

# Nigerian Traditional Craft for Self-Reliance and Cultural Tourism Development: Inyi and her Pottery Production

Joy Nneka Uchenye Ejikeme

Humanities Unit, School of General Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

\*Email of the Corresponding Author: [Joy.ejikeme@unn.edu.ng](mailto:Joy.ejikeme@unn.edu.ng), 39557797

ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4483-2939>

## Abstract:

This article examines the significance of Nigerian traditional crafts in promoting self-reliance and enhancing cultural tourism, with a focus on Inyi's pottery production. The study delves into the rich history and techniques of pottery in Inyi, a community in Enugu State, Nigeria, where pottery-making has been a generational craft. It explores how this indigenous practice not only sustains livelihoods but also serves as a cultural asset for tourism development. The article argues that preserving and promoting traditional crafts like pottery can lead to economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and the growth of cultural tourism in Nigeria. The study's justification stems from the reality that this age-old craft is rapidly becoming obsolete. Hence, it is pertinent to study and document the Inyi pottery production for posterity. The study employs a qualitative methodology, gathering data via interviews, field observations, and documentation, and then conducting a descriptive analysis.

**Key words:** Nigerian traditional craft, Self-reliance, Cultural tourism, Inyi pottery, Community cohesion, Indigenous craftsmanship.

**DOI:** 10.7176/RHSS/14-7-06

**Publication date:** October 30th 2024

## 1. Introduction

Nigeria's cultural heritage is a rich tapestry of traditions, customs, and artistic expressions, with traditional crafts like pottery, weaving, beadwork, and carving representing the country's vibrant identity and creativity. Pottery is a significant and iconic Nigerian craft tradition, originating from ancient terracotta figures and now being practiced by skilled artisans in villages and towns for millennia. Pottery is one of humanity's most enduring crafts. For thousands of years, pottery has been seen as possessing functional, spiritual, artistic, aesthetic, and educational value in the everyday life of society (White and Adu-Ampong, 2024). Pottery craftsmanship holds significant cultural value for many communities, providing insights into their past lives and times, making it an important form of cultural heritage (White and Adu-Ampong, 2024).

Traditional crafts in Nigeria are significant cultural heritage, self-reliance, and economic empowerment, particularly in rural areas. They preserve traditional knowledge and skills, providing income and preserving traditional skills. Traditional crafts in Nigerian communities are deeply ingrained in society, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity. These crafts embody knowledge acquired during adaptation to nature, making them significant cultural attractions (Okonkwo and Oguamanam, 2013).

Inyi pottery is significant for its artistic and utilitarian value, fostering self-reliance and economic empowerment within the local community. It is a source of cultural pride and identity for Inyi artisans, contributing to the continuity and resilience of Nigerian cultural heritage. Pottery-making in Inyi is a manifestation of cultural heritage. Traditional crafts in Nigeria attract tourists, promoting economic growth and community development, and attract visitors to the country's rich cultural heritage through bustling marketplaces and artisan workshops. Inyi pottery offers a unique cultural tourism attraction, allowing visitors to explore Nigerian pottery making traditions through guided tours, workshops, and cultural exchanges.

Inyi pottery links Nigeria's pre-colonial past, showcasing ancient traditions and craftsmanship. It provides livelihoods for artisans and entrepreneurs, fostering self-reliance and economic resilience. The industry generates revenue, attracts tourists, and stimulates local economic growth, contributing to the socio-economic well-being of the community. Nigeria's diverse cultural heritage and natural attractions can be harnessed to promote self-reliance and cultural tourism, fostering sustainable development and economic growth. Research on Nigeria's development emphasizes the role of self-reliance and cultural tourism in driving national prosperity, preserving culture, and inspiring local artisans through cultural travel (Okonkwo and Oguamanam, 2013). Inyi's pottery production showcases Nigeria's traditional craft sector, highlighting its connection to self-reliance, cultural preservation, and tourism promotion. It demonstrates Nigeria's cultural resilience and creativity, preserving indigenous knowledge and community empowerment. Inyi demonstrates the potential of traditional crafts for self-sufficiency, cultural heritage, and tourism development.

In this paper, we seek to explore the nexus between Nigerian traditional crafts, self-reliance, and cultural tourism, with a specific focus on Inyi and its pottery production. By examining the historical context, techniques, socio-economic impact, and potential for cultural tourism development surrounding Indigenous pottery, we aim to illuminate the profound significance of traditional crafts for self-reliance and cultural enrichment in Nigeria.

### **1.1 Research Methodology**

This study utilized a qualitative approach to accomplish its objectives and analysis were influenced by descriptive design. Qualitative descriptive design “is a straight descriptive summary of the informational contents of data organized in a way that best fits the data. The choice of qualitative descriptive design ensured accurate description, explanation and interpretation of the perceptions and lived experiences of the respondents of Inyi traditional pottery art and its cultural tourism potentials. Inyi was chosen as a case study. Specifically, this study was conducted in Alum Inyi autonomous community. This community was purposefully selected as they have few potters in the entire population of the urban town of Inyi indulging in pottery making. Primarily, data was collected using semi-structured interviews, field observation, and photographic documentation. Group discussions were conducted to gather information from the community and potters. The study focuses on traditional pottery making in Alum Inyi, involving three (3) potters and non-potters as respondents. The research also used secondary data such as journals, books, and internet sources to support the findings. The data from the interview session was descriptively analyzed. Thus, a complete literary and field study has been carried out during the process to present and discuss the socio-economic aspect of pottery making Inyi.

### **1.2 Scope of the Study**

The study examines Inyi pottery production as one of the Nigerian traditional crafts for self-reliance and cultural tourism development. The Alum Inyi autonomous community was chosen purposefully as they have remnants of potters that are still active in pottery activities.

## 2 Brief Literature Review

### 2.1 Cultural Tourism and Pottery Production.

Cultural tourism is a harmony between culture and tourism, whereby the former serves as a fertile ground for the latter to strive for. Although some of the aforementioned traditional arts are in decline, pottery art is one area that has over the years received the needed attention from the rural women of Inyi. Some writers have also stressed that, despite the negative influence of modernity, the pottery tradition has continued in some parts of Igboland because of its role in traditional society (Ali, 2016). Ali (2016), in his article "A Critical Survey of the Growth, Decline, and Sustainability of Traditional Pottery Practice among the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria," The study has established the fact that the influence of modernity started to be felt in the 1950s, but its effect was very gradual, enabling the pottery tradition to reach its peak in the 1970s. The actual period of decline was the 1980s, about twenty years after the end of colonial administration in Nigeria. However, the tradition of pottery making is an old cultural tradition in Inyi. This piece of art continues to be a prime source of livelihood among women in Inyi. These potters are classified as artisans whose lives are defined by their skills and artistic work. Panikkaveetil, Jishnu, and Harikumar (2020:26) note that artisans are people who produce goods by manual labor, incorporating minimal to no mechanization in the production process. This paper explores the rich history and artistic skill of Inyi pottery making, highlighting its potential for cultural tourism and the preservation efforts of craft artisanal communities.

Nigeria's tourism industry generates significant employment and income, with tourists often returning souvenirs of their foreign experiences, often handicrafts from local artisans. Ibadat (2016) Ibadat (2016) highlights the significance of souvenirs in tourists' experiences, their symbolic value, and their economic benefits for host communities. Across the developing world, tourism has had a profound impact on the livelihoods of traditional communities involved in handicraft production. In most cases, it has been a factor that has brought prosperity to artisans, while in others, it has led a destruction of traditional products and culture (Panikkaveetil, Jishnu, and Harikumar, 2020). The commercialization of handicrafts was brought about by a realization on the part of artisans that there exists outside their traditional sphere, a market that could fetch them a stable livelihood. The relationship between the tourism industry and handicraft producers is subject to changes in time. Certain tourists purchase handicrafts because they feel the commodity has a link to a culture and identity and wish to keep a memory with them when they go back home (Panikkaveetil, Jishnu, and Harikumar 2020). Nzei (2024) in his study "Role of Handicraft in Tourism Promotion and Economic Empowerment in Nigeria" indicates that traditional handicrafts attracts tourists to a destination as they are interested in purchasing crafts with symbolic meanings, as souvenirs to take to their homeland as memory of the place visited. Handicrafts offer job creation, income, and foreign exchange earnings, preserving traditional arts and heritage. They also contribute to a country's foreign exchange earnings, boosting foreign tourists' purchasing power (Nzei, 2024). Mukherjee, Mukherjee and Bhattacharya (2016) in their study "Exploring the Potentials of Handicraft as a Tool for West Bengal Tourism" noted handicraft production diversifies tourism products, promotes responsible tourism, and prevents migration from rural areas. Partnering with tourism enterprises can boost development, prevent migration, and create jobs, especially in poverty-prone communities.

Mukherjee, Mukherjee, and Bhattacharya (2016) noted that handicraft plays a pivotal role in the tourism sector; it does not only attract tourists but also helps the country to increase its GDP by the foreign exchange earnings

from the sales of the handicrafts. The money spent by tourists in purchasing handicrafts as souvenir generates income to the people who engage in the business and also increase government revenue. Oluigbo (2023) stated that, Edo State's governor, Godwin Obaseki, is actively promoting cultural tourism as a revenue source, leveraging the state's vast arts, crafts, and tourism potential. Nigeria's handicraft industry is undervalued due to a lack of recognition, compared to countries like India and Indonesia, where craftsmanship is a lucrative business. Tourism cannot effectively flourish without the cultural components (Awodiya, 2016).

Handicrafts, such as traditional pottery art, form part of the tangible culture of indigenous people (Navei, 2021). The traditional craftsmanship is one of intangible cultural heritage domains. It is about crafting knowledge and skills that are passed down within the artisan families and through the guild system (Kennedy, 2010). The element of traditional craftsmanship includes the skill and knowledge of craftsmanship, the craftsman and the craft. The traditional craftsman is producing tools, clothing and jewellery, costumes, props for festivals and performing arts, musical instruments and many more. The traditional craftsmanship derived from word traditional and craftsmanship. Traditional is an adjective and its origins from the term tradition. Tradition is passed down the customs or beliefs throughout generation (Hornby, 2005). The custom and belief can be seen in a form of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In context of traditional, it presents the way of life of people in the past time and build their identity (Linnekin, 2007). Traditional terms express past activities and skills, while craftsmanship involves producing specific crafts like pottery, which are major crafts in Nigeria.

Clay, a key material in pottery production, is used to create earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain, with the location where these wares are produced being referred to as a pottery. For Allen (1986), pottery also refers to the art or craft of the potter or the manufacture of pottery. Pottery can also be referred to as "all fired ceramic wares that contain clay when formed, except technical, structural, and refractory products" (ASTM International, 2007). Pottery is created by heating clay bodies to high temperatures, causing permanent changes like strength and hardening. Clay bodies can be decorated before or after firing. Preparation involves kneading and de-airing to ensure even moisture content and remove trapped air. Wedging ensures even moisture content in clay bodies, which are then shaped using various techniques after being kneaded and de-aired. After shaping, it is dried and then fired (Osarumwense and Peters, 2017). Pottery has helped in knowing a lot about the civilization of very many places in Nigeria such as the Nok Culture, Igbo Ukwu and Benin.

### **3. Historical Context of Nigerian Traditional Crafts**

Pottery is a cornerstone of Nigeria's cultural heritage and as a potential driver of self-reliance and cultural tourism, particularly in the case of Inyi and her pottery production. The origins of pottery in Nigeria can be traced back to ancient times, with archaeological evidence suggesting that pottery making has been practiced in the region for thousands of years. Pottery is seen as one of the earliest forms of human artistic expression, dating back to the Neolithic period. In Nigeria, pottery artifacts dating as far back as 1000 BCE have been unearthed at archaeological sites such as Nok and Ife, providing insights into the early development of pottery in the region. In the olden days, most especially during the pre-colonial and colonial era when aluminum pots or fridges were nowhere to be found, clay pots were in vogue and people patronized pottery business in Nigeria for household needs and kitchen utensils. The pottery business of trading with products of pottery was effectively managed by the women in spite of the burden of carrying the fragile wares from one location to another after production.

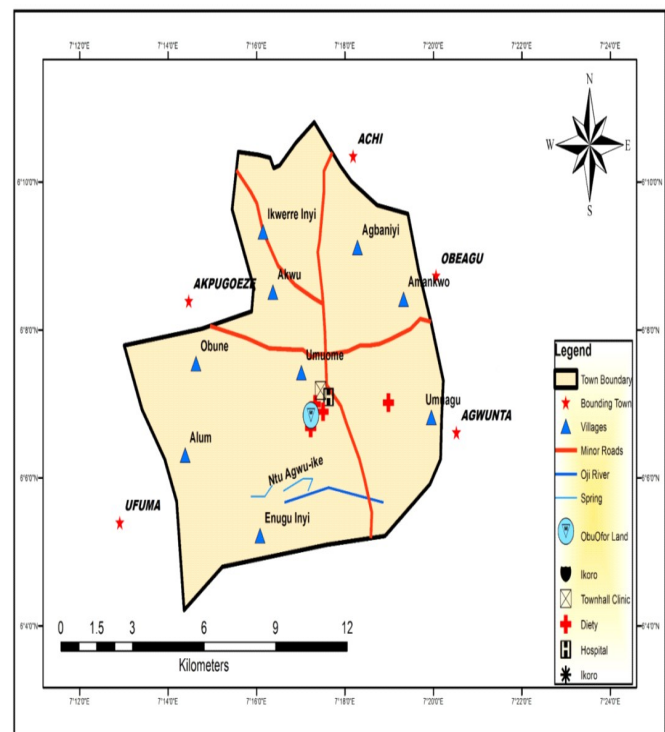
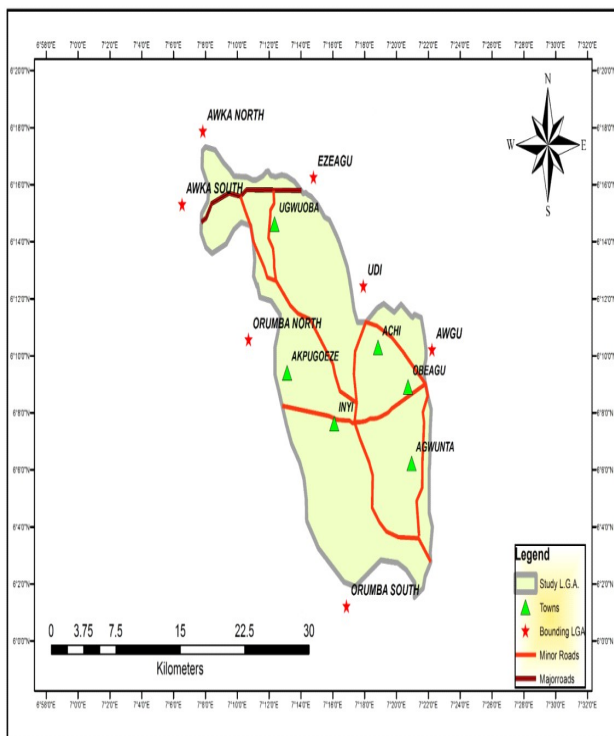
Excavation has shown that potter products attained a high level of development in Nigeria because a well fired pottery is almost indestructible and very informative when recovered from archaeological context. Features often taken note of in the study of excavated pottery include the manufacturing techniques, the forms, decorations and inferences with regard to functions (Ejikeme, 2012). A notable scholar, Micheal Cardew, western scholar has confessed that traditional potters know very well just what they are doing and how best to do it. According to him, they do so, much better than many whites who call themselves potters (Onuzulike, 2007 in Ejikeme, 2012). In Nigeria, pottery production has been integral to the socio-cultural fabric of various ethnic groups, serving both utilitarian and symbolic purposes. Pottery served as a vital commodity for trade and exchange, contributing to the economic prosperity of the area and its integration into regional and trans-Saharan trade networks. Colonial policies disrupted indigenous craft industries, leading to the decline of traditional pottery making in some regions while also sparking efforts to preserve and revitalize these practices in others. In contemporary Nigeria, pottery production continues to thrive as a vibrant expression of cultural heritage and artistic creativity. The challenges facing modern-day pottery artisans include competition from mass-produced goods, environmental degradation, and limited access to markets and resources. Inyi traditional potters adapt to changing circumstances while striving to preserve their cultural traditions and livelihoods. Igboland's towns, including Inyi and Ishiagu, continue pottery production, with Inyi showing significant socialization. Other towns that do pottery making include Nrobo, Eha-Amufu, Eha-Ndiagu, Ishiagu, Ezzamgbo, Amarin, Afikpo, Awonmamma, Amaraku, Aguleri, Amawobia, Ihube, Iwala, and Owerrezukala (Ejikeme, 2012). The archaeological site of Igbo-Ukwu and ethnographic studies suggest that pottery products were obtained from Ufuma and Umunze markets, with Nkwo Inyi Market and Owerre-Ezukala being key sources (Okpoko, 1987; Ejikeme, 2012).

#### **4. Inyi: A Cultural Hub for Pottery Production**

##### **4.1 Geographical Location and Cultural Significance of Inyi**

Inyi, a community in Oji River Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, is primarily inhabited by Igbo ethnics, known as Waawa people, and is renowned for its picturesque landscapes and tranquil atmosphere. The name "Inyi" is derived from a tree called *Inyi*, under which the father of Inyi descendants was found and adopted. It is about 41 kilometers north-east of Enugu, the capital of the state. The town makes up a large majority of the total population of Oji River Local Government Area, 126,587 according to the 2006 Nigerian census. Inyi Town is surrounded by some other towns, namely Ufuma (in Anambra State), Achi, Awlaw, Akpugo-Eze, and Ugwuoba. Inyi is made up of nine (nine) major villages or quarters. These major villages are *Amankwo, Obule, Enugwu Inyi, Alum, Agbariji, Umuagu, Akwu, Nkwere, and Umuome* (Ejikeme, 2020).

Inyi, located near the Anambra River, is renowned for its abundant clay deposits, which are essential for pottery production. The town's strategic location and scenic beauty make it an ideal location for artisans. Inyi's proximity to major transportation routes supports the pottery industry's economic viability, while its cultural significance in Nigerian society is evident through its vibrant community and artisans preserving ancient techniques and artistic styles.



**Figure 1: Map of Oji River Showing the Study Area. Figure 2: Map of Inyi**

## 5. Results

The fieldwork conducted by the pottery makers in Inyi is practiced only by women. Men could help in digging out the clay and bringing it home, but using the clay to form products of different types is the work of women. In this section, we are going to look at the uniqueness of Inyi pottery making, socio-economic benefits, why people prefer Inyi pottery products, implications for cultural tourism development, and strategies for harnessing and promoting Inyi pottery making as a cultural tourism attraction.

### 5.1 Unique Characteristics of Inyi Pottery and Its Historical Importance

Indigenous pottery stands out among Nigeria's traditional crafts due to its unique characteristics, techniques, and historical significance. The distinctive features of Inyi pottery highlight its use of locally sourced clay, traditional firing methods, and intricate decorative styles. Their pottery products can be distinguished among other pottery products from other areas. The smoothness of their pots came from the rigorous methods of their pottery production. Concentration is needed for a potter to get the desired quality of the Inyi pottery product (Ejikeme, 2012).

Pottery making has been a mainstay of Inyi's economy for centuries, providing employment opportunities, generating income, and fostering community cohesion. Through interviews with local artisans, Inyi pottery has sustained its relevance and cultural significance amidst changing social and economic conditions. Inyi pottery is characterized by its utilitarian functionality as well as its aesthetic appeal, making it a versatile and sought-after craft.

Inyi pottery, a cultural attraction and livelihood for many Inyi residents, showcases unique craftsmanship and artistic heritage, drawing visitors from around the world and highlighting the importance of women in the production process.

Inyi's pottery reflects its community's aesthetics and cultural heritage, preserving traditions and providing economic empowerment. It supports artisans, suppliers, and vendors, contributing to the local economy and providing employment opportunities. Recognizing and celebrating the pottery industry's rich history and heritage is critical for Inyi's self-reliance and tourism development, ensuring that its tradition continues to prosper for future generations.

## 5.2 Techniques and Processes of Inyi Pottery Production

### 5.2.1 Traditional Methods of Pottery Making in Inyi:

From the fieldwork conducted, Inyi pottery production is a traditional art, utilizing age-old techniques passed down through generations. The artisans' ingenuity, resourcefulness, and cultural heritage define their craftsmanship. The process takes two weeks and involves multiple processes, making it an art that requires many processing days. Pottery makers work from home, excavating clay from deposits. Inyi pottery production has unique techniques and processes, as discussed below.

**A. Sourcing of Clay:** Inyi pottery products are not made with any type of clay. The indigenous knowledge of clay selection by the potters is what makes the pottery products of the Inyi people unique in look. Inyi has three sites where clay deposits of different colors are excavated. The three sites are Obule, Alum, and Agbariji Inyi. Agbariji has clay deposits in Aguike. Alum has four (4) clay deposits; these are Owerre Umuibudu, Obodoudele, Oghoo-Ochiri Utu, and Obunma in Duli Alum. Obune Inyi has a clay deposit called Osuigwe. People excavate clay from the other two sites except the Obune site, which is individually owned by a man, Osuigwe. Thus, clay in Obune is sold to potters, unlike Agbariji and alum deposits, which are free (Ejikeme, 2012). From the fieldwork, Obune Inyi has the purest clay sources but does not pay much attention to potting. Women in the Alum community are highly interested in pottery making. The clay is tight and has a smooth texture. Inyi potters draw upon their cultural heritage and ancestral wisdom to discern the qualities of clay, such as its color, texture, and plasticity, and determine the most suitable methods for its preparation and use in pottery making. Two factors seem to determine the exploitation of clay sources: (i) the plasticity of the clay itself, and (ii) the nearness of the source or sources to the potters. The potters obtain clay from a depth of about 2. to 3 m, or even more, with cutlasses, hoes, and, at times, shovels.

**B. Clay Preparation:** Clay collection in Inyi is done by individual potters, who are women, or as a communal endeavor, often undertaken by women and children. Clay is called “uro” in the Inyi dialect. In Inyi, the potters make use of two types of clay to manufacture their pottery: *uro ocha* ('white' clay) and *uro oji* ('black' clay). The gathering of clay not only fulfills a practical need but also fosters social cohesion within the community, as generations come together to partake in this time-honored tradition. Once collected, the clay undergoes a series of preparatory steps to ensure its suitability for pottery making. (1) First, the clay is cleaned to remove any impurities, such as organic matter or debris, that could compromise the integrity of the final product. The two types of clay above are usually mixed together to manufacture pottery products. It is then worked by hand to see

if it achieves the right degree of plasticity. In Inyi, the two types of clay are brought from their sources and, first of all, dried in the sun for two days. After this, both are broken into small lumps (finer particles) and soaked separately in water for about three or four days (Ejikeme, 2012). (2) The next day, the excess water is drained out, and the leftover soft clay is used for making pottery products. Then, both are mixed together and puddled. As this process continues, water is added to the clay, which becomes softened. (3) Next, the clay is kneaded and tempered to achieve the desired consistency and workability. Inyi potters use tempering materials, which are usually broken potsherd grinded in grinding stone (see Plate 1 c), then sieved and mixed with the clay paste to achieve uniformity and consistency in texture. The tempering material that is added to the plastic clay is called “*Mgba*” (Grog). Unwanted particles are removed from it. Temper helps to hold the clay together and lessens the risks of shrinkage and cracking. This process, often performed by hand or with rudimentary tools, requires skill and precision to achieve uniformity in the clay's texture and composition. Inyi potters knead with their palms; at times, legs are used. If the clay is not properly made, during the sun drying process or in the firing process, the pots can break into pieces.

**C. Hand-building Techniques or Making of Pot:** One of the primary methods used in pottery making in Inyi is hand-building. The technique relies on the manipulation of clay by hand rather than the use of a pottery wheel. Hand-building allows potters to create pottery products using minimal tools and equipment, making it accessible to individuals of all ages and skill levels within the community. In preparation for making wares, potters assemble the prepared clays and tools around them. These consist of smoothening and decorative tools. The smoothening tools are “*Kworinkwo*” (smooth pebbles), “*Oghuru* or *Nchiri uro*” (wooden paddles), “*Azu aku oyibo*” (coconut shell), and Udara leave (native apple leave used in shaping the mouth of a pot or bowl). The decorative tools are “*Nde*” or “*Obara uro*” (a bamboo stick shaped to create a design), “*Uri*” (Black Indigo), and other smoothing sticks and rags for wiping and smoothening. The potter assembles the tools in order to concentrate on the molding of the pottery products. The potters’ tools are packed in unused pots or bowls, which are now kept in the workshop to avoid losing any (Ejikeme, 2012:90). The Inyi potters always sit on the bare floor in their workshop to set to work.

Inyi potters primarily use one hand-building technique: coiling. They shape pottery vessels using coils or slabs of clay, gradually building up the form of the vessel by layering coils or joining slabs together. This technique allows for greater control over the shape and size of the vessel, as well as the incorporation of decorative elements and textures. Coiling involves rolling out coils of clay and then stacking them on top of one another to build up the walls of the vessel. The coils are then smoothed and shaped to create the desired form, whether it be a pot, bowl, or decorative figurine. The coils are about seven inches long, and 20 could be built for a start. The coils are known as “*Uro ehuruehu*” in the Inyi dialect. These clay rolls are then worked in, one on top of the other, by hand. While supporting the clay ring with the left palm, the potter uses the forefinger of the right hand to stick it on to the one before. She tries to maintain a uniform thickness first with her hands and secondly by using a scraping tool, for example, a piece of bamboo, which generally smooths the pot on the inside. When the pot or bowl becomes too big for the potter to carry, she will now rest it on a broken pot's neck, “*onu ite*,” or form a base fit for that pot or bowl. The base is used as the pedestal stand called “*Olu alula*” or “*akpurumakpu*,” an inverted shoulder and neck of a pot that acts as a stand. “*Olu alula*” or “*akpurumakpu* are intentionally manufactured (see plates 1d and e). They are of different sizes and are used according to the sizes



of pots being manufactured. The process continues until the required shape of pot is produced. The pot is then dried in the shade or in direct sunlight, depending on the intensity of the sun. After six hours, the neck and rim are added to the pot. Since the rim and neck are introduced during the leather hard stage, it becomes necessary to use just the right amount of water that will help with this attachment. Also, during this leather-hard stage, the potter uses a smooth pebble, a piece of coconut shell, to smoothen both the inside and outside bodies of the pot. “*Nchiri uro*” is also used to beat the product formed all around the mouth to enable him to get the thickness. After the beating, the potter uses a wooden plank known as “*The ejiatanata onu uro*” to flatten the mouth into shape. A piece of cloth (rag), a udara leaf, and a spatula (“*Obara uro*”) are used to get a uniform thickness. The pot is then left to dry before it is polished. Different materials are used as polish or slip in different areas, like smooth pebbles. In Inyi, a type of clay, yellowish in color (nchala), is used to polish pots. A neck of an old broken pot (onu ite) can act as a base on which a new pot is built.

**D. Decorative Styles and Finishing Touches Specific to Inyi Pottery:** In the southeastern town of Inyi, Nigeria, pottery production is distinguished by its unique decorative styles and finishing touches, which reflect the community's rich cultural heritage and artistic traditions. Ejikeme (2012) notes that it is through decoration that pottery products are identified with the cultural area. For instance, when the researcher went for an archaeological conference in Jos Museum, the pottery materials in the display room is of Inyi origin due to the motif seen on them despite it was labelled of just Igbo origin. Decorations are applied on pots by the potters and not by any specialist artist. Once the pottery vessel has been formed, potters often decorate the surface with intricate patterns, motifs, and textures. Decoration techniques may include carving, incising, stamping, or painting to adorn the surface of the vessel using natural pigments. These decorative elements not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of Inyi pottery but also serve as a means of preserving cultural identity and fostering community pride. In addition to their decorative function, finishing touches play a crucial role in enhancing the overall quality and durability of Inyi pottery (Ejikeme, 2012). These finishing touches not only improve the pottery's aesthetic appearance but also make it more resistant to wear and tear, ensuring its longevity and durability. Moreover, Inyi potters often incorporate symbolic and spiritual motifs into their decorative styles, imbuing the pottery with deeper meaning and significance. By incorporating these symbolic elements into their pottery, potters create opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue and exchange through cultural tourism initiatives. These motifs may include symbols of fertility, prosperity, and protection, as well as representations of ancestral spirits and deities. Inyi pottery is characterized by intricate designs, patterns, and motifs inspired by the natural surroundings, folklore, and everyday life of the community. The motifs often reflect the village's close relationship with nature, featuring depictions of animals, plants, and geometric patterns that hold cultural significance and cosmology within the community. Igbo potters do not always apply decorative motifs on pots only to make the pots look attractive. Understanding and appreciating African art requires analyzing themes, as Igbo pots' images hold cosmological and ritual significance in Igboland. For example, the movements of snakes (snake trails) could also have led to the preference of a snake trail motif (ije-agwo, snake trail) on Igbo pots (Okpoko, 1987). The motif is called *agwologwo* (snake coil) and is found on Igbo pots. These decorations found amongst most Inyi pots are produced with a groove technique (see plate 6). Depending on the craftsmanship of the potters, such decorations and motifs can be easily produced with this technique. Inyi pottery features images of the sun, moon, stars, leaves, and animals, showcasing the interrelationship between man and his environment.

These designs also serve as a picture language, with decorated pots yielding higher income to potters. Elaborately decorated bowls or dishes (*oku oma*) used in serving food to important personalities or guests yielded much money to potters. For instance, decorated "*oku oma*" cost one thousand five hundred naira (₦1,500.00) in Nkwo Inyi market, while an undecorated dish of similar size cost six hundred thousand naira (₦600.00) in the same market and on the same day. Thus, Okpoko (1987) notes that on the same market and on the same day, the cost of a big pot with decoration was about 35% higher than the cost of a pot of similar size without decoration. The main decorative techniques prevalent in Inyi are burnishing, grooving, incision, rouletting, impression, perforation, and applied or relief decoration. The descriptions of these techniques are as follows:

**I Burnishing:** This is done by rubbing the surface of a pot with a smooth river pebble or a piece of coconut shell until the surface becomes smooth and shiny. There is no evidence of any pattern of burnishing. Black indigo, or "uli," is used in decorating pottery products. Uli is a black indigo that could be used to make a design on a pot. "*Kworinkwo*" river pebble is used for burning.

**II Grooving:** Grooves and ridges are produced on pots with bamboo sticks or with any hollow stick possessing two blunt and short projections. This notched stick is dragged over the surface of the pot to form different kinds of motifs, depending on the designs the potter wants to produce and also on her ingenuity. Grooves are made into vertical, horizontal, or concentric lines that cover almost all parts of the bowl or pot by Inyi potters.

**III Incised and Excision:** These are made with sharp pointed objects (especially sharp pointed sticks), which are cut into the surface of a pot by removing a bit of clay to make a design. Some of these lines can be vertical, horizontal, or may form crisscross patterns. With incision, the cuts are V-shaped, while grooves are U-shaped in cross-section. Excision is the removal of excess bits of clay to create a good design using the "*Nde* tool." The "*Nde*" (made from bamboo stick) is used to make grooves in the body of the pots.

**IV Rouletting:** A roulette impression is created by rolling a cylindrical object on a pot, using a right palm to press on the surface. The left palm is then placed inside the pot, receiving pressure from the right palm. The roulettes could be made with a carved object, by plaiting frond or string, or by folding and twisting a single string, grass, or frond

**V Impression:** This decorative technique involves pressing fingertips and objects like nets or sacks on a pot's surface, creating impressions based on the object's shape and size.

**Vi Perforation:** A pointed stick is used to pierce through a pot's body, creating two types of perforations: one for hanging bowls and one covering the entire pot, used for sieving or drying meat or fish over fires.

**Vii Applied or Relief Decorations:** Pot decorations are created when the pot is between the wet and dry states, allowing for clay addition to form ridges or projections called bosses or cordons. Animals and birds may also be affixed to ritual pots like *ite ike* (see plates 8 a and b). Most narrow-mouthed long-necked pots, "*udu*," usually used as musical instruments (with a hole at the shoulder) or for ritual purposes (when found in shrines), are often well decorated with applied or applied decorations - cordons and bosses - burnished externally and at times polished with *nchala*. Products associated with initiation ceremonies (e.g., masquerade societies) are often decorated with ornamental handles, different animals, and birds of ritual significance. Ritual pots and bowls, often kept in shrines, are decorated with grooves or ridges, motifs, and applied decorations. These bowls are well

burnished internally and can have three or five ornamental mouths, like udu nono, depending on the potter's desire for craftsmanship.

**C. Sun Drying and Firing:** The number of days a pot stays in the sun depends on the weather conditions and the size of the pot. According Mrs. Mrs Onyenonanna Mmadu (an Inyi potter) from Umuochie Alum Inyi, a very large pot, like ite ike, stays for about ten days in the sun. Depending on the intensity of the sun the pot is either kept in the sun or under a shade. But if it is in the sun it must not be for too long. Potters prefer slow drying due to shrinking thinner parts and potential cracking. In rainy seasons, they smoke pots by fireside or fireplace rafts, preventing breakages and preventing constant movement of large wares. After decoration, the pottery is left to dry before being fired, fueled by locally sourced materials such as firewood or charcoal. Unfired pottery objects are often termed greenware (see plates 4d and 5a). Clay bodies at this stage are very fragile and, hence, can be easily broken. The firing of pots or bowls is called “*Ilu uro*” by the Inyi people. Materials that are important include: straw “*Ahurihu*” (elephant grass) (*Pennisetum pedicellatum*) (plate 4c), baked clay pedestals (plate 4b), special firewood from “*Akpaka tree*” (oil bean tree) (*Pentaclethra macrophylla*) (plate 4a), “*Oka*” (*Aga*) (a tree that gives color), “*Omanyi*” and “*Okenchi*” (Ejikeme, 2012).

In Inyi town, potters engage in group or individual firing. The firing lasts from two hours or more depending the size of the pots/bowls. Inyi potters primarily employ open-air firing techniques, a method that involves stacking pottery in a carefully constructed mound surrounded by combustible materials like wood, leaves, and grass (straw). The firing spot is made in a circular form with baked clay and small stones and sticks, which are arranged in layers interspersed with combustible materials. This is done in a careful way to avoid collapsing any pot or bowl in fire. This mound is then ignited, and the intense heat from the fire gradually hardens the clay, turning it into pottery products. When the fire dies down, the pots are removed with poles and allowed to cool. According to the respondents, Inyi potters check the quality of her pot by tapping at the back. The good ones that produce quality sound will be assembled, while the bad ones will be assembled together to serve as potsherds in subsequent pottery making. Another way one can tell that a pot is not good is to put water on it; if it starts leaking, then it is not good. Inyi people call the leaking pot “*Ikwo nshi*” (Ejikeme, 2012:95).

When the pots and bowls are still hot, *the uli* and *aga* designs are applied. The firing techniques used in Inyi are characterized by their simplicity, efficiency, and adaptability to local conditions. Despite advancements in technology, the community has maintained traditional methods, preserving their cultural heritage and fostering a sense of continuity with the past. Firing techniques in Inyi also hold symbolic and spiritual significance. Some potters and artisans often incorporate rituals and ceremonies into the firing process, invoking blessings and prayers for the success of their work. This spiritual connection reflects the community's deep reverence for pottery making and its role in sustaining cultural identity and community pride. After firing, the products are cleaned, and this could be done by anyone, even the buyer.

**D. Marketing:** The potters sell their products in the local markets in Inyi and the surroundings. These markets are Nkwo Inyi, Ekegbo Achi, Afo Ufuma, Owerrezukala, and Umunze. People intentionally visit these places to buy the same for household purposes and other occasions. Also, the potter's source their products from the wholesalers who have a retail shop in the city.

### 5.2.2 Taboo Associated with Pottery Making

1. A pregnant or menstruating woman cannot extract clay; otherwise, pots will explode when fired or the clay source will dry out at once.



Plate 1: (a) clay in a container (b) kneaded clay balls (c) grinded potsherd (grog) (d&e) an inverted shoulder and neck of a pot which acts as a pedestal stand (*akpurumakpu* or *Olu alula*)



Plate 2: Potters from Alum; a & b Onyenanma Madu (Umuochie), (c) Caroline Ilomuanya (Umuachaogu) and (d & e) Ezinne Josphine Leweuwa (Umu-Avu).

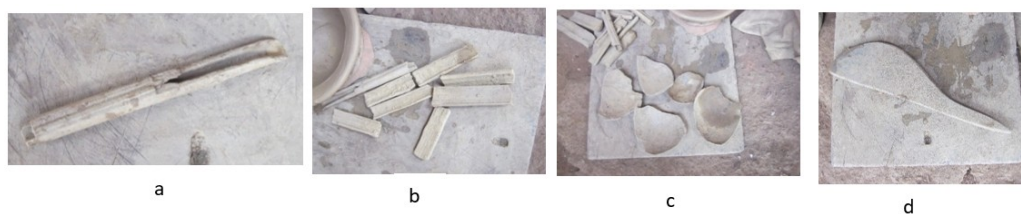


Plate 3: Tools for pottery making (a & b) *Nde* or *Obara Uro* (Bamboo Stick) (b) *Azu Aku Onyibo* (Coconut Shell) (d) *Nchiri Uro*



a

b

Plate 4: Materials for Firing (a) Pieces of Firewood (b) Baked Clay (c) Ahurihu (elephant grass) (*Pennisetum pedicellatum*) (d) Unfired "Oku Ncha" (Bowl)



a



b



c

Plate 5: (a) Unfired "Oku Akwu" (b) Oku Akwu (c) Oku Ncha



a



b



c



d

Plate 6: (a & b) Oku Nri or Oku Oma (c & d) Incision and Groove Design



a



b



c



d

Plate 7: (a) Oku Nri (b & c) Oku Ozo (d) Ite Mmanya

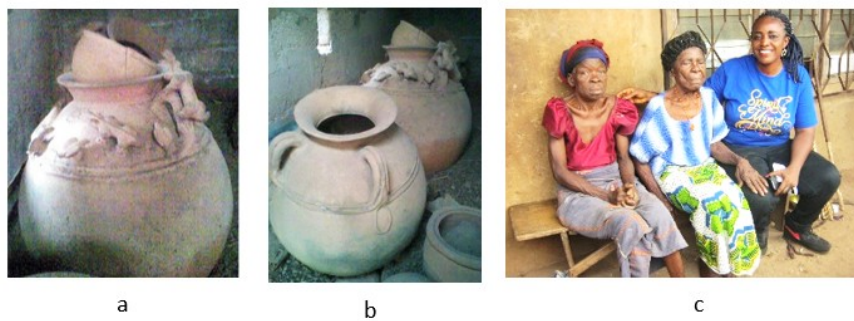


Plate 8: (a & b) Ite Ike (c) The Researcher with the potter and her co-wife



Plate 9: (a) Udu (Ritual Pot) (b) A Statue Representing a Woman Potter at Enugu-Inyi vs Alum Road Roundabout.

**5.2.3 Life Span of Pottery Products:** Inyi pottery's life span is estimated to be 1 to 50 years, influenced by its hardness and function. Carefulness of the owner can also affect its lifespan, with ceremonial pottery lasting longer than household items. Pot hardness also plays a role.

**Table 1: Cost of Production**

Cost of Production of one Cycle		
Particulars	Amount of Labour	Cost
Cost of Clay on Site	50 kg	₦500.00
Labour for Clay Excavation	2 men	₦ 1000.00
Transporting the Clay home	Barrow or Vehicle	₦ 2,000.00
Wood/Straw for Firing	30kg	₦ 1,000.00
Producers own Family Labour	Unskilled and Skilled Labour	₦ 3,000.00
Total Cost		₦ 7500.00

Table 1 shows the manufacturing cost for a cycle of pottery making. One cycle takes two weeks and lots of process went throughout the process as discussed earlier. All the potters interviewed used their house as workshop. It cost about ₦ 7500.00 to complete one cycle.

## 5.4 Why Prefer Inyi Pottery Products?

There are factors that encourage Inyi pottery production. First is the cheapness of the traditional pottery due to cheap factors of production. The entire local process of production is cheap to compare to the modern process. The processes involve cheap labor, and raw materials are within the vicinity. There is little or no capital investment. Secondly, traditional pottery is better adapted to local uses. For example, the indigenous people believed that the traditional food cooked in pottery rather than metal or other utensils kept warmer and preserved. Traditional foods like tapioca food called ncha Inyi n'se are prepared and eaten using pottery bowls (Ejikeme, 2020). People believed that food cooked in such traditional pottery has superior flavour. Drinking water stored in a traditional pot, usually porous, remains cool from the effect of water seeping slowly through the walls of the pot and evaporating at the outer surface. Therefore, because of preference for cool and sweet drinking water, people in parts of Igboland, especially those in low-income groups who cannot afford to buy refrigerators or those in places without electricity, will continue to demand such traditional water coolers. Medical science has it that water from a local cooler is good for health. Since traditional pots do not rust, they are used for storing palm wine, palm oil (palm oil can be preserved in such a pot for about a year), and seeds like maize, melon, etc. The earthenwares are also known to enrich the food and drinks with rich minerals and nutrients (Ningthoujam and Rashida, 2022). Traditional cooking pots are fired at a low temperature; they have very high thermal shock resistance, and this makes them like the enamelware suitable for cooking over open fires. Both the traditional and enamel wares can be used over an open fire for boiling water or cooking without fear of breakage.

Thirdly, only traditional pots can be used to perform certain social, medicinal, and ritual functions. For example, in parts of Igboland, a type of hemispherical bowl (oku) with all parts of its body covered with perforations acts as a special container for materials used in curing certain ailments. A charcoal fire is made in the vessel, and some medicines are poured on the fire. A person with malaria or any other ailment is made to sit over the fire and inhale the medicinal smoke. Also, some small and miniature pots or bowls are used for storing medicines and for ritual purposes. For instance, oku ibenne is a small bowl. Pottery making has been noted as one of the economic strategies to meet household needs (Thebe et al. 2010; Wilmsen et al. 2009). Clay pots are used for cooking, rituals, decoration, and communal events, including weddings, funerals, and other celebrations. Elderly people prefer ceramic pots for brewing traditional beer and water storage, with some claims of better taste (Thebe, 2017).

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Socio-economic and Cultural Impact of Pottery Production in Inyi Communities

The interview and group discussion revealed Inyi town as a hub for pottery making. The skill is mainly done by women. Pottery making plays a significant role in the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of the communities in Inyi. From ancient times till the present generation, pottery is closely connected with the cultural life of the Inyi people. It is used on every occasion of life, from birth till death.

Although men help in extracting the clay, transportation, pounding the clay after soaking, and firing big pots. The traditional craft stands as one of the economic activities of the Inyi people; thus, it is a means of their

livelihood. Pottery production has had a profound socio-economic impact on the communities in Inyi, contributing to livelihoods, economic sustainability, and social cohesion within the town.

The pottery industry supports a network of artisans, suppliers, vendors, and ancillary businesses, generating revenue, stimulating trade, and enhancing the overall economic vibrancy of Inyi. Apart from socio-economic impact, it has a lot to say in the area of their cultural life and belief system. Direct observation shows that Inyi pottery products are of different sizes according to their functions for the user. At times, potters produce on demand. These products are small, medium, and large in size.

Every household has different forms of pottery products that serve a particular function. Inyi traditional pottery wares are not only shaped for functional/utilitarian purposes but also for social and non-utilitarian or symbolic values (self-expression and identity marks), which could be sources of tourism attraction. Inyi pottery skill is noticed as one visits the town; the evidence is seen immediately you enter Inyi from any location. Pottery materials like body sherds and rim sherds are scattered on the ground in every Inyi community. Pottery products are seen in household and village shrines.

All the village squares in the study area have evidence of ritual pots and bowls used as spots for religious activities, surrounded by the Ogirisi tree (*Newbouldia laevis*). Title holders in Inyi are served food with pottery-made plates. The Chief Priests use only pottery products in presenting food to their God. In their belief system, they recognized that clay is from the ground, and they used it to relate to their god, Ajana deity. Most men adherents of ATR have representatives of Ajana in their compound.

Most of the people that practice African Traditional Religion revere pottery-made products. During group discussion with the potters, they said that pottery products are what they use in bathing, eating, and going to the stream to fetch water. They believe in nature and work with natural laws, said the respondents. Inyi pottery products are used to store and present palm wine (see plate 7d) during traditional gatherings like marriage ceremonies, burials, age-grade meetings, ozo chieftaincy/title-taking, naming ceremonies, housewarmings, etc. Ozo title members are usually served tapioca food with a sizeable *oku ozo* (pottery bowl) (see plates 7b and c).

During events as mentioned above, *oku akwu* is used in the preparation of tapioca food (see plate a). For Ningthoujam and Rashida (2022), it is used on every occasion of life, from birth until death. Inyi people in home and abroad believe so much in eating their local dishes, prepared and served with well-designed pottery plates. Most of them store their drinking water in clay pots because they believe it has health benefits.

Thus, clay preparation in Inyi carries symbolic and spiritual significance, reflecting the community's deep connection to the land and its natural resources. A woman on menstrual flow does not go to clay deposits or to engage in pottery production. Ejikeme (2012) notes that pottery as a craft is well integrated into the living patterns of Nigeria and inseparable from their spiritual and cultural philosophies.

Tegegn et al. (2020) are also of the view that cultural pottery and the pottering processes have recognizable cultural tourism attraction potential. This comes from the fact that Inyi cultural pottery products and their production processes are uniquely peculiar to the tenets of the culture and the local ingenuity of their people. As a result, tourists find such wares to be interesting based on their utility and sociocultural symbolism (Navei, 2021). Both local and international tourists buy pottery products as gifts and decorative items.

From group discussion, Inyi pottery making helps to foster social cohesion by engaging various segments of the community, including women and youth, in productive and culturally enriching activities. Pottery-making is a



communal activity that strengthens social bonds and fosters a sense of belonging among Inyi's residents. Potters start by helping their mothers with clay extraction and gradually learn the shaping, decorating, drying, and firing processes. This learning involves a close relationship with an expert. By revitalizing communal crafts, it strengthens ties within the community, promoting collective responsibility and shared economic growth. Other socio-economic and cultural impacts of pottery production in Inyi communities are as follows:

**a. Employment and Income Generation:** Pottery production in Inyi provides employment opportunities for a large segment of the local population. From clay gathering to shaping, firing, and decorating pottery products, the pottery industry in Inyi supports a diverse range of skilled and unskilled jobs, providing livelihoods for individuals of all ages and backgrounds. These businesses play a vital role in the pottery supply chain, creating additional income opportunities and stimulating economic growth within the community.

Furthermore, Inyi pottery-making is a major source of income for many families. Income per month plays a vital role in shaping the socio-economic lifestyle of the communities. Given that the household serves as both a social and an economic entity, everyone in the family is active in the pottery business. While the girls worked on potting, the male children assisted their mothers in gathering clay, firewood, and fuel for firing enormous pots like the 105-liter *ite ike*. Alongside their mothers, they actively participated in the pottery manufacturing operations, which resulted in a considerable contribution to household revenue. Girls, observing their mothers create pottery, learned the art of potting. No official instructions were provided. Inyi pottery production supports artisans, families, and local businesses by selling products in local markets like Nkwo Inyi Market, Afo Ufuma, Ekegbo Achi, Umunze, and Owerre-Ezukala to tourists. This revenue supports livelihoods and sustains craft while also supporting clay suppliers, toolmakers, and community service providers. Middlemen transport the products to other markets. Both the cost of production and cost of the products are shown in table 1 and 2.

**b. Economic Diversification:** Inyi's pottery production boosts economic diversification and entrepreneurship and supports ancillary businesses, enhancing the community's resilience and sustainability for the Inyi people. Potting among Inyi women is a business that creates space for part-time. During the dry season, a lot of pots are manufactured in commercial quantities because, during the rainy season, there is not enough firewood to fire pots, which are usually fired in the open air. In the rainy season, the women work on their farms and may also trade in other items. However, during this period, pottery is limited mainly to small wares that dry quickly irrespective of the rains and high humidity and to a few large pots that are constantly moved into the sun and out of the rains.

**c. Tourism Revenue:** Pottery production in Inyi attracts tourists and visitors interested in experiencing the town's rich cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship. Tourists often visit pottery workshops and studios in Inyi to observe the pottery-making process, purchase handmade pottery products, and learn about the town's history and cultural significance. The influx of tourists brings revenue to local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops in local markets, further stimulating economic growth and development in Inyi.

**d. Cultural Heritage Promotion and Preservation:** Inyi's pottery production is vital in promoting the community's cultural heritage and identity. It showcases the town's traditions, values, and artistic prowess, attracting collectors, art enthusiasts, and tourists. Pottery serves as a medium for artistic expression and aesthetic innovation in Nigerian society. Pottery also fosters pride and identity, as potters use their senses to determine

clay's suitability for pottery making. This intimate relationship with the land and its resources reflects Inyi's deep connection to its cultural heritage and natural environment.

## **6.2 Implications of Pottery Making for Self-Reliance and Cultural Tourism Development in the Study Area**

Inyi pottery products attract tourists due to their artistic and smooth nature. Sirigu pottery, known for its cultural and philosophical designs, attracts high inflows of tourists to the Upper East Region of northern Ghana (Navei, 2021). Traditional pottery from indigenous cultures worldwide attracts tourists due to their unique visual culture and fascinating underpinnings, appealing to tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds (Navei, 2020). There are heavy demands for Inyi pottery products on a daily basis by consumers as household, utility wares, and souvenirs during occasions such as weddings and burial ceremonies, among others. They are hung and seen in all the households in Inyi communities. Traditional people use some of the pottery products for house decoration and flower vases. Traditional crafts contributed greatly to the culture of a destination and the development of the travel experience.

A tourist expects to see fashionable things in his travels that will always brighten his mind about the activities of the country he visits. No wonder it was said that "craft is a sinequanon to tourism." Traditional crafts serve as fundamental pillars for both self-reliance and the development of cultural tourism in Nigeria, as exemplified vividly by the pottery production in Inyi. These crafts serve as pillars of local economies, providing sustainable livelihoods and economic empowerment opportunities for potters and their communities, as shown above.

Through the preservation and promotion of indigenous craftsmanship, traditional crafts contribute to self-reliance by tapping into local resources, skills, and knowledge, reducing dependency on external factors, and fostering resilience against economic fluctuations. For instance, it relies on locally sourced clay, traditional firing methods, and indigenous craftsmanship. The traditional crafts of Inyi could encourage religious tourism as many of these pottery products are used for ritual purposes (see table 2). Okonkwo and Oguamanam (2013) note that the people's crafts are closely linked to religion as carvers create objects that are well recognized and appreciated in the context of religious worship. These religious objects provide insights into African traditional religion and religious genies. Special ritual pots are made for different deities and for traditional medicine. For instance, some of the pots in Iyingwe Shrine in Alum represent different deities with whom they serve food. Ethnographic sources revealed that the Inyi people serve and worship these deities, which serve as intermediaries or representatives of the Supreme Being known as Ajana Inyi, the God of Heaven. In the Inyi dialect, the deity is referred to as "*Aronshi*," and the shrine is referred to as "*Ulo Aronshi*" (meaning house of the deity) (Ejikeme & Okonkwo, 2022).

Religious tourism in Inyi can attract followers and admirers from far and wide if shrines are effectively utilized for faith sharing and inspiration. Among Inyi potters, clay is revered as more than just a raw material; it is a sacred substance imbued with ancestral wisdom and cultural meaning. It is revered as a sacred material, imbued with spiritual properties, and associated with fertility, abundance, and renewal in Nigerian cosmology. As potters mold and shape the clay, they honor the traditions of their forebears, invoking blessings and prayers for abundance, fertility, and prosperity.

Tegegn, Amsalu, and Tefera (2020) are also of the view that cultural pottery and the pottering processes have recognizable cultural tourism attraction potentials. This comes at the back of the fact that cultural pottery

products and their production processes are uniquely peculiar to the tenets of the culture and the local ingenuity of a particular group of people. As a result, tourists find such wares to be interesting based on their utility and sociocultural symbolism (Navei, 2021).

These crafts are not just about creating tangible goods; they represent the embodiment of cultural heritage, community identity, and economic sustainability. By harnessing these resources, potters in Inyi are able to create pottery that sustains their livelihoods, reducing dependency on external factors and empowering the community economically. During these processes, a potter could hire people to help out in getting the clay from the trench and getting ready the combustible materials for firing. Children and youth also help in fetching water from nearby streams or rivers, sometimes from boreholes, for the processing of clay. Four 20-liter gallons of water is ₦50.00. Traditional crafts, such as Inyi's pottery, are significant catalysts for cultural tourism development, attracting tourists for recreational and educational purposes. These crafts, with their unique decorative styles and historical significance, showcase the authentic and cultural authenticity of Nigerian craftsmanship. Through cultural tourism initiatives centered around traditional crafts, such as pottery workshops and artisanal tours, Inyi and similar communities can generate income, create more employment opportunities, and promote cross-cultural exchange. Inyi's pottery production holds a unique allure for tourists, offering a glimpse into Nigeria's rich cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship.

The town's pottery tradition is a magnet for travelers seeking authentic cultural experiences and unique souvenirs, drawing visitors from across Nigeria and around the world. During occasions in Inyi, visitors and tourists buy pottery products because of their aesthetic, utility, and for upholding cultural material as a souvenir. By showcasing the skills and creativity of local artisans, cultural tourism initiatives centered on traditional crafts also promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Inyi's pottery products are renowned for their artistic beauty and craftsmanship. From intricately carved patterns to vibrant glazes and textures, each piece of pottery tells a story of skill, creativity, and cultural expression. Tourists are captivated by the aesthetic appeal and artistic intricacy of Inyi pottery, recognizing it as a form of functional art that reflects the town's unique identity and creativity. This is seen in the style of decoration given to their products. Interactions between community members and tourists facilitate knowledge-sharing processes and provide a means of self-authentication for indigenous cultural heritage practitioners.

Moreover, traditional crafts contribute to community cohesion and identity preservation by celebrating local customs, beliefs, and values. Inyi's pottery production, for instance, serves as a symbol of the village's cultural heritage, connecting residents to their ancestral roots and fostering a sense of pride and belonging. By engaging in traditional craft practices, potters transmit intergenerational knowledge and skills, ensuring the continuity of cultural traditions and strengthening social bonds within the community. Traditional crafts like pottery production in Inyi are indispensable assets for Nigeria's journey towards self-reliance and cultural tourism development. As Nigeria continues to harness the tourism potential of Inyi traditional crafts, it can unlock new opportunities for economic growth, cultural exchange, and community empowerment, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come. As guardians of traditional crafts, artisans in Inyi and beyond play a vital role in shaping a future where culture and commerce intertwine harmoniously for the benefit of all. Engaging the tourism potential of Inyi pottery boosts domestic and international markets. Inyi pottery has the potential to be marketed beyond local borders, both domestically and internationally, creating demand for handcrafted, culturally

significant products. Increased visibility of Inyi pottery through e-commerce, cultural events, and tourism could enhance its marketability, offering artisans a wider customer base.

**Table 2: Pottery Products and their Prices**

S/N	Types of Pottery	Local Names	Prices in Nkwo Inyi Market
1	Medium Sized Cooking Pots	Ite Nri/Ofe	N1,500.00
2	Storage Pots/Bowls	Oku	N3,000.00
3	Bowls for Serving Food (Vessels without a neck)	Oku Nri/Oku Oma	N1,500.00
4	Pots for Carriage of Water	Ite Mmiri	N3,500.00
5	Big Bowl for Tapioca Preparation on Occassions	Oku Akwu	N7,000.00
6	Ceremonial Pots	Ite Ike	N20,000.00
7	Ritual Pots/Bowl (at home)	Oku Alusi Ulo	N1, 200.00
8	Ritual Pots/Bowls (in Shrines)	Oku Alusi Umunna	N1, 500.00
9	Narrow Mouthed and Long Necked Pot, sometimes with a hole at the Shoulder	Udu/Udu nono	N3, 000.00
10	Pottery Lantern	Mpanaka	₦2,000.00
11	Miniature pots or bowls	Ite Ogwu	₦1,500.0
12	Small bowl of similar size owned by women (personal god)	Oku chi	₦1,200.00
13	Special Bowl for Serving Ozo Title Holders	Oku Ozo	₦3, 500.00
14	Bowl with Inverted Mouth used in Serving Food	Oku Onu Nwa Nkwere	₦1, 500.00

**Source: Field Work, 2024**

Table 2 represents the pottery products of different sizes and their prices. The cost of per product was gotten from the potters and the sample products at Nkwo Iny market. It is evident that Inyi pottery production has potential to promote tourism in Nigeria. With tourism, many sells will be made to tourists. This promotes creativity and innovation. Since there is a ready market, people will learn more new skill to improve in their product quality to enhance their business and many people will also be attracted to the business.

Pottery workshops, exhibitions, and hands-on experiences could serve as key tourist attractions, drawing visitors to engage with local artisans and their craft. Handicrafts play a vital role in the tourism sector, as tourists are attracted to a destination to buy them as souvenirs to take memory with them of the places visited while they return home (Mukhrjere et al. 2016). Apart from evoking good memories for tourists, good quality handicrafts arouse the interest of others who see them (when the tourists take them to their countries), to also want to visit the destination (UNWTO, 2018). Pottery products are sold to tourists as souvenirs as well as to the public in the local markets; thus, they are suitable for cultural tourism development. However, cultural tourism development in Inyi will arouse benefits for the indigenous people, like the building of stable infrastructure and tourism facilities within the town. It will strengthen pottery making as a cultural heritage of the Inyi people. The people of Inyi are well skilled in potting, and a ready market will be provided if harnessed for cultural tourism. This will encourage more production of these cultural objects by the potters since an avenue has been provided to market them.

The growth of pottery-based businesses, from production to sales and tourism services, can stimulate local economies and reduce dependence on external sources of income. Tourism creates sustainable development through craftsmanship. Pottery making is an environmentally sustainable craft, utilizing locally sourced clay and traditional techniques with minimal environmental impact. Promoting Inyi pottery aligns with eco-friendly

practices and sustainable development goals. Supporting this craft encourages a shift from mass-produced, industrial goods to handmade, locally sourced products, which supports sustainable local economies.

Cultural tourism development around Inyi pottery opens doors for educational exchange programs where tourists, scholars, and students can learn about Nigerian craftsmanship. Artisans and local communities benefit from cultural exchange, gaining new ideas, techniques, and opportunities to share their traditions on an international platform. The success of Inyi pottery in driving self-reliance and tourism relies heavily on government policies that support traditional crafts, provide funding, and create infrastructure for cultural promotion. Investing in craft centers, tourism facilities, and marketing initiatives will enhance the potential of Inyi pottery to contribute to national development.

### **6.3 Strategies for Promoting Inyi Pottery as a Cultural Tourism Attraction**

The following strategies should be adopted in harnessing the potentials of Inyi Pottery Production for self-reliance and cultural tourism development:

1. **Engaging the Local Communities:** Local communities should be involved in the promotion of Inyi pottery as a cultural tourism attraction, fostering community pride and ownership in the development of tourism initiatives. To ensure the sustainability of Inyi's pottery heritage, community participation is encouraged in cultural events, artisanal workshops, and heritage conservation efforts. This fosters cultural exchange.
2. **Offer Souvenir Opportunities:** Provide tourists with opportunities to purchase Inyi pottery souvenirs, either at local markets, pottery studios, or online platforms. These authentic mementos serve as tangible reminders of visitors' cultural experiences in Inyi and support local artisans and craftsmen.
3. **Collaborate with Travel Agencies:** Partner with travel agencies and tour operators to include Inyi pottery experiences in their cultural tourism packages. By showcasing Inyi pottery as a highlight of Nigerian cultural tourism, these partnerships help attract tourists and promote sustainable tourism development in the study area.
4. **Implement Marketing Campaigns:** Launch marketing campaigns targeting domestic and international tourists, highlighting the unique allure of Inyi pottery and its role in Nigerian cultural heritage. Utilize digital platforms, social media channels, and tourism websites to raise awareness and drive visitor interest in Inyi's pottery production. For the expansion of demand for these products in the market, proper promotion of these products has to be done. The local panchayat has to play a great role in this aspect. Publishing brochures and weekly magazines can also sensitize the market. Besides, social media can also uplift the situation of the potters by spreading awareness and promoting their products. This can become an indispensable tool for promoting products on the market. These crafts must also be sent to participate in trade fairs organized by state and central governments. Local government agencies, associations, and NGOs need to move forward in order for these initiatives to preserve this
5. **Host Cultural Festivals:** Organize cultural festivals celebrating Inyi pottery, featuring live pottery demonstrations, traditional music and dance performances, and local food and crafts vendors. These festivals will showcase the vibrancy of Inyi's cultural heritage and attract visitors from near and far. Pottery products will be exposed for tourists and visitors to buy.

6. **Establish Pottery Museums:** Create dedicated pottery museums or cultural centers in Inyi where tourists can explore the history, evolution, and cultural significance of Inyi pottery. These museums serve as educational resources and cultural hubs, preserving Inyi's pottery heritage for future generations.
7. **Provision of Incentives:** The government and NGO's must also extend their helping hand by providing potters with proper financial assistance and support for their improvement. This should be provided with incentives to the potters in the form of soft loans and grants in order to encourage the manufacturing of pottery products. Workshops and seminars could be organized to educate the indigenous people of Inyi, especially girls, on the importance of engaging potting as a skill. The Nigerian Export Promotion Board and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and national organizations and private bodies should help to promote traditional handicrafts and also help in promulgating a comprehensive national handicraft policy.
8. **Upgrade Pottery Studios:** Invest in the renovation and modernization of pottery studios and workshops to create welcoming spaces for tourists to engage with artisans and learn about pottery production.
9. **Establish Community Partnerships:** Forge partnerships between local government, community organizations, and tourism stakeholders to co-create and implement cultural tourism initiatives that benefit the entire community on pottery making.
10. **Promote Cultural Heritage Conservation:** Engage local residents in the preservation and promotion of Inyi's cultural heritage through heritage conservation programs, workshops, and awareness campaigns. Traditional potters in Inyi town should be exposed to the acquisition of various skills through formal education, vocational training centers, and apprenticeship initiation.
11. **Empower Local Artisans:** Provide training and capacity-building opportunities for local artisans to enhance their skills, entrepreneurship, and marketing capabilities, enabling them to thrive in the cultural tourism market.
12. **Establish Infrastructural and Visitor Facilities:** The provision of facilities is one of the factors that influence tourist satisfaction and willingness to visit a destination. It is a fact that the facilities provided by the government have to be shared by the locals as well as tourists.

## Conclusion

The significance of Inyi pottery for both self-reliance and cultural tourism in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Throughout this exploration of Nigerian traditional craft, it is evident that Inyi pottery stands as a beacon of cultural heritage, economic empowerment, and community pride. Firstly, Inyi pottery plays a crucial role in fostering self-reliance within the community. By harnessing local resources, skills, and knowledge, artisans in Inyi have created a sustainable livelihood through pottery production. The traditional craft provides an avenue for economic empowerment, allowing potters and artisans to generate income, support their families, and contribute to the local economy. Secondly, Inyi indigenous pottery serves as a cornerstone of cultural tourism development in Nigeria. Despite the challenges posed by modernization and market competition, there remains a significant potential to develop cultural tourism around this craft, creating new opportunities for both local communities and the broader economy. The unique characteristics of Inyi pottery, including its intricate designs, traditional firing techniques, and cultural significance, attract tourists from around the world. Through cultural tourism initiatives such as pottery workshops, artisanal tours, and cultural festivals, Inyi showcases its rich

cultural heritage and invites visitors to experience the authenticity of Nigerian craftsmanship. By preserving and promoting Inyi Indigenous pottery, Nigeria not only celebrates its cultural diversity but also strengthens its economy and empowers its communities. Inyi pottery exemplifies the potential of traditional crafts to drive self-reliance and cultural tourism development, serving as a model for sustainable development and cultural preservation across the country. In conclusion, Inyi and her pottery production stand as a testament to the resilience, creativity, and cultural richness of Nigerian traditional craft. As Nigeria continues to harness the tourism potential of its traditional crafts, it can unlock new opportunities for economic growth, cultural exchange, and community empowerment, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come. Continued investment in traditional crafts like Inyi pottery is promoting Nigeria's cultural heritage on a global stage. By leveraging the cultural and economic potential of these crafts, Nigeria can create a thriving intersection between heritage preservation and economic development, with Inyi pottery standing as a model for the power of traditional crafts in driving self-reliance and cultural tourism.

### Acknowledgements

We appreciate our respondents for responding to our questions. They were informed of the research, and they gave their consent as the participants. We equally appreciate the reviewers for their constructive criticisms that helped improve the work.

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**Joy Nneke Uchenye Ejikeme** is a senior lecturer in the Humanities Unit, School of General Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In 2013, she had a parallel appointment with the Department of Archaeology and Tourism, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Presently, she had a parallel appointment with the Department of Tourism Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. She belongs to many organizations and corporate bodies where she renders her modest service to the nation. A member of the Association for Tourism Development of Nigeria (ATDiN) in 2009, the Archaeology of the West African Archaeological Association (WAAA) in 2009, the Archaeological Association of Nigeria (AAN) in 2009, the Hospitality and Tourism Management Association of Nigeria (HATMAN) in 2021, and the Association for Promoting Nigerian Languages and Culture (APLINAC) in 2010. In recognition of her excellence, proficiency, and intellectualism, Dr. Joy Nneke Uchenye Ejikeme



received a Prestigious Platinum Award from Chief A. C. Osadebe GON of AkaEze, Prime Minister Ogbunike, and the entire Igwe-In-Council, Oyi Local Government Area, Anambra State, in 2023. Her exceptional intelligence and dedication in educational development, tourism, and efforts to establish projects that would enhance the economic well-being of human beings were outstanding. The Ogbunike community sported on their search the work published by Dr. Joy in **“IKENGA INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES,”** titled **“Ogbunike Cave in Nigeria: A Tourism Potential Asset in Anambra State,”** and conferred her Award in recognition of her achievements and sterling qualities as a virtuous woman of substance and in appreciation of her remarkable encouragement, support for developmental efforts, and upliftment of Ogbunike town and its people. In Educational Leadership, Dr. Joy N. U. Ejikeme was an editorial board member, Journal of Tourism and Archaeology Research (JTAR) 2020–2023. Reviewer Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 2022-2024. Editor, Nigerian Peoples and Cultures, 2024. In 2023, she was the chairman of the local organizing committee of the 2023 Maiden Homecoming of the Department of Archaeology and Tourism. Her research activities were heritage conservation, sustainable tourism development, tourism studies, cultural resource management, and hospitality management. Dr. Joy has published many in-depth articles in learned journals in these areas.