

**TRADITIONAL JUDICIAL SYSTEM AS A PANACEA TOWARDS FIGHTING  
CORRUPTION AND OTHER RELATED CRIMES IN NIGERIA: THE *IGBA MBEMBE*  
IGBO DANCE DRAMA AS AN EXAMPLE**

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***Abstract***

*It is no longer news that corruption and other related crimes have eaten deep into the fabrics of all facets of Nigerian systems. From all indications, our nation is sick and requires a state of wellness. The data for the study was obtained using interview and participant observation. The study conducted, discloses that many Nigerian citizens have lost confidence in the Nigerian Police Force in terms of fighting corruption and other related criminal cases. The people interviewed by the researchers unveiled their minds that the Nigerian Police Force is not walking the talk. Some documented interviews on people's views about the Police Force are nauseating. The study aims to enlighten the world at large, the Nigerian populace, particularly the Igbo on the need to revert to the Igbo traditional system of justice known as Igba mbembe where confirmed perpetrators were brought to book by open disgrace through music and dance drama. They were made to dance either half or fully naked to different types of music played by the members of the community where they belong, with demonstrations depicting the offence committed. The efficacy of music in transforming lives was also looked into because the Igba mbembe is accompanied by didactic music. The researchers are confident that by so doing, law and order will be restored and maintained in Nigeria and the society will once again experience the state of wellness as was the case in the olden days. The study is based on Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory.*

**Keywords: Judiciary, Police Force, Dance Drama, Corruption, Crime.**

## Introduction

Happenings all over the country depict a helpless country. A country ill-prepared for the independence it received from the colonialists. With the *Boko haram* militant and the Fulani herdsmen terrorists' challenges, where innocent citizens are slaughtered daily. With kidnappings, robbery at gunpoint and rape on the rise, it depicts a country whose security apparatuses are overwhelmed. Other challenges destroying the morality of our society are same-sex marriage, sex for marks in Nigerian tertiary institutions, incest, 'pastorpreneurs' with fake miracles, and other repulsive acts that are alien to an ideal African society.

In the olden Igbo land, a high level of morality prevailed. People dread being caught committing a crime for the fear of being brought to book and exposed in open disgrace by the entire community through *Igba mbembe* dance drama. Because of this system, there was law and order. Immoral acts were put under check before it it develops into a full blown criminal acts. Unlike nowadays that we see cases like emptying of people's bank accounts through hacking and so many internet fraud cases. Today, empirical evidences shows that there are scammers everywhere defrauding people of their hard-earned money, committing criminal acts and many of them get away with it because of the level of decadence of the Nigeria Police Force as expounded in this study with documented proofs.

Some female students in tertiary institutions, due to the low economic status of their parents, pay their tuition fees through prostitution (Fawole & Osho, 2017, pp. 99). Young men take to armed robbery or drug trafficking to survive. Jobless citizens who responded to job adverts in named locations were kidnapped and sent to early grave by the job advertisers. Paid drivers plan the kidnap

of their employers, kill and bury them in shallow graves. Men of God have been kidnapped severally, beheaded and dumped even after receiving ransoms from their victim's relations (Alagbe, 2020 - <https://punchng.com/touching-foes-of-jobseekers-lured-to-kidnappers-den-via-employment-scam/>).

Examination malpractice has grown to a pitiable dimension through the existence of 'expo' websites where School Certificate candidates download real examination questions before the examination days and come into the examination halls with the same under the protection of paid supervisors (Jimoh, 2009, pp. 101). The Police force has failed and the religious institutions as the moral compass of the society have not achieved much. What is the solution and how do we get rid of all these societal viruses? Let us borrow a leaf from Skinner's theory.

## Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory

This research on *Igba Mbembe* is based on B. F. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning. According to Iversan (1992, p.20):

Operant conditioning theory believes that behaviour is an outcome of response that follows an action. The learner will possibly repeat the action or a particular behaviour if it is rewarded with a pleasant consequence (positive reinforcement). On the other hand, the learner is unlikely to repeat an action if it is followed by unpleasant consequences.

According to Skinner's theory, there are two types of reinforcers namely; positive and negative reinforcers. For instance, giving a complementary remark to a person for good behaviour is a positive reinforcer while a person who receives punishment for misbehaving is unlikely to repeat the action for which he has received an unpleasant/negative reward. This according to Skinner is a negative reinforcement. Burns (1995) notes that:

Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior. Learning is acquired due to prior experience one has gained. A child may learn from his environment consciously or unconsciously, and in the process, his or her behavior is being modified either positively or negatively (p. 12).

Burn's idea is in agreement with Skinner's operant conditioning theory since both agree that a person's behaviour is modified based on the reward or punishment that follows an action. This of course leads to learning.

Skinner's theory is in line with the *Igba mbembe* - Igbo traditional justice system where public shows were made of criminals. This is done through public disgrace by dancing to the music played by members of the community. Often, perpetrators of crimes were made to dance naked. The dance is accompanied with floggings depending on the gravity of the offence. The confirmed guilty members of the community were humiliated openly before the entire community.

The offenders, according to Skinner's theory of operant conditioning, are unlikely to repeat such deviant behaviours. This system serves as a deterrent to others. It will also force them to comply with the norms of society in order not to face the same shameful treatment as observed by Skinner. That is why the researchers advocate for the *Igba mbembe* punitive measure to check corruption and other crimes in Nigerian society. It is worthy of note that *Igba mbembe* justice system has no fetish connotations. It is as simple as that and works effectively because Ndi Eze (Chiefs) that gave the final verdict were incorruptible for fear of the consequences of any compromise in handling criminal cases.

### **Dance Drama**

This is a type of dance where the dancers use body movements, gestures, and facial expressions to tell their story without speech. Nguma et al (2010), see a dance drama as, "a narrative dance where the dancers use music and body movements in place of words" (p. 20). The *Igba Mbembe* is a dance where culprits were made to demonstrate their evil acts without words but with music for the dance drama supplied by the members of the community. The criminals were each subjected to demonstrations of their evil deeds in the dance drama. It is a non-fictional or real life dance drama. It is worthy of note that the Chiefs (Ndi Eze) of the Igbo communities who give the final verdict are incorruptible, hence their strictness in dealing with criminal cases. Once someone is summoned to the *Eze* and found guilty after due diligence, he/she will face the music of open disgrace in the presence of the entire community, with no bailing in this system.

### **Crime**

Britannica Encyclopedia describes crime as "the intentional commission of an act deemed socially harmful or dangerous and specifically defined, prohibited and punishable under criminal law" (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/crime-law>).

Merriam-Webster dictionary (1999) adds that "crime is any illegal act which someone can be punished for especially gross violation of the law" (p. 752)." The Business Dictionary sees crime as, a "harmful act or omission against the public which the state wishes to prevent and which on conviction is punishable by fine, imprisonment and or death.

Examples of crimes include; murder, rape, arson, sale of illegal drugs, theft, kidnapping, homicide, sexual assault, robbery, stealing,

stealing, traffic violations, indecent exposure of private parts, driving without license, drug influence and disturbing peace.

### **The Duties of the Nigeria Police Force**

The Nigeria police force is the oldest law enforcement agency in Nigeria. It was established in 1930. It metamorphosed from different regional security outfits that were in existence pre-1930. Its operation is controlled at the national level with an Inspector General of Police as the head of the organisation. The duties of the Nigeria Police Force as stated in the Nigeria Police Act (2020) are as follows:

- a. Prevent and detect crimes, and protect the rights and freedom of every person in Nigeria as provided in the Constitution, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and any other law;
- b. maintain public safety of all persons in Nigeria;
- c. protect the lives and property of all persons in Nigeria;
- d. enforce all laws and regulations without any prejudice to the enabling Acts of other securities.
- e. discharge such duties within and outside Nigeria as may be required of it under this Act or any other law;
- f. collaborate with other agencies to take any necessary action and provide the required assistance or support to persons in distress, including victims of road accidents, fire disasters, earthquakes and floods;
- g. facilitate the free passage and movement on highways, roads and streets open to the public; and

h. adopt community partnership in the discharge of its responsibilities under this Act or under any other law; and

i. vet and approve the registration of private detective schools and private investigative outfits (p. 2).

The extent to which the Nigerian Police Force performs these duties will be exposed. We shall then analyse our findings and take a stand.

### **The Menace of the Nigerian Police**

Despite the duties of the Nigeria Police Force as listed above, it is an obvious fact that the Nigeria Police Force has been infiltrated by unscrupulous officers. This bad eggs conducts themselves in an embarrassing way. They perpetuate criminal activities that makes the citizens lose trust in the organization.

According to an address to senior officials in September 2009, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) identified some of the problems of the Nigerian Police when he said:

It is apparent that indiscipline, unprofessionalism, and widespread corruption have been the bone of the Nigerian police over the years, a situation that has greatly hampered the quality of service delivery.... Our image has been battered time and again, leading to loss of confidence by members of the public on the police (Human Rights Watch: 2009).Emerson (2018) of Human Rights Watch stated that:

Countless ordinary Nigerians attempting to make ends meet as taxi drivers, market traders and shop keepers are accosted on daily basis by police officers who demand bribe and commit human rights abuses against them as a means of extorting money. Those who fail to pay are frequently threatened with arrest or physical

harm. Often, these threats are carried out. The activities of the Nigerian police also include; arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention and acts of violence, including physical and sexual abuse. (Source: 2018 John Emerson/ Human Rights Watch, Aug. 17, 2010 News release).

### **Random Indiscriminate Arrests and Detention of Citizens**

Eric Guttschuss, Nigeria researcher in Africa of Human Rights Watch, conducted more than 145 interviews with victims and witnesses on police extortion, and corruption related abuses including market traders, commercial drivers, passengers, okada motorcycle commercial drivers, sex workers, criminal suspects and victims of common crimes. According to Guttschuss (2018):

The police round up citizens in public places, including mass arrests in restaurants, markets and bus stops. In some cases of blatant deception in plain clothes, police officers simply masquerade as commuter minibus drivers, pick up unsuspecting passengers at bus stops, take them at gun point to nearby police stations where they demand money in return for their release (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/17/everyones-game/corruption-and-human-rights-abuses-nigeria-police-force#2987>).

Note that the names of the interviewees were withheld for security purposes according to him. Below are some of the findings he made:

### **From the father of a 16 year old boy arrested in Anambra State on April 19, 2009.**

The police told me they had arrested my son in a robbery.... They beat him up mercilessly. He had wounds on his back and body. My son told me they put a stick between his arms and legs and suspended him. If I didn't pay, they would have killed the only son I have and after I paid the money, they released the boy for me. No bail, no statement, nothing (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/17/everyones-game/corruption-and-human-rights-abuses-nigeria-police-force#2987>).

The police released a robbery suspect without hearing or court order simply because the father paid and the boy was freed. What a corrupt society. A market trader in Onitsha recounted how in December 2007, he and others were randomly picked up by eight policemen and unlawfully detained.

Around 6 pm, we were sitting outside a restaurant having drinks. They arrested us and took us to Niger Street where their vehicle was parked. They took us to Fegge Police Station and detained us. I called my people and my brother came and paid ₦6,000.00 and I was released. My other friends also paid before they were released (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/17/everyones-game/corruption-and-human-rights-abuses-nigeria-police-force#2987>).

How can the populace trust the Nigerian Police Force since their preoccupation is to collect bribes? This is quite disgusting.

### **Sexual Assaults Associated with Extortion: From a sex worker in Lagos.**

She attested that:

Last week at 9:30 pm, I was standing on the street when the police came and arrested me. They took me to their van with the other ten girls who are also sex workers to the Ikeja police station. They took me to a small office and asked for ₦3,000.00 (\$20). Because I didn't have money, he had sex with me inside the office without a condom after which he released me (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/17/everyones-game/corruption-and-human-rights-abuses-nigeria-police-force#2987>).

This is terrible. The policemen rape girls instead of bribes.

### **Torture and Extrajudicial Killings**

In Dec 2009, a student of Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Victor Obrige was allegedly killed by the police at Omoku Police Station in Rivers State. Victor's brother revealed that:

I went to the police station that day; the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) said they would grant bail to Victor. The officer in charge of the surveillance Department demanded ₦20,000.00 (\$132). I offered ₦5000.00 and he rejected it. They beat up Victor mercilessly, hit him with their baton and kicked him with their boots. They beat him to death and deposited his remains at Archbong Clinic. The Doctor told us that Victor was already

dead when they brought him to the clinic (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/17/everyones-game/corruption-and-human-rights-abuses-nigeria-police-force#2987>).

Lives were wasted because they could not pay bribes to the police. This is horrible, agonizing and unbearable.

### **The Igba Mbembe as an Option**

From the foregoing, it is clear that many citizens of Nigeria do not have confidence in the Nigeria police and the judiciary for obvious reasons.

It becomes imperative to seek an option where citizens will find redress when they are suppressed by anyone. The *Igba Mbembe* Igbo traditional judicial remains an option. This is a traditional judicial system practised in Igbo land in the olden days, where confirmed criminals were disgraced openly. For instance, if someone was caught red-handed harvesting cassava on another person's farm, they will be made to face the *Igba Mbembe* tribunal on a fixed date for trial.

### **Stages Involved in the Igba Mbembe Tribunal**

#### **Stage One**

The suspects would be dragged to the presence of the elders at the *Obi* where the report of what happened will be laid. The elders will then give them a date to formally present the case. On the scheduled date and time, the *Ikoru* will be sounded to alert people and invite them for the hearing. The *Ikoru* is a giant slit drum deposited permanently in the village square, *Obi*, because of its gigantic size. This is the beginning of the process. At the gathering, there would be a brief address, stating the purpose of the gathering. The suspect(s) would be communicated with the

allegations against them from members of their community. They would be given opportunities to defend themselves to avoid false accusations. Those who accepted the charges against them without denying would be booked for another session with the Eze of the community and the elders.

### **Stage Two**

The stage two of the *Igba Mbembe* process is primarily for serious interrogation and investigation. This stage is a very tedious and delicate stage. The cooperation and sincerity of the accused and witnesses determines the speedy conclusion of the case. At this stage, those who denied the allegations would be made to face a team of witnesses on a given date and time. They would be allowed to give their sides of the story on the case. After the witnesses' confirmations, the innocent ones (if any) would be released by the ruling of the *Igba Mbembe* Judiciary while the culprit will move to stage three of the process.

### **Stage Three**

The next stage is for all the confirmed culprits to have a sitting with the *Eze* for a final hearing and the final verdict. The *Eze* will be fully briefed by the elders. The outcome of the interrogations will be reported. The *Eze* will confirm the veracity of the accusations, investigations and conclusion from the accused from the culprit(s). A date would now be given for the final verdict. The *Igba Mbembe* judgment with the *Eze* as the chief judge. Should there arise any dissatisfaction on the process or outcome of the hearings by any of the parties involved (accused and accuser), there is room for appeal. The appeal hearing will be presided by the *Eze*. He will select few elders to join him in this stage.

### **Stage Four**

The final stage is the *Igba Mbembe* proper. On this date, the *Ikoru* will be sounded to assemble members of the community. The culprit will be presented by the elders. A brief address will be made by one of the elders. During the speech, members of the community will be reminded of the case at hand, the various processes they have taken in unravelling the truth of the matter and their findings. The *Eze* will now inform the members of the community of their final conclusion on the case. If the person is found guilty, the *Eze* will make pronouncements on the commensurate punishment for the offence. This punishment is given based on the tradition and custom of the community. Also, references will be inferred on past offenders and the punishments given. After the pronouncements, the culprit(s) will be handed over to the youths. The youths will ensure the judgement of the *Eze* is carried out to the letter.

It is important to note the following:

- i. Should the accused show any trait of violence or tendency to abscond, the person will be kept in a room in the palace of the *Eze*. From there, the accused will attend the hearing process.
- ii. Depending on how grievous the offence is and the tension it raised, should there be any reason to show that the accused will be harmed if left to go home, he/she will be taking into protective custody at the palace.
- iii. The process of the judgement may be faster or spontaneous in some cases depending on the circumstances surrounding the crime committed and acceptance of guilt by the accused.

### Cases of successful outcomes of *Igba Mbembe* punishment

As a very little girl, the first researcher witnessed two *Igba Mbembe* cases of two culprits in her community; Ezeoke Nsu in Ehime Mbano in Imo State, Nigeria in the seventies. It was a case of theft involving a woman who was caught harvesting cassava from another woman's farm. She was openly disgraced, even before the *Igba Mbembe* process started. Immediately she was caught, she was dragged to the *Eze's* palace from where the elders took over. They requested that the *Ikoru* be sounded while the culprit was taken to the *Obi* (village square) by the youths. At the aggressive sound of the *Ikoru*, the community members started gathering and within a short time, the village square i.e. *Obi* was filled with villagers. The culprit was dragged to the centre of the village square. She was stripped of her wrapper, pants, brazier and blouse. Her fellow women used leaves to cover only her private parts. Other parts of her body were exposed. The village musicians were already singing mockery songs with instrumental accompaniment. Madam Onyekwelu, the culprit was weeping bitterly because she was forced to dance to the music. She was also flogged intermittently at any point she got tired of dancing, or failure to dance rhythmically to the sound of the music being played for her. Her children could not withstand the shame as they were weeping profusely for their mother who stole in order to feed them. To make matters worse for her, after dancing for a while at the village square, the judgement was given, she was then paraded around the entire community carrying a local basket *nkata* or *ekete* full of cassava depicting the item she stole while dancing to the music. It was a horrifying experience. Many people vowed openly never to involve themselves in any crime that would make them be relegated to the background, which many of them

upheld. Cases of theft were no longer or rarely heard of in the community.

Below are some of the songs the entire community sang for her which was backed up by indigenous instrumental accompaniments and which Madam Onyekwelu danced to:

#### Song No 1

Onyekwelu



Song	English Interpretation
<i>Onyekweluwa</i>	Onyekweluwa, you
<i>mgbi- mewere</i>	have been a
<i>eteele</i>	perpetrator of evil
<i>Mgbe I mewere</i>	You have been a
<i>eteele</i>	perpetrator of evil

This song brings to limelight the despicable outcome of committing a crime. It says: *Onyekweluwa*, you have been a perpetrator of evil. It is contemptible for one to be known for evil as the woman in question. This type of exposure will definitely affect the woman's family as it will be regarded as a family where thieves are bred. They will have no say in community matters since they are known for stealing. No right-thinking person would like to be associated with such a family in marriage. Therefore, the audience will guide against such identity for themselves and their families. People in those days detested evil and brought up their children well.

#### Song No 2

E GBUO 'NY'O SHI NMA



Song	English Interpretation
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<i>Egbuo onye-oshi nma</i>	When you give a knife cut to a thief
<i>Ebe na ebe O gara</i>	Wherever he goes.
<i>Anyi a huwala ya ama</i>	We will recognize him

This song portrays the appalling outcome of stealing. It says:

When you give a knife cut to a thief, which is permanent, wherever he goes, we will recognize him. This shows the deplorable situation a marked thief faces as a result of the *Igba Mbembe* disgrace and the indelible marks they receive. It is a didactic song that leaves a lesson to the guilty and the audience.

The second time one of the researchers witnessed the *Igba Mbembe*, was a case of adultery. Like Onyekwele, the duo was shamefully dragged to the village square where they were made public show of. They were stripped naked and as usual, the women covered Akunna's (the adulterous woman's) private part with some leaves while the man was stripped naked.

They were forced to simulate through dance how they had the affair. The naked woman was made to lie down with the naked adulterer on top of her in a demonstration to the sound of the music. Any missed beat amounted to flogging of the duo on the floor. Some women among the spectators turned their faces as they could not watch continuously the terrifying dance drama.

Next, as usual, they were paraded around the community with singing, and drumming by the community members and dancing by the culprits. The community members shrouded

their shoulders in disapproval to the crime committed.

Below is one of the songs they sang while parading the offenders around the community. These songs are often accompanied with drumming.

### Song No 3

#### Akunna I gba Onwe gi Oshi

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Song	English Interpretation
<i>Akunna, isi na-I luru di Ma na-agba ga onwe gi-oshi</i>	Akunna, you mean you are married
<i>Eh, eh eh eh eh eh eh eh</i>	And still, you disgrace yourself
	<i>Eh, eh eh eh eh eh eh eh</i>

The song says:

Akunna, you mean you are married and still you disgrace yourself? In the olden days, people rarely get involved in extra marital affairs to avoid such embarrassments. Some parents, in their ignorance went as far as circumcising their girls to make them remain virgins before they married. While the married women are forbidden to have any sexual relationship with anyone aside their husband. Education and civilization has proved that female circumcision also known as female genital mutilation (FGM) is dangerous to the health of the female gender.

**Song No 4**

**I MERE OLE IWE**

Song	English Interpretation
<i>I mere ole iwe, hea I mereole</i>	What have you done, sad, hea what have you done
<i>Oke okpa gara</i>	done
<i>ogu, iwe</i>	A hen that goes to war,
<i>Obi ya sara</i>	sad
<i>mbara</i>	Is usually happy
<i>Efochaa nnekwu</i>	When the chick is exposed
<i>odu, iwe</i>	
<i>Oke okpa a</i>	The hen laughs at her
<i>chigbuo onwe ya</i>	to scorn

This song exposes how illegal it is for a married man to sleep with a married woman and vice versa. It is an abomination in African culture. The translation of the song; when you are enjoying sexual affairs with another person’s spouse, you seem to be enjoying yourself but at the end of the day, you are both ridiculed by public disgrace.

**The Efficacy of Music (Songs) in the Transformation of Lives**

Songs play no small role in the upbringing of the Igbo citizens. In the words of Emeka (2002) “Igbo traditional music emphasizes character formation and starts early to enculturate the young into those values, behaviours, attitudes, speech, action and traditions that are considered necessary for the making of a person in a given environment” (p. 205). In the same vein, Okafor (2005) states that, “in traditional Nigerian society, music is an integral part of education” (p. 208). From the foregoing discussion, it is very clear that music plays a

vital role in the education of citizens of any given society as in Nigeria. Ikem and Anene (2006) also unveil that:

Social control was enforced through subtle means like an evil doer being criticized and mocked during festivals with songs. The Ine song stands as an important object of caution to those who are about to go contrary to societal norms (p. 47).

This was exactly what *Igba Mbembe* tradition achieved in the lives of the citizens of the Igbo communities before independence. The Igbo citizens were conscious, watchful and mindful of their behaviour to avoid attracting the anger and the judgment of the community members. Morals were acquired by members of the society through music. Agu (2011) opines that:

Moral education is mainly channeled through the medium of folk music because it enhances easy comprehension and assimilation. Therefore, songs are considered most effective for this purpose and carefully selected to create the desired impact (p. 4).

This again proves the efficacy of music in the transformation of lives. Onyeji (2011) expatiates:

African music is a certified agent valued for its role in the maintenance of social and political order. It is valued as the last resort for tackling difficult social situations in a community. Its value as a policing agent in African societies finds great usage when addressing the high and mighty in the society (p. 19).

Onyeji’s take suggests that the *Igba Mbembe* will go a long way to maintain law and order in the Igbo communities. It did in the olden days when it was enforced. The lawlessness

we battle with today will be a thing of the past if we embrace the *Igba mbembe traditional* judicial system.

Ofuani (2011) also discloses that:

In Aniocha, (Delta Igbo), they have customarily enforced social control in their communities through subtle means. They achieved this by exposing the violators of whichever communal norms through commenting on such individuals and the societal ill committed (p. 42).

This again brings to the limelight the efficacy of the *Igba Mbembe* tradition in positively affecting the lives of the Igbo communities as in the olden days. Today the Nigerian Police has taken over the maintenance of law and order in our nation Nigeria with the problems of indiscipline, corruption and serious criminal acts staring at us daily. The *Igba Mbembe* Judicial approach remains a better option for the maintenance of law and order in Nigeria and in the Igbo communities in particular. The researcher therefore advocates for that.

There is a need to mention at this point that Skinner's Operant Conditioning theory is a suitable one since it believes that when someone is punished for an undesirable behaviour, he is unlikely to repeat such an act. People's reactions during the *Igba mbembe* are enough proof to accept his theory in this regard. Also, the sanity enjoyed in our nation before the colonial masters took over was glaring.

## Conclusion

The rate of criminal cases in Nigeria is heartbreaking. The Nigeria Police was established in 1930 to secure lives and property, fight corruption and other related

crimes, arrest criminals and make sure the offenders were brought to book.

From the research conducted, the Nigeria Police are far from performing their duties. Instead of protecting lives, they grossly waste lives when people fail to pay bribes as reported by some people who encountered them. Suspects of serious criminal cases were released on payment of bribes as the father of a 16-year-old boy suspected to be involved in robbery testified against the police who collected money from him and released his son without any trial of the robbery case. That shows that if one is unfortunate enough to encounter robbers and report to the police, nothing will come out of it as long as the suspects release money to the police.

In fairness to the Nigerian police force, there were few cases in which officers of the Nigerian police force have shown dedication and committed towards combatting crime in the country. This is commendable.

Policing in isolation of the community members will be a futile effort. However, it is evident that the citizens have little or no trust for the police.

The *Igba Mbembe* judicial system, a community based process practised in Igbo land in the olden days could be the best option if our communities return to the practice in order to sanitize our land. Other tribes in Nigeria are encouraged to devise their own traditional means of eliminating evil in their localities without involving themselves in any fetish practice that will release the anger of God. By so doing we are sure of a better Nigeria where peace and justice reign supreme and where law and order will be maintained thus leading to our dream healthy Nigeria.

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