

RESSURECTION OF IGBO COMMUNIALISM: METHAMPHETHAMINE (MKPURU MMIRI) IN FOCUS

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**Abstract:** From time immemorial, the Igbo people of Nigeria in their entirety are known to form cohesion. This cohesion makes every member of the family, village and community get involve in individual affairs. No wonder such names like "Nwora" and "Igwebuike" Ụmụnnabuike are common among the Igbo. This principle of communalism makes the Igbo share in the success and the failure of each other. The advent of migration occasioned by urbanization poses a threat to this communal accountability as the foundation of Igbo checks and balances become shaky. With this lacuna, some Igbo youths become recalcitrant by engaging in some social vices like drug abuse with its attendant effects of robbery, rape kidnapping, and cultism. The drug abuse take a dangerous dimension in Igbo land with the emergence and embrace of methamphetamine popularly known as "Mkpuru Mmiri" in Igbo palace by its youths a development that re-enact the Igbo communal spirit of "Nwora and Igwebuike". This work brings out the organs Igbo of old use to shape the lives of their youth, its collapse, and the emergence of "Mkpuru Mmiri", it's devastating effects and various Communities use of communal actions in checking the menace. The work further shows that the Igbo communities' interventionist approaches in fight against Mkpuru Mmiri really pay.

**Keywords:** IGBO, METHAMPHETAMINE, COMMUNIALISM, DRUG ABUSE, MKPURU MMIRI

## INTRODUCTION

Igbo one of the major tribes of Nigeria in West Africa is located at the South Eastern part of the country. They are known and refer as Igbo people and their abode called Igbo land "...comprises Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states, where the Igbo language is spoken" (Nwangwu, Samuel, Anya, Emeka, Clara, Ifeoma, Leonard & Uchenna, 2022). They are mostly agrarian people being farmers while some of them occupying the

coastal areas are mostly fishermen and women. At the advent of modernization, most of its people become merchants: a trade that makes them to be itinerants looking for greener pastures. The rural urban drift occasioned by civilization cum modernization to a larger extent affects their communal life: the bond that binds everyone together irrespective of parental differences. As a result (Isidienu, 2016, pg. 3) observes that “most people in their various families are becoming so much self centered”. (Njoku, 2016, pg. 115) also links this to Christian missionaries attack and demonizing indigenous knowledge... tagging them as fetish”.

Prior to the above progression, the Igbo lives and shares things in common, everyone is answerable to the society, a child is a child for all (Nwaora), every adult is part of the child’s training and upbringing as the community shares in the success and failure of its members. The language (nwa m) is alien to the Igbo as every child is referred and addressed as (nwa anyi) our child. This concept of Nwaora is tailored from the day the child is born, formative years, marriage and death. Collectively (Igwebuike), the Igbo are their brothers’ keepers (onye aghana nwanne ya), they pay the price of this togetherness by being involved in their individual affairs. When a child is born, every adult within the community tries as much as people to identify with the couple showering them gifts according to one’s ability. During the child’s formative years, every adult celebrates the child’s ingenuity and condemns his or her shameful acts.

When the time comes for marriage, the kindred (umunna) even to the village level contributes to the would be marriage in form of kegs of palm wine, yam, while the womenfolk fetch firewood in support of the marriage as well as joining in the cooking of the day and fetching water by the youths. Cleaning of the compound and erecting makeshift palm front supported with bamboo sheds are the sole responsibility of the celebrant’s kindred (umunna). It is a shared responsibility and reciprocal as such gesture is expected to go round whenever any of them are having one celebration or the other including burials. Among the Igbo no one is an island, everyone is answerable to his kinsmen, village and the community through various organs set up to regulate and bring sanity to the system. The coming together according to (Okoli, 2020, pg. 25) also “makes them contribute towards the general development of the society”. Inactiveness of any member of the Igbo community is frowned at and attracts penalty that can result to excommunicating the offender but that depends on the enormity of the offense. The Igbo uses various organs and bodies to perpetuate their supports, checks and balances. Such organs include the kindred (umunna) level, village, age grade (otu ogbo), daughters of the community, (umuada, umuokpu) married women of the kindred (alutaradi, aludi) and indeed the youths (umu ntorobia) these are stages and organs every Igbo is expected to metamorphose and get integrated into the system. Under this umbrella, the Igbo identify themselves, share their responsibility, support their own and punish offenders. ‘it is one of the associations that give individuals sense of belonging and collective responsibility” (Okoli, 2020, pg.253).

This Igbo cohesion receives threat from modernity and its attendant effects of urbanization and migration. Needless mentioning Christian Missionaries with their heavenly message that further tear the Igbo communal life into shrewd and pitch children against their parents in utter disregard to what was in their bid to embrace the Whiteman’s religious belief and way of life. The Igbo in the search of greener pasture find themselves in the midst of people of different divide, imbibe their culture and at the same time build neighborliness that is in sharp contrast with what is obtainable in their various villages and communities. The Igbo that find themselves in such an environment begin to live as it pleases me (mu ka o solu) type of life. The communal cord that put everyone on check was cut, the platforms used for checks and balances are no longer in existence rather they become subjected to the government of the day and its agents. The younger ones become friends with people with different cultures and learn their way of life that is in contrast with the Igbo beliefs.

Although the Igbo that find themselves in such an adventure form a replica of the village brotherhood through various associations outside their communities. The association meets once in a while to maintain communication and have a make believe community. The organizations are not solid like that of the ones in their villages because they live in different locations, converge once in a month or there about to chart a course for themselves unlike the village setting where everyone sees each other on a daily basis. This is where things start to fall apart in the lives of Igbo parents and their children. Our child (nworra) becomes my child (nwa m).

## ORGANS IGBO USE TO BRING SANITY TO THE SYSTEM

The Igbo system of governance (egalitarian) is likened to the present day democracy in Nigeria whereby powers of governance are shared to various arms. (Soji, 2024) describes traditional Igbo political organization as quasi-democratic republican. (Marco, 2021) observes “no member could take decision affecting the group without the consent of the other”. None of the organs has absolute power while they are being regulated at the center. This is evidenced in the words of (Ajakor, 2019, pg.54) “as the child gets older, their responsibility grows”. These organs are structured in that one graduates from one level to the other as he or she grows in age. A child of today grows from being under the umbrella of tweenager/youth get initiated into the cult of masquerade, married and graduate to be in the comity of kindred (umunna) meeting and at the same time join the age grade. Same is applied to the girl child who grows to be a youth, mother, aludi and Nwaokpu umuada. The Igbo in their quest to maintain orderliness in their system have these structures in this order

1. Tweenager/middle-childhood
2. Youth (ntorobia)
3. Masquerade Cult (otu mmonwu)
4. Age grade (otu Ogbo)
5. Daughters of the community (Umuada, Umu okpu)
6. Wives of the family/community (Alutaradi, Aludi)
7. Titled men (Ndiichie)

### TWEENAGER/MIDDLE-CHILDHOOD

These are children under the age bracket of 9-12 that are not yet teenagers. In Igbo communities, children in this age bracket are already captured to fit into the Igbo traditional communal life. The Igbo in what could be described as catch them young at early stage plant the seed of communalism in this tweenagers as they are saddled with the responsibility of cleaning the village stream. (Okoye, 2022, pg. 5) captures “the social environment of an African village encourages and appreciates sharing of skills and possessions...” Igbo inclusive. Every Igbo child within this age bracket participates in ensuring that the community’s or village stream is clean for human consumption. (Obiakor, Onuora & Nnebedum, 2018, pg. 74) posit that “young boys and girls between the ages of 10-15 years are responsible for the upkeep of the village stream”.

The cleaning of the stream in most communities if not all is done once in a week precisely Saturdays and it’s not gender based. As early as 7 in the morning every child within the age of 9-10 races down to the village stream with their cleaning implements such as broom, “akpata” made from the palm front, cutlass and wooden plate. This rare attribute of the Igbo children (Ajakor, 2019) says “provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of the society during their adult life”. In most cases these cleaning implements are already procured through freewill contribution from them and kept permanently at a safer corner of the stream. In such a situation the children will go to the stream with only their water keg hoping to pick the implement on arrival for their participation.

Their coming together is made effective with some dos and don’ts both within their members and other users of the stream. For the members, late coming during cleaning days and absenteeism has their penalties. Anyone that is inactive while the cleaning is ongoing will be reprimanded while fighting among them also stands the risk of receiving punishment which usually comes in form of monetary charges. There are demarcations where laundries of any type are not permitted, washing of children clothes soiled with feces are not allowed in the Igbo village streams including keg used for oil. There is portion for those that want to take bathe everything is well structured. As the cleaning of the stream is going on, the children will position themselves in two rolls passing on the dirt water and dirt’s till it get to the last person. It’s a joint and collective effort were everyone is involved and at the same time.

While the cleaning is ongoing, they sing songs as a moral boaster entertaining themselves. In fact, Igbo children cleaning of stream is structured in such a manner that they do not see it as a hard task rather as part of their recreational activity and socialization. That is the reason why they usually look out for it rather than growing

weary. After the days cleaning exercise, roll call will be taken to ascertain the absentee ones. They may from there in their droves visit the families of those that are not identifying with them in the stream cleaning, those that have been absent for so long and those that default the rules of the stream. All these go with their various degrees of penalty.

### **YOUTHS (NTOROBIA)**

The youth here comprise the female and the male. At this stage among the Igbo, their responsibilities are gender based. The females independently have their cutout responsibility same is applicable to the males. Although the Igbo females have a more spelt out responsibility they are doing communally. They have a body called “nzuko umu agbogho” body of unmarried women. Through this body, the Igbo check the excesses of their young girls and condition them to be marriageable women. Any of them exhibiting bad character, giving her family headache and living a wayward life will be dealt with accordingly by her mates once her case is brought before them.

The female arm of the Igbo youth also celebrates any of them that are getting married. They will individually contribute bunch of firewood and fetch water during the day of her marriage ceremony in support of her family. They are usually physically present at their member’s marriage ceremony entertaining the audience with their song and at the same time to give her their parting gift.

For the Igbo male youth, they do not have a particular platform as their female counterparts though they still perform some tasks. Some of them at this stage already join the kindred meeting (nzuko umunna) an opportunity that is not given to their female folks. Under the youth umbrella, they clear the kindred square whenever there is an upcoming event. At this stage, they are already involved in masquerade and masquerading. It’s the Igbo young boys’ period of exploring their environment.

### **MASQUERADE CULT (OTU MMONWU)**

This is one of the organs the Igbo use to separate the boys from the men. It’s an organ/body that teaches them the importance of men being secretive and hardened. In the words of (Orji, 1999, pg. 159) “masquerade society was a secret society”, through their initiation into the masquerade cult, the Igbo male youth is shown the disparity between them and the girl child. The male flippancy is put to check during their initiation as they are barred from revealing the secrets of the masquerading to none initiators especially the females including their mothers.

During the initiations, other rigorous exercises follow an indication that life is not all that rose as it can be rough as well. It teaches them to be strong and resolute as men. Igbo masquerade cult is another means and ways of preparing their male folk on interpersonal relationship and to control his household especially the wife. It teaches the men that it is not everything you tell your wife/wives.

### **AGE GRADE (OTU OGBO/OTU EBIRI)**

Age grade system in Igbo land is coming together of men born the same year or within specification of years put together. It’s not just a particular year but three or four years depending on community. Some form age grade with three different serial years while some form with four different ears. Age grade formation in Igbo land brings them together for the development of their communities, socialization and self enhancement as in the words of (Obiakor, 2016, pg 91) “the members see themselves as comrades and checks on each other’s deficiency” (Ohadike, 1995, pg xxv1) elaborates that “...the friendship they cultivated in childhood remained intact throughout life”. Every age grade is known by its given name. Such names are symbolic as it reflects the happenings or remarkable event that happens during its formation. (Ohadike, 1995, pg. xxv) “the association was named after a major event that took place at the time of its members birth”. Age grades are not giving names trivially rather the names are mirror and moral lesson to the society. Age grade names are like encyclopedia of the community where it’s domiciled.

Mentioning any age grade name among the Igbo already tells a thousand stories of the people. In some communities age grades formed during the Nigerian Biafran war of 1967 that lasts to 1970 answer names like

“Oguadimma” meaning fight is not good, “Aghanyereuche” war instills sense, ‘Aghaebigo” the war is over and others. When a community is in crisis and they eventual settle their differences, age grades formed within such period answers names such as “Udokamma” meaning peace is supreme, “Udoamaka” peace is good. Other age grade names that send moral lessons and values to the people include “ifunanya”, “Ugo” meaning Eagle the king of birds. Such age grade with the name Ugo are people that like to show off, it’s made up of proud men, “Echidime” meaning tomorrow is pregnant, “Onyeaghananwanneya” be your brother’s keeper and “Igwebuike” meaning there is strength in diversity.

The Igbo age grade system has women as its appendage with no cut out function. In fact, women who join age grade among the Igbo are few and passive. They are there for the fun of it. The Igbo women are not a force in age grade formation and system. The reason is not farfetched because most of the daughters of the community are married outside while only but the few that are within show interest.

Age grade members in Igbo land forms support base to its members and it’s a platform that encourages healthy competition as no one would like to be left behind (Ohadike, 1996, pg xxv1) says it also promotes respect. The age grade members give support to any of their own that is having one celebration or the other, like marriage, child dedication, burial and title taking. When any of them is not catching up with others, they usually rally round to ensure he gets up. This is clearly seen when their member is finding it difficult to marry. His age members will assist him financial and at the same time contribute palm wine for his marriage. Among the Igbo, age mates embark on the same voyage the same time because when any of their members marries, others see it as a challenge. They usually do things the same time as being left behind shows that the person is not catching up and it brings shame to his immediate family. Just the way they celebrate the marriage of their members, aside their immediate families’ ones age grade has important role to play at death.

As it’s customary to the Igbo to maintain their thatch houses annually, it’s the duty of one’s age mates to assist them in doing so while those with none receive support from others to erect new house. Among the Igbo, It’s the age grade members that contribute building materials such as raffia, bamboo and red mud whenever any of them wants to build a home. Aside contributing the materials, they as well see to its erection from scratch to finish. Under the age grade system, the Igbo appreciate themselves by treating their fellow’s wives as theirs too. It’s another Igbo extended family whereby their joy and sorrow are shared together this action (Obiakor & Onuora 2016, pg. 91} calls “onuru ube nwanne” being ones brother’s keeper. In Igbo culture, ones strength and achievement are measured by that of his age mates. Bad performance of one single member of age grade attracts bash to the entire members. So to avoid being ridiculed, they try as much as possible to come together and cover up their member’s deficiency. Obiakor & Onuora, (2016, pg.89) singles out the affinity “collectivity both in pain and Joy is more of an intrinsic value in Igbo culture...”

## **DAUGHTERS OF THE COMMUNITY (UMUADA/UMUOKPU)**

Umuada or umuokpu the two names boil down to daughters of the family that are married out. According to (Okoli, Ujummadu, Okonkwo, Agbo, Okutu, Nwivu, Adonu, Alozie, Odu & Oko, 2021) Umuada is coming together of women from a community married to other places. They wield so much authority in various Igbo families. Every married woman in Igbo family pays obeisance to the umuada of her husband’s place as anything less than this attracts fine of punishment to the woman. Any woman married in Igbo family tries as much as possible not to attract the wrath of the daughter of the family because a case with only one Nwaokpu is a case with all of them. The umuokpu protect the interest of one another. They believe that an injury to one of them is an injury to all of them. The umuokpu/umuada is being carried along in anything they do in their various homes even in absentia. (Nwaubani, 2006) captures umuada as “...peace makers, intervening to sort out issues which had become intractable, and their decisions were usually taken as final”.

The Igbo daughters “umuada” has a particular part of any animal killed in their father’s compound reserved for them; the hip of the meat (ukwu anu). It’s from it the Igbo daughters derive their pet name (ada na eri ukwu anu) meaning daughters that eat hip of meat whether they are around or not, on no account should anyone deny them that part of meat. Once goat or cow is killed, one of them that is living close by will be invited to receive it on behalf of other umuada. She will in turn confirm to others that such get to her. These right covers both during,



traditional marriage, burial and other celebrations, once a live animal is slaughtered within their father's compound (umuokpu/umuada) the hip belongs to them. Whenever any "nwada steps into her father's compound, every married woman in that family will ensure that she is given food and other hospitalities.

Beyond the married women in their families, the umuada also wield much influence on their brothers. Any of their brothers that deviates they summon him and bring him to order. When the sons of the family are having misunderstanding, it is the duty of the daughters of the family (umuada) to bring them together and settle the case. They never fail to cut to size any of their brother's wives that prove stubborn. No matter the distance the Igbo daughters are married, they never fail to visit their maiden home periodically to ensure that things are moving normal. In order not to lost touch with one another, they formed a meeting of daughters of the family/community (umuokpu.umuada) a platform they use view and supervise activities in their father's house.

### **MARRIED WIVES OF THE FAMILY/COMMUNITY (ALUTARADI/NLUDI)**

Alutaradi/nludi is the women being married by the sons of Igbo family "ndi nwunyedi" meaning co-wives. Every Igbo married woman is "umuokpu/nwada" but she cannot exercise that her "Umuokpu/nwada" power in her husband's place not until she gets to her father's house. Even the "nwada" in her husband's place is also "nludi" where she is being married. Among the Igbo, all the women married in a particular community do come together under the auspices of "nludi/alutaradi". It's through this organ they fraternize to know themselves, hold their meetings discussing for their voices to be heard. Whenever any member of their husband's family marries, they ensure she gets registered into their meeting. It's the duty of every mother in-law to ensure that all her sons' wives are active member of the "nludi". In a situation that the mother in-law is no longer alive, the senior wife assumes this position.

### **TITLED MEN (NDIICHIE)**

Titled men 'council of elders' in Igbo land are made of highly revered men who uphold the truth. They are the parliamentarians assisting the king in the dispensation of justice. They are selected from kindred's and villages of every given community representing the voice of their people. Among the Igbo, men of impeccable character are usually appointed by their people to represent them as 'Ndiichie' member of the king's cabinet (Isidienu, pg. 1 2016). When cases are handled at the kindred (court) and the village (appeal court) levels the kings cabinet (Ndiichie) is the Supreme Court that takes the final decision of any case.

Ndiichie is mostly made up of people of age because the Igbo is of this strong belief that an old person is next to god hence the saying "okenye bu okara chukwu" as in the words of Soji-Oye, 2024) "communities were usually governed and administered by a council of elders". And each kindred and village try to bring out one of their own that is imbue with wisdom and integrity. All other organs of Igbo checks and balances like the age grade, umuada/umuokpu, nludi and the youths are under the "Ndiichie" the king's cabinet. Anyone that is not satisfied with the way his/her case is handled at these various levels is at liberty to approach the "Ndiichie" for a review of the case.

### **DRIFT FROM IGBO NORMS**

Rural urban drift in search of greener pastures with its attendant effects of modernity watered the functionality of all these aforementioned Igbo organs of cohesion, checks and reprimanding. (Isidienu, 2018, pg. 2) points out that "most people who live in the cities could not allow their wards to join in carrying out functions especially sweeping of village square". Families are scattered abroad, give birth in their new found abode without the Igbo known communal environment where every adult watches and disciplines any erring child. The absence of all these according to (Samphina, 2023, pg 4), places "the culture of the Igbo in the crossroad". The children grow in absence of the communal spirit that starts at their tender age where they learn respect, sharing, brotherhood and accommodation. They choose their company, live individualistic life which at the end exposes them to social vices such as, stealing, kidnapping, and drugs abuse among others.

Those that are still in the Igbo villages in absence of these strong institutions live solitary life “mu ka osolu” coupled with the establishment of government that prohibits the activities of such bodies. The institution of government sees some of the actions of the Igbo organs in keeping a peaceful community as abuse of human rights, meddling into someone’s affair and people taking law into their hands. The establishment of government limits the powers of the Igbo communal and disciplinary measures hence things starts to fall apart. Our child becomes my child every family tends to protect and hide their idiosyncrasy. The communities tend to overlook the bad behaviors of the younger ones who later grow to become a menace to the society.

A good number of Igbo younger men who could not fit into the urban areas or who has committed one crime or the other run back to their villages constituting nuisance. These loafers with their nefarious activities are thorns in the flesh of the people. Some are kidnapers, armed robbers, diabolic and crowning it with hard drugs. It’s a known fact that hard drugs and criminality work hand in hand (Chikwendu, 2021) collaborates “there is correlation between poverty and drug abuse. Financial instability fosters stress, increasing the likelihood of addictive behaviors”. The Igbo youths in different villages embrace hard drugs such as cannabis, cocaine, heroin, amphetamine that result to abnormal behavior living a life of fantasy.

### **THE EMERGENCE OF (METHAMPHETAMINE) MKPURU MMIRI IN IGBO LAND**

Methamphetamine popularly known and called Mkpurummiri among the Southeast Igbo speaking people of Nigeria is a transparent crystal hard drug also known as ice due to its appearance. In his narrative, (Banjo, 2021) relays that “mkpuru mmiri is a slang coined from the Igbo language which is loosely translated as seed of water” A mere look at its formation reminds one of the good old days, the ice that falls during the peak of the rainy season’ no wonder the Igbo comfortably refers to it as “Mkpurummiri”. Although methamphetamine Mkpurummiri, falls into the category of other illicit hard drugs like heroin, cannabis, cocaine, amphetamine et al but its adjudge to be more expensive and deadly than the others. According to (Marshal & Werb, 2010, pg.56) “the drug was said to be more costly than cocaine and that its African production was rated highly in the international drug market”.

The existence of methamphetamine is as old as other illicit hard drugs. Quoting the Chairman Chief Executive Officer NDLEA (Ujummadu, 2021) says methamphetamine (mkpurummiri) “was developed in Japan in 1919 and grossly abused during World War 11 when it was issued to pilots on a suicidal mission called Kamikaze”. After its introduction in the early nineteen according to NDLEA Boss, methamphetamine used to treat some health related issues like control of obesity, depression, was banned in 1970’s, listed as schedule 11 just like drugs with high potential for abuse that leads to severe psychological or physical dependence by the International Drug Control Convention.

All these while the consumption of other illicit drugs are trending in the South East Igbo speaking people of Nigeria including other parts of Nigeria. Little or nothing is known about methamphetamine not until the last quarter of the year 2021 just about the month of October precisely when its presence like that of hurricane tries to sweep and render useless the entire youth of Igbo land this (Njoku, 2023) says makes “the Igbo youths to raise alarm over growing intake of methamphetamine (mkpuru mmiri) and other hard drugs among youths”. Prior to the mkpuru mmiri nightmare, (Okohochi, 2021) recalls that “what was common among drug users in the zone was cocaine, hashish, crack, heroin, Indian hemp and other less potent illicit drugs”. UNODC in their National Drug Survey reports “the prevalence of Methamphetamine use at 0.1 representing (8900) users while the South East recorded 0.6% (67.000) users of the substance

There are different accounts on how mkpuru mmiri find its way into the south East part of Nigeria. One of the postulators (Banjo, 2021) says “...some have claimed that mkpuru mmiri comes from the Northern part of the country” while (Njoku, 2021) declares that “it is a young man who returned from South Africa that is running the cartel”. But the outcome of the operations of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) shows that some Southeast states have factories where methamphetamine is being cooked while those discovered outside Igbo land like Lagos state belong to Igbo businessman.

The Chairman CEO of NDLEA Bubba Marwa while addressing the people on the outcome of their investigation on the outbreak of Crystal methamphetamine abuse in the last quarter of 2021 predominantly in the Southeast declares that; “The Agency successfully busted two methamphetamines manufacturing facilities called meth laboratories. The first one, located in Victoria Garden City (VGC) Estate of Lekki, Lagos, is owned by a baron, Chris Emeka Nzewi, while the second in Nise community of Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra state was owned by Paul Ozoemena”. According to Marwa, the owners of the two laboratories are in their custody including Sunday Ukah their cook also known as chemist from Abia state that produces the drugs for them. The NDLEA startling discovery puts to rest the source of the methamphetamines mkpuru mmiri as evidence shows that it neither comes from the North nor is South Africa rather southeast is one of the manufacturers of methamphetamine.

The lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak is an exposure to the existence of methamphetamine factories in the South East Nigeria. (Chikwendu, 2021) points out that; “The recent Covid pandemic caused the greatest upset in the global trafficking and distribution of meth and crack. The pandemic forced governments to introduce travel restrictions”. The methamphetamine factories in the south east states primarily set up for exportation of the illicit drug to other countries where they have larger market and hard currency could no longer ship the products due to the restriction of movement. The couriers resort to distributing the hard drugs in their immediate environment ‘the south east’ (Chikwendu, 2021) further explains that this “made large number of kilograms of stimulant drugs like meth readily available in countries that were not their intended market seeing how challenging it has become to traffickers use the local population as their market to recoup their investments”.

The turn of event in the distribution chain of methamphetamine also brings about new clients in preference of their former stimulant drugs. This is how the youth of Igbo people of south east Nigeria embraces methamphetamine to the detriment of their health and their future as a result (Njoku, 2021) makes ‘some youths take to all manner of crimes after taking the substance’. (Okohchi, 2021) in her lamentation says;

Presently, mkpuru mmiri has become a living nightmare in the region. From Onitsha, Ihiala, Nnewi, Obosi, Mgbidi, Orsu, Njaba, Owerri, Ariaria, Afikpo, Enugwu, Nsukka, Aba Umuhia etc. The devastating effects of the synthetic Stimulant have spread like wildfire across most towns and even remote villages.

There exists a cult like relationship between the consumers of these illicit drugs and their sellers. They easily identify themselves and where to source the drugs even if one is new to such an environment (Agbedo, 2023) says both the consumers of hard drugs and sellers operate in the “markets, motor parks and relaxation spots smoking these substances openly without fear of arrest by law enforcement agents”. Agbedo further explains that the drug vendors freely move around with the drug in their pockets. According to him, they know their patrons so they don’t sell to every Dick and Harry.

The consumption of methamphetamine by Igbo youths of south East Nigeria begins to take its toll on not only the abusers but also on the entire society. Their new find love ‘mkpuru mmiri’ make them to constitute nuisance with its attendant effects of losing the regions workforce to this dangerous stimulant drug (Otuya, 2021) relates, “the drug is not only ruining the lives of Igbo youths, it is also causing a serious breakdown of family structure which affect the society in general”.

Giving further insight on the devastation level of the methamphetamine that permeates into the fabrics of the Igbo youths; (Otuya, 2021) says “most of the users are young people between the ages of 14-45”. (Njoku, 2023) laments “...the unfortunate rate at which Igbo girls were joining illicit consumption of the drugs especially in the communities”. The uproar and condemnation trails the youth indulge in methamphetamine mkpuru mmiri as its manifestation is demeaning to the ethos of the Igbo comes from different angles. (Ojiego, 2021) with his narration describes the scenario as an epidemic that hit Igbo land where no one is safe as gory tales like this one, a double tragedy litter the space, “On October 19, 2021, a boy allegedly killed his father in Adazi Ani Anambra State and took the fathers #50.000 just to buy mkpuru mmiri. He was apprehended by youths of the community beaten to stupor and burnt alive”.



Hardly any day passes without hearing fresh stories on the activities of youths that are taking mkpuru mmiri. The social media; Face book, Whatsapp, Instagram, X formerly called twitter on a daily basis inundate with pictures of melancholy males and females Igbo youths under the influence of methamphetamine. The newspapers are not left out as their headlines read as follows: Punch newspaper- What you should know about hard substance popular among south east youths, 247reports- Mkpuru mmiri: Season of madness in South, Daily post- As Igbo's others battle mkpurummiri, Tribune-Tackling Mkpuru mmiri menace in south East, PM News- NDLEA Urges S/E communities to report mkpuru mmiri labs, Vanguard- Many Igbo communities are currently facing dangerous effect of methamphetamine, Hallmark- Mkpuru mmiri: havoc in South East, New Telegraph- Menace of methamphetamine (mkpuru mmiri) on youths in Igbo land, The Street Journal- Mkpuru mmiri: the dangerous drug destroying Igbo youths etc.

The effect of consumption of methamphetamine goes beyond encouraging armed robbery (Njoku, 2021) paint a picture of a young man of 25 years, murmuring to himself, looking haggard with overgrown hair. His outlook and attitude are linked to mkpuru mmiri. According to (Njoku, 2021) taking mkpuru mmiri, "makes them to look down on anyone that comes their way" giving credence to this assertion, (Dumbili & Ebuenyi, 2021) say "it is believed to enhance heightened alertness, energy and concentration". (Ojiego, 2021) narrates a story of a boy that killed his father in Adazi Ani, only to gain access to his money to buy mkpuru mmiri. (Goodness, 2021) tells a story of a video that shows a young man who under the influence of nkpuru mmiri kill his mother and only sister. Mkpuru mmili is an ill wind that blows the entire Igbo community as in the lamentation of (Ezeaka, Nwamuo, Anunobi, pg.22);

Viral videos are circulated on daily basis from various communities in the south east, victims of mkpuru mmiri with their attendant abnormal behaviors, some then were reported to have killed their parents, siblings or burnt their houses under the influence of drug.

The deeds of mkpuru mmiri patrons are endless. They equally debase humanity by going stark naked, embarks on suicidal mission by hitting their heads on the wall, falling inside gutter and other unimaginable things due to (Dumbili & Ebuenyi, 2021) say "methamphetamine use can trigger the brain and central nervous system, increase heart rate and blood pressure". Quoting Abiri a Medical Director, (Njoku, 2021) explain that mkpuru mmiri could be consumed in different ways; smoking, ingesting it in form of pills or snoring through the nose or injecting it mixed with alcohol or water.

## IGBO COMMUNAL EFFORTS IN TACKLING MKPURU MMIRI CONSUMPTION

The alarming rate at which Igbo youths irrespective of gender embrace the methamphetamine mkpuru mmiri and its shocking dishonorable effect on its users unsettle the sensibility of right thinking Igbo both the endangered youths and the elders alike. The use of mkpuru mmiri by Igbo youths redefine the entire Igbo as people with little or no hope of producing responsible succession. Seeing the red flag, everybody under different umbrella both those in Diaspora, the clergy, including the youths themselves begin to express concern over the terrifying effect of mkpuru mmiri. This development re-awaken the Igbo communalism knowing that the mkpuru mmiri hurricane is an ill wind that knows no bounds (Chikwendu, 2021) relates the action as the identity of the Igbo of old: "The Igbo, in their uniqueness, are quick to call out and condemn their sin, no matter if it involves their family members. That is why you see so many Igbo involved in curbing the menace". The steps are also in the words of (Eluke & Mbazie, 2022, pg. 56):

The notoriety of the abuse of methamphetamine hydrochloride is such that it has attracted the attention of the Members of Imo State House of Assembly who discussed it on the floor of the house and suggested that the State Ministry of Health runs a rigorous media campaign against its intake.

In Anambra state, Umudioka town union in Dunukofia Local Government Area at the wake of the mkpuru mmili debacle according to (Marshal & Werb, 2010, pg 57) just like other communities, "proscribed the sale and consumption of all illicit drugs and substances in the community" The intervention is endless as (Goodness, 2021) reports the intervention of the South East Governors Forum by calling on traditional rulers and town unions to champion the fight against the sale and consumption of hard drugs including the collaboration of the Apex Igbo

Organisation, Ohaneze Ndigbo and Association of South East Town Unions in tackling the scourge. They embark on routine announcements using gong in their various markets condemning the consumption of mkpuru mmiri and its ban including prominent Igbo sons through publications add their voices.

With the support and endorsement of South East stakeholder's frontal attack against mkpuru mmiri with the principle of; "umunna bu ike" "Nwora" and "onye nna ya dunyereoshi na-eji ukwu agbawa uzo" every community in Igbo land rise to the occasion. (Goodness, 2021) says "...especially Anambra state, have taken the law into their own hands to tackle the challenge by adopting physical measures to curb the menace". This fight is made possible with the collective efforts of the entire communities also (Ujummadu, 2021) states that: "...some communities have started identifying those who sell the drug in their areas and are banishing them".

The fight against mkpuru mkpiri becomes a collective responsibility of every sane Igbo man and woman because of its destructive effect to not just to the males but females also which makes (Njoku, 2021) lament" the unfortunate rate at which Igbo girls were joining illicit consumption of the drugs". The Igbo introduce a method to reset the brain of the berserk mkpuru mmiri consumers. (Nwangwu, Samuel, Anya, Emeka, Clara, Ifeoma, Leonard & Uchenna, 2022) "report that public flogging is fast becoming popular and acceptable preventive mechanism to reduce substance abuse, particularly methamphetamine or mkpuru mmiri". This public flogging is organized by able bodied youths of the given community who ties on a stake the berserk mkpuru mmiri user who receives several strokes of cane. (Nwangwu, Samuel, Anya, Emeka, Clara, Ifeoma, Leonard & Uchenna, 2022) shed more light on this Igbo reformation action of:

Public flogging also known as cane deliverance among the locals is a situation whereby drug peddlers of mkpuru mmiri are tied to a tree, stake or a pole in a public place and flogged severally as means of deterrence from the drug

## FINDINGS

The mkpuru mmiri menace nearly rob the Igbo of its pride, rendering useless their would be successors. It reignites the communal spirit of the Igbo which is no longer in force due to modernization and the establishment of government. The introductions of "cane deliverance" as a reformation for mkpuru mmiri addicts which (Marshal & Werb, 2010) describe as "destroyer of youths" no doubt save the Igbo the agony of losing a whole generation. The Igbo with the principle of collectiveness "Ohazurume" and "Igwebuikwe" including the saying one person cannot subdue the community "otu onye siere oha, oha ga ericha mana oha siere otu onye o gaghị ericha" play out in this Igbo fight against mkpuru mmiri that is at the verge of consuming their youth, their heritage their pride and their tomorrow. The swell in number of youths that embrace mkpuru mmiri is a testament of increase in the number of idle Igbo youths and wants quick money thereby killing their entrepreneurial spirit as (Agbedo, 2023) points out:

were you have young adults that have no jobs or have nothing meaningful to do, or people that are facing socio-economic hardship of substances give them some momentary relief from pain, anguish, sorrow of the challenges, so, that temptation is there for them.

Although there are dissenting voices in the name of human rights against the use of public flogging and shaming as corrective means for mkpuru mmiri addicts. (Nwangwu, Samuel, Anya, Emeka, Clara, Ifeoma, Leonard & Uchenna, 2022) describe: "Public flogging of offenders as a clear violation of International Human Rights Law, equating it to cruelty, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment".

Another dissenting voice on the use of Igbo introduction of 'cane deliverance' (Chikwendu, 2021) says "flogging young people caught in the abuse of substance cannot achieve a lasting solution. They are the victims who need help not such". The solution to mkpuru mmiri addicts according to (Otuya, 2021) is "... to go through behavioral therapy and the sad reality of things is that such facilities are not readily available in Nigeria". With the absence of government workable solution to mkpuru mmiri addicts the Igbo employ self help because according to (Otuya, 2021) "the drug is not only ruining the lives of Igbo youths, it is also causing a serious breakdown of family structure which affects society in general" the Igbo wouldn't want to tell a story that touches the heart like 'there

was a race'. Igbo despise anything that will bring shame to their families including termination of lineage which is one of the missions of mkpuru mmiri.

## CONCLUSION

The effect of Igbo communal spirit in the fight against methamphetamine ( mkpuru mmiri) consumption by its youths is a testimony to the efficacy of organs of Igbo of old put in place to bring sanity in their various villages and communities. It shows the level of decadence in the Whiteman's system of government in maintenance of peace and order. The Igbo philosophy of communal raising of children to a greater extent check individual parents rearing a child that will turn out to be a monster not just to the immediate family but to the entire community. (Samphina, 2023, pg. 2) quite agrees that "... many of these Igbo cultures are far better than those of the foreigners" Igbo communalism being one of them. The so called modernity has to a large extent make Igbo to be progressively backward especially a situation they have human right in absence of considering human wrong. The Igbo with the concept of "anu gbaa ajo oso, a gbaa ya ajo egbe" timely intervention bring sanity to their once endangered youths. Most importantly the Igbo Ancestors (forebears) who are crying in the spirit world for the relegation of their ideals by the present generation will heave a sigh of relief by this singular act. The choice of the venue for the 'cane deliverance' according to (Ujummadu, 2021) "their youths who were known to be taking it are publicly punished by flogging them in the village squares" historically, brings to life the typical Igbo setting where the activities of the Igbo is centered 'the melting point of Ndigbo'. It also gives credence to Igbo wise saying that "nwa m akaria m bu aghugho" a child does not outgrow his parents and "okenye adi ano n'ulo ewu amuo n'ogbir". The result of resurrection of communal spirit of Ndigbo bring to its barest minimum, youth consumption of mkpuru mmiri to the various Igbo communities and at the same time give credence to the Igbo saying and belief that "it takes a community to train/raise a child".

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