

**CORRUPTION AND VICTIMIZATION IN ISIDORE
OKPEWHOTIDES AND ANTHONY ABAGHA'S *CHILDREN OF
OLOIBIRI***

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ENGLISH**

TITLE PAGE

CORRUPTION AND VICTIMIZATION IN

ISIDORE OKPEWHO'S *TIDES* AND

ANTHONY ABAGHA'S *CHILDREN OF OLOIBIRI*

DEDICATION

This research work as dedicated to my lovely Divine Companions, my Guardian Angel, the Most Holy Trinity and Our Lady, cause of our joy.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project on Corruption and Victimization in Isidore Okpewho's *Tides* and Anthony Abagba's *Children of Oloibiri*" as conducted by Obaji Judith Ukamaka Regn. No. ENG/2007/052.

Prof. M. Amadiche Ezugu
(Project Supervisor)

Date

APPROVAL

This project by Obaji Judith Ukamaka, Regn. No. ENG/2007/052
has been approved as having satisfied the requirement for the Award of
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Honours Degree in English, Faculty of Management
and Social Sciences, Caritas University, Amoji-Nike, Enugu, Nigeria.

Prof. M. Amadiche Ezugu
(Project Supervisor)

Date

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Date

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I am overwhelmed.

OBAJI JUDITH U

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ABSTRACT

This project is on Corruption and Victimization in Isidore Okpewho's *Tides* and Anthony Ndubuisi Abagha's *Children of Oloibiri*. It is a study of the endemic corruption and Victimization that hold the Niger Delta captive and by extension the entire nation in spite of available monumental wealth and qualified manpower.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page	i
Certification	ii
Approval Page	iii
Title Page	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Abstract	vii
Table of Contents	viii

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Objectives of the Study	4
Scope of the Study/Limitation	5
Significance of the Study	5
Methodology	6

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review	7
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CHAPTER THREE

Corruption And Victimization In <i>Children Of Oloibiri</i>	15
By Anthony Abagha	

CHAPTER FOUR

Corruption And Victimization In <i>Tides</i> By Isidore Okpewho	29
By Anthony Abagha	

CHAPTER FIVE

Comparative and Contrastive Analysis of Abagha's <i>Children of Oloibir</i> and Okpewho's <i>Tides</i>	44
Conclusion	48
Works Cited	49

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines corruption as a dishonest or illegal behaviour, especially of people in authority.

In philosophical, theological or moral discussions, corruption is spiritual or moral impurity or deviation from an ideal. In economy, corruption is payment for services, or materials which the recipient is not entitled to under the law. In government, it is when an elected representative makes decisions that are influenced by vested interest rather than legitimate or established government or party regulations.

In life there are political, moral and systemic corruption or abuse of power. Moral or political corruption involves the abuse of public power, office or resources by elected government officials for personal gains, by extortion, embezzlement, soliciting or offering bribes or other forms of inducement. Official corruption is a specific form of a misconduct designed to obtain undue benefits, personal gains or career advancements. Police Officer, for example, sometimes flout the police code of conduct in order to secure conviction of suspects through the use of falsified evidence.

Systemic corruption is the complete subversion of a political or economic system – which is primarily due to a weakness of an organization or process. It can be contrasted with individuals, officials or agents who act corruptly within the system. Lack of transparency, low pay, injustice, greediness, exploitation and poverty are the factors that encourage corruption.

Corruption poses a serious development challenge; it undermines democracy and good government by flouting or even subverting formal processes. Corruption in election and in legislative processes reduces accountability and distorts representation in policy making. Corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law and corruption in the public administration results in the inefficient provision of services. It violates basic principles of the country regarding the centrality of civic virtue. Corruption facilitates environmental destruction. There is also industrial corruption; this occurs when bribe is paid by a supplier to an industry or a manufacturer in order to sell low quality goods at the price of good quality products.

Corruption is a harmful force that hinders government and represses individual in many countries throughout the world. It is generally a word

used to qualify the existence of common social ills that affect the entire aspects of our society.

Victimization is the process of being victimized, becoming a victim or being unfairly punished. Victimization means making someone a group of people to suffer unfairly because you do not like them, their opinions or something that they have done. The trauma of victimization is a direct reaction to the aftermath of unfair punishment. Victims suffer tremendous amount of physical and psychological trauma. The physical injury suffered by victim may be as apparent as cuts, bruises or broken arms and legs. It is common for victims to be fatigued, unable to sleep or have increased or decreased appetite.

Many victims believe that the stress caused by victimization endangers or exposes them to physical or psychological problems later in life.

In our society, people are victimized because of or for many reasons. In the ancient days and still in some places women are being victimized after their husbands' death and when they are unable to give birth to children. Women are often socially and psychologically victimized in the absence of their husbands and children. Men who are impotent or childless suffer

victimization by not allowing them to comfortably air their opinion in their fellow men's social gathering.

When one is denied of his rights and possessions and is maltreated for no justifiable reasons, he is being victimized. Such a person often tries to avoid society and especially the company of his victimizers or those opposed to his way of life.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nations, Organizations, Institutions and individuals especially those mentioned in the novels understudy participate in or experience corruption in different ways that are often overt or covert. Euphemisms are often used to make corruption and/or victimization less offensive or palatable in the society. Often, their perpetrators are "honourable" or important people, in short "sacred cows" in the society—Those people "respect" or fear to confront. This study intends to explore the terminologies the culprits invent and often use to hoodwink the society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research work is conducted as it is an area where nobody has worked on. The study is being made to expose the problems caused by

corruption and victimization and their effects on the national and private sectors of our national life and economy and possibly proffer useful suggestions/solutions to the malaise.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY/LIMITATIONS

Basically, the study is focused particularly on corruption and victimization as explored in *Tides* by Isidore Okpewho and *Children of Oloibire* by Anthony Abagha. References to Okpewho's and Abagha's other works and works of other writers, journals, magazines and newspapers would also be made to enrich the study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research has both practical and theoretical significance to the general public especially social organization, institutions, social activists, psychologist, leaders and literary artists who should understand the level of corruption and victimization operating in the society. It will also bring to limelight the impacts of corruption and victimization on individuals and society at large. This work is undertaken with the intention that the result will be of help to the leaders of the nation at all levels of government, serve as a good material to students and scholars as well as concerned persons who

may like to make further research on this subject matter in the interest of all and sundry.

METHODOLOGY

Since this study is based on Okpewho's *Tides* and Abagha's *Children of Oloibiri*, the methodology will basically be literary in terms of what the library and the internet will offer by way of critiques, journals, magazines, newspapers and interviews on Niger Delta literature and environment.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

PREAMBLE

The topic of this project - - corruption and victimization in Isidore Okpewho's *Tides* and Anthony Abagha's *Children of Oloibiri* - - is an interesting one. Corruption and victimization are moral, social, political, systemic problems and so on. The novels for study are Niger Delta based. They are so intriguing especially as the area involved is a region so rich in natural resources that people find it so easy to plunder while hardship and victimization go on in different ways. It is therefore not difficult to access relevant literatures in this regard.

Because of availability of literary materials on corruption and victimization, as well as on the Niger Delta and the novelists whose works are being studied, we intend to be very selective on citing such relevant materials. Whenever corruption is being discussed, no one ever forgets *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, a novel which lays particular emphasis on real decay and corruption in Africa. It emphasizes physical decay which makes one see more clearly the depth to which the society we live is corrupt. A library of critiques exists on this text.

Kaine Agany in *Yellow Yellow* shows how the village head Amananawei could not do anything after getting report on how the oilpipe that runs through the village has exploded and spilled on the farm because of the ransom he receives from the officials of the oil company. The implication here is that like the officials of the NAFCOM, the Amananawei is aiding and abetting corruption and even the despoliation of the Niger Delta environment, the ecosystem.

A man of the People by Achebe Shows the strameless, corrupt and uncultured minister of culture in the person of Nanga, anxious to elbow his way to greater patronage and wealth. He is the man of the man of the people only Ironic sense. While he openly proclaims his affection for the people “Do the right and shame the devil” (2). He does everything to undermine their welfare. He is not only a confirmed agent of an entrenched system of political corruption, he is willing to betray the interest of the nation in his dealings with the firms like “Antonio and sons”. In him the acquisitiveness and unrestrained corruption which dominates life reach their peak. He is motivated in all his actions by self interest, when for example, he arranges for a road to be tarred, it is only because an election is near or that he has ordered ten luxury buses of his which will make use of the road, he is an embodiment of corruption.

Odili himself confesses that as long as men are swayed by their hearts and stomach and not their heads, the chief Nangas of this world will continue to get away with anything. When Odili gets involved in politics, he starts behaving like chief Nanga.

In T.M Aluko's *Chief The Honourable Minister*, there is political corruption which is so widespread that wherever the novelist turns his attention, he discovers crude political misbehaviors and inordinate attempts to ride on the backs of others to achieve political success. There is little to choose between the government and the opposition. The government is corrupt and the opposition employs unscrupulous methods to destroy it.

Emeka Nwabueze in his *Parliament of Vultures* explores corruption on various levels, the way corruption has even extended to our homes even the homes of our leaders. Madam Omeaku throws all morals and ethics to the wind, introducing her daughter Nkechi to high class prostitution despite the attempt of her husband to stop her.

Through the caustic exchange of words between madam Omeaku and her husband, the author satirizes the corrupt nature of the education sector. According to Mrs. Omeaku, one does not necessarily have to attend a university before obtaining a degree certificate, having the right connection

assures one of (a) certificate (s); “What matters now is not what you know. But whom you know” (10).

People with better certificates are not getting a befitting jobs but the illiterates ones. Even the poor masses are also corrupt, because of their poor conditions, they are used as instruments by the politicians to carry out their evil acts, using them as thugs, assassins and kidnappers and the masses chanting praises of the politicians even through they know they are corrupt; they do this to obtain favours from them.

In our society corruption is as pervasive as victimization. Childless women suffer victimization in their matrimonial homes. Writers like Flora Nwapa, Femis Osofisan, Buchi Emecheta and others through their novels explore such hostile reactions from people who should exhibit better understanding of issues involved.

In Flora Nwapa’s *One is enough*, Amaka suffers untold humiliation (Victimization), embarrassment and oppression in the hands of her husband and mother in law because her marriage is bereft of children. Her life is made miserable in her marital home that she has to quit the marriage and vows never to remarry.

Osofisan in *Wuruola, Forever* demonstrates that a childless women are monsters and are treated as nuisance in the society. Wura, the heroine of

Wuruola Forever Passes through such a crucible because of her childlessness.

Paul Emema, a writer makes it known that corruption is not only in government but in all segments of the society. Hence people should not look at the government as the only corrupt institution but also look at themselves as culprits. According to him,

“We as individuals eventually become part of government and when people are corrupt before they go into government, they will eventually be corrupt when they become part of government. Corruption has never left and it has now taken a new dimension every day in the country”. (*Daily Sun* March 8, 202 39).

The chairman of Pension Reform Task Team (PRTT) disclosed that the team uncovered ₦5 billion fraud and traced the sum of ₦6 million to a bank in the United Kingdom.

Testifying at the public hearing organized by the Nigeria Senate Joint Committee on Establishment and States and Local Government Maina; the chairman disclosed that when the team was set up in June 2002 it went into investigation and discovered in the process that some people who did not qualify for pension had their names on the list while some genuine pensioners were omitted. He further stated that a list of 258,000 existed

when the team began work but after the verification, the team discovered that only 4,765 were genuine pensioners and 44,320 genuine pensioners were left out of the scheme. (*The Guardian* March 8, 202,).

In Dan Amadi's *Trials Of The Militants*, the political aspirants bribe their ways to emerge candidates of their parties and buy victories during the election. Rigging of election becomes the order; people no longer win election according to the number of votes they obtain and the leaders prefer to steal the ballot boxes and disturb the conduct of election.

The author also show how corruption has made our leaders to throw all morals and ethic principles to the wind by cheating on their wives, keeping concubines and abandoning their families to suffer.

In the same spirit, Tanure Ojaide in *The Activist* uses his work to show how the people of the Niger Delta are oppressed, exploited and victimized in spite of being the goose that lays the golden egg.

Even when people have good intentions to serve their government and their people, they do not escape being harassed and victimized unjustly.

Achebe in *Anthills of Savannah* shows the victimization imposed on the people by the various military regimes that have ruled Nigeria. The picture of Africa under military regimes is that of a large prison with the citizens as the prisoners. They are usually arrested, detained, oppressed,

tortured, dehumanized and even murdered. In a society where the powers – that – be are insensitive and corrupt and vicious, who can survive?

- Reuben Embu at the 30th Annual Conference of African Literature Association 2010 on the topic “Drama and Environmental challenges in Niger Delta” talked about how federal government set up the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) as special agency to tackle the developmental needs of the people bearing in mind the peculiar nature of the area.

Similarly, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) and the Niger Delta created by the military under Babangida and the democratic rule of Obasanjo were geared towards resolving the incessant conflicts. Despite these commissions, the communities in the Niger Delta are largely underdeveloped and this is attributed to bad leadership entangled in corruption.

Achebe in an interview with the Christian science monitor January 2008 at New York said;

“Corruption is the root of the current fuel strikes crisis and that the only way to set Nigeria on democratic path is for Nigerians to select better leaders and to punish those who steal from the state, corruption is endemic because we have had a complete

failure of leadership in Nigeria that has made corruption easy and profitable” (www.sahra-reports.com>Home>Interviews).

Countless critics and opinion leaders have devoted tons of papers on articles condemning the insensitivity of corrupt and tyrannical men in power, but the problems continue unabated. We are familiar with names like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ayi Kwei Armah, Emmanuel Obiechina, Ernest Emenyonu, and many other voices in the wilderness that keep on crying for sanity. With the efforts of our present government of president Goodluck Jonathan that has zero tolerance for corruption and victimization and the influences of many other Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), there is hope for light at the end of the tunnel: Nothing lasts forever.

CHAPTER THREE

CORRUPTION AND VICTIMIZATION IN ANTHONY ABAGHA'S

CHILDREN OF OLOIBIRI

Oil was first discovered in Nigeria in 1958 at Oloibiri, now in the present Bayelsa state of the Niger Delta. But Oloibiri as portrayed in the novel is an independent nation. A rich nation with numerous mineral resources. Children of Oloibiri are the lazy children of oil, indolent children with oily mouths, some of who have over the years learnt to eat without working and have in their unbridled greed deprived majority of their compatriots who have worked without eating.

Children of Oloibiri by Anthony Abagha is a satire, exposing the conditions and situations in our country, the ills, and many aspects of corruption and their effects on the citizens and the nation as a whole. They become forms of victimization of individuals, institution, etc.

The author avers that corruption has come to stay; it cannot be wiped out thoroughly but can be only alleviated and tolerated because it has eaten deep inside the citizens and the nation as a whole.

ONAFCON in the novel is a fiction, capturing some of the things that make NAFCON – National Fertilizer Company of Nigeria to fail. The

author shares his experiences which he gets as a contractor and a vendor in NAFCON; the occupation he breaks away from, to write.

ONAFCO is a national institution which means Oloibiri National Fertilizer Company. The idea of this company's establishment is muted by Dr. Bomo to Oloibirians in the diaspora and later to the government with hope that it shall improve their agricultural system, "and this plant shall form the basis for a real agrarian revaluation in our land and the entire continent of Africa" (83).

But the corrupt practices by the officials would not allow the company to grow and achieve its aims. India built their fertilizer company at the same time with ONAFCO but India has built their ninth urea and NPK plant and ONAFCO remains the only one plant since ten years ago. "Here, ONAFCO plant is replete with buccaneering activities and is about to witness the auctioneer's bell toll"(83).

In ONAFCO, there are over invoicing, suppliers recycling and other corrupt practices.

The company gets a new procurement head as an answer to the crisis rocking the company. The Man as he is called is the third procurement head in the last one year. The Man for the last one month he is employed has been viewing piles of requisition files. He attends to a particular requisition

paper containing four items each marked “emergency” and this catches his attention and it reads thus:

Item one: Hand digging machine

Description: tempered steel blade, alloy of steel and aluminum 30cm by 1mm by 35cm blade size, 70 degrees blade to head angle.

Head and handle of treated Amazom wood, cured to withstand tropical weather elements.

Minimum stock level: 50 No.

Maximum stock level: 50 No.

Quantity in stock: 10 No

Quantity required: 140 No

Price per unit: N20,000.00

Total Amount N2,800,000.00

Item Two: Hand cutting Machine

Description: Broad steel cutting structure tempered to 1000 – degree Celsius. Smooth, firm and curved handler’s end, complete with protective jacket and operator’s manual.

Minimum stock level: 50 No.

Maximum Stock Level: 150 No.

Quantity in Stock: 5 No

Quantity required: 145 No

Unit Price: N10 0,000.00

Total amount N1,450,000.00

Item Three: Urea – tank fasteners

Item description: Alloy of copper and steel, two inches

Head to end. Smooth Threaded – 0.08mm thread pitch

Broad head, American's Kellogg Fertilizer – plants standard.

Minimum stock Level: 5,000 No

Maximum stock level: 10,000 No

Quantity in Stock: 200 NO

Quantity required: 9800 No

Price per unit: N1000.00

Total amount: N9,800,000.00

Item Four: Aqua Canopy

Item Description: Kellogg – Type, with stainless handler's post.

Multi-colour design, tempered polyethylene based material complete, with storage jacket and operator's manual.

Minimum stock level: 1000 No.

Maximum stock level: 5000 No

Quantity required: 4500 No

Price per Unit: N5000.00

Total amount: N22,500,000.00

Grand total: N36,550,00.00

Amount in words: Thirty Six million, five hundred and fifty thousand naira only (22 and 23).

The four items; hand digging machine is ordinary hoe; hand cutting machine is cutlass; urea – tank fasteners are screw nuts and acqua canopy is just umbrella. These names are given to these items to make them look special and important. The buyer of these items is an intelligent criminal and he is known for ciphering of the names of technical items in order to

inflate their prices and he does this taking undue advantages of the office messengers and cleaners.

According to the Assistant store supervisor when he is called by The Man for explanation, he says that the four items are priority items and priority “e” (emergency) for that matter. “But sir, they are priority items, priority “e” Sir” (26). So, they mark the items emergency because the company has the tradition of not delaying the procurement of priority items.

The company has the tradition of not delaying the procurement of priority items.

The Assistant super glibly lectured: This is because of the pressure – loaded nature of fertilizer companies all over the world. Here in ONAFCO, we have priority 3,2,, and priority “e”, the red priority. This arrangement is proactive and adequately checks the well known risk of ammonia leakage” (26).

This is not the first time they are doing this kind of evil practice. It has become their way of business and corrupt acquisition. The supervisor when he is called by The Man over the paper, blames himself for not being able to damage that particular paper when he damaged similar ones.

“He admonished himself greatly for not being able to discover and destroy this particular paper when he destroyed similar ones in the wake of the reforms that accompanied The Man’s employment” (77).

ONAFCO is victimized as it is raped by some of the officials. The company loses a lot through the monsters called fertilizer racketeers, selling its two bulldozers on the basis of high maintenance cost but they are bought by an individual; a senior management staff in ONAFCO. Is this not another means of impoverishing the company as he hires it out still to ONAFCO at a daily price of twenty five thousand naira each day.

In the novel, *Children of Oloibiri*, there are different forms of corruption and victimization, but there is more of corruption than victimization. There is political corruption, police corruption, systemic corruption and other kinds of corruption or liquidation of the entire company.

In the first and second chapter of the novel, Abagha x-rays the appetite and love of money of Oloibiri people which start from their childhood stage as the children of Oloibiri follow the white man asking and chanting. “Oyibo nyem ego” (9). Which means “white man give me money”.

Chapter two shows how the people of Oloibiri become mindless and conscienceless to acquire or obtain a particular thing. When the whiteman produces a small bottle with a brown liquid and drops the contents on the crude which turn into liquid gold they become mindless.

The artisans, all of them, unmindful of their genitals, removed their clothing and with them, tried dismally to gather a greater portion of the gold product (20).

The minds of children of Olobiri are so corrupt that what ever happens, they do not think for a positive solution or face it as humans but look for a kind of corrupt practice to back it up. They boy mechanic whose finance goes away to many another man who comes back from England and is working in an oil company after he (the boy mechanic) has seraped daily in his roadside workshop to see her through the university education, make both of them mad—what are his gains?

The tap – root of corruption in Oloibiri.

Member whose real name is Micah Agbalagba; the owner of member Global chemicals is a corrupt fellow, his father was a foremost corrupt political sponsor and buccaneer contractor of all times in his lifetime. He teaches member all the evil practices he is doing.

When shell D' Archy arrives in 1593 and starts shooting the forest and waters, shocking the people's land and houses, member and his father erect small houses on poor foundation, blocking the ways of the prospectors and their sounds, shocking the land greatly. The houses collapse and a lot of money is paid to them as compensation.

This the author uses to show that corruption in Oloibiri did not start today; it originated from their fathers. Member's only sons; Baby as he is called takes the foot steps of his father, abandons school and goes for pipeline vandalization even with his teacher which means even teachers have gone out of the lines of imparting education and moral values on the children to planting seeds of vice and corruption in them.

Abagha also confirms that the government is the cause of some of the evil practices. The teacher would have been busy in the classroom teaching the children but because of the inability of the government to pay him, he has to look for an alternative source of money which is pipeline vandalization. This is confirmed by Udeme.

Him say as them dey strike for one month so without pay
make him find something wey go helep am (29).

Member is known for paying everything off, bribing and "sorting" everybody. At Onafco's gate, he will give the security people money and

shut their mouths and they will not check his boot at the gate as he comes and goes, and they call it act of generosity.

Member, member! The faint sibilant sound filled the air once more, as he struck some crumpled naira notes into the waiting hands of one of the security men and speed off.

He is used to this type of treatment even as a politician and feels happy about it. It administers a welcome close of adrenalin in his system, enabling him to convey his bags of fat with an ease hitherto alien to him (30).

All the children and society of Oloibiri are corrupt. This is shown by the statement of a national Morgue attendant to The man when he is asking for money from The Man when he goes there to the morgue to deposit his father's dead body and the man says he des not understand.

No be Oloibiri Man? Abi this one na charley just returned?-----incase here is another pretender, another incorrupt and potentially corrupt fellow country man (65).

Which means all in the land of Oloibiri are corrupt or potentially so and also according to the attendant.

Whether clad in a flowing gown, priestly hood, or in three – piece suit, they are all brothers united by corruption (66).

The corruption in Oloibiri is unavoidable. The Man is trying his possible best not to participate in the corruption but he is always overcome. At the patrol station, a female pump attendant approaches. The man saying, “Oga, if metre read twenty, na forty you go pay” (67).

He could not argue because as he wanted to, he notices a police superintendent begging the attend to attend to him at the said condition. Corruption has become their culture and life.

The author also satirises police misconducts – police corruption. At the toll gate, the anti-crime will be there saying to the people passing in their cars, “Oga anything for smoke, paper dey –oo(67). And this they accompany it with salute. They will leave their work and turn themselves to professional beggars.

Gana, a lawyer; The Man’s friend convicts an IPO for extortion. A man whose sister is raped reports the matter to Diobu police station in Oloibiri. The IPO takes the complainant to the back of the main building of the station and displays police baton and a rifle. He says if he goes with the rifle to arrest the man, the complainant will pay two thousand naira and if he

goes with only the baton, one thousand naira. He asks the complainant the one to use and he tells him to use anyone he wants.

The police man uses the two materials to go and the complainant refuses to comply in the end and he is detained by the IPO.

Others forms of corruption are also disclosed in the novel in the speech made by senator Rizenbe on radio where he discloses that; “that all Oloibirians are four-one miners” (146).

He explores further how why they are referred to as 419ners.

The senator talked about the Nkanu Meat seller -----He keeps his knife aimed in a manner that suggests to the prospective buyer a vertical ninety degree cut, at negotiation, but the knife lands at a slanting near sixty degree cut at the end.

The Owo woman rice retailer ar Ajegunle, has her measuring cup hammered in at the bottom”--- And if her customer is a young man and is so foolish as to be looking a the parted legs of the woman, what he wants to buy is measured from the bottom end of the cup; and if the voyeur was remarkably foolish, he was given less change” (147).

A one – time vice president of Oloibiri once confirms that all her citizens are “four one-niners”. A court clerk also proves that the Oloibiri corruption law is obsolete and that saying that corruption is bad will make him look stupid.

The ranks of women of moroko in Oloibiri are graded according to the number of men they have slept with in the vicinity.

All these have shown that in the Oloibiri nation corruption has become their culture and tradition. In Igbo land an adage says that “Aru gba afo Oburu omenaala; meaning “if an abomination lasts for a whole year, it becomes a tradition”. Corruption has lasted for ages in Oloibiri land, therefore, it has become their tradition—a normal/ accepted way of life.

Political corruption is replete in the novel. In Oloibiri, it is the candidate who has money that wins election, that is their belief. “Election na the man wey get money, Igbigi, ego, owo kudi, dey win am” (89).

In Oloibiri, they have different ways of announcing election result; their final result is always different from the field result. The amount of money given to the electorate determines the winner.

In the novel also, many people suffer victimization for one reason or the other or for just no reason at all.

Sage, The Man's father before his death narrates a story of how his wife; Florence is raped by whitemen while they are swimming at the beach.

In Onafco Integrity Is Death

According to the diary Mr. Bomo gives to The Man, Engineer Moan; the plant manager who is employed to verify the usefulness or otherwise of the heaps of requisition papers over spilling from the procurement department. One weak in the assignment, drinks tea one morning and slumps on his seat; dead.

Engineer Claudius, the procurement manager gets home from work and sleeps and does not wake up.

ONAFCO by the end of the novel is considered to be "dead" because of the corrupt practices of the officials – the sons of the land.

The member of OVA – ONAFCO vendor Association suffer victimization as they are not paid by the company after their transactions/supplies. A woman, member of the association stripes herself naked as she has not been paid and usurers are on her neck. Some men crying like babies to elicit pity, but who cares?

The buyers as mentioned by senator Rizenbe are victimized as they are defeated; they pay more for less commodities - - what they pay for is not what is given to them. Tables are turned!

CHAPTER FOUR
CORRUPTION AND VICTIMIZATION IN ISIDORE OKPEWHO'S
TIDES

Isidore Okpewho's *Tides* centres on the Nigerian government's complicity with international oil interests in the despoliation of the natural environment and the dispossession of indigenous people of their homelands.

Okpewho explores Nigeria and Niger Delta in the regime of the military government; the rigged government, the corruption and victimizations that have become entrenched as second nature among the people of Nigeria especially the people of Niger Delta because of the oil exploration there. The novel portrays national and regional corruption and their effects on the people. The desecration of their physical environment as well as human and lack of infrastructural development is legendary. Victimization, exploitation, oppression, maltreatment and neglects become normal ways of life.

Okpewho's *Tides* explores abuse of power by government officials, the untimely and forceful retirements of Pinye Dukumo and Tonwe Brisibe from the *National Chronicle* as result of that

It may well be that Murtala Muhammed meant well by his crusade against redundancy. I don't doubt it, but his

intentions have been exploited by a handful of criminals who have simply seized the opportunity to settle personal scores (4).

Piriye and Tonwe are retired because the people appointed to compile the list of redundant staff, maliciously target them as redundant". They are retired not because they are truly redundant, but because they are jealous of their achievements. This selective injustice befalls only two of them from Beniotu that are retired this is corruption and victimization.

Tonwe Brisibe decides to enjoy his retirement peacefully in his home town; Beniotu and Piriye Dukumo becomes a freelance writer to some national and international newspapers. Magazines and journals. Piriye suggests to Brisibe for them to do joint and collaborative investigations.

I believe it's time for us to rouse our investigative skills once again and produce a document that will be unrivalled in authority..... You will monitor the home front, as regards the growing resentment of the farmers and fishermen, while I cover the corridors of policy in Lagos and agitations of the CCC (3).

So, all the activities, the expositions of corruption and victimization in the novel are carried out through the letters and reports exchanged by

Brisibe and Piriye through Priboye who is a businessman always travelling from Lagos to Delta. "I will normally write you through my friend Priboye Oruama who goes to Delta frequently on some business transactions" (4). Therefore all the reports on corruption and victimization that take place in the Delta are by Brisibe and the reports from Lagos are from Piriye.

The novel shows how even the fishermen are victimized oppressed and exploited by the various foreign oil companies in Niger Delta because fishing is one of main means of livelihood. The delegation of the fishermen goes to oil rig owned by Atlantic Fuels to complain that the enormous lights which they train on the waters around their offshore rig are driving the fishes away and begs him to do something about it, but the whiteman neglects them and calls them "literate natives who know nothing about what the oil industry is trying to do for them. He goes off and calls soldiers who descend on the leader of the delegation; Opene.

He had scarcely finished speaking when the officer slapped him hard across the mouth and sent him crashing across the bowl of the canoe, dragging a couple of his men down with him (13).

These soldiers are paid by the companies to deal with any community or association that tries to raise their voices.

Opene said that when from a distance he cast a final glance back at the rig, he could vaguely discern the officer shaking hands with the Whiteman and receiving from him what looked like a package (13).

Okpewho also ex-rays corruption among the Niger Delta's Chiefs and councilors through Chief Zuokomors who is known for corruption and dubious records.

But everyone here knows the corrupt, ignominious roles he played in two recent arbitrations! One in the dispute over fishing boundaries between the villages of Dimiso and, Erefiebi, the other in the matter of compensation to be paid to village of Ekpetiama by the Dutch company, Atlantic Fuels, (14).

We are told how the Chiefs collide with the foreign oil company to victimize the people. Consequently the Chiefs do not talk or oppose the foreign oil company because they have been bribed to cooperate against the welfare and interest of their people. What a shame!

This is why Chief Zuokomor is shunning Brisibe at the inaugural meeting of the Task Force on pollution in the oil producing Areas when he is addressing and stating the plight of the Beniotu land. Hear him: "I think

this man should shut up because he does not know what his is talking about” (131).

Even the Newspapers like *National Chronicles* and *The New Nigerian Times* join the government in their corrupt practices, faking reports and pictures that the public is even doubting their reports because they are owned by the government.

Lati has been kind enough to let me see some of the articles, complete with classified information and some very incriminating photographs of the damages suffered by Niger Delta Communities, which the newspaper has refrained from publishing – at least in the form in which they came (17).

I didn’t want to rely on what *The New Nigeria Times* carried – being practically owned by the government, it couldn’t be trusted to tell the truth on any serious matter affecting the government (35).

Okpewho’s *Tides* explains why all the committees, Task Forces established to develop the Niger Delta fail. The CCC: Committee of Concerned Citizens fails as it is only the leader; Bickerbug that is active; other three

members are there for their selfish purposes. During the meeting with the minister, they are only there to maximize their corrupt opportunities.

Our three so called representatives were busy trying to persuade the minister to include their names in the list. Not because they hoped to use the opportunity to help our cause, but simply to suit their own private and selfish interests (37).

Another factor that makes the committees and task forces to fail is that the people involved are indigenes with questionable characters and dubious records. Imagine involving chief Zuokomor as a member of the Task Force. What will be his impact if not corruption. And in CCC, it is only Bickerbug that stands boldly against corruption, a tree does not make a forest.

Everybody is fighting for his personal gains, the foreign oil companies, the soldiers and even the fishermen.

Private profit “Whether for the oil companies or for the petty soldiers who seem so committed to protecting the interests of the former for their own blasted purposes, or even for the local fishermen who don’t mind bargaining for compensations now and then (3).

The level of corruption and victimization around is too high. This is making everybody to be afraid of everyone. One cannot relate with a fellow country man or woman without showing one fear or the other whereas there is freedom of speech. This is shown in the statement of the old man living in the same compound with Bickerbug after talking to Piriye. “Remember, he whispered; you didn’t hear anything from us. You don’t know us and we don’t know you. Okay?” (50).

One’s struggle for the relief of his people is seen as a violent act and the person is prosecuted. Bickerbug when speaking publicly at the campos square is arrested by the members of the NSS – National Security Service. This is why when Brisibe is visiting some government ministries reporting the woes of his people Batowei warns him: “Please don’t get yourself involved in anything that may ruin your chances of realizing this happy life in the village” (79).

It is not surprising why there are coups upon coups and new budgets and spendings that achieve no visible improvements anywhere!

Every other year, there is a coup and new government comes into power. New men, new policies, new budgets, new spending and we start all over again (80).

Nobody wants to associate with truth or anybody this is truthful. Batowei does not want to be identified with Brisibe in the meeting of the Task Force inauguration simply because he is truthful and outspoken about the troubles the Beniotus people are suffering.

There are several cases of environment pollution, corruption, and victimization in Okpewho's *Tides*. The environment of the Niger Delta, Beniotu in particular, is so polluted by the oil exploration by various foreign oil companies and nobody is doing anything about it; their shrines are being destroyed; their farms are destroyed by the oil spillage, even their rivers/water, almost every week are polluted by seismic explosion, and leakage from oil pipelines. The application of some detergents to prevent the pollution kills fishes in the water while the water that flows into the farm also carries the spillage along and thereby making their plants/crops to die.

If they report to the oil companies operating there, they will send soldiers after them; the government is already colluding with the companies. consequently they call Niger Deltans names like "trouble makers, Soboteurs" etc. When committees are set up to improve their lives they do not do anything because the members are corrupt.

The people of Beniotu suffer terrible victimization; the oil exploration in their homeland makes life excruciatingly difficult and meaningless for

them; their farms are devastated; the fishes in water are killed or wiped away by water pollution. Availability of drinking water becomes an impossibility. Not even the air they breathe is any longer pure and healthy. How do people live and remain healthy? Is it not gradual genocide?

I am suggesting that the petroleum slick affect not only our fishes and farm but even the water in our wells. My wife and I have observed an unnatural taste in our drinking water (131).

The value of the oil is the main thing the country is after. The navy station in Warri is established since the civil war with the charge of ensuring the security of oil exploration in Niger Delta and has unit in Brutu and Forcados. They protect the oil companies that often buy them over to silence dissenting voices of the people of the land.

It has been rumoured that for sometime now that some officers and soldiers of these units have colluded with the oil companies around here in measures of dubious purpose directed against communities that have had cause to raise a voice of protest (13).

We are told that communities are beaten and locked up or even allowed to die in detention because they protest officially against the degradation of their lives.

The Kuruma people protested and many of them were beaten and locked up for days in cells without food. One of them died in the cell. He was quietly buried (27).

Piriye Dukumo suffers victimization in many other ways. First from his wife; Tonye who he has lived and spent unbearable years without having children and she blames him for that and punishes him for a disability traceable to the pollution of the ecosystem and the lives of the people of the land.

But life with her had become totally unbearable in the last five years or so: But why must a man suffer in his own house simply because he has not given his wife a child? For some three years now she has not cooked me a single meal or even allowed me to make love to her ----
- what have I done? She can't say I ever lifted a finger on her despite all the provocations that could have driven me to it (62).

He goes to the NSS station to look for Bickerbug and he is treated like a criminal. He is ushered into an empty room, where there is no fan and is kept alone without any word for over an hour against his own will and after being interrogated he is left in the empty room locked there till their closing hour in the evening.

Piriye is visited by Dayo Haastrup and Phil Osawe from NSS office. Haastrup gives Piriye a hard push on the chest for no reason, tearing his shelf and breaking his flower vase without an apology and without showing their search warrant. He is taken to the NSS office and put into prison without telling him his crimes, there, he is made to suffer from “Legalized blackmail”. He is made to inhale the shit coming out from the “Pail of shit – toilet pail by other prisoners/detainees by leaving the pail open on his first night in the detention and he could not sleep because of that.

The other inmates had insisted I should be introduced to the realities of life in detention and the pail should be left open for my first night there (98).

The novel explores how prisoners/detainees suffer; they are maltreated and their health are not important to them. Imagine being with a pail of shit and a broken one for that matter.

This pail was torn for about half its deep from the top, so that there was a constant overspill of human waste on the floor by the corner of the wall where it stood (99).

They detain people in the prison without trial for a very long time. Many detainees stay in prison for an incredible long time and some convicted prisoners serve long term, only because the authorities have forgot about their cases or lost their files.

The prisoner who tries to escape from the prison was caught and victimized seriously according to Piriye;

I looked closely and saw a pool of blood on the floor where he has collapsed. The bullets had ripped his right thigh to shreds and his abdomen was open, allowing his intestines to spill out and crang loosely over his shredded shots. The two soldiers who gunned him down grabbed him, each by the arm and proceeded to drag him along the ground in the direction of the train building (98).

This is horribly inhuman. Only savages deserve such treatment. The Niger Deltans are victimized, often silenced so that oil companies,

Government, chiefs and collaborators who hardly share in the devastation of the environment feed faton the misery of the people.

Our people down in Delta are angry because too many promises have been made to them – compensations to be paid, roads to be built, et cetera et Oter and nothing ever gets done (150).

There is terrible politics going on. Nigeria as a nation is exploited, marginalized, and even abused in the oil companies. It is all a rip-off. It could even be termed racism. The Nigerian executives at the rigs – engineers and technicians are under paid and over exploited because “The white rednecks are paid far more than them even though the Nigerians are better qualified”(150).

Ebika Harrison – Bickerbug suffers victimization more than any other individual in the novel because of his honesty and fight to better the lives of the Niger Deltans. He is followed up by the NSS people. He is detained for three months simply because the other members of the CCC of which he is the leader report that he has a violent plan without any proof at all.

Ebika suffers in the hands of the NSS, he is badly hurt by them. He narrates his experiences to Piriye.

I was led Hand cuffed to the gate of the camp. Yelwa made sure he saw me to the gate. While it was being open, he shouted to the armed guards in the camp all four of them. When they came he told them to “break” me and leave me in the box. Two of them led me away. They took me to the back of the building, and they worked me over - - - - - . The two soldier loosened their belts and began to lash me furiously. Remember I was handcuffed and could not ward off the lashes in any way. I screamed to the top of my voice as the pain of their blow cut through my skin. After a time I was thoroughly weakened by the pain and I fell down - - - when they got tired of lashing, they resorted to punching and kicking on my face, my sides, my eye balls, every where. I did not know what else they did because I passed out. When I woke up in the middle of the night, I found I was lying on the floor. I noticed my handcuffs were gone. I was lying on a wet, stinking floor and I was aching all over - - - In the morning I saw that there are faeces and urine all

over the floor. Mind you I could barely see, with my eyes all swollen and bloodshot and red (152 – 153).

All these he suffers; these toughen his resolve to deal with the government by being violent. He destroys not less than five oil installations in the Delta by bomb explosion, blowing up a section of Lugard Bridge in Lagos. He blows the Kwarafa Dam and he becomes happy that the water is now flowing freely for the people of Delta.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMPARATIVE AND CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ABAGHA'S *CHILDREN OF OLOIBIRI AND OKPEWHO'S TIDES*

Both novels are Niger Delta novels. They deal with issues concerning the Niger Delta areas and the country/nation at large. These are shown by the names of places in the novels where most of the events take place and affect. In *Tides* by Okpewho we have Beniolu, Benin, River, Siemna, Delta, etc. and in Abagha's *Children of Oloibiri*, Oloibiri, Moroko, Diobu are all towns on the Niger Delta State like Bayelsa, Delta and River State.

Okpewho's *Tides* explores environmental pollution, maltreatments. Victimizations of the Niger Delta people. It x-rays the corruption in the country involving the government (military) officials, the oil companies' managers some members of the communities and task forces, the village chiefs and the council of elders.

There are issues of unfulfilled promises – like roads not built and compensations not paid. The people are given all sorts of names like “trouble makers”, “Saboteurs” and “Illiterate natives” just because they demand their due rights. Any head that rises or any mouth that speaks for the liberty of the Niger Delta people is crushed and trampled upon by the security forces. Bickerbug is followed and dealt with by the NSS – National

Security Services because he speaks to the government about the condition of the Niger Delta people. Piriye Dukumo is questioned by the NSS agents also for his writeups in the international newspaper

We read about how piriye and Brisibe are retired prematurely because they are both from Beniotu – minority group..

Anthony Abagha in *Children of Oloibiri* also explores the corruption in the Oloibiri nation:, the inevitable appetite of Oloibirians, their uncontrollable greed and urge to acquire more wealth not minding whose ox that is gored, the unholy baptism of items and change of their names (“acqua canopy” is umbrella; hand digging machine” is a hoe;” hand cutting machine” is cutlass, and “urea – tank fastener”, is screw nuts). Unit prices of items are sky – rocketed. An ordinary umbrella costs N5,000 - - a case of monumental fraud through which ONAFCO (Oloibiri National Fertilizer Company) is robbed billions of naira with the collaboration of the sons of the soil who are both the contractors and the Approval Authorities. The result is that ONAFCO is liquidated and closed.

Children of Oloibiri is an account of a country where everyone makes corrupt use of any position he/she has to manipulate the people, the company, and the nation, which – by implication is Nigeria.

Both novels *Tides* by Isidore Okpewho and Anthony Abagha's *Children of Oloibiri* have corruption and victimization as their major themes. There are foreigners involvements as both novels include events, actions and business relations with foreign companies.

There are oppositions to corruption and victimization in the two novels. In *Tides*, we have Ebika Harrison known as Bickerbug, Piriye Dukumo and Tonwe Brisibe and in *Children of Olobiri*, there are The Man, Sage his father, Gana, a lawyer and senator Rizenbe, though he is not an active participant.

Both novels uncover all the dark deals in the nation and bring them to light. There are abuses of power and positions. The foreign companies bribe the soldiers, the village councilors, elders, the members of the committees and Task forces in *Tides*. The Solders abuse their powers by maltreating the indigenes and NSS – National Security Services detain people without reason.

The Man who is the protagonist in *Children of Oloibiri* and an opposition to corruption and victimization in the novel, demands in ONAFCO that all the corrupt officials like store supervisor, the store messenger, the head of requisition department and member chemicals should be sanctioned. The controlling Authorities disagree with him. knowing that

he could not sanitize ONAFCO without the cooperation of the authorities, he goes on leave. Like all honest staff of high integrity The Man secures a higher and more responsible job at Abuja and consequently leaves ONAFCO for good, forever. In the end, ONAFCO liquidates and is closed down as it could not even pay staff or produce fertilizers for the public.

Children of Oloibiri deals more on corruption than victimization but *Tides* deals greatly with both corruption and victimization.

Tides dwells on event, actions and experiences of the Niger Deltans and Nigerians as a whole during the military era while *Children of Oloibiri* explores the excesses of the nation and the government during the civilian period. *Abagha's Children of Oloibiri* employs euphemistic languages like “Chop I Chop” (65), anything for smoke, paper dey – oo (67), four-one – niners (146) etc. *Tides* discusses issues in everyday languages without any sugar coating or euphemisms.

The events and experiences shared in *Children Of Oloibiri* are told from the author's perspective whereas in *Tides Piriye* and *Tonwe* discuss events and experiences through their letters - - or what we may refer to as the epistolary techniques.

CONCLUSION

Anthony Ndubuisi Abagha's *Children of Oloibiri* explores corruption in a greater extent than victimization. It discusses corruption and victimization in many sectors— private sectors, public sectors and the society at large even to the notice of the government personnels like senator Rizenbe and the former Vice President. It shows that corruption has engulfed the entire nation, the entire *Children of Oloibiri*, who by extension and implication are Nigerians as a whole. In a situation like this how does the nation survive. ONAFCO symbolizes Nigeria; a close down of ONAFCO is a shutdown of the allegorical Nigerian Nation. But there is, however, a light at the end of the tunnel. The Abuja offices, one of which employs The Man (the erstwhile ONAFCO staff) is hope enough that Nigeria remains a float and would not sink for long into the quagmire of corruption, victimization or the euphemistic “Chop I Chop” and the nation dies!

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