

# **The Socio-Democratization and Structural Stratification of Coven in Okulosho: A Lesson for the Nigerian Political Leaders and the Ruling Class**

**By**

**Valentine A. Inagbor**  
**Department of Religions**  
**Faculty of Arts**  
**University of Benin, Benin-City**  
**Nigeria**

**Email address: [inagborbose@gmail.com](mailto:inagborbose@gmail.com)**

**Phone No: 08096589050**

## **Abstract**

This paper attempts to trace the origin of the political crisis in Nigeria to three main areas in our political history. The amalgamation of the North and South protectorate in 1914 seems to be held sway by some scholars as the major factor that is responsible for the political cataclysm in Nigeria. While some scholars opined that the early colonial masters deliberately created the political crisis in order to milk Nigeria natural resources. Some other scholars hold both the colonial masters and our corrupt political leaders responsible for the socio-economy and political predicaments we are now navigating in. This paper observes that the coven in Okulosho (a small community in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo state, Nigeria) is more organized politically than Nigerian political system and as a nation. This paper also attempts to make a comparison between the organizational structure in the coven in Okulosho and Nigeria political system, and it observes that justice, love, selfless service, fairness to all members, and meritocracy have contributed to the peaceful coexistence enjoyed in the coven in Okulosho. It is the submission of this paper that in spite of the negative concept we seem to have about witchcraft in our society, our political leaders have lots to learn from the leaders in the coven.

## **Introduction**

The instability in our socio-economy and political system has become a perennial issue that has drawn the attention of the international community worldwide and some well-meaning Nigerians; and solutions are being sort for to correct some of the anomalies that are constantly dragging our political system into a bottomless Erebus and doldrums. Our politicians have turned themselves into squander maniacs and insensitive criminals that loot the nation wealth on daily bases and the common man on the street has no hope for the future. The poor are becoming poorer while the rich are not only getting richer, but annexing the little that belongs to the poor to survive. That is the situation we find ourselves today in our country. It sounds funny and ironical to learn how to run or organize our society from the most detested group of people in Africa. This detested group of people in African society are said to be the enemies of mankind and anti-progressive. We commonly refer to them as witches or practitioners of witchcraft. A Coven is an assembly of witches where they congregate to discuss their welfare, problems, and the progress of their society. It is their sense of justice and sensitivity towards members that actually prompted this topic. The problem we have in our country, corruption aside, is injustice and the insensitivity of our political leaders and some of our gullible traditional rulers towards the ordinary citizens. This paper attempts to bring into a sharper focus what we can learn and benefit from the leaders of the coven, how they manage the coven for the common good of all members.

## **A Brief History of the Okulosho People**

Okulosho is a heterogeneous community in Akoko-Edo local government in Edo state of Nigeria. It comprises of Idagbala (Dagbala), Ekunu (Ojirami), Oza (Ojah), and Uma (Makeke). These four sister villages share the same cosmological and metaphysical worldview, owing to the singular ancestral genealogy and dialectical tendencies.

According to Olu (1984: 26), in his book, *Slave Trade in The Heartland of Okulosho*, the term 'Okulosho' designates an enclosure. Its English derivative during the colonial era refers to the four communities as 'enclosure', an enclave in the Kukuruku country bordered by Igarra South, Ososo North, Okpella East, and Ekpe West. Due to faulty pronunciation by the natives, "enclosure" came to be pronounced 'Okulosho'. The people are mostly subsistence farmers and hunters. They cultivate crops like yam, cocoyam, cassava, beans, cocoa, melon, groundnut, coffee and some other crops. They also engage in petty trading to supplement their income from farming.

### **The Stratification of Coven in Okulosho**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1985: 268), the term 'coven' is a derivative of a late medieval Scot word meaning a gathering of any kind. It derives from the Latin root word CONVERNIRE meaning to come together or to gather which also give rise to the English word CONVENE. The first recorded use of it applied to witches, which came much later from 1663 in the witch trial of Isobel Gowdie, which describes a coven as a gathering or meeting especially of witches. For the Okulosho, Omunagbe (2008) asserts that, coven is a spiritual assembly or an invisible or a metaphysical terrain where witches hold their nocturnal meetings at night. The Okulosho people popularly refer to coven as 'night city' or 'night community', (uqueri) because all their activities take place at night.

For the smooth running of the coven, there exists a hierarchical structure which each member is expected to fall in or fit in from the very day of initiation. This hierarchical structure is to enable members of the guild to function according to their ability and capacity. It is also interesting to know according to Abenesere (2012) that positions are given based on members' ability and capability, and the rule of law is held supreme when positions are given to members. Positions in the coven, she further states, are purely for service and not for the oppression of the less privileged in the coven. All members of the guild are equal and treated equally. The coven, in spite

of its egalitarian nature, there still exist a hierarchical structure. There is a king (Ovie), follow by the Queen (Jamata), the Council of Elders (Ejah), the Native Doctors (Ebu), the Arm Force and the Police (Idugare), the Welfare Commission, and the Messengers or Spies (Evushomi).

### **The Election of a King**

Okpafioko (2014) claims that the King (Ovie) is the highest position in the coven and it is not hereditary, because the son or close relation of the king might not be a member of the guild, and even if he is, he might not have the charisma of a leader needed in the coven. He further states that the election or selection of a King is not sentimental, or based on ethnic affiliation, but age, experience, mental and emotional stability; the individual positive contributions to the running of the coven and other leadership qualities are the major prerequisites for the appointment of a King in the coven. Three months after the death and the final burial rites of a King, the position is declared vacant for interested candidates to apply for. The candidates are to be screened and interviewed for this position. Reputable elders who are not contesting for this position are appointed as members of the screening committee. There are procedural process and criteria that they must adhere to without favour or disfavour of the candidates. Lobbing amounts to disqualification of a candidate. A candidate is expected to submit his credentials to the screening committee and then wait until he is invited for an interview.

Series of meetings are held by the members of the committee to decide the type of leader they want. At the end of the meetings, oath is taken by all members to be transparent as much as possible. Honesty is their watch word, and dishonesty amounts to punishment when detected. Ashake (2014) claims that, all members of the guild are more interested of the general welfare of members. Those who are over ambitious are screened out of the race. There is no campaign for any of the positions in the coven, but applications are welcomed from members for the various positions.

After the oath taking ceremony, members of the committee resume the screening process two days later. There is no personal interaction between the members of the committee and the candidates to be screened until after the screening exercise. The first stage is the assessment of the candidates' credentials whether they are qualified for the position they are vying for. Those that are not qualified are dropped at the very first stage, while the qualified candidates would move to the next stage. The second stage is the presentation of manifesto by individual candidate to members of the committee. The committee members go into consultations for at least a week before they reconvene. Again, members of the committee are not permitted to go into any form of discussion with the candidates involved in this contest. The third stage is the proper interview where candidates are expected to answer questions from the committee members. Okpafioko (2014) claims that the interview questions are drawn from three major areas which include: general knowledge (to know the vastness of the candidates in relation to the affairs in the coven), managerial issues (the committee would want to know whether the candidates have ever held sensitive positions in the coven, and how they performed), lastly their personal contributions to the running of the coven (have they ever made personal effort to improve the general welfare of members in the coven?). After the interview stage, the committee presents the candidates manifesto and interview reports to all members of the guild in their general assembly. The non-committee members are allowed to freely ask the candidates questions which they must respond to.

The committee also plays the role of electoral commission by fixing a date for the general election for the candidates. Candidates are voted for based on their various manifestos, and response to the questions they are asked. Members of the guild know the type of leaders they want in the coven, and they vote such people accordingly. They know themselves and the capability of each other. Nepotism, favouritism, sentiments, ethnicity, and emotions are completely ruled out of the game. The election is based on principles and the needs of the coven. They do not allow their emotions and

sentiments to betray their common unity and goal. Members fight for the common good and the interest of the coven.

The election is purely by secret ballots, while the counting of the ballots papers is public and the results are announced at the venue of the election. The winner is congratulated by other contestants in good fate and admits their defeat. The swearing in ceremony is fixed and every member of the guild is involved in the preparation for the swearing in ceremony. Omunagbe (2014) states that, the proper swearing in ceremony usually takes place four weeks after the elections, because some rituals have to be carried out before the main ceremony. The coronation according to him, involves every member of the coven and other covens send their representatives.

### **The Appointment of the Queen (Jamata)**

The appointment of a Queen in the coven is done by the female folks. The Queen is appointed to assist the King and play the role of a wife to the King. According to Udo (2015), the Queen must possess the following qualities: beauty, motherly, calm, emotionally stable, homely, intelligent, and morally upright. A Queen is appointed two weeks after the coronation of the King. A form of beauty contest is organized by the female folks to elect or select the best among the contestants to occupy the position. Again, there is no lobbying or favouritism of any form, and whoever wins becomes the mother of all in the coven and acceptable by all. Whoever emerges as a winner is crowned as the Queen (Jamata).

### **The Council of Elders**

The council of elders constitutes the elderly men in the coven who work hand in hand with the King. The council of elders also plays the role of the legislative and the Judiciary. This council is responsible for the making of laws and the administering of justice in the coven. Members meet on daily bases to settle disputes either among members or between members and non-members of the guild. According to Dania (2015), disputes among

members are less stressful and easy to settle, but when it involves a member and a non-member it is very difficult to resolve, because the non-member is not present in the coven to defend himself/herself. It takes weeks or months to settle cases between members and non members, because it involves thorough investigation to avoid punishing an innocent person. The council appoints a counsel/solicitor to defend a non-member before the court in the coven. It is the responsibility of the solicitor to physically interrogate the non-member to find out what might be the cause of the conflict so that he can represent his client effectively in the court. The client is not aware that he is on trial in the coven, since he is not a member of the guild. Oromenoya (2014) claims because of members' strong belief in law of karma, they are always very careful when it comes to the administration of justice. She states that injustice of any form or kind is not tolerated in the coven, because of the negative consequences it has on the members.

The council of elders is charged with the responsibility of protecting the interest of all members and advises the king accordingly. Those considered to be dissidents among members who misuse their power against innocent people are given punishment that is commensurate to the offence. Members of the council of elders are honourable men that are fearless and always stand for the truth. In dispensing justice, there is no favouritism of any sort. Members are warned against lies in settling disputes. At times, they are made to take oath to tell the truth so that justice will reign in the coven. According to Odafe (2013), there are different spiritual means of detecting lies in the coven. A member could be suspended from the coven for telling lies, and during the period of this suspension some of his powers would be withdrawn from him/her. An elder can be suspended too for getting involved in any form of corrupt practices of any shade.

### **The Native Doctors (Ebu)**

The native doctors play very sensitive roles in the coven according to Kekere-Eku (2009: 92), in his book, *Give Them Freedom*. He states clearly that the native doctors play the role of medical practitioners, consult oracle,

prepare soldiers spiritually whenever there is war, they act as priests, provide counsel for members of the guild, act as public relation officers between the deities and members of the guild, act as prophets and prophetess, and it is also their duty to crown the King and Queen after election in the coven.

To belong to this group, one must possess the gift or be in the practice before becoming a member of the guild. It is a kind of vocation in the coven, because no one appoints anybody to join this group, rather, it is a calling. Members of this group discharge their duties without any compensation. Some of them are professional native doctors in our physical world according to Ejo (2012: 58) in his book, *The Practice of Medicine in The Night City*. He states that no ordinary native doctor can compete with them because of their spiritual exposures. In curing patients, they combine both spiritual and physical means. They can easily diagnose and distinguish through the consultation of oracle between spiritual ailments from ordinary ailments. In the physical world they do not charge much fee in treating a patient.

### **The Arm Forces and the Police**

The arm forces and the police constitute young men and women. According to Okarasi (2014), those who serve in the arm force and police are there for six years and then retire. No one serves beyond six years. They are well respected, because they defend the territorial integrity of the coven and at times the community they belong to. Ologbo (2010) points out the erroneous belief that, witches do not contribute to the progress of their respective communities where they dwell, and that they are always involved in nefarious activities. According to him, they do fight against witches from other neighbouring community who attempt to tamper with the progress of their community. He states that there were occasions whereby some witches in another community were negotiating for their market to be sold to them and they refused. This refusal later led to a fierce battle that claimed some lives from both sides before the intervention of



witches from other neighbouring communities. This incident took place in 1972 between Ojirami Kpetish and Akuku. Thirty years later in 1989-1992 the battle was fought physically, not in the coven this time, but in reality over boundary. The case was taken over by the Edo state government, and it was settled in the court. Akuku was found guilty. A similar battle was also been fought between Akuku and Ewan in Akoko-Edo local government area of Edo state in 2007-2009 over boundary. The fight started in the coven in 1980 when the Ewan witches refused to cede part of their land to Akuku. Akuku is a small community occupying a small Island, and because of their increase in population they needed more land for expansion. If their witches succeeded with the negotiation for more land in the coven it would have been easier for them in the physical world, hence the battle for land usually starts from the coven according to Omunagbe (2014).

For war to be prosecuted, the king and the council of elders must give an approval after due consultations. Asekhoka (2013) points out that, battle in the coven are not fought for the sake of fighting or an attempt to prove superior power. He states that, war becomes the very last option when negotiation breaks down or fails. According to him, battles are very expensive to prosecute in the coven because it involves lots of sacrifices and strong spiritual men and women. He says that there is a display of spiritual power and modern technology. They are well trained and formidable army with modern military weapons manufactured by members that work in their arms industry. According to him, they do not spend money for the purchase of ammunition since they are manufactured by members.

Ekeke (2014) states that, sacrifices are offered to the deities of the land before the declaration of full war. He says that, they need the support of the deities to fight effectively, especially if it is outside their domain. Within their domain there is no much fear, because they understand their terrain so well that when the battle becomes fierce they know where to get extra power to reinforce. According to him, when there is war, their soldiers become very aggressive in the physical world, but ordinary people do not

understand the reasons. It is a time of tension for them in the coven, because to lose a battle has adverse effects on the entire community and the members of the guild. The injured soldiers as they are receiving treatment in the coven they fall sick in the physical world and become heal after the completion of the treatment; those who are badly injured at times die during treatment in the coven. Those who die are accorded befitting and heroic burial in the coven after the war for three days with different ceremonies in their honour. For the three days of burial, all the activities in the coven are suspended, and members of guild are expected to participate fully as sign of respect and honour for their fallen heroes.

### **The Welfare Commission in Okulosho Coven**

The welfare commission pays close attention to issues of members' welfare. This has to do with entertainments, providing food and drinks during ceremonies, assisting members that are bereaved, assisting women who have problems with their husbands, and assisting members who are orphans. This commission is made up of young men and women, under the direct supervision of a member who is very vast in social issues and naturally sociable and jovial with good and cordial social relationship with members, according to Eneregwue (2014: 34) in her book, *An Inquiry into Social Relationship in Okulosho Coven*.

Eneregwue points out that there is no boring moment in the coven; it is a place where everyone is always busy with his/her unit trying to make the place homely and friendly. It is only when two covens are engaged in war that the place looks tensed up, because those in military sector would be receiving training from the generals and spiritual preparation from the native doctors. At the time of peace, members of welfare commission organize various social activities to entertain members of the guild. The entertainment may be in form of drama, dancing competition, fashion parade, and dinner party. They are also in charge of preparation for burial of members. Eneregwue states that, burial of member in the coven involves lots of social activities to honour a deceased member.

### **Messengers and Spices**

This unit is in charge of dissemination of information to keep the coven abreast of what is happening in the society. Members are sent to investigate cases between members and non-members of the guild. They physically interact with non-members to get information, and then relate the information to members of the guild in the coven. Some decisions taken in the coven are based on the investigations and information provided by this unit in the coven. Maliki (2014) claims that, members of this unit are people of high integrity that cannot give false information to members of the guild; because of the consequences of falsehood in decision making. According to Maliki, all cases involving investigations are carried out by more than five to ten people, and reports are given to members of the guild separately by the investigators. Conflicting information on certain issues are thoroughly scrutinized and reinvestigated before they arrived at any decision to avoid punishing innocent people. Omunagbe (2014) points out that, all members of this unit must possess the following qualities: sociable, truthful, honest, and intelligent. They mix up freely with people to find out the feelings of the people towards the members of the guild, they are very inquisitive about the happenings in their immediate community and outside the community, and they also ask questions about issues that involve members of the guild, so that they can report appropriately to their members. Okpafioko (2014) refers to them as the Journalists of the coven on who decision making in the coven rest upon. According to Okpafioko, they listen attentively to people's discussions so that they can gather information for the consumption of members of the guild. Coven, he says, is ruled by genuine or authentic information about people in and outside their community to enable them to map out their operations successfully. He says categorically that, conflicting reports from their journalists on certain issues are to be reinvestigated over and over again for more clarifications before decisions are taken. According to him, it is their policy not to base their judgment on falsehood and prejudice.

## **Some of the Major Issues Responsible for the Political Quargmire in Nigeria**

Some historians, political scientists, and erudite scholars from the various fields of studies identified and attributed the problem of Nigeria to the 1914 event of the amalgamation of North and South protectorates by Lord Lugard under the direct influence of his superiors who sent him to this part of the world from Britain as the Governor General. These scholars rightly pointed out that Nigeria is a multi ethnic group with cultural diversity, therefore, merging them together is like Tower of Babel in the Bible where people could not understand each other anymore and they separated. They argued further that, looking at the landscape of Nigeria, nature has already partitioned Nigeria into different nations with different identities. River Niger and Benue according to this group of scholars have already done a good job supported by linguistic and cultural differences. Apart from easy governance and economic reasons the colonial masters have no genuine reasons for the amalgamation. Otuibe (2003: 67-69), in his book, *Amos: A Challenge to Nigerian Church and Society*, points out that, almost a hundred years after the amalgamation, there has never been cohesion or stable unity between the North and South, and politics are continuously played along this path. Kukah (1995: 69-87), in his article, *Political Stability and the Leadership and the Inevitability of Instability*, clearly states that, colonialism may not necessarily be responsible for all our political sins, but there is no doubt that like the sin of Adam in Christian theology, most of the roots of our present day political sins can be traced to the loss of innocence after colonialism. The way the word *innocence* is used here does not imply sinlessness, but in the sense that the new cosmology which would later dominate our lives after independence as Nigerians had hitherto been unknown to us. The new paraphernalia of governance as seen in the introduction of Parliaments, all the talk about Democracy, Constitutionalism etc, the new economic language of Capitalism and western education, all these came with their new demands on our fragile polity. They threw our communities into a world that were neither

prepared for intellectually, psychologically, nor spiritually. Their traditional cosmos was destroyed and they were offered new values systems that they had never known.

Colonialism may not have invented ethnicity, but its new definition of political space injected new interpretations and conceptions of Ethnicity and Religion into the people. If they made ethnicity, religion and region a basis for access to the spoils of state, there was no doubt that these hitherto innocent identities would gradually become miniature Frankenstein in the process of political competition among communities that had lived peacefully on many fronts. Many communities had lived with their neighbours on the basis of some form of independent international relations, but they were now forced to live under new tutelage that they did not know. They were now to worship gods that they had never heard of or known in the new ways being proposed by the conquering powers. The colonialists established their governance by force. It was natural that despite so many years of innocuous legislation and dubious claims of indirect rule, it imposed a certain dominant ideological worldview on the populace. By coercion, the law enforcement agencies they left behind- the army, the police, the immigration and all the other arms of security- would later become tools of terror in the hands of the successor elite. Security would later become a veritable fig leaf to cover up all forms of injustice and atrocities by various arms of the state. Although the colonial government pretentiously behaved as if it was a referee, in reality, it had its own interests which it sought to defend during and after its stay. This became the main reason for the exaggeration of Region (division of the country into three regions), Tribe (making the boundaries coterminous with the boundaries of the three main ethnic blocs) and Religion (sheltering Muslims from non-Muslims influence). It was never clear to anyone that the regions would never be merged together and one country formed from them. But today, here we are. This is what accounts for the endless attempts to redefine our various interpretations of nationhood today.

Nevertheless, varieties add beauty to life. The merging of different nations together to form one entity called Nigeria ought to be a thing of joy, and not causing a perpetual strife over the years among the people. Till now, some families get themselves involve in match- marriage of their children for social and political reasons, and after sometimes the couple get use to each other and develop genuine love for one another in spite of their different orientations. Considering the number of years this imposed marriage by the colonial masters has taken place between North and South, we ought to have accepted and tolerated one another despite our differences, by now, issue of ethnicity should not showcase at all in our political system.

Nigeria is naturally blessed with both material and human resources down through the ages as remarked by Ehusani (1996: 5-8), in his book, *A Prophetic Church*. Otuibe reiterates that, God has endowed Nigeria with enormous potentials and opportunities that could make this nation really great and offer every Nigerian a comfortable living. Like the biblical description of the Land of Israel, Nigeria could equally be said to be a land that flows with milk and honey. According to Pope John Paul II (2002:11):

God in fact has blessed this land with human and natural wealth, and it is everyone's duty to ensure that these resources are used for the good of the whole people. All Nigerians must work to rid the society of everything that offends the dignity of the human person or violates human rights this means reconciling differences, overcoming ethnic rivalries, and injecting honesty, efficiency and competence into the art of governing.

The multi ethnic and cultural diversity add colour and varieties to our social life. It is also interesting to know that in spite of religious riots mostly experienced in the Northern part of the country; Nigeria still remains as one of the most peaceful country in the world. Nigerians do not have a revolutionary spirit compared to some of the African countries like Libya,

Egypt, Liberia, Sudan, Sierra-Leon and some others. The Nigeria political leaders have abused this calmness and the 'unrebellious' nature of the citizens over the years. Late Fela Anikulakpo Kuti, in the 70s during the Olusegun Obasanjo regime, in one of his songs, he made an allusion to this unrevolutionary spirit of the Nigerians, when he said 'suffering and smiling' and 'no one won die', meaning that everyone in Nigeria is conscious of his family, and no one wants to die and lives his wife, children and parents behind to suffer. Riots or revolt or protest against the Nigerian government has never been taken seriously by the political elites, because with little treats from government through her law enforcement agencies and arm forces, the Protestants simply enter into their shells and accept whatever situation they find themselves with philosophical equanimity.

The complaints of the citizens have little or no effects on the political class, hence they loot the nation's treasury to enrich themselves and families without thinking of the consequences it might have on the common man that they have turned to object of ridicule. In spite of the abundant natural resources majority of the Nigerian citizens are still wallowing in abject poverty. In most villages in Nigeria, children are malnourished, no good and well equipped hospitals where they exist, some of the schools that where built during the colonial era attended by some of the politicians are now living monuments that are not maintained by those in power. Hence, the private institutions all over the country have taken over from government institutions. It is only in Nigeria that people pay light bills without seeing light, yet government spends billions of naira yearly to maintain the power sector. In the same vein, some private individuals who struggled to sink bore holes to provide water for themselves and their neighborhoods are taxed by the government who refused to render such service to its citizens. People pay taxes without seeing the dividend of the taxes they pay. When occasionally the government uses the people's own taxes to either construct roads to enrich friends or family members who happen to be unprofessional contractors the citizens who benefit from the poorly constructed roads are expected to pour encomium on the

government of the day as if the money is from the personal pockets of the person at the helm of affairs. In political rallies the politicians use the few roads that were constructed in their tenures of office as a campaign to solicit for vote from the common man who is languishing in abject poverty in the village. It is only in contemporary Nigeria we have numerous political parties without political ideology and manifestoes. No wonder the present crops of politicians misguide and mislead the populace because they lack focus. The common man is so traumatized that with a cup of rice and salt distributed by politicians during political rallies he can no longer distinguish between dubious political charlatans with questionable characters and responsible politicians who know what it takes to be a leader. Most Nigerian politicians do not have leadership qualities; they are more or less political vagabonds who clearly manifest their political ignorance and rascality in the political scene. Their behaviour in their various offices clearly shows that some of them cannot distinguish between democracy and autocracy or militocracy. Few of them that have little idea of democracy have no regard for the rule of law. With little food and drinks, and occasionally small amount of money, the Nigerian youths are ready to sacrifice their lives for robber politicians during political rallies; because that is the only way they could get their daily bread. Nigerian politicians have turned the youths to brigands, arm robbers, hired assassins, political togs, touts, area boys, prostitutes both at home (father's land) and abroad, drug addicts and barons, militants, shadeless terrorists, youths without future ambitious, jobless and thoughtless fellows. What a shame? The politicians skillfully send their wards outside the country to get best education so that they would come back to the country in the nearest future to take over from them, since the politicians have succeeded in turning political positions to family inheritance which is well manifested in the ministerial appointments in the country where the children of ex-heads of state, presidents and first class traditional rulers are the ministers, ambassadors, directors and commissioners. Meritocracy is sacrificed at the altar of nepotism, tribalism, godfatherism, and cultism in ministerial



appointment. Hence, some of the ministers are completely ignorant of the offices they are heading. It is shocking that those who are not in academic circles are the commissioners and ministers of education, while civilians are the ones managing and heading the ministry of defense as enlightened as Nigeria is today. At times the minister of health has little or no knowledge of medicine.

Those in power encourage and support private institutions that are not affordable by the common man more than public schools owned by the same government. It is on this ground Ehusani states that:

The educational system in Nigeria has virtually collapsed. While the children of the rich and powerful are sent to elite schools and colleges at home and abroad those of the lowly class are left to roam the streets, with no access to knowledge nor promise of gainful employment. A number of Universities are shut down for nearly half of the calendar year. When the lecturers are not on strike for poor pay and unbearable conditions of service, the students will go on rampage to protest the shortage of water or electricity on the campus.

The problem of leadership and good governance in Nigeria started in 1963 when she became a republic and consequently assumed political autonomy. Instead of planning durable and viable political and economic legacies for future generations, the leaders got entrapped in the mud of tribalism and its attendant disunity. They were so preoccupied with the gimmicks of political harangues and economic mismanagement that they had no spare time to think and work out a national ethics.

Kukah (1995: 70), in his article, *Political Stability and the Leadership and the Inevitability of Instability*, points out that, political stability has always been presented as an ideal around which good governance can and should be built. In fact, it is always being argued that political stability is a

precondition for national development, cohesion and integration. It is therefore, a desirable component of life. The opposite, the political instability, has a corrosive effect on national development, stunts integration, frightens investors and disrupts the national equilibrium. If nations must move forward, attain national cohesion and consolidate their human, material and mineral resources, gain international recognition and credibility, then they must find ways of achieving domestic political stability. It is ironical that the political leaders or rulers or the ruling class in Nigeria constitute the socio-economic and political instability that Nigeria is now navigating in. The looting of the nation's treasury and insecurity in the country today is masterminded by politicians and the ruling class. It is as a result of the unstable economic system and insecurity that scars the foreign investors away from Nigeria, because they either run at a lost or get kidnapped by some jobless youths who can only survive through crimes.

Corruption and the bureaucracy in Nigeria, as asserted by Kukah, the net result of a post-colonial state is that politics tends to become, by and large, what has glibly been often referred to as a competition for scarce resources. But why are the resources scarce and who determines the scarcity? Is scarcity real or imagined? It is the greedy urgency of the competitors that leads to the misplacement of the priorities and identification of what constitutes resources. In post colonial states, the temptation is to work within the limits of aphorism: *first come fist served*. This introduces urgency in the competition which leads the politicians to narrow down the definition of resources within the context of money and privileges (land, house, cars and other perquisites within the bureaucracy). The real resources are the men and women who make up the nation, not the mineral and material resources which are by and large the creation of international industrial needs. Tragically, these same men and women of our society are the victims who get sacrificed. The process of coping with the demands by the elites occasionally leads to the false belief that an expansion of the bureaucracy is a necessary precondition for job creation, but the job

placements continue to expand in inverse proportion to the job seekers. Gradually, the competition becomes decisive when losers substitute their personal incompetence or weakness with their ethnic origin, thus raising the stakes by the introduction of ethnic politics within the system.

Corruption and crime which are the end products of our politicians and the ruling class are increasing geometrically and astronomically. Orakwe (1995: 51-68), in his article, *The Prison and You: A Study in Diminishing Social Responsibility in Nigeria*, observed that, more than 90% of our prisoners are the marginalized, the wretched, the social drifters, in short the *hoi polloi*. These are people in the society without education, no jobs, no social status and no hope. But are they truly representatives of the group that commits the most heinous crimes? Certainly No! Rather they are the group produced in the main by the crimes of the other more powerful group of thieves- the politicians, the industrialists and the bureaucratic classes. The crimes of this group produced the anemic economy of Nigeria today. Yet not one of these people is in prison. The reason is that they have the cash and connections to play the litigation game our own way and get away scot free with their loot. On the other hand, the group in prison has to stay there because they have neither the cash nor the connections to get away. Those in the prison are they really the bad and corrupt people in our society? Or, are we being plain sanctimonious? The truth of the matter is that we are being hypocritical each time we look at our prisons and our prisoners with contempt. We have watched over the years as one group or political bandits after one another come up to the political scene to organize one systematic looting and plunder of state resources after another. At the end of the day we have not only applauded such brigandage by inundating the actors with many titles and honours, but we have also tended to encourage others to make it the same way. By so doing we succeed in enthroning a culture of thievery which has turned governance of the Nigerian society into an exercise in crime and corruption. While we applaud the successful thieves, we look down with contempt on the poor thieves, forgetting that stealing is stealing no matter by which academic nomenclature we choose to label it.

We must realize that for every million naira stolen from the public funds, at least a hundred thousand people are denied education, good jobs, health care, shelter etc. the rate at which the public treasury has been attacked and looted in this country makes crime of this poor group pale into insignificance.

### **Lesson to Learn From the Okulosho Coven by the Nigerian Politicians and Leaders**

From the foregoing discussion, it is glaring that the Nigerian populace in general, and the Nigerian leaders and the political class have lots to learn from the organizational structure of the coven in Okulosho. Members of the guild in the said coven fight for the common good of all members, and members are placed in the various positions based on their area of competences. They emphasize on meritocracy in terms of appointment, self sacrifice, justice, fairness to all members of the guild, they consider every member relevant to the coven, honesty is their watch word, because they believe in law of karma, positions are not hereditary (they are democratized), and every member is engaged in his/her area of specialization. The fraternal love in the coven stands as the very foundation upon which the egalitarian and communitarian life that seem to exist in the coven in Okulosho solidly rest upon.

Okpafioko claims that, the love which members of the guild have for one another in the coven is not negotiable, because love is their strength of unity and cooperation. It is the love they have for their members and the coven itself that propel members to fight gallantly to protect the coven. He says the love for the coven comes first before any other thing; members are therefore ready to sacrifice themselves to secure the coven. Coven is their community that every member must protect against foreign or external inversion.

The said witches/wizards in Okulosho were able to discover the power of love and selfless service to their coven, whereas the politicians and the ruling class in Nigeria preach, disseminate and promote hatred, self

centeredness, injustice, embezzlement, deceit, falsehood, godfatherism, nepotism, ethnicity, ego-centricism, materialism, money laundry, immorality, segregation, discrimination, looting of public treasury, oppression of the poor masses, criminality and imposition of political prostitute and criminals as leaders on the Nigerian populace. In such a scenario, how will such a nation develop or move forward? Gigantic contracts are given to tribal men, women, sons, girlfriends, drug barons, members of family and political sugar mummies who are not contractors. How would such a nation measure up with other civilized nations of the world? In the coven positions are given to members by merit and not by ethnicity. Nigerian politicians by all standards are dragging the entire nation to the state of nature whose philosophy is predicated on 'survival of the fittest'. The coven in Okulosho focuses on unity, love, common good, justice and human dignity. Human dignity in Nigeria society is relegated to the lowest background in order for the political elites to have a smooth sail, and make the ordinary man look irrelevant to decision making in his own society. For instance, the technical rigging of election in Nigeria renders the vote of the ordinary citizen worthless. The political class or the ruling class decides who comes to power and not the general consensus of the people, which is the true democracy. In the coven in Okulosho, the voting of the simple majority to install a new leader or head of the coven is of paramount importance.

### **Conclusion**

The socio-economy and political instability that Nigerians now navigate in is an offshoot of the colonial and Nigerian political leaders which was further compounded by some traditional rulers from the various parts of Nigeria. The traditional institution that was well respected has over the years been bought over by the political class who now determine the fate of the heir apparent to the traditional stool. The Nigerian political class having taken over fully from our colonial masters subjected the ordinary citizens to perpetual slavery in their home land. In spite of human and natural

resources that Nigeria is endowed with, the common man still wallows in abject poverty and misery. The Coven in Okulosho if properly understood is well organized and every member is well respected. If the organizational system and stratification in Okulosho coven is adopted in our political system, probably most of our socio-economy and political problems would have been minimal. There is justice, love, rule of law, respect for meritocracy, cooperation, selfless service, and general commitment of individual member to the coven for the sake of common good that all members stand to benefit from. Nigerian politicians do not have respect for fundamental human rights of the citizens, while justice is trampled upon on daily bases. It is the submission of this paper that Nigerian politicians should endeavour to learn some basic rudiments of how to organize and run a society that both the rich and poor can live together without harassment of the low class people. The government should always take the problems of its citizens as personal and not allows its citizens to die with their problems.

## References

- Abenesere, S. A. (2012), Personal Interview, Herblast, Dagbala, 75 years
- Asekhoka, D. C. (2014), Personal Interview, Farmer, Dagbala, 78 years
- Dania, A. A. (2015), Personal Interview, Farmer, Dagbala, 80 years.
- Ehusani, G. O. (1996), *A Prophetic Church*, Ede: Provincial Pastoral Institute Publications.
- Ejo, M. (2012), *The Practice of Medicine in the Night City*, Igarra: Amune Printing Press.
- Ekeke, R. U. (2014), Personal Interview, Diviner, Ojirami, 72 years.
- Eneregwue, M. A. (2014), *An Inquiry Into the Social Relationship in Okulosho*, Igarra: Amune Printing Press.
- Kekere-Eku, F. E. (2009), *Give Them Freedom*, Benin-City: Teredia Press.
- Kukah, M. H. (1995), "Political Stability and the Leadership and the Inevitability of Instability", *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, Violence

and State Security, Vol. 7, Published by *The Ecumenical Association of Nigerian Theology*.

Maliki, M. B. (2014), Personal Interview, Farmer, Oja, 68 years.

Odafe, N. A. (2013), Personal Interview, Diviner, Oja, 78 years.

Okarasi, O. (2014), Personal Interview, Necromancer, 80 years.

Okpafioko, I. (2014), Personal Interview, Herbalist, Dagbala, 72 years.

Ologbor, O. (2010), Personal Interview, Farmer, Dagbala, 84 years.

Olu, H. (1984), *Slave Trade in the Heartland of Okulosho*, Igarra: Amune Printing Press.

Omunagbe, B. (2008), Personal Interview, Diviner, Dagbala, 80 years.

Orakwe, I. W. (1995), "The Prison and You: A Study in Diminishing Social Responsibility in Nigeria", *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, Violence and State Security, Vol. 7, Published by *The Ecumenical Association of Nigerian Theology*.

Oromenoya, I. (2014), Personal Interview, Herbalist, Dagbala, 80 years.

Otuibe, C. A. (2003), *Amos: A Challenge to Nigerian Church and Church Society*, Ibadan: Okley Printers (Nig.) LTD.

Oxford English Dictionary (1985), London: Oxford University Press.

Pope John Paul II. *Homily at the Beatification of Blessed Cyprain Iwene Tansi at Oba, Onitsha*. CSN News, No 5, Jan- May 2002.