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The Dynamics of Igbo Cultural Revitalization

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ABSTRACT

Language is a carrier of culture and so language and culture are inextricably bound together. The culture of the people finds reflection in the language they employ and thereby use their language in ways that reflect what they value. Ndiigbo constitute a cultural group and community, with a distinct identity. Culture is characterized especially by a communalistic social interaction with one another. The dynamic nature of culture is activated through interaction with other people. 'Igboism' thus emerges the totality of experiences; negative and positive. The distinguishing mark of Ndiigbo is that they are continually in search of new and perhaps more result oriented for which they would like to achieve at all cost. They have as well given up a lot due to their natural quest to adapt and be accommodated by other cultures. The Igbo are ultra-republican and utilitarian in nature. In the face of these threats, the paper calls for urgent need of revitalizing the Igbo culture in order to restore the valuable aspects of the culture, its peculiarity and identity. The fruit of this work would go a long way in ameliorating the ugly aspects that negate their cultural values. The fruitful dialogue, and interaction with other cultural groups are expected to usher in firm panacea in re-positioning its members a true sense of self- acceptance.

Keywords: culture, language, Igbo people, values, identity, threats, revitalization

INTRODUCTION

Chinua Achebe recounts his reminiscence before the coming of the White men on Igbo life scripted through his most popular novel, *Things Fall Apart*, taught us about the dint of hard work and quest for dignity that characterizes and orders Igbo life [1]. Before things started falling apart, a typical Igbo man is known and seen as his brother's keeper. What concerns the others, concerns another [2]. Togetherness was the basic necessity for development and progress in communities in Igbo land and these transformed immensely the life of communities and Igbo people. They relied so much on collective efforts for survival and achievement [3]. These communal living find expression in words, names, or phrases like "*gidigi bu ugwu eze* (a trooping crowd is the king's dignity), "*ibu anyi danda*" (loads do not weigh ants down), "*agbakoo agbakoo nyuo mamiri ya agboo ufuu*" (when people urinate together, it foams very well), "*igwe bu ike* (strength comes from the kinsmen", *onye ahala nwanne ya*"¹ (nobody should abandon his brother), among others [4]. Again, the Igbo of innocence in a kindred spirit have strong traditional and culture (taboos), which everyone frowns at

whenever they are violated. These taboos cut across killing somebody, stealing promiscuity, kidnapping, sorcery and so on. Everyone is cautioned from childhood to desist from such acts that are offensive [5]. The Igbo people believe that life is greater than wealth and so such names like '*akuagwu*', '*nwakaego*', '*nwabugo*', '*nwanne*', '*nwabugwu*', '*nwabueze*' and as such, their care and respect for every creature provokes love amongst them; thereby unity is assured in their communities. They are hardworking people who do not believe in short cuts in money making [6].

Over the years, Ndiigbo have recorded enviable achievements through self-help and collective effort. This style life has preoccupied their minds for many years of existence. But today, these ethos have been totally overtaken by irrelevant foreign alternative which have made them aliens in their father land. Concerning this, Osuji in Eze-Peace. This is to say: "just like every other culture and tradition, some of these practices have been watered down by incursion of western education [7]. In addition, social and economic imperative have introduced their ameliorating

practices amongst Igbo [8]. Today, the reverse is the case. Instead of these communal attributes, what we have and experience is selfishness, self-aggrandizement, killing of innocent souls, I am because I am, one man show, count me off syndrome. In their enterprising spirit, they have become aggressive individuals who are now exploitative, grasping, greedy, jealous, and, even to their own brothers' wives, children and others. They are no longer their brother's keeper [9]. They have turned to the biblical spirit of Cain against his brother, Abel. The spirit of selfishness, lack of moral discipline, and respect to supreme beings has driven the Igbo man to become a kidnapper, murderer, a child trafficker, a sorcerer, and an armed robber. All these negative attributes have slowed down the rate of development amongst the Igbo [10]. And these negative low moral values indicate that the Igbo collective identity is dead and hence the need for revitalization. Exhuming precedes death. Revitalization suggests reawakening, giving life, strength and energy to something on the verge of death and collapse. The various ways of restructuring and revitalizing those I in a conflict Igbo cultural values can be achieved with the use of prototype theory. Way of looking not only at how concepts may be formed, that is at the cognitive dimensions of linguistic behavior but also at how we achieve our social competence in cultural values [11].

The historical experience of European colonization, foreign ideologies and devastating civil war distorted the Igbo psyche and cultural vitality. This culture, the universal, underwent what has been referred to as 'pseudo-speciation', a distortion of external acquisition of decisive views of the Igbo into the Igbo self-consciousness and cultural awareness. Therefore it is quite evident that in order to avoid imbalance of personality and acquisition of a sound identity, one has to fight for continuity in culture that tolerates a systematic enlightenment and assures a stable individual identity. The fact one has to identify oneself with some or one successful figure in the community in order to feel accepted and to reduce tension, one finds oneself in a conflict when one's people are accredited with a negative identity and negative attributions culture. It is even worse when the people actually accept this negative and low position [12]. The person involved would therefore strive for the foreign ideals and culture which are highly esteemed in one's

society, thereby living in false life. The only reasonable remedy for such mentality colonized people would be to revitalize their culture. The present paper seeks the dynamic ways to revitalize Igbo cultural values [13].

Language and Self Identity

One's opinion is communicated to others inter-subjectively, artistically, symbolically, linguistically and incarnately, whereby an individual idea becomes accepted and understood. In that case, meaning depends on communities, their history and situation. It is precisely the existence of a common meaning that sustains a language, there could be some subdivisions of the common meaning which eventually give rise to secret societies; one could also talk of medical language, psychological language, legal language, philosophical language, and so on [14]. This means that social divisions, be it class, group or club create more meaning in the community in the form of symbols, symbols, signs, letters or language and thereby contribute to the disintegration of the community. Bernard Longergan describes the making of a community in this way:

A community is not a number of men within a geographical frontier. It an achievement of and common meaning and there are kinds and degrees of achievement. Common meaning is potential when there is a common field of experience, and to withdraw from common field is to get out of touch. Common judgments.... common coheres or divides, begins or ends just where the common field or experience, common communities

begin and end
[15].

Since common meaning gives rise to communities as well as a linguistic unity or group, and since communities or groups come to stay through an accepted common symbol around which the group orientates itself and gives sense to its existence. One could therefore conclude that common meaning is a symbol of unity or a creator of unity. However, where there are a multitude of meanings in a given sphere, for example, in language there would then be divergent symbols as well [16]. When one takes cognizance of the fact that man acts when he speaks because language is a part of human activity which is in connection with the rest of human activities. One comes to see that common meaning which sustains a language is an idea, because people act according to the ideas they already possess. Our ideas are conversely derived from an impression; and impressions constitute all our senses, passions and emotions [17]. That means that common meaning arises from ideas and impressions that are later generalized; their origin may be from individual thus the history of common meaning. That means that words have meaning for the community alone to which they belong, and using foreign words to describe the same thing or person changes to a certain degree the idea of the thing or the person for the speaker [18]. No doubt, language unity creates human unity through the inter-subjective communication on the basis of language symbol; this human unity is a product of mutual identification due to common meaning [19]. Such a community would definitely be disunited with the introduction of a new meaning or language. Such a new meaning creates new symbols and at the same time, confusion, misunderstanding, and non-identification, possibly, social division. Language therefore, being a symbol, holds a group or community of individuals together, gives them a common identity, idea, and impression. And since language is part of culture, it

should therefore not be substituted but enriched to avoid conflict, disunity, and loss of identity [20].

Conceptual Clarification: Igbo Cultural values

Dynamism, as the topic suggests, projects and focuses on the varieties, and practical manner where by the Igbo people could make their culture and language come into life in every aspect of life. The Igbo tradition establishes a code of conduct or moral code embodied in *Omenala* - customs. *Omenala* is the corpus of most of the legal, social, moral and ritual norms of Ndiigbo. In *Omenala*, *ajoihe* is anything that is considered evil whether physical or moral, a sfortune or deliberate fault, while *mmehie*- transgression is a moral fault. Ndiigbo distinguishes two kinds of moral faults, namely, bad behaviour or *ajo omume* which consists of breaches of rules of etiquette and social conventions. Other minor faults as Joseph Amaegwu posits, such as: not greeting elders, laziness, unhygienic habits, gossiping do not carry any specific sanctions, but they are generally condemned. *Ajo-aru*- bad deed is another moral fault [21]. It is a deliberate transgression of serious moral norms of the society.⁶ It has three qualities, it is deliberate, it flouts the laws of the land; and it carries some social or mystical sanctions or both. The Igbo tradition and customs hold the following in high esteem: respect for elders, truth, and respect for life [22].

A Classical Identity: Language and Environment

“Onye Igbo is in the first place an Igbo person, then politically a Nigerian and thirdly, an African. His original geographical location is in the Eastern part of Nigeria but could now for many reasons be seen all over the federation, even across the globe [23].’ Anacletus Odoemena, captures in his book, *the Dynamics of Cultural Revitalization*, a typical Igbo man as member of an ethnic group, Onyigbo is bound to carry about with him some of the characteristics that distinguish him from any other African, which is his own contribution to African culture and identity [24].

It is precisely the existence of a common meaning that sustains a language; there could some subdivisions of the common meaning which eventually give rise to secret societies, medical language, legal, philosophical language, among others, it is language that differentiates between man and make others

understand him [25]. Speech is only possible because within each society, people agree to understand particular patterns of sound in particular way. The Igbo speaks a common language and can be said to possess in good measure, similar social system. As a result of the broad similarities, of their culture they have been described by Forde & Jones in Okafor & Emeka "as a single people'. There are however differences in dialects and social institutions [26].

The language of the people is Igbo which is classified among the Volta-Niger Congo language family. Orji succinctly points out that the Atlantic Congo language family is a branch of the Niger- Congo language family. In Igbo Language, a single word with word assumes several meanings. Moreover, proverbs and idioms are highly important in the spoken language of the people. Originally, the Igbos lived in small independent villages each of which was ruled by elected council of elders, rather than chiefs ¹⁰. The situation though highly democratic in nature, the political organization did not make them classes society. Rather Igbo societies are highly stratified along the lines of wealth, achievement and social rank. Dual incidence of overcrowding and degrading of soil, forced many Igbo people to migrate either to the cities or other parts of Nigeria [27].

Igbo land where most of Ndigbo dwell is situated in the eastern area of southern Nigeria, with the River Benue in the North, River Niger in the west and Atlantic Ocean in the South. The land is flat, with very few rivers like the Imo, Anambra, Oji, Njiaba, Oguta. One could, in comparison with many other African sub-regions say that this area has fairly abundant sources of water supply. As for the large area, of Igboland, without natural water supply like many parts of Nsukka, Enugu, and Owerri, their economic, agricultural and domestic lives differ from that of areas with rivers. Moreover, their attempt to adapt themselves to their particular situation modifies their culture and makes it different from those of their neighbours in different environs [28].

The rivers in any case influence not only the economic and cultural life of the people who dwell near them but also the climate of the whole region. So

the climatic nature of igbo land go a long way in influencing the life, culture and psychology of Onyeigbo who has to live and adapt himself to such a moderate climate-'always hot in the day and cool in the night' with forest as defence, rainfall as a compensation of the great heat for man, animals and plants. These help in making him, to a large extent, individual success, independent and amicable relation with God [29].

One can say that the climate, and other geographical factors influence the temperament, housing, clothing, social relationship, indeed the culture of the Igbo people just as they would do for every other nation and people. Good understanding of Igbo history presupposes an understanding of the Igbo man's interaction with his environment, which forms the bulwark of his culture from which he derives his personality and identity. We are of the opinion that adaptation is the wrong approach to natural geographical features, which are meant to serve man's needs, for man is not meant to serve the imaginary interest of natural feature. That does not mean that man should go about annihilating and misusing the natural features, but rather, preserve them and nourish them for his own interest and for the love of natural features. A culture born through a mere need for adaptation cannot be deeply rooted and therefore may be oppressive to self or group fulfilment and so would be temporal phenomenon. The history of Ndigbo is not only an account of the efforts they have made to control and understand nature as well as their efforts to manipulate it [30].

The traditional occupation of the people of Igbo is farming at a subsistence scale and complemented with very small livestock keeping. The crops are mostly staple crops, including Syams, cassava, cocoa, yam, maize, okro, mellon, pumkin and beans.

Igbo Social values: Marriage / Family Life
A value is a belief that something is good and desirable. It defines what is important worthwhile and striving for. Like norms, values vary from society to society. Many norms can be seen as reflection of values. Shared norms of values are essential for the operation of human society. Since man has instinct, his behavior must be guided and regulated by norms. Unless norms are

shared, members of a society would be unable or even comprehend the behavior of others. Similar arguments apply to values. Without shared values, members of a society would be unlikely to cooperate and work together.

Morality is the most practical aspect of culture and constitutes the nucleus of culture when one considers social culture as the material traces of ideas and ideals in the habits and association of man. Igbo morality is the effort to maintain a continuity by avoiding all abnormality which they regard as either expression of divine dissatisfaction or offence to the divine order. Human person has to control one's nature and model it according to the normal socially accepted form. Thus the realities of economic life, technology and everything conducive to human material well-being must be balanced by strongly developed spiritual, intellectual, moral aesthetic values. Where therefore, such a balance exists, that, is where various cultural activities enjoy vital functions in the whole structure. Indeed, the absence of a balanced and harmony between spiritual and intellectual values could harm the moral, economic, political and social values of a people, thus making the people subservient of ideas and ideals. Moreover,, one becomes a social slave to natural order and society in order to ensure continuity.

One would agree with Karl Lamprecht, a professor of History who believes that in a situation where one has no sense of existence outside that of his natural group, it requires a hero to break the moralities and transcend the mass in order to live his own life., whereby one could be in the sense a *Homo faber* who subdues nature to one's own advantage and that of the human race. We do not intend to give the impression that Igbo moral values are not progressive or genuine; rather, that they are too strict and impersonal, that is, do not take into consideration the human persons, and since they are built on ideas and ideals whose neglect constitutes a criminal offence. For the Igbo people, one maintains one's dignity when one comports oneself according to the socially order and conduct.

Marriage as one of the Igbo social values is the act of bond that connects independent villages and makes them have some sense of blood relationship due to marriage contract between sons and daughters. It is an important event in the life of every Igbo person. It is seen as an

initiation into a responsible and mature life. It is also seen as a fulfilment of one's manhood/womanhood and one's pledge to uphold the lineage blood. Odoemenamaintains that 'an Igbo regards marriage as the core of their whole social structure'. In this regard, one could hardly think of divorce. Through marriage, both families are kept intact and the future of the children reassured. A sound and normal family life is guaranteed through a marriage within a recognized cultural system, the children are accepted in the community and they mature without the chance of any complex, thus, a guarantee for personality development, integrity and identity.

Family is the basic unit of every society. It is a group composed of a woman, her independent children and at least one adult male joined through marriage or blood relationship. Benedict XVI in Joseph Amaegwu [12]. The family is certainly a grace from God, which reveals what he, himself, is: love. A love that is entirely gratuitous, that sustains fidelity without limits, even in the moment of difficulty and rejection. It reveals nature of God'. Africans, especially the Igbos attach great importance to family and family name, hence they work assiduously to see that their families are protected and catered for. The originality or individuality of African family emerges from the cultural context: that is why it is unthinkable to live in isolation of others in Africa. Ndigbo and their family are extensive. It includes all the living members and the dead ancestors. "family in our sense includes not just the nuclear family of mother and father, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews and cousins, grandpas and grandmas [13]. What it means is that a person in Igbo land is defined in terms of the group he belongs, while community is gained through the family, the lineage, the clan and the tribe.

Respect for Dignity and Sanctity of Human life

Some of the earlier practices the Igbo people observe, which were the regarded as offence, like the killing or eating of a totem animal purposely, a wife of a titled man cooking for him during her menstrual period, someone dying of leprosy, small pox, or dying after swearing an oath, and so on. others include some offences against the goddess, *ala* and therefore against social stability, involuntary actions like a baby coming out of the womb with the feet instead of the head, a growing child cutting the upper tooth first, giving

to twins. Twins were killed because the society considered it abnormal for a woman to give birth to two children at a time. But there are many other moral values listed by Edmund Ilogu in his book *Christianity and Igbo Culture* that are very positive and edifying. The former were mentioned examples because of their negative character, especially the killing of twins and human sacrifice, which, of course, do not belong to moral laws but have to do moral values. Those observances of 'moral values were to the people had to do with abominations, just for the fact that they were not normal occurrences. This shows their rigidity and subservience to the law of nature and its signs, which they presume to master.

Africans and more especially the Igbo cultural tradition view life spiritually and man is considered by virtue of what human life stands for and is always related to the after-life not as mere matter limited to earthly life. In man, there is presence and power of spiritual element African culture sees life as world - affirming, the greatest and highest gift from God, divinities and ancestral spirit'. Ancestors 'reincarnate' in the life of the newly born children as signs of their benevolence and interest in the communities. This life is sacred that it must be respected and protected. Wilful murder is an abomination in both African and Igbo tradition and culture and sometimes, requires complicated rites of purification that may induce going into exile for several years. This spiritual concept makes it imperative that Igbo from cradle to grave find the face of God as the first and ultimate cause of all things. Igbo world is principally anthropocentric. Such that human life is immensely valued, zealously and religiously guarded; hence, anything that threatens life is ruthlessly dealt with. For instance, the presence of God permeates African as well as Igbo life. The Igbo culture respects and dignifies man because man is created by God who is the first and ultimate cause of all things. That is why Ndigbo call life *ndubuisi* - life comes first. This is why an Igbo man can go any length in order to protect and preserve life, moves from one shrine to the other searching for definite material satisfaction bordering on life and health. ¹⁴ Offence against human person attracts the wrath of God, ancestors and the community. Igbo philosophy begins with the concept of life - *Ndu* and man is called *mma- ndu*, 'living beauty'. This *mma ndu* is made up of *ndu* - life, *uche*- intellect and

ahu- body. Igbo tradition teaches that life must be lived, enjoyed, and be whole, honorable, above all, it must be long and peaceful.

Ndigbo always say *chinwendu*- meaning 'God owns life'. Human life is sacred and cannot be taken away with impunity. Hence, Isizoh in Amaegwu ¹⁵ succinctly posits 'willful murder is an abomination, sometimes requiring complicated rites of purification which may include going to exile for several years and paying, for the upkeep of the family of the murdered person. Abortion is also regarded as an abomination'. Suicide is also considered most abominable crime against humanity.

Hospitality: Oji, Morality, and Social Order
central

Culture regulates the standard by which members of the community live as well as interactions among its members and components. In this, more than in any other respect, culture is central to life in the community. Customs and conventions have force of law and are complemented by regulations enacted by peer groups. Social groups, cults, guides and the governing authority. Culture with its customs and d conventions is therefore, the essential mechanism in social order.

Customs and conventions are generally localized within culture groups but certain traits could be universal to the main group. Because of this, even small communities have firm control of these customs and conventions and can therefore exercise social control of its members. The individual is subject to the community- bows to its laws and conventions and yield to all manner of sanctions Igbo generosity to strangers speaks volume in times of tribal war, generosity or hospitality towards strangers is not compromised. Hostility towards stranger or a traveler in one's territory is not welcomed. A Stranger is protected and the arrival of any stranger to a community elicits a great honour to the host in showing hospitality because the host requires prestige in addition. Oji, as it popularly known in Igbo land means O-Omenala, J-jikoro, I-Igbo. Kolanut or oji is a symbol of peace, respect, goodwill, acceptability, is used to welcome strangers. It symbolizes anything that stands for love and unity. That is why it is used for every occasion in Igbo culture and it is one of the most surviving cultural practices of the Igbo man. Once a person visits somebody, after receiving the visitor before he announces the objective of his visit, the first thing the host does is to

present kolanut to the visitor as a sign of good will. The complicating aspects of kolanut as a cultural symbol are in its presentation.

Morality is the most practical aspect of culture and constitutes the nucleus of culture when one considers social culture as the material traces of idea and ideals in the habits and association of men. Igbo morality is the Igbo effort to maintain continuity by avoiding all abnormality which they regard as either expression of Divine dissatisfaction or offence to the divine order. Human person has to control one's nature and model it according to the normal socially accepted form.

Ndigbo, call social order or custom *omenala*, meaning the traditions of the people. Morality as a part of *omenala* is also a custom and as such a social order. A social order makes morality more of a group morality than individual morality. Morality becomes a sort of socialization or education, the responsibility of the society and not of parents only. For one to be accepted in one's society, presupposes that one has successfully undergone this socialization process whereby one learns to avoid whatever is forbidden, including moral prohibitions. In so far as the Igbo [17]. Tradition, political and social systems encourage diversification of interests, and to some extent, individual freedom and competition, they equally determine the rightness and goodness of every action according to the custom and tradition, which is seen as the general guidelines of individual conduct and the way of life of the ancestors who in one way also still rule the land. One way one may come to discover that one of the main pillars of Igbo morality is justice based on the respect of the human person, the community and nature. Also, economic situation also determines the moral standard of a people. In the case of the Igbos, the flexibility of their social and political system, also influence their moral standard.

Prototype Theory in the Igbo Culture
Prototype theory as was propounded by Eleanor Rosch in the 1970s is a mode of graded categorization in cognitive science, where some members of a category are more central than others. It was a radical departure from traditional necessary and sufficient conditions which led to set - theoretical approaches of extensional or intentional semantics. Thus, instead of a definition based model. Thus, Roach defines it as a stimulus which takes a salient position in the formation of a

category; more recently succinctly defines it as the most central member of a category [19].

Applying this theory in the area of Igbo cultural revitalization, it aims at cultural issues pin-pointing those stimuli which take salient position in the formation of cultural category for revitalization. In other words, they are of greater significant to the categorization process. In this case, the certain features of the Igbo values (category) have equal status and thus examples that represent all or most of those feature become the prototype for that category. Some values that do not share the majority of these features may still belong to that category. In the area of social, religious, cultural, political, health, among others form the prototype [20].

The Igbo people have rich cultural heritage. And the cultural heritage showcased that the Igbo cultures are diversified. It means that the people have cultural values which the people have to harness. Taboo has this to say 'based on observation that among the Igbo of Nigeria respect to parents, elders and any properly constituted authority is one of the core values. The Igbo no doubt acclaim and promote respect to elders not only to parents or close relations as they are quite aware that '*nwa bu nwa oha*' (the child belongs to every) [21]. Hard work as Tagboo posits is regarded as one of the values of an Igbo man. We are all habituated to labor from our earlier years. Everyone contributes something to the common stock and as we are unacquainted, we have no beggars. The lazy ones are ridiculed, cajoled and condemned publicly. As it regards human life, the place and sacrosanct consideration to human life in Igbo world view cannot be underestimated. Children are taught to be honest and truthful especially as it relates to Human life. They believe that blood is equal to life and life is equivalent to God. Hence, to discuss or tamper, threaten or endanger one's life is considered a sacrifice or anathema. This also supports Amaegwu's view of how the Igbo people value life. According to him, Igbo is principally anthropocentric such that human life is immensely valued, zealously and religiously guarded. Therefore, anything that threatens life is ruthlessly dealt with. That is why the Igbos consider suicide, kidnapping as most abominable crime against humanity.

Language and culture complement each other, but most importantly, the Igbo Language is a vehicle for cultural

expression. Obieze points out that 'language fosters culture and there are many ways and forms of cultural expression' those cultural expressions and festivals among the Igbos are diverse. They are expressed in *Ugu-uzo, Iwa Akwa, Iri- Ji, Ita- Okazi, Onwu-Oru Urrata, Oru Owerri, Iwa ji, Ilu Nwanyi*, among others. Igbo language is always the medium of communication whenever these ceremonies are displayed [20]. For the fact that the Ndigbo are the people who appear to be people of perpetually celebrating, this gives credence to Okafor & Emeka orientation that in every festival, there are rituals and ceremonies. Religion is very predominant in determining and instituting festivals in Igbo land [21].

Some of the constituents of the religious and moral values practiced by the Igbo people are many. Traditional religion in Igbo land is a way of life. Because of that men are held accountable to these forces of their actions. They also try to relate to them through appropriate ceremonies and festivals.

Many of these festivals and ceremonies and rituals are based on religion. Many beliefs in the Igbo traditional religion tend to guide human actions or explain puzzling natural phenomena. Some of these beliefs are: reincarnation, retribution, remuneration, retribution, divination, it is also believed that life is a continuum and that the dead live in the land of the dead organized in much the same way as the land of the humans. The Igbo tradition establishes a code of conduct or moral code embodied in *Omenala* or customs. *Omenala* is the corpus of most of the legal, moral, and ritual norms of Ndiigbo. And so, in moral and religious codes, we found the above issues as data presented. Among the moral values placed high among the Igbo and enshrined in the religion is chastity. Chastity before marriage is held in a very high esteem in Igbo religion and culture [23]. Chastity is regarded as the pillar of every marriage and the rewards are many and varied ranging from trust in both parties and the avidity of for outsiders to marry from products of such chaste homes. Rape and incest, adultery and other amorous conducts are seriously frowned at.

Kindness and hospitality are other moral values emerging from Igbo religion and culture. The Igbo of Nigeria are kind and hospitable. They believe like the Yourba as Ademilokun reiterates, they do not take likely these moral virtues except in

modern times with attendant sociological implications.

The Igbo traditional religion has a place for oracles and life after death. There are such oracular divinations. Such as Ibini Ukpabi of Arochukwu, Agbala of Awka, Igwe ka ala of Umunneoha, Efuru of Ukehe, Arushi of Okija, among others. All these oracles and shrines in addition to the position occupied by the Supreme Being constitute a rallying point of unity among the Igbos. The oracles are believed to be responsible for all those who deviate from the normative behaviors and in most cases, visit defaulters with pestilence and death. It is sad to note that the level of degeneration of the Igbo cultural and religious values is alarming. Thus Joseph Amaegwu remarks 'in this present dispensation, the western excessive utilitarian values have caused many families in the West to push their elderly parents and family members out of their families to the nursing homes [22]. These families have forgotten that confining their elderly parents to nursing homes, they themselves suffer as they miss the opportunity to make their young ones benefit from the life-long accumulated experiences and the wisdom of the old. The Igbo cultural death as Amaegwu maintains that with globalization of free market economy and the accompanying promotion of utilitarian and hedonistic values of the West, human life has become valueless and meaningless. Life has become the cheapest commodity to dispense with as a result of excessive hedonism and capitalism of the West. In most Western countries the emphasis is on mercy killing, legalization of abortion, euthanasia or facilitated assisted suicide. Marriage as well has lost its dignity. Divorce is a wind that blows no one any good. Divorce rate has symmetrically increased while marriage has significantly declined. There are fewer second marriages, while most people live longer periods of their lives in single state. Divorce affects children negatively and even makes them promiscuous [17]. Homosexuality, lesbianism and other aberration of dignified married life are the greatest human deviant behaviour. These ungodly act of homosexual relation of same sex marriages not only is against the cultural sensibility of Nigerians and other African countries, but also against socio cultural and religious beliefs of our people. For Odoemna, morality is the most practical aspect of culture and constitutes the nucleus of culture when

one considers social culture as the material traces of idea and in the habit and association of men. Igbo morality is the Igbo effort to maintain continuity by avoiding all abnormality which they regard as either expression of divine dissatisfaction or offence to the divine order. Human person has to control one's nature and model it according to the normal socially accepted form [24].

The people Igbo are known for communal living, hospitality, warm and welcoming people. But as a result of degeneration of our cultural and moral values, people are becoming individualistic. This ugly situation provoked the Pope Benedict XV to warn the people Christians about threat of individualism in the face of the challenges posed by today's culture, there is need for active dynamism aimed at promoting the fundamental moral values that underpin social living and identity of the old continent.

Revitalization of Igbo Culture

Carl Jung views man as a combination of technology and causality. This means that man's behavior is conditioned by his individual and racial history as well as by his aims and aspirations (technology), whereby the past as actuality and future as potentiality direct and influence one's identity and behavior [25]. The past is for the individual life not only a frame work of reference but also a symbol of unity because one lives on past experiences from which one makes the complexes of choices that creates one's identity. This feeling of identity secures that of integrity, which is itself, a feeling of correctness about one's participation in the universe. The experience of a community is handed down to the next generation as a frame work or reference and guide. This frame work of reference is otherwise known as culture, which is inevitable in every community with a history: a community has a history because it works to survive and possess implements with which it notes so and which latter survives the community [26]. When the past and present begin to be derogated by another culture or group, whereby the latter is considered superior to the former, then the supposed inferior culture can no longer act as a frame work of reference or an ideal, especially for the younger generations.

The fact is that a community or a people can create a history which it did not possess, or refute a history and write or create a new one; every generation understands the past differently and

writes its own history. These facts make one to ask whether a foreign people or community who either directly or indirectly negated or created as inferior the culture of a people can at the same time write a genuine and objective history of those people they consider inferior.

To save the culture and the people dominated by such an over bearing culture from disintegrate ion, splitting into autonomous groups, and searching for a false and unnatural identity, one must the revitalize the culture by first rewriting the history to correct historical errors which may have been created where the common history was written by people from the so called 'higher' culture. In line with that, it is by re-writing the history to show the inhumanity and uncivilized nature of the opponents and at the same time showing one's uprightness, mistakes, and innocence, finding archaeological facts to support historical claims as well as trying to pick out some contradicting facts from the ancient and modern history of the people written by the colonizers.

Judging people by their own ancient standards one could find several heroes and natural figures who did so much under given conditions, the purpose of which is to create a greater past and the same time, bring out the virtues and highlight the ultimate aim of the culture. In this case, one tries with all experiences one has gathered to work for an acceptable means of achieving these ends which must be connected with and relevant to old means. On the other hand, one has to abandon new aims or ends, propagated by new culture, which are not found in the old culture, such as atheism, individualism, immorality, among others. The Igbo people could through such means gradually distinguishes themselves and their identity from the dominant over bearing culture. The redemption, revamping, exhuming and revitalization of the culture of Ndigbo subdued by another culture is tantamount to a redemption and revitalization of a people's and eventually the individual's identity. Culture as the way of life of a people or a group is responsible for their being a group or a people because it distinguishes them from other groups or peoples. Culture should therefore be seen as a guide to individual community life. Being the theoretical standard, regulates and influences actions but does not determine actions. The very fact that culture could be limited implies that it could be imperfect, and so, it is not only dynamic but also in the process of an

unending longing for perfection, most often expressed through and in interaction with other cultures. To revitalize culture should be to in a position to reconcile itself with the 20th century man that is it has to be equipped to assimilate certain characteristics of the time. It has to learn to assimilate instead of being assimilated, a process we choose to call reconciliation in a narrow sense. In a wider and more urgent sense, it must reconcile the people with the culture of their fore fathers which they abandoned in the face of more aggressive and self-imposing culture, as well as reconcile the people with one another, with God and with nature. To achieve such ends, the culture has to be not only revitalized but also updated, meaning that shortcomings of the old culture have to be eliminated, certain aspects like religion 'metamorphosed' through a process of a gradual metabolism. Modern technology and science should be acculturated in the revitalized culture instead of being merely adopted. For this purpose, the history and culture of Ndigbo have to be looked at from a purely African point of view for the sake of Africanism and the truth about Africans and their past. Another such way of recapturing Igbo cultural values is living Igbo names. This is in line with the views of the Ohaneze Ndigbo that Igbo names are life in its totality not mere appellations and there lies African theology, philosophy, culture and religion. In Igbo nation, Igbo names take first place and whoever does not have Igbo names has no identity in the society. This is because Igbo names are history, religion, lineage as well as existence. This fulfils the Igbo adage that states '*aha onye na-edu ya* (one; name leads or guards him/her).²⁷ Inculturating Igbo cultural and religious practices in the faith believe and church's activities are desirable means by which the church and culture disuse. In the light of the above, submission, Obinna teaches that at the heart of the Christian faith is our Lord Jesus Christ and the heart of the Igbo culture are the Igbo people. Therefore, essentially we are dealing with the relationship between Jesus Christ and Igbo people. It is from this angle that we can talk of faith in Jesus Christ blending with Igbo culture to become a new way of life of the Igbo people [28].

Revamping the Igbo language as a way of rectifying degenerated Igbo culture is the keystone of culture and for one to learn

about man and nature, one must learn about language. Ndigbo must therefore begin to revamp their language; the language has Igbo cultural heritage stored in it. This is in line with Obinna as regards the *Odenigbo* as a means of encouraging and repositioning the Igbo language, he says that *Odenigbo* is a medium of evangelization. Jesus Christ, *Ode n'igwe* (who resonates in heaven), came down in the world and became *Ode n' uwa* (and resonates in the world). This same Jesus landed in Igboland and became *Ode n' Igbo* (Jesus who resonates in Igboland). The real meaning of *Oden Igbo* is Jesus Christ who is resonating into the Igbo world to doziela omenala - rectify Igbo customs and traditions. There is also an empirical evidence from the data presented that the good news of salvation of Christ of *Odenigbo is out* to spread will permeate every nook and cranny of our society will bring healing and forgiveness so that every Igbo person will see Christ in one another.

Recommendations and Way Forward

The following recommendations are made to the Igbos for effective and dynamic ways to revitalize their cultures. Enculturation of their cultural, social and religious values in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Encouraging the teaching and speaking of Igbo language in our homes, institutions of learning, the church and the society at large. Supporting and awarding the Igbos who excel in dignified life various spheres of life. Putting sanctions on those who violate our cultures as a deterrent for others.

- Making *Odenigbo* Lecture compulsory for every Igbo person both at home and Diaspora.
- Creating a constant forum where Ndigbo gather and discuss their common mission and vision. Implementing the communiqué realized from ISA Conferences and other Academic conferences organized by Igbo scholars. Embracing one another in love knowing that we all share the same patrimony. Decolonization of the Igbo mind set, believing in ourselves, and being proud of our of our culture and traditions. Encourage and promote Igbo cultural musicians, and other artistes that project Igbo culture since our language is embedded in arts and culture.

CONCLUSION

We have in this paper attempted to bring out the traditional Igbo life, culture and values, which differentiate the Igbo community from any other group of the world and thereby give them some sort of identity. Climate and physical factors play an undeniable role in their life history and culture. The Igbo people have very acclaimed cultural, moral, social and religious values. These have emerged from their in-depth religious insight and the fact that they guard all the principles of the faith jealously. However, the Igbo people suffer in their cultural degeneration as a result of globalization. From the fore going,

some pragmatic measures are given by the Igbo themselves that will redirect them to their cultural values. Igbo people as a nation with different dialects, cultures, traditions and values cannot benefit from these various peoples and cultures unless they are given the room to develop their natural endowments for their own good and that of the state.

The unity of the Ndigbo in general and is the aim of cultural revitalizations, this cannot be achieved without the recognition of the people's common interest and history.

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