

PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY OF IBUSA

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by **EMMANUEL EBUKA AJUFO** in the Department Of History and International Studies University Of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

PROF. J.I. OSAGIE
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DATE

DATE

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty God for his guidance throughout my time in school most especially during the period of this research work; and for his blessings and love upon me and also to my late father, Christopher Anyaobi Ajufo.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Acknowledgments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Table of Contents	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vii
CHAPTER ONE: Background to the Study								
Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Aim and Objective	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Scope of the study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Methodology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Literature Review	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Chapterization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Endnotes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
CHAPTER TWO: Tradition of Origin Of Ibusa								
Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Nri Movement (9 th A.D. Century to 1911)-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Edini Migration and Settlement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Isu movement (AD 15 th – 16 th century)-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Umejei’s Settlement and Migration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Origin and Etymology of the Name-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Endnotes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
CHAPTER THREE: Political Institution in Pre-Colonial Ibusa								
Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24

Gerontocracy in Ibusa as System of Governance-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26
Monarchy in Ibusa-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
Administrative Structure in Ibusa-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
Political Groupings/Organization in Pre-colonial Ibusa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
Endnotes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
CHAPTER FOUR: Social Activities in Pre-Colonial Ibusa								
Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36
Religion of Ibusa-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37
Marriage Institutions in Ibusa-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39
Birth and Naming Ceremonies in Ibusa-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44
Death-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
Burials-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
Festivals in Ibusa-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
Endnotes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51
CHAPTER FIVE: Economic Activities in Pre-Colonial Ibusa								
Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54
Agriculture in Ibusa-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	55
Farming Techniques-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	57
Farming Seasons	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
Industries in Pre-colonial Ibusa-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	59
Trade-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	63

Conclusion-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71
Endnotes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	73
CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion									
Conclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76
Bibliography	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	81

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This research work focuses and seeks to achieve the goal of explaining and analyzing the pre-colonial past of the Ibusa community since its foundation. Even though much attempts have not been made to give a vivid and clear-cut description of the rich culture of these distinct Igbo group, it is evident that the Ibusa community had an organized pattern and way of doing things before their interactions and colonial dominations by the Europeans.

Ibusa as an Igbo community in Delta State was born out of some certain migrations that took place several years as far back as 1450. These movements formed the present day Anioma group as identified by Onuejeogwu who was supported by Egwu.¹ Ibusa is a classic example of bipartite social structure formed by two different settlement histories occurring at fairly close intervals. Ibusa thus is a federation of two autonomous communities that have different origins.² It is a town situated between the Igbo and Edo. It is also a town lying in the midst of people claiming to have both Igbo and Edo blood in them. This is the situation Ibusa, a town now situated in today's Delta State; south-southern part of the country has found itself geographically.³ Ibusa community enjoys strategic location as it is physically situated around several other

important communities that surround it. It is one of the most contagious communities connecting it. With its geographical location in Delta State, South-South geo-political zone, it is bounded to the North by Okpanam; to the West by Ogwashi-Uku and Ewulu; to the South, it is bounded by Asaba, Okwe and Oko; and to the East by Abala-Unor. It also lies close to other important towns and communities such as Issele-Azagba , Ubulu-Uku, Ubulu-Okiti and Akwukwu-Igbo, which is the headquarters of Oshimili North Local Government Area.⁴

The people of Ibusa speak Enuani dialect which is Igbo and are known to belong to the proud Anioma family.⁵This dialect is characteristics of the specific Aniocha and Oshimili groups of the Anioma people inhabiting the area. It is a dialect rich in expressions and condensed memorable sayings that personify facts of past important experiences.⁶

With various events that have happened since its inception in 1450, it would be important to take a closer look at the admirable and practical ways the people of Ibusa conducted their affairs due to the fact that these events have shaped and contributed to the development of other communities before colonization.

Popular theories have been put forward, trying to drive a narrative that Igbo groups were stateless and had no specific origin and tradition before the encountering of

colonialists. These theories however, can only be countered by the dependence of historical evidences and research which is the aim of this project's examination.

Among migrations that formed various Anioma group settlement, the Nri migration that occurred from A.D 9TH Century up to 1911 and the Isu historical movement of the A.D 15th century led to the foundation of Ibusa. This gives reason why Igbo scholars hold Ibusa to be the first Igbo settlement in the West of River Niger.⁷ Having stated this, mention must be made of the Anioma Region being a heterogeneous society with its people tracing their origins from different ethnic groups of the country. However, they were later synced into a people of homogeneity by culture and language.⁸

The Pre-colonial history of Ibusa will be incomplete without examining the political institutions and political scenes that were in place before colonialism such as the democratic gerontocracy that was practiced and the borrowed monarchial system of government which was borrowed from the Benin culture. Also, the social activities and cultural practices such as New Yam festivals, marriage celebrations, death and funeral rituals and birth ceremonies make up the history of the distinct Igbo community living across the Niger. They were however sustained economically through farming, hunting and trade with their outside neighbors.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research work is to examine the pre-colonial history, socio-political and economic activities of the Ibusa community.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

To examine the pre-colonial traditions of origin of Ibusa

To examine the political system and institutions in pre-colonial times

To examine the social activities in pre-colonial Ibusa

To examine the Economic activities of Ibusa.

Scope of Study

The scope of this research work covers the origin of Ibusa up to the period before colonial rule in Ibusa. It spans from 1450- 1910. The scope is however will attempt to cover the political institutions that were in place, social activities such as Yam festivals, funerals, marriage etc. and Economic activities such as trade, farming and hunting.

Methodology

This project will adopt the historical method in its data collection and data analysis. For data collection, although this research work will adopt both primary and secondary sources of data collection, this work will rely on both primary and secondary

sources of data collection. For primary sources, oral interviews will be conducted with historians, academicians and indigenous people or persons who have vast knowledge about Ibusa. While for secondary sources, books, journals, articles, online publication and unpublished works will be employed. Sourcing for materials will require frequent visits to Libraries for consultations.

Literature Review

The pre-colonial history of Ibusa has been a topic that most scholars and academicians have not been able to extensively work on which makes this research work important. However some have made attempts in documenting its history. A number of materials have been compiled to show the history of Ibusa and its people's conduct and affairs, yet these materials have failed to fill in some gaps which this research work aims to close, as none of them has been able to fully treat and examine the pre-colonial history, socio-political, and Economic activities of Ibusa. Some of these existing relevant literatures are reviewed below.

Emeka Esogbue's in his book entitled, *A study of the Origins and Migrations of Anioma Settlements*.⁹ This book gives a detailed examination and analysis of various migrations that led to the foundation of Anioma settlements.¹⁰ It also provides historical information of the Origins of the Anioma people, the migration patterns and the various

settlements that led to the existence of Ibusa. Despite that, it differs from this research work as it focuses on Anioma settlements and not Ibusa in particular.

Don C. Ohadike's in his book entitled, *A Social History of Western Igbo People*,¹¹ assess the pre-colonial history and existence of Western Igbo people. It is aim which it sought to achieve was to illustrate how the Igbos functioned in the pre-colonial periods and how their settlements grew from a few individuals to tens of thousands of people. It also dealt with how the Anioma people related with outside neighbors and their integration. This is relevant as certain socio-cultural activities of Ibusa could be drawn from this source. It also gives a brief account of the origin of Ibusa.

.... Early the next morning, before the first crow of the cock, the party set out for the unknown. They headed west, but soon after crossing the Niger River, the pots of travellers fell, one after the other, and each brother cleared the bush and built his settlement as he has been instructed. It was at Omeze in the present-day Igbuzo that Onuoha's pot fell. Here Umejei, together with his sister and her husband, founded the nucleus of the town that became known as Igbuzo¹²

Elizabeth Isichei in her article entitled, "Historical Change in Igbo Polity",¹³ accounts for Asaba's traditional, social and political structure and it is former role in the economic life of the lower Niger.¹⁴ She states that : "There were in Asaba, three main kinds of political authority, all of which were wide spread in Ibo land. The authority of the family head, Diokpa (equivalent to the Okpala elsewhere) over the extended family, the authority of the governing age-group, Oturaze, over the whole town, the limited and

specific duties and the personal prestige of individuals holding particular titles".¹⁵ Though this article doesn't focus on Ibusa town, but it is evidently noted that the political system of pre-colonial Ibusa was adopted from Asaba which the journal attempted to bring to light. It further shed a bit of light on the economic activities of towns and communities in the lower Niger; "Traders from Brass and other coastal states brought European goods to Aboh, at the apex of the Delta where they exchanged originally for slaves, and later for Palm oil".¹⁶

Emeka Esogbue in his book entitled, *History of Ibusa*,¹⁷ renders highly informative account of Ibusa's past. It also gives insight into a recognizable patterns of the community's political and cultural evolution. In light of this, the book explores contemporary efforts to sustain this past efforts that are invested in the continuities of collective action to memorialize and historize the community.¹⁸ The attempt of this book is to sketch Ibusa's past as an important instrument of negotiating her into the social and economic politics of Nigeria's complex nationhood"¹⁹. However this book provides little or no information about the pre-colonial socio-economic life of Ibusa before colonialism. It dives straight into socio-economic development of Ibusa in recent times.

Olufemi Ekundare in his book entitled, *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1990*,²⁰ presented a systematic account of the economic History of Nigeria. It explains the various economic activities that sustain the various tribes ethnic groups in Nigeria and how it further brought about relations among them pre-colonially and their involvement

with the Europeans. It illuminates the successful sustenance of the living standard of Anioma people before the British administration in Nigeria. He asserts that: "Before the advent of British administration in Nigeria, a few European explorer visited the country and recorded their personal judgements about the economic and Social conditions of the people"²¹

Dan Olisa (Okwuchi) Dieyi in his book entitled, *The Realities and Values and Anioma Identity*,²² attempts to provide vital information on Delta Anioma culture and also educate , encourage and gear indigenous researchers into decisive action to uphold and embrace the customs and traditions of Anioma. It goes further to cover both the material and immaterial aspects of Anioma Customs and traditions whose percepts are binding.²³ It contributes to this research work by giving accounts of Early Igbo influence around Enuani where Ibusa can be traced to have been founded. According to Dieye "It is therefore evident that during the acculturation process, many communities were founded by the Igbo immigrants without mixed ethnic elements, some by mixed Igbo and Edo origins"²⁴

From the above, it is obvious that none of the existing literature has treated the precolonial history of Ibusa and so this project is an attempt to fill the existing gap in the history of Ibusa

Chapterization

To ensure that the aim and objectives of this research work is achieved, this project is divided into five chapters.

Chapter One: Background to the Study

This is the foundation to the entire research work. It contains the introduction, aim and objectives, scope of study, methodology and literature review. Etc.

Chapter Two: Tradition and Origin of Ibusa

This Chapter is to examine the foundation, tradition of origin of Ibusa as a community. Which involved migrations and settlements from Anioma region.

Chapter Three: Political Institutions in Pre-colonial Ibusa

This Chapter examines and analyzes the structure of the pre-colonial political institutions in Ibusa. Such as the system of government, administrative duties were being carried out and hierarchical structure during the pre-colonial era.

Chapter Four: Social-cultural Activities in pre-colonial Ibusa

This Chapter examines here is to have a look at the way the people of Ibusa conducted their social affairs such as marriages, religion, birth and death burials and

funerals , taboos and beliefs, as well as their social relationship with their neighbors and other parts of Nigeria.

Chapter Five: Economic Activities in Pre-colonial Ibusa

This chapter examines the economic activities that were practiced such as agriculture, hunting and trade in pre-colonial Ibusa. It also seems to examine how these activities sustained them economically and how they conducted trade relations with other groups and communities.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This presents the conclusion to this study. It consists of a summary of the study, and some observations on the study.

Endnotes

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12. *Ibid.*, p.28
13. E. Isichei, "Historical Change in an Ibo polity: Asaba to 1885", *Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No.3., 1969, pp.421-438
14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. E. Esogbue , *The History of Ibusa.*
18. *Ibid.*, p.17
19. *Ibid.*, pp,17-18
20. R. Ekundare, *An Economic History of Nigeria*, London: Richard Clay, The Chaucer Press Limited, 1973.
21. *Ibid.*, p.21
22. D. Dieye, *The Realities and Values of Anioma Identity*, Lagos: Danfejim International Company, 2001.
23. *Ibid.*, p.2,3
24. *Ibid.*, p.20

CHAPTER TWO

TRADITION OF ORIGIN OF IBUSA

Introduction

The history of human race is replete with traces of mobility.¹ Just as animals migrate from place to place for survival, mankind has also been compelled by circumstances like war, famine occasioned by flood, drought, disease, epidemic and earthquakes e.t.c. There are reasons for these movement. It could be change of positions of man due to political, religious, social or military causes to move or migrate to another area or country for survival. Igbo scholars agree that the first ever Igbo movements from the East of the Niger to West of the Niger Basin resulted in the formation of the Ibusa settlement by Nri and Isu movements. Hence, Ibusa is a federation of two units formed by two movement (Nri and Isu movements). It can best be described as a willing of convenience entered into by Edini and Umejei, two leading progenitors of the settlement. Although, it is common to hear that Ibusa was founded by Umejei, he is not the only founder of Ibusa.²

This chapter attempts to provide account of the two movements that led to the establishment of Ibusa and its origin. It will attempt to embrace the two narrative sided story of who founded the community in which some historians claim that Umejei was the first and sole founding and give brief details of how the people's tradition began and development over the years of their existence.

Nri Movement (9th A.D. Century to 1911)

The Nri movements that occurred in A.D 9th century to 1911 and Isu movements of A.D 15th-16th century led to the foundation of a number of settlements within the area known today as Anioma .6 It is believed that these movements that started in the 19th century continued up to 1911 when the British banned the immigration in which hundreds of migrants had been moving Westward into the Anioma area. Generally, Anioma historians agree that Nri-movement led to the foundation of some clans west of the Niger Valley in which Ibusa is of no exclusion.³

The community forming process at Ibusa can be linked with the first wave of the movement of the Igbo adventures into the West Bank of River during the “Igbo period of Adventures” around of 15th century. This sporadic movement formed a nucleation of Igbo elements among who was Edini who founded “Ogboli-Nri-Igbuoz” as a settlement camp in the present site of Ibusa town as the first Igbo settlers.⁴

Edini Migration and Settlement

Oral tradition links the first wave of ibusa settlement tp Edini the son if ogbe Nnaja, the Eze Nshi (Nri) and brother of odaigbo, who left their homeland as a result of escaping from their land after committing an abomination. Odaigbo the second son slept with one of his father’s wives an act considered as “Alu” also known as abomination. The

penalty therefore was death but Odaigbo was forced to exile with his mother and Edini his brother.⁵

The monarch, Eze Nshi (Nri) gave odaigbo and Edini two small pots of charm which they carried on their heads with instructions to settle where the pot dropped. The pot of Edini was to drop at “Ani udo”. However Edini’s pot fell at Ani-Nshi (Nri) Ogboli in Ibusa. While the other (odaigbo) dropped his at the present Ogwashi-uku.⁶

In an interview with Mr Peter Chigbue, He explained that the exile was as a form of punishment for Odaigbo was not accepted by members of the Nri. The crime was heavily frowned upon and it required manipulation for him to be exiled. Even up till today it is an abomination for a child to have sexual affairs with a member of the family or the wife of a father, and this has however shaped and formed the basis of the tradition of the people of Ibusa.¹² Also, in the aspect of believe, spirituality was also strongly held and practiced with charms made by the king of Nri for his children, it is obvious that the Ibusa community embraced traditional form of religion or believe.⁷

In analyzing the Edini tradition, one can see how the actions of another influenced the existence and settlement of Ibusa. Edini himself was not the one who committed the crime but was however affected and forced to start a new home. This has however had a big impact in the socio-cultural state of Ibusa. This tradition of origin has been accepted

however by many but not by all as a lot of historians refuse to accept that Edini founded Ibusa first.⁸

Isu movement (AD 15th – 16th century)

The Isu under the period of study would have been a single settlement other than the sub-group that it is today with the people having dispersed to different parts of Igbo land. However, not much is known of their origin making their study a very complex one.⁹ Isu tradition claims that their founder came from nowhere. This means that the knowledge of the people as regards their foundation may have become dim or lost and only deeper researches can provide better historical information about their origin. However, what is important in this study is that the Isu movement or migration led to the foundation of some settlements that formed the present day Ibusa. However, a more important wave of the Isu migration westward was led by Umejei Nwa Isu (Prince Umejei of Isu). Umejei is one of the founders of Ibusa Onwuejeogwu (1987: 27-28).¹⁰

Umejei's Settlement and Migration

Oral traditions and stories agree that Umejei (Nwa Eze Isu) is the founder of Ibusa. Umejei the son of the King of Isu left Isu because he committed an offense against his people. It seems that Umejei's wife had a lover, and when Umejei heard of this distressing rumour, he questioned her several times about it, but on each of those occasions, the wife denied the story. Hence, he called her Ishinta which means denier.

Both Ishinta and her lover ran out of luck and were caught by Umejei overwhelmed with uncontrollable rage, Umejei killed the man.¹¹ Another account explains how Umejei participated in the wrestling games that occurred during the new yam festival that took place every year. This auspicious moment when Umejei the son of the king of Isu during a wrestling moment came over his opponent. Not only did he win the contest but he killed the opponent and this was regarded as a murder. It was a custom at Isu that anybody who commits murder should be hanged. It was difficult for Umejei's father to see his son hanged, so he decided that Umejei must leave Isu. On banishment he given a pot of life to take along with him. The pot of life was to determine his final place of settlement wherever it fell down and it broke.¹²

Umejei accepted the challenge, he prepared, had a strong retinue of relations, friends, well wishers and loved ones. They carried all sort of food, fruits, seeds, farm implements, crops, ammunition and left. They left Isu to Orlu, then to Ihiala, until they came on contact and saw Njaba river which offered drinking and washing facilities. The journey was over a year. Consequently, the pot fell down from his head and broke at the settlement. Umejei was a hunter. He had to be he and his family had to eke out their daily bread in a virgin land from raw and hostile environment. He however wandered about in the thick, inhibited forest.¹³

In a view from this story or oral tradition, this version seems more relateble and more authentic and is however accepted by most people. Umejei settling in a new place

was a result of his actions and not by the influence of someone else. By date of the Isu movement some believe that he arrived the Ibusa area first and established dominance there influencing the Ogboli settlers to join then and became Ibusa.

The friendship between the children of Umejei and those of Ogboli deepened and ogboli left it is former site to live closer to Igbouzo (Ibusa). These settlement are now regarded as one entity . Ibusa (pronounced as Igbouzo).¹⁴

In an interview with Chief Awo Inugonum, he explained certain reasons for Umejei settlement at site of where Ibusa was founded and they wore

- (1) This was where his medicine pot fell and he was instructed by his father Alokaube to settle wherever the pot lands and breaks.
- (2) The area was blessed with fertile soil and forest was good enough for agriculture.
- (3) Ibusa is almost surrounded by water : The atakpo river Eastward, Oboshi river to the west, Odu-uche river to the south Iyi Ojji.
- (4) Ibuzar (Ibusa) was blessed with minerals such as coals at oboshi riverside, oil at Achalla area limestone and different other minerals.¹⁵

In Umejei's many exploits, he encountered several pockets of settlers in the vast territory he found himself. He invaded these settlers, killing some of them in the process and taking the surviving ones as hostages. As a rule where possible, Umeje usually

returned to the camp with heads of those killed. For fear that the spirit of those Umejei killed might hurt him, Anyala-Obum who was a proficient native doctor, made some medicinal concoctions. Omolia would anoint the head of her brother Umejei anytime he returned home with heads of his victims. This anointing was to ward off the spirits of those Umejei killed.¹⁶

Tradition has it that this was the origin of the ogbu cult. Upon the demise of Anyala-obum and Omola, the ancestor-father of Isiogbe odogwu inherited this craft. In later years, Umejei's children as well as their cousins in Izuukwu who killed people in battles, passed through this tranquilizing initiation into ogbu cult.

In the early years of the settlement there was little contact as between the various communities. Each settlement regarded the other as a potential enemy. Their relationship was characterized by mutual suspicion. This accounted for open hostiles and frequent inter-coummunity battles that were the order of the day.¹⁷

In subsequent years however, through natural process of growth and development, the settlement move towards each other until they were fused into an entity in which the descendants of Umejei became the dominant group in terms of population. Over many years of interaction, all the federating communities developed into ten villages with a common culture as can be seen in the spoken language, facial marks and social disposition such as marriage and burial rites, age grade, and social stratification.¹⁸

As the federating communities came over so closely together, the need for hierarchical order of rulership and social organization developed and through the organized age gradation, it was not difficult to identify the oldest man in the federation as well as various villages. The scattered hamlets came to live together and formed the large community known as Ibusa.¹⁹ Ibusa is composed of ten main quarters and they are: Umueze, Umueke, Umuodafe, Ogbuowe, Umuidinisagba, Anyallaobum, Umuagwu, Umuezeagwu, Ogboli and Umuehea.²⁰

Origin and Etymology of the Name

The name “Ibusa” is an Anglicized version of the community’s name appeared for the first time in the document officially submitted to the British parliament in 1900 and it arose out of the inability for the British to pronounce the name “Igbuzo”.²¹

Etymologically, the name Igbuzo is a derivation of ‘Igbo-uzor’, which means “igbo bi na uzor” (igbos living along the road) or (igbos strategically located). However, Chief Inugonum while interviewing him asserted that there are two schools of thoughts that explain the etymology of the name Igbuzo. The first, being it based on the disagreement between Edini and Umejei over who was the first to settle in the area, resulting to the question of “were you the first to settle here?” translated as “Ibu uzo(r) bi ma ebea?”. While the second school of thought holds the claim that a challenge Igbuzo

settlers within the Asaba-Ibuzo-Okpamam axis by Asaba, Ogwashi-uku and Okpamam over who was the first to settle within the axis bore the name.²²

In conclusion, it is evidently seen that the origin of Ibusa is born out of two different Migrations and Settlements that led to its establishment. The Isu and Umejei's version has however been widely accepted and embraced more than that of Edini. However it is important to note that both are still very valid in the history of Ibusa as some historians don't see Umejei as the sole founder of Ibusa.

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CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL INSTITUTION IN PRE-COLONIAL IBUSA

Introduction

Pre-colonial political systems are the types of traditional government that existed before of traditional government that existed before the advent of colonialism in Africa. Pre-colonial political systems are the government based on the customs and conventions of the indigenous people of Nigeria. The Pre-colonial period was however characterised by Nations based on Kingship, tribe, clans and totems among others. For example, the common system of governance by then was traditional through spiritual leaders and strong tribal elders.¹

Ever before the commencement of colonialism the people of what later became known as Nigeria were living under different administration or political arrangements. However the precolonial Nigeria symbolises the methods or wars by which Nigerians governed themselves before the advent of colonialism. It means traditional systems preceded the era of colonialism. From the same position, the Pre-colonial Nigeria varies from one region to the other because of the ethnic and ethno-linguistic differences. For instance, which some political systems are centralized or chiefly society (e.g Yoruba pre-colonial system and Hausa-Fulani) others were decentralized and chief less societies (like the Igbo clan system which was acephalous in nature).²

The Igbo people have variously been described as acephalous people. This is because the people had no central states and operated a kind of government without Kings. This is because unlike other ethnic groups in Nigeria such as Benin and the Yoruba, they did not build any string centralized states. The village was therefore the centre of government which has been described as direct democracy. This means that all lineage including all male adults in the village participated in its political process. Among the instrument of government were age grades or age sets and titled societies. This chapter provides an examination of the pre-colonial political institutions in Ibusa, the practised system of government and how it was being influenced by the Benin. It looks at the nature of Political conducts in Ibusa.³

From the previous chapters, we understand that Ibusa is a federation of two main units and not just one monolithic entity originating from one apical ancestors but rather two known as Umejei and Edini. These two founding fathers did not come with any distinct pattern of rulership relating to monarchy even though both of them were Sons of Kings (Princes). They however ruled based on their positions as founders and beginners of a new home.⁴ In an interview with Dr. Nwaokocha, he described the indigenous political system of government of Ibusa as “gerontocratic”- where the leadership of a people is vested on the oldest person(s) known or referred to as the 'Diokpa'. This is hinged on the idea that the oldest people are wise, experienced and highly insightful. For example, Obi Nosike Ikpo, states in his book: Umejei, was the head of the Family,

succeeded by his surviving eldest Son, followed by the next eldest in the family. So was Edini also succeeded by the eldest son. This appears to be the origin of our traditional governance by which the oldest Ibusa man alive became the head and subsequently, the ruler of the town. From his statement, it is worthy of note that rulership was also in the hands of men and not women as all successions were by sons and not daughter.⁵

According to Victoria Oluomachukwu in her book entitled “*African Women and Religious Change in Igboland*”,⁶ there are two types of political systems practised by the Igbo on both side of the Niger. The first is the democratic village republic type of government found among the Igbos living West of the Niger and by the second is the constitutional village monarchy which is practiced by the Igbo of the West of Niger and the riverine of the Igbo of Onitsha and Oseinachi. This system of administration is derived from Benin from where most of the title come.

Politically, Ibusa has practiced gerontocracy and monarchy at some point of its history. Indeed, both systems of government were accomplished in the early years of the formation of the settlement.⁷

Gerontocracy in Ibusa as System of Governance

Supreme power of authority had always been seen to lie in the hands of the “Diokpa” who was referred to as the senior Diokpa and is traditionally assisted by the “Onu-Diokpa” (spokesperson). Necessitated by incapacities in health that the Diokpa

may suffer as a result of a late time of life.⁸ A better understanding of Diokpaship as practised by the Ibusa people is conveyed in the analysis of Ogbueshi Chukwu Ebuke and Iwueze Awele Success which have explicated that: "Traditional Ibusa administered in three levels, namely the Umunna, Ogbe and Ibusa Town. The administration of the Ogbe is controlled by the Diokpa Ogbe in council. This council is referred to as the Diokpa Umunna in council". This however explains how traditionally, Ibusa was supremely administered by the oldest man from each quarters also known as Ogbe.⁹

Monarchy in Ibusa

Centuries back, Ibusa borrowed monarchial idea from the Edo, when King Ezesi from Umuogowo quarter of the town successfully plotted a coup and succeeded the then senior Diokpa of the town as the traditional ruler. In an interview with Chief Inugonum, he narrates how Ezesi was a renowned warrior who was appointed by the Oba of Benin to rule Ibusa as a Monarch after his visit to Benin. He then proclaimed himself as the sole ruler of the town with Benin Soldier by his sides who escorted him. The people of Ibusa in utter shock accepted and yielded to his command. This led to secret grievances among the people and unrest. Adding to unacceptable development, Ezesi's wife did more harm by overstepping her duties as the King's wife. She was said to be sitting with her husband during Izu-Ani Ibusa (meetings) in Ezesi's strength as a leader.¹⁰

Chief Inugonum went further to explain how Ezesi kept ties with the Oba of Benin and took instructions from him. It led to further complaints from the Ibusa people. A combined ritual and violent coup was planned by Osodi Nwadegele of Umukanyia Omeze supported by Ogboli village men. After Ezeji was enthroned, Eze Ogbobi of Ogboli became Eze of Ibusa. He later on permitted other quarters to have their Eze. Ogboli reversed back to their former system of Diokpaship. It is however important to note that before the introduction of monarchial system, Ibusa was administered as multiple clans and each clan was headed by a Diokpa.¹¹

Administrative Structure in Ibusa

The Diokpa rules his subject through various institutionalised organs or councils such as:

I) Diokpas in Council: The supreme council of traditional rulers (Diokpas-in-council) which is the general assembly headed by the Chief Diokpa.

II) Olinzele Ani: Council of ministers or traditional chiefs or the traditional war chief known as the *Onotu* headed by the traditional prime minister "*iyase*"

III) Ikpala: The council of elder Ozo or Ikpala title holders at province level (*Ogbe*) headed by the Onishe wrongly called Ogene

IV) Diokpa-Ebo: The council of Nze Office holders at district level (*Ebo*) (*Diokpa-Ebo*)

V) Dibia Cult: The council of Dibia Cult headed by Eze Dibia Ani.

VI) Omu-Cult: Council of Omu Cult headed by Omu-Ani.¹²

Political Groupings/Organization in Pre-colonial Ibusa

These political groups can be classified into ten and they are as follows.

Ogbe: To be able to reach, govern and control subjects effectively, the entire community is structured into various socio-political units, which federate into a strong and united entity known as town or 'Ani'. These federating unit or provinces is called 'Ogbe' which consists of mix families who are genetically heterogeneous and are socially free to inter-marry each other family member.¹³ Politically, Ibusa being a federation of two autonomous settlement is regarded as one political entity with ten equi-balanced territorially organized units called Ogbe namely: Omeze, Ezukwu-Achalla, Idiniaisagba, Ogbe ogwugwu, Umu osage, Ogbe Owele, Umu Ekea, Umu Eheha, and Umu Ezeagwu. An Ogbe is more of a territorially organized group whose patrilineage components may or may not have a common male or female founder. It is referred to by a name and members refer to themselves as belonging to it. Members however act in unity as a political entity under a head called Diokpa Ogbe.¹⁴

Ndi Eze/Eze: As Ibusa male children grow from childhood to manhood, they take titles for themselves. These titles are hierarchically based. The three most important titles are

Nkpisi, Alo and Eze or Ozo, or Nze or Obi. The Eze title is the highest and requires heavy payment of money and feasting. Ndi Eze are strong political decision making group and are consulted to decide major issues like land and territory based issues in pre-colonial and modern Ibusa.¹⁵

Ndi Ichie or Nkpa Alo: In Ibusa, a man becomes a member of Ndi Ichei group if he takes the Alo title. This political organization in Ibusa deals with disciplinary matters related to all members of their group and those below their group. They are highly respected and regareded.¹⁶

Mgba Nkpisi: It is the title at the bottom of the hierarchy of titles. It is the title that gives individuals the right to full Ibusa citizenship and the right to enjoy the democratic freedom available in the unwritten constitution of Ibusa. All person who have taken the title are members of a group that operate at the level of minimal lineage but have social and political consequences at the Ogbe and town levels.¹⁷

Akwukwa Ato: This organisation is the military arm of Ibusa. The ten Ogbes are divided military into three units called Akwukwa Ato. It is headed by three war chiefs called 'Odogwu', 'Uwolo' and Iyase. Odogwu is the most senior, followed by Uwolo. Iyase is the youngest. The war chiefs are autonomous in their units. They aree responsible to the Diokpa-Ibusa-in-council, whose composition and functions are spelt out. They are always active especially in times of war and conflicts.¹⁸

Ndi Ogbuu: This is a club of brave men headed by ear chiefs headed by Odogbwu, Uwolo and Iyase and also the Ikwelle whose function is vital. The Ikwelle title is hereditary in a particular lineage of Ezukwu. The main political function of this group is that they are in charge of dealing with any persons who cut down or destroy any food crop planted by any free person in Ibusa. They could enforce their decisions because most of them are also members of the Diokpa-in-council and members of other political groupings.¹⁹

Anikammadu: This was a group of secret police that has the traditional prerogative to use force on any Ibusa person found guilty of any offense by any of the group that had the constitutional and traditional rights to do so. Members of this organs are meant to be able bodies, brave and secretive.²⁰

Otu Omu: It is an association of women who have the traditional role of imposing fines on men and women who violate the traditional codes guarding the sanctity of the extended family life of Ibusa. They attend Izu Ibusa and constitute a major pressure group in Ibusa political system.²¹

Dibia/Ndi-Dibia: The Dibia/Ndi Dibia is a political association of all traditional diviners or doctor diviners. It is headed by Eze Dibia. It is an important organ of the decision making process and in the crystalization of public opinion in Ibusa by manipulating the art of divinity. In pre-colonial times they helped to fix the dates, for military, ritual and

socio-economic and socio-cultural activities that involved the whole community. They also acted as healers with their knowledge of healing herbs of witchcraft and sorcery remedies.²²

Ogbo: This is the Ibusa age grade system. Each age grade is made up of these born between intervals of a given three year period. The 'working' age grade is called Otu Okwulagwe and it is headed by “Okwulagwe”. They perform manual duties that involve the whole of Ibusa. Age grades are organized on basis of Ogbe and the tripartite division of the town. At Ibusa level, the “Okwulagwe” takes order from the Diokpa Ibusa. At the district level (Ogbe) , the Okwulagwe takes orders from the Diokpa Ogbe.²³

Diokpaship: The Diokpa of Ibusa is the symbol of unity of all Ibusa Ogbe. He is also the focus of political activities. He however does not rule alone but rules with a council which is a council which is a cabinet of elders made up of the ten Diokpa-Ogbe and their line 'Oga' (speakers), the three traditional war chiefs- the Odogwu, Uwolo, Iyase: the Ikwelle and agreed number of members of Ndi-Ichie and Ndi Eze from each Ogbe. The elders acting with the Diokpa Ibusa is referred to as Diokpa-Ibusa-in-Council.²⁴

The Diokpa-Ibusa-in-council is however, the highest political authority in traditional Ibusa political system and it is the only body that has the constitutional right to summon Izu Ibusa, which represents a cross section of the whole of Ibusa. Only Izu Ibusa can proclaim orders, issues decrees, make and review laws, head and appeal cases,

interpret Ibusa's tradition declare war and make peace. The Diokpa is not elected or selected neither is it hereditary. Nevertheless some criterias are meant to be met.²⁵ They are:

1. The aspiring Diokpa must be the oldest man in town
2. The aspiring Diokpa must be mentally active
3. The father of a Diokpa must be or have been a free Ibusa man
4. He must have lived an upright primarily life i.e he must not have been found committing abomination (Alu)
5. All Diokpa-Ibusa always undergo long periods of political apprenticeship as Diokpa of their Umunna and Diokpa of their schooled in the customs and practices and procedures of Ibusa system of government.

Conclusion

As examined above, it can be deduced that the political system of Ibusa had two phases which were the period of genocratic democracy and later monarchy which did not last. This led to reverse in the type of governance. It shows and justifies the idea that Benin as an empire at one point in time influenced the political structure of Ibusa in pre-colonial times with the appointment of Ezesi as the monarch of Ibusa, it implies that there were some of form of political relations among Ibusa and Benin.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN PRE-COLONIAL IBUSA

Introduction

Man is a social Animal and a product of his society. For man to survive, he must relate and socialize with his fellow beings and share all emotions he possesses within him. Be it happiness, anger, sadness or violence. Different societies over time have practiced different socio-cultural activities which has made them distinct and dynamic from others. These activities have made them who they are and what they are known for. Just as tribes, towns, clans and kingdom differs, so does their social practices and beliefs also differs. This includes their different birth, marriage and death celebrations, religion, festival celebrations, taboos, social order.¹

These social activities over time even before colonialism has stood as a unifying factor among people of a particular community or town and has also been strong preservative of our culture. This activities have often time been passed from generations to generations and has given new born the opportunity to appreciate the practices and culture of their predecessors. However, with the impact of colonialism and westernization, these socio-cultural practices have been diminished and less promoted, leading to certain changes and redundance in appreciation. In the Pre-colonial times, these practices were well appreciated and cultivated among them and this is what this chapter will examine. This chapter attempts to examine and analyze the Pre-colonial traditional socio-cultural

practices in Ibusa before colonialism such as Marriages, Festivals, Religion, Birth, Death and Burials.²

Like most societies, the Ibusa society traditionally emphasizes three stages of life that are birth, marriage and death. Consequently, strong cultural beliefs are often placed on these phases of life. It is important to also note that all three phases over the period of Ibusa's existence are celebrated in ceremonial elegance and splendor for every of the afore mentioned is a birth.³

Religion of Ibusa

Religion is one the universal aspects of human culture. Everywhere around the world, Human beings are adherent for one religious group or other. That being the case, religion is an essential part of the human socio-cultural environment. Religion has thus played and continues to play a great role in the development of human societies.⁴

Before the advent of Christianity in Ibusa, the Ibusa practised "Odinani" which was a traditional form of worship. For many centuries, "Oboshi", "Atakpo", "Oduche", and "Asiama" streams remained major sources of Water to the people but "Oboshi" and "Atakpo" stand out as streams venerated because of the powers with which they have protected not only the people but whole town, according to their belief. As a result of this, the people of Ibusa forbid the eating of Fishes from the "Oboshi" River. The Chief priest of Oboshi is "Ohene" popularly called "Ohene-mmili".⁵

Religions Practiced: The religions practiced in Ibusa were Oboshi worship, Igbe, Onokwu, Aloe, Ani, Fejoku, Atakpo

Even though most people refer to the religious Practice of Ibusa people as "traditional". It is important to know that they still believe in the existence of God and it is rooted in their practices. Obi Nosike in his book asserts: "The religion of Ibuzor people is rooted in their belief in the existence of God, the Almighty, the supreme Being and Creator and Ruler of the Universe. The Ibuzor people's concept of "Chukwu" is so large that they also describe Him as "Ojuwa", "Olisa-"Imegau O'se Ebuluwa".⁶ These names depict God as all powerful, all knowing and all seeing. There is no other being to which our people ascribe these names and attribute". He further explains that Ibusa people still believe in the existence of divinities who are definitely lower than God but greater than men who preside over certain portions of portions of worldly affairs at the behest of God Almighty. These divinities are of male and female kind. Thus, there is the god of rain, the God of harvest and the goddess of female divinity of water. They are recognized as agent of God. They are called Alusi. Ancient Ibusa people also created images symbolizing and representing their concept of God where Christians describe as idols. In Ibusa traditional religion, these spiritual beings are not recognized as the supreme Being. They are seen as God's representatives. Ibusa people do not worship but respect and ask them to intercede with "Chukwu".⁷

Ibusa traditional religion recognizes and accepts the values of the ideal life and practices for attaining those values but the values of the ideal life and the practice for attaining them are embodied in a particular system relating to the environing Universe. Religion in Ibusa has been a string social cultural activity that has been practiced since centuries ago because of their believe in the supernatural and the ability of these beliefs to bring solutions to their problems such as treatment of Diseases, fertility, cleaning from evil spirits and Demons, prosperity and so much more.⁸

Marriage Institutions in Ibusa

The institution of marriage is found in all societies. It joins together a man (or men) and a woman (or women) in a special kind of social and legal arrangement that serves several purposes for a society. Although, in recent times the concept of marriage has been redefined by some people as the union between persons, Ibusa sees marriage as a union between a man and a woman. By implication, if it is not between a man and a woman then Ibusa frowns at it and forbids. For example, Ibusa's culture forbids same sex marriage.⁹

Types of Marriage in Ibusa

In Ibusa there are different types of marriage that have existed over the years and they include:

Levirate Marriage (Nwunye No or Igbulu Na Nzo): this is a type of marriage practiced in Ibusa in which a man inherits the wife of his deceased brother or relative. This mostly happened if the woman in question was considered productive biologically. After the burial of her husband, the wife is invited to meeting by the husband's Umunna for "iha li idi" rites. This form of Marriage was designed to allow procreation of children for the deceased brother and the woman to remain in the family after the death of her husband rather than leave the family to remarry in another family. It is significant because it encourages procreation along family line and keeps the Woman from engaging in prostitution at the loss of her husband. Levirate Marriage is fading away because most widows often prefer to choose their son as the family head instead of their brothers or relative's brothers.¹⁰

Nwunye Mgbakpuegbe: is a cultural practice of marriage by capture practiced by Ibusa and other Anioma communities. It was practised in a way that a man lures a woman to his house then arrange for local gun to be shot. Once shot, the marriage has taken place and all the man needs to do is to complete the ceremony at a later date.¹¹

Legitimate Adultery Marriage: This is a kind of marriage that happens as a result of a husband's impotency. Once a husband is proven to be impotent and the wife is still strong and fertile to be bear children. His family will request the wife and impotent husband, officially and traditionally to invite the family "Nwa-afa" and instruct her to absolve the wife of the marriage obligations and consequences of marriage adultery and infidelity to

enable her raise children for her husband. This process involves spiritual sacrifices and propitiation. After this is done, the woman is free to read children for her husband from a nominated relative for her husband. The children will however still bear the name of the actual husband and under no circumstance can these children be taken to their biological father.¹²

Monogamous Marriage: This form of marriage allows a man to be legally married to one woman at a time and it is highly recognized and practiced in Ibusa. However a man can choose to marry more women later if he chooses.¹³

Polygamous Marriage: Just as the opposite of monogamy. In Ibusa, men are also at liberty to take more than one woman as wives. This however depends on the capability to take care of these women and the children they bear. It is gradually fading away too due to western civilization and bad economy.¹⁴

Nature of Marriage in Ibusa

Marriage is held Sacred in Ibusa and the couple are expected to stay in the union all days of their lives. In pre-colonial Ibusa, the first step of marriage is a man's desire to marry. He must be mature, responsible and independent of his parents by constructing his own personal house and establishing his farm. After which he notifies his family and friends of his intentions to get married. While his family and friends are in search of a wife, he becomes actively involved in social activities and various Ibusa meetings.¹⁵ This

is a form of advertising himself for people to see how active and fit he is in the process of it, he might find a suitable wife himself. In whichever ever way the girl is found or identified, after he confirms his love for the girl,. marriage overtures begins. Marriage overture in Ibusa has to do with the divine investigation into the girl's family background and spiritual exposure so as to make sure it is a good family free from unclean spirit or curses. As the relationship between the two intending couple waxes, the families regularize the relationship through official friendship visits. In one of these visits, a date is being set for the introduction or knocking known as "Iku Aka".¹⁶

The knocking at the door in marriage is the process of initiating the payment of preliminary bride price or marriage portion. It is a minor bride price in the sense that the ceremony is exclusively women affairs with its financial benefits. The women continue to jubilate and dance from their home to the girl's family, who also welcome them with a similar jubilation and dance. During the ceremony, a specified amount represents the initial or preliminary bride-price called "Ego Iku Aka ". This is used to compensate the girl to make up for her expenses during her period of courtship called "Ego Nwunye". Some parts of the money is then given to the mother which acknowledges motherhood as expressed in the good training from mother to a good girl to adulthood. It is called "Ego Nne New". This knocking at the door ceremony precedes the payment of the final and main bride-pride, which represents the traditional wedding.¹⁷

After the ‘Iku-Aka’ marriage expectations become very high and a list of necessary requirement is expected from the man’s family. There is no fixed amount. On the marriage day, both families are seated and the opening prayer begins with the “Diokpa” and blesses the union. After some certain processes like breaking and passing of kolanuts, the couple are being brought and adviced on how to be good husbands and wife. The “Diokpa” then pours some “Nmanya-Nkwu” (palm wine) into a cup and gives to the bride to drink and give her husband which she does while kneeling down. This is to symbolize her submissiveness to her husband in the years ahead as a wife.¹⁸

This marriage pattern seems to be practiced among other towns and tribes in Africa and thus shows similarities in these social activities such as marriage. In the pre-colonial Ibusa, almost everyone is present at a marriage ceremony. At these function various delicacies are being prepared and served to visitors and guests. There are also musical form of dances and entertainment such as “Agbalani” or “Uloko” that requires rigorous body movements. Marriage in pre-colonial Ibusa is a highly celebrated social activities that brings people together even up till date. It is a traditional socio-cultural function that promotes tradition and is highly encouraged. That is why divorce is highly frowned at with exception to extreme cases.¹⁹

Significance of Marriage in Ibusa: Marriage as a socio-cultural practice in Ibusa is highly significant because it leads to expansion of the kinship ties and bond. It also leads to procreation and passing on the gift of life from one generation to another. It also serves

as a marking stone to show that a youth has come of age and fit to head and manage a home. Marriage of many wives can also be a source of wealth to the families in some cases where by in-laws assist and help each other either in form of finances or farming assistance. It promotes mutual love and companionship between a man and woman.²⁰

Birth and Naming Ceremonies in Ibusa:

In Ibusa just like every other society, the birth of a child is a joyous event. They are believed to be gifts from the supreme being and are therefore treated with care and love. The joy of every marriage rests on the blessing of that marriage with a child. It remains a symbol of success, happiness and as a continuum of the generation of the family. It is fundamentally compulsory that every child must be traditionally circumcised and baptized practically and symbolically in occasions of circumcision and child naming rituals known as "izo-idayi"²¹

It is at this time, that the child is named in a ceremony that would have relatives, friends and well-wishers in advance. The child receives as many names as possible but he may just be called name(s) given by his/her parents. With the excitement of child birth, Ibusa in pre-colonial even till date, celebrate it as a social event that brings people together, both old and young. The families of the new born prepare food, music and entertainment and invite friends and relatives to share in their happiness. These visitors in turn come with gifts such as money, dried fish, red oil, shea butter, cotton clothes present

to the child. After the naming of the child, food is being shared and local music fills the air with dances all over (3).²²

Death

Among other social activities in Ibusa is the celebration of death of old or titled persons. In keeping with the believe and value system of the people in the life after death, burial rites and performed with every seriousness. It is belief of the people that were normal burial rites were not accorded to the dead, or not done at all, the dead from his immortal world having assumed higher supernatural power over the mortal beings will visit his/her relations on earth to avenge the dishonor done to him/her.²³

Burials

Ibusa society recognizes different types of burials as follows:

1. Burial of infants
2. Burial of men/women (non-title holders)
3. Burial of Mkpakor
4. Burial of Obi (Eze)
5. Burial of Omu

Burial of Infants and Youths

Ibusa society does not accord the burial of infants and youths with so much cultural attachment as they are believed to have died early enough in life so silence will be maintained on this aspect of burial. This is because the child is said to have punished

his parent and is left to suffer the burden of immortality by not giving him a home or peace over there by way of not performing burial rites. Infants in Ibusa are not buried in cemeteries, rather they are buried in bush paths called "mgbo mgbo ofia". Generally, parents of a dead child do not bury their children.²⁴

Burial of Men and Women

Burial of men and women in Ibusa takes different cultural forms. Generally, burial rites in Ibusa involve first and second burial usually conducted separately with each other and also held on separate days. The first burial of a woman is known as "ikpu eshi" while the second is called "Ikpu nnu". A woman who was aged before departing to the world beyond or seen to make accomplishment may be considered "Okanga" rites as a mark of respect. However, one of the earlier rites of the first burial is "Ije akwa" which required the widow to be accompanied by other women within the same "Ogbe" "Ije Akwa" is the crux of all aspects of the first burial rites. Any widow who falls short of expectations while observing this particular rite would incur the wrath of "Umuada Ogbe". i.e the woman folk of the deceased village. This culture practice is normally preceded by the firing of cannon shots at dawn, indicating the commencement of the burial ceremony, which is "Ikposa Oju".²⁵

It is customary to have meals or feast of mourning and during these feast they would eat and drink in memory of the deceased. Early in the morning, elders of the consanguineous family members are summoned through the firing of some cannon shot

early in the morning. Usually all ceremonies are performed in an open booth constructed with bamboo and palm fronds in the frontage of the deceased premises. After all processions and rites, the social celebration begins with entertainment with provision of food and palm wine. There are performances of dancers and Ibusa musicians such as “Okanja” “Imanokwa”, “Uloko Odukor” and so on.²⁶

Burial of Mkpakor (Title Chief)

The burial of Mkpakor is different from the burial of untitled men and women because of his important position in the Ibusa society. It involves the feature of Okangs dancers that include members of the deceased family and friends and well wishers dance around the community. They follow designated routes, covering the entire ten ogbes of the town in a war-like procession, chanting and performing 'Igu aya' rites.²⁷

Burial of Obi: The burial of an Obi covers more days than those of Mkpakor. His burial is quite eventful and involves a huge ceremony. An important burial feature of his burial is that he is buried in a sitting posture.²⁸

Burial of Omu: The Omu is also buried in a sitting position.

Significance of Burials in Ibusa

The significance of burials and burial rites in Ibusa are numerous and are as follows:

1. It is a culture that has been imbibed into Ibusa just like it has been in other human societies and communities.

2. A funeral service can mark the significance of the life that was lived. They also help us find meaning and purpose in our continued living, even in the face of loss.
3. A funeral service can allow us to express our inner thoughts and feelings about the life and the death.
4. A funeral service can encourage us to remember the person who died and share our unique memories with others, creating hope for the future.
5. A funeral service can help us begin to truly acknowledge the reality that someone in our life has died.

Festivals in Ibusa

Some important Ibusa annual festivals are owned and celebrated by a group of Ogbes or by the whole of Ibusa. The performance of these festivals has an integrative and cohesive influence on the total.²⁹

Social structure: There are various festivals celebrated in the pre-colonial time but some are gradually fading away while some are still celebrated and remembered. These festivals are as follows.

Ineh Festival: This is one of the oldest festivals celebrated in Ibusa to mark the clearing of farmlands. After all farms are being cleared and there is a harvest, the Ineh festival begins. Although it is gradually fading away.

Ifejioku (Yam Festival): All the ten “ogbes” celebrate this festival. It is done in portrayal of reverence to the god of yam who they believe made the land fertile to harvest good yams. Fighting and combat among young men is being displayed on that day too.

Ichu Ekwensu (Cleansing Festival): This festival is celebrated as a ritual done seasonally to cleanse the land from evil spirit and demons. It involves the full participation of everyone from Ibusa and it has been successfully practiced from old generations to newer ones with total adherence to the instruction of the spiritual leader “Eze mu” the land is believed to be cleansed and free from attacks.³⁰

Iwu Festival: The festival is mostly celebrated by “Ogbewe and Umuodafe quarters of Ibusa. In Ibusa, it lasts for four days and mostly involves adults and youths. It is believed that the festival evolved on the base of communal efforts to placate forces and allow fruitful existence of man as it is associated with planting and harvest times. Celebration of the festival comes in stages and the festival can be described to be mainly outdoor festival. Iwu festival comes with unique songs and dance steps which are rarely sang on normal days and dancing of tones composed by them. Principal characters of the festival are “Ohene” (Chief Priest), “Eze-Iwus” and Ndi Enem who display nice dance steps that thrill spectators.³¹

There are other festivals too that bring the people of Ibusa in pre-colonial times but these mentioned above have been the most ceremonies and have been practiced.

Conclusion

it is evident through the various points mentioned above there are people of Ibusa have embraced and indulged in several socio-cultural actives that makes them distinctive Igbo-speaking people. From the social ceremonies such as Child birth, marriages and funerals to the festivals and other forms of religious worship. It is also seen that these activities have been influenced at one point by were they came from and how their environment has been a major contributing factor of these activities.

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CHAPTER FIVE

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN PRE-COLONIAL IBUSA

Introduction

Economic activities is described as the activities of making, providing or selling goods or services. Cambridge Dictionary defines it as "the activity of producing, buying and selling products or services" For Humans to survive, they need Food, Air, Water, clothing and Shelter. Without these in place, humans will lack the ability to survive. Economic activities are however necessary for these needs to be met or acquired. That's why the main aim of economic activities is to satisfy human wants and needs. In pre-colonial Nigeria, different tribes, kingdoms and nations depended on different economic activities to survive. These activities were largely dependent on the area of environment they find themselves. For example the Ijaws, being a maritime people are known to be fishers and fishing was this economic mainstay. Those in the forest based regions were known to be hunters and farmers. However due to the fact that man is not self-sufficient and must depend on another, there is the constant need for him to negotiate and trade with his neighbors with things he can provide and what his neighbors can return. This introduces Trade as an economic activity that existed I pre-colonial Nigeria. This Chapter examines the main various economic activities that were practiced in Ibusa before colonialism or even after.¹

Agriculture in Ibusa

Just like other communities in West Africa, Agriculture has been a form of sustenance for the people of Ibusa. Most West Africans have some their living from Land. Agriculture was the chief activity in the greater parts of the regions of Africa. It is not, and it was not necessary to give up farming on order to enter occupation such as craft manufacture and trade, which are frequently undertaken on a part time or seasonal basis. On the contrary, an agricultural surplus often made it possible to finance additional types of productive enterprises (trade).²

In the previous chapters, it was established that Umejei, one of the founding originators of Ibusa settled in a land which was very fertile with natural resources present there with Rivers around it. This left him and his people no choice but to engage in agriculture. Agriculture which is the occupation air business of cultivating the land, producing Crops and raising Livestock has been practiced by people of Ibusa since it is existence. Because of their geographical location in Anioma, the land is highly fertile generally. Hence, they used indigenous farming technologies to exploit their well-known economic riches. These indigenous economies based on farming and palm oil production, requires full participation of everyone in the house hold. In Ibusa, with the patriarchal family structure in place, the men are meant to provide the source of living as the head of the home while the women and children play supporting roles such as mean preparation, gathering and sales of farm produce and so on.³

Land Tenure System: Land means many things to Ibusa people. It is the domain of the earth goddess, a resting place for the ancestors, a place to live on and make a living, land is therefore the most important asset to the people of Ibusa. It is a source of security which is emotionally protected from alienation. It is believed that the Ibusa people cannot have too much land and that no opportunity to acquire rights in land should be lost.⁴

Land tenure among the Ibusa people and Anioma refers to the traditional system of land holding or ownership. Land (ani) is a crucial economic index in the agrarian setting of the Ibusa. It is a free gift of nature. The basis of its acquisition, ownership or appropriation is first settlement, deforestation of virgin land (Igbo ani, igbukpo ofia), conquest as in old times or outright gift or purchase as in modern times. Land is a sensitive issue because of its economic index. In a predominantly agrarian society land determines wealth. Ownership reside in individual or the family (umu), though there are incidences of communal or village (obodo) ownership.⁵

Farming: Pre-colonial Ibusa was characterized by intensive farming as an economic means of survival. Men and women of Ibusa are natural farmers and they were known to take it seriously as it was a means of survival and economic benefit to them. Women and Children would plant crops and seed and harvest with the use of indigenous farming implement such as local hoes, knives and shovels. The products gotten from the farm were later used to eat and the surpluses were sold in the market for income such as yams, oil, cassava and so on.⁶

Farming Techniques

To optimize crop yields, Ibusa people adopted the methods below: Shifting Cultivation, Bush Fallowing and Mixed Cropping.

Shifting Cultivation: is related to bush fallow systems, which has served a useful purpose in preserving the farmland. Although, subsistence is low in productivity, such systems had minimal adverse impact on the land. The bush fallow system of farming is widely practiced in Ibusa. Under this farming system, the family or household is the unit of decision making and production, and there is heavy reliance on personal and family labour for farming activities. The farming system is characterized by the use of simple tools and fire for clearing vegetation, and there is heavy dependence on the inherent fertility of the soil. The use of fire is a means of conserving energy, and the ash from burning makes some minerals phosphates and potash readily available for use by plants. Crops grown are basic food staples including cassava, yam, cocoyam, plantain, maize, and vegetables. Farm sizes are usually small, and the cropping system adopted is mixed, which help provide the subsistence needs of the family.⁷

Bush Fallowing: Practice involves the cultivation of parcels of land on a rotational basis, because a piece of land gets exhausted after two or three successive periods of cultivation. There is a close relationship between the soil and the vegetation in terms of nutrient exchange. Clearing of the vegetation breaks this normal cycle and the soil loses its nutrients through leaching. The farmer is therefore compelled to abandon the deficient

land for it to restore its fertility through the natural nutrient exchange cycle. Thus, there is rotation of fields instead of crops. The length of the fallow period varies from place to place depending on prevailing local ecological and sociocultural factors. Essentially, there should be plenty of cultivable land in relation to the population of the land-owning group so that pieces of land could be allowed sufficient time to regain their fertility through the natural system.⁸

Mixed Cropping: Typically a mixture of legumes and cereals or tuber crops, is a common practice in Ibusa which fulfills a variety of functions, including complementary use of growth factors, such as soil nutrients, which reduce pest and disease incidence, reduced soil erosion, more yield stability and more household food security. Furthermore, the mixtures can be flexibly adjusted to conditions such as late or early onset of the rainy season or status of soil fertility in different fields. However, mixed cropping was practiced in Ibusa, a piece of farmland cleared by a man for yam, cassava, corn, melon, and maize planting was utilised and immediately after harvesting the corn and melon, cassava and yam will immediately planted.⁹

Farming Seasons: In pre-colonial Ibusa Farming was the most important productive activity in Ibusa because it was so ordered that it defined all the various stages of the year which was divided into farming phases. Which include burning time, bush clearing, planting, weeding, tiling, harvesting, threshing or storing time. Farm year ends in the

second week of December and any time after the New Year begins with the clearing of bush for the main farms and by March/April, yams are planted with corn immediately after the first rain, Amenkaho. Cultivation, weeding, packing and harvesting were usually carried out with simple implements like hoes, knives, axes, cutlass and spade produced by the indigenous black and iron smiths.¹⁰

Crops: Among crops grown in Ibusa are Colanut, Yam, Potatoes, cassava, Mango, Plantain, Pear. These crops are also cash crops being sold in the market.

Industries in Pre-colonial Ibusa

The Ibusa people had engaged in various industries during the pre-colonial era. These industries includes Art and other such as carving, blacksmithing, weaving of basketry and clothes, pottery, soap making, cottage industry, textile industry, carpentry and so on. Some of these industries such as carving and blacksmithing were strictly for men while women engaged in other industries. These industries brought about development in Ibusa as some of the produce were sold out to neighbouring towns. Although some major occupations have lost their glamour and are now fast becoming extinct.¹¹

Types of Industrial Practices

The various types of industrial practices that the Ibusa people were engaged in are: Blacksmithing, Carving, Weaving, Cottage Industry, Textile Industry

Blacksmithing: The people of Ibusa are in work of art and other crafts. Ibusa has talents for creativity through arts, carving sculptures and handicrafts, although not as developed as that of Igbo-Ukwu Bronze, Owo Terracotta Sculpture, Ife Copper Masks, Benin Bronze Plaques as well as Igalla wood Helmet. Many of the Ibusa Sculpture symbolized various values, life principles, social relationships and ritual life of the people through various artistic symbols, which are illustrated in totemism. For example, the indigenous Ibusa Obi's palace walls were decorated with beautiful artistic painting and murals with symbols which depicted the aesthetic way of the people. Ibusa art history and artistic were better appreciated in wood carving and blacksmithy.¹ These include blacksmith, carvers, sculptors, leather workers, weavers of special embroidered cloth (akwa ocha), carpenters and drum makers. These craftsmen and women organize themselves into the following guilds of ndi Uzu or Okpu Uzu with the greeting Oka Onwene.¹²

The Indigenous Ibusa blacksmiths mastered the scientific use of bellows (Eko) for the smelting of metal before beating it to any desired shape. Such metal works include Iron Bowel, Iron gongs, cutlasses, spear, the ceremonial ada, bolts, a native lock and keys called mkpisi for opening doors.²This craft was learnt from the Awka and Nkwerre people. Hoes, cutlasses, needles and kitchen utensils like knives, ladles were made.

Carving: Carving was an important occupation in the clan. In the olden days, the people practiced crude carpentry. They used hoes, knives and other implements to carve. Some people were experts in carving doors, wooden doors with some designs on them, boxes,

gongs hallowed out of logs, coffins and benches for sitting in their homes. Some perfected in carving essential household equipment like mortars, pestles, trays, wooden ladles, 3 wooden bowls, door frames, wooden grinders and carved staves used as symbols of some deities and for ancestral worship. In the olden days, the Ibusa people carved wood panel doors which were used in their buildings. They also carved wooden ash-trays, stools, chests, walking sticks, candle-holders, domestic trays, ladles, mortar and pestles. They also produce the ceremonial staff of the Ozo titled men called Osisi and the Ofor (symbol of authority) in a family, in addition to wooden heads for shrine decorations and toys. The Okpu-egede makes drums and other wooden musical instruments like the wooden gong (ekwe).¹³

Weaving: Indigenous Ibusa arts and crafts are further sustained on the availability of the local raw materials which gave impetus to the development of handicrafts characterized by the production of basketry. These include mats and baskets. Baskets are made extensively in Ibusa. The basic raw materials are obtained from palm branches and canes. Products include farmers' wicker baskets, domestic baskets, waste-paper baskets and fishing baskets by those living near the stream. Mats are still produced in many villages in Igbodo and Ute clans in Ibusa. Mats making is traditionally a female occupation. The women also weave beautifully patterned cloth of various sizes from local cotton (olulu).¹⁴

These include the men's working loin cloth, the women loin cloth, the men's ceremonial, the two piece wrapper and the three piece wrapper. To produce cloth from

cotton, the cotton is first DE-seeded, the thinned or cleaned out with a small bow specially made for that purpose, called Uteh- the process is known as igba uteh. The now fluffy cotton wool is then spinned into thread with a spin called ude. Depending on whether the thread is to form the main frame of the cloth or to to be used for making patterns. It is dyed as required or left white. The thread is then spun round the vertical hand loom called nsu and a pull called afia is affixed to make the movement of the weaving sword through the web of threads easy. Intricate patterns are then woven into cloth. In the process, such weaving implements as the ukoti for perforation of the cloth and the cutting of the thread and the nlu used to ensure the maintainance of uniform width throughout a given process are employed. Most women learn the trade from their mothers, from relations or neighbours reputed for their expertise in the art.¹⁵

Cottage Industry: Ibusa cottage industry cannot be conclude without mentioning of traditional soap making technique (Igbu Ncha). Traditional soap making is by simple process of saponification. The skill shows a confirmation of indigenous scientific knowledge of chemical analysis of organic compounds from palm trees, coconut fibres, and many other plants which naturally contain basic components needed for soap making.⁷ Soap making still holds some attraction.¹⁶

Textile Industry: Cloth weaving in Igbo land had attained a high level of profeciency. There were very popular cloth weavers in Igbo land including Nsukka, Abakaliki, Asa, Ndokji as well as Anioma. Ibusa was particularly noted for her unique indigenous textile

industry of Akwa-Ocha materials, which were hand woven embroidery designed materials, similar to the much celebrated “Akwete” textiles. The establishment of indigenous Ibusa textile industry, though highly localised, was traced back to many centuries ago. Its industrial development was however hampered by the introduction of western Textile technology. Which means mass production with minimal human labour thereby leaving the skill under developed in the hands of a few old women especially in Ubulu-Uku in Anioma South Local Government Area, and Onicha-Ugbo. Until recently, Ibusa textile industry flourished across the River Niger and some parts of Edo state and this gave impetus to the development of the knowledge of manufacturing of local dye-stuffs from special leaves and roots which underwent a series of extraction process before the final and desired colours were obtained. Ibusa dress making-culture was predominantly women’s occupation, which was not given adequate encouragement. Though not encouraged, those who still have the skill of weaving, make reasonable contribution to the economy of Ibusa.¹⁷

Trade

In early times there was no currency (ego) because commerce (izu afia) was virtually nonexistent. Every individual or family tended to be self-sufficient in its needs. It provided all it needed. As a society grew, there arose the need for exchange because needs outstripped the capacity to provide them all by oneself. Sophistication and specialization gave rise to commerce. Barter was adopted as a means of exchange

whereby goods, depending on reciprocity called double coincide of wants. Whatever goods or services one had was ones currency with which one exchanged for other goods and services provided there was coincidence or reciprocity. The Anioma people were involved in both internal and external trade. Various goods were traded and this encouraged relationships among the people and the neighbouring towns.¹⁸

Trade was a vocation in which the vast majority of the people of Anioma participated, though mostly on a part time basis. Only few individuals made their living on trade and of that number only a few engaged in long distance trading; the majority confined themselves to local trading.¹⁹ In pre-colonial times the people engaged in internal and international trade. The former was trade between individuals within the villages, clans and the tribe while the latter was with the neighbouring tribes. Local trade dealt principally on food items as well as products of smith's sculptors, potters and cloth weavers among others. This serves the commercial interest of contiguous communities on the other hand long distance trade attracted people from far and near and the items sold in the market satisfied the needs of the people beyond.²⁰

Nature of Trade: Short Distance Trade and Long Distance Trade

Two nature of trade existed in pre-colonial Ibusa:

Local trade/ Short distance trade

Long distance trade

Local Trade/ Short Distance Trade: The earliest form of trade was at the village level. Each clan also has its weekly market named after one of the local weekdays nkwo, eke, olie or afo. The marketing of farm produce is intimately linked with the rights and obligations of the couple. In an interview conducted with Chief Awo Inugonum, he said that few men in Ibusa were into tapping of palm tree for palm wine while majority of the men were into farming of yam and fishing. The women were into weaving of clothes, petty trade and taking care of the home. He further said that Ibusa has four market days namely Eke, Olie and Nkwo. The market Eke brought about the name of a town in Asaba known as Isieke.²¹ The wife has the right to sell the crops but she must account to the husband for proceeds of the sale of yams, she may keep the rest for the maintenance of the home. There was a system of migratory trading between neighbouring clans converge to sell their wares. In fact link roads between clans were actually old trade routes. Rain making among villages having their market on the same day is an instrument of hostility meant to spoil a rival's business and draw traders to one's market. Women dominated the market, which was traditionally not meant for men.²²

This characteristic of commercial enterprise lasted well into the colonial period. In the 1930s, a British colonial agent, J. Macrea Simpson, noted in regard to Agbor that “there are no large native traders in the clan. The bulk of the people are peasant farmers who sell their produce locally, but several enterprising aspirants are now exporting yams

to Kwale and the creeks”. Simpson reported also that the main trade was still internal, and that yams and edible also were the most important items. What Simpson described, however, was an ancient trading pattern that had simply been carried over into the colonial period.²³

Anthony G. Hopkins has noted that “traders involved in local exchange tended to be predominantly female, part-time, small scale, mobile and numerous. They were mainly female because local trade was a convenient adjunct to household and, in some societies, farming activities”.²⁴ Most women, he continued, engaged in local trading because they regarded it as “a supplement to primary (domestic) occupations.”²⁵ Local trading operations remained small, partly because what a farmer was capable of selling was being equally cheaply produced and traded by her neighbours. In any case, Hopkins suggested, while local trading developed in response to the complementary needs of communities living in close proximity to one another, long distance trade owed its origin to the demand for scarce and less bulky items which were constantly being moved around, sometimes over a great distances. For example, cowries were imported from the Indian Ocean Island, and copper, cattle, grains and other food items from distant lands.²⁶

Two thousand or more years before the Portuguese felt their way down the West African coast, the entire valley of the Niger River had become a single economic region. Since there were no rigid political boundaries, traders, crafts-persons, and farmers met in the Niger settlements in periodic, rotating markets. On an island in the river between

Asaba and Onitsha was a famous market where traders from Aboh and the Niger Delta met once each week to exchange yams, livestock, salt, cloth, metal wares, and other goods with traders from Idah and Lokoja upstream. Similar fairs were held further upstream at Ikiri, Idah, Lokoja, Jebba, and beyond. These fairs were intricately connected to the local markets which were located on the banks of the Niger and in the interior settlements. They were also linked to the North Africa by the caravan routes and the major entrepots of Jenne, Gao, Timbuktu, Kuka, and Kano.²⁷

The market place was important to the social, political and economic structures of the Igbo and it was a ritual, political and commercial center as well. A collection of settlements shared a central market but in less thickly populated districts, several settlements shared a number of periodic, rotating market places. The scheduling of these markets was embedded in Igbo culture and derived from Igbo concept of time. Periodic markets were thus held on each day of the four day Igbo week (Izu), namely Eke, Ori, Afo and Nkwo. Markets were sometimes located between settlements rather than within them so that they might be seen by all to be a common property. Each clan fixes a day convenient, relevant or significant in some way to it as its market day. For instance for Ogume, the market day is Ori while it is Nkwo for Efor, Emu, Obiaruku and Onicha - Ukwuani. Abbi, Alok, Umuebu, Umutu, Utagba-uno have eke as their market day. Afo is the market day for Amai, Ashaka, Iselegu, Ossissa and Ushie. Some communities have their market days every fourth day while others have theirs every eighth day. Aside from

the clan markets for each constituent villages of the clans which holds usually towards the evening. Asaba have nkwo has their market day while Ibusa have eke has their market day, Ugbolu has Afo has their market day and cable has orie has their market day.²⁸

Long Distance Trade: Whatever its origin, local trading derived much of its sustenance from long distance trading in as much as the latter could not have flourished without the former. Long distance trade relied primarily on the non-bulky or luxury items like beads, salt, ivory, dyes, cloth and ritual objects, while local trading involved, in most cases, the collection and distribution of bulky food items, some of which, depending on the strength of the demand, were invariably channeled into long distance trade. For example, yam were a bulky commodity but were ferried down the Niger River, over a distance of two hundred miles, because of the strong demand created by the provisioning trade. Though small in scale and numerous, it was upon the local and periodic markets that most long distance trade routes, such as the Niger and trans-Saharan trades, drew their sustenance.²⁹

Atlantic Slave and Provisioning Trades: By A.D. 1500 the Niger trading system had been well advanced. A sixteenth century portuguese explorer, Duarte Pacheco Pereira, described the canoes he encountered at the mouth of the Rio Real,¹⁰ a distributary of the Niger, as large enough to hold 80 men and travel down the river several hundred miles, conveying yams, cows, sheep and other commodities. This report suggests that food trading on the Niger was well established even before the rise of the Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century. In fact, E.J. Alagoa has noted, “by the beginning of the sixteenth

century this north-south trade was already far advanced and carried on with huge canoes on a large scale over long distance.” Alagoa emphasized that the oversea trade built on this ancient Niger trade. David Northrup concurred, writing that “by the arrival of the Portuguese, the region was already a veteran of long distance trade both up the Niger and Westward to the Gold Coast, and in the case of the inter-coastal trade it was the Europeans who had to make the adaptation to the existing African patterns.³⁰

When the Atlantic slave trade became the dominant industry in the seventh century, some Africans in the region participated by producing large quantities of food stuffs, including yams, palm oil, maize and other food items normally purchased by European ship captains. Slaves and crew had to be fed during the long periods that the ships spent at the coastal ports collecting their slave cargoes and also for sustenance during the middle passage. Thus, many communities made a good living of the slave trade by producing food for provisioning. As the slave trade grew, so did the demand for provisions. David Northtup has estimated that at least 400,000 yams annually entered this trade from the bight of Biafra at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Yams from the lower Niger were also intended for sale to the coastal communities, which had experienced a population explosion and could not grow all of their food. These communities eventually neglected fishing, farming, and salt making because of their preference for trading. During the Niger expedition of 1830, Richard and John Lander remarked that most of the yams which the Brass imported from Aboh were sold to

European slave ship. The canoe in which the brothers were transported from Aboh to Brass contained over two thousand yams intended for sale to a Spanish slave ship on the Brass River. Laird and Oldfield also commented on the trade of the lower Niger, remarking that yams and foodstuffs from the hinterlands were for salt and European manufactured goods from the Delta.³¹

The people of Anioma participated in the slave trade because their homelands had long been integrated into the trade of a region which itself had strong linkages with an interregional, multi-commodity commerce. Aboh chiefs and merchants maintained large fleets of war and trading canoes that plied the Niger, bringing foods and other commodities downstream to be exchanged for goods manufactured overseas. The Aboh were the most notable middlemen on the lower Niger communities. Unlike slave raiding and slave trading, yam production required neither large capital investments nor elaborate regulatory structures to maintain.

Throughout the period 1500 to 1900, the demand for labour to produce yams and other crops, to paddle the trading canoes and to act as domestic servants was constant.³² Since the amount of labour at the disposal of each household was limited in the short run, some enterprising local producers turned to the use of slave labour, secured through the normal process of trade. After 1840 the price of slaves in the lower Niger dropped dramatically, which coincided with the expansion in the demand for palm oil. Slaves were ferried down the Niger, where they were sold for pittance. The more enterprising

male and female yam and palm oil producers in Anioma took advantage of the situation to amass cheap labour which in turn enabled them to climb rapidly onto higher rungs of the social ladder. For example, one Aboh woman in 1841 owned over two hundred slaves whom she kept to produce palm oil and yams. In Asaba, Onitsha, and the other places, men became slave-owing chiefs almost overnight.³³

All in all, the people of Anioma developed a complex, hierarchical social organisation, a stable political system, and a lucrative trade during the one and half centuries following the repulsion of Benin military forces in 1750 and the conquest of Anioma by the British at the end of the nineteenth century. The society of Anioma was not particularly changed by the Atlantic slave trade; instead that trade encouraged the production of yams and palm oil for provisioning. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the bulk of these commodities were produced by family labour.³⁴

Conclusion

The people of Anioma were engaged in various activities before the colonial era. Both the male and female were involved in various works of arts and craft which brought about development in the land of Anioma. These work brought about closer relationship among the people. The Anioma people were able to create tools they needed to work and also enabled them to explore the natural resources around them. This artistic work

brought about great development in the economy of the Anioma people as this brought interaction with the wider world.

Conclusively, it is clear that the economic activities that has been practiced in pre-colonial Ibusa and Anioma as a whole had been simple but dynamic and spontaneous. It is obvious that the people of Ibusa has made good use of the environment in where which they find themselves starting from Umejei who became a hunter and food gatherer when he settled. With further growth and development, it is later seen that other forms of economic activities were embraced for sustenance such as building of huts and mud houses, fishing and farming, production of textile and cotton clothes and trade. In the aspect of trade, we see that Ibusa had some form of relations with its neighbor like Bini and those far off by exchanging goods and commodities.

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CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The Pre-colonial history of Ibusa has been a complex study and examination due to the different Tradition of origins and settlement, political structure, socio-cultural activities and economic activities in pre-colonial Ibusa. This project has successfully introduced the geographical location and position of Ibusa thereby laying the foundation of this study. It went further to provide brief details of some certain features of the people that occupy such as their language and the Ibusa family in which they belong to even as they are independent and slightly different from other parts of Ibusa. So this establishes the fact that they are Igbo speaking people who are situated in the present Day Delta state in the South-South region of Nigeria

Findings from this research work have shown that Ibusa was formed from certain migrations and latter settlements from the East by two major founders that brings a debate among Ibusa Historians on who founded Ibusa first and truly. It was however analyzed that Umejei's settlement tradition seems more accepted, popular and pragmatic.

This is did not however discard the Edini/Nri tradition as it still asserted that both settlement fused and became one Ibusa at the end of the day. This finding reveals that migration has contributed a lot in the origin and Tradition of Ibusa. In addition, it had also revealed how the tradition of the town is based on some certain actions of its founders that directly or indirectly affected it such as Umejei's murder that led to his banishment and Edini's banishment that led him to move and settle in a far away land.

This research work has gone further to showcase the political structure and system of Ibusa before colonialism which brought some changes. It establishes the fact that the political system of governance was gerontocratic in which the highest authority was in the hands of the oldest and wisest man in the town who had foresight and had executive power to allocate land and properties, settle disputes and announce the events and activities which would take place. The study was able to describe the various autonomous towns that existed to make up one Ibusa known as 'Ogbes' that were headed by a 'Diokpa'.

Furthermore, it was also highlighted that there were other several traditional political organizations that existed in Ibusa so as to carry out some administrative functions that were important to the smooth running of Ibusa in pre-colonial times. Such organisation like 'Ndi Eze' who were strong decision makers who constituted the leadership structure and authority in Ibusa, the Mgba Nkpisi, Ndi Ogbuu, Ndi-Dibia who were in charge of spiritual matters and divinity. The chapter went further to shed to dim light onhie the Benin Kingdom affected the Ibusa political system by lending or imposing the

monarchical system of government at some of Ibusa's history which the people did not accept as it did not last a long while before they revolted against the system. This proved the influence of the Oba of Benin in the Pre-colonial history of Ibusa as far as pre-colonial politics is concerned.

In another section of this project, the social activities that existed in Ibusa have been highlighted and examined. It shows how like many other Towns and communities that existed in pre-colonial times that Ibusa celebrated some certain important events that brought about celebration and communal jubilation. Among such are the three recognized stages of Humans which are Birth, Marriage and Death. We saw how celebration of the death of adults was more eventful and ceremonial than that of a child or youth which is seen as unfortunate. It is also shown how marriage is one social ceremony that involved the community leading to social involvement of different dancers and entertainers to make it more eventful.

Burial and Funerals were also celebrated too and involved some certain processional rites before commencement of the actual burial. The project work also looks into the Religious aspect of Ibusa as socio-cultural practice and it was duly observed that Ibusa before the introduction of Christianity had believed in the very existence of God whom they refer to as "Chukwu". It also recognize the presence of certain deities who were regarded as God's representative. It however showed that they respect theses beings and andi not worship them as God as opposed to people's claims . Such gods such as Atakpo

and Oboshi were seen to have protected them in times of war and thereby making them forbid eating animals or creatures found in or around their rivers.

Some very important festivals that were and are still celebrated in Ibusa in pre-colonial times such as the 'Iwaji', 'Ifejiouk' and 'Ineh' festivals which has been in practise all over the years and centuries back. These festivals have reflected the rich tradition and culture of both Ibusa people and other Western Igbo groups of Anioma as they are all similar. It portrays their traditional beliefs and customs. The Iwaji festival for example is also celebrated by the Benin and this proves how the history of Ibusa was influenced the customs and traditional of others.

Economically, this project work has been able to pin point the major economic activities that sustained Ibusa in pre-colonial times. It was noted that the Ibusa people were hunters, farmers, architect, fishers, cloth and textile makers and even oil palm producers which is beneficial to other parts of the geographical Nigeria and hence there was inter and intra trade relations in that time.

A research work which is problem solving in nature can be seen through this project work in the sense that it has been able to prove that Ibusa has a history which is admirable and valid. It however discredits the view that the Igbos either from the East or those situated in the west had no organized pattern of doing things. It argumentatively provides that before the domination of the Europeans Africans and indigenous people of

Nigeria lived independently and organized their ways and patterns of living by conduct themselves without any interference and supervision of foreign bodies. This as seen in their inter-group relations through trade and even even war.

However, much works and upcoming historians and student of History are to be encouraged to make researches and get inner depth knowledge about the history of certain communities and towns that existed before colonialism just as this research work has attempted to do.

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Nweze, Gabriel	60	Farmer	Ibusa	6/7/2021
Nwanze, Nnamdi	65	Retired Teacher	Ibusa	18/06/2021
Chigbue, Peter	73	Rtd Civil Servant	Lekki	20/07/21
Iweze, Daniel	46	Lecturer	Benin	24/07/21
Nwaokocha, Odigwe	56	Lecturer	Benin City	24/07/21
Ozor, Ifeanyi	76	Trader	Ibusa	18/08/2021
Okolie, Frank	70	Retired Civil Servant	Ibusa	6/7/2021
Chigbue, Patricia Nwukpo	60	Rtd Civil Servant	Lekki	20/07/21
Ofili, Joy	55	Trader	Ibusa	6/7/2021
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