



# **AFRICAN HERITAGE, IDENTITY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

## **NAVIGATING GLOBALIZATION AND POST-COLONIAL REALITIES**

**Proceedings of the 2024 International Conference of  
The Association for the Promotion of African Studies (APAS)**

# APAS

**Editors**

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## **DEDICATION**

**To all Promoters of African Studies**

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## PREFACE

The present work on “African Heritage, Identity and Sustainability: Navigating Globalization and Post-Colonial Realities” is proudly rooted in the rich soil of our African heritage, culture, and identity, which are the very essence of our being. From the majestic pyramids of Egypt to the vibrant markets of Lagos, our heritage is a testament to the ingenuity, creativity, and resilience of the African people, and above all, our Is-ness.

Yet, for centuries, our culture has been subjected to erasure, appropriation, and marginalization. Our identities have been distorted, silenced, and fragmented. The legacy of colonialism, slavery, and oppression has left deep scars, threatening to disconnect us from our roots. This background reveals not only the beauty but also the significance of this work.

This book is one of the products of the 2024 International Conference of the Association for the Promotion of African Studies (APAS), held at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria, 22 – 25 May, 2024. Immense thanks to the Emmanuel Kanu Educational Foundation for their generous support, which made this conference possible. This work of several chapters by scholars of the Association for the Promotion of African studies, seeks to reclaim, rediscover, and celebrate the beauty, diversity, and complexity of African heritage, culture, and identity. Through the voices, stories, and experiences of Africans across the diaspora sounding in this work, it aims at weaving a tapestry of our shared humanity. It explores the intricate threads of tradition and modernity, the struggles and triumphs, the pain and the joy. It delves into the nuances of identity, belonging, and citizenship, and examines the ways in which our heritage informs our present and shapes our future.

This is a journey of self-discovery, healing, and empowerment. It is a testament to the boundless potential of the African spirit. I, therefore, invite you to join on this journey, as we uncover, honor, and celebrate the richness of African heritage, culture, and identity.

**Prof. Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony, OSA**  
*Director of Research, Publications and Linkages*  
*Veritas University Abuja*  
*28<sup>th</sup> August, Feast of Saint Augustine of Hippo*

## **EXPLORING AND PRESERVING OUR AFRICAN CULTURAL VALUES AND HERITAGE IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL CIVILIZATION**

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### **Executive Summary**

*Why and how should Africa's cultural heritage be preserved? Africa is a home for a wealth of traditions, customs, and historical legacies that have been bequeathed through the ages. In the face of modern civilization, however, many of these cultures which are true to life stand at risk of extinction. If the true African past is lost to civilization, then there will be a gap in continuity between the past, the present and future generations. In other words, Africa can hardly speak of identity within the global community. This makes the question of preservation of African heritage expedient in contemporary African literature. This work employs the critical method of study in philosophy to explore some of the African cultural values and examine the consequences of preservation or non-preservation of the true African heritage. It finds that it is only through preservation of true African culture and traditions that African people can maintain a sense of identity and belongingness, and a sense of unity and cohesion which are essential to development within African communities. Preservation of a people's heritage is indispensable for its development and indigenous knowledge management. This paper argues that the key to preserving African culture lies in making it accessible to younger generations through education, documentation, and languages.*

**Keywords:** African heritage, African traditions, African identity, true culture, indigenous knowledge.

## Introduction

There is a saying about Missionaries in Africa that goes like this: “When the white man came to Africa, he had the Bible and the black man had the land. The white man said, ‘Let us close our eyes and pray.’ And when they opened their eyes, the white man had the land and the black man was left with the Bible.” This anecdote has far-reaching implications in the understanding of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial African society generally. It models a set of arguments against the colonial masters that has become commonplace in the discourse of so-called loss of identity in Africa – arguments that are quite necessary, but insufficient for understanding the history and impacts of colonialism and its antecedent modernity in Africa generally.

In his *Philosophy of History* published in 1956, Hegel depicted the Africans as people who have not attained consciousness or realization of any substantial objective existence. The African for him is yet to reach the level of realizing his own being (Hegel 1956, 93). He further portrayed African worldviews such as morality, culture and religion as being at the lowest conveyable phase of mind, tapped in nature, bonded to the body and barely above the level of animal. Simply put, Africa, Hegel maintained, was still at the level below that of a normal human being. Classical writings like that of Hegel have led to different misinterpretation regarding Africa as a people viewed through the lens of her culture and values. Against this background, many African scholars in contemporary discourse generally describe colonial masters and colonialist writers as the enemy of African cultures and freedom.

However, this study demonstrates that notwithstanding the attendant evils of colonialism, it has also been central to Africans’ own narratives of improvement. One of the valuable changes carried through by colonizers are stopping the taking of the life of twins. They also opened schools and spread education which helped the Africans to raise the level of their academic and cultural capacities. In doing this, however, they consciously altered African tradition and African values. This is because they could not identify the valuable elements of the traditional African culture that kept the Africans living in peace and security (Hoffman, 2017). Indeed, *Things Fall Apart* reflects how Europe treated Africa as both primitive and cultureless (Achebe, 1994). Colonialism she exerted on Africa ruptured the traditional process of moral identity and its practice.

It was believed that the ethics and values of the colonizer were superior to those of the colonized. This belief was accomplished through the change that has resulted such as the establishment of schools in which curricular were geared to achieve the goals of the colonizer rather than help the colonized to be politically and economically independent; and also, the missionary project, which helped in vitrifying the religious notion and scope of the colonized. One result of this was the ruin of the values, culture and religion of the colonized. The African society became victim of a strange creed with which it

has continued to struggle till date, with little or no success. Hence, this present study which tries to explore and foster the preservation of African cultural values and heritage becomes very apt.

Tylor (1971) believed that there was a functional basis for the development of society and this, according to him, was universal. He maintained that all societies passed through three basic stages of development: from savagery, through barbarism, to civilization (Long, 2016). He asserts that the human mind and its capabilities are the same globally, despite the stage in social evolution of a particular people (Stringer, 1999). This would mean that a hunter-gatherer society would possess the same amount of intelligence as an advanced industrial society. The difference, according to Taylor, is education, which he considers the cumulative knowledge and methodology that takes many years to acquire. Thus, Taylor often likens so-called primitive culture to “children” and sees culture and the mind of humans as progressive. A child, if given the opportunity will surely grow; in the meantime, however, she is still a human being. The novel, *Things Fall Apart* presents two persona (Achebe, 1994). Okonkwo symbolizes the first persona who respects and appreciates the customs and traditions of his culture and believed that the colonial masters came to tear up the African society and culture. Thus, he had to bring an end to this colonization and go back to African heritage. But finding that he could not succeed, he made a suicide. The second, was the modern African character who gets benefits from the colonization. As is evidence, there are so many benefits gained by the Africa from the colonizers.

Despite these benefits, however, there are a number of challenges that face the future of the Africa. It is a truism that social factors structure our thoughts and behavior. Therefore, as Long (2016) remarked, it is in his culture that the Africa can fully interact with the world and become fully human. There is no gainsaying that the chances of the African attaining his life aspirations have been limited by colonialism. This is a form of “death” of the African. What is behind the suicide of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, is to show he sacrificed to his people or he mourned the death of the African people – the dramatic change of the African people from satisfied and self-dependent to “improved and modern modes” (Stipe, 2003). No society could work without a system of representation and action, common to the members, that distinguishes it from others. Thus, the need to explore and preserve the African heritage even in the face of today’s civilization and modernization cannot be overemphasized.

Simply put, cultural heritage preserves the way things used to be: the way that people used to think, used to behave, used to celebrate. It preserves the way people used to live. With cultural heritage, therefore, we can always remain in touch with a true knowledge of who we are. Who would we be if not for the connections we draw from our ancestors? Who would we be if not for the traditions passed down by our parents?

Thus, the African cannot speak of a sustainable future if he throws away his cultural heritage.

On a very large scale, therefore, cultural heritage when preserved, tell us the history of a people. Even a single tradition or artifact can speak volume on how a people lived, on the history of their ancestors. From what were passed on, one can discern easily what the people thought was important, and that strengthens the history of the community. Granted, what was important for the ancestors may not be entirely considered important to the contemporary or future the generation. Hence, preservation of culture does not imply stagnation. Yet the past and the improved present combine to strengthen the history the community writes.

### **The Concepts of Culture and Traditions**

Taylor sees culture as that complex whole that includes many elements like knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, or any other abilities that are ordained by the people. It includes lifestyle, common knowledge, images and myths (Taylor 1987, 1). It follows that culture is the totality of the way of life of a people that have been developed, shaped and practiced over years – modelled by environment and the need of the peoples. According to Adler (1983), culture is the mass programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another. People are seen as being from different cultures if their life styles as a group are obviously different.

In the words of Igwilo and Ogbo (2018):

Culture refers to the shared beliefs, customs, values, and practices of a particular group of people. It includes various aspects of human life such as language, religion, cuisine, art, music, and social norms. Culture is dynamic and can evolve over time based on certain factors like globalization, migration, and technological advancement.

Traditions, on the other hand, are specific customs or practices within a culture that are typically preserved and observed over time (Ogbo & Ndubisi, 2018). They are often rooted in cultural beliefs, rituals, and historical experiences. Traditions help to reinforce cultural identity and to provide a sense of continuity and connection to the past. Traditions are a part of culture, yet, they are more specific practices or rituals within that broader cultural framework. Over the years, as society progress and modernized, cultural and traditional practices undergo changes to mirror the changing times to better serve the needs of the people. This means that culture is not static. As Baffoe noted, culture is always tolerating development established on the changes in the environment in which it exists (Baffoe, 2018). Hence, that culture is represented in various particular identities should not prevent the quest for popular values. Each culture has the potential

to reach universal but none can claim to have a monopoly of it. Meanwhile, universality is not equivalent to identification. No society could work without a system of representation and action, common to the members, that distinguishes it from others.

According to Idang (2015), African culture is considered a powerful moral status. It has a system of beliefs and customs which every individual must possess in order to live a good life. The African culture strongly hinders immoral behaviours. Anyone found guilty of breaching the moral order is punished severely; a suspected guilty person who opposes a charge brought against him, would be made to take an oath for proof of innocence. This taking of oath is a conflicting, yet an important aspect of African culture that cannot be dispensed.

### **Towards a Recognition of the African Cultural Values**

There are two major historical influences on African cultural values, namely colonialism (the practice of control by one people over another) and human slavery (which was practiced in Africa even before the broader slave trade that started in the 15th century) (Stipe, 2003). Existing slavery system in Africa then, started selling captured slaves to countries around the world. The resulting diaspora returned indelible foreign ways of life to Africa. These have reshaped the African world as they continued to influence our economic, political, religious, moral, intellectual and cultural lives. These factors are the bases for emphasis on the need to preserve a culture already battling with strong external influences.

Definitely, culture varies among ethnic groups in Africa. But most cultures have common trend. The *Pengium Dictionary* describes the word “value” as having a connotation of permanence. Unlike attitudes which are fleeting and unstable, values are dimmed to be permanent and important to the societal fabric (p.373). Hence, society depends more or less on values. Iheanacho (2014, 2) remarked that social order depends on the existence of general shared values which are regarded as legitimate and binding and act as a standard by means of which the ends of action are selected. This is in line with the understanding of Nicholas et al (2000) which posits that values are permanent social cultural tenets which sustain social order and which is intrinsically binding on members of a particular nation, culture area or professional calling. The fact of general acceptance as something conventional makes value very essential to any given society. It is also this general acceptance that gives it a legal backing and functionality. It follows therefore, as Iheanacho observed, that values, whether cultural, religious, social, ethical or professional, remains a yardstick through which human activities achieve their original ends (Iheanacho 2014, 2).

Indeed, values of a people are a simple way of understanding the culture of the people. Thus, African values are enshrined in the African cultures and traditions. And it is these culture and values that attracted our colonizers. African artifacts are worthy of mention here as they priced more than gold due to their inestimable values within the African mindset. Having made this point, some of the forms of African cultural values and heritages can be explored.

*Family Relationships:* This is highly valued everywhere in Africa serving as the cornerstone of society and culture. The immediate and extended families have an irrevocably strong tie. Older members of society as well as constituted authorities enjoy unreserved respect and reverence. Family ties are strengthened through communal living, mutual support, and collective decision-making. Indeed, the concept of *ubuntu*, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity, calls attention to the importance of family in African culture. Family gatherings, ceremonies, and rituals play important roles in maintaining bonds and passing sown traditions within the family unit.

*Community Living:* Community living is deep-seated in African tradition and heritage, reflecting values of solidarity, cooperation, and interconnectedness. In this way, it prioritizes communal wellbeing over individual interests (Ndubisi & Ogbuishi, 2015). This communal ethos extends to various aspects of life, including decision-making, resource management, celebrations and knowledge. The Africans believe in community life in order to enforce the rights and responsibilities of everyone. The society advocates belongingness, rewards and punishments, good living and general wellbeing of its citizens. However, care must be taken to ensure that the community aspect of African heritage is not manipulated for the marginalization and operation the few/individual. If community living is positively embraced, it will promote cohesion, resilience, and collective progress.

*Respect for Elders:* In traditional African societies, elders hold positions of authority and are revered for their knowledge, leadership and contributions to the community. They are the acclaimed custodians of traditions; often providing socio-politico-moral guidance in the community. Hence, young generations are expected to show reverence and honor towards them. Respect for elders, as an important part of African heritage is, therefore, a reflection of wisdom, experience, and community cohesion. It fosters intergenerational harmony, continuity of cultural values, and collective wellbeing.

*Indigenous Knowledge:* Indigenous knowledge is integral to African heritage. It comprises traditional practices, wisdom, and cultural insights passed down through generations. Ogbo and Ndubisi (2018) remarked that African indigenous knowledge is a rich tapestry of knowledge on important issues like agriculture, medicine, arts, technology and spirituality. It thus offers unique perspectives and solutions to

contemporary challenges such as unemployment. Recognizing and preserving this heritage is necessary for honoring Africa's diverse cultures and fostering sustainable development.

*Oral Tradition:* The traditional African culture values oral tradition. It is not necessarily because of illiteracy as often presumed. The traditional African society could afford a written system just as it was not found lagging behind in other aspects of life including language, art, science, mathematics. A society that understood education "as socialization" of the child (Ogbo & Ndubisi, 2018) did not dim writing and the burden of reading and memorizing wise. The adverse effect of the written system is glaringly evidence too in today's society. We read lots of books, write volumes, and even acquire certificates without really being adequately knowledgeable in the field of study. Only a handful of our studies can be converted into knowledge. Hence, the problem of unemployable graduates abounds in our contemporary societies. Oral tradition, therefore, has some salient benefits. It is learning friendly as it taps on the power of memory in such a way that no doubts can be cast on whether the learners have understood what is taught. Hence, no need for frequent exams.

*Storytelling and Folktales:* These play an important role in the African world. Apart from provision of entertainments, they transmit values from generation to generation. Through storytelling family, village/clan histories and other important information were passed. Teaching and learning were easily facilitated. Generally, storytelling serves as vehicles for preserving history, transmitting cultural values, and fostering a sense of identity. These tales often feature colorful characters and moral lessons. By cherishing and sharing these stories, Africans upholds their rich heritage and ensures its continuity for future generation.

*Spirituality:* Faith practice in traditional African societies is the traditional religions, which include beliefs in a necessary supreme being as well as in other deities (gods). It also involves the practice of reverence for ancestors, spirits, and nature. This belief emphasizes community, harmony, and maintenance of balance with the natural world. It is typically passed from one generation to the next through oral tradition, songs, festivals. Over time, Christianity and Islam have also become influential, blending with African indigenous beliefs to form unique expressions of faith. Prayer is an important element in African spirituality. The African can speak to God directly or through the lesser deities. As Aachebe (1994) remarked, you do not approach a great man directly but through his servants. Meanwhile, prayer in African spirituality does not take long period of time. For the traditional Africa, prayer is not work or a profession.

*Hospitality:* This is a cornerstone of African heritage, with different African cultures valuing warmth, generous, and welcome dispositions towards guests/visitors. A

traditional African does not look at a stranger with prima-facie suspicion. Instead, he welcomes him with a spirit of compassion and love, making him to feel at home. Indeed, different African societies places importance on hosting visitors with open arms, offering colanut, food, shelter, and companionship as a sign of goodwill. It thus fosters bonds between individuals and communities, promoting mutual understanding and solidarity as well as the spirit of inclusivity and harmony.

*Music:* Music, defined as the product of an organized sound that is pleasing to the ear (Ogbo, 2021), is undeniably one of the most vibrant and integral aspects of African culture and heritage. African traditional music is not music for music's sake. It is used basically for promotion of good moral behaviour, to spur one into positive action (such as love, war, work, prayer, repentance, charity, hope, patience), for maintenance of peace, to encourage or discourage actions or practices as the case may be, to praise or condemn, to heal a broken heart, etc. African music comes in form of songs, instruments, dance or their combination, serving as a powerful means of expression, communication, and connection. African music plays a central role in ceremonies, celebrations, storytelling, social/religious gatherings – serving as a unifying force and fostering a sense of community.

*Sense of Connection with Nature:* One of the fundamental aspects of African heritage is strong connection with nature. This is deeply rooted in many traditional beliefs systems and cultural practices across Africa. Historically, African societies relied on nature for sustenance, livelihood, physical and spiritual wellbeing. This sense of connection is often expressed through rituals, ceremonies, as well as folklore that honor and respect the natural world, including humans, animals, plants, water, and the land itself. Many African proverbs and teachings further emphasize the importance of harmonious living with nature and recognizing human beings as part of a larger ecological system.

*Oath-taking:* Oath-taking holds significance in many African cultures and heritage. They are often used as solemn promises or commitments. Oaths are administered in different contexts such as interpersonal relationships, religious ceremonies, legal proceedings, and community governance. This practice is deeply rooted in spiritual beliefs. It is believed to invoke the power of deities and ancestors to enforce honesty, loyalty and accountability in the society. It also serves as mechanism for the maintenance of social order, conflict resolution and reconciliation. Although it is important that the specific rituals and customs surrounding oath-taking in Africa be reconstructed to ally properly to social justice, its importance as a symbol of trust, integrity and communal values cannot be overemphasized. If, for example, political leaders go through the processes of oath-taking in authentic traditional African ways at

the swearing-in ceremonies, it might be a better deterrent from refrains from fulfilling the fundamental promises made to the community or nation by the candidates.

*Medicine and Healing Systems:* These systems, though diverse and varying from community to community (Ogbo, 2018), are integral parts of African culture and heritage, often incorporating traditional practices, herbal remedies and spiritual beliefs. Despite their variation according to different communities, they share some common elements such as the belief in the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit which inform their belief in the importance of holistic healing. Medicine men and women generally known as traditional healers, play significance role in providing healthcare and addressing ailments believed to be either physical or spiritual. These medical traditions often coexist alongside modern medical practices, thereby contributing to a comprehensive approach to healing.

### **Some Benefits of Preserving African Heritage**

Africa is a country rich in cultural diversity and heritage. With over 3000 distinct ethnic groups and over 2000 languages (Grindler 2023), Africa is home for wealth of traditions, customs, and historical legacies that have been passed down through the ages. Many African cultural traditions, however, stand the risk of being lost in the face modernization and civilization. Therefore, we consider the urgent need for Africans to preserve Africa's heritage for the future generation a social responsibility for everyone. The positive results can never be overemphasized.

First, it is essential for maintaining a sense of identity and belongingness for the African people. Africa's cultural heritage such as music, language, food, dress, arts, festivals, moral and social values, will help the future generation connect with the past, understand and appreciate their roots, and provides a sense of continuity. It will strengthen their sense of self and contribute to a positive and stable societal fabric. This connection, in turn, promotes mental well-being and a stronger sense of community. A people can have no sense of pride if they have no identity, and there can be no way to identify a people culturally as being different from another if their cultural traditions are not preserved. Therefore, in order to assert an African identity and promote belongingness among various African communities, preservation of the African heritage is indispensable.

Again, preservation of African culture will help to promote a sense of unity within African communities. Consider, for instance, the age-grade festival of Egede community in Enugu state, Nigeria. The festival occurs once every ten years during which the male citizens within the age bracket gather together to unite, strengthen their bond of friendship, and share their experiences. They will then be able to speak in one

voice in matters concerning the entire community. It follows then that by celebrating and reserving cultural practices, various African communities are able to come together to bond and share their experiences. This creates a strong sense of solidarity and mutual understanding, and can help to bridge the gaps between communities, and between different ethnic groups and tribes within Africa.

Moreover, as Grindler (2023) rightly noted, preserving African heritage is also important for the broader international community. Just as Africa readily learns, and sometimes improves itself, from the rich cultural legacies of other parts of the world; so also, should the rest of the world learn from Africa's heritage and also enhance themselves from it. But this cannot be possible if the culture is not preserved. Thus, failure to preserve the African traditional heritage is a loss not only to Africa but to the rest of the world. This is because African traditional heritages are valuable pieces of human history, and contribute as such, to the rich tapestry of global heritage. By ensuring that these heritages are preserved, humanity is able to appreciate and learn from Africa's diverse and fascinating cultures and traditions. Cultural preservation generally fosters an environment of inclusivity and acceptance within the global community. Exposure to different traditions, languages, and customs promotes a deeper understanding of one another, breaking down barriers and creating a more harmonious global community.

Furthermore, preserving the African heritage will be beneficial for economic growth of African communities. Cultural tourism, for instance, is a significance source of income for many communities in Africa. Tourism helps in promoting traditional practices and artifacts, and when it is preserved, these communities are able to attract visitors, thus providing opportunities for employment and business. By involving in the preservation of cultural assets, African societies can create sustainable economic opportunities and support the livelihood of those involved in cultural industries. Historical sites, traditional crafts, and cultural festivals attract visitors, generating revenue for local communities. In this way, the potency of preservation of African traditions and cultures in driving economic growth cannot be denigrated.

Finally, it is an avenue for safeguarding indigenous knowledge. African cultures hold invaluable knowledge and wisdom that has been passed down through generations: from traditional medicinal practices to sustainable agricultural methods. Preserving these time-tested approaches can offer solutions to contemporary challenges. Indeed, preservation of African cultures will ensure that we do not lose sight of these valuable insights that can contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future. By embracing and safeguarding our indigenous knowledge, we not only enrich human's understanding of the world but also lay the foundation for a more interconnected, tolerant and prosperous global society. This point is well captured in Ogbo and Ndubisi

(2018) when they noted that indigenous African communities possess a wealth of knowledge about sustainable living, biodiversity, ecosystem management, medicine and healing approaches, etc. By preserving the African heritage, her indigenous knowledge would be safeguarded and this is essential for addressing contemporary challenges. By acknowledging and safeguarding this valuable wisdom, the future generation can learn from sustainable practices that have sustained African communities for centuries.

### **Ways of Preserving the African Cultural Values**

The African culture can be preserved in many ways. One important way of preserving the African cultural values and heritage is education. By teaching the young ones about their traditions and heritage, African societies ensure that younger ones remain connected to their roots. Through formal and informal education systems (eg. community gathering, storytelling, proverbs), Africans learn about their heritage, language, history, and cultural practices. Education also empowers individuals to engage critically with their cultural heritage, adapt traditions to contemporary contexts, and contribute to the revitalization and preservation of African cultural values for a sustainable future.

Again, documentation is necessary if we will preserve our African heritage. A Latin saying has it that *verbo volunta sed crima manet* – words flies but writing remains. Thus, while the oral tradition is good, it cannot meet up to the challenges of contemporary society. Therefore, efforts must be made to document African traditional rituals, symbols, languages and practices. This can be done through the establishment of cultural archives, libraries and museums. The rich oral histories should be gathered and preserved in writing. Also, different African communities should gather and record traditional music and dance. Traditional African societies have a rich philosophical tradition as well as great philosophers. For lack of documentation, the international society as well as many African young, do not know about most of the ancient African philosophers not to talk of their insightful contributions to knowledge. The African proverbs, riddles, storytelling, and names are sources of philosophy which have the potency to transform the human society for good if they were documented and developed.

Finally let us look at language as a veritable means of safeguarding the African values and heritage. Indigenous African languages serve as carriers of cultural heritage since it has the potency to encapsulate the nuances of African traditions, beliefs, and worldviews. The African languages are the mother-tongues of the African children. As such they can better think and better understand and also better express ideas within the society. A “people” without language is a contradiction in terms because language

is one of the basic defining elements of a people. By allowing their native tongues to die off as something primitive, the various African societies are doing themselves a disservice. Therefore, efforts to promote and preserve indigenous languages, both within formal education systems and through community initiatives, are essential for safeguarding African cultural values and promoting intergenerational continuity.

### **Universalizing the African Values and Heritages**

A universalized world is one in which political, economic, social and cultural events become more and more interconnected. Universalization of African values and heritage is therefore a process of increasing interconnectedness between Africa and other societies of the world, such that more and more of African values and heritage have effects on people and societies far away. This term was referred to by Anowai (2007) and Iheanacho (2014) as globalization; the aims and objectives of which is the pursuance of cooperation of political, economic, social, scientific and technological ideologies, innovations, discoveries and consumptions in the world.

If the African is proud of our African cultural values, and if he really prices it more than gold, then he should strategize on how to make it available and accessible to the global world. This is universalization of the African values and heritages. We would want other people to know, cherish and appreciate these values like ourselves. This universalization is readily possible now because, the rest of the world wants to know what is happening in the next village or community. This possibility is further conditioned by the present global communication network which fast tracks information dissemination from any part of the world to others. We must utilize these opportunities to sell our own values and knowledge to the world. This will not only bring pride for the African peoples, but can earn reasonable foreign exchange for different African communities. In other words, it will serve as economic windfall which will be ploughed back to bring about development in Africa generally.

It should be noted that universalization of culture does not mean instituting a mono culture in the world. If one of the aims of universalizing the African culture is cultural monism, its success will be low or impossible, for it will certainly meet strong reactions across opposing views. According to Iheanacho (2014), cultural diversity is one big block the forces of universalization should not target to penetrate. Acculturation is therefore the nearest success as people would still relapse into the cultures while greeting, conversant with why you eat, dress, and act the way you do. Universalization of African values and heritages is the advocacy of certain attitude towards and the preservation of them for imitation by other race communities of the world. It is necessary because Africans especially can testify to the effectiveness and efficacy of these beliefs and practices in their lived societies and relationships.

For instance, in a world under the bondage of corruption, atheism, etc, and in which most world popular religions are increasingly becoming mere socio-politico-economic organizations, and a world at the same time increasingly afflicted by pandemics and other diseases, belief in a just society and in the efficacy of conventional medical practices are gradually and systematically eroded. World-reorientation on the African *oath-taking systems* as well as *healing practices* would put Africa in the world map once again. Given the fact that some people of the world might reject African values come-what-may, it should not be ruled out that some non-Africans may be interested in knowing and investing in African beliefs, ideology, and values as something which of course can stand as a credible and reliable alternative to other cultural values of the world.

Meanwhile, African cultural values have not been strictly kept within the bounds of Africa all the while. Some aspects of African values have been universalized since the 14th AD (Iheanacho 2014, 13). This was the period when the exploratory activities of the Portuguese in African continent were going on. History had it that during this moment of interaction, the Portuguese discovered some magnificent art works of African province. These were taken away and stored in European museums (Iheanacho 2014) which later formed the greater percentage of European artifacts collection corpus. This alone, despite its negativity, is a major breakthrough in the quest to universalize African values. Everywhere they are, they speak about their sources and ingenuity. Any other aspect of our cultural values and heritage could be universalized in a positive exchange this time. This includes dress code, community life, hospitality, chieftaincy system, marriage rituals, and religion.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

African values and heritage are the rich and diverse encompassing principles such as communalism, respect for elders, hospitality, spirituality, and a strong sense of connection with nature. As such, they reflect Africa's deep history, culture, traditions, and contributions to the global tapestry of humanity. There is urgent need, therefore, for contemporary Africa to cherish, maintain and preserve our life-enhancing heritage. This, nevertheless, should not prevent the quest for popular values. Preserving our African cultural values and heritage amidst global civilization involves a delicate balance of embracing modernity while safeguarding the African traditions. By recognizing and preserving African cultural values and heritage, we uphold our rich heritage and identity and ensure the continuity of these values for future generation. It requires initiatives like education, documentation, and promotion of indigenous language. Balancing progress with preservation requires thoughtful engagement and proactive measures to ensure the longevity and relevance of African heritage in an ever-

changing world. Future research on this subject can navigate the influence of globalized norms and technologies which can sometimes overshadow African traditional practices.

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## **DYNAMICS OF AFRICAN HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO GBAGYI PEOPLE IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY ABUJA**

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### **Executive Summary**

*African people are not here by accident. They existed from the beginning of time. It was not by accident that they ended up on the African continent. Every ethnic group has a birthplace from which they derived their cultural traditions. Gbagyi is one of the 350 ethnic groups that make up Nigeria, one of the West African countries. The north-central region of the nation was inhabited by the Gbagyi indigenous people as part of their cultural legacy. The 1976 transfer of the federal capital territory from Lagos, in western Nigeria, to the country's agrarian centre Abuja facilitates transformation. The nation's capital relocation helps in the development of the Gbagyi ethnic group's environmental and cultural transition. They asserted themselves as the legitimate native inhabitants of Abuja. A wealth of natural and human development is ushered in by the relocation of the federal capital to Abuja and the Gbagyi territory. The dynamics of African ancestry and the Gbagyi people's sustainable development in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, are examined in this study. To gather information, the researcher consults relevant literature, personal observations, and interviews. The Gbagyi territory inhabitants, encourage diligence and dedication to the cause of sustainable human and ecological development. It is necessary to organize and activate the portions of the Gbagyi people's vital cultural legacy for tourism.*

**Keyword:** Gbagyi, Culture, FCT Abuja, Nigeria, Sustainable development

### **Introduction**

The Africans are the people domicile in the African territories. The topography is enriched with natural and human resources prevalent within its continent. Virtually, African nations are similar as pertains to heritage. Something that has been customarily passed down from the past: a brave, honourable, and proud national history. Heritage entails something that one inherits or is due to them by virtue of their birth; a legacy of hardship and poverty (<https://www.dictionary.com>). According to Huang “Heritage

encompasses many things. It's about our ethnic roots, of course, but it also includes cultural teachings and personal experiences. It's about who you are and where you have come from to get to where you are today". This implies that every ethnic group has a birthplace from which they derived their cultural traditions. The ethnic groups in Nigeria sum up to 350 of which Gbagyi is one of them. They inhabit the central part of the country. Gbagyi people are found in other States of Nigeria such as: Kaduna State, Niger State, and Nasarawa States. However, they synchronize their heritage but the dynamic of their sustainable development differs due to their different geographic locations.

The Gbagyi aborigines inhabiting Abuja are privileged to be bona fide indigenes of the city of Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, one of the nations in west Africa. The Gbagyi ethnic group calls the north-central region of the country their home. This implies that, the virgin agricultural area inhabited by the Gbagyi indigenous people was privileged to be selected in 1976 to become the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja in order to relieve traffic jams in Lagos and decongest the former capital of Nigeria. As a result, the ethnic group of Gbagyi residents of Abuja experienced a change in their ancestral cultural and natural heritages.

The natural and cultural history of the native ecosystems was impacted by the invasion of the new capital territory. The demand for sustainable development became loud and clear. This research uses the Gbagyi ethnic group in the federal capital area of Abuja as a case study to examine the interplay between African heritage and sustainable development. The native inhabitants of Gbagyi were blessed with a cultural heritage even before the national capital, Abuja, was established. The truism is that cultural legacy refers to a group or society's tangible and intangible heritage assets that have been passed down through generations. Not all heritages of previous generations are referring as heritage rather, legacy is a product of societal selection. The Federal Capital Territory Abuja constitutes six geographical area councils situated on rocks, valleys, mountains and streams. They are predominantly farmers, hunting and crafting and pottery. The advent of the Nigerian capital to Gbagyi land ushers in intensive sustainable development through the agencies of education westernization, urbanization and globalization.

## **Methodology**

The nature of this study is ethnographic and descriptive. The Gbagyi ethnic group in central Nigeria, west Africa is examined in its endowed natural and cultural heritages. The dynamics stages of development are highly estimable. The oral witness of the physical nature of the mountains, hills, valleys, streams and rocky ground glare visible. The indigenes give authentic narration patterning to the historical origins and existence

of the Gbagyi heritage and the transformation leading to development. A tour was made to observe the natural and cultural heritage of the Gbagyi ethnic group to synchronize the dynamism of sustainable development in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

### **Gbagyi Ethnic Group of People**

Tracing the historical culture of the ancient people that occupied the central Nigeria, it falls back to the Nok people. Encarta dictionary posits the fact that, it is a “civilization located in the forests of central Nigeria that flourished between 500 BC and AD 300. It is known for its highly developed art style”. It is obvious that certain individuals were inhabiting the central part of the Northern Nigeria prior to the existence of Gbagyi ethnic group of people. Nwanaju argues that the eastern section of the central Nigeria region has a diversity of ethnic groups such as Gwari, Jakun Koro and, Nupe (43). Prior to the amalgamation of Northern part and Southern parts of Nigeria in 1914 by the then British Governor, Sir Fredrick Lugard, the Gbagyi indigenous were existing in the central part of Nigeria. Eluwa, Ukagwu, Nwachukwu and Nwaubani in a history of Nigeria for schools and colleges, confirmed the amalgamation of Nigeria by the colonial administrator for effective administration (218). The ethnic group of Gbagyi are privileged to find their habitations in the Federal capital territory Abuja. Gbagyi is one of the many ethnic groups that live in Nigeria's north-central region. People referred to them as "Gwari" or "Gbari," depending on where they settled. They are the original owners of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. They were discovered in states bordering the capital territory, such as Nassarawa, Niger, Kogi, and Kaduna. They are in large numbers. According to the 2006 national population census (King np), it had a population of 5.8 million people. However, because of more modern facilities that help preserve and prolong life, they may be more than that now. Bwari settlers preferred to be addressed as Gbagyi rather than Gwari. They are genuine citizens of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.

In addition, scholars have emerged with various views on the origin of Gbagyi ethnic group into the Federal capital territory, Abuja. Some Gbagyi scholars have researched the historical origins of the Gbagyi people and have come up with various versions. Gbagyi's historical background is unknown. It dates back to the dawn of time (Kuta 1). Shaibu agreed with this viewpoint. He said that, the people of the Gaba settlement, for example, claimed to have lived in their environment since time immemorial. According to the oral history, they did not migrate to or from another location. Alternatively, oral tradition holds that "the Gbagyi originally came from the east and lived in Borno around 1600 AD." "However, they were forced to migrate as a result of Kanuri wars to Islamize them" (Kuta 2). "Whatever was widely assumed prior to the 1804 Danfodio led Jihad, the Fulani were penetrating various Hausa states in the late 15th century," Kuta

continued to assert that. "Originally, the Gbagyi (Gwari) were listed as one of the seven Hausa states" (3). In line with argument on the historical origin of the Gbagyi tribe, Ayuba posits that, the Gbagyi people lived in Saudi Arabia before migrating to Africa. He claims that oral tradition testified that Gbagyi originated from Yamen or Israel (Yamma 3). It is important to note that the people of Gbagyi and the Kanuri tribe in Bornu State have traditionally resembled the tribal mark. Although modernity has had an impact on the people by erasing the Gbagyi tribal marks. More importantly, the women in some parts of Bornu still carry their loads at the back shoulder like the Gbagyi women in FCT Abuja. Gbagyi's indigenous people are noted in living in settlements. People describe them as peaceful, generous, accommodating, and hospitable because they enjoy their homogeneous lifestyle so much. "Doing things Gwari Gwari," which means "doing things with a good heart, justice, and a pure heart," is a popular phrase among Hausas and other ethnic groups (Kuta 5). Strangers are welcomed by the Gbagyi people, and people from other ethnic tribes are tolerated in their homes. It is observed on the fact that, Gbagyi amuses visitors with food.

The Gbagyi people have delicious food known as "ezhe" or "wyizhe," which is very delicate to them, and a special drink called "Zehpwo." It is prepared with Guinea corn or maize. The process of cooking it involves grinding, sieving, boiling water, and adding potash water to the cooking pot. The potash is for the preservation of the food for up to two weeks (Asough np). It could be eaten with kandolo. Kandolo can be made with gari, corn, eggplant, pepper, and spices in addition to Dawa Dawa locust beans. Ezhz could be eaten with soup or soaked like gari for two weeks. Socially, Gbagyi practice infant and later marriages, as well as elopement marriages and legal, proper marriages. Women in Gbagyi are highly valued. They live subservient, docile, and submissive to the established authority.

### **Federal Capital Territory Abuja (FCT)**

The decision to shift the capital of Nigeria from Lagos to a more central area of Nigeria was taken during the regime of the Major General Olusegun Obasanjo, the then Head of States and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Federal Republic of Nigeria. On February 3rd, 1976, a more suitable centralized geographic area was established in Abuja, in the north central region of Nigeria. According to Abubakar, a well-known fair man named Abubarka JA, an indigenous person who had lived there in the distant past, is responsible for Abuja's name. His last name, JA, was combined with his first name, Abu, to form Abuja. (3) Abubarka added that, Nigeria's capital was moved from Lagos to Abuja on December 12, 1991, under the rule of Major General Badamasi Ibrahim Babangida, the Federal Republic of Nigeria's president, head of state, and supreme military commander. Due to its north-central geographic location, Abuja was the most suitable. As the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja was selected. The Gbagyi or

Gwari aborigines dominated the population of the new capital territory. They were formed from Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Kogi states, with the bulk of the land coming from Niger State. The Gbagyi people live in harmony and are inherently peaceful. The dispositions of docility and compatibility are present in women. Consequently, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja was made up of the mapped-out districts, all of which were claimed by the federal government. Indigenous people of Gbagyi were uprooted from their ancestral lands and relocated backwards. They were relocated to the limits and periphery of the capital territory. One of the areas that has been outlined, pushed backwards, and added to as a suburb of the Federal Capital Territory is Bwari. The Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, comprises six local area councils that make up the Federal Capital Territory, and was established in 1996 (Yamma 5). The six area councils include: Abaji, Abuja municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali area Councils.

Prior to the influx of the federal capital territory Abuja, the indigenous people of Gbagyi have both natural and cultural heritage from their ancestors. The topography of the Federal Capital Territory constitutes mountainous areas, hills, valleys, and streams. The governing body under the military government launched drastic constructions of roads, bridges and modern houses with road networks of major and minor roads and streets and recreational grounds. Human and natural development were in earnest. Gbagyi indigenous people were relocated from their ancestral heritage and pushed out to the suburban of the capital territory. Some relocated by themselves, while others were compensated with lower modern edifices. Gbagyi heritage was transformed into modern outlook.

### **Natural Heritage of Gbagyi in FCT**

The land of the ethnic people of Gbagyi is endowed with natural heritage such as mountains, hills, valley, forests, water, soil and iron. These natural heritages are treasure when they are utilized properly. They are sources of wealth to a nation when they are harnessed properly and adequately. The mountainous terrain commonly seen in Gbagyi land is one of the natural heritages. It had been a rescued place for the forefathers who migrated from Zaria in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to settle on the mountains for refuge. Oral interview testifies that, most of the early Gbagyi people were migrants from Zaria. War broke out they dispatched to various places searching for safety. They dwelt on the mountains and hills to have a clear view of their enemies and strategize techniques of overcoming them and to defend themselves. Most of the mountains in the Federal capital territory bear the names of the ancestors who discovered and resided on them. For example, Sunape, Sherepe, Barongaripe. Some were given names in reference to the special and remarkable events that occurred while they were living on the mountain examples Igupe a home of hospitality and peace. Bwayape, Bwari mountain means

pound here given by Tayegbegbe. Mountainous and hills serve as ancestral home for the settlements. On the mountains are traces of antiquated pots, huts, spoon, plates and graves are found there presently. The indigenes still climb there for farming or burying of “Esu” the ruler of their communities. Traditional shrines are set there to offer sacrifices for the ancestors and invoke their spirits on the rocks, hills and mountains (Opara 76).

Mountains have valleys or foot of the mountain. This can be sloppy or flat ecosystem. The area can be fertile for cultivation of crops. Most times river flows in between the river to provide water for animals and crops. Forest is a heritage the Gbagyi indigenes acquired that facilitates the farming occupation. They grow yams, guinea corn, maize, rice, sorghum, millet, black-eyed peas, groundnuts, bananas, calabashes, melons, and cotton in large quantities (Yamma 38). Domestic animals kept by the Gbagyi include cattle, chickens, ducks, dogs, goats' horses, pigeons, turkeys, and sheep (39). Some of the raw materials are used to make items required in the community. Cotton is used to make clothes, particularly Jobode and Ajesuda. Gbagyi has excellent clay soil for the production of various pottery (40). The Gbagyi people have a reputation for being hardworking and dedicated to agricultural products. They engage in hunting of animals from the forest. Materials for producing iron and steel are available locally. The weapons made from steel are used to produced such as knives, digger, hoes, gun and arrows. It is pertinent to appreciate the natural gift of rivers and streams that supply water for drinking to the communities. The water is used to water farm crops, and mixed clay. Gbagyi inherited clay soil from their fore fathers. They discovered three types of clay which the frequently experimented till they were able to mold durable pots (Research and Documentation division of the Arts and culture department social development secretariat FCT 57). The women specialize in pottery, molding different shapes of vessels for domestic usages. After molding the pots and other vessels, they would fire it with dry sticks and grasses to make strong and durable. The streams and rivers are source of catching fishes for cooking food. The research and documentation division of the Arts and culture department social development secretariat FCT on Social-Cultural study of the Peoples of Abuja Volume 2, highlights a “fish method which involves damming the river with sticks and grasses, then the traps and cages are attached to the dam into which these fishes enter” (53). It is imperative to harness the water heritage endowed on the Gbagyi people of Abuja. Gbagyi people are good in making mats with the use of available materials of guinea corn stalks, raffia, palm front and tall grasses found in swampy areas (76). Naturally, materials for making mats were fetched within the environments. Gbagyi explores various copious of tangible natural raw materials unknowing the treasure worth of thousands of Naira. Mats are used to sit down at cultural ceremonies of marriage and funerals.

## Cultural Heritage of Gbagyi

People are identified by their culture as an explicit way to show who they are in the society. In the argument of Aremu, states in Nigeria Heritage that “culture has been succinctly defined as the distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete design for living, including dressing, language, music and dance, the way their children are brought up, and their governance, among others” (74). In line <https://en.wikipedia.org/> with the totality of human person in Africa, a person's knowledge, beliefs, arts, customs, laws, abilities, and habits are all included in their culture. Culture also includes the social behaviour, institutions, and norms that are present in human civilizations. A certain region or location is frequently cited as the source of culture ([https://en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/)). In addition, a cultural symbol is a tangible manifestation that represents a specific culture's philosophy or just has meaning within that society. Culture is the sum of a group's beliefs, traditions, language, and values.

The indigenous people of Gbagyi in the Federal capital territory of Abuja Nigeria, inherited cultural identity from their fore fathers refers as “Knunu” which depicts the tradition, culture and religion of Gbagyi people. More importantly, it refers to their way of life circled round the worship of a supreme being refers as “Shekwoi” God. The heritage of *Knunu* makes them peculiar people, outstanding and differentiate them from other ethnic groups of people in Nigeria. Otonko and Opara testify that, they are known for their cultural attire, called ajesuda, (188). The fabric is locally produced from the cotton trees planted within the settlements. The women tie the cloth round their chest, while men wear an abache, which looks like pants and crosses the gonads while exposing the buttocks. This cloth serves as a unique identification symbol for Gbagyi. It's a tie-dye fabric made of traditional cotton and dyed locally. The colour is entirely black. A source from the Gbagyi indigenes argues that, in their culture, women carry large objects or burdens on their shoulders instead of their heads, due to the fact that their head is a notable feature that has received widespread attention. The cranium is usually recognised as a source of wisdom and information. According to their cultural system, the head holds ultimate power over the entire body (Otonko and Opara 191). The women carry log of fire wood and harvested farm produce with a basket or calabash on their shoulders. Oral source highlights that the gods forbade men from carrying loads because they placed a high value on them in the families as heads which they traditionally claimed.

The Gbagyi people use the Gwari language as a mechanism for preserving and promoting their cultural heritage (198). Like other ethnic groups in Nigeria, Gbagyi language is undergoing process of standardization. From the oral source, it has been observed that the indigenous population employs two distinct dialects for communication, which are widely recognised as the Gbari (Gwari yamma) and Gbagyi

dialects (199). The most common acceptable language that is going into studies is Gbagyi dialect which is slightly different from Gwari yamma. The cultural food for Gbagyi is Ezhe, a delicate, delicious, and valuable food for the indigenous people of Gbagyi. It is a corn-based meal that is cooked into a soft dough and served with soup. Ezhe, which is made from guinea corn or maize is grinded on stone, can take up to three hours to prepare. Shekwoisa argues that it should take little time because the corn flour has already been prepared. It must be cooked with sifted potash water (Asough np) for preservation. Cooked Ezhe can be stored for up to two weeks. It goes well with special soups like Agbenyi, Agunlala, Takwa, and Nkunlo. It can be soaked in water and drunk in the same way that gari is. Kandolo is another dish made with corn, gari eggplant, pepper, and locust beans (Dawadawa). It complements Ezhe. Gbagyi in exile pines for the flavours of Ezhe and Kandolo. This food is served at weddings and the Gbagyi festival, along with traditional Gbagyi attire. Culturally, Otonko and Opara assert that, Within the Gbagyi culture, there is a customary expectation for women to demonstrate characteristics such as submissiveness, obedience, respect, subservience, docility, cooperation, and support towards men (204). These are cultural values heritage from the ethnic group of Gbagyi inhabiting the present federal capital territory Abuja. This can be cooperated into the working values of the council areas and the nation. Another important aspect of Gbagyi's culture is dancing. The ethnic group of Gbagyi are lovers of music in entertainments. In an observation, the men beat the local instruments with gung, drum, calabash and pots while both the men and women take dancing steps. The waists are bent down with two arms stretched out and face down, the legs are moved backwards and forward to the rhythm of the music. Gbagyi can dance from morning to evening uninterrupted.

### **The Gbagyi's Dynamic Heritage and Sustainable Development in Abuja's Federal Capital Territory**

The ethnic group of Gbagyi is privileged to inhabit the Federal capital territory, Abuja since its creation in 1976 and establishment in 1991 (Abubarka 1). The creation of this central part of Nigeria is a huge source of blessings and successes. It ushered in structural and human development, urbanization, modernity, civilization, emancipation and empowerment in various capacities. Although, the Federal capital brought from Lagos came with lots of changes, yet the aborigine of FCT Abuja remains resilient and resolute to preserve their cultural heritage. The augment is that a preliminary decision was made in 1975 by Major General Murtala Mohammade in 1975 the then Military Head of States, fully created by Major General Olusegun Obasanjo 1976 and implemented by Major General Ibrahim Babangida in December 12th, 1991 (Abubarka 5).

In order to establish the federal capital territory and to turn it into the master plan, affected the natural and cultural heritage of the indigenous people of Gbagyi and its inhabitants changed. These alterations resulted into the promotion of sustainable development. cursory looking into the influx of the colonial masters, westernization, civilization, urbanization and human empowerment brought radical structural changes. According to the master plan, the development came in phases. It ushered in structural and human development, urbanization, modernity, civilization, emancipation and empowerment in various capacities. Original names of places altere such as, Wushapa to Ushafa, Bwaya to Bwari, Mawupe to Mabushi, Gbangadna to Gwagwalada, Agazhima to Galadimawa (Yamma 27). Phase one were Garki, Wuse and Maitama. The hills were bulldozed, the valleys were filled up, drainages were constructed to give way to rivers and streams to flow on the track mapped out for water ways. The road networks were mapped out in different trunks and shapes to give it a befitting outlook. Abubarka and Akpen gave a vivid description of the natural terrain of FCT Abuja in their article titles “Changing Environment and History in Nigeria: A study of Federal Capital Territory Abuja since 1976.” *In Studies in the History of Abuja*, indicates massive transformation undergoing structurally. Modern settlement coupled with urbanization were introduced and established (42). Many government workers were transferred and relocated to the Federal capital territory Abuja especially, the federal government workers. Subsequently, many roads, streets, and houses were constructed and erected.

Trees are part of Gbagyi heritage from the natural forest within the habitat. Trunks of trees were caught to aid in roofing houses and different offices to facilitate sustainable development in the federal capital territory. Forest product include timber, paper wood pulp and fuelwood, other products from woods are, mortars, pestles, tobacco pipes, mask, musical instruments and household utensils (Aondoakaa 30) to sustain the development in FCT. Aondoakaa argues on the progress of forest areas of the Federal capital territory into root crops like yam, potatoes, cocoa yam and cassava (26). Other crops include, groundnut, and cowpea, grains: maize, guinea corn, millet, sorghum, rice, watermelon, beniseed, carrot, cucumber, cabbage, green beans, peas, garden egg, fruits and vegetables. Animals include, goats, dogs, cattle sheep and poultry. However, agriculture is an important occupation in the federal capital territory, Abuja especially among the Gbagyi indigenous people. More quantity of yams in millions are produced by the farmers, many quantities of bags of rice and corn, millet and guinea corn in thousands of bags are produced and supply to the public for consumption. More importantly, some of these farm crops are used as raw materials for industries and factories, to supply food to the nation.

Other natural heritage of mineral resource, the people of Gbagyi has to embark on sustainable development in the federal capital territory include: marble that had existed

in commercial quantity around the village of Burum, Kanada, Taka Lafia and Ele. It is pertinent to know the existence of tin found around Kusaki Kuje. More importantly, granitic stones are found all over the federal capital territory Abuja. Wolframite and tantaline are compound and iron and manganese. Tantaline is black. Lead and clay which is suitable for bricks making are found around Gwagwa, Dangara, Izom. Ceramic clay are discovered at Ruboci, yaba and Bwari. Another mineral found at Mangoro is mica (Aonodakaa 27). The minerals are source of wealth to the nation. To harness it gears towards sustainable development in the Federal capital territory.

Water is an essential need to human beings, animals and plants. Water ways are the natural heritage of the indigenous people of Gbagyi on the federal capital territory. The rivers, Usuma, Jabi and Gurara are the major water in the capital territory. The fishermen and women use them to catch and supply fishes to the populace. The presence of the Capital territory resulted in the construction of the two dams, the Usuma dam and Jabi dam. Oral discourse testifies that, there are presence of steel, iron which are used to produce hoes, digger, shovel, arrows and ornaments (30). The clay uses for material of pottery. This is a special soil found at Ushafa and Giri. The potters mold different varieties of vessels such as pots, jugs, flower vessel, cups, water cooler, water storage, ear rings, neckless and bangles. Gbagyi pottery has been recognized locally and internationally. Two international exhibition of pottery vessels in London and New York (yamma 42). Ladi Kwali got international recognition in special techniques she employed in pottery making (44). The federal Government immortalized her name in the print of 20 naira Nigerian currency and a street in Wuse zone 4. In addition, making of wool for producing traditional cloth are inclusive in natural heritage for Gbagyi indigenes in FCT, Abuja. The hills and mountains are source of sustainable development through satellite and media, there exist Aso Radio cited at the middle of Nigeria in Katampe and Jordan FM radio at Ushafa in Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

### **Dynamics of Cultural Heritage and Sustainable development in FCT, Abuja**

Cultural legacy refers to a group or society's tangible and intangible heritage assets that have been passed down through generations. Not all former generations' heritages are "heritage," but rather the result of societal selection. Intangible cultural assets include folklore, customs, language, and knowledge; tangible cultural assets include buildings, monuments, landscapes, archival materials, books, artwork, and artefacts; and natural cultural assets include biodiversity and culturally significant landscapes, proverbs, poems and riddles ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_heritage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_heritage)). Ifamoshe and Ojo highlighted the concept, role of culture and development, that culture plays significant and substantial roles in the people's daily life (282). The argument lies on the fact that, culture affects all facets of life both ancient and modern, and they all survive when things develop and utilized. Culture affects other facets of life such as

family, religion, economy, politic, law, social, habit and technology. Modernization and civilization can be achieved when culture is transformed (Ifamoshe and Ojo 282). Cultural heritage depicts itself as it passes from generation to the next. It is beyond doubt.

Gbagyi cultural heritage of Gbagyi language is radically progressing to a higher sustainable development. Gbagyi scholars have emerged to take counsel and decided to improve on Gbagyi literally arts especially in forming vowels and consonants. They had developed Gbagyi dictionary (Audu 2012). Language is intertwined with culture. It is a prerequisite in cultural exhibitions. Oral traditions and expression, including language as a means of transmission of cultural heritage (Usman). Gbagyi has a peculiar custom that explicitly differentiate them from other ethnic groups in Nigeria. The women carry loads on their shoulder backs. Gbagyi people are known for their agricultural products which the women carry on their backs with the use of calabash, such items include, farming tools, water, prepared food to be eaten at the farm. Other things to be carried on the shoulder are log of firewood and farm products such as guinea corn, maize, rice, millet sorghum and beans (Yamma 38) The men carry things in their bags slung on the shoulder (37). The argument is that the head is regarded as sacred and the domicile of intelligence, wisdom and knowledge, it does not need to be disturbed. This method of transportation of farm produce on the shoulder had to be changed due to the advent of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the habitat of Gbagyi indigenes. The importation of modern means of transportation such as cars, lorries, carts, tricycle, bicycles and multicycles by the federal government to change the outlooks of transporting farm produce in Gbagyi land brought sustainable development of the heritage in farming couple with new innovations in farming such as, irrigation, use of fertilizer and mechanize farming to bring abundant food production.

Another important cultural heritage of Gbagyi ethnic group in Nigeria is that, Gbagyi is noted for the traditional cloth refers as ajesuda. The cloth is produced from cotton material planted within the environment in a small industry at Abaji, Kwali and Ushafa. The cotton is treated through spin and weave and dyed black. It can be designed with other colours to make it attractive (Research and Documentation division of the Arts and culture department social development secretariat FCT 75). The argument is that the cultural attire of Gbagyi ethnic group of people has gone into tremendous transformation. It is compulsorily attire for every Gbagyi indigenes. The materials are now imported with quality fabrics in different designs and styles. They are worn on special events, ceremonies and festivals. Gbagyi indigenes wear the cultural attire for dancing and cultural display. They wear it for national and international arts and culture days.

Food is a necessity in human needs. Every African society is recognized for the food she eats. This is applicable to Gbagyi people in the federal capital territory Abuja. They are well known with Ezhi, Whizw and Kandolu. These are delicacies to Gbagyi indigenes. The Gbagyi in diaspora often long to eat the ezhi and kandolu. They are prepared with guinea corn or maize with potash for preservation. The source or kandolu is prepared with garden egg, pepper, locust beans (dawadawa) and groundnut. The food is served in all Gbagyi's occasions. Areh argues that, to promote Nigerian Culture and Heritage Museum is a great way to teach Nigerians to appreciate the diversity of our human world. It will teach and encourage students that culture and tradition usually come from family backgrounds. Museum in the Federal Capital will promote Nigerian rich culture and create a cultural exchange between tourists and local citizens. Exhibitions will attract foreigners. (Areh np).

### **Findings and Recommendations**

- There are six Area Councils in the Federal Capital Territory.
- The Abuja Municipal Area Council has gone far in terms of sustainable development.
- The other five Area Councils: Abaji, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kwali and Kuje are yet to experience much sustainable development.
- The natural and cultural heritages of Gbagyi are yet to be fully recognized and utilized by the Federal Government of Nigeria.
- Both the National Museums and Arts and Culture House centers in Federal Capital Abuja are having insufficient artifacts and symbols that depict Gbagyi natural and cultural heritages.
- The Arts and Culture and the national Museum should have more artifacts and cultural symbols of the ethnic group of Gbagyi.
- The ancient mountainous sites should be developed into Tourism so to yield more money for the Nation.
- Tourism attracts foreigners for site view and relaxation.
- The indigenous people of Gbagyi should be encouraged to have more interest in Gbagyi natural and cultural heritages and to preserve them accordingly.
- The Federal Government should look into the plight of the suburban's area in FCT and extend massive sustainable development to them.
- Gbagyi indigenous language should be developed and be inclusive in school curriculum in FCT Abuja.

### **Conclusion**

Gbagyi ethnic group is one of the occupancies of the Federal capital territory established in 1976 to decongest the former capital of Nigeria Lagos. Prior to the establishment to the federal capital territory Abuja, the following people were co-

inhabiting with the Gbagyi: Koro, Gbede, Ganagana, Bassa and Nupe. Oral tradition asserts that Gbagyi aborigines migrated from Bornu to the North central due to war in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Gbagyi people are seen in Kaduna state, Niger State, Nasarawa state and Kogi State. The Gbagyi living in the federal capital territory could trace their origin from Zaria. They lived on hills and mountains to be able to view their enemies and strategize the appropriate techniques to combat them. The ethnic group of Gbagyi domiciling in the new capital territory Abuja possess both tangible and intangible heritages from their fore fathers. These heritages are grouped into natural and cultural heritage.

Natural heritage comprises natural endowment from the supernatural being. They are fixed and human being migrated to meet them and utilize them. Natural heritage in Gbagyi land of the Federal Capital Territory includes land, valleys, hills, mountains, plain land, rivers, stream, trees, forest, rocks, grasses, soil, sand, gravels, steel and minerals. The influx of federal capital territory and civilization and modernization brought implicit and explicit transformation of these natural heritage for sustainable development in the new federal capital territory, Abuja. These natural heritages generate sources of raw materials for industries, factories and producers in various production and tends to produce and supply goods and services in larger quantities. New road networks are planned and mapped out into roads and streets and flyovers. Residential buildings started in Garki. Government Offices were erected, ministries and paramilitary houses and offices were built. Electricity and pipe-borne water were installed. In addition, water ways were constructed and Usuma and Jabi lakes were constructed to serve as sources of water supply and generating power to the residents. Other inheritance embedded in culture.

Cultural inheritance of the ethnic group of Gbagyi in the Federal capital territory include traditional attires of *ajesuda* cloth. It was manufactured locally from the cotton wool obtained from the environment into fabrics through weaving. In the sustainable development, the fabric industry is robust and the materials are imported to sew variety designs. The women carry loads on their shoulders but transportation has improved to the extent that the incoming of the FCT brought new system of transporting goods and services through the use of cars, lorries and motorcycles. These have brought increase in food supply and massive production of fabrics in large quantities. In the cultural heritage, music, modern instruments are supplied and added to the verities of musical melodies. The dynamics of Gbagyi heritage and sustainable development in the federal capital territory has pushed forward the utilization of Gbagyi heritages into transformation of the federal capital territory Abuja into a modern society. There is vacancy for more improvement in speeding some left over Gbagyi natural and cultural heritages which the FCT Minister and the federal Government should look into for sustainable development. Ancient mountains like Bwayape, Igupe sunape and other undeveloped mountains and hills should draw attention of the federal government to

utilize these high levels of the mountains as tourist centers to yield money for sustainable dynamic development. The copious minerals deposited in some FCT soil should be highly identified for extractions and usages.

### Names of Interviewees

S/N	Names	Male	Female
1.	Aye Samson	male	-
2.	Tanko Ayuba	male	-
3.	Mrs Timi Audu	-	female
4.	Oga Jeo	Male	-
5.	Shekwosa Awytu	-	female
6.	Dorcas Musa	-	female

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## **CULTURAL RETREAT, ANCESTORAL HOMELAND AND THE GLOBAL FEATURE: THE OGBA PERSPECTIVES**

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### **Executive Summary**

*The Egwu-Ogba (new yam festival) of Ogba people in the Niger Delta area of southern Nigeria, is a cultural heritage which demonstrates the peoples' perception of order in the universe. The activities which characterize this observance are encapsulated in their cosmology. Its tenets are packaged, preserved and transmitted in a month-long ritual which the young and old freely participate. During the "Egwu-Ogba" (new yam festival), celebrants including indigenes, their friends and well-wishers come from different works of life to take part. As it were, this annual ceremony is an institution of cultural reconstruction. The study noted that the participants not only take part in the social activities, they also learn those salient religious features of the people which are not expressed in words. However, owing to the fact that the nuances of the festival are preserved in the memory of participants, those who miss any aspect or could not be part of the celebration, will always be neophytes. The aim of this research was to reconstruct the motivating force behind the idea of cultural retreat, ancestral homeland and the global future, especially the Ogba perspective. The paper employed Abraham Maslow's motivation theory as the lens of the study. To this end, the work adopted the descriptive phenomenological approach in data collection, presentation and analyses. It observed that reconstructing the religio-cultural heritage of indigenous people was an indispensable tool in ensuring sustainable global future. The study concluded that indigenous societies like the Ogba with rich culture should be encouraged to preserve their tradition for global sustainability.*

**Keywords:** Cultural retreat, homeland, festival, inheritance and solidarity

### **Introduction**

Without overstating the obvious, it is a truism that every human society is uniquely constructed by nature or culture. This distinctiveness expresses itself in language,

history, religion, political structure or social organization. Bearing his mind on this, Onwuejeogwu (2007) calls it a culture area. To him, this is simply a geographical area occupied by people whose culture exhibit a degree of similarity with each other as well as significant degree of dissimilarity with the cultures of others. From time to time, such a people may call up one of their cultural heritages to remind themselves of their distinctiveness or journey so far. Among Ogba people of the Niger Delta, this statement cannot be over emphasized.

The Egwu-Ogba (new yam festival) celebrated by Ogba people, is a cultural heritage which gives them identity, existence and continuity. It demonstrates the peoples' perception of order in their universe. The activities which characterize this observance are encapsulated in their cosmology. Its tenets are packaged, preserved and transmitted in a month-long ritual which the young and old freely participate. During the "Egwu-Ogba" (new yam festival), celebrants including indigenes, their friends and well-wishers come from different works of life to take part. As it were, this annual ceremony is an institution of cultural reconstruction. The study notes that the participants not only take part in the social activities, they also learn those salient religious features of the people which are not expressed in words. However, owing to the fact that the nuances of the festival are preserved in the memory of participants, those who miss any aspect or could not be part of the celebration, will always be neophytes.

Highlighting the importance of culture in any society, Ekwueme (2021) argues that The compound word landmark stands for the overt or covert defining features of the society which enables such a society to mark its location.....To him, this appertains to an event that has great significance or importance and influences how other things develop. According to Wariboko, (2007), in Kalabari culture, the excitable, the loveable, the acceptable or the ideal, does not stand apart at the hill top nor dwell in the valley. All are intertwined into a single whole to achieve a purpose. Therefore, cultural authentication is the mechanism by which the composite ideal type is constituted or created.

To members of the Diaspora community, the argument for cultural retreat is a welcome development. Obviously, participation at such cultural retreat, offers them the avenue to reminiscent on their ancestral homeland. Cultural retreat refers to the act of rolling backward or reverting to traditional values, practices and beliefs in response to the perceived erosion of societal values. This manifests in various forms, such as resurgence of religious fundamentalism, nostalgia for past era, or a rejection of global influences (Faster capital, 2024). Advocates of cultural retreat argue that indigenous communities around the world desire to revive their traditional languages, customs and knowledge systems, recognizing the importance of maintaining their distinct cultural

identities. Unfortunately, indigenous people worldwide are vulnerable to a range of social and economic factors that affect their human rights (U.N. 2023).

The aim of this research is to reconstruct the cultural retreat, ancestral homeland and the global future, especially the Ogba perspective. The paper employs Abraham's theory of festival as the lens of the study. To this end, the work adopts the descriptive phenomenological approach in data collection, presentation and analyses. It observes that reconstructing the religio-cultural heritage of indigenous people is an indispensable tool in ensuring sustainable global future. The study concludes that indigenous societies like the Ogba with a rich culture should be encouraged to preserve their tradition for global sustainability.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper adopts Abraham Maslow's motivation theory as the lens of the study. Maslow (1970) is identified as the modern proponent of the motivation theory. He asserted that theory of motivation is holistic and dynamic and applies to both work and non-work spheres of life. Maslow was of the opinion that individuals' needs present themselves in a hierarchical order. Beginning from the physiological to self-actualization as follows:

1. Psychological- hunger, thirst, rest, activity.
2. Safety- security, freedom from fear and anxiety.
3. Belonging and love- affection, giving and receiving love.
4. Esteem- self-esteem and esteem for others.
5. Self-actualization- personal self-fulfillment (Maslow, 1970).

As it were, an understanding of motivation is the key to understanding the question of why people travel (Cooper et al 2005). Motivation describes a state of being in which an individual experiences the energy and desire to pursue a specific goal. It can be seen as a psychological feature that arouses an organism to act towards a desired goal and elicits, controls and sustains certain goal directed behaviours. Motivational theory includes different explanation for how motivation helps propel and direct people's behaviour and addresses possible reasons for why people try to achieve goals. Fodness (1994) as cited by Batubo (2023), explained that while motivation is only one of many variables in explaining the enthusiasm of participants in a cultural retreat. it is possible to describe the who, when, where and how of participants in a cultural retreat, together with the social and economic, characteristics of their host, but not to answer the question "why", The most interesting question of all participants.

Motivation theory suggests a dynamic process in internal psychological factors (need, wants and goals), causing an uncomfortable level of tension within the individual's

minds and bodies. In such a circumstance, resulting in actions aimed at releasing that tension satisfying these needs.

Relating the above theory to this study, it is apparent that motivation generally accounts for all human undertakings. This being the case, when indigenes and their friends retreat to attend a cultural festival, the driving force is to reunite with their kits and kins. In addition, their participation will renew their allegiance and cement their fraternity, as the succeeding discussion shall show.

### **The Concept of Cultural Festival**

Awolalu and Dopamu (2005) reveal that every society have special ceremonies or events that calls for the coming together of people to celebrate. These ceremonies may be secular or religious. However, the “celebration of these events is known as festival and it is marked by public enjoyment or religious ceremonies.” Thus, these “series of performances, entertainment, merry-making, rites and ceremonies” serve as the climax of the festival. As it were, Obodoegbulam and Lawrence-Hart (2019) explained that festival periods are times when a people remember the blessings they had received and also use that as a medium to repair or amend the “broken fences in the socio-religious sphere” so as “to restore order.”

Cultural festival refers to the act of organizing events that are particularly set out for cultural purposes, having authentic nature and contributes significantly to the community (Frey, 1994). To these scholars, festivals have regular similarities as powerful products and a cultural occurrence which happen as a resultant effect from a compact program that is organized with a particular target. Festivals are therefore not just an act of gathering different phases of culture that are being displayed, they are intricate phenomena. Perhaps, this is why cultural festival forms a major cultural heritage of any given society. Analytically, cultural festival is a phenomenon in the field of culture which is multifaceted in nature with its instrumental formation and characteristics, often reflecting a vigorous process (Frey, 1994).

Without mincing words, cultural festivals offer a wide range of action because they are based on a life performance and are held in places of historical significance. Supporting the above, Fernández (2006) avers that the value attached to cultural festivals can be appreciated from different dimensions: leisure, amusement, artistic delight, intellectual worth and value of existence.

In view of the above, celebration of a traditional festival plays prominent roles in the community which are very important in the social, economic and cultural context. Ejizu (2007), argued that festivals whether seasonal, annual or bi-annual as the case may be,

play an important role in the recreation, sustainability and transmission of culture from generation to generation. This paper emphasizes the need for preservation and maintenance of vital components of culture such as drumming, dancing, art, songs, belief systems, values, norms and practices for posterity.

Cudny (2014) as cited by Onwumelu (2024) argues that a festival:

1. Is a social event;
2. Makes it possible to establish the social identity and capital;
3. Strengthens human relations (socialization) and consolidates communities;
4. Is related to the broadly understood human culture;
5. Is a part of the cultural heritage;
6. May be combined with a competition or review;
7. Is a one-off or regular event;
8. Is organized and takes place around a certain predominating theme;
9. Is a public celebration combined with fun; and
10. Takes place at a specially designated time and outside the everyday routine.

As it were, the above agrees with what Piette (1992) posited that: “festival is portrayed as reinforcing established society. The antithetic behavior of the festival is said to destroy social convention in order to reinforce it. Thus, the festival is displaced from its proper logic, that of ritual, rules and regulations, play and ambivalence.”

According to Kloskowska (2005), the features of a festival are closely linked with the culture of the people comprising power, beliefs, art, morality, laws, customs and skills, and habits developed by the people of the society in question. However, in festivals there are required organizational basics which the participants look up to and where such is absent, something serious will be missing.

To Awolalu and Dopamu (2005), festivals have certain characteristic: all festivals have a source. And this source or origin are revealed in the myths or stories related to the festival. Thus, these myths or stories reveals the “when, where, why, and how” of these specific festivals. So, in the course of the festival celebration, these stories are told in relation to their religious importance. In fact, “celebrations of these festivals remind the people of the origin of such festivals.” In the view of Mbiti (1990), adequate preparations are necessary for any festival to be celebrated. Since the observance or celebration of the festival does not occur accidentally. This is true because in virtually many African societies, orders of festivals are determined following the ancient customary “practice of counting the sacred calendars.” That is to say: “a careful calendar is worked out to fix the date of the festival and ensure that several festivals do not clash in a particular town or village.” However, some festivals are celebrated in a precise month(s) of the year or day(s) of the month. Whereas, some are associated with

particular seasons, either rainy, dry, planting, or harvesting. Still, in some case, it is planned to fall on specific market days. The duration of festivals can be for days, weeks, or months, as the case may be; hence, the need for adequate preparation. More so, information/invitation is passed to friends and loved ones. Certain areas, like the town hall, playground and the sacred places of the community is kept clean and adorned in view of the celebration. Also, items for the festival celebration, including food and drinks, are made ready and available. In fact, for some, festival periods are times new outfits are made in order to look cute. And in some quarters, heavy or extravagant spending is done in the course of the festival celebration.

Onwumelu (2024) avows that merry-making, entertainment, singing, dancing, processions, feasting, skillful displays and so much fun are associated with festivals. Consequently, there is a large coming together of people, from far and near. To some, it may be the first time in a long while. So, there is this socialization and re-uniting. There is also exchange of visits and gifts, including food and drinks. Indeed, festivals as a form of cultural retreat, offers a once in a long while moments of reunification, re-evaluation and strategizing for the coming months, seasons or years.

On the aspect of procession, sometimes on the first or opening day of the festival, sacred and symbolic movements are made from one point of the town or village to another. Points like the palace or house of the paramount ruler, market, town hall/playground, and shrine. And in some cases, the procession ends where it began (Onwumelu, 2024).

The global future: In the light of the above submission, various festivals have various purposes for which they are celebrated. For Awolalu and Dopamu (2005), festivals function, first, as a religious phenomenon which is “functional to social cohesion and solidarity.” Since festivals are agents of socialization, “they give rhythm to the social, political, religious and everyday life of the society where they are celebrated.” In other words, festivals are sources of knowledge acquisition, with respect to the “customs, religion, social relations, institutions and values” of a people. In addition, attitudes and social values are also expressed through festivals. In the same vein, “existing order, important social customs and political authority” are confirmed by the celebration of festivals (Anyanelechi, 2013).

In addition, festivals function as a means of “renewal of covenant, relationships and solidarity.” And the renewal of relationship includes both that of human to the supernatural (that is the spirits, divinities and ancestors) and the human to human. In addition, through festivals, the problems of “disputes, quarrels, misunderstanding, family and community” can be solved. Also they can be media for which “sad memories of the previous years are forgotten, the enemies are forgiven and door is

opened for new beginning.” As it were, , during festivals, gratitude is being expressed to the divinities and ancestors and their continuous blessings and protection is sought, since they are universally believed to be existing and are possessors of powers.

Again, festivals function as an avenue to achieving unity. They solidify the “communal spirit by claiming kinship to the same ancestry. They foster clannish and kinship solidarity and enhance the spirit of togetherness that may lead to loyalty to one another.” Next, festivals serve the purpose of cultural, religious, and philosophical preservation for the people. Meaning that, as long as the festivals are celebrated frequently, various parts of the culture of the people will be preserved. “Ancient songs, ritual dance, traditional beats and tunes are preserved in festivals”.

Egwu-Ogba (new yam festival: According to Obodoegbulam (2019) Egwu-Ogba new yam festival which is celebrated by Ogba people of Niger Delta, is the highest celebration in Ogbaland. However, the pattern differs from one clan to the other. This notwithstanding, the essence is the same all over. Among the Ogba people, those from Egi call it *Egwu-Ogba*, those from Igburu and some part of Usomini call it *Nchaka*, those from Idu autonomous community call it *Igba-ogwe*, those from *Ohali-Elu* and some part of Igburu community call it *Egwu-Ohali*, those from Okposi call it *Egwu-ijonube*, and those from Ohiauga, Ama, Osiapku and Ikiri call it *Ebiahm*.

*Egwu Ogba* is celebrated yearly by the Ogba people. As part of the celebration, everyone tries very well to live in peace and love with everyone around. It is a time to give and share with loved ones. Customarily, *Egwu Ogbais* celebrated between the month of August and December every year, which is seen as the end of the traditional calendar year. One important aspect of *Egwu Ogbais* that new yam is harvested.

Furthermore, Obodoegbulam, (2019) explains that date fixing in other to start the New Yam Festival in Ogba land is highly important. Commenting on this, Wokoma as cited by Obodoegbulam (2019), reveals that the festival date is normally fixed “not less than six to eight market days away (*Nkwo Ishini/Nkwoesato*).” two kindreds from two notable communities in the Egi clan of Ogba land are responsible for the fixing of date for the festival. And they are the *Umu-Ollori* family of Oboburu and the *Edihuru* family of Erema communities. For the Idu people, the date for *Igba-ogwe* festival is fixed by the *Umu-Ezeidu*. While the *Umu-ebe* family of Ikiri fixes that for the *Nchaka* and the *Umu-Ezeali* family of Ohiuga fixes that of the *Ebiahm* festival.

As a way of preparation for this festival, three *Nkwo* market days ahead were usually fixed for the clearing of all major roads and streams. And this is related to the entire community by the town crier on the day before the third. The essence for which the cleaning and clearing is done, particularly on the day before the *Nkwo* market day fixed,

is to “deceive the evil spirits who may come on the real date to malign the people”, on the last market day to the ceremony, young men are observed tying yellow palm frond at their door posts to scare evil spirits. And all through the night, before the festival morning, among numerous activities that take place, is a general prayer for a peaceful celebration. Commenting on *Egwu-Ogba* festival, Amos (2007) revealed that this festival time in the traditional religion of the Ogba people is a time of where they passionately interact with the different deities in the land. Once the fixed date for the festival is announced, everyone is high in spirit and the bad spirits are chased away as bamboo made canons are shot by young adult males. In fact, throughout the festival, each day is marked with series of activities.

On the day one of the festival (called *nkwo-egwu*), the eldest man in each lineage will acknowledge the presence of their ancestors invite them to the festival by pouring local gin and presenting kola-nuts. And it is believed that the ancestors will respond to the invitation by joining their kinsfolk in the celebration. As stated by Obodoegbulam (2002), the libation chant is:

*Ndenmoonubia. Didindegekagbo, Onubia.*  
*EgwuOgbarume. Bianibia to oji.*  
*Ndenmoonubia. Didindegekagbo, Onubia.*  
*EgwuOgbarume. Ka m' gbabunmiyaocha.*  
*Bianibaranmiya. Ekwuatubia a ranmiya.*  
The spirits come. Our forefathers come.  
It's time for the festival. Come and share kolanut with your people.  
The spirits come. Our forefathers come.  
It's time for the festival. This is white dry gin.  
Come and drink. *Ekwuatu* come and drink.

More so, housemaids are not supposed to celebrate the festival outside their homes. So they are sent home to go and celebrate with their parents, siblings and other relatives. They sing and dance around the communities and receive gifts that they will take home, as a way of appreciation. The song sang to escort them home is:

*Eye ihenwabia la bia la. Bia la nkwo-egwu (2 times)*  
*Egwuogbarumani Ogba.*  
*Eye ihenwabia la bia la. Bia la nkwo-egwu*  
*Ka ye diguariwegwu Ogba.*  
Housemaids come and go, come and go.  
Come and go nkwo day (2 times).  
It's time for the Ogbas to celebrate.  
Housemaids come and go, come and go.  
Come and go nkwo day (2 times).  
So that we can continue our feast.

Still on that first day, by evening, married young men, will customarily visit their in-laws with a jar of palmwine and a log of wood, as a gesture of appreciation for them for their daughter's well behavior. This also, is a way of strengthening the relationship between them and their in-laws. Members of various lineage will assemble at the house of their eldest man, who by right will carry the fire of his lineage. And he will welcome his lineage members by presenting them with drink and kola-nuts. After the sharing of the drink and kola-nuts, there will be folktales till midnight at family hall (Ibrakran) believed to be the dwelling place of the ancestors. More so, the eldest man will edify the younger ones by relaying their history (*Eguagugu*). Here, the most elderly man makes supplication, with kola-nuts and a bottle of dry gin, to the ancestral spirits to bring blessings and drive away evil on the land.

On the day two of the festival (called *eke-egwu*), which is the high point of the festival, the eldest male of each kindred, in the company of some members, will carry their fire and go through the community, then proceed to throw it in the forest. By this, it is believed that the land is being cleansed of evil.

After the throwing of the fire, a new cloth is worn as a way of rebirth. Thereafter, they return to *accompany each elder to his home* where kola-nuts and drinks are offered. When this is concluded, everyone returns to his home. As part of the cultural retreat, masquerade display takes place in eight of the Egni communities where the masquerade society exists. As festival gradually ends, it features "masquerade dances on the second week of the festival which last for seven days" (Amos, 2007).

Although, there is no one pattern of celebrating this festival all through the villages in Ogba land. But one prominent ritual or symbolic act found in all is the carrying of large fire by heads of lineage for the driving away of evil spirits. For the Egi people, the lineage head alone is duty-bound to carry the fire and throw. While in Omoku town, the women who are old and not widowed throws the fire first. Then four days later, the men throw theirs. This festival lasts for nine days. Then from the next market day, "lineage heads and heads of various compounds settled down to attend to the various deity associated with the festival.

According to Obodoegbulam, (2019, Edozie (2021), *Nchaka*, as the new yam festival is called in Igburu and some part of Usomini of Ogbaland, is celebrated to cleanse the land. In other words, it is a "period of rebirth, when diseases, evil and calamities are repelled from the kingdom." In this regard, to celebrate bountiful harvest, Abali as cited in Edozie (2021) reveals that *Nchakais* the "most prominent among the cultural celebration of the Igburu and Usomini people" where gratitude to God is expressed for

“fertility, cleansing and protection and to mark the end of the planting or harvesting season.”

## Recommendations

In view of the arguments advanced in this paper, the work recommends as follows:

- i. The custodians of Ogba religion should demonstrate the practical essence of this cultural festival as a way of attracting national and international recognition.
- ii. The cultivation of yam among Ogba people should be re-invigorated since yam is the main item used during this celebration.
- iii. Participants at this ceremony should avoid being mere unlookers. They should get involved in one aspect of the ceremony or the other.
- iv. The tourism potentials of this festival should be explored and encouraged for revenue generation.
- v. Adequate publicity should be given to this cultural festival so that those who do not know much about it can be properly educated.

## Conclusion

Without fear of contradiction, cultural retreats the world over, serves as a spring board for cultural reawakening. It provides the avenue for indigenes who by way of exploring the opportunities available in the outside world, reunite with their kits and kins to refresh their memory about their culture, existence and continuity. When the celebrants gather in this manner, their memories are refreshed and their commitment to their origin renewed. This being the case, the benefits offered are enormous. Despite the new commitment of celebrants, the fact that their memories are refreshed, they return to their places of abode with a new sense of self-worth. The benefit of this is that it makes for quick integration with their hosts.

At the global sphere, the participation of non-indigenes opens the door for a better understanding of the culture in question. This will then obliterate whatever wrong impression hitherto perceived. The resultant impact of this is that it will promote better understanding and global integration.

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## **THE PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL HERITAGES: A PREREQUISITE FACTOR TOWARDS ECONOMIC NATIONALISM IN THE SOUTH-EAST OF NIGERIA**

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### ***Executive Summary***

*A call to return to agricultural farming has been a global call on a daily basis from different countries of the world. As such it has formed a hinge for economic advancement and sustainable development in most developed countries of the world. But with the wake-up of globalization Africans especially in the South-East of Nigeria, abandoned this rich cultural heritage for non-agricultural economic advancement. Hence, the resultant effects of this, are seen in various ways ranging from loss of many cultural heritages, corruption, brain drain, loss of jobs, kidnapping, and so on. Economic nationalism here gears towards the struggle or going back to preserve the traditional agricultural system found within the South-East of Nigeria which has been a source of economic development to the region in the past years. And of course, improving the agricultural system already in existence through globalized mechanized farms is seen in various ways, which remains the key to economic nationalism. This research employed a culture area approach in analyzing data and found out that due to non-mechanized ways of farming and lack of proper policies by the government, it led to the abandonment of agricultural heritage that has been the center for economic development.*

### **Introduction**

It has been confirmed and known judging from the past history, that agriculture was one of the key factors that facilitated the emergence and economic development in the Southeast of Nigeria and Nigeria in general. This is because agriculture was and has been the principal occupation of the majority of people in Nigeria before and after the arrival of Europeans. The massive fertile land mass in Nigeria cum favorable climate that supports agricultural productions paved the way for agricultural productions both for subsistence and commercial farming. Lawal (1997) added that agricultural products from different ecological zones and parts of the country were predominantly displayed

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and exchanged in different markets by farmers and traders. Of course, these agricultural products or goods were exchanged or distributed in those primitive days by a system of exchange (trade by barter) before the introduction or the use of different currencies. This facilitated the movement of agricultural products to their proper destinations and the introduction of new agricultural products in different zones or parts of the country. It also accounts for many zones not to depend on one type of agricultural product for yearly cultivation.

The proper use of human and material resources in agricultural production was done excellently, labor was largely provided by families, extended families, groups, slaves, and peer groups or hired laborers as the case may be in those primitive days. Though mechanized form of farming is taking place but not yet fully in the south-east of Nigeria which necessitated the abandonment of agriculture among the youths.

There are wide range of ideas and beliefs about land in the southeast of Nigeria which they have and which allowed them to maintain a complex agricultural system and other land use systems. Hence, Uzozie (2002) remarked that:

The Igbo concept of land (*Ala, ale, ana, ani*) is deeply rooted in religion. *Ala* (land) is a goddess, the source of life, of fertility, prosperity, and food. She is also the final repository for all human beings after death. *Ala* keeps constant watch over all the activities of men and ensures that people behave in accordance with prescribed traditional norms. (p.450).

With this idea behind the mindset, the southeast people in exploring the gift of land given to them by the gods keep or maintain certain natural balance to maintain the fertility of agricultural productivity which may be inform of offering sacrifices and avoiding certain taboos against the land. This explains the classification of land systems we have almost in all the south-east region of Nigeria, many scholars like Meek (1937) and Chubby (1961) classified land systems into four categories namely sacred or taboo lands, virgin forests, farmlands and individual holdings, and two broad categories namely compound land (*ani uno, ani mbubo*) and farmland (*ani agu, ala ubi*) respectively. Again, there was an abundant land system of ownership, some belonged to the whole community, and some belonged to the clans or villages for distribution during the yearly farming season or for residential and infrastructural buildings. Again, these lands are being shared or sold by communities for other purposes rather than for the cultivation of agricultural products, and some for infrastructures by the government and individuals.

However, Obi (1963) and some scholars later remarked that the Igbo or the southeast of Nigeria have no general classificatory system. They use many lands depending on the objective. The real fact is that all the land is potential farmland depending on how

the settlement took place in the area concerned in this age of globalization. It is worthy of note that in the farming process in the southeast in the years past, they equally considered these important factors concerning the land to be cultivated before engaging in the agricultural productions like geographical location, ecological or season of the year, vegetation cover, soil or rock structure, drainage systems, ownership or tenure land system. These are put in consideration to determine the types of crops to be planted. But in this age, technology has helped to improve the crops, soil texture, and drainage system that makes it possible to engage in agricultural productions throughout the year. The implements for agricultural productions have been also improved, and hoes and matchets or other notable implements are being replaced by various machines that can be used to work on many hectares of land in a few hours. This promotes economic stability and operation feed the nations.

Worthy of note is that most early farmers in the southeast of Nigeria were peasant farmers who engaged mainly in crop production and meagerly in livestock production. Okwuosa (2002) remarked that:

Their principal occupation on the farm is food crop production with livestock production as a supplementary programme. The men, the heads of households, own the sheep, goats, pigs, and cattle, while the women own the poultry. The stock raised are the local genotypes and these are raised under the traditional system of husbandry. (p. 505).

This means that the early farmers were not into full agricultural productions or mechanized farming but purely subsistence farming and that crop production was their main occupation. Achebe (1958) also portrayed that yam production was the main crop being cultivated in those early days and he recounted how Okonkwor borrowed eight hundred seed yams from Nwakaibie and four hundred seed yams from his father's friend. However, many scholars believed that the raising of sheep and poultry were done by women and not by men as remarked by Okwuosa (2002) in the above citation.

The above background shows how agricultural production was being carried out in the primitive ages before it started to undergo changes and the introduction of new means of improving it. And to show that it has been sustaining the life of the southeast people in the day-to-day living, but critically the write-up will show why it was abandoned gradually by the people who took it before as the source of livelihood. Hence, there is a call to go back to this heritage that was found to be the engine hub of economic growth and stability. This is what is regarded as economic nationalism which is a move towards making the production of agricultural products in a mechanized form the mainstay of wealth in the southeast of Nigeria.

## **Agricultural Heritage: A Factor Towards Economic Nationalism in the South East Nigeria**

Nationalism has been defined as a consciousness on the part of individuals or groups, of membership in a nation, or of a desire to forward the strength, liberty, or prosperity of a nation (Akinyele, 1997). The principles of nation-building and self-determination revolve around the building of an economy, judicial system and economic nationalism. Economic nationalism refers to a set of policies and practices aimed at protecting and promoting a nation's economy, often with a focus on domestic industries, resources, agricultural production, and markets. It emphasizes the idea of economic self-reliance and sovereignty, seeking to reduce dependence on foreign entities and maximize national economic interests. Economic nationalism can manifest through various measures, including trade barriers, agricultural exports, subsidies for domestic industries, currency manipulation, and regulations favoring local businesses.

In the context of southeast Nigeria, economic nationalism involves strategies to boost the region's economy, prioritize local resources and industries, and reduce reliance on external products and borrowings by state governments, though, it has been argued in different fora that borrowing is not bad when it is used for industrialization or production and not for consumption which is the problem of Nigeria government. This could entail promoting and supporting sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and small-scale enterprises that are essential for the southeast economic development. Preserving agricultural heritage, can be seen as a form of economic nationalism because it emphasizes the importance of leveraging local agricultural practices, resources, and knowledge to drive economic (agricultural) growth and sustainability within the southeast region.

According to the Agriculture & Food Security Policy Commission Report (2024), economic nationalism in the South East of Nigeria through agriculture can be achieved through the following ways:- increased investment in agricultural infrastructure, promoting of local food system, supporting small-scale farmers, developing agro-industries, implementing protectionist policies, encouraging research and development, supporting cooperative farming, developing agricultural value chains, promoting sustainable agriculture practices and developing agricultural education and training programs. By implementing these strategies, the southeast of Nigeria will promote economic nationalism which in turn will improve the livelihoods, of farmers, and people, creating jobs and economic growth and sustainability, protection of domestic markets, utilization of local resources, and ensuring food security. Overall, economic nationalism in the South East of Nigeria aims to build a strong and self-reliant economy that benefits the local population, preserves agricultural cultural heritage, and contributes to the region's overall development and prosperity.

## **Challenges Facing Agricultural Heritage in Economic Nationalism in Southeast of Nigeria**

Modernization and technological advances present a double-edged sword for agricultural heritage in the southeast of Nigeria, while modern techniques and technologies can improve agricultural productivity, they often undermine traditional farming practices and indigenous knowledge systems. Reports from various scholars showed that the indigenous techniques of farming produce more harvest than technologically advanced methods that are alien to our soil formation and processes. Uzozie (2002) affirmed that:

The high productivity was the result of much longer fallow and better farming techniques...when their soils yielded three corn cobs on one stand and huge yams weighing upwards of 20 kg. Here, in the core of Igboland we have the most intensive and advanced form of traditional agriculture employing various methods, including heavy applications of farmyard manure, and much, to increase productivity. (p. 486).

Again, one of the most outstanding features of agricultural farming in southeast of Nigeria is the ability or tendency to mixed cropping. The farmers grew in each plot of land a little of everything needed for subsistence farming and this helped in the management of soil for farmland for some farmers who did not have many plots of land for farming. These mixed and inter-cropping systems according to Uzozie (2002) also influence the rate at which new lands are cleared, the techniques of cultivation that will be in use, the distribution of farm labor in any field during the agricultural year, and the nutritional habits of the people. Most times crops like cassava, cocoyam, yam, maize, and pigeon peas are all planted in one plot of land, but with mechanized farming and technological advancement, this is no longer possible for many reasons. So, one can argue or agree with most scholars that the introduction of modern farming equipment and genetically modified seeds often leads to the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices. According to Okoye and Nwankwo (2018), these modern methods tend to overshadow the rich indigenous knowledge systems that have sustained local agriculture for centuries.

Another harmful factor towards preserving the agricultural heritage in the southeast is too much dependency on external inputs from modern agricultural mechanization which relies heavily on synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery, which can create a dependency on external suppliers. This dependency undermines local economic nationalism, which seeks self-reliance and sustainability (Nwosu et al., 2019). Apart from this dependency, most times the process and the products received from other continents does not yield much harvest because variation in soil texture and

other factors involved. It has been found that imported fertilizers most times destroy our land or soil with the harvest expected to earn, or the products harvested spoil easily because it was not cultivated with organic manure which has been the normal thing applied to the soil, fertilizers at that moment becomes hostile to the crops planted and the soil itself. The issue of many farmers not being educated on how to use these agricultural products and machines to maximize profit cannot be ruled out. The land system ownership being operated in the southeast is also a problem, where a group of people owns a portion of land, access to lands belonging to farmers who want to use machines becomes a problem because the cultivated land belonging to another person is destroyed in a bid to gain access to one portion of land. This is quite in contradiction with the western world where a farmer owes many hectares of land.

Land fragmentation and urbanization significantly impact the preservation and nationalization of agricultural heritage in the southeast. The reduction of arable land for rapid urbanization leads to the conversion of agricultural land into residential and industrial areas. Real estate development is the key to the creation of wealth in the southeast as of today, this is seen from the call to southeasters to develop their region and to drive home the concept of *aku-luo-uno* syndrome, which is being clamored by many state governments in the southeast of Nigeria. This reduces the available rich land for traditional farming practices (Adesope et al., 2021). Meek (1937) classified land in Igboland into four broad categories: sacred or taboo lands, virgin forest, farmland, and individual holdings, but all these lands are not seen as they used to be. For these classifications, enable the traditional farmer to infer the sustainability of the land in question to be used for maximum potential harvest. Again, land fragmentation results in smaller, less viable agricultural plots, making it difficult to maintain traditional farming practices that often require larger contiguous areas. According to Eze and Agwu (2020), small landholdings also hinder the implementation of sustainable farming techniques that are characteristic of agricultural heritage.

The decline in agricultural education and the transmission of knowledge poses a significant threat to agricultural heritage in the southeast of Nigeria. The menace of migration to urban areas and to other countries of the world by young people for education, employment or to escape hardship from the rural areas and in the country hampers greatly the transmission of traditional agricultural knowledge. Equally, lack of interest according to Nwankwo and Eze (2019) among the youth in farming or agriculture in general further causes the loss of the traditional knowledge indigenous to the southeastern part of Nigeria. The youths, these days focus on white-collar jobs, and dishonest ways of being wealthy which have no foundation in creative outputs. Hence, agriculture is always relegated to the background, coupled with the fact that some youths who are interested in farming or agricultural production found the mechanized form of agriculture to be too expensive and the government on its own

does not subsidize or help in providing some machines necessary for agriculture. Anazado (2002) highlighted that in the previous years in Nigeria, all ministries of agriculture in the states of the federation, operate tractor hire services for farmers in their respective states to encourage private investment in mechanized farming, but this service is expensive and mostly unavailable all the time.

Modern educational curricula introduced in the school system today focus more on contemporary agricultural practices and less on traditional methods, this factor according to Onyeneke et al (2016) leads to a disconnect between academic knowledge and indigenous ways of farming. Apart from this factor, most schools from primary to tertiary institutions have not given agriculture its proper place as part of the learning necessary for growth and process of feeding the nation.

Climate change and environmental degradation present profound challenges to the agricultural heritage in most parts of the country in Nigeria especially in the southeast. Changing climate patterns affect the growth cycles of traditional crops, making it difficult for farmers to rely on historical knowledge for planting and harvesting (Eze and Agwu, 2020). Anyadike (2002) further explained that the southern parts of the region are only 530 kilometers away from the equator, hence solar radiation is high all year round. It affects the farming seasons with its irregular radiation over southeast Nigeria. With high temperatures, all year round, rainfall with its seasonal variations appeared to be the most climate change element that affects the time of cultivation. Equally, environmental degradation, such as soil erosion and deforestation, reduces the fertility of the land and undermines traditional farming systems that depend on specific environmental conditions. According to Adesope et al. (2021), this degradation leads to a loss of biodiversity, which is crucial for maintaining agricultural heritage.

Agricultural heritage in the Southeast of Nigeria faces significant challenges as seen above, even as of today the menace of herders is not yet handled by the federal government of Nigeria which is a very serious threat to agriculture. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that balances the benefits of modern agriculture with the preservation of traditional practices and knowledge systems, ensuring the sustainability and resilience of local economies in the southeast of Nigeria.

### **Agricultural Heritage: its Roles in Reshaping the South-East of Nigeria**

To explain how agricultural heritage will contribute to economic nationalism in the southeast of Nigeria, one has to delve into various aspects such as the historical significance of agriculture in the southeast, the role of agricultural heritage in shaping cultural identity, its economic implications, and how agricultural heritage aligns with economic nationalist agenda in general. This is why Njoku (2008) attested that:

Igbo traditional economy stood on a sectoral tripod that embedded agriculture, manufacture, and trade. These sectors had an inter-dependent relationship; the health of one sector impacted that of the others. With specific reference to manufacture and trade, it should be stressed that manufacture, provided the context for trade, that is, the distribution of goods from areas of plenty. At the same time, trade stimulated manufacture by providing a vent for the disposal of surplus production, thus moving the economy away from subsistence to market orientation. (p. 47).

From the above, it can be adduced that one of the aims of promoting or preserving agricultural heritage is its potency in creating major economic growth in the southeast and reducing the tendency of the youths to engage in uncivilized activities inimical to the people around them. But if these will take place, government in power has to mobilize and support agricultural farming as it is done in the other developed countries of the world. Agriculture has been the backbone of the economy in the South East of Nigeria for centuries, with traditional farming practices deeply ingrained in the region's cultural heritage. According to Nwankwo and Eze (2019), indigenous farming systems in the region have evolved over generations, reflecting a deep connection between people and the land.

The agricultural practices have played a great role and continue to play a great role in the southeast, this is seen through the closely intertwined cultural identity of the people of the Southeast which is displayed in the form of cultural festivals either at the beginning of any farming season or during the harvesting seasons. Before the cultivation season starts, sacrifices are made to appease the gods and to request for bountiful harvests. Iwuagwu (2008) asserted that sacrifice is normally done at the door of the yam barn where yams are stored. So, during the celebrations especially during the harvest season the sons and daughters of the Igbo people and beyond come back home to celebrate and make peace with each other. Onyeneke, Anyanwu, and Eboh (2016), confirmed that farming traditions, rituals, and folklore are integral parts of the region's cultural heritage, shaping social structures and community cohesion. Earlier, Afigbo (1980) affirmed that:

Agriculture in Igboland was highly ritualized....The beginning of the farming season, the date of which varied from one part of Igboland to another for ecological reasons, was a formal occasion marked by a festival and a ritual. It was the same with the beginning of the harvest season which was marked by the very important New Yam festival. It was not only the practice of agriculture that was ritualized. But those crops, especially yam and cocoyam, which constituted the backbone of Igbo agriculture were also ritualized, and each was believed to have a spirit force, *arusi*, which laid down the specific

code of conduct for cultivating, harvesting cooking, and eating it. (pp. 126-127).

This ritual has been part and parcel of the cultural identity of the southeast people, and this has continued to define them as people, hence it is showcased through the agricultural heritage being celebrated yearly even beyond the shores of the southeast, in the distance foreign countries where the people of the southeast live as foreigners, they come together and celebrate these festivals in union with people at the homeland. Here, cultural displays of different kinds are done and some prominent sons and daughters are given chieftaincy titles.

Agriculture remains a significant contributor to the economy of the Southeast when it is viewed from the angle of trade and commerce. A study by Okoye and Nwankwo (2018) highlights the economic importance of agriculture in providing employment, income generation, and food security for the region's population. Furthermore, indigenous crops and livestock breeds hold economic potential, contributing to both subsistence and commercial farming activities (Adesope et al., 2021). Apart from employment opportunities, Afigbo (1981) affirmed that selling of agricultural products in the precolonial times helped in the development of long-range trade which involved the development of regional trade within the southeast and the development of long-range trade linking the southeast with their neighbors. According to Afigbo:

The two kinds of long-range trade developed in consequence of differences, or growing differentiation in ecological conditions, leading to a situation in which one part produced more of one kind of goods that it could consume, and had to exchange the excess for those goods which it needed and could only get from its neighbors who either produced them or were in a position to procure them from their other neighbors. (p. 131).

This transaction laid the foundation to the southeast people being known as traders all over Nigeria and beyond. The transaction of agricultural products and other things has continued to showcase and promote the economy of the people in the southeast. Preserving agricultural heritage in the southeast of Nigeria aligns with the goals of economic nationalism globally by promoting self-sufficiency, local empowerment, and cultural preservation. According to Eze and Agwu (2020), efforts to conserve indigenous crops and livestock breeds not only safeguard biodiversity but also strengthen the region's resilience to external economic pressures and control over erosional menace taking place in the southeast of Nigeria. Recently, several state governments in power in the different states in the southeast have continued to plant more trees both for economic reasons and to control environmental erosions in different parts of the states of the southeast. With the planting of the different types or species of palm trees in most part of the southeast, the region is again reclaiming its first

position towards the production of palm oil for export and other things connected with the growing of palm trees, and other economic trees. Ovat (2024) reported that this year (2024) alone, the Anambra state government has flagged off and planted trees to maintain urban forestation, for ecosystem stability, food and agricultural security, and erosion control across the cities in Anambra state, and for climate regulation.

Economically, the viability and productivity of crops have increased more than it used to be in previous years, more people especially youths have moved into both subsistence and commercial farming, thereby reducing the rate of unemployment in the states of the eastern region of the country. With this development, food security is assured especially organically produced food which ensures the health of the people with the local foods produced locally than imported food items. But in due time, with the supply of constant power supply and prevention of herders from entering or destroying the farm, the activities of the farmers will increase the internally generated revenues of the states more than any economic activities being engaged by the state governments. This will confirm that agriculture has been the mainstay of the Nigerian economy and it has been dominated by the peasants before and after the independence, then gradually declined from 1970, as the Nigerian government found new and false love with the oil sector and neglected the agricultural sector.

## **Conclusion**

Therefore, agricultural heritage plays a crucial role in promoting economic nationalism in the South East of Nigeria by preserving cultural identity, supporting local economies, and fostering self-reliance. Efforts to conserve indigenous farming practices and biodiversity not only contribute to sustainable development but it also aligned with nationalist agendas aimed at promoting the interests of the region and its people.

With the agricultural sector in full development and financed by the federal government, the over-dependence on the oil sector will be a thing of the past by the Nigerian government as exemplified by the region of the southeast of Nigeria. From the above discussion, it is possible to march towards economic nationalism through agriculture which will ensure a prosperous future for all regions of Nigeria with regard to food security. Embracing this agricultural heritage, government intervention is highly needed, which will surely foster innovation, create jobs, enhance food security, and reduce the menace of kidnapping factor all through the country as it is gradually taking place in the southeast of Nigeria. This again, will drastically reduce dependence on the importation of food items, boost locally produced food, and give value to Nigeria's devalued and inflated economy. So, there is a need to go back to the mainstay of the Nigerian economy by the government support and allocating more to it in the national budget and ensure its implementation. This has sustained many countries of

the world to survive economically even in the time of war. This can be seen when the Ukraine government despite the ongoing war with Russia, still donated 25,000 metric tons of wheat to support the World Food Programme (WFP) in providing emergency food assistance to 1.3 million crisis-affected people in North-East Nigeria (Anyagafu, 2024). This shows that agriculture is very important in the stability of any country, so there is a need to go back to agriculture by the government of Nigeria.

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## **REDISCOVERING AFRICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN THE GLOBAL FUTURE**

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### ***Executive Summary***

*Africa as a continent is rich in cultural diversity, with a wealth of traditions, languages, art, music, and spiritual beliefs that date back centuries. This cultural heritage is not only a source of pride for African communities but also a valuable asset with the potential for economic empowerment, social cohesion, and cultural preservation. This work explores the importance of rediscovering and promoting African cultural heritage for sustainability in the global future as a commodified glocalization. This glocalization emphasizes the importance of incorporating local perspectives and preferences into the global exchange of goods, services, and ideas rather than simply adopting global trends and practices. By accentuation and promoting African Cultural heritage, the continent can attract tourists, and invest in cultural industries, and create job opportunities for its people. Additionally, the preservation of these traditions is crucial in the face of modernization and globalization, which pose a threat to the continued existence of many African cultural practices. Embracing African cultural heritage can foster a sense of unity and pride among African communities, bridge cultural divides, and promote understanding and respect for different cultural background in an increasingly globalised world. Using a qualitative and analytical approach, the paper concludes that the preservation and promotion of African cultural heritage are essential for ensuring the sustainability of these traditions for future generations.*

**Keywords:** African, African Cultural Heritage, Sustainability, Global Future, Glocalization

## **Introduction**

A discourse on African cultural heritage provokes the mind of every ideal African towards the quest for identity and self-affirmation against the wide spread malignant and obnoxious squalor of Africans by the European and Americans. In the words of Njoku as cited in Kanu<sup>1</sup> the principle of identity is a value expressed by one of the first principles of being. It states that every being is determined by itself, is one with itself and is consistent in itself. Thus, every being is one with itself and divided from others. The qualities of matter, referred to in traditional metaphysics as accidents, such as size, color, shape, etc, distinguish one being from the other. If being does not have an identity, then everything would be everything, giving birth to one thing since nothing can be differentiated from the other. In this case, there would be no subject and object relationship. This would create a causal traffic in the order of being and knowledge.

Commenting on the traditional African cultural heritage in the face of the western values, Makamba<sup>2</sup> writes, there is no doubt that the dichotomy between traditional values in Africa and the western paradigm that governs the very idea of modernity has come to assume a practical importance and to present something of a dilemma. The Africanness of the African has an embodiment of values that made him live authentically his African worldview. Culture is a factor that characterizes virtually the beingness of every society. African continent in pre-colonial era lived in a multi-cultural society, with enduring values that guided and protected the interest of all her citizens. However, there has been some kind of cultural malaise or forgetfulness, occasioned by the culture-clash in the encounter between Africa and the West (Rest). This encounter left behind some kind of cultural vacuum, or alternatively, they have been replaced by foreign values of doubtful worth for Africa. The whole idea of this encounter between Africa and Europe was occasioned by the process of colonization. These strangers (the Westerners) came to our land with an obvious appearance of godliness and paternal gesture that made us accepted them and gave them unrestricted access to all that they needed. Little did we know that their purpose was destructive on our cultural heritage. The first strategy employed by these strangers (colonial masters) according to Ekwuru as cited in Kanu<sup>3</sup> was that of disassemblage, concealed in the exploitative colonial ideology of benevolent paternalism. It is first instance, an ideology of condemnation, which identified everything “good to be white” and everything “bad to be black”. Today, in Europe and America respectively, African cultural heritage is being displayed as being paganistic, and anachronistic yet kept in their museums if you like for veneration. We however censure this misrepresentation upon the problem we call ‘an ignorance of the other’. It is our belief that the European/Americans live in such erroneous conception of our cultural heritage consequent upon their ignorance of our values. We therefore encourage that African scholars should intensify their efforts and interest in writing about our cultural heritage

in national and international publications so that the European/Americans will always have access to them and learn more about our values. It is believed that their subsequent knowledge of our values will lead them to appreciate those values.

## **Conceptual Analysis**

### ***African***

What does it mean to be an African? What is African? etc, are recurrent questions debatable. In following from the thoughts of Onyeocha,<sup>4</sup> Africans can be understood as people who stemmed from Africa, and whose experience of life and life's activities are tied to Africa. Whether these are resident in Africa or abroad, their spirit is in Africa, and their destiny is tied to that of Africa. Thus, Africanity, or being an African, is thus a horizon of experience, of life and living, of thought and thinking that centers on Africa as a home and wellspring, as a concept, and as a realm of possibilities. In a bid to underscore the impact of Africans in the global community, Onyeocha<sup>5</sup> opines, already, the African, in spite of his or her present predicament, has had quite a few things to offer to the world in terms of humanity, crisis management, and conflict resolution. In the case of humanity, many a visitor to Africa has remarked how people are honored in life and venerated in death. The life and death of each affect all and is never considered a private affair. Speaking on the competence of the African in his world he affirms, not only does the African speak the language of the West, he or she has also imbibed Western culture, and can, with creditable temerity, practice practically all their crafts. Most importantly, he or she can now live in freedom and equality with them and among them anywhere in the world. He or she can now acquire or exchange citizenship rights with them, and where applicable, can even vie for, and get into public office.

### ***African Cultural Heritage***

African cultural heritage according to Sogolo as cited in Kanu<sup>6</sup> consists of the patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired by the African and transmitted by symbols. It includes the embodiments in African artifacts, the historically derived and selected traditional ideas and values. It is a way of life that is particularly African. African cultural heritage is basically two dimensional: the tangible and the intangible features. The tangible features include archaeological sites, historic sites and monuments, traditional sacred sites and other places of importance. Intangible features are traditional beliefs and practices, such as religious rites of passage, ritual, crafts, and other cultural traditions. These intangible features are the embodiment of all African values that are continuously inculcated to all African citizens that they may know and observe them for a meaningful, peaceful and progressive African society. These features are cherished by the generality of African people and are transmitted from one generation to another. These features from the implication refer to such knowledge,

norms, and mannerism of the Africans that are transmitted from one generation to another. They are invariably those set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize the African society. They are referred to as the worldviews expressed by the Africans as basis of their living

### ***African Traditional Society***

Africans of antiquity lived a multi-societal system of society. They can however be seen in four basic societies. Starting from the ‘Hunter-gatherer societies’: these categories travelled widely for food, depending virtually on natural resources available. They ate and drank basically from what nature gives. Second are the ‘Stateless societies’: these groups are known as stateless in that they did not operate on a state-based system of governance. They were very few and did not need a centralized government. ‘Stratification societies’: these are the categories that lived in a divided-class style of society. At this stage, the society believes in separation of people according to their class differences; and invariably led to the broad division of specialization.

The fourth, being the last of the division is known as the ‘Kingdom societies’: they lived under a centralized government, usually governed by a king. Amidst the divergences of culture among the Africans, there are certain traits that characterize the generality of the African society. Prior to the advent of the colonial masters, Africans were generally known of having certain values that are common among the Africans. These cultural values will therefore be examined respectively for a better appreciation of the ideal African society.

African values may be taken to mean a set of institutionalized ideals which guide and direct the patterns of life of Africans, It includes the embodiments in African artifacts, the historically derived and selected traditional ideas and values. It is a way of life that is particularly African. The values of the African culture include: honesty and truthfulness, and the Igbo put this ontological principle in the maxim: *Eziokwubundu* (truth is life), hospitality is another value, this is seen in the expression made by Iroegbu as cited in Igboin<sup>7</sup> “there is no special rendezvous required to join in meal, on arrival, once there is food, the visitor is invited to eat”. Elders in Africa are esteemed as figures of wisdom; as such respect for elders is a tradition. There is respect for sacredness of life: the African believes that life is from God. This is manifested in the names that the Urhobo people give to their children: *Oghenevweakpo* (God is the owner of life), *Oghenemakpo* (God made life). Purity of life is also valued and prized as life itself. Communal living is at the heart of African cultural value, and this is summed up by Mbiti<sup>8</sup> Thus, “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am”. However, following external influences on the African culture, these values are fast eroding.

Onyeocha<sup>9</sup> opines further that there are some essential contributing factors that must be considered in determining the African personality, among those of descent, art, religion, family life, respect for elders, land tenure, and a communal system of government. In the words of Onyeocha<sup>10</sup> “to be able to produce what is distinctly African, these factors must be taken in combination with one another rather than in isolation from each other. For more clarity, we shall expatiate on the above concepts that characterize the African values.

*Descent:* Africa is by right the first homeland not only of all of the human race but also of those of African descent. By that fact, none of her children even those who, as a result of historical circumstances have been scattered in various parts of the world, is excluded from her protective shield, no matter the legal or geographical situations in which they find themselves. She is thus the rallying point for all her children at home and in Diaspora. Nkrumah<sup>11</sup> put it thus, ‘the core of the Black revolution is in Africa, and until Africa is united, the Black man throughout the world lacks a national home.

*Art:* The African personality is evident in African art. In this setting, art is not mere representation like photography, it is also like “tuning-in” a joining-the chorus, a vigorous and enthused capturing, a purposeful harnessing or domestication of reality. Images are presented as rhythm, form and movement on the one hand, and as color, texture and rhythm on the other. Thus, colour, texture; rhythm and movement blend together in harmony. They are integrated into life, not divorced from it.

*Philosophy:* Ever since Placid Tempels produced his monumental ‘la philosophiebantoue’ (Bantu Philosophy), critics and supporters alike have had a heated debate as to whether there was such a thing as African philosophy. If by philosophy we mean a systematized discipline recognized as such and taught in schools of philosophy in universities then one could hardly answer categorically in the affirmative, but neither could one give it a blanket denial.

*Religion:* The African is very religious and usually bears witness to religion in every aspect of his or her life. The African bears witness to the divine everywhere and in various religious forums. His or her immediate surroundings, his or her own life and all his or her activities have for him or her, sacred values and meanings.

*Marriage:* In Africa, as everywhere else, the family is the basic unit of society. Every male and female marries at the proper age. The matrimonial system is flexible without being impulsive or arbitrary. It was designed in such a way that it is possible for every male or female to be married and to take part in the process of continuing the human race by procreation. There was no room for life-long bachelorhood or spinsterhood since that was perceived as a wasting away of a human live. The marriage institution

in Africa is based on a multi-wife system; this is largely due to the influence of traditional religion and Islam.

*Family:* Group membership, kinship, lineage, and the ethnic groups are very important socio-political institution in Africa. An African must either be born within the continent or be a descendant of one born within it, the African family system is broad and extended to include near and distant relations almost ad infinitum. Each family is responsible for the care of its own weak ones, the aged, the incurable, the helpless, and the sick. If the family fails, then responsibility falls upon the village or town, etc.

*Respect for Elders:* In Africa there is the principle of respect for elders. This presents an inescapable consequence to the African as far as African philosophy of human nature is concerned. In traditional Africa, old age is a virtue. It is associated with wisdom. Hence it is generally agreed that the elders are the repository of communal wisdom. the justification for this mentality takes root from the fact that the wisdom of traditional Africa was acquire not through academic knowledge but through practical experience of life through long and judicious associations with different individuals, with nature, and with the gods.

*Land tenure:* Land belongs rather to all the people as a legacy from the ancestors. Land is indeed a patrimony that comes to the people through the generations but is ultimately referred to God. The land and the water are accessible to all. Nobody is left in want of either, for work, for food, or for clothing. The use of land as a commercial venture is quite unknown in traditional Africa.

*Communalism:* The community spirit in the African theory and practice is philosophically concentrated in the notions of Ubuntu and communalism. Music and dance are special relevance in African art. The notion of Ubuntu and communalism can be found in African art and music and is the most important form of art in Africa. Africans unlike the Americans place high value on communal living. Communal values express the worth and appreciation of the community, the values which guide the social interaction of the people towards a common goal. Interpersonal bonds go beyond biological affinity in expressing the values of communality. Africans share mutually, they care for one another, they are interdependent and they solidarise

### **The Clash of Cultures and the beginning of crisis: European/American on African culture**

The Clash of Culture marks the beginning of the crisis of African Heritage. Part of the original problem for Senghor<sup>12</sup> came as a result of the encounter they had with the European and the African culture. Kanu<sup>13</sup> argues in Senghor's favor that, the encounter between European and African cultures is better described as a forced acculturation. A

word that describes a situation in which a highly developed society imposes certain elements of its culture in the other, thereby forcing it to derail from its unique tract of cultural civilization: the observed result is an initial form of resistance and conflict that often leads to a situation of cultural disorder.

It is doubtless that colonialism stimulated positive and negative changes in Africa. More importantly, colonial rule was an imposition that unleashed deadly blow on African culture with the immediate consequence of the introduction of such values as rugged individualism, corruption, capitalism and oppression. Colonial rule disrupted the traditional machinery of moral homogeneity and practice. The method of moral inculcation was vitiated which resulted in the abandonment of traditional norms and values through a systematic depersonalization of the African and paganization of its values. Instead of the cherished communalism which defined the life of the African, for instance, a burgeoning societal construct was introduced which alienates and destroys the organic fabric of the spirit of we-feeling. Apart from the economic exploitative agenda, colonialism expressed the ethnocentric belief that the morals and values of the colonizer were superior to those of the colonized. This belief was programmatically achieved through the establishment of schools, which curricula were tailored to achieve the goals of the colonizer rather than train the colonized to be independent. This scenario naturally created two classes, one being the supererogatory and the other subordinatory, with deliberate administrative structure that favored the former. One consequence of this was the erosion of the values, culture and religion of subordinatory. The African cosmos became a victim of extraneous ideology which it has continued to grapple with, with little or no success, for instance, as part of the erosion of the African cultural values, African now bear at least an European or Christian name. This means that African names, arts, music, religion and so on, are inferior of pagan orientation.

Consequently, despite the clarion call for globalization and remaking the world into a global village, Africa has been ill-treated by the rest of the world. These ill-treatments which have their roots in the historical pasts are still being practiced today as factual facts beyond fable and fantasy. The Africans are relegated as less humans, inconsequential or insignificant people whose value is only exploitative. The above quotation is meant to introduce us to the obnoxious experiences of Africans Under the control of their wicked white kidnapers. The sufferings did not begin in the Americas, it did indeed, begin back home from the African continent. Ghana, Lagos, Dahomey, Zanzibar were leading slave ports through which the Portuguese, who later joined the slave business, Spanish, French, Dutch and British colonies in the Americas. It is estimated that over the centuries, twelve to twenty million people were shipped from Africa by European traders, the black Africans in their respective locations suffered

inexplicable racism based on skin color, attributed innate mental backwardness and low graded cultural civilization. Achebe in his book, *Things Fall Apart* as quoted in Kanu<sup>14</sup> brought out the consequences of the encounter between the European and African cultures. He particularly looks at the Igbo society, especially at the period when the white man broke into it as a missionary, trader and administrator: Does the white man understand our custom about land? Asked Okonkwo, how can he when he does not even speak our tongue? Responded Obierika, and then he continued, but he says our customs are bad, and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers and our clan can no longer act as one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart. Lamenting further on the destructive impact of the colonial masters, Ekwuru<sup>15</sup> writes, colonialism represents for the Igbos, a higher and more disastrous form of slavery, the “deculturisation” and “depersonalization” of a people within their own land. With the exploitation and instrumentalization of the colonized as its main objective, colonialism was nothing other than a suppressive form of territorial cultural slavery. Europeans in general and European missionaries in particular, with some few exceptions, admitted little if any culture of value in Africa, just as many have denied that Africa really has any religion other than fearful superstitions. They came with their culture which includes their language, religious customs, morals and ways of praying and acting which defines their identity and imposed it on Africans. In this way, they killed our culture and denied us of our true identity and uniqueness.

The African culture in any of its manifestations was the bull’s eye for attack. The Christian church working hand in hand with the colonial masters declared an all-out war on African culture, regarding them as primitive, savage, pagan, barbaric and the like. Culture is the sum total of a people’s way of life, which embraces their mode of dressing, talking, the food they eat, and the way they conceive death and welcome live. By destroying the African culture, the European dealt coup de grace to the African personality, to his is-ness, by destroying the African cultural values. Unending is the regret of Africans for Accepting the white man into the African territory. The white man came in apparent love and gentleness, and the Africans from their usual culture of acceptance gave way to them believing that the white man came in with a noble agenda, and lately did Africans discover the trick employed by the white man. It is upon this realization that the Africans came up with different ideologies as a way of rediscovering the African cultural values that were almost eroded consequent upon the encounter.

## **The Process of Rediscovering the African Cultural Heritage for Sustainability in the Global Future**

African cultural renaissance movement is about the reawakening of fellow Africans to the need for a cultural rebirth in Africa. This would help bring about a revival of the African culture, which has been subdued, devalued and bastardized by the European culture. It is a movement for originality, which should involve governments, educationists and the wider society. It is a search for meaning, a search for identity and for culture. It is a search that must lead to the roots of Africa's being. It is therefore, a search for Africa's fullness of being. For Hastings as cited in Ekwuru<sup>16</sup> captures the content of an African cultural renaissance when he speaks of it as "rediscovering the wisdom of the ancestors, revaluing their ceremonies, reawakening their names, renewing their languages" The call for a cultural revolution from the above does not mean a call to primitivism: it is not a call back to cultural practices such as the killing of twins, patriarchy, human sacrifices and so on. It is not a call to close the door against cultural interactions, because every culture gives and takes from the other. The move for a cultural renaissance is a reminder to Africans that the western culture is not a finished product, they must be considered as raw materials still requiring processing and refinement before use. Scholars argue that Africa should define itself in and on its own terms regarding methodologies, subject areas, and issues without reference of deference to any alien culture. The problem that African cultural renaissance tries to avoid is what is known as 'cultural hegemony'. That is an attempt by some cultures to dominate, to assimilate or even to totally obliterate another or other cultures. Some cultures including cultural aspects like languages, customs, habits and values have been known to have disappeared or been absorbed into other cultures.

The culture of the Indians in North America was eliminated by the new American culture; the cultures of Egypt were absorbed by that of the Persian Empire; the culture of Arab nomads was absorbed by the conquering Palestinian cultures of ancient times. We are already deep into westernization but we can still bail out the water while it is still an ankle's deep. In the contention of Mugambi, according to Ekwuru<sup>17</sup> the future of African can only be forged by accepting and mending the socio-cultural present. Colonialism and westernization have brought a permanent and irreversible change on Africa. African cultural renaissance is not a speculation that should be left hanging on ivory towers; it is a reality that is praxis-oriented. Africa can right her present wrongs as a necessary condition for a healthy future, and here again the African must first be in rapport with himself so as to construct the truth of his world and be the controller of his destiny. Our identity must not be sacrificed on compromise. We must step forward towards restoring our values. Already, Africa is beginning to be intensely conscious of the cultural questions. In January 1972, a new law was promulgated in Zaire which abolished names that were not African. This decree was the most striking expression

of president Mobutu's policy of "authenticity" the assertion of African cultural values over and against European culture whose standard has been normative throughout the colonial period. Comparatively, the change of name of country by some African countries is also a public announcement that expresses the hunger for authenticity. In the area of Philosophy there has emerged an African philosophy, after several debates as to if there is an African Philosophy. In the area of theology, an African theology has also emerged. A theology, which is African, not just because it is done by Africans or in Africa, but because it speaks of African problems from African viewpoints. And at the same time, is nurtured and developed in Africa. As leaders of the family, parents have the duty of making their families the place where culture is taught, transmitted and sustained. Parents should take the teaching of culture as an important duty and primary right. To regard ignorance of one's culture as 'civilization' is at its best misnomer and at its manipulation of ignorance for questionable ends. In this age of globalization, science and technology, and near invasion of the mass media in our homes, it is incumbent for parents to insist on sound African moral values for their children. Parents must make out time to stay with their children to provide them with alternative African perspectives. In an age where 'economism' has become the yardstick, it is crucial to inculcate African values, such as solidarity, sense of ritual and festivity, sense of the sacred, hospitality, and love for life. These values should rather serve as yardstick. One great instrument for cultural renaissance is language. Irrespective of where parents find themselves with their children, they should endeavor to teach their children their native language. Language carries with it the culture and worldview of the people who own it. Some African families can be described as 'expatriate' even though they live within Africa. These are the wealthy families who think that it is a sign of prestige to act like and teach their children everything in the western way. Learning institutions also have a role to play in this process. It is through education that our values can be restored in the heart of young Africans. The African law-making bodies also have a role to play: if laws and policies that can safeguard our values are promulgated by the government or enacted by traditional ruling councils, the decay of our values will be impeded and their recovery enhanced. There should be censorship of whatever comes from outside before they are allowed for local consumption.

### **European/American Projection of African Cultural Heritage: A Display of History of Ignorance of the 'Other'**

A close examination of the present cultural bigotry among nations of the world intimates us of crucial challenges that demand immediate attentions, especially the European/American display of African cultural heritage. It is indeed a challenge that needs to be readdressed if we must achieve a meaningful and effective inter-cultural dialogue: that is, the problem of "human ignorance". The challenge of human ignorance

is twofold. There is the challenge of “self-ignorance”, and there is the challenge of “one’s ignorance of the other”. The twofold challenge of ignorance applies to both individuals and groups. However, our main concern in this work is the challenge insofar as it concerns groups, which leads us to the challenge of cultural ignorance and the sorts of prejudices it breeds. The limited scope of this essay will further restrict the discussion to the issue of a group’s “ignorance of the other” and the implications it has for inter-cultural dialogue. More precisely, we are focusing on the challenge of “mutual ignorance” among European/America towards African cultural heritage. In the context of this essay in which mutual acquaintance is advanced as a major pillar of cultural symbiosis, we are giving priority to the issue of “mutual ignorance among European/American as it concerns African cultural heritage. It is our view that there is much ignorance and prejudices on the sides of these nations (European/American) of the world. What we call “misperceptions” and “misconceptions” of the ‘other’ that under certain circumstances may even lead to unnecessary conflicts and wars are largely the bitter fruits of this cultural ignorance and prejudice. The well-known saying “ignorance breeds prejudice, and prejudice breeds hate” constantly reminds us of the fundamental nature of the challenge that cultural ignorance poses to the wellbeing of the human community at its various level. The fact that philosophy plays a pivotal role in tackling the problem of ignorance is inarguable. To that effect, we encourage that the indigenous African scholars should educate these (European/American) counterpart on the nitty-gritty of cultural diversities, especially as it concerns African cultural heritage. It is believed that their subsequent knowledge of the African cultural heritage will pave a way towards transforming their thought pattern about our cultural heritage. One of the factors that engender conflicts among people of different cultures is one’s ignorance of the beauty and worth of the cultural values of the other.

Our experiences of the perceived “misconceptions” and “misperceptions” of European/American of African cultural heritage prompted the move towards these expositions and analysis of culture for a better understanding of the diversified cultures of the world, especially of the culture in question (African culture), in a bid to achieve mutualism among nations of the world, especially European/American and African society. We believe that the only way to come out of this dilemma is by creating a cultural literacy across the globe. The idea of cultural literacy is basically concerned with our capacity to learn about cultures other than our own, to know commonalities that bind all cultures together and differences that set them apart, and to enlist the support and contribution of every known culture in the world in the pursuit of the common good. Moreover, cultural literacy is about having the right attitudes toward both commonalities and differences. The challenge before us is how to appreciate and celebrate similarities and differences at one and the same time, especially when differences tend to breed prejudices and disrespect and, more disconcertingly, when

even similarities tend to be viewed negatively. This is indeed the challenge of cultural literacy for twenty-first century humanity.

## **Conclusion**

Ignorance is one of the greatest enemies of mankind. It is an enemy that prevents one from progression and delights solely on stagnancy. In terms of growth it delights in diminutiveness. Little wonder the 'ignoramus' makes little or no effort to learn but remains contented with his/her present state of ignorance. One who finds himself in this condition has little or nothing to do in order to liberate himself from this quagmire unless he/she is helped externally. In view of this, we consider that those who lack the knowledge of African values will make little or no effort to learn them unless the Africans get involved in the process. It is on this note that we encourage that the African scholars should endeavor to reach out to those alien who constantly misconceive our values and at such misrepresents us even in the global community. Thus, until the European/American are cleared of this debris of misconceptions and misperceptions, they will continue to hold such notion about our cultural heritage.

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## **AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND THE CONTEMPORARINESS OF AFRICAN CULTURAL IDENTITIES**

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### **Executive Summary**

*The African quests for self-definition, self-recognition and self-participation in the midst of other cultural and racial identities have been based on their contemporary demands for integral values of their freedom and the sense of African Sustainable Development (ASD) through the promotion of African Cultural Identities (ACIs). The problem inherent in this quest, especially in our contemporary time, has been linked with some difficulties on the part of the Africans themselves, through the institutionalization of sustained intense poverty, corruption, electoral malpractices, ethnic and religious insurgences and the mismanagement of human and natural resources. These strives of our existence are appearing as way of life, and then, defeating the traditional values of ACIs that make our personality to remain unique in the faces of the community of nations. Indeed, the challenges or problems of change which this implies the re-visitation of values of ACIs as a mean of demanding the employment of African philosophy as a panacea. Therefore, the paper recognized that the tenets of the African philosophy require that the Africans, the values of their Blackness as their identity, maintain two mutually supportive faces of the truth and trust, through the examination of their past with a view to discovering aspects of it that are useful for collective contemporary existence as a people by preserving ACIs in modelling of our courses of ASD.*

**Keywords:** African Philosophy, African Sustainable Development (ASD), African Cultural Identities (ACIs), Blackness Consciousness Philosophy (BCP), Black Solidarity

## **Introduction**

It is on this basis of classification of the individuals as persons, especially as Africans, is dependent on the cultural values that flourish on their solidarised expressions of one's self-authenticity, self-subjectivity and self-definition (Bature & Nebeife 2023: 480; Isanbor & Ukagba 2024: 139; Isanbor & Obinyan 2018: 538). This is a philosophy<sup>1</sup> fashioned to the reformation of the African minds and rejuvenation of the African spirit by the valuation of their common existence as a people of the *Blackness of History*. This is one of the main concerns of African philosophy as a course for the proper understanding of the African person and society in the midst of other cultural, social, political and racial personalities. It is hinged on the developmental currency of BCP<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup>The conceptual operations of philosophy in general as a course of study have its nature which is fundamentally theoretical, intellectual, abstractive, rational, reflective and historical in assessing the beingness of the human person in relation of the ontologised society. It develops from the culture of a people and entails to some extent the traditions and history. From all these a people's philosophy emerges as a combination of certain essential modes of thought and rationalization and examination of the accepted way of life. It is in this regard that people often talk of "philosophy of life", an existence that necessarily needs the imports of the philosophical consciousness of the human person to properly known and such knowledge to be sustained from one generation to the other. This is only reasonable when such epistemological convictions are logically imported, as the ensemble of the principles guiding mode of conduct, expression and life.

<sup>2</sup>The philosophy of Black consciousness is a principle born in struggle in that was fermented and brewed in the belly of apartheid. This is a contemporary development of the philosophy of Negritude. This is mainly associated with and championed by Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko. The concern is to project and sustain that ideology of development based on the values of self-liberation, self-dynamism, and self-subjectivity. This means that "to struggle is to engage in the politics of resistance." This is resistance against the operation of the western imperialistic culture in African landscape and consciousness. Black Consciousness philosophy articulates the lived experiences of blacks who are in the clutches of racial oppression, suppression and subjugation by the racially-marauded Whites. These are the very negativity of antiblackness and the attempts for the extinctions of the values of Blackness in the minds of the Blacks. It is a philosophy born in struggle in that the very same lived experiences and the testimonies that come with it, and to some extent the articulation that tries to

where the African quest for self-definition can be summarized as a free quest for the courses of ASD. This quest cannot be successful if all Africans do strive to return to, or maintain, our old ways of life; or pursue change along the enslaving and imperialistic lines of values and interests established by the *Whiteness of History*. According to Isanbor (2024):

African philosophy has being at appraising the socio-political and developmental contents and values of “Black Consciousness Philosophy” in the fight against diplomatic manipulation of the “Politics of Antiblack Culture” by *Whiteness of History*. Such concerns of *Whiteness of History* are to sustain the presence of White supremacy in the minds of the Blacks by the pushing for the impossibility of *Blackness of History* through the neglects of African Cultural Identities in the global marketplace of racial and existential values and recognition.

Indeed, with such concern of African philosophy for the realization of ASD through the expression of ACIs, the challenge of change which this implies requires that we maintain two mutually supportive and unmarked faces of BCP, the paper is poised to examining the past in relations with the potentials of present and future based on the sustainability of African Blackness as the ontological uniqueness and inevitable blend of identity. This is with a view to discovering aspects of it that are useful for contemporary existence and preserving the values of ACIs; and the other concerns are by observing the present and contemplating the future with a view to appropriating whatever is the best in the scientific and intellectual resources of Black humankind in the contemporary operations of solidarity, trust and truthfulness. Hence, a careful and balanced use of these faces of BCP can strengthen the Africans in our interactions with other cultures. With African philosophy, the employment of BCP can also assist the Africans in their search for appropriate socio-cultural frameworks for building anew and humane society through their collective promotion of the courses of ASD.

### **The Problematique: ACIs and the Contemporary Recognition of the African Person**

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understand the manner in which oppression is constituted, are the very basis through which this philosophy rests.

The cultural operational values of BCP<sup>3</sup> as a course of African reformativ conscience are beyond their racial classification and identification, as these values of self-subjectivity and self-dynamism were greatly exemplified their importance, especially during the ravaging moment of COVID-19 pandemic. It is the mutual operatinality of the power of African solidarity in overcoming the courses of common death, even when majority of the African political leaders did not changed from the selfish and greedy nature they were known for and still exercising. In the exactness of concern, the currency of the COVID 19 pandemic and the lingering effects of other previous pandemics and epidemics have revealed and have been revealing of some hidden aspects of the African person as a subject of lived experience, especially in terms of his or her socialization, religiosity and psychology of living, in relation to the valuation of their self-authenticity, self-dynamism and self-participation.

With the pandemics, everyone sees death very close and in the face of everyone it remains normally indispensable that everybody is going to die, especially in under-developing countries where we have no proper governmental preparedness or pro-activeness for any unforeseen circumstance like epidemics and pandemics, especially due to corruption and mismanagement of public resources. As for COVID-19 pandemic, there were increasing and fearfully disturbing reports of death of persons is surging in Europe mainly, many questions were also surging in the minds of many Africans, such as: who will be saved in Africa from COVID-19 pandemic since we are still battling with malaria and Ebola Virus? What then is the value of the human persons in a pandemic death like this? Who will bury and mourn who since everyone likely to die in Africa and the liked continents? Will African nations always and continually depending on the development of vaccines from European and Asian Communities to avert endemic and pandemic deaths? Such anxieties and uncertainties for common survival as against the sense of common death gave answers to the questions been asked.

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<sup>3</sup>The purpose of the exercise of Black Consciousness Philosophy is to serve the value of Blackness as a clearing ground for the determination of the set ideas that are hinged on African self-development and growth. This can serve as the theoretical and pragmatic compass for the developmental achievement. For the Blacks, the human person as an active agent of development, and he or she should be devoid of racial subjugation and suppression, and he or she must be awake in trying to value the life he or she possessed. For the human person is to live, not to exist. His or her duty and responsibility are to prolong his or her life. He or she has to responsibility manage his or her time to value his or her by utilising the lime he or she possesses, not to waste time by trying to exist merely. This can only be meaningful when the communitarian nature of the human person is well considered in every developmental planning.

From the questions above, and with the tenets of African philosophy<sup>4</sup> being the promotion of Black solidarity (see, Sithole 2017: 44), we can easily deduce the sensibility of common survivals of persons as brothers and sisters, not merely as neighbors, make such consciousness to overcoming common death and suffering a culture of life, and an identity of trust and genuine solidarity (Isanbor & Obinyan 2018: 237; Obinyan & Isanbor 2018: 250). Here, the fear of death and the commonness of incoming it becomes a culture, that is, the identity of common survival. For Pantaleon Iroegbu, “we have one world but various cultures. We discover this oneness and variety in culture. We can say that we have a culture of human beings but various ways of expressing our human-beingness” (Iroegbu 2005: 276). The loveable values of our *beingness* through cultural recognition show our closeness to what nature can offer to collective existence and authenticity. It is in the same way the culture of each people finds itself sharing the same *beingness* with all other human beings, in advancing the courses of lives and the fighting against the courses of common death, and the communally embracing the death that cannot be adverted. Hence, the questions and the some related ones were examine in helping the African thinkers to examine themselves as Africans and the whole survival qualities of the Africans in facing the courses of common death and sufferings (Isanbor & Obinyan 2018: 238; Obinyan & Isanbor 2018: 251). With such conditioning of African personality, as been represented in its classification by African philosophy, we try to ascertain the values of the human person as an African in relation to the employment of ACIs for the classification of African common survival, especially in their contemporary quests for ASD. This poses that the ACIs help to the whole religiosity, socialization and psychology of the African person, especially the cosmological-ethical valuations of African human commonness, and

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<sup>4</sup>It is philosophy done especially within African philosophical tradition designating the corpus of African philosophical writings. As the distinctive movement as it is today, it is largely a response to the postcolonial condition and, in this regard, it should be thought of as a postcolonial project even if the specific themes dealt with are not always postcolonial. African philosophy is born of pain, humiliation, destitution and destruction not solely of material conditions, but also and primarily of the symbolic order from which the confidence and meaning of Africa originally stemmed, that is, stemming from the concerns to advance African thoughts, values and beliefs. But, with the promotion of Black Consciousness Philosophy in recent times, the tenets of African Philosophy have remained the philosophy done especially by the Africans themselves in exacting their identities beyond the effects of its racial classification. It is a by-product of human enterprise on people’s culture. It is a philosophical tradition that is African within the mainstream of philosophy as a systematic study of their historical relevance. African Philosophy is the critical and universalizing interpretation of the culture and the worldview of African people by philosophers within and outside African continent.

which has been the basic concern of African philosophy in its promotion of African Blackness as an indispensable identity of truth and genuine solidarity.

### **Culture, African Philosophy and the Question for African Self-Identity**

In relations to the indispensable workability of culture, African philosophy and its sustainable concerns for ACIs cannot be distant from metaphysics and epistemology in analyzing the developmental contents and values of the average African person (see, Iroegbu 2005: 275; Isanbor & Obinyan 2018: 239; Obinyan & Isanbor 2018: 2521; Oladipo 2006: 70-71). Beyond racial invention and the incursion of cultural racialism, these concerns for metaphysical and epistemic recognition of the African person are mostly based on the developmental proximity of African Blackness as the foundational basis of ACIs (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ndlovu 2021: 30-31, Zonbi 2021: 230). With these concerns in recent times, one can easily evaluate the trending waves of the ground breaking achievements, mind-burgling inventions and discoveries in all facets of human endeavors and these are all clear indications of the dominance of the engagement in philosophical thinking with a strong blending flavor of African philosophy as a model of conscious reformation.

We are constantly reminded by many contemporary African philosophers about the roles of African philosophy, especially on the indispensable relationship between the cultural values of African Blackness as the seat of commonness of self-recognition and the quest for the courses of African emancipation through the exercises of ACIs. Analyzing the authenticity for the institutionalization or recognition of philosophy within cultural divides, Jim Unah (2006: 40) asserts that;

The point has been made quite frequently and unambiguously that the tree of authentic philosophy is timeless and universal. The truth, however, is that its roots are cultural, experiential and personal. In other words, the tree of authentic philosophy germinates from culture, experience, human will, and sometimes human arbitrariness. The so-called theoretically sophisticated philosophical systems of Western Europe developed from culture, experience, individual decisions and arbitrariness. Whatever else philosophy may be said to be and whatever else it may be found, it definitely springs from culture, towers above culture, guides and domesticates culture, through critical reflections on the predominant aspects of reality, truth and value.

As reasonably recognized by the Leopold Senghor, Julius Nyerere, and Kwame Nkrumah, Steve Biko, Sophie Oluwole and some contemporary African thinkers, culture in the hands of African philosophy, as a tool of mental reconstruction; poses the values of self-development based on epistemic recognition of the African person. Such relationships define the social cultural coloration of African identity and personality in

the conceptual frameworks of realities around their development, as Makumba (2007) puts it; when examining the cross-cultural nature and relevance of philosophy towards a global perception for the application of philosophy, that;

Strictly speaking, in order to define African philosophy, the questions of African identity and African culture are inevitable. There is no denying that one's conception of who qualifies to be called African and what qualifies to be African culture will determine one's conception of African philosophy (p. 34).

This inevitable relationship of African philosophy and culture explicates the philosophical consideration of cultural humanism which is ever situated within the sociological and communitarian valuing for the attainment of ASD. This is as a remedy to sectional actualization of interests that does not consider one's racial and ontological recognition in accordance with its ACIs. Away from this recognition, ACIs are about the emphatic harmonization of human interests in respect to its cultural ethics and development. Though, within the domination of modernization, globalization and civilization by the application of science and technology, the placement of African philosophy is questioned in the terms of relevance. This is so because African philosophy is a sectional and non-pragmatic model of philosophy, according to many thinkers, and to them the African philosophy cannot be studied adequately with due references to the values of African culture.

This is owing to BCP thinkers' summation on the operability of culture for the identification and classification of the human person as a subject of lived experience; the African persons are beyond their identity as Blacks.<sup>5</sup> They are the life they possess, with which, the cultural values define their self-authenticity and self-subjectivity. That, with life being defined the values of lived-experiences as offered by culture; the relation of the individual as a person and his or her choices and responsibilities for meaningful development remains indispensable and inevitable. Such relationship identifies morals, laws and norms to shapes the society. It is about the understanding and practicality of personal and common lived experiences. With the existence of human culture in the society, there are demands of social order to promote the development of the human person. The concept and application of social order referred to the stability and equilibrium necessary for establishing the ingredients of meaningful development (see,

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<sup>5</sup>This is where culture is seen as the expression of the life of a given people in various external forms. It involves the acquired ways and manners of doing things, which a people have like their lifestyle and eventful activities to which they still adhere. It is life in its practice as different from mere theory. Culture is lived life. But it has to do with a people not with mere individuals. What a people shares, appreciates, and promotes in common, that is their culture (See, Iroegbu 2005: 272).

Obono 2017: 197). In any given society, social order could not exist without the effective and effectual operationalities of social institutions, such as culture, education, religion, political organization, law, etc. Culture in its general sense indicates everything in which human person develops and perfects his or her many bodily and spiritual qualities. The human person strives by his or her knowledge and labour of self-understanding and then directs his or her actions to bring the world itself under his or her control of the tones of his or her temporal experiences. He or she renders social life more human both in the family and the civic community, through improvement of customs and institutions.

However, African Philosophy as a cultural ventilated analysis of values and moralities, like other philosophical traditions, has an historical development along the path of human consciousness, critically encountering their realities based on the sustainability of the person as a subject of lived-experience (Onebunne & Kanu 2022: 14). Such philosophy of living need not acquire another meaning in order to be useful. It is what it is; it is a philosophy that is metaphysically cultural, as the nature of human person is more culturally defined than any other aspects of his or her existence (Isanbor 2017: 108; Uzomah, Isanbor & Uzomah 2023: 24). Such philosophy does not require ceasing, for instance, from being a personal reflection on some human problems and experiences for it to aid human development (Oraegbunam 2008: 80). African philosophy is also eligible for this claim. This undeniably has been the fulcrum of scientific and technological development and advancement as well (Isanbor 2024: 34; Isanbor & Ukagba 2024: 121). Of course, this has also been the focal origin of African civilization in the midst of imperial presence of the *Whiteness of History* through its operationality of the “Politics of Antiblack Culture” in African socio-economic landscaping, as against the valuation of *Blackness of History*.

The struggles to remain and be selves as Africans in the midst of racial complex suppressions and dehumanization course the re-membering of selves through the valuation of ACIs (see, Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ndlovu 2021: 30-31).<sup>6</sup> Such remembrance

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<sup>6</sup>The definition of African identities as qualities that direct and determine the nature of development we achieved is hinged on remembering the past in relations to the present and then the future. it is in taking account of ourselves as a people, the knowing the values of common life and common death. It is about the resistance to the forces that are against our will and freedom. When we take into account the resistance that coalesced around the identity of blackness, we can therefore confidently refer to the dynamics of blackism on a world scale in the second sense of “re-membering.” Such practical and ideological consciousness of re-membering encapsulates the consistent attempts of black people at counter-self-creation, self-definition, recovery, restoration of their denied humanity, but also systematic self-rewriting of themselves back into human history, and then, knowing the

of our self-authenticity in the midst of imperialistic resistance to values of Blackness as a foundation of ACIs brings to African consciousness to the originality of African philosophical postulations and engagements for their liberation struggle, especially the decolonization of the African minds (Isanbor 2024: 36; Isanbor & Ukagba 2024: 123). Both philosophical ideologies are hinged on the projection of African self-ness through the learning and understanding of African blackness in economically managing themselves as a people with common interest for common development by advancing and investing in the knowledge horizons in understanding all models of economic, social and political ideologies.

This sense of judgment on the values of ACIs should be made to solve some key societal problems, as learning about the operational applications of problem-solving techniques for the achievement of ASD. With such resilient concern of African philosophy in promoting African Blackness as the basis of African identity, culture remains a way of life and as a model of real socialization. With it, the African person lives according to and along the dictates of community's values and desires. This is what readily informed the mind of an average well-conscious African before he or she has been influenced by some external and foreign cultures. This is what informed the ontological values of the Blackness of solidarity and truth (Sithole 2016<sup>a</sup>: 100; Isanbor 2017: 109). The African Blackness as an ontological-cultural identity poised that such self-authenticity, being collective as in recognition of a group of people as Blacks, is defined by the senses and practices of sincerity, honesty, team-spirit, truth, trust, humility and solidarity (Isanbor 2017: 108; Isanbor & Ukagba 2024). These are qualities of sustainable and meaningful growth and development any African community demands from a person as a subject of lived-experiences.

### **African Philosophy, BCP and the Contemporariness of ACIs**

With the contemporary aspect of African philosophy, the values of ACIs are about the definition of the human person through the contents of African cultural practices and moralities (Isanbor 2017: 108). It about the socialization and developmental metabolism of cultural values in defining the human person as an agent of ASD, and it is the exemplification of cultural and ethical values in identifying the individual as a

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values of being a people of ancestral coloration and definition. It is in knowing that we are not designed as blackness by the imperial forces and interests, but ontological fashioning of the selves. Thus, those who were designated as black people were essentially thrown into the deep end of a problematic luminal state of being that was perpetually transitional in nature, as against the will of the blacks. They were and still caught between demeaning their humanity due to poverty, slavery, corruption and exploitation of their natural and human resources and then with the seductive promise of eventually attaining ontological density so as to return to the human family, the family of solidarised personhood and personality.

subject of lived-experiences. ACIs define the values of the individual morally, especially as a person rather than as a being, owing to what he or she can offer to sustain that same. With culture and its enduring cosmological existence, there is an indispensable and unbreakable connection of the past, the present and the future of the people with a high level of common interests and values. For Makumba (2007), when analysing the developmental placement of philosophical thoughts or ideologies in solving continental problem, asserts that;

Another area of concern for contemporary African thought is the role of philosophy in the development and the economic emancipations of the continent. ...Yet African philosophy cannot just look the other way waiting for other sciences to bring the continent to this level. Poverty, disease, famine and illiteracy are still a reality on the African continent. Whereas philosophic thought is not impossible under such circumstances, it cannot blossom as well as would have been the case under better conditions (p. 95).

It is a cosmological leveler of characters' definition and specification for all persons in a particular society. It defines human commonness by engendering the factors for common human morality and values of togetherness through the classification of human happenings. Such happenings are products of human actions, values and choices. It is where acting by living out one's essence begets the stucturisation and formalization of one's becoming and happening by directing one's future contents and expectations. It showcases the contents of one's lived experiences on the values of one's personhood in relations with the other selves in the community (Aghamelu 2019: 108). With the known and unknown operations of culture, the society forms and informs the human person, and in return, the human person defines the society through his or her actions, choices and responsibilities as occasioned and designed by the same culture. Then, Makumba posits that;

Contemporary African philosophy finds itself at the heart of cultural formation and transformation, in which it has to give direction. Any development whatsoever must be geared towards the good of the human person, which good should be based on an authentic interpretation of that person. African philosophy should stand out as a true conscience in the craze for advancement so that society is saved from extreme positions like those of scientism and traditionalism (p. 95).

Hence, the contemporariness of the study and the exercises of African philosophy within the values of BCP, which is through the promotion of ACIs as modeling qualities for the reformation of characters and values towards the attunement of ASD, demands that there should be indispensable needs to sustain the ongoing efforts of and by many African nations in the reformation of the minds towards their own growth and success. These efforts aim at creating legal, social, cultural, political and economic reforms that

are ontologically aligned with ACIs. Such consciousness demand that these policies and programmes should be legally sustained and remain sustainably institutionalized based on traditional mode of administrations of trust and solidarity, knowing that we all belong to each other. Such mentality of development will become our standard way of thinking and rationalizing as Africans, on which, everyone is a proximal determinant of growth and success, such consciousness in the hands of African philosophy should be at:

- Ensuring the sustainability of the factors of common development based on the assurance of economic and legal reforms which determine the flow of labour markets, interest rates and the other forces of production.
- Sustaining the ownership reforms of state-owned enterprises, by creating economic zones where the individuals can strive in businesses and being themselves in innovations and creativity, in order to contribute to their community development.
- Conscientizing the minds of African leaders on the indispensable needs to be sincere and truthful in their management of human and natural resources, especially by the obedience to the rule of law and the insurance of political stability
- Determining the sincere pace of governmental reforms through the exactions of positive and effectual political ideologies, including the maintenance of fiscal system and monetary policies that can accelerate the reduction of unemployment rate; boost surplus labour values for the benefits of the workforce, reduce immobility, rural-urban migration, and rural-urban income divide.
- Improving the corridors where the youth exhibit their pragmatic and mental innovative and creative skills and powers, especially in the scientific and technological domains
- Providing resources for the development of modern and sustainable public facilities and infrastructures in order to overcoming the courses of common death and backwardness, especially the fights against Ebola disease, HIV/AIDS incidence, Lassa Fever, COVID-19 pandemic, etc.

The socio-economic and political thrusts of BCP resiliently stage the continental solidarized concerns for the contemporary sensibilities for the realization of ASD by the Blacks themselves, hinged on the contemporary economic and political values of the exercises of African philosophy as a course for the reformation of African minds. Hence, the contemporariness of ACIs presupposes the perceptual currency of the African persons in the midst of other racial personalistic identification, recognition and valuation, in terms of what they can offer to the entire world. It is the contemporary consideration of African person with his or her blackness in the midst of other racial

personalizes. It is with the understanding that culture makes the African person what and who he or she really is. Through the values of ACIs, the African person expresses, communicates and conserves the works in creation and of co-creating, great spiritual experiences and desires that they might be of advantage to the progress of all humankind. With these qualities, the African person places his or her priorities in the promoting the communal interests, with which, his or her *beingness* is defined. It is about the true collectiveness of ACIs with the support effects of cultural metabolism and synopsis for initiating and sustaining human responsive togetherness and communal socialization.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, the paper has been on what could be done to make Africa as an entity and African as a people to truly attained ASD through the values of ACIs. The paper also recognized that this concern has bothered some African philosophers in the past and has been bothering some of them in the present, and projecting the minds of so many scholars over the years, especially through the promotion of BCP. In this paper, we made available this concern and that of other thinkers like Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko as they make a clarion call on Africans to never to bend backward to their cultural as well as ethical traditional heritages which have variously been exemplified in their personalities as pragmatic entities of solidarity, brotherhood, hospitality (with caution), and mutual assistance. This willingly explicated the development engagements of African philosophy, which has been hinged on basic aspects of ACIs to be situated within the ambience of sociological as well as communitarian valuing of ASD. We saw this approach as a remedy of sectional and skeletal development that does not consider the expected central concern of a genuine and lasting development- the human person in consonance with its cultural heritages, and identity. With the epistemic evidence and a showcase of pragmatic applications of thoughts for the development of Africa, the pedagogical relevance of the same philosophical tradition or culture needs not to be questioned. For Marcel Onyibor (2004);

We must note that what differentiates philosophy from other field of African studies is the fact that African Philosophy is the fruit of rational discourse, logical and systematic in its inquiry. In other words, African philosophy, in its critical role, seeks to understand, clarity and explain every aspect of the African experience, and through these processes, seeks to articulate the world-view of the African, in terms of who the African is and his role and place in his environment (p. 106).

Therefore, African duties and responsibilities towards the attainment of ASD are to live positively and reasonably, not to merely exist. This is the true definition of African Blackness as mode of meaningful existence beyond the raciality classification. It is

about being truthful to one's ontological relevance through the valuation of truth and trust. With it, the culture of self-definition, self-dynamism, self-subjectivity and self-participation remains where the creative order plays a decisive role in the process of making the individual becoming more human, most especially more African in his or her exercises of the Black solidarity as he or she recognizes the common values and interests which the community holds indispensably sacrosanct. No one can actually be free and articulate one's humanity if one does not live in harmony with nature. It is in only cosmic harmony with the other selves in the community can help to bring about the full development of the individual as a subject of lived-experiences.

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## **AFRICAN PERSONALITY: THE PLACE AND ROLE OF LANGUAGE**

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### **Executive Summary**

*The concern of the paper is on the indispensable relation of human language in human endeavour. It explains the extent and efficacy of language not only as a means of communication but also as a tool of conveying and impacting morals. This research argues that the facts that moral values are meaningful and effective dependent on the contents of language has the ability to sustain values if well used and to as well misrepresent values if abused especially in expressing them. Therefore, the content of language in African personality serves as both a means of communication and a source of transmitting cultural values and morals. This paper using hermeneutic method posits that language has the capacity of explaining one's personality and cultural values. It argues that the depth of language in African society is traced to the worldview of the people since in conveys both their thoughts and their values. Hence, in order to understand a person as expressed in human discourse and agitations, language is the only means towards human self-authenticity, self-dynamism and self-participation. The paper concludes that since humanity cannot be separated from its language in all ramifications despite the limitations visible in the human linguistic engagements, the power of language has the ability to sustain, promote and talk about a person and their values, because rich cultural values are expressed in our language.*

**Keywords:** Language, Culture, African Personality, Morality, Self-Authenticity

### **Introduction**

Africa is one of the continents in the world that comprises of different cultures and traditions speaking different languages. As a medium of communication, Language plays a pivotal role in shaping the African personality, serving as both a medium of

communication and a repository of cultural identity. The intricate relationship between language and identity is deeply embedded within African societies, influencing social interactions, cognitive processes, and worldview. As articulated by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, a prominent Kenyan writer, language is not merely a tool of communication but a bearer of culture, history, and consciousness (37). This sentiment underscores the profound significance of language in defining the African personality. In Africa, linguistic diversity is extensive, with over 2,000 languages spoken across the continent (Lewis et al 121). Each language encapsulates unique cultural norms, values, and traditions, contributing to the multifaceted tapestry of African identity. The utilization of indigenous languages fosters a sense of belonging and pride, reinforcing communal bonds and preserving ancestral knowledge. Consequently, language serves as a conduit for intergenerational transmission of heritage, enabling the continuity of cultural practices and customs. Moreover, language shapes perceptions of self and others, influencing social hierarchies and power dynamics within African societies. Linguistic choices can reflect societal attitudes towards ethnicity, class, and gender, exerting a profound impact on individual identity formation. Therefore, understanding the place and role of language in constructing the African personality is essential for comprehending the complexities of African societies and fostering inclusive development initiatives.

In this work therefore, we shall be exploring on the overview of Africa personality, the linguistic landscape of Africa, examining the impact of language diversity in Africa and the role in which language plays in shaping African personality.

### **Clarification of Terms**

#### *Personality*

Personality refers to the unique pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguish one individual from another. It encompasses a wide range of characteristics, including temperament, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social roles, which collectively shape how a person interacts with the world. Psychologists often conceptualize personality through various theories, such as trait theory, which identifies enduring qualities that predispose individuals to behave in consistent ways across different situations. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory emphasizes the role of unconscious processes, divided into the id, ego, and superego, in shaping personality development (87). Meanwhile, humanistic theories, like Carl Rogers' person-centered approach, focus on the inherent goodness and self-actualization potential within individuals.

### *African Personality*

African personality refers to the diverse range of traits, values, beliefs, and behaviors that are characteristic of people from the African continent. It encompasses various cultural, historical, and social influences that shape individuals' identities and expressions. In his book, Okolo observes that “the phrase ‘African Personality’ has become rather common in the social and political utterances of many contemporary African leaders and intellectuals” (48). He then traced back the phrase to Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana as its ardent promoter. Before the First Conference of Independent African States held in Accra in April 1958, Nkrumah had emphasized the need for “self-expression” by Africans from their own collective/common experience (or identity) as a people. He said: For too long in our history, Africa has spoken through the voices of others. Now what I have called the African personality ... will have a chance of making its impact and will let the world know it through the voices of Africa’s own sons. (Quaison-Sackey 35).

### *Language*

Language is a system of communication that uses symbols, such as words or gestures, to convey meaning. It allows people to express thoughts, ideas, emotions, and information, and it can be spoken, written, or signed. Language is a fundamental aspect of human cognition and plays a crucial role in social interaction, cultural expression, and the transmission of knowledge.

## **Overview of African Personality**

The concept of African personality encapsulates the unique cultural, social, and psychological traits that characterize individuals and communities across the African continent. It embodies a rich tapestry of values, beliefs, and practices that have evolved over centuries, shaped by diverse historical, geographical, and sociocultural contexts. As articulated by philosopher Kwame Gyekye, the African personality is rooted in communalism, spirituality, and a deep connection to the land (75-79). These foundational elements underscore the importance of collective identity, interdependence, and holistic worldview within African societies.

Moreover, African personality encompasses resilience, creativity, and adaptability in the face of adversity, reflecting a history marked by colonization, slavery, and systemic injustices (Nwoye 693-702). It emphasizes the importance of oral tradition, storytelling, and ritual practices in transmitting cultural heritage and fostering social cohesion (Wiredu 96). Additionally, African personality is dynamic and multifaceted, encompassing a diversity of ethnicities, languages, and lifestyles that contribute to the continent's vibrancy and resilience (Asante 59). Understanding the complexities of

African personality is essential for appreciating the richness and diversity of African cultures and societies.

### **The Linguistic Landscape of Africa**

Africa is a culturally diverse and linguistically heterogeneous continent. It presents a classic example of linguistic diversity with almost 2,000 indigenous languages, which are grouped into the following language families: (i) Afro-Asiatic (approximately 200 languages covering nearly all of Northern Africa, including the horn of Africa and the central Sahara at the top of the Nile); (ii) Nilo-Saharan (consisting of about 140 languages with some eleven million speakers scattered in Central and Eastern Africa); (iii) Niger-Saharan (covering about two-third of Africa with about 1000 languages and some 200 million speakers, and including the Bantu languages of Central, Southern, and Eastern Africa); and (iv) Khoisan (about 30 languages in Western part of Southern Africa) ( Bamgbose 91). A graphic picture of the multilingual situation in Africa is painted in a working document by UNESCO, cited in Wolff:

According to the definition of languages and dialects there are between 1,250 and 2,100 languages in Africa...It is a trivial statement to say that monolingual countries are more the exception rather than the rule if we are to adhere to strict criteria. Even in an apparently monolingual setting, the geographical distance (dialects), the social distance (sociolects), the historical and other codes and registers will make the situation more complex (5-6).

Homogeneity is a fiction in the linguistic field more than in any other. Taking an arbitrary threshold of 90 per cent as the defining landmark of a monolingual country, only a handful of countries meet this criterion in Africa. The ones generally cited are Botswana (language: Setswana), Burundi (Kirundi), Lesotho (Sotho), Madagascar (Malagasy), Mauritius (Creole), Rwanda (Kinyarwanda), Seycelles (Creole), Somalia (Somali), Swaziland (Seswati). The degree of multilingualism varies greatly. About 105 million people speak around 410 languages in Nigeria, 30 million people in Zaire use 206 languages and Ethiopia has 97 languages for a population of about 45 million. Diversity is not the characteristic of giants alone. In Cameroon, 185 languages are used by 8 million people, giving an average of 50,000 persons per language; 3 million inhabitants of Benin are spread over 58 languages while 2 million Congolese have at their disposal 31 languages. On the other land, Mauritania has four languages, Niger ten. These figures need to be scrutinized further, and they yield interesting and useful information. With a population of about 28 million, Tanzania has 120 languages, among them Kiswahili which as a lingua franca is used by the vast majority of the population. Mali has 12 languages and 90 per cent of the population use four of them and 60 to 65 per cent use only one language (UNESCO 3).

## **Language and Identity**

Language is one of the determiners of understanding people's culture in the world. When a speaker communicates a particular language people may speculate about the origin, nationality, culture, religion and ethnicity of the speaker as language reflects embedded cultural identities of people within a language. Hall, S. states that language represents the shared meanings of a particular culture and culture exchanges the meaning through language with the society members (37). Primarily, language as one of the mediums of conveying innumerable opinions, ideas, emotions and knowledge serves multiple functions in framing the diverse cultural identities of a particular group. Different languages representing diverse geographical locations express people's voices reflecting their cultural identities. The language and culture continuously co-create cultural values, traditions and identities through human interaction (Maine et al 383-392). Language can reveal the different hidden social and cultural realities of the people when they develop a certain lifestyle and culture with the family members and society through languages from early life. Bucholtz, M. and Hall, K. state that "a person's identity results in linguistic interaction as a social and cultural phenomenon rather than an internal and psychological one" (585). Therefore, the linguistic performance of individuals distinguishes their cultural identity as they use distinct language to talk and perceive the world. Many social theorists and cultural researchers in the area of sociolinguistics and anthropology argue for the role of language in shaping cultural identity. For example, Kennedy states that "language can positively navigate and construct cultural identity by strengthening the connection of people in the community" (39). Similarly, Ennaji illustrates that what factor differentiates an Arab and a French from an Igbo has the cultural communicative function of their mother tongue as the culture can transmit the people's shared mentality, lifestyle and behaviors based on local, tribal and national languages (86). Every language with a distinctive nature shapes the people's cultural identity with the reflection of different social and cultural realities, historical traditions, typical lifestyles, shared cultural values and belief systems of a specific society resulting in the promotion of solidarity, preservation of cultural traditions and developing the socio-cultural system of a nation.

## **The Impact of Language Diversity in Africa**

In virtually every part of the world, the challenges of language recognition, language rights and attitudes arise in jurisdictions where language diversity exists. Recently in Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A., a proposal to legislate English as the city's only official language suffered a setback because those who voted against it argued that it would diminish the provision of emergency services in languages other than English. This is based on the belief that a citizen is able to exercise his/her rights only if he/she receives communications from government officials or service providers in a language he/she understands (Patten 696). Language rights become more contentious when dealing with

multilingual nations with a great diversity of languages and cultures. Long before factors such as conquest, slave trade, missionary activities, colonialism, and migration came to alter the linguistic configuration of Africa; local languages of the natives were the subject of convenient choices depending on the region and location of the speakers. Each nation has continued to adapt her individual peculiar socio-cultural and socio-political experience to manage linguistic issues arising from the factors mentioned above. At best, many countries have opted for a multilingual society to support the traditional socio-cultural landscape and contain the potential spill-over crisis that may arise from unfavorable language policy by those in power.

The linguistic situation became more complex when the colonial powers that shifted the national borders of the nations in Africa paid little or no attention to the existing linguistic, religious and cultural affinities and political organizations of the ethnolinguistic groups. The convergence of several diverse languages in these new nations inevitably created the challenges of language management, language rights, language attitudes, allocation of roles and the development of language policies that would adapt to the circumstances that are prevalent in individual nations. Whether in the English and French-speaking West Africa, or the Portuguese-speaking nations in Central and part of Southern Africa, or Arabic and French-speaking North Africa, language issues have continued to generate debates that has led to the emergence of different language policies. The subsisting multilingual situation has also given rise to classifications such as official languages (in most cases the imported languages), national languages (e.g. Swahili in Tanzania), network or broadcast languages (e.g. Tiv, Nupe in Nigeria) and indigenous languages. In Africa, the official languages are often the languages of government, the mass media and medium of instruction in schools. National languages are indigenous languages that also share the functions of official languages. Broadcast or network languages, on the other hand, are languages used for limited communicative purposes within a region, while indigenous languages are used for personal and intra group communication within the locality where they are spoken and across regional boundaries where language affinity exists or where speakers of those indigenous languages are found.

The implication of choosing the imported languages as the official languages is that most children in Africa come in contact with the official languages for the first time in primary school. By implication then, only a marginal population with access to formal education will acquire some level of competence in the language used to conduct the affairs of their nations. As is the case in Mozambique with the Portuguese language, so it is in Nigeria with English and in Benin Republic with French. “The imported official and dominant language is effectively controlled by only a minority, which, by virtue of this control, also has access to political and economic power (Bamgbose 44). The language power thus creates inequality at virtually every stratum of the society,

bifurcating the society into those that have language power and those that do not. The emergence of different language policies has often taken into consideration the critical role of the imported languages against the background of the numerous indigenous languages in Africa. The controversies that language selection procedures often generate have supported the position of those who favour the retention of the imported languages as the languages to be used for official communications. However, it is believed that such language policy (e.g. in Nigeria) will continue to perpetuate the dominance of the imported language over all the indigenous languages. Gilbert Ansre was very blunt in criticizing the choice of the language of the colonial master. He argued:

Any country which takes seriously the need to develop its human resources maximally cannot afford to under-use such resources. Much less can it afford to do so on linguistic grounds. If the language or languages selected to be used for resource exploitation and wealth acquisition are those mastered only by a small minority of the population, the unemployment and the emergence of an exploiting and wealthy minority can be the only results expected... A nation-state in which the constitution is an obscure document written in a language understood well by a small minority and used for communication by even less cannot be said to be politically developed (6).

Although the challenges of socio-economic development in Africa may not be solely blamed on the language situation, it is a fact that language, to a large extent, impacts on socio-economic and educational policies that in turn underpin progress towards national development. The complex language situation in Africa notwithstanding, each nation has been exploring ways to successfully manage the peculiar situations in its communities.

### **The Role of Language in Shaping African Personality**

There is every need to comprehend the place and role play by language in shaping African personality as such, we shall explore some of the areas language necessarily takes influence on which include:

#### *A tool of Cultural Identity*

It is pertinent to state that language is the tool of cultural sharing between the members of a community because interacting in a language means understanding the culture and the process of being an integral part of it. Supporting this, Fuller, J. M. emphasized that the cultural identity depended on interlocutor's interactions and the choice of language in different social contexts (105-129). Similarly, Vygotsky, L. S. argued that the interaction between individuals and the community performed the semiotic functions therefore language as a linguistic and cognitive tool supported children to internalize

the social and cultural thoughts of others at first before framing their psychological thoughts in the community (85).

#### *Transmission of Cultural Exchange*

Language transmission from one generation to another generation provides a foundation for cultural transmission and modification as mother tongue interaction in a family and society helps to learn all the basic cultural values and traditions which grow as an identity in the future. Gelman and Roberts indicated that language as a powerful engine of cultural transmission exchanged different sets of cultural skills representing the private, public, cultural and mental system of the society (7900-7907). Likewise, Kinzler et al. interpreted the role of mother tongue as one of the social and cultural identity markers as more than 6000 mutually unintelligible human languages were mostly learnable in early childhood (106-111). However, some researchers argue that language transmission within a particular culture can be challenging for establishing a separate cultural identity if the language speakers migrated from one nation or culture to the next as Bhugra contradicted that when individuals from a particular sociocultural background migrated to another linguistic and cultural background, they might feel socio-economically disadvantaged, culturally discriminated and alienated (129-141). Learning language and shaping a new cultural identity can be a problem for people in the new socio-cultural context, on the contrary, the findings of Miller and Collette emphasized that people improved their multicultural identity and life standard developing the required skills to function in the multicultural society after learning the international languages with a sense of satisfaction in the target culture and the pride of one's culture at the same time (614-631). Therefore, these findings present that learning and transmission of language continuously exchange cultural and multicultural identities irrespective of geographical location.

#### *Hegemony and Cultural Representation*

Multiple ethnic minority languages in Africa have not been officially promoted and preserved from the national level as a result cultural traditions and identity embedded within these languages are on the verge of extinction. As the majority of people use some small languages in the written and spoken discourse and English languages widely practiced as the medium of education, media, technology, business and economics. Supporting this, Phyak identified that many local languages of indigenous communities had fragile socio-political, economic and educational representation due to the monolingual language policies of the country therefore the language policies needed to establish the ethnic and cultural identity of indigenous people incorporating them in the explicit policy formation and implementation (127-143). Similarly, Giri argued that Africa as a linguistically and culturally diversified continent ignorantly do not promote ethnic minority languages due to the invisible language politics by the

interest of ruling elites as a result minority language had no definable position and adequate recognition in different fields and language policy (87-100).

#### *Preservation of Cultural Pride*

Language develops and preserves the culture and culture interacts within the language system therefore people with different castes and communities persistently want to preserve their languages and cultural identity as cultural pride. For example, Gurung reported that some major communities of Africa today want to develop a unified language script of their language to preserve and promote their cultural and ethnic identity for future generations (98). Therefore, how cultural identity presents a particular community can be the output of the language system. Thus, it reflects that the close connection between language and cultural identity that lack language preservation brings a threat to their cultural identity therefore people with specific cultures want to promote their language system to endorse their ethnic dignity and cultural pride.

#### *Language Learning and Cultural Identity*

Cultural identity is associated with language learning because recognizing language elements enable learners to assimilate with the cultural activities, sign, symbols and societal consciousness encouraging adjustment in the new culture. Li argued that cultural understanding and cultural transformation can be increased through learning diverse linguistic features of a language which empowered learners against cultural hegemony (136-143) Similarly, Freire focused that the multicultural and multilingual teaching-learning practices emphasized socio-political consciousness, cultural awareness and social actions to foster the cultural identity of the individual using languages (56-71). Similarly, Donitsa-Schmidt and Vadish highlighted that language proficiency and acculturation enabled the North American students to learn the Hebrew language, Israeli culture and lifestyle for establishing new Israeli cultural identity while studying there (33). Therefore, the above literature emphasize that language learning is one of the significant components to trace the cultural identity promoting language learners to assimilate into the new culture.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the significance of language in shaping the African personality cannot be overstated. Language serves as a vessel for cultural expression, identity formation, and intergenerational transmission of values and knowledge. It plays a crucial role in shaping individual and collective identities, fostering a sense of belonging and preserving cultural heritage. Moreover, language empowers Africans to participate fully in social, economic, and political spheres, advocating for their rights and contributing to societal development. However, the diversity of languages across the

African continent presents both challenges and opportunities. Efforts to promote multilingualism while preserving indigenous languages are essential for fostering inclusive societies and maintaining linguistic diversity. Ultimately, recognizing the place and role of language in shaping the African personality is fundamental for promoting cultural pride, social cohesion, and sustainable development across the continent.

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## **WERE THE WESTERN COLONIALISTS, SETTLERS AND MISSIONARIES BIRDS OF FEATHERS FLOCKING TOGETHER? THE KENYAN PRE- INDEPENDENCE HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

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*The Kikuyu apophthegm, Gūtīrī Mūthūngū na Mūbīa (a white-man and a missionary are indistinct) encapsulates the general perception and conviction about the Colonialists and the Missionaries. The Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1884 would become the watershed moment for the African continent. The seven colonial powers were in attendance for the Berlin Conference where Africa was initially segmented into 54 States. The conclusion of the Conference inaugurated the occupation of the African territory which turned out to be the greatest territorial scramble of the epoch. The explorers, merchants, settlers, colonialists and missionaries migrated and emigrated like swarms of bees into various destinations within the continent. Unbeknownst to the Conference, the indigenous people in Kenya, akin to other territories within the continent, had avowed ownership of their motherland. Only in the fool's paradise could variance remain inevitable! The Natives had a largely non hostile exposure to the Arab merchants who traversed from the coastal belt to the hinterland in search for commercial raw materials. The arrival and settlement of the "Whiteman" was quite consequential. The Colonialists flew the British flag and flaunted the rifle, the Missionaries had the Bible and arrayed the Cross coupled with give aways, the farmers had the fordson tractor and dwarfed labour wages. All of them insatiably needed the "Black man". The Kikuyu ethnic community's experience with the "invaders" was largely unpleasant. A bloody encounter would ensue shortly after the invasion. In the Mau Mau war, the Missionaries appeared to be fence sitting while Settlers were beating the drums of war, and as a ripple effect, the Kikuyu's confidence with Missionaries and Settlers was fast eroding. As the antagonism metamorphosed into a guerrilla war, the blanket mistrust over all the intruders became more conspicuous. The Colonialists and Settlers' allegiance was to the flag. However, the Missionaries were viewed as part and parcel of colonial subjugation and on espionage colonial mission. At this juncture, all the "Whitemen" appeared to have the same colour, character, chore and chase. The flag, the Bible and the fordson tractor were perceived as camouflaging implements hence the indistinctiveness. This academic corpus sets to firstly demonstrate the*

*antecedent factors that fuelled the consequent conviction and confusion of indistinctiveness between Settlers/Planters, Colonialists and Missionaries. It also assesses narratives for and against the apophthegm.*

**Keywords:** Africa, Anglicans, British, Catholic, Colonialist, Kikuyu, Mau Mau war, Missionaries, Protestants, Settlers, Natives.

## **Introduction**

The Europeanization of Africa never happened overnight, rather, it was for yonks. The Caucasian arrival in Kenya was intermittent in reference to historic epochs, purpose and mission. Between 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Portuguese made a short stint stay of about a century and a quarter but remained influential in the coastal cities of Mombasa and Malindi. There was no singular effort to experience the hinterlands. However, they certainly encountered and mingled with long distant traders ferrying goods from the interior to the coastal Arab traders.

The Caucasians were homogeneously socialised and therefore, it was convenient for them to work shoulder to shoulder. Having arrived in a foreign strange destination that was beyond their ken, the need to stick together was never an option. After the Portuguese attempted occupation, which failed in industrial scale save for historical monuments, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century arrivals were characterised by a hybrid of Traders, Planters and Missionaries. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1895, a Baraza was held in Mombasa Town where Sir Arthur Henry Hardinge (1859-1933), with the consent of His Highness Seyyid Hamed bin Thwain, the Sultan, read the historic Decree<sup>1</sup> with an exordium stating, *I announce to you that from today, I take over, in the name of the Great Government, the administration of this country and of all the countries inland as far as kikuyu, and of the whole coast from Wanga to Kismaiyu...* (Mungeam, Kenya, 1978). This proclamation brought to end the presence of Imperial British East Africa Company, (which had withdrawn from the territory on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 1895), and inaugurated the epoch of East Africa Protectorate. It is sensational to note that the Consular Union Jack Flag was hoisted at the government building in Mombasa as the Company's flag was lowered, 69 years later, the Union Jack would be lowered at Uhuru Garden Park in Nairobi and the Kenyan Flag hoisted atop Mt. Kenya, about 600 Miles away. The region would remain a Protectorate until 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 1920 when it became a Colony and later, in December, 1963, the Colony became The Republic of Kenya.

During the 69 years of British dominance, the Kenyan territory grew integrally by leaps and bounds. The *panya routes* became thoroughfare, cow paths became roads and

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<sup>1</sup> The East Africa Protectorate proclaimed at Mombasa, July 1, 1895, by A. H. Hardinge, HM Agent and Consul General, Zanzibar.

distant traders' roadsteads became highways. The Education system, medical services, habitancy modes, attires, and lingual communication gradually became westernized. The Europeans and their culture were ambivalently regarded. In their interactions and encounter with the local communities, friendship and communion were established. On the flipside, and largely within the Mt. Kenya region, the rivalry was as loud as a thunder. It ranged from riots to protests, to revolts, and eventually into a bloody war. It would later turn out that the blood of the nonconformists became the seed for freedom and sovereignty. The insurgency involved and included the Settlers/Planters, the Colonialists and the Missionaries. The Natives contrastingly related with each cadre.

The Natives within Mt. Kenya region, in their wisdom, could not grasp how a Settler would not support and protect a Colonialist and vice versa. In a meeting held on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, 1912, at Dagoretti, the minutes recorded by M. W. H. Beech, Assistant District Commissioner, stated that, the Natives hesitated to raise all issues against the Settlers to the Colonial administrators on the ground that, *we are afraid; we think all white men must think alike* (Mungeam, *Kenya*, 1978). The statement solidifies the inference that, whether a Settler or a Colonial officer, or a Missionary, they all shared inseparable bonds. Sources of conflict were largely cultural, religious, social, economic and political. During the intermittent conflicts, the Natives found themselves on the receiving end. The Europeans would flock like birds of feathers.

When it comes to the historiography on labour, settler capitalism, and colonial state power in Kenya's central highlands, curiously, little attention has been paid to the roles played by the Missionaries. A special attention is deliberately given to the Gikuyuland (Kikuyuland) on its comparative qualification within Africa as known at the beginning of twentieth century. Similar horrifying experiences were reported from rubber-producing regions in Belgian Congo and mines in South Africa. The coercive government controls bred grievous labour scandals and violent encounters between the colonialists and the indigenous populace. It is consistent to conclude that the forceful occupation of Settlers within the resource-rich belts in Africa was a form of economic colonialism which occasioned the violent and bloody war. At the inception of the intense orgy of violence in 1952, the white fraternity in Kenya—some Settlers, Administrators and Missionaries alike, would not admit that Mau Mau had legitimate grievances, or that land and freedom, the axis on which the fighters had waged their war, constituted any real economic or political agenda (Gachihi, *Faith and Nationalism*, 2014). The European encroachers, without abundance of time to learn the philosophy of the people in the Mt. Kenya region, dismissed almost every aspect of the culture under the banner of savagery, primitiveness and barbarousness. Civilization was understood with cliquish univocality where the parameters applied to determine it were exclusively European. In their blissful ignorance to Utuism, the die was cast and the revolt precipitated (Mungai, *Impact*

of *Mau Mau Philosophy*, 2022). This academic corpus seeks to indulge in interrogating the attitude of the Kikuyu Community on each of the European group with an intent to unmask the reasons for bias, rivalry and the tragic war.

### **The Settlement of Europeans in Central Kenya Region**

H. Burgman observed that the immigrants came in waves. Around the turn of the century, there were adventurers and restless spirits eager to settle for anything new. The second wave had members of the British aristocracy, intent on excitement and dignified leisure. After the great war, new wave of immigrants arrived, largely military men from demobilised army (Burgman, *The Way Catholic Church Started*, 1990). The European settlement in Kenya developed on large-scale estates, and was characterised by *colour-bar*, as Kenyan apartheid was called. Colonialism developed from imperialism, which can be referred to as the highest stage of capitalism. Capitalism, imperialism and colonialism share the following definitions: political, cultural and economic domination and exploitation (Ndege, *Colonialism and its Legacies in Kenya*, 2009).

One of the thorniest issues among the Mt. Kenya folks pertained to land. The Anglo-German Agreement of 1886 was followed by the adoption of the East Africa Land Regulations that "legalised" the British Protectorate (1885-1919), and later a British Colony (1920-1963) to alienate land that traditionally belonged to the various African clans. Upon the completion of the so-called Uganda Railway in 1901, European Settler-farmers started arriving in the Kenya colony for largescale farming. This went hand-in-hand with land acquisition and the creation of White Highlands/uplands. The railway, whose construction began in Mombasa in 1896, reached St. Florence (renamed Kisumu) Port of Lake Victoria in 1901. Kisumu was geographically part of the then province of Uganda (in the so-called British East Africa) till 1903 when boundary review was done, and the novel boundary arrangements were enacted. Apart from Kisumu Port, the entire Nyanza, the Rift Valley, and Western regions were all transferred to Kenya from the then Uganda province of British East Africa in 1903. The opening of the Uganda Railway also saw the influx of European Settlers from South Africa (Boers) in 1904 (Gathogo & Njogu, *Chui wa Mararo*, 2019).

The appropriated land was previously possessed by particular clans or individuals. It is fair to note that some of the owners of parcels of land had actually purchased from previous landlords rather not freely acquired. The age of land seizure by both the colonial government and the European Settler/Planters took place after the construction of the Uganda Railway. The sequestration was legally backed by the Land Acquisition Act of India (1894) that initially gave consent to the Commissioner of the Protectorate to appropriate land. (Gathogo, *Settler-Missionary Alliance in Colonial Kenya*, 2020). Josiah M. Kariuki captures the agitation on land question in his book as follows, *That*

*I shall go forward to fight for the land, The lands of Kirinyaga that we cultivated. The lands which were taken by the Europeans. And if I fail to do this, May this oath kill me, May this seven kill me, May this meat kill me ...*(Kariuki, *Mau-Mau Detainee*, 1963). Given that the Kikuyu people were staunchly spiritual, an invocation to God and oathing in reference to land struggles, are sufficient attestation of a real socio-economic predicament.

The policy of land acquisition before settling was first experienced as early as 1894 when Central Kenya and the rest of Kenya were governed by the Imperial British East Africa (IBEA), a chartered company (1887-1895) under Sir William Mackinnon. Through three punitive expeditions, central Kenya was conquered and land expropriation became the new trend. While the first one (1894) in Dagoretti-Kiambu expedition was led by Major Smith, in the present-day Kiambu; the second one (1901) was led by Francis Hall in the present-day Murang'a county of Kenya. The third one of 1904, of Kirinyaga-Embu Counties was spearheaded by Captain Richard Henry Meinertzhagen (1878-1967). In the third expedition, Meinertzhagen killed an estimated 797 residents from Ndia, and Gichugu peoples of Kirinyaga County. He also killed 250 inhabitants of Embu and Mbeere peoples, as he sought to start a colonial station and/or a Fort in the present-day Embu Town (Gathogo, *Unsung Heroes and Heroines at Mutira Mission*, 2013). In all these expeditions, indigenous peoples, who were oblivious of these expeditions, were murdered in cold blood after being sprayed with bullets. Additionally, villages were burnt down, livestock and other properties destroyed, and scores were left homeless. Further, brutal land alienation became the vogue, as by 1930, Natives in Central Kenya were virtually reduced to tenants and squatters on their ancestral land. (Gathogo, *The Quest for Religious Freedom in Kenya*, 2008).

The first committed European Settlers arrived in 1902. Shortly after, they begun expropriation of land with abandon, even though the Crown Land Ordinance of 1915 acknowledged the right of Natives in land matters. The creation of "African reserves" in 1926 versus the so-called White Highlands for Europeans further complicated the land problem. The reserves would later serve as concentration camps during the Mau Mau War. At the end, the expropriation of large tracts of land in Murang'a, Nyeri, Nanyuki, Kiambu, and in parts of the larger Rift Valley region had taken place. (Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 2005).

After acquiring land via forceful evictions, the Kenyan Settlers enjoyed a higher standard of living than the Natives. Characteristically, they had more leisure activities than Missionaries. John Lonsdale noted: *There were more (Settler) farmers' associations, cricket clubs, golf clubs, women's institutes, gardening societies, masonic lodges, dining clubs per head of the white population in Kenya than in any other*

community in the world' (Lonsdale, *Mission Christianity and Settler Colonialism*, 1982). On the whole, the European settlement ensured that Africans and Europeans lived or developed separately. The Settler-farmers became landlords as Africans became, *Hewers of wood and drawers of water* (Joshua 9:23), a people who performed menial tasks.

The arrival of Protestant Missionaries in Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century inaugurated the epoch of successful evangelization attempts. Although the Protestant Missionaries had already reached the present-day Kenya in as early as 1844, when the Rev. Dr. Ludwig Krapf (1810-1881) arrived at Rabai, in the coastal city of Mombasa, only in around Mid-1907, the Weithaga-Fort Hall CMS Missionaries reached the heart of Mt. Kenya region. It is in 1908 when undeveloped localities were recommended for Missionary settlements (Gathogo, *Njega wa Gioko*, 2022). Previously, Missionaries preferred to remain within civilised locale. Contrastingly, the Catholic Missionaries spread both in the urban and rural areas with the same vigour. The Holy Ghost Missionaries, given their royal origin, and being the pioneer Catholic group, opted to evangelize within less desolate locales. The Consolata Missionaries, being dominantly Italian and papal, were pushed to the interior and received little colonial government support. The worst would happen during the Second World War where Great Britain was part of Axis Powers while Italy formed part of the Allies. The rivalry had a detrimental ethnic impact on the Missionary groups in Kenya.

### **The Encounter of The Settlers and The Kikuyu People**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 1902, a meeting was held in Nairobi attended by representatives of all classes of men of European origin. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the best means of encouraging the colonization of the Protectorate with European Settlers. Among other businesses, the meeting deliberated on the Asian question and it was observed that the Natives were comparatively superior in physique and morality and more amenable to European supervision unlike the Asians (Mungeam, *Kenya*, 1978). This historic meeting did set the pace in engaging the Settlers in the colonization mission.

Besides the European Settlers/Planters, other Settler-farmers came from New Zealand and Australia (Rosberg & Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau-Mau*, 1969). By 1906, it was not only the lands to the north of Nairobi that were alienated for the European Settlers, but also lands far afield in the Rift Valley region of western Kenya. Some of the members of the Kikuyu ethnic group, who had lost their ancestral lands after it was forcefully appropriated by the European Settler-farmers, migrated into their neighbours' territories, the Maasailand, to seek abode. Yet, other members of the Kikuyu nation remained on the alienated lands to become squatters; while others went

to the Rift Valley and became squatters or indentured labourers (Gathogo, *Some Challenges in Founding an African Faith*, 2012). Forceful migrations are not only contrary to inalienable human rights, but also tend to provoke an industrial scale mutiny. The internally displaced Natives that left their ancestral land without compensation would remain malcontented and ever ready to retaliate when factors got favourable. The seed of enmity was planted and, with severe arrogance, the Settlers would keep it growing. The Colonial administrators offered no solace since the Settlers were more beneficial to them than to the Natives. Hence, in the eyes of the Natives, they were birds of feathers flocking together.

The Settlers were not only wild and weird to the Natives. The Indian Question, which refers to the conflict where Indians in the Kenya Colony protested against harassment by the Settlers on land matters in the 1920s, postulates the insatiable appetite for resources. In this embargo, the European Settlers wanted to be the sole custodians of the land in Kenya, rather than the colonial administration. It was the first major test in the Settler-Missionary alliance. Like the Settlers, the Missionaries opposed the Indian claims that they were equal with Europeans (Smith, *The Immigrant Communities*, 1980).

The three groups (Missionaries, Settlers and Colonialists) appeared to handle conflicts with similar temperance and imperiousness. As Africans uproariously agitated against the coercion to carry the *Kipande* (an identity card and passbook) which were introduced after the First World War, without which no African could leave his or her village to seek employment, neither the Missionaries nor colonial administrators stood by the Natives. Moreover, the two cadres never condemned the European Settlers' habits of thrashing "errant" African workers. In some cases, the Settlers would deliberately tear up the *Kipande*, thereby making it impossible for the victims to obtain employment elsewhere. (Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 2005).

Disturbingly, the European Settlers would at times punish their adult male labourers with the *kiboko*, (a whip made of rhinoceros hide). Appallingly, in order to deflate their ego, the whipping would be done publicly and even in some cases, in the presence of children and women. They would flog their Native workers from time to time and justify their cruel actions with trivial excuses. As Anderson notes, by the early 1920s, the deaths of several African servants from beatings at the hands of their European masters earned Kenya's White Settlers an unenviable reputation for brutality (Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 78).

The Settlers/Planters were the major source of employment in the new colonial economic model for the Natives. Since the Natives had little confidence on fighting for their labour rights, the Settlers tramped upon the Natives with dirty great impunity.

With the docility of Missionaries and the iron fist of the colonial masters, the Natives could not help observe the indistinguishability of the Europeans regardless of their purpose and mission in the colonial territories.

### **Colonialists and The Natives**

The bloody conflict with the Colonialist was certainly presupposed. A. H. Hardinge, the first British East Africa Commissioner, in a letter addressed to Hill John Kenyon, expounded on the colonial philosophy of force. He stated, *in Africa, to have peace, you must first teach them obedience, and the only tutor who impresses the lesson properly is the sword*, (Hardinge Letter to Hill, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1897 (Mungeam, *Kenya*, 1978).

It is evident that the Colonial masters knew and expected a bloody war from the Natives. In an address by Sir Frank Watkins<sup>2</sup> to Sir Alfred Lyttelton, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies dated Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> 1905, he voiced his objection on the drafting of blacks by the government as soldiers and police to deal with White Settlers. Such a move was described as absolutely fatal to the maintenance of white prestige among Natives. It was perceived as a catalyst for the “day of black rebellion”. The address continued to mention that the revolt was going to happen with absolute certainty which would be like *a human volcano set to burst forth in uncontrollable eruption* (Mungeam, *Kenya*, 1978). Most of the available literature on the Mau Mau War were authored by non-Africans and thus tend to underplay the magnitude of dissension and counter dissension. It has been christened as a rebellion, revolt or insurrection. Such descriptions are meant to conceal more than reveal the reality. All factors considered, the strife was not a mere rebellion but a full-fledged war that reached its apotheosis after the guns of the Second World War fell silent. The relations between government and members of the churches were often strained but frequently cordial. From 1920s, prominent clergymen, such as the Rev. Dr. Arthur of the Kikuyu Church of Scotland Mission (henceforth CSM), and Archdeacon (Bishop and later the Archbishop) Beecher of the Church Missionary Society (henceforth CMS) in the 1940s, had been nominated to represent the African interests on the Legislative and Executive Councils. (Githiga, *The Church as the Bulwark Against Authoritarianism*, 2001). M. Ndeda opines that, despite the nominations, they never ventured into real issues outside the LegCo given that, majority of clergy and church workers in colonial Kenya had a very restricted theology of power. Most of these workers of the CMS and CSM belonged to a conservative tradition, with its belief in individual salvation and the strict authenticity of the Bible. It means that the Natives integral needs could not be secured through the Missionaries (Ndeda, *The Struggle for Space*, 2009).

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<sup>2</sup> Sir Frank Watkins was the Honorary Vice President of the Colonialists’ Association British East Africa.

Strange to say, a stranger in a strange land becomes the spokesperson invested with powers to promote and protect interests of the Natives. The colonial administration, in their wisdom, reckoned that the Missionaries were better placed to understand the Natives and their particular issues that required attention. The bias is indefensible since, by 1920's, there were Associations of Natives whose object was to air the views and concerns of the local people. The notion of the inferiority of African race was one of the reasons they were denied the opportunity of sitting in the Legislative Assembly with the Europeans. This alienated them from the policy-making institutions that discussed their affairs. Such an inclusion would have provided a platform where matters of mutual concern would be addressed and perhaps, a stronger voice to restrain the Colonialists would have emerged. It would wait until 1944 when Eliud Mathu was nominated by the Governor to represent Kenya in the Legco as the first African. The mindset occasioning the subduing of Natives vindicates the claim that the Colonialists and the Missionaries were not observably strange bedfellows.

Colonial taxation was used as a tool to compel the indigenous working population to resign to the fate and work in the settlers' farms. This was a strong indicator that the Colonial administration certainly, and as expected, favoured the Settler over the Natives. Certainly, the largely iron-willed Kikuyu community would interpret the discrimination as an attestation of deficiency of dissimilarity between the Settlers and the Colonialists.

### **Missionaries and The Natives**

Christian missionary work in the present Kenya preceded colonial rule in time. Nevertheless by 1920s and 1930s, there was a three-way relationship; at times conflictual, between Missionaries, Settlers and Colonial authority. The disputes revolved over three cardinal issues namely, Treatment of Natives, Land and Education. From the onset, the missions exerted great influence upon the Natives since their services would resonate well with the immediate needs of the indigenous population. They were pioneers in medical services, education, social welfare and economic development. Although they could at times be criticised for undue narrowness of view, at least they did set standards, which were vitally needed. (Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997).

When the influx of the European Missionaries to East Africa begun with the coming of Rev. Dr Ludwig Krapf in 1844, a new slogan did not delay to emerge among the Natives: *Gutire Muthungu na Mubia* (there are no marked differences between a European missionary, a settler-farmer or a colonial administrator-as all are the same people). In this understanding, the mission societies were looked at through the same

lenses as accomplices. Thus, the new common saying among Natives became a gospel truth. Conversely, the above common saying among the Natives, as sufficiently demonstrated in this article, validated some ignorance as there were commonalities and huge differences among the trio (Settler-farmers, Missionaries, and Colonial administrators). Each had his or her unique distinctions, even with regard to the land question (Gathogo, *Settler-Missionary Alliance in Colonial Kenya*, 2020).

In supporting the Settlers' large-estate farming, the Missionaries held the belief that the move was an ideal opportunity to civilise the Africans, in line with the 3Cs that Dr. D. Livingstone propounded, namely: Christianity, Commerce, and Western Civilisation. Livingstone's concept of missionary enterprise differed from most of his older colleagues among London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) Missionaries. He saw mission centres not only for strictly evangelization purposes, but encompassing the whole spectrum of human activity. Christian missions were understood to be autonomous centres that provided for all the people's social, economic, political and spiritual needs. In a region such as central Africa, which was dominated by the inhumane activities of his fellow Europeans and Arab-Swahili in the form of slave trade, Livingstone believed that human suffering could only be alleviated by introducing genuine and legitimate commerce, and good government guided by Christian principles (Nkomazana, *Livingstone's Ideas of Christianity*, 1998). Livingstone's twentieth century critics, however, have attacked him for having led the way for European colonization of Africa. One such critic is Cecil Northcott, who wrote: *Livingstone was a colonialist and was not ashamed of it. He was in Africa to offer the benefits of the white man's civilization, and no latter-day beliefs in the black man's freedom, liberation and independence may be read into his actions* (Northcott, *David Livingstone*, 1974). On the flipside, Livingstone idea aimed at occasioning an integral human development in Africa and hardly did he contain any premonition on how his evangelical successors would blur the vision.

The Missionaries attempts to change the entire indigenous mind-set: medicine, education, language, and culture, was tantamount to a declaration of war with ones' antagonists, hence conflict. They had a strong desire to change locals through the medium of education and evangelisation. In such situations, they were bound to seek support from the Settlers who were combative in their social discourses. In turn, the Settlers saw the African lifestyles as an economic liability as they looked forward to their cheap labour. At one stage, both the Settlers and the Missionaries got disappointed by the failure of the colonial government to legislate against African customs that they deemed inimical to modernity such as female circumcision, polygamy, wife inheritance, and wife-beating, among others (Hastings, *A History of African Christianity*, 1979). On the cultural colonialism, the Settlers and Missionaries appeared to read from the same script. There was a notable confluence amongst them. The

Natives, who judged their culture as autonomous and serving their immediate needs, interpreted the cultural coercion as an onslaught.

After settlement of the Missionaries in various parts within Mt. Kenya region, sentiments of distrust never delayed. Harry Thuku, the then Secretary General of the Young Kikuyu Association, (later Kikuyu Central Association) had begun to agitate against the Christian Missionaries and contemptibly referred to them as being colonizers' stool-pigeons. One of the earliest yet most intriguing event pertains to the colonial wire cage erected in September, 1917 in South Nyeri District within East Africa Protectorate. It was reported by Horace Philp, under the title; *The Wire Cage*, in Kikuyu News Quarterly of Feb.–April 1918<sup>3</sup>. The event was later dubbed, *the Colonial Missionary in the Wire Cage*. During three days in mid September 1917, Dr. Horace Philp of the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) carried out medical examinations on thousands of African men. Philp related the events for Kikuyu News, the Mission's fundraising magazine, in a 1918 article titled *The Wire Cage*. It was wartime and the colonial government was intensifying its drive to recruit the colony's 'able-bodied male natives' for the Carrier Corps, the body that supplied porters for British forces in German East Africa. In a week of frenzied activity, Philp wrote on how thirteen chiefs of South Nyeri District, together with their headmen and the tribal police, plundered their locations, seizing 9,000 men. The seized were taken to a military camp composed of temporary shelters and a massive barbed-wire cage. Over the next three days, the men were corralled into the cage, 1,000 at a time, where they sat on the ground in columns under the watchful eyes of police guards. One by one, they were ushered into a large grass shed. In the shed, they met Dr Philp (Cunningham, *Missionaries*, 2022).

The work of Dr. Philp was to examine the most capable persons to be drafted as Carrier Corps. From the humongous crowd, 3,000 men were found unfit for any work while the rest were qualified as Carrier Corps and Farm workers. A certain percentage was found too sickly and ailing and thus, were taken to Tumutumu mission hospital for treatments. Objectively, it is fair to note that, in the entire deplorable exercise, the missionary face was visible in the treatment of those found too sick. More broadly, as Nancy R. Hunt puts it, it is about the complex relation between 'healing' and 'harming' in the colonial setting, examining how an ostensibly benign, 'gentle' programme of Christian 'improvement' became entangled in a colonial network of incarceration, coercion, and abuse (Nancy, *A Nervous State*, 2016). There remains something

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<sup>3</sup> Kikuyu News (KN) was a Newspaper published monthly and served as the CSM's promotional journal. A complete collection (1908 to 1958) can be consulted at Edinburgh University Library, Centre for Research Collections (EUL) which also holds the private papers of Dr John Arthur and Arthur Barlow. It can also be found at the Archive of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, St Andrews Church, Nairobi (PCEA).

intriguing, uncomfortable, and remarkable about the missionary's presence in the wire cage and, specifically, the interaction between the work of medical healing and the violence of this situation. The concern was that, of this coercive compelling Natives to work, a Missionary doctor stood at the centre of the ordeal. Sad to note, the role of European Christian Missionaries played globally in the extension of colonialism and capitalism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (Cunningham, *Missionaries*, 2023). The Natives could not help group the Missionaries in the same bandwagon with the Colonialists and Settlers.

During the Kikuyu Conference of January 1922, among the matters deliberated was the subject of *Missionary Work in Relation to Government* that was proposed by Dr. John William Arthur, the then Medical Missionary of Church of Scotland. He proposed to have Missionary-representatives in the Legislative Council of the Colony in order to voice out matters related to the Natives. In the deliberations, Mr. Samuel Fredrick Deck, the Colonial Chief Labour Inspector, asked the Missionaries to consider whether the formation of the Board would negatively affect their influence and popularity among the Natives. After deliberations, a motion was passed to form the Natives Affairs Board comprising of Government Officials, Settlers and Missionaries (Mungeam, *Kenya*, 1978). This incidence characterize the laxity of Missionaries in distancing themselves with avenues that would potentially breed direct confrontation with the Natives. It is interesting to learn that, a civil servant, Mr. S. F. Deck, had a premonition of the future unpleasantness in relation to the colonial government camaraderie with Missionaries.

As Missionaries settled in colonial Kenya in the early 1900s, they (like Settler/Farmers) needed parcels of land so as to settle down and build mission centres. Some wanted demonstration farms in their bid to advance holistic ministry and/or their three-fold ministry where literary and technical education (through schools), evangelism (through building churches), and healing (through opening up health centres) were the *modus operandi*. With the East African Scottish Industrial Mission (later renamed the Church of Scotland Mission [CSM]), a British religious outfit, coming to Kikuyu-land earlier than other mission societies in 1898, land acquisition also begun in earnest. Led by Rev. Thomas Watson, the CSM set up a mission centre at Tumutumumu (in the present-day Nyeri County), in 1908, after acquiring land. In the first option, the CSM persuaded the locals to donate, sell or relinquish land for mission settlement and expansion. Alternatively, they made a pitch for the land through the protectorate government. In time, they were, for instance, helped by the protectorate government to alienate 3,000 acres of land at Thogoto in the present-day Kiambu County. (Gathogo & Njogu, *Chui wa Mararo*, 2019). Since the Planters/Settlers had employed a synonymous approach into acquiring chunks of land, the Natives could hardly discern a distinction between the Missionaries and the Settlers. Moreover, given that CSM was

idiosyncratically under the Union Jack, the Natives would find it an uphill task to disaffiliate it with the colonial administration.

A case in point refers to the Weithaga-Murang'a CMS Missionaries (led by Arthur Wallace

McGregor) who crossed over R. Tana (locally called Sagana), in mid-1908, to meet Senior Chief Njega wa Gioko. The visit was purposed to negotiate for a parcel of land to establish a mission centre at Githuguya, (at the present-day Sagana Technical Institute). As an employee of the British protectorate government, Senior Chief wa Gioko was not expected to decline the request. Nevertheless, he played tricks by redirecting them to *Gacumbirira ka Mutira* or the upper hill of Mutira (Njumbi-Mutira) which they reached in the last half of 1908. They met Chief Munge wa Ndaruru, one of Gioko's Assistants. Interestingly, Ndaruru was not friendly to them. Equally, youths from the local Ithimbwi lineage of the Wanjiku clan came out to stop the "foreigners" from surveying their land and disrupted the missionary team till they left the scene for some time, but returned afterwards. Under the missionary influences, Chief Munge wa Ndaruru was sacked after the they appealed to the District Commissioner, and Ndegwa wa Kimere replaced him in around the year 1913. Such gestures show the working nature of the colonial administrators and the Protestant Missionaries. Furthermore, Ndaruru's sacking was a warning signal by the colonial government those rejectionists of the European Missionary enterprise in their land acquisition bid, and in their general missionary agenda, would face the music (Karimi, *Njega Gioko*, 1986). The message to the Natives was loud and clear; their lifeline resource (land), would be appropriated voluntarily and involuntarily. To the dismay of the Natives, neither the Missionaries nor the Settlers would protest the forceful acquisition.

Without pressure from the Missionaries, the government attempted to solve the land problem through the Devoshire Paper of July, 1923. The Natives failed to point out the contradistinction between the colonial Administrators, Settlers, and Missionaries. In this respect, not only did the Missionaries support the Settlers during the Indian Question on land, but also remained largely silent against massive land alienation. Was it another way of suggesting that they were equally guilty as charged? Were they involved in land alienation as well? (Gathogo, *Settler-Missionary Alliance in Colonial Kenya*, 2020).

Despite the seemingly healthy Settler-Missionary alliance, from 1940s, the Missionaries avoided Settlers' clubs, particularly because Settlers held them under suspicion, together with their schooled converts. Already, the ground had become severely hostile to the colonialists and the Settlers. The culture of segregation and seclusion was deeply rooted during the formative years of Kenya as a Nation. The segregation was consistent in the leafy sub-urbs for Colonial Masters, Settlers'

farmhouses and, disconcertingly, in the Churches too. Indeed, they were like bobbsey triplets. Under ostracism, Europeans had an open bias to the Natives and would deliberately limit their interactions to necessity. The residential areas were clearly demarcated. Each race had to seek conurbation where fellow folks lived. The Natives could only penetrate into the Europeans suburbs when invited or else, it was a punishable trespass. Conversely, the Europeans would transverse the Natives' habitation with impunity. Ghastly, the Churches too could not evade the colour bar. In the Catholic Church within Nairobi City, the Whites worshipped at Holy Family Basilica, the Goans laudated at St. Francis Xavier Parklands while the Natives thronged at St. Peter Claver. All the three churches were within one mile radius. While there were no posters hoisted to welcome one race and dismiss another, wordless posters were too loud. In some instances where the Natives would dare to cross over to either of the Churches, they would sit at the unwelcoming benches designated for them and even proceed to receive Holy Communion after the dominant and hosting race had communed. While there was no formal announcement on neither the sitting arrangements nor procedures, everyone instinctively knew their place and time. The Catholic Missionaries got into a largescale foundering in sternly extirpating the practice and nurturing a culture of integration. Similar practice was detectable in the City Protestant Churches as well. The Natives were complacent since they had been brainwashed to take up the second-class citizenship in all spheres of life.

The divorce from the marriage of convenience between the Settlers and the Missionaries was occasioned by a number of factors. After the 1950s, none of the Missionaries maintained land in colonial Kenya, as the Settler-Missionary alliance proved incompatible and/or unsustainable. As suspicion grew, and as former mission boys and students took up arms against Settler-Farmers and colonialism in general, particularly from 1952 to 1960, things had fallen apart and the centre could no longer hold. The marriage of convenience was now dead and buried, particularly as Settlers targeted some "rogue" Missionaries who had been accused of subtly fuelling revolts. A case in point pertains to Archdeacon Walter Edwin Owen<sup>4</sup> (1875-1945) of Kavirondo

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<sup>4</sup> After Kenya was declared a British colony in 1920, Archdeacon Owen formed the Kavirondo Taxpayers' and Welfare Association in 1921. The aim of his religio-political movement was to empower the disenfranchised Africans, so as to enable them to be selfreliant rather than dependents of anyone. To practicalise his ideals, he taught Africans basic economics, and more importantly, the economies of scale so as to help them improve their production. Subsequently, he introduced ploughs, new crops, watermills, and bookkeeping as a measure of ensuring a skills development plan. He also taught them civic education and responsible leadership. As he organised this silent revolution, he also became a controversial cleric due to his outspokenness that irked settler-farmers. He would speak about common humanity, against forced labour, poll tax and hut tax. He spoke openly about politics as a right for humanity, including missionaries. As he armed Africans in political and agricultural matters, he finally found himself very isolated, not just by settlers but also by the radical Africans since 1935 onwards. Nevertheless, he had made his socio-political point and henceforth focused on liturgical developments of the African Church, culminating into the revision of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer (Luo version). [Barrett, *Anglican Communion, Church Missionary Society, Kenya*, 80-82.].

who was derogatorily nicknamed *Archdemon* for his concern for the welfare of the Africans, and in teaching them new farming techniques. (Knighton, *Religion and Politics in Kenya*, 2009).

Githiga opines that, when a church supports the government and assists in formulating governing policies, it usually defends the State and those policies. If the government then appears to serve the interest of many minorities against those of the majority, then the church becomes one of the oppressors. In view of this, many Missionaries, most of whom were Anglicans, may be seen to have assisted the colonial government in furthering the British interests in the colony. During this period, in the Anglican Church in British colonies could not easily dodge the political baggage since, *the Bishops in the British territories needed letters patent from the crown to make their consecration lawful just as English bishops did. It was assumed that their legal status was exactly that of bishops in the Church of England.* (Githiga, *The Church as the Bulwark against Authoritarianism*, 2001). It would therefore sound illogical to expect Anglican Missionaries to lead the war against colonial excesses without severing their links with the British Royalty. Such a move would be a huge liability given that the head of the Anglican Church has always been the King or the Queen. It would thus have been unfathomable for British Missionaries to think or act in a manner that was disloyal to the crown.

In their efforts to implement colonial policies considered to liberate Kenyans from the barbarism of pre-colonial African life, the Missionaries participated in some of the oppression. Their gospel was hostile to much of the African cultural practices and favoured the western culture. As Welbourn asserts, *The missionaries did not bring to Africa a “pure milk” of the gospel but a complex culture, which can be termed “Christian Western.” Missionaries are Europeans offering a culture which is Western as well as Christian, unable to escape, whether they wish it or not from identification with men of other professions of the same race* (Welbourn, *East African Rebels*, 1965). At a particular point, it was evasive to differentiate between Christian culture and the European one. The Natives were prevailed on to acculturate. Like their colonial counterparts, it has been established that some Missionaries retained class boundaries and they segregated themselves from their converts. In some disturbing cases, Missionaries discriminated against the African Clergy causing a lot of squabbles and scandals on the neophyte Christians. The Missionaries, like their colonial counterparts, found it difficult to dislodge the paternal mantle of authority (Throup, *Render to Caesar The Things That are Caesar’s*, 1995).

As pertains to capital punishment of the Natives, the colonial era Missionaries had their chapter where the natives wrote their history, not with ink, but blood. Some Missionaries, devoid of temperance, would mete severe and appalling corporal

punishment to the Natives. The phenomenon was not restricted to the Kikuyus and within the larger Mt. Kenya region. In Kisii, a renowned hollander Catholic missionary, Fr. Nicholas Stam (later a bishop in 1936), in the establishment of Nyabururu Catholic mission, the pressure pressurized him to resort in using his firearm against the indigenous people in a protracted bloody tussle. It appeared that baptisms had to be conducted with water, fire and firearm. Stam could not appreciate that the Kisii people had a case for their deep anti-European sentiments. The Natives were waging war against the intruders, any intruder. They accused Fr. Stam of walking with troops that killed their men and therefore, he was a friend to their nemeses, and indubitably so, a friend of your enemy is your enemy! (Burgman, *The Way Catholic Church Started*, 1990).

The Anglican Church was especially highly placed. Firstly, the majority of the Settlers were members of the Anglican Church and the residence of the Archbishop in Nairobi was located within the government square, right outside the gate of the government house, perhaps for ease of communication and consultation. During the First World War, the CMS offered the government unqualified use of its personnel and property as stipulated in the work-principle that stated, *it is our first duty to render to the government any assistance in our power even though it may interfere with our work*, (Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa*, 1972). The Catholic Missionaries were not necessarily of British origin and hence refrained from any conflict with the colonial powers and indeed as one Catholic historian rightly asserted, *But how was the church to better the lot of local population if not by entering into some form of understanding with the colonial power?* However, Catholics were acutely sensitive concerning their “foreign” status and so were not anxious to press any particular political view. This hesitancy was reinforced by continental European Catholics relations with State in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Lonsdale, *Mission Christianity and Settler Colonialism*, 1978). These subtle differences, continental politics, and ethnic biases among the Europeans did not amount to constitute any verifiable differences between them, thus, the Natives upheld their conviction of indistinctiveness.

The Missionaries attempted to resist numerous belligerent approaches in colonial Kenya. They disagreed with the Settlers’ particularly on some issues which appeared oppressive to the Africans. In the Legislative Council (LegCo.) where they represented African interests, the Missionaries seemed to represent an opposition wing of the council in some instances (Githiga, *The Church as the Bulwark Against Authoritarianism*, 2001). In some instances, the government displayed its upper hand over the missions by providing limited bursaries and grants with strings attached. There were moments when the government threatened to withdraw funds whenever the mission societies became too critical against the dissipations of colonial administrators. Such evidences can be deduced to corroborate that Missionaries and Colonial officers

had areas of corporeal contentions. While the European Settler/farmers put pressure on the Missionaries to provide technical, agricultural and industrial education to the African learners, the Missionaries and the colonial administration preferred literary education. This shows that, unlike Settler/farmers, the Missionaries' primary goal was not land as such, but basic literacy to aid their missions (Kipkorir, *Imperialism and Collaboration in Colonial Kenya*, 1980). However, the docility and lack of power and steam, motivated the Natives to underestimate the Missionaries' goodwill in promoting their interests.

## Conclusion

As dust settled and every cadre had its cut and share of the Kenyan resources, including human, the blame game between them ensued. The Missionaries hit hard the Settlers for failing to bring up meritorious servants in their institutions of learning. In counter accusation, the Missionaries found some Settlers culpable for ignoring the evangelical virtues. Missionaries entertained an integral stratification where Africans were at the bottom of the social stratification. Good examples were Churches, schools, hospitals and social places. Besides the Natives, the Indians too were disgruntled against the Europeans but they did not have the masses to help express their concerns. However, in the social stratifications, the Indians came second after the Europeans.

In sharing kinship and identical forms of civilisation, they were all in agreement that the indigenous people had to meet the threshold of Western civilisation. Other factors that account for the Settler Missionary alliance include the Indian Question of the 1920s, the education factor where they shared similar orientations despite some variations, and their "fewness in a strange land," among others. At one stage, the Missionaries, Settlers and colonial Administrators demonstrated their ability to team up and act collectively. Incontestably, the reasons for their uncoupling would be fewer than what bonded them.

The rivalry of the various European nationalities also permeated in the Missionaries' circles. The in-fighting among themselves, though largely guarded within their circles, made it difficult for Natives needs to be prioritized. Missionaries of British origin had more favours than other nationalities. The Catholic Missionaries of Italian origin had more financial and structural support from the Pope than other Missionaries of non-Italian origin. The Natives hardly noticed such rivalries instead, they were preoccupied with mistreatment and exploitation that was meted out on them.

It is therefore fair to conclude that, the Natives faced the blunt of it all. While the colonial Administrators, Missionaries and Settlers had their differences, the Natives' excruciating pain and the tearful eyes could not allow them to notice their disparity.

Whether a Scottish, Briton, Italian, or Irish, the Natives saw a swarm of compadres with identical mission of self-aggrandizement at the detriment of the host. Given the interests of all the European immigrants, the Missionaries stood a chance to strike the balance, but Natives experience conjectured them as more European than Missionaries. It was an opportunity that Missionaries never seized. As Martin Luther Jr. said, *In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends*. The Natives would certainly identify their experience with the Missionaries with the immortal words of Martin Luther. The distinctiveness of Missionaries was blurred hence, *Gūtīrī Mūthūngū na Mūbā*.

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## **CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FOR AFRICAN CULTURAL MORAL VALUES: IGBO PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Executive Summary**

*African moral values are the focus of this paper among other things that may be bothering African cultures. In the recent times, there are challenges on the moral values of the African people. The presenter among other communities of the African continent focused more on Igbo peoples' moral value. Morality acts as the guiding principle for a functioning society. Without moral values, we would either live in a state of anarchy, or a society where we are kept in line only by threats of punishment from a governing figure. In general, in our daily interactions, it is morality that makes us continue to respect one another and treat each other with dignity. This is what many philosophers have called the unspoken social contract. These challenges on African moral values are already sinking the moral values and morality of the African people, and thereby living the future society of Igbo people in great and precarious moral decadence. If not checkmated with every serious measure, it will continue to endanger the people's society in the near future. This is why the writer chose this topic to make a clarion call to Igbo people and Africans in general, especially mothers to make hay while the sun shines. This work therefore, intends to discover some of the prevalent moral decadence in our contemporary society, their effects on the society and unit families in particular. It seeks also to encourage the place of mothers in the proper upbringing of their children. It is expected that the views of other writers about what moral decadence is, and the place of mothers in child's upbringing will help the writer to x-ray the topic better. The knowledge from the findings and recommendations will be of great help to the contemporaries to seek ways of curbing the problems, so that Igbo and African values will be preserved and maintained for posterity. Data collection method for this research is mostly secondary data collection. The research concludes with proffering some suggestions on how moral values of the African people, especially among the Igbo people can be restored, retained and maintained.*

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Winifred Mary ECHE, PhD; Fidelis Oghenero Ejegbavwo, PhD

**Keywords:** Contemporary, Challenges, African, Cultural, Moral, Values, Igbo Perspective

## **Introduction**

Everywhere in the world, there is a general cry over the moral degradation affecting the average Igbo moral values. There is a current and recurrent materialism which has gripped and crippled the Igbo person, leading to the generation of a new set of vice and material values courted by both the old and the young. This moral challenge is mostly imposed on Igbo set of moral values by quick money making and easy popularity. Money is at the root of this materialistic philosophy and has become the biggest benchmark for a well-endowed and successful personality. In the words of Ani, Ome & Nwankwo (2014);

This material culture has spawned a new generation of immoral personalities who are selfish, self-centered, high criminal in intent, corrupt in management of state resources and educated without adequate character molding. We are beginning to witness the era of the “successful” Igbo man and woman without character and values. These new generations of Igbo people especially the younger generations have lost all sense of communal values which is different from a well-balanced and dignified community citizen who cares for others, puts others first and works for the common community good. It is now obvious that these morally nescient citizens cannot, in all honesty, claim to be communal citizens since they have lost their human dignity acquired over time from their Igbo forebears and forefathers. (p.1).

There is, furthermore, an erosion of core Igbo communal values as a result of the negative impact of the Eurocentric concept of the human person which elevates the importance of the individual personality over and above the interest of his society. In this Eurocentric concept of the individual, the interests and values nursed by the individual for his perpetuation and personality are eulogized and elevated to the level of state craft. In modern states such values manifest in the condemnable phenomenon of Igbo leaders who are corrupt, nepotistic, despotic and power hungry. The presence of such crop of leaders has also been worsened by the corrupting speed of globalization and the prevalence of global values which attack the roots of African communalism and communal values.

In the words of Mbiti (1990), In Africa, especially in Igbo land, a man who has lost his human dignity is no longer into touch with his fellows and his society’s values. (p.52). Such a morally derailed personality will continue to drift and dwell in a selfish world of only his dreams, interests and ambitions. His presence in governance becomes a

development disaster because he will fail in the first test of leadership which is to mobilize and carry his society along in every policy and program implemented by him.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

It is important to make some clarifications of the key words as contained in the research topic. This will guide the readers to grasp the clear-cut understanding of the context in which they are used in the paper. The following are the keywords as contained in the topic of the work; Contemporary, Challenges, African, Cultural, Moral, Values, Igbo Perspective

#### *Contemporary*

Things that are contemporary are either happening at the same time or happening now. Contemporary art is recent art. In history class, if you hear that one famous person was a contemporary of another that means they lived at the same time. Contemporaries are people and things from the same time period. It is belonging to the same age; living or occurring in the same period of time. It also means existing or occurring at the present time and conforming to modern or current ideas in style, fashion, design, etc.

#### *Challenges*

A challenge is something new and difficult which requires great effort and determination to solve or manage. African, to arouse or stimulate especially by presenting with difficulties

#### *African*

African can be used as a noun or an adjective. As an adjective, it means of or connected with Africa, the continent that is south of the Mediterranean Sea, east of the Atlantic Ocean, and west of the Indian Ocean. As a noun, it means a native or inhabitant of Africa, especially a Black person of African ancestry. The term African, conceptually has to do with belonging to African. This informs that this paper discussed cultural moral heritage that belongs to Africa.

#### *Cultural*

Culture can be defined as all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that are passed down from generation to generation. Culture has been called the way of life for an entire society. As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals and arts. According to Asikaogu (2018) who threw more light in the meaning of culture as follows;

Culture is passed on from one generation to another, through learning, transmitted in people writing, religion, music, clothes, cooking, and in what they do. Culture is more than just material goods, that is, things the culture uses and produces. Culture is also the beliefs and values of the people in that

culture. Culture also includes the way people think about and understand the world and their own lives. Thus, “culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.” it is mankind primary adaptive mechanism.” (p.45).

Ejikeme, (2020) said the following on the meaning culture; Culture is the totality of the way of life of a group of people that has been developed, shaped and practiced over the years. Culture is the connective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another. Hofstede (1980) also said that, the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group’s response to its environment. Jean (2002) opines further, Culture is the product of a complex inheritance constantly submitted to scrutiny and the need to adopt to a constant conquest to achieve.

From a common ground culture is that which characterize a particular group of people and their very ways of life which differentiates them from other people. It is observed in the writings of African scholars that the distinctiveness and uniqueness of communalism is enshrined in its characteristics, principles and norms.

### *Moral*

Morals are the prevailing standards of behavior that enable people to live cooperatively in groups. Moral refers to what societies sanction as right and acceptable. *Moral* comes from the Latin word *mores*, for habits. The moral of a story is supposed to teach you how to be a better person. If *moral* is used as an adjective, it means good, or ethical. If you have a strong moral character, you are a good member of society. If someone is a cheat and a liar, you might say, "She is not a moral person.

### *Values*

Values are individual beliefs that motivate people to act one way or another. They serve as a guide for human behavior. Generally, people are predisposed to adopt the values that they are raised with. People also tend to believe that those values are “right” because they are the values of their particular culture. Some values have intrinsic worth, such as love, truth, and freedom. Other values, such as ambition, responsibility, and courage, describe traits or behaviors that are instrumental as means to an end.

### *Igbo Perspective*

This has to do with the Igbo concept of moral value. It explores the Igbo worldview. Igbo Perspective is a way of Igbo people are thinking about and understanding something such as a particular issue or life in general.

## **Abridged History of Igbo People**

The Igbo people are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, known for their rich cultural heritage, history, and traditions. In this paper, there will be a review of the fascinating world of the Igbo people, exploring their history, culture, language, and traditional practices. The Igbo people are a socially and culturally diverse group of people who live primarily in southeastern Nigeria. This region is also called Igbo land. They comprise the total population of Nigeria; they are among the largest ethnic group in the country. Though the people are spread out between groups of villages, they share one common language, also called Igbo language. In fact, the term "Igbo" can be used to refer to the people, the language, or the land. Besides Nigeria, there are also large populations of Igbo in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. Igbo are also sometimes called *Ibo*, though this is a misspelling that originated during the period of British rule in Nigeria

## **Culture of the Igbo People**

Igbo culture is vibrant and multifaceted, with a strong emphasis on family, community, and tradition. Some key aspects of Igbo culture include: Extended Family System: The Igbo practice an extended family system where several generations live together in a single compound. The head of the family, typically the oldest male, holds significant authority. Igbo people are known for their peculiar cultures virtually in everything that involves Igbo people. According to Cook (2020):

Serious archaeological investigations of Igbo land have revealed evidence that the Igbo have lived in the region for thousands of years. The ancient man-made tools discovered in the area that date back to the Stone Age indicate that the culture was built largely around growing and harvesting yams. Over time, the Igbo improved their technological skills, using iron to craft sophisticated metal tools that allowed them to better utilize the resources provided to them by the surrounding forests; they could cut down fruits from tall palm trees, which allowed them to process the fruit into various edible and medicinal oils. Historians often attribute the large modern-day population density of the Igbo people to their ability to effectively cultivate yams and their ability to use the oil palm tree in many different ways. (p.1).

During the Middle Ages, the northern Igbo Kingdom of Nri maintained a sphere of religious and political influence through the rule of a priest-king called an *EzeNri*. The *EzeNri* was in charge of managing trade, diplomatic relations, and religious matters on behalf of the Igbo subgroup known as the Nri people. The kingdom persisted as the main authority well into the 16th century but began to weaken due to the growing power of neighboring kingdoms, as well as the beginning of European colonization.

## **The Language of the Igbo People**

The Igbo language, also known as “Igbo” is a tonal language with a rich vocabulary and distinct linguistic characteristics. It is primarily spoken in Nigeria, but you can find Igbo-speaking communities around the world due to migration and the Igbo diaspora. The language is written using various scripts, including the Roman alphabet, which was introduced by Christian missionaries during the colonial period.

## **Some highly esteemed Values in Igbo People’s Culture and Challenges**

Igbo people have great value to certain cultures, especially when it has to do with morality and customs. In this segment of this paper the presenter will make known some cultural values of the Igbo people, afterwards will also review the challenges to the extinction of these cultural values of the Igbo people.

## **The Cultural Values of the Igbo People**

The culture of the people is of prime importance to them and the value of a culture to a people can never be fully measured in monetary terms. The expression “human values” is used by a lot of people with different interpretations and meanings, and under different contexts. Value is a universal dignity and concern which is used often in moral, philosophical, legal, social and economic discourses. Ejiofor (2002) said that;

The love of culture is not blind, that it is mystic and spiritual. Culture instills pride in man. Without it, the past seems non-existent and the present seems suspended without pillars or props. The Cultural values of the Igbo people are their reputation. People without culture do not exist. Even America as the world’s wealthiest nation still lay emphasis on cultural identity. They eat with fork in the right hand to differentiate themselves from the British who eat with the left. (p.158).

What is culture among the Igbo people? It is a complex whole valued by all peoples since time immemorial, a treasure highly prized by the world’s greatest nations, an apple of the eye of many tribes and primitive peoples, a possession daily glorified by many other Nigerian peoples. The cultural values of the Igbo people can be seen in their language, art and crafts, festivals, dishes, clothing, oral traditions, among others. Morality is the number one value cherished by the Igbo people. Igbo people have a lot of morals that guides their society and help to checkmate the behaviour of people.

However, respect for elders has gone into extinct. The children, youths and adults have a rule on how they should live that portrays the Igbo culture. Children are told a lot of folktales during moonlight by the elders that depict humility, courage, and obedience. Youths, through social organizations during initiation ceremonies, are guided with

some norms that help them to live an honest and transparent life. The adults are penalized for their wrong doings. Masquerading serves as a social function bringing people together as one during festivals. In Igbo cultural setting of the past, people lived in villages and groups, and the social ties was close. However today, the city life has crushed the bond of communal ties. Ejikeme (2020) said:

People live in cities a times without knowing the names of their neighbours for months. Among all the ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Igbo people have adopted the western life and have held tenaciously to it Frankly speaking, we are not proud of our culture. The issue of language has been a problem in Igbo cultural values. English language fluency is mistaken for intelligence. The local languages which is the most efficient medium of education, becomes outmoded because of displacement. It is lamentable that most Igbo people, especially elites cannot communicate in their mother tongue. Most parents do not consider it crucial to communicate with their children in their mother tongues, which should rather be the first language. They are well pleased when the children are fluently speaking English. Instead of an Igbo person showing his identity through speaking Igbo language, he will prefer to speak in other languages (preferably Yoruba or Hausa). (p.158).

A lost language is a lost culture, while a lost culture is a loss of invaluable knowledge lost. To this preceded idea Kwame (2010) opined as follow;

The Igbo people begin their ceremonies by presenting and breaking kolanuts with accompanying prayers such as ndibeanyi ta oji (our people ate kolanut) ,ndi be anyiojiabianu (our people kolanut has come), onyewetaraojiwetarandu (who brought kolanut brought life).....In the Igbo culture therefore, no traditional ceremony is deemed to have commenced without the presentation of kolanuts. Clothing in Igbo culture is another value that should be looked into. (pp.158-159).

Baffoe (2005) noted that these myths and taboos were needed at some point in the society's development to regulate life, many of which have outlived their usefulness as a result of urbanization and the trends of modern development. Today, most of all the cultural values have changed drastically due to influence of globalization.

The Igbo extraction of African people possesses some moral values that are centered on communal values which are necessary to exhibit by every Igbo person both in the home and in diaspora. Living antithetically to these values is a taboo and attracts some punishment. In the traditional Igbo cultural context, taboos refer to those prohibitions aimed at the promotion of moral values, religious sanctity, social cohesion and cosmic harmony. According to Anedo (2019) said, taboos are a set of prohibited actions, a set of morals binding on a people; the violation of which attracts a severe punishment

which may include death penalty. The institution and observance of taboos help in the peaceful co-existence of members of the community. It helps in the projection and promotion of social integration.

Violators of taboos are seen as agents of socio-political disintegration and chaos. The institution of taboo targets the holistic orderliness of life and all human activities and interaction in Igbo land. Ogbu (2013) observes that the ideology of abomination "nsọala"... cuts across the entire Igbo land and made manifest in their artistic, social and religious as well as political traditions and patterns of leadership. He went further to note that it is a heinous crime to commit abomination against the earth, Ala. Such crime requires sacrifices for its expiation. Okeke (2019) said; the traditional Igbo see aru (taboo) as norms, the breach of which, whether voluntary or involuntary unleash some mystical sanctions not only on the individual but also on the entire society. (p.19).

### **Igbo People's Cultural values and Challenges**

It is necessary to enumerate some of the personality traits Igbo people are currently losing as a result of moving away from their traditional value system and western life influences. Ebigbo (2002) in outlines and explains these lost values and acquired vice as follows:

*Disrespect to elders:* The Igbo today obviously has more regard to material wealth than he has for human beings. He has no respect for elders. He feels that everybody is equal in all spheres of life in as much as he fends for himself. This has given them bad reputation in other parts of Nigeria.

*Selfishness:* He has more concern for himself than for others. He is such that forgets every other person when it comes to satisfying himself. This has made him infamous in Nigeria.

*Arrogance:* By all indication, an Igbo man is the type that feels very arrogant to reckon with others at any point in time. He believes that he is a king in his home in as much as nobody feeds him and his family, therefore damning every other person and the people in authority. This has made him infamous in Nigeria.

*Transparency or Proven Character:* An Igbo man, of course, is naturally endowed with and exhibits a proven character or transparency. This results from the Igbo belief that "imebi aha nwaogaranyakaogbugbuya" as well as their belief in the Igbo customary meaning that "Neze aha kauba". This transparency still exists but has been badly battered by the present phenomenon of 419 (What is known as advance fee fraud under Nigerian criminal law). This is a reflection of OzoEze symbolism propagated by the Nri system. This Igbo value and characterization is in accord with what Norris (2001) would regards as the roots of a federal democracy and its survival.(p.12).

*Self-Esteem and Self-Belief:* An Igbo man is one who strongly believes in self-esteem and self-belief. That is, the consciousness that whatever is worth doing is worth doing well and the desire to attain the peak of his target in it. The Igbo man has strong self-reliance in his ability to achieve his goal in life. He believes that there is nothing any man could do to him and could not be even better.

*Dedication to Duty:* An Igbo man is known to be highly dedicated to duty resulting in his belief that in whatever field of endeavour he or she is found he must remain an achiever.

*Rectitude:* An Igbo man believes that he is being cultured in doing things in a proper or universally accepted manner. In other words, he is bestowed with pure sense of standardization.

*Ambition:* An Igbo man is no doubt a man full of ambition. He wants to be at the top or ahead of others in every field of life.

*Perseverance:* An Igbo man is one who always perseveres in his struggle to make ends meet. He is extra resilient to retrogressive factors of life. No matter the ups and downs in his struggle to survival, an Igbo man believes that giving up is not the best, so the end determines the means. This is a reflection of Ikenga symbolism.

*Self-Control:* An Igbo man is one always full of self-control. His all-time consciousness is to respect and avoid disgrace to himself. This imbibes in him the sense of self-control. Again, this is another Ikenga quality.

*Bravery:* This is one of the natural attributes of an Igbo man. An Igbo man is conscious at all times of self-defense and the desire to conquer. This is found in the Igbo adage “mberede nyiri dike, mana mberede k’oji ama dike” meaning: surprise attack conquers the brave but it is also that which marks the brave.

*Hard Working:* The Igbo people are hard workers, because they naturally believed in the philosophy that one must always be the architect of his or her own destiny. Therefore, they determined to work hard and succeed. This is again another Ikenga symbolism.(pp.43-46).

Most people of Igbo extraction are worried at the alarming rate of social ills bedeviling the Igbo nation. These social evils which debauch authentic Igbo socio-cultural communal moral values include violent crimes like kidnapping of fellow Igbo brothers and sisters for ransom, hired assassinations, armed robbery, political thuggery, prostitution of the high order among the young people, etc. These socio-cultural eddies not only pose security risks to people but also paralyze social, religious and economic life of the Igbo people.

## Preservation of Igbo Cultural Moral Values from Challenges

It is necessary as the truth of Igbo people's cultural values has been enumerated and discussed broadly with its challenges, it is necessary to further discuss the remedial measures of these discussed challenges in Igbo people's cultural values. It is fairly evident that Igbo customs and values seemingly are on the highway to extinction. Their fleeting existence, already stark, shows very slim chance of surviving the ferocious erosion of modernity. According to Odegbo (2016) who has expressed displeasure on the speed dwindling of the customs and values Igbo people thus;

Sadly, very little effort is being made by the Igbo people to forestall the progressive decline. Everybody, it would seem, acquiesces to the decay. From the hallowed to the mundane nothing is spared the buffet of the cruel fate. Coronations, title-taking, burial ceremony, marriage ceremony, breaking of kola nut, to the least of these customs and values have lost the touch of tradition. All are now in acute struggle against eroding influences that appear decided to lay them waste. Nobody is sure where the development is headed, but it certainly does not lead to any cultural flourish. (p.1).

Each time I think about this development and the possible solution, I flinch from the thought, not so much for the decline as it is for the fate that awaits non-preservation of these customs and values for the coming generation. When did Igbo people get to this sorry pass? What, if any, are the redeeming possibilities? Any relics for the coming generation and what is the assurance the bequest will be appreciated? Nothing is revered any more in Igbo land. Worst still is the violation of Eze title. Apart from turning official traditional event into an éclat of language competitiveness, the violation of Igweship has caused Igbo people to appear less serious in the eyes of their neighbours. The sudden craze for titles and, in particular, the coveting of *Eze* Igbo title by one that is new in various states outside Igbo land has further dwindled the authority of an otherwise elevated kingship institution.

A deeper understanding of the African culture and its peoples will ultimately breed a profound respect for, and embrace of, African traditional values which, when properly understood, reveal to the discerning mind a wisdom of the ages, capable of providing some solutions to our contemporary search for sustainable development and a peaceful, equitable society. As argued and pointed by Ike & Edozien (2001):

There is need to harness the innovative potential in our societies and cultures with a view to effecting a sustainable and self-reliant rationalization and modernization of communities. Our challenge is to search for appropriate paradigms and expressions to define and evaluate cultural, social, ethical and religious conditions relevant to our many African societies (pp. 3-4).

The starting point of retrieving that cultural loss is the immediate recovery of cultural human values. The recovery of cultural human values will recreate the concept of dignity of man as what ought to be revered and not for slaughtering and butchering for quick money-making purposes. Respect for the dignity of man will make speed loss of cultural moral values among the Igbo people wane. If this concept will be widely taught among the Igbo people both home and abroad, it will initiate a lot of assistance towards the recovery of the speed loss of Igbo cultural moral values. In preserving the moral value, it is worthy to note that value is intrinsically linked to the creation of wholesome individuals and socially acceptable character. According to Idiodi (2000) opined that, a society or a nation is great in nothing which is loose or low in moral character (pp.16-24). Character molding and stabilization in the human personality is at the heart of successful communal and state building using the contributions of morally responsible citizens. Value is attached to a human being because he has the capacity to be a responsible person. When a responsible human agent enters into his own creative endeavours, not only should he avoid anything counter to universal human value, he should also use his capacity of rationality to achieve a meritorious form of human value by developing a virtuous character and by engaging in moral conduct. A person develops his virtues as a means to gain his values and achieve flourishing happiness. Living according to moral principles contributes to one's having a sense of dignity/

## **Conclusion**

It is worthy to note the following as the paper is concluding; it is obvious that the Igbo people are losing speedily their inherent sense of Igbo cultural values as a result of globalization, modernization and influence of western life styles. Igbo cultural values can be preserved as part of the African moral values when they are challenged by societal pressures by prioritizing on human dignity as part of human values. The Igbo man increasingly finds it difficult to successfully grapple with the challenges and problems of modernity revolving around the loss of his cultural moral values as a result of consistent corruption, quest for wealth and materialism and globalization which results from the loss of Igbo people indigenous cultural values. It is the duty of the Igbo people societal leader to raise alarm and bring to the notice of Igbo people the challenges the Igbo moral cultural values are facing and to start proffering solution beyond the prescriptions in this paper.

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## **PSYCHOLOGY OF VALUE FORMATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: A PATH TO SUSTAINABILITY OF AFRICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE**

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### **Abstract**

*Values in a wider perspective are important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture in a communal setting about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person's behaviour and attitude; they serve as broad guidelines in all situations. Values are general principles that regulate our day-to-day behaviour. The emotional, social and physical development of young children has a direct effect on their overall development and on the adult they will become. That is why understanding the need to invest in young children is so important, so as to maximize their future well-being. A child's early years are the foundation for his or her future development, providing a strong base for lifelong learning and learning abilities, including cognitive and social development. Well established research, continues to emphasize the importance of early childhood education as an essential building block of a child's future success. The society is filled with children and adults that are untaught in values system, as a result of it the society is facing vices like; violence, cultism, prostitution, bloodshed, thievery, (armed robbery), examination malpractice, destroying and manipulating of social values system and order, etc. This research therefore, suggested the importance of inculcating values in a child at the early stage. This if achieved in children at their early developmental stage will help them to maintain ethical values system in their adulthood. The researcher adopted Bandura's social learning theory which states that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling. If children will be trained by modeling of values at their early stage of childhood it will help to instil important values in them. The researcher therefore, used secondary data collection methodology to generate other scholars' opinions in this discourse.*

**Keywords:** Psychology, Value Formation, Early Childhood, Sustainability, African, Cultural, Heritage

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Winifred Mary ECHE, PhD; Fidelis Oghenero Ejegbavwo, PhD

## Introduction

Training is a process of making a trainee to become like his/her trainer; it is also a way of making a trainee to imbibe some rare necessary qualities. Training takes processes and time; it is not done or achieved instantaneously. It requires application of methods, patterns, principles and technicalities for the purpose of the training to be achieved. When it has to do with inculcating values in a child in his/her early childhood some principles and methods are required as to achieve it.

Value is a concept that includes everything that is acceptable and important to the individual. Such branches of science as philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, and sociology consider value as a product of human life in certain historical, cultural, and socio-political conditions. Values are individual beliefs that motivate people to act one way or another. They serve as a guide for human behavior. Generally, people are predisposed to adopt the values that they are raised with. People also tend to believe that those values are “right” because they are the values of their particular culture. Ethical decision-making often involves weighing values against each other and choosing which values to elevate. Some values have intrinsic worth, such as love, truth, and freedom. Other values, such as ambition, responsibility, and courage, describe traits or behaviors that are instrumental as means to an end. Still other values are considered sacred and are moral imperatives for those who believe in them. Sacred values will seldom be compromised because they are perceived as duties rather than as factors to be weighed in decision-making. So, whether values are sacred, have intrinsic worth, or are a means to an end, values vary among individuals and across cultures and time. However, values are universally recognized as a driving force in ethical decision-making.

## Conceptual Clarification

It is important to make some clarifications of the key words as contained in the research topic. This will guide the readers to grasp the clear-cut understanding of the context in which they are used in the research work. The key words include; Train, Child, Psychology, Values Formation, Early Childhood.

- i. *Psychology*: Psychology has been defined in different ways. Some people have defined psychology as an art. Other people have defined psychology as a science. Many text books define psychology as the science of mind and behaviour. Psychology involves the study of human nature and/or behaviour. Different opinions come from different perspectives. The following are the variety of definitions of psychology as generated online.

- a. Eric Pettifor defines psychology as "an art which presents itself as science". Eric is most interested in the area of personality psychology.
- b. Hamm, H. D. who authored and maintains a site for Northern Michigan University, defines psychology as the "scientific study of the behaviour of humans and animals"
- c. Tom Bolling defines psychology as a science of description and application used for the "interpretation, prediction, development, and improvement of human behaviour" and that psychology was originally a branch of philosophy.
- d. According to the American Psychological Association, Psychology is the study of the mind and behaviour. It is the study of the mind, how it works, and how it affects behaviour.

Anene (1993) said:

Psychology has always had a way of outgrowing its definition. It's observed that early 19<sup>th</sup> century, most psychologists considered psychology as the study of mental life. When we consider the etymology of the word psychology one can then see the link between this early view of the discipline and the origin the word. The word psychology comes from two Greek words, psyche (meaning mind or soul) and logos (meaning science). A combination of the two words then implies that psychology the science of the mind. (p.1).

Formerly, psychology was a part of metaphysics, and dealt with the nature, origin, and destiny of the soul. It was called rational psychology. But modern psychology is empirical, and does not deal with the problems relating to the soul. Psychology is the study of behaviour and the mind. There are different types of psychology, such as cognitive, forensic, social, and developmental psychology. A person with a condition that affects their mental health may benefit from assessment and treatment with a psychologist. A psychologist may offer treatment that focuses on behavioral adaptations.

- ii. *Values Formation*: The formation of something is the starting or creation of it. The formation of value is the process of developing and establishing it. The process of influencing or guiding a person to a deeper understanding of value systems. This is a process of inculcating some necessary values in a person whether a child or an adult.
- iii. *Early childhood*, defined as the period from birth to eight years old, is a time of remarkable growth with brain development at its peak. During this stage, children are highly influenced by the environment and the people that surround them. In psychology, the term *early childhood* is usually defined as the time period from

birth until the age of eight years, therefore covering infancy, kindergarten and the early school years up to nursery stage.

- iv. *Path*: This means different things to different school of thoughts, but generally a path is synonymously used as a way and means. It also means a course of action or way of achieving a specified result of a chosen career path and this is the context in which the term is used in this work.
- v. *Sustainability*: Sustainability is ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level. In the broadest sense, refers to the ability to maintain or support a process continuously over time. When this is applied to the topic of this paper, it informs preservation to the cultural moral values of African moral heritage.
- vi. *African*: African can be used as a noun or an adjective. As an adjective, it means of or connected with Africa, the continent that is south of the Mediterranean Sea, east of the Atlantic Ocean, and west of the Indian Ocean. As a noun, it means a native or inhabitant of Africa, especially a Black person of African ancestry. The term African, conceptually has to do with belonging to Africa. This informs that this paper discusses cultural moral heritage that belongs to Africa.
- vii. *Cultural*: An understanding of culture requires an understanding not only of language differences, but also differences in knowledge, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Culture (from the Latin '*cultura*' stemming from '*colere*', meaning "to cultivate") generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activities significance and importance. Cultural paradigms refer to the shared beliefs, values, customs and practices that define a society or group of people. They shape our identity, influence our behavior and inform our understanding of the world.
- viii. *Heritage*: Heritage is the legacy from the past that we inherit, live with, and pass on to future generations. Heritage can include places, objects, values, traditions, culture, languages, stories, and events that reflect our history, identity, and diversity. Heritage is irreplaceable and important for our sense of belonging, learning, and inspiration.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The researcher adopted Bandura's social learning theory which states that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling. Social learning theory is the view that people learn by observing others. Associated with Albert Bandura's work in the 1960s. People learn through observing others' behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes

of those behaviours. Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. Bandura's Social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. Social learning theory explains how people learn new behaviours, values, and attitudes. Social learning is defined as learning through the observation of other people's behaviours. It is a process of social change in which people learn from each other in ways that can benefit wider social-ecological systems. Different social contexts allow individuals to pick up new behaviours by observing what people are doing within that environment. Social learning and social pedagogy emphasize the dynamic interaction between people and the environment in the construction of meaning and identity. The process of learning a new behaviour starts by observing behaviour, taking the information in and finally adopting that behaviour. Examples of environmental contexts that promote social learning are schools, media, family members and friends. If learning is to be considered as social, then it must:

1. Demonstrate that a change in understanding has taken place in the individuals involved;
2. Demonstrate that this change goes beyond the individual and becomes situated within wider social units or communities of practice;
3. Occur through social interactions and processes between actors within a social network.

It is a theoretical system that focuses on the development of the child and how practice and training affect their life skills. This idea is centered on the notion that children are active and competent even in their early stage of life.

### **Child Psychology and Development**

Child psychology and development is the study of subconscious and conscious of childhood development. Child psychologists observe how a child interacts with their parents, themselves, and the world, to understand their mental development. Child Psychology basically encompasses the study of various different psychological elements that affect individuals throughout their young growing phase. From birth to puberty, the study will usually help a child psychologist to understand the circumstances that led up to the current position the individual is likely to lean towards.

Child psychology studies the mental state and changes that generally take place in an individual from the infancy stage. According to Michael (2005),

Child psychology is the study of children's mental processes, with a particular focus on cognitive and language development and socialization. Child

psychology aims to help parents; teachers and care workers ensure an environment favourable to children's emotional, cognitive and social development. (p.5).

Child psychology is one of the many branches of psychology and one of the most frequently studied specialty areas. This particular branch focuses on the mind and behaviour of children from prenatal development through adolescence. Child psychology deals not only with how children grow physically, but with their mental, emotional, and social development as well.

It was philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) who first suggested that the mind of the newly born child was like a blank slate. According to his theory, experiences during childhood were crucial for shaping adults' characteristics. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 to 1778) argued but not in disagreement with the assertion of John Locke, that children were born good and innocent; it was how they were nurtured that corrupted them. Childhood plays such an important role in the course of the rest of a child's life; it is little wonder why this topic has become such an important one within psychology, sociology, and education. Experts focus only on the many influences that contribute to normal child development, but also to various factors that might lead to psychological problems during childhood. Self-esteem, school, parenting, social pressures, and other subjects are all of tremendous interest to child psychologists who strive to help kids develop and grow in ways that are healthy and appropriate.

Therefore, Child psychology, also called child development is the study of the psychological processes of children and, specifically, how these processes differ from those of adults, how they develop from birth to the end of adolescence, and how and why they differ from one child to the other.

### **A Brief Look at the Meaning of Values**

Values are a set of desirable behaviour by following what is good for the individual and also the society, that exactly is the reason as to why values are not taught, lectured about or professed, they are only demonstrated. Values are Important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person's behaviour and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations.

Generally, value has been taken to mean moral ideas, general conceptions or orientations towards the world or sometimes simply interests, attitudes, preferences, needs, sentiments and dispositions. But sociologists use this term in a more precise sense to mean; the generalized end which has the connotations of rightness, goodness or inherent desirability. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2000) who defined value as, "a belief that something is good and desirable". Mukerjee (1949) a pioneer

Indian sociologist who initiated the study of social values, in his opinion on value said, “values are socially approved desires and goals that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning or socialization and that become subjective preferences, standards and aspirations”. A value is a shared idea about how something is ranked in terms of desirability, worth or goodness.

In ethics, value denotes the degree of importance of something or action, with the aim of determining what actions are best to do or what way is best to live (normative ethics), or to describe the significance of different actions. Axiology, (from Greek *axios*, “worthy”; *logos*, “science”), also called theory of value, the philosophical study of goodness, or value.

### **The Formation of Values in Early Childhood**

Psychology of values formation in early childhood is art or social science of forming the necessary ideas and values in a child in the early childhood. At birth, children are immediately inserted into social relations: all of their needs are met by an adult, who becomes the centre of attention of the baby. It is important to remember that, in babies, visual and hearing structures have not developed completely yet. Shams and Seitz (2008) said;

The enrichment of visual and hearing impressions contributes to the organic evolution of the senses in a satisfactory manner. For this reason, the richer the experiences of a child with an adult - who becomes the mediator of the first sensorial contacts of the baby with the world around him or her -, the more positive this child's physical and emotional development will be in the first period of life. (p.12).

The central psychological formation in the first year of life is perception. It enables the sensorial appropriation of the world in a direct communicative and emotional process with the adult. What does this mean? Dale (2005) also said, in this first period of the psychic development, the main activity - the one that promotes a greater development of the intellectual and practical capacities and of the personality of the child in this moment is the emotional communication the baby establishes with people around him or her. (p.8). Because of that, although in the first months of life babies are not able to express themselves through conventional talk yet, they can communicate with the people around. For this reason, they use other languages, such as crying, smiling, movements of throwing their arms and body towards the adult and the objects they want, closing their hands as if they wanted to grab something they cannot reach, etc. It is important to observe that all of these behaviours of the baby have an affective nature, that is, they happen because people around him or her and objects presented to him or

her provoke emotions, like the joy of reaching them or the pleasure of physical contact with the adult, creating a need for new impressions.

The preschool years in which the foundations of many developments of human life are laid, is a critical period in which children start to acquire basic knowledge related to the values which is a part of moral development of children. When the effect of the basic knowledge and talents acquired in these years on socialization of the individual in the following years is considered, the importance of acquiring values in early ages is seen. First, the family atmosphere started to be gained in value over time; media, friends, teachers, society, and it continues to evolve under the influence of similar elements. It is in this view that Halstead & Taylor (2000) said, "First, the family atmosphere started to be gained in value over time; media, friends, teachers, society, and it continues to evolve under the influence of similar elements" (p.169). Furthermore Frydkova (2012) said on the important of value formation in early childhood thus:

The pre-school period when the basis of values is taken is important for the child to observe and adapt the certain values through positive models. Social life, an integral part of the value of having first details regarding the foundations of the pre-school period, academic skills training as well as social values , education also should be emphasized. (p. 16).

There are means of inculcating values in early childhood, the very basic means to form values in a child's life are; family, religious organizations, school, social media etc. Except these institutions play their roles well a child's life values may be farfetched.

### **Importance of Early Childhood Development**

The emotional, social and physical development of young children has a direct effect on their overall development and on the adult they will become. That is why understanding the need to invest in very young children is so important, so as to maximize their future well-being. Children's early experiences the bonds they form with their parents and their first learning experiences deeply affect their future physical, cognitive, emotional and social development.

Optimizing the early years of children's lives is the best investment we can make as a society in ensuring their future success. Early years of childhood form the basis of intelligence, personality, social behaviour, and capacity to learn and nurture oneself as an adult. There is significant evidence that links the circumstances of adversity and habits formed in early years to the non-communicable diseases of adulthood. There is consistent and strong evidence which shows that:

- i. Brain development is most rapid in the early years of life. When the quality of stimulation, support and nurturance is deficient, child development is seriously affected.
- ii. The effects of early disadvantage on children can be reduced. Early interventions for disadvantaged children lead to improvements in children's survival, health, growth, and cognitive and social development.
- iii. Children who receive assistance in their early years achieve more success at school. As adults they have higher employment and earnings, better health, and lower levels of welfare dependence and crime rates than those who don't have these early opportunities.
- iv. Efforts to improve early child development are an investment, not a cost.

Simply put, a child's early years lay the foundation for all that is to come. In recent years, researchers have learned that the human brain develops the vast majority of its neurons, and is at its most receptive to learning, between birth and three years of age. Early childhood is a crucial stage of life in terms of a child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. Growth of mental and physical abilities progress at an astounding rate and a very high proportion of learning takes place from birth to age six. It is a time when children particularly need high quality personal care and learning experiences. Education begins from the moment the child is brought home from the hospital and continues on when the child starts to attend playgroups and kindergartens. The learning capabilities of humans continue for the rest of their lives but not at the intensity that is demonstrated in the preschool years. With this in mind, babies and toddlers need positive early learning experiences to help their intellectual, social and emotional development and this lays the foundation for later school success.

### **Agents of Value Formation in Early Childhood**

Process of formation values in a child is also a part of socialization, and this socialization process cannot be achieved in isolation. Socialization helps people learn to function successfully in their social worlds. How does the process of socialization occur? How do we learn to use the objects of our society's material culture? How do we come to adopt the beliefs, values, and norms that represent its nonmaterial culture? According to Henry (2012), this learning takes place through interaction with various agents of socialization, like peer groups, families, plus both formal and informal social institutions. (p.13). It will be of immense contribution to briefly look at some of these agents of socialization in a child.

### **The Role of Family in Value Formation in Early Childhood**

The family is considered to be a social system, a social group that logically passes through its own development regarding the changes of social conditions. The family's

effect reflects - either directly or indirectly the state and possibilities of the society though least of all social institutions it underlies the direct guidance of the society. The life of families does not change often or fast. It is based on customs and habits, it is subordinated to values and norms which are accepted in a certain society, and it tends to make self-reproduction rather than transformation. Family is the foundation on which values are built. Moral values like truthfulness, happiness, peace, justice are instilled in children's thoughts, feelings and actions and they function as ideals and standards that govern their actions in their life. The value system practiced in the family becomes automatic to the young family members if they are taught moral values systematically. The family, shapes the child's attitude towards people and society, and helps in mental growth in the child and supports his ambitions and values. Blissful and cheerful atmosphere in the family will develop the love, affection, tolerance, and generosity.

In values formation in early childhood the role family is *sin qua non*. The family forms the ground for other social institutions like; school and religious organizations to play their role of values formation in children. When family fails in her duty of values formation early enough in children, it forms faulty foundations although the children life. Frydkova (2012) offered the following view on the role of family in values formation in the members of family, especially the children.

For children, the family represents a certain type of environment where they could find support, safety and security – it is the basic background for them. A child is a product of a family and it is reflected in his/her features, behaviour and values. The values that a child receives in a family will probably determine his/her behaviour in the future. Family values among the members of a family are based on the relationship of affinity and touch mostly feelings, emotions and interests established on mutual respect of people living in a family. (p.1).

The first school a child attends is his home and parents are the first teachers. With the help of their conduct and behaviour they induce an influence on their children. They play a major role in inculcating values in their children. Values are essential for a sound character and personality. But at times due to their sheer negligence a child lacks morally and ethically accepted values.

In the formation of children's morals, no outside influence is greater than that of the family. Through punishment, reinforcement and both direct and indirect teaching, families instil morals in children, and help them to develop beliefs that reflect the values of their culture. Kohn (1977) opined that, "children are effectively socialized and raised to take the types of jobs their parents already have, thus reproducing the class system. Likewise, children are socialized to abide by gender norms, perceptions of race, and class-related behaviours." (p.18). The family, forms the child's viewpoint towards

people and society, and helps in mental development in the child and supports his desires and values.

### **The Role of School in Value Formation in Early Childhood**

Teachers represent role models beyond those provided by parents. They introduce added knowledge and differing points of view. Classroom routines and expectations are the first step on the road to gaining and maintaining the ability to earn a living. The school provides a learning environment where children skills can be measured against the abilities of age peers.

According to Kessler (1991):

The fact that schools and education can reflect social ideology is also true in early childhood education, a period which may be viewed as the nexus of the complex social concerns and interests representing a given society. In spite of this fact, however, there is a general tendency in early childhood education to conceal social determinants by emphasizing the developmental aspects of early childhood education. (pp.137).

Shonkoff& Phillips (2000) said:

A child's early years lay the foundation for all that is to come. In recent years, researchers have learned that the human brain develops the vast majority of its neurons, and is at its most receptive to learning, between birth and three years of age. In fact, the intake of new information is critical to the formation of active neural pathways. (p.159).

Early education can play a critical role during this important developmental period. Research linking early intervention to both cognitive and socio-emotional gains have fuelled the proliferation of early childhood programs since the early part of the twentieth century. Education begins from the moment the child is brought home from the hospital and continues on when the child starts to attend playgroups and kindergartens. The learning capabilities of humans continue for the rest of their lives but not at the intensity that is demonstrated in the preschool years. With this in mind, babies and toddlers need positive early learning experiences to help their intellectual, social and emotional development and this lays the foundation for later school success.

### **The Role of Religious Organizations in Value Formation in Early Child Childhood**

While some religions are informal institutions, here we focus on practices followed by formal institutions. Religion is an important avenue of values formation in early childhood. Nigeria is full of synagogues, temples, churches, mosques, and similar

religious communities where people gather to worship and learn. Like other institutions, these places teach participants how to interact with the religion's material culture. For some people, important ceremonies related to family structure, like marriage and birth are connected to religious celebrations. Many religious institutions also uphold gender norms and contribute to their enforcement through socialization. From ceremonial rites of passage that reinforce the family unit to power dynamics that reinforce gender roles, organized religion fosters a shared set of socialized values that are passed on through society.

The church has a big aspect of nurturing development of children. It is important that children grow up with values and the church is very strategically positioned to do that. Sherkat (1998) said, "From childhood through emerging adulthood, one's religious affiliation is highly correlated with the tradition in which one was raised." (p.2). According to Gunnoe and Moore (2002) said, "Religious beliefs and practices are also closely associated with those that parents modelled and encouraged during childhood." (p.4). Regnerus and Uecker (2006) said, "Having religious parents makes one less vulnerable to dramatic religious declines during youth." (p.3).

When a child is baptized, the church remembers God's covenant promise to bless believers and their children (Gen. 17:7), and it also renews its own commitment to caring for the children. While raising children is primarily the responsibility of parents, it is not exclusively so. After all, God charged the entire nation of Israel to teach the children (Deut. 6).

### **The Role of Peer Groups in Value Formation in Early Child Childhood**

A peer group is made up of people who are similar in age and social status and who share interests. Peer group socialization begins in the earliest years, such as when kids on a playground teach younger children the norms about taking turns, the rules of a game, or how to shoot a basket. As children grow into teenagers, this process continues. Peer groups are important to adolescents in a new way, as they begin to develop an identity separate from their parents and exert independence. Additionally, peer groups provide their own opportunities for socialization since kids usually engage in different types of activities with their peers than they do with their families. Peer groups provide adolescents' first major socialization experience outside the realm of their families. Interestingly, studies have shown that although friendships rank high in adolescents' priorities, this is balanced by parental influence.

According to Dale (2005):

Studies of child development have always drawn attention to the importance of peers, especially in adolescence, when peers may facilitate each other's antisocial behaviour. It has often been assumed that peers are less important

in early childhood, when relationships with family members are more influential. However, recent research shows clearly that even infants spend time with peers, and that some three- and four-year-olds are already having trouble being accepted by their peers. (p.1).

Early problems with peers have negative consequences for the child's later social and emotional development. To understand why some children find it hard to relate to peers, it is important to study the early development of peer relations.

### **The Role of Mass Media in Value Formation in Early Child Childhood**

Mass media distribute impersonal information to a wide audience, via television, newspapers, radio, and the Internet. These aspects have been shown to influence an individual's preferences in popular culture. Sociologists agree that the extent of the influence of mass media is hard to measure. With the average person spending over four hours a day in front of the television (and children averaging even more screen time), media greatly influences social norms. According to Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout (2005), People learn about objects of material culture, like; new technology and transportation options, as well as nonmaterial culture what is true that is beliefs, what is important that is values, and what is expected that is norms.

### **Sustainability of African Heritage through Value Formation in Early Childhood**

The world is under enormous pressure as it faces major moral, environmental, health, social, political and economic threats. Although disasters and challenges can, at any time, pose a threat to the sustainability of any nation or continent cultural moral values. It seems as if children happen to be hardest hit. Using a theoretical approach, this paper systematically reviews research studies on early childhood education to explore the way the African moral cultural values can be sustained. In this paper, the roles of *early childhood education of African moral heritage and care for sustainability* are recognized as essential means of creating sustainable building blocks for adult lives. This if achieved, will comprise the holistic development of the inseparable moral values, social, emotional, cognitive and physical facets of child development in order to form behaviours towards preserving the African heritage towards promoting fairness and social justice for life. Given that the holistic development comprises both on the whole child and the environment, this paper explores how an awareness of the principles of the African cultural heritage, constituting principles such as sharing, respect and interaction may be used to young children with values, skills and knowledge that form the basis of sustainable development.

## Conclusion

In the research the evidence shows promise: early intervention into the minds, bodies, and emotions of children suggests long-term benefits. The research stresses social, religious and academic skills for young children appears to have long-lasting benefits. Academic performance increased for children provided with high-quality, early learning. Additionally, the differences in math and reading on the state standardized indicators provided evidence that early intervention has long-term benefits for brain development when its architecture is most pliable. The growing evidence from the data for social skills lends strength to the notion that early education has long-term benefits for children. Whereas kindergarten students benefited from the social and academic skills they learned at the Early Learning Centers, these skills expanded as the children grew and developed children became increasingly adept in their social skills. In addition, they were becoming more responsible for their behaviour as evidenced by their attendance at school, which increased as they aged. Thus, for 5 years, at least, there is considerable evidence that a high-quality preschool education creates improved life outcomes.

According to article published by UK essays on Importance of Early Childhood Education opined the following;

Development in early childhood does not only affect to academic and physical activities, but also involves relationship with other people and emotional and cognitive development. People easily think children struggle to find their ego in adolescence; however, children actually start to realize their identity in first eight years and inner capacity of imagination and self-image of gender roles start to develop. In that age, they learn how to associate with friends and start to look people around them. Throughout the play and education, children learn social skills along with how to deal with others and develop their own values. (p.5).

Brain takes what environment offers and learning environment that challenges and motivate children is the first preparation of child education. Parents and educators should understand that children also have own thinking and proper education based on care and attachment is potent influence to them. Society and community should also recognize education given in these ages is very critical to child's mental and intellectual development and therefore provide more productive education program not only for the children, but for parent, since early childhood education is most efficient investment for society.

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## **RETHINKING THE GLOBAL PROSPECTS AND FUTURE OF THE HISTORIC BENIN MOATS IN THE WAKE OF URBANIZATION**

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### **Executive Summary**

*The Benin moats have remained both a historical marvel and a mystery for centuries. They are indisputably among Africa's most renowned environmental heritages with the potential for global recognition and exploration. This study examines the potential global worth of the Benin moat and the impact of urbanization on the future of this historic environmental heritage. The work aims to uncover the general contemporary awareness about the Benin moats while also highlighting their aesthetic and economic significance. It shows the factors contributing to their decline, highlighting the implications for their global future. The paper uses historical methods to review the literature on Benin moats as both cultural and environmental heritage. It also adopts the survey method to gather empirical data on the decline and loss of moats in some parts of Benin City. The paper is largely descriptive and expository in orientation. The study finds that Edo residents are largely familiar with the moats. It also finds that there are noticeable anthropogenic-induced changes in the Benin moats caused by urbanization and its attendant consumerism. In view of reimagining the global future and potential of the Benin moats, the work argues for restorative and preservative care that could transform the moats into tourist attractions for economic advantage. The paper concludes that unwholesome consumerist tendencies associated with modern urbanization must be conscientiously mitigated for the preservation of the moats for future generations. The study recommends ecological, cultural, and conservative initiatives, as well as sustainable urban planning strategies as key essentials in safeguarding the environmental heritage of the Benin moats in the wake of rapid urbanization.*

**Keywords:** Benin Moats, Urbanization, Tourism, Environment, Heritage

### **Introduction**

Many studies have shown that there is a connection between urbanization and the loss and distortion of cultural and environmental heritage across the globe (Akil et al., 2022;

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Adie & Amore, 2020; Guzman, 2020). Therefore, people strive to preserve their inimitable cultural heritage for the future. Like other people and places where nature has favorably bestowed aesthetic environmental endowments, Edo people have continued to imagine how best the natural and cultural environmental heritage of their ancient past could be preserved. Particularly, the Benin moats are among the foremost cultural environmental heritage Edo people hope could get the attention they deserve and be harnessed for economic and aesthetic gains in contemporary times. A large number of Benin indigenes believe that the moats have great potential for drawing global attention in terms of tourism and even scientific engagements to Edo state. These lofty ideas have fertile grounds in today's flourishing ideas of globalization. As globalization forces nations and people to renegotiate and navigate their ways into global relevance in the future, Edo people could effectively rally their cultural and environmental heritage in the sustenance of their own unique identity in the global future. The historic Benin moats are among the most viable cultural, geographical, and environmental advantages the Benin people could explore in this regard.

However, there is a growing concern about the continuous loss and almost derelict state of the Benin moats among Edo indigenes. Rapid urbanization and unmitigated consumerism, manifesting heavily in land grabbing across Benin City and its environs, are leading to the encroachment of the natural geographic spaces of the moats (Tomiak et al., 2024). Projections from some recent independent observers indicate that the loss of Benin moats will continue as the city continues to expand and as more lands are used up for residential, commercial, and public utility constructions and infrastructure in the state (Tomiak et al., 2023; Curnow, 2024). It is globally acknowledged that urban development often leaves significant changes to natural ecological balance, resulting in increased threats of environmental degradation and even erosion of cultural heritages. In the case of the Benin moats, urbanization might eventually rob future generations of Benin indigenes and the world of this historic heritage.

While many articles, write-ups, and even studies have delved into the historical description of the nature and purpose of the Benin moats, especially within the context of their ancient significance (Tomiak et al., 2023; Curnow, 2024) not much study has been carried out on unravelling the global potentials of the Benin moats in rethinking the global future of the Benin people. This study is conducted to examine the general awareness and global potential of the Benin moats and the challenges posed to them by rapid urbanization and unmitigated environmental and economic consumerism. The study seeks to provide valuable insights into the current state of moats' environments in Benin City and offer strategies for better preservation for their future global relevance.

### **Study Area: Benin People and Their Land**

Benin is used interchangeably with Edo without confusion (Omoera, 2019). To put this differently, it is convenient to say that beyond being a geographical entity, Benin is also used to describe the people and the language spoken mostly by the dwellers of the southern region of the present Edo state of Nigeria. The principal town of the people is Benin City – the rallying point of the Edo people (Aisien, 1995).

Imoagene (1993) on the Edo people and their neighbors in the Mid-Western region of Nigeria gave an impressive description of the patrimonial territory of the Edo people. Edo state is presently in the south-south geopolitical zone in the present political configuration of Nigeria. Aisien (1995) notes that the Edo people of Nigeria are divided into several sub-units, each of which speaks a patois of the Edo stem- language. In Edo state are found such ethnic groups as the Benins who speak the Edo language or Benin. There are also Esan (Ishan), Etsako, Onwan, and Akoko who speak dialects of the Edo language which in some cases are not mutually intelligible. According to Egharevba (1968), the Benin people emigrated from Egypt and in the course of their journey southward, they settled at Ile-Ife before finally arriving at their present location. The magnificence of the Benin moats may have something to do with the craft wisdom of the inventors of the pyramids. Another origin myth claims that the foremost dweller of Benin was the youngest son of God who, together with his eldest brother (founder of Ile-Ife), had been ordered by their father (God) to take possession of the world (Egharevba, cited in Imoagene, 1993, p. 7). Based on the second version of the origin of the Benin people, it is held that the people may have been living in the area from the very beginning (Osagie, 2002).

The Benins boast of a traditional governing system that dates back to the early period of their history. The first recognized monarchical era among the Benin was that of the Ogisos (the King of the sky). The Ogiso phase of Benin's history would appear to have been a long one because as many as thirty-one of them are believed to have reigned before the last ruler of the dynasty was overthrown and expelled from the kingdom due to political upheaval. Thus, the Ogiso era ended with civil unrest, leading to the deportation of the last of them, called Owodo (Imoagene, 1993; Welton, 1969). Some writers trace the origin of the Benin moats to the Ogiso era in ancient Benin civilization (Curnow, 2024).

The historical narrative of the transition to the monarchical era of the Obas has various versions. In all, Oba Eweka is believed to be the first in this era (Osagie, 2002). Again, several online writers maintain that the Oba era witnessed the construction of the larger parts of the moats. It is also argued that many Edo communities may have joined in the construction of moats around their territories as the imperial power of the Oba's palace continued to spread (Curnow, 2024; Tomiak et al. 2024).

The ancient Benin kingdom was reputed for many things. For instance, the political and social developments in Benin kingdom so impressed the Europeans that one of them who visited the kingdom in 1604 compared it with a major European country of that time. In the words of one of the explorers, “The town seems to be very great. When you enter into it, you go into a great broad street, not paved, which seems to be seven to eight times broader than the Warmoes Street in Amsterdam” (Hodgkin 1975 in Osagie 2002, p. 13-14). Socioeconomically, the traditional Edo economy was focused on agriculture, commerce, and handicraft manufacturing. Agriculture was the foundation of the Edo economy, with yam, cassava, maize, and vegetables constituting the majority of their subsistence cultivation. The residents of Edo also engaged in trade, which included the trading of salt, kola nuts, and textiles. Their artisanal industry, which included bronze casting, weaving, and ceramics, was highly valued both in the local and international markets. The economy of Edo was structured on guilds and associations that regulated production and commerce.

According to the 2006 Census of the National Population Commission of Nigeria, the population of Edo State was 3,233,366 (NPC, 2006; Edo State Government, 2023). The most recent population figures for Edo state stand at an estimated 4,777,000 people (City Population, 2021). The sample size of this study is 1,859,185 people, comprising the Edo-speaking ethnic group of the state. That is 57.5% of the total population of 3,233,366.

### **The Historic Benin Moats**

Popularly called *Iya* among the Benin people of Nigeria, the moats are the most unique geographical and environmental heritage and identity of the Benin land. The renowned and historic Benin moats are massive ancient earthworks that date as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE (Curnow, 2024; Akujieze and Irabor, 2014). They are acclaimed as the largest man-made earthwork in the history of any known people. The earthwork formations usually appear in circular shapes encircling communities of Edo origins in the present Edo state of Nigeria. The Benin moats are not to be confused with the natural geological formations such as hills (*Oke*), mountains (*Utete*), and valleys (*Uye* or *Ugboghodo*). The Benin moats are distinctively human constructions, chiefly for defense fortification and boundary or border demarcations (*Iyan'uwu*) of Benin territories in ancient times (Akujieze and Irabor, 2014; Ebegbulem 2011).

The Benin moats have a long historical origin, probably reaching to the pre-Oba monarchical era (Curnow, 2024; The Nation, 2013). Some argue that the dates of some of the Benin moats may be longer in history than the popularly acclaimed Oba era. The moats encircling ancient Benin City span approximately 6500 square kilometers of land. In total, the Benin moats are believed to be more than 10000 kilometers long

(edoworld.net, 2023). Future archeological and geographic information research may shed more light on the dimensions, dates, and purpose of the Benin moats.

The Benin moats were typically dug ditches with sand heaps forming earthen banks on one side of the ditches to create a sort of outer wall beams. The ditches were structurally created to form a steep valley-like shape as an integral part of the defensive barrier. The ditches required anyone approaching the earth-heap beam to first coast through the precipitous valley before climbing the earthen wall. Traditional sources claim that the structural design of the moats was such that it prevented invaders from being able to hold on to their weapons as they struggled to climb the earthen walls. While invaders shielded their swords or dropped their arrows to ease their climbs, the waiting warriors of the moats' territories often capitalized on the vulnerability of the invaders by attacking from the top of the high earthen walls.

According to Akujieze and Irabor (2014), the ancient Benin moats could reach 5 meters in width and 30 meters in depth when the earthen wall is measured from the base of the ditch. This is almost consistent with another source's claim that the ramparts range in size from shallow traces to the immense 20-meter-high walls in some parts of the Benin moats (The Nation 2013; edoworld.net, 2023). This present researcher measured a moat at Aduwawa Benin City, with a width reaching about 7 meters and an estimated depth of about 13 meters. However, it should be noted that this particular moat is presently not in its original state, as many anthropogenic activities were observed on the moat in the course of the research.

Due to their perceived historical and environmental importance, the Benin moats were added to the World Heritage Sites of the Royal Palaces of Abomey in 1995. The Benin moats were also recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records in 1974 as one of the largest man-made structures by length. Despite the challenges posed by urbanization, many parts of the Benin moats have survived to date. While some of the moats are now parts of the city centers and have been defaced significantly by anthropogenic activities ranging from sand filling and refuse dumping, others, especially in the villages, still exist in their precinct states. Albeit, they no longer serve the defense fortification purposes for which they were originally constructed.

### **Urbanization and Cultural Environmental Heritage**

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, about half of the world's population resided in the cities. This figure is projected to continue to grow, reaching more than 60% by 2050, with Africa and Asia contributing significantly to the numbers (Zipperer, Northrop, and Andreu, 2020). Presently, across the globe, there are 31 mega cities with more than 10 million people and another 987 smaller cities with population figures between 500

thousand and 5 million people. A projected increase of megacities to 41 and smaller cities to 1290 is expected in about 2030 (Zipperer, Northrop, and Andreu, 2020). These figures undeniably speak to rapid urbanization. Conceptually, urbanization is a complex mix of several interrelated concepts, such as population migration, infrastructure development, environmental changes, economic transformation, and social changes, among others. In simple, unambiguous terms, it refers to the process by which an increasing proportion of a population moves from rural areas to urban centers, resulting in population growth and expansion of cities and towns (United Nations, 2022; Dawson et al., 2009, Regmi, 2017).

It is within the complex dynamics of urbanization that environmental changes occur, giving rise to the issue of the protection of cultural, environmental heritage and the question of sustainability. As expected, population growth places tremendous stress on natural systems. It leads to greater exploration and exploitation of natural resources (Zipperer, Northrop, and Andreu, 2020; Haggitt, 2004). It is this anthropogenic strain on natural balance that results in infringement on environmental heritage. Environmental heritage itself connotes the natural and even cultural endowments inherited from past generations and are preserved and protected for future generations. This could range from the ecosystem, geographical topography, biodiversity, and cultural landmarks, cultural heritage constructions, among others, that are of significant historical or cultural value to a place (Alnsour et al., 2023). As already shown in the paper, the Benin moats are environmental heritage of immense value to the Benin people, to which urbanization now poses a great threat.

Urbanization no doubt has several positive implications for society. These positives do not in any way nullify the negative consequences on its trail. Higgitt (2004) connected urbanization to environmental degradation using Jordan as a case. In this case, urbanization particularly resulted in strain on land and water resources as population growth continued to demand expansion of cities and even agriculturally cultivated land. Alnsour et al. (2023) focus on the impact of urbanization on cultural heritage with attention on some historical buildings in Jordan. Both studies are clear on the fact that unmitigated urban development significantly affects cultural and environmental heritage.

In the African continent, the World Bank, as of 2017, already projected that urbanization could lead to suboptimal land use and harmful environmental impact. According to the prediction, the major demographic and geographical shifts in the continent have the potential to propel unprecedented environmental challenges in the future (The World Bank, 2017). Similarly, National Geographic (2023) noted that rapid urbanization will, in the near future, exacerbate the twin problems of poverty and environmental degradation. In Nigeria, Aliyu and Amadu (2017) observe that

urbanization is demographically driven without commensurate socioeconomic development. The situation often results in negative consequences on the environment, including pollution and poor health conditions. While these are significant implications of rapid urbanization, the critical issue of the degradation of environmental heritage is another layer to the problem of unplanned urban development.

Unplanned urbanization alters natural habitat and environmental cultural heritage through housing, road, and pavement construction, among others. In all, humans remain the ultimate invasive species consuming environmentally sensitive areas, resulting not only in habitat loss but also in the loss of sensitive environmental and cultural heritage (Higgitt, 2004; Fu et al., 2023). Fu et al. (2023) particularly pointed out urbanization as the major factor causing the decline in the value and integrity of cultural heritage, especially in historical areas lacking proper documentation. This seems to reflect the case of the Benin moats which currently suffer loss and distortion of material properties due to unplanned urban expansion of Benin City. As Fu et al. (2023) suggest, this paper agrees that the protection of cultural heritage amidst rapid urbanization requires impact assessment and effort directed toward maintaining a healthy balance between cultural heritage preservation and urban growth.

## **Methodology**

To determine the level of awareness and general perception about the Benin moats, their decline and loss as a result of urbanization, and the global future potentials and existence of the Benin moats, the researcher carried out a survey and conducted some personal interviews to collect empirical data.

*Research Design:* The study employed a survey design to examine opinions on the awareness and perception of respondents on the historic Benin moats and the challenges posed by urbanization to their global future.

*Sampling:* Various sampling techniques are available (Levy & Lemeshow, 2009). To investigate the study context, a sample size of 100 respondents was used. This is justified within the recommended range of 30 to 500 for most studies (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The total of 100 respondents used for the study was the number of collected questionnaire responses in usable formats out of the original 120 received. That is an 84% response rate. The focus was on communities known to have long stretches of moats, such as Iyaro, Ekenwan Road, Third East Circular, Aduwawa, Ohovbe, Ahor, Isi communities, and Egba communities.

*Instrument:* This study used a questionnaire as its survey instrument. This method was chosen due to its suitability for directly obtaining knowledgeable informed data from participants on the variables under investigation. A structured questionnaire was

developed for the respondents' opinions on Benin moats and the issue of urbanization. The data from the questionnaire was supported by information gathered through personal interviews with some key stakeholders, such as community heads and government functionaries.

*Procedure:* The questionnaire was divided into two parts (Sections A and B). Section A collected demographic information such as gender, age, tribe, residence, and occupation, while section B, consisting of ten items, measured opinions on the Benin moats and the impact of urbanization on their potential for a global future. To ease data gathering, an online survey was launched, and links were distributed to some respondents in Benin City via individual WhatsApp platforms and community groups. To reach respondents without internet access, some printed questionnaires were distributed to respondents in various areas within Benin City and some fast-developing communities around Benin City.

*Analysis:* Some statistical tools such as frequency tables, simple percentages, and bar charts were utilized to quantitatively analyze empirical data collected. These were corroborated by opinions from personal communications with individuals with good knowledge of the Benin moats, including some Benin chieftains, opinion leaders, government functionaries, community leaders, and some museum curators.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Consent and authorization were formally requested from the participants to facilitate the completion of the questionnaire. Adequate information regarding the aims and objectives of the study was provided to ensure a thorough understanding and cooperation from the respondents. The participants were assured confidentiality of their responses, and that the data will be utilized exclusively for academic purposes.

## Results and Analysis

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Questionnaire Respondents

<b>Demographic Characteristics</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	56	56%
	Female	43	43%
	Not specified	1	1%
	Total	100	100%
<b>Age</b>	Under 20	18	18%
	21-40	37	37%
	41-60	35	35%
	60 and above	10	10%
	Total	100	100%
<b>Tribe</b>	Benin	87	87%
	Others	13	13%
	Total	100	100%
<b>Residence</b>	Benin City	63	63%
	Communities around Benin City	24	24%
	Villages of Edo origin	13	13%
	Total	100	100%
<b>Occupation</b>	Civil servant	36	36%
	Self-employed	39	39%
	Farmer	5	5%
	Student	20	20%
	Total	100	100%

Source: Self Compiled (2024)

Table 1 above shows four demographic characteristics, namely, gender, age, tribe, residence, and occupation. The table illustrates that both male and female respondents participated in the survey robustly, with 56 respondents that is, 56% identifying as Males, while 43 (43%) participants were females. Only 1 participant opted not to disclose their gender identity, categorized as not specified.

Most respondents ranged between 21-40 years of age, with a total of 37 participants comprising 37% of the total respondents. This was closely followed by the 41-60 age group, constituting 35%. The age categories of under 20 and above 60 years had 18 (18%) and 10 (10%) participants respectively. The age distribution of the respondents

shows that the general population seems to be interested in the issue of the Benin moats. As Table 1 also shows, the majority of the respondents, 87 (87%) in the survey, identified as Benin indigenes. Only 13 (13%) participants indicated other tribes. The demographic information of the participants in Table 1 also shows that 63, representing the majority of respondents (63%) live in Benin City; 24 of the participants (24%) reside in communities around the city center; while 13 of the participants (13%) dwell in various villages of Edo origin. 39; 39% of participants were self-employed, 36 (36%) were civil servants, 20 (20%) were students, and 5 (5%) identified as farmers in the occupation categories.

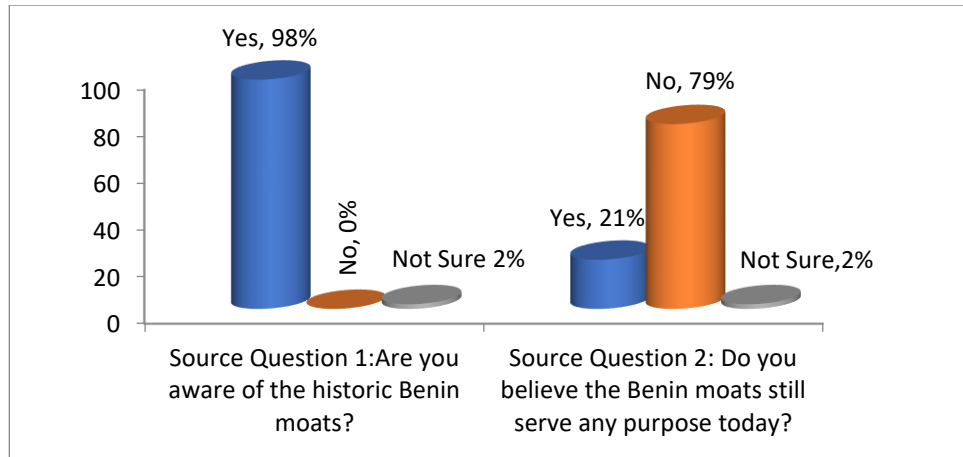
Section B of the questionnaire measured awareness and perception about the Benin moats, the impact of urbanization on the moats, and conservation issues. The table below shows the questions in these categories and participants' responses.

**Table 2:** Statements on awareness and perception of Benin moats

S/N	Source question	Response format	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1.	Are you aware of the historic Benin moats?	Yes	98	98%
		No	0	0%
		Not sure	2	2%
		Total	100	100%
2.	Do you believe the Benin moats still serve any purpose today?	Yes	21	21%
		No	79	79%
		Not sure	0	0%
		Total	100	100%

Source: Self Compiled (2024)

Table 2 above shows an overwhelming majority of respondents (98; 98%) are aware or know about the historic Benin moats. Only an infinitesimal number of participants, that is, 2%, were unsure about the Benin moats. We note here that these two respondents belonged to the age category of under 20. However, 79 respondents (79%) believe that the Benin moats have outlived their importance, leaving 21; 21% of participants who hold that the Benin moats still serve some purpose today. The figures in Table 2 summarily show that although the majority of Edo people and residents are familiar with the historic Benin moats, there is, however, a general perception that they do not serve any significant purpose in contemporary times. This finding is drawn from the (98; 98%) respondents who claimed to be aware of the Benin moats and 79 respondents (79%) who believe that the Benin moats have outlived their importance as represented in the chart below.



**Fig. 1:** Bar chart on awareness and perception of respondents on Benin moats

**Table 3:** Statements on urbanization and its impact on the Benin Moats

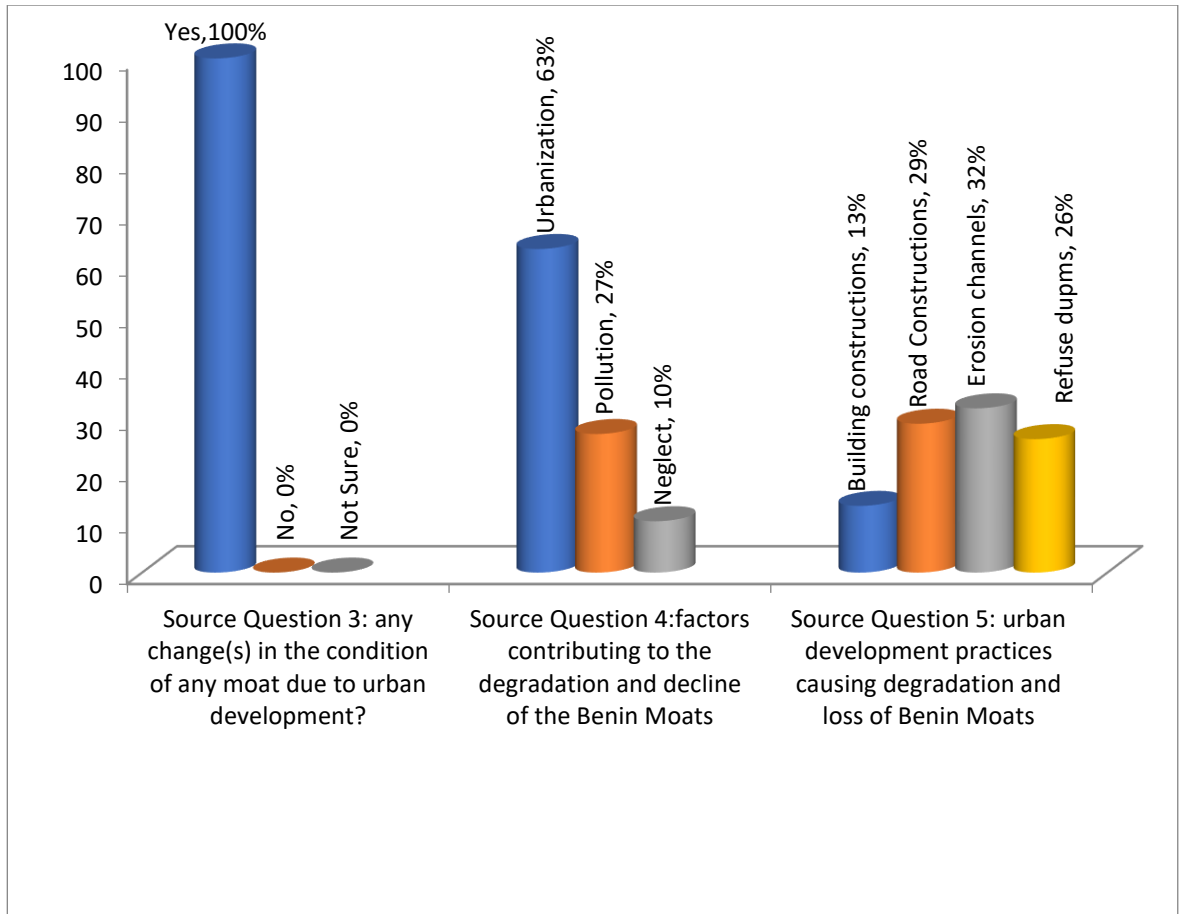
S/N	Source question	Response format	Frequency	Percentages (%)
3.	Have you observed any change(s) in the condition of any moat due to urban development?	Yes	100	100%
		No	0	0%
		Not sure	0	0%
		Total	100	100%
4.	What do you consider the main factors contributing to the degradation and decline of the Benin moats?	Urbanization	63	63%
		Pollution	27	27%
		Neglect	10	10%
		Total	100	100%
5.	Which of these urban development practices in your opinion leads more to the degradation and loss of Benin moats	Building constructions	13	13%
		Roads constructions	29	29%
		Erosion channels	32	32%
		Refuse dumps	26	26%
		Total	100	100%

Source: Self Compiled (2024)

The result from Table 3 above reveals glaringly that all respondents agree to have observed changes to the historic Benin moats. This is evident in the 100; 100% “Yes”

response to the question “Have you observed any change(s) in the condition of any moat due to urban development?” According to the data presented in Table 3, a total of 63 respondents (63%) identified urbanization and its attendant developmental activities as the main culprit among factors contributing to the degradation and decline of the Benin moats. Similarly, 27 participants, constituting 27% of the total sampled group, ticked pollution as the main factor contributing to the degradation and decline of the Benin Moats. Notably, all 27 respondents in this category live in the city center as seen in their demographic information. In contrast, however, 10 respondents noted “Neglect” as the main factor contributing to the degradation and decline of the Benin moats.

On the question of which urban development practices and associated phenomena lead more to the degradation and loss of Benin moats, responses varied between building constructions, road constructions, erosion control channels, and refuse dumps. Figures from Table 3 reveal that a fair majority of respondents (32; 32%) believe that channeling erosion to moats causes significant degradation and loss of the Benin moats. Another 29 respondents (29%) went for road construction as the leading cause of degradation and loss of Benin moats. 26 participants (26%) and 13 participants (13%), respectively, opted for refuse dumps and building construction activities as the main urban phenomena causing degradation and loss of Benin moats. The overarching finding, as revealed from the data in Table 3, is that there are significant changes in the environmental and cultural heritage of the Benin moats due mainly to urbanization and its associated activities. These include poor erosion control mechanisms; poor waste management systems resulting in refuse dumps and pollution, and poorly planned buildings and road constructions. Below is a chart showing the responses to the inquiries in Table 3.



**Fig 2:** Bar chart on urbanization and its impact on the Benin Moats

**Table 4:** Statements on conservation and direction for the global future of historic Benin moats

S/N	Source question	Response format	Frequency	Percentages (%)
6.	Would you agree that the Benin moats are well preserved for the future?	Yes	7	7%
		No	75	75%
		Not sure	18	18%
		Total	100	100%
7.	Are you familiar with any law or conservation initiative aimed at	Yes	16	15%
		No	64	64%
		Not sure	20	20%

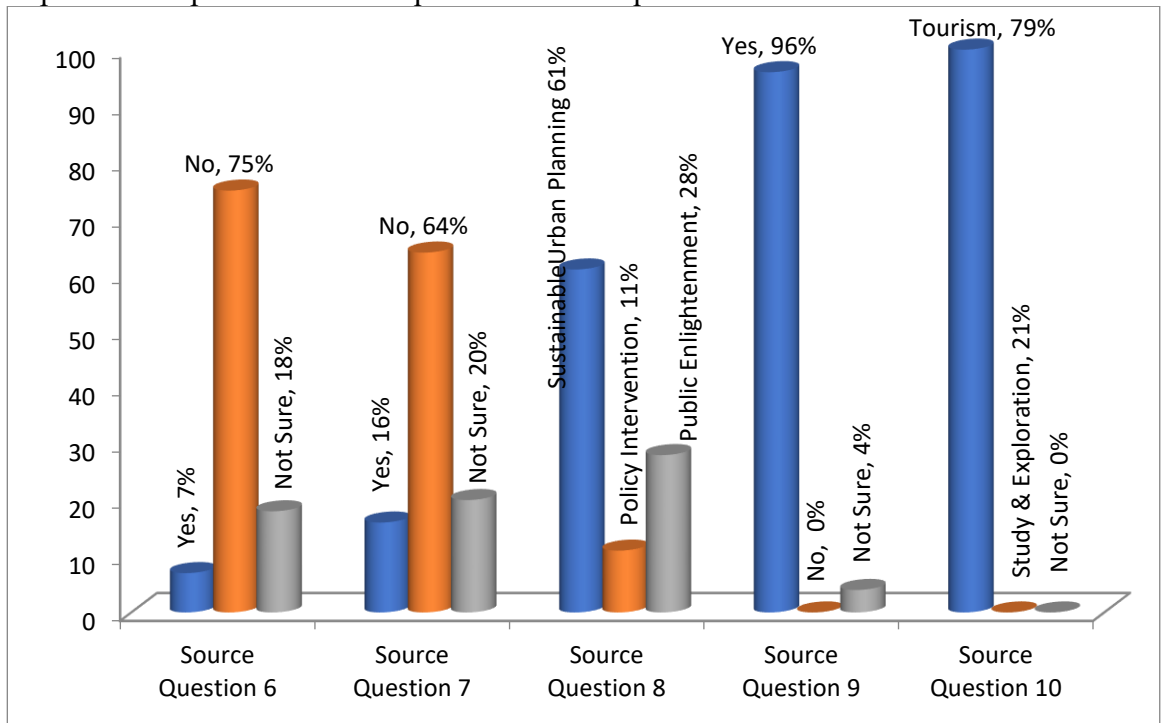
	protecting the Benin moats for future generations?	Total	100	100%
8.	What strategies do you believe could best help in preserving the Benin moats as environmental and cultural heritage	Sustainable urban planning	61	61%
		Policy interventions	11	11%
		Public enlightenment	28	28%
		Total	100	100%
9.	Do you believe the Benin moats have global potential and should be recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site?	Yes	96	96%
		No	0	0%
		Not sure	4	4%
		Total	100	100%
10	Which area do you think the Benin moats could be more viable and contribute to the socio-cultural and economic development of Edo state in the future?	Tourism	79	79%
		Study and exploration	21	21%
		Not sure	0	0%
		Total	100	100%

Source: self-compiled (2024)

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate that 75 respondents, constituting 75%, do not agree that the Benin moats are well-preserved for the global future, while an additional 18 respondents, or 18%, are uncertain about whether they are well-preserved or not. On the other hand, 7 participants, equivalent to 7%, agreed that the Benin moats were well preserved. Table 4 also shows that only 16, 16% of respondents claim to be familiar with some regulation or conservation initiative aimed at preserving the Benin moats. In contrast, 64 respondents, a far majority accounting for 64% of participants are not familiar with any law or conservation effort aimed at preserving the Benin moats. Closely following are an additional 20 respondents, constituting 20%, who are not sure about any preservation effort.

Table 4 further reveals that while 61 respondents (61%) and another 28 participants (28%) respectively favor sustainable urban planning and policy intervention, 11 respondents (11%) prefer public enlightenment as strategies that could help in

preserving the Benin moats as the cultural and environmental heritage of Edo people. From Table 4, a clear majority of respondents, that is 96 representing 96% of the sampled population, believe the Benin moats have global potential and should be made UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Only an infinitesimal number of 4 respondents (4%) are unsure about the Benin moats becoming UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The majority of the study’s participants (79; 79%) submitted that the Benin moats are a viable environmental heritage that could contribute to socio-cultural and economic development when harnessed through tourism. Another 21 respondents (21%) saw potential in the study and exploration of the moats as the channel through which they can contribute to the development of the state. This is the summed response to the question, “Which area do you think the Benin moats could be more viable and contribute to the socio-cultural and economic development of Edo state in the future?” Consequently, the overarching finding on conservation and direction for the global future of the historic Benin Moats suggests that most of the respondents acknowledged that the Benin Moats are presently not well preserved, but that their recognition by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites coupled with some strategic measures like sustainable urban planning, and public enlightenment campaigns could change the tide, exposing the Benin moats as potential tourism attraction. The chart below shows respondents’ opinions on the inquiries in source questions 6-10 in Table 4 above.



**Fig. 3:** Bar Chart on conservation and direction for the global future of historic Benin moats

## **Discussion of Findings**

### ***Awareness and Perception of Benin Moats***

The first finding of the study showed that although the majority of Edo people and residents are familiar with the historic Benin moats, there is, however, a general perception that they do not serve any significant purpose in contemporary times. The general awareness level about the Benin moats, which cuts across the whole population of Edo state, as shown in the demographic information of the study, could be anchored on the preponderance of the moats. These respondents (whether indigenes or not) may have seen a physical moat in Benin City or other Edo communities. However, the awareness about the Benin moats seems to be localized among the residents of Edo state. A personal vox pop that sampled opinions of 20 students on awareness about the Benin moats conducted by the researcher at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers state, on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, revealed that none of the students interviewed had prior knowledge about the historic Benin moats. Another follow-up personal interview (April 23, 2024) with Osayi Igbinosa, one of the respondents in the category of those who shared the view that the Benin moats still serve some purposes, further clarified that although the moats are no longer serving the defensive fortification purpose for which they may have been originally created, they remain an enchanting aesthetic and defining feature of Edo landscape in modern times.

### ***Urbanization and its Impact on the Benin Moats***

The second overarching finding of the study revealed that there are significant changes in the environmental and cultural heritage of the Benin moats due mainly to urbanization and its associated activities. The researcher's direct observation of some moats at Aduwawa, Ohovbe, Evboumodu, and Egba communities in Benin City shows, with pictorial evidence, that urban activities such as building, roads, refuse dumping, and erosion channeling, among others, are fast defacing the symmetrical structures of the moats. To further buttress some respondents' claim that the moats suffer neglect, the terrible states of some moats were noted with pictorial evidence. The presence of grasses, refuse, and vegetation give a general sense of abandonment. Some of the pictures below show poor erosion control mechanisms; poor waste management systems resulting in refuse dumps and pollution, and poorly planned buildings and road constructions as urban activities currently degrading the Benin moats.



**Fig 4:** A picture showing a building fence on the high beam of a moat at Aduwawa Benin City



**Fig 5:** A picture showing a refuse dump in a moat in Benin City



**Fig 6:** A picture showing an unplanned road/path across a moat in Benin City



**Fig 7:** A picture showing digging on a moat in Benin City



**Fig 8:** A picture showing an erosion channel and a fence on moats in Benin City

### **Conservation and Direction for the Global Future of Historic Benin Moats**

Another central finding of this study on the issue of conservation and direction for the global future of the historic Benin moats revealed that the Benin moats are presently not well preserved and there is little or no conservation initiatives or policy framework aimed at protecting the moats. Furthermore, the study also showed that UNESCO's recognition of the Benin moats as World Heritage Sites, coupled with some strategic measures like sustainable urban planning and public enlightenment campaigns could change the tide, exposing the Benin moats as a potential tourism attraction. It is overwhelmingly revealed that not so much is currently being done to preserve this cultural and environmental heritage. As could be deduced, the poor preservation of the moats may have informed the opinion of the majority of respondents who believed the Benin moats had outlived their usefulness.

In line with rethinking the potential and global future of the Benin moats, it is important to note that Edo residents are currently yearning for various intervention efforts to preserve the moats for the future. Strategies such as sustainable urban planning, policy intervention and public enlightenment are believed to be in the right direction in preserving the Benin moats as the cultural and environmental heritage of the Edo people. Significantly, one finding that speaks to the potential future of the Benin moats is that many Edo residents believed that the Benin moats should be recognized as UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. This is the opinion of 96 respondents, representing 96% of the sampled population of the study. A personal communication with Williams Ijesurobo in Benin City on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 strengthened the case for a potential global

future of the Benin moats. According to him, a final word has not been heard yet on the origin and purpose of the Benin moats. He added, for instance, that the historical origin of the Benin moats could be farther than is currently believed. For him, the same could be said about the purpose for which they were constructed. Williams Ijesurobo (Personal communication on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024) saw a potential global future in further study and exploration of the moats. The interviewee further noted that not so much is known about the moats beyond what had been passed down from ancient times as tales among locales. This accordingly opens up the opportunities for archeological and other geoscientific investigation and engagement. In somewhat an agenda for future investigation, Williams Ijesurobo (Personal communication on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024), continued by mentioning: the number of the moats, sizes in scale and dimension, possible earthmoving instruments available, and labor force, among others, as potential areas of study of the moats that could help in better appreciation of the ancient Benin civilization that birthed the moats and Benin people in general.

In the same vein, Augustine Imade (Personal communication on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024), having opined that the Benin moats are civil engineering masterpieces and marvels, noted that the nature and magnitude of the moats are such that they should capture global academic and scientific investigations. For him, some of the moats present some forms of architectural formations and consistencies that should excite modern construction engineers. They hint at a sophisticated and even mystical civilization only a probe with global interest can unravel. To further buttress the potential of a global future for the Benin moats, Charles Osawemwengie (Personal communication on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024) stated that the Benin moats have great potential to benefit from global advancement in technology. According to him, advances in the Global Positioning System (GPS) have the technological capability of remapping the moats for proper documentation and preservation for the future. He added similarly that other scientific technologies, especially in Laser Scanning (LS) and Ground Penetration Radar (GPR), could provide crucial and compelling details about the moats that could benefit the global community in the future. The positions of these interviewees serve to emphasize the opinions of the 21 respondents (21%) who saw potential in the study and exploration of the moats as the channel through which they can contribute to the development of Edo state in contemporary times.

Another area of potential global future revealed in the findings of this work is that the Benin moats are a viable environmental heritage that could contribute to socio-cultural and economic development when harnessed through tourism. As the study showed, the majority of participants (79; 79%) hold the view that the greatest significance of the historic Benin moats lies in their potential for global tourism. The tourism industry is acknowledged worldwide as a stimulant for economic growth. Coupled with the rich cultural heritage of the Benins, the moats could significantly boost the tourism industry

of the state with a ripple effect on other sectors of the economy through strategic investment.

## **Conclusion**

The Benin moats have not garnered the significant attention needed to secure their relevance in the global future. They are, at best, in their precinct states (especially those in the villages) and, at worst, in degraded states due to urbanization and its associated activities (in the city centers). The ongoing actions of converting moats to erosion channels, indiscriminate dumping of refuse, and sand filling of moats for building and road constructions are a few of the culpable urban activities leading to the degradation, decline, and loss of the historic Benin moats today. In all circumstances, these unhealthy activities challenge the global future of the moats. As already pointed out in this study, there is a need for sustainable urban planning that pays attention to mitigating urban-economic consumerism. In rethinking the global future of the Benin moats, there is a need not only for conservation initiatives aimed at protecting the moats as cultural and environmental heritage but also for economic-oriented initiatives in line with emerging norms of globalization. Tourism particularly stands out in navigating the future of these environmental heritages. The Benin moats could be utilized for economic advantage while being maintained for future generations.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following are suggested recommendations for a way forward in safeguarding the environmental heritage of the moats in the wake of rapid urbanization. Firstly, there should be a public-driven awareness campaign to draw the attention of the whole nation to the Benin moats as a national treasure. Currently, as the study found, the awareness about the Benin moats is localized, especially among Edo state residents. Some ecological strategies could help not only in the protection of the Benin moats areas for the future but also for more widespread awareness about them. For instance, there should be clear government policies declaring these areas as national ecological and environmental heritage reserves. This could help mitigate human impact and preserve the moats' ecosystem. Secondly, there is a need for Edo culture to evolve beyond the prevalent orientation that the moats were protective fortifications and boundary landmarks in ancient Benin civilization. A sustainable cultural strategy for safeguarding environmental heritage like the Benin moats should involve promoting awareness through cultural events such as eco-themed cultural exhibitions, storytelling focused on the ancient creation of the moats and volunteering for cultural conservative initiatives, among others. These could cultivate a deeper connection of the people to their environmental heritage and natural surroundings as a whole.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need for sustainable urban planning in Edo state to curb the encroachment into the natural spaces of the moats. The moat areas should come under the protective designation as heritage sites and be protected by law. Building and road constructions should strictly adhere to the state's master plan. For instance, convents and bridges are perfect and sustainable alternatives to sand filling of the moats during construction. Also, the government must implement erosion and waste management strategies to stop the degradation and pollution of the moats due to the channelling of rainwater and indiscriminate dumping of refuse in parts of the moats. Finally, there is a need to strategically rethink the global future and value of the Benin moats in contemporary times. The study particularly pointed out that a huge economic advantage could be derived from the recognition of the Benin Moats as one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites due to the potential it holds for global tourism. While this is being awaited, the state government should lead in investing in the development of some parts of the moats for tourism attraction. For instance, cable vehicle facilities (these are small vehicles for sightseeing that move on cables in the air) could be developed in some good scenic stretches of the Benin moats to provide visitors and tourists a unique aerial view.

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## **GOEMAI PEOPLE OF DOROK DISTRICT, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA: THEIR BELIEF ON TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF FREE SPIRITS**

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### **Executive Summary**

*There are many different kinds and categories of free spirits among the Goemai people of Plateau State, Nigeria. However, many contemporary Goemai People seem to be ignorant of this fact possibly because of carelessness, the influences of modernization and civilization. The focus of this research is to find out the origin of Goemai people, to investigate the types and functions of free spirits among Goemai people. The data for this research were collected from books, journals, dictionaries and encyclopedias, among others which were sourced from the internet and libraries. The data were basically analyzed through the discussion, descriptive and historical methods, among others. The research found out that the different types of free spirits among the Goemai people include spirit of dead people who are rejected in the land of the ancestors for either living a bad life or indulging in certain evil activities while alive, the spirits of those who die in war, hunting expedition, through the activities of sorcery, in accident and those who have double self and the spirit of those on the path of the deities who are basically divided into white and black spirits. The free spirits basically perform the functions of blessings and curses. The research recommended that the elders in Goemai land should teach the younger generation about their religious heritage, especially in relation to free spirits and the younger generation should complement the efforts of their elders by availing themselves to learn this religious heritage, among others.*

**Keywords:** Goemai People, Belief, Free Spirits,

### **Introduction**

The world comprises of 7 continents namely: Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, Australia and Antarctica. Similarly, the world comprises of about 195 countries including India, China, United States of America, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Brazil, Bangladesh, Russia, Mexico, Iran, Japan and State of Israel, among others (George 1-3; Josh 1-4; World Atlas 1-4; Worldometer 1-5; Davis 1-2;

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Worldmeter 1-4). These different continents and countries of the world are homes to varying religious traditions. For example, India gave birth to Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, China gave birth to Taoism and Confucianism, Japan gave birth to Shintoism, Israel gave birth to Judaism and Christianity, Saudi Arabia gave birth to Islam, Iran gave birth to Baha'i Faith and Zoroastrianism and Africa gave birth to African Traditional Religion (Deshmukh 1-10; Vaughan 1-3).

African Traditional Religion which is the indigenous religion of the African people. The religion is as old as the people in the continent. It believes in the existence of Supreme Being or God and that this Supreme Being or God is too big to be worshipped directly but through other mediums including deities and divinities. It also believes in human beings, magic, ancestors, medicine men, witchcraft, after life and spirits. The kinds of spirits existing among the Goemai people are called "free spirits". These free spirits are believed to be into different types and perform different functions as will be discussed below (Parlong 7-9; Gehman 145-153).

### **Origin of Goemai People**

Goemai people of Dorok district originated from the Kwararafa Empire. This is because of the similarities in their tradition, culture and civilization with that of Jukun, the aboriginal of Kwararafa Empire. Their migration began in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the dynasty was beginning to disintegrate due to intra-dynasty feuds. The migrants came into this part of the "Goemai" land and joined with the autochthons who were the natives (i.e. the pure "ankwe") to form the present "Goemai". Nevertheless, it is now very difficult to trace the where about of this pure "Ankwe" (Longban *et al* 36). When the migrants who were Jukun came, they first settled at Damshin, a town connected to Kalong. Their next settlement was at Shimankar and Moekat. The migrants intermarried with the pure "Ankwe" to make up the communities. The town of Ajikamai was founded by the Jukun of Dampar. The Goemai of Namu who trace their origin to Dorok and Kwo holds that they were originally autochthons of Middle East before migrating to the Kwararafa Kingdom (precisely Wukari) and finally to the above mentioned places. Other Kwararafa descendants include Alago, Igala, Idoma among others. The major factor responsible for the migration of this Jukun who finally became Goemai and settled in Plateau State was the disintegration of the Kwararafa Empire, which preceded the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio. One important evidence that the Goemai of Dorok had Jukun origin was the fact that they annually attended a Jukun festival, *Puje*, which was attended by all Jukun at Wukari (Longban *et al* 37-38; Ames 179; Meek 297; Fremante 20; Isichei 1).

The origin of the Goemai of Dorok can be traced to two varying views. Firstly, they were founded by the descendants of Damiyl (Adami). Secondly, they were founded by

the descendants of Watoe who were from the Jukun royal family. Watoe migrated alongside his followers from Wukari and briefly settled at Tu'un-Bo'on, a desert settlement located closed to Mekera. They continued their journey to Ganwa Moekwarkum and finally to Kwap-Watoe (Dungram), where they permanently settled. It was in this place that Watoe gave birth to five sons who later became the Dorok Royal Dynasties. They included Lankup, Bombuk (Goewam), Washior, Lanwar and Agyo. The main purpose of their migration was for hunting. However, the issue of security and the expedition for new land/settlement forced them to change their locations severally and settle in places like Dungguar, Garko, Gwashigwa, Ganwa Moekwarkum, Dungkul, Npal, Kanwa, Diasbip, Ngwa, Kwap-Dabi and Kwap-Watoe (Dungram) (Longban *et al* 38-39; Walu 8; Middleton 71 & 145).

The name “Kalong” in Goemai language means “the head of the king”. Kalong was founded by Yongkur Yilzem who was a pre-dynasty Chief. He migrated alongside his followers to first settled at Dungkul. In the course of time, Yongkur Yilzem died and one of his descendants, Latyil who reign from 1813 to 1820 moved their headquarters to Npal. It was during this time that the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio penetrated into this area in 1820. Although, the Jihadists did not enter Dungkul, but they killed Latyil Lanwar, a pre-dynasty Chief in 1820 who was settling at a “Lake” located at the North-Eastern part of Npal. Similarly, Kalong was later made the headquarters of Dorok and Gwandia Yongkur was installed as its first Chief (Long Dorok) by Captain Charles Gordon who was controlling the then Administrative Province of Muri in 1907. Likewise, it was at this time that the Goemai nation got their autonomy from Wase. However, due to the activities of the Jihadists, the headquarters was relocated by Datul Yongkur to Dungkul in 1867, which attracted a lot of asylums. Datul Yongkur, one of the Chiefs of Dorok, was also assassinated while in Duntul by the Jihadists who were led by Muhammadu Kobri, Sarkin Dutsen Wase in 1886. This made the settlers to desert Duntul and to establish Kwap-Dabi, a settlement located closed to the present day Goesa and Poe-Matiri by part of the Bombuk (Goewam) and Agyo clans (Longban *et al* 39).

This constant Jihadists attacks caused many to relocate from Kalong to Yabung, Tehl/Montol land, Awe and Lafia. It should be noted that the activities of the Jihadists in 1820 and *Shal Dungkul* (war of Dungkul) of 1886 brought about a great displacement of the Dorok people in the vicinity of Kalong to other parts of the Dorok land including Ngwa, Ngootlong and Ngoo-Tugut. Nevertheless, the positive and good part of the Jihad was that it created a close relationship between the people of Kalong and Wase through marriage. This is because one of the daughters of Kalong by name “Rep-Jiba” (later renamed “Patu” and also nicknamed “Senseni”) who was taken captive to Wase later got married to the Emir of Wase and this union produced Abdulhahi Maikano who became the 12<sup>th</sup> Emir of Wase (Longban *et al* 40).

‘Gongvel’ was founded by the descendants of a professional Royal Ritualist who was residing in the defunct Kwararafa Empire. He alongside his followers migrated from the Kwararafa Empire to settle in Dungkul. While he was in Dungkul, he gave birth to many children including Niangsek and his brother, Mukgoenye who later migrated from Dungkul to establish Gongvel, a settlement located towards the Western part of Dungkul. In view of the religiosity of this clan, they were made the custodians of the *Muut-Fan* cult, which was related to rain-making in the land of Dorok. The purpose of their migration from Dungkul to Gongvel was for security, to escape the Jihadists attacks (Longban *et al* 40).

‘Goesa’ was founded by Nkum in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He alongside his followers migrated from Kwapdabi to settle around Kurwat. In this place, one of his wives became tired by the journey and decided to branch to *Pang Tandarang* Knoll. They continued their journey to Gyailong, where they settled. Nkum did not die a natural death, but he later disappeared by submerging into the bowels of the earth. After this, his sons, Yilgap, Yilwan and Duutbam succeeded him as Chiefs in Goesa. The purpose of their migration was for security, to escape *Shal Dungkul* (a war between Kalong and Wase in about 1886). It was also recorded that one of their ancestors by name “Ntis” migrated from Wukari alongside his followers and briefly settled by Ruom Lake located close to Shagang before moving to settle at Kwapdabi. In the course of time, the successors of Ntis moved to briefly settle in Sokkiak, Zenghen and Kwapdabi before they finally settled at Kasa’a (Goesa) meaning “on pebbly ground” (Longban *et al* 41-42).

‘Ngo’otlong’, which literally means “the hid-out of the King” was founded by Allahde the then Chief of Dorok (Long Dorok). He alongside his followers relocated from Garkwo in search for a safer place (1827-1867). The purpose of their relocation was for security, to escape from the Jihadists who were constantly raiding that area. He moved from Garkwo to Ngo’ot-Kwapdas, where he met Niyu Kwapdas who was a brave hunter controlling that part of the land and its people. Niyu Kwapdas asked Allahde and his followers to stay with him for their welfare and security and Allahde agreed and stayed with him. In the course of time, the name of Ngo’ot-Kwapdas was changed to Ngo’otlong (Longban *et al* 42).

‘Ngo’ot-Tudut’ meaning “the hid-out of Tugut” was founded by Tugut. This place was also known as “Ungwan Rina” by the Hausa Jihadists meaning “Haven of Wasps”. This is because when the Jihadists first came, they were attacked by Wasps and hence the name “Ungwan Rina”. However, after the Jihad, Ngoot-Tugut became a safe haven, which later attracted different people including the descendants of Watoe (the clans of Lankup, Goewam, Agyo and Washior) and Moefe Lanwar. Others migrated from Moekat including the descendants of Angyu who joined this settlement. Still, others migrated from Goesa, Jimduut and Lu-Hwau to join this settlement. Still yet, others

migrated from Kwande to join this settlement. He alongside his followers migrated from Jiban (Kuka) and passed through Wali (Jikgurum) to finally settle in Ngo'ot-Tugut. While he was in this place, he did not establish absolute control over the place because his attention was usually drawn back home (Jiban or Kuka) for their annual religious festival/ritual. Wali was later joined by his brother, Atil, a fisherman who decided to settle by the edge of Ruom Lake, Shagang. However, during the reign of Latyil, the Chief of Dorok who resided at Npal in Kalong, the Jihadists attacked him and killed him. This development caused the displacement of his descendants (Moefe Lanwar) and others to escape to places like Ngootlong (Demshin) and Jonggwe located towards the Western part of the present day Ngo'ot-Tugut (Longban *et al* 42-43).

'Ngwa', which was also known as "Ungwan-Dadi", was founded by Ndoezak. 'Ngwa' basically means "an area", and the change of the name to "Ungwan-Dadi" came up because of the war of 1886 by the Jihadists, the inhabitants of Ngwa provided material and nutritional support for the Jihadists against Kalong and hence, the name "Ungwan-Dadi" in Hausa Language meaning "a place of enjoyment". Ndoezak was a member of Agyo clan who was crowned as Latyil's successor by the Chief of Wase (Sarkin Dutsen Wase), Hassan Giwa in 1820. This happened when the Jihadists attack led to the death of Latyil who was the then Chief of Dorok, which made them to be responsible for the installation of the new Chief and in which case Ndoezak was crowned as the new Chief in Wase. When he came back from the coronation in Wase, he moved the headquarters of his settlement towards the Western part of Kalong located at the bank of Matiri close to river Shimankar. After which, he moved alongside his followers to the present-day Ngwa, a place located in the territory of Ganwa Moekwarkum, which literally means "the walled settlement of the spirits". This place was actually a desert settlement inhabited in the past by Damyil Lumuut and in the present become the most important shrine of the Dorok Royal Families. Apart from the clan of Agyo which occupied Ngwa, other clans from Birbit, Kwande and Turniang also came to join the settlement (Longban *et al* 43).

'Shimankar', which was also known as "Menkat", was founded by Goeka. He alongside his three wives (Noewar, Senset and Demnoe) and other followers migrated from Wukari to briefly settle at Tuun-Boon, a desert settlement located close to Mekera and Moekat. It was from this place that Goeka moved to establish Menkat. Goekat later became old and disappeared into the earth and became a tutelary deity. This particular spot of Goekat disappearance later became a shrine, where barren women go to make supplication (usually seven times) for the problem of their barrenness. Another version has it that Menkat was founded by the descendants of Damyil (Adami) who was the ancestor of the royal families of Dorok. Dangcum or Goedangcum who was one of the sons of Damyil was the founder of Menkat. However, this version still maintained the tutelary deity of Damyil. This version was affirmed by the Goemai phrase *Dangcum*,

*Shik Goe Kum Ka'a Moe-Menkat* meaning “Dangkum is the knife that shaves the hair of the people of Menkat”. This phrase implied that there was really connection between Dangkum and the people of Menkat. The leadership style of this clan was “Septennial leadership”, where each Chief ruled for a period of seven years each. Examples of Menkat Septennial Leaders include Goeka, Ntiem, Pusbuet, Payil, Njin and Agap. Before the colonial time, the Chiefs of Menkat were under the control of Aku Achuwo who was a Jukun official answerable to the Chief of Wukari, Aku Uka. It should be noted that the Chief of Wukari was responsible for the installation of the Chiefs of Menkat in the pre-colonial times Chief (Longban *et al* 44; Gella 106; Meek 345).

‘Moekat’ was founded by Angyu. He alongside his followers migrated from Wukari and first settled in Tuun-Boon. Angyu later died while he was still in Tuun-Boon and was succeeded by Abaga his brother. The need for water made Abaga to migrate from Tuun-Boon to Tongki, a stream located close to Moekat and then finally settle in a more convenient settlement called “Moekat”, which in Goemai Language means “we have found it”; implying that it is now that they have found a convenient settlement. Maambial, which was also known as “Biembiem”, was founded by the Aji, a brother of Angyu. It was recorded that while Angyu and the rest of the clan members were still in Tuun-Boon before moving to Tongki, Aji who was a very good hunter decided to move to Nkas (Haambang), where he briefly settled for the purpose of hunting. In the process of time, he found out that Maambial was a more convenient and richer place for hunting and therefore, he and his followers moved to finally settle there. After a very long time of awaiting the return of Aji to Tuun-Boon, Angyu sent one of his younger brothers by name “Anuku or Nuku” to look for him (Aji) and he was finally found in Maambial. Nuku was also attracted to stay with Aji in Maambial probably because of hunting. The stay of Aji in Maambial alongside his followers continued to attract people from different places to join the settlement for two reasons: firstly, to join Aji in his hunting business and secondly, for security since Aji was a hunting warrior who would be able to protect his subjects from enemies. The Abakwariga clan which migrated from Wukari under the leadership of Agabi also joined Aji and his followers in Maambial. Eventually, Aji became the first Chief of Maambial and its inhabitants including his descendants, followers, Abakwariga who came from Wukari and the other later migrants (Longban *et al* 46).

*Luu-Hwau* was founded by the descendants of Anhom and his brother, Dimu. They alongside their followers migrated from Wukari and first settled in Luumi, which was located close to Kanje or Njen (the equivalent in Goemai). Their migration took place in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They continued their journey to Kwaplui, which was located in Puoos, close to the lake of Doeben. In the course of time, while they were still in Kwaplui, Dimu moved to Kalong leaving his brother, Anhom behind. Anhom later died in Kwaplui and his son by name “Goebal” moved with the rest of the clan

members to establish the present day *Luu-Hwau*. *Hwau* was named after one of their deities and *Nkiru* was the shrine of this deity, which was located in the territory of *Luu-Hwau* community. Their Chiefs who also bear the title *Hwau* as derived from their prominent deity were the custodians of the *Kwamteng* cult (Longban *et al* 48).

‘Wali’, which was also called “Jikgurum”, was founded by the descendants of Langwalang, Tugut, Luu-Hwau, Japgor and Shendam. The town was located towards the Western part of Jimduut and Luu-Hwau. The purpose of their migration was basically for security, to escape the attacks of the Jihadists from Wase. During this time, Wali became a place of refuge for those escaping the Jihadists and other forms of internal civil disturbances, especially refugees from Dorok. For example, the clan of Langwalang under the leadership of Beryil was displaced by the royal family of Agyo from their native settlement of Yabung (the present-day Kalong) during the *Shal Dungkul* of 1886 and established their settlement at the centre of Wali. Similarly, the clan of Tugut (Jibang group) was also harassed and displaced from Ngoot-Tugut during the war of 1886 and also established their settlement at Diasbip located towards the Western part of Wali. There was no doubt that the coming of these people into Wali was what gave it a cosmopolitan outlook. However, it was during the temporary leadership of Yildiem who was from the clan of Jiban in Wali that Hwau Ton’an migrated from Luu-Hwau to be made the prominent spiritual attendant of Long Dorok (Longban *et al* 48).

‘Jiban’, which basically means “the journey has ended here”, was an expression which denotes that the migrants have found a conducive place of settlement. This place was also known as *Kuka* in Hausa Language. It was recorded that when they took their journey from Wukari, they moved towards the Western part and found a settlement, where they settled under a “Baobab tree” meaning *Kuka* in Hausa Language and hence, the name of the place. Jiban was founded by a Jukun man by name “Damuut” who was a son/descendant of Njin. He migrated alongside his followers from the Kwararafa Empire and to be précised, Wukari in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (probably 1780) when the Empire began to disintegrate (Longban *et al* 49; Gella 2).

There were two possible purposes for their migration: firstly, to escape the outbreak of sleeping-sickness epidemic in Wukari and secondly, to protest Chieftaincy position denial. In 1820, Jiban was attacked by the Jihadists led by Yakubun Bauchi. The Goemai called this place of attack *Poe-Tini*, which literally means “by the Baobab tree”. In view of this attack, the inhabitants of Jiban under the leadership of Tugut Damuut were forced out of Jiban and scattered into other parts of the Goemai land and even beyond including Npap, Lu-Niyu (Bakin Ciyawa), Poeship, Sabon Layi, Tengzet, Kwap-Yilkan, Lu-Tinghen/Poegung, Kurwat, Wali, Kalong, Shagang among others. Tugut who was their leader fled and passed through Luu-Hwau and briefly settled in

Kanwa, where he obtained permission from the Long Dorok, Latyil before moving towards the Western part to establish a more permanent settlement called “Ngoot-Tugut”, which literally means “the hide out of Tugut” in Goemai. After the Jihad, the remaining part of Jiban clan under the leadership of Mangtu and Niemen relocated to establish the settlements called “Luu-Molo” and Kwap-Niemen respectively, which were located within the territory of *Poe-Tini* or *Jiban* (Longban *et al* 49; Gella 2).

### **Belief on Types and Functions of Free Spirits among the Goemai People**

There are different kinds and categories of free spirits operating in Goemai land. The first category is called *Tamsun* spirits. Although, the etymology of the term *Tamsun* is obscured, but in most cases, it is used to refer to spirit of dead people who are rejected in the land of the ancestors for either living a bad life or indulging in certain evil activities while alive. Examples of spirits rejected from entering into the land of the ancestors include the spirits of witches, wizards, sorcerers, thieves and wicked minded people. These rejected spirits return to torment, especially their left behind enemies in their former community. The best time, these rejected spirits operate is usually the night time. However, they can be prevented from tormenting the community by the help of medicine men, especially witch doctors. They do this by fortifying the community with powerful medicines and charms. This action confuses the rejected spirits from identifying their victims and thereby, they continue to wander and get lost in the bush. Nevertheless, these rejected spirits may migrate to another community (Parlong 8).

The second category of the free spirits is the spirits of those who die in war, hunting expedition, through the activities of sorcery, in accident and those who have double self. Once the death of these people is made public or announced and women cried, their spirits will never return home again, but will rather go to either establish themselves in new places or continue to roam around as ghosts in the bush. Sometimes, these spirits visit their family members and intimate friends through dreams, as ghosts and in human forms to either pass important messages or encourage the despaired family members. However, if the family members are scared, the spirits will depart and never visit the family members again, probably for the sake of their peaceful existence. There is also the practice of re-incarnation in the Goemai land, in which the spirits of dead people return to the world of the living through the wombs of their loved family members and these kinds of children usually resemble their dead family members (Parlong 9).

The third category of free spirits is the *Mukwarkum* spirits. Although, the etymology of this word *Mukwarkum* is not very clear, however it is suggested that the word is a corruption of the Goemai phrase *moe goe war kum* literally meaning “those on the path of the deities.” This implies that these spirits have some resemblances with the deities.

*Mukwarkum* spirits have powers to do both good and evil but they never entice people into evil practice. Goemai people categorized *Mukwarkum* spirits into white spirits (*Mukwarkum Goe Pia*) and black spirits (*Mukwarkum Goe Tep*). *Mukwarkum Goe Pia* refers to good and benevolent spirits, which are very useful and helpful to man. Whenever these spirits meet with men or visit the community, it is for good and blessings. The Goemai word *Pia* means “something that is white.” The white in this context is used as a symbol to refer to cleanliness, purity and transparency. It is in view of this that the Goemai people refer to God as *Bi goe pia goe goetengnoe* meaning “That white thing (being) living up in the sky” (Parlong 9).

The major function of the white spirits is to bring goodness and blessings to the people in particular and the community in general. In this regards, diviners, medicine men and witch doctors trace their powers to these white spirits through their encounter with the spirits either in the mid-night (*Ngong-Goezanwor*) or noon-time (*Arap Pus*). Those that encounter these white spirits only benefit from them by strictly adhering to their instructions because doing that will make the white spirits happy to unleash their blessings (especially of power) upon their clients. Nonetheless, these white spirits have less to do with witches, wizards, sorcerers and wicked minded people. White spirits require sacrifices from their clients periodically in order to strengthened their relationship. This is very important because it is through that the powers they give to their clients are maintained and curses, bad luck, sicknesses are averted. Items required for the above sacrifices are only known to those that had encountered with the white spirits and the items vary from person to person and purpose to purpose. Examples of these items include chickens, goats and beers, among others, which are used either monthly or at the end of the year (Parlong 9).

White spirits are believed to live in places like rivers, big trees (especially by the roadside), forests to mention but a few. Although the white spirits are invisible, but at times, they choose to reveal themselves for certain purposes. Their most convenient mission time is the night, but under special conditions, they appear in the noon or anytime of the day. Encountering both the white and black spirits can be avoided through the following ways: not walking during the night time, not visiting rivers in the evening, noon and early morning times because during these times, the spirits are usually out for feeding. Meeting these spirits or ignorantly stepping on their properties will attract punishment, sickness and curse of different kinds, which can only be treated by medicine men with *Fun Ka* meaning “second sight”. Although meeting some of these spirits, especially the white ones, has some benefits, the average Goemai people never wish to meet any of these spirits, not even the white ones because meeting them is usually dreadful and one cannot really tell the outcome of the meeting (Parlong 9).

Similarly, *Mukwarkum Goe Tep* refers to black, evil and malignant spirits. The word *Tep* means “something that is black” and is also associated with darkness, bad, dangerous, evil, wicked and death. The encounter with these black spirits brings nothing good, but rather curses and bad luck on whoever meets them. The result of this encounter is usually instant death, becoming cold and shuddering, mental disorder, sicknesses that may eventually lead to death. Some of these black spirits smoke and drink like humans (Parlong 9).

Also, some of them are extremely dangerous, while others are mild. They attack their victims, especially in the night time by impersonating those they already know, but possibly travelled away. They do that by calling the name of the person and once their victim answers, the victim will begin to follow them without really knowing it and without any sense of direction like zombie. In view of this, Goemai people barely answer calls at night, from the forests, farms and bushes, except sighting the person making the calls. The above happening is common to what is obtainable amongst the Chadic-speakers. Those that have *Mu goe ka fun* (power of the second sight), especially children are prone to attacks from black spirits because they tend to see and know the secrets of these black spirits (Parlong 9).

Beside children, those who take the properties of the *Murkwarkum*, eat their food and step on any of their items are usually prone to these attacks. In most cases, when this happens, sickness follows and in which case, diviners are consulted to identify the cause of the sickness, whether the sickness is caused by *Mukwarkum goeteng* meaning “spirits that live on the dry land” or *Mukwarkum kong* meaning “spirit that live in the river”. The diviners also perform divination rituals to know, which kind of medicine men to be consulted for the treatment. The rightful medicine man takes the victim (especially a child) with either the thing he stole or took away from the spirits. The medicine man performs the rituals as he begs the spirits as well as asking the victim to give the spirits their property. The items used for this ritual include beer and white sheep. The performance of these rituals will block (*Dor Ka*) the *Ka fun* meaning “second sight” of the victim, especially the child (Parlong 9).

## Conclusion

Goemai people of Dorok district who migrated from the Kwararafa Empire in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, especially when the dynasty was disintegrating due to intra-dynasty feud believe in the existence of free spirits. They believe that the free spirits are into different types. These different types include spirit of dead people who are rejected in the land of the ancestors for either living a bad life or indulging in certain evil activities while alive, the spirits of those who die in war, hunting expedition, through the activities of

sorcery, in accident and those who have double self and the spirits of those on the path of the deities who are basically divided into white and black spirits.

Both the white and black spirits are believed to play significant functions among the Goemai people of blessings and curses. Whereas, the white spirits bring goodness and blessing to the people in particular and the community in general, the black spirits who are associated with darkness, badness, danger, evil, wickedness and death bring curses and bad luck to the people. Encounter with white spirits brings about heal, prosperity and long life while encounter with black spirits brings about sicknesses, mental disorder, poverty and death.

### Recommendations

1. The elders in Goemai land should endeavour to teach the younger generation about their religious heritage, especially in relation to free spirits.
2. The younger generation should complement the efforts of their elders by availing themselves to learn this religious heritage.
3. For relationship with the white spirits to be strengthened, Goemai people will need to offer them sacrifices from time to time.
4. Goemai people should avoid stealing or touching properties belonging to the spirits because that would attract their punishment.
5. In the event of attacks by black spirits resulting in sicknesses and other forms of curses, Goemai people should consult diviners and medicine men for identifying the sickness, curses and their causes and getting the right medication.

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## **AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND THE GLOBAL FUTURE**

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### **Executive Summary**

*Humankind as speaking animal (animal loquens) and symbolic animal (animal symbolicum) expresses himself in a unique language (a formal speech or a sign language). Language identifiably defines a people as such. Hence, it is a unique means of connectedness that is within the boundaries of communication. It reaches out to different aspects of human capital development unto other forms of progress in Continental Africa. Unfortunately, many popular African languages are yet to be part of the global languages for global enterprises. However, most African languages are on the brink of extinct, hence, the irony of keying into the global future and the consequent Information-Technology era popularly driven by Artificial Intelligence. Using the method of critical analysis, the researchers in confronting some African languages find out that the need for few African languages to be sustained for robust and promising global future.*

**Keywords:** Humankind, Africa, language, global future.

### **Introduction**

The chequered history of humanity has come to appreciate human language as the clearest medium of communication and connectedness which has given room to other human possibilities in every essential and existential undertakings. One doubts what life and living would have been without human language. The only thoughtful idea nearest to such is the Scriptural episode at the *Tower of Babel* when it was alleged that

God confused human language which, however, accounts for the spread of humanity outside the geography of creation-moment and well as counts for mocking humanity's effort to reach God *via* the sky, (cf. Gen. 11:4ff). Whatever it was, the confusion of that sole and particular human language then that helped the people to coordinate themselves in the structural development of the tower simply led to multilingualism, that is, speaking of different languages even though unintelligible to them then. In the process of such language confusion, they found it more difficult to collaborate in their skyscrapers project (cf. Gen. 11: 10ff), leaving the then developmental project stunted. Without a well defined and a definite language such crisis and confusion will expectedly repeat in our time even unto the generation next as long as there is this language-death as we witness it today. Language and development at this point interweaves.

Language is very crucial in the *coming to be* and actual existence of any people. The scope of this study is Africa as the “cradle of humanity and home of human language”, (Wolf, 2016). Our interest is in African language with its diversity and the global future. The diversity is much in Africa orchestrated by her difficult relationship with the West, as Imperial and Colonial Masters, initiated *via* colonialism than developmentalism alongside language assimilation. Why introducing new languages in Africa like English, French and Spanish, *et cetera*, against their indigenous ones? What is wrong with African indigenous languages? Why were the colonisers not able to build and develop one for the good of the continent? Why is it that African continent, geographically connected by landmass cannot boast of one language? And in that order: why shouldn't Africa boast of one currency, one passport, *et cetera*. Why is AU (African Union) after years of OAU (Organization of African Unity) not functioning diplomatically like the US (United States) and EU (European Union)? Why must Nigerians look for visas for many other African Nations in one continent? Anyway, these are part of the evils of Mummar Ghaddafi and his consequent death as well as many executed and dethroned African presidents who tried to question the imperial masters over-stay in Africa with their colonialism rather than developmentalism. However, Edna Ogholi, a Nigerian musician, described Nigeria as a country that has *one kilometre, another language*.

As long as language expresses one's critical, it may interest you to know that Philosophy of language is very crucial in every philosophical enterprise. Language analysis is very *ad rem* in human interaction. Philosophers of language are very particular about this. Through the sections of this work the researchers have tried to explain that until Africans develop their indigenous African languages, they may remain in perpetual servitude to the necessities of human capital development

championed with human language. Recently, the budding idea of eurocentricism alongside that of afrocentricism has chanced the idea of cosmocentricism, hence, the need for one language, probably a global language. How prepared is Africa? There is this great need for a global African language even as many African languages are under the threat of loss or extinction, dying or disappearing.

## **Language**

Language remains a natural phenomenon of man as a rational, thinking and speaking being. Thinking and rationality are therefore consequences of speaking. Language identifiably defines a people as such. Hence, it is a unique means of connectedness that is within the boundaries of communication. Etymologically, language is from the Middle English, from Anglo-French *language*, from *lange*, *langue* tongue, language, from Latin *lingua*. Dictionary.com (n.d.) defines language as “the principal method of human communication, consisting of words used in a structured and conventional way and conveyed by speech, writing, or gesture. Continuing it maintains that it is a system of communication used by a particular country or community. Wikipedia (n.d.) defines Language as a structured system of communication that consists of grammar and vocabulary. It is the primary means by which humans convey meaning, both in spoken and written forms, and may also be conveyed through signs languages.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) defines Language as “the words, their pronunciation, and the methods of combining them used and understood by a community”. It goes on to maintain that language is audible, articulate, meaningful sound as produced by the action of the vocal organs; a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings; a formal system of signs and symbols and the suggestion by objects, actions, or conditions of associated ideas or feelings. By the means the animals communicate. Hence our particular interest is human language which as borders on a formal system of signs and symbols as regards the contemporary artificial intelligence. Language is often a sound, a seeming noise and to some an articulate noise once it is interpreted as a language, and more as a human language (sign and or symbolic); as long as it is intelligible and comprehensible.

## **Human Language**

Human language, therefore, is very unique and a distinct definitive nature of humanity. Humankind as speaking animal (*animal loquens*) and symbolic animal (*animal*

*symbolicum*) express himself in a unique language (formal speech or sign language). In turn, human language necessitates human knowledge, which according to Francis Bacon, is power. The power of the human knowledge that was necessitated by human language can be seen in the scientific *cum* technological prowess which our world has witnessed over the centuries. It is simply unfathomable even as artificial intelligence has come with its tapestry of revolution even in communication and human language.

However, Wikipedia (n.d.) maintains that human language is characterized by its cultural and historical diversity with significant variations as observed between cultures and across time. Human languages possess the properties of productivity and displacement which enable the creation of an infinite number of sentences, and the ability to refer to objects, events, and ideas that are not immediately present in the discourse. The use of human language relies on social convention and is acquired through learning. However, human language often expressed in signs and symbols as well as in vocals is nevertheless identified with a community of people to whom such language helps in their communication and connectedness. What's the essence of language if it fails to communicate. Mention must be made at this point as regards the first confusion of human language seen in the Scripture and its diehard consequences. Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia (2024) describes *Tower of Babel*, in biblical literature, as structure built in the land of Shinar (Babylonia) sometime after the Deluge. The story of its construction, given in Genesis 11:1–9, appears to be an attempt to explain the existence of diverse human languages. God disrupted the work by so confusing the language of the workers that they could no longer understand one another. The city was never completed, and the people were dispersed over the face of the earth. The symbolism of the Tower shows the need for the world's peoples to speak different languages. The symbolism of Tower of Babel, myth inspired by the Babylonian tower as well represents confusion which can halt progress with many and forced human language as depicted in the tower. Therefore, human language defines human kind as a communicating or communicable animal. And in our context, we are dealing with African languages.

## **African Languages**

The bane of African problem is the West's ability to deprive Africa of a language instead impose theirs on Africa. AU fashioned after US and EU as such champions African Language for her development and scientific *cum* technological advancements. The language must not be African based and not Europe influenced nor Western borrowed. Africa's history is entrenched in a thorny colonial past. Europeans captured much of Africa's land, and either enslaved or oppressed her people. Worst, some of the Europeans twisted and thwarted the history of Africa. Some were forcibly migrated off

the continent's shores, while others remained under duress on their own land. With captured land and bodies, came the imposed speech and language. Many Africans were forced to speak like Europeans and forget their native languages. This led to the loss and even the deliberate misrepresentation of traditional narratives and truths about the continent's history, making it difficult to identify the etymology of Africa, (*Away To Africa*, n.d.).

Geographically, African continent as the second-largest continent in the world with an area of 30.37mkm<sup>2</sup> with five geographic regions as: North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and South Africa, (*South African History Online*, 2023). However, Africa has other unique geographic features with regard to the Nile River (the longest river in the world), Mount Kilimanjaro, Victoria Falls, Lake Victoria (the largest tropical lake in the world) and the Sahara Desert. The recently formed African Union (AU) is a continental organ with 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. On 9.9.1999, the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999) issued the Sirte Declaration calling for the establishment of an African Union, (Development Initiatives On-line Forum, 2013). It was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The OAU, now AU, was the manifestation of the pan-African vision for an Africa that will be united, free and in control of its own destiny in response to the aspirations of Africans for brother-hood and solidarity, (Wikipedia, n.d.).

Africa often referred by explorers as dark continent is made up of 54 countries with more than 75 languages amidst many cultures and ethnic traditions, (Wikipedia, n.d.). Unfortunately, of all these languages none of these languages could define African Continent. History, especially biblical history, attests to Africa's role in salvation history as Jacobs and sons were in Egypt for centuries till the Exodus, (cf. Ex. 12:40ff). Jesus Christ's refuge in Egypt with his parents during the massacre of Herod was very significant, (cf. Mtt. 2:16). The exploration of Africa gave room to slavery and later colonialism as well as the eventual partitioning of Africa and conquest of Africa by the dawn of 1900 as countries like Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Italy had the good turns establishing colonial states. However, African countries after years of colonialism and independence formed a union known as Organization of African Unity (OAU) and now African Union (AU). But none of her languages worth global attention.

Now, the guiding philosophy was that of Pan-Africanism which centred on African socialism and promoted by African unity, the communal characteristic and practices of African communities, and a drive to embrace Africa's culture and common heritage. This guiding philosophy ought to affect the needed education that is just African.

However, one of the main objectives of the AU was to rid the African continent of the remaining vestiges of colonisation and the apartheid of 350 years then in South Africa. OAU then with this new formation of AU tries to organize and cooperate for holistic development of Africa by jointly move towards eradication of all forms of colonialism from Africa, (Development Initiatives On-line Forum, 2013). Till date, there is need for African Language inspired by African Philosophy which will definitely expose Africa to the world and global stage of human activity.

### **On Indigenous African Languages**

African Language is primarily a language and necessarily a human language. It is part of the greatest African predicament that Africa has no common language that will definitely unite them. Colonialism which would have been developmentalism, hence, necessitates a language which ought to be language of development. Moreover, language is an instrument of social interaction. African life communicates. Communication is the basis human life expressed deeply in African life within the African languages. Without this unique and necessary language, how can Africa communicate to the world? And how would her global future look like?

Many African countries were made to learn and continue to learn another foreign language of their *master colonizers* knowing full well that speaking foreign language is not a sign of intelligence. Neither does such guarantee development or progress of any sort. With all the multifaceted languages in Nigeria why must the colonial master import new ones as English, and later French, as her second *lingua franca*? But such was a functional expression of colonialism. This remains the mental slavery Bob Marley had earlier cried out against. Technological advancements and scientific prowess adopt and hear any language. Japan and China as the hubs of industrialisation in the world as well as Dubai as hub and centre of every known merchandise do not speak English nor French yet technology and tourism obey them. African case is always a different case because of colonialism. Learn and speak your languages for functional development.

Man, though known as *animal rationalis* (rational animal) is fundamentally a *homo loquens* (speaking animal). Man is a language bound animal. A particular language defines a people as such. Through language, however, man communicates and interacts in and within his environment. Through language, there is this connectedness between and his entire environment. Language most often is a product of thought, hence, the interconnection between language and thought, as an idea or opinion produced by thinking. Language, a system of sound for communication, culturally

learned and acquired, is a very exclusive mark of man. According to Uche Azikiwe (1998), “language could be said to be a means of social control, it is a collection of motor responses. It functions symbolically and so is used for verbal communication. Again, only human beings had evolved a communication system with the properties of natural language” (p.1). Explaining further, Azikiwe describes language as a code, a system, convention for verbal communication. To this extent one thinks of sign language just for communication that is important for authentic and functional development, (Azikiwe, 1998). Africa’s linguistic landscape reflects both its rich heritage and the impact of colonialism. Recognizing and celebrating indigenous languages can lead to greater cultural appreciation and development.

Africa is a highly multilingual continent, with diverse and numerous languages. These languages vary in vitality, with some being institutional, developing, vigorous, in trouble, or dying. Despite this linguistic richness, many African countries use ex-colonial tongues or Arabic as their official languages. An indigenous living African language as a national language for international outreach is ever a unique African problem. Language assimilation and imposition of foreign languages on Continental Africa remains one of the greatest evils of colonialism as well as neocolonialism. It is unfortunate that colonial rulers viewed Africans as culturally inferior and sought to acculturate them in various ways. Language was one area profoundly impacted by colonialism. Speak-africa.com (n.d.) reiterates that indigenous languages were often downgraded, and foreign language-speaking, superstructures were imposed on Africa. Hence, people refer derogatorily to any one speaking his or her Nigerian language be it Huasa, Yoruba, Idoma, *et cetera*. And with regard to Igbo, such a person is Igbotic. Efforts have been made to address this issue of love for African languages, including declarations on African languages and discussions about multilingualism. However, Africa still grapples with how to fully recognize the value and beauty of her linguistic diversity. Multilingualism, if properly harnessed, can be a blessing rather than a curse, contributing to development and literacy of Continental Africa without prejudice to the imperial impositions and colonial assimilations, (Amfo & Anderson, 2019).

African languages (vocal, sign and symbolic) are broadly shaped into two as native or national African languages and colonized languages. Native or national languages (indigenous) are languages of people from the same roots, as in Latin word *natus*. Colonial languages have to do with languages that the colonial masters brought alongside their exploration that turned into exploitation of Africa and they are Indo-European and Austronesian languages. African languages refer to the thousands of languages natively spoken across the continent of Africa with special reference to the native African languages. African languages is estimated about 3000 and Nigeria alone has more than 500 languages as one of the greatest concentrations of linguistic diversity

in the world, (Wikipedia, n.d.). Continental Africa is blessed with diversity of multi-ethnicity. These ethnicities accounts for the languages of Africa as they belong to several distinct language families. The majors ones are according to Nationsonline.org (n.d.) and Tripsavvy.com (n.d.) gave a vast array of grouped languages spoken across the continent thus:

- Afroasiatic: Spoken in North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and parts of the Sahel. Examples include Arabic, Amharic, Somali, and Hausa.
- Niger–Congo: The largest language family in Africa, found in West, Central, Southeast, and Southern Africa. This includes the Bantu languages like Swahili, Zulu, and Xhosa.
- Nilo-Saharan: A collection of languages spoken in East Africa and the Sahel, including Nuer and Maasai.
- Khoisan: Known for their click consonants and spoken primarily in Namibia and Botswana. Examples are Khoekhoe and Ju/'hoansi.
- Austronesian: Mainly in Madagascar, with Malagasy being the prominent language.

Some of these African languages serve as crucial tools for communication, facilitating trade, education, and cultural exchange among diverse African nations. However, Bing.com (n.d.) enumerates the most popular native or national African languages, based on the number of speakers and their widespread use, include:

- Arabic: A widespread official language with over 300 million speakers.
- Swahili: East African lingua franca with millions of speakers.
- Hausa: A major West African local language.
- Amharic: The working language of Ethiopia.
- Yoruba: A major Nigerian ethnic language.
- Oromo: Spoken by the Oromo people in Ethiopia.
- Zulu: A South African ethnic language.
- Igbo: Another major Nigerian ethnic language.
- Somali: A Cushitic language spoken in Somalia.
- Shona: A home language in Zimbabwe.
- Xhosa: A South African click language.
- Wolof: A native language in Senegal.
- Fula/Fulfude: A Senegambian language.

### **Appreciation of Mother Tongue**

Onebune (2024) reiterates that man is a *homo loquens*, speaking animal. Speaking is very characteristics of him as a human being. As a *homo loquens* man has a language. Speech or language, in its vagaries of vocal or sign languages, is very fundamental to

his being. Once born, the child inadvertently picks a language within his or her very first immediate environment and therefore speaks and hears their language, that is, communicates with it. This first language is often referred to as mother-tongue, the L1. Such language may not and most probably may be connected to the mother. However, the language is called: Mother tongue. Mother tongue (L1) is the first language of a child irrespective of the mothers. Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) defines misleadingly mother tongue as “one's native language” and “a language from which another language derives”. Correctly, Dictionary.com (n.d.) defines mother tongue as “the language first learned by a person” as well as the “native language”. The first definition is acceptable while the second definition is quite misleading. Collins Dictionary equally defines mother tongue as “the first language that you learn from your parents when you are a baby”.

However, policies on mother tongue education can play a major distinct role in the promotion of indigenous languages especially in Africa as they emphasize the need between language of teaching or instruction and language of learning. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) defines mother tongue as: "the language that a person learns first; it is usually the language spoken in the family or home environment during early childhood". UNESCO emphasizes the importance of mother tongue education as a fundamental human right and a crucial factor in promoting inclusive and quality education. Hence, UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action declares that: "Mother tongue-based multilingual education, with particular attention to linguistic diversity, is an essential component of achieving sustainable development. It is also a driver for equity and inclusion". This citation underscores UNESCO's recognition of mother tongue-based education as a means to ensure equitable access to education and to preserve linguistic diversity, both of which are central to sustainable development effort.

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed that the period between 2022 and 2032 as the ***International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032)***. This move aims at drawing global attention to the critical situation of many indigenous languages for its necessary preservation. UNESCO's stand on indigenous languages is one of active support, advocacy, and collaboration to ensure the survival and flourishing of these vital linguistic treasures. Here are some key points about the International Decade of Indigenous Languages:

- *Purpose:* The IDIL seeks to address the challenges faced by indigenous languages worldwide. It aims to prevent their disappearance, promote their use, and recognize their value as part of our common cultural heritage.

- *Self-Determination and Right to Use:* The Decade is based on the principle of self-determination and the right of indigenous peoples to use and transmit their languages.
- *Community Building:* UNESCO is actively building a global community around indigenous languages and their users.
- *Actions and Resources:* The IDIL involves various activities, events, and resources.
- *Multilingualism and Traditional Knowledge:* Promoting linguistic diversity and multilingualism through information and communication technologies (ICTs) contributes to preserving, accessing and promoting the invaluable traditional knowledge embedded in indigenous languages.

Nevertheless, the recognizes several official languages to ensure inclusivity and effective African Union (AU) communication among its member states. In these officially recognized languages only one or two are indigenous African language while others are foreign African languages or rightly put, languages of the colonial masters that subdued our indigenous languages for theirs. And they are Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Kiswahili. This is irksome. Until AU like and go for a common language for Africans that is indigenous, we remain the slaves of European languages. Notwithstanding, while these official languages serve as the primary means of communication within the AU, it's essential to note that the organization acknowledges the vast linguistic wealth of Africa. Of great importance is the fact that AU has taken specific steps to promote and protect indigenous languages. For instance, in 2019, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) adopted a resolution on the Recognition, Promotion, and Protection of Indigenous Languages.

### **Extinction of African Languages**

Language is humanity's common heritage. Language come and go. The disappearance of indigenous languages implies an irreplaceable loss of cosmogony and humanity's common heritage. Extinction of African languages started with Foreign languages being replaced with indigenous African Languages. Foreign African Languages are those imposed languages on Africans as result of colonization and their policy of assimilation. Scholars believe that colonization which ought to have been developmentalization of African States shouldn't have been on our African indigenous languages.

To most scholars, language extinction is an alarmist reminder while other scholars know the dangers ahead. Death of language is often referred to as endangered language or moribund language. Wikipedia (n.d.) defines endangered language or moribund language as “a language that is at risk of disappearing as its speakers die out or shift

to speaking other languages.” This is language endangerment. Language loss occurs when the language has no more native speakers and becomes a *dead language*. If no one can speak the language at all, it becomes *an extinct language*. However, a dead language may still be studied through recordings or writings, but it is still dead or extinct unless there are fluent or articulate speakers, (Wikipedia, n.d.). However, UNESCO's *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Endangered Languages offered three main criteria or indicators being used as guidelines for considering a language ‘endangered’:

- The *number* of speakers currently living.
- The mean *age* of native and/or fluent speakers.
- The percentage of the *youngest generation* acquiring fluency with the language in question.

The death of African languages or even their extinction are becoming an entertaining real fear than mere phobia. Language death is a reality as long as the users are not mindful of language endangerment. Therefore, language death is a gradual procedure whereby the level of people’s communal vocal interaction made in speech as part of their linguistic competence expressing their unique language decreases irredeemably. A language is often declared to be dead even before the last native speaker of the language has died. A related term is *linguicide*, the death of a language from natural or political causes and rarely, *glottophagy*, the absorption or replacement of a minor language by a major language. Many factors contribute to death of language as imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, mass migration, globalization, cultural assimilation or cultural replacement, language shift, cultural contact and clash, *linguicide*, *et cetera*. While there is no defined or particular parameter for identifying an endangered language, UNESCO’s 2003 document entitled *Language Vitality and Endangerment* outlines nine factors for determining language vitality. African languages have been endangered and are on the road to such linguistic prediction. However, languages come and go!

The possibility of African languages facing extinction is a complex issue influenced by historical, political and social factors. The imperial master had in the past demonized most of the African languages, hence, the need for the civilized language which was theirs. Afrikaans, one of South Africa’s 11 official languages, has been a subject of debate. It is increasingly demonized as a legacy of apartheid, and its use is politicized. While some view it as part of preserving cultural identity, others oppose it as a symbol of the past regime, (Wikipedia, n.d.).

## **African Languages' Influence in Shaping Global Future**

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the influence of African languages on the global future cannot be overlooked with Africa as home to an immense linguistic heterogeneity. The beautiful vast and geographically diverse continent of Africa with unique history, culture, and identity has over 2800 distinct languages, (UNESCO, 2020). These languages are phenomenal as they shape the present African Nations with great hope of reshaping the future world. These languages are like vital force of communication as they explore the transformational powers of language as instrument of social drive as they continue to reshape global communication, technology, scientific theories and economic growth.

The richness and tapestry of African languages have the capacity to impact on global cultural exchange, their contribution to technology, and their potential to drive economic growth. This is why the UNESCO as well as AU maintain that the promotion of African languages in global communication is essential for improving linguistic diversity, Continental integration of African states, Sustainable development and social cohesion amongst African states as well as cultural understanding. According to UNESCO, the use of African languages in international organizations can help bridge the communication gap between Africa and the rest of the world (UNESCO, 2020). This is because millions of Africans do not speak English or French, which are the dominant languages in global communication. Therefore, integrating African languages into technology and artificial intelligence can increase access to information and services for these individuals with such profound influence that these African languages may have on our interconnected world. All these efforts in promoting African languages are significantly essential and profoundly important for building a more inclusive and equitable global community. The contemporary demand for technology and *AI* systems that will cater for the needs of African consumers presents an opportunity for tech-companies to tap into this market by incorporating African languages into their products and services. These tech-companies can establish a strong presence in the region and drive their economy for the global advantage.

African languages have long been contributing to the world's culture, with their specific traditions, unequalled cultures, thoughtful philosophies and fundamental histories. Mention must be made of Yoruba language of Nigeria, for instance, is known for its complex and remindful proverbs that have been adopted by many cultures around the world. Likewise, the Swahili, widely spoken in East Africa, has influenced music and literature, impacting the global culture (Busolo, 2023). The African philosophy of Ubuntu, present in languages like Zulu and Afrikaans, has been adopted as a guiding

principle in various international organizations, highlighting the global influence of African languages (Khokhlova, 2015). However, for some, the Western cultures have greatly influenced global culture. It is worthy of note that African languages, with Africa as mother and cradle of civilization, have been a part of the global culture long before the rise of Western cultures, (Roy-Campbell, 2006). Moreover, the increasing recognition of African cultures and appreciation of her philosophical traditions and her philosophies in the global context support the argument that African languages are simply *force-vitale* in shaping the global culture. African languages simply highlight her critical role in reshaping the future of our interconnected world.

However, with the growth of African economies and the increasing number of African immigrants in other parts of the world, the use of these African languages in global communication is on the rise. For instance, languages such as Swahili, Yoruba, Igbo and Amharic are now being taught in universities and language institutions around the world, providing opportunities for cross-cultural communication and understanding. Additionally, African literature, music and film are gaining popularity globally, leading to an increase in the use of African languages in these mediums. Belcher (n.d.) opines that Africa is home to extraordinary intellectual effervescence. Yet, many myths about Africa persist into the twenty-first century, despite the efforts of thousands of scholars to eradicate them. The myth that Africa had no writing and no history is one of the most persistent. So, let's look at some facts. *African literatures are ancient*. If people think of African literatures at all, they tend to think of it as beginning in 1958 with Chinua Achebe's brilliant novel *Things Fall Apart*. Yet, the African literatures written before the twentieth century are substantial. *African literatures are vibrant today*. African authors are incredibly active, writing variety of works in a variety of languages. There are 3,500 African literature titles in print in English and French alone and over 10,000 in 143 African languages, (Belcher, n.d.). *African literatures are of high literary quality*. Nigerian literature is one of the great literatures of the twentieth century, with its authors regularly winning prizes in international competitions. Its authors have topped the American best-seller lists. *African literatures have been globally important*. African folk-tales have shaped folk-tales through the African diaspora. The Malian *Sunjata* epic influenced canonical American literature, including work by W. E. B. Dubois, Hailey's *Roots*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Morrison's *Song of Solomon*. African conceptions of time, space, and God shaped not just the culture of the American south, but its very architecture. *African literatures are also written by and about African women*, (Belcher, n.d.).

The promotion of African languages in various sectors such as education, media and business can unlock new economic opportunities and contribute to human capital

development, social cohesion and economic growth. Accordingly, on the issue of African languages, AU proposes for the African Academy of Languages (AU-ACALAN), the use of African languages in education, administration and the economy can significantly contribute to development (AU-ACALAN, 2018). Equally, the International Labour Organization (ILO) opts that indigenous languages can foster entrepreneurship and innovation by enabling better communication with local communities, facilitating access to market information, and strengthening cultural identity (ILO, 2020). Consequently, the sole idea for the promotion of African languages can lead to increased productivity, job creation and improved socio-economic outcomes for African populations. African languages can comfortably compete with other foreign languages within Africa without prejudice to already existing French and English languages. Nevertheless, scholarly works have shown that multilingualism and linguistic diversity can enhance cognitive abilities, creativity in all forms and other problem-solving skills (Grosjean, 2010). Therefore, the promotion of African languages can also contribute to the development of a more innovative and competitive workforce.

The potential of African languages in driving economic growth is substantial, and policy-makers should prioritize the promotion and preservation of African languages in various sectors. By doing so, African nations can promote linguistic diversity, social inclusion, and economic growth, while also fostering a more innovative and competitive workforce. In conclusion, the significance of African languages in shaping the future of the world is undeniable. They have played a pivotal role in global communication, technology development, and economic growth. The ability of African languages to connect people across the world, to drive innovation in technology, and to spur economic development cannot be overstated. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the importance of linguistic diversity and the recognition of African languages as a valuable asset in shaping a dynamic and inclusive global future cannot be ignored. Embracing and investing in African languages is not just an issue of cultural preservation, but also a strategic imperative for a better future.

## **Conclusion**

The emerging of African languages in a global context is a subject of fundamental interest and foundational concern as well as profound value and significant benefit. African languages and global future account for the African linguistic-ethnic diversity and cultural vitality, lasting impact of the colonial languages on Continental African States, indigenous African language challenges, compatibility of African languages

and technology especially Artificial intelligence, paradigm shift in globalization and African languages, African socio-economic *cum* educational values. The works above tried to explicate these issues within the network of African disposition and global interconnectedness.

African languages are repositories of unique knowledge, perspectives, and world-views, and their loss would be a significant loss for humanity. African languages are crucial not only for cultural reasons but also for the enrichment of the global community. The loss of these languages would result in the loss of unique perspectives, historical knowledge and cultural traditions. African languages have played a significant role in African literature, music and art. According to UNESCO, Africa's linguistic diversity is a source of innovation, creativity, and resilience. By preserving African languages, we can promote linguistic diversity and ensure a vibrant and diverse global future. The emerging of African languages in a global context is a subject of profound value and significant benefit. African languages and global future accounts for the linguistic-ethnic diversity and cultural vitality, lasting impact of the colonial languages, Indigenous language challenges, compatibility of African language and technology, paradigm shift in globalization and African languages and economic *cum* education values.

Languages are not just means of communication but they also represent cultural identity, unique perspectives and historical knowledge. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the importance of African languages and prioritize their preservation in the global context. African languages have had a significant impact on global literature and arts, with many notable authors and artists drawing from the rich linguistic inheritance, prosperous literary genre and cultural heritage of the continent. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, for example, has been translated into over 50 languages. In such translation, the Igbo language and culture are being introduced into a global audience. In addition to literature, African languages have also influenced various forms of entertainment industry like music, such as jazz, reggae, and hip-hop. African rhythms and instrumentation have helped to shape these genres, and the continent's distinctive musical styles have been a source of inspiration for musicians around the world. The importance of African languages in global education and learning is a significant factor that will shape the future of the world. The African Union's Agenda 2063 has also emphasized the importance of using African languages in education and science, which will further promote their significance in global education.

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## **THE “JAPA” SYNDROME AND ITS TOLL ON THE HEALTH SECTOR: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE DAILY TRUST AND VANGUARD NEWSPAPERS’ REPORTAGE OF THE MIGRATION OF HEALTH WORKERS IN NIGERIA**

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### **Executive Summary**

*The study focuses on the newspaper reportage of the migration of medical health practitioners and the toll it has on Nigeria’s health sector from January 2022 to April 2024. Health workers migration is a huge Labour loss for the nation and has contributed to the decline of the health system. The study aimed to examine the nature of coverage of health workers migration stories in the Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers. Agenda setting theory served as the theoretical framework and thematic analysis served as the methodology. Five variables were chosen as the units of analysis. They are- Positive Government Response (PGR), Negative Government Response (NGR) Neutral (N), Labour Loss (LL) and Labour Gain (LG). The study discovered that Vanguard newspaper has more stories on health workers migration (24) than Daily Trust newspaper (12). Vanguard newspaper also has harsher tones in its coverage than Daily Trust. It was recommended that the health gap created by health workers migration portends danger to the health sector in Nigeria and the cry by health workers should be attended to, to discourage their migration*

**Keywords:** Migration, Health Gap, Labour Loss, Labour Gain, Global Future

### **Introduction**

Living things-both animals and humans migrate. Reasons could range from searching for basic needs like food, water, shelter, safety or better living condition. Since the Bible days, humans have always migrated to better places for better life. In Nigeria, the exodus of people to other countries like the United States, Canada, Britain, Dubai,

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Saudi Arabia and even neighbouring countries like Ghana, Togo and Benin republic have increased exponentially. Over 2000 doctors migrate to the United States every year. (Obinna, 2019). For skilled health workers to migrate for unaddressed issues like human rights as stipulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on health is a cause for concern. In a recent publication in a Nigerian Daily newspaper- *The Punch*, it reported that “Nigeria needs 10 years to replace 500 migrating doctors. (Muntari, 2023). The number of highly skilled Nigerians in the diaspora is increasing on a daily basis, while the health sector in Nigeria keeps depleting after huge investments on educating the medical practitioners. With no better incentives for them, many of them are migrating to greener pastures in other countries. This migration has led to the coinage of the term “Japa” which means escape for safety in Yoruba Language. This is labour loss for Nigeria and labour gain for these countries. This study intends to extrapolate the “Japa” syndrome in Nigeria and its resultant effect on the health sector in the Daily Trust Vanguard newspapers and examine what this portends for the future.

The global attention that the media locally are giving to issues of health care migration is a matter of urgent consideration by the disadvantaged countries. The mass media in Nigeria is agog with news stories about contending national issues ranging from politics, insecurity, economy, and etc. in the heat of a dire economic disarray, the ripple effect has trickled to other sectors especially the health sector, leading to migration by health practitioners in Nigeria to first world rated countries.

Dragon, (2019), defines the term ‘migrant’ to cover several categories of population. Amongst these we find, first, all people who voluntarily and legally, left their country of origin in order to work and settle in another country. The first international conventions on migrants were adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the 1930’s to protect this category of persons. They define a migrant worker as someone who migrates from one country to another with a view to being employed otherwise than on his own account.

It is a clear fact that Nigeria produces medical and health practitioners, year in year out due to the number of medical schools in Nigeria. It is also a thing of pride for a Nigerian family to produce a medical practitioner. Parents go the extra mile to cajole their children to study nursing and medicine because of the prestige it portends. The competitive nature of securing admission to study medicine or nursing in Nigerian universities make those institutions put a high benchmark on those courses. Hitherto, the amount of money that goes into funding, learning and preparing these potentials for optimal healthcare delivery becomes a futile exercise due to health care migration to

countries that can give them better lives. With the economic hardship in Nigeria and the lack of political will to make the health sector better for her citizens and the practitioners- health tourism and health care migration is the order of the day. This has led to the best hands migrating to other countries and a resultant labour loss for the nations that have trained their people. The thrust of this paper is to assess the implication of this loss to Nigeria as a nation as a wake- up call to the government to reconsider revamping the health sector to reduce this health care migration.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Majorly, poor condition of service and inadequate equipment for proper medical practice is the bane of the health care sector in Nigeria. For instance, Obinna, (2019), reported that “the inadequacy of health workers in Nigeria is alarming as one doctor is to a population of 5000 Nigerians which is against one doctor to 600 people as suggested by World Health Organisation (WHO). Considering the standard given by the World Health Organisation on the ratio of a doctor to patients, the doctors are so be-laboured that their best medical practice is stifled. Consequently, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s) and subsequently the Sustainable development Goals (SDG’s) emphasis on health is a matter of urgency for a serious government or nation. This has made Nigeria to suffer for lack of implementation of these spelt out goals- leaving the teeming masses in the quagmire of suffering the consequence of such migrations. The elites on the other hand can engage in medical tourism to countries that can offer them best health care delivery. (Ojebola et al, 2020).

It has been reported that between 2008 and 2021, a total of 36,467 Nigerian doctors migrated to the United Kingdom. There was a steady increase from 1,798 that migrated in 2008 to 4,880 in 2021. A larger trend was observed for nurses. Between 2002 and 2021, a total of 60,729 Nigerian nurses had migrated to the United Kingdom. There was a steady increase from 1,393 nurses that migrated in 2002, to 5,543 in 2021 (Yakubu K. et al, 2023). This trend in history of migration for skilled health workers to leave their countries in search for a better life is a minus to their nation. Nigeria has witnessed several setbacks with the coming of democracy. Several political administrations have come and gone with promises to change the important sectors of the nation’s economy but to no avail.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- a. To determine level of frequency ascribed to stories on health workers’ migration in the Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers.

- b. To examine the government policies in place to mitigate health workers' migration in the Daily Trust and Vanguard Newspapers.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is significant because health migration is taking highly skilled workers away from the African nations due to poor condition of service. It will add to the body of literature and close the gap in knowledge regarding the huge data of health workers migration. The study will contribute in policy formulation and development; and bring the health and over all well-being of the nation and its implications to the front burner.

### **Literature Review**

There is no serious nation that will invest in the education of her citizens and will not provide an enabling environment for those citizens to thrive. After the provision of the basic necessities of life – which are food, clothing and shelter, the next is health and security. While the emphasis of this research is pinned on beaming the search light of the mass media in reporting the dangers of health migration in the country, there is the need to understand what this portends to the fabric of the society. A Visit to government hospitals will leave one to wonder the crop of medical practitioners, particularly doctors who are attending to the medical needs of patients. Those with the right expertise are sought for abroad and the package given to them by the government is not juicy enough to keep them in the country.

Considering the yearly budgetary allocation on health clearly indicates the negligence of government in revamping the health sector in Nigeria. State governments on the other hand do not give the health sector the attention it deserves and so they give little or no attention to the Primary Health Care (PHC). Now the secondary and tertiary health institutions are facing the same negligent treatment, except for the intervention of NGOs and international donor agencies with their intervention projects. While there are numerous public and private health training institutions from medical schools, nursing schools and other health related institutions, and more in the pipeline. They are breeding grounds for people with the utmost intention of migration after successful completion of the studies. This has made the country to suffer more brain drain than brain gain. The fate of the ordinary Nigerian citizen and life expectancy keep reducing as a result of this. The 2024 World Health Organization (WHO) life expectancy rate in Nigeria is ranked the lowest with 56.05 years. While the country with the highest life expectancy as at 2023 is Monaco (Macrotrends, 2024). Those who can afford health tourism travel abroad for medical attention and surprisingly meet Nigerians to attend

to their health needs. This is a paradox that can be addressed if the government is willing to do so.

Adebowale-Tambe (2022), reported that “over 100 consultants from 17 hospitals left Nigeria in two years”. Also, statistics has shown that there is only one doctor to 10,000 patients as against the one doctor to 600 patients according to the World Health Organization standard (Dokpesi, 2024). Consequently, the statistics are so enormous and, in this case, there is always new data about health migration as the clock ticks not even considering other disciplines. One cannot help but become apprehensive to the global future of the health condition in Nigeria and Africa in the bigger light. Africans have put in the much-needed work to train its people but the West is gaining from these human capital investments, health wise. One may argue that some Africans after working outside their countries come back to settle in their mother lands and invest by building private hospitals with the state-of-the-art facilities. However, the common people do not patronize such health facilities because they are very expensive. Most governments now do not give subsidies to their masses on anything because it has been alleged that subsidies are a form of fraud (EFCC, 2024). The citizens are left to their fates to either seek alternative medication which is not government regulated or go for medical tourism abroad.

### **The Health Sector Laws in Nigeria**

The National Health Act of 2014 carries all the health-related laws that will oversee the affairs of health related issues in Nigeria. Part 1, sub-section 1a, b, and c, are as follows:

- a. Encompass all public and private providers of health services;
- b. Promote a spirit of co-operation and shared responsibility among all providers of health services in the federation and any part thereof;
- c. Provide for persons living in Nigeria the best possible health services within the limits of available resources;

Hitherto, with the brilliant regulation on paper, there is little or no adherence to the Act by the government hence, the decay in the health sector. The human resources are aggrieved that government is not meeting their needs because what they offer is termed as “highly skilled”, this make their services to be highly demanded for by those who know their value. In addition, the political will to implement these policies is not there and the teeming population is left to bear the brunt while those who can afford patronize the countries that have invested in such human resources without any compromise.

## **Effect of Health Migration on a Nation**

Hagopian et al (2005) in their study corroborate that “West African physicians have been migrating away from their sub-Saharan home countries since the first medical doctors were trained there in the middle of the 20th century. They go in search of what they describe as “greener pastures”—better working conditions, better pay, and better training and research opportunities. They leave behind communities in desperate need of not only the health services, but also of the leadership and stability that physicians provide to a health system's development”.

‘Physician migration generates three areas of concern. The first is a loss of health services available to the populace. The second effect of physician migration from Ghana and Nigeria is that it diminishes the health sector's ability to organize and expand. Health sector institutions rely heavily on physicians to lead, develop and promote them as they work to advance the public's health. The third problem is that physician migration depletes an important element of the middle class in West Africa. As in the US and UK, African physicians comprise an important segment in the social and economic make-up of the middle class. (Hagopian et al 2005).

The resultant effect this portends is that it makes the masses loose hope in the health sector and resort to alternative medication which will aggravate quackery and other health practices that may not augur well for the nation. Particularly alternative medications that are not proven to be globally acceptable, because of their inability to test the veracity of such medications. This will make the health sector to lose valuable data, hence inability to make informed decisions health wise. One important fact about the health migration is that the advanced countries get the best hands and leave the average ones who battle to attend to the overwhelming populace without the right kind of medication. A case in point is the wrong diagnoses of patients and the wrong administration of medication to patients who lose their lives and the relatives have nowhere to run to for justice

## **Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs at play**

While man’s basic need is a priority that cannot be compromised, no matter the level of education man attains, it cannot replace the need to seek a moderate degree of comfort. Man can move to anywhere possible to feel valued and appreciated. In considering the Maslow’s order of needs, health workers who have put in the hard work to study have the need to self-actualize for personal and professional fulfilment. When there is no hope insight for the needs to materialize in one’s own motherland- migration for greener pastures set in, in order for man’s highest potential to be actualized. (Jones et al, 2023).

## **The Agenda Setting Theory**

This theory postulates that the mass media as the fourth estate of the realm set the agenda for public discourse. Whatever the mass media choose to report becomes what the public will engage in socially. As developed by McCombs and Shaw in 1976, posits that “the mass media does not tell the public what to think, but they give the public what to think about. The agenda setting theory emphasizes the important role of the mass media in steering public discourse and social engagements that can influence governance and policy making. In this regard, the mass media shapes public opinion on how the health workers migration can affect health sector in Nigeria. It also raises awareness the calls for concerns on how to nib the situation in the bud by influencing government policies to drive collective action. (McCombs, 2023).

## **Methodology**

Since this study is considering the media reportage of the migration of health practitioners in Nigeria and its coverage by the Daily trust and Vanguard Newspapers. The methodology suitable for the study is Content Analysis. In specific terms, thematic analysis and comparative and sentimental analysis were implored to extract frames that dwelt on the health workers migration in the Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers.

## **Research Design**

The study is on the *japa* toll and its implication on the health sector: the media reportage of the health workers migration and its implication on the Nigeria health sector. It is major objective examined the nature of media coverage of the health workers migration in Nigeria. The methodology adopted was content analysis while focusing on thematic analysis of newspaper contents (Daily Trust and Vanguard) from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022- 31<sup>st</sup> April 2024. For coding, the themes used were Dates, Titles, Themes, Interpretations and Tones as the content categories. Positive Government Response (PGR), Negative Government Response (NGR) Neutral, Labour Loss and Labour Gain served as the units of analyses with values assigned to get the frequencies and compare how they were covered in the two national dailies.

## **Population of the Study**

For the sake of this study, the two newspapers that were analysed were the Vanguard and Daily Trust Newspapers. The time under study is from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> April 2024. All Vanguard and Daily Trust newspapers within these years, not minding if they were weekday or weekend newspapers, were considered as part of the population. The reason for this is to find out the level of reportage of this health workers

migration, post-COVID, when the ban was lifted on travels. Hence, the population is 1,460 days under study. However, when the stories related to health workers migration were counted, 36 newspapers served as the population.

### **Sampling Technique and Size**

For the sampling, purposive sample was used to gather all stories related to health workers migration in the VD and DT newspapers of the years under study. VD had 24 newspapers; while DT had 12 newspapers within the years under study (January 2022-April 2024) totalling 36 newspapers.

### **Content Categories**

For the content categories, emergent content categories were used to get news stories related to health workers migration in the VD and DT newspapers sampled out were analysed whether they appeared as straight news reports, articles/ features, editorials, and interviews. They were categorised as:-

- a. *Labour Gain for Nigeria*: This refers to the tone of the stories that reflected some elements of positivity on the part of the nation gaining from the emigration of the health workers.
- b. *Labour Loss for Nigeria*: This refers to the tone of stories that reflected damage and impact the emigration will have on Nigeria's health sector
- c. *Neutral frames*: This refers to stories that are neutral or indifferent about the migration of health workers in Nigeria.

### **Units of Analysis**

The unit of analysis comprises of the small unit of content to be coded in the content category. The unit of analysis adopted for the study based on the frames built in this study were stories on the health workers migration. Words and phrases that form sentences and paragraphs on the story were analysed. They will be analysed as:

- a. Positive Government Response, (PGR)
- b. Negative Government Response (NGR),
- c. Neutrality (N)

### **Instrument of Data Collection**

The instrument used to collect data for the study was coding sheet. This was designed by the researcher and a coding guide was developed and nominal values assigned to highlight the options for measurement.

## Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

The data were analysed using tables and bar charts to visualize how the stories were reported within the time range of the study in the Daily Trust and Vanguard Newspapers.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the Daily Trust newspaper stories on Health Workers Migration from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 -31<sup>st</sup> April 2024

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Indicators (Main themes)</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Tone</b>
5-5-22	Nigeria lost over 9000 doctors in two years-NMA	N G R - P G R+	Labour loss	Harsh
25-8-22	Fact check: are there enough doctors in Nigeria	PGR+	Labour loss	Moderate
13-11-22	Brain drain: dearth of midwives often frustrate health workers in rural nigeria	NGR-	Labour loss	Moderate
5-12-22	How research will help address maternal mortality and health workers migration	PGR+	Labour loss	Moderate
16-4-23	Why UK’s restriction won’t stop brain drain.	PGR+ NGR-	Labour loss	Harsh
20-4-23	Reps move to stem brain drain of doctors raises dust	PGR+	Labour gain	Moderate
22-10-23	Nigeria- the returnees who leave again	NGR-	Labour loss	Harsh
17-1-24	Japa: Why we cannot leave Nigeria- doctors	N	Labour gain	Soft
10-3-24	Japa: FG prohibits leave of absence for health workers	PGR+	Labour gain	Harsh

11-3-24	Japa: UK bans health workers, others from bringing family	N	Neutral	Moderate
11-3-24	16000 doctors leave Nigeria in five years- Minister	NGR-	Labour loss	Harsh
4-4-24	Transformation of Nigeria's health sector	PGR+	Labour gain	Soft
Total	12			

Table 1 shows that DT newspaper from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 -31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 has a total of 12 stories.

**Table 2:** Distribution of the Vanguard newspaper Health Workers Migration stories from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022- 31<sup>st</sup> April 2024

Date	Title	Indicators (Main themes)	Interpretation	Tone
24-08-22	Migration: FG to introduce policy to replace medical personnel	PGR+	Labour gain	Moderate
25-10-22	Brain drain; 50 doctors leave Nigeria every week	NGR -	Labour loss	Harsh
24-11-22	Curbing health sector brain drain	NGR- NGR-	Labour gain	Soft
12-1-23	Nigeria loses over 1800 doctors, health care	NGR-	Labour Loss	Harsh
23-1-23	Recruitment in health sector	PGR+	Labour gain	Soft
13-4-23	Groups of Nigerian doctors working in the diaspora have petitioned	NGR - N	Labour loss	Harsh
15-5-	FG kicks against bill to	PGR+	Labour loss	Harsh

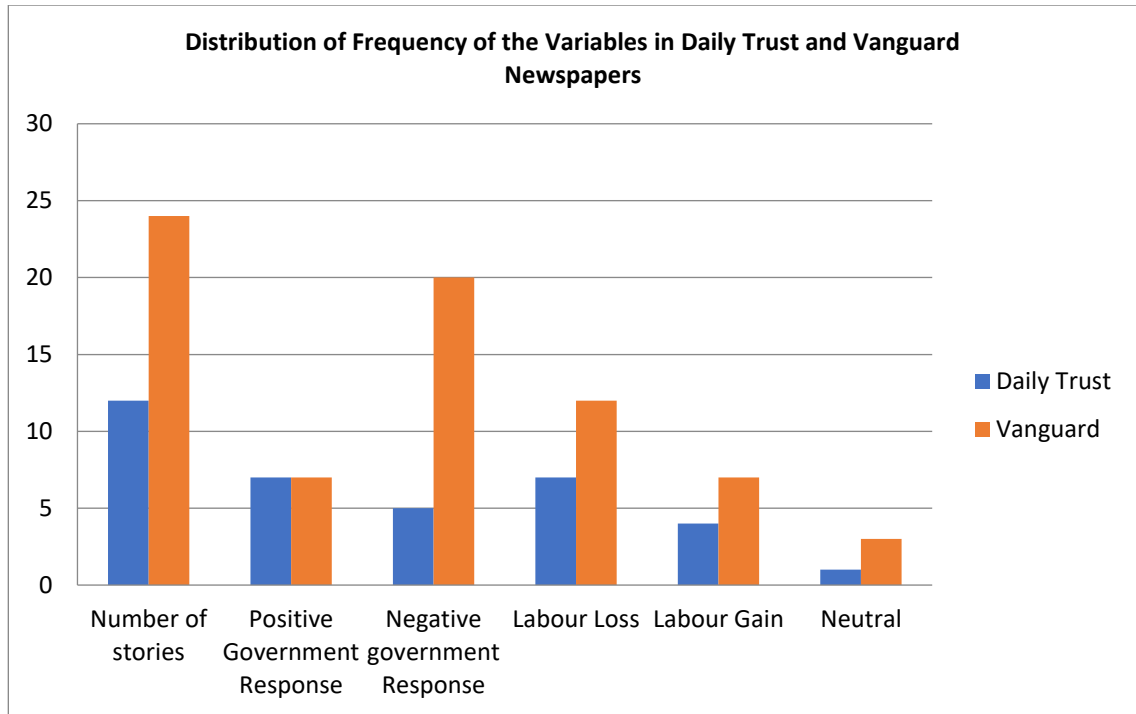
23	stop doctors’ migration	NGR-		
16-5-23	The FG, yesterday kicked against the bill	PGR+	Labour loss	Harsh
20-5-23	Why more Nigerian nurses will move abroad	NGR- NGR-	Labour loss	Harsh
21-6-23	62221 Nigerian doctors lost to UK in 6 years	NGR-	Labour loss	Harsh
17-8-23	Work ongoing to stop Nigerian nurses from migrating	PGR+	Labour gain	Moderate
21-8-23	Brain drain: show us we are valued, appreciated	NGR-	Labour gain	Moderate
12-9-23	Confronting the doctors brain drain	NGR-	Labour gain	Harsh
29-11-24	Japa: reps raise alarm as LUTH shuts down 5wards over doctors’ shortage	NGR- PGR+	Labour loss	Harsh
5-12-23	UK announces stricter measures to reduce migration	NGR-	Neutral	Harsh
9-10-23	Africa contributes over 50% of world health workers deficit	NGR-	Labour loss	Harsh
13-2-24	Over 42000 Nigerian nurses migrated abroad in the last three years- NMCN	NGR-	Labour loss	Harsh
29-2-24	Japa:2497 doctors recruited in last six months	NGR-	Labour gain	Moderate
6-3-24	2023 was deadliest year for migrants in a decade	NGR-	Labour Loss	Harsh

8-3-24	NLC urges FG to remove impediments to health workers	NGR-	Neutral	i.	Moderate
12-3-24	UK unemployment rises amid ban on foreign health workers from bringing dependents	NGR-	Neutral	ii.	Harsh
9-04-24	Nigeria struggles with exodus of doctors and nurses	NGR- PGR+	Labour loss		Harsh
<hr/>					
Total	24				

Table 2 shows the number of stories on health workers migration in the vanguard newspaper from January 2022 to April 2024. It has a total of 24 newspapers.

**Table 3:** Distribution of Frequency of the Variables in Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers

Newspaper	Daily Trust Vanguard	
<b>Number of stories</b>	12	24
<b>Positive Government Response</b>	7	7
<b>Negative government Response</b>	5	20
<b>Labour Loss</b>	7	12
<b>Labour Gain</b>	4	7
<b>Neutral</b>	1	3



In table 3, the frequency of coverage-Vanguard has 24 articles covering multiple themes. The Vanguard newspaper also has more Negative related response on government action than the Daily Trust newspaper.

In comparing the theme of the newspapers, Vanguard Newspaper has a broader and wider perspective while the Daily Trust focuses has lesser and narrower in perspective and in the total coverage of the news stories on health workers migration.

**Table 4:** Distribution of Frequency of the Tone in Daily Trust and Vanguard Newspapers

Newspaper	Daily Trust	Vanguard
Harsh	4	16
Moderate	5	5
Soft	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>

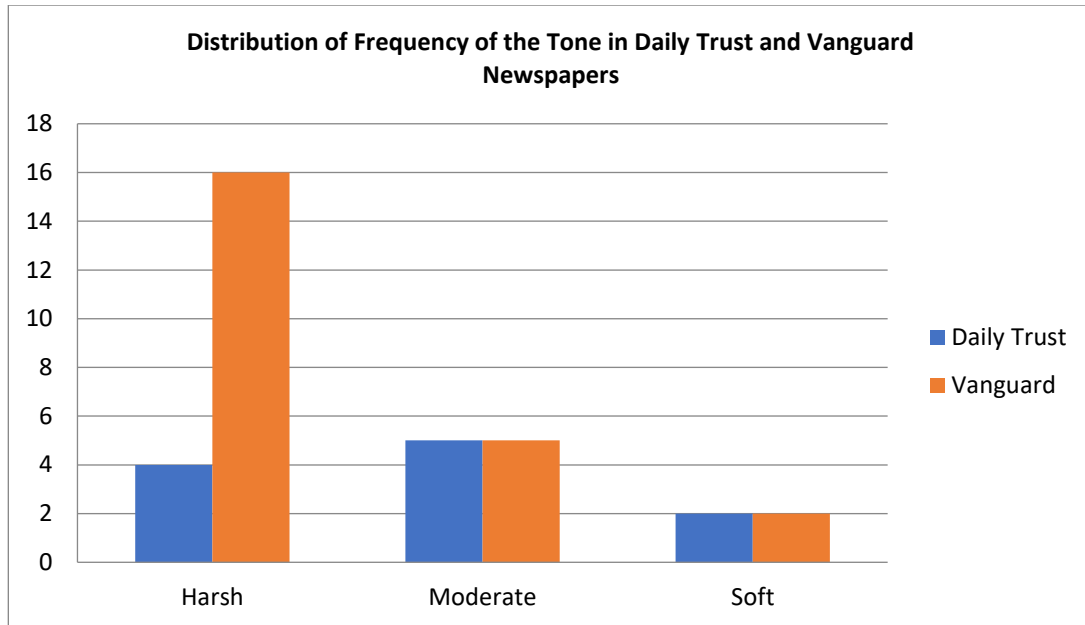


Table 4 describes the tone the stories in the DT and VD which are Harsh, Moderate and Soft tones. VD has harsher tones in their stories than DT. Though the two dailies had the same number of soft and moderate stories, this means that the Harsh tone in the VD newspaper is an emphasis for the government to consider the issue of health workers migration as a contending national problem.

### **Discussion of Findings**

#### ***What is the level of Frequency ascribed to stories on health workers' migration in the Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers?***

The VD newspaper has more stories (24) compared to DT (12). Considering the fact that these two dailies represent the southern (VD) and northern part (DT) of Nigeria, they have different editorial policies and national focus. This indicates the type of agenda the two newspapers can choose to give prominence. However, the keyword “Japa” was used considerably in coinage of health workers’ migration in the Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers

#### ***What are the government policies in place to mitigate the migration of health workers in the Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers?***

Section 43, articles (e) and (f) of the National Health Act of 2014 states that-

*(e) Prescribe strategies for the recruitment and retention of health care personnel within the health care system from anywhere outside Nigeria.*

*(f) Ensure the existence of adequate structures for human resources planning, development and management at national, state and local government levels of the National health system in conjunction with the National Council on health*

These clauses state the intentions of the Nigerian government to care for the health workers and possibly recruit health workers outside the country for Nigerians. However, the needs of the health workers in Nigeria that will dissuade migration were not stated. So, with every labour loss, there is a huge health gap for Nigeria and a resultant health labour gain and health prosperity for the advanced countries. Unfortunately, the brilliant health policy on paper does not translate to better health care for Nigerians. From the number of story titles in the DT and VD, and the statistics revealed by the government and other studies, it shows that government policies have done little or nothing to mitigate health workers migration in Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

The study of the health workers migration reportage in the Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers and the results it has shown indicate that there is a considerable number of agenda setting carried out by the media to draw the attention of the government. From the frequency of the stories, the consequence of labour loss than labour gain cannot make a serious government to turn a blind eye to the plight of its citizens. It behooves on the media to continue to set agenda while the government act on the agenda to draw out policies and implement them to the latter. This can help the nation to achieve its set objectives. The conditions of service demanded by the health workers should be met by the government to discourage health workers migration and bring about health security.

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## **BEHIND THE MASK: THE PHILOSOPHICAL DYNAMICS AND SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF MASQUERADES AMONG THE OGONI AND THE GLOBAL FUTURE**

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### **Abstract**

*The Ogoni society is a unity of both the visible and the invisible worlds. In this scheme, human and all concrete objects they create or live with are inextricably linked to a spirit world. Masquerades, in their semi-divine state serve as a conduit between the spirit world and the realm of the living, providing a means for ancestral spirits and supernatural deities to communicate and bestow blessings and protection upon their descendants. However, the Ogoni social milieu in its original traditional settings is no longer as vivid and valid as it ought to be. Consequently, masquerades in the Ogoni communities could be said to have lost its ancestral flavours and heritage of the spirits. The reason for the current neglect attitude shown towards the patronage of the indigenous cultures cannot be separated from globalization and advances in technology, as well as the fact that some of these masquerades are under threat of extinction as much effort has not been done towards its documentation. This study focused on the philosophy behind the mask, and the symbolic significance of masquerades among the Ogoni and the global future. The paper adopted the descriptive method. The paper argued that while these masquerades are designed to entertain, they perform more utilitarian functions than mere spectacle. The study concluded that while not adopting the negative and harmful practices of masquerades in Ogoni, the good part must be preserved and mingles with modern concept, thereby maintaining the people's distinctiveness.*

**Keywords:** Alu (Maquerade), Global Future, Masking Traditions, Ogoni, Ziibalozzii.

### **Introduction**

The Ogoni Masquerade art which embodies the essence of ancestral wisdom, communal bonds, and spiritual reverence, is seen as an eloquent expression of the people's philosophy and worldview. It is a phenomenon that is borne out of the Ogoni

belief in the continued presence of the ancestors in the affairs of the living as well as the co-existence of the three worlds of the living, the dead and the unborn. Thus, serving as a conduit between the realm of the living and the realm of the spirits, offering a mechanism by which the spirits of ancestors and supernatural deities may interact with one another and bestow blessings onto their descendants. Steeped in the rich history and cultural significance, the Ogoni masquerades as testament to the diverse and colorful tapestry of the African heritage. It is possible to trace the origins of the Ogoni masquerade all the way back to ancient times, when it was an essential component of religious rituals and other community events.

In contrast to the prejudiced stereotypes that were prevalent among scholars during the nineteenth century, which portrayed African masquerades, symbols, rituals, and beliefs, as well as those of other traditional peoples, as being the result of ignorance, superstitions, illogical, inchoate, and rudimentary mentality (Levy-Bruhl, 1923), and as meaningless imitative actions. Recent studies have revealed that such masquerades with their symbolic rituals as well as the belief which underpin them are astutely sensible and logical. Scholars and researchers into the African masquerade art have variously described it as a manifestation or concretization of the spirits of particular dead ancestors (Kanu, 2016; Obodoegbulam & Kasi, 2022). It is a physical and abstract creation of man in order to comprehend his world better as he approximates the spirit of dead ancestors and gods; a visitation of the spirits of the dead to their late familiar haunts (Nwankwo, 2017). Masquerades are ancestral spirits personified by maskers who appear in public at seasoned periods; they are manifestations from the spirit realm of the ancestors and other disembodied beings seeking communication with mortals. It follows therefore that the Ogoni masquerade art is the people's mode of concretizing the abstract concept of some ancestral spirit beings and gods which activities have some direct relationship with the living. Consequently, these spirit concepts are closely related to the environment of their creation.

However, the Ogoni social milieu in its traditional settings is not as vibrant and authoritative as it should be. This is a significant change from the past. Consequently, it is possible to assert that the Ogoni masquerades have lost their traditional flavors and the inheritance of the spirits that they formerly had. The current attitude of neglect that is shown toward the patronage of indigenous cultures cannot be separated from globalization and advances in technology. Additionally, the fact that some of these masquerades are under the threat of extinction due to the fact that not enough effort has been put into documenting them is another factor that contributes to this attitude. This study focused on the philosophy behind the mask, and the symbolic significance of masquerades among the Ogoni and the global future. The paper adopted the descriptive method. The paper argued that while these masquerades are designed to entertain, they perform more utilitarian functions than mere spectacle. The study concluded that while

not adopting the negative and harmful practices of masquerades in Ogoni, the good part must be preserved and mingles with modern concept, thereby maintaining the people's distinctiveness.

### **Masquerade in Ogoni Ontology**

The origins and migration of the Ogoni indigenous people is a source of significant debate among scholars. While many linked the origin of the Ogoni to the Ghana/Namma Theory, some simply see them as a westward expansion of Benue-Congo speakers, others believed the Aboriginal Theory. The above speculations among scholars are attributed to the near absence of written sources that serve as the foundation for conventional history and the near absence of reliable oral traditions that could shed light on the origins and migration of the Ogoni (Deezia, 2024). Consequently, each author's perspective on the source of migration for the Ogoni stock would be different because there has not been a thorough archaeological examination that would pinpoint a particular source of migration for the Ogoni. However, the Ogoni indigenous people, who currently occupy the Eastern part of Niger Delta Nigeria, are said to have settled in the six kingdoms of Babbe, Eleme, Gokana, Ken-Khana. Nyor-Khana, Tai and Oyiigbo including Ban-goi special unit. In Ogoni cosmology, community life embraces the living and the dead, thus the emphasis on the continuity of family-lineage through the *Biakē* custom.

According to Horton (1973), a masquerade is a mechanism that is used by a person or group to hide, conceal, and disguise themselves in order to exhibit a concept, an animal philosophy, or a spirit. Masquerade is an artistic construct that is worn by humans for the aim of entertaining an audience via dance, talking, or other diversions while acting under pretence. In terms of form and style, masquerade is an artistic creation. The term "masquerade" may have a variety of connotations depending on the individual, as stated by Onyeneke (1987). Many see it as a representative of ritual symbolism, some as a representative of empirical symbolism and to some others is an illusion. As a ritual symbolism, it is defined as an intermediary between the living and the dead. Libation becomes the channel of communication for the two worlds (of the dead and living), and the visitation of masquerades signify the rapport in the communication (Onyeneke (1987). Better still on ritualism, Turner (1967) defined it as a prescribed formal behaviour for non-technological occasion, indicating beliefs in mystical beings or power. As a representative of an empirical symbol, it is for tourist attraction. This group believes that masquerading is for show where masks, images, shapes, dance, chants and song are expressed to enhance tourism. As an illusion, it centres on make-up, i.e. costume, which stands for art. Masquerade's sensory display is on its bodily coverage. Some participants in Ogoniland covered their entire body with locally made fibre,

leaves, skin or metal while others half- covered their body, so that the hands and legs were exposed.

In Ogoni, masquerade embodies three areas such as ritualism, empirical symbolism and illusion. In the area of ritualism, it is believed that they are spirits emanating from the spiritual world periodically to cleanse the land against the impending doom awaiting its inhabitants due to some evil committed in the area as often signalled by some negative omen. In its empirical symbolism it stands as avenue to showcase tourism. During the masquerading period people from far and near gather to watch the masquerade display at the village square. In spite of the fact that there is no payment or collection of a fee from the viewers, local delicacies and wine are supplied as part of the traditional generosity of the people, and those who are there are allowed to consume as much food and drink as they choose. After everything is said and done, it radiates the aura and awe that are often associated with otherworldly entities.

Masquerade which literally means *Alu* or *Elu* (spirit being) depending on the dialect of the Ogoni group adopted is an ageless practice among the Ogoni indigenous people of Eastern Niger Delta. Among other things, it enjoys durability and continuity over time, which is made possible by the handing down of the art, craft, magic, and culture of masquerade from one generation to the next via the generations of families and communities. Masquerade as a traditional cultural heritage is enclosed in a Mask. A mask is a disguising dress, which hides the personal identity of the one who wears it.

A masquerade is a public display and performance of a masked actor as he strives to present in his action the new identity that is created and expressed in the fashion of the mask that is adopted. In Ogoni, masquerade presents deep seated cultural ideas and forms of Ogoni social organization. These are firstly, the Ogoni view of world order and philosophy, its cosmology; secondly, the structure of social organization and control. This cosmology includes the overriding authority of spirits and the will of dead ancestors on the present living generation. The veneration attached to the masquerade institution is built on these, and its desecration is seen as the violation of cultural values.

According to Nwideede (2022, oral interview), nobody knows for definite when the practice of masquerade began in Ogoniland. Thus, it is as old as the community where it is practiced. Hence, most of the communities contend that they were born into a social system where the mask institution was already in existence. What they needed was to learn the customs and practices attached to it and then to try to pass the same on to the generation following them without must change. However, systematic studies of the masquerade in Ogoniland give opposed opinions in the origin of masquerade institution. One opinion is that, it is something imported into Ogoniland especially

from the ethnic groups who form the immediate Ogoni neighbours (Donatus Bekanwah 2023, oral interview). However, those who are opposed to this opinion see the institution as a genuine cultural development of the Land (Nwideede 2022, oral interview). It is pertinent to note here that in Ogoni tradition today, there is no universal period of masquerading; any community determines the period and modus operandi of their masquerades.

Their performances provide a multi-faceted, dramatic, and tactile experience altogether. They each have music, choreographies, costumes, and drama that are all very different from one another. Moreover, apart from the above period of masquerading in Ogoni tradition, masquerades are also allowed to parade during festivals. Festivals have to do with essential celebrations in a particular community. The Ogoni people have festivals such as the new yam festival, different coronations, and other socio-cultural events etc. This implies that the role of mask and masquerading in traditional Ogoni setting cannot be overemphasised. This can be seen in the coronations of kings and chiefs, age - grades, priest of deities, marriage, and burials ceremonies among others. In other words, Masquerades play important role in the issue of governance, social control and maintenance of peace and order. The people believe so much in them in accomplishing all the above-mentioned roles and even more, because they were seen as spirits in the physical realm. Nwideede (2022, oral interview) opines, “masked figures provide a mechanism through which the probability of sustained divisive conflict is decreased by converting secular actions of rule application into sacred, supra social actions”.

The membership is only open to male individuals, and there is a ceremony that takes place after the ceremony. It is in the initiation ceremony that the secrets are disclosed to the new member. It is also important to note that the initiation ceremony is not a funny experience for the person who receives it. This is because his masculinity is tested during an initiation ceremony. Also, the displays of masquerades are welcomed with pomp and pageantry in Ogoni society. Different communities in Ogoni have so many different masquerades they display. However, most often, what seems to be universal among the masquerades is that they are always on a mask; this is to make the identity of the person obscure. The concept that masquerades posit in Ogoni tradition is that they are representations of the living dead in Ogoni tradition; therefore, some of them dress dreadfully to show the terrifying nature of the spirits they represent. In Ogoni cosmology, women and children are meant to understand that masquerades are not human beings but spirits that came from the spirit world. It can be argued that ancient Ogoni people instilled fear in the concept of masquerades, but it all enhanced the reverence that masquerades enjoy.

Again, despite the fact that the Ogoni tradition has an inconceivable number of masquerades, there are two distinct sorts of masquerades. The first is called the visible masquerades. These are the ones that operate during the day time. To begin, there are what are known as the visible masquerades. These are the ones that start and end their operations throughout the day. For the most part, they are for entertainment purposes, and they participate in activities such as dancing, singing, pestering, parodying, and so on. Among them, one finds very beautiful masquerades and even ones that utter wise sayings. The second type of masquerades is the invisible one. This one operates only at night. In addition to producing a terrifying sound, it restricts the residents of the community's ability to move about throughout the night, which instills terror in them. It is the disguise that is utilized in the execution of criminals, and is always fiercely dressed.

It is the uniqueness of the designs that distinguish Ogoni masquerades' masks, headdresses, costumes, and even attributes is what allows them to be recognized and identified. In other words, despite the fact that they are often referred to as *Alu*, each particular masquerade is distinguished by the uniqueness of the mask or headpiece that it wears. In spite of this, further particular identifications may be established within the basic categorization of these classes of masquerades by referring to the distinctiveness of the masks or headdresses that are worn by each of these classes. Within the Ogoni culture, masks are only worn by those persons who have been deemed to be deserving of the privilege of donning them. Depending on the culture and the kind of mask being worn, this varies from community to community; but, in general, only males wear masks (with a few notable exceptions), even masks that portray feminine creatures. People who have an equivalent social status, such as a king or a chief, are the only ones who are allowed to wear masks that reflect monarchy.

### **Some Common Types of Masquerades in Ogoni**

***Ikpong-Kpean Masquerade:*** The history of *Ikpong* masquerade of Kpean community in Ken-Khana Ogoni, popularly known as *Ikpong-Kpean* is shrouded in mystery. According to oral tradition, *Ikpong-Kpean* is believed to have originated from Ibibio, Akwa Ibom state. When *Ikpong* got to Kpean, because territorial defense was emphasized in the pre-colonial era, the people decided to perform *Ikpong-Kpean* on the festival of Yor-Goroo deity, who was and still in charge of Kpean territorial security. *Ikpong-Kpean* has always been associated with Kpean traditional religion and culture. As a result, the date on when it was formed is uncertain. *Ikpong-Kpean* is now considered an ancient traditional practice in the Kpean community, as well as the most dreaded machete-play in Ogoniland. Every October, in honor of Yor-Goroo deity, this masquerade is performed.

In an interview with Hon. Dr. Sunny Bekanwah (2023) during the day one (1) of the *Ikpong-Kpean* Festival, the Honorable described *Ikpong-Kpean* as an ancient cultural practice in Kpean community, and the most dreaded machete play in Ogoniland. This masquerade is displayed every October in honor of Yor-Goroo deity. To him, *Ikpong-Kpean* is a masquerade festival that attracts people from all works of life and from different villages in Ogoni, as such, bringing about unity and peaceful co-existence within Kpean communities, and other neighboring villages.

The significance of *Ikpong-Kpean* lies in the fact that it performs the function of a diviner, therefore divulging secrets and, on occasion, providing solutions to spiritual issues that prevailed within the society. According to Chief Donatus Bekanwah (2023, oral interview), during the festival, particularly on the day two (2) of the display, the *Ikpong-Kpean* masquerade makes a visit to each home in the Kpean community. The purpose of this visit is not only to reignite people's trust in the Yor-Goroo deity, but also to bless members of the family. Ikpong's refusal to visit any ancient compound/family in Kpean community is a hint that something is wrong in such family. *Ikpong-Kpean* also protects the community's spiritual well-being. It promotes peace and togetherness among the six compounds (Nyorkpo, Bara, main communities) that make up Kpean, as well as other neighboring villages. Despite the fact that Christianity and Western education have resulted in the declined and possible extinction of some traditions and cultural practices in Ogoni, the Kpean community in Ken Khana kingdom, has maintained its traditions and cultural heritage amidst modernization.

***Karikpo* Masquerade:** The *Karikpo* is purely an Ogoni masquerade act, reserved for young people who are nimble, vigorous, and courageous in spirit and who are prepared to defy gravity via aerial acrobatics. The heroic nature of the performance was conveyed by a demonstration of acrobatic skill or somersaulting exploits carried out by the actors. Although some of the masquerades are depictions of the ancestors, others are depictions of animals such as the antelope, buffalo, dog, monkey, and so on. Nwikina (2023, oral interview) added that *Karikpo* masks are carved caricatures of ancient creatures that are able to move quickly and are nimble, such as gazelles, antelopes, goats, and sheep. All of the masks are equipped with horns that are precisely the same length as the arms of a grown man extended outward. These horns must not come into contact with the ground as they ascend into the heavens.

Typically, the masquerade acts as both a group that provides entertainment and an agency that is responsible for instilling beliefs and attitudes in the wider population. Having a string of jingling bells wrapped around the top borders of the raffia costume, as well as white camwood dabbing ornaments on the exposed areas of the Masquerade body, the *Karikpo* is prepared to enter the town square. The costumes are constructed of dried raffia palm and are dispersed about the waist of every jumper.

Although there are less initiation rites in *Karikpo*, once one come of age, and had acquired some individual somersaulting skill, such person is ripe for *Karikpo*. However, it is not everyone that is able to somersault, that qualifies to wear the *Karikpo* mask for town square performance. In order to happily dance in the air, you must be an Ogoni by birth. Sequel to the above, *Karikpo* dance has scanty choreography in terms of the dancing style; yet, the consistent beat of the giant drum, and other supportive drums creates an electrifying atmosphere that compels everyone to come out and participate in the *Karikpo* dance. Its inbuilt magical power for audience involvement is communal.

Each and every somersault has to be performed at such a great height that the audience will see your agility in the air, as you disobey gravity. It is not recommended that anyone who are not from Ogoni and who have not participated in *Karikpo* somersault classes under the guidance of practitioners try to do *Karikpo* acrobatics. This is because of the possibility that one may get a neck injury in the process of somersaulting. The *Karikpo* masquerade dance is a unique dance that no other ethnic groups in the Niger Delta has been able to replicate. Do you want to understand, how a Masquerade, with two long horns, is able to summersault, while ascending into the sky, without clearance from the control tower? The *Karikpo* acrobatics is a traditional homemade spiritual hot air balloon exclusive to the Ogoni people.

**The *Kanutete* Masquerade:** This is an Ogoni indigenous comic traditional play. Its literary significance is conveyed via the masks, which have been painstakingly carved into a variety of unattractive forms to reflect a wide range of unfavorable features of human nature. Their songs, which are mostly composed of proverbs and metaphors, are designed to entertain the audience, lampoon disputants and infamous personalities or unpopular causes, and especially those whose behavior is culturally inappropriate. This is done with the intention of stigmatizing and making them remorseful for the offense that they have committed. It is possible for a specific song's topic to be dominated by a person who is responsible for adultery or a notorious housewife, for example.

During events like funerals, festivals, feasts, and other festivities, the *Kanutete* masquerades are often performed to provide enjoyable entertainment for the audience. *Kanutete*, an indigenous play that started in Bodo, has spread across every village and is now ingrained in the cultural framework of the whole Gokana kingdom of Ogoni since it has spread throughout the entire kingdom.

**Waaroo Masquerade:** The sighting of *Waaroo* masquerade is indicative of an important season in Ogoni cosmology. In Luawii, the traditional headquarters of Babbe Kingdom, it is believed that the display of *Waaroo* masquerade during the new yam festival marks the presence of the ancestors, communing with the living members of their family and the community at large. *Waaroo* masquerade is celebrated annually; to usher in harvesting, eating, and gifts of New Yam, otherwise called *Deedua/Deezua* (New Yam festival). Ogoni oral tradition, preserved over generations says, before the new yam is harvested and eaten, *Waaroo* masquerades, made from 100% farmland grass, locally called *sengen*, must be tied in the forest, and dance round the community. It carries a long cane, for flogging only young unmarried girls, and maidens. No serious ritual is attached to this cultural practice. No initiation is also required. Any male child from Ogoni is eligible to *yiikue waaroo* (enter *waaroo* masquerade). Women participate actively in the festivities by singing and dancing, in the market square, and taunting the *waaroo* openly, but risk being flogged by these iconic grassy masquerades. Much fun and communal laughter is derived from running around, outsmarting, and making jest of these grassy creatures. The Ogoni people return home for the *Deedua/Deezua* (new Yam festival) every year. Communities have their local ways of fixing dates for this masquerade, as it is not uniformly scheduled.

**Agaba Masquerade:** The history of the *Agaba* masquerade could be traced to the violent contours of the Ogoni indigenous people and the Nigerian petro-state. However, the mask slipped from an ethnic designation to a generational one, as the *Agaba* masquerade was taken over by local young men. Over the course of the last several years, the *Agaba* groups have been linked to instances of political violence and drug use. Despite the fact that it distinguishes itself from violent gangs, *Agaba* provides us with an understanding of the youth culture, including the language, aesthetics, and idioms of solidarity that are shared by a variety of youth cults that have created intricate political connections between the streets of the city and the creeks of the Ogoni-Niger Delta area.

Today in Ogoni, *Agaba* has spread right across Ogoni communities to become a mask of, and for the youth. Its vernacular is Pidgin English – a kind of lingua franca. From an aesthetic standpoint, the mask is grafted onto the traditions and customs of the local community. On a physical level, the mask serves as a venue to exhibit one's ability, courage, and might. The music of the mask is the finest example of the open-ended, improvisational, and subversive features that it has. The metal gong, known as the *Gira*, and the wooden flute, known as the *Aja*, are historically connected with the music that is played during the *Agaba* masquerade. However, the song repertoire is reminiscent of the "king" of highlife, Cardinal Rex Lawson of Port Harcourt. Additionally, the songs draw from jail songs, Kegite - a society that promotes drinking

palm wine, varsity cults, inverted hymns, and the *jarassis* or slang of what is often referred to as "gyration music."

The songs are rich in irony that undermines a stereotypical image of these young men's societies as being sinister and violent groups. They reveal a surprising frankness about their precarious livelihoods and personal insecurities, despite the fact that the context in which the songs are performed is one that is vigorous, noisy, and empowered. When it comes to metaphorical use, the *Agaba* songs that use maritime and mafia imagery to convey the difficult lives of young men living in the area are the ones that are the most imaginative. When it comes to the topics that they sing about, they compare this to the world of gangster rappers. It is a world that is referred to be "worsky," which is slang for its warlike arbitrariness, and it is inhabited by "winchy" people, which is a combination of witches and evil people with the police being the most common example. The corruption of the police, which is shown by officers accepting bribes at the side of the road, is mocked in another chorus: *Every junction police e-dey* - The political order is never far from the surface and folk heroes including the murdered rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa.

Through this masquerade play, young people are able to construct a male persona that is strong, tested, and both physically and spiritually "rugged" via the use of this mask. *Agaba* masquerade presents a powerful critique of the Nigerian social fabric. It is a space in which young males reveal the disparities and inequities of their position from the periphery, projecting advantage onto their own disadvantage.

### **Philosophical Dynamics and Symbolic Significance of Masquerades**

The Ogoni society is a unity of both the visible and the invisible worlds. In this scheme, human and all concrete objects they create or live with are inextricably linked to a spirit world. Thus, the *Ziibalogzii* philosophy- which literally translates to the state of being human in an interconnected web; seeing reality in terms of a universe of forces that interlinked together, and that are in constant interplay with one another (Deezia, 2023). Masquerades, in their semi-divine form therefore serve as the link between the world of the physically living and the world of the ancestors. Every Ogoni community understands and acknowledges this experience, which is the reason why tribal heroes and leaders are revered after they have passed away. The masquerades are a representation of these deified personages, who continue to have a significant impact on the lives of those who are still alive. Therefore, the only way for human society to have purpose and value is in connection to the world that is either unseen or transcendentally present. As a result, individuals are better able to organize their lives in the physical environment. To the Ogoni, the masquerade transforms into a potent physical depiction of the ancestors who are responsible for ensuring and legitimizing

the community's ethical code. According to this point of view, masquerade is a significant part of Ogoni cultural life that has not been completely eradicated by the impact of western culture. This is because of the powerful religious significance as well as the fact that the masquerades satisfy many social and aesthetic demands in the community.

In Ogoni, the Mask is also seen as an expression of thought. It gives idea about the great richness of the world history of the mask as well as about the strange under-estimation of the autonomous value of the mask. Masks stand as one of the higher performances of human thought. To be masked is an expression of the thought. This point of view challenges the current thought for which the mask disguises, falsifies and hides. In the great traditions of the mask, the mask has a great spiritual quality. It brings transparency to reality, and at the same time makes an opening, brings about transcendence towards the very other. Thus, a discussion about masks obviously has to consider the modalities of transformation, alteration and enchantment.

When it comes to comprehending masquerades, the concept that they are symbols is of utmost importance. They are depictions of the ancestors who have passed away and are no longer visible. The concept of symbols was first articulated by Fairchild (1965) as anything that represents something else. In particular, a representation that is more definite and explicit of an item or set of things that is more generic, diffuse, and ethereal. In agreement with Fairchild, Ejizu (1986; 2017) described a symbol as anything that is commonly recognized as typically typifying, symbolizing, or remembering something with a great significance. There is a similar connection that can be drawn between it and what it represents. Turner (1968) provided more explanation by stating that symbols might take the shape of things, actions, events, gestures, and unique units that are present in a ritual setting. Due to the fact that they are symbols that were created by a people, they are exactly what the people who hold them believe they are. Because of this, the nexus between symbols and cosmology is strengthened even more.

There is a significant amount of symbolism involved in Ogoni ceremonial and ritual traditions. There are use of symbols in language, and herbs and prescription. The foundation of human society and the social existence of individuals is the use of symbols. They are a way of saying or expressing abstract ideas, values or notions which would be difficult or even impossible to say or express directly. The meaning of symbols therefore transcends the physical intrinsic property of the object, and can only be understood in terms of the meaning which the people of that culture invest in them. In Ogoni masquerade, the visible stands for the invisible, the material for the immaterial, and the touchable for what cannot be held or seized by sensory organs. The Mask is therefore, a visible, tangible representation of some conception or of some

spiritual or intellectual reality. According to an Ogoni proverb, “You do not stand in one place to watch a masquerade.” This might be taken literally, but also contains a metaphor signalling the masquerade’ multiple dimensions; it comprises tangible and durable, intangible and ephemeral, as well as male and female components.

The songs and chants used during the masquerading performance are extremely communicative based on the contextualization of the songs and chants. The content of song and chant symbolically reminds or reflects the situation of things in the community, especially before, during and after the various seasons and festive periods in the community. Based on this, the audience understands the thematic potency of the various songs and chants sang at any given time.

### **Significance of Masquerades in Ogoniland**

In spite of the fact that masquerades serve a variety of purposes, they seem to be grouped into certain groups. There are masks that are linked with rites of passage, such as initiation celebrations for teenagers, other rituals related to age, and death. Masking in seasonal festivals and renewal rituals is associated with the earth’s fertility and the path of the sun as it appears to us from Earth. There are also psychological and emotional advantages that may be acquired from rituals that include the performance of masquerades. Initiation ceremonies and rites of passage are two examples of the ways in which members of a community might commemorate significant moments in their lives. Birth, puberty, and death are the three stations that make up this stages. Marriage sometimes coincides with puberty and even though it is important, some people do not get married while others do so more than once (Deezia & Obodoegbulam, 2016). Considering the profound psychological effect each stage has on a person it is important that adequate preparation is made to guide him/her through with minimal risk, pain or loss.

There was an important role that masquerades performed in the past in terms of upholding law and order, especially before to the coming of Christianity. It was ingrained in the minds of young people that masquerades should be revered. People had a responsibility to always speak the truth in order to escape the wrath of the Masquerade parties. In the framework of this discussion, masquerades were seen to be a means of preserving social order and preserving peace. In other words, Ogoni masquerades are mechanisms of social control and are powerful method for eliminating or controlling behavior that is deemed abnormal or inappropriate. Masquerade could detect any social ills in the society without information. They do not hesitate to notify the authorities quickly in the event that any stolen item is brought to their attention or is held at a location that they happen to visit by chance. Thieves, fornicators, lazy and bad individuals, and sorcerers, as well as men who are diabolical, girls and women who are wayward, murderers, and any act that is potential of ruining the reputation of their

communities, are all exposed and disciplined by Masquerade. Masquerade disciplines people through physical confrontation. They use proverbial words that are loaded with facts and meaning to psychologically chastise offenders. Masquerade publicly rebukes erring members of the society, calling out their names, warning and cursing them. Through this function, the societal values, mores and cultic resources are transmitted significantly.

Ogoni masquerades are able to fulfil duties that are comparable to those of missionaries, including those of priests, prophets, and kings. As priests they prescribe sacrifices to their followers in order to placate the spirit of their ancestors. As prophets they foretell the imminent disaster that will befall a community or a person, and they provide potential sacrifices as a solution to the approaching crisis, and as kings they sit in judgment. They are often connected to the rites and practices of many religious traditions. In many cultures, they function as a way of bridging the gap between the material and the spiritual realms. It is thought that the performers are possessed by ancestor spirits, gods, and other supernatural beings, and these are the entities that are invoked via their usage. On the other hand, the performers serve as mediators between the spiritual and physical realms, communicating messages and blessings to the community in which they are performing.

In Ogoniland masquerades could be consulted for oath taking. If the gravity of the offence committed is high and defies possible human solution, the accused may go beyond swearing in the shrine. The traditionalist proceeds to present the masquerades before the accused for oath taking. Through oath taking, the truth, integrity and reliability are better determined and morality is enforced. Since oath is taken for exoneration or punishment, it has the function of deterring liars or would-be offenders and thereby reducing crime rate in the community. The masquerade diagnosis illness and provides medicines for their cure; knows and can detect witches and ask them to publicly confess that they are witches.

### **Masquerade in the Global Future: Towards the Concluding Remarks**

The thrust of this paper is the attention it has drawn to the philosophy behind the mask, and the symbolic significance of masquerades among the Ogoni in the global future. In Ogoni culture, masquerade embodies the spirit and human world. Mask is fundamentally a spiritual and metaphysical value before it transformed into a socio-cultural value that helps the Ogoni people to create their sense of what constitutes order, law, authority and the proper way people should be governed. Masks are the representation of the Ogoni ancestral origin and authority that account for what constitutes human value, worth and meaning. The spiritual ancestors are the source of life, order and continuity in any African community.

However, the unprecedented exposure of traditional cultural systems to alien values, ideas and patterns particularly from the nineteenth century onwards has created an enormous upheaval and disruption in the different facets of life of the Ogoni indigenous people. The change is a radical one. And the stimulators include the multiple forces of colonialism, Christianity, Western education and culture, urbanization and scientific technology. Imageries drawn from many areas of awareness have been employed by various writers to depict the ensuing uneasy experience of traditional Africans. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), and *No Longer at Ease* (1960), readily come to mind.

Specifically, in the context of traditional perception of the philosophy behind the mask, and the symbolic significance of masquerades in Ogoni, the tidal wave of change has actually engendered a significant revolution. There has been a systematic erosion and displacement of traditional value-scales and life orientation. New values and parameters of evolution have successfully been introduced in most part. This resultant consequence is the fact that the Ogoni social milieu in its original traditional settings is no longer as vivid and valid as it ought to be. This may be associated with the influx of cultures and social leanings which came into the Ogoni geographical area as a result of western acculturation and colonialism. It could be said that the belief in the effectiveness and sacredness of the masquerading cultural heritage has weighed down to compare its status in the period or era prior to the western infiltration of the traditions, customs and cultures of the Ogoni people. The majority of the masquerades seen along the streets of the Ogoni communities today are not traditionally linked to deities, neither are they a true invocation of the ancestral spirit to come and live awhile amongst the living.

What is seen in the Ogoni communities today in the name of masquerading are mostly youths who cloak themselves with rags, torn clothes and well-sewn pieces of clothing, with fixed palm fronts, colour variations, and a mask for a cover-up. The youths who impersonate the masquerades are even known amongst the people. As such, the masquerading in the Ogoni communities could be said to have lost its ancestral flavours and heritage of the spirits. These days, the practice of masquerade is not only utilized as a way of begging money and undoing their imagined opponents, but it is also employed as a tool of extortion, an embodiment of molestation, and discrimination, all of which are not worthy of being practiced. The recommendation made by the study was that, although it is important to avoid copying the bad and damaging behaviors of masquerades in Ogoni, it is also important to retain the positive aspects of these rituals and combine them with contemporary ideas in order to preserve the uniqueness of the people. The work finally disclosed that the Ogoni people have array of colourful traditional cultures and masquerades that distinguished them from other tribes, the

unique traditional masquerades if well packaged can increase foreign exchange and create employment opportunities to the people. In other words, Government should pay more attention to the Ogoni cultural heritage and masquerades for tourism development, not to solely depend on oil and gas as the only source of revenue and economic development.

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## **ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOURISM AS AVENUES FOR MITIGATING CONFLICT AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the potential of archaeology and tourism in mitigating conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. Nigeria is a West African country that is rich in cultural heritage and natural attractions. It is, however, faced with various conflicts and security challenges, often rooted in socio-economic disparities, ethnic tensions, and historical grievances. Archaeology, through its ability to uncover and preserve the shared heritage of diverse communities, can promote understanding and reconciliation among different ethnic groups. Tourism, on the other hand, has the potential to generate income, create employment opportunities, and foster cultural exchange, thereby addressing some of the underlying causes of conflict. By consulting relevant documents on the topic and exploring case studies and best practices from around the world, this paper highlights the role that archaeology and tourism can play in promoting peace, unity, and stability in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Archaeology, Heritage, Tourism, Conflict, Insecurity, Sustainable Development.

## **Introduction**

Archaeology provides a unique lens for understanding human history and culture. It reveals not only where and when people lived but also how they interacted with their environment and with each other. By studying cultural identities, exchanges, and changes over time, archaeology offers insights into the distinct lifeways of different peoples and societies (SAA, 2022). Unlike history, which relies on written records, archaeology delves into prehistoric eras, reconstructing the lifeways of ancient societies through the analysis of artefacts left behind. This allows archaeologists to illuminate aspects of the past that might remain invisible in written history, such as ancient religions, trade routes, and the lives of marginalised people.

The goal of archaeology is to understand how and why human behaviour has changed over time. Archaeologists seek patterns in cultural events such as the development of agriculture, the rise of cities, and the collapse of civilisations. This knowledge can help predict future cultural shifts and guide more effective planning (PHMC, 2015). In Nigeria, archaeology has uncovered and preserved a wealth of cultural heritage, from ancient artefacts to historical sites, contributing to the country's cultural identity and heritage (Gubam and Nomishan, 2021).

Tourism, meanwhile, encompasses travel for recreational or leisure purposes. A tourist is someone who travels outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year, engaging in activities unrelated to paid employment at the destination (Okonkwo and Ikegwu, 2013). Tourism has become a global phenomenon, with international tourist arrivals reaching 903 million in 2007, generating \$856 billion in revenue (UNWTO, 2008, as cited in Okonkwo and Ikegwu, 2013). The tourism industry, dynamic and competitive, is one of the world's fastest-growing sectors. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, it generated \$740 billion in direct travel expenditures (Nomishan, 2020).

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) reported a 7% increase in international tourist arrivals in 2017, the highest growth since the 2009 economic crisis (UNWTO, 2018). In 2022, the global travel and tourism sector contributed 23% to global GDP, a decrease from 2019 due to the pandemic, but still projected to reach \$9.5 trillion in 2023 (Statista, 2023). The growth of tourism benefits economies, societies, and nations, creating opportunities for economic development and cultural exchange. Nigeria, with its diverse landscapes and cultural heritage, holds significant potential for tourism development.

However, Nigeria lags behind other African countries like Seychelles, Cape Verde, and Mauritius in harnessing these diverse tourism potentials. While travel and tourism

contribute 20%, 17%, and 12% to these countries' GDPs, Nigeria's tourism sector accounts for just 2% (World Economic Forum, 2017). The reasons for this poor performance include poor infrastructure, a lack of government prioritisation, and security concerns. This study seeks to examine how archaeology and tourism can offer innovative solutions to these challenges, promoting conflict resolution, unity, and peacebuilding in Nigeria.

## **Research Objectives and Methods**

Conflict and insecurity in Nigeria have been persistent challenges in Nigeria since independence. This stems from various factors such as ethnic tensions, religious differences, economic disparities, and political instability. According to Akinrinmade (2013), and Kassahum (2011), cited from Gubam and Nomishan (2021), conflict and insecurity are usually seen (in every nation) when the government is not responding (positively) to the yearning and aspirations of the people. Under such circumstances, political instability becomes the resultant effect (Akinwale and Aderinto, 2011). If not curtailed, this can transform into different forms of insecurity, including electoral violence, youth militancy and/or banditry and kidnapping, and general civil unrest (Gubam and Nomishan, 2021).

In Nigeria, these challenges have resulted in widespread violence, displacement of populations, mutual suspicion, division/disunity, lack of patriotism, and loss of lives and properties, among other consequences. These issues have significantly impacted the socio-economic and cultural progress of Nigeria and its people. To this end, scholars from various fields such as anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, security, law, and history have been grappling with finding effective solutions to these ongoing and potential crises. Numerous practical and theoretical remedies have been recommended with some implemented, yet none have been completely successful. It is crucial, therefore, for archaeology and tourism professionals to engage in the social analysis of these challenges, leveraging their scientific and practical approach to societal issues.

Archaeology provides insights into the historical and cultural underpinnings of disputes, resulting in a better knowledge of the underlying difficulties. Tourism, on the other hand, has the ability to foster peacebuilding, economic development, and cultural preservation in conflict-affected regions. Despite its promise, there is a scarcity of comprehensive research into the roles of archaeology and tourism in alleviating violence and instability in Nigeria. It is from this premise that this paper becomes timely.

To this end, the study adopts a qualitative research design, to explore the potential of archaeology and tourism in mitigating conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. Data for this study has been elicited via literature review and document analysis. Relevant literature on archaeology, tourism, and conflict mitigation in Nigeria and elsewhere has been reviewed. This includes academic articles, books, reports, and policy documents. Relevant documents such as government reports, policy documents, and organisational reports were analysed to understand the current state of archaeology and tourism in Nigeria and their potential for conflict mitigation.

### **Brief history of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria**

Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has been beset by frequent social unrest and upheavals that threaten its peace, security, and cohesion. Following the end of British colonial rule, the country has experienced a wide range of conflicts, including recurrent ethno-religious violence, indigene-settler clashes, tribal wars, communal conflicts, political strife, militancy, insurgency, hate speech, and, most recently, ethnic groups issuing quit notices to one another (Itumo *et al.*, 2017). These persistent challenges are deeply rooted in the country's historical experiences and the complex nature of its statehood.

The transition of Nigeria to independence did not follow the typical path of nation-state formation. Instead, it was the result of an artificial amalgamation of diverse ethnic groups with little in common apart from the colour of their skin. This "mechanical" union ignored the various ethnic, social, and cultural affinities of the country's different groups, which has contributed significantly to its enduring tensions (Itumo, *et al.* 2017).

A number of contemporary conflicts in Nigeria can be traced back to pre-colonial migration patterns, conquests, and territorial domination. For instance, the Hausa-Fulani Muslims carried out raids, enslavement, and the forced integration of many non-Muslim communities into the emirate structure in Kaduna in the mid-19th century. This history continues to fuel ethno-religious unrest in this area, including the Sharia riots that lasted from February to May 2002 (Kazah-Toure, 1995). Efforts to reduce this tension have included the establishment of independent chiefdoms for the southern Kaduna people, separating them from Hausa-Fulani control.

Also, pre-colonial migration patterns may have influenced modern identity conflicts in Nigeria even more than pre-colonial conquest and subjugation (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). Historical migrations, often driven by wars or natural disasters, have also left a legacy of violent disputes, as original inhabitants have long discriminated against newcomers. Examples include the 18th-century migration of Oyo Modakeke people to Ife, fleeing Oyo empire conflicts; the migration of the Tiv people from northern

Cameroon into the Middle Benue Valley around the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Hausa merchant settlement in Zangon Kataf in the 16th century; and the Jukun-Chamba migration from Cameroon to present-day Taraba State, among many others (Isumonah, 2003; Mustapha, 2000).

The introduction of colonialism in the late 19th century and the amalgamation of northern and southern parts of Nigeria in 1914 further spurred migration, particularly due to new economic opportunities in colonial urban centres. One significant example is the early 20th-century migration of southern Nigerians, particularly the Igbo and Yoruba, to northern cities like Kano, Kaduna, and Jos. However, instead of fostering integration, this movement heightened divisions, partly due to the territorial consolidation by the Muslim rulers in the North after the 1804 Fulani jihad and partly due to British colonial policies (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). The colonial policy of creating "sabon gari" (strangers' quarters) in northern cities to segregate southern migrants mirrored similar arrangements in southern cities like Ibadan and Lagos, where northern Muslim migrants were housed separately. This spatial separation became a foundation for conflict, fostering identity-based discrimination (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). Given this complex colonial history of ethnic tensions in Nigeria, it is unsurprising that the first major instances of inter-ethnic violence occurred during this period. In 1945, amidst widespread strikes and food shortages, violence broke out in the mining town of Jos between Igbo and Hausa migrants, triggered by competition over residential and commercial space (Nnoli, 1978). This violence foreshadowed further ethnic clashes, such as the 1953 riots in Kano, where Hausa and Igbo clashed over southern political parties' attempts to demonstrate in support of Nigerian independence. At least 36 people were killed, with over 200 injured (Feinstein, 1987). This event reflected northern resistance to the independence movement, driven by fears of southern dominance in a post-colonial Nigeria, and the Hausa community's resentment of Igbo economic success in Kano.

The 1953 Kano riots were a precursor to the widespread ethnic violence that would follow, particularly the anti-Igbo massacres of 1966, which contributed to the outbreak of Nigeria's civil war. In essence, colonialism laid the groundwork for the violent identity conflicts that have plagued Nigeria since independence, creating an enduring challenge to national unity (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005).

### **Overview of the Current Situation**

The ongoing conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria are deeply rooted in the legacy of British colonialism, which laid a foundation of mistrust among the country's diverse ethnic groups. Political struggles, ethnic-religious divisions, and resource disputes have repeatedly escalated into violence. Early postcolonial conflicts, such as the Tiv riots

(1962-1964) and the 1966 secessionist attempt by Isaac Boro, explained ethnic minority dissatisfaction with unequal regional integration. Ethnic-regional federalism also contributed to the political turmoil of the 1960s, including the 1962 Western Region state of emergency, census disputes, and the 1966 military coup that led to the Biafran Civil War (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). While the end of the war in 1970 brought temporary peace, the 1987 Kafanchan-Kaduna riots reignited inter-group tensions, sparking ethno-religious and economic conflicts across Nigeria.

Today, leadership failures—driven by corruption, nepotism, and greed—have exacerbated insecurity. In recent years, Nigeria's conflicts have shifted from political, economic, religious and ethnic clashes, to insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and herder-farmer disputes, resulting in widespread loss of life and property damage (Gubam and Nomishan, 2021).

### **Mitigating Conflict and Insecurity in Nigeria via Archaeological Intervention**

Archaeology plays a crucial role in mitigating conflict and insecurity by helping communities understand socio-political and cultural conflicts, especially in the face of state repression and social justice issues (Lindskoug and Martínez, 2023). Its role is multifaceted and can be viewed from several dimensions.

First, archaeology uncovers shared heritage, fostering empathy and reconciliation by revealing common historical connections between groups. This deepens mutual understanding and encourages communities to confront past grievances and injustices, promoting a willingness to address difficult truths (Lindskoug and Martínez, 2023). Through this, archaeology fosters empathy and encourages conflicting parties to view each other's perspectives, paving the way for mutual acceptance, reconciliation, and resolution of misunderstandings. Archaeology also promotes open dialogue, improving communication between opposing groups and helping dispel myths and stereotypes. This nuanced approach fosters trust and encourages effective conflict resolution (Gubam and Nomishan, 2021). It supports reconciliation efforts through symbolic gestures like memorials, which help heal past wounds and promote long-term, sustainable peace (Bloomfield et al., 2003).

Furthermore, archaeological research reveals long-term patterns of human interaction and conflict, offering valuable insights into the root causes of current tensions. By safeguarding archaeological sites and cultural heritage, archaeology helps preserve the identity and history of conflicting groups, preventing the erasure of cultural significance during conflict. Engaging local communities in archaeological projects also fosters dialogue and collaboration, reinforcing a sense of ownership and pride in

cultural heritage. This involvement can reduce insecurity, promotes peacebuilding, and fosters tolerance, contributing to conflict prevention and resolution in Nigerian society.

## **Overview of Major Archaeological and Heritage Sites in Nigeria and Their Contributions**

*Ile-Ife Archaeological Complex:* Since the early 20th century, the artefacts discovered at Ile-Ife are unique to West Africa. A German anthropologist, Leo Frobenius conducted the first excavation in 1910, revealing the significance of antiquities such as the Olokun brass head, symbolising Ile-Ife's illustrious past. Modernisation in the 1930s led to more discoveries, notably the Wunmonjie brass heads, which reshaped Western views of African art. The creation of a museum in 1953 and systematic excavations led by Bernard Fagg revealed evidence of an advanced civilisation in Ile-Ife. These archaeological findings promote national pride and unity by showcasing Nigeria's rich cultural history.

*Ancient Kano City Walls and Associated Sites:* The Ancient Kano City Walls, with a 14-kilometre radius, were built between the 11th and 16th centuries to protect the city's growing population. Notable associated sites include Dala Hill, an ancient settlement dating back to the 10th century, Kurmi Market, a historic centre of trans-Saharan trade, and the Emir's Palace, built by Muhammadu Rumfa in the 15th century. Together, these sites reflect Kano's historical significance as a hub of trade and culture, fostering a shared heritage and identity among communities.

*Sungbo's Eredo:* This massive earthwork, covering 16,000 km, dates back to the 8th century and stretches across the Benin rainforest. The site reflects socio-political development in the region, with its 15-meter-deep earthworks extending to Ijebu-Ode. By emphasising the long history of human settlement and cultural exchange, Sungbo's Eredo promotes continuity and interconnectedness among diverse communities.

*Nok Terracotta Figures:* Discovered in 1928 by Colonel Dent Young in Kaduna State, the Nok Terracotta figures date from 500 BC to 200 AD, marking one of Africa's earliest centres of ironworking and figurative sculpture. Archaeologist Bernard Fagg initiated systematic excavations, uncovering hundreds of terracotta artefacts, which provide insight into ancient Nigerian craftsmanship and cultural heritage. These artefacts promote pride in Nigeria's artistic traditions and foster respect for its ancient civilisations.

*Oyo-Ile:* Oyo Ile, the capital of the Old Oyo Empire, flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries, serving as a major cultural and political centre in West Africa. The site

reveals the historical achievements of the Yoruba people, fostering a shared identity among Yoruba-speaking communities.

*Sukur Cultural Landscape:* Sukur is a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its terraced fields, traditional ironworking, and its sacred landscape. Located in the Mandara Mountains, the Sukur Kingdom played a central role in iron production and trade (Nomishan *et al.*, 2023). The Sukur Cultural Landscape demonstrates a history of cooperation and peaceful coexistence in a diverse region. By promoting heritage tourism and intercultural understanding, the Sukur site can contribute to reducing tensions, particularly in the volatile Northeast region plagued by Boko Haram insurgency.

*Osun-Osoybo Sacred Grove:* Another UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Osun-Osoybo Sacred Grove, is a forest sanctuary dedicated to Osun, the Yoruba goddess of fertility. It is an important site for Yoruba religion and culture and features a festival that attracts thousands of worshippers annually (Nomishan *et al.*, 2023). The site exemplifies religious tolerance and cultural diversity, crucial in mitigating religious conflicts between traditionalists and adherents of other religions. The annual Osun-Osoybo festival brings people together from diverse backgrounds, fostering unity and understanding.

*Ancient Benin Kingdom:* The Ancient Benin Kingdom is famous for its bronzes and sophisticated political structure. The ancient city was the centre of the powerful Benin Empire, which thrived from the 13th century until British colonial conquest in 1897. Efforts to return the Benin bronzes and preserve the city's heritage can play a role in reconciliation and addressing historical grievances, particularly concerning colonial injustices. The recognition of Benin's cultural heritage can also promote a shared understanding and foster inter-ethnic unity in the country.

*Ogbunike Caves:* The Ogbunike Caves are a sacred site for the Igbo people, playing a key role in religious and cultural rituals. The caves have a long history of being a place of refuge, having sheltered people during wars. This unique role of the caves as a place of refuge and protection symbolises peace and safety. Engaging local communities in the preservation of this heritage can promote unity and reduce tensions rooted in resource or land conflicts.

The above represents a very small portion of the archaeological potential in Nigeria that can contribute to mitigating conflict and insecurity. Other archaeological heritage resources in Nigeria *inter alia* include sites such as the Lokoja complex, Turunku, Kabitu Hills, Katsina-Ala Basin, Ibinda and Tse-Dura Complexes, Wo-Mondo, Kpe Hills, Da'ama, Birnin-Kudu Rock Painting, Iwo-Eleru Rockshelter, Erijiyan Dufuna

Canoe Site, Postsherd pavements, Ikom Monoliths, Ancient Ile-Ife, Old-Oyo Kingdom, Olumo Rock, Idanre Hills, Ogbunike Caves, Ancient Benin Empire, Arochukwu Long Juju Shrine, Igbo-Ukwu, and Akwanshi Stone Figurines, inter alia (see Tubosun, 1995; Folorunso, 1981; Tubosun and Andah, 1983; Andah, 1983; Shaw and Daniels, 1984; Okpoko, 1984; Igirgi, 1984; Mangut, 1986; Ogundele, 1990; Okafor, 1989; Mangut, 1990; Jemkur, 1992; Gundu, 1999; Ibeanu, 2000; Aremu and Odofin, 2002; Ndera, 2009; Chikwendu, 2002; Babalola and Ajekigbe, 2007; Chia, 2014; Nomishan 2021).

Moreover, these sites serve as tangible reminders of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage and history, fostering a sense of national pride and unity. By showcasing the ancient civilisations and achievements of Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups, these archaeological sites promote a shared sense of identity among different communities. This shared heritage can help bridge cultural divides and promote understanding, which is essential for conflict resolution.

Furthermore, these archaeological sites serve as educational resources, providing insights into Nigeria's past civilisations and the development of human societies. By understanding and appreciating the complexities of Nigeria's history, people are more likely to value peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. Also, these sites have the potential to boost tourism and economic development, especially in regions that have been affected by insecurity. The preservation and promotion of these archaeological sites can therefore contribute significantly to the reduction or end of insecurity in Nigeria, by promoting a sense of national identity, unity, and economic prosperity.

### **Tourism as a Pathway for Conflict Mitigation and Peacebuilding in Nigeria**

Tourism has the potential to make a significant impact on host communities in Nigeria, not only by boosting the economy but also by preserving cultures, reviving traditions, and preventing cultural stagnation. It can act as a grassroots approach to conflict transformation, offering people a way to challenge societal restrictions driven by religious, political, or ethnic divisions. Sustainable tourism plays a critical role in fostering tolerance, inspiring cultural exchange, and laying the groundwork for stable, peaceful growth (da Silva et al., 2021).

The sector creates jobs, particularly for women and ethnic minorities, and offers skilled employment opportunities for Indigenous people (Adeleke, 2021). By providing alternative livelihoods, tourism reduces the economic drivers of conflict and generates revenue through foreign exchange, taxes, and investment returns. This supports government and private sector initiatives and stimulates economic growth, particularly in conflict-affected regions.

Moreover, tourism promotes cultural exchange, reduces stereotypes, and encourages dialogue between different groups, contributing towards mitigating conflict and insecurity. Tourist sites can serve as neutral venues for discussions, helping to bridge divides and foster reconciliation (Zhang, 2022). Furthermore, tourism supports environmental and cultural conservation by preserving historical, archaeological, and religious sites, thereby safeguarding cultural heritage, which often becomes a target during conflicts (Nomishan, *et al.*, 2023, 2024).

### **Tourist Attractions in Nigeria and Their Conflict-Mitigation Potentials**

- *Yankari Game Reserve*: Located in Bauchi State, Yankari's vast biodiversity and natural beauty attract visitors and promote ecotourism. The reserve offers jobs and fosters cultural exchange, contributing to peace by reducing resource-based conflicts.
- *Obudu Mountain Resort*: Situated in Cross River State, this scenic resort supports tourism-based livelihoods, enhances local economies, and fosters intercultural interactions, reducing poverty-driven tensions.
- *Sukur Cultural Landscape*: A UNESCO World Heritage site in Adamawa State, Sukur promotes cultural understanding and indigenous heritage preservation, fostering community pride capable of reducing conflict of interest.
- *Olumo Rock*: Historically a safe haven during tribal conflicts, this site in Ogun State fosters historical awareness and local tourism, promoting unity and reducing resource dependence.
- *Aso Rock*: A symbol of national unity in Abuja, Aso Rock serves as a platform for peaceful protests and dialogues, promoting patriotism and national identity.
- *Ogbunike Caves*: Located in Anambra State, these caves hold spiritual and historical significance. They support cultural tourism and community-based tourism initiatives, reducing intergroup disagreements.
- *Kainji National Park*: This national park promotes eco-tourism and environmental conservation while providing alternative livelihoods, which reduces resource-based conflicts.

Similar to the rich archaeological and heritage sites, Nigeria boasts a wide array of tourist attractions. However, this work offers only a brief overview to buttress the key points. Thus, by promoting cultural and environmental conservation, economic growth, and intercultural exchange, tourism can help mitigate conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. The development of infrastructure and the preservation of cultural heritage sites will foster peaceful coexistence, unity, and long-term stability in the country.

## Conclusion

This study examines the critical role that archaeology and tourism can play in addressing the ongoing challenges of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. Archaeology, by uncovering and preserving cultural heritage, not only fosters a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural roots of conflicts but also promotes reconciliation and unity among diverse communities. It reveals the shared histories that can help bridge divisions, dispel myths, and contribute to long-term peacebuilding efforts. Engaging local communities in archaeological endeavours strengthens a sense of cultural ownership, thereby reducing tensions and promoting societal cohesion.

On the other hand, tourism, with its potential to stimulate economic growth and foster cultural exchange, can be a powerful tool for conflict resolution. Sustainable tourism initiatives that prioritize cultural preservation offer opportunities for economic development, intercultural understanding, and social harmony. By leveraging Nigeria's rich cultural heritage, tourism can attract global attention and investment, helping to alleviate poverty and reduce economic disparities, which are often drivers of conflict.

However, for these benefits to be realised, there must be strategic interventions that integrate archaeology and tourism into national efforts to mitigate insecurity. This requires improving infrastructure, addressing security concerns, and implementing policies that prioritize the protection and promotion of Nigeria's cultural resources. The study suggests that through the combined efforts of archaeology and tourism, Nigeria can foster a more peaceful and unified society, harnessing its cultural wealth to resolve conflicts and build a more secure future.

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## **THE VALUE OF WOMANHOOD IN PRE-COLONIAL IGBO-AFRICAN SOCIETY**

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### **Executive Summary**

*A cursory glance reveals that at various ages and cultures, and from different disciplinary perspectives, there have been growing concerns about the perception and value of women in human societies. This work is a philosophical inquiry into the value of womanhood in pre-colonial Igbo society, with a view to understanding the colonial influence on Igbo society. This paper employs analytic and critical methods of inquiry to explore the significance of Igbo women and the roles they played in Igbo culture before the destruction of the Igbo-African cultural heritage by the colonial administration, which has endured to the present day. This research aims to analyze the concept of Igbo womanhood, examining what it means to be an Igbo woman within the Igbo community and the values and ideals she represents. By delving into philosophical analysis, this study would shed light on the multifaceted nature of Igbo womanhood and the cultural force it embodies. This paper has provided a deeper understanding of the value and contributions of Igbo-African womanhood and has provided profound insights into the need to preserve the dignity and value of womanhood, and their empowerment, especially, in the face of cultural changes and external influences.*

**Keywords:** Igbo, African, Womanhood, Pre-colonialism, Colonialism

### **Introduction**

The researcher has researched and written more on women's empowerment based on some experiences we are encountering in society. The impression that a woman is the weaker sex is a well-known factor in our contemporary society. And we see that manifest in different ways. However, in recent reflection, the researcher began to remember that this impression associated with womanhood was not as pronounced as it is now. The woman was valued more in the traditional Igbo culture than it is today. Though some may disagree with this position. For example, as presented by Uche

Uwaezuoke Okonkwo, in her paper on “The Gender Question and the Involvement of Women in Pre-Colonial Igbo Warfare in Equiano’s Interesting Narratives”. She concluded that “women were relegated in traditional Igbo settings, and the claim that Igbo society was democratic and republican was exaggerated by nationalist historians”.<sup>1</sup> That may be a perspective of which if looked at holistically other perspectives may emerge, like the one being presented in this paper. The researcher realized that the Igbo/African woman was not completely an oppressed species as presented by some authors. Stories and some documentation affirm this. Though it applies to the entire Africa, the choice of this paper narrowed it down to African/Igbo reality. The Traditional Igbo woman/women have areas of contributions to the social, economic, political, and educational developments of their society. Traditional Igbo/African society attached no importance to gender issues as it is prominent today because every individual had a role to play both in the family as well as in the larger society.

Each gender had its traditional role in the development of the society. In other words, the position of women was complementary to that of men. There was the non-existent of gender inequality. Regardless of who performed each role, it was considered equally important because it contributed to the fundamental goal of community survival. What this simply implies is that indigenous people in Africa performed varying roles to maintain the efficient functioning of their society, before colonialism. The claim, therefore, is that gender inequality came with the advent of colonialism<sup>2</sup>

Womanhood was highly valued in pre-colonial African/Igbo society and was essential in forming the social structure of the group. The rich cultural legacy of the Igbo people, who are mainly found in southeast Nigeria, honoured the abilities and accomplishments of women, in contrast to the patriarchal structures that resulted from colonialism, pre-colonial Igbo society valued and acknowledged the distinctive characteristics and roles that women played in their communities. As a result, the paper examines the roles, rights, and influence of women in various facets of community life as we investigate the value of womanhood in pre-colonial Igbo society. Women's

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<sup>1</sup> Uche Uwaezuoke Okonkwo, (2021). “The Gender Question and the Involvement of Women in Pre-Colonial Igbo Warfare in Equiano’s Interesting Narratives”. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 22(5), 116-127. Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol22/iss5/8>. Pg.116.

<sup>2</sup> Afisi, Oseni Taiwo, (2010). “Power and Womanhood in Africa: An Introductory Evaluation”. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.3, no.6. Department of Philosophy, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria. Pg. 230.

economic, social, and spiritual significance were also examined by highlighting how they have contributed to the maintenance of cultural traditions.

The paper further examines women's economic, social, and spiritual importance by highlighting how they support upholding traditional customs, the health of the family, and the general well-being of Igbo society. Understanding the pre-colonial Igbo society's value of womanhood allows us to see an egalitarian system that recognizes the contributions and significance of women. Understanding and appreciating the historical setting in which gender roles were established as well as the influence of colonialism on the ensuing transformations in Igbo society is crucial.

### **A Woman, Who is She?**

Before discussing the cultural definition of an Igbo woman, this paper first discussed briefly the general concept of a woman. Everything that embodies life has male and female including plants—likewise, the human species. The word *woman* can be used generally, to mean any female human, or specifically, to mean “an adult member of the female sex”<sup>3</sup> as contrasted with a *girl*. The word *girl* originally meant "young person of either sex"<sup>4</sup> in English; it was only around the beginning of the 16th century that it came to mean specifically a *female* child. The term *girl* is sometimes used colloquially to refer to a young or unmarried woman; however, during the early 1970s, feminists challenged such use because the use of the word to refer to a fully grown woman may offend though varies among cultures. An Igbo woman or Nigerian woman will be offended if she is addressed as a girl but in some parts of the world, for example, some parts of England, even elderly women are excited when they are addressed as a girl. In particular, previously common terms such as office girl are no longer widely used, though still in use in Nigeria. Conversely, in certain cultures which link family honour with female virginity, the word *girl* (or its equivalent in other languages) is still used to refer to a never-married woman; in this sense, it is used in a fashion roughly analogous to the more-or-less obsolete English maid or maiden.<sup>5</sup>

Philosophically, a woman as established already is a human person, and a person is regarded as a being characterized by a personality, consciousness, rationality, a moral sense, and self-awareness. A human person is regarded as an animal with a difference owing to the possession of rationality and free will. Intelligence and freedom make the woman a self-active moral subject responsible for her actions because whoever is

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<sup>3</sup> Restituta B. Igugbe (2004). *Women and Gender Studies*. Sir Kuf Ventures Ltd. Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. Pg,25

<sup>4</sup> John Ragai, 2024. ‘Woman’. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

endowed with thinking faculty and free will, ipso facto, can exercise freedom of decision and choice.<sup>6</sup>

Biologically, “the woman is a biological variant of the human species”<sup>7</sup>. Humanity manifests naturally in two complementary genders: male and female. The woman is the female human. Beyond cultural designations, the woman is physiologically different from the man. The woman evolved in significantly different ways from the male human and did in deep adapt to perform certain natural biological functions that the male human is not capable of, likewise, the male has his biological functions that the woman cannot perform, which is why each is as important as the other and that is why the complementarity is the best way to describe their existence.<sup>8</sup>

Beyond cultural definitions of womanhood, the woman decisively, biologically stands apart from the male human as a biological species. There is no humanity without the woman as reproduction of the human person cannot take place without the woman, just as the woman cannot exercise her function of reproduction without the male seed, which is life itself.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Cultural / Social Definition of an Igbo/African Woman**

The Igbo woman remains a female filled with cultural meanings and roles in Igbo ontology. She is defined not just in terms of her gender and biological composition but also in terms of her social, economic, political, and religious dimensions. Among the Igbo race, the woman is a person as well as a cultural force. Her gender is a fundamental existence but it does not completely define her<sup>10</sup>. In the cause of my research, it is known that patriarchy existed before the arrival of the colonial masters. But it was not dangerously used as it is today. Though it existed, Igbo/African women were not left without recognition. They were powerful, influential, and respected.

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<sup>66</sup> Marie Pauline Eboh, (2000). *Philosophical Criticisms: Anthology of Gender Issues*. Pearl publishers. Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Pg. 62-63.

<sup>7</sup> Socrates Ebo, (2022). “The Woman in Igbo African Ontology”. *Quest Journals. Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* Volume 10 ~ Issue 1. ISSN(Online):2321-9467. Pg. 76.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Socrates Ebo, (2022). “The Woman in Igbo African Ontology”. *Quest Journals. Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* Volume 10 ~ Issue 1. ISSN(Online):2321-9467. Pg. 75.

Many of them were competent rulers, warriors, and active participants in their various communities<sup>11</sup>.

Culturally, the Igbo/African woman was capable of fighting injustice and resisting perceived injustices. She possessed the power to organize the family and the society at large. There was an enormous task and responsibility conferred on her. From my understanding, the responsibilities of both men and women were seen as complementary to one another, just as their sexes are. There was a co-dependence and a balance that existed. In various traditional African societies, the African woman possessed the power that binds the society together. The survival of the family and the future of marriage depended a great deal on the woman.

Culturally, African women were the transmitters of the language, the history and the oral culture, the music, the dance, the habits, and the artisanal knowledge. They were the teachers responsible for instilling traditional values and knowledge in children. Men were also essential in transmitting knowledge to the youth because they had a different knowledge of the earth and environment, and also of ceremonies and traditions performed exclusively by men.<sup>12</sup>

Igbo women retain a highly revered status in Igbo ontology. Igbo people seem to be pragmatic in their social definition of the woman.

The exigencies of the survival of the society seemed to be more important to them than biological gender. The Igbo woman is revered as the sustainer of human society and the giver of life while the male child is cherished as the sustainer of the lineage. Igbos recognize and revere the woman for her special role in continuously birthing humanity. It is because of this feminine role that the greatest deity in Igbo ontology, known as Ala (the earth goddess) is assigned the feminine gender. Like the woman, Ala is revered as the giver and sustainer of life. Accordingly, the mother is highly revered in Igbo ontology. It is indeed motherhood that is seen as the essence of the woman. Igbos see motherhood as the most sacred duty. ... Unlike in some cultures where women are seen as second-class citizens who play second-fiddle roles in the society, Igbo people traditionally see women as the sacred bearers of life. They occupy a special spot in the social psyche of the people. The guild

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<sup>11</sup> Monique Oshame Ekpong, (2018). *Feminist Consciousness in Selected Works of Ama Ata Aidoo and Zora Neale Hurston*. University of Port Harcourt Press. Pg. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Afisi, Oseni Taiwo, (2010). "Power and Womanhood in Africa: An Introductory Evaluation". *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.3, no.6. pg. 230.

of the married women in the kindred plays very powerful roles in Igbo society.<sup>13</sup>

### **Pre-Colonial Period: Values and Contributions of Igbo Women to the Wellbeing of the Society**

During the pre-colonial era, Igbo women played significant roles in different areas for the development of their society. Their impact was felt in different areas of life, such as family, economic, political etc.

#### *Family Role*

“The value accorded to women extended also to their importance in the making of the home and the society”.<sup>14</sup> When we analyze the level of moral decay we are experiencing today, concerns are being raised about the kind of morals our mothers possess today. This is because, the traditional Igbo woman owes the responsibility of the nurturing of good morals and upbringing in the traditional homes and society was more or less, entrusted to women. It was a woman's affair. When we consider the importance of good upbringing and good morals in every society, we then appreciate the position of women in those traditional societies. This is one of the reasons why men before getting married in those days, often made serious enquiries of the kind of mother (though the kind of father was as well inquired of) their would-be spouses had. A Good mother was a sign of a would-be-good home and family. That the mother was the embodiment of the good moral of a family is evidenced, for instance, in the traditional Igbo family whereby the husband and father of the house, when a child begins to misbehave, reproaches the wife and mother of the house with such phrases as “woman, talk to your child o!” or “woman, have you seen the behaviour of your child? He is getting lost o!” These were, and remain frequent phrases used by men in their homes.<sup>15</sup> Igbo women are seen to be managers of their homes. The well-being and education of their children, especially inculcating of good morals were not to be played with. This is one of the reasons why girls kept themselves as virgins before marriage because they were taught its importance.

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<sup>13</sup> Socrates Ebo, (2022). “The Woman in Igbo African Ontology”. Quest Journals. Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science Volume 10 ~ Issue 1. ISSN(Online):2321-9467. Pg. 78.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph O. Okafor, (2014). “Women in Nigeria History: An Evaluation of the Place of, and Values accorded to Women in Nigeria”. Journal of Research in Arts and Social Science Volume 3 Number 1. Pg. 76.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

### *Economic Role*

Women were also very influential in the economic contributions of the Igbo society during the pre-colonial era. Their impact was felt in different areas. “Women in the traditional Igbo society were seen to be a pillar in various economic activities especially in agriculture”.<sup>16</sup>

In the Igbo system of farming, men usually planted yam, while women tended and nurtured the tendrils. They were also responsible for the cultivation and tending of most other crops such as cassava, cocoyam, maize, groundnut, vegetables, etc. In most cases, women were equally responsible for taking most of the farm produce to the various markets. This is so because

trade in Igbo society was regarded as a central activity that selected no specialty but some areas were more engaged in it than others. Pre-colonial Igbo women were seen as a driven economic wheel moving the economy to the best destination. They traded various kinds of agricultural products. Trade in Igbo land was dominated by women in pre-colonial times. Their central role in the trade was mostly manifested at the local level. You will not get or see any Igbo community in the pre-colonial without its marketplace.<sup>17</sup>

There existed four market days, (Orie, Afor, Nkwo and Eke). These market days are found in different villages. So, they travel to those villages on their market days to sell their farm products. However, they are still functioning in some places to date.

The role of women in the production and distribution of goods and services in the pre-colonial Igbo societies made many women not only prominent but also influential in their various communities. For instance, most of the communities along the Niger Igbo gave honours and titles to women who distinguished themselves in economic fields. Such as the one given to the First Lady in the Niger Igbo community. She was chosen by the Obi with the title of ‘OMU’ based on her achievement. The Omu presided over market and other women's affairs and enjoyed paraphernalia of office

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<sup>16</sup> Nwaoha Chimaroke. C. & Ejiaga Constance. O, (2022). “Women and their Socio-Economic Roles in the Pre-Colonial Igbo Society”. *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research* 10(1):11-16, SEAH I PUBLICATIONS. Pg.3. Retrieved from [www.seahipaj.org](http://www.seahipaj.org) I. Sourced on May 6, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. pg. 13.

akin to that of the Obi.<sup>18</sup> The Omu attends council meetings just like Obi “by virtue of her position”.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from farming, there were other economic values in which women were involved. They could be described as local industries. Women played a prominent role in the traditional industries of Igbo land's pre-colonial economy. Even in the pre-colonial era, the Igbo people had a well-developed and organized local craft industry in addition to other manufacturing sectors. The distinction between genders in the local industries applied to the range of crafts that were offered. In Igbo society before colonization, certain crafts were reserved for women only. These included the manufacturing of salt, pottery, textiles, and mats.<sup>20</sup>

### *Social and Political Role*

Dual sex- political structure existed in Igbo politics. Its dual nature is based on the “principle of complementarity and shared political power between the two sexes. While female political leaders mainly controlled and managed the affairs of women, male political heads ran the general affairs of the community, especially those pertaining to men. In effect, there existed two parallel political structures”<sup>21</sup>.

In many cases, the Isi Ada, or the oldest daughter of a lineage, played a part in political, judicial, and religious institutions. Her reports to the women of her group could lead to collective action opposing the decisions of the male political leaders. Some wives of a chief might also hold power equivalent to that of male elders. And, in some cases, women ruled as monarchs or regents for under-aged kings.<sup>22</sup>

It is impossible to overstate the role and significance of women in politics among the Igbo. In the pre-colonial Igbo societies, women demonstrated themselves to be formidable both as individuals and as groups. The legislative and judicial authority of

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph O. Okafor, (2014). “Women in Nigeria History. Pg.80

<sup>19</sup> Nkeonye Otakpo, (2009). *Justice in Igbo Culture*. Malthouse Press Limited, Lagos, Nigeria. Pg. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Nwaoha Chimaroke. C. & Ejiaga Constance. O, (2022). pg. 14

<sup>21</sup> Michael Muonwe, (2016). *New Dawn for African Women: Igbo Perspective*. Xlibris, Bloomington, IN 47403. Pg. 72.

<sup>22</sup> Livia Gershon, (2022). “Women Leaders in Africa: The Case of the Igbo”. JSTOR. Retrieved from <https://daily.jstor.org/women-leaders-in-africa-the-case-of-the-igbo/>. Sourced 03/05/2024.

"Otu Umuada," was described as an organization of daughters from a specific village or community, in addition to its political influence. The organization of Umuada pointed out that the assembly served as the last court of appeal in a particular community in both its political and judicial capacities. It passed laws on issues that men were unable to resolve. Not only did the Umuada do a commendable job of upholding justice and discipline, but it was also well-known for mediating disputes between families, villages, and communities. That is still fairly workable to this day. Something happened last year in December at the burial of my aunt. The day that the villagers gathered to kill the cow brought by her children as the custom demands, one of the men from my village acted obnoxiously, by pulling his trousers and scratching his bottom on the ground. The men could not say or do anything. It was the Umuada who reprimanded him and told us to be calm because, with their presence and action, they had neutralized whatever he intended to do. That shows how powerful they can be. If it was in the pre-colonial era, they would have done more than a reprimand.

Otu Umuada and Otu Nludi which is the organization of the daughters and that of the married group collaborated in pre-colonial Igbo society to uphold law and order and advance safety and security. For example, "women rose to challenge colonial policies during the popular anti-colonial Aba Women's Riots of 1929".<sup>23</sup> In Igbo societies, women achieved significant positions as individuals. For example, among the Niger Igbo, a woman's title of Omu in Onitsha was almost equivalent to that of the Obi, the town's king. Women were appointed chiefs in the Ogbaru communities, bearing titles akin to those of men, such as Onowu, Ajie, Oduah, Omu, and so forth. These served religious as well as sociopolitical purposes. It therefore means that Igbo women had the authority to address issues such as domestic violence, child abuse, and ill-treatment. If a man mistreated his wife or children, these groups of women would administer punishment, which could include physical discipline or other forms of restitution. In Igbo land, "pre-colonial women were generally respected members of the community who were seen as a complement to men".<sup>24</sup>

Socially, there is an aspect of Igbo life that is very interesting. That is what can be addressed as the 'Woman-to Woman marriage'. This woman-made man is not the transgender that we are experiencing today. Neither is it a lesbian world. But it is a woman marrying a wife the way it applies to men. Most of the authors that have written on this present it as it happened where there is no male child. It was more than that.

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<sup>23</sup> Ngozi Ugo Emeka-Nwobia, (2021). "Understanding Gender Complementarity in Igbo Society: The Role of Umuada and Umunna in Peacebuilding". Retrieved from <https://kujengaamani.ssrc.org/2021/07/21/...> Sourced on 08/05/2024

<sup>24</sup> Joseph O. Okafor, (2014). "Women in Nigeria History. Pg.81

My grandmother married a wife because she wanted to. The woman was taken care of by her sons. It was not a taboo in those days for such to happen.

The woman-to-woman marriage was practised chiefly among those who were considered to have attained exceptional values in the eyes of society due to wealth or some social standing, those who have passed menopause. These women could marry wives for themselves and as well for their husbands, sons, or siblings. They were regarded as men and influential, and by paying the bride price for women, their statuses were elevated in the society and this made them enjoy the same privileges as men.<sup>25</sup> It therefore means that in the pre-colonial period, women participated actively in the political administration of their various communities. They “played legislative roles, constituted themselves into important pressure groups, and were kingmakers, peace-builders, advisers, priestesses, and diviners”<sup>26</sup> etc.

This healthy socio-cultural synergy between the sexes in many parts of Africa was disrupted by colonialism. It is also contended that in Nigeria, as was the case in some parts of the continent, the British colonial authorities, influenced by the prevalent Victorian-era gender tradition which relegated women to the background, made extensive use of men and thereby stripped women of the rights and privileges they had hitherto enjoyed.<sup>27</sup>

Igbo people in Nigeria have never had a centralized government in contrast to other tribes before the colonial Masters. They are possibly the world's most republican people. No matter how tiny, every town was a republic with a sovereign and autonomous government. Every town managed its affairs independently of any other external authority. They had never engaged in any political or cultural acts as a people. Neither a central army nor a central religion were present. They were unable to interact with any other tribe or national government. Before British colonialists could establish their dominance over them, they had to conquer them village by village. They had to install warrant chiefs, village by village to administer the village states on their behalf.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Nonso Egbo, (2021). “The Life of an Igbo Woman Pre-Colonial Times”. The Guardian Nigeria News. Retrieved from [https:// guardian. ng/life/the-life-of-an-ig...](https://guardian.ng/life/the-life-of-an-ig...) Sourced 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<sup>26</sup> Chidi M. Amaechi, (2019). “Pre-colonial African Gender Cosmology and the Gender Equality Nexus: The Road Not Taken in Igboland, Nigeria”. *Asian Women*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pg. 94. <https://doi.org/10.14431/aw.2019.09.35.3.93>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Chidi M. Amaechi, (2019).

### *Spiritual Role*

The Igbo belief system represents both feminine and masculine deities, presenting an equal spiritual realm. Women's and men's roles in the social structure of Igbo land were very symbolic of their religious practices and beliefs. Male and female gods and goddesses, such as Chukwu and Ala, governed the lives of people. Chukwu was the masculine "Supreme Being" of all creation and actions, and "Ala" feminine deities was the "great mother goddess". Chukwu and Ala seem to represent the father and mother of a human household.<sup>29</sup>

Women in pre-colonial society played significant roles in the religious activities of their communities and villages and so, make their contributions to the spiritual welfare of their families and society at large. They had diverse ways through which they played active roles. In some Igbo communities, women were Priestesses, known amongst the Igbos as *Eze Nwanyi* and *Nne Mmanwu*. A good number of them belonged to the various masquerade cults and played very active roles. The women priestesses offer prayers for their families and communities and consult the oracles to seek direction and instruction for the society. Though they participated in the religious worship, they were not allowed into the shrine, they could be priestesses to minor deities like the *ogbanye* priestess; "chi" personal spirit for women, etc. A woman cannot handle or be the chief priestess of a family or village deity. It is said in Igbo "Agwu anaghi ama nwanyi" which means that an oracle cannot suggest a woman as a legitimate person to handle "Isi Agwu" (the head deity). A woman cannot lead public worship in the presence of men. The "Isi Mmoo" is meant for a man.<sup>30</sup>

They were traditional healers, and some of these female traditional healers handled women's and children's ill health. They also deliver pregnant women their babies.

### **Conclusion**

The major task of this paper lies in the fact that, before the arrival of the colonial Masters, Igbo women were not feeling marginalized. Though patriarchy existed, women were happy to a large extent with their positions in society. They had their forms of authority as well. It was the British administrative system, their indirect rule system, which was imposed on the Igbo people that ignored female equivalents. "Village assemblies were replaced with

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<sup>29</sup>Gladys I. Udechukwu, (2017). "Position of Women in Igbo Traditional Religion". Journal of Linguistics, Language and Culture Vol. 4. Pg. 88.

<sup>30</sup> Gladys I. Udechukwu, (2017). "Position of Women in Igbo Traditional Religion". Journal of Linguistics, Language and Culture Vol. 4. Pg. 89.

Native Courts, run by British officers and handpicked Igbo men, and women's oversight of marketplaces was replaced with male market administrators. While women occasionally snagged positions of authority within the colonial system, it was rare".<sup>31</sup> Apart from the political aspect of societal life, Igbo women were much appreciated. What existed in the Igbo land was gender complementarity. There is an understanding among the Igbo people that every individual reality serves as a "part of and the completion of the whole and thus, there is unity in the midst of diversity".<sup>32</sup> This is what is lacking today. The regaining of this unity and the dual system structure enabled women to protect their economic, political and social structures.

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<sup>31</sup> Livia Gershon, (2022). "Women Leaders in Africa: The Case of the Igbo". JSTOR. Retrieved from <https://daily.jstor.org/women-leaders-in-africa-the-case-of-the-igbo/>. Sourced 03/05/2024.

<sup>32</sup> Ikechukwu Anthony Kany, (2021). *IGWEBUIKE: An Operative Condition of African Philosophy Religion and Culture Towards a Thermodynamic Transformation Ontology*. Altgrade Nig. Ltd. Pg.27.

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