

**POKHARNESSING LOCAL FESTIVALS FOR TOURISM
PROMOTION IN PARTS OF BENUE STATE**

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TITLE PAGE

**HARNESSING LOCAL FESTIVALS FOR TOURISM PROMOTION IN
PARTS OF BENUE STATE**

CERTIFICATION

Onaji Esther, a post Graduate Student in the Department of Archaeology and Tourism, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, with Registration Number PG/MA/11/58477 has satisfactorily completed the requirements for the course and research work for the Master of Arts Degree in Archaeology and Tourism. The work in this project report has not been submitted in parts or full for any other diploma or degree of this or any other University. This project has been approved for the Department of Archaeology and Tourism, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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EXTERNAL EXERMINAR

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty who made me what I am today, and to my late husband who gave me all the love and support in life. Also to my lovely children, late Onche Onaji, Ene Onaji, Dominion Onaji, Lucy Onaji and Junior Ben Onaji.

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I must not forget my course mates Mr. Andrew Ogbuja Fredrick, Chidi Agu etc. may God bless you all.

Abstract

Local festivals are increasingly being used as instrument for promoting tourism and boosting the regional economy. This is often reflected in the level of public assistance made available to these festivals. However, it is sometimes difficult to assess the contribution of traditional festivals to the growth of local economies. This study looks at three traditional festivals that take place annually in Benue State of Nigeria (Ejalekw, Igede Agbah, Kwagh-hir). These festivals have very rich cultural heritage, cultural norms and customs. This research examined them, their tourism potentialities and how they can boost socio-economic development in Benue State.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1: Introduction

The relationship between tourism and local festivals is one of the most debated issues in tourism studies, some implicitly assume that local festivals promote tourism and tourism generates wealth that will gradually promote development.

Local festivals in Benue State have very rich culture, ritual, dance, that can capture the attention of tourists to a greater dimension. Local festivals can put forward the beauty of our culture and tradition. Festivals such as Eje-Alekwu in the Idoma area, the New Yam festival in the Igede area, and the Kwagh-hir in the Tiv speaking areas. These local festivals have potentially much larger repertoire of tourist products to offer, such as watching religious rituals, tour of historical sites and interactions with local hosts, masquerades of different kind. These local festivals have not been properly harnessed and packaged to unleash its tourism potential and the economic benefits for the local people.

There exists a general agreement among these local festivals in Benue state that projects cultural sustainability and unity amongst the people. However, the festivals can promote local empowerment which can lead to economic profit as

they have all factors to attract tourists into Benue State.

The people of Benue State have very rich cultural heritage enshrined in local festivals. These festivals have historical and architectural platform that can converge the huge presence of tourists both at home and abroad if properly organized.

The Kwagh-hir festival of the Tiv has such display of the Tiv culture and traditional rites such as masquerades, dance, songs and Puppetry Theatre. Towns, villages and cities are interestingly keen to share their culture and environment with visitors. This study investigates how local festivals in Benue State can be tourist attraction in their own right and encourage tourists to visit local places in Benue State. This work will examine 3 of 10 festivals held yearly in some part of the state and how it can attract tourist which will lead to boosting sustainable local economic development.

Festivals as celebrated in the early years back are different from what we have in these modern days of civilization, globalization and Christianity. The Alekwu festival in those days were celebrated with a lot of sacrifices on shrine but Christianity made people to do away with some of these shrines, so now Alekwu is mostly made of masquerades of different types and colours come to visit markets on agreed three consecutive market days with a lot of fun, the Igede Agba is celebrated like any normal Christmas day but being concluded by a display in the

chosen local government headquarter with invited guests from all nooks and corners of the state or outside state.

In the early days, the Kwagh-hir festivals at their rudimentary level but have now being modernized with other things including masquerades of different types and sizes.

These three major tribes (Igede, Idoma and Tiv) are differentiated from each other by the colour of clothes they use. The Idoma people wear the black and red, the Tiv wear black and white and the Igede black and blue.

1.2: Statement of Problem

Traditional Festivals can be events usually and ordinarily staged by a local community that centers on some unique aspects of culture, music, plays, dances, acrobatics, puppetry, myths, rituals etc. Festivals are usually organized annually or at agreed period, where people of a particular community come together to dine and wine in order to celebrate and share common traditions. Traditional festivals in Benue state have not gained tourists attraction as a result of the way it is celebrated by the people. Enough awareness is not created to attract tourists and neither does the government encourage traditional festivals. This has relegated traditional festivals to the background; as a result it has created a gap in what is and what should be. Also other organizations have not contributed enough to uplift

traditional festival in Benue state. This has created a vacuum in tourism development in Benue state.

1.3: Research Objectives

The objectives to be accomplished in this research are as follows:

- i) To study these festivals in their socio-cultural context.
- ii) To highlight the tourism potentials of New yam festival, Kwagh-hir and Ejeø Alekwu
- iii) To show how these festivals could be harnessed to improve the life of the people.
- iv) To show case the intrinsic tourism potentials of local festival in Benue state

1.4: Research Methodology

Ethnographic research method was used in this research. The researcher participated in all the festivals. I went to Orokam during the Eje-Alekwu Ogwa on Ukwo day in June, 2013 and Eje-Alekwu Ono in Ugboju.

I also traveled to Obi and Oju Local Government Areas (Igede speaking area). The Igede Agba was celebrated on the 3rd of September, 2013 and the researcher and my mechanic went to witness the event myself with Mr. Sunday interpreting the Igede aspects. The Governor, Suswan Gabriel and his entourage

were there. The Ministry of Tourism and Culture was also there as one of the contributors.

I also traveled to Makurdi, Gboko and Katsina-Ala for different Kwagh-hir rehearsals and display. The researcher snapped with one of the masquerades display in Gboko shortly before Christmas, 2013.

I also traveled to Otukpo-Icho and Igbanomaje to witness the Ekwu-afia perform the burial of two elders who are elderly members of the cult. The Alekwu cult is stronger in the Otukpo part of Idoma than other parts. There are some stages in the rites that prohibit women from being present. In such places I used my son to get the information required. The researcher used her camera to snap some of the scenes.

Interviewer ó Interviewee verbal interactions and conversations were also used. In Oju the researcher interviewed Inyangbe Ode, an elder on why they celebrate this festival and he told me that they do this to remember their great father Agba.

I also spoke to Adam Onche the son of Ada-Alekwu. He told me that no other person is permitted to bury their members as the Idomas believe in the souls of the departed to be somewhere taking care of the affairs of their living relatives.

In Gboko the leader of the C Terh Kwagh-hir said that the Kwagh-hir is a picture of the Tiv culture and heritage.

Another sub research method is the documentary type. The researcher gets her data from unpublished and published materials such as books, newspapers, magazines, journals etc. information were downloaded from the Internet to support the work.

1.5: Significance of the Study

This work will be of paramount importance, not only to the local people of Benue State, and the government also to researchers interested in the study or management of cultural resources and cultural heritage. Local festivals in Benue State lead to social, educational, political and economic purposes to the people of Benue State and also to the people around the world.

This research work would help create awareness to tourist both local and international alike that there are festivals of international repute; it will also create awareness about the economic benefits of local festival of the people of Benue State.

This work will also be of immense importance to tourism potentials, as it will show case the rich cultural heritage of the Tivs, Idoma and Igede people of Benue State.

1.6: Scope of the Study

This work focuses on EjaøAlekwu festival in Idoma land, New yam festival in Igede land and Kwagh-hir festival in the Tiv land, all in Benue State of Nigeria; with a view to bringing them to limelight as well as highlighting their economic importance to the local people.

1.7: Limitations of the Study

The researcher encountered various problems during the exercise.

Firstly, I was directed to get approval from the chiefs and elders of the community before any exercise will be allowed in the place. The process of getting the approval was time consuming.

The distance posed a problem to the researcher. From Nsukka to far Benue where these festivals take place is about six hours journey. These festivals are done by three different ethnic groups that stay very far from each other. The transport fares were high. I equally made use of motorbikes because most of the villages are not accessible to motor cars and the cost is quite high.

Another problem encountered was language. The three common languages spoken in Benue state are Idoma, Igede and Tiv which are their vernacular. The researcher has no knowledge or background in two of the languages. Most often an interpreter was employed to help in the work. People like Sunday Ikwue did the Igede side, Ayede A.S. for the Tiv and Adama Onche supported me even in the

Idoma.

In addition to these, sex barrier is another limitation as female(s) are not allowed access to some stages of the festivals especially Alekwu and Kwagh-hir.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Theoretical Literature

One cannot establish the date when sociological theory began, people have been thinking about and developing theories of social life since early in history.

A theory is a set of interrelated prepositions that allows for the systematization of knowledge, explanation and prediction of social life and the generation of new research hypothesis (George Ritzer, 2012).

Writing on theoretical frame work, Aluko (1981) noted that there is no intrinsic advantage of any model of analysis of the world economic order and that the value of choosing a particular of analysis for any research is not that it gets closer to the ultimate truth of the matter. Rather it serves to provide grounds on which we stand. It serves both as a tool and a goal. As a tool it serves to provide direct empirical investigation, while as a goal, theory is sometimes valued on its own. For example, theories integrate and order empirical findings. They are economic and efficient means for attracting, summarizing, integrating and storing information (Igbo et al, 2006).

Theories may not tell us what will happen, but they can argue for what

should happen and it helps us to develop a plan for carrying out the change that the theory envisions or for resisting the change that the theory predicts.

Marx's theory was used in this work, Marx believed that people are basically productive; that is, in order to survive, people need to work in and with nature. In so doing they produce the food, clothing, tools, shelter and other necessities that permit them to live. Their productivity is a perfectly natural way by which they express basic creative impulses. Furthermore, these impulses are expressed in concert with other people. In other words, people are inherently social. They need to work together to produce what they need to survive.

The people of Benue State live by their theory as they work with nature to get their basic needs of life and cooperate with each other. That is why these three cultural festivals are celebrated by all the people of the state and people from other places. Benue State is hospitable to all that visit or come to live with them (George, 2012).

Feminism theory was also used in the work as there are a lot of discrimination against the women folk in the festivals. It is not as if the women will die in the parts they are discriminated from but just the mere selfishness of men from ages. I discovered that women who have reached their menopause can participate in those discriminated areas.

In one sense there has always been a feminist perspective wherever women

are subordinated and they have been subordinated almost always and everywhere. They seem to have recognized and protested that situation in some form (Lerner 1993).

Some Benue women are already protesting against this subordination especially in the Tiv part of the state. There are women commissioners, judges, Heads of departments etc. But the subordination level is still much especially in the government but the women are still pressing more buttons to have their legitimate places in the local, state and federal governments.

2.2: Empirical Literature

Puppetry

Puppetry is a form of theatre or performance that involves the manipulation of puppets. It is very ancient, and is believed to have originated 3000 years BC. Puppetry takes many forms but they all share the process of animating inanimate performing objects. Puppetry is used in almost all human societies both as entertainment ó in performance ó and ceremonially in rituals and celebrations such as carnivals. Most puppetry involves storytelling. The impact of puppetry depends on the process of transformation of puppets, which has much in common with play.

Festival

A festival is an event ordinarily staged by a local community, which centers on and celebrates some unique aspect of that community. Festivals are historically interchangeable, however the term *feast* has also entered common secular parlance as a synonym for any large or elaborate meal (www.wikipedia.com).

A community festival is an event that is more often organized and staged by a local community to celebrate or highlight a unique aspect of that self same community. The unique aspects include the celebration of historical, social and religious festivals such as:

- a. ***Historical festival:*** it includes the celebration of major historical events such as the end of a war or the overthrowing of a particular cruel government.
- b. ***Social festivals:*** it includes celebrations of art and music such as Eje-alekwu in Idoma land or Kwagh-hir in Tiv land, all in Nigeria.
- c. ***Religious festivals:*** it is held in areas all around the world in honour of God or gods. These festivals include the Christian festivals of the feast of the nativity of our Lord (also known as Christmas) and the feast of the resurrection (also known as Easter) (www.ezinearticles.com).

Etymology: The word festival is derived from the Middle English word *feast*

which is also from the middle French word *festivus* which was also adopted into the French language from Latin. Festival was first recorded as a noun in 1589, before then it was used as an adjective from the fourteenth century, meaning to celebrate a church or religious holiday (www.etymonline.com).

Tourism

In 1976 the tourism society of England defined tourism as the temporary, short-term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during their stay at each particular location.

Etymology: Theobald (1994) suggested that the etymological word tour is derived from the Latin word *Tornare* and the Greek word *Torno* meaning a lathe or circle, the movement around a central point or axis. This meaning changed in modern English to represent ones turn. The suffix *ism* is defined as an action or process while the suffix *ist* denotes one that performs a given action (www.wikipedia.com).

2.3: Theoretical Orientation

After examining and reviewing the theories, the study used sociological theories which were borrowed from sociology. As we know that sociology primarily concerns itself with social relationships. Local festivals are a function of

the society and people. However, it is important that the government should understand societal formation and it will be necessary that the Government should play an active role in supporting local festivals. The onus should not only be left in the hands of the Government alone but other stake holders like NGO, political organizations should get involved in supporting local festivals in Benue State.

Even as cultural differentialism in those who adopt this paradigm argue that among and between cultures there are lasting differences that are largely unaffected by globalization or by any other bi-inter-muth or trans-cultural process. This is not to say that culture is unaffected by any of these process, especially globalization. But it is to say that their core cultures are largely unaffected by them.

Local festivals according to Adesina (2010), are events usually and ordinarily staged or organized by a local community that center on some unique aspect of that community. A festival can also be seen as a series of performance involving music, play, dances, rituals, puppetry performance, usually organized annually or as agreed upon where people of a particular community come together to dine and wine in order to celebrate and share common tradition thus making festival an element that is enshrined in the African concept of theatre, in which experience of the participant could be shared through acrobatics, puppetry, myths ritual, legends, masquerading, drama of carnival etc.

CHAPTER THREE THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1: Brief Geographical and Historical Background of Benue State

Benue State is a state of Nigeria in the mid-eastern region with a population of about 3.8 million people in 2010. It comprises of three major tribes Igede, Tiv Idoma people. Although they are other ethnic groups as well, these include Etulo, Utonkon and Akpa. Benue State is a rich agricultural region generally known as the Food Basket of Nigeria, some of the crops grown are, potatoes, cassava, yam, soya beans, guinea corn, beniseed, rice, corn, millet, it also grow orchard crops like oranges of different varieties, mango, pineapple etc.

Benue State was named after River Benue from the former Benue-Plateau State in 1976, and has a land area of 34,059 sq km. It is bordered to the east by Taraba State, to the North by Nasarawa State to the west, by Kogi State and to the South by Enugu State, Ebonyi State and Cross river State and the Republic of Cameroon.

Benue State is made of 23 local governments of which the Tivs occupy 14 Local governments, the Idoma Occupy 7 Local governments and the Igede two Local governments. These local government councils include Ado, Agatu, Apa,

Ogbadibo, Okpokwu, Ohimini and Otukpo for the Idomas. Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer-East, Gwer-West, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Tarkar, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya for the Tivs and Obi and Oju for the Igedes.

The People of Benue State are very artistic and hospitable in nature. There are places of interest that are very recreational and can have important historic and artistic attraction that tourist will find very attractive. Ushongo hill, Swem hill located in Kwande local government area, the hills are valued for historic linkages and are believed to be the place of origin of the Tiv people, the Swem shrine (cultural/monument) Swem is a shrine site at the foot of the Cameroon range in Kwande local government area. Bassa hill, Tomb of the past Tor Tiv (monument), this is the tomb of three prominent kings of Tiv tribe buried in Gboko town, Gungul waterfall, Ocho Idoma palace, the Tor Tiv palace, montane game reserve and Ogbudu-Apa (monument), this is a massive grave of Jukun warrior who fought during inter-tribal wars.

3.2: Origin of Cultural Festival in Benue State

According to Adesina, (2010), festivals can be defined or said to be an event, usually and ordinarily staged or organized by a local community that center on some unique aspects of that community. A festival can also be seen as a series of performance involving music, plays, dances, rituals, puppetry performance,

usually organized annually or as agreed upon, where people of a particular community come together to dine and wine, in order to celebrate and share common tradition. Thus making festivals an element that is enshrined in the African concept of theatre, in which experience of the participants could also be shared through acrobatics, puppetry, myths, rituals, legends, masquerading, drama of carnival, ancestral worships and so on (Adegbite, 2009: 46).

3.3: Idoma People and Culture

The Idoma people in Benue State are enterprising, versatile and hospitable; they treasure independence and self respect and therefore, cogently place premium on achievements. As a group their world view is permeated by stringent belief in the power and influence of God (Owoicho) through the ancestor (Alekwu).

The Idoma is the second largest ethnic group in Benue State, living in an area of 130, 1552 km which cover Otukpo, Ogbadibo, Okpokwu, Ado, Apa, Ohimini, Agatu. Historically, the Idoma are said to have migrated from the old Kwararafa emir to Apa as a result of attack on them by predatory neighbours.

It is difficult to ascertain how long they have settled in their present location and where in particular they came from. There are many traditions or origin of different Idoma clan. According to one of the traditions, on their way they found the kingdom of RO Buma in the Chad basin around AD 1284 (Ngoma R. 2001).

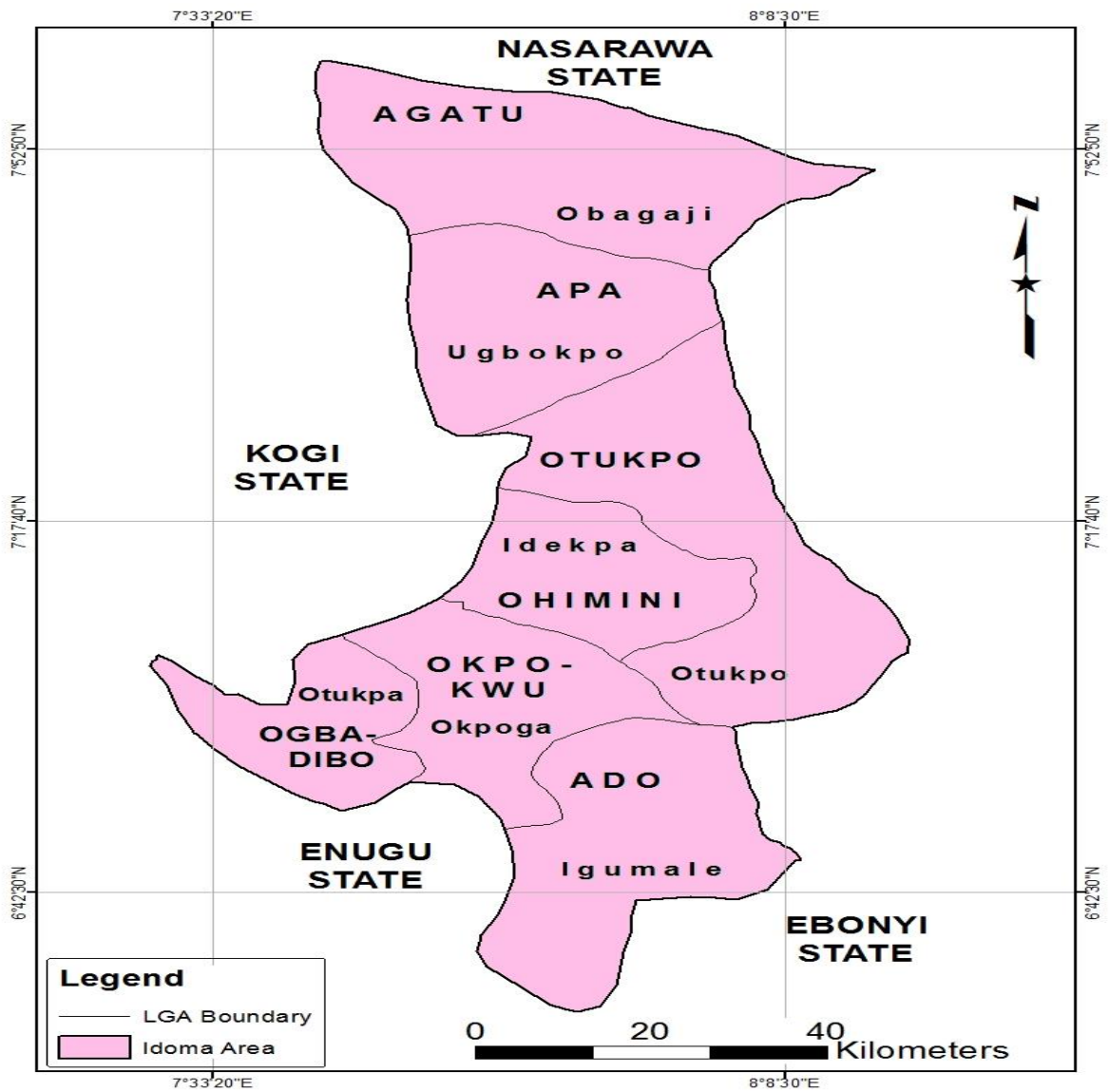


Fig 1: Map of Idoma-speaking area of Benue State.

Among the vast majority of Idoma however, their oral traditions are unanimous that they migrated to their present territories. Apa has been tentatively identified as one time capital of the legendary Jukun empire of Kwararafa on the basis of available evidence of Idoma and the Jukun do not appear to share any common characteristics for one to conclude that the people came from the same origin.

Everyone is seen and described in terms of his relation to his father, family, sub-lineage and clan or even as district. The Idoma concept of an individual is in line with Igbiti (1969, 108), who observed that the individual does not and cannot be alone. He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations of the whole. In the opinion of Iwo (1994, 36) the African and Nigeria inclusive saw man as a social being. None has full realization of his actuality without the society.

The Idoma sees an individual person as part of the community and not an independent person. He/she has to share with other people in the community. A strong sense of unity and solidarity in the Idoma community can be explained by the fact that Idoma people behave and feel that they are very much related to one another through the families and various segments of traditional society.

Although in different heterogeneous group they felt that they have come from the same family root and are bound together by the same ancestral home land

and other social cultural heritage.

The basic units of the Idoma cultural structure is the compound. Armstrong (1955, 94) asserts that the compound comprises of the man, his wife(s) and their children. Traditionally, they believe that a man can take more than one wife, this shows that polygamy is widely accepted in the Idoma tradition.

Generally, in Idoma land a deity called Alekwu is the most revered deity, and is seen as the spirit of late Ancestors. Alekwu is seen as one who protects the community from evil, provides for them and control the general ethics and life style of the people. Alekwu occupies a very sensitive and delicate aspect of the Idoma belief system.

They also believe in the Supreme God called ðOwoichoö in Idoma language. Owoicho is supreme above all other deities in Idoma land. Greater honour is given to Owoicho because they believe that he is the Creator of life, and everything they have seen.

The Idoma people have their marriage system. Generally, before a young man marries, the parents of the boy must ascertain that he is due for marriage. He must be strong and matured enough to get married. In some areas of Idoma society the parents of the boy buy a pig for the young man to live within the same house. He is expected to stay with the pig for one year, and for that one year he is saddled with the responsibility of taking care of the pig and after this period of time, if he

does not complain about the nature of the pig, he would then be considered a man and can take a wife. When the marriage takes place the woman is expected to leave her parents' house and proceed to live with her husband. The woman is expected to change her surname to that of her husband's family name. When the chosen girl accepts to marry the boy, a date is now set by the elders from the groom and bride's family. On the set date, the groom and his family member will come to the venue of the marriage with items like: cola, kegs of palm wine, wrappers, bitter kola, local hen, etc. On arrival the parents of the groom is to stand as a father and some elders will be seated with the father of the bride to discuss the bride price of the girl to be married. It should be noted here that when the bride price is discussed, no female is allowed to take part in the discussion process, when the bride price has been settled, the father of the groom pays the price; or if he does not have the money it will be considered that the woman will be taken on debt, the complete price will be taken at a later time. This bride price is not an indication that the bride is sold away but it follows that, because the father of the bride does not want the lineage of his daughter to pass away from his family. The paid price will be used to bring another bride. At this junction, it spells out an intersection point in the culture of marriage for the Tiv and Idoma people in Benue State.

The Idoma have a political leader called the Ocho Idoma, he stands as the supreme head of the Idoma traditional council. He lives in the center of otukpo in

Ochi-Idoma Palace. The office of the Ocho Idoma became necessary as a result of the political and social changes within and outside Idoma land. This office was created when the late Abah Etema I became the first Ocho Idoma, but because he was illiterate, that office was transferred to Ogiri Oko from the Adoka kingdom. Abraham Agene Okpabi II became the second, but this Ocho Idoma has raised a controversial concern in the Idoma Kingdom. This is because he is an Igede man, the Idoma and Igede are seen and classified as people of the same kingdom but presently because of cultural, political awareness, the Igede people see themselves as a separate kingdom and people.

In Idoma, chieftaincy goes in conjunction with shared authority and leadership. Such chieftaincies have always existed in Idoma traditional society. The creation of paramount chief of Idoma was only inaugurated as modern development during the British administration (1984) at which the Ojila or council of chiefs elected the chief of Idoma as stated by Armstrong (1965, 98).

It has been historically recorded that the Idoma traditional society has witnessed two types of leadership. The *õOjirashipö* (Ojira) and *õOcheshipö* (Oche). Towards this development each clan or kindred group is ruled by an Ojira (council of elders). Membership of which was mainly chosen from the heads of the various lineage of the kindred. Erim E.O (1981, 9) noted *õit* must be stressed here that each kindred Ojira was politically autonomous of the other in the content of a small

groupö.

The second type of leadership known as ðOcheö. Oche (the chief of head kindred) was politically the most senior elder of the kindred. In other word, several elders with the kindred would meet to nominate one of their members as Oche (Chief). The office rotates among the constituent lineage of the kindred.

3.4: Igede People and Culture

According to Oral tradition, the Igede people migrated from somewhere around the Niger Delta region and settled in their present location in Oju and Obi. It was believed that the Igede people were living in a place called ðOraö where they had neighbours. At a point in the history, the people of ðOraø asked the Igede people to lend them water pot to fetch water from a stream, while in the stream, the ðOraø people now broke the pot, so the Igede people got angry and asked the ðOraø to pay them their pot and the ðOraø people refused, and there was a war. So after the war the Igede people migrated to a place called Oturupko, a place presently referred to as Otukpo in Benue State. As a matter of history, they had to migrate fully to their present location of Oju and Obi.

The concept of ancestor(s) and ancestral worship in African Religion remains a controversial issue. The Igede believe in a deity called ðAkpanö. This deity is the most revered of all other deities in Igede land. The ðAkpanö is seen as a god of

vengeance, it controls the ethics, politics and social aspect of the Igede people. It caters for the peace and protection of the Igede people, both at home and in Diaspora. The Igede man believe so much in supremacy, but having examined their religious beliefs extensively, it was discovered that the Igedes have smaller gods called Ogbadugogo. Ogbadugogo is referred to as ðOHEö. Among the people of Igede, every clan must have a shrine for Ogbadugogo or cannot have a link with the Almighty God ðOHEö.

Marriage as an institution is recognized globally as a matrimonial relationship and union of person(s) who most often are usually of the opposite sex. The Igede as a people have their traditional system of marriage, though some similarities in the marriage rite of the Igede and the Idomas.

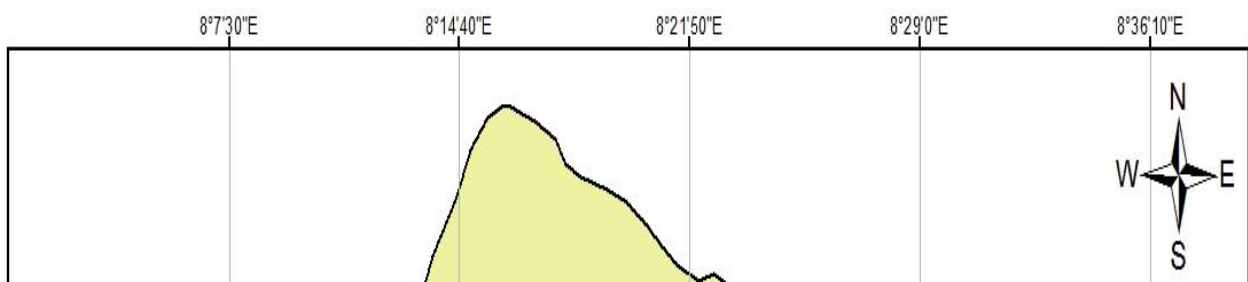


Fig. 2: Map of Igede-speaking area of Benue State.

Like the Idoma the Igede people have almost the same rite for a traditional

marriage, but a little difference exists in the sense that a woman is not recognized as a married woman if traditional gunshots are not heard on the day of her traditional marriage. These gunshots are referred to òIdobiö. In Igede language, it means that the girl whose bride price was just paid has accepted the man and the price paid.

3.5: Tiv People and Culture

The Tiv are linked to southern Bantoid Tiv old family, which is a brand of Benue ó Congo. In the pre-colonial times the Hausa ethnic group referred to the Tiv as òMunchiö, a term not accepted by Tiv people. The Tiv people depend on agriculture for commerce and economic life.

The Tiv Origin can be traced to the ancestral father of all Tiv called Takuruku Anyam Azenga. The Anyam Azenga tradition of Tiv Origin holds that, at the beginning Anyam Azenga married an unnamed woman who gave birth to Tarukuku who in turn married and had a son named Tiv. Tiv had other two sons known as Ichongo and IPSV. These names are of paramount importance to Tiv genealogy. The Tiv came in contact with European culture during the colonial period in the 1907, through an expedition of the Southern Nigeria regiment led by Lieutenant-Colonel Hugh Trenchards. He brought gifts for the tribal chiefs and subsequently roads were built and trade link established between them and the

Europeans. Most Tiv have a high sense of genealogy, with descent being reckoned patrilineally. Ancestry is traced to an ancient individual Tiv. The smallest branch or minimal lineage is the òIpaveö. Members of an Ipave clan tend to live together, in a local kin-based community called a segment lineage.

Nigeria was created through the indigenous people with the use of traditional political system of communication. The rulers and the chiefs governed their ethnic communities and communicated with them. Through various channels locally made musical instrument were traditionally used for political and ceremonial communication. Some of the major musical instruments used in Tiv Kwagh-hir are Kakaki; this is an instrument used to convey special messages to the people of the community, such messages as new-born child of the king, the crowning of a new king, and to gather people together. Iiyu a high wooden instrument, was used to pass messages to the people of the village, probably for invitation of the people for a particular meeting of the elders in the king's palace. Others are irigyer, akya, adiguve, gbande.

There are three major words for marriage in Tiv: these are òyamö, òNgohölö and òerö. òYam literally means to buy, However when used in connection with marriage it was purely exchange of daughter or sister with another different family (BD, Iyortyon, (1976).

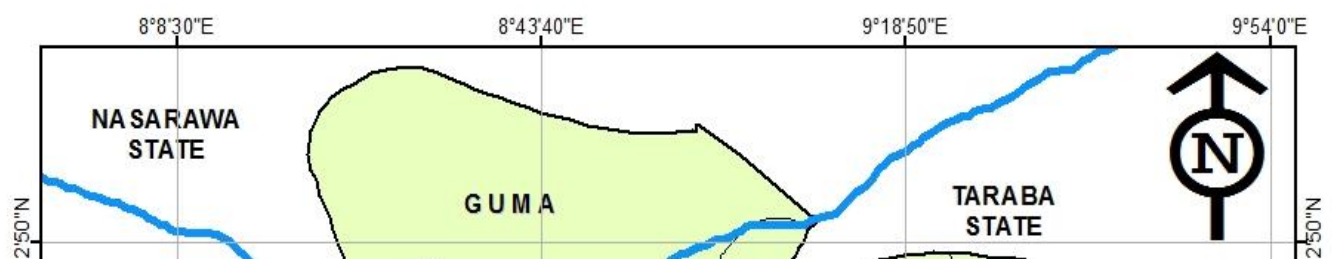


Fig 3: Map of Tiv-speaking area of Benue State.

Er means literally to make, in other words when a person married, it means he had made a wife.

According to Tiv custom, a wife does not take the name of her husband; she

is called by her father's names. It is an honour among the Tiv to call a married woman by the name of her paternal family. If a woman from Mbayion district is married into Gaav district, her husband and the elder in Gaav call her Mbayion or Wan-Mbayion. But, normally young people call her by her first name.

The word for bride price was given not that the girl was being sold away, but it was because the person whose daughter was married did not want the image of her daughter to pass away from her family, therefore, he would use that money to get another one. It was meant to enable a person to get another wife for replacement.

By Tiv arts and culture we refer to the creative art forms of the Tiv people. The art have been part and parcel of the functionality of life and it is a function of the Tiv world. Tiv creativity and artistry is reflected in their huts, the heaps on the farm, the compound settlement, their outer daily rhythms of life and practices.

Before the British took over administration of Tiv land in the early twentieth century, the Tiv had leader who were elected by the people. The first type of such leaders were called kur, this type of leaders had a semi-military character, but did not last long. Akiga (1939). The need for a constitutional leadership became stronger through context with other people. The Tiv appointed Utonmba agbandov the drum chiefs, when the colonial administration took over the control of Tiv land. Some of the Utombaagbandov were district heads, clan heads etc.

The need for a political leader of all Tiv became imperative because of social and political changes within and outside Tiv land. This office was established in 1946, the late Orcivirigh Gongo Makeri Dzakpe was the first Tor Tiv. He was Tor Tiv II from 1956 ó 1979 while Orcivirigh James Akpean Orshi was installed Tor Tiv I on March 21st 1979. Every clan had a clan head, and in every district there is a district head, every district head had regular meetings with his clan head. The Tor Tiv is the Chairman of all the Tiv traditional rulers. He resides at Gboko, a town in the centre of Tiv land.

The election of Tor Tiv is based on two principles:

- i. The office of the Tor Tiv is open to all Tiv people, since chieftaincy is not hereditary among the people.
- ii. The post of Tor Tiv rotates between the descendant of the two sons of Tiv, Ipusu and Icongo.

CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1: Cultural Festivals in the Study Area

Festivals and celebrations among Benue people are marks of the rich cultural heritage of Benue people. These feasts cover the various socio-cultural aspect of life of Benue people, like marriages, seasonal farming yields, fishing, hunting, burial, bestowal of honour and dignity upon individuals or group among others. Some of these festivals are celebrated annually or at interval of some years.

The Alekwu festival is a ritual festival and at the same time functions prominently in the burial of any member of the Alekwu. The burial of the younger ones are not too complicated as those of the older members of the cult. For other younger members masquerades of different type parade round the village indicating that an Alekwu member has died and every other person of the diseased gather for the burial. But certain stages are reached that no female is permitted to remain, even visitors.

When an elderly cult member passes away and is put in the mortuary for a date to be chosen by the family members for the burial. Three days to the burial day, masquerades parade the different corners of the town or village indicating that an elder has passed on. Ekwu-afia is the masquerade that performs the burial rites of such members. The door must be broken by the ekwu-afia of all elders. By this breaking of door implies a curtain is put across the door of the Itakpa house in the

house of the diseased and cut open by the Ekwu-afia. The masquerade recites some incantations. At this juncture, all women and visitors are told to leave so that they can bury their member according to their arrangements.



Plate 1: Ekwu-afia masquerade performing the burial rites of Mr. Ogbe Audu in Otukpo, Benue State.

Even if a man professed to be a Christian while alive, Alekwu must bury him or her if he/she did not give a standing order of that arrangement while alive. The Alekwu is strongly practiced by the Otukpo Idoma more than other Idomas.

The Kwagh-hir is not a ritual festival but for entertainment, educational and corrective in nature.

The Igede Agba is just a memorial festival in appreciation of what God has

done for them.

These festivals are not celebrated in isolation because of the unity that exists among the people. Invitations are given by any tribe that celebrates their festivals. The last Igede Agba celebration was graced by the Governor and his entourage, some Idomas, Tivs, well wishers and tourists. A lot of money was made from gate fees and other things. The researcher was even present in this occasion. During the celebration of the Eja-Alekwu of Otukpo, the Tor Tiv, Senator David Mark, Comrade Abba Moro, Steven Lawani were all present.

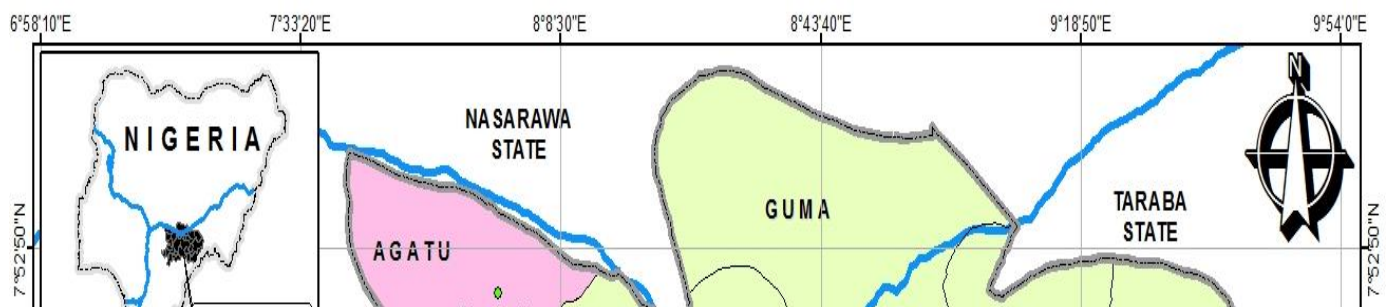


Fig. 4: Map of Benue State using a colour effect to distinguish the three major Tribes i.e. Tiv, Idoma and Igede.

4.2: Eje-Alekwu Festival

We shall consider the key ancestral festival in Idoma land, the Eje-Alekwu festival. As already mentioned, it dominates the cultural and religious activities in the traditional life of Idoma people. The Eje-Alekwu festival in Idoma culture portrays the belief in the spirit of the departed ancestors, which in effect depicts life after death. It is practiced in all districts of Idoma, but the intensity and dimension differ from place to place. Another point to be stressed as regards the place of Eje-Alekwu is that the rituals are basically the same amongst Idoma speaking area of Benue State.

The Eje-Alekwu festival is observed at two different periods of the year. The first is the ritual ceremony is held between the month of May and June. This is known as òAlekwu Ogwaö (rainy season Alekwu). It is a ceremony dedicated to the ancestors for the protection of the community from famine. The ceremony falls normally on special chosen market. The Alekwu-afia masquerade comes out and displays at Ikpoduda (shrine).



Plate 2: Ikpoduada Shrine in Orokam in Ogbadibo LGA Benue State

This festival attracts a lot of ritual (Oha) and sacrifice (Ofidaka) as earlier said. In essence, the ceremony involves the slaughtering of a lot of animals in the Ikpoduda shrine by the most elderly man from each clan. Also balls of pounded yam smeared with palm oil are given to the ancestors (Alekwu).

On the festival day various kinds of food stuff are brought from different houses and gathered under the tree where Alekwu is believed to be originally instituted by their forefathers. All kinds of crops planted on the land (Aje) must be brought to the shrine or grove for offering. When all are brought, the chief priest (Adaje) and all will kneel before Alekwu shrine with their offerings such as goat, fowl, cola nut, pot of Brukutu and palm wine in their hands offering prayers to the (land) Alekwu for the protection against enemy and for good harvest.

The sacrifice is an expression of appreciation to the ancestor for providing the need of community, such as, adequate rainfall, good health and successful harvest. It is a thanksgiving period accompanied by sacrificial victims in form of goat and cocks. These sacrifices are performed together with some food items, cola nut and palm wine to the ancestor in each family. The difference between Alekwu Ono and Alekwu Ogwa is the Alekwu Ogwa is more of a ritual festival than an entertainment form of festival.

Processes in Eje-Alekwu Festival

The analysis of the Eje-alekwu festival as it is celebrated in Idoma land has different processes. The Otukpo Kingdom have their Alekwu also, the Orokam, Otukpa have their Alekwu festival as well, though there are some variations in the Alekwu celebration across the 16 Idoma kingdoms. For the Alekwu of Orokam, the chief priest and his subject would celebrate on a date that will coincide with Afor market day. This date is publicized to the people, this date always fall in March of every year. This is accepted by the congregation of the elders. The message of the set date is subsequently passed to the people through a town crier, his duty is to inform the entire village on the major market day which normally is Ede and Ukwo.



Plate 3: Masquerades Display during Eje-Alekwu Festivals in Nkwo Orokam.

After the announcement those that have the financial capabilities will buy what will be used to appease or make sacrifices to the land òAjeö. It is a time when women will prepare millet for the spiritual wine called òEjeö in preparation for the festival. On the set day nobody is permitted to go to farm or to his or her working place. All sons and daughters are expected to stay at home and appease the land òAjeö. On the day of the Eje-alekwu festival various kinds of food stuff are brought from different houses and gathered under the tree where Alekwu is believed to be planted by their ancestors. All kinds of crop and fruit planted on the land (Aje) must be brought to the shrine for offering. When all are brought, some of the locally brewed wine and palm wine are poured on the land, offering prayers to the land for the protection against enemy, for good harvest, good children and turn away evils and bad epidemic that will invade the land.

As earlier noted, the August/December Eje-alekwu festival is the public manifestation of the people's concept of the festival. The celebration of Eje-alekwu festival as done in Idoma land is distinguished by the nature of their participation and ambition of masquerades at the public outing to the market square. On such days masquerades of different types and colours play in the market square pushing people and some beaten.

Preparation

The first day of the festival usually fall on the Nkwo market day, which is the sacred market day. This day is always preferable in holding the Eje-Alekwu festival, like the Orokam kingdom. Each of the five clans prepares the market for the celebration. Some rituals are made by the Obiokwute/Ada-alekwu and the elders, the members of the community are expected to cleanse themselves, shrine are renewed and when all the spiritual cleansing process are done the celebration of Eje-Alekwu will commence.

Eje-Alekwu Festival Celebration

The most exciting aspect of the festival is the day of the visit to Nkwo Market by the Akatakpa masquerade. Akatakpa Masquerade is believed to represent the living dead; the crowd amidst singing groups accompanies the visit. The festival at this site rouses the environment to beautiful admiration of the occasion. As a consequence, all movements are directed to the market square and out of it this exhibition culminates with series of circular movement within the market area. The appearance of these masquerades is consequently followed by praise and salutation from the spectators. The Akatakpa masquerade comes in such a skillful style, with dancing, back doubles, acrobatics, local magic and song of

praise to Alekwu that is being celebrated. There are different costumes of the Akatakpa masquerade, some are made to look like a handsome young man, some are built like old man, and some to look like a traditional chief.

On the day of the Eje-alekwu festival there are a lot of activities to grace the celebration activities such as local wrestling, dancing competition, flute blowing competition, singing competition, drinking competition etc. The second day of the Eje-alekwu festival takes another dimension. The ceremony takes place at on Eke market day, the Akatakpa masquerade comes out in a flamboyant style to show their beauty and their artistic endowment by dancing in groups and display of magical powers.

Political Impact of Eje-alekwu Festival

The Eje-alekwu festival plays an essential role in maintaining and promoting the Idoma traditional institution and system of administration. In this regard the ancestors play not only a religious and metaphysical role, but also a religious and political role as well. The Ancestral genealogies which are evoked in songs during the Eje-alekwu festival celebration is not only the way of rendering homage, it contributes towards the oral history of the Idoma because during the festival, one of the Alekwu-Afia recites the genealogies of the different lineage, praising in songs of the heroism of earlier ancestors since the time of migration, ultimately the festival acts as a cohesive force which unite the Idoma people politically.

In line with other traditional African institution the elders are taken to the repository of communal wisdom and invaluable regarded as the mouth piece of the ancestors. In this perspective, they are conceded leadership role in the Idoma setup. Supporting this view Davidson (1969, 31) says "legitimate power lay in the office sanctioned by ancestral norms not in the persons and the persons lost his right to exact once he abuses that office".

Their relationships with regard to the festival within family, with clan and so on, are coordinated by their ancestral function of ritual and sacrifice in private and public shrine during Eje-alekwu festival. This function is a source of their recognition as the religious and political leader in this single unit. Evidently, this important role bestows respect to the elder which has practical effect in the stability of custom and tradition.

The ancestors are interested in the continuing coherence of the traditional institution, so that it does not breakup when the ancestors were here on earth. Now even if they are dead, they do not cease to show interest in the general welfare of their descendants. In this regard, the Alekwu system of organization recognizes the elders as a link which coordinates the cultural events and units. This festival brings people of different class together for the purpose of having relationship with the ancestors.

4.3: Igede Agba Festivals

The Igede Agba festival is a new yam festival celebrated among the Igede people of Benue state. It is a three day event that is occasioned by huge celebration. The celebration of Igede Agba (New yam festival) is deeply rooted in this firm belief in patience. Igede Agba celebration marks the beginning of the harvest season. It is celebrated annually on the first *Ihigile* market day in the month of September, hence the date oscillates between the 1st and 5th of September. Yam which is the most prized staple food item in the locality is used as a symbol to mark the celebration. Hence harvesting of new yams before Igede Agba is a taboo. Thereafter new yams can be harvested freely. The ideas behind this culture are numerous. For the Igede man to celebrate Igede Agba, he must have something to celebrate with. He must therefore have his own farm to harvest his yams else he will go begging for food on that day. This is deeply abhorred.

One must learn to conserve and preserve foodstuffs and diversify ones farming else cultivating yams alone may keep you in hunger until the next Igede Agba period. This has taught the people to be good food processors and developed numerous preservation methods for yams (so as to have seedlings for farming in the next season) and other food products. Yam being given the honour of place shows that the Igede man believes in leadership and standards, for it takes a dedicated farmer to have enough yam seedlings for cropping in the next season.



Plate 4: Yam market in Obarike Ito after appeasing the gods

The Igede people trace their ancestry to a particular father called Agba who is the progenitor of all Igede people after whom they name their New yam festival ó Igede Agba which is usually celebrated in appreciation to God for bountiful perennial harvest. Igede people were forced to migrate to their present abode as a result of a communal clash between them and their Ora in Sabon Gida . Ora is in Owan west LGC of Edo State. The Oral tradition had it that an Ora woman had broken the Igede woman's clay pot òOtaö. Unfortunately the Igede woman insisted on having her original clay pot, which of course was impossible. That was how peace eluded the Igede people for a long time as they refuse to forgive this Ora woman.

What started as an innocuous quarrel between two women generated into a

wild camp fire. This misunderstanding eventually led to a communal war between the Igede people and their Ora neighbours. The Ora people who use superior weapons overpowered the Igede people in the warfare that ensued. The Igede travelled night and day until they arrived in Utukenge having stopped over at Edumoga, in Ugbokolo in Idomaland. It was here that Igbabu, Opirikwu, Anyaobe and Ikwura Agba left to settle in Cross River State and other Igede clans travelled to Ipinu, Igede their present abode (Agogo et al, 2013).



Plate 5: Section of Viewers in Igede Agba Celebration in Oju LGA

Igede Agba 2013 was jointly celebrated on the 3rd of September by the Obi

and Oju local government areas at the Oju local government headquarters, Oju. The celebration was attended by dignitaries especially Igede sons and daughters, Benue state Governor Gabriel Suswan and his entourage, tourist from other states and some other parts of the nation and the researcher was there to see things for myself and interview some people in the field.

Igede Agba is not like it was in those pre-colonial days but has undergone a lot of changes. The Igede Agba is celebrated like Christmas except that the food used is yam. Families buy ingredients and clothes for themselves. On the day of the festival, food is cooked and given to friends and relatives and people visit each other with children dressed in the new or old clothes walking from street to street. All of them eventually gather in the headquarter where some dances, masquerades, acrobatics are displayed by different groups even those from other local government areas of Benue State, Okpirigidi from Ogbadibo and Aja from Okpokwu, Kwagh-hir from Katsina were present and given various stands.

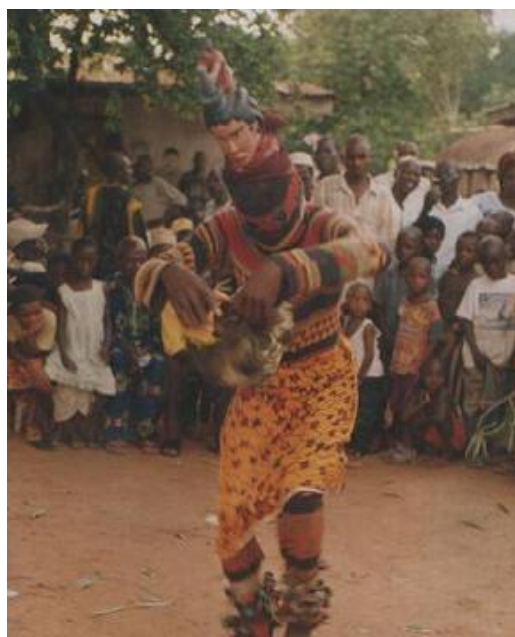


**Plate 6: Masquerades display on 3rd September, 2013 Igede Agba Celebration
The Celebration of Yam.**

During the celebration, awards and honours are bestowed on the farmers who have cultivated the largest farms or have the biggest yams or the most number of yams in their barns. This is a very open, free and fair competition and it helps to stimulate hard work and commitment.

Traditionally, the role of eating the first yam is performed by the oldest man in the community or the king. This man also offers the yams to God, deities and ancestors. It is believed that their position bestows the privilege of being intermediaries between their communities and the gods of the land. The rituals are meant to express the gratitude of the community to the gods for making the harvest

possible and they
despite changes due
Christianity in the



are widely followed
to the influence of
area.

Plate 7: A Typical Igede Masquerade (as used in Igede Agba).

The day is symbolic of enjoyment after the cultivation season, and plenty is shared with friends and well-wishers. A variety of festivities mark the eating of new yam. Folk dances, masquerades, parades, and parties create an experience that some participants characterized as "art". The colorful festival is a spectacle of exhibited joy, thanks, and community display such as Dancers wearing masks that reflect the seasons or other aspects of nature, parade, songs, dancing, and drumming. Because a good yam harvest is important for survival, the people give thanks to the spirits of the earth and sky.

The New Yam Festival is celebrated by gathering, blessing, and then feasting on the new yams. New yams could not be eaten until some was offered to

these deities. Men and women, young and old, looked forward to the New Yam Festival because it begins the season of plenty in the New Year. On the last night before the festival, yams of the old year were all disposed of by those who still had them; the New Year must begin with tasty, fresh yams and not the shriveled and fibrous crop of the previous year. All cooking pots, calabashes and wooden bowls are thoroughly washed, especially the wooden mortar in which yam was pounded. Yam *foo-foo* and vegetable soup was the main food in the celebration. After cooking the new yams, a kind of thanks giving ceremony like libation will be performed before the yams are eaten. 'Libation' here means the act of pouring out indigenous wines and throwing out kola nuts with some cultural incantations. So much of it was cooked that, no matter how heavily the family ate or how many friends and relatives they invited from the neighboring villages, there was always a large quantity of food left over at the end of the day.

Preparation for Igede

Igede Agba is a time of peace, reconciliation and sharing. No one eats alone on Igede Agba day. You must have a friend to visit or one to visit you. Hence as part of the preparations, it is mandatory that the local people clear the foot path between theirs and neighbour's houses. This shows that they are welcome to visit or branch and eat. Exchange of gifts and food is done with enthusiasm and joy. The

Igede man is truly at his best during the Igede Agba period. Young men dig up the yams and women carry them home in baskets on their heads. Everyone is proud of the harvest and wants to be the family with the largest crop. Villagers gather together as the women and young girls prepare the feast, with the yams as prized food. They choose a young boy to carry the best yams to the festival dinner, and another boy follows him beating a drum. Other young people from the village march to the beat of the drum and the sound of a woodwind instrument, and sometimes musket fire. Chiefs, under umbrellas and wearing robes made from the famous, brightly colored Igede tradition, follow the yams, and the young people dance. Other activities include singing, wearing animal masks, etc.



Plate 8: Scene from Igede Agba Celebration.

First Day of Igede Agba

On the first morning of the celebration, families make an altar in honor of

their ancestors, the earth god $\text{OHE}\phi$, and the yam god, Village men go out to the farms to dig up the new yams, and give thanks in the village square. Yams must be carefully dug up as they bruise easily. In their homes the men make an offering to the ancestors of new yam. Some use white chalk, and chicken. The chicken is for slaughter, and the chalk symbolizes purity and well-being. Some of these traditions are changing now, as Christianity becomes stronger in the region. A feast with family, friends and neighbors follows.

Second Day of Igede Agba

On the second day, the villagers gather to watch young men in wrestling contests. In the morning the wrestlers eat roasted yams, which they believe will give them strength, and village elders are chosen as judges. Drums welcome the wrestlers, divided into two teams, into the village square. When a wrestler wins a round, drummers beat their drums again, and young women come into the circle and dance. Eating, drinking, and talking also continue the whole day into the evening. It can be a noisy celebration with gongs, musket fire, calabashes, and flutes as well as the drums.

Third Day of Igede Agba

The third day is rounded up in a chosen local government area headquarters

of two Igede local government areas with invitations to all nooks and corners of the state and country. The rounding up of Igede Agba took place on the 3rd of September, 2013. I was there with Mr. Sunday Ikwue, an Igede man that helped to interpret the language. The Governor of the state Gabriel Suswam and his entourage were there to grace the occasion. The officials of Ministry of tourism were there. Different masquerades from other local government were there, many dancing groups also featured during this festival. Gate fees were collected at a flat rate of ₦500 per guest. The activities finally were rounded up by five O'clock in the evening.

4.4: Kwagh-hir Festival

The people find great value in the kwagh-u-alom narrative and the Kwagh-hir puppet theatre tradition. Both narratives are used to entertain and instruct its immediate audience through metaphoric narration. The kwagh-u-alom narrative provides several metaphors on social and moral issues, famine, poverty, dictatorship, load leadership, selfishness and greed, ill luck and cheating. The culture of the Kwagh-u-alom narrative has both human and supernatural characters or sometime the fable and fairy tales have strictly animal characters.



Plate 9: Tor Tiv on a Horse ride on Kwagh-hir Festival in Gboko

The central objective of the tradition of the Kwagh-u-alom narrative is twofold: to entertain and to educate; essentially the common characters involved are the protagonist Alom or Hare (the cunning schemer) and Anjieke his wife. Unfortunately the Kwagh-u-alom seems to have been relegated to the background with the emergence of television and video technology. This tradition apart from entertainment was designed to instruct the young generation on many societal and cultural issues.

The Tiv society emphasizes on the advantageous presentation of self and artistic performance. The contemporary skilled singer, dancer, story teller or other performer contributes to one's acquisition of social prestige or shagba. The important point being stressed is that the Kwagh-hir theatre offers visual

metaphors for unraveling conflict in Tiv social order. Kwagh-hir is an art form which belongs to the masses. The Tiv masses have used this medium to criticize society, resist oppression, and promote ethnic consciousness and to bring their unseen world to comprehension.

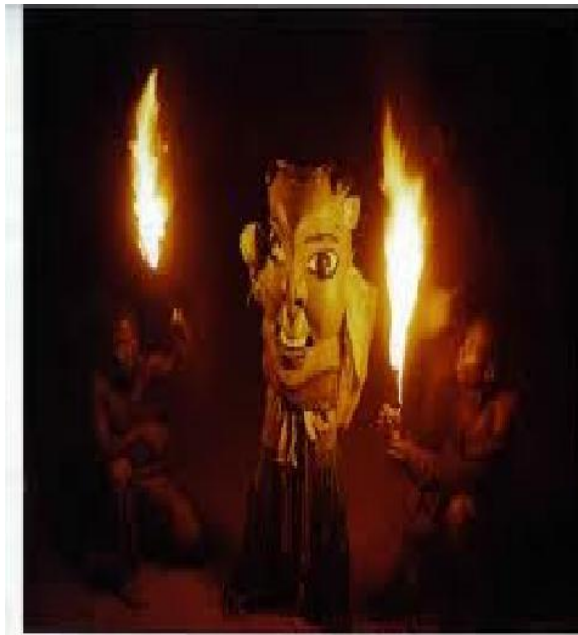


Plate 10: Picture from Kwagh-hir performance (Tiv traditional festival).

The Kwagh-hir puppet theatre derives from storytelling performance of the Tiv people, which is a long-established form of performance, Kwagh-hir means "something wonderful" or a fabulous thing (Kwagh = thing, hir = wonderful). It refers to both storytelling and to the content of the story, this is the inter-section point of Kwagh-u-alom and the Kwagh-hir tradition by the Tiv people. It should be understood that Alom is the trick character in Tiv story who always survives even the direst fate. Culturally in Tiv, there is a saying "A story in which Alom is killed is not numerous" (Alie kwagh alom une alom yo, mayange une hom ga). (Harry HAgher, 1987).



Plate 11: A Snapshot in one of the Kwagh-hir performances in Gboko.

This thriving story telling practice incorporates dressing-up, and an element of disguise. Traditionally the kwagh-hir performance has consistently been organized into four different categories which are, the management, this include the director of the performance; the musician, the performer and the sculptors. There is normally a role that is suitable for different members of the entire community. An elderly man usually tends to be the leader of the kwagh-hir group, in Tiv language this elderly man is called Ter u kwagh-hir meaning father of kwagh-hir. His role is to organize and direct the group and settle any differences or dispute that may arise. Kwagh-hir is a reflection of the way in which the Tiv view the world by incorporating their many superstitious and religious beliefs. The kwagh-hir performance is a mixture of storytelling, poetry, puppetry, music, dances, drama and masquerades.

Contemporary Kwagh-Hir Theatre

As theatrical entertainment, kwagh-hir takes three material forms. The first form comprises carved joint figures about two feet high and manipulated by young men from underneath a mobile plat form (dagbera). The name of these puppet figures, òtom areö meaning work of hands, refers to the manner in which they are animated. There are two kinds of masquerade characters which are about life size

or larger, worn by a man, the ñnyoron vorö (entering the vor) represents one of the adsov, which the nyora nyam (ñentering the animalö) literally ñfleshö are the fabulous animal adzov, the names describe the act required to inhibit and thus to animate the character.

Kwagh-hir performance takes place during the dry season in many villages or family compounds with the resources to form a kwagh-hir group. Aside kinship links; there is no prerequisite for starting or joining a group, other than a commitment of time and energy, an aesthetic sensitivity, originally, and the presence of interested performer. A group may begin with quite simple figures and progress to more complex masquerades.



Plate 12: Contemporary kwagh-hir Theater.

Competitiveness has always been a dimension of Tiv performance, and kwagh-hir is no exception, competitions begin at the inter village level between members of the same kin group. The winner acquires the right to incorporate the loser into his team. In this way, group gets bigger and more varied, developing a greater bank of talent and personnel to draw on for the next stages of competition, big and large sequence of competition between performers. In some years there has been a pan-Tiv kwagh-hir contest with substantial cash prizes and perhaps the chance to travel abroad to international theatre festivals. The decision to perform will be made by the tor kwagh-hir (director) for one of several reasons. The group may want to try out a new masquerade or puppet sketch, or it may be practising for an inter-village or bigger inter-clan competition. Kwagh-hir performance may also be part of a marriage celebration or a political event. In the commemorative funeral ceremony for Ikyon Gungar in January 1994, kwagh-hir formed part of all the night entertainment activities.

The announcement that there is to be a performance is made by blowing the Ramø horn. As darkness fall spectators start gathering and there is a great deal of movement between back stage and the acting area. The Ramø horn continues to be blown. Soon a group of women singers ó who may process formally ó begin the evening entertainment. Throughout the performance, which last for several hours

or even all night, this chorus of women will sing the various songs composed for each of the masquerades during the performances. The area is illuminated by local flaming torches made from slow-burning grasses or from corn cobs dipped into kerosene and held aloft on stick. These torches are also needed to guide the masquerades, even when electric light is used. The man who has the crucial role of operating the torches is called òfire manö (or - Usu). A good or-usu contributes substantially to the entertainment. For example, when a triple masked appears on stage, the usu man performs energetically around it and one point comes close to the spectators attracting attention away from the three masked figure.



Plate 13: Tiv Masquerade.

The historical question persists, what are the antecedents for masked performance among the Tiv and people of the surrounding areas? Some

geographically peripheral use of masquerades by Tiv is recorded by Bohannans (1953:83). The Pitt River Museum holds an Akuma costume acquired in 1929 during the haakaa (õthrow it awayö), a government conducted witch-hunt in which elders, were forced to relinquish their objects of sacred power. It is said to have been used by Tiv. Tiv land around Wukari, the Jukum capital suggests an external origin. Downes further refers to mask associated with Jukum and used by Tiv and he later makes note of a leopard skin or a leopard costume. There is, however, no mention of substantial masquerade traditions in the early literature of Tiv (Akiga 1939) and (Abraham 1933). Although these early writers refer extensively to dancing, singing, poetry and storytelling activities.

It seems, then, that after generations of not utilizing masquerades significantly, the Tiv chose this performance genre as one of the premier form of expressing Tiv collective identity, while at the same time it enabled them to continue to present themselves in a special way: As for the masks themselves, the individual iconography is largely narrative. It constitutes both entertaining and cautionary aspects of kwagh-hir performance. It would be inaccurate to say those kwagh-hir masks are made simply for entertainment. Tiv masquerade brings into visibility the õAdzovö. The beings from the spirit world concealing the presence of the performer; Adzov is the name given to the masquerade of the Tiv people, it is believed that Adzov is symbol of spiritual protector of the Tiv kingdom, from

political and social oppression, its function to harmonize Tiv land, it is associated with political resistance, and its place in kwagh-hir to link Tiv cultural practice to a wider complex of ideas by redefining the Tiv identity. When the Adzov masquerade is worn, its spiritual nature comes into existence. It serves to remind people of the presence of non-human beings who seek to affect peoples' lives.

Another popular masquerade is òFulanö or òFulani manö. This masquerade represents or refers to the conflict between the cattle herding Fulani and the sedentary farming Tiv. This masquerade spells out the fact that the two ethnic groups are in constant conflict as a result of the cows destroying Tiv farm. The costume of the herder is made from a hollowed out tree trunk, which is worn over the head, it encases the body down to the thigh.

The term masquerade can refer to masking performance, a masked performer, or the character embodied by the mask itself. Masquerade is an important mode of the Tiv cultural expressions. A typical Tiv masquerade has admirable human or animal feature. The purpose of masquerades can be for entertainment, to commend achievers, to chastise evil-doers, to bring messages of hope, peace or impending disaster, to mourn the dead or to receive special newborn, or to grace a ceremonial occasion like a festival such as kwagh-hir.

Masked Performance

The question whether to disguise or display is intrinsic to all performance in kwagh-hir festival. To disguise is to change external appearance to such an extent that the original appearance is entirely or significantly obliterated. To display is to exhibit, to enhance deliberately, to show ostentatiously or to expose to view. A masquerade in Africa is most frequently associated with suppressing public acknowledgement of a person inside the masked figure and, as an inevitable consequence of this, suppressing his personal identity. In some instances neither the presence nor the identity of a human carrier is concealed. Tiv performers contextualize masquerades as one of the range of performance forms in which they seek to present the self in a special way.

In so doing, they contain the potential for supernatural domination by the masked character, a perception not easily accommodated within the Tiv belief system. At the same time they retain creative and expressive control over the defining features of disguise and concealment both of which are human techniques of performance. This control distinguishes masquerades from other theatrical form. There is a prior notion of secrecy associated with masquerades in which there is a conceptual disjunction between the performer and the masked figure. This may apply to kwagh-hir.

Kwagh-hir masquerades appear to sustain a tension between concealing the presence of a human wearer during the actual performance and then ó essentially in

particularly successful and popular performance ó seeking ways to reveal their identities before and afterward. They could not otherwise acquire any benefit of being a skilled performer. Such a display of the human agent is in keeping with Tiv ideas of self. Even if the non-human beings (Adzov) can affect lives the central force of power either actualized or potential lies within the living individual. This acknowledgement of the existence of the supernatural power to the person can be concealed, even while control over it needs to be demonstrated.

The Performers

Women have some part to play in a kwagh-hir performance, but not as masked figure (masquerades). The first explanation given for this is that there is much jostling in the preparation (dressing and undressing) and in the performance and men might not like their wives to be involved in these activities as it may lead to trouble with people being accused of touching other men's wives. Another explanation involves the supernatural. The ðevil forestö (Ikyo Mbakur) was out there, and kwagh-hir and its performers are on the edge of it, women are not expected to be in these spaces because their strength is not up to it. The reward of being a good performer are immediate ó young women leave the parental home and follow the best performers, content just to be with them, though this is the most frequently given explanation. A good performer gains respect from the elders

and in turn brings respect to his clan or village. These performers are well skilled in music, comedy, acrobatics, and cross-gender dressing.

Spiritual Attachments

As discussed earlier, Tiv masquerades bring into visibility the *ōAdzovö* the beings from the spirit world while concealing the presence of the performer, Actor balance this requirement with the need to reveal their own identities, this is done in several ways, beginning with a head of performance. The initial processes of selecting a ganger tree from which the *kwagh-hir* can be carved is partly secret but the carving itself is done in the open square: men, women and children can watch figures dry in the sun or stand around outside waiting to be painted or repainted. The construction of this large figure (mask) is undertaken by more than one person; generally the *ōAdzovö* has a spiritual sphere of knowledge and practices. The concept of spirituality is neatly tied to spirits of ancestors. In this sense, ancestor is a living dead according to Mbiti (1982:83). They are referred to as living dead because of their importance and felt interference in the affair of their relative and society. These spirits of ancestors are not only revered as past heroes but are believed to be present watching over the household and directly concerned with the fortunes and misfortunes of their families. They

are believed to be custodians of the laws and customs of the Tiv people. They believe the ðAdzovö is the protective spirit of the Tiv people.

Tiv Religious Culture

The word religion for the Tiv is kwagh-Aondo literally denoting ðsomething of Godö, etymologically coined from two Tiv words of kwagh ó meaning something and Aondo meaning God. Aondo here refers to the ultimate reality, the Supreme Being identified celestially by the Tiv as the ðUSHAö ó above the sky. The practice of Tiv religion includes their pattern of behavior, language, thought and belief system that influences human experiences that may intersect, incorporate or transcend other aspects of Tiv life and society. Tiv religious experience may be expressed in visual symbol, dance at performance, elaborate physical system and legendary.

A religious culture (Tiv religious culture) may be viewed as the spiritualization of the complex experience and physical features of the Tiv people. It connotes the profound sacred and give-inspiring attitudes of the living towards the supernatural reality. All objects and icons of religious culture allow the Tiv to communicate with supernatural beings such as animal spirits, gods and spirits of the dead (ancestors). According to Gbenda (2005:89) ancestors exist in Tiv religious culture and are known as Mbayzabe. They are elders of high moral

rectitude. At death, such elders are incorporated into the community of the unseen world, thus the living elders of Tiv society are said to commune with the living dead at night through the tsav factor, the father claims that the cultic emblem of the ancestor is known as Imborwungu. In Tiv religious culture, the kingship system is organized patrilineally and traced to the ancestral descent is from the male line, the petrilineal kinship is only organized through generational structure for social cohesion and not religious practice.

Witchcraft in Tiv Religion

Those who possess witchcraft substance in Tiv society are called Mbatsav. Their main communal function is for the good of the society, they are expected to perform the rites of revitalizing and protecting the land. If the women and men are to remain fertile and the social order is to remain cohesive, then òtsavö is not anti-social in itself and neither is it intended to be acquired primarily for an individual or groups selfish ends.

The connection between witchcraft and superstition is however, not very clear to Tiv people in their conception. Witches (Mbatsav) have the wisdom and privilege of understanding the immutable truths of the supernaturally governed world. The Mbatsav invariably attempt to grasp the ways superstitious beliefs

operate in human affairs.

Often times, the reason which bring about the use of witchcraft may simply domestic tensions and jealousies that are bound to grow in any closely knit communities. If there is a dispute between neighbours or relatives, one party may want to get rid of the other by means of mystical forces. Superstitiously, it also implies that is something goes wrong following such a dispute and quarreling. Everyone will immediately suspect that the other party through witchcraft caused it.

Sometimes people may wish simply to get others for the fun of it, or to inherit their property or to take revenge for some wrong done to them. There are many superstitious beliefs connected with Tiv witchcraft practice. In Tiv religion, every unusual event most likely is labeled superstitious especially meeting a chameleon on the way, seeing a rabbit at day, or an owl sitting on ones roof at day. This belief can even effect the interior dispositions whose demand is to fall into witchcraft.

Assessing Tiv witchcraft and superstitious behavior concerning fertility Utov and Uba note that the major practice of superstition in Tiv is that of Imboriwungu. The superstitious emblem which looks like a human bone is taken from the arm of a deceased person after examination by the Mbatsav (witches). The Imboriwungu consist of portion of the actual former bone of lower end of the

bone is covered with five strong membrane of the spiders egg capsule, or sometimes a batø with (both of which are firmly fixed in places with gum and this forms a vibrating medium). The rear end of the bone is inserted and firmly fixed into the base of the actual skull of ancestor which is dressed with human hair, said to be that of the ancestors, and decorated with asah-beads.

4.5: Contributions of the Festivals to Tourism Promotion in Benue State

Economic Contribution

The total income of about 11 festivals was just under N15, million. More than 40% (over 5 million) was earned income, including membership fee collected. By 1990, the largest source of earned income was taking as a just over 6 million public funding accounted for just over 40% of income, public funding (about 3 million). Arts Council of Benue State (Hagher, 1990).

Local authorities contributed N2 million which is a total of 13% with 89% of this provided by city and district council, sponsorship in cash and kind amounted to N1.5 million about 10% of total income. While just over 1 million income from charitable trust and individual donation respectively.

Impact on Local Businesses

Lastly the study gathered the views of a selection of local businesses from 11 local festivals. Some of the companies surveyed said that festival provide economic benefits to them as expressed in increase in the number of customer (64%) and in turnover.

However, some businesses indicated that festivals were eleven disruptive (25). A similar result was evidenced by the fact that the percentage of those who replied who did not think of festivals as a source of new business 45% was substantially higher than the percentage of those did (33%).

Nonetheless, at a more general level the Local Business surveyed has a very positive attitude towards festivals. They saw them as:

- a. Good for the town/area and local communities 90% respondent
- b. As making a good contribution to the development of tourism (85%)
- c. Enhancing the image of an area as a place to live (84%).

52% of the companies in the sample have attended the local festival to them but only 33% had attended other festivals interestingly, 67% of local businesses have not been formally approached by a festival with requests for any form of input or support. Therefore this is a key area for development for festivals across the region.

Generating Substantial Wealth and Development

The total of all eleven festivals was almost 18 million in 2012, more than 40% of the income generated was earned income. Total spent was 5 million which may have contributed a further 4 million to community's economy equivalent to 30 full time jobs. Artists' fees were the largest expense, at 50% with considerable new work opportunities being created for local artists. 6 million naira was spent by audiences through local shops and other businesses in the festivals in the host area. The economic impact of spending may have generated a further 5 million to the region equivalent of 213 full time jobs.

Enhancing Local Image and Identity

More than 64% of festival attenders said they felt more positive about the place where the festival was held. This demonstrates that festivals can be an important factor in improving perceptions of places and people.

An estimated 30,000 hours by volunteers (equivalent to 341) days away for each of the festivals demonstrates that many festivals are rooted in the social and cultural life of the host community.

4.6: Potentials of the Festivals

Igede Agba, Eja-Alekwu and Kwagh-hir contribute to tourism development through the following ways;

- Yams produced in different parts
- Tourists themselves and hard currencies
- Masks and costumes, puppets and sculptors of different sizes and shapes
- Different art works of the people
- The farm products as a food basket of nation
- Different palaces of the chiefs
- Local textile and wears

4.7: Harnessing the Potentials of the Festivals

A lot of money was made both by the local host and government from these celebrations and the government of the state have through the ministry of tourism made a lot of roads and bridges that connect the Idoma, Igede and Tiv. Formally these roads were not pliable.

Government and individuals have built a lot of good standard hotels that now house these touristsø friends of Benue State. Money made by the local host during the period of these festivals has improved their standard of living by establishing different businesses in Oju, Obi, Orokam, Katsina-Ala, Gboko etc.

These hotels have given a lot of employment to both indigenes and non-

indigenes of the state. Sales of yams, masks, puppets, souvenirs, sculptures have improved the standard of living of the people and they have all built their own houses and establishes things which provide services to the visitors.

Local host produce and market the cultural wears in different point in the cities Makurdi, Otukpo and Igede, Gboko etc. These festivals are not celebrated for the fun of it but a lot of benefits are made now by people.

Tourist themselves contribute to the potentialities of the festivals. The tourists are from different part of the country. In this last Igede Agba, a man and his wife from USA, Mr./Mrs. Andrews were in the Governors troupe and they went site seeing using the Governor vehicle. During the Alekwu Ono in Orokam, another man from Morocco Sani Aldulahi was at Orokam to see the different types of masquerades, as Orokam is a place close to Obollo with many facilities that cater for the needs of the visitors. So many tourists were in Gboko during the Kwagh-hir festival that took place in Gboko. Many of the tourists bought souvenirs like puppets, masks, leather works and other local art works.

The attraction that attract people to Benue State are Alekwu festival and during the burial of any old members of Alekwu, Kwagh-hir, Igede agba festivals, different beautiful hills in the different location, iron casting furnace in Ibilla Lukpo in Oju LGC, dry season river Benue beach, Enumabia warm spring in Orokam in Ogbadibo LGC, Ikoyogen Cattle ranch in Adikpo in Kwande LGC,

Ikwue holiday resort along Otukpo Makurdi road and a host of others.

These attractions are not just left undeveloped but the government, host communities and other lovers of tourism are helping to transform them into habitable locations. The Ikwe wild life park was developed to compliment the Makurdi zoological gardens and houses a conference hall, comfortable houses to accommodate guests with good water supply and other amenities. A lot of stadia are built in different local governments for the display of the various festivals. The state government has built several hotels to house these visitors and even individuals like Bongos Ikwue have built some luxurious hotels. There are banks, hospitals, computer centres, shops, saloon (barbing and hair dressing).

The tourism industry is bringing a lot of resources to the state government and the government is using the money to develop a good road network that connects these tourism centres. Most of the bridges are developed. Some of these tourists use their personal cars, public transport and government sponsored transports like Benue links that ply all corners of the state.

Kwagh-hir offers entertainment to 30 million television viewers. It is also performed live in 19 states in Nigeria and has toured Burkina-Faso, Morocco, Ivory Coast, Mauritania and Niger Republic.

Kwagh-hir featured in the first World puppetry festival in Washington DC through its film by Peggytharper and Frank Speed. It also featured in London at the

second World Puppetry festival in 1984 (Harry H. Hagha 1981).

4.8: Development agenda of Benue State and Tourism

Over the years, especially in developing economies of the world, delivery of public service has been a challenging task to successive government. In fact, it is common to find the citizens decrying the deplorable state of public utilities, amenities and services that have been allowed to degenerate into a state of comma, at best of public service facilities are privatized thus making their affordability out of the way of the common citizens.

The Benue State ministry of tourism and industry however has come up with some developmental policies that can help in building a sustainable tourism sector in Benue State. The organization has been detached from the civil service and granted autonomy in all its operations including employment, remuneration, modus operandi, discipline and reward etc. In Benue today the BIRS prides itself as the highest paying public service job and staff of the organization are the envy of all. This autonomy acquired under the leadership of the Executive Chairman has enabled the service to operate better as a financial institution providing maximally the needed base for Socio-political and Economic Advancement of the state. The BIRS have been able to provide financial information on the economic contribution of tourism to Benue state in general.

Transformative Strategy

As part of the development strategy by the State Government, the Commissioner of Tourism and Industry Benue State has been given unflinching financial support to enable the local communities achieve its objective; this will go along way to enhance tourism development in the state. It is expedient to note that tourism has considerable contribution to the income of Benue State and the State cannot afford to underestimate or even neglect the fact that Benue State as the food basket of the Nation should be made very attractive for tourist, hotels, park, game reserve should be built to bust tourism development in Benue State.

Media Partnership

Aside the media consultant engage the service regularly and organized interaction force with the media houses and out fits in the state. There is a guided tour organized for journalist where they are shown project being executed by government with the revenue generated; operations are usually fielded at such occasions and the help enlighten the public on areas of interest and concern. The media workers too are herein appreciated for their collaborative efforts in the public enlightenment campaign.

Employment

The challenge of unemployment bites harder now that the global economic downturn has resulted into far reaching effects. Even in the developed economies, people have lost jobs or have been rendered redundant, still the demand for jobs have not ceased just as man power training, institutions also turn out qualified personnel regularly and in large number where employment is not found and the environment is not supportive of self employment initiative. The unemployed turn to criminal practices that do nobody any good. And this is the area which the Ministry of Tourism is looking at to empower the youths through participating in local festival, to be self employed, local festival has become a tool that can generate a considerable income to the state which can absorb about 216 unemployed youths across the state.

Training and Capacity Building

In a bid to enhance efficiency on the job, the Ministry of Tourism and industry has sponsored several workshops and capacity building training for old and youth on the importance of local festival. This workshop boards on the importance of local festival to the local communities and how these festivals have contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of the state.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1: Summary

The exploration of the fundamental principles of traditional festival guides some aspects of the African tradition, culture and Ethics as it exist in Tiv, Idoma and Igede culture. This reveals the effect of social religious change on the people of Benue state.

The critical evaluation of the values of traditional festival, reveal that the sense of rituals, sacrifices and cultural formations during traditional festival celebration carries along with it a link of present and past symbols which include the contemporary Tiv, Idoma and Igede society and the departed ancestors through traditional, dance, ritual, customs attached to these ceremonies, the social link and

unity of the entire people is captured in communal rituals sacrifices with the ancestors who are honoured.

Traditional festivals are communal celebrations involving carefully planned programmes outpouring of respect, rejoicing or high revelry, established by custom or sponsored by various cultural groups or organizations. In another view traditional festival mark special occasions in which a community gather annually to remember, honor and give thanks to God, the gods and the ancestors for their help and protection. This definition therefore agrees with Nukunya's argument that traditional festivals are associated with planting and harvesting of which protection and good yield for the season, are solicited from the gods.

Contemporarily, the celebration of festivals goes beyond the preservation and maintenance of tradition to create a platform or an opportunity when communities invite and engage dialogue with duty bearers through advocacy for development projects. Besides, traditional authorities also use these forums to account to their people and also evaluate service providers on what they have been doing and what have been done so far in their communities. The outputs of these festivals eventually culminate into action plans with assigned roles and responsibility to various stakeholders in the community.

The role of traditional festivals in community development cannot be overemphasized because it plays a huge role (traditional and contemporary roles)

in development. Drumming, dancing, art, songs, belief systems, values norms and practices are vital components of culture that need to be preserved and maintain these cultures. Hence community elders and headers use these fora to enhance the perpetuation of values and belief systems and also pass on folklores to the younger generation.

Through various traditional festivals, communal solidarity in traditional belief and practice are strengthened. The loyalty to and support ones brothers and sisters are intensified. In this light there is no room for the isolation of individual from their traditional family. This in effect fosters kinship solidarity even for those living in distant locations.

5.2: Conclusion

Several African authors like Ilogu, Kalu, Iwe, Metuh, Ifesiah, Ejizu, Ekwunife, Lawasa among others have mentioned the reality that Africans have traditional values inherited from their fore fathers. In the case under study alien structures have been alienated by the imposition of foreign structures. The traditional roles of festivals which include to preserve and maintain culture, remember, honor and give thanks to God, the gods and the ancestors for their help and protection is increasingly been influenced by governmental policies and programs that call for community self development. Therefore communities have

resorted to the use of various strategies for self development initiative in their traditional areas.

Prominently, traditional festivals are been used all over Benue state as platform to plan and advocate for developmental projects and programs. These festivals (Kwagh-hir, Igede Agba and Eje-Alekwu) bring together decentralize departments of the distinct assembly, NGOs, politicians and relevant development issues are made bare for consideration. The effort to use traditional festivals as platforms for development still leave much to desire traditional festivals are still breeding grounds for chieftaincy disputes and political talk. We therefore need to consider seriously using traditional festivals as the most participatory forms of engaging with duty beares devoid of political ambitions and chieftaincy disputes.

The fact is that cultural contact exposes people to both positive and negative experiences. For instance in the past people were made to feel ashamed of their culture, especially with the elites who were made to accept alien values and ways of life. However, today all over Africa especially in Nigeria in various cultures areas in Benue state.

General argument exist that the most ancient traditional festival were associated with planting and harvesting or with honoring the ancestors; in another view traditional festivals mark special occasions in which a community gather

together annually to remember, honor and give thanks to God the gods and the ancestor for their help and protection.

In Africa, there abound several reasons to dancing as well as different modes, forms, contents and context for people to engage in dance. Among these in traditional festivals are dances that are reserved and ritually inclined forms for healing, prosperity, fruit of the womb, which further lightens their direct/indirect connectivity with the spirit an gods Akunna (2008: 1) casts an allusion on the potency of dance in African context. This work therefore observed in traditional festivals that active participation /spectators, through dance, and who are sensitive to the prevailing moods during festivals could secure the sympathy of the supernatural forces and in the process, meaningful changes may occur.

Conclusively, traditional festivals have been considered an integral part of African live, existence and its being creatively and meaningfully explored in various celebrated traditional festivals in Africans societies.

5.3: Recommendation

As said earlier on, the celebration of traditional festivals marks the occasion where all sons and daughters within and without come home to rejoice and discuss developmental issues in the area. These festivals bring together departments, district, assembly, NGOs, G.O, politicians and relevant organization.

Traditional festivals in Benue state have become a platform to showcase the local people's life style, custom and tradition, and also help in improving the economy of the indigenous people, thus, I therefore make the following recommendations

- ❖ The Government, NGOs and other organizations should form a synergy with the local community to plan and organize an international standard traditional festival which will attract more international tourist to the local places.
- ❖ The Government should incorporate traditional festival into its budget, special allocation should be given for organizing local festival in Benue state to make traditional festivals world class event.
- ❖ The sons and daughters of Tiv, Idoma and Igede communities should make considerable contribution towards the planning, organizing and financing of traditional festivals in order to achieve overwhelming success of local festivals
- ❖ The local people should work with the media house to advertise traditional festival
- ❖ The government should make accessible roads to rural areas and build standard hotels to help the local people host tourist.

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