

## Emerging trends in Nigerian culture: An Umuchu Igbo example

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### ***Abstract***

*This study makes a critical analysis of modernization and globalization influence on Umuchu: Igbo culture. No human being is an island to himself or herself neither are tribes to themselves. Both humans and tribes are in relation with one another. Though there is always inter-cultural interaction, diffusion of cultural practices is therefore, inevitable which more often than not, may result to cultural domination. Umuchu culture has continuously been affected and suffered the forces of modernization and globalization. Though, change is a social phenomenon, which is often inevitable when cultures interact as in the case under study. The objective of this study has its focus on the effects of modernization and globalization on Igbo culture: Umuchu example; the resultant effects on the mindset of the Igbo men and women and the possible ways of averting these influences to preserve their inherited culture and hand it over to their children. This study was anchored on globalization theory by Robinson (2007) who emerged as a result of series of internal developments to social theory. This study also hopes to examine how best to adopt the good aspects of these trends and still maintain the fundamental sides of Igbo culture in Umuchu. This study adopted qualitative method of using questionnaire and personal interview as tools for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive method as analytical tool from pre-colonial to post-colonial era. The findings revealed that there are original Igbo cultures of Umuchu under study and there are severe effects of modernization and globalization on them.*

**Keywords:** *Globalization, Igbo nation in Nigeria, culture*

## **Introduction**

Globalization according to Onyeonoru (2003) ‘is the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice-versa’(37). Definitions of globalization vary depending on who is defining and the perspective from which the person stands. Amiuwu (2004) opine that it could be institutional; process; system and or value driven, ideological or a combination of some or all of them (18). Globalization is a controversial topic especially in terms of whether it is a good thing and should be allowed to continue, the appropriate form it should take and how it impacts nations and peoples. The way people sees globalization will differ depending on how it impacts their lives and this in turn depends on the part of the world they belong to.

Presently, the whole world has turned into a cosmic village through globalization. It is already the spread of worldwide practices, organization of social life as well as practices, relations and consciousness. Approximately all the nations and the way of lives of the billions of people are being transfigured frequently by modernization and globalization. Their effects and degree are seen everywhere one looks Igbo people are not exemption.

Political, cultural, religious and social harmonization is the variables through which this change is made possible in the entire world. It has become so easy to communicate faster than ever. Within few minutes, one can speak to anyone of his choice through the use of GSM, twitter and other modern communication gadgets that came with globalization. The Igbo people under study holds and mingle with modernization and globalization though with fear of its effect in losing their cultural

heritage. Before colonial era, Igbo people under study maintained their cultural heritage with pride and proudly handling and or transferring them to their children, but colonial imperialism made it unrealizable anymore. Their major concern is how the younger ones are being attached and or attracted by these global changes with the mindset that they need new things and new ways of life.

The mindset and life of the new generation Igbo people are observe with dismay the confusion they are encountering, which are seriously stripping them of their cultural roots in the face of these new ways of life occasioned by modernization and globalization. The Igbo people have not stopped wondering the extent and the best approach that will be applied to keep and maintain their cultural heritage in this face of modernization. Nkurmah asserted that ‘African history through the centuries has accumulated men of confusing teachings and re-teaching from external force varying from colonial imperialism, Islamic and Euro-Christian elements, thereby producing confusing and more confusing vision’ (89). We can see at this juncture the level our culture has been affected and re-shaped by this new trend. Other cultures in Nigeria presently are in crises as well due to the emergence of modernization that has eaten deep in their marrows. Therefore this study tends to: (a). Present the original Igbo being affected by modernization and globalization. . (b). Finding the extent of the effects of modernization and globalization. (c) .Finding out the negative effects of the culture erosion on the Umuchu section of the Igbo. (d) Finding out the steps to be taken to preserve the Umuchu cultural heritage of the Igbo and hand it over to their children. This study centers on fifteen Igbo cultural activities or facts therefore all other cultural activities, thus:

Ejji, Igu afa, Ilu di na nwunye, Iti mmanwu, Iri ji ohuru, Ichi echichi, Igba odibo, Osu, Igu afo, Igo oji, Igba oso ochu, na ndi ozo ga.

The researcher made certain findings as the research questions were keenly answered during the data analysis and some recommendations were also made. The research questions that guided the study are:

1. What is the original culture of Umuchu affected by Modernization and Globalization?
2. To what extent has modernization and globalization affected the Umuchu culture of the Igbo?
3. What are the negative effects of the culture erosion on the Umuchu section of the Igbo?
4. What steps are to be taken to preserve the Umuchu cultural heritage of the Igbo?

The researcher made use of interview and questionnaire as for data collection. Interview for those age 70 to 95years that could not reply the questionnaires and questionnaire for age bracket 30 to 60years that are lettered. The first group through interview replied that the Igbo culture under study has been seriously affected comparing with what was handed over to them. These activities under review was the proud of Igbo culture but modernization and globalization have taken them away given them new different ones. Those in second group that responded through questionnaires said that this is 21<sup>st</sup> century and Christian era, there is no need keeping and maintaining old ways of life.

This study is pertinent in many ways; it is an attempt to project Igbo culture of Umuchu people to the world. It is also a response to Nkurumah's call for Africans to speak for themselves and not be quiet for the outside world to speak for them. Further, this work will draw the attention of the Igbo

people to the fact that it is not every aspect of globalization that is to be rejected or accepted and call for Umuchu Igbo people to go back to their cultural root and rediscover those cultural values that promoted brotherliness and co-existence.

### **Modernization and globalization**

Historically, the world and societies together with the people are having systematic transfiguration as a result of modernization since colonial era. The so apparent colonial expansion of the West to the third world so called was from outside a global process that was authoritarian and destructive in nature. However, this new civilization or modernization is the most obvious fact in the present time which faces human race with its deepest social violent and intensive restructuring.

The meaning of globalization cannot be seen as a single concept and be defined within a particular time rather it involves economic harmonization, the shift of polity beyond borders, knowledge transfer, stability of culture and power; it is a global system, an idea, a revolution and an enterprise of global market that is devoid of socio-political control.

Globalization is interpreted by individual political concept, geographic location, social status, and cultural background, ethnic and religious branch that determines its background. Thomas Larsson Opined that, it is the process of world shrinkage of distances getting shorter, things move closer that pertains to the increasing ease with which a person on one side can communicate for mutual benefit with another on the other side of the world (9).

The world as a biophysical planet is experiencing so many implications of globalization that range from a complicated conversion that is based on the idea of complete market, a conversion that seeks to absorb the whole globe in a new international fellowship by lifting the economic element to be

the only source of meaning, value and so teaches a new liberal doctrine of economic personal interest where the free market is wrongly assumed to be objective and fair. Having this in mind, not minding the progressive aspect of globalization, its ethnocentric, patriarchal, authoritarian characters are glaring and outstanding everywhere. Consequently, it destroys cultures in this contemporary period and makes the new generation to continue looking up for the modern life/way of things as the ideal due to accompanying aspects of globalization.

Globalization, furthermore, may make the old dream/desire of making the world come to reality, but in so many ways/forms it is the colonialism of the past that is at work from the African point of view with reference to Igbo culture; family and respect, life and care of life, hospitality, brotherhood, marriage system etc are in strong conflict with modernization and globalization.

Globalization according to Oni (2005) when viewed from the cultural point, major critics is that it is destructive to African culture and development (9). This is because the close integration and interaction of different people which it engenders, globalization exerts more cultural pressure than people imagine. Waters (1995) observes that globalization is the direct consequence of the expression of European culture across the planate through settlement, colonization and cultural imperialism (3). Afisi (2008) is of the view that it is purely an attempt to spread western culture with its attendant capitalist, socio-economic and political nuances (1). Furthermore, most Africans see globalization as merely another form of imperialism. In the word of Wilfred (1997) 'present day globalization is but a continuation of a long tradition of over five hundred years, the tradition of imperialism' (42-43).

Modernization is an encompassing process of massive social changes that once set in motion, tends to penetrate all domains of life, from economic activities to social life and political institutions in a self-reinforcing process.

It is the transformation from a traditional rural agrarian society to a secular urban, industrial society, undergoing the comprehensive transformation of industrialization that societies become modern. It is a continuous and open-ended process.

Modernization means the sum of the processes of large-scale change through which a certain society tends to acquire the economic, political, social and cultural characteristics considered typical of modernity.

It is an evolutionary transition from a traditional to a modern society, which has been known to cause tremendous effects on Igbo culture which Umuchu is not exempted. Historians link modernization, industrialization and the spread of education as observed by Kendel (2007). Modernization refers further to the process of change through which traditional societies attempt to adopt themselves culturally, economically and politically to the requirements of the contemporary world, Bright, (2000:15). It is also a process of change in economic as well as cultural aspect of the society as seen by Hailand, (2002).

Modernization is a phenomenon linked to the emergence of sophisticated machinery, improved technology and other structures that make life to be convenient, has influenced Umuchu people in particular and Igbo culture in general in terms of its socio-economic conditions, cultural values, education and communication. It is the idea of change in social and cultural process either through improvement or decline, in society and the present life is different from life in the past according to Hooker, (1996).

### **The Igbo nation in Nigerian culture**

The Igbo people are known and called Ndi-Igbo which cover most of the South Eastern part of Nigeria. They are the third largest ethnic group in Nigerian nation, and are said to be the most dispersed ethnic community in Nigeria. They started

migrating in the early days of slave trade which continues to be felt till date. One of the primary virtues of a traditional Igbo person is hard work and honour. The Igbo people were predominantly farmers, artisans and traders. A man's honour hung so much on his ability to fulfill his social and economic obligations. This he does by working hard in his business and handiwork. Laziness has no place in a traditional Igbo society and a man without any means of livelihood is regarded as a lazy fool. Currently, the Igbo people seem to occupy Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Abia, Ebonyi States in addition to other parts of Rivers and Delta States. Because of their trade and enterprise they are present in all parts of the country and beyond. Their language is known and called 'Igbo', and their main religion is Christianity with few others practicing traditional religion. Igbo people have various cultures and customs they practice, they include: 'Iji Ejiji' Mode of dressing; 'Igu afa' Naming ceremony in Igbo; 'Ilu di na nwnye' Marriage; 'Iti mmonwu' Masquerading; 'Iri ji ohuru' New yam festival; 'Ichi echichi' Tittle taking; 'Igba odibo' Apprenticeship; 'Osu' caste system; 'Igu afo' Igbo calendar; 'Igo oji' Kola nut ceremony; 'Igba oso ochu' Exile for committing murder; among others.

### **The concept of culture**

The concept of culture consists of the values the members of a given geographical group holds, the norms they follow and the material goods they create. It refers to the way of life of the individual member of groups within a society; how they dress, their religious activities and leisure according to Oni (2005:9). Considering the above concept, it means that culture is a very broad concept that generally encompasses basically every aspect of human life. Furthermore Adler (1983) defined culture as the programming of the mind which distinguishes one member of a society from another.... the interactive aggregate

of human characteristics that influence a human group response to its environment (16). From Ednor ((2003) view, 'it is the way of life of the members of a society, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation' (195). This complex whole which includes knowledge, belief art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities as well as habits acquired by man as a member of a society; and the set of tangible and intangible elements such as diet, tools, technology, language and value that gives shape and meaning to everyday lives of a particular group of people, Kanagy and Kraybill (1999).

People consider culture to be important for several reasons. Firstly, it is seen as defining peoples' identity and consequently, it has been argued that people without culture is a people without identity. By defining peoples' identity, it helps to distinguish between peoples of different societies of communities. Summarily, Adedimeji (2006) says 'to be removed from one's culture is to be deprived of one's identity; to lose one's identity is to be tossed in the wind floating along like a leaf separated from its tree' (10). Secondly, culture is considered to be very important in ensuring the survival and development of a community. To support this assertion, Adedimeji (2006) posits that a society robbed of its culture can only manage to survive...anyone that loses his cultural legacy is bound to expire (10). Thirdly, it plays a crucial role in ensuring continuity in any given society by helping to transmit values, beliefs, rituals and so on from one generation to the other. One vital fact about culture is its dynamic nature which means it is subject to change.

The word culture has its meaning as the people's way of life meaning the way people do things. It is the attribute of a particular cultural group ranging from their language, religion, social habits, music and arts. It is also defined as the shared patterns of behaviour and interactions, cognitive constructs and

effective understanding that are learned and transmitted through a process of socialization. Members of a particular culture are identified by these shared patterns as well as distinguish those of another cultural group. These variables of identification are transmitted from one generation to another through learning, writing, religion, music and what they do exceptionally. It is that which characterized a particular group of people and their very way of life which differentiates them from other people. It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the member of one category of people from another.

Oni (2005) sees Nigerian cultures as being weak when compared with western culture and consequently bound to be losing in a battle against western culture. He laments that ‘the situation in Africa today is so pathetic as a result of the gradual admittance of western culture at the detriment of our own culture’ (2). Africa has consequently changed from a land of culture, nature, tradition and rural setting where the cockcrow signals the dawn of a new day.

According to Norbeck (1970), culture is an abstraction from reality and not reality itself, that is, culture prescribes why, how and where people should gain a decent livelihood(5). Swartz and Jordan (1980) is of the opinion that it is a shared understanding of norms, rules or laws that govern and control behaviour, belief in religion, superstition, witchcraft, myths and ideology (47).

### **What are the original cultural activities of Umuchu affected by modernization and globalization?**

Cultural activities are the unifying factors in Igbo cultural community and traditional life of the people. Some of those cultural activities that will be x-rayed by the researcher in this work are thus:

- a. Ichi echichi: (Title taking)
- b. Iri ji ohuru (New yam festival)

- c. Ilu di na nwunye (Marriage)
- d. Igu afa – (Naming ceremony in Igbo)
- e. Ibuna ozu Nwada ada ( Burying wife in her father’s house)
- f. Ida ekpe maobu Iru uju (mourning)
- g. Igba odibo (Apprenticeship)
- h. Igu-afo – (Igbo calendar)
- i. Igo oji – (Kola-nut ceremony)
- j. Iti mmonwu – (masquerading)
- k. Osu (caste system)
- l. Iji ejiji ( mode of dressing)
- m. Igba oso ochu (exile for committing murder)
- n. Ite ime (Abortion)
- o. Umunna (Kindred)

#### **a. Ichi echichi (title taking)**

This is a significant aspect of the socio economic and cultural life of the Igbo people which area under study is not an exception. In traditional Igbo society, taking title were usually associated with ones skills which guaranteed successes in farming or agriculture because the economy were basically agricultural. Igbo people under study attached so much importance to title taking because it indicates the fact that it is not meant for everybody rather for few that meet up with the criteria. The person taking the title is expected to feed and entertain the community during the event.

Furthermore, it was considered economically important and indeed an insurance against old because the holder is exempted from fees paid by subsequent entrants and also not seen or considered ordinary.

**Nze na Ozo Taking:** The highest title in Umuchu Igbo culture is ‘ozo’ and its variants: nze, adaba. To qualify for the ozo title, a man must have outstanding character and have accumulated

enough wealth and also completed the ceremonies connected with the second burial of his father.

‘ozo’ taking is very important in Igbo cultural life. It is both sacred and secret. The holder of ‘ozo’ title in Igbo culture was held in high esteem and great respect was accorded to the holder anywhere in Igbo land. The holder is looked upon as a personified truth that are guided by truth, honesty and justice which made them to be highly revered. Those that are not initiated in the ‘ozo’ society were referred to as ‘Ukpoo’. Another state of ‘ozo’ title is ‘Nze’ which not all the ‘ozo’ title holder do reach the coveted title of it, because it is the highest rank one can reach within the title hierarchy.

Because they were reputed to say nothing but the truth in any given circumstance, they are always invited to adjudicate in land disputes and other related sensitive cases in Igbo land.

### **b. Iri ji (New yam festival)**

This is the same thing with ‘iwa ji’ or ‘ihe-ji-oku’ which is widely celebrated among Igbo people/society. The ceremony was performed between the month of July and August every year. What characterized it was the making of sacrifices of food and drinks to the ‘Agwu’ the guardian deity, in appreciation for its bountiful provisions. This is the reason the ‘Agwu’ ancestral spirit was first given the new yam to eat before the living. No Igbo man or woman has the right to sell or buy the new yam in the market until the festival is performed. This is the beginning of the harvest period of the Umuchu Igbo people. It marks off the border between the harvest period and the next planting season of the year.

It is a very great occasion, which is celebrated by people in appreciation to the gods of their land for granting them a good planting season with bountiful harvest and also seek for more abundance harvest in the next planting season. It involves

mainly the eating of yam the king of the arable food with palm oil prepared with condiments. The yam will be roasted. During this occasion, libation is performed on the earth with gins and or, up wine in appreciation of this season. Prayers are often said by the chief priest to the gods of the land such as Agwu. The iri ji festival is a commemorative event that brings together all the citizens of a town both home and abroad in the village square. A lot of events that is cultural oriented are being showcased: beating of drums, dancing, eating and drinking as well as extension of greetings or regards to extended friends and well-wishers. It is really a long expected ceremony in the culture of Igbo Umuchu inclusive, as it marks the end of a hard labour and strenuous season of planting and the beginning of an enjoyable season.

### **c. Marriage (Ilu di na nwunye/nwanyị)**

This is highly regarded as a sacred social institution in Igbo cultural society. It is a contract that is made and solemnized by/with certain rites. Marriage within the members of the same town or village and outside the town were permitted, but any marriage between members of related blood is not permitted in Igbo culture under study except were the relationship has spanned or reached up to fourth generation. If the couple is found to be related with blood after marriage a kind of ritual cleansing – ‘Idu Umune’ could be performed for the marriage to be successful.

### **d. Igu afa (Naming ceremony)**

As soon as a child is born to a family, the relations of the couple and the entire neighbourhood would be informed, then, enquiries would be made from the diviners as to who reincarnated the baby and as well to know the name that will be given to the child. Names in Igbo culture depict the culture, norms and

values of the parents. They are not a mere tags or labels for personal identification. They reveal sentiments, aspirations, hopes, fortunes, misfortunes and values and are accurate records of people's beliefs, moral concepts and way of life, wishes and aspirations of the family in Igbo culture. In the words of Ubahakwe, Igbo people give their children names according to the circumstance, be it social, political, religious etc that has connection to the birth of the child (99).

#### **e. Ibuna ozu nwada (Burying wife in her father's house)**

'Nwada' is a female child born into a family, kindred, village or town. In her mother's/father's house she remains 'Nwada' as well as a member of the kindred or village even after her marriage. In those days, no 'Nwada' was buried in her husband's family. She must be taken back to her home land/family. On being certified dead, her husband would immediately notify his own relations. The deceased's son and daughter sometimes accompanied by an elderly woman to go and present a hen – 'okuko ntije mkpu' to their mother's family/father informing them that their mother had died. With the hen someone would go round the village and announce to them that their daughter married into such and such village is dead. This would be followed by a visit to the place by the deceased father and relations. On arrival the fellow 'Umuada' would bath the corpse which was carried home on a local bamboo shelter by the men folk. After bathing her, she would be then buried in her father's compound after the interment the 'Umuada' had to perform some farewell rituals to enable her reach her ancestors in peace.

#### **f. Ida ekpe or uju (Mourning)**

This means mourning, an aspect of funeral obsequies that followed immediately after a person's death was announced

traditionally. It was a serious obligation the living, especially a couple, owed each other in the event of death. This was performed at many stages in Igbo culture under study.

On the death of a husband after twelve (12) days or three native weeks all his male children had their hair shaven. That was a visible indication that they were in a mourning mood. The wife being the central figure in the whole affair would not shave her hair until the last day of the mourning period which span between one to two years as the case may be. The woman would be told the dos and don'ts of the mourning period. In those days she was restricted to particular places for about twenty native weeks (oguzi), during which she would not have her bath, apply any make-up, go to market, work or attend any public function. She was attended to by a female relation, if that widow had no grown-up daughters. A woman under 'uju' was not expected to fight, shout gossip nor respond to greetings.

At the expiration of the twenty native weeks, confinement, she would be permitted to do some minor domestic works such as fetching water, attend markets but not those outside the community. While in 'uju', she was mandated by the 'Umuada' to always wear her sackcloth usually, black and carry a hiltless kitchen knife to move around. On entering any compound, she stood aside to deliver her message; she must not sleep outside her husband's house. If someone died at her father's place, she must be accompanied to the place by a female relation (Nwada) of the dead husband and they must come back same day.

It was a taboo in Igbo culture under study for a woman in 'uju' to be pregnant. If it happened, 'oriko' and 'isacha-arua' cleansing which were acts of covenant were performed at the initiation of the 'Akansi' (a dwarf). The purpose was to re-admit the culprit into the family and into the large society. On the other hand, if the man responsible was identified, he was made to undergo some cleansing rituals or otherwise be excommunicated. The 'uju' period lasted for two years

including the first-six months she stayed at a place and the one and half years she moved about in sackcloth. It was a bad omen for a woman to die while mourning her husband and that again required ritual cleansing of some sort to appease the land.

The next stage was the 'imecha- ahu-ekpe' ceremony which was a bond breaking ritual to mark the completion of the mourning for the dead husband.

The final stage was the 'omeria-ekpe' ceremony, which was rather complicated and costly. Part of it was the disposal of materials used by the woman during the 'uju' period. All the sackcloth, her hair and some eating post were thrown into a nearest evil forest – 'Aja-ohia'. That was done at midnight and in the company of one or two members of the family 'Umuada'. While going she was not expected to look back until the items were dropped. There at the spot, she took her bath and had her hair shaven and at the end of which, she was led back home.

On the death of a woman-wife a man owed it an obligation to mourn for her wife, twelve days after which the man shaved his hair, and restrained from attending any social gathering and from marrying any other woman until after one year. It was a taboo to see a man under mourning period in relationship with another woman, the wrath of her in-laws are attracted and he will be meant to explain about the death of her wife after a cleansing rituals will be performed.

### **g. Igba odibo (Apprenticeship)**

In Igbo culture a unique form of apprenticeship is practiced where either a male family member or a community member spends some time – years, the person involved is usually in their teens to their adulthood with another family and they work for them. After the agreed time/years, ends the family, through the head of the family who brought the apprentice into the household organizes (idu-obi/ulo) settlement of the apprentice

by either setting up a business for him or giving him money or tools by which to make a living.

Every Igbo man began his life as an apprentice. A young boy accompanied his father or uncle to the farm and rendered as much assistance as he could in apprenticeship.

#### **h. Igu afo igbo (Igbo calendar)**

Culturally, Igbo traditional calendar was; a week = 4 days i.e. 4 market = one month (otu onwa); one month has 28 days and there are 13 months in one year. An extra day is added in the last month. Each name of the day has its origin in the mythology of the kingdom of Nri.

The 13 Igbo calendar months in one year are as follow:

1. Onwa Mbu – 3<sup>rd</sup> week of February
2. Onwa Abuo – March
3. Onwa Ife Eke – April
4. Onwa Ano – May
5. Onwa Agwu – June
6. Onwa Ihie Ji Oku – July
7. Onwa Alom Chi – August to early September
8. Onwa Ilo Muo – Late September
9. Onwa Ala – October
10. Onwa Okike – Early November
11. Onwa Ede Aja-ana – Late November to December
12. Onwa Ajana – Late November
13. Onwa Uzo Alusi – January to early February

#### **Onwa Mbu: An example**

Eke	Orie	Afor	Nkwo
		1	2
3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14

15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26
27	28		

### **i. Igo oji (Kola-nut ceremony)**

In Igbo cultural life under study kola-nut occupies a unique position. It is used to welcome visitors in a house. The head of the family uses it to pray to the gods first in the morning through which he commits the day's activities, his family, children, friends and well-wishers to the gods. Before any important issue/function begins in Igbo cultural life kola-nut must come and its ritual fully performed. It is so unique to the culture of Igbo people that the only language that must be used to performed its ritual is Igbo language because 'oji anaghi anu asusu ozo'. There is no amount of education one may attain that will make him use another language for kola-nut rituals. Its sacredness makes it a taboo for a woman to handle, pick or break kola-nut, the attention of a male child, no matter his age, must be drawn to perform its ritual by an aged woman to maintain its sacredness. It is used to show seniority between persons, communities or even kindred.

### **j. Iti mmonwu (Masquerading)**

This is one of the secret organizations in Igbo cultural life whose activities are known only by those that are initiated into it. This was of two types thus: day and night masquerades. Day masquerades appear only in the day time especially during festivals. They are of various categories like; 'isi-mmonwu' owned by the village/town, the 'mmonwu-ija', 'mgbadike', 'isi-okpoko', 'oji-onu' etc.

Male children must at least attain twelve years of age before they are qualified for the initiation and that was after they had

presented the elders with pots of wine-palm and cowries (ego ayoro) on an appointed date/day, they would be initiated would be taken to a place of initiation called, 'uno-mmonwu' for the initiation rituals.

The night masquerades – 'Achikwu' and 'Okuekwe' in the area under study performed peculiar corrective functions of admonishing and reprimanding social deviants or the never-dowells in the community. The uninitiated and women who desired to listen to the music and taunting of these night masquerades, hid themselves at nearby houses, with the light out so as not to incur the wrath of the masquerades. Traditionally they were fearless in exposing social deviant's behaviours and their perpetrators. Through the use of allusive and esoteric languages, they describe culprits exactly; narrate their offenses and the manner of the offence they committed without calling their names

#### **k. Osu (Caste system)**

These are group of people in the area under study whose ancestors were dedicated to shrines and temples for the deities of the Igbo and therefore were deemed property of the gods. They are segregated and did not mingle freely with the free born; they almost not attend the same market or other social functions in the community. Marriage with them is forbidden. It is a stigma on their entire generation that remains difficult to wash off.

#### **l. Iji ejiji (Mode of dressing)**

Dressing is one of the things that distinguish culture from another which include style of dressing, and type of attire and so on. The attire of Igbo people under study consist of scanty clothing as the only purpose of dressing is to cover private parts. Children were usually nude/naked from birth up till adolescence

but sometimes, ornaments, were worn round the waist for medical reasons. 'Uri'-body art was also used to decorate both men and women in the form of line forming patterns and shapes on the body.

### **m. Igba oso ochu (Exile for committing murder)**

Spilling the blood of a townsman or woman is a serious offense against the earth goddess. However, if a murder occurs in Umuchu during pre-colonial era certain age groups might seize the property of the murderer and destroy his house and runs to exile. If the murderer escapes a waiting period of four years he will be allowed back following the stipulated rituals his lineage will perform. These demonstrate the extent Umuchu culture abhors blood shedding.

Killing was only permitted during war which serious effort was also made to minimize casualties because it was also against the earth goddess. Therefore, when men return from war elaborate cleaning rituals are performed before they could associate with their lineage. Igbo cultural society respect life and view it as sacred. As such fear blood and anything that has anything to do with it remain sacred in Igbo culture under study. Because elders will always add it in their prayer to the gods every morning while breaking kola-nut – 'Egbe bere ugo bere nke si ibe ya ebe na...' and that 'ya ahudighi ihe ga eme nwoke ma obu mee nwanyi'. They believed so much in sacredness of blood/life thereby any man/woman seen having something to do with blood is banished or excommunicated to avoid contamination and attracting wrath from gods. They so much believe in live and let live and seriously distance themselves from anything that involves bloodshed.

**n. Ite ime (Abortion)**

In Igbo culture human life is sacred and immensely valued. However, since life is sacred, it must be protected and respected. Willful murder like abortion is abomination in African traditional culture which Umuchu is a part, therefore human life cannot be taken away with impunity. This is a taboo in Igbo cultural life. It was uncommon in the Igbo culture under study. What was considerable/ understandable in Igbo culture was miscarriage. Abortion was foreign to Igbo culture of which any young girl that did abortion is always seen as an outcaste which must undergo some ritual cleansing before she would be allowed to freely associate with others because murder is murder and bloodshed is bloodshed.

The Igbo culture strongly upholds that if one has the aim to or of entering into sexual union the person must also be ready to accept the responsibility for the outcome. This explains Igbo name such as– ‘Ajunwa’- child is never refused because ‘Ifeyinwa’ – there is nothing like child and ‘Nwahiri’ – let the child stay. The stigma is still very active.

**n. Umunna (Kindred)**

This was a lineage group, an exogamous unit made up of several nuclear families. It consists of all the sons and daughters who shared a common ancestor and all the wives married into the lineage segment. Each nuclear family was headed by a direct male child known as ‘diokpara’ while the extended family, was headed by the ‘isi obi’. The ‘diokpara’ or ‘isi’ obi could be an old or young man but occupied the position by virtue of his being the direct and first-male descendant. He wielded enormous spiritual and political powers.

The nuclear extended family was considered a vital agent of political socialization. It was through the family that the children were taught the basics of Igbo culturally approved

norms, myths, folklores, right attitudes, beliefs values and pattern of good behaviours.

‘Umunna’ is the strongest institution for dialogue in Igbo cultural setting. It remains the strongest institution to settle dispute among one another both in marriage, tribal war, childbirth etc. It is second to none in decision making, it is as such respected that anyone neglects it at his own risk.

It remains the valid grassroots administrative institution in Igbo culture which wields a powerful/ great influence among the people. The name ‘Umunna bu ike’ explains such belief and practice. It is the Igbo political structure which forms the fundamental basis for the execution of moral principles.

### **How have modernization and globalization affected these aspects of Umuchu culture?**

Modernization and globalization are destructive to Igbo cultural activities and development according to Oni (2005:2). It is the direct consequence of the expansion of western culture across the globe through settlement, cultural imitation and colonization. The effect of globalization and modernization seem to be more observable and alarming among Igbo youths as Oni observed that Igbo youths are rapidly losing touch with cultural values and that this could be seen in the alien culture which they project; their strange dressing , dancing and language which invariably affects other aspects of social life (66-69).

Modernization and globalization of cultural heritage have some negative impacts in the Igbo culture which area under study shares. As observed by Akande (2002) who seems to understand it more when he said that western adventures made efforts to undermine the cultural heritage of various peoples around the world through colonization, imperialism and now globalization. He further said that cultural imperialism left the

colonized in a state of cultural disorientation which is vulnerable to cultural invasion.

Younger generation of teenagers have mostly abandoned their culture and language together with religion and then trying to be hip by imitating their mainly western rap artist role models who display acute lack of values and act immorally on show and promote promiscuous behaviors especially in the lyrics of music they compose instead of them promoting the Igbo culture. The negative aspects of these changes are clearly observed by some scholars like, Ogunjini and Na'Allah (2005:36) which says that the peculiar Nigerian cultural values, like title taking, language are being eroded by the pop culture brought about by globalization.

The culture that remains in its old order is a myth which operates as a closed system. As observed by Oni (2005) 'if we become exclusively African oriented, we may as well never develop or preserve our ancient cultures which need to be improved by the fusion of other cultural, educational and scientific models'(15). It is a law of nature that true perfection can only be achieved through union. No culture is perfect but each has part of what is required to build a perfect culture. If globalization and modernization occur as a result of acculturation, a natural selection that selects the best part of each culture and combines them to achieve a perfect dominant global culture, human being will be better.

There is need to fall in place with outside world and adopt change of old practices because change is the only thing that is constant and also Christ has come to make all things new, thereby relinquishing most of those important heritage that identifies Umuchu culture in the name of Christian religion, new era and modern time.

### **1. Ichi echichi (Title taking)**

Today globalization and modernization have affected this prestigious aspect of the culture in that it is difficult to accord the kind of respect due to title taking in Igbo culture under study according to those interviewed because new breeds of the 'ozo' title holders are influenced by this new trend and made it have monetary face as against merit. This social change brought about by modernization and globalization almost wiped out the institution completely but modifies it to suit them and the modern time. The 'ozo' title lost its appeal to the modernization and globalization in the twentieth century when colonial officers stripped traditional Igbo chiefs of their power through western education.

### **2. Iri ji ohuru (New yam festival)**

The new yam festival which is still widely retained by all Igbo communities has now lost its original taste of making sacrifices of food and drinks to the Agwu, the guardian deity, in appreciation for its bountiful provisions. This is the reason Agwu ancestral spirit was given first the new yam to eat before the living. It is now replaced by church services and or thanksgiving to God almighty and again most communities use the festival to raise fund for community development as against cultural display of all sorts where Igbo heritage are transmitted to the younger generations.

### **3. Ilu di na nwanyi (Marriage)**

This aspect of Igbo cultural life has also experienced modernization and globalization as so many values in relation to it is considered things of the old, make things easy for the people involved. Families are no longer considered let alone 'Umunna' and or Village. Traditional rites of the marriage that

use to be a marker of Igbo ethnic and identity consciousness is now turned upside down in such a way that it is even perform in a foreign land without any recourse or consideration of the underline culture as a result of this new trend because where you live is your home philosophy.

The stages for the traditional marriage are no longer fully observed. Also in the presentation of wine, some Christians especially ‘the born again’ insist on the presentation of non-alcoholic drinks which is almost accommodated by the majority as a result of this new idea There is nothing like ‘iju ese’ anymore before marriage or have middle man because most marriages are initiated through social media.

#### **4. Igu afa (naming ceremony)**

Name and naming ceremony that use to be a mark of culture identity are not exempted by this new trend. In Igbo culture name that is used to depict culture, norms and values has now turned to be ordinary tag and a mere label as a result of modernization and globalization because most parents of this days do not find meaning in names they give their or even consider the implication of it on the bearer, rather they give names because of the sweet sounds or the trending name of the time. Some Igbo family name is almost lost because new generation Igbo and Christian find evil in them and do not see any need in answering their family names rather they resort in answering their father’s direct name as a result you hear: Ifeanyi Jacob; Mary Johnson; Ngozi Richard; Jenifer John etc thinking that Okeke; Okorie; Ezeigwe is out dated and evil or old fashioned.

## **5. Ibula ozu nwada (Burying a woman in her father's house)**

With the advent of modernization and globalization some of the practices in relation to ‘‘ibula ozu Nwada’’ have dropped because they are considered fetish and contrary to Christianity as well as modern time. But, it is difficult to part totally most of the cherished culture of the land. However, this is strongly objected to by the new breed of modernization that insist that Christians should not be associated with these traditional practices and that once a person dies, she should be buried in her husband place or home.

## **6. Ida ekpe (Mourning)**

Modernization and globalization as well as consequently upon increasing cost of living, the mourning period has drastically been reduced even amongst the core traditionalists. In some situations, the mourning period last between six and twelve months while some modern churches do not observe it at all. For Christians, the iyipu –afe uju and church outing mark the completion of the mourning period during which the widow is accompanied to the church with relations for church services. At the end, all would come back home and the sack cloths for the mourning period would be burnt. This will be followed with prayers, eating, drinking and dispersal. The aged believe that because of this modernization effect, there is no more respect for the dead, thereby, increased death rate as against what they consider normal.

## **7. Igba odibo (Apprentice)**

The old and famous ‘Igba odibo’ in Igbo culture has undergone several modifications or modern touch in such a way that young teens do not want to pass through the rigorous way of

apprenticeship rather they prefer easy money making process as a result of modernization and globalization. Younger ones are made errand boys for drug pushers, 419ners, cultists and armed robbers. There is no ritualist or a dirty businessman who does not have a native doctor that makes divination and prepares charms for him for a fee.

How did Igbo people under study abandoned their noble philosophies of ‘oji ofo ga ala, eziokwu bu ndu, ezi afa ka ego’ and embraced the things they once frowned upon in the name of modernization. The aged are crying that abandoning this divine-like heritage has turned children into something else, that there is no more dignity in labour. Today due to modernization and globalization effects, many Igbo people have abandoned their handiwork in search of white collar jobs and get rich quick schemes. Wealth with no known source is being celebrated as people fight to meet up with the challenges of a globalized economy.

## **8. Igu afo (Igbo calendar)**

Igbo calendar is no longer active as modern English calendar has taken over. The new generation children and parents do not know or even want to hear or even learn it because it is considered old fashioned not considering their identity that is attached to it. They do not even conversant with four market days as a result of modernization as they don’t want old things any more.

## **9. Igo oji ceremony (Kola ceremony)**

Kola nut in Igbo culture that occupied a unique position is almost seen or influence by modernization and globalization as well because to most Igbo families kola nut is replaced with anything: ‘ihe onye nwere ka oji eme oji’ behavior/ attitude.( whatever you have is what you use as kola nut. Further, women

do not break kola nut according to those interviewed but these days' women in the name or umbrella of 'Ezenwanyi' break kola nut as a form modernization.

### **10. Iti mmonwu (Masquerading)**

This secret cult/ organization that was respected and believed to be spirits of departed relatives which function as a link between the living and the dead has also been abused and experienced modernization effects. It has been severely and seriously affected in such a way that uninitiated in Igbo cultural community under study have access to the secret that is meant only for the initiated members. Also, masquerades of this modern time are baggers, robbers and even gospel preachers. That is why you hear motor killing masquerades. There is no special time for masquerade to perform, you see it this time at random which watered its glory and or prestige in some Igbo cultural communities especially area under study but the aged are still fighting to retain the originality. It is now complete social entertainers used for funeral condolences and the likes. The rigorous process of initiation are lost to modernization that anybody that wishes can make, follow and attend to 'mmonwu' of the present time.

### **11. Osu (Caste system)**

This is a controversial issue that has almost refuse to be affected by modernization in such a way that most Igbo cultural communities especially area under study irrespective of Christianity still uphold it with both hands even when modernization has nullified its existence. It is still upheld that once 'osun' is always 'osun' there is no going back in Igbo community under study, though without full stigma/pronunciation but with diplomacy the segregation is still in existence.

## **12. Ejiji (Mode of dressing)**

Dressing is one aspect of cultural identity but modernization and globalization has taken it away from Igbo culture under study in such alarming degree. It has gone modernization process and now made up of the 'isiagu' top which resembles the African 'Dashiki' for men. The isiagu is usually patterned with lion's head embroiled over the clothing; it can also be plain black most at times. For women, an embroiled puffed sleeve blouse which is influenced by European attire along with two wrappers and a head scarf are worn

## **13. Igba oso ochu (Exile for committing murder)**

Igbo people of today have lost their value for life which they are originally known for as a result of modernization and globalization. It is heard almost every day of Igbo youths killing and eating human flesh, fortifying themselves with the blood of the innocent, killing of security men in the name of freedom fighting or the likes, there is no fear of blood anymore. Today, young boys are abandoning everything to take to ritual killings, yahoo plus to a point of killing their parents in the name of making quick money. It is about wealth as they know that if they become rich they would be celebrated by their church leaders, become kings, take prestigious titles in their communities.

Modernization has made it look simple in such a way and manner that blood makes no meaningful meaning anymore as it was in Igbo culture under study. People kill over a little clash, insignificant issues, land disputes as well as for money making and in the name of one group or the other they belong thereby reducing the cultural value for the sacredness of life.

#### **14. Ite ime (Abortion)**

Modernization and globalization have made this act that is a taboo in Igbo culture look very simple as if nothing happened to a point that it can be done as many times as one wills without any stigma because modernization said it is your pregnant and child it concerns nobody as well you can do with it anything you want. Most parents are even part of this dirty deal either on themselves or their daughter in the name of unwanted pregnancy as against Igbo cultural philosophy: 'Ajunwa' because 'Ifeyinwa' but murder is murder against God and humanity.

#### **15. Umunna (Kindred)**

Kindred which used to be the strongest institution for dialogue in Igbo cultural setting has also been affected by this modern trend of modernization and globalization in such a manner that it is now politicalized in most Igbo communities including area under study thereby creating division amongst themselves and scaring younger ones away from tracing to their root. Some are no longer functional while some are functioning with half trust and confidence and some are on the fight to stand their feet to enable them hand over good legacy to the new generation.

#### **What are the negative effects of the culture erosion on Umuchu of the Igbo nation?**

Cultural contact has brought about a forced acculturation that has left the rich cultural heritage of Umuchu Igbo people in a precarious condition of imminent extinction. Modernization and globalization negates all the ideas of cultural relativity and cultural pluralism such that today Umuchu section of Igbo culture suffers the crisis of identity because of the importation of foreign values, and modernization and globalization have also destroyed the cultural values as well as the uniqueness of natural cultures and identities. Therefore, this is a great

challenge to Igbo cultural values and heritage, so, men and women of this present generation should use two hands and all their strength to lament and stand strongly to this difficult challenge. The Igbo people which Umuchu shares should take their destiny into their hands and acts to correct the anomaly.

The negative effects of globalization seem to be more conspicuous and alarming among the youths according to Oni (2005). Nigerian youths are rapidly losing touch with cultural values and that this could be seen in the alien culture which they portray their bizarre dressing etc. The dress code which is perfectly fits winter condition in western countries is presently wear by Igbo people under study when a summer is full without noting that not all western styles of dressing are acceptable in Igbo culture because of value.

Modernization and globalization has made it that families do not do things together and even eat from same bowl anymore as a result of their work or otherwise. Formally, families used to eat together from the same bowl which also brought sense of unity among them. The ordinary daily eating has become more of an individual ritual owing to modernization and globalization according to Murcott (2011) and Caplan (1997).

Worse still, extra and/or pre-marital even same sex sexual affairs which traditional norms frown at and often with severe consequences for the individual involved have become part or normal life style because of modernization and globalization.

### **What steps are to be taken to preserve the umuchu cultural heritage?**

It is a law of nature that true perfection can only be achieved through union, therefore no culture is perfect but each other has part of what is required to build a perfect culture. In view of the contending issues therefore the following steps are to be taken

for effective preservation of Umuchu cultural heritage of the Igbo in a global changing world.

1. The first step to be taken in preserving the Umuchu cultural heritage of the Igbo is to transcend the inferiority complex that makes the people believe or think that what they have is local and anything foreign is better.
2. There is need to establish cultural heritage club where cultural heritage issues would be discussed as a means of transmission of oral and intangible heritage of Umuchu section of the Igbo.
3. Umuchu section of the Igbo can also advance their culture by way of cultural adaptation and alignment, rather than copying a foreign culture completely.
4. Umuchu section of the Igbo should not target to retain their cultural heritage in their ever position because it is against the law of nature rather to direct the process of Cultural Revolution in a way that is positive to them by selecting what to preserve and otherwise.

## **Conclusion**

Globalization has severely affected the Igbo culture. Its undertone and effect cannot be overemphasized. Politically, the quest for personal power no matter what it cost is in vogue. The modern life of individualism has also affected the Igbo communal life – culture of brotherhood and extended family system.

All ideas of cultural relativities such as discussed above are suffering serious identity as a result of importation of foreign cultures – modernization and globalization. Seriously, Igbo culture under study has been affected by the evil wind of modernization and globalization. Ehusain opined that, nowadays personal relations and the overwhelming sense of the

sacredness have been witnessed and obscured by the cankerworm of western materialism and individualism. The effect came as a result of our willingness to embrace the western culture and not as result of a deliberate scheme by the west to impose their culture on ours. Therefore, to manage the effects we should first realize that we have culture which is our identify and that there are some aspects of our cultures that are superior to what other foreign culture has and also there are some aspect of foreign culture that are superior than ours which we can positively direct the conduct of the development of our cultures by judiciously adopting what to change and what to retain or preserve to marry the two for a perfect and quality living condition.

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