

Igbo cultural practices: Changing, dying or dead?

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Abstract

The Igbos are known to be very adventurous, but as advantageous as this may seem, such movements have affected some Igbo cultural practices. Culture is not only a person's social behaviour or heritage but also their identity. A big problem arises when the cultural traditions of a people are hardly known or used by a generation. Since culture says so much about a group of people, this paper studies some aspects of the Igbo culture, particularly greeting, marriage rites, and naming to ascertain if they are changing, dying, or dead. The objectives of this study are to determine the extent to which these practices are still in use, the benefits of these practices to the Igbo people and the society at large, and how mobility and other factors impact these practices. The study adopts the descriptive survey method in eliciting data. The paper discovers that certain aspects of the cultural practices under investigation are largely, essentially not in use today, primarily because of the influence of urbanization and contact with diverse forms of religion, education, and diverse cultures. This paper reconsiders the practices of greeting, marriage rites, and naming, and questions their role in portraying the Igbo identity and instilling morals and values.

Keywords: Mobility, 'Ndị Igbo,' cultural practices, naming, genuflecting, seclusion of the bride.

Introduction

A popular local parlance says that if one goes anywhere in the world without coming across an Igbo person, the person is expected to exit that place immediately. This implies

African Anthropologist, Vol. 21, Issue 1, pp 68–86, online ISSN 1024-0969.

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that the Igbo people are a highly 'mobile' group of people that adapt easily to different environments (Afigbo 1981). This accounts for why there is practically no part of the world where the Igbos are not found. The Igbo are the second largest group living in southern Nigeria, particularly the South-East. They are socially and culturally diverse and speak the Igbo language with numerous dialects. The Igbo language belongs to the Niger-Congo group of the Kwa subfamily.

This paper focuses on three aspects of the Igbo culture – **greeting** *ekele* (particularly a non-verbal form of greeting known as genuflection/genuflecting), **marriage** *alým di na nwunye* and **naming** *iba nwa aha* (personal names). The values placed on greeting and marriage rites (usually, it is expected of young women and men to know that marriage is a union of adults who have respect for each other and have learned arts that could enable the marriage to thrive culturally, economically, socially, and religiously. The question that comes to mind is: Is this the case?), and naming by the current generation of the Igbo people, especially regarding the preservation of the Igbo beliefs and traditions, have been adversely affected, to a large extent, by three significant factors - culture contact, choice, and vitality. The present generation has yielded to the pressure of Westernisation. Since cultural shifts represent an impact on any language and culture (Sibani 2018), this paper is faced with the specific objectives of finding out the extent to which the act of genuflecting in greeting, the seclusion of the bride-to-be as a marriage rite, and the choice of the old naming patterns in the practice of naming are still in use. The paper also looks into the benefits of these practices among the Igbo and the society at large, the factors impacting these practices, and their final status: are these practices changing, dying, or already dead?

Background: The concepts of 'cultural contact,' 'cultural shock,' and 'cultural death'

According to Ogbu (2013), culture is a people's whole way of life. It embodies a people's

language, emotions, responses, looks, ideologies, interactions, and belief systems. Hofstede (1980, 21-23) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another.” Culture transforms and changes from generation to generation. According to Creanza, Kolodny, and Feldman (2017), culture is not genetically inherited and cannot exist independently. Members of a society share culture. Ejiofor (1984) acknowledges that culture is a product of human’s relationship with the environment. Ejiofor sees cultural practices as the customs of the people. Some practices like the family unit (marriage), and funerals seem universal. In contrast, others like dancing, crafts, and the arts represent reflections of localities. Ejiofor (1984, 63) observed that the culture of the Igbo people practiced by our fathers and mothers falls under “good customs, bad customs, and customs that should be revived or retained.” The author echoes the need to revive some good customs or cultural practices beneficial for societal growth, such as eating habits, greeting, naming, betrothal, marriage customs, or rites. In his view, bad traditions, or cultural practices, for instance, the killing of twins, “should be forgotten or suppressed” (Ejiofor 1984, 63). Multiple births were considered a bad omen that could bring devastation or calamity to society because twins were believed not to be humans and were seen as evil. Bastian (2001) explained that twin murder involves the suffocation of multiple neonates, after which their bodies were disposed of in the *ajo ohia* (bad bush).

Cultural contact is the coming together of two or more cultures, and one culture may influence the other(s) more. The gradual giving up of one culture’s values, customs, beliefs, traditions, and perceptions in favor of the dominating culture is known as a cultural shift; this shift eventually leads to cultural shock. According to Winkelman (1994), cultural shock is a feeling of anxiety resulting from familiar signs and symbols of social intercourses. One who suffers from culture shock experiences disorientation, stress, and fear due to differences between their culture and that of the target language

community. To Adler (1975,13), cultural shock “is primarily a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one’s own culture, to new cultural stimuli with little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences. It may encompass feelings of helplessness, irritability, and fears of being cheated, contaminated, injured, or disregarded.” According to Weaver (1994), cultural shock is the loss of familiar cues, the breakdown of interpersonal interactions, and crises of identity resulting from cultures coming into contact. Cultural shock may produce erosion, cultural death, or the cessation of the way of life associated with a people, communication, interaction, and revival.

Research methods

This study is purely qualitative in nature. Our research questions included 1) To what extent is genuflecting as a form of greeting still retained in Igbo? 2) In what way is bride seclusion been practiced in the present-day Igbo culture? 3) To what degree can we establish the distribution of personal names among the Igbos? We requested consent from participants to answer our research questions. In the case of greeting, seven persons were purposively interviewed. Some interviewees responded online. In the case of the marriage rite of the seclusion practice of a bride-to-be, we observed the marriage custom or rites of the people of Umuchu, a town in Aguata L.G.A of Anambra State. To elicit data for naming, we used the names of seventy (70) third-year students from the Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria. We collected students’ names to determine the frequency of old names as surnames, old names as first names, middle names as surnames, middle names as first names, Christian names as surnames, western names as surnames, etc. We also made use of library materials for the literature review.

Results

Greeting

According to Nillson, Norrby, Bohman, Marian, Wide and Lindstrom (2020), conversational openings are often performed through verbal greetings. Greeting is a socially accepted linguistic behaviour often associated with respect regardless of age, gender, nation, or region. Lyons (1968) relates greeting to social behaviours that express acceptance and appreciation and are signs of complimenting something or someone. Greeting is also used to show respect and goodwill. According to Ferguson (1976), greeting captures a stereotyped polite form of communication. Nillson et al. (2020) perceive the act of greeting as a ritual easily and naturally performed as part of cultural competencies. However, Udeagha (2020) refers to Igbo forms of greeting as one of the most cherished core values that facilitate interpersonal relationships and cooperative reality in Igbo culture. Greeting is what a person does or says to show respect and goodwill. In other words, this subject matter represents a mark of respect and honour, a core Igbo value that indicates deep feelings of regard and admiration shown towards an elderly person or those appreciated, Udeagha (2020).

Mmadike and Okoye (2015, 9) state that “greetings constitute a set of linguistic and non-linguistic expressions used by humans in social interactions and encounters.” Hence, we mainly consider two types of greetings - verbal and non-verbal greetings. Verbal greeting involves using vocal sounds to acknowledge the presence of or appreciation of a person. On the other hand, non-verbal greeting involves gestures that could include facial and bodily expressions that may or may not be accompanied by verbal greetings. According to Izuogu (2013), non-verbal behaviour far outweighs the impact of words. It is the act of greeting usually made using both words and gestures. According to Hasyim (2019), greeting words are used to talk with other people and reflect the social interaction system of the speaker community. However, Hasjim, Hasyim, Maknun, and Kaharuddin

(2021) define it as a morpheme, word, or phrase used to refer to people who are spoken to. Onuigbo (1993) captures greetings as cultural performances, molded and dependent on social variables like age, sex, and roles. To this effect, Okoye (2011) adds ethnic groups and Mmadike and Okoye (2015) add context, both variables that should be considered. Usually, in Igbo culture, younger people are expected to initiate the greeting process. Also, the first to initiate eye contact should create the greeting.

The aspect of non-verbal greeting that this paper looks at is genuflection/genuflecting, which is the act of bending a knee instead of kneeling, instead of kneeling, which involves both knees. However, Encarta (2009) records that the action is synonymous with kneeling, bowing, bending the knee, or curtsying. Whichever way, genuflecting is captured as a respectful act of greeting that involves the bending of the right knee, kneeling, and slightly bending the back (as is the case with women) to show a gesture of respect and/or bending the head slightly or bending with the right hand touching the knees or toes (as is the case with men). This is very common amongst the Roman Catholic faithful and the Yorubas. Sheridan (2020) also sees it as an excessive show of respect that may or may not be necessary or deserved.

Genuflecting is one aspect of greeting that has yet to be considered to a large extent in Igbo literature. The interviews conducted and the library sources show that there are two basic forms of genuflecting in the Igbo culture. Kneeling of one or two of the knees or bending of the knees accompanied by a slight bend of the shoulder by Igbo women as a sign of respect to their husbands and their husband's people. This is a common gesture put forward by the women while greeting their husbands, elders, and titled men. Men also genuflect on titled men. These gestures are recognised by a tap on the back or the nod of the head of the greeted persons. It is also considered a critical cultural practice that mothers should teach younger women. Although men also learn the practice from their elders.

Okoli (2011) and Izuogu (2013) mention in their descriptive studies of greeting in Isuochi and Ajalli, that kneeling is an aspect of greeting that is expected of a married woman to her husband and to her husband's people. We seek to find out how obtainable this is today and if this is beneficial to the Igbo land, people, and society at large. Izuogu (2013) identifies the features of greetings as universal, ritualized, rule-governed, context-determined, culture-specific, and having two forms - verbal and non-verbal. Izuogu observes that education, context, sex and age, norms and values, level of relationship, and modern influence are the reasons why greetings in Isuochi have changed. This practice is not very common in all parts of the Igbo land. The parts of the Igbo land where this is heavily used are Anambra, some parts of the Imo and Abia states. Ebonyi, Enugu, and some other parts of Imo and Abia states do not exhibit this cultural practice.

Despite the opinions of Okoli (2011) and Izuogu (2013) above, some of the respondents in our interview insist that genuflecting is a borrowed culture but this paper argues that it is not true. Westernization is usually referred to as civilization (the stage of human social and cultural development considered most advanced) and the attendant Christianity believes that no one is expected to bow to another except God (Deutz 5:8-9). This notion has swallowed up the tint of respect reflected in the pattern of greeting the elders and titled men. From close observation in recent times, mothers and young girls do not genuflect while greeting; in fact, people generally believe that the Igbos are a proud breed who do not genuflect while greeting.

Marriage and the 'iru-ihe' maiden rite of passage

According to traditional Igbo culture, marriage is a legally or formally recognised union of a man and a woman in a relationship. By legal, it means that the parents of both the man and the woman in most cases, are aware of the relationship. By formal, we mean that every necessary step has been taken in the culmination of the union of two individuals.

To ensure a cordial relationship between a couple and reduce the rate of divorce, certain programmes are being embarked upon in the traditional Igbo society. Marriage rites among the Igbos differ from one part of Igbo land to the other. According to tradition, these rites include stages of visits by the in-laws before a daughter is given to them in marriage. In a discussion of the Igbo marriage custom, Uchendu (1965:51) supported by Uzoagba (2015) notes that “the process of betrothing and marrying an Igbo girl is a long, ceremonious one” which ranges from seeking the bride’s consent through testing of character, settlement of bridewealth and the general merriment that follows. Using Umuchu, a town in Aguata local government area of Anambra State as a case study, certain maiden rites are intended to train young girls to turn into responsible wives and mothers in their matrimonial homes.

In Umuchu, records on wall carvings and paintings on ‘*iru-ihe*’ maiden rite of passage show that the observance of marriage rites started about AD 1200 and continued through AD 1959. *Iru-ihe*, according to Uzoagba (2015), is a maiden rite in which young girls are trained in different crafts to be better prepared to face the challenges that may be associated with matrimony. It is a rite that shows that a young maiden has reached marriageable age. Nwoko (1974) notes that initiation rites for young girls anchor the endurance test for maidens who are of marriageable age in society. The essence of this traditional practice is to reinforce the age-long maxim in Igbo land that the pride of every woman is her ability to preserve her maiden purity for her future husband. *Iru-ihe* is a seclusion period when maidens are kept under close surveillance out of their normal daily activities by elderly women. The duration of this seclusion sometimes depends on the financial strength of the maiden’s parents and/or her suitor. At other times, the duration varies from one cultural variety of Igbo to another. For instance, in Ikwere of Rivers State, Talbot (1969) notes that seclusion lasts for a period of three months, four to six months in Awka of Anambra State, three months in Okigwe of Abia State, except Orlu

and Otanzu of Imo State where seclusion lasts one and five months respectively (all these areas are found in South-East Nigeria).

During the seclusion period, the maiden is trained to understand that it is not only her husband that is marrying her but the entire members of her husband's family. This is done to inculcate the right attitude in the maiden towards her husband and his family. Maidens are trained in different kinds of crafts which range from pottery to weaving to carving in order for her to be resourceful to her husband and help meet the family's financial needs. Nkwo (1984, 57) identifies five hairdos used during the seclusion period, including *ntutu isi*, *ahiri-ahi*, *okpu-azu*, *isi-ego*, and *isi okpoko*. After the confinement period comes the first public outing ([zx ah[a] which marks the end of the seclusion period.



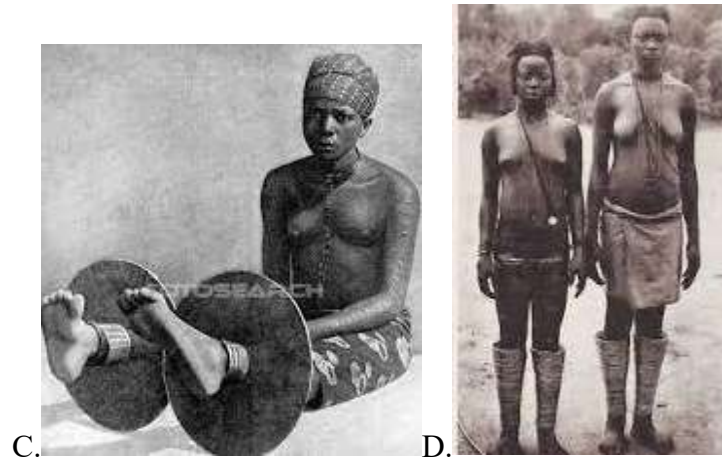
A.

B.

A.Talbot (1969); B.Chukwunonso Uzoagba (2022)

From our interview with Eshiole Umeh, (2021), the *iru-ihe* maiden rite in Umuchu stopped in 1959 after a period of subsequent waning. The main reason for the non-observance of this rite, according to Eshiole, relies on the arrival of the Christian missionaries to Igbo land in the 19th Century. Apart from the Bible, missionaries came with several other things with them for the remote and timid Igbo people to whom they had brought the gospel. One such thing was European

clothing, different from our dressing pattern in the early times.



C and D: Igbo women dressing in precolonial times, Talbot (1969)



E and F: Igbo women dressing in modern times; Chukwunonso Uzoagba (2022)

Figures C and D show the dressing pattern of Igbo women in precolonial and colonial times where parts of their bodies, especially the trunk, were left uncovered. In (D), one can see the beads around the neck, uncovered hair, and large copper spiral rings (anklets as is the case with Fig C) on the legs. Uzoagba (2017) explains that the springing and relaxing of the individual circle of rings while the wearer is in motion produces a dignified sound that adds to the glamour of the maiden thereby creating a euphoric atmosphere during the *iru-ihe* maiden rite ceremony. The feet are bare without any sandals or shoes on. Note should, however, be taken that young girls that dress in this manner were undergoing a maiden rite of passage.

Today, the story is no longer the same as in Figures E and F, where the women are modestly dressed in modern apparel. There is a common denominator in all the women here, not only are their trunks and other parts of their bodies covered, they are all wearing matching head gears which could be of the same fabric as their dresses or a different but matching fabric.

Christian missionaries also brought new forms of education and civilization. They saw some of the Igbo customs as archaic and crude - one of which is the *iru-ihe* maiden rite of passage. Also affected, according to Ibenwa (2014) are other obnoxious practices, for example, the caste system (*osu* - one dedicated to idol/god), slavery (*igba-ohu*) in Igbo land, killing of twins, and albinos, ritual killings, and oppression of widows. In response to the message of white missionaries, people gradually started to lose interest in these rites. This result has had a very shifting effect on the quality of marriage we see among the Igbo people today. Young people now enter marriage without knowing any craft which can fetch them money, they find it difficult to relate with their husbands' families as expected because of a lack of preliminary training. The resultant effect of this is a high level of divorce in marriages among the Igbos today. We need to go back to the drawing board and call back some aspects of our traditions that are not barbaric.

Naming (Igu Aha): Personal names

Naming is a universal practice that is used for the identification of individuals (Durant, 1997). Naming is giving a name to a thing, object, or human. Names are a valuable information source and could indicate gender, marital status, birthplace, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and social roles or position within a family and society. Ogie (2002) notes that personal names are words that reflect the worldview of a people. Personal names identify people's names, ethnic groups, and ideologies.

Personal names that identify people are of three types: surname, first name, and last name also known as middle name. Mbonu (2010) writes that personal names in Igbo tell a lot of stories. According to Mbonu, personal names depict the circumstances surrounding an individual's birth. Onumajuru (2013) notes that Igbo names are lexicalized sentences. To Nwagbo (2012), naming is a socio-cultural universal because all cultures name their members. He notes that names identify persons and natural things, stressing that no entities exist without names. According to Egenegbe (2004), personal names in English are derived from history, mythology, biographies, the Bible, and contemporary issues.

Naming in Igbo is influenced by events, the order in which children are born and the circumstances surrounding their birth (Ogonna 1972). Isichie (1976) observes that names perform synchronic and diachronic functions as names speak of happenings that took place during a period of time and actions that took place over periods of time, respectively. According to Iwundu (1994), names in the Igbo culture are associated with divinity, and cosmologies structures ranging from the names of the supreme God to deities, for example, *Eke*-creator, *Olisa*-God, *Obasi*-God, *Chukwu*-Great God/supreme being: *Chineke*-God the creator, *Agwu*-deity responsible for human sense, *Mmuo*-spirit, *Ugwu*-deity of the hills, *Ajoku*-deity responsible for crops, *Amadi*- goddess of thunder, *Anyanwu*-sun god, *Ala*-earth goddess, *Igwe*- sky/heavens, *Iwu*-laws of the land, to mention a few examples.

According to Ogbalu (2006, 7) Igbo “myths, folklores, fables, songs, maxims and proverbs will provide a good insight into Ibo political, social, economic and religious philosophy...” Ogbalu goes on to say that “Igbo mythology is deficient in stories in which God (Chuku) or the gods (Chi) are involved.” However, if observed with caution, the great number of maxims, proverbs, and personal names depicting the people’s religious beliefs will prove extremely useful. Names in Igbo in Mbabuike’s (1996, 47) view “hold in-depth meanings as extensions of the Igbo self and Igbo cultural heritage.” He further observes that Igbo names usually would make statements of “the Igbo people’s understanding of gods to the cosmos, and among themselves.” For him, names give an individual identity. The seriousness of naming is heightened when Mbabuike (1996; 47) notes that “to exist without a name for the Igbo people is to be faceless, to be socially inconsequential and to be without any social status.”

Naming in Igbo, according to Mbabuike (1996), includes celebrating the reincarnation of ancestors, expressing gratitude to God for blessing(s), and relating to social affairs, events, prayers, and wishes. Names possess meanings and could make “full-length philosophical statements. According to “*A guide to names and naming practices*” (2006, 6), naming in Igbo sometimes is not gender specific. Ogbalu (2006, 91) opines that “a child receives a name immediately on birth according to the market day in which it was born.” Males are called Nweke, Nwoye, Nwafor, Nwankwo, Okeke, Okoye, Okafor, Okonkwo, Nwokoye e.t.c, whereas females are named Mgbeke, Mgbeoye, Mgbenkwo, Ugoye, Ugonkwo e.t.c. Each name contains meanings and depicts the circumstances surrounding the birth of the child, as well as experiences in life, desires, and hopes for the future.

Obasi (2008) studies derivation of the Igbo personal names from the semantic viewpoint. To account for the dying out of the personal names in the Ajalli community of Igbo, she made use of questionnaires to elicit data for her analysis. The paper finds that personal names in Ajalli are dying out. She observes that this is a result of the people’s negative attitude towards their native names and also the poor understanding of the meanings of these names. The names are considered archaic; as such they do not want to be identified with them. Obasi also notes that the attitude of refusing to be associated with the Igbo names is common among the youths. Obi (1972) and Ezeanya (1967) claim that the advent of Christianity has greatly influenced our native names. As a suggestion, Igbo people could learn to use their indigenous (native) and Christian names. This is because the native names identify them as the Igbo people and reflect Igbo ideologies. Studies in naming can also be in the form of toponymy which talks about names of places rather than of people. To this end, Uzoagba et al (2022) examine place names in Nsukka to identify the factors that could be responsible for the names given to places in the area. They made use of Evans Gareth’s use theory of meaning in the study and found that Igbo toponyms usually depend on such socio-cultural factors as geographical landscape (*Obakaali, Mberugwu*), ancestral/genealogical relationships (*Umuezoguda, Umudeju*), location of the place (*Obodoagu-Ajuona, Amegu Idike*), past events and experiences (*Umụ Ugbala, Umụ Ogiri*).

Seventy names are considered for this study. This gives us seventy surnames, seventy-first names, and sixty-seven last names. Sixty-seven last names have been collected because three of the students interviewed have no last names appended after their first name. In this paper, we use the term last name against the *middle name* used by many. For a proper eliciting of data, the names are grouped into three groups:- Surname (S), First name (F), and Last name (L). The names are further grouped into four categories to ascertain the extent to which the old Igbo cultural names are still in use, the benefit of the old naming practices to the Igbo people and the society at large, and factors militating against the practice of using old Igbo names. The categories include Old, middle, Christian, and Western names. Table 4 presents the class of names encountered during the study and their frequency of occurrence.

Class of names	Frequency
Old names as Surname (OAS)	57

Old as First names (OAF)	9
Middle names as Surname (MAS)	7
Middle as First names (MAF)	16
Christian names as a Surname (CAS)	2
Christian names as First names (CAF)	27
Western names as Surname (WAS)	2
Western names as First names (WAF)	17
Old as Last name (OAL)	8
Middle as Last name (MAL)	13
Christian as Last name (CAL)	28
Western as Last name (WAL)	16

Table 1: Naming and Categories

From the data above, we observe that most of the Igbo surnames are the exclusive reserve of the Igbo cosmos and belief system. Very few first names reflect the old naming pattern of the Igbo people, the same goes for the last or middle names. The highest frequency for first names and last names is foreign to the Igbo cultural naming system and style. Obviously, the use of old names that embody more of our cultural beliefs is dying out in our first and last names. Most of these first names may be adopted by the younger generation as surnames. And if this happens, our cultural belief systems exclusively reserved in names will be lost. This calls for parents to revive and restore the old naming system to preserve our language and culture.

From the discussions initiated in line with this study, we observe that at the mention of most of the old names like, Nwokoji, Mgbeke, Nwokeoma, Nnenne given to an Igbo child born today, the reaction we get is a frown and a snorting showing disgust while some others are very surprised and make a lot of snide remarks. The Igbo people's perception of these names is that they are old and funny. We observe that these old names give information about what the Igbos believe in and uphold. The shift and dying out of these old names in the Igbo first names and last names which stick with us are informed by: the wrong misconception of the old Igbo indigenous names as having negative implications on the bearer; religion; feeling of being civilized rather than being '*Igbotic*'; the belief that the names are diabolical; preference of another man's culture over

one's culture; culture shift and shock, and the feeling that bearing foreign names depicts exposure (civilization and modernisation). The benefit of bearing the old names is that it could raise questions that will lead to the teaching of the people's belief systems, histories, customs, and practices.

Discussion and conclusion

This paper finds that naming greeting and marriage have gone through different processes of change. First, greeting (particularly genuflecting) is a dead cultural practice since many cannot currently associate the Igbo people with it. Recently, we have had a few women trying to bend their knees in recognition of authority. This act has disappeared in real situations except in movies. Two of the interviewees even said that it is a borrowed culture. The seclusion practice, which is rare in all parts of the Igbo land, has also died out, in fact, it is no longer mentioned at all. These findings, therefore, confirms that it is a dead cultural practice. Parents' adoption of the old traditional names is on the verge of death. Some parents are beginning to rethink and have started picking up these names. Therefore, it is a dying cultural practice that must be revived. The above assertions prove that genuflecting and seclusion of the bride before marriage are forgotten cultural practices. Old naming patterns to a very large extent are no longer in use, rather Western and Christian names (like Robinson Reagent Victories) are used as either first or last names that is, the names by which a person is referred to every day of his life. In addition, this paper finds the following factors to be militating against genuflecting, *iru-ihe*, and naming practices in Igbo land:

Mobility

Mobility and migration are major factors that affect Igbo cultural practices. Most Igbos end up living a long distance away from their indigenous communities in search of economic and educational opportunities in urban cities. There are cases where people give birth to children who in turn give birth to their own children and so on, with all these generations living (and even dying) in the Diaspora without having the opportunity to visit home as often as possible. Therefore, children born in these urban centers (like Lagos, Port Harcourt, Abuja, or outside Nigeria) grow up, get married, give birth to their own, and educate children with little or no contact with their indigenous culture (yet, they are encouraged to learn western culture and are not discouraged even as they learn other cultures apart from theirs in that immediate environment).

Preference

Most Igbo prefer the Western culture to their indigenous Igbo culture. This preference can be seen in the choice of movies, dress code, and even food, the social media and the entertainment industry as a whole. This results from the wrong belief system that thinks that the Igbo culture is not as good as the Western culture or that it makes one be seen as unexposed or backward.

Christianity

Christianity teaches and inculcates to bow or bend in worship to God who made the heavens and the earth, or else one will be said to be idolizing a human being. In the case of the seclusion of the bride, many Igbo Christians prefer the Western way of life and the seeming freedom it gives, unlike the Igbo culture which looks like “tying a young girl down.” Also, marriage counseling and mentoring in Christianity seem to have replaced the kind of mentoring practiced by the Igbo culture, so, Christian-to-be brides are groomed more in the art of praying, fasting, generosity, hospitality, and so on, at the expense of the other Igbo traditional culture of learning to make a home and treating husbands with special respect that is taught during *iru-ihe*.

Education

Much time is spent on acquiring Western education these days, which is one factor that militates against adopting the original Igbo names. Most parents who have some form of Western or formal education (and even those who do not) find it more ‘modern’ and ‘civilised’ to name their children English or Christian names rather than Igbo ones. Some even make their children bear their first names as surnames as is the case with Emmanuel Onyebuchi, Chidalu Chinenye, and so on where Onyebuchi and Emmanuel which father’s first names are.

Recommendations

The paper recommends that there is a need for the Igbo people to reexamine and reconsider these cultural practices some of which are better than what we have today. Again, further study should be carried out on current female greeting patterns to be able to establish their noncompliance with genuflecting as an act of greeting. The same applies to marriage and naming customs. These should be reappraised in order to dispute or affirm that what we had in the past is better than what we

have today.

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