

HISTORY OF IGBO PEOPLE AND EDUCATION: A PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATION

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Abstract

This paper argues that it is the duty and intellectual responsibility of indigenous elites to write the history of their own people. It claims that the knowledge of the language of peoples' birth, history, cultural values, traditional norms, geography and education, to mention but a few place aborigines of a an area on a vantage position to deliver this crucial service to their people and humanity. This paper of the opinion that a few weeks' vacation by expertrates to Igbo land; Nigerian is quite insufficient to equip any expatriate with the full knowledge and endowments needed to write about this fascinating people and area. That was the reason why theses researchers written what they know about their people, their history as it is and as it should be, to put records straight and decimate misinformation.

Key Words: Agriculture; Cultural Values; Igbos' History; Indigenous Education; Language; Local Technology; Religions; Socialization.

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Introduction

Can a mortal man do without his past? The answer should be no. the answer is correct because, history has a way of deterring the future. It is a popular saying that before an individual will do well in the journey of life, he should have a good grasp of his past, study his present and be able to predict his future. Anything that concerns the past events is called history. Orji (2002) posited that history as a science is the systematic recording, description and interpretation of events about the past. In the words of Fafunwa (1974) history is to a people what memory is to the individual. A people with no knowledge of their past would suffer from collective amnesia, groping blindly into the future without guide. It is only a thorough awareness of people's heritage that can allow them to make their public decisions as they make their private ones. Fafunwa posited that for possible educational reform, reflection on previous events and policies will assist considerably in planning any future course of action of a people.

This brings us to the question of who is most apposite to write a people's history of education? Should this responsibility fall on indigenous authors or expatriates? In an attempt to provide an answer to this this petinent question, authors of this research paper are of the view that citizens of a country, local community stand the best position to write their own history. In support of this assertion therefore, Fafunwa (1974) opined that it

takes an indigenous historian to glimpse the historical past of his people and to express it in a language that his people will appreciate and in a manner that will create a deeper understanding and sense of identity with the cultural heritage of his people. It then obvious that Igbo intellectuals and historians are the best positioned to undertake this enormous task of writing about the Igbo man; his developmental transitions and prospects and challenges as a distinct African race. For the indigenous Igbo authors and historians are better armed with the tools of academic research and intellectual power-points to perform this essential duty. Therefore, relying on expatriate authors who have barely been to Nigeria on a few weeks' vacation as the handlers of this elaborate project and possible authors of Igbo history need to be reconsidered promptly. Abandoning this task in the hands of expatriates who know little or nothing about Igboland would definitely create an avenue for misinformation about the Igbos (people of Igboland), who are the focus of this study. It imperative that those who know a people very well should write or talk about them to avoid the acceptance and consumption of unverified and groundless stories about a people. Expatriates who misunderstand and misinterpret the philosophy and psychology of African culture because they don't understand the mysteries behind it should not be the ones to tell the world about the Igbos. When expatriates tell stories they hardly know much about, they do lots of damage that's could deface the integrity and historical pride of a race enduringly.

Apparently, the western world created some needed enlightenments which lit the light of civilization in Africa; Igbo land, a fact that propelled the western world to arrogate on themselves the singular responsibility of delivering this intellectual service to the Igbo race and t Nigeria as a whole. Possibly, their claim over this duty was nessesitated by the Lugardian colonial policy of imparting a sound educational policy to the colonized peoples of Africa (Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies, March 1925). Having abandoned the unenviable yoke of political colonialism, and effectively matched into the light of intellectual maturity therefore, the time is ripe enough for Igbo indigenous authors, researchers, and historians to embark on the project of writing their own history, using proper language and culture of the people which is completely based on vderifiable facts and figures on ground which are devoid of mere imaginations used by foreign authors and writers who don't know the Igbos of the Southeastern, Nigeria etymologically.

The Theme

The theme of this article will be dicussed under the following subheading: The Igbos of the Southeastern, Nigeria, Igbo Cultural Values, Religions of the Igbo, Language, Indigenous Education, Our History is in our own hands, Local Technology, Building and Constructions, Information Storage System, Information Dissemination Techniques, Agriculture, Socialization.

The Igbos of the Southeastern, Nigeria

The Igbos are located in the south-eastern part of the country called Nigeria and they occupy a geographical space of about 15,800 square miles, have a population of about 73 million and located between latitude 5-7 degrees north, and longitude 6-8 degrees on the east. The geographical territory occupied by the Igbo people and Igbo language itself (Iwunna, 2009). The Igbos who form the focal point of this paper is one of the three largest ethnic groups among Nigeria's estimated 256 ethnic and 490 linguistic groups. The Igbos are predominantly Christians, majority of whom are Catholics. They are so rich in the numerity of the cultures and traditional values celebrated by the people, which clearly distinguish them from the rest of the country's ethno-cultural units. It is the uniqueness of such cultures and traditional value systems that draw the huge line of distinction between the Igbo and all the other ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Igbos are ingenious, brilliant, successful traders, great travelers, accomplished educationists. Igbo people revere hard work, honesty, truthfulness, generosity, humility, respect for elders, respect for cultural and traditional values, but hate acrimony, backbiting, arrogance, greed, stinginess, dishonesty, stealing, ill-gotten wealth to mention but a few (Obasi, Obi & Ndukwu, 2017). The Igbos are passionate about their cultural values and heritage. And before the advent of western education and before Rev. Father Lutz founded the Roman Catholic Church in Onitcha in 1886, the Igbo man had been nurturing, giving and passing to his young ones the traditional or indigenous type of education orally. For instance, their folktales, poems, proverbs, alliterations, stories of ancestral links, family and local community ties, and ancient conflicts and conquests, count among the local values which define who the Igbos really are. Others are embedded in their burial ceremonies and rites, wrestling contests, marriage rites and celbrations, salutations, respect for authorities of the land, naming ceremonies, arts and designs, local technology, religion, masquerades, festivals, conflicts management, fines and levies, punishments for offenders, divorce, theft, lineage migrations, acts of ostracism, oaths taking, language and communication skills, etc (Ogbalu, 1974). Ancient stories and tradition revealed that most of the Igbos are sons of the soil and the aborigines of where they occupy. These areas of cultural and traditional identity define who the Igbos are, what they value and celebrate, where they came from, and what their Igboness really entails. Within the umbrella of these value systems, the ancient history of the people could be deduced. It is therefore the belive of the authors

of this research work that only indigenous authors or researchers have the natural advantage to write the tenets of their cultures; their history is in their own hands.

Igbo Cultural Values

Culture is the totality of people's way of life that identifies and makes them unique and also distinguishes them from other people. The Igbos are a culture-conscious nation. The Igbos' life style is portrays numerous cultures and traditional values which clearly distinguish them from all other Nigerian communities and identifies them as Igbo people wherever they are. It is to such an extent that the daily life activities of the people are reflected and founded within the milieus of the different cultures they share and celebrate. As a value-oriented, norms and indigenous practices have become so strong that the people place so much importance on the continued celebration of these trans-generational values. It could be said without any regrets that the Igbos are as synonymous to culture itself, to the extent that their relevance to the Igboness of the Igbo man could only be compared with the natural relationship which exists between mother and child, water and fish.

The daily activities of the Igbos, such as greetings, respect for parents and elders, character development, marriage rites, skills acquisitions, burial rites, naming ceremonies, age grade celebrations, titles taking rites, settlement of disputes, inter-personal relationships, hosting of visitors, courtships, oat-taking, house making or mending, lands sharing among families, seniority rites, socializations, widowhood rites, widowerhood rites, mourning rites, use of proverbs and idioms, etc. constitute an integral part of the Igbos' world of cultures and traditional value systems (Achebe, 1958).

In the thoughts of our former European colonizers, several of these cultures and traditional values and value systems were described and categorized in some terrible languages. They were said to be idolatrous, barbaric, savage-oriented, and other marks of un-civilization. In their opinion, Igbo, Nigeria cultural practices are marks of paganism and unchristian. To them, those traditions reflected Igbo man's attachments to the gods of the land. This erroneous concept is not true of an Igbo man. That it is why we say that it is the responsibility of Igbo researchers and authors to explain issues better to our expatriate brothers. European colonizers criticized the African cultures either because they were unable to comprehend them or because they did not know what we celebrate, and their inherent relevance, and associated relationships to the African cum Igbo man. Based on these factors and un-qualifiable opinions, foreign authors often found it cheap to classify most Igbo and African cultures as being paganistic, heathen, and uncivilized, plus several other similar terms (Okoro, 2009).

It is an issue of common knowledge that there is no part of the Igbo culture which tolerates or encourages any forms of immoral behaviors in any way. Among the people, hard work and dignity of labor are celebrated and held high. Honesty and respect for the law are well-regarded. Respect for the sanctity and sacredness of human life is an accepted norm. Wanton destruction of lawful properties of others is abhorred and condemned in all its ramifications with all impunity. The Igbos value human life and property, a reason why they criticize the heinous activities of Boko-Haram and Fulani hairdressmen in many parts of Nigeria today. It is therefore the task of our indigenous authors and writers to write and educate our expatriate friends that on how far they have erred in their individualistic perceptions of the rich traditional values of the Igbos. It is quite obvious that no foreign author, irrespective of the number of times he/she had visited, researched in, or even lived in parts of Igboland would ever know the Igbo better than they know themselves, or write more conscientiously and authoritatively on specific areas of their cultures and traditions, better than the Igbo author himself. It is time respond to and correct the mistakes of our colonial masters.

Key Religions of the Igbo

Prior to the arrival of Europeans to the shores of Igboland, the Igbos were predominantly adherents of the African Traditional Religion (ATR). ATR is the original religion of the Igbos in Nigeria, ATR is aboriginal and was unimported like other religions we have in Africa today. Imported religions have Africa more than they met her. In exception of few exception one can confidently say that ATR is better than all other religions in the world. Even before the advent of Christianity, the Igbos worshipped God Almighty, though, through ancestral, village, or family deities, housed in various shrines found in different parts of Igboland. Through the medium of the mini-gods, known as "Agbara or Arusi", worship and reverence are made to Chukwu (the big God). Uchendu (1965) posited that the Igbos are a religious people. Their belief system and elaborate religious worship recognizes God as the supreme being." Uchendu added that the Igbos' knowledge, faith, and belief in the Supreme God is not in doubt. For him, their worship of the creator of the universe, known in the local language as Chineke, Chukwu Okike, Okike kere uwa, Chukwu, and Chukwu Abiama, was very strong indication that the Igbos have been worshipping God before they came into contact with the whites. One God, who creates, as is reflected in the name – Chi Okike (Anyanwu, 2003).

All the other gods worshipped by the Igbos were conceived as messenger-gods. They were seen as messengers of the Supreme God, hence they thought it reasonable and respectful enough to worship God through the mini-gods. Anyanwu said that the sun god is called Amadioha; but Amadioha is the god of lightning or

thunder and rains, Ahia-Njoku; the god of yams and fertility, Igwe; the god of the sky, Ala; the goddess of the earth and fertility, etc., due worship was given to God. Thus, it becomes relevant then to add that the religious nature of the Igbos far existed before the arrival of European missionaries. The Igbos were of the view that God is too big and powerful for man to approach directly, that was why the Igbos were worshipping him through a number of minor gods and small deities. The understanding of the earlier Igbos was that the Supreme God was too great to be worshipped directly or faced by a mortal man. This mad them to resolve to worship homes and village or community shrines deities (Uchendu, 1965 & Ogbalu, 1974).

However, the big difference was that the entry of the European Christian missionaries into Igboland changed the Igbo man's mindset about worship of the only true God, and fertilized the ground for the complete displacement of the shrines through which God was worshipped. Christianity opened the eyes of the Igbos to the paradox of approaching God through a number of agent-gods. Christianity rather directed their minds to worship God through His Son Jesus Christ, who is conceived as the redeemer of all humanity. Thus, Ayandele (1996) describes the scenario as the "collapse of paganism" and asserted that the Igbos responded most enthusiastically to christianity. This is because the Igbos' knowledge of God and His existence preceded the arrival of the European christian missionaries and the subsequent introduction of christianity to Igbo communities. Their recognition of the place and position of God as the maker of the world was never in doubt. Thus, it would be a lie if anybody says that the Igbos knew God and His existence only after the arrival of the missionaries. It is also an erroneous assertion that the Igbos were all pagans, prior to the arrival of Europeans. Rather, it is quite acceptable that the introduction of christianity in parts of Igboland largely influenced their art of worship of God.

Significantly therefore, their new doctrines strengthened the Igbo man's power and mode of worship of the Supreme God. Thus, it is a known fact that Igboland remains the only major ethnic group in Nigeria which is predominantly Christians, with more than 98% of her population professing Christ. There are however scanty persons who still keep faith with the traditional religion, as well as Islam.

Language

Language is a unique, arbitrary, systematic and symbolic means of communication. Language is a non-material aspect of culture. Without doubt, the language of the people forms an integral part of their culture and history. Language is crucial in view of the fact that it is part and parcel of every human society. No human society ever existed without its own indigenous language for communication. It is a unique aspect of every human society, and in fact a crucial arm of their cultures, identity, and selfhood in the comity of nations and language communities. As an important facet of any nation's cultural values and natural heritage, language becomes synonymous with the owners and users of this vital tool of communication and a mark of identity definition. The aborigines of Igboland speak Igbo language as their mother tongue and first language. Igbo language is in the indigenous language that pride the identity of Igbo people. It is in this language that they claim oneness, distinctness, and undiluted freedom of expression.

Above all, it is in a people's language that owner-speakers document their past, write their life's stories, and pass their history to future generations or into the hands of their unborn children. Common language is what gives the Igbo that unique power of self-expression, and most importantly in the use proverbs, idioms, alliterations, and all manner of language communications, thoughts, and feelings. It becomes plausible then that through the use of the Igbo language, the Igbos are able to write their own literature, history and communicate their past intelligibly into the future – for generations unborn. The Igbos should encourage their children to learn and speak Igbo language, this is because all manner of scientific and technological developments are easier when indigenous languages are used. Every advanced nation of the world uses her indigenous language in communications, inventions and educating her citizens. Countries like Rusia, China, Japan, Germny, Italy, North Korea France United Kingdom and America cannot do without their local languages. Africa, Nigeria and Igbo land will not and cannot develop scientifically and technologically without using and developing their indigenous languages for research and academic instructions. When Russia orbited the earth, America restructured her own educational system using their language and did what Russia did after seven years. When North Korea wanted to be counted as one of the world nuclear powers, she restructured her educational system using their language and channeled their curriculum towards science and ballistics. In 1967 when Julius Nyerere wanted to unify Tanzania and solve her socio-economic and political problems, he introduced the Arusha policy (Orji, 2001). Arusha policy enabled teachers in Tanzania to teach all subject to students in their native language; Swahili. These examples depict the power of language in aiding a nation to achieve her set goals.

Through the use of the Igbo language, intellectuals have been able to bring the past into the present, as well as leap into the future from the antecedents of their ancestors. Today, indigenous historians and native academic researchers are able to talk and write in their own language. With the aid of our own language, Igbo intellectuals are proudly motivated to address the questions concerning critical issues of their development, nationalism, education, technology, and issues of human capacity advancement, using the power of Igbo language; language of the mass natives. A total acceptance, usage, mastery and publicity of Igbo language will

make the Igbo child to appreciate his/her own language and become willing and to speak on their own past, write on their own past in an adult manner, and consequently become better informed to talk unshakably about their own history, instead of relying on the disjointed and often unsubstantiated information emerging from the hands of some alien authors who are more or less fictionists.

Indigenous Education

There was education in Igbo land before the advent of the white missionaries. The education that existed in Igbo land then, taught Igbo people how to survive on their own. That aboriginal education, taught girls how to be good wives by respecting and helping their husbands and raise their kids in a moral way. It taught young men how to be strong, work hard, be law abiding, respect for elders and cultural values. That native type of education produced traditional healers, house builders, blacksmiths, wood workers, food processors, midwives and many more. That was why Fafunwa (1974) opined that the indigenous education emitted in the youths the desire for the acquisition of professional skills. Native education instilled in the youths the attitude of skills acquisition. That is the dignity of an Igbo man, and this is what the Igbo known for, even today. That indigenous type of education was what helped the Igbos to transmit their cultural values, beliefs, norms, history and language from one generation to another. The traditional educational system encouraged Igbo sons and daughters to participate actively in matters of community development, as well as imparting in the youth the love for good character development. Igbo history has it that from time immemorial, the Igbos, encourage their citizens to appreciate high moral standards which are the hall marks of indigenous education of the Igbo people. Through folkstories, the Igbos try to teach and build a crime-free Igboland. This education, if judiciously handled and effectively imparted, the youths will learn the right attitude to life and enjoy an enviable position in the community of world nations where peace, unity, and religious tolerance constitute the accepted societal norm. For instance, the Igbos still remain the only section of Nigeria without any indigenous terrorism despite all sorts of marginalization they have suffered in the hands of Nigeria since after the civil war. The then indigenous education had nothing to do with writing, writing and organized classroom. Teaching was done orally, and any reasonable and knowledgeable elder could assume the position of a teacher then. No certificate or classroom was required before teaching could take place in the traditional educational system. But there was oral curriculum which was embedded in the norms and traditional values of Igbo people. There is no way the Igbo history of education could be promoted without paying due attention and sense of commitment to the people's indigenous education.

There is no doubt that western education brought enlightenment to the African soil, but, the western system of education came with its own ills, that was the reason why Rodney (1972) postulated that the educational pattern brought by the colonial masters to Africans was quite short of the quality and quantity of the education necessary for the genuine and authentic development of Africa. According to Rodney, such education could not encourage the developmental needs of the continent, neither were the contents good enough to support community development, encourage healthy character formation, or discourage the life of criminality, religious indoctrination, and wanton destruction of life and property which have rampaged parts of Nigeria today.

Western values are inimical to communal living, shared cultural values and traditional norms celebrated by the Igbo. Prominent among these obnoxious cultures of the whites are the legalization of homosexuality, lesbianism, trans-gender and indiscent dressing. As well, the relentless and faceless attacks of insurgents on innocent people are unacceptable in the trade-religious milieu of the Igbos, as such things are quite detrimental to peace and development of the people. On the average, the Igbos do not partake in heinous crime against fellow people, because their indigenous educational curricula have no provision for violence or negative trends. The kidnapping, armed robbery, insurgence, assassination and prostitution are some of the traits Africans; Igbos are learn from white and foreign cultures.

Our History is in our own hands

An Igbo adage says that no one can ever know anyone better than he or she knows him or herself. If the assertion above is true, therefore, it is quite plausible that no author or writer in the world would ever know or write about a particular people or human society better than the people themselves, irrespective of the veracity and scope of the research work conducted. Writing about yourself will make you to be properly armed with the right tools, and guided by the appropriate materials to say things the way they are without chasing shadows.

There is no doubt that Igboland has produced renowned and reputable intellectuals, technicians, and scientists of all categories. Igbo academic and research gurus are easily located in all parts of the globe, manning different intellectual and professional duty posts of high repute. In universities, research centers, and educational institutions worldwide, Igbo intellectuals have never been found wanting in occupy enviable front seats in the academic circle. In the research community worldwide, the Igbo are easily located, and always available in their numbers to answer the call of duty. In fact, they are often considered trusted research partners. It is not surprising to hear that the Igbos are in the front seat of the Nigerian educational pursuit, hence by 1930s most of the Igbo

people had already known the importance of western education (Orji, 2002). If the above assertion is true, the Igbos really need to wake up from slumber and refuse to be fed with some information jumbled together in the History books, emanating from the hands of expatriates and their agents.

The Igbo, Nigeria, and Africa as a whole should no longer define themselves from the lenses created by the ex-colonial masters and their praise singers. Thus, Rodney (1972) claims that for such expatriate authors and novelists, there exists no significant difference between the fictions they produce and the History books they write. Igbo people are ripe enough to speak for themselves, write about themselves, and document their pasts using their own hands, and guided by their own intellectual lenses.

The Igbo are making exploit in various disciplines of study; Medicine, Philosophy, Psychology, Engineering, Computer Sciences, History, Education, Law etc. There is no field of study in the wide world where the Igbo will be found in their numbers. It is not surprising then that among the Igbo, investment in education is viewed as a serious issue of concern. Among families and local communities, education is conceded as a crucial project, which must be preciously guarded with severe caution and sincere sense of commitment. Thus, through the powerful tools of education, the Igbos became better positioned to speak for themselves, write their own history, and sincerely redress the misdoings of the colonial and ancestral past, using the powers of the pen on paper.

With these in perspective, our discussion of this subject shall be harmonized under a few subheadings, which would guide a better appreciation of our line of discussion.

Local Technology

The term “nka na uzu” is used in Igbo language define local technology produced in Igbo land. Prior to the arrival of the Western colonialists and their agents in Igboland, the people had their indigenous forms of technology, arts, and crafts, even though they were not at their best. The Igbos were able to fabricate the various and metal items needed for domestic use, as items of decoration, production, repairs making, farming, and several other construction materials. To that end, the Igbo were able to fabricate and produce wooden and iron items of furniture, parts, hoes, cutlasses, tables, cooking stands, block making molds, and soil tilling implements (Iwunna, 2010; & Omolewa, 2001). As the knowledge of these crucial technological implements were already established in the minds of the Igbos, and they were using them to service their numerous domestic and industrial needs, as well as marketed them for financial benefits. The fact is that as knowledge of these technological skills grew, indigenous apprentices grew in numbers too. The implication of this development is that the desire for skills acquisition grew, unemployment fell drastically among the Igbo population, community development ensued, while engagement in the fabrication and mass production of other technological tools needed by the Igbo in the areas of agriculture, carpentry, crafts making, arts and crafts, music, building constructions, as well as road making projects went upwards too (Udoh, 1966).

It therefore lies in the hands of indigenous authors to inform and educate Western authors and fiction writers that indigenous technology existed in Igboland before their arrival to the African soil and shores. The Igbos knew what they needed to survive and were able to produce them locally, using their indigenous forms of technology. The assertion above was evidenced their ability to produce local bombs called the Ojukwo-Burket or Ogbu-n’-igwe (killing in mass), local guns, other weapons and refine crude oil for their power their vehicles and jets during the Nigerian-Biafra war of 1967-1970. The Igbo are able to fabricate several auto spare parts, tractor accessories, electrical parts, as well as numerous other construction accessories which are in use in Nigerian markets, and abroad till today. Aba in Abia state is the Russia, Japan and China put together, and Onitcha in Anambra state is fast growing in the invention of in indigenous science and technology (naka-nu-uzu). There is no doubt that this has imparted the fast-growing level of development witnessed in many Igbo towns and communities today. Another evidence of the creative power of the Igbo man is the huge numbers of small, medium and large scale industries established by Igbo sons and entrepreneurs in various towns and cities of Nigeria and abroad. Consequently, investment in this region has hugely created employment opportunities for the Igbos and other Nigerians as well.

Building and Constructions

It is a fact that before the arrival of European missionaries and their colonial allies in Igboland, Nigeria, Igbo people had knowledge of different kinds of construction, but lacked the knowledge of sophisticated construction techniques and designs we have in Igboland today. Their knowledge of house making, solid road construction, bridge making, and professional roof making designs were poor. Prior to this historic encounter, the Igbos lived in shanties and huts, and travelled on pathways. Just as the huts and shanties functioned as their homes and places of residence, the narrow and unnavigable bush paths offered them no facilities to travel fast on land. There were no sound knowledge of bridge making, in the real sense of it as we have them in our landways today. As those ancient facilities were most unreliable, less resistant to tropical weather conditions, and undurable in any manner or form. They lacked every basic facilities which could enhance life, as well as

deprived their owners or users every elements of aesthetics. Above all, those facilities lacked every sense of professionalism in their constructions and designs (Lugard, 1922). The scenario however changed with the arrival of European nationals and missionaries, following the importation of the highly needed building materials and construction design technology into the shores of Igboland. Consequently, these developments gave birth to the erection of carefully designed homes and residential building, concrete bridges, corrugated roofing sheets, solid block making materials, iron rods of all sorts, measures, and weights, weather resistant doors and window frames, as well as factory produced bags of cement.

Following their arrival, permanent family structures came into Igboland. Carefully designed public structures and facilities began to emerge in all the nooks and crannies of the land. Permanent church structures, hospitals, medical centers, professionally designed bridges and road networks which connected different towns and villages of Igboland, came into existence. Designed office complexes began to emerge within the colonial territory of Nigeria.

The positive effect of this development was the creation of job opportunities which enlightened Igboland and other parts of Nigeria. To that end, the people began to train in several sectors of the construction industry where manpower was needed for the development of Igboland. At that, the growth of the economy was boosted as families made better living out of the fast growing industry. Thus, there is no doubt that the arrival of these facilities impacted development, governance, transportation, contact among communities, healthy living, jobs creation, professional careers development, as well as reduced joblessness and indolence among the people. Consequently, this new development impacted positively on the relationships which existed between the Igbos and their European expatriate colleagues and partners. Above all, they injected professionalism, durability, and added value to the construction industry, thereby repositioning its relevance in the development of the Nigerian economy (Lugard, 1922: 512). Thus, we conclude that Europe's entry into the construction industry in Igboland, following their historic contact injected new blood and energy into the sector and the land.

Information Storage System

The traditional Igbo society, family, or homestead lacked proper, secure, and long-lasting information storage mechanism. Prior to contact with Europeans, the Igbos stored crucial information such as family history, personal data, business activities, confidential personal matters, and other private information concerning themselves, their lives, families, activities, contacts, and history in some crude and highly unreliable formats. Before the advent of Europeans to Igboland important data were stored in the forms of signs and symbols created by the owners themselves, whose meanings could only be read or interpreted by the exact owners alone. By implication, the meanings of such signs and symbols died as soon as their owners died. Therefore, the symbolical languages created by the earlier Igbo men never lasted long. Their usefulness and relevance were quite limited, even as the means communication, such symbols conveyed information depending on individual perceptions. A single traditional Igbo sign and symbol then could be given hundreds of interpretations and meanings, which are dependent on the 'reader' himself. Based on this factor, authors rather classify this category of language as a private language (Fafunwa, 1974).

Among the Igbos therefore, items which formed the core instruments of information storage included sticks, stones, graffiti, pieces of clothes, lengths of rope, various forms of wall marks, marks on trees, carved objects, kola nuts, sorts of ornaments, rings, etc. Usually, each of these objects conveyed different meanings and interpretations, which depended clearly at the discretion of the individual user-owners (Depaepe & Simon, 2001). In which case, there are no universalities in the meanings attached to any of these objects of communication. Meanings and possible interpretations were exclusively left at the discretion. Thus, the legendary Unoka, a renowned debtor, known loafer, and the biological father of Okonkwo in *Things fall apart by Chinua Achebe*, used wall marks, made in several rows on the walls of his traditional lounge to indicate his indebtedness to everyone of list of creditors. In the case of Unoka, each single line represented a specific amount of money he owed to a particular creditor (Achebe, 1958). The question is, what happens if the debtor suddenly dies without letting his family members know the exact meanings of what he wrote on the walls of his own lounge? Omolewa (2001) suggested that the memory could be better preserved through written records, and their information could be more effectively shared and exchanged through the same medium. The truth is that the death of such a debtor will lead to contrversis and bad debts. The obvious answer is that in the thinkings of all other readers of those lines, they could mean simple wall decorations. They could even be interpreted to represent the births of his many children, the number of domestic animals he owned, the exact figures of male and female members of his lineage, the number of palm trees he owned, his pieces of farmlands, figures of seed yams harvested in the previous year, etc. The implication here is that a whole world of interpretations could be created from out of a single sign language written anywhere in the traditional Igbo environment. Above all, the signs represent different meanings to different people, as well as the reading audience (Omolewa, 2006).

The traditional Igbo man stored crucial information in their heads (brains). Therefore, such information or data were prone to decay, mental corrosion, and loss of memory. By implication, the moment the original

owners or storers of the information or symbolical languages died, all the data stored up in the brain go into the grave where they remain perpetually. The unfortunate result is that chances of ever recalling or retrieving them in any way or form become impossible (Iwunna, 2009; Depaepe & Simon, 2001). Because of memory loss, there is the tendency for undue falsification of information in families, communities, and among business associates. The result of such an unfortunate development is that there is every propensity for families and neighboring communities to engage in bitter squabbles over issues that could have been better managed if the evidences were clear enough or well documented and stored.

Information Dissemination Techniques

Before the coming of Europe in Igboland, the people had their indigenous media of information dissemination. Basically, the methods of information circulation among members of different communities are through the word of mouth, which goes on from one person to the other, until the whole village or local community is covered. The indication is that soon after a piece of information gets into the ears of a few members of the community, it is quickly circulated into the homes and workplaces of the remaining members of the community. The unwritten standing code is that once the information is sent out through a few persons, it becomes their obligation to pass same around with speed and precision within the kinship range.

The implication is that the Igbo circulate their essential information through the mouths of some designated town criers who have been selected for this singular purpose. At that, village town criers are usually armed with a metal or wooden gong, with which they walk through the perimeters of their local communities, beating them at intervals as the messages were shouted out. Meanwhile, it is the leaders of specific local communities who appoint town criers, as well as hand out messages to them for circulation to the community members. With a unique beat of the gong, they traverse the entire village, sending their messages around, just at the peak of their voices (Achebe, 1958). Soon after all nooks and crannies of the affected local community have been covered, the gong immediately goes silent, and waits till another time in the future. At that the task of information circulation is completed. The snag here is that information spread and effective communication is often slow and sluggish. Sometimes, the core elements of the message are missed out or lost.

The difference became quite clear, following the entry of Europe into Igboland. Radios, newspapers, short notices, billboards, written circulars and letters, television broadcasts, and other electronic media came alive. Over the years, the European methods of information dissemination proved themselves better, faster, better defined and refined, catchy, and more appealing to the audience. Consequently, they became commercialized, and became a source of jobs creation for millions of Nigerians, as well as a beacon of financial growth. Thus, the fact remains that in this area, the Igbo, Nigeria had their indigenous methods of information dissemination prior to the arrival of the Western shores. Over the years, these have been complemented by those of their European partners, which share the huge advantage of making wider appeals to the audience within the shortest possible time.

Agriculture

From the origin of man, Igbo people have been strong successful farmers and agriculturalists. They have engaged in small and medium scale levels of food production. Prior to their contact with white men and women. All the way, the Igbos created jobs for themselves and their family members in the different sectors of agriculture, with the main objectives of feeding for themselves and their family members (Iwunna, 2015, Achebe, 1958, & Iwunna, 2009). This is reflected in the large number of children which Igbo families had in their earlier days. Their quest to have many wives was a mark of affluence and agricultural wealth. The Igbos produce yam production, pepper cultivation, groundnuts, cassava, cowpeas, rice corn or maize), palm oil, soya beans, and other agricultural products were in abundant supplies all over the land. Following the arrival of the European colonialists and their marketing agents, the production of these products got highly commercialized. Exportation of farm produce became a major source of wealth to both locals and their expatriate partners (Echeruo, 2003).

Countries of Europe, most especially Britain and Portugal cashed in on these resources, and consequently impacted the proliferation of industries to exchange our raw materials with money. It is worthy to note that Europeans and Africans had always traded even during the time of trade by barter. Thus, it became the responsibility of the colonial government to begin the process of introducing modern agricultural practices in parts of the country, as well as supported the teaching and learning of Agriculture in schools and educational institutions all over the country. Thus, over the years, crop yield improved dramatically, export markets grew tremendously, while the quality of produce improved (Iwunna, 2009 & Lugard, 1922). Thus, the arrival of Europe on the shores of Igboland impacted the quality and quantity of agricultural produce through improved farming practices. As well, new agricultural products such as paw-paw, tomatoes, pepper, oranges, etc. started entering Igboland, thereby making agriculture one most essential industry in the nation. Above all, this historic contact introduced the Igbos to the attitude of embracing agriculture as an occupation which could improve the

lives, economies, and living conditions of families. In attempt to upgrade this profession from a mere hand to mouth affair, that shifted its relevance to what it is today in Igbo land.

Socialization

Socialization is the unique process through which a new member of a society learns and acquires the norms and conforms to the cultural values and expectations of the people. It is quite natural that the Igbos have their indigenous forms of socialization which pre-existed the arrival of European explorers into our part of the world. These forms of socialization were crucial for their entertainment and relaxation purposes. They offered opportunities for inter-village competitions, as well. Still, their ability to provide opportunities for a judicious use of leisure hours at village squares and other public gathering points makes this art an essential part of the Igbos (Anyanwu, 1989).

It is important to indicate right away that the art of traditional dancing is a key form of socialization and entertainment among the Igbos. Life becomes boring if traditional dances, wrestling competitions, and other forms of traditional entertainment are not held at various public areas, or the events that call for them. In parts of Igboland, most especially in the Mbaise areas, traditional dances and other entertainments which often appear on the scene include the Ekpe, Abigbo Mbaise, Ikoro, Okonko, Ekpo, Agbachaa ekuru nwa, Abigolo, Ogbogelenge, Ese, and Uko, Nkwaiké Mmanwu, etc. Though it would be most impossible to describe all of them here, but it might also be relevant to indicate that the Abigbo Mbaise is a special dance among the Mbaise and Owerri areas. These activities were both gender affairs. The music is danced with all the grace and fanfare it requires, while beautiful and carefully corrugated renditions which follow the sweet beatings of traditional instruments follow. Beaming faces of the male dancers and the chanting of their highly harmonized voices add color and elegance to the sweet tunes of the music, thereby pulling the watching audience off their feet in utter jubilation.

Traditional wrestling was part of the Igbo socialization tools. Traditional wrestling was usually held at village squares during festivals such as Oruru-Ukwu Enyiogugu, Onwa Asa, Iwa-akwa, Igba nkwa nwanyi (traditional marriage ceremony), ibo uzo (annual traditional road cleaning festivals), Iri Ji Ohu (new yam festival) and so on. Usually, wrestling was an affair for the male foke, as Igbo culture does not allow female wrestling competitions, though there was a story of how one woman named Eringa wrestled and defeated three different men in a wrestling competition before her husband came and defeated her. It is a shame for a woman to defeat a man in a wrestling competition.

There were other forms of socialization prominent among the Igbo too, which include folktales entertainments (mnolight stories) which made serious waves among the people, prior to the overwhelming takeover from the television and radio entertainment industries in Igboland, Nigeria. That was the era when families gathered in groups to be entertained by the elderly members of their family units. The people also have numerous riddles and jokes, known in the local language as 'gwam gwam gwam', singing competitions, as well as various forms of drama entertainments (Nkokelonye, 2005). Though several other foerms of socializations are still prevalent among the Igbos, one fact still remains very clear.

The Igbos love to socialize as well as entertain themselves whenever the occasion calls for it. Even before the advent of modernity in the entertainment industry, Igbo communities created local entertainment outlets for themselves, and were able to keep communities alive and active through that. Those entertainment outlets enhanced children's intellectual development, ensured creativity, promoted the attitudes of healthy practices, morality and consolidated the foundations for the inculcation of the sense of the dignity of labor in the youth and adults alike (Nkokelonye, 2005). These are indications that the arrival of European explorers and Christian missionaries in Igboland only added glamour and colour to the local entertainment industries that pre-existed their entry into this sector. That is to say that the Igbos were already rich in the compendium of their entertainment itineraries. Rather, their contact with the Igbos literally opened the corridors for the in-flow of modern musical equipments, which at the long run impacted the quality of the products of the entertainment industry in this part of the world. It as well created more employment opportunities for the populations of the land, enhanced chances of making professional careers and gainful living out of this industry.

Above all, the contact opened the frontiers flor the marketing of European television sets, radio sets, cassette decks, and other electronic playing devices into the Igbo market. In the course of time, the Igbo and their European partners became close collaporators and partners in the socialization and entertainment industry. Following this development, local tuneds of the Igbos could be vibrated and produced in various electronic devices, and marketed worldwide, thereby adding quality and added value to this local industry.

Conclusion

It is important to conclude this work with a brief note; Igboland and the rest of Nigeria existed long before the arrival of the colonizing authorities and their Christian missionary allies in igboland. Prior to this historic encounter, the people already had their history, enjoyed their ways of living, lived in their own homes, developed private media of contact and communication with one another, as well as shared forms of

socialization and entertainment. During that period, the people had and used their indigenous language as their primary medium of communication. At that time, the adoption of the English language as a medium of communication in the midst of Nigeria's multiplicity of languages and divergent cultures was not applied. However, towards wriggling themselves out of this language-related quagmire, the British expatriates and colonizing authorities chose to impose the English language on the people. For them too, it was an approach intended to solve the linguistic disconnect which existed among the members of Nigeria's divergent ethno-linguistic communities.

The bottomline is that it takes the indigenous author to write the indigenous history of his own people. As an authority in the people's cultures, values, and traditional practices, his undeniable wealth of experience in this area positions him most appropriately as the most viable and best qualified authority to speak on this crucial subject area. It is quite inappropriate when the history of the Igbos, Nigeria are hurriedly written in the streets of Europe, by some expatriates who have only been to Igboland and Nigeria on a few days' holiday, who are completely unaware of the indigenous values and inherent cultures which distinguish the people from the rest of the world. It is quite absurd for such an expatriate to begin to write on this crucial subject, based on the few flimsy data he is able to gather within the short period of his stay in the land. It is therefore crucial to remark that the days of armchair journalism and unprofessional authorship on such key subject area are over. It is imperative for indigenous authors and academics to pick up their pens and write their own history, and be able to correct the mis-writings of our colonial past. Let us do for ourselves what no other people can do for us.

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