

## **CULTURE AND MIGRATION: THE CASE OF THE IGBO OF SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA**

**Igbokwe Benedict Nkemdirim**

[uwa9@yahoo.com](mailto:uwa9@yahoo.com)

&

**Ahumaraeze Chinwe Innocentia**

Directorate of General Studies  
Federal University of Technology  
Owerri, Imo  
[iahumaraeze@yahoo.com](mailto:iahumaraeze@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

*In recent times, there has been heightened and sustained interest in the concept migration because of its phenomenal global significance. Emergent discourses dwell on its link with other aspects of life and societal engagements like culture. Humans are naturally mobile. Certain factors contribute to the movement of people from one locality, one country or from even one continent to the other. This movement is not usually a smooth sail as it is fraught with unusual difficulties and hindrances. Immigrants are, more often than not, cajoled into shading off their cultural identity in their new place of abode as they are subtly made to see their cultural practices as mundane and obsolete. Thus, there is usually loss of culture due to migration. Be that as it may, some immigrants who have strong and established culture migrate with them despite all odds. A case in focus is the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria. This paper aims at countering the general notion of culture loss or the negative effects of migration on culture. It is the view of the researchers that there are benefits accruable from culture in migration. It is the contact of cultures that leads to cultural diffusion and appropriation, which translate to improved economies, greater technological innovation and general global advancement. The paper explicates migration, culture and cultural diffusion, the Igbo and their general characteristics, aspects of the Igbo culture that have migrated and the benefits of cultural migration. The paper concludes that cultural diffusion is the key to the sustenance of immigrants' cultural identity, individual and global advancement and world peace. It is the recommendation of the researchers that cultural migration should be encouraged because of its emergent benefits.*

**Keywords:** Mobility, Migration, Culture, Cultural Diffusion.

## **Introduction**

Migration is one phenomenon that dates as old as humanity. Since creation, humans have always exercised their mobility individually or in groups. They have moved voluntarily in search of better living conditions or have been forced to move as a result of wars, intolerance, persecution and their likes. Yet again, some have moved for conquest reasons in search of colonies and territories. The New World Encyclopedia has recorded that as early 1066, the Duke of Normandy, William the Conqueror evaded and took control of England. Before the Norman Conquest, there had been other conquests on England. The Roman conquest dates back to 43 AD, when England was still in the Dark Age. Around 450 AD, the Angles and Saxons invaded and were later conquered by the Normans. These migrations had cultural entailments. The conquerors at each point came with their language and other forms of cultural identity like food and clothing. There was also another wave of migration in the course of history. Due to religious persecution in Europe, the pilgrims and later the puritans fled to America in search of religious freedom between 1630 and 1640.

Another wave of migration was recorded in the age of discovery between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Mesurier (2012) posits that the wave was born out of the need to tackle labour shortage. That was the age of European explosion to America, Africa and Asia and the discoveries of the new lands. This wave of migration gave rise to slave trade, another dimension of migration-forced. These European migrants/explorers also brought their culture which found expression in religion, dress, music and education to their countries of destination and these cultural elements got engraved in the lives of the receiving population.

There is yet another wave of migration which is recent and is the focal point of global discourse. This is the influx of immigrants from less economic buoyant domains to Europe and America largely due to the Pull Factor. These people also migrate with their culture which either dies or survives depending on the disposition of the immigrants. The Igbo are among those who migrate due to economic reasons and research evidence shows that they keep their culture alive in their receiving countries.

The foregoing typifies the interconnectivity between migration and culture. As people are not divorced from their culture, they tend to migrate with their culture which they fight against all odds to keep alive. For some migrants, there is cultural loss due to influence and contact of cultures. Both for some like the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria, there is cultural sustenance and revivalism even in

migration. Issues that border on culture and migration, the Igbos and aspects of their culture that are kept alive in migration will be explicated subsequently.

### **Culture: Functional Conceptualization.**

Culture is a multidisciplinary concept which study has continued to receive scholarly attention and debate. Culture is an all inclusive phenomenon and encompasses the identity of a people and the beliefs that make them distinct from others. In all societies, there are human creations aimed at helping individuals to live harmoniously in a world that is ever challenging. These creations are nurtured, shared and transmitted across generations for the preservation of individuals and the society at large. These creations double as the culture of any given society.

There have been scholarly attempts at defining and categorizing culture. Taylor (1891) in Abakare (2009:3) defines culture as “the complex totality of men’s acquisition of knowledge, morals, beliefs, arts, customs, technology etc which are shared and transmitted from generation to generation”. Cohen (2014) views culture as produced of a particular society, including material artifacts like food and clothing, institutional (village and authority, system and land heritage) beliefs, values and laid down rules for behaviour. These views typify that culture is all embracing. Everything about man in his society is hinged on culture, which in turn, moderates man’s activities. In this regard, culture becomes a check and benchmark for assessing man’s conduct and adaptiveness to his environment.

Still on the explication of the concept of culture, Abakare (2009:3) posits that culture includes all adaptive techniques for societal preservation and for there to be preservation, there must be a heritage for each society. This illustrates that culture is a social construct as well as society specific. Each society constructs its own specifics which may flourish or decline depending on the disposition of the people.

Another notion of culture is that it encompasses patterns of social behavior which find expression in language, dressing, roles, rules and identity. This notion is heightened by Dowse and Hughes (1980) assertion in Abakare (2009:3) that culture deals with the interaction of people in an environmental setting

where they generate ideas and share expectations, attitudes and beliefs about their activities and existence.

Culture is highly componential. Scholars have isolated two major components of culture; the material and the non-material. Bhugra (2004:6) has identified cultural components to include religion, rites of passages, language, dietary habits, beliefs and leisure activities. The material components of culture form an integral part of an individual's cultural behaviour and include arts, technology and ideology (Aghamelu, 2009:50). Material culture is used to denote the tangible and visible aspects of culture and Abakare (2009) cited above lists them to include products of industry, technology, housing, clothing, medicine and all concretized forms used to meet individual needs in the society. Non-material culture, on the other hand, denote all abstractions connected to the lives of individuals in the society. Language, attitude, norms, beliefs, values, behavioural patterns and codes of conduct are all aspects of culture in abstraction.

The foregoing typifies the functionality of culture in any given society. It is shared, transmissible, enforceable and adaptive. It is created and has the capability of changing lives and giving order to values and lives of people in a society where it is cherished and nurtured. It is all encompassing and cannot be easily divorced from individuals who have imbibed them. It is a string which strongly binds individuals in a society to one another and offers them a unique identity.

### **Migration: An Appraisal**

Migration is an age long phenomenon which has continued to receive attention in global discourse given its status of linking individuals and societies across the globe. According to the 2018 Report of the International Organisation for Migration, migration encompasses a wide variety of movement and situations involving people of all works of life and background.

Research has recorded attempts to conceptualize migration. It is seen as the permanent change of abode by a group or an individual which is done because of reasons ranging from economic, social, religion and education. Bhugra and Becker (2005) have viewed migration as semi-permanent or permanent relocation of people to another country or region. Currently, there is mass movement and an influx of people to Europe and America from less economically buoyant countries in search of pastures that are greener. Bhugra and Becker cited above have identified reasons for migration to include education, economic and social

class. They went further to indicate that physical movement, duration of relocation and absorption of migrants in the social and cultural framework of the receiving society are all domains of migration.

As has been noted, migration occurs due to various reasons. Miesel (2017) has outlined reasons for migration to include displacement, poverty, persecution and economic opportunities. Mesurier (2012) has noted that migration which is the process of moving either across an international border or within a particular region encompasses length of movement, composition and causes. Still on the reasons for migration, Benson (2011) posits that migration is driven by flight or the search for work and for sustaining kinship. Cohen (2014) has noted that migration as a solution to social problems of unemployment and relative deprivation has led to a migration culture - growth in dispositions that favour migration. Cohen goes further to say that migration aspirations have been heightened by higher global connectivity, global media, increasing unequal distribution of income and sophisticated transport systems. One meeting point in all these postulations is that in recent time, the rate and frequency of migration has increased and aspirations to migrate are born out of the need for survival and self emancipation.

There are also typologies of migration. There is internal migration - within the same region and there is international migration- across countries or even continents. International migration which is the focus of this paper is ever increasing. The 2018 World Migration Report of the UN Migration Agency has given statistics of migration to be 244million international migrants in 2015 and 258million in 2017. There is also a projection for 2030 which has led to the pronouncement of the 2030 Agenda to manage this rise.

Thus, migration is an issue of global concern and significance. Both countries of origin and those of destination are affected in some ways. Attempts will now be made to link culture and migration drawing out their attendant and emergent effects and affect.

### **Culture And Migration: The Nexus Between**

The relationship that exists between culture and migration seem not to be clear cut. Both concepts have been studied in isolation. Recent Scholarship has tilted towards the integration of culture in migration studies. Scholars who have attempted to review post settlement issues have noted that cultural analysis as it pertains to migration is shrewded in controversy.

Cohen and Jonsson (2011) indicate that cultural analysis comes with a layer of complexity because of emergent post settlement issues. Culture in migration has its attendant controversy and complexity hinged on the dimensional facets it presents. Culture, which include observable phenomena and the process for living passed across generations in any given society, could have both negative and positive connotations. The contact of cultures in migration leads to positive or negative influence which may translate into alterations in the designs of one culture.

Loss of culture or death of cultural identity is a negative colouration and happens due to variety of reasons. Bhugra and Becker (2005:10) have noted that this happens because of the dissimilarity between the culture of origin and culture of settlement. The contact of dissimilar cultures according to the authors usually leads to alienation from culture and language, lack of social support and rejection which, in turn, translate to poor self esteem, cultural bereavement and, in severe cases, mental illness. The treatise above examples that migration usually has emergent issues like loss of the familiar and what one holds dear like language, attitudes, values and structures of the society of origin.

Epstein and Gang (2010:19) have noted that in the contact of cultures, acculturation occurs. This implies that original culture could be maintained or lost. Acculturation is a bi-dimensional phenomenon but this paper points out that what usually happens is that the substructure (culture of origin) usually loses out in this battle to the super structure (culture of settlement). In acculturation, the culture of settlement usually and gradually takes precedence. Another concept noteworthy in culture and migration studies is assimilation which is the total disappearance of all perceived cultural differences due to the adoption of the language, custom and beliefs of the host culture. Assimilation is thus an extended form of acculturation. This research holds that acculturation and assimilation erode the culture of origin of migrants. It advocates for cultural diffusion which forms its theoretical thrust and which explication is given in the succeeding section.

### **Cultural Diffusion: An Attempt At Framework Adoption**

Migration has attendant cultural implications as has been explicated in the preceding section. Cultural identity which doubles as an individual's feeling of group belonging and self conception anchored on nationality, religion, social, class and their likes becomes moribund or even dies through transnationalism and globalization. These are what this research abhors and in its stead advocates

A Publication of Association for the Promotion of African Studies

for cultural preservation. The study thus adopts cultural diffusion as a working framework.

Cultural diffusion as conceptualized by Leo Frobenius in 1897 is centered on the spread of customs and social activities of one culture to different ethnicities, regions and nationalities. Wachen, Odunsi and Ajiboye (2011) re-echo in their assertion that cultural diffusion leads to the movement and spread of ideas, cultures and beliefs from one locality, one end of the world to the other. They went further to indicate that it also leads to diffusion of knowledge, architecture and increased economies. The foregoing indicates that as migrating people interact with people in their place of destination, inter-cultural diffusion occurs. To this end, food, clothings, beliefs and customs migrate and diffuse. Choudhoy (2018) concretizes the notion of diffusion by stating that cultures migrate and intermingle in contact where they spread and overlap.

This study has adopted cultural diffusion as a working framework because it has observed that due to the resilient nature of the Igbo culture and its survival in millions of kilometers outside the shores of Igbo land, it is only cultural diffusion that has helped in this achievement.

### **The Igbo Of South Eastern Nigeria**

The Igbo are predominantly found in Igboland of the South Eastern Nigeria. Ukaegbu (2005:7) argues against referring to the Igbo nation as part of Nigeria because, Igbo was before Nigeria. The Igbo are found beyond the boundaries of Nigeria and Africa. This statement is buttressed by Adam (1790) as cited in Ukaegbu (2005:8) saying, "Not fewer than Twenty thousand slaves were sold annually at Bonny of whom Sixteen thousand were Ibos".

The Igbo are conglomeration of people who share the same reasoning, time and space. They share life and grow together as a people. They are resilient, a people with diverse culture, as well as adherent to their traditions. The Igbo are known for their spirit of oneness, tolerance, accommodation and hospitality and more importantly their ability to adapt to any situation. As Apakama, (2010:16) has said, "To actually describe who an Igbo man is, you need to live with him, observe his ways of life and make conclusions yourself".

The Igbo are known to hold their culture and tradition tenaciously wherever they find themselves. They are migrants by nature and migration has become part of their culture. In the course of the Igbo migration to any part of the world,

they migrate with some of their cherished norms, values and practices which had already become part of their life.

The following subheadings discuss some of the migrated culture of the Igbo.

## **Some Migrated Cultures Of The Igbo**

### **Igbo Kolanut Hospitality**

Kolanut hospitality is one of the cherished values of the Igbo which have refused to be influenced or eroded by the Western civilization. A popular Igbo maxim says “onye wetara oji wetara ndu” (He who brings kolanut brings life).

Igbo kolanut represents warm reception, respect and regard, peace, acceptability, love, goodwill, settlement of dispute and unity.

Chukwuezi & Chukwuezi, (2002) as cited in Igbokwe (2018:115) affirms,

The Igbo kolanut is a symbol of hospitality and friendship. It plays very important social and ritualistic roles amongst the Igbo. The first act of love and reception to a visitor is presentation of kolanuts. The sharing of kolanuts as show of love is very important before any subject matter is discussed. Marriages, peace treaties, visits and countless other transactions are initiated and arranged by means of kolanut distributed amongst the parties to the transaction.

The above citation buttresses another Igbo adage that says “oji bu isi emume” (kolanut is paramount in any occasion). The Igbo also see kolanut as life itself. This is because, whenever kolanut is being presented, what follows is “igo oji” (prayer) and such prayer is centered on life and the well being of the people.

The Igbo in diaspora are known to practice kolanut hospitality in different countries where they reside. It could be in their individual homes and in their gatherings during ceremonies. The kolanut presentation (iche oji) during occasions abroad represents what Ofoegbu (2006:3) describes as “symbolic actions which the people regard as head count or a way of checking the identity of all the people in attendance in any gathering before any kind of discussion could be heard”.

Talking about being one’s brother’s keeper and team spirit which forms the characteristics of the Igbo, kolanut is at the centre role; therefore the Igbo cannot do without it wherever they go.



## **Igbo Masquerade Culture**

In the traditional Igbo society masquerade is regarded as the presence of the spirit of their forefathers in the land of the living. The Igbo masquerade plays a lot of roles in the socio-political and religious lives of the people. The masquerade helps a lot to maintain sanity. It functions as Law Enforcement Agency, because it arrests offenders and sanctions them accordingly. It is used in checking indolence as well as those who keep late nights. It collects levies and fines. Masquerades perform judicial functions, and expose the evil of any tyrant in a particular society. (Okodo, 2009:258)

Osuagwu, (1980:116) posits:

Masquerade is used to exhibit manliness It was for recreation in those days When facilities for recreation were not available as they are today. Masquerade was the highest judge in any matter, as no one appealed its judgment. They served in community policing, preventing social vices and theft.

The most relevant function of masquerade in relation to this paper is that masquerade is used to grace occasions, they provide entertainment and recreation to people. They trigger awe, respect and fear. There is usually no dull moment in any occasion where the Igbo masquerade is displayed.

The above stated essence of masquerade in the life of the Igbo informed the migration of the masquerade culture to various parts of the world, where the Igbo are found today. Most of the Igbo in Diaspora display masquerade as a means of identity and respect to their culture. The present day Igbo in Diaspora can hardly hold any festival without masquerade display and this usually draws much attention and interest of people of diverse culture both the indigenes of the host countries. This can attest to the mammoth crowd of people that grace those occasions.

## **The Omugwo Culture Of The Igbo**

A newly born child is usually received with joy by the parents, family, friends and relations. In the traditional Igbo society, when a woman delivers a baby, the woman is placed on certain restrictions. She is not allowed to cook for her husband until four weeks. In the same manner, a woman who gave birth to a new baby is not allowed to enter her husband's obi, where his sacred items like ofo, ugu and Ikenga are kept. If there is anything the nursing mother needs from

A Publication of Association for the Promotion of African Studies

her husband's obi, she will send any child around to help her bring it. At times, the woman will stay at the door post and be pointing at the item she wants to take.

It is the above mentioned circumstances that prompt a man to invite his mother-in-law or any other suitable person to come and stand for the nursing mother in terms of cooking for her husband and children, fetching water and firewood, washing clothes as well as attending to other errands which the wife could not do because of her condition.

At the expiration of the Omugwo period, according to tradition, a ceremony is performed to cleanse and purify the woman so that she will attend to her usual household responsibilities. At this point, her mother or any relation that came to help out for this purpose can then go because their daughter is out from Omugwo and competent to move about in order to help herself. (Anozie, 2003:25)

When a woman receives an exciting message and invitation to come and do Omugwo for her daughter, she prepares and gets things together because Omugwo is not done with empty hands. Most women start the Omugwo preparation right from the time their daughters becomes pregnant. Husbands also support their wives in getting food items ready in order to do a befitting Omugwo for their daughter. Talking about the essence of Omugwo, Ubesie, (1978:69) opines:

... the reason why a woman comes to do Omugwo for her daughter is for her to relieve her of some of her duties in the family, which the state of her body will not allow her to do. For instance a woman in Omugwo would not go to kitchen to cook ... if the baby cries in the night, it is the duty of the mother to take care and allowing the nursing mother to rest ...

The importance of Omugwo in the life of the Igbo cannot be over emphasized, that is why it is practiced by the Igbo people, wherever they find themselves, so long as their children are still giving birth to children.

Those benefitting most from this culture are the mothers. It affords them the opportunity to travel abroad, at regular intervals, depending on how many daughters they have abroad.

### **Iri Ji/Ofala-New Yam Festival**

Over the years, yam has been recognized as an important symbol of Igbo culture and tradition as it remains the chief farm product cultivated and harvested by an average Igbo man before the advent of western civilization. In the olden days, a man's wealth was determined by the size of his barn after harvest. Yam is highly respected and preserved like the Igbo kolanut. Some prominent Igbo are given certain titles like – Osuji (servant of yam), Ezeji (chief of yam), Ugoji (The Eagle of yam), Oparaji (The first son of yam), Ekeji (Arch farmer) because of the great success they made in farming. (Osuji, 2009:110)

In the traditional Igbo society, each farmer performs some kind of ceremony to celebrate his eating of yam for the first time that year. There are different reasons for that. First, because of the respect accorded to yam in Igbo culture, the farmer is expected to purify himself before he can eat the new yam, else the spirit of yam will frown and there will not be bumper harvest in the coming year. Secondly, the Igbo proverb says, "If you prepare for wealth, wealth will come in". It is believed that if a farmer prepares well for the yam, the yam will reciprocate the honor by yielding bumper harvest the next harvest season.

Thirdly, the occasion of the new yam festival is used to thank God Almighty for preserving the lives of farmers from the planting to the harvest season. It is not uncommon that he who planted the yam may not be alive to harvest it. Therefore, it is a thing of thanksgiving and gratitude to God for one to be alive to reap the fruit of one's labours.

Osuagwu, (1978:11) explains, "The Igbo believe that if they do not do the new yam festival, the goddess of yam, ajokuji or fiajoku will invoke pestilence on their yam thereby causing famine. Again, anybody that eats the new yam without the festival may fall sick or die". New yam festival has different names in different places like Iri ji ohuu, iti ogidi, ilo mmuo, ikeji, fiajoku, ime otute, ofala.

Trying to discuss the migration of Iri ji festival, in corresponding with foreign festivals, Osuji, (2009:112) reveals:

An annual national day known as thanksgiving originated in the United States of America in 1621 marking the celebration of the harvest and other blessing of the past year. This celebration takes place on every last Thursday of November. In like manner, the same thing is celebrated in Canada on the second Monday in October yearly. These two celebrations

are the same thing the Igbo do that is called New Yam Eating (Iri ji) Festival.

New yam festival, being one of the most surviving Igbo traditions has gained more ground and acceptability, not only amongst the kits and kin at home, but also those in diaspora. The present day Igbo in diaspora take new yam festival seriously and have elevated it to a very important cultural festival in their countries of abode.

### **Igbo Ezeship In Diaspora**

An Eze or traditional Ruler is the traditional number one citizen in any given community. He is either appointed or elected by the people of the community. At times, the traditional ruler inherits a throne. An Eze, who is supposed to be widely knowledgeable and versed in the history of his kingdom, is a custodian of the people's customs, culture and tradition. His advice or opinion must be accepted as authentic in any matter concerning the culture and tradition of the people, like marriage, birth, burial, native dances, festivals and other cultural displays, the taboos, dos and don'ts of his kingdom (Osuji, 2009:67).

The present day Igbo in diaspora have replicated this concept of Ezeship and traditional rulership in various states and countries of their abode outside Igboland. Today, one hears about Eze Igbo or Eze ndi Igbo in Kano State, U.S.A, Dallas, Texas, United Kingdom, Brussel and others. Those Eze ndi Igbo are held in the same esteem by the Igbo in those areas in the same manner the Igbo at home hold their Eze. Those Ezes perform the leadership roles as well as propagate over there, those norms and values for which the Igbo are known. They ensure that notable cultural festivals are celebrated. They receive homages as well as give titles and recognitions to the deserving citizens.

### **Mbari Culture Of The Igbo**

Mbari was the life of every community. It was the medium of communication and expression between the community and the gods, especially Ala deity, the earth goddess.

Acholonu-Olumba, (2009:16) reveals,

Mbari was usually created when the goddess or deity in question requested for it through oracle. A community may however wish to honor its gods for a good harvest or for a victory granted them in battle or even

for saving it from plague, by making a graceful Mbari Art and dedicating same to the god amid celebrations.

Looking closely at the representations in an Mbari house, one will see a record of the customs of the people, current events, important personalities in the society, family life, sacred writing forms of the Igbo, notable historical developments in Igboland, the mother goddess, the python and other arts.

Mbari is a people's way of life, a very important aspect of the culture of the Igbo who live around Imo State in the South Eastern Nigeria. Cole, (1969) as cited in Ejiogu, (2009:11) asserts.

Mbari is life and language. It is about the daily life of action and thought encoded in mud, the symbolic language of ritual, proverbs and myth, encrypted in colour. It is about the promises and hopes of a people, graphically presented in a house erected as a monument to a powerful deity.

Various Mbaris are dedicated to various deities such as Chukwu Abiama (the supreme God who created other gods) Amadioha (the god of thunder and lightning), Anyanwu (the sun god), Igwe-ka-ala (the sky god), Duruaku (god of wealth) and Agwu-nsi (god of mischief or malevolence).

The construction of Mbari is a sacred project that involves rigorous process. When people are confronted with calamitous conditions like frequent maternal and infant mortality, outbreak of diseases, famine and drought, they go to the oracle or diviner to ascertain the cause of their problem. When their problem is known, they promise to build an Mbari for the offended god or goddess. To some people, Mbari is regarded as "a museum of appeasement". (Ejiogu, 2009:11).

Mbari culture of the Igbo is amongst the cultures that have migrated. The Igbo in diaspora have made efforts to replicate the Mbari culture in some countries of their residence. The establishment of the Igbo village in Virginia, United States of America is one of those examples of efforts made to export the Mbari culture of the Igbo.

### **The Igbo Language**

Igbo language is spoken by the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria. Igbo language is one of those cultures of the Igbo that migrated with the Igbo right from the early period of the slave trade.

According to Curtin, (1978), as cited in Anozie, (2003:51)

Igbo language studies first started in America, where some African and Igbo slaves were engaged in labour in the tobacco and rice farms. These slaves were identified through their languages.

Another place where the Igbo language manifested was in West Indies, where a white, G.C.A Oldendorp got attracted by the language and culture of the slaves who were working in the farms. G.C.A Oldendorp later in 1717 produced a book titled, "Geschichte der mission der Evangelischen Bruder auf den carabischem." In this book were some Igbo words, some numbers, thirteen Igbo nouns, and two sentences (Anozie, 2003:53)

Presently, many Igbo in diaspora have formed groups as well as initiated programmes that will encourage the use of Igbo language especially among the Igbo in various countries where they reside.

We have, Igbo Studies Association, ISA, Otu Suwakwa Igbo, Igbo ga-adi, Igboanwuna etc. In Baltimore Maryland, USA, there is an Association PILA, that propagates Igbo language and culture- Pila-foundation.org.

The above instances point to the fact that the Igbo migrate with their language, which is part of their culture.

### **Igbo Dress Culture**

The Igbo dress code is another aspect of Igbo culture that migrated with the Igbo.

According to Igbokwe, (2009:184)

There are different dress codes for different occasions. There is dress code for work, market, for babysitting and for dance. There is another special dress code for important ceremonies. There is dress code for young girls who are going to market and also for one who is mourning the dead. There is dress code for wrestling, for demonstrations or protest and for war. The Igbo have their dress code for going outside their localities.

The Igbo traditional dress code is George wrapper that covers the lower part of the body and the jumper shirt or woolen jumper called “isi agu”, which is made of swede material. These days, men mostly wear trouser and now put on the jumper top or isiagu with red cap or war beret. For the women, they put on George wrapper in two segments and put on a lace blouse and head gear.

There is also “Akwaete” cloth, which originated from Akwaete people of Ndoki clan in Abia State, Nigeria, from where the cloth took its name. This cloth is an indigenous hand crafted textile material produced by the above mentioned clan.

Okeke, (1996) as cited in Ogu, (2009:43), explains,

..the quality of the cloth has gone through radical changes over the years to become one of the most exciting and beautiful Nigerian clothes available today. Different designs and styles have been introduced as innovations in the use and production of Akwaete. Its modern brands are sometimes designed in contribution with cotton, rayon, silk etc.

The Igbo dress code is better assessed during important occasions like marriage, coronation, launching, thanksgiving and similar occasions.

In the same manner, the Igbo in Diaspora are well known for show casing the Igbo traditional outfit during ceremonies at their various countries of residence. They dress traditionally anytime occasions permit them to come together, especially when they celebrate New Yam Festival, Naming Ceremony or any of those cultural gatherings for which the Igbo are well known.

Funeral/Wake-keep is another aspect of Igbo culture that migrated with Igbo migrants. Wake-keep is observed in the oversea countries in honour of their deceased relatives or friends, whether the deceased was resident at home or oversea. During the wake-keep ceremony, the Igbo gather either at the deceased relatives’ residence or at an event centre in the evening singing, dancing and praying. At most occasions, some sort of side attractions in the form of music and other cultural displays are included in the programme.

### **Benefits Of Cultural Migration**

Although it cannot be claimed that most of these migrated cultural practices of the Igbo are practiced exactly the way they are being done in Igbo land as a result of environmental factors, yet the benefits of these cultural practices abound

This paper captured some benefits of cultural migration as follows:

- a. **Cultural Identity and Bonding:** With the practices of these cultural events in Diaspora, the Igbo are easily identified as people that have rich cultural heritage. With this, the Igbo in Diaspora not only identify themselves, but are also bound together as one people. This also promotes good relationship amongst them.
- b. **Cultural Preservation and Propagation:** Cultural migration brings about the preservation and propagation of the rich culture of the Igbo, saving them from going into extinction.
- c. **Cultural Exchange:** Through diffusion, cultural exchange is made possible. Cultural migration is a means of selling the rich culture of the Igbo to the outside world.
- d. **Recreation and Entertainment:** The Igbo in Diaspora use the season of the celebration of festivals to relax and recreate themselves. Some of these events take place during their summer holidays when they join their families together to celebrate and make merry.
- e. **Revenue Generation:** The period of festival celebrations are mostly used to raise funds and generate revenue for one developmental project or the other. Often times, it is heard that a certain socio-cultural organization resident in any of the countries abroad embarked on one project or the other in their local communities. The funds used in those projects are raised during the festivals they celebrate in different countries of residence.

## **Conclusion And Recommendations**

The driving effort in the development of this paper has been to establish a link between culture and migration. The study revealed that this era has witnessed an increase in the culture of migration traceable to forces of political instability and harsh economies. Thus, migration leads to the contact of culture which most times results in the loss cultural identities of migrant or mental illness in severe cases. The study however used the Igbo of the South Eastern Nigeria as a case to showcase how migrants can hold firmly to and propagate their culture even in the Diaspora. It is on this premise that the following recommendations were made.



- \* The custodians of our culture are encouraged to uphold and keep the cultural practices alive so that migrants will have the interest to replicate the practices outside.
- \* Migrants are encouraged to hold firmly to and practice their culture outside because it gives them a sense of identity.
- \* Cultural diffusion should be encouraged because it makes for the growth of cultures in contact and prevents cultural identity loss which could lead to severe health hazards.
- \* Cultural migration has attendant benefits and should be encouraged.

## References

- Abakare, C. (2009). Definition of culture. In F. Aghamelu & C. Asomugha (Eds). *Readings in African thought and culture*. (pp. 2-13). Enugu: Strong Tower Books.
- Acholoru-Olumba, C. (2009). Mbari and its significance in Igbo life and culture. The concept of Mbari in Igbo land- A colloquium (Onugaotu) Ozuruimo 2009. Owerri: Imo State Council for Arts and Culture.
- Aghamelu, H. (2009). Culture and art. In F. Aghamelu & C. Asomugha (Eds). *Readings in African thought and culture*. (pp 49-56). Enugu: Strong Tower Books
- Anozie, C.C. (2003). *Igbokwenu: Akuko na Omenaala ndi Igbo*. Enugu: Computer Edge Publishers
- Apakama, L.M. (2010). Traditional Igbo education: A tool in the achievement of millennium development goals. In the *ICACD journal. Cultural perspective of development for Africa*. 1(1), 15-19.
- Benson, M. (2011). *British in rural France: Lifestyle migration and the ongoing quest for a better way of life*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Bhugara, D. & Becker, M. (2005). Migration, cultural bereavement and cultural identity. *World psychiatry: Official journal of the world psychiatric association* 4(1): 18-24
- Bhugra, D. (2004). *Migration, distress and cultural identity*. PubMed 69: 1-13
- Choudhoy I.S. (2018) Cultural diffusion: meaning, types and examples. Retrieved from <https://historyplex.com/cultural-diffusion-meaning-types-examples>
- Cohen, R. & Jonsson, G. (2011) Introduction: connecting culture and migration. In R. Cohen and G. Jonsson (Eds). *Migration and culture*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

- Cohen, R. (2014). Brilliant and useful pieces of writing on migration: A compass anthology. In B. Anderson and M. Keith (Eds). *Migration and culture representation: Power and pitfall'* COMPAS: Oxford
- Ejiogu, A. (2009), The concept of Mbari in Igbo land. In the colloquium (Onugaotu). Owerri, Imo State Council for Arts and Culture.
- Epstein, G. S & Gang, I.N. (2010). Migration and culture. In G. Epstein and I. Gang (Eds). *Migration and culture: Frontiers of economies and globalization*. 8, 1-21, Emerald group publishing Limited.
- Igbokwe, B.N. (2018): Igbo culture and global reconciliation. *European journal and Social Sciences Studies*. 2, (10), 113-120.
- Igbokwe, B.N. (2009) Ejiji Odinala ndi Igbo: O ga-ekwe mee ka o bu ka Ekwuo. In *Opiike: A Journal of Igbo Language and Culture*. 1(1), 177-190
- International Organization for Migration. The UN Migration Agency. World Migration Report 2018
- Meisel, A. (2017). The present, the past and the future of human migration. Retrieved from <https://omnia.sas.upenn.edu/story/past-present-and-future-of-human-migration>.
- Mesurier, S.L. (2012). The phenomenon of migration: Its significance or meaning in human society through history. Seminar on current migration phenomenon Spanish Red Cross in Seville. Retrieved from [www.Hre.org/en/news-and-media/opinions/speeches/2012/test](http://www.Hre.org/en/news-and-media/opinions/speeches/2012/test).
- New World Encyclopedia: Retrieved from <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Norman-Conquest-of-England>.
- Ofoegbu, J.U. (2006): The kolanut as an Igbo cultural and social symbol. In *Ndi Igbo magazine*. Issue 10 p. 28-31.
- Ogu, J.C. (2009) Dressing as a cultural identity: Exploring the Akwaete Among the Igbo. In *Opiike*. A journal of Igbo language and culture. 1(1),39-48
- Osuagwu, B.I.N. (1980) *Ndi Igbo na omenaala ha*. Owerri: Macmillan Publishers.
- Ubesie, T. (1978). *Odinala ndi Igbo* Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- Ukaegbu, F.N. (2005). *The Igbos: The African root of nations*: Ibadan: Heinemann Educational books.
- Wahen, E.O., Odunsi, S.O. & Ajiboye, O.E. (2011). Causes and consequence of rapid erosion of cultural value in a traditional African society. *Journal of Anthropology*. Retrieved from <https://www.Uoi.org/10.155/2012/3206>.