

## THE IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON IGWEBUIKE PHILOSOPHY AND AFRICAN COMMUNALISM: A PHILOSOPHICAL ASSESSMENT

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### Abstract

Nowadays, no one hears of the ravages of Corona virus, or crown virus in Africa but one still hears during winter that a strand of the virus is still alive and still cause ill health in some part of Europe and America. This pandemic, Corona virus, known with the code, COVID 19 spread like a wild fire; in 2019, 2020, and 2021 and its impacts on so many sectors of African life were enormous. Many sectors of the world's economy went into lockdown, likewise so many nations or countries in Africa. And with the introduction of COVID 19 sanitary rules or precautionary measures that were aimed at defeating the virus, like social distancing, staying at home, staying alone to stay safe, one instantly saw a serious problem or challenge and an attack to the foundation of African communitarian life and practice or communalism, also to Igwebuike Philosophy which is within African Communalism. African communalism as an African way is community oriented life it's never individualistic. Using Philosophical analysis, as the methodology, exposition of COVID 19, African Communalism and Igwebuike philosophy is made, and the most dreadful effect of the pandemic is portrayed, and then, this noble life of African man is x-rayed too, so as to see its benefits to Africans of nowadays. Seeing the challenges posed by the Crown virus, the researcher portrays African Ethics of care as the way forward and this African Ethics of care is rooted firmly on African communalistic principles of living and on Igwebuike philosophy. Not only that the most vulnerable must be catered or cared for, however, African communalism is still in voyage with its solidarity palliatives and assistance from the governments, groups, and well to do Africans. It must reach to the less privileged ones and even to middle class among the privileged ones so as to gain enormous strength to defeat the pandemic together.

**Key words:** COVID 19 and COVID 19 Impacts, Igwebuike Philosophy and African Communalism.

### Introduction

COVID 19 pandemic is really a great and memorable disaster for the whole world as its effect and cumulative effects were great. In African continent, it reached everywhere except in Madagascar which we know it's somehow cut off from other countries as it's an island. In Africa and especially in Nigeria, the effects and disruptions also were enormous owing to Nigerian bad leadership and bad leaders. As a pandemic, it was experienced almost everywhere in the world however, the way the Americans, Europeans, and Oriental countries like Japan, India, China, Indonesia and others handled the pandemic were quite different from that of the Africans and the sole reason is owing to African poverty, corruption and bad leadership. Describing the real *sitz im leben* (situation or settings of life) of Africa people without reservation and which we knew too well has not changed at the moment, the fathers African Synod of 1994 holds that Africa is well known for its poverty. Thus, they write:

All over towns and villages are faces of malnourished people, squalid living conditions, diseased with scanty medical facilities, roadside beggars, street children, etc... One common situation without any doubt is that Africa is full of problems. In all the nations, there is abject, tragic mismanagement of available scarce resources, political instability and social disorientation. The result stare us in the face: misery, wars, despair. In the world controlled by rich and powerful nations, Africa has practically become an irrelevant appendix, often forgotten and neglected.<sup>1</sup>

The influence and the challenges of COVID 19 were much that so many sectors of lives were affected: business, education, migration, politics, and African communalism and among others. For instance, in Nigeria, looking at the system those in charge of eradication and control of this disease called, Nigeria centre for Disease Control (NCDC) does their work one can't but be confused all the more. A fourteen (14) day quarantine was mapped out for one coming into the country and even when it's obvious the virus is in the country and states begin to lockdown, the first state was Lagos, followed by Abuja capital territory and together so many states queued in and through the media, it is clear that many nations in the world did quarantine and lockdown as well, but Nigeria's own is always accompanied with corruption and sectionalism. Even when the pandemic seems to have subsided, opening of schools became a serious problem while opening of markets and churches weren't a problem. Education system suffered much on account of COVID 19 challenges. Even, while on this research, one may even tend to align with some discordant voices that were saying that there was nothing like COVID 19 in Africa and Nigeria, that it's just a political business among African

leaders, Nigerian inclusive. But looking at the enormous impact of this pandemic on the Africans and on Nigerians, one knew that people really suffered from COVID 19 as there were so many deaths and again, Nigerian politicians were also not free from playing planks with the lives of their citizens. We now proceed with conceptual clarifications and undertake a critical analysis of COVID 19 its impacts and the challenges it poses to Igwebuiké philosophy and African communalism.

### Conceptual Clarifications:

**Philosophy/Philosophical Assessment and Philosophy of Life** - Philosophers are not in agreement on the meaning of philosophy, however, there are common grounds among philosophers pertaining to the etymology of the word 'philosophy' as one may see in many philosophical texts. Martin Heidegger says that "philosophy speaks Greek"<sup>2</sup>. Etymologically, the word "philosophy" comes from two Greek words joined together: "philos" and "Sophia". *philein*-to love, *philos*- loving, *philia*- love, *sophos*-wise, *Sophia*-wisdom. Hence, we can say, "*philosophia est philia tes Sophias*"- "philosophy is love of wisdom. A philosopher is a lover of wisdom, a person strongly desirous of wisdom. Wisdom here begins with wonder that is, astonishment. This kind of wonder is not ordinary wonder but of deep curiosity. An embracing wonder, that is, wonder about things in totality and not in bits by bits. Plato says, "It is through wonder that those who began philosophy started off" Also, "The sense of wonder is the mark of a philosopher"<sup>3</sup> Philosophers wonder about things through reflective thinking. They wonder about things through their ultimate causes or from their fundamental point of view. Hence, the scholastics define philosophy as "*Scientia rerum per ultimas causas*" which means "Science of everything through their ultimate causes."<sup>4</sup> based on the light of reason. Philosophy is a critical reflection on the realities in the universe; this includes the human person himself or herself. For C. B. Okolo, philosophy is a "critical enterprise, something dynamic, a quest, a search ..., a spirit of evaluative inquiry into all area of human experience, of the world in which we live, of man himself and his place in the universe."<sup>5</sup> He further contends that it is the duty of philosophy to give a "coherent and systematic account of the multifaceted universe of being and knowledge of what is, and how man knows it."<sup>6</sup> This implies that philosophy covers every aspect of human endeavors. In other words, it studies the whole of reality. Thus, it is most ambitious.

**Philosophical assessment** is to apply the tools of critique and objective scrutiny in its assessment of its subject matter. The focus here is on the impact of COVID 19 and its impacts as a major challenge to Igwebuiké Philosophy in African Communalism.

**Philosophy of Life** - is a personal framework for understanding the world and one's place in it, encompassing beliefs about existence, values, purpose, and how to live<sup>7</sup> Philosophy of life is a set of core ideas that guides a person's thoughts, feelings and actions, often developing in response to life's big questions. In a nutshell, it is a group of core ideas that governs everything a person thinks, feels and does.<sup>8</sup> These core ideas develop as our responses to the big questions of life or existential riddles life asks each of us. A life philosophy is like a car engine or computer operating system, these are somehow hidden and invisible, but, whether we interact with them or not, they are always there and making everything to work. Life philosophy pilots one's affairs in life.

### The Term Igwebuiké and Igwebuiké Philosophy

"*Igwebuiké*" is an Igbo philosophical concept and it signifies "strength in unity" or strength in numbers". Igwebuiké is a philosophical concept that emphasizes the importance of collective action and power of complementarity, the complementary nature of reality and the importance of harmony and togetherness. It's often described as the underlying principle of African philosophy, pointing towards the interconnectedness and balance of all things, interconnectedness of the spiritual and material worlds and the importance of social institutions. Essentially, Igwebuiké promotes harmony, complementarity and the strength found in collective action. Igwebuiké can be employed as a word or used as a sentence. As a word, it is written as *Igwebuiké*, and as a sentence, it is written as *Igwebu ike* with the components words enjoying some independence in terms of space. The three words involved: "*Igwe*" is a noun which means number or multitude, usually a huge of number or population. "*Bu*" is a verb, which means is. (indicating existence or being) "*ike*" is a noun which means strength or power.<sup>9</sup> Here, we mean ability, capability or resilience to overcome challenges. Thus, Igwebuiké means strength or number is power. There is strength in unity. When human beings come together in solidarity and in complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force.

**Igwebuiké Philosophy:** Igwebuiké as a concept in Igbo ideology is that of strength in numbers, where togetherness in one accord remains the watch word and the spirit of engagement.<sup>10</sup> Igwebuiké is a key concept in Igbo Philosophy and culture, highlighting the importance of cooperation, harmony and the recognition that strength lies in the collective

rather than in the individual dominance. It is a principle that encourages individuals to come together and work towards common goals, understanding that their collective power is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.<sup>11</sup> Igwebuike emphasizes interconnectedness and complementarity among individuals and realities, promoting collective growth, cooperation, and mutual understanding.<sup>12</sup> Igwebuike philosophy is founded on four principles:<sup>13</sup> **Principle of identity:** The principle of Identity asserts that every being is determined in itself, it's one with itself and it is consistent in itself. So, we talk of oneness and uniqueness of a being.

**Principle of Hierarchy:** This principle holds that every reality in the universe has a force, but not of equal force as there is categorization of forces according to classes of being. We have Ontic being (non living being like stone) and we have Ontological being (human being). We have being *qua* being, entity *qua* entity (this one can refer to as God) as he is the purest of beings and with the greatest force. **Principle of contrariety:** Here we talk of otherness of reality or the contrary of reality or difference or otherness of reality.<sup>14</sup> (Contrary or differing in genus or specie, and cannot belong at the same time to the same subject). Thus, Igwebuike accepts contrariety as part of the natural universe as it recognizes that individual prosperity is linked to the well being of the community.

**Principle of unity:** Here, the emphasis is on the importance of unity and cooperation in achieving common goal. Principle of unity tells us that in spite of contrariety of reality, in spite of the singular identity of each reality, there is something common to everything. Igwebuike understands every individual reality as part of and completion of the whole and thus, there is unity in diversity. Igwebuike presents a being as that which possesses a relational character of mutual relations. Thus to be is to live in solidarity and complementarity and to live outside the parameters of solidarity and complementarity is to suffer alienation.<sup>15</sup> The four principles explained above collectively promote a holistic understanding of existence and social cohesion. Igwebuike transcends natural boundaries, advocating for universal relevance in addressing human challenges and fostering communal well being.

### **African Communalism and its Elements of Communal Spirit and Mutual Co-Operation**

**African Communalism** - African communalism is the mode of life of traditional Africans, characterized by humane living. By humane living, we mean a way of life emphatically central upon human interest and values. "It manifests a mode of living evidently, characterized by empathy, consideration for others and compassion for human life. Above all, it stresses oneness and unity of purpose"<sup>16</sup> C.B. Nze, holds that the communalistic culture remains a treasure to the African traditional society. He describes communalism as bedrock and result of the wonderful relationship prevalent in the community, and at the same time serves as purpose of the existence of the community and of the African person.<sup>17</sup> In the book "*what is Negritude?*" L.S. Senghor holds that African way of life is communalistic and African man has no individualistic mentality since the society in which he lives is structured on communalism and not from individualism or capitalism. His socio-political philosophy (Negritude) is that of re-discovery and cultural awakening/emancipation aimed at bestowing on Africans, pride and dignity through appreciation of their cultural value themselves.<sup>18</sup>

Julius Nyerere in his book: *Ujamaa: Essay on socialism*, portrays his philosophy as a communalism of Traditional African society which is based on family hood or family relationship as the root of authentic African socialism. He was optimistic that with egalitarian and communalistic model of socio-political life, African liberation or development could be achieved (however based on family hood or Ujamaa).<sup>19</sup> Nyerere proposes the extension of this spirit of Ujamaa to embrace the whole society of mankind. J. Obi Oguejiofor, defines communalism as primacy of the community over individual. He holds that it is a system of governance or social relationship in which the claims of individual generally take the second seat before the demands and claims of the community.<sup>20</sup> He used the term communalism or communitarianism to describe traditional African socio-politico-cultural and economic system. Traditional African Communalism has some disadvantages but its merits outweigh its demerits significantly. Indeed, no man can succeed as an island unto himself. Hence, the Igbo aphorism; *otu onye noduru onwe ya, odudu atagbue ya* (if one stays away from fellow men, tse-tse fly will bite him to death). *Ahu ibe na-eche ibe ya* (one's neighbor gives him protection).<sup>21</sup> Communalism is a means that ensures even distribution of goods and burdens of life so that everybody could have a fair share.<sup>22</sup> It concerns how the members of a given political community distribute fairly or justly the advantages and burdens of social co-operation. Communalism makes people burdened with grief or unbeatable life situations to be renewed through communal solidarity.

**African Communal Spirit** - communal spirit is what makes one to carry along the other who is not as successful as one is, and insures that he/she enjoys fair share of life's goodness. As an element or principle present in traditional African society, it helps in living with one heart, soul and mind. The presence of this communal spirit makes individuals committed to community oriented projects like building of community hall, reconstruction of community roads, roads that leads to stream, markets, and village square and even for village/town security. In line with this

notion, Chinua Achebe portrays similar setting as he writes about construction of Okperi-Umuaro road (work) by the entire Umuaro community.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, in many community projects there were in traditional Africa for there were no contracts and construction companies for construction and maintenance of community roads, streams, square. African communalism is even seen in communal work as it's really a consensus that human work has a social dimension. Thus, Pope John Paul II declares: "It is the characteristics of work that it first and foremost unites people. In this, it consists in its social power to build a community"<sup>24</sup> Also he continues that: "By his work, a man ordinarily provides for himself and for his family, associates with others as his brothers and renders them service"<sup>25</sup> Thus, African communalism portrays that work is not personal activity, but links one to human society, creates a relation, a way of being with others, a mode of communication. Work creates a network of relation.

**Mutual Co-operation** - This element is possible owing to the existence of a communal spirit, a feeling of belongingness, love and solidarity felt or expressed by each towards the other. In mutual co-operation of a traditional African man with his fellow man, one sees that "being with" is to be an authentic African. Mutual co-operation is seen not only in community-oriented projects but also in the individual assistance to one another such as in the clearing and cultivation of farm land, in harvesting of crops and the likes. Here, one sees a reciprocal help which is based on consanguine, family kin's, lineal and kindred relationship. This is communalism in practice <sup>26</sup>

### **Communalism and its Implications for Authentic African Life: "Being African"**

At this point in time, it is important that we underscore the relevance that African communalism has in redefining the place of the African in contemporary times. At a time when the world grapples with pluralism, multiculturalism and a complex mix of antagonistic cultural influences, what does it mean to be truly African? How the contemporary African regain his existential composure, originality in cultural expression and find meaning and self mastery from his roots, his very own, thereby enabling for a conscious expression of identity and fulfilled lived experience? To these questions, one may ask: Is humankind no longer one? Would growing up and adopting Western or European identity through citizenship and cultural affiliation rob the African of his or her humanity? Or would it still deprive him of a fulfilled life?

The truth is that no matter the affiliations, or deliberate adoption of foreign citizenship and life ideologies, man is essentially a cultural being. While this existential identity does not mar man's universal spirit and ontological relations to the entire human species, everyone however is inevitably born into a culture by parents with biological traits original to their cultural origins and nativity. These traits no matter how much one tries to suppress it would be essential to the task of self-discovery, self-understanding and self-mastery. For every man and woman is charged with the responsibility of self-discovery, self examination and self mastery. For Socrates, this is both an existential requirement and a moral obligation.

For Contemporary Africans, how then do the principles of communalism apply to facilitating the existential tasks of discovery, examination and mastery, for attaining a fulfilled life? In what ways can recourse to African Communalism add value and significance to the lives of contemporary Africans at home and in the diaspora?

In reminiscences, the older folks who experienced life in the villages between the 1960s, 1970s and to a certain extent the 1980s, in Igbo communities across Nigeria, not disregarding communal formations in the diaspora, like *Uzundu Family Meeting, Lagos Branch, Ezinifite-Aguata Association, Abuja Branch, Aguata Sons Family Union, USA* and the likes, would always recount how some individuals attained opportunities of development through community support. There has been the popular tale, that the Igbos were able to pick up from the scratch after the 1967-1970 Biafra-Nigerian war, rebuilding themselves and attaining balance in very short time was because of the long-standing tradition of communal support for individual development. Relatives who were better placed carried along their brothers and sisters and helped them rise again. Community Markets, traditional industries, etc were revived *via* the vehicle of communal support. The point here is that, individuals within the specified period of time under mention were able to assert themselves in time, identify their interests and dreams, and got the leverages to consciously pursue targeted careers thanks to family and community support. This practice was not just a coordinated attempt to rebuild the Igbo nation, but a tradition that defines the *Igbo Persona* irrespective of location, orientation and circumstance. Communalism runs in the very Bloodline of the Igbo people. Egwutuorah captures this principle of shared responsibility in the assertion that, "Igbo communalism is expressed in living together and sharing responsibilities"<sup>27</sup> This is in respect to the acknowledgement that, "the individual is not self sufficient but has many needs which he cannot supply to himself".<sup>28</sup> To address this existential requirement, therefore, "human beings agreed to submit voluntarily to a system and were bound to live in unison and solidarity".<sup>29</sup> As a matter of facts, "interdependency,



solidarity, reciprocal obligation and social harmony”<sup>30</sup> were the watch words. Being therefore as conceived in Igbo communalism is “living in solidarity with others”, “co-existing with mutual sense of obligation towards the welfare of others” and “expressing success as social achievement”. “I need you to become a better me”, and “you need me to be a better you”. Being in Igbo Communalism points to the ontological position that, “‘community’ expresses the Igbo experience of life and what reality is, to the extent that to be is to be in, with, for, by, of and through a ‘community’”<sup>31</sup> The principles of “solidarity” “reciprocity” and “social harmony” were in fact fundamental principles around which the community revolved and members of particular communities saw this not as show of empathy, but a duty and obligation for all and to all. It was therefore affirmed that: “The Igbo communal system which has the best indigenous ethical and environmental structure for the restoration of man’s dignity is under serious challenge in this 21<sup>st</sup> century as a result of globalization and its resultant technological advancement”<sup>32</sup>

In essence, therefore, the time for a collective acknowledgements of the Igbo existential reality, that his and her existence attains meaning within community, irrespective of status and class difference. Igbos everywhere, at home and in the diaspora strive to identify with a community, for in life and in death, the individual belongs to a community, which remains bound and obligated to the person even as one is laid down to the grave. This sense of “belongingness” transfers to the world beyond, for even in death the Igbos remains united to their forbears through ancestral reverence. Ontologically, therefore, “being” in Igbo cosmology and ontology make meaning when the individual is seen as part of a whole, and the whole is seen as the custodian of the part.<sup>33</sup>

### **Covid 19: A Memorable Experience**

*Corona Virus* - COVID 19 is a contagious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2. (SARS-coV-2). The first known case was identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and the disease since spread worldwide, leading to an on-going pandemic. And this pandemic came into Africa and Nigeria in February and March, 2020. The role of social media is not forgotten and as the world is becoming a global village and global sitting room, thanks to technological advancement. Social media are indeed helpful to humanity, Africans and to Nigerian in particular, as without such thing like Facebook, WHATSAPP, Twitter and others, the dangerous All Progressive Congress (APC) government in power would have mercilessly eliminated many citizens through many means, terrorism and terrorist herdsmen attack inclusive. During COVID 19 pandemic, Nigerians witnessed the unprofessional handling of the social media and this is self-inflicted harm and many never knew that fake and unverified news may even kill before the virus strikes. In European countries, the corpses of victims of Corona virus were treated with dignity and solemnly laid to rest, In Nigeria, not only misinformation and mal-information were seen regarding to the number of deaths recorded, the individual, families, towns and villages. And these indeed were malicious stigmatization that carries heavy economic and Psychological consequences as they are cordoned off from and are inaccessible to others. Information and counter-information become the order of the day as voice messages from unverified sources continue to fly on the air, some traceable to senders with an admixture of prejudice and acrimony.

Many Nigerian corrupt leaders and their workers never help matters even in ravages of the pandemic. Some of Nigerian politicians’ hearts are hardened that they use every opportunity, even life threaten situations for self enrichment as some palliatives given out during the COVID 19 pandemic were ceased and stored in the ware houses for future political campaigns. Also some governors falsely acclaimed instances of COVID 19 in their states just to benefit from United Nations’ and World Banks’ aids or money mapped out for fighting the pandemic. However, no matter how noble such decisions may be, the obvious regret is these Nigerian corrupt governors may never use such fund to equip their health care institutions as they have already seen it as an opportunity for self enrichment, business and nepotism. Some treats the issue of such virus with levity and light-headedness, but it’s really a fatal one in view of what is happening at Europe and in the Oriental countries. Africans were lucky as they registered low mortality and Africans themselves are mainly less prepared than the Europeans, Americans and oriental countries that suffered more casualties.

In Nigeria for instance, the attitudes of NCDC and some state governors’ reactions never allow the citizens to know the truth. Also and the inharmonious voices of health commissioners of some states and those of their health workers over the existence of COVID-19 in their states cannot be forgotten in a hurry. Some were insistent in selling the notion to Nigerians that their state is COVID-19 free while at the same time, their frontline health workers continued giving contrary information with evidences of infected persons in the same state. Others, on the other hand insisted that the staff of Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) must go for 14-day quarantine before carrying out any national assignment in their state. As this battle continued, a few deaths in the same state were being associated with the

pandemic related complications. Boldness in error is really an underlying feature of this country, Nigeria, as these dissonant voices strengthened the random and vastly unverified arguments. However, the lesson learnt is in matters like this obedience to the civil authorities prevails as prevention is better than cure and as far as COVID-19 is concerned prevention is the best option.

### **Covid19 Impacts as a Mega Challenge to African Communalism and Igwebuike Philosophy**

The challenges of COVID 19, especially in Africa can never easily be forgotten. Africa is still undeveloped and the burden and challenges of underdevelopment added to that of COVID 19 is really enormous and almost unbearable. What comes to mind always is when will this menace be over and is now over. For instance, in Nigeria one of the public actions taken to curtail the spread after the sanitary observance is lockdown.

*Lockdown enforcement in conflict with Communal Values* - Lockdown and Social Isolation encountered during COVID 19 pandemic is serious attack to the foundation or root of Igwebuike Philosophy and African communalism. This seems to be the highest among the challenges encountered throughout the duration of the pandemic. By definition African communalism is a life that is other oriented, a communal and community life as against individualistic or isolated life and even Igwebuike has its translation as “there is strength in number.” Here, we are talking numbers and not just an individual person. When one works in isolation, he or she may not achieve much; but together the virus would have been defeated faster and easily.

*Disruptions in Businesses/markets* – In Nigeria, markets were closed for more than four months and the results were food scarcity, acute hunger, recession and inflation came in a bigger way and when it's clear many were about to die of hunger because the long awaited palliative and cash transfer were not meant for all the regions in practice, people forced the government to re-open markets and businesses, thus there came partial closure and later came full businesses.

*Food Scarcity and Hunger* – Africa is known for poverty, hunger and no clean water. African leaders were also known for corruption and bad leadership and this is the reason for African poverty. Africa leaders have not even satisfied any goal among the 17 sustainable millennium goals mapped out by the United Nations to be achieved in the year 2030. Sustainable Development Goals of 2015 is a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all<sup>11</sup> by the year 2030.

In Nigeria for instance, many households depend on daily hustle for their daily bread, so, before lockdown could be effected, there suppose to be palliative from the government, and this was not done and when later it was done, it never reached up to a quarter of those that needed it most owing to corruption from the governors and other agencies entrusted with the distribution, even some governors went and stored the food stocks and prepare to use them in their forth coming political campaigns. People have in the past stayed indoors for one or two days owing to curfew for peace and never for two weeks or one month. One thing observed during the period especially in Nigeria is that hunger kills more than COVID 19. *Bann of social events* is another big challenge to African communalism as man is a being for other and not just a being unto himself. The social events banned include:

*Burial / Funeral* – Here, we mean the physical act of placing of deceased one in the ground (burial) and the ceremony to remember the deceased (funeral). All are African communal acts that involve not only the immediate family, but the extended families, kindreds, in-laws and friends and relatives are all involved. By observing COVID 19 social distancing and partial and total lockdown, one sees that burials and funerals could not hold. And as people continue to pile dead bodies in the morgue, another challenge erupted as it's difficult know a victim of COVID 19, and this made some governors to force families to bury their deceased ones before one month of his or her death. Thus, people buried some their loved ones in isolation and this is in serious conflict with African communalism and Igwebuike Philosophy.

*Wedding* – Here, we have African traditional wedding which is a vibrant communal celebration as both families and community are involved. It includes some elements like bride price, negotiations, elaborate attire and symbolic rituals, food, money spraying among others<sup>34</sup> Again church wedding which is a communal event and it's always conducted in the church as it's with religious significance and follows a specific religious tradition. All these were disrupted by COVID 19 and the result is not encouraging because some went into secret marriages for their brides are already heavy with pregnancy owing to comfortable terrain for love affairs provided by COVID 19 lockdown. However, some couples went into smaller and virtual weddings with zooms and some other platforms and an elaborate occasion was reduced to small one, just with their immediate family members and it's a big challenge to African way of life. One observed *Change in traditions and Rituals* as social distancing disrupted traditional rituals, shared meals, dancing, and communal blessing were either skipped or radically altered.

*Postponements and cancellations of weddings* - This has a big financial implication as some have booked halls and have already paid the caterers, planners, photographers, decorators and among others. Owing to lockdown, many couples cancelled their wedding and there are some that missed such opportunity that have not wedded till today as they may not have recovered financially and otherwise. This is owing to lockdowns, travel bans and restriction of social events and gatherings.

*Closure of Schools and Remote Teachings* – Almost the whole academic year was closed owing to the spread of COVID 19. At last, some institutions thought it wise to start online classes as the impact of the crown virus were much, but as African society is still undeveloped, lack of electricity to charge one's phone becomes a big problem. Most of the schools later did marathon classes as to meet up with the normal academic year calendar and with this how can the students and children meet up or cope with the lessons skipped, certainly, only serious students can go back on their own and study the ones skipped. COVID 19 pandemic increased the number of student school dropout as well as lack of interest in digital education as this has not been normal in Africa.

### **Ethics of Care, Igwebuiké and African Communalism as Remedy**

Seeing the challenges posed by COVID 19, the researcher portrays the African Ethics of care as the way forward and for future pandemic (if any). It is an ethics that emphasizes relationships, empathy and responsiveness to the need of others.<sup>35</sup> And this African Ethics of care is greatly rooted firmly on African communalistic principles of living and on Igwebuiké Philosophy. Not only that the most vulnerable must be catered or cared for, however, African communalism is always in voyage with its solidarity palliatives and assistance from the governments, groups, and well to do Africans and it must reach to the less privileged ones and even to middle class among the privileged ones so as to gain enormous strength to defeat the pandemic and other challenges together.

Igwebuiké philosophy has been exhibited in so many instances in the past like in the areas of community service, for example, during COVID 19 pandemic, there was lockdown in so many countries, Africa and Nigeria inclusive. Africans practiced Igwebuiké philosophy exemplified in helping each other to survive. This they did in helping their neighbors in observing the pandemic's code of conduct and observing necessary hygiene needed. There was distribution of palliatives by both the governments, philanthropists, churches, and especially by individuals and generous neighbors. This is Igwebuiké philosophy in action as left for government and its palliative alone, many Africans and Nigerians supposed to have died of the pandemic, as hunger kills speedily more than COVID 19. Thanks to generous individual and neighbors who pulled their resources together and help others. Igwebuiké communal philosophy has long been in existence and has been in praxis or in action before COVID 19 pandemic, for instance one still recalls that such practice of helping one another to observe pandemic hygiene and distribution of palliative to the needy and vulnerable ones was done during Ebola outbreak and pandemic in July, 2014 and the spread was curtailed instantly. In like manner, in the midst of present insecurity and insurgency in the Nigerian communities, the youths have a lot to do. They have to rally round and provide security through Igwebuiké philosophy which is deep-rooted in African communalism. Through Igwebuiké philosophy, the youths have to secure their communities through formation of vigilante groups and work in synergy with their neighboring towns and villages and never to wait for Nigerian corrupt government to come and secure them.<sup>36</sup> Igwebuiké philosophy has not only helped out in COVID 19 pandemic, it is also a catalyst and remedy towards solution of some societal and national problem.

### **Evaluation and Conclusion**

In this research, through critical reasoning, we have attempted to give rational response to some fundamental issues pertaining to Corona Virus (COVID 19) and Igwebuiké Philosophy within African Communalism. Through philosophical assessment, we recall that the ultimate goal of any philosophical enterprise is search for truth in its foundational level. Hence, Aristotle holds that it is right to call philosophers seekers of truth for the end of philosophical knowledge is truth. Aristotle continued by saying *amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*- Plato is my friend but truth is a better friend<sup>37</sup> In line with the above, we have x-rayed the truth about COVID 19, and some of its numerous impacts, indeed, COVID 19 was really a mega challenge to both African communalism exemplified in and through Igwebuiké philosophy as it attacks them from their roots, which is communal or community living and gathering. It's an attack or challenge on man and man as a social being. This is really a dangerous attack that aimed at man's total extermination or obliteration of man in the face of the universe.

Again, in the ravaging of this deadly crown virus, many doctors both medical and herbal doctors tried to found solution and they really resuscitated many patients but African men and women still living communitarian lives helped one another to survive the pandemic through their generosity to quench the hunger brought by COVID 19 lockdown. However, some Africans lost their lives in their practice of full African communalism to those already infected with

the virus and this led to some creativity, innovations and modification of some African communal practices, for instance hand shake was done by waving of hands or using hand fan or walking stick and staff by the elders. There were so many creative adaptations like online lessons for school education, e- funerals and weddings and Zoom meetings. And by helping one another in observing the routine hygiene exercise and by the effectiveness of medical doctors and even herbal doctors, COVID 19 vaccines were produced and the spread of the deadly virus was eradicated. Finally, as we no hardly hear of any string of this deadly crown virus in Africa, and as Africans continue to practice their African communalism and Igwebuiké philosophy, African leaders should build standard hospital in their countries and better equip hospitals, primary and secondary health centers in their countries, so as to assure a good and adequate health care system for their citizens as health is wealth.

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