

An Assessment of Western Civilization and the Transformation of Igala Culture and Tradition

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ABSTRACT

Western Civilization, faith and institutions have had a profound impact on the religious and cultural aspects of Igala land, Nigeria. This article examines the scope and character of that transformation, and in particular the centrality of Christianity, formal education and evangelisation as the main agents of change. Using historical and ethnographic methods and based on interviews and secondary sources, including books, journals, and theses, the paper explores changes in significant cultural fields, such as religion, tradition, marriage practices, burial rites, and indigenous knowledge systems. Results show a dual effect: Western cultural imperialism has stimulated modernization and social progress on the one hand, and on the other, it hastens the degeneration of once cherished Igala values and cultural heritage. The research suggests incorporating cultural education in school curricula and organizing cultural activities to uphold Igala identity. It finds that a proportionate stand of keeping the good traditional values while adopting some beneficial elements of Western society is fundamental for cultural continuity in a modernized society.

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Introduction

Western civilization has to do with the shared history, beliefs, and practices of the Western people. It means everything that concerns their ways of living. Western civilization came into Igala land through Christianity, the slave trade, and other mechanized activities. The coming of this culture has over time created both positive and negative effects on people's lives ranging from their culture to their religion. This is true of the encounter between Western civilization and legal culture. The missionaries did not want Christianity to mix with Igala traditional religious practices because they felt that it was polluting their religion. The encounter between the missionaries and the Igala people brought positive and negative transformations to the people. Positively the coming of this alien culture led to technological advancement, the birth of Christianity, infrastructure, etc. Negatively it brought discrimination in terms of Igala traditional religion and moral decadence, which includes the totality of the people's lives. Culture according to Taylor is defined as that complex whole of man's acquisition of knowledge, morals, belief, arts, custom, technology etc. which are shared and transmitted from generation to generation [1,2].

These missionaries seem to keep the entire Igala traditional heritage behind. To this end, Nduka observed that "to make matters worse, virtually everything else in the native culture was regarded as bad [1]. More often than not a policy of complete Europeanization to replace the native culture was adopted. Not only native names and costumes but also native songs and dances, folklore, arts, and systems of marriage, were to be consigned to the scrapheap. It was

altogether a revolutionary demand. The encounter between these cultures is that of a coin of two sides that has both the positive and the negative aspects. Even though it brought about negative changes to Igala's cultural practices, on the other hand, its positive impact is numerous. This paper aims to examine the impact of Western civilization on Igala culture and tradition. It also explores the introduction of Christianity in Igala land and how the meeting of these two cultures has brought the transformation of Igalaland.

Western Civilization

According to Arowolo western civilization or the Western culture that is broadly used in describing the heritage that is found in a normal society i.e. The ethical values, social norms, beliefs, political, specific artifacts, the technologies used and the political systems found in that society, that have some resemblance with that from European countries. This effect was felt because it was carried either through colonization or modern-day immigration; hence the culture is transferred from the host nation to the new and diverse frontiers like Africa, Australia and the Americas (9) [3-5].

Igala Ethnic Group

Igala is the language spoken by the ethnic group occupying the eastern territory of the confluence of rivers Niger and Benue in Nigeria. Their landmark covers an area of about 13,665 square kilometres. And it is 120 kilometres wide and 160 kilometres long, located approximately between latitude 6° 30' and 8° north and longitudes 6° 30' and 7° 40' east [6,7]. It is bounded by Enugu state to the east, Anambra state to the south, Benue and Nasarawa State to the north and river Niger/Edo state to the west. The population of Igala was estimated at well over two million in the late 1990s; it is the most populated single ethnic group in

Kogi state and it is popularly considered as the melting pot of Nigeria. Due to its being a geographical terminus, it is influenced and at one and the same time impacts many of its neighbouring ethnic configurations such as the Igbo, bassa, Idoma, Nupe, Jukun, Ebirra, Hausa, Yoruba, etc [6].

Interaction of Igala Culture and Western Civilization

The culture of the Igala people is very similar to the culture of most other Nigerian people, especially those from the geographical middle – belt, southwards, to the coast. Cultural practices such as kingship, funeral ceremonies, beliefs, marriage, masquerading, mode of dressing, body adornment etc are similar to those of other Nigerians in the sub-region mentioned above. For instance, the egwu masquerades of Igala are similar and indeed are related to egwugwu or nmanwu of Igbo land, egwugwu of Asaba (delta state). The alekwu afia of Idoma, the eku od of Ebirra, the Gunu and the Udeako Gboya of the Nupe but for some slight differences. The ogani festivals performed at Idah and Ankpa are also celebrated in the southern parts of Plateau state, especially in the Umaisha and parts of the Nassarawa area [8].

The Igala people believed in the existence of the supreme being they referred to as “ojo” odobogagwu (almighty god) or ojoochamachala (God who owns everything) ojokinyi (the creator) ojoanemagedo (God of great courage and power). He is also known as ojokinuma (god of wisdom). Ojo-agogba-gubi (God who sees front and back). He is believed to be omniscient both in the past, present and the future. And he ostensibly ranks supremely far higher than any of the deities or spirit beings in igala religious imagination [6]. Igala people generally believed in the existence of spirits and other gods. Igala people believe the spirits dwell in trees, springs, wells, stones and mountains. Special and unusual events were considered to have divine character. In the view of Egbunu, “the traditional worldview of the igala is expressed in their beliefs, myths, legends, proverbs, rituals, symbols and festivals” (18).

Ancestors are respected and dreaded because they believe that they can punish offenders.

Adama holds that

Igala people believe and revered the ancestors. Their belief in the existence and influence of the departed fathers of the family is very strong. Igala people always revered the ancestors and held them (ancestors) in high esteem. They are believed to come next to god in spiritual realm. They are believed to know more than the living. Igala people offer prayers to the ancestor through libation. Among Igala people food must be cooked in every compound every night because it is believed that ancestors come around at night to eat and visit kinsmen (117).

The Western culture sees polygamy as a sin but in Africa and particularly in Igala culture polygamy is seen as a legitimate system of marriage because of its effectiveness in the people’s life and the way it has helped them thus far. But the emergence of Christianity which came with Western civilization has pushed back polygamy to the back side even though some persons still practice it.

Adama witness to this

Polygamy was the common, valid and cherished form of marriage among igala people. A man would take more than one wife and thereby raise a large family that will help the man in performing his agricultural operations. The man and the male children till

the ground, the women and the female children took part in the weeding of the farm and harvesting of the crops. Through this way, the family was maintained. Thus, Igala religious culture was fully developed before the advent of Christianity in the land. The Igala community like any other Nigerian community is a dynamic society hence susceptible to changes. Christianity had an indelible impact on the cultural practices of Igala people in particular and Nigerian society in both positive and negative ways (117-118).

Western civilization came into Igala land through Christianity, the slave trade, and other mechanized activities. The coming of this culture has over time created an effect on the people’s lives ranging from their culture to their religion. This is true of the encounter between Western civilization and Igala culture. The missionaries did not want Christianity to mix with Igala traditional religious practices because they felt that it was polluting their religion. The encounter between the missionaries and the Igala people brought positive and negative changes to the people. Positively the coming of this alien culture led to technological advancement, the birth of Christianity, infrastructure, etc. Negatively it brought discrimination in terms of igala traditional religion and moral decadence, which includes the totality of the people’s lives. Culture according to Chuta in is derived from the Latin word *culture* which means “cultivation” or “tend”. The word “cultivate” means “to improve and develop by education or training (a person, manners and faculties) and “to improve the growth of, devote oneself to the advancement or development of science, etc. [1]. Which culminated in a process”. These missionaries seem to keep the entire Igala traditional heritage behind. To this end Nduka observed that “to make matters worse, virtually everything else in the native culture was regarded as bad [1]. More often than not a policy of complete Europeanization to replace the native culture was adopted. Not only native names and costumes but also native songs and dances, folklore, arts, and systems of marriage, were to be consigned to the scrapheap. It was altogether a revolutionary demand. The encounter between these cultures is that of a coin of two sides that has both the positive and the negative aspects. This work is aimed at discussing Western civilization, the Igala culture, the introduction of Christianity in Igala land and the impact of Western civilization on Igala culture and tradition [9].

Positive Impact of Western Civilization on Igala Culture and Tradition

The presence of Western civilization in Igalaland has created changes in the people’s culture and tradition. This affected all aspects of the people’s culture, from physical, religious, economic, political, moral, social etc. There are many problems, as well as benefits in the meeting of these cultures.

Impact on Infrastructure

The presence of Western civilization in Igalaland has brought about infrastructural development. If one is to compare the present Igalaland and the Igalaland before the advent of Western civilization it will be very clear that there was nothing like infrastructure in Igala but the coming of civilization brought the changes we are enjoying. This infrastructure has been of great help to the Igala people in different ways, it has enhanced the standard of living of the people. Examples of such infrastructure in Igalaland include roads, water supply etc. Good roads have been of help to the people’s economic life. Businessmen and women in Igalaland can now transport their goods from one place to another, and people can now export goods out of the land and import to the land as well. Researchers now travel to Igalaland to explore and research the people’s culture, and tradition and also to

know more about view some of their tourist centers. Another way infrastructure has helped the people, is in terms of water supply, in the olden days people always depended on rainfall and also went to streams to fetch water but with the aid of infrastructure almost every community has a water supply that was provided by government and those that are financially buoyant. This has reduced the quest for water in Igalaland, subsequently; almost every compound now has a borehole that helps communities.

Infrastructure, as part of the benefit of Western civilization, has helped in the development of Igalaland land, without it there would not have been any access to the Igalaland and its resources.

Impact on Education in Igalaland

According to Mish and Robinson the term education is derived from its Latin roots *educare*, *educatus* which means to rear [6]. On the other hand, *educere* (in Latin) means to lead forth or to bring out or develop. It therefore simply denotes any of the following, depending on the context: to provide schooling for; to train by formal instruction or supervised practice, especially in skill, trade or profession; to develop mentally, morally or aesthetically, especially by instruction; to persuade or condition to feel, believe or act in a desired way or to accept something as desirable. This is in line with Bellingham's definition of education as any process, formal or informal that helps develop the potentialities of human beings, including their knowledge, capabilities, behaviour patterns and values [6]. It is therefore evident here that the process of education entails much more than mere acquisition of knowledge. It embraces character building and even the learning of societal values or guiding principles which enable one to make healthy adjustments within particular cultures. Such values could be in relation to the mental, physical, spiritual, moral, social or aesthetic aspects of life. That perhaps, explains why Okafor in Egbunu posits that "education is a process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to attain the development of his potentialities, and their maximum activation when necessary, according to right reason and to achieve thereby his perfect self-fulfillment" (68).

Fafunwa cited by Egbunu had earlier seen it as, the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. It is a process of transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth, for disseminating knowledge either to ensure control or to guarantee the rational direction of the society or both. Western civilization used education by establishing schools in Igalaland to get the attention of the citizens not just getting their attention but also teaching them 'certain values and doctrines of Christianity. Because of this, Okpe asserts that building schools were not just only for the education of the people in the Western sense, but also to teach them the Christian doctrines, and thus, win them over to the Christian religion" (177) [10].

Before Western education in Igalaland, there was a system of education that was recognized and practiced. That is the informal education system; this system of education is the process whereby a citizen of a society learns the values, norms and culture of the society via oral translation. However, the arrival of Western civilization has changed the educational system in Igalaland by introducing a formal educational system. This is supported by Adama (119) "Christianity introduced Western education which improved the status of those who received it. For the igala people western education was mainly focused on men. Fathers regard female children as other men's property and need not spend money

on them". Presently in Igalaland, they are not limited to primary and secondary schools alone but there is a tertiary institution. The establishment of schools in Igalaland via the efforts of the missionaries has greatly contributed to the standard of living of the people, guarantees white collar jobs as those who go to school are working with the knowledge they gain from school, it has enabled the people to learn norms, values and culture of the society, education creates room for harnessing of one's potential and learning new skills. For example, actors, singers, dancers, writers etc. It also serves as a base for interaction and cooperation. With this one can humbly assert that education in Igalaland has helped in the development of both human and natural resources in the society.

Christianity

One of the major tools used by western civilization to gain access and dominance in Nigeria and Igala in particular is Christianity. Europeans used the gospel as a tool to get the attention of the people via establishment of mission's schools, health delivery services and other strategies used by western civilization to get the heart of the people. In this regard Okpe (17) states, "one of the main methods employed in the task of evangelization was the establishment of missions schools aimed at teaching both western education and the Christian doctrine". Before the advent of Christian religion in Igala land the people were used to some practices that do not support human dignity and as well religious belief. Those practices are man inhumanity to man which militate blessing from God but the coming of this religion via the efforts of the missionaries has helped to annihilate them. Christianity as a religion gave the Igala people a new world view and introduced the people to certain truth about humanity and God.

Some of the Benefits of Western Civilization through Christianity in Igala land are:

Abolition of Human Sacrifice

Human sacrifice was one of the common practices of the Africans and Igala people in particular. Humans were used as sacrifices to appease the gods. Ugwu in Adama (119) attests to this, "this was normally carried out in the form of atonement when there was an abomination in the land leading to a breach of harmony between the spirit world and the communities. A good example can be demonstrated with the burial of chiefs along with slaves who would serve them as chiefs in the underworld. This act of man's inhumanity to man was stopped only with the advent of the Christian religion [11,12].

Abolition of the Killing of Twins

In primitive times Africans and Igala people as a case study saw twins as an abomination to society this led to the killing of twins because they felt that it is not cultured to give birth to two children at a time. According to Ugwu in Adama (118), "This was done because they felt that it was an abomination to the earth deity and the ancestral spirits". Christianity has helped in the abolition of this practice. Furthermore, he continued that, "with the effort of the missionaries and Mary Slessor in particular this obnoxious practice ended in Nigeria and Igala land" (118).

Abolition of Harmful Widowhood Practices

Widowhood practices were reformed due to the efforts of missionaries. This is one of the positive impacts of Christianity in Igala land. Before Civilization, Igala widowhood practices were prevalent due to the tradition of the people; however, the advent of Christianity altered this practice. According to Ugwu: If a man died, the wife automatically became a widow. "oya

okwu-oko". In Igala land immediately after the man dies the wife removes all the good clothes and jewelry on her body, and she is confined in one place for three months. She is not allowed to talk loudly, she sits and sleeps on the mat, she takes a bath only at night, and she wears black clothes as mourning attire. She is expected to be wailing between 5 and 6 am for seven days. In some parts of Igala land the widow is expected to feed the women in the deceased husband's room morning and evening for seven days. The deceased husband's brother can inherit the widow and take her as a wife "oya ogwu". The advent of Christianity has put an end to this. The number of days the widow is restricted is reduced significantly, and widows now wear white attire, especially Catholics in place of black ones (119).

The emergence of the Christian religion in Igala land has changed the religious beliefs and cultural life of the people. Christianity came with many influences on the people's life. Though it has some side effects on the people's belief notwithstanding, the positive impact it has created cannot be over-emphasized.

Technological Advancement in Igalaland

Western civilization brought about advancement in technology due to its rich culture and it is part of the features of Western civilization. In traditional Igala society, people were not used to certain technology because it was not available but when civilization gained access to Igalaland technology was introduced and it continues to develop day by day, people started using mechanized tools for agriculture, they used media for business in terms of advertisement, use of communication gadgets which enables a quick and easy way of disseminating information; you could imagine when people were writing letters there was a delay in delivery but presently with the aid of mobile phone people can easily communicate to their love ones and business partners, the mobile phone has come to stay and it has some special features which are beneficiary to its user for examples, camera, games, music player etc.

Mobile internet has given people the opportunity to gain access to entertainment, information, and communication. Even in the educational sector, technology stands as one of the things that create a conducive environment for learning. It makes learning easy compared to when there was no technology. Lecturers and students struggle to carry out research, and lecturers struggle to compile results but today the story is not the same, people easily carry out research via mobile internet and results are easily done with the help of computers. Television is another aspect of technology that is affecting people's lives and behaviour this is because people adapt to what they see more easily than what they hear. In this contemporary era television cannot be sideline; it serves as a means of information to the people and entertainment. With a television one can, be aware of the things happening around for instance, if you want to know the current situation in South Africa what you need to do is turn your TV to either AIT or CNN channels. Television (TV) also brings pleasure to whoever watches which can reduce depression and pressure on individuals. For example, most people after they return from work the next thing they do after they have eaten is to watch sports (football, volleyball), wrestling, romantic films, and action films. By doing this they feel relaxed and happy. In the olden days, people walked a long distance because there was no means of transportation system apart from using animals which not everyone could afford but the introduction of technology has changed that, now people can travel by land, railway, and water, even on air. This is not just fast; it saves energy and time compared to walking a long distance.

These and many others are important of technology. Considering Igalaland before the epoch of Western civilization, things were usually done with man's god-given power which is more time-consuming than when one is using any type of technology to carry out an assignment.

Improved Healthcare Services

Health according to WHO (World Health Organization) cited by Ubruhe (38), is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Rothschild in Ubruhe (38) defines health as a state of feeling well in the body, mind and spirit, together with a sense of reserved power, based upon the principles of healthy living, a harmonious adjustment to the environment (physical and psychological); it is a means to a richer life in service [10]. The Igala people value health more than any other thing. There is a popular adage that says "Health is wealth", in Igala land health is cherished and held with high esteem because it is believed that no matter what someone may own or acquire if health is not included then the person has achieved nothing, the Igala people would say *ola fian ola te nwu du le* which means health is more than everything. Before civilization came to Igalaland the people were not ignorant about health and the healing process. They made use of traditional medicine which was obtained from the soil of the people and with the help of an herbalist and some cases witch doctor, they were the custodians of traditional medicine and healing in Igalaland before civilization. Igala has a system of healing but there is nothing like hospitals and health facilities which help to increase the health status of the people.

When Western civilization came to Igalaland via the efforts of the early missionaries, they had concern for the people's health which was one of the reasons they established healthcare centers where people could be treated. Supporting this Adama (119) asserts that, "Christian missionaries also provided health delivery services. For example, Grimmard Hospital Anyigba, Immaculate Heart Maternity Dispensary, Awo-akpali. Ika Christian Hospital Ika, Holley Memorial Hospital Ochadamu to name but a few were their hand made". A health delivery service that was established by the missionaries has been of help to people as regards their health. With the help of the Western health system of healing, health challenges can be easily solved. The Igala people have access to modernized health facilities which were not available in the people's traditional healing system.

Negative Impact of Western Civilization on Igala Culture and Tradition

Western Medicine as Oppose to Igala Medicine

Western civilization has dealt with Igala traditional medicine in a tremendous way since its emergence on the Igala soil. Early missionaries that came to African especially Igala land could not understand Africans' environment and some of their practices including traditional medicine; they gave traditional medicine all sorts of derogative names such as superstitious, fetish, animistic, witch doctor and magician.

Iwu attest to this fact in Ubrurhe

The popular image of the African men as that of a fabled witch-doctor with his exotic paraphernalia of feathers, cowries and animal skin muttering meaningless incantations and dispensing worthless potions to equally ignorant clients. Even the herbs they dispense are considered harmful and when they are found efficacious, the detractors of traditional medicine are quick to dismiss the as change discovery. The incantations and the rhythm

of drums are said to be weird sounds and part of the mumbo-jumbo designed to hoodwink the superstitious savages who are under their spell (13) [13].

The introduction of orthodox medicine into Igala culture and tradition has changed most people's belief about their own traditional medicine which was the formal and effective system of health sustenance prior to civilization. In contemporary time most of the citizen now prefer orthodox medicine to Igala traditional especially those that tagged themselves "elites". They believe that Igala traditional medicine does not have specify dosage, it is not hygiene, some say they don't have trained doctors that their doctors are quack.

Moral Decadence

Western civilization has transformed the Igala culture, thereby leading to moral deficiency. Before the advent of civilization in Igala land, most of the things were done with decency but civilization has change that act of decency in terms of morals. The moral standard has fallen due to the meeting of these two cultures. Prior to western civilization, greetings, dressings, dancing, eating, names, singing, sexuality and the likes were held with high esteem. Presently, the reverse is the case as people now sort to copy or prefer the general lifestyle of the western world to the detriment of Igala culture. According Arowolo, "the conception of sexuality has changed completely; the desire to be like westerners by our children have suddenly made them promiscuous; doing things that were never imaginable several years ago" (10). Today people all in the name of westernization almost go naked, eating with hands is no longer acceptable with a lot of persons instead they prefer cutlery. in an interview with John Akoji Daniel he said, the use of body lotion with special reference to bleaching/toning cream. This has often led to skin irritations and health hazard generally (skin cancer). Instead of using *okwume* (sheabutter), kernel oil, both of which are medicinal and healthy is part of western influence on the people. He further stated that most parents do not spank or beat their children as a result of western influence. In the west parents do not beat their children irrespective of the offence which is the main reason why most western children are not morally sound. Igala parents have copied this act to their culture, today you hardly see parents beating their children for wrongdoing rather they pamper them this has led to most moral menace such as abortion, drug abuse, premarital sex, indecent dressing, theft, etc. [14].

This is another area of setback in igala culture that he pointed out, insatiable taste for fashion. Insatiable taste for fashion has taken over the igala people especially the youths. The more they take western lifestyle as their ultimate goal, by striving to look like the westerners in their lifestyle that is how needs arise. Noah attest to this "the desire to pursue foreign fashions (clothing styles, make up, bangles, and jewelries) excessively advertized by foreign media forced many African children into prostitution because of material things" (27), people want to appear like the westerners by copying their ways of dressing [15]. Most of them go for things that they cannot afford but because they see it on the internet and television, they tend to hunt for it. The Igala ladies now don't want to go out with their original face but prefer "heavy" makeup before they go out.

A lot of people do not work because of influence of western civilization; everyone is looking for "shortcut" to destiny which gives room for laziness and indolence. A young man these days do not want to follow the parent to farm because they believe going to farm is primitive likewise to young ladies most of them do not help their parents at home in domestic work and if the

parent wants to talk, they will reply "mummy forget what you are saying is old fashion" because they believe westerners are fond of enjoyment. Also, people do not walk these days, unlike in the olden days that people walk for a long distance which makes them more energetic and medically sound. Most people are used to motorcycle, car, bicycle which has make a lot of people to feel that wherever they are going to no matter how short is it they should take a bike and car. He further gave this example to explain his point "in Kogi State University campus how many people can walk from old lecture theatre to female hostel?. Only few persons. This is the major reason that people are having bones related problems but in the olden days that people walk, they were healthier and stronger than the people of these days. He continued by saying that "the conventional way of cooking has changed". In those days people used stone to cook which is safer and it brings out the original taste of a food but today people rush gas cooker and stove which is more deadly and hazardous to health. There are few ladies that can cook traditional foods because they are used to cooking junks like noodles (*income*), spaghetti, macaroni and the likes. In the olden days the Igala people value pounded yam but, in this era, people prefer to eat "pando" it is a grinded cassava sealed in sachet. "Pando" is a processed food and it is also preserved by chemicals which could be detrimental to people's health because the natural air has no access to the grinded cassava but the traditional pounded yam is healthier and more original. These are the effects of copying an alien culture or when one sees another culture superior to his or her own culture it will result to change in the initial culture.

Rejection of Igala Cultural and Traditional Festival

Cultural and Traditional festivals like the Ibegwu Festival, Ocho Festival, Egbe Festival, and Italo Festival are an integral part of the people, and their connection cannot be separated. They serve not only as entertainment but also as a force of integration, fostering peace among individuals and the broader community. Also, it serves as a medium of social control and cohesion. The presence of Western civilization has pushed most of their impacts to the back even though they still exist today. The missionaries considered the Igala traditional ceremonies to be anti-Christian which made them discourage people from participating especially those that were converted from traditional religion to Christianity.

There are no people devoid of culture, including the Westerners who condemned some igala practices, especially festivals. In the West for example they have different kinds of festivals like Halloween, black Friday, thanksgiving and the like. They do this annually as part of their cultural heritage, it also makes them appreciate the efforts of their deceased forbearers but coming to igala land the reverse is the case. The Igala people have their culture like the Westerners, which is peculiar to them and this makes them celebrate festivals as part of their cultural heritage but because they cannot understand the peoples' culture, the Igala were forced to neglect their festivals which has caused a lot of things to the society and the citizens as well. Because during festivals the gods are appeased and there is sanitation of the land from all forms of evils and atrocities. Given this Idang maintained that "in a traditional African society like in Ibibio land (Nigeria), festivals which were celebrated often had religious undertones they ended with sacrifices that were offered to certain deities on special days to attract their goodwill on the members of the society" (103). Since it has been reduced, we can now see strange things happening in the land which were not so before the advent of civilization. Even though people still celebrate festivals it is not like before civilization came into the land, most Muslims and Christians do not participate in the festivals because they see it

as against their faith.

Negligence of Igala Education

The Igala people were used to informal education in which parents served as the teachers who inculcated norms and values of the society to their children via adages, tales, legends, folklore etc. But presently, as a result of Western education most Igala people neglect and abandon Igala education, they no longer learn the basic norms of the society in which they live rather they concentrate more on Western education. There are few persons in this generation who do not know the history of the Igala and Igala alphabet because most people do not think it matters to learn such things, and there is no legal ground for learning this. Enwubo opined that “the rate at which we take time to learn about Western culture is far above the acquired knowledge of our own culture [16]. It is a setback for igala culture to be fading out” (109). Another aspect where Igala education is neglected is the area of reading in Igala, majority of the Igala people do not know how to read in Igala because they did not learn the Igala alphabet which is foundational to reading in Igala, and there is no Igala language in the academic curriculum of schools in Igala land. For instance, in Yoruba land, there is a legal ground for their citizens to know about their language and culture. They have Yoruba language in their school curriculum which makes it easier for their students to get acquainted with it.

The Negative Impact of Technology

Technology was designed to make life easier; to enable people to learn and to increase the standard of living but people have abused it, which is why it hurts society. Technology is the centre of attraction of many cultures in this era; it is part of the reason for the rising and falling of cultural values in this generation. Over time this has been of great concern to so many in the society because of its negative effects on people’s lives in all ramifications ranging from economic, social, religious, moral, academic, and political values.

The use of mobile phones in Igala land has caused a lot of damage to the people, especially the youths. Via social networks like Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, WhatsApp, Tiktoks and the likes, with these entire available social networks, people get themselves engaged in chat with friends both at the national and international levels which denies them of opportunity to spend quality time with their friends and family which in return can lead to the destruction of relationships since there is no room for interaction. It consumes a lot of time which denies people of having quality time. Some of the users can spend several hours chatting and operating their cell phones which has robbed them of the time they would invest in their academic, spiritual, and economic lives. Many have been defrauded through social networks and some people’s image has been tarnished via Facebook or one of those social networks. Hackers will hack into their accounts and use their information to publicize negative things against the user’s will and at their expense. An average user of a mobile phone in this era finds it difficult to write letters because they are used to text messages which has bankrupted them in the aspect of letter writing. This can be confirmed by the result of this era in which most of the students fail in the English language. Another area where mobile phones have affected is in the educational sector. Students hardly have time for their studies as a result of devotion to social networks and mobile phones which has to examination malpractice.

The rate of examination malpractice in schools especially tertiary institutions is alarming because students use mobile phones with the help of mobile internet to cheat during examinations.

Having said all these effects of mobile phones, the worst of all is the danger of mobile phones on people’s health. Constant use of cell phones can lead to health challenges of different kinds.

Eberendu witnessed this fact when he said, these phones emit electromagnetic radiation; many thinks extended use can cause cancer [17]. Medical health reports have noted the harmful effects of microwave radiation of hours of mobile phone chatting on the brain, but a more serious issue is the effect on the sleeping patterns of youngsters. Other anomalies in behavioral patterns, such as irritability, lack of patience and abruptness (24). The use of television is another forum for negative impact on Igala culture and tradition. Almost every family now has a television in their various houses and this has become an area of weakness for our people because most of them are exposed to Western culture which leads them to demonstrate whatever they see on the television either good or bad. Kids, teenagers and adults are the major concern here. They watch action films, pornographic movies, fashion and many more. According to Noah, some of these Western technologies have rather helped to reduce African cultural values. The youths appeared to be the most vulnerable group affected by the influx of these Western technologies. Western culture transmitted through technological devices (pornographic movies or materials) exposed young people to adult issues at an impersonate age (27).

As they continue to watch it that is how it enters their heads and turns into a corrupt seed that comes out as a behavior. According to Denga in Noah studies repeatedly show that watching violent entertainment increases aggression in those who view it” (27). This has caused moral decadence in African culture and Igala culture. As a result of this exposure to certain lifestyles of the Western culture through television, a lot of youth now engage in all sorts of immoral activities that are against legal culture and tradition. Some of these include; rape, abortion, cultism, indecent dressing, drug addiction, skin bleaching etc.

Recommendations

From the above discussion, the following recommendations are put forward

Igala people should take the positive side of Western civilization and leave the aspects that do not align with their cultural values.

Igala education should be encouraged, especially at the primary school level, to ensure the inculcation and continuity of Igala cultural heritage and values.

The celebration of religious and cultural festivals should be encouraged in Igalaland to ensure its continuity and the preservation of the people’s heritage.

The use of Igala traditional medicine should be greatly encouraged in Igalaland, because it is potent and efficacious and can cure most ailments that the people experience [18-35].

Conclusion

This paper has examined the impact of Western civilization on Igala culture and tradition as one of the objects of concern among contemporary scholars. The encounter between Western culture and Igala culture has drastically changed the people’s ways of life on the grounds of acculturation. The interaction between these two cultures is such that there a benefit as well as losses. Western culture has helped to develop the Igalaland through improved infrastructure, educational development, arrival of

Christianity, and in another sense, it has also helped to reduce the value of cultural heritage among the Igala people by opposing Igala traditional medicine as unhygienic, moral decadence as a result of western influence, rejection of Igala cultural heritage. In addition, Igala education has been neglected due to Western education and the arrival of technology also brought a negative impact on the people's culture even though it has its positive impact. Though one cannot overlook the positive aspects of Western civilization however, their negative impact on Igala culture and tradition is responsible for the setback in cultural development, because most people strive to live following a Western lifestyle which has made them to abandon their own Igala culture. Igala people ought to hold Igala culture and tradition in high esteem. They should not see Western culture as superior to their culture, which will enable them to better appreciate and value their cultural heritage anywhere and anytime.

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