

TRADITIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR PUNISHMENT FOR CRIME

The issue as to what constitutes crime and punishment in any society is a crucial one. This becomes necessary when it is known that crime poses a serious threat to any society. It endangers the peace and security of any society and her citizens. In classifying what should constitute a crime in any society a lot of factors have to be put into consideration, especially those which have to do with man's happiness and security. To some communities crimes have economic and political undertones, while to others they have, in addition, an ontological base. Punishment poses similar problems. This is not basically a problem of whom to punish (for it is definitely the criminals) but rather on the weight of punishment and what such punishment should aim at.

In carrying out of the above functions, what is obvious is that morality is brought into focus. Another problem that is rooted here is the difficulty in the universalization of moral principles. Nonetheless, the functions of determining what constitutes a crime and what punishment to be imposed are deeply rooted in morality, which imposes responsibility on all of us. It is this that reinforces the authority of the law and the duty to render obedience to what it enacts. This responsibility presupposes man's rational nature. Which is to say that one cannot be morally held responsible for an action if one acted under influences which one had no control over, like insanity or when coerced by an overwhelming force.

What constitutes a crime may revolve around the moral convictions of the community than around the body that is charged with the responsibility of its administration. As Lloyd further points out (1995) "it is not easy to see how the idea of moral responsibility, can be eliminated from the question of legal guilt for the offence charged without undermining the whole basis of mental responsibility for crime and substituting for it an inquiry into whether the accused did the acts in question and if so what is the best social solution to be applied to this case?"

The recognition of one's moral responsibility is almost a self-conviction to any criminal acts. And since moral guilt varies, it is only appropriate that punishment be reasonably given to culprits in proportion to their moral wrongdoing. In any community, it is only wise that a criminal be punished adequately. It is injustice to allow a criminal to escape the consequences of his malicious action. Kant (1979), in an attempt to stress the need for punishment, says that "even if a civil society resolved to dissolve itself with the consent of its members – as might be supposed in the case of a people inhabiting an Island; resolving to separate and scatter themselves throughout the whole world – the last murderer in the prison ought to be executed before the resolution is carried out. This ought to be done in order that everyone may realise the deserts of his deeds, and that blood guiltiness

may not remain upon the people; otherwise they might all be regarded as participators in the murder as a public violation of justice”. Achebe (1958) depicts this in his novel to the effect that the Igbos believe that one man’s crime can “ruin the whole clan. ‘’ Thus punishment for crimes is necessary for the continuous existence of the society, to correct the culprits and to deter would-be ones. On the basis of the above clarification, we shall look into the elements that constitute crime and punishment in ancient Okpanam community and what the punishment intends to achieve. Our account is a verbatim report of the interview held with reputable elders of the town.

CATEGORIES OF CRIME

In accounting for what constitute a crime in Okpanam, two major sub-headings for crime emerge. The first category is social crimes. These are crimes directed against individual, and which ultimately offset the harmony in the society amongst such crime are stealing, adultery, fighting, lying, and geocentricism. The second categories are spiritual or religious crimes. This phase of crimes is viewed with seriousness for their spiritual undertones. Which is to say that such crimes primarily affects the gods and goddesses with consequences visited upon the entire community. They are not directly against individuals parse, but essentially an invitation to the wrath of either the gods or the goddesses (2004)

1. Social Crime:

As indicated earlier, this class of crimes is of individualistic nature. They are consequences of inter-personal relationship; or negligence on the part of the culprits. They are discountenanced because of the negative roles they play in the harmonious co-existence of the community.

Stealing: Stealing is a serious crime. It is viewed from two angles: foremost, it is a manifestation of laziness and misguided ambition. Second, it is seen as denying another man the fruit of his labour. These two features make stealing devilish. An average Okpanam man is active with his hoes and machetes. It is a presupposition that every adult should be capable of feeding himself and the entire members of his family. Laziness or idleness is viewed with disgust, infact, as a negation of the essence of man. What makes “a man a man” is to be strong with his hoes and machetes. A lazy man has no place in the ‘roll-call’ of the community’s honourables. It is the belief of the community that a man should live and enjoy the fruits of his labour uninterruptedly. Any attempts to dispossess him by theft are treated seriously.

A man’s property is the fruit of his labour, and no attempt should be made either individually or collectively to dispossess him of it by force or cunning. This is not in any way in line with geocentricism, but rather is an emphasis on the crime of dubiously dispossessing one of one’s property. Besides the moral undertone in this crime, its

condemnation encourages hard work which is invariably for the benefit of the community as a whole. A suspected thief is given a public trial at the village square. While this is in progress, his movement would be under close surveillance. On conviction, he will be mercilessly beaten up by all and sundry and fined, based on the value of the property stolen. In addition, he automatically loses membership of his age grade group and other organizations he may belong to. This latter punishment is normally for a specific period to give chance for assessment of his later behaviour. If it is proved beyond reasonable doubt that he has turned a new leaf in his life-style, he will regain the membership of the associations he had lost.

Adultery: Aghamelu (2019) posited that adultery constitutes another spiritual and serious crime in Okpanam just like any other African society. Broadly speaking, adultery entails having sexual intercourse with a woman that is not traditionally married, a spinster or another person's wife. This crime is distasteful for various reasons. It is assumed that it exposes young unmarried ladies to a lot of disasters which include unwanted pregnancy, and its attendant offspring or attempts at abortion which may lead to death. It is a crime to procreate without a traditionally recognized father. Such a child has no place in the community, no matter what social status he may attain in future. Abortion merits as much condemnation as murder.

It is also a consensus that a woman should not be public property. As such each woman should be entitled to a man as her legitimate husband. Committing adultery with married ladies is viewed with much seriousness. It is seen on the part of the lady involved as the height of dishonesty and disregard for her husband, and on the part of her male counterpart as an encroachment on the private life of another man. A victim of adultery sees his woman on two planes: first, as an intrusion into his family life and secondly, as a dispossession and disregard for his person. If he continues to stay with his wife without necessary remedies he automatically enters into the list of the dishonoured members of the community. Adultery also breeds children whose ancestral lineage is doubtful. In future, if the need arises to make reference to "ancestral spirits", the attempt will be fruitless. Marriage is regarded as a sacred institution which should not be disrupted. In other words, once a lady is betrothed to a man with the necessary traditions, it is believed that he has monopoly, control and use of the same. Any external factor aimed at disintegrating such union is viewed with utmost seriousness. Adultery is a factor that is capable of upsetting the peaceful co-existence of couples.

Another important reason why adultery is condemned in the community is the belief the people have on re-incarnation. To an average Okpanam man family lineage is a continuous process and the relationship between the living and the dead is strong. Any issue that arrives in the family circle is traced to one ancestral or the other. Therefore, adultery that results in illegitimate pregnancy disrupts such lineage. It is a popular belief

that any child begotten through adultery has no link with the family's ancestral lineage. As a result, such a child is exposed to the danger of being haunted by dangerous spirits without corresponding protection from the ancestors.

Punishment for adultery is vehement if the woman involved in the act is married. If such is the case, the woman would be forced to leave her husband's place for six months. At the expiration of the period, she would come in the company of her kindred with two pots of wine, a basket full of cocoa-yam and a goat to apologize to her husband and perform the traditional rites. If the apology is accepted, she is to make a new pledge to be of good behaviour. Her male counterpart, if he is a titled man, would be stripped of all his titles, for in the community parlance, he is "Nwoke ajor nnadu" interpreted as (evil man)

Lying: Another pronounced social evil is lying, being dishonest, insincere and betrayal of trust. A liar is seen as a feeble character, a misfit and a cheat in the community's circle. Lying is decried for its effects; foremost, a liar is a liability when the need exists for an enquiry into any affairs. He blocks every possible avenue to finding out the true position of things. A liar could generate rancour and hatred between friends or relations. He is also capable of spreading false rumour which could set up commotion in the community.

Those interrogated justify the community's belief concerning lies with a story in the ancient days about a woman who returned from the farm and spread false rumour to the effect that she saw kidnappers "ndi ntor" on her way back from the farm. That it was only due to luck and the grace of God that she escaped. With this information given, the community alerted everybody with the medium wooden drum, and all the "dikes" of the clan got ready and set out for action with a mission to capture the kidnappers dead or alive. But to everybody's chagrin, this news turned out to be false. In return, the woman was descended upon by the community. The effects of this kind of rumour show what damages lying could unleash on a community.

There is this other popular story being told in Okpanam till today to put across the message of lying to people. It is about a man who was coming back from the farm. On the way, he was told by his neighbour that his brother fought and stripped his wife naked in the village square. This man, without being patient to probe into the veracity of this story, went immediately to his brother's house, engaged him in a fierce fight and in the process his brother died. Regrettably, it was discovered that the whole story was an exaggeration of what really happened.

These and other stories are used to stress what harms liars could do in the life of a community. A liar is banned from giving evidence on any issue, or to stand as a witness for anybody, for his will be false witness. Besides, he also loses the chance of belonging to any panel that has to do with adjudication. These bans are of unspecified period until the committee of elders decides otherwise. Serious lies attract fine. Achebe (1961) in his classic novel, *Arrow of God* tells us the story of a young man who "sent everybody running

to his father's compound in a false fire alarm for which his father Paid a fine of one goat". This is meant to drive home the seriousness of falsehood.

Egocentrism: An Okpanam man is his 'brother's keeper'. Like other African communities, the spirit of give and take is at the root of the community's life. There is the willingness from all and sundry to render help on matters where such is needed. This is the foundation of the communal life of the people. Everyone perceives himself as a community member first before considering his own interests. Therefore, self-centred men are despised for it is believed that such people contravene the spirit under which the community is founded. And this spirit de-emphasizes individualism and stresses communalism. The essence of this is numerous. It means that the weak and the poor who are not the cause of their misfortune are taken care of. It also means the fostering of the spirit of togetherness and group works which is essential to the community's life.

In contradiction to this, 'egotism' is retrogressive and damaging to the spirit of the community. Such style of living does not encourage inter-personal relationship, not development at the macrocosm. To them, a man is essentially a community member. As a result, the fulfilment of his obligations to the community is a sine qua non for such membership. Such includes rendering help to the needy, using your potentials for the service of the community in particular and humanity in general. Such names as "Nwaoha" (child of the everybody) for a man and "Adaoha" (for a woman) are eloquent testimony that a man's obligation is not limited to himself and his immediate family alone (2005).

The communal nature in the ownership of such property as land attempts to discourage egotism. No single person has the right to sell land as it belongs to the whole community. Such land is normally called "anioha". At the family level, a family's land belongs to the whole generation, living and those yet to be born. Its use is open to whoever is capable. Another proof of communal life is the habit of having organized labour by group, either as 'age grade', social clubs or other groups to help the need. This labour is not seen as exploitation or the subjugation of man to slavery or forced labour. It is rather a voluntary job done out of good will and magnanimity. To a large extent, it encourages large-scale farming. And in Qkpanam (being a community dominated by farmers) this was a healthy practice in the community's life in the past.

As much as possible, egocentrism was discouraged. There is a popular story about an egostic man who wanted to farm and left his aged father in the house. Accidentally, his house caught fire, leaving the old man to the mercy of the devastating inferno. But the woman at home raised alarm which attracted the 'Umunna' (kinsmen) who arrived at the scene of the fire and put it off almost immediately. The life of the 'aged' man, the house and other property were saved from total destruction. The punishment for a self-centred man is ostracization until he turns a new leave.

2. Spiritual Crimes:

The second class of crimes are spiritual crimes. This crimes, as its group name implies, are seen as crimes committed primarily against the gods though, they have their effects on human life. An offender is seen to have gone contrary to the ordinance of one type of god or the other. Because of such actions disaster may befall the individual involved or, at times, the entire community. Therefore, crimes in this category are viewed with more seriousness than social crimes. In this category are incest, murder, suicide, killing sacred animals, terminating pregnancy, and unmasking the masquerade. These crimes are believed to have something to do with specific gods. Its commission is believed to have a serious consequence on the entire community.

Incest: For one to make love with one's relation is an abomination. Anybody who commits this act is said to have offended the 'earth goddess' (Nso ani). This is so because relations have special spiritual ancestral ties, and any unholy act like sexual intercourse weakens such ties. It is a serious offence against the 'earth goddess' and the spirits of the ancestors. Elders, in the course of this narration, revealed that to view this act from the natural perspective means to preserve the kind of respect that should exist between relations. To ensure that the love that exists between relations does not go beyond what it is supposed to be. Besides, since relations are not allowed to marry, it is improper for them to engage in love-making as they are prevented by custom to bear the consequences of such action – like procreation. A proverb goes that 'a sister's body is not romantic'.

Incest carries measurable punishment. Foremost, the culprits are sent away from their respective homes for a period of two months. After this, the priest of the 'earth goddess' will come and enumerate the items required for expiators sacrifices. If the people involved are teenagers below the age of eighteen, each of them would be required to bring white fowl each to be sacrificed to "the earth goddess and the source of all fertility". After this sacrifice, the two persons involved in the act will be required to fetch water and firewood for the priest continuously for two weeks. When these are completed, they will be allowed to return to their homes with strong warning to desist from such acts. If adults are involved, it carries a more severe penalty. Besides banishing them from their homes for a period of three months, each of them will be required to produce two fowls, a basketful of yam and cocoa-yam, a pot of palm wine, and a lump of chalk. All these will be sacrificed to the *ëze ala*". With the sacrifices there is the conviction that any impending danger from their act has been warded off. The sacrifice is called 'ichu ani'.

Murder: To an Okpnam person, life is precious. It is the greatest gift from the superior power. Life means everything for a man. Their value for life reflects on the names they give bear. Thus, we have such names as Ndubuisi (life is supreme), Nduka (life surpasses), Ndukwe (if life permits), Ndubuaku (life is wealth), Ndukaku (life is greater than wealth). Which is to say that a man's ambition and achievements depend on the existence of life. Life being a gift from the most high, no one is expected to tamper with what he cannot

create or replace. To terminate life is seen as the worst crime that one could commit. Terminologies like provocation, self-defence, etc. are not used as defence for killing in this community. It is the belief of the people that no reason whatsoever should be adequate reason for one to terminate one's fellow's life. It is an abomination before man and the gods in this case "eze ani" (earth goddess). The earth goddess is very powerful because it controls the most essential facets of human life, such as fertility and birth.

Murder may be committed in two different ways. It could be by either negative supernatural means, or the application of physical method on one. The former is a recognizable element and its efficacy in terminating one's life is indubitable. A murderer is a danger to any community, and his action is capable of polluting the land for a long period of time, either in a way of infuriating the earth goddess into withholding fertility or to unleash serious evil on the entire community. To appease the earth goddess, a murderer must be committed to death and buried in the evil forest or in the alternative, be banished for life from the community.

There is a popular story on the incident of murder. It is about a man that was mysteriously murdered in his house. When this was discovered all efforts by the community to trace the culprits was fruitless. The community had to suspend further inquiries on the matter. But this laxity on the part of the community incurred the anger of the 'eze ani' (earth goddess). Throughout that year, there was no rain, harvest was poor, no birth and people died in their tens because of famine. Due to these misfortunes, the community consulted the 'oracle' to know what had gone wrong. It was revealed to them that the 'earth goddess' was annoyed because of the fact that the murderer was living among them unpunished. Elders immediately set into action. A 'dibia' (native doctor) was invited and all the adults of the community were also invited to Iswa-ani 'swear an oath.' There and then, the culprit was killed and almost immediately there was unprecedented rainfall and revival of normal life. The elders have a proverb that 'a murderer does not live in a decent society'. As Nwala points out "there is a behaviour which if left unchecked may lead to chaos in society." (2013)

Unmasking the Masquerade: The masquerade performs during important ceremonies such as 'Egwugwu or Nmo ike' secret society, burial ceremonies, etc. These masquerades are taken as the spirits of dead ancestors. They speak in strange voices and their words are sacred. No one have ever seen the masquerade unmasked in the public, and they watch it from a distance for it is believed that women are not meant to come close to masquerades.

To unmask a masquerade, therefore, is an abomination against the ancestors for it is like killing "an ancestral spirit." Such action would make them to withdraw patronage and guidance from the entire community. Anybody who unmasks the masquerade is lynched to death and his body taken away to the evil forest and burnt to ashes. Nobody will be allowed to use of his property. It is worthy of note here that nobody has ever unmasked the masquerade in public, for its consequences are better imagined. There is a

common proverb in the community which is literally translated thus; A wrestler who wrestles with the spirit will swear not to wrestle again. Which is to say that no matter how strong one is, one does not challenge the spirit.

CONCLUSION

In this essay, we have been able to show that laws predicated on morality and values were fundamental characteristics of ancient Okpanam society. It is obvious that their idea of what constitutes crime rests on some of the human features and condition in real life – that is in societal life. Man wants peace. He wants happiness. And happiness is achieved only in a peaceful environment. But it is not always that all men work for peace. What guarantees the existence of peace in the society is law. Law can only be effective when it is backed with some measure of sanctions. And these sanctions manifest in an organized society in form of punishment. We all know that obedience to law is possible and enhanced when men are aware of the consequences of doing otherwise. As Hobbes opined “Man is so made that he always acts from hope of benefit or fear of hurt to himself” That is to say that man obeys laws either because of the benefit of such obedience or the penalty disobedience attracts to them. In other words, law is effective because “it is not counsel but command, and is obligatory in some sense than a mere precept of reason, is so only because it is a command.” Naturally, without the punishment that goes with crimes people would have been violating the laws of the land with impunity.

A just society must have just laws. Just laws in a society are a function of the latter's concept of justice, how laws are administered vis-à-vis the weight of punishment meted out to criminals. And justice “is itself a moral value, that is, one of the purposes which man sets himself in order to attain the good life.” There is no rigidity as to what constitutes justice in a given society. Some crimes attract stiff penalty in Okpanam obviously because certain facts of life were either vague to her citizenry or completely unknown. As most of these facts became clearer, the interviewers pointed out, punishment was reduced or modified. But to this ancient community, what was paramount in their administration of justice was like the utilitarian doctrine whose ultimate good is greatest happiness of the greatest number to which other goods are subordinated” which is to say that the concern of an Okpanam person was for the majority interest not those of the microcosm.

The harshness of some punishments for certain crimes were justified on the basis of the consequences of such actions on the entire community. This is so because the principle which states that no one is punishable for acts committed by others is not applicable in Okpanam community. A person's calamitous act was capable of ruining the entire community. Hence punishment was made stiff to protect the community from the wrath of the gods. Even some of the punishments that some crimes carried in the community still meet the standard of justice in modern period. Murder, for instance, which attracted death penalty still stands the test of time. Other punishments like the ones on stealing, adultery,

incest are justifiable. The penalty that they attract is proportional to the weight of the crime. And this is justifiable, for justice requires that a man should suffer because of, and in proportion to, his moral wrongdoing” The attitude of these people was in consonance with the stand of the retributivists who contend that “whatever other purposes are served by a penal system it only exacts justice so far as it gives an offender his moral deserts.”

The punishment for stealing, besides the moral undertone, had economic consequence in Okpanam. Foremost, they were of the view that a thief is a disgrace to the potentialities endowed on man, and secondly, an unnecessary parasite on the entire community. This idea seems to be in agreement with Harris’ argument that “the law penalises the thief... to persuade the thief to use the market.” In other words, the punishment being meted out to the thief is, besides other reasons, a reminder to him that there are other legitimate sources of livelihood within his reach. This is reasonable enough. Other categories regarded as crimes were due to some of their peculiarities, for instance, the act of unmasking the masquerade. Masquerade at the point in reference was seen as the spirit of their ancestors whom they had great respect for. To unmask same is an act of humiliation.

We can see that there are reasons behind some of the punishments meted out to criminals. In actual fact, “climate, soil, occupation... religion custom are all relevant conditions in determining what in particular case, reason (or law) will set up. This fitness or relation of conditions, physical, mental From the spirit of the laws.(2018). Their attitude towards adultery is rooted in their values, especially as it affects the marriage institution. The Anioma Igbos, the tribe to which the Okpanam community belongs, “have great respect for marriage and the family. Family ties are strong. Marriage is not just the affair of a young man and his fiancée, but a long process between both families, entailing the marriage payments by the fiancée, religious ceremonies and sacrifice “For this system of marriage and the regard people have for the institution, they felt there was the need to protect it jealously by the imposition of stiff penalty on any intruder on a man’s private and family life. And as it is obvious, this stiffness on adultery is for the interest of all, for by man’s nature he does not want anybody to tamper with his pride. So what you hate being done to you is most unjustified if you attempt the same on others. This could be seen in the Hobbesian law of nature which states thus “Do not that to another that which you don’t want done to you” Any honest and conscientious man would see the simplicity and veracity in this dictum.. Therefore in view of the recent world report and other research findings that the Nigerian nation have been finding it difficult to establish and maintain a stable political culture, possibly as a result of lack of political will, there is therefore an urgent need to direct to government, political class to peruse into the Anioma ancient traditional value system to borrow from the workings of the society.

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