

**A REVIEW OF KANU'S "IGWEBUIKE AS AN IGBO-AFRICAN  
PHILOSOPHY OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP"**

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The primary contention of Kanu's disquisition, as the title suggests, is the urgency to provide a framework for inclusive leadership. This is coming from the backlog of the inefficient and nearly counterproductive leadership ideologies that has rocked Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. The onus is therefore to employ an indigenous framework to ratify the seeming gap initiated by poor leadership through an Igbo-African perspective. In this guise, he proposes 'Igwebuike' as a viable basis for inclusive leadership.

For Kanu (2017: 171) 'Igwebuike' is an Igbo word that is characterized by three simple words. On his terms, the three words involved: *Igwe* is a noun which means number or population, usually a huge number or population. *Bu* is a verb, which means *is*. *Ike* is another verb, which means *strength* or *power*. Thus, put together, it means 'number is strength' or 'number is power', that is, when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force (Kanu, 2017: 171).

Kanu (2017) seems certain the present spate of leadership failures in not unconnected to the replete questions and challenges facing Nigeria, for instance. The tussles for resource control, neglect of some regions for the sake of the other and the grievances that has derived as a result. He explains that these issues have been rocking Nigeria for a long while but are tied to the leadership problem which has yet to be properly addressed. Hence, 'Igwebuike' steps into the gap to inform the grooming of a leader that will explore the principles of solidarity and complementarity within the whole. He forays into the traditional Igbo society to disclose how this can be revived in contemporary times for unity and development in Africa. He explains social formation in traditional Igbo society from the nuclear family to the whole community as an instance of solidarity and complementarity wherein effective lessons for leadership and followership may be inferred for contemporary use.

In spite Kanu's brilliant and worthwhile analysis, one finds that he, like any other philosopher is concerned with the urgency to solving some of the challenges that are faced by his country. Similarly, the clamour for the return to indigenous ideas as more befitting for Africa's condition vis-à-vis Western political frameworks seems to have also been validated by Kanu (2017). It is in this sense that Kanu's ideas may be said to have come at the right time. In spite of these strength and interesting side to Kanu's works, the essay has some technical fall outs and assumptions that are beyond corroboration from reality.

One of the technical fall outs of the paper is that it is replete with auto-plagiarism. There are several claims in the essay that should derive from independent research aside Kanu's but one finds Kanu quoting himself to justify the assertion, as though none else has given a thought to return to Igbo notion of leadership and ontological wholeness. Consider the pages (167-8) where discoursing the scramble for Africa in his essay but Kanu was quoting his earlier works (Kanu, 2010; 2012). Obviusuly, Kanu is a philosopher not a historian. One would have expected him to employ the ideas of some historians to make his case stronger. Clearly, this is *argumentum ad verecundiam*.

Secondly, Kanu's essay is short of instances and proper justification why 'Igwebuiké' is desirable and should be embraced. The picture he has provided concerning the Igbo social formation is true for nearly all of traditional Africa, so one wonders what is so unique about his proposal. In addition, what kinds of achievements did the concept of 'Igwebuiké' nurture and attain in traditional times? What monumental achievements by the Igbo may be pointed as a consequent of the use of the leadership ideals embedded in 'Igwebuiké'? Did the traditional Igbo use this term to affirm the essence of their inclusive leadership or is the term nothing but Kanu's neologism?

Aside the foregoing thought provoking posers, the qualities of inclusive leadership provided by Kanu are not new to the ears (see page 172-3. Nearly all existing leadership ideals emphasise this reality. One would have expected Kanu to juxtapose his 'Igwebuiké' with the Yoruba notion of 'Omoluwabi' for instance to draw parallels or departures rather than recommending this for Nigeria and Africa without taking cognizance of the indigenous leadership ideas that 'Igwebuiké' is likely to confront.

The fourth problem with Kanu (2017) is found closely knitted with his analysis of the 'dimensions of the human brain' (Kanu, 2017: 174-5). Throughout the section

(The Anthropological Foundation Inclusive Leadership) that discourses this, Kanu did not make mention of any neurologist, psychologist, psychiatrist whose research conforms to Kanu's (2017) analysis. How did Kanu (2017) arrive at this analysis? This is pertinent once we recall again that Kanu is a philosopher but seems to engage in affairs that are closely related to fields beyond philosophy. Has Kanu dissected any human brain to affirm his analysis? Did he conduct any field research to deduce how the brain operates? Kanu (2017) is silent over the method that he uses to garner his discourse on the human brain but this is the greatest pitfall of his essay.

Despite the shortcomings pointed above, the intellectual prowess of Kanu deserves an accolade in the Igwebuike as an Igbo-African philosophy provides a socio-political platform for leadership of inclusivity as against nepotism. Thus, the *kpim* Igwebuike as an inclusive form of leadership as the political system in Africa; particularly in Nigeria will restore genuine Nigeria Socio-political life.

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