



American Journal of Arts and Human Science (AJAHS)

ISSN: 2832-451X (ONLINE)

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1 (2025)



PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

The Power of Communal Action: A Theatrical Exploration of Justice in Nigerian Society

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Article Information

Received: December 25, 2024

Accepted: January 28, 2025

Published: March 08, 2025

Keywords

Collective Action, Miscarriage of Justice, Nigerian Justice System, Societal Struggle and Freedom, Theatre for Social Change

ABSTRACT

This study explores the prevalent miscarriages of justice within Nigerian society and the resultant erosion of confidence in the Nigerian justice system, often perceived as flawed. This lack of trust fosters fear and drives individuals to make desperate, sometimes harmful, decisions. Although achieving true justice may seem like a distant goal, it becomes more attainable through collective action, emphasizing the power of unity. Theatre, as a potent medium accessible to diverse audiences, serves as an effective catalyst for justice, fostering awareness, empowerment, and potential societal transformation. Through a literary lens, this study analyzes three plays; Osita Ezenwanebe's *Withered Thrust*, Akachi Ezeigbo's *Hands that Crush Stone*, and Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun*—to demonstrate how communal efforts can triumph over individual struggles in the pursuit of justice. The findings reveal that collective action empowers communities and fosters justice for individuals. This research highlights the intersection of theatre and social change, illustrating how artistic expression can inspire collective efforts for justice.

INTRODUCTION

Justice in Nigerian society has undergone a transformative journey, from the structured, community-driven systems of pre-colonial times to the often-flawed Western judicial framework imposed during colonial rule. In pre-colonial Nigeria, communities like Umuofia, as depicted in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, resolved conflicts through deeply entrenched cultural customs, often emphasizing communal retribution and restoration. However, with the advent of colonialism, the imposition of a singular Western legal system created significant challenges, failing to accommodate Nigeria's rich cultural diversity and exacerbating societal inequalities.

In contemporary Nigeria, these challenges persist, with widespread disillusionment in the formal justice system fueling fear and desperation. Yet, amidst these struggles, the potential for communal action to restore justice emerges as a powerful antidote. This study explores how theater, as a medium accessible to diverse audience, can galvanize communities to address societal injustices collectively. Through the lens of Ezenwanebe's (2014) *Withered Thrust*, Akachi Ezeigbo's *Hands that Crush Stone*, and *Morountodun* by Femi Osofisan, this paper examines the limitations of individual efforts in achieving justice and underscores the transformative power of unity in the fight for societal equity.

Corruption and the Crisis of Justice in Nigeria Governance, Corruption, and Justice: Analyzing Nigeria's Criminal Justice System

Osasona Tosin highlights the symbiotic relationship between governance and the criminal justice system, stating:

Governance determines how the criminal justice system as an institution of social control in a country is defined and utilized. Furthermore, how well a country manages its criminal justice system affects its overall performance on the governance index. A country that gets its criminal justice system right has effectively addressed a great part of its governance concerns because of the centrality of the criminal justice system to order and stability.

This assertion underscores the essential role of governance in ensuring the functionality of the justice system. Inefficient governance, marred by corruption, disrupts the system's operations and undermines its credibility, leading to the erosion of public trust. When faith in the formal justice system falters, citizens often turn to extrajudicial measures, further destabilizing societal order.

Osasona also observes that the Nigerian criminal justice system is "fundamentally flawed and the problem is represented and manifested at every processing point on the entire criminal justice system line". From law enforcement to adjudication, systemic weaknesses lead to inefficiencies, delays, and injustices. Similarly, Newman and Moore emphasize that an effective justice system should operate as a cohesive process, ensuring that crime management and penalties are equitable and timely. However, Nigeria's system has been characterized as a "conveyor belt of injustice". This antiquated framework struggles to process cases effectively, diminishing public confidence in its ability to uphold the rule of law.

Criminal justice can be understood as both a system and a process. As a system, it represents the agencies and processes established to manage crime and penalize lawbreakers (Moore, 1997; Newman, 1979). However, in

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Nigeria, the absence of essential policies and legislation results in a justice system that is unresponsive and incapable of delivering timely justice. This dysfunction creates a public perception of impunity, further undermining the system's credibility and societal order.

Unlike the antiquated and dysfunctional modern system, the pre-colonial era's justice mechanisms, despite their imperfections, embodied elements of fairness and accountability, incorporating punitive measures rooted in cultural and spiritual beliefs. The colonial introduction of Western justice systems disrupted these indigenous systems, replacing them with frameworks ill-suited to address Nigeria's cultural complexities. The current justice system's inability to deliver timely and impartial justice further compounds its inadequacies, exacerbating public disillusionment.

Leadership and Service Delivery Failures

Nigeria's justice system is plagued by inefficiencies that have allowed corruption to flourish. Endemic corruption, which many scholars trace back to the colonial era, has permeated public and private institutions. Colonial legacies introduced a culture of self-enrichment, as observed in the 1947 Colonial Government Report: "The African's background and outlook on public morality is very different from that of the present-day Briton. The African in the public service seeks to further his own financial interest" (Okonkwo, 2007). This perspective continues to hold relevance in contemporary Nigeria, where institutions like the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Ports Authority, and Nigeria Airways have become synonymous with corruption.

The primary responsibility of leadership is to deliver essential services to the populace. As Adamolekun notes, "In Nigeria, the ability of the government to legitimately tax and govern people is premised on its capacity to deliver a range of services required by its population which no other player will provide". However, in Nigeria, this model has been undermined by institutionalized corruption, which has profoundly compromised governance and service delivery. Poor leadership, fueled by endemic corruption, has created an environment where promises of reform often remain unfulfilled.

Leadership is integral to countering corruption and fostering good governance. Leaders are expected to guide their followers toward just and ethical actions. However, when leaders fail to act credibly, they lose influence, leading to widespread disillusionment among the citizenry. During his administration, President Obasanjo established anti-corruption agencies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) in 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003. Despite these efforts, corruption persists due to inadequate enforcement of justice. Without accountability, individuals continue to exploit systemic vulnerabilities.

President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, which assumed office in 2015, was built on the promise to

eliminate corruption. Buhari declared corruption as "the greatest form of human rights violation" (The Inaugural Speech). Despite these strong words, after eight years in office, corruption persisted and even intensified. Efforts to prosecute individuals involved in corrupt practices have been hindered by systemic dysfunction within Nigeria's justice system. Onya McWilliams highlights two significant obstacles: the compromised sincerity of policymakers and enforcers, and the limitations of penal codes, which primarily target public servants while enabling non-public collaborators to escape accountability.

Similarly, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, in his inaugural address in 2023, pledged to combat corruption and enhance the efficiency of anti-corruption agencies. Despite these commitments, skepticism remains, as many view his declarations as echoing Buhari's earlier promises. Real progress in combating corruption requires substantive reforms within Nigeria's criminal justice system, as this system is foundational to governance and societal order.

Theatre as a Catalyst for Communal Justice

A Communal and Artistic Struggle for Justice

Addressing corruption and systemic injustice in Nigeria demands both collective action and innovative strategies. Communal struggles for justice unite diverse communities to challenge systemic inequities, amplifying marginalized voices and fostering solidarity across social, cultural, and political divides. These movements emphasize inclusivity and mutual support, creating a unified front to demand accountability and reform.

Theatre provides a dynamic platform to mobilize communities and provoke critical discourse. Through storytelling, performance, and artistic expression, theatre engages audiences emotionally and intellectually, fostering awareness and inspiring collective action. By leveraging theatre as a tool for advocacy, individuals and communities can challenge the entrenched norms of corruption and impunity, driving meaningful social change.

This study explores the transformative potential of theatre in reforming the Nigerian justice system, drawing on influential theories such as Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre, Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and the concept of theatre as ritual and ceremony. It proposes theatre as a platform for community engagement, critical reflection, and collective action. By employing participatory techniques, theatre can empower citizens, challenge oppressive power structures, and advocate for systemic reforms, paving the way for a more equitable and transparent justice system. Furthermore, this study examines the interplay between corruption, the justice system, and the moral and ethical collapse caused by systemic injustice. This exploration is framed through the lens of Nigerian plays such as *Withered Thrust* by Ezenwanebe (2014), *Hands that Crush Stones* by Akachi Ezigbo, and *Morountodun* by Femi Osofisan. These theatrical works critique societal ills, illuminate the

deep-rooted consequences of corruption, and propose pathways for justice and reform. Through the communal power of theatre, this research underscores the role of art in challenging the status quo and fostering transformative change in Nigeria's justice system.

Advocating for Change in Nigeria's Societal Landscape

Theatre possesses immense potential as a powerful tool for conveying information, advocating for causes, and shaping societal perspectives. Throughout history, it has proven effective in delivering critical messages, raising awareness, empowering individuals, and driving transformative change. As Leonard and Kilkelly aptly put it, "Sometimes the plays speak what everybody knows; sometimes they speak what nobody says. Sometimes they open paths or unveil truths; sometimes they challenge the way things are done or understood". When discussing theatre as a vehicle for justice, it is often seen as a form of protest. However, in this context, theatre (play) refers not just to acts of defiance or resistance, but also to its potential as a tool for reconciliation. By using theatre to address societal issues, we not only educate, but also challenge public awareness, foster empathy, and create connections among individuals.

Artists are often perceived as dreamers, living relaxed lives and deriving sustenance from beauty. However, art holds just as much power as any other tool in the fight for societal change. Diego Rivera famously stated, "All forms of art are propaganda. The only difference is the kind of propaganda. Since art is essential to people's lives, it cannot belong to just some of us. Art is a universal language and belongs to all mankind" (34). Rivera believed that every great artist was, at their core, a propagandist. He declared, "I want to be a propagandist and nothing else. I want to use art as a weapon". This idea—art as a weapon—resonates deeply. Art has the capacity to serve as a powerful tool in the fight against injustice and oppression. Through various forms of creative expression, including theater, artists possess the ability to raise awareness, challenge societal norms, and amplify the voices of marginalized communities. By shedding light on urgent social issues, provoking critical thought, and mobilizing collective action, art becomes a catalyst for social change. In the hands of artists, art transforms into a vehicle for resistance, solidarity, and healing, opening new avenues for advocacy, dialogue, and reconciliation in the pursuit of justice and equality.

Boal's theory highlights the transformative potential of theatre in fostering social change and empowering marginalized communities. Techniques such as Forum Theatre and Image Theatre, central to the Theatre of the Oppressed, enable participants to engage with and challenge systems of oppression, advocate for their rights, and imagine alternative realities. Echoing Bertolt Brecht's views, theatre should prompt spectators to adopt an attitude of inquiry and critical reflection rather than passive emotional engagement. Brecht emphasized

that theatre is not about replicating existing conditions but about unveiling and exposing them, encouraging spectators to think critically (Brecht, qtd. in Walter, 3-5). This aligns with theatre's role as a potent tool for raising awareness, fostering understanding, and advancing societal progress. In this context, theatre serves as an invaluable medium for effecting change and cultivating a more informed and conscientious society.

Osofisan maintains that: In terms of political engagement, the theatre has a great role to play by ensuring that it forms part of the struggle for the political and economic emancipation of our country. It is imperative for practitioners to stand up to face the immense challenges of reviving the arts in Nigeria, particularly theatre practice. He argues that live theatre can be used to preach "the virtues of socialism," since the old doctrine of "arts for art's sake" has gradually been relegated to the background, and that there is no denying the fact that the theatre can indeed go beyond just being for entertainment or mere formalistic experiments (Osofisan & Hussein, 2001).

Certainly, theatre through its consistent and repetitive messaging has the capacity to influence its audience's attitudes and behavioral patterns. Thus, theatre can be harnessed as a means to shape people's way of thinking and, in the context of this study, to collectively advocate for justice. This study emphasizes the efficacy of communal efforts over individualistic endeavors in societal struggles. The motto of communalism, often referred to as 'communitarianism,' encapsulates this idea: "I am because we are" (Nagengast, 2015). This statement powerfully underscores the inherent strength in collective efforts. It does not discount the significance of individual efforts, but it emphasizes that the sense of togetherness makes it easier to achieve a common goal. It's akin to the concept that it is easier to break a single broomstick than to break an entire broom, symbolizing the power of unity. Communal actions, in this context, refer to actions that resonate with the shared sense of belonging among a group of people. This unity and collective purpose can be effectively channeled through theatre to foster social change, including the pursuit of justice.

This study strongly advocates for leveraging communal efforts to attain individual freedom. Nigerian society operates within a mixed economy framework, with capitalism significantly influencing the system. Instances where the government privatizes state-owned enterprises and sells them to private individuals exemplify this trend. If caution is not exercised, Nigeria may increasingly veer towards a capitalist economic structure rather than maintaining a balance with socialist elements. Capitalism, at its core, involves private ownership of the means of production and is driven by the pursuit of material self-interest. In this economic system, individuals or private entities own and control the resources necessary for production and distribution. Marx, upon observing the extent to which capitalists exploit the labor of the working class, proposed that the working class should unite, revolt against this exploitation, and protect their produce,

putting an end to the alienation and poor treatment they endured. He argued that collective conflict and action were significantly more effective than individual struggle (Marx, 12-14). This viewpoint underscores the power of communal efforts in challenging unjust systems and advocating for better conditions, which aligns with the study's emphasis on communal action for achieving individual freedom.

The concept of communal control is rooted in the idea of achieving individual freedom within a broader societal context. It posits that communal struggle often yields greater success in the long run, ultimately resulting in individual freedom. The effectiveness of communal effort over individual endeavors is highlighted in the context of productivity and achievement, resonating with the portrayal in the mentioned plays. Nigeria, with its diverse ethnic communities like the Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, and others, exemplifies a society with smaller communal units.

These communities not only coexist but also share specific norms and values. A community, as defined by Bartle, "represents a pattern of human social interaction where individuals involved share certain values, norms, aspirations, and interests" (15). For instance, the Igbo community, characterized by a unique culture and a sense of communal identity, underscores the communal nature of Nigerian society (Ezenwanebe, 2014). In the Nigerian societal context where the justice system now encompasses various ethnicities and is not synonymous with a single group, the shared aspirations for justice, freedom, liberty, and rights indeed serve as a unifying force. Achieving these essential objectives requires a collaborative endeavor where individuals come together in solidarity. While the ultimate aim is to secure these rights for each individual, the path to realization necessitates a collective effort. It is imperative for people to unite and demand justice, particularly in holding offenders accountable. This collective action demonstrates the potency of unity in the pursuit of fundamental rights and freedoms, transcending ethnic boundaries and forging a common path toward a more just and equitable society.

Echidimma's solitary struggle against corruption in *Withered Thrust*

The play *Withered Thrust* by Ezenwanebe (2014) was first performed in 2017 by final year students of the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, Nigeria in 2007. It centers on the character Echidimma, an ambitious young banker. Echidimma takes up a solitary crusade against corrupt practices within the bank he is employed in. His motivation stems from Chief Badmus, the bank manager at Giant's Bank Plc., and his hypocritical stance on fighting corruption, aligning his speeches with the federal government's anti-corruption campaign. Echidimma's initial objective isn't to entirely eradicate corruption from the banking system. Instead, he is driven by the desire to claim the three million Naira reward offered for anyone who can uncover, prevent, or

expose fraud within the bank. Echidimma is hesitant to involve others in his pursuit for the entire reward due to his family's financial demands, given his limited salary. He states in the play; "The family expenses are telling hard on me. And my salary? My salary refuses to stand up as a man and carry the burden. Instead it is collapsing under the weight, bearing hard on me".... It cannot be heard that an Igbo man is incapable of taking care of his family financially. That's a significant aspect of his manhood. This predicament emphasizes the underlying socio-economic pressures that drive individuals to take unconventional actions, even in the pursuit of justice and rectitude.

The parallel between the banking system in the play and Nigerian society is evident, reflecting a broader issue of power dynamics and exploitation prevalent in a capitalist system. This resemblance highlights a reality where a select few individuals hold significant influence, akin to how the capitalist system can oppress and exploit the working class or proletariat. As outlined by Elster, "this exploitation serves as a powerful motivator for protest, revolt, or revolution when perceived by the exploited". Exploitation is inherently wrong, and reinforces the need for a more equitable and communal approach, such as communism, to counteract the exploitative nature of capitalism. This aligns with the notion that corruption, like exploitation, necessitates a collective effort to effectively combat it and bring about substantial change. Echidimma's oversight of the challenges inherent in fighting corruption alone underscores the importance of collaboration and collective action in addressing societal issues effectively. Corruption is a battle that cannot be fought alone if one were to achieve great success; Echidimma ignores the effect involved in fighting corruption alone. In movement two of the play, at the meeting, Chief Badmus the operation's manager of Giant's Bank plc. talks about the federal government unrelenting fight against corrupt practices especially in high places. He declared it a total war against the enemies of the state; "he adds that anti-corruption war is raging, and their bank cannot sit on the fence, and concludes that they must follow the foot-steps of their leaders". The play sheds light on these interconnected issues, highlighting the imperative of unified action in confronting corruption and seeking justice.

In the play, chief Badmus is a good representation of a corrupt politician/leader/highly-placed individual who destroys the system secretly, so, he is the arrow-head of the corruption that the play dramatizes. This situation can be likened to the present day Nigeria where the fight against corruption is evident with the participation of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). In the play, this statement is rather ironic because the person issuing this statement is the same person who the war should be waged against. In Nigeria, for instance, when laws are made, and the penalty of breaking the laws are issued, the people assigned to curb this are the same people who break the law, how then can justice be effective. It is just a circle of corruption.

Echidimma, the central character, embarks on a solo mission to uncover the fraudsters and claim the three-million-Naira reward. He chooses this individualistic path to avoid sharing the promised monetary reward, illustrating a focus on self-enrichment rather than ethical conduct. His stance of prioritizing financial stability for his family showcases the economic struggles prevalent in society, highlighting the inability of salaries to meet basic needs. This economic disparity reflects a state of alienation within the country, wherein workers find it challenging to sustain themselves and their families. Echidimma's quote; "all I know is that a man, a banker for that matter, should be able to take care of his family....I am no longer going to sit down here and watch the forces of an evil era and their cohorts rob me of my manhood and turn me into a castrated he-goat". This underscores the societal expectations and the economic pressures that drive individuals to engage in desperate and often illegal activities. He feels compelled to take matters into his own hands due to the prevailing injustices and economic inadequacies. However, his choice to pursue this path individually rather than through collective action reflects a failure to adapt to the principle of unity and joint effort, which is crucial for effecting meaningful change in a society. Mr.Hamzat a co-worker in the play asks; "but how? I know it is not easy to get these documents", Echidimma replies "I had to bribe to get them out". The desperation Echidimma feels due to the difficult circumstances in his life drives him to make impulsive decisions without adequate consideration or strategic planning. This is a stark representation of the impact that harsh living conditions can have on an individual, pushing them towards morally compromised choices. The Nigerian society, like the one depicted in the play, often places individuals in challenging situations due to economic disparities, limited opportunities, and unequal distribution of resources. In such conditions, individuals may resort to actions that may not align with their moral compass in an attempt to improve their circumstances. Echidimma's inclination towards fighting against the exploiters, representing the upper class, is in line with a Marxist spirit of addressing class struggle and societal inequalities. However, his failure to comprehend the enormity of the forces he is up against demonstrates the limitations of individual power in challenging entrenched systems. This realization underscores the importance of collective action and unity in effecting significant societal change. Individual efforts may be easily overwhelmed by the pervasive structures of inequality and exploitation present in society. In Echidimma words; "it is exploitative, anti-human and evil. A few corrupt men mount the back of laboring masses, sucking them dry and siphoning the product of their sweat, fixing it in foreign bank accounts... nothing is left in the nation for the welfare of the men that generate the wealth. .. These evil men can no longer get away with their plot. He possessed a strong desire to combat corruption at any expense, fueled by motivation. However, his primary goal was not to enhance the nation but to secure the well-being

of himself and his family. Unbeknownst to him, a joint effort could lead to an increase in their salaries, enabling him to provide for his family in the long run. Instead, he opted for an immediate achievement rather than aiming for a lasting one. Hamzat states; I see. Now tell me: what exactly propels your action? Patriotism, love for the masses, the desire to humiliate the rich, evil men or the cash reward which will enable you join them? Or what?. Echidimma fails to see beyond now, he thought if he engages others the reward will be split and so failed to apprehend that the mission cannot be achieved unaided. His colleague Mr.Hamzat tries to point Echidimma to that direction of a collective struggle when he says, "Come on, Echi, can't you see you are treading on a dangerous ground?", but to no avail. He clearly saw the danger inherent in this fight and however observes that it is a fight bigger than one man but Echidimma was oblivious in seeing it and this evident in his statement; "I have them right in my palm", Mr.Hamzat replies, "Have you?", he adds; "I think you need to think twice, for what you're out to catch is too dangerous with bare hands. Remember, an old woman cannot be outdone in a dance she has danced for long". Echidimma replies; "These men bestride the gateway to wealth and pleasure and bar others from crossing over as if wealth and luxury are meant for them alone. Every man loves good cars, magnificent apartment, beautiful ladies and the likes. I mean, with the cash reward of three million naira, my life is changed for the better! Maybe you think I don't like luxury, you're wrong". This statement still pivots his reason for this fight and thus no proper planning and as such resulting to his demise. Echidimma's solitary struggle in this conflict ultimately led to the tragic loss of his life. He found himself pitted against the collective force of the operation sector's staff, including Chief Badmus, Mr. Gab, Mr. Anyika, and Mallam Abdulahi. Their combined numbers and united front overwhelmed him, resulting in the devastating consequence of his widow and orphaned children. This serves as a stark reminder of the outcome when one person attempts to wage a battle meant for many. It underscores the importance of those facing injustice and oppression coming together as a united front to defend their rights. While one individual can spark a movement against corruption in the face of an unjust justice system, victory in such a battle cannot be achieved by a lone warrior; it requires the collective efforts of a determined group.

The Power of Unity: Collective Action in Hands That Crush Stone and *Morountodun*

In *Hands That Crush Stone*, Ezeigbo highlights these social inequalities, calling for revolution in response to oppression. Through the play, she offers a realistic portrayal of societal struggles, using satire to critique the capitalist system and its impact on the marginalized. The play primarily focuses on women, particularly widows, who endure the grueling labor of crushing stones for meager pay. They face exploitation and are disconnected from the fruits of their labor, unable to sustain themselves

and their families adequately. Eziegbo utilizes this play as a means to convey a message to the policymakers of the state she is portraying, namely Ebonyi state in Nigeria, urging them to alleviate the immense suffering these women endure. The analysis of the play doesn't center on a feminist perspective despite its focus on women. Instead, it highlights their collective effort to instigate change that would lead to individual benefits for these women. Amina a character in the play recounts that they come in the morning before eight crush stones till five in the evening only to go home with the starvation wage they are being paid. They live in retarded places without drainage and rain water digs holes there every rainy season, they can barely feed themselves let alone their children and some of them are widows single handily taking care of their homes. These women united and took the bold step of going on strike, aiming to compel Chief Mbu, the chairman of Izunga Local Government, to address their demands by raising their current wages. Despite facing the dilemma of hungry children and wavering thoughts about retracting their stance, they remained resolute and sought ways to resolve the issue while maintaining their unity to drive the cause for change.

The women question their wisdom in reporting for work the next day, but came to a conclusion that, it would not have been possible, if they were not in it together. Timi states; "I am afraid. I almost did not come here this morning, but I did not want to disappoint you people, as we agreed yesterday that we should all be here". Timi knew she could draw strength from the other women and could withstand the fear because of their agreement to work together. Kemi agrees by stating; we are all in this and must see the end of it. We must stick together or we lose. Unity and collective action indeed drive success. The women in the play showcased the power of standing together, ultimately achieving their goal of a wage increase through solidarity. Madam Udentia's strategic use of media and the threat to Chief Mbu's position demonstrated the influence of collective efforts in effecting change.

A similar theme is depicted in the play *Morountodun* by Femi Osofisan, where the Agbekoya uprising underscores the farmers' struggle against alienation and their quest for justice in reaping the benefits of their produce. Although the decision to take up arms resulted in conflict and loss of lives, the focus here is on the collective effort the farmers demonstrated to address their grievances and find a solution to their problems. In both instances, whether it's the exploited workers or marginalized farmers, their actions were driven by frustration and exhaustion from the continuous neglect of their pleas by the authorities. The pivotal shift occurred when they chose to unite and take a collective stand against the injustices they faced, showcasing the potent force of togetherness in striving for change.

This paper argues for the concept illustrated by the farmers to come together and seek justice rather than resorting to armed conflict. In the play, a character named Baba highlights the enduring difficulties encountered by

the farmers; the roads have been in poor condition for years, making it impossible for them to reach the market to sell their crops. In act four, Baba states; "the akodas and officials harass us minutes to minute to collect bribes from them...you market board seizes of our cocoa and pays us only one third of what it sells...we have no electric and we still drink tanwiji from the stream. These grievances depict the harsh reality of their situation and highlight the need for collective action. The farmers' unity is emphasized as crucial in this context. They stayed together, amplifying their voices and demands for justice. The ill-fated mission undertaken by Marshal, Bogunde, and Kokondi without the support of their fellow farmers serves as a cautionary tale, illustrating that isolated efforts can lead to disaster. It emphasizes the importance of solidarity and togetherness when striving to address systemic issues and seek redress for injustices. Collective action not only enhances their strength but also increases the likelihood of achieving their goals and creating a lasting impact for their community.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria has experienced a prolonged period of leadership failure, resulting in a detrimental impact on its citizens. The country's alarming rank of 150 out of 180 countries in the 2022 Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International underscores the depth of the corruption issue. However, there remains hope for change, and the true power to instigate that change lies within the collective hands of the people, not a select few.

This paper strongly advocates for the utilization of nonviolent methods to address prevailing issues, rejecting violence, warfare, or rebellion. Instead, it underscores the significance of unity and strategic action in demanding the necessary change for the nation. Collaboration and collective endeavors are underlined as pivotal in achieving justice, liberty, and freedom. When individuals unite for a common purpose, their influence is considerable and widespread. The paper acknowledges theatre as a powerful instrument for raising awareness and conveying important messages. Through plays and performances, it becomes feasible to elucidate crucial issues and mobilize the public toward a shared objective.

Sponsor

This research is sponsored by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

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