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**Alternative to Dispute Resolution: Şàngó and Amadioha and the
Nigerian Criminal Justice System**

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Abstract

Sango and Amadioha, the Yoruba and Igbo god of thunder and lightning are the administrators of justice within their domiciled cultural spaces. Before the advent of colonialism which introduces the British common law, African values and custom checkmated corruption and other forms of lawlessness. The adoption of the British legal system as the Nigerian legal system jettisons the African traditional justice system which manages disputes and conflicts within the African socio-cultural space through deities like Sango and Amadioha. The jettison of the African methods of conflict resolutions leads to some of the ambiguities and inconsistencies in the adjudication and delivery of justice experience today in Nigeria. The paper interrogated the modern methods of adjudication which takes its cue from the British

common law in contradistinction with African traditional justice system governed by Sango and Amadioha through various texts and argues that the gods, Sango and Amadioha, are purveyors of justice and the standards of their adjudication are premised on the virtues of truth and impartiality; therefore should be adopted as an alternative to dispute resolution.

Key Words: African traditional justice, Amadioha, British common law, Sango

Introduction

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) involves other methods of conflict resolution that do not involve litigation via the courts of law. Scholars like Olakunle Orojo and Ayodele Ajomo, (1999, p. 4) argued that “ADR is generally used to describe the methods and procedures used to resolve disputes either as alternatives to the traditional disputes resolution mechanism of the court or in some cases as supplementary to such mechanism.” Orojo and Ajomo’s submission affirms that any other procedures and methods that are used in resolving conflict without the involvement the court of law or that that complements it can be categorised as ADR. Other scholars like Joseph Nwazi (2007, p. 27) in one hand, sees ADR as a “broad range of mechanisms and processes designed to supplement the traditional courts litigations by providing more effective and faster resolution process. It is a procedure for the settlement of disputes by means other than confrontational and relationship destroying litigation.” Nwazi’s observation indicates that ADR is “more effective and faster’ and less confrontational. ADR as he argued, does not destroy relationship because those involve are expected to accept the verdict with no grudges. On the other hand, Agbakoba (2008, p. 2) viewed Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) "as a range of procedures that serve as alternatives to litigation through the courts for the resolution of disputes, generally involving the intercession and assistance of a neutral and impartial third party." Agbokoba’s submission maintained that the intercession in ADR usually involves an assistance from “a neutral and impartial third party." This neutral and impartial third party is to create acceptability by parties involve in the conflict that is to be resolved.

Ezike (2012, p. 252) argued that ADR should have many options “so that people could have the freedom to make their choice from a wide range of available options.” This wide range of choice he argues is the reason why the advocacy “of arbitration and other forms of ADR in the management of various disputes which arise regularly on account of human interactions.” is aptly recommendable. Ezike (2017, pp. 246-247) also contended that it is only “conciliation” and “arbitration” that are backed statutorily at the federal level, other forms ADR as a means of resolving conflicts, he points out, are still evolving mostly at the state level. The reason for this gradual evolvment is because “the provisions of the Laws or Rules of courts on Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism is still nebulous and devoid of any meaningful contribution to the effective advancement of Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism.” Ezike’s assertion recognised other forms ADR which have not been sanctioned by “the provision of the Laws or Rules of courts” and moreover, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) Court Users Guide 2 recognises religious bodies and their leaders as one and also places where one can assess ADR in Nigeria. These religious leaders do not exempt African traditional religious leaders whose religions are governed by deities like Sango and Amadioha. Therefore, this paper seeks to explore Sango and Amadioha, the gods of thunder and lightning among the Yoruba and Igbo, as being purveyors of ADR in the traditional justice system.

Sango and Amadioha in Yoruba and Igbo Cosmos

Ẓàngó, one of the strongest deities in Yorùbá pantheon, is viewed from the mythic and historic perspectives. This plurality of faces and perception of Ẓàngó's mythology by his followers is a thing that is obtainable in any polytheistic religion, as there exists no regulatory body as available in Christianity and Islam, to regulate the scope of his (Ẓàngó) worship. For instance, Schiltz (1985) observes two different perceptions of Ẓàngó between the Sábẹ̀ẹ̀ and Kétu Yorùbá, and other parts of the former Ọ̀yọ̀ Empire where Ẓàngó is perceived as the wife of Àrà, another thunder deity. This arrangement Schiltz describes as a marriage of convenience between the two deities to guarantee peace where another god of thunder-Àrà- is well established before the popularity of Ẓàngó by Aláàfin through the Ọ̀yọ̀ Empire. Scholars like Bascom (1972), Noureini Tidjani-Serpos (1996) and Adejumo (2009) identified Jàkúta, one who fights (*ja*) with stone (*okuta*) as the mythical Ẓàngó before his (Ẓàngó) later association with Aláàfin Ẓàngó. Other scholars like Tishken et al (2009) argued that Ẓàngó, the mythical is worshipped at Ilé-Ifẹ̀ as Ọ̀ràmfẹ̀ before the founding of the Ọ̀yọ̀ Empire. Ẓàngó *Pípẹ̀* and *Odù Ifá* also inform that this mythical Ẓàngó like other Yorùbá deities – Odùduwà, Ọ̀gún, et cetera, – in the Yorùbá pantheon, descends primordially with thunder and lightning as its embodiment.

Duro-Ladipo and Kolawole (1997) averred that “the *sere* (an important Sango symbol) and *apo laba* (Sango's bag) are said to have been handed to him by *Orunmila* before the dispersal of the gods, according to *Okanran Meji*, in the *Ifa* corpus” (p.108).

The handling of these instruments by Ọ̀rúnmìlà suggests the primeval nature of Ẓàngó as Ẓàngó is being categorised with other primordial gods before their journey down to the earth.

However, there exists the historical Ẓàngó. Adejumo (2009) argued early missionaries like Samuel Johnson (1921), Herthesett (1941), Ogunbowale (1962), Ladipo (1966) et cetera spearheaded the idea. This historical Ẓàngó probably assumes the abilities of the primordial Ẓàngó so as to control the sovereignty of his vast kingdom through “the control over the Sango cult” (Schiltz 1985, p. 69). This association from Schiltz (1985, p. 69) perspectives, makes it imperative for the Aláàfin that assumes the qualities of Ẓàngó to stay in the convenience of his palace at Ọ̀yọ̀, through divine injunction and the “ever-present” cosmological danger from thunder and lightning, rules his vast empire through the assistance of local Ẓàngó devotees who would communicate his wrath to whoever violates his command thereby maintaining law and order in the vast Ọ̀yọ̀ empire. Akinyemi (2009b, p. 26) averred “The integration of the cult of Ẓàngó into the political system of Oyo probably dates back to the reign of the fourth ruler of old Oyo, Aláàfin Ìtíolú Olúfinràn also known as Aláàfin Ẓàngó.” This integration may have come because of the fearsome reverence for Ẓàngó by his devotees and the recognition of the prevalence of thunder and lightning in Yorubaland as Ojo (1966, p.171) would have us believe. Therefore, “a royal cult associated with the terrifying natural force” would guarantee peace and stability in the administration of such an (Ọ̀yọ̀) empire. This association makes it imperative for the Aláàfin that assumes the qualities of Ẓàngó to stay in the convenience of his palace at Ọ̀yọ̀, through divine injunction and the “ever-present” cosmological danger from thunder and lightning, rules his vast empire through the assistance of local Ẓàngó devotees who would communicate his wrath to whoever violates his command thereby maintaining law and order in the vast Ọ̀yọ̀ empire. Andrew Apter (1987) also supported Schiltz's observation that through the worship of Ẓàngó the Aláàfin controls the entire Kingdom of Ọ̀yọ̀.

John Pemberton (1977) and Soyinka (1976) Soyinka's asserted also that there exists a historical Ẓàngó, and an Aláàfin that ruled the Old Ọ̀yọ̀ Empire who probably was transmogrified into a

deity or assumed the qualities of one. The father of the historical Sàngó is Oranyan, “a son or grandson of Odùduwà and Yemoja, a Nupe princess and daughter of Elenpe, a powerful chieftain north of the Niger River bend” (Badejo 2009, p.116). This identification of the earthly parents of Sàngó confirms the historicity of an Alààfin that appropriates and probably integrates himself with the primordial Sàngó (Jàkúta) to govern his vast empire. Idowu (1962) also agrees with the historical nature of Sàngó and informs that he grew up in Nupe before coming down to Òyó, his fatherland.

While Sàngó is conceived in the mythical and historical perspectives, Amadioha is only mythical in the Igbo cosmology. Amadioha, the Igbo god of thunder, lightning and justice has been an entity in Igbo cosmogony from time immemorial. His impact is felt in Igbo world-view as he retributively metes out justice to anyone that violates communal ethics or subverts the freewill of the people. Consequently, Amadioha is seen as the guardian of the peoples’ collective will. Diala (2005) identified Amadioha’s fundamental nature and asserts its known characteristics as the god of thunder, lightning, and justice. Arinze (1970 p. 16) substantiated the characteristic of Amadioha as a god who dispenses justice, which is not accidental but a conscious retribution on its victims for their evil deeds. It justifies as well the societal reaction to the corpses of its victims, which are not accorded normal burial rites because such deaths are viewed as accursed, a vindictive vengeance from the god for their (the victims of Amadioha) transgressions. Iwe (1989, p.14) made an observation that validates Arinze’s perception that victims of Amadioha are perceived as ill-fated as Amadioha is perceived as “a divinity of vengeance against the wicked and evildoers.” The victims of Amadioha, he further argues, are not given proper burial as their movable properties are also forfeited. A death that results from Amadioha is seen as an aberration and must have a negative cosmological consequence, for no one would like to associate with the victims of Amadioha’s wrath, or with their properties, for the gods have singled out such persons for divine punishment. That is why Amadioha is regarded as “God’s minister of Justice.”

The widespread influence of Amadioha, as Arinze noted, is viewed from the “supremeness” point of view by Ibe Chukwukere (1983) who identified Amadioha as the “‘supreme deity’ of negative sanctions for a class of heinous offence” (p. 527). This observation indicates the “supremeness” of each god in Igbo cosmology. Amadioha is viewed as a supreme god when it comes to the manifestation of thunder and lightning especially in using thunder which Diala (1993) identified as “Amadioha’s mortal voice” (p. 56) and lightning as tool to sanction, and of social justice. Nzeata (2016) also described Amadioha as a benevolent god that does not kill indiscriminately. Even when one swears falsely in an oath, Amadioha would rather send his emissaries which include: giant millipede also known as *Esu Oka Amadioha* (Amadioha giant/long millipede), black snake (*Osukpo*) and beehives (*Ibi anu*) to the house of his victim. If the person fails to understand or decode these signs and quickly appease Amadioha, such a person will then be killed. But if the person accepts culpability and quickly appeases Amadioha, Amadioha will forgive the person. Nzeata (2016) argued that Ala, the Earth Goddess, is more malevolent and ferocious than Amadioha. Also, he notes that *Ndi ndu muo* (Amadioha’s acolytes) can as well preside over sacrifices and do the duty of the chief priest when the chief priest is not around. He further maintains that the presence of Amadioha makes the people to be calm, patient, just and truthful in the traditional society. However, he laments that the absence of Amadioha increases the level of anti-social crimes in the society.

Amadioha visits his wrath on people who swear falsely by the god or seek his intervention out of malice. Nyamndi (2006) identified Amadioha as “Ruler over the skies and purveyor of rain

and sunshine... the most feared and the most venerated of all the gods” and informs that invocation of Amadioha is fraught with danger as Amadioha is “a deity whose name no man can invoke when guilty” (p.193); this points out the incorruptibility and impartiality of the deity, Amadioha. This idea of chastity and purity, and the guiltlessness of petitioners to Amadioha is also observed by Norbert Eze (2000) who argued in his exegesis of Nwokedi that “Nwokedi father, Nwokedi Senior, compels his political supporters to swear to Amadioha, the god of thunder, lightning and rain that they had no hand in his failure at a just concluded election” (p. 28).

This swearing comes because Nwokedi Senior wants to be sure that his “supporters” are absolutely loyal to him. However, this compulsion boomerangs for his son who is possessed by Amadioha kills him with a “machete” (Amadioha’s weapon). Nwokedi Senior’s death in this fashion indicates that Amadioha finds him guilty, despite being the one that invokes him (Amadioha) to be his arbitrator.

Oparaocha (2004) also underscored the dreaded nature of Amadioha and informs that it is because of it that people build *Mbari* (a museum for gods to make them creative rather than destructive) to placate Amadioha. He wrote:

...they feel secure when they have made *Mbari*. For example, they fear less about thunder when they feel they have satisfied the thunder god. Whoever is killed by thunder would not be regarded as a victim of an angry god: people regard such a person as unjust person, believing that he has done some evil which angered the god who has taken his life in consequence. The person who has died is not given proper burial (p.10).

This security (that the community feels when an *Mbari* is built) is essential in Igbo cosmos for it identifies and differentiates death that emanates when Amadioha is angry and that of an “unjust person” who has committed some evil and so is struck down by Amadioha.

Diala (2005, p.102) in his critical exegesis of Irobi’s *The Other Side of the Mask* argues that Amadioha is a god of justice; he upholds the integrity of all and sundry and sanctions only those who violate the laws of the land. In upholding the laws of the land, Maduka (1988) maintained that Amadioha does the work of “a military officer... [and] upholds the sanctions as approved by the spirits” (p. 245). This recognition of Amadioha as a male deity is what informs his characteristics as “a military officer” as “Amadioha was often dressed in military derived fashion, initially representing the power of the colonial order, but later that of the new Nigerian police officers and soldiers.” (Ogbechie 2005, p. 66). This depiction of Amadioha by *Mbari* sculptors and stage designers in military fashion indicates the identified strength of Amadioha in the Igbo cosmos, which the *Mbari* builders first attributed to the white imperialist, but after the Nigerian independence, the sculptors changed him with the Nigerian police and army to assert his (Amadioha’s) characteristics as the law enforcer in Igbo cosmos.

Icheoku, an NTA (Nigeria Television Authority) drama series as Diri Teilanyo (2011) noted recognises the military capability of Amadioha, especially when the CC (Court Clerk) does not understand what the DC (District Commissioner) says. In such instances, the Court Clerk invokes his favourite deity, Amadioha (in Igbo) as translated by Teilanyo (2011) thus, “May Amadioha strike your big nose. You want to imprison me in my father’s land, God punish you” (p.151). This confirmed that Amadioha is an enormous force to reckon with in Igbo cosmos. Amadioha as the defender of the defenceless defends the CC who cannot fight the authority of

the DC physically or politically. Therefore, he, the CC, engages a god that he believes will fight his cause as a means of retaliation.

Zeus, the Greek god of thunder as Redmond (2009) points out in the writings of the Greek poet Homer, is represented as the god of justice and mercy, the protector of the weak, and the punisher of the wicked. These two very different ways of viewing Zeus is synonymous with other thunder gods like Amadioha or *Sàngó* as they are also viewed as the protector and defender of the defenceless as well as the punisher of the wicked. Joseph Awolalu (1976) extended these identified characteristics of *Sàngó* and Amadioha to “other African thunder gods like ‘Sokogba among Nupe, Xeviosa among the Dahomeans’ as ‘anti-wickedness divinities ... who detest stealing, witchcraft, sorcery and other vicious crimes. When men incur the displeasure of such divinities they are singled out for punishment” (286).

Awolalu’s assertion denotes that thunder gods, despite being protector gods, do not kill for the sake of killing or for asserting their positions as gods to be feared or revered. Rather, they single out and punish their victims to serve as deterrent to others who may want to indulge in any of the wicked acts that may jeopardize the communal and peaceful co-existence of the people. Therefore, the presence of these gods in Africa or the world, guarantees peace and harmony as the society believes in the existence of a god that protects from the evil machination of the wicked.

***Sàngó* and Amadioha and the Nigerian Criminal Justice System**

The Nigerian legal system, according to Salihu Onimajesin, is traceable to the British legal system which originated from the British common law. The common law itself, according to him, originated from the rule and norms that judges peculiarly apply to each community whenever they are settling disputes. These laws gradually develop to be known as the common law. These judges made laws, which are also known as the common laws. These laws are divided into civil and criminal laws. Civil law regulates conduct which is not necessarily punished by the state. Criminal justice, on the other hand, has to do with perceived wrong(s) against the society, which the society punishes. Omobamidele Olufemi and Adekunbi Imoseni (2013, p. 64) view the criminal justice system as “a set of laws, agencies, entities, and individuals that work together to ensure that order in the country is maintained through law enforcement and the deterrent and prevention of crime.” The administration of justice by *Sàngó* and Amadioha fits perfectly in the criminal justice system than that of civil laws. *Sàngó*, as an embodiment of the institution of state religion in the old *Òyó* Empire, possesses the power to adjudicate criminal cases through the help of the *Mòngbà* in the entire *Òyó* Empire. Amadioha, too, fits in the criminal justice system as he is known as the Minister of Justice among the Igbo.

Leonard Opara (2014) submitted:

The Criminal Justice System in Nigeria commences with the commission of a crime and continues with subsequent interventions by the law enforcement agencies of the system that has the power to arrest, arraignment, trial, sentencing and punishment of the offender (p. 886).

The submission of Opara (2014) validated that it is the state that institutes most criminal cases, though it is individuals in the state that commit the crime that the state punishes. However, it is solely the state through the law enforcement agencies that apprehends the culprit and charge him or her to court for “trial, sentencing and punishment.” Osasona (2015, p.1) viewed the

Nigerian criminal justice system as being “fundamentally flawed”. He goes further to argue that:

the problem is represented and manifested at every processing point on the entire criminal justice system line - from the failure of governance institutions to design a suitable criminal justice policy that serves the current need of the country, to the inability of the legislature to appropriately transform policies into laws, from an oddly designed judicial system plagued by massive corruption, incompetence and crippling bureaucratic bottlenecks to an outdated and counterproductive style of policing and a correctional services that inhumanely warehouses those considered “innocent” by the very law of the society (p. 1).

Osasona’s observations confirmed and identified the endemic breakdown of the Nigerian criminal justice system. Every aspect of the justice system from his point of view needs a reform to meet up with the current realities on the ground. Nlerum Okogbule as well stresses that there are a lot of impediments in the Nigerian criminal justice system starting from the pre-trial process which consists of: complaint about commission of offence, arraignment before court of law, obtaining advice from the director of public prosecutions to the trial process down to sentencing and post-conviction. He argues that the causes of these impediments are due to what he identifies as the “Nigerian Factor.” By Nigerian Factor, he means:

... a peculiar characteristic identifiable as Nigerian, which strives to ensure that things and issues are handled the negative way. The concept covers such unhealthy and unsavoury conducts [sic] as corruption, dishonesty, fraud, favouritism, ethnicity, tribalism and even villagism (p. 2).

This negative way of doing things has crippled the Nigerian Justice System to the extent that Amnesty International (AI) refers to it in 2008 as the “conveyor belt of injustice, from beginning to end” (par.2). Okogbule further argued:

the Nigerian factor is seen as a weapon through which justice can be manipulated to suit the personal interests of the high and mighty. The maxim “equality before the law” appears to be honoured more in breach than in its observance (p. 3)

Closely related to the insidious “Nigerian Factor” that pervades the entire gamut of Nigeria’s existence as a nation is the shyness and timidity of its legal system in tackling high-profile crimes. The strength of a nation is measured in terms of its legal system to punish offence, irrespective of the status of the offender. When a nation’s legal system, however, looks away from crimes perpetrated by the bourgeoisie to punish misdemeanours of its downtrodden proletariat, it confirms the presence of a serious systemic problem – that of injustice, partiality and lop-sidedness. The gods studied in this paper are purveyors of justice and the standards of their adjudication are premised on the virtues of truth and impartiality.

The Nigerian factor, which negates the principle of equality before the law, is non-existent in the presence of *Şàngó* and *Amadioha*. Nobody, no matter how highly placed he or she is, can manipulate or influence the justice of *Şàngó* and *Amadioha*. *Şàngó* imprisons his friend, *Qbàtálá*, (*The Imprisonment of Qbàtálá*) without fear or favour. *Şàngó* is not oblivious of the person and the status of the person he imprisons before his internment. Professor Njemanze, in *The Other Side of the Mask*, despite his position as the chairman of the panel of judges, still fears the power of *Amadioha* to the extent of kneeling down to *Jamike* to beg for forgiveness. Even when humans attempt to manipulate the justice of *Şàngó* and *Amadioha*; they, *Amadioha*

and Ẓàngó, will sanction the one that tries to do that. The death of Jamike in *The Other Side of the Mask*, Amadioha's priest, in the hands of Amadioha shows that the gods do not condone evil or manipulations even when it is done in the interest of their priests. In the presence of Ẓàngó and Amadioha, there is nothing like being "connected with the Judge or Magistrate" (Okogbule: 7) so as "to obtain favourable judgment in any particular case." Ẓàngó and Amadioha know no connection of that sort as they adjudicate justice without fear or favour.

Mahmud Mohammed, the former Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), identified "The issue of delays in criminal justice delivery in our courts" as a factor in the Nigerian justice system. He went further to argue that "It is simply inexcusable for us to allow criminal cases to continue at the very slow pace that has since become endemic" (2015, p. 7). Despite this observation of the former CJN, Okogbule noted that in Nigeria, it is not surprising for a simple case of assault to last for over five (5) years. Instances where cases have lasted between ten to fifteen years are legion (p.7). Adelowo Asonibare and Halimat Akaje (2015) identified some of the constraints that lead to slow justice delivery as difficulty of filing court processes, inadequate working tools, inadequate manpower, insecurity of court documents and lack of transparency. These factors delay the Nigerian justice delivery system. They, however, argue that the adoption of the e-delivery system may ameliorate these identified factors. However, the e-delivery system, according to them, is also laden with other factors such as lack of constant power supply; lack of IT-trained personnel, network dysfunction, hackers and virus threat to documents, inadequate relevant legal and regulatory framework and lack of funding. With these observed constraints, it means that it will be difficult to have justice as and when due in Nigeria, because of these identified threats to it, whereas the common parlance in justice administration still holds "Justice delayed is justice denied". However, in the African traditional justice system, where deities like Ẓàngó and Amadioha are paramount, the identified factors by Asonibare and Akaje (2015) are non-existent. This is because Ẓàngó and Amadioha are avowed for their instant judgment and justice in the African socio-cultural space. Ẓàngó and Amadioha are known for their instantaneous judgment of anyone who goes against the customs and norms of the traditional society.

Despite this affirmed strength of the native and indigenous justice system, Okafor (2007, p. 6) underscored that African elites still promote the European justice system over the native justice system. Notwithstanding this promotion, the indigenous justice system still persists in Africa. Some of the reasons why the populace still patronises indigenous system over the modern system that is rooted in the English common law, according to him are, desire for quick, inexpensive justice and the relevancy of the cultural justice order. Another reason for patronage of the indigenous system against the modern system is just because the traditional judicial system is governed by the deities.

These reasons supposedly are the motives why the African elites do not promote the indigenous judicial system. They know that deities' judgement is instant, quick and impartial; therefore, they prefer a slow and less efficacious judicial system. The elites today will take an oath either with the Bible or the Qur'an and do otherwise. Such was not obtainable in the trado-cultural matrix of Africa as failure "to comply with god's injunction brings about instantaneous negative repercussion" David Alao (2015, p. 64). Because of the fear and reverence given to African gods, the African traditional societies were much more law-abiding and no one dares to lie because such a person will not live to tell the story. For instance, when Nneoma in *The Pyre* questions the lore of the land and kisses the corpse of her husband which the culture forbids, she never lives to tell the story albeit her action causes unnecessary and avoidable catastrophe

in the land. Because of the absence of fear, Alao (2015, p. 65) noted that members in conflict resolutions may deny being culpable for a crime committed because such a case cannot be proved in the law court. Senator Arikpo in *Nwokedi* dares Nwokedi to prove that he is responsible for the deaths of his wife and three children. The only fact that Nwokedi has is the difference between the ash of a human and that of furniture. Beyond these exhibits, which may not be admissible in a law court, Nwokedi is powerless. But the justice of Amadioha prevails though Arikpo confesses to Mrs Nwokedi that he kills her daughter and three grandchildren. Nwokedi is oblivious of that confession before he severs his head when he is possessed by the spirit of the mask where he acts in the place of Amadioha, the god of justice. Senators Arikpo and Nwokedi Senior (*Nwokedi*), Dr. Animalu and Jamike in *The Other Side of the Mask*) and Agbo (*Otaelo*) do not live to tell the story of their manipulations because the deities are involved in their verdicts.

However, Alao (2015, p. 68) contended that the gradual erosion of African culture and values constitutes a serious challenge to the effectiveness of deities in resolving conflicts in Africa. On the erosion of African cultural values, Okolo and Akpogighe (2014, p. 7) argued that the missionaries were the first to debunk our indigenous cultural values before the colonialists forcefully discredited them. The forceful and inhuman way the colonialists coarsely subvert the African traditional value system is one of the reasons responsible for the pervasive lawlessness that abounds today in most Africa countries. The arrival of Christianity and Islamic religions together with colonialism contributed much to the erosion of African cultural values. The resultant effect of this erosion is a situation whereby Africans neither believe in the indigenous cultural system nor the imported ones. Hence, lawlessness abounds.

Conclusion

Despite the recognition of the roles of African cultural values in justice delivery system, the societal value which is supposed to be the most important affirmation of the justice system is not reinforced. The value chain that deities play is jettisoned in favour of the colonial system which is rooted in the Western cultural ethos and norms. The modern justice system which is patterned after colonial ideals has made it inevitable for African deities like *Ẓàngó* and Amadioha who administer justice in the Yorùbá and Igbo traditional societies to play their identified roles within their domiciled cultural spaces. Before the advent of colonialism, African values and custom checkmated corruption and other forms of lawlessness, but the advent of colonialism introduces some of the anti-social behaviours being witnessed today in most African countries. One of the main causes of this is the erosion of African value system and the enthronement of western ideal.

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