

## INTRODUCTION

According to Asadu L. (2016) " Frontline Politician and industrialist" from Nsukka, Nsukka is a town and Local Government Area in southeast Nigeria in Enugu State. Towns that share a common border with Nsukka, are Eha alumona, Edem, Alor-uno, Opi (archaeological site), Orba and Ede-Oballa, Obukpa, Obimo. Other nearby towns include Enugu Ezike, Obollo-Afor (formerly centre of the palm oil trade), Nimbo, Adani, Uzo Uwani and Mkpologwu, now also lay claim to the name Nsukka. This is because they all collectively fall into the political zoning system in Nigeria known as Senatorial Zone. As of 2006 Nsukka had a population of 309,633 Nsukka Town is known as the site of the University of Nigeria, the first indigenous Nigerian university, founded by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, first President of Nigeria. Currently the town has a number of Federal Parastatals in the university such as NABDA, CBSS, and the Energy Research Centre. Nsukka LGA has an area of 1,810 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 309,633 at the 2006 census. The Local Government Headquarters is located in the hilly and green sites which Nsukka is known for close to colonial quarters of the pre-Independence years. The present Chairman of the Local Government Area council caretaker committee is Prof Roseline Onah who assumed leadership in early 2016. The postal code of the area is 410001 and 410002 respectively referring to University of Nigeria Campus, and Nsukka Urban.

As widely argued before colonialism, the African societies had a rich tradition of political, economic and social institutions that dealt with the allocation of resources, law-making and social control. Traditional

institutions, which are still in operation in rural Africa are complex and vary from place to place. Therefore, before the advent of colonialism some parts of Africa had developed centralized systems of governance with chiefs and kings often times the power of these rulers were restricted by various arrangements, including the institution of councils. In other cases, the rulers enjoyed more absolute power. In most of Africa, however, political tasks such as social control were not carried out solely by the state. Some of them were assigned to other organisations, based on other organizational principles, particularly to families, village communities, age sets and religious congregations. One of the characteristic that is commonly found among many of the decentralized African traditional institutions of governance is the consensual nature of decision making in the areas of resource allocation and law-making. The Nsukka's however operated a decentralized political system. Many institutions were put in place and political authority was shared among them. For example, the Ofo title holders [council of elders], Ozo title holders, age grades, Ozioko, Onyisi etc were all involved in the power –sharing exercises. No wonder the ‘acephalous ‘ was ascribed to the political organization of the Igbo political system {Dibie 1999}. Therefore, using the Nsukka traditional system we clearly see the inter-play of politics and law, the structure of the Nsukka socio political system.

## **SOCIO- POLITICAL SYSTEM AND COLONIALISM**

**Socio-political system** refers to systems composed of both social elements and political elements and the interaction between them.<sup>1</sup> In asking the question where does governance come from or on what do we base governance on? The answer is sociocultural institutions. Political systems sit

on top of and are dependent upon their underlying social system – in that political institutions emerge from and are determinant of the actions and relations between agents.<sup>2</sup> The idea of sociopolitical systems is explicitly designed to focus one's attention on the interaction between the social system and political system and processes that involve elements of both. <sup>3</sup> Sociopolitical analysis helps us to identify and trace processes that span both the social system and the political system. Such processes can not be fully interpreted by simply focusing on their manifestation within the political realm, in that they have their origins within more fundamental social processes – from which they can not be fully separated. In such cases, it is of value to look at the whole of the social and the political realm as a single organization so as to identify and trace these interactions and processes. One such example would be political movements. These processes of change often originate in informal social groups that over time galvanize into political movements. In understanding such issues as racism, inequality or populism it is required to look not just at the political system itself, but also at cultural factors and social factors within the broader community. Sufficed to say, studying politics and power as closed systems yields only limited results, to understand more fundamental and complex phenomena it is important to recognize political systems as open systems embedded within a broader social system.

**Colonialism** is the policy of a nation seeking to extend or retain its authority over other people or territories. Colonialism involves unequal relationships between the colonial power and the colony and often between the colonists and the indigenous peoples. The European colonial period was the era from the 16th century to the mid-20th century when several

European powers established colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. At first the countries followed a policy of mercantilism, designed to strengthen the home economy at the expense of rivals, so the colonies were usually allowed to trade only with the mother country. By the mid-19th century, however, the powerful British Empire gave up mercantilism and trade restrictions and introduced the principle of free trade, with few restrictions or tariffs.

### **HISTORY OF NSUKKA AND ITS SOCIO POLITICAL SYSTEM**

Nsukka is home to members of the Igbo ethnic group. Little is known about the history of Nsukka town except that the Kingdom of Nri had contact with Nsukka in earlier periods. However, in the book 'Igbo/Igala Borderland' the ancient American writer traced the origin of Nsukka town to the earlier traders from Arochuku in the present Abia State, who initially rested and later settled down there. In July 1967, Nsukka was one of the first Biafran towns to be captured by the Nigerian forces during their so-called 'police action' at the outset of the Nigerian-Biafran War. This action, during which Nsukka's university was burned down, created many refugees and contributed to the chaos and suffering inherent in this bloody conflict. Prof Roseline Onah is the new chairman of Nsukka local government, who assumed leadership in early January 2016.

According to Ezema, B.C (2017)"Community leader of ihe/owerre Nsukka", (now called Ezemmah) Nsukka is a town that is made up of three prominent communities, namely the Nkpunanor community, the Ihe n'Owerre community and the Nru Nsukka community. Each of these communities are made of villages headed by an Onyishi (village heads are

known as Onyishi) and other title holders. Oral history has it that Nsukka has very close ties with three other neighbouring towns: Obukpa, Okpuje and Eha, which are said to have common ancestral origins. Nsukka, Obukpa, and Okpuje are siblings of Asadu Ideke Arumona; while the last – Eha is a patrilineal brother of the other three relations. The town is therefore called Eha-Alumona. Nsukka town has very ancient culture and traditions that are almost lost in antiquity due to the late awakening of the indigenes to the relevance and necessity of the pursuit of intellectual erudition and research. Each community is composed of many other smaller villages and clans. A number of festivals are celebrated by the people of Nsukka, including the Omabe Masquerade Festival; the Onwa Eto, or Onwa Ito (the 3rd moon) Festival, which is characterised by the slaughtering of several fowls in each household for each child in the household and in memory of deceased family members; the Onwa Ise (the 5th moon Festival – which is also known as the moon that marks the beginning of the harvesting of yams (some people call it the New Yam Festival in English Language); Onwa Esa'a (the 7th moon Festival); the Onunu Festival which is a sort of carnival characterised by the going to the 'Nkwo' market Arena (where the 'Oromme' Dance, traditional wrestling, etc., was performed); The Onwa Esa'a (the 7th Moon Festival) is noted as the period for the commencement of the eating of cocoyam. Of the numerous festivals by which Nsukka was known, only the Omabe festival is still being widely celebrated in the town.

### **Performance Of Governmental Functions Of Nsukka People:**

According to Agbo G.C (2017) "A politician and Legal practitioner of Nsukka", The law of the land in Nsukka socio political system was as important as fuel to a vehicle, because in Nsukka political system they have

no central government, but still yet the system was still been manage this was because the Nsukka people strongly believes in the law of the law and abode by it. The Nsukka's are a segmentary and fragmentary people, because unlike other ethnic groups in Nigeria, they did not build any strong centralized community. They were simply regarded as a Chief less people. The law made it in such a way that the village was the centre of government were final decisions were taken by Elders from every family in a form of Gerontocracy. All lineage including Males and Females adults in the village also participated in its political process. The age grade and titled societies where the major instrument of government.

**Legislative Function:** there was no legislature as such, but laws were made all the same. The following institutions took part in the law making process directly or indirectly, they include; the council of elders, ozos, oziokos the Village Assembly (it made laws especially during the second burial ceremonies), the Diviner (he handed down supernatural laws).

**Executive Function:** the principle instrument for village administration was the Council of Elders. Other institutions which assisted in managing the affairs of the village include the following; Family Heads, Age Groups, Ozos, Ozioko

**Judicial Function:** The judicial system of handling cases in Nsukka land was informal. The “court of original jurisdiction” was the “court of the father (husband) of a household”. Justice was primarily a family affair. The deviant acts of his wife or wives and children were dealt with exclusively by him. If the rule violation was a victimization of any member of his family, he would convene a “court” hearing composed of his wives, older sons and

daughters who would be there only to listen and witness his judgment aimed at specific and general deterrence. The facts of the matter would be laid down. The accused may call a witness or witnesses from within or outside the immediate family. If he was found guilty of the offense, he was punished, most of the time, by corporal punishment or denial of a meal, a knock on the head or a slap on one cheek, depending on seriousness of the offense. In cases of repeat persistence in serious offending, an overbearing father may rub some hot pepper by the eyes of the offender. The authority of the father was not questioned by anybody in his family, as patriarchy and patrilineal formed the order of authority and inheritance.

### **CONCLUSION**

The law of the land in the Nsukka socio-political system was as important as a fuel to a vehicle, because in Nsukka political system they have no central government, but still the system was still been managed; this was because the Nsukka people strongly believes in the law and abode by it. Also the Nsukka socio-Political system was so unique that the power started from the grass root level that is the family. This central system helps them to manipulate the law or had the power to make law for the entire society. But in the Igbo system the people believed in their culture and respected their family head and clans. This is because The strongly Igbo believe in principal spirits of the sun (Anyanwu), the sky (Igwekaala) and thunder and lightning (Amadioha) and they try to pass this to their generation.

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