

# **ỌJÌ: A SOCIETAL BOND FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE**

---

---

**Gladys I. Udechukwu**

## **Abstract**

Before the advent of the white-man, the Igbo people had held kolanuts in high esteem. The respect, honour and dignity accorded the kolanut had never been extended to any other nut or fruit. There was nothing one was doing without the kolanut. "Whether one was receiving a stranger, making a sacrifice, holding a ceremony or providing entertainment, kolanut must be vitally needed". (Orji 1999). In the present Igbo Society, the presence of kolanut is no-longer well felt as people always replace it with other things like wine, garden eggs etc. If this should continue, the tradition accorded to kolanuts in Igbo land will fade away. This paper therefore, intended to give the concept of "Ọjì," its symbolism and its significance, in the Igbo world view. It went further to see "Ọjì" as a thing or an instrument that holds the society together. This will help to widen the knowledge of the Igbo people on kolanut traditions and to boost the honour given to kolanut in Igbo land. It will also help the younger ones to understand the reason why Igbo people accord kolanut such honour. Related literally words were reviewed to widen the horizon of the research found in the analysis of the data collected, it was found out that: Igbo people especially youths no-longer accord respect and honour to kolanut. It was also discovered that western religion has taken over the real tradition of kolanut in Igbo land. Suggestions were made on the ways to restore the respect and honour given to kolanut in the past. In the end, summary and conclusion were drawn.

## **Introduction**

"Ọjì" is very important in the life of Igbo people. A typical Igbo man cannot leave his house for anywhere in the morning without

first breaking kolanut to ask for protection and every other good luck from the gods and his ancestors. Nzeako (1974:5) supports this view when he says: "Ma ọ bughị na anyị agaghị ata ọjị ụtụtụ, onye kwuru nke a? Here, Nzeako portrays how important "ọjị" is in the life of an Igbo man. It is so significant that they can not ignore it.

Before the advent of the colonial masters, it was a bond duty of any family to pray to God early in the morning before embarking on any business of the day. The prayer was said through the process of the early morning breaking of the kolanut. Everyday, the father of the family woke up from sleep, washed his hands and set his chair in front of his house known as "Obi" with a kolanut in his right hand. He sat down and started his prayer thus:

*Chineke kere mmadu, Ọbasị bi n'elu bịa taa ọjị, Ala be anyị, biko bjanu were ọjị taa. Ihe anyị na ayo Ọbasị bu ogologo ndu na ahụ ike. Ihe ọzọ anyị na-ariọ kwazi bu ọmumụ eke, ọmumụ orie, ọmumụ afo, na ọmumụ nkwo, mana anyị achoghị ọmumụ abụọ maobu umu ato n'otu afo ime. A si na otu otu, ulọ eju. Onye si na anyị agaghị adi, ya buru okuko uzu lakpuo ura. Anyị na-ariọ Ọbasị bi n'elu ka ubochi taa buru anyị ezigbo ubochi.*

God the creator who lives in heaven come and eat kola. Our ancestors come and take kola. What we are asking God is long life and good health. Another thing we ask for is fruitfulness, but let them come one by one. He, who says we should not live, let him die. We pray to God in heaven that today will be good one.

Then, he broke the kolanut and offered it to God the creator and his servants and agents on earth-the juju gods including the mother earth and the spirit of the dead, by throwing a piece on the ground outside the house. The Igbo people knew of great God (Chi-ukwu) God the creator (Chineke) and the king on high whose

cloth swept the ground. It should also be noted that the Igbo people were already very religious before the coming of the white man with their Bible. The morning prayers which were made manifest in "igọ ọjị ụtụtụ" are the same as the morning prayers by both Christians and Muslims. Although, there may be differences in methods, their essence and objectives are the same.

Ordinarily, "Ọjị Igbo" is one of several species of nuts found in the West African sub-region. In Akinbode (1954) as quoted by Opate (1999:98) says:

Twenty species of kola are recognized in Nigeria. These fall into four subgenera: parvosema cola, haplocola, macro-cola, and sub-genus cola. Of these, the sub-genus cola is the most widely cultivated and it has more than a hundred species of which only four are edible. The edible species are cola verticillata, cola mega- lophylla, colanitida, and cola acuminata.

The kolanut that is referred in this work is not the species called "gworo" or "ọjị Awusa". The kolanut as referred to in this work is "ọjị Igbo" which Nnambuihe (1999) as quoted by Okodo (2003:176) refers to as kola acuminata. The kolanut can be eaten any time just like one can eat any order fruit. It is food; some Igbo people are so addicted to it that it serves as a stimulant for them. When they get anger, they eat it to change their state. . Some people mostly eat it in order to help them keep awake. Kola is a nut because it is in a pod. Chewed as an ordinary nut, it has a bitter taste of bile. For this reason, it is good to chew it with alligator pepper (Ose ọjị). In Igbo custom, kolanut serves divine purpose. The forefathers said that God revealed this nut in order to bring men together. Thus, wherever kolanut is presented, men must be thankful to God. The point here therefore is not kolanut but symbolic purpose.

## **Symbolisms of the Kolanut**

Oji in the view of the Igbo has some ideological bearings. That is why its perpetuation and maintenance among the Igbo is placed on a very high esteem. Why is it such a central and pan-Igbo phenomenon? Why is it considered normative that kolanut should be presented to people and that its breaking and sharing should signal the formal beginning of events? Is it merely a social principle or does it conceptualize the Igbo quintessence of holism? What is its ontological status in the scheme of affair of the Igbo? The answer to these questions is seen in the significance of kolanut in the life of the Igbo people. Kolanut in the life of the Igbo people signifies the following:

One, part of the Igbo concept of kolanut is that it is a **life affirming principle**. Everything has life, and to be alive is the aspiration of every living thing. Oji is life because he who brings it, brings life in the dual sense that the person has brought it so that it can be eaten without threat to one's existence, and two, in the sense that the prayer for good and long life which would really precede its breaking and sharing would be accepted by the ancestors. In another sense, one who brings kola ordinarily has no intention to cause Injury or any untoward thing to the person whom the kolanut was presented. In addition, kolanut is not a poisonous nut, and it has the innate quality of helping to keep people awake and being awake in the ordinary sense is for the living not for the dead.

From the biological point of view, the kolanut is also life affirming: Opata (1998:114) says "...a list of forty medicinal uses of the nut collected at the beginning of this century among which include relief from hunger, fatigue, and thirst as important properties, along with cures for headaches, and sexual importance...". This list is very interesting because they are all life affirming. Of special importance is the fact that kolanut could be used to cure sickness. For the Igbo, nothing can be more life affirming than "Kolanut". Conversely,

the kola in Igbo world view touches on the principal essence of existence: being alive and being able to sustain it. For them, therefore, there is no better way of preserving this fact other than by continuously celebrating it at the least opportunity offered.

Two, the kolanut is also a symbol of **Unity/ Oneness: (Otu Obi)**: The white-man says: "unity is strength". This is to bring people or every other thing together. An Igbo adage says: Gigi-gidi bu ugwu eze". Therefore unity/oneness is a major significant of kolanut and Igbo believes in unity/oneness.

Three, the kolanut signifies **majority**. Another significance of kolanut in Igbo world view is majority. This is because, the Igbo believe in majority. They do not recognize kolanut that has only one lobe or two lobes because of their philosophy in majority. In support of this view, they give names such as: Igwebuike (Unity in Power), Umunnabuike (kindred is power), Igwenwanne (Power in kindred), etc. Their belief in majority can also be seen in some of the Igbo adages like:

- a. A nyuko amiri onu o gbogo ufufu.
- b. Otu onye kwuru, odudu atagbuo ya.

Four, Kolanut signifies **clean/pure heart** especially "Oji ugo". Ugo in the Igbo beliefs is used in describing something that is very clean/pure. In Igbo land, one that is presented with this type of kolanut knows that he is loved and cherished with a pure/clean heart.

Five, kolanut symbolizes **peace and love**: The greatest thing on earth is love for one another. Even the Holy Bible recommends it that one should love his neighbour as one loves himself. It is because of the love God has for human being that made him to send his only son to come and die on the cross. Kolanut in the Igbo view signifies this kind of love. This means that when it is presented, it signifies a pure love towards the person it is presented to.

Six, kolanut is also a **symbol of continuity** of the entire life process. It is a social as well as a vital recognition that life started somewhere, that the present life is a continuation of that life, and that subsequently this present life would naturally flow into the future. This is why of all Igbo social practices; it has remained the most permanently celebrated norm despite western influences. Breaking of kolanut is always a feature of contemporary social functions and ceremonies among the Igbo, and it continues to draw itself the same arguments that it drew long ago. It still continues to play the educational role it used to play in the past, fixing as it were, and the oral history of the people in their memory. One could rightly call it a deconstruction instrument, providing the opportunity for people to recount their ancestral linkages and clan constitution.

Seven, "**Oji**" as well **symbolizes goodwill**: This goodwill can manifest in several ways: it can be shown to a visitor, to someone who meet another in a work place, even on the road if one happens to have a piece of kola on him. As a symbol of goodwill, it is always the first thing one has to present to a visitor. This custom is captured in the Igbo proverb: "Mmọọ na-eri efi, eri ebule, oji bu mbu" meaning that a deity which shall be offered a cow or ram, the first thing which takes precedence is kolanut. It is such an important first step that one can entertain his visitor with before presenting food and drinks. If no kola was presented, the visitor can in a future time accuse his host of not even providing him with kola the last time he paid him a visit.

Eight, one other thing which the presentation of kolanut symbolizes is that **it acts as social relaxed** just as the presentation and drinking of palm wine does. The only difference is that it is briefer and does not intoxicate.

### **Symbolisms of the Lobes**

In the Igbo perspective, the lobe of kolanut symbolizes different

things. Indeed, kolanut has different lobes; there are kolanut without any lobe, there are some with two, three etc, they mean different things. The number of lobes a particular kolanut contains is very significant. The people present have to comment on the number. The lobes have different symbolisms.

**One lobe:** Any kolanut that has only one lobe is termed "oji ogbi" in Igbo. (dumb kola). It is not eaten. It indicates that the kolanut is merely thrown away or rejected.

**Two lobes:** This type of kola is regarded as an aberration, and as such is regarded as abominable, a bad omen by the Igbo people. Consequently, on breaking a piece of Igbo kolanut, and it is found that it has only two lobes, it is mostly thrown away but sometimes, eaten by untitled men not by elders or titled men, and is never used to offer any type of sacrifice.

**Three lobes:** It is regarded as "Oji okike" in some Igbo communities. Among the Igbo, okike is a creative deity- because of this, a kolanut which has three lobes is regarded as a symbol of fecundity. In addition, a piece of kolanut with three lobes is said to represent the tripod stand, the hearth-stone, on which traditional cooking takes place. Again, some areas of Igbo land regard a kolanut piece which has three lobes as "Oji Ikenga" Ikenga as it is known in most Igbo communities is the symbol of achievement.

**Four lobes:** It is regarded as the conventional kolanut which portrays as it is the Igbo native week of four days, and as well representing the four market days in every part of Igbo land.

**Five lobes:** It is a portender of good luck, especially for the person whose function it is to break or share the kola. As would be seen in Igbo kola sharing practices, not all people must individually partake of a particular piece of kolanut presented to a group, especially

given a large group presented with few kolanuts. However, in many Igbo communities, a situation where a kolanut piece has five lobes, the sharer automatically gets a share. Infact, he has to put away the fifth lobe, usually the lobe with four sides onto which the other four lobes lap. It is also a symbol of the power of the "many" emphasizing as it is, the importance of number, for Igbo believe in "Igwe bu Ike" meaning that there is power in being "many"

**Six/Seven lobes:** it is a sign of riches and plenty children. It is at that meeting that the kolanut is tied up and will be rebroken with a feast.

While commenting on the respect accorded the kolanut, Okodo (2003:179) says:

The ceremony of the kolanut is very intricate from one place to another; only very deeply knowledgeable one in the culture of the Igbo people feels confident in handling the ceremony of the kolanuts. Peoples' lack of the knowledge are exposed each time a kolanut is presented. Somebody found wanting in handling the kolanut always suffers a lot of shame. This makes people to shy away from handling the kolanut.

Supporting this view, Eziezeh (1999) as quoted by Okodo (2003:178) affirms:

There are two traditional ways of presenting the kola either by "nearness" of person or by "seniority". The Igbos say in their proverb that "Onye agbata obi madu, bu nwanne ya". (Literally meaning that one's neighbour is his brother) consequently, the kola could be given to the most senior person or most senior kindred. If someone was presenting the kola and his brother was

present he will first of all pass the kolanut on to his brother for presentation to others.

### **Celebration of Kolanut**

The presentation of "Oji" is so important in Igbo world view that a host who cannot present it to his guest is usually full of profuse apologies. However, such an apology by a host that he has no kola is taken as a demonstration of goodwill on his part. Thus, while it is recommended that one should present kola to his visitors, if the person has no means to afford kola, mere apology would suffice. Thus, a person who has no kola to present, and at the same time does not apologize for not having one could be accused of not even having the courtesy of explaining to his guest that there was no kola. Among the Nsukka Igbo, this practice is called "Iriaru mmadu oji". The inability, the refusal, or even the forgetfulness to apologize to a visitor that there is no kola is regarded as a show of disrespect or lack of recognition to the visitor.

On occasion, the kolanut passes through different stages. The stages begin with the presentation. When somebody has a visitor or is holding a ceremony, the first thing he does after greeting his visitor or guests is to present them with the kolanut. He presents it in a tray or saucer. He normally hands it over to his nearest relative who in turn hands it to his own nearest relative until it is finally presented to outsiders. In some parts of the Igbo land, he will put some money in the tray or saucer. The money is said to be used in washing the kolanut. Eziezeh (1999:18) sees kolanut presentation this way:

There are two traditional ways of presenting the kola either by "nearness" of persons or by "seniority". The Igbo say in their proverb, that onye agbata obi madu, bu nwanne ya" (Literally meaning that one's neighbour is his brother). Consequently, the kola could be given

first to the nearest person. Alternatively, it could be given to the most senior person or most senior kindred. What the situation, if someone was presenting the kola and his brother was present, he will first of all pass the kolanut on to his brother, for presenting to others.

The presentation of the "Oji" as well as the breaking and sharing of it signal the formal beginning of a meeting. For the traditional Igbo, it is what can be regarded as opening prayers because it is also the major instrument of prayer. Not only is it the instrument of prayer in terms of being used as an offering. It is also a factor for forging a continuing link between the dead and the living as well as an avenue of invoking abstract forces, deities, and divinities to be witnesses at the proceedings of the meeting. In other words, the "Oji" Igbo is a force that unites the living, the dead, and the supernatural forces.

In the Igbo view, "Oji" also symbolizes "akuko" literally meaning that kolanut is the bearer of story. This statement is true as kolanut has become as proverbial as the tortoise in Igbo folk lore and motif. For Igbo people affirm that after narrating a folk tale and the tortoise is not mentioned, then the story has not been told. The same scenario is obtainable with kolanut in its presentation and breaking among the Igbo people. Nzeako (1974:45) says.

Ihe kere mmadu, Olisa puru ime ihe niile, onye na-ahụ ihe niile, onye maara ihe niile, otuto diri gi, n'ihì na I na-onye ihe oma, ka o rutu ma ndi ogaranya, ma ndi ogbenye...Anyi na-ariu ihe kere mmadu, ka o nara oji ndi a, wee gozie ha, ka anyi jiri obi ocha taa ha. Anyi na-ariu ka o nye anyi ahụ ike, ogologo ndu, omumu na uba...

### **Kolanut: A Societal Bond from Cradle to Grave**

The culture of the Igbo people honours "Oji" so much that it has become a recurring decimal. It appears in all the ceremonies of the Igbo man. It appears in all spheres of human metamorphosis ranging from the stage of a child's conception till death. In the process of under-going these stages, kolanut must be vitally needed.

#### **A. In Praying to God**

The Igbo man uses the kolanut to pray to God and so each time he wants to pray, he must use it. Okodo (2003:176) says: "kolanut is the chaplet with which the Igbo man prays". He prays that God gives him life and prosperity and all the good things of life. He also prays that God averts all dangers facing him". The kolanut is more than food. It is a fruit which has a lot of myths surrounding it and as a result attracts a lot of attention at any gathering. Nnabuihe (1999:70) supporting this view affirms.

However, in addition to the Indubitable truth that kolanut is a nut like other nuts, the Igbo try to weave some myths around the nut to explain the prominence it possess when it is compared with the other nuts. Parts of it are mythical narratives about the origin of the kolanut stores in oral traditions. These narratives vary according to their conception and perception in different cultural areas.

Orji (1999), as quoted by Okodo (2003:176) observes that the kolanut appears on all the Igbo man's occasion: He opines:

Before the advent of the white men, the Igbo people had held kolanut in high esteem. The respect, honour and dignity accorded the kolanut had never been extended to any other nut or fruit. There was nothing one was doing without the kolanut being present whether

one was receiving a stranger, making a sacrifice, holding a ceremony or providing entertainment, kolanut must be vitally needed.

It symbolizes both good and bad things, it is not only used in beseeching the gods as well as God for good things of life, it is also used in cursing. The kolanut can be used in invoking evil upon someone. Beyond the needs of the above, there are so many things that pertain to it in the culture of the Igbo that makes it to appear in all the ceremonies of an Igbo man. He lifts the kolanut so ceremoniously that it occupied a very important position. Its position makes it the king of the fruits in the culture of the Igbo. Nnabuihe (1999:70) agrees thus:

It (kola-nut) is one of the edible fruits found in Igbo land, and one of the cash crops the Igbo have. Apart from being an edible fruit or cash crop. It goes further to occupy a place of prominence in the traditional Igbo world view. It did not assume its position among the Igbo on account of its position among the Igbo on account of its colour, size or taste. It rather did due to the important the people attach to it.

### **B. In Child Birth**

When a child is born, there is usually sing-song presented by the mothers (Ndi-nne) which goes thus:

*Ọ nụrụ akwa nwa ee  
Ewoo, onye nụrụ akwa nwa  
Bja ngwa ngwa na ọbughị  
Ofu onye nwe nwa.*

When the elders arrive, the first thing the father of that child will offer to them is kolanut. The most senior among them will use it

to call upon the name of God, and the other gods of the land, including their forefathers and commit the child in their hand for proper protection against any evil attack. His prayer with the kolanut goes:

*Chineke nke puru ime ihe niile, nekwa "oji" Ogwugwu  
Ama, Amadioha, Udezulu, ndi nna nna anyi ha bikonu  
bjaanu nara anyi oji a taa. Lekwa onye unu wetara  
n'etiti anyi, na-edu ya, na-echekwanu ya. Chupunu  
ajọ mmuọ na ajọ mmadu n'ebe ọ nọ. Gozie nne na  
nna muru ya, ma nyekwa ha ihe ha ga-eji wee zuo ya  
na ndi be anyi, ka anyi di chaanu;*

The people present will all answer "isee" in agreement of what the person has prayed. After this, other things like foods, drinks etc will follow. Nzeako (1974:45) affirms that presenting a kolanut before one's visitor is of great Importance in the Igbo system. He portrayed this view when Ekwenugwo invited his in-laws in his house for a crucial meeting. When they came, the first thing he presented to them was kolanut. "Ekwenugwo wee kowaa ndi niile gbakotara n'ebe ahụ. O banye n'ulo, bunye ha oji, ka ha waa" Obiechina blessed the kola.

### **C. In Marriage Ceremony**

In marriage ceremonies, kolanut must be presented, broken and eaten before any other entertainment could follow. Onyekaonwu (1980) supported this view in "**Nwata Rie Awo.**". This happened after Aworo of Amangwu defeated Akatoosi of Amaudele in a wrestling match, Obioma the daughter of Okwukogu of Isiama ran to Aworo to marry her because of his wonders in defeating Akatoosi. On the fateful day, when Aworo and his kindred came to Isiama for the marriage ceremony, Obioma's father Okwukogu presented kolanut to them after greetings. The presentation goes: "Ndi be anyi na ndi ogo anyi, oji abianu "Obiukwu lee oji cheere ndi ogo ma werekwa nke i

ga-awara anyi". Obiukwu collected the kola and showed it to the people and went into *igò oji*" Thus:

O ru onye, o ru chi ya o bukwany oji o. Ndi ogo anyi ukwu unu jiri bja ka unu ga-eji laa. Uzò anyi na unu ga-abu uzu mmiri, o gaghì abù uzu nkù. Oule anyi na unu ga-abu njutukò njutukò, o dighì nke ga-ajutu ibe ya. O bjara be onye abjagbula ya, o lawa mkpumkpu apula ya. Anyi bu nnukwu olulu ndi ogo anyi ga na-amachi anyi amachi. Aworo na Obioma, ndu unu o, anyi niile no ebe a ndu anyi o, Awakwaala m oji o.

When Obiukwu was blessing the kolanut, the people present were answering "Isee" in unison. It was after the kolanut ceremony that other things followed. Without the presentation of kolanut first in this type of ceremony, it will not hold.

Kolanut therefore appears in spheres of human activities or ceremonies even in the burial ceremony kolanut is the number one item that will be needed. Orji (1999) when he was discussing "burial ceremony and widows' plight" supports the view that kolanut is highly needed during burial ceremony. In his comments, he said that immediately a married man died, the elders in the community were contacted. The next set of people to be sent for, were the "umu-okpu". The custom forbade any person to cry prematurely. The wife and the bereaved family wept in secret. The news of the death was kept secret in order to get things ready for his burial, before informing the town's people. Such things that will be needed include: human head, cow, he-goat, ram, a cock, kolanut, alligator pepper and cloth to cover the dead body.

#### **D. Others**

In naming ceremonies, Kolanuts were not only eaten but they formed an integral part of the ceremonies. In making any sacrifice,

initiation, kolanut must be present. And it formed the vital part of the rituals. Whenever an abomination was committed and during the cleansing ceremony, kolanut must be named as one of the necessary ingredients for the cleansing.

It is only in situations of conflict mutual suspicion of great dimension between two parties that kola presentations and ceremonies can be deliberately avoided. For instance if two Igbo warring communities are still in a state of war, and are having preliminary discussions to examine ways of peacefully resolving the conflict, there would normally be no presentation of kolanuts. Indeed, a meeting like this would hold at the common border of the two communities, and talks about kola presentation are deliberately avoided not only because of mutual suspicion but also to illustrate the seriousness of the condition under which the meeting is taking place.

#### **Findings**

It is observed that "oji" in the life of the Igbo cannot be ignored. "Oji?" in the world view has certain roles it plays. In any society, when people quarrel and get into one conflict or the other, the spirit of reconciliation is a necessary desideratum on the part of the parties in conflict if whatever that constitutes the problem must be resolved. In many Igbo societies, when people quarrel, an attempt is always made to reconcile them. At the end of any process of reconciliation, the parties concerned are required to eat kolanut together. Eating kolanut together symbolises that the two parties no longer bear grudges against one another, that they no longer have vile feeling towards one another, and that they are now ready to forget the past and work together for their welfare. Before the kolanut which serves as a reuniting force is eaten together, special prayers are said with it, and what emerges as the content of the prayers would very much read like a new covenant, a promise to



get the past behind, and a commitment to begin to relate together without any sense of ill feeling. So, kolanut can be regarded as an instrument of reconciliation. This practice of eating kolanut together after a process of reconciliation is called "Igba ndu" in Igbo land.

It is also observed that kolanut serves as an educational instrument. The type of education or socialization imparted during such occasions is called "kola-lore". This is very important aspect of the general orientation of the average traditional Igbo man into the customs and traditions of his people. Since most of the lore emanate during meetings, it is discovered that one who does not attend traditional village meetings does not know much about these things. It is only the person who attends such meetings regularly that is in position to know the kola-lore of his people. Knowing kola lore of one's people is important to the Igbo because it is like teaching one fundamental human rights, failing which, one can always witness one's right abused or denied. Indeed, the Igbo laugh at people who do not know the kola lore of their communities. Therefore "Oji?" is an educational instrument.

### **Summary**

Opata (1998:111) Opines:

Throughout Nigeria, Kolanuts are used as gifts and are widely circulated on important occasions such as marriage, funeral, child naming, or coronation ceremonies. A gift of kolanut to house women on the birth of a child is a mark of the highest honour.

Like most social institutions all over the world, the kolanut presentation and practices among the Igbo carry with it a lot of advantages for the person presenting the kolanut and the person whom the kola is presented to. "Bia were oji", come into my house and take kolanut is a familiar strain addressed to passers-by.

The kolanut as an item of ceremony is the thing that started with the Igbo man and will end with him. Since it survived the pressures of foreign cultural squeeze of the way of life of the Igbo man, it has come to stay. Ogbalu (N.d) as quoted by Okodo (2003:180) says "The customs around kolanut are numerous and deep-rooted. It is one of the few that survived Western impact" kolanut is a cultural identity of the Igbo man, which he celebrates on various occasions. He cannot do without the kolanut because of its inspiration for prayers. Whatever the occasion is, it symbolizes unity in prayer for the good things of life.

### **Suggestions:**

- i. Igbo people should have at the back of their mind that kolanut celebration is one of their cultural practices which should not be trodden upon.
- ii. Western Religious beliefs should not over-shadow the traditions accorded the kolanut in Igbo land.
- iii. Igbo youths are expected to have respect for Igbo traditions by learning the "kolanut lores"

### **Conclusion**

Kolanut is put in a very high esteem in Igbo culture area because of its symbolism and importance in the life of the people. It is more celebrated than eaten among the Igbo people. The traditions accorded to it have been from generation to generation. It is no doubt that kolanut has been and together. It is indeed a societal bond from birth to death.

### **References**

Ejiofor, P. N.. *Cultural Revival in Igbo Land*. Ontisha: University Publishing Company. 1984.

- Eziezeh, L. *My People: Their History, Culture and Tradition*. Owerri: Urekweson Press, 1999.
- Ezeuko, R. O. *Ewumewu, Omenala, Ofufe na Nkwenye Ndi Igbo*. Onitsha: Johnson Associates, 1986.
- Nnabuihe, C. "The Myth of Kolanut in the Igbo World," *Imo Search Light*. Vol.1, No 1, November, 1999, Pp 70 -73.
- Nzeako, J. U. T. *Aka Ji Ak?*. Lagos: Longman, 1974.
- Ogbalu, F. C. *Igbo Institutions and Customs*. Onitsha: University Publishing Company, (n.d).
- Onyekaonwu, G. O. *Nwata Rie Awo*. Onitsha: Varsity Industrial Press, 1980.
- Opata, D. U. *Essays on Igbo World-view*. Nsukka: A.P Express Publishers, 1998.
- Orji, M. O. *The History and Culture of the Igbo People*. Onitsha: Jet Publishers, 1999.
- Okodo, A. I. "Kolanut: "The Igbo Multidimensional Symbolism" in *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*. Vol. 1, No 1. 2003, pp 178-179
- Ukaegbu, F. N. *The Igbos: The Afrikan Root of Nations*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 2005.