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**Matric No: 16/law01/138**

**LAND TENURE SYSTEM IN IZOMBE, OGUTA LGA IN IMO STATE.**

Land tenure is the system of land holding in a given society. In common law, land tenure is the legal regime in which land is owned by an individual, who is said to "hold" the land. It determines who can use land, for how long and under what conditions. Tenure may be based both on official laws and policies, and on informal customs. It determines the owner’s rights and responsibilities in connection with their holding. When the tenure is based on informal customs, it is said to be customary land tenure.

In customary land tenure, the norms of customary tenure derive from and are sustained by the community itself rather than the state or state law (as in statutory land tenure).

Below are the various customary land tenure system practiced in Izombe, Oguta Local Government Area in Imo State:

1. Individual land tenure system

2. Communal land tenure system

3. Family land tenure system

4. Village land tenure system

**INDIVIDUAL LAND TENURE:**

The individual land tenure in traditional Izombe society is not different from already discussed types of land tenure earlier. In traditional Izombe society an individual can gain access to community land for purposes of agriculture, housing etc. Others may be seen from this view: THE ANA ALUSI (SACRED LAND): This category of land can be seen from the angle of that owned by the community; some land in Izombe community is still seen today as OFIA ALUSI OR ANA ALUSI. These lands are were some traditionalist/heathen offer prayers and sacrifices to their gods, it is held sacred by the priest and those members of such traditional religion, its exclusive for the members and no one is expected to encroach in such land. Also, the community has different lands designated for different traditional function.

**COMMUNAL LAND TENURE (ANA OBODO):**

The communal land tenure system in traditional Izombe society existed even before the different tenure laws were enacted in Nigeria. This could be seen in the various lands dedicated for different communal use and which includes the village squares, the market and other land dedicated for farming purposes. It should however be noted that the term community is a political and social concept and as such a community cannot act on its own. It can only act through some human agents such as chief or traditional ruler of the community who exercises the power of control and management of communal land on behalf of the community. Communal land is vested in the community as a whole and as such no individual member of the community can claim exclusive ownership to any part of such land. It should also be noted that in communal land tenure system the members of the community have definite rights in communal lands unlike a stranger who is not entitled to a portion of communal land.

**THE FAMILY LAND / TENURE:**

Family land is owned by a family in a certain prescribed manner by the head of the family, which is usually the oldest member of the family. He holds the same in trust for the rest members of the family. Despite the fact that the headman possesses the right to family land, he does not have the right to take decisions pertaining to the land, alienate, lease or dispose of land without the consent of the principal members of the family. He must seek the opinion of the principal members of the family before taking decision on land. Land can be held patrilineally or matrilineally. Patrilineally deceased property is shared amongst all his sons with the oldest getting the largest share and matrilineally, the deceased property is shared amongst his extended family, that is his next brother-though not necessarily the same mother. In traditional Izombe society the family land may comprise of the extended family structure and the nuclear family, this also came as a result of the sharing of the Ana Ndi Uluku.

**VILLAGE LAND (ANA OGBE) / TENURE:**

This comprises of different clans, the clan (Ndi Uluku) comprises of bigger extended families. Note that village lands emanate from the community land; they also have peculiar ways of sharing their land. Also it should be noted that Izombe community comprises of six villages. One of the peculiar features of the village land is that each of the six villages has its own square which is owned generally, these squares serves as meeting point for the various function by the village. Instances also abound where families who have small compound uses the square for traditional marriages.

Reference: **THE NIGERIAN LAND LAW, *TAIWO E.A.,***