

OSU/DIALA Caste System Impeding the Child's Education and Social Development in Igbo Land, Nigeria: The Imperative of Enthroning Godly Leaders and Human Rights Enforcement

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Abstract – This research focused on osu/diala caste system as impediment to the education and social development of the child in Igbo Land, Nigeria: The imperative of enthroning godly leaders and enforcing human rights. The Igbo is one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria and geographically located in eastern Nigeria. The diala is regarded as freeborn and has unlimited opportunities and privileges. In contrast, the osu is regarded as slave and has limited privileges and rights. Under this caste system, social mobility across the two castes is not allowed to the extent that two consenting adults are often refused marriage by their parents on the reason of osu/diala caste system. The consenting adults either out of mistake or desperation give birth to children. Such children of circumstance unfortunately are denied their deserved parental care which include guidance, discipline, socialization, protection, education and provision of basic needs because there is no legitimate father hence no outstanding sponsor in school. It was found that those children hardly go to school because there is no sponsor and even if they go to school, they performed poorly because of challenges ranging from not knowing the surname to bear, being emotionally disturbed, being stigmatized, inability to provide basic school needs etc. The study concludes that osu/diala caste system does not only impedes the child's education and social development but it is also discriminatory, obnoxious and retrogressive. It was however recommended among other things that Government should enforce Child's Right Act; communities should choose leaders who are characterized by conscientiousness and godliness; National Orientation Agency (NOA) should enlighten the people on the evils associated with the osu/diala caste system.

Keywords – Osu/Diala Caste System, Child's education, Impediment, Social development, Human rights.

I. INTRODUCTION

Caste system is not a new phenomenon because in some parts of the world, caste system had existed centuries ago. Caste system is synonymous with social stratification. Akubukwe (1997) views that

social stratification implies evaluating and categorizing, ranking or grouping people in a society on the bases of certain criteria or resources such as levels of wealth, income, power, education, prestige, influence, privilege, status etc. In other words, social stratification may be defined as ranking of social inequality among people in a society. Those who possess largest share of resources are defined as upper-class, and those with the smallest share are lower-class; those who are in between the upper and lower classes are known as middle-class (P.120).

In tandem with the above excerpt, a caste system is a form of social stratification in which castes are hierarchically organized and separated from each other by rules of ritual purity. The lowest strata of the caste system are regarded as untouchables; because they are excluded from the performance of rituals which confer religious purity. Each caste is ritually purer than the one below it in this hierarchical system (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner 2000).

Caste systems are practiced in various forms in different enclaves such as India, Igbo in Nigeria, Nazi Germany, South African apartheid regime, Egypt, America etc. In practice, caste system in many parts of the globe was cruel, segregatory, discriminatory, oppressive, repulsive and obnoxious. It is however important to note that civilization and modernization as a result of education has led to some form of modifications in the practice of caste systems. Notwithstanding, some are so dogmatic that certain unpleasant aspects of the caste system are still perpetrated in some climes. For instance, the Osu/diala caste system practiced by the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria is so discriminatory that the Osu (slave) is not allowed to marry a diala (free-born) and vice versa. Social mobility is not allowed. In fact the osu/diala caste represented an important illustration of social ranking by prestige and formed part of a wider interest in pariah groups (Weber, 1958).

In Igbo communities, there are situations where a free-born and a slave may love themselves and decide to marry but the osu/diala caste system prohibits it. However, out of mistake or desperation pregnancy occurs. Children born under this circumstance suffer a lot as they are treated as osu (outcaste or slave). This is because the man responsible for the pregnancy is not allowed to marry their mother, so identity problem starts. The child is therefore denied the right of parental care, upbringing, education, training, socialization, guidance and discipline.

To this end, this paper discusses the concept of caste system, history of caste systems in some parts of the globe, osu/diala caste system as impediment to the child's education and social development in Igbo land of Nigeria and the imperative of godly leaders and enforcement of Human Rights.

II. THE CONCEPT OF CASTE SYSTEM

As earlier stated, caste system is synonymous with social stratification. It is a situation where some certain members of the society are regarded as superior whereas others are seen as inferior. This results in treating certain persons disdainfully while those on the other side of the divide are accorded respect. Consistent with the above, Macionis (1994:151) opines that "a caste system amounts to social stratification based on ascription. A pure caste system would grant individuals no social mobility at all; birth alone would determine their destiny". According to Ifeanacho (2012:227) "a person's birth certificate tells all about career opportunities, lifestyle, prestige and privileges that the individual can aspire to ... the caste you are born into is the caste you will belong to forever".

Caste positions are inherited. Social mobility is prohibited. Caste is endogamous hence there is neither upward nor downward social mobility. Each caste is required to live separately by law. Even intermarriage between castes is not allowed as it could engender important and frequent interrelationship (Otite and Ogionwo 1979).

In a rather more explicit form, a caste system according to Akubukwe (1997:123) refers to "a situation in a society whereby the people have been legally or formally divided into separate groups called castes based on their common ancestry, religion, race, occupation or mode of original entry into the society". A combination of the above criteria could also be used to decide the caste a person should be categorized. People in any caste and their offspring (descendants) ever belong to the very caste. Some castes

succeeded to gain dominant and superior positions and roles in the society whereas other castes are seen as inferior and subordinate hence they occupy positions and roles that are less prestigious. In a caste system, status is not achieved rather it is inherited or ascribed. In view of the above, each caste is required to live separately from the other and serious or intimate relationship between castes is prohibited. Dominant castes seldom allow subordinate castes to experience up-ward social mobility (Akübukwe, 1997).

Caste can be seen as ritual segregation which is strengthened and galvanized by endogamy. Making an explication of caste system, Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (2000) posited that

it is a form of social STRATIFICATION in which caste are hierarchically organized and separated from each other by rules of ritual purity. The lowest strata of the caste system are referred to as 'untouchables'; because, they are excluded from the performance of rituals which confer religious purity. In this hierarchical system, each caste is ritually purer than the one below it (P.42).

History Of Some Caste Systems in Various Parts Of The Globe

Hindu Caste System in India:

Social stratification has been existing for ages. The country, India consists of the traditional Hindu Villages where greater percentage of its population still lives under a caste-like system. In India, the caste system dates to as far back as the fifth century Before Christ (5BC) and continued until 1950-AD when the discrimination was abolished. The Indian agrarian society favours the practice of caste system. Occupational specialization and religion were the basis of the caste system. Four major varna or castes exist which include Brahmins (priests and scholars), kshatriyas (warriors and princes), vaisyas (merchants), and sudras (peasants, crafts workers). There is also the existence of the fifth caste known as the harijans (untouchables). The harijans or untouchables are more or less an aspect of the castes system. They carry out or engage in such works as cleaning latrines and evacuating dead animals which are seen as so defiling that they were not even categorized as part of the caste system in symbolical considerations (Akubukwe 1997).

It is however important to note that in spite of the four major castes in which the Hindu caste system is organized, there is still much diversity at the local village level where major castes are further divided into smaller groupings of subcastes which are called "Jati". More rule has it that one is born into a caste and social mobility between castes, is impossible. The above notwithstanding. It is rather paradoxical when Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (2000) posited that

In practice, however, it is possible for a sub-caste as a whole to bring about an improvement in its standing within the hierarchy of prestige. Those special groups which can successfully acquire or imitate the ritual practices of privileged castes can experience upward mobility by a process known as 'Sanskritization' (p.42).

Characteristics of the Indian Caste System

The typical characteristics of the caste system in India according to Otite and Ogonwo (1995) include:

1. Membership in a caste is hereditary and fixed for life;
2. Choice of marriage partner is restricted to one's own caste;
3. Contact with other castes is limited by restrictions on touching, associating with, dinning with, or eating food cooked by outsiders;
4. Consciousness of one's caste membership is emphasized by things like the caste name, by the individual's conformity to the particular customs of his caste, and by his submission to be governed by his caste;
5. The caste is united by a common traditional occupation, it may also be united by things like belief in a common tribal origin or by adherence to a common religious sect;
6. The relative prestige of the different castes in any locality is well established and jealously guarded (P.345).

Race as Caste in South Africa

In the mid seventeenth century, Dutch traders colonized the black inhabitants (aborigines) of South Africa. Later in the 19th century, the descendants of these Dutch settlers were pushed further inland by British colonizers that newly arrived the territory. Having gained control of the territory, the British colonizers named it Union of South Africa. The Republic of South Africa formally became politically independent in 1961 at the instance of severed ties with United Kingdom. In spite of the political independence, actual freedom was only for the white minority. The whites exhibited domineering and discriminatory attitudes characteristic of their policy of apartheid. In 1948, the apartheid policy was enshrined in law so that whites could deny the black majority South Africans citizenship, ownership of land as well as voice in the government. Ultimately, blacks became a subordinate caste under this obnoxious policy. More so, the blacks were subjected to receiving only the schooling needed to perform low-paying jobs shunned by the whites hence blacks were able to earn on average, only one-quarter of what whites earned. Under the same apartheid policy, millions of blacks were forcibly resettled to so-called homelands, dirt poor districts set aside by whites to confine and control blacks. The situation was that most blacks lived in abject poverty in a land endowed with natural resources. The defence put up by the minority whites was that they viewed blacks as social inferiors. In order to maintain their power, the whites adopted a system of brutal military repression. The blacks were unjustly arrested and detained in police cells should anyone be suspected of opposing the white rule or apartheid regime (Fredrickson, 1981; Wren 1991; and Contreras, 1992).

Consistent with the foregoing, Akubukwe (1997) views thus

From 1948 until 1991, South Africa was a prime example of racial caste system called apartheid. In the system, the castes are defined on the bases of race. During this period, South Africa's apartheid laws defined four racial castes. European (white), African (black), coloured (mixed European and African ancestry), and Asian. Political and educational rights, types of jobs, and type and location of housing were legally defined on the basis of these groupings or castes (P. 124)

Race as Caste in Germany

In Germany, there had existed various races. The people of the various races had lived together peacefully. With time the Aryan race started to see themselves as superior to the Jewish race and the Slavs. Under the Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany, it was further expressed that the true Germans were a racial group called the Aryans. Hitler outlined his view that the Aryan race had been corrupted by contact with inferior races such as the Slavs and Jews. In an attempt to correct the misnomer, Hitler created an Aryan 'master race'. Nuremberg Laws of 1935 withdrew the civil rights of Jews and forbade mixed marriages between Jews and Aryans. In spite of the debasement of the Jewish populace, the Government embarked on gassing millions of Jews along with gypsies, homosexuals and others in concentration camps such as Belsen, Dachau and Auschwitz. This was a genocide. The hostility towards the Jewish race is not limited to Germany alone. The Jews were also hated by other races especially in Europe. Giving credence to the above, Bannisters 1901 book as cited in Haralambos, Holborn, Chapman and Moore (2013) described Jews as

'Yaddish money pigs' who were unwilling to take baths and so were particularly prone to skin and blood diseases. Banister believed that Jews were dominating Britain, and in a private letter to a Jew he said: It is a pity that some kind of vermin exterminator could not be invented by which your vile breed could be eliminated (P. 155).

The excerpt above seems that Bannister pre-empted Hitler's act of genocide. More so, if Bannister had the opportunity of becoming British Prime Minister, perhaps he would have been more cruel than Germany's Adolf Hitler. The main issue remains that the Jews were excessively debased and that constitute racial caste.

Racial Segregation in United States Synonymous with Caste

For 240 years, Africans were sold as cargo. The first slave ship landed in Virginia, USA in 1691 and since then Africans were treated as second class citizens or rather an inferior race. Although slavery was officially abolished in 1865, law makers frame laws that the newly freed Blacks might be legally free but were made unequal. The laws included segregation of schools; Blacks standing up for white people in the bus; separate door entrances in restaurants; ban on inter racial marriages; only those that could read were allowed to vote (the freed slaves could not read); the Blacks were legally not allowed to share the same public space with the whites (they were not allowed to drink from the same water fountain). The blacks could only sit at the back of the bus (Obilade, 2020).

The Blacks ordinarily refers to inhabitants of America whose skins are black or people who are dark in complexion. Meanwhile Obilade (2020:19) refers to Black race as “anyone with origins from Africa even if the African blood goes back multiple generations or if one-eighth of his blood is African”. Racism in the United States has been institutionalized, hence racial inequality manifests itself in employment, housing, healthcare, educational system, academia, boards of corporations and in Congress. The above scenario explains why there was disproportionate deaths among Blacks, during the coronavirus pandemic. What led to deaths of more Blacks during the COVID-19 pandemic was that they held more essential jobs. Consistent with the above, Obilade (2020) explicates thus

While majority of the population was on lockdown in their homes, protecting themselves from the virus, these Blacks had to be at their jobs. They held jobs like hospital cleaners, garbage collectors, supermarket attendants, bus drivers, security men, grave diggers, mortuary attendants, care givers and nurses' aides. A few were nurses and doctors (P. 19).

Racism in Egypt as Caste

Egypt is said to be part of the Arab world. This notion makes the Egyptians to discriminate against the non-Arab Africans in no small measure. Racism permeates all spheres of Egyptian activities such as politics, education, religion and social. In the perspective of politics, it is said that when meeting with their Egyptian counterparts, black African embassy officials are often told “that being black, they have to keep a distance”. Discrimination is also experienced on the street and black Egyptians say they encounter constant social hurdles. Also, a Nubian filmmaker, Nada Zeitoun from the upper Egypt city of Aswan was denied service at a pharmacy in central Cairo because the pharmacist said “he didn't accept money from black hands. Most Egyptians don't consider themselves Africans. The Nubians are among the first inhabitants of what is now considered modern Egypt. In spite of this, it is said that Egyptian people don't believe they have a huge provenance of Nubian people. Even deposed President Mohammed Morsi thinks the Nubians are foreigners. (Siegelbaum, 2013).

In Egypt there is the practice of culture of racism. This practice is also extended to refugees especially sub-Saharan refugees. Buttressing the above assertion, Director of legal programming at AMERA, a British NGO for refugees, Christopher Eades as cited in Siegelbaum (2013) stated thus

You can be here 15 years as a recognized refugee and not for a moment of that will you ever be recognized legally or have a home, Aid workers believe sub-Saharan refugees are treated by different informal rules than those of Arab origin-excluded from schools, facing hurdles opening businesses and finding work, and hampered in legal cases ... Even if you're a recognized refugee, and you have a blue card, you have no right to medical treatment, no right to education, no right to work. (P. 23).

The fact is that in Egypt, refugees of Arab descent are given every assistance, accommodation and hospitality than refugees of Black African descent.

Osu/Diala Caste System in Igbo Tribe of Nigeria

In some communities in Igbo tribe, there exist two caste system known as Osu/Diala. The Diala are known as freeborn and enjoy higher social status and privileges. The Osu on the other hand were people captured during wars in those days or bought. They were regarded as outcastes or untouchables because in the ancient times, they were offered as sacrifice to the gods and idols of the respective communities. This makes the Osu distinct. Buttressing on the above, Ifeanacho (2012) explains thus.

Human sacrifice was the ultimate sacrifice in Igbo traditional religion. Thus, it was conventional that these slaves were offered as sacrifice to the gods of the different communities. Touching or consuming what had been sacrificed to gods in Igbo is forbidden. The sacrificial beings were therefore set aside from others. They were allowed to socialize among themselves only. This caste was not legally recognized. It has continued to enjoy limited cultural support in some communities. The caste system also existed during the days of slavery (P.229).

It is important to note that this Osu/Diala caste system started about 5 centuries ago. At such period, forefathers then were uncivilized, brutish and barbaric. Worse still, some people in this contemporary era are continuing the unpleasant practice of

discrimination. For instance, the free-born (Diala) are not allowed to marry the slave (Osu) in some communities in Igbo tribe. Some do not allow them to do anything in common. Unfortunately, it is difficult to control everything absolutely. Besides, these days, choice of marriage is no longer the prerogative of parents rather the consenting adults (the bachelor and the spinster).

Igbo Caste System as Impediment to the Child's Education and Social Development

In modern cultures a spinster and a bachelor find themselves and agree to marry if they love themselves and feel they can live together. The consenting adults only need the approval of their parents for marriage to be contracted. In practice, if one of the hopeful lovers is of the Diala caste and the other is of the Osu caste, the marriage would not hold. The caste system does not allow for social mobility. Intermarriage between people of two different castes is forbidden. When the hope of the consenting adults is dashed, it is sometimes heart-breaking. It is also a common occurrence that in some cases, before the consenting adults inform their parents, pregnancy had already occurred. Having a child becomes imminent but the overwhelming influence of the Osu/Diala caste system makes the child to be at the cross-roads. The resultant effect of the child of such circumstance is that he/she might neither be accepted by the mother's family nor the father's family. In this situation, the child does not know whose name to bear as regards surname.

The child in this case becomes stigmatized because he could be embarrassed or molested for adopting either of the families' name as his surname. This stigmatization has far reaching effects on the child's education and social development. This is a serious psychological problem as it could make the child to be an isolate.

Furthermore, the situation could result in the child not having an outstanding sponsor due to the influence of the caste system. This is due to the fact that ownership of the child is in dispute because it is not only a taboo but engenders inferiority complex on one of the parents of the child. When there is no outstanding sponsor, the child's education invariably becomes impeded.

Concentration in school or class work is always difficult with a child that is emotional. If a child is in school and he/she does not have hope of getting school needs such as school fees, books, school wears etc., the child would hardly concentrate. Sometimes, the teacher in ignorance of the child's plight might always flog him/her for not providing the school requirements. When a child does not concentrate in his academics, it automatically leads to poor academic performance.

Indeed, the child needs adequate parental guidance, discipline and socialization to succeed in not only academics but all facets of life. The child at birth is tabula rasa. This means that the child at birth is like a clean slate. Whatever somebody writes on it is 'difficult to delete. The parents ought to be happily married so as to properly guide, discipline and socialize the child' for the child to make headway in education and social development. The absence of this parental guidance, discipline and socialization would adversely affect the child's social development.

It is quite unfortunate that the Osu/Diala custom has deprived many innocent children 'of the deserved care by their parents because the two consenting adults that gave birth to such children were refused marriage by their parents on the reason of the caste system. Stating it more concisely, Nnamdi (2014:20) posited that "the Osu/diala has also subjected several children to physical, mental and emotional neglect, maltreatment and abuse, and other inhuman and degrading treatments".

On social development, the Osu/diala caste system deprives the Osu descendants from taking titles. This is discrimination that is quite repulsive. A child from birth ought not be limited in his aspirations. This is because even when he/she has worked diligently and merits an office or position, he would be denied the opportunity because of unjust or unfair caste system. In this sense, meritocracy would give way to mediocrity. When dullards are allowed to occupy the position of authority at the expense of the intelligentsia, the society or community is bound to experience retrogression and in some cases anarchy. For instance, between 10th and 11th April 2016, youths from Ugbene quarters, Alor-Uno community in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State took up arms against the other sections of the community. In a bid to unravel the cause of the fracas, Ani (2016:32) reported that "... there is the issue of which quarter controls the leadership of the community's town union and finally, there is also the issue of Ugbene people claiming that people from the other quarter were referring to them as slaves".

Osu/Diala Caste System as Impediment to the Child's Education and Social Development: The Imperative of Godly Leaders and Enforcement of Human Rights.

Discrimination in some parts of Igbo has continued to hold sway especially with regards to Osu/diala caste system. This trend can be checked if we rely on provisions of the Constitution, Acts and Charters as well as conscientiousness. For instance, Section

4 of the Child's Right Act provides that every child has the right to survival and development. Section 7(1) and (3) placed responsibility on the parents and legal Guardians of the children to provide direction to the child in the exercise of the rights of the child, having regards to evolving capacities of the child. The same Child's Right Act Section 10 Sub section (1) and (2) provides that a child shall not be subjected to any form of discrimination merely by reason of his belonging to a particular community or ethnic group or by reason of his place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion. Also, Article 2, 3, 4, 5, 18(3), 19 and 28 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Right (Ratification and Enforcement) Act, provides that every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedom recognized and guaranteed in the present Charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other statues. The Osu/diala caste system is discriminatory, slavery and racism in all ramifications and its continued practice tantamount to violation of the provisions of the above African Charter.

Also the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Section 42(1) provides that "a citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not by reason only that he is such a person be subjected either expressly by or in the practical application of any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities or ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religion or political opinion are not subjected. Sub Section 2 of this same Section provides that "no citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth". It is worthy of note that the perpetuation of this practice of Osu/diala caste system in some parts of Igbo is in defiance of the provisions the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. If the constitutional provisions are enforced adequately, the Osu/diala discriminatory practices would be checked (Nnamdi 2014).

In a rather more explicit manner, the Child's Right Act Section 20 provides that "Every parent, guardian, institution, person and authority responsible for the care, maintenance, upbringing, education, training, socialization, employment and rehabilitation of a child has the duty to provide the necessary guidance, discipline, education and training for the child in his or its' care such as will equip the child to secure his assimilation, appreciation and observance of the responsibilities set out in this part of the Act'. This again shows that the Osu/diala caste system undermines the Childs Right Act. But there is supremacy of Law and if the Act is enforced, certainly the Osu/diala caste system would be a thing of the past.

Apart from the above, having conscientious or godly leaders is important in stopping the repugnant Osu/diala caste system in Igbo communities. On Igbo broad consideration, good leaders have frowned at the Osu/diala caste system and made statements detesting it. For instance, on March 20, 1956 Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe in his historic address to the defunct Eastern Nigeria House of Assembly as reported by Ukegbu (2018:15) described the Osu caste system as

devilish and uncharitable to brand any human being with a label of inferiority due to the accidents of history ... no one should join in the encouragement of a system of society where one stratum can superciliously claim to be descended from the best brain and would, therefore, consign others to a scrap heap of their own invention and ostracise them socially (P. 15).

Also, during the regime of Dr. Sam Mbakwe as Governor of the old Imo State, Osu caste system was banned in the state (Ukegbu 2018). It is said that when the righteous rule the people rejoice. The godly ruler can re-write history which would engender happiness in his domain. An example is the traditional ruler of Oraeri Community in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State, Eze Emmanuel Ezenriagu who abolished the Osu Caste system in his domain. Although the caste system had existed for over 500 years, the system is described as retrogressive as it reduced fellow human beings to second-class citizens over the years. During the official abolition of the Osu after over 500 years of practice, Eze Emmanuel Ezenriagu stated as was reported by Ujumadu (2019) that

With the official abolition, anybody who discriminates against them will henceforth be sanctioned. With the ceremony we have performed in this community, those formerly described as OSU will start taking traditional titles and inter-marry with others. Those who were hitherto referred to as OSU in this community have been bestowed with all rights and privileges enjoyed by the freeborn. They are good people and many of them are intelligent and beautiful and everybody stands to gain by putting behind this obnoxious system (P. 13).

The excerpt above shows that a leader who is godly and conscientious can turn the hand of the clock for better, after all the people were born into a system that they did not create. The circumstance of their birth could not have been an obstacle to their social development. In the same vein, Nkoto Ihube community in the Okigwe council area of Imo State abolished the discriminatory Osu caste system on Saturday, May 11, 2019. On the fateful day, the clergy, the community leaders and the Akajiofors (kingmakers) gathered at the community hall and declared the progressive action (abolition). Similarly, such pronouncement of abolition of osu caste system was made by the people of Orogwe community in Owerri West council area in the year 2018 (Onyejiuwa, 2019). Consistent with the above, Nnamdi (2014) posits thus

When our ancestors and forefathers did what they did that brought about this repugnant custom, they did not envisage that the stigma be transferred from generation to generation resulting in injustice in innocent young men and women who are now denied the choice of getting spouses of their choice and also children who have been denied parental care because these two consenting adults have been denied marriage by their parents and the community (P. 20)

III. CONCLUSION

Caste system has been practiced in varied forms all over the globe and it is repulsive. The Osu/diala caste system practiced in Igbo land is obnoxious as it reduces fellow human beings to second-class citizens. Moreover, the Osu/diala caste system had continued to deny innocent children the necessary parental care because often two consenting adults that gave birth to them were refused marriage by their parents on the reason of the caste system. This by extension adversely affects the child's education and social development. One effective way of stopping the obnoxious practice is enforcement of relevant sections of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Right; Child's Right Act; and the Fundamental Human Rights enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Also, a panacea is enthronement of Community leaders whose major characteristics include conscientiousness and godliness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussion and the conclusion above, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should enforce Child's Right Act; the African Charter on Human and Peoples Right; and Fundamental Human Rights.
2. Those that should be selected/chosen for community leadership positions should be people characterized by conscientiousness and godliness.
3. National Orientation Agency (NOA) should enlighten the public on the evil associated with the Osu/diala caste system in Igbo communities.
4. Philanthropists and charity organizations should direct their humanitarian services towards children that are discriminated against.
5. Christian organizations as well as elites in communities perpetuating this Osu/diala caste system should challenge this practice in the court of law.

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