

**A REVIEW OF IGWEBUIKE  
AS THE CONSUMMATE FOUNDATION OF AFRICAN BIOETHICAL  
PRINCIPLES**

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Prof. Kanu published this paper in 2016. It remains a work of great breakthrough in African Bioethics at the moment when western civilization seems to have coloured all we may think of with regard to bioethical engagements. In this masterpiece, some concepts are very prominent especially *Bioethics*. Bioethics is a compound word with *Bios* meaning life and *ethics* which is the philosophical study of morality and or value. Ethics, along with Logic, Metaphysics and Epistemology, is one of the main branches of Philosophy. Further division of Ethics has it as Meta-ethics, Applied Ethics, Moral Psychology and Bioethics. Bioethics, therefore, is the philosophical appreciation of morality and its application on life. Hence, it is the ethics of medical and biological research. It is the morality governing the practice of medical enquiry and biological investigations. Our consideration in this review in accordance with the paper at hand is African Bioethics in contraposition with Western Bioethics.

Prof. Kanu was very conscious of the long Western Bioethical imperialism. This made him to be very vehement in discussing African Bioethics from African perspective. A discussion of such delicate and fragile nature on moral issues ought to be done with proper reference to African cultural practices, traditional values and traditional beliefs. Far be it from moral relativism, many African moral values are *naturally* deep rooted in African culture and traditions thereby providing alternative and unconventional framework for ethical decision-making and implementations. Most of these naturally African Bioethical principles are already *coded* in the popular African sayings, *Ifo, Illu*, Songs, Myths, Proverbs, Folktales, Maxims *et cetera*.

Kanu made us to know that the thrust of this paper is African Bioethical principles with Igwebuiké as the underlying philosophy and religion. Igwebuiké

according to him remains the study of the modality of being for the realization of the *Being*. As an ideology, Igwebuiké philosophy like the unifying modality for African philosophical experiences affirms communal togetherness in unquestionable solidarity and categorical complementarity. Igwebuiké is all about human beings in their number. It is about the relationship of these human beings for the needed activity. It has to do with certain imaginary boundaries within and between persons. It is about sharing. Igwebuiké, therefore, posits that *to be* is to live in communion of solidarity and complementarity otherwise one lives in isolation, or right put, in the words of Kanu, one suffers alienation. The relational interaction among such people is defined by some principles with regard to moral issues. Kanu diagrammatically showed these African Bioethical principles thus: *Principles of Solidarity, Respect for Others, Beneficence and Non-Maleficence*. These principles are not only African based but are deeply rooted in Igwebuiké as the complete foundation of African Bioethical principles.

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