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The Discourse of Arbitration in Pre-Colonial Nigeria: Insights from Igbo Literary Texts

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Abstract

The British Common Law provides an overriding background to human conduct and the dispensation of justice in many Commonwealth nations, including Nigeria. This is without regard to the age-long processes of conducting human affairs in these societies. Indeed, there is this suspicion that the intellectual content and programmatic essence of traditional Nigerian practices, including arbitration procedures, have not been exploited ill the solution to our problems. Modern Nigerian societies do not seem to anchor on our cultural heritage. Thus, issues, including minor ones, tend to be exaggerated, and their outcomes drastic. It is this suspicion that provides justification to this paper. An attempt will be made to discuss arbitration strategies in pre-colonial Igbo society. Emphasis will be on the discourse structure. TIIIIts, some of the survival strategies of those early societies will be highlighted. Material for the study will be drmvn from literary texts based on pre-colonial Igbo life. There is, however, the assumption that the findings will be relevant to other Nigerian groups.

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