



The Cultural Values And Communication Towards Improving Food Security In Nigeria: Hausa And Igbo Cultures In Focus

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to find ways through which people's cultural values and communication could aid in the improvement of food security in Nigeria, with particular interest in Hausa and Igbo cultures. It is necessary to ascertain what the terms "culture, society and communication" entail as well as their significance in the improvement of food security across the Nigerian nation. The types of insecurities that pervade every nook and cranny of this country was highlighted, though, the paper focus on the challenges posed by food insecurity, bearing in mind some of its causes, as well as how the menace could be curtailed. The conclusion was drawn stressing the fact that for Nigeria to produce enough food that will match her teeming population, the citizens as well as the government must endeavour to play by the rule. It is absolutely essential that we avail ourselves of the good moral values embedded in our cultures and traditions, imbibe them and live them out in our daily lives, particularly, as it concerns making dignified efforts towards having better quality and quantity of agricultural products for human sustainability and the overall national development.

Keywords: Importance, Hausa, Igbo, Cultural values, Communication, Food Security, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Culture: It's Meaning and Significant in the Lives of the Igbo

The term "culture" has been variously defined. On its simplest basics, it has been seen as the way of life of a particular people. In the National Cultural Policy (1988:5), Culture is rightly defined as:

the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organisation, thus, distinguishing the people from their neighbours.

Obineche (2007) cited in Ofomata (2013) opines that culture consists of the institutions, technology, customs and social patterns within which a society evolves - a context every individual invariably lives his or her life. On the other hand, the term "society" has conventionally been used to refer to substantial collections of people living in near isolation from other such collections, having definite geographic boundaries, and enacting distinctive cultures.

Considering the Igbo nation in the light of the preceding definitions of culture and society pre-empties the fact that the Igbo possess their own distinct culture and society, which set them apart from other cultures and societies in Nigeria. This claim is supported by Ofomata (2013) who avers that Igbo have their "distinctive cultures" that make them different from other peoples and societies. Ofomata (2013) elaborates on this claim by noting that the Igbo as a people have their "way of life" [which is embedded] in their food, dance, dressing,

language, respect, technology, religion, moral code, living ethics, principles, marriages, occupation, belief system, training, education, arts, settlements, title-taking, institutions of living, etc. He also maintains that Igbo culture involves every man, child, parents, household, towns, organisations, associations, age-mates, etc. in the Igbo society.

Ideally, Igbo is one of the highly cultured ethnic groups in Nigeria. In fact every inch of the way of life of the Igbos which is embedded in their culture is inherited from their ancestors and transferred from generation to generation. The Igbos are very serious at maintaining or keeping their cultural heritages alive that they make concerted efforts at adopting diverse methodologies in training and transferring their culture to the younger generation. Nwadike (2002:9) puts it this way:

Through reinforcement, prohibition, examples and precepts, a mere look or a word, children are initiated into their linguistic community and get to learn the do's and don'ts in the society. The world of the folklore is open to them through which they gain a lot in linguistic expression, common knowledge, honesty, courage, endurance, devotion to duty, respect, truthfulness, the common rules and established etiquette of the Igbo society and the entirety of good morals.

In the traditional Igbo society and culture, the entire populace that made up the society is the teacher, and each person tries to impart positive knowledge and good morals to children. Since the desire of everyone is to see a child grow to maturity upholding tenaciously to the good norms, values and customs of his/her community, everyone tries his/her best to ensure that a child is brought up accordingly. The implication is that, since the expectation of the society is to have children who are healthy morally, socially, intellectually, economically, technologically, etc. for the upkeep and continuous development of the society, the children are normally expected to embrace the teachings of adults; knowing very well that positive responses to those teachings have short and long term rewards.

Culture: It's Meaning and Significant in the Lives of the Hausa

In the traditional Hausa society, culture is equally important in the upbringing of the children. Learning of cultural values, norms, customs and traditions is compulsory to both children and youths, and even adults as they represent a lasting legacy that would transmit whatever they have learnt to the upcoming generation. In the society, impartation of cultures and traditions takes place through folklores, riddles, proverbs, myths and legends. The adults also display exemplary lives by their speeches and deeds so that the younger generation can emulate them and in essence reciprocate with appropriate actions as the time and seasons require.

In Hausa land, culture demands that a child got acquainted with the kinds of jobs his family and other people in his/her environment are engaged in. For instance, some of the occupations in the society that a child can be acquainted with include: farming (noma), leather tanning (jima), blacksmithing (kira), dyeing (rini), hunting (farauta), trading (kasuwanci), fishing (su) etc. In fact, pertaining to the acquisition of skills in pre-colonial Hausa, and even contemporarily, the Hausa people are well known for their craftsmanship and occupations. In the traditional Hausa society, pedagogy is authoritative and teacher-centred. The cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains were strictly adhered to as corporal punishment was also encouraged for the offenders. At the appropriate age, a Hausa girl-child is prepared for marriage, and in so doing, all the ideals of a good wife are imparted on her. On the other hand, the boys are also taught the acts of being an ideal husband, who would provide for his family when he gets married.

In the Hausa indigenous society, being an adult is seen as a mark of certain accomplishments in a person's life. This is because, with this stage comes a lot of expectation on the part of the individual from the society; having learnt a lot from his environment both socially, politically, economically and technologically. However, the fact that acquisition of culture is a continuous process, the individual concerned would keep on learning from his/her parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunties, elders, in-laws, as well as the whole members of the community or society where s/he resides. Culturally, as an individual kept on keeping pace with his/her acquisition of good moral values, norms, and traditions that will make for a sound character and integrity, s/he is expected to exhibit a high level of decorum in the discharge of his/her duties in the community. In fact, s/he

is expected to continuously showcase all of the good characters s/he has acquired over the years responsibly as the society expects such from mature people for further development of the community/society.

Communication and Its Importance in the Dissemination of Information in the Society

The term “Communication” has been variously defined. In this paper, we will refer to the most appropriate definitions of communication that best suits our purpose. Hence, we turn to Defleur, Kearncy and Defleur (2005) cited in Ogwumike, Ndimele and Kasarachi (2015) who define communication as:

as a process in which an individual initiates messages using verbal and non-verbal symbols to express meaning in such a way that a similar or parallel understanding is aroused in all the communicators involved.

Other notable definitions of communication according to Ogwumike, Ndimele and Kasarachi (2015) include:

- Communication is any means by which a thought is transferred from one person to another (Chappel & Read, 1984).
- Communication is a process by which one person (or group) shares and imparts information to another (or group) and which information is clearly understood one by another (Udall & Udall, 1979).
- Communication is not just giving of information, it is the giving of understandable information and receiving understandable message by parties so that such messages can be understood and acted upon (Eyre, 1983).
- Communication is a process involving the passing of messages through the use of symbols which all parties in the communication encounter and understand. It involves the exchange of ideas, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs between people (James, Ode & Soola, 1990)
- Communication is the process by which information is shared through a channel (Ajayi & Idakwo, 1996).

From the above definitions of communication, it shows that communication involves passing and sharing of information between two or more groups of people with the aim of actualizing certain objectives. It is a process through which ideas, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs are exchanged between a group of people with the aim of improving the lives of the group concerned, and even beyond. In fact, the role of communication in the overall development of humanity cannot be overemphasized. This is because communication cuts across all facets of human endeavours and the society at large for the enhancement of human development. Indeed, it is a vital instrument through which a people or groups of people can be organized and motivated into a workforce for the realisation of human destiny.

Types of Insecurities that are Prevalent in Nigeria

Nigeria is currently experiencing a myriad of insecurities that are causing heavy turmoil, such that there is no part of the country that one can say is totally free of one form of insecurity or the other. Below are some the types of insecurities bedeviling this country:

- (1) Food Insecurity.
- (2) Social Insecurity.
- (3) Religious Insecurity.
- (4) Financial Insecurity.
- (5) Scientific and Technological Induced Insecurity.
- (6) Climate Induced Insecurity etc.

Of all these types of insecurities outlined, the paper limits itself to only one of the insecurities, which is food insecurity. Food insecurity or food threat is a situation where there exists acute food shortage compared to the total number of the population that is craving to feed on the said available food. It is a condition occasioned by lack of food contrary to the expectation of the masses who are struggling to feed but could not find or purchase enough food for them. To the people, food insecurity or food threat may be in two folds. On the one hand, some people may experience food threat simply because, even though there is food in the market, they cannot afford to purchase the quantity needed due to paucity of funds on their part, and on the other hand, some individuals may experience food threat because, there is acute shortage of food such that even though they are in possession of enough cash, they cannot purchase enough food needed.

Ironically, food insecurity can be caused by the presence of a number of factors in the society, which in turn are responsible for social insecurity. Such occurrences include the presence of:

- (a) Herders/Farmers Clashes.
- (b) Cattle Rustlers and Armed Bandits.
- (c) Boko Haram Insurgency.
- (d) Kidnapping.
- (e) Armed Robbery.
- (f) Climate Change.
- (g) Long time neglect of the Agricultural Sector.
- (h) Laziness.
- (i) Hoarding of agricultural Produce.

(a) Herders/Farmers Clashes

Of a truth the presence of some human elements or the activities of some elements in our society has led to acute food shortage in our contemporary society. It has become unfortunately customary in our society to hear or to witness some cases of Fulani herders and local farmers clashes. This ugly trend has become rampant these days that quite a good number of farmers have been massacred while many have fled their farms for fear of being annihilated by the wanton herders, who not only allow their herds to graze on people's farms, but also murder farmers who dare fight for the safety of their farms.

(b) Cattle Rustling and Armed Bandits

The presence of cattle rustlers and armed bandits parading peoples' farms have led to the death of many farmers due to the unjustifiable killings being inflicted on such farmers. There are also cases of forceful carting away of many herds from their owners by greedy cattle rustlers. These occurrences have as well led to acute food shortage because, the farmers who got murdered can no longer be partake in food production process. The farm lands of such farmers have been laid waist, and unfruitful as they are no longer cultivated. It should be noted that while the activities of these armed bandits are felt all over Nigeria, they are more pronounced in the northern part of the country. The same thing is applicable to the issue of cattle rustlers.

(c) Boko-Haram Insurgency

Boko Haram insurgency or terrorism has been a major concern to the general citizenry, and the Nigerian government in particular, for more than two decades now. These faceless human entities have been the mastermind behind many people's death and evil distortion of destinies, particularly, in the North-East geographical zone of the nation. Fundamentally, their activities have led not only to the gruesome murder of countless farmers and some of their family members in the North-East zone, but have equally led to the initiation of many innocent Nigerians into the malevolent sect. Besides, many of the people that were left behind are taking refuge in the Internally Displaced Peoples' Camps (IDPCs) such that they can no longer patronise their farms, thereby leading to a reduction in food production. This situation has not only led to serious food threat in the North-East zone and even Nigeria as a whole, but has also been the cause of severe humanitarian crises in the country.

(d) Kidnapping

In recent times, kidnapping for ransom has been a major crime committed by the youths in this nation. As a matter of fact, a lot of lives as well as countless wealth have been lost to these unscrupulous individuals who are only mindful of their wanton gains in the evil enterprise that they have chosen to embark upon. Worst still, countless farmers have been kidnapped and murdered in cold blood, while substantial amount of money have been paid as ransoms for the release of many others as well. Undoubtedly, this ugly incidence has resulted into the abandonment of many fertile farmlands with its attendant loss in food production in the country.

(e) Armed Robbery

Armed robbery is another source of serious concern that has led to severe food threat in Nigeria. Due largely to armed robbery, many people have lost their huge wealth with which they could have pursued any meaningful enterprise in agriculture and food production. No doubt, this is one of the major security challenges facing this nation.

(f) Climate Change

Due to the activities of men globally particularly, in the area of burning and industrial pollution etc., the ozone layer has been tampered with such that it has depleted. Consequently, the effect of the direct rays from the sun

is seriously affecting the inhabitants of this planet earth very negatively. This has contributed to some form of food threat globally because, the heat from the sun is damaging both crops and animals meant for human consumption and nourishment. Aside this, the rainy season has been adversely affected in such a way that the rains no longer fall adequately, leading to want of rain to wet the earth for bountiful harvests. The overall effect of all this is a reduction in agricultural production to the detriment of the inhabitants of this earth.

(g) Long time neglect of the Agricultural Sector

For some time now, the Nigerian government and its citizens have relied heavily on the proceeds from the oil sector, particularly, since the early 1970s at the instance of the oil boom. Consequent upon the income generated from this sector, the country became relatively rich such that the attention paid to the agricultural sector of the economy wasn't very adequate considering the population explosion being experienced in Nigeria. However, the enthronement of the Gen. Muhammadu Buhari led administration in 2015 saw the revamping of the economy through increased interest in agriculture. Even though, the efforts of the government at revamping the economy through agriculture was intense, the direct effects of this long neglect of this sector of the economy was that Nigeria could not produce enough food to feed her populous citizens; a situation that is still lingering even at the moment.

(h) Laziness

Some large portions of the population that make up the country turned their backs on farming due to laziness. Inadvertently, this is not unconnected with the fact such lazy citizens believe that they could have their needs met without embarking on agricultural production. Unfortunately, this attitude has significantly reduced the hands that are engaged in farming activities to the detriment of the whole nation. It is a fact that youths and able-bodied adults form a reasonable quantity in the population of this country. And, going by the look of things, the populace within this age bracket, whose impact could have been felt in increased food production, have out of sheer laziness abandoned the farm in search of non-existing white collar jobs in towns and cities. Only for some of such people to be turned into shameless rogues when they could not see ends meet in the long run.

(i) Hoarding of Agricultural Produce

Another ugly incident that causes food threat or shortage is the activities of the middlemen and women, who after purchasing food items from farms and milling stations at cheap prices, tend to hoard them in their homes or storage/ware houses. Essentially, hoarding is the act of obtaining and storing or piling up of any items of value with the hope of selling such items when the prices increase or rise higher than what is obtainable presently in the market, in a bid to make more profit or selfish gains. This type of attitudes normally end up causing food shortage and its attendant artificial inflation in the market, even in the heart of the harvest season when farm products are supposed to be purchased at cheaper prices.

Improved Ways Through Which Culture And Communication Can Be Used To Improve Food Security In Nigeria: A Way Forward

It is worthy of note that we have acknowledged the significance of culture in both the lives of the Hausas and the Igbos. In a similar vein, we have equally acknowledged that the role of communication in the pursuance of human destiny cannot be over-stressed.

Here, the paper wants to throw more light on the significance of culture and communication in the improvement of food security in this nation. First and foremost, food security is very vital in securing the destinies of the teeming population that comprise or constitute this great country. This is due to the fact that nothing can really be accomplished in a country or society that is laden with scarcity of food and hunger on the part of its citizens. It is said that a 'hungry man is an angry man'. Thus, when one is angry due to hunger, one can do less or nothing to improve one's life; for in actual fact, no one can make any monumental achievement and development on an empty stomach.

The use of good cultural values through coordinated communication to educate the citizenry on the consequences of turning to various agricultural practices in a bid to revamp the economy and to improve the livelihood of the Nigerian populace through increased food productivity is imperative. Indeed, in a bid to employ the use of our cultural values and communication for the improvement of food security, there are certain definite steps to be taken to actualise the desired result. The following consideration is necessary in this direction:

- Possessing good communicative competence in native languages especially among children in order to acquaint themselves with the diverse cultures inherent in their community/society.
- Good parental upbringing through improved communication among family members in native languages (the Hausa and Igbo languages).
- Government intervention and communication.
- Donations from good spirited individuals to improve agricultural production through improved communication.
- Shunning negative cultural practices that are inimical to agricultural development.
- Provision of good access road networks and balanced transport fare system to convey agricultural products to the desired destination.

Hymes (1972) cited in Adesida, Aina and Adekunle (2011) explains that communicative competence is the knowledge that a speaker needs to have in order to function as a member of a social group. He (Hymes) recognises the fact that to be a speaker of a language means to be a member of a speech community. He further avers that this means that to be a competent speaker of a language is to be able to do things with the language as part of larger social activities, which are culturally organised and must be culturally interpreted.

The essence of the above observation by Hymes (1972) is that having a communicative competence in a language will go a long way in aiding a citizen to be a valuable member of a society in such a way that he can know the language, and utilise it for the improvement of the society in which he resides. In this connection, possessing a communicative competence in Nigerian languages, especially Hausa and Igbo, will certainly, enhance the acquisition of cultural values inherent in our environments, and whose positive effects in development cannot be over-emphasized. Due to this reason, effective and efficient language use for purposeful communication requires that as much of the language as possible should be internalised. This implies that learners or users of a language according to Adesida, Aina and Adekunle (2011) should have an unconscious mastery of as much of the mechanisms of the language as possible, so that conscious attention can be given almost wholly to the content of the communication rather than to its form.

It then becomes imperative that the Hausa and Igbo natives more especially, the younger generation should possess a sound communicative competence in their respective languages in order to be able to have a profound comprehension of information being communicated across to them in these languages. Sincerely speaking, to be able to acquire such sound communicative competence in these languages, parents, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunties and in fact, the entire community in which a child resides should endeavour to bequeath a sound knowledge of the language of the environment to the child such that the child could have a thorough knowledge of his/her cultures through the language of his/her birth.

Then, having been exposed to the cultures inherent in the environment through language acquisition, the child can then possess the capability of employing this cultural knowledge acquired for the growth and further development of the community/society in which he/she lives. This could happen when a citizen having possessed some positive cultural norms in a society applies them in his/her life's endeavours in a bid to improve his/her income, which would further improve the economy of the country at large.

Some of those cultural values that can enhance one's value and dignity in a society are: integrity, good morals, honesty, hard work, uprightness in the face of opposition etc. It is only through proper acquisition of a language; and in this case, the Hausa and Igbo languages through effective communication in the environment in which one resides, that a citizen can come across these great attributes which when combined together can make one a valuable and enviable member of any society. Hence, the need for us to promote acquisition of our mother tongues to the upcoming generation, for this is one of the lasting legacies that we can bequeath on them for their continued identity among the committee of nations and for their continued development.

For as Altbach and Hassan (1996) cited in Ishola (2010).

... no country has ascended to the level of a first-rank economic power by excessive dependence on foreign languages. Japan rose to dazzling industrial heights by scientificating the Japanese language and making it the medium of Japan's industrialization.

The truth remains that the Japanese's rise to a very high echelon of development using her native language is an indication of how high such a language can be of immense assistance to the development of human

destinies attached to it. Indeed, such is an indication of how high such a language is being cherished, and how tenaciously its citizens have immensely focused on it for the actualisation of their dreams. Consequently, it is absolutely essential that we should all turn to our local languages and proudly harness them for proper application in the developmental strides being taken as a nation; and we can only but marvel, at how much we can recover in the future, but our glory, which we have lost as a nation.

Good parental Upbringing through Improved Communication among Family Members in Native Languages (Hausa and Igbo Languages)

It is a fact that good parental upbringing increases the chances of being good-mannered in the society. Hence, it would be highly edifying if parents should endeavour to inculcate good manners embedded in our culture through effective communication unto their off-springs in order to have ordered and peaceful society. Particularly, mothers who are the breast-feeders of babies, should commence from infancy to educate their children on the cultures, traditions, norms and values of the society so that the children can at the end of the day fit in properly into their environments so as to have a positive contributory mind towards the society, instead of developing into nuisances in the future.

Right from the outset, agriculture has been the mainstay of the Nigerian economy before the oil boom in the 1970s which made both the government and the citizenry to shift attention from agriculture and its dividends and focused only on the crude oil and what it has to offer. However, enough evidence has revealed that population explosion and its attendant demands, coupled with the fall of oil price in the world market resulted into the fact that quite a lot of people are now living beyond poverty level in the country.

Now, it is high time, Nigerians begin to shift their gaze back to what has always aided the masses from time immemorial, which is agricultural produce. To be fair to the government of the day, this regime has right from the start recognised the importance of agriculture in revamping the economy; hence, it is one of the topmost agenda of Gen. Buhari's administration. All the same, the truth is that not every Dick and Harry have paid the necessary attention to the overall significance of agriculture towards the growth of Nigerian economy as well as its role in minimising food threat in the country as President Muhammadu Buhari has envisaged. Hence, a lot of people are still paying lip service to the direction of the government regarding agriculture.

This papers is of the opinion that Nigerians should go back to the drawing board so as to increase food productivity in the land. And, some of the ways through which we can actualise this is for parents to make their offsprings to understand the importance of hard work or diligence, integrity, truthfulness, good neighbourliness and good morale embedded in our cultures and traditions so as to choose the part-ways of being good and profitable citizens from whom the nation can benefit from. Particularly, it is imperative that parents and other family members should, through good communicative processes in their native languages intimate their children and wards on the essentiality of turning to agriculture when there are no white collar jobs on their way, as a means of livelihood, instead of turning into loafers roaming the streets, and eventually becoming victims of peer group pressure that may lead one to end up being an armed robber, armed bandit, kidnapper, etc. Indeed, this could be one of the optimal ways in which food productivity can be increased in the country.

By implication, the Hausa and Igbo indigenes should view it as a challenge and so make concerted efforts to consistently aid the younger generation to have a positive wholesome attitude towards our good cultural values of hard working, diligent, integrity, truthfulness, good neighbourliness, patriotism etc. so that the country can move forward in the right direction, even agriculturally.

Government Intervention and Communication

It is a fact that the government of Gen. Muhammadu Buhari was determined to increased food production in the land since its inception in 2015. In order to make agriculture a more lucrative business, the government has introduced what it refers to as "Anchor Borrowers' Programme". This is an opening created by the Buhari's regime whereby funds are made available through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to individuals for the purpose of increased agricultural practices in the country, which in turn would lead to increased food production.

However, it is noteworthy to say that more needs to be done in this area, as not all of the people that actually apply for these loans end up accessing them. There are a vast majority of people who could have loved to expand their farmlands as well as agric-oriented business ventures if they had access to this loan.

Just recently, the Federal government of Nigeria under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari unveiled a rice pyramid consisting of one (1) million bags of locally produced rice, courtesy to the relentless efforts of the people involved in the Anchor Borrowers' Programme and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Lately, the government also brought to the awareness of the good citizens of Nigeria that through the mechanisms of the Anchor Borrowers' Programme that very soon, the importation of rice from Thailand would be drastically reduced.

Donations from Good Spirited Individuals to Improve Agricultural Production through Improved Communication

The Hausa and Igbo cultural heritages demand that more privileged persons should help the less privileged ones. This was even exemplified in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, where the chief character, Okonkwo knowingfully well that his father Unoka was a pauper, from whom he can inherit nothing, resulted into sourcing for some aids from an affluent farmer in his vicinity, the wealthy Nwakibie. Nwakibie being a good spirited individual, was readily available for Okonkwo to access his vast wealth by lending him some of his yam seed from where Okonkwo got the foundation of his farming prowess and affluence after much toiling in the farming venture.

It has always been in our culture to lend a helping hand to the needy in our domain. Consequently, bringing the above observation in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is that, the rich people in our society should be involved in improving food security in the country by offering helping hands to the less privileged who may need their aid in a bid to venture into agriculture. On the detection of such individuals who could sincerely aid others in venturing into agriculture financially or otherwise, commendable efforts should be made to communicate such discovery to others in need so that they can be acquainted with their location and have access to such aids.

Being that virtually, all the ethnic nationalities that comprise this country are naturally in love with agriculture, including the Hausas and the Igbos, rigorous efforts should continue to be made by both government and individuals to revive this love in the hearts of the citizens so that many people could be encouraged to go back to the farm for increased food productivity.

Shunning Negative Cultural Practices that are Inimical to Agricultural Development

There is an adage which says, "All that glitters are not gold". This is a revelation which points to the fact that not all that are embedded in our cultures are good for human development. A case in point is a situation, for instance in Igbo land, and even in some other places within this country, where women are denied having access to landed property no matter the degree of their affluence and prominence which they command in the community of their birth.

To elaborate more on this, the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development (TCARD, 1993) cited in Tunde (2010) notes that in Africa, women make up more than one-third of the work force. They account for 70% of agricultural workers, and 80% of food producers. (TCARD, 1993) maintains however, that observation has revealed that in spite of this huge contribution made by women towards ensuring food sustainability in the continent, they naturally possess no right to own a land of theirs, except one is wealthy enough to purchase some.

The fact remains that in rural communities in Igbo land, women who venture into farming do so, on account of having the favour of being given some piece of land temporarily by their husbands, or heads of the families who would re-collect such piece of lands whenever they deem it necessary. Adepoju (1997) cited in Tunde (2010) affirms that discrimination against women is especially serious in the case of widowhood, when women usually end up without inheritance rights and find themselves subjected to harrowing widowhood rites. Tunde (2010) discloses that although, statutory law provides for women's capacity to inherit assets following the death of their husbands, in practice, this is often overridden by the local customary law of succession. He (Tunde) expatiates by stressing that it is almost universal in Nigerian customary law that widows have no capacity to inheritance. One reason for this is that there is no concept of co-ownership of property by couples in traditional Nigerian culture, the presumption being that all substantial properties, including land belong to the husband, while, the woman (herself) is considered a form of property.

To lend more voice on this issue, Tuyizere (2007) cited in Tunde (2010) discloses that in traditional African society, women cannot own property left behind by their deceased husbands as they are often to be part of the household property to be inherited by his relatives. To drive the point home, Tunde (2010:289) gives an

instance by indicating that in Ozalla community (Edo State), once a woman loses her husband, her inheritance is more in terms of liabilities than assets. She is subjected to sexual harassment from younger male in-laws who view her as part of their relative's property to be inherited. Tunde elaborates on this by disclosing that since the women have no control over land and are often in subordinate positions, they are sometimes subjected to dehumanising treatment from male relations and male in-laws whenever request for land is put forward to them. And, even when such requests are granted, women suffer from inconsistent and temporary use of land despite their contributions to food production in the community.

Still unveiling some of these dehumanising treatments meted on the womenfolk at the demise of their husbands by the immediate family members, one Mrs. Chinyere Udoma a gospel artist in her Musical Album titled, "*The Wind of Glory*" displays a play-let where a brother to a deceased fellow, shortly after the man's death storms the house of his late brother with some of the elders of the family, and forcefully commanded the boys that accompanied them to accomplish their malicious acts, to barge into the house of his late brother in the presence of his widow and the only daughter. The boys forcefully raked the house of all the available properties for the man, without giving any consideration whatsoever to the plight of the widow and her only child.

When the poor widow questioned the heinous man about what she would do with her daughter as the whole house is being scraped of all its properties, with nothing left for them to lay hold on, he instantly replied that since his brother is dead, all of his properties including the woman and her daughter now belonged to him. He asked the elders that accompanied him to perfect the evil act if that is not what the culture permits, and they all answered in the affirmative, insisting that that is in accordance with what the culture has laid down. When the poor woman further insisted that the dead should at least be respected before emptying his house of all his belongings as it was not long that he passed on, the oldest man that accompanied the brother of the deceased claimed that they have shown the dead man due respect when they buried him. Instantaneously, this embarrassing and inconsiderable attitude threw the poor widow and her only daughter into a fresh and deep mourning for the loss of the poor husband and father.

As humans, it is absolutely essential that we should considerably think of the dire consequences of such acts on the lives of those concerned, if it actually happens in real life situations. This is because after all, we are all human beings. But the irony of the whole thing is that, it really does happen at times. Then, if it does happen, what could such inconsiderate actions bring to human life but great hatred against the perpetrators of such acts, and miserable conditions for the affected individuals, which would in turn aggravate the suffering of humanity generally. It is ideal that we remind ourselves that on this earth, we are all birds of passage, and consequently, we are to be held responsible for all actions and inactions against our fellows before the great Creator and Judge of the whole universe.

However, if truth be told, the emergence of colonial administrators, Christianity and Western civilisation in Nigeria has to some extent been able to aid the natives in solving some of these problems besetting the land. For instance, the white men brought along with them certain guiding principles and laws which when observed properly makes life easy and more meaningful. They made laws and established reformatory institutions or prisons where offenders could be subjected to some form of punishment in order to reform them to be able to fit into the society once they have served their sentences or jail terms.

So, in the case of some negative cultural practices that are inimical to human growth and development, the white men provided statutory laws that could guide and harness peaceful co-existence among the members of any given society for optimum benefits of the individuals involved. Pertaining particularly to the issue of property inheritance, statutory laws provide for women's capacity to inheritance of assets at the eventual demise of their husbands. The problem as has been earlier observed, is that in Africa including Nigeria, these statutory laws are not observed due to customary law of succession; implying that the citizens do not abide by, or conform to all the laws establishing good human relationship and development in the Nigerian society.

Our argument here is that wisdom suggests that just as we obey the laws against theft or armed robbery, human assassination, human trafficking, not living with someone as husband or wife without payment of dowry, kidnapping, etc, it is also expedient that the statutory laws recognising the right of women to inheritance of their husbands' properties at death should not be overridden by any local customary law of succession. Attaining this great feat will enable the womenfolk to be in possession of access to their husbands' properties at death, including lands so that they could continue to provide their own quota in food productivity in goodwill, as they had been doing before the demise of their husbands, without being in jeopardy or threat of

even losing their precious lives in the continued struggle to provide for the children, under the molesting attitudes of the envious in-laws. It is noteworthy to acknowledge the fact that a woman's productivity and usefulness should not be thrown to the winds, or trampled under the dust, just because her husband has passed on to eternity.

To alleviate all these predicaments on the part of the female folk in our society, it is essential that obedience to laws that make for human and material development should be greatly esteemed and appropriately observed in the society for continued progress in the right direction. In this regard, it is also expedient that the educated elites should make all the necessary efforts to ensure that such laws are communicated to the people at the grassroots for proper observation, since such would make for increased interest in agriculture by women and widows, and consequently lead to increased food productivity in our dear nation, Nigeria.

Provision of Good Access Road Networks For transporting Agricultural Produce

It is observable in some quarters that even though, quite a reasonable quantity of food items are being produced annually, nevertheless, lack of good infrastructural facilities such as good roads always hampers prompt transportation of such agricultural products to the desired masses that are in towns and cities in need of the products. In a similar vein, high cost of transportation which may be linked to lack of good and accessible roads, or inordinate ambition of some road transport workers to get rich quickly, thereby resulting in the collection of high transport fares from farmers and travelers is indeed, another clue to the issue of food shortage being experienced in some parts of the country, while it is over surplus in other parts. When this happens, the tendency is that it results into unnecessary wastage by non-usage of the surplus valuable farm products.

So, in a bid to minimise food wastage, the government at all levels should make useful infrastructural provisions such as good access roads available to farmers in order to make their farm produce transportable to the masses in need of them, for prompt consumption to avoid undue wastage of the products. Equally important is for government, particularly, the state and local governments to intervene and monitor how road transport workers are going about with the issue of transport charges and collection in their areas of jurisdiction to avoid undue advantage being taken by these road transport worker the poor on farmers and travelers

CONCLUSION

The focal point of paper was targeted at finding ways through which our cultural values and communication could aid in the improvement of food security in Nigeria, with particular interest in Hausa and Igbo cultures. The introductory part commenced by ascertaining the meanings of the terms "culture, society and communication" due largely to their significance in understanding the bases upon which our argument was being anchored, as it concerns the improvement of food security across the Nigerian nation. Though, some of the types of insecurities that pervade every nook and cranny of this country was brought to limelight, we focused our attention mainly on food insecurity, and in the process highlighted some of its causes; and equally proffered solutions on how the menace can be curtailed.

We are therefore, imploring the entire citizenry to make concerted efforts by availing ourselves of the good moral values embedded in our cultures, customs and traditions, imbibe them and live them out in our daily lives, particularly, as it concerns embarking on farming ventures that could enhance food productivity in this nation. It is very appropriate that we should cast back our minds on the days of old when the issue of oil boom was unknown in Nigeria; yet, the country was able to feed her citizens with agricultural products produced within. Agreed that there have been population explosion, but, the question to be asked is, if we are sincere to ourselves as a nation, and are hard working, wouldn't we be able to manage our human and material resources well enough to produce adequate food that could cater for the teeming population in the country? It is therefore, very vital that we should take a good look at the vast landmass God blessed with, yet, the nation is still suffering from food insufficiency. In fact, it is high time we go back to the drawing board and have a change of mind, retreat from our nonchalant attitudes towards our good cultural values, norms and traditions, and make fundamental efforts at aligning the country to achieve food sufficiency that will match her population. When we are well-fed, it is then we can have a clear mind to think and reason better on how to move the country to the next level of greatness and development.

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