

**CYBERNETTING NETWORK OF IGALA CULTURAL NETWORKS: COMMUNICATING
POSITIVE ELEMENTS OF IGALA CULTURE.**

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ABSTRACT

This paper uses the social responsibility and agenda setting theories to study how positive elements of Igala culture can effectively be communicated for the growth of society using available primary and secondary data as well as interviews. It is believed that this work, if well appreciated will no doubt resurrect the ailing Igala cultural system.

This work attempts, also, to suggest digitization of Igala cultural networks and mechanisms for modern cultural relevance and transmission.

KEYWORDS:

Cybernetting (My coinage), Networks, Igala Cultural Networks.

INTRODUCTION:

There are as many definitions of culture as there are scholars on the same topic Shaibu (2021), Crampton (1976), Okwute (1973), Omale (2001), Miachi (1989) et al showcase diverse definitions, and for the purpose of this work, the researcher will like to see culture as the aggregate of the positive elements of a race for the growth of society. This includes the language, the dance, the songs, the proverbs, the wise sayings, the marriage, the farming or occupation, the eating and drinking habits, the norms, the mores, folkways and the way they live , give names to their living and non-living elements and the way they die and are buried as well as relationship with the dead.

E. B Taylor (1958) stated that culture is a complete design of a people for living. To him he broke culture into material and non-material forms i.e. the ones you can see and the ones you cannot see. This is corroborated by Odoma in an interview at Bingham University in June 2021.

From all these we can say that culture is either the conglomeration or aggregate of man's way of life.

Dr. Odoma on this interview stated that culture is characterized by,

- Learnt cultures through socialization
- Culture is not static but dynamic
- Culture is symbolic
- Culture is integrative not static

The Igalas are the 9th largest tribe of the 250 ethnic communities in Nigeria residing in Kogi State, south of the confluence of River Niger. The Igala Kingdom, one of the oldest in Nigeria, played prominent roles in the amalgamation and subsequent treaties in Nigeria during the colonial period. These were captured by works of T. A Miachi (2012), Samson Opaluwa (2021) and others.

Also the 2021 judgement at Lokoja High Court that put the Attah as a pivotal figure that signed the agreements that made Nigeria a reality, and also made Lokoja the then Capital of the Federated Nigeria affirm this assertion.

The horizon of communication from the rudimentaries i.e. interpersonal, to town criers or village announcers, smoke screens, drummings, songs, funerals, dirges, proverbs, wise sayings, sports (just to mention a few) to “Oko, Ane Igala” (Igala Indigenous Community Newspaper) to “Radio Ochaja” Igala foremost radio station that broadcast solely in Igala language, to NTA’s Community Television channels in Igalaland as well as very many new social media platforms in Igala land for Igala people and for the promotion of Igala cultures are all to;

- Inform,
- Educate,
- Entertain,
- And promote the culture of the Igala people/nation.

All these notwithstanding the role of Christianity and Islam in doing debilitating damages to the death and growths of some aspects of Igala culture must be noted. Igala traditional wedding, dance, songs, marriage ceremonies, funerals, namings, markings etc. have greatly been affected by the coming of Christianity and Islam into this mono ethnic race that has accommodated the Egbiras, Kakandas, Nupes, Bassanges and Bassa Komos sub-tribes in the kingdom. The Igalas exhibit greatly Ali Mazui’s “triple heritage” of effectively projection traditional values, as well as Christian and Muslim values to a very accommodating level to the point that today we have Igala Christians bearing Alhaji, Mohammed, Shehu, Usman while their Muslim and animist traditional worshippers bear Peter, Solo, Moses, Ezekiel etc. and they have lived together as it was in the beginning and today without religious crises. Infact in a family, one can see conglomeration of Christians, Muslims, and Animists or traditional worshippers living mutually together without acrimony. All these too have been documented by scholars such as Ukwede (1987), Miachi (2012), Okwoli, Opaluwa et al.

One of the interesting aspects of Igala Cultural Network that deserves exportation via local and international networks include Igala songs. These songs, today can be in Igala, English and for Igala Christians, Muslims and Animists or traditional religious practitioners.

Igala songs overtime have been created, captured and documented for posterity by the following;

1. Paul Odi in his “Ugwolo/ Agale” songs.
2. Ikani Ajabiti and his “Igba” songs.
3. Audu Inachalu and his “Ugwolo” songs.
4. Rekiya Odinenwu and her “Olele” songs.
5. Yahaya Ogbogodo and his “Ugwolo” songs.
6. Hajia Zanabu Anwere and her “Olele” songs.
7. Inana Edibo and her “Olele” songs.
8. Elijah Abalaka and Igala gospel songs.
9. Eke Emele and her “Olele” songs.
10. Emmanuel & Victoria Ajeka and their gospel songs.
11. Joseph Abah and his “Ibele” songs.
12. Omonu Abigail and her Igala gospel songs.
13. Joseph Abu and his “Alo” song.
14. “Agale” songs by Sundry artistes.
15. Ugwolo songs by Sundry artistes.
16. Idachaba Omalometu and his “Ibele” songs.
17. Iyoma Akpelu and her “Iyoye” songs.
18. Idrisu Egbe Ibi and his “Alo” songs.
19. Imana Edibo and her “Olele” songs.
20. Ikaka Odogomu and her “Olele” songs.
21. Ichabada songs by Sundry artistes.
22. Iya Ichekpa songs by Sundry artistes.
23. Idologo songs by Sundry artistes.

24. "Ichasala" songs by Sundry artistes.
25. Aminetu Ejiga and her "Iyoye" songs.
26. Amodu Ochimana and his "Iyoye" songs.
27. Ujaabegu Oma Ako and his "Ibele" songs.
28. Etc.

Igala tribe is guided by diverse philosophies and ideologies.

Odekina (2014) catalogued this under a topic titled Igala ideologies "that directly or indirectly influences, guided or shaped" the essence of Igala being and existence.

A sampler of a few that include positive and negative ideologies include;

1.	"Ejumi, ejumi onwu chogwu eju"	Caution of the eye, is the protection of the eye. That means treading softly in all things.
2.	"Atakpa nyaja kia munwa enyo"	He who goes to market early secures a good placement for himself meaning, making hay while the sun shines.
3.	"Onu noja takoja nonu"	That provides power check between the ruler and his subjects.
4.	"Unaju ule kia kpule chi"	Rapidity hinders movement
5.	"Enwu kajuwe majeni, Efu fia tuka"	What the chicken cannot eat, it scatters.
6.	"Ajuwe fufu kia dolanwu nwobochi"	The white chicken which exposes itself to the native doctor.

Another area that captivates, non-initiates of Igala culture is Igala captivating dance(s) that cannot be easily captured by ordinary cameras, except the high definition ones, because of the quick, electrifying and rapid movements of the dance steps.

Igala dance that is very electrifying and cannot be easily captured by slow cameras include the following;

1. "Ogba" dance.
2. "Anukikpo" dance.
3. "Ichabada" dance.
4. "Olele" dance.
5. "Iyoye" dance.
6. "Iyogu" dance.
7. "Otachi" dance.
8. "Obutu" dance.
9. "Olagenyi" dance.
10. "Echooga" dance.

Igala as a tribe has her primary socialization rooted in Igala wise sayings that are transferred or bequeathed from one generation to the other.

These wise sayings via "Akpo, Ita, Ohiala, or Ohiaka" are deep and they form the primary source of early childhood socialization and early upbringing. Some are negative while some others are very positive for early socialization. The negative ones rooted in diabolical wickedness can be de-emphasized for the positive ones that are for progress and development of Igalaland. There is a deluge of them that this work cannot accommodate. Take a look at these few samples:

- "Ema takpa mojin, ifemu ..." which means 'If you are not early or wise enough, to catch a thief, the thief will incriminate you'.

- “Anagbo akola, Ito awalu” which means ‘What an elder sees sitting down, even if a child climbs to the top of the tallest palm tree, he or she may not see it’.
- “Ibe ejo, defe ejo” which means ‘All lizards lie prostrate on the ground but no one can tell, the one with belly ache’.
- Etc.

The question is how have all these been passed down from generation to generation?

Sundry Studies have indicated the following;

- By words of mouths, stories, etc.
- By documentation in Attah’s palace.
- By “Oko Ane Igala”
- By radio.
- By television.
- By the new social media.
- By festivals called “Italos”

And the communication for consolidation of Igala culture continues even up to date. The author believes that through this cybernetting formula (his own coinage) all these can digitally be upgraded and communicate to generations today, tomorrow and those yet to be born. This recommendation is rooted in new socialization, mobilization and re-conscientization not only to Igalas at home but to Igalas in diaspora... so that their children will not be liminal animals that are neither birds nor bats or neither Igala nor other tribes.

CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are indications that many tribes will soon go extinct because of the loss in their language, songs, proverbs, dance, eating habits, marriage rites, greeting habits etc. this indication is affirmed by different UNESCO studies.

To mitigate these tragic occurrences occasioned by the vagaries and debilitating influence of Christianity, Islam and change, the Igala Nation must note and do something about the following and many more;

1. Cultural re-orientation.
2. Cultural Mobilization.
3. Cultural re-education.
4. Fix cultural studies in their schools, colleges and universities.
5. Ensure language inculcation into the psyche of their children and children’s children especially before or during early/ primary socialization.
6. Begin Igala language studies in their schools, colleges and universities.
7. Promote culture by giving Igala names to their children and children’s children with a view of pushing language neo-colonialism imposed on the culture by Christianity, Islam and western education as a way to avert further damage to Igala culture.
8. Use community newspapers, radio, television, schools and new social media under their control to promote Igala culture etc.
9. Put Igala cultural studies in the curricula of some programmes in tertiary institutions in Igalaland.
10. Network Igala cultural networks via internet and other New Social Media platforms for education, information, entertainment and promotion of Igala culture to Igalas at home and at diaspora.
11. Etc.

This study has laid the basis for not only Igala culture but other cultures in Nigeria to take preemptive measures against UNESCO dread alarm on the imminent death of some cultures/ languages for one reason or the other.

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INTERVIEWS:

- (i) Dr. Achema Foundation in development, Igalá Students association before his demise.
- (ii) Dr. Odoma Samuel. Dept of Sociology, Bingham University Karu, Nasarawa state, 30th June, 2021.
- (iii) In the Federal Court of Nigeria, in the Lokoja judicial division, Holden at Lokoja on Tuesday the 2nd day of June 2020, Before His Lordship, Hon Justice D. U. Okonowo, Judge Suit No. FHC/LKJ/CS/43/2017, between;
 1. Attah Igalá, His Royal Majesty,
 2. Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni
(Plaintiffs)

And

1. Attorney-General of the Federation
2. Attorney General of Kogi State
(Defendants)