

**IMPACTS OF MODERNIZATION ON IGUE FESTIVAL IN  
EKIADOLOR TOWN, OVIA NORTH EAST LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AREA**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY**

**APRIL, 2024**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
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**APRIL, 2024**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to GOD ALMIGHTY for his undeserved love and kindness in my life and academic pursuit, and to my family, friends and well wishers.

## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **OSADOLOR OSARIEMEN VICTORY** from the department of History and International Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under my supervision

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Head of Department

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**Date**

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**Date**

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the study**

This research work examines the impacts of modernization on the Igue Festival in the Benin Kingdom using Ekiadolor Town as a case study. It covers the historical foundation of Ekiadolor Town and the impacts of modernization on the Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town. There is also a brief examination of the Benin history from the period of gerontocracy to the Oba dynasty, the different traditional practices that characterizes the Igue Festival, and how modernization have impacted the celebration of the Igue Festival in recent times.

Benin history and civilization is imbued with ceremonies and festivals that continue to draw the attention of traditional historical scholars in recent times. According to Izevbigie, the Benin people have many festivals they celebrate in the different parts of the Benin Kingdom. Some of them are; Ovia masquerade Festival, Ekaba Festival, Igue and Ague Festival which was ongoing when Phillip visited the kingdom in 1897<sup>1</sup>.

There are many more festivals which are celebrated by the Benin people, but there is none as significant and widely celebrated as the Igue Festival, this is perhaps so because of its popularity. According to Izevbogie, in his notes, he said that the Igue has taken not only the center stage of all Benin Festivals but has also been incorporated to be under the auspices of the annual Benin Palace Festivals<sup>2</sup>. Another reason why the Igue Festival holds such gibbosity, is because the Igue Festival is celebrated throughout the Benin speaking parts of Edo state with valor and ceremony. The study of the Igue Festival is deeply interwoven with the wider field of cultural anthropology, folklore studies, and African traditional religion research.

Historical scholars and researchers have delved into this ample cultural phenomenon to construe its historical, social, and religious dimensions, shedding light on the complexities that shape the festival, the ancient Igue Festival is likened to the white's man's new year celebration.

Before the Festival was introduced by Oba Akenzua II, Igue Festival was normally celebrated during the month of September to climax a series of ceremonies including Ugiiododua, Ikpoleki, Ehor, Ugioro, Ugi' gun or Isiokuo and Ihieku. the festive nature and the pleasantness of the weather in

the month of December make that month the choice of all for such an important occasion, hence the shifting of time to December<sup>3</sup>.

The Igue Festival is a traditional celebration that is deeply embedded in the cultural and religious heritage of the Benin people of Nigeria, particularly in the ancient city of Benin. The origin of the Igue Festival, the making of sacrifice to one's head has always characterized the Benin people from time immemorial, tradition says that when the ancient man becomes conscious of his creator and his success in any undertaking, he appreciates his head and his God, he believes that his head had led him through his successful adventures of the year. The first people who occupied the land of Benin at that time ran a system of gerontocracy where the old ruled, this old men were referred to as *Odionwere*, after this period came the *Ogiso* era. The *Ogiso*'s ruled the land of Benin between(40B.C-1100A.D), after this period then came the *Oba* era which was otherwise known as the second dynasty in Benin, this dynasty started with Oba Eweka I in 1200A.D.

The Igue Festival is a remarkable annual event that is characterized by elaborate ceremonies, rituals, and vibrant ethnic displays. the Igue Festival which is also known as the King's festival came forth in the 14<sup>th</sup> century

during the reign of Oba Ewuare the I, who was in power between the year 1440 and 1473.

Oba Ewuare, indeed, all the other Obas of Benin Kingdom are regarded as deities who are truly men and truly gods who are meant to be worshiped. Oba Ewuare was renowned as “Ogidigan Ebo no ye erhen khue” translated to mean *the strong deity that baths in fire*. The festival was a state event, instituted mainly in worship and the reverence of deities and the ancestors, for good luck and victorious destinies.

The Igue Festival was a conglomeration of rituals, ceremonies, full of sacrifices, prayers, propitiation and elaborate festivals, the major animal of choice to be sacrificed was the leopard. Oba Ewuare’s Igue Festival was purely sacred, its aims and intentions where purely religious.

During the Igue Festival, the Oba received no visitors, most of the rites to be performed were usually done within the palace walls, the glamorous and lavish palace rituals of the Igue Festival came to an end in 1897 during the popular British punitive expedition that led to the exile of Oba Ovoramwen to Calabar.

Igue Festival resumed in modern and contemporary times in the 1950's, during the reign of Oba Eweka II. The glory and majesty of the Igue Festival became reduced to a miniature form, almost a parody of Oba Ewuare's Igue Festival.

Historically, the Igue Festival has been observed for centuries, making it a linchpin of Benin's cultural identity. The festival customarily takes place in December as earlier mentioned, and spans for about two-weeks. It holds cosmic spiritual importance as it is dedicated to the worship of the Oba, who is the traditional ruler of the Benin Kingdom.

The word "Igue" itself connotes to the period when the Oba performs certain consecrated rites and rituals within the restricted space of the palace. The Igue Festival not only serves as a religious observance but also promotes a sense of community and cultural continuity. It attracts both locals and visitors who are eager to witness the rich drapery of Benin traditions, including art, dance, and the significant rituals that link the past with the present.

The Igue Festival in Ekiadolor town, Ovia North East, is a vibrant ceremony that is nestled in the cultural heritage of the Edo people in Nigeria,

as the town comes alive with color, music and dance during the festival, it serves as a testament to the rich history and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation, beyond its religious importance, the Igue Festival is a time for communal bonding, the festival creates a platform for the showcasing of artistic talents of the people in the community including music and dance, in recent times, the Igue Festival has also become a tourist attraction for visitors who want to behold the beauty of the Edo traditions.

In recent years, joint efforts between the community, government bodies, and cultural organizations have come up with ways to support the Igue Festival, these partnerships aim to improve the infrastructure, promote tourism and also open the door of opportunities for cultural exchange, fostering a deeper appreciation of the Edo traditions, as Ekiadolor opens its doors to outsiders during the Festival, there's an opportunity for cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

The Igue Festival in Ekiadolor town is more than a celebration, it is a dynamic cultural phenomenon that weaves together the threads of

spirituality, community, and identity, the festival in many ways, reflects the symbiotic relationship between the community and its surroundings.

The Igue Festival finds its roots in spiritual beliefs that permeate the daily lives of the people in Ekiadolor, ancestral worship is a cornerstone of the festival, and the rites performed during this celebration are deeply ingrained in the community's cosmology, the belief in the presence and influence of ancestral spirits is a unifying force, connecting individuals to their lineage and reinforcing a sense of continuity.

Navigating the challenges of the changing times, the festival remains a living heritage, adapting and evolving while staying firmly in the timeless traditions that define the Edo people.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

This study is aimed at;

1. Investigating the historical and cultural significance of the Igue Festival in Ekiadolor town.
2. Exploring the socio-economic impacts of the Igue Festival on the community and its residents.

3. Examining the rituals and traditions associated with the Igue Festival and their development overtime.
4. Documenting the role of the Igue Festival in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of Ekiadolor.
5. Balancing the opinions and attitude of Ekiadolor people towards the Igue Festival and its pertinence in the contemporary times.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In the face of rapid modernization, the Igue Festival in Benin Kingdom has undergone transformative shifts. This study seeks to investigate the multifaceted impact of modernization on the Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town, exploring how socio-economic changes, technological advancements, and shift in cultural values influenced the dynamics of this historically significant celebration.

The examination of these dynamics is imperative for understanding the challenges posed to traditional practices and formulating strategies to preserve the cultural richness of the Igue Festival in the evolving context of modernization. Today, many cities dwelling in Benin metropolis do not

celebrate the annual Igue Festival due to the change in the global system and with the introduction of Christianity.

### **SCOPE OF STUDY**

This study focuses on the impacts of modernization on the Igue Festival in Ekiadolor town, it aims at examining changes in ceremonial practices, cultural significance, and community participation.

It would explore the perceptions of community members toward modernization and how these changes affect social cohesion and the transmission of cultural values. Additionally, the study might access the economic implications, tourism aspects, and the overall sustainability of the festival in the context of modernization.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

The significance of this historical research is to shed light on the preservation of cultural heritage in the face of evolving societal norms. It would help identify how traditional practices adapt or change, influencing community identity and social dynamics.

Additionally, this study would offer insights into the balance between cultural preservation and the forces of modernization, contributing to discussions on cultural sustainability.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

To achieve the objectives of this study, a qualitative research approach is employed, this research was carried out using the historical methodology which adopts a system of analysis of basic issues. The study was based on the qualitative method of visual and data analysis.

Conversely, the style of referencing adopted in this study is the Chicago Manual style 16<sup>th</sup> Edition.

In the course of writing this project, relevant data and information were obtained from two main sources. These include;

### **Primary Sources**

Primary sources which was utilized in the course of the research for this study was of two categories namely; archival and oral interviews.

They included eye witness accounts, which provided information on the Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town, archival documents relating to the Igue Festival were also consulted.

Oral interviews were conducted with individuals, some of whom are elders, who have deeper knowledge on the history of the Ekiadolor people and the Igue Festival. Others who were interviewed included chiefs, workers and also youths.

### **Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources which were consulted in the University of Benin libraries and public libraries within Edo state include; textbooks, journals, articles, periodicals, excerpts and monographs.

The integration of qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources facilitates a comprehensive exploration of the Igue Festival in Ekiadolor town and how they are being practiced in contemporary times.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The impacts of modernization on the Igue Festival have being a subject of increasing scholarly interest, this literature review explores the existing researches and articles made by historical scholars on the historical origins of the Igue Festival in Benin Kingdom, its cultural significance, rituals, artistic expressions, and its contemporary relevance.

The first on the list is an article which is titled '*Regaining the Lost Heritage: A Critique of the Revival of Igue Festival in Benin, Nigeria*' by Daniel Ayodele Orobator and Victor Osahon Aiguobarueghian, the authors looked at the origin of the Igue Festival in Benin Kingdom, its nature and significance up to 1897 and then its decline, the aim of their research work was to examine the declining significance of Igue Festival in Benin. According to the authors, the Igue Festival has proven to be a significant festival in the history of the Benin Kingdom and in the lives of the people during the pre-colonial period till present time, the authors then went further to talk about the declining period of the Igue Festival.

According to them, '*However after the British invasion of Benin in 1897, Benin Kingdom was captured, its monarchy and its paraphernalia of government was suspended. Consequently, Igue Festival thereafter entered a sharp period of decline in terms of significance to the people in particular and the Kingdom in general.*'<sup>4</sup>

The authors also stated the nature and reasons that had contributed to the declining significance of the festival and also navigating through the

arguments of historical scholars as to ascertain if there was truly a decline in the significance of the Igue Festival.

The authors also went further to suggest on how the Igue Festival could regain its lost glory, this can be seen when they said *'some of the practical suggestions we thought could help revive the festival with a view to regaining its lost glory, and they are; Firstly, the Oba of Benin Kingdom and major stakeholders in the diaspora should focus on how to channel their contributions to the welfare of the people by way of using the period as an opportunity in helping one another, Secondly, the festival should be used as an avenue to offer scholarships of different categories to indigenes of the Kingdom who has done so well in their various schools and endeavour...<sup>5</sup>'*

The second on the list is an article written by Osakue Stevenson Omoera with the title *'Igue Ceremony as a Theatrical Performance; An Appraisal*. In this article, the author appreciates the wonder of the Igue Ceremony and the various performances that characterize the ceremony, *'essentially, Igue is a combination of nine major ceremonies, viz: "Otue-Ugierhoba, Ugie-Erhoba, Iron, Otue-Iguoba, Igue-Inene, Emobo, Iguivioba,*

*Igue-Edohia and Ugieewere*”, the author then went forward to examine these various ceremonies one after another in his article.

Omoera, further talked about the theatrical effervescence of Igue Ceremony, he said that the theatrical nature stems from the that the Igue integrates all the trappings of what may be considered as Africa theatre, he buttressed his point by referencing Banham who noted that *“the most important point to make is that African theatre has developed without major restrictions placed upon it by physical limitations, or time barriers, such as traditionally proscribe the form and length of much European and American theatre...”*<sup>6</sup>

Osayomwabo Osemwegie Ero in his book titled *Igue and other festivals* gave an analytical description of the fundamental trait of a part of Edo culture that has to do with the celebration of their various festivals, he made mention of the concept of ancestral worship in Benin, while also taking about the origin of the Igue, and its components, his main objective was to enable all people including non-indigenes who were interested in the Igue Festival to revolutionize the subject from a Benin man’s perspective and also how modernization has affected the celebration which is the foundation on which

this research work is laid. *'the ostentatious display of the flamboyant, luminous, Benin chiefs and the uniqueness of their traditional dress are something quite reminiscent of the power and glory that was Benin'*, here the author talks about the distinctiveness of the Benin cultural attire and its significance to the celebration of the festival itself, the author also talked about the various animals like cows, goats, fowls and other beasts that were used to propitiate the spirits of the departed Obas and the various gods that were worshiped by the people of Benin<sup>7</sup>.

Goffman E 1976. Performances. In: Richard Schechner, Mady Schuman (Eds.): *Ritual, Play and Performance*.<sup>8</sup> offers a comprehensive exploration of the significant cultural event in Benin. Dark delves into the historical, cultural, and spiritual aspects of the Igue Festival, providing his readers with a nuanced understanding of its significance within the Beninese society

He examined various dimensions of the ceremony, including its rituals, symbolism, and socio-political implications, shedding light on its role in reinforcing communal bonds and preserving cultural identity. Dark's

meticulous research and insightful analysis makes this work an invaluable resource during the period of this research.

He examined the intricate rituals performed during the ceremony, highlighting their role in invoking blessings, purifying the community and maintaining harmony with the supernatural realm.

Furthermore, he conceptualized the Igue Festival within the broader historical and cultural landscape of Benin, tracing its evolution over time and its resilience in the face of social and political changes. By examining the ceremony's socio-cultural significance, Dark reveals how it functions not only as a religious observance but also as a mechanism for social cohesion and political legitimacy. His literature on the Igue Festival provides readers with a rich tapestry of insights into the Beninese culture, spirituality, and community dynamics, through his meticulous research and thoughtful analysis, he offers a nuanced perspective on the enduring relevance of this ancient festival and its contemporary relevance in Benin.

An article explores the cultural symbolism and social significance of the Igue Festival within Benin society, its historical origins, its traditional rituals and ceremonies, and its contemporary relevance in preserving Benin

heritage<sup>9</sup>, the Igue Festival is a festival that fosters community cohesion, promoting social identity, and also strengthening inter-generational bonds<sup>10</sup>

Another research paper examines the historical evolution and contemporary practice of the Igue Festival within the Benin Kingdom, drawing on archival resources, oral histories, and fieldwork observations, the paper traces the origins of the festival to precolonial times and analyses its adaptation to changing socio-cultural contexts, it explores how the festival has evolved over time, incorporating new elements while preserving its core traditions, and discusses its role in promoting cultural tourism and heritage preservation<sup>11</sup>.

In conclusion, the literature written on the Igue Festival and on the impacts of modernization on the Igue Festival presents a nuanced perspective, acknowledging both the opportunities and challenges associated with the societal changes. Further research is needed to delve into specific aspects of this phenomenon and its implications for the cultural heritage of the people of Ekiadolor.

## END NOTES

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## **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **CHAPTER ONE-INTRODUCTION**

- Background to the study
- Aims and Objectives
- Statement of the problem
- Scope of Study
- Literature review
- Significance of Study
- Research Method
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### **CHAPTER TWO-ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF EKIADOLOR TOWN, EKIADOLOR AND HER BENIN NEIGHBORS**

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## **CHAPTER THREE-SOCIO-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF IGUE FESTIVAL IN EKIADOLOR TOWN**

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## **CHAPTER FOUR-IMPACTS OF MODERNIZATION ON IGUE FESTIVAL**

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## CHAPTER TWO

### ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF EKIADOLOR TOWN, EKIADOLOR AND HER BENIN NEIGHBORS

#### **Introduction**

Nestled in the heart of Benin Kingdom, Ekiadolor Town, which was a farmstead of Oba Adolor, stands as a rich tapestry of history. In this chapter, we embark on a journey through time, tracing the origins and development of Ekiadolor Town from its humble beginnings to its present day prominence.

From ancient roots steeped in tradition, to the dynamic forces of urbanization, the origin of Ekiadolor is one of adaptation and growth which shaped its identity for generations to come.

This chapter also covers the relationship of the people of Ekiadolor with their people and how they've continued to maintain cordial relationships with their neighbors.

## **Origin of Ekiadolor**

Ekiadolor town was originally founded many years ago in the 1880's before the reign of Oba Adolor by a lot of people, but the major founder was a man called Eho, whose father's name was called Eko.

The other original founders of Ekiadolor town, the very people who started the town was from a family called **Elewudu**, who migrated from Ogun State, another family who was amongst the founders was called Ahekoru, another family who was also amongst the founders of Ekiadolor was called Iyudu who is the father of Igiebor, another family who was also amongst the founders of Ekiadolor town was called Ebiogbe.

Ekiadolor was founded as a result of a market that was opened by an Oba, **Oba Adolor**. Oba Adolor ascended the throne in the year 1888, but the town was already in existence before then, the present Ekiadolor today was formally known as **Igwiko**.

As a result of the market that was opened by Oba Adolor, a lot of people came to trade in that town, on entering the town, they would be asked where they were headed, then they would reply that they were going to Eki

Oghe Adolor which means '*the market of adolor*' , the name Eki Oghe Adolor was later corrupted to Ekiadolor which is used in the present day.<sup>1</sup>

According to Chief E Agbonevbare, a palace chief of Ekiadolor, Ekiadolor was discovered as a result of the expedition carried out by Oba Adolor who was at that time, a prince.<sup>2</sup> The expedition carried him across the village to a very powerful and potent shrine, Prince Adolor, got to the shrine with the help of a duck, on arrival, looking left and right, he saw a foot mark, he asked some of his subjects to trace the foot mark and they traced the foot mark to a hut in the community, they entered the hut and found the person who was living in the hut, his name was Edo, Edo greeted the prince who was also dressed in his royal regalia, then the Prince pointed and asked, 'what is the name of this god?', Edo answered, 'the name of this god is Igwinizide', the man Edo was the son of *Igwiko* who was named after that village.

Prince Adolor was on an mission to conquer many villages which was naturally required of him if he wanted to ascend the royal stool. He told the god to give him the power to succeed on his expedition, that when he finally ascends the throne of his fathers, he would establish a market in that village.

Prince Adolor was given Ogun which is the god of iron, which he would use to tackle the enemies that might confront him on his way. He went for the expedition and he succeeded, on becoming King, he forgot the promise he had made to the god, as time went on, the empire started to witness some crisis, because of this crisis that befell his village, he went to consult the oracle, the oracle asked him, ‘what god did you promise that if you succeeded in this expedition, you would build a market for them’?, he then remembered and he said it was Igwinizide,

Fulfilling his promise, he came to Ekiadolor town and established the, authorities to establish the market were appointed, people from other villages far and near up to Siloko came to that market established by Oba Adolor to trade, they traded fishes, clay pot and the likes of them, King Adolor closed down the other markets that were established before then and made the market he established, the only market for trade. With time, the name Igwiko became a house-hold name, when people were asked where they were going, they would say they were going to ‘Eki Oghe Adolor’, which was later corrupted to Ekiadolor which is being called till date.

The people of Ekiadolor are predominantly farmers, they engaged in agricultural activities in order to make ends meet, the head of the family which is the father wakes up early in the morning to go to the farm, he is later joined by his wife and children and they continue to farm till sunset, after that they return to their homes.

But Elewudu who was one of the founders of Ekiadolor was a blacksmith, he was brought into Ekiadolor town by the Oba Igwin in Benin to come and settle in Ekiadolor, the main purpose of his coming into Benin was to produce guns, cutlasses and other equipments that is meant for farming, he was meant to be the main producer of these equipments for farming, as a result of this, the entire village would go and brush and fell the tree that would be used in the production of these farming equipments for him before they were allowed to do theirs, that is, before anyone can go about their business, they would first of all fell the tree that would be used by Elewudu for him, this privilege was bestowed upon Elewudu by the Oba, that was why when he had his second son, he named him Obasuyi which meant '*Oba is bigger than respect*', he also had another child which he named Obaretin which means the '*Oba has power*', Elewudu's last child

was called Ebebiomo which was a name that was given to a deity, Ebebiomo's mother faced difficulties during childbirth and as a result of this, he was carried to a shrine, on getting there after some hours she gave birth to him.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1897 Benin massacre, with the invasion of the white men into Benin, the white men were in search of a Benin warrior who was called Ebeki, the man was in charge of Ughoton, he was a great warrior, they said he was one of those warriors that killed the white men so they were searching for him to assert revenge, he escaped from Benin through Ekiadolor.

According to Mr Sylvester, the warrior escaped to his grandfather's camp where he carried out his farming activities, the farm was called *Owieko*, the warrior went to seek refuge there, the white men came and asked his grandfather where the warrior was but his grandfather denied knowing his whereabouts.

The white men later asked him if he had a camp, he assented, the white men went there and found the warrior but it was difficult for them to capture the warrior because the warrior moved mysteriously and was just

really difficult to capture, it was difficult for the white men to bring him down and at the end of the day, the warrior was shot but he went away with it, the white man did not see his body to bring back to Benin.

Subsequently, Ekiadolor continued to grow, one of the things that made Ekiadolor popular was the road that was constructed by Gaius Obaseki, this road was constructed from old express road to a village called okoko that passed through Ekiadolor in the year 1947. In 1959, a local government was created, it was called Iyeku Urelu District Council(IUDC),<sup>5</sup> This office controlled the major part of the Benin and Ekiadolor was made the headquarters of this district council,<sup>6</sup> in light of that, so many other constructions were made, it was then that Ekiadolor primary school was made known, infact, the primary school was already in existence before then, the primary school was established in 1926, but it was because Ekiadolor was made a headquarter of the district council, that was why the primary school became more popular.

Another facility that was constructed was the customary court that was established in 1929, this court was used to settle disputes among the village heads and elders, a maternity was also constructed in that same year,

the maternity was used in the delivery of children by the Ekiadolor women. The district also constructed a library, they also established a rest house where tourists could take their rest.

Another contributing factor to the development of Ekiadolor Town was the introduction and establishment of a Teacher Training College, the teacher training college was established in the year 1974, the teacher training college served as a platform for upcoming teachers and educationists who wanted to venture into the world of teaching and also to be able to hone their skills in the field of teaching.<sup>6</sup>

The teacher training college was one of the major factor that contributed to the growth and development of Ekiadolor Town, it helped the people to grow, a number of houses began to multiply, hostels were even built to accommodate people from far that couldn't come to the college everyday, and by 1980/82, it was the most populous African school, the population was explosive, anywhere people went to, you would see their uniform.

According to Mr Sylvester, this period was characterized by the reign of his father, his father was the *Odionwere* as at that time. Ekiadolor Town

became more exposed with the influx of people from far and wide, people even came from Anambra into Ekiadolor Town, and as a result of this, many houses were named *Anambra Quarters*, the Igbo people benefited from the good tidings of Ekiadolor Town because majority of their services were free.

After some time, the Teacher Training College said they could no longer control the massive population, the man who was at the helm of affairs, one Pius Ologie who was the principal as at that time, was transferred to become the Minister of Education, and in replacement, they brought in a Director General, he served as an overseer of the school, but unfortunately, he couldn't serve for a long time, and by 1985, the school went into extinction.

The Town sprang up again in 2014 with the introduction of a College of Education by the federal government which is still in operation till date. Around 1959 to the early 70's, the local government was removed from Ekiadolor Town, and they were merged with Ovia local government.

All the district councils were merged except the one in the North. As aforementioned, the people of Ekiadolor are predominantly traders and farmers, they didn't have titled chiefs, what they had was *Odionwere*, when

one of them passes, another one succeeded him, it was a position one inherited by seniority. Before a person can become an *Odionwere*, he must first of all be initiated into their age group from when he was a youth and from there, he would be trained on how to become an Odionwere.

### **Ekiadolor and her Neighbors**

The ancient Kingdom of Benin was one of the most prosperous, powerful and prominent states in pre-colonial Africa. Its artistic triumphs, elaborate pantheon of gods, its sophisticated system of government and the intimidating aura of its monarchy makes the Benin experience a fascinating subject of historical scrutiny.

The Ekiadolor people are a small part of a whole of the great Benin Kingdom, the people of Ekiadolor are also Benin people who share the same customs and traditions of the Benin people. The people of Ekiadolor have a festival which is called *Iguedohia*. They have some other social amenities like a shrine, this shrine was the reason why a market was introduced in Ekiadolor by Oba Adolor,<sup>7</sup> when Oba Adolor was an Edaiken, that is before he ascended the throne, he was always moving around, protecting himself before he ascended the throne, in the process of moving around, spiritually,

this very shrine stopped him, he talked to the fellow that by the time he ascends the throne in Benin, he would come back to compensate him, he would come back and open a market for him here(Ekiadolor), that was how the market in Ekiadolor came about, the shrine was called *Ogunnisiide*, the shrine is very close to the market.<sup>8</sup> The people of Ekiadolor do not have a festival that is specially meant for only them, the only festival they participate in is the IGUE FESTIVAL which is celebrated all over Benin kingdom.

The administrative system of Ekiadolor people was similar to that found elsewhere in the every village found in Benin and was based on age grade system. The age grade system is a system of administration in which the head of the community is the oldest man in the community, they are called *Odionwere* The usual age-grades, Iroghae and Edion were found, all of them through age grade except that an eldest son who had completed the burial ceremony of his father could become an Edion before his age entitled him to promotion to this grade. Normally, the *Odionwere*, the oldest member of an Edion Age grade, was regarded as the village head and summoned village meetings which were attended by the Edion. In some cases, however,

there was an Enogie, an hereditary title-holder appointed by the Oba, and in these case, he, and not the Odionwere is regarded as the village head.<sup>9</sup>

Generally, there was little interference from Benin in the management of purely local affairs. So long as the villages paid their tributes and perform their communal services, they would be left alone. Approach to the Oba was always made through a sponsor known as ‘Onotueyevbo’. This term literally translated means ‘He who salutes for the people’ and the function of the ‘Onotueyevbo’ seem to have been to introduce the villagers to the Oba. The position of the ‘Onotueyevbo’, was in itself of great importance and it seems to be proven by the fact that many of the villages in Ekiadolor Town had as their ‘Onotueyevbo’, one of the young boys who was constantly in attendance of the Oba and who carried his ceremonial sword. On reaching man-hood, these “Omo-ada” relinquished their posts and another “Omo-ada” would become the “Onotueyevbo” of the village in the palace.<sup>10</sup>

The people of Ekiadolor have being able to maintain peace and unity amongst themselves and their surrounding villages, there haven’t come a time where there was a need to engage in communal wars or land disputes amongst themselves, if such scenarios come up, the matter is taken to the

customary court for peaceful negotiation and settlement, but to say that people ambush themselves or there is some sort of clash and people die during the process, they haven't being involved in it.<sup>11</sup>

## **End Notes**

1. Oral interview with Mr Sylvester, who is in his mid fifties, a resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2003.
2. Oral interview with Chief E Agbonevbare, who is in his early sixties, a palace chief of Ekiadolor Town, March 2, 2024.
3. Oral interview with Mr Amadin, who is in his early seventies, an elder and a resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2003.
4. Oral interview with Mr Sylvester, who is in his mid fifties, a resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2003.
5. Oral interview with Mr Friday, who is in his late fifties, an elder and resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2023.
6. Oral interview with Mr Sylvester, who is in his mid fifties, a resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2023.
7. Oral interview with Mrs Amadin who is also known as (Big Mummy), a grandmother and a native of Benin, December 19, 2023.
8. Oral interview with Mr Sylvester, who is in his mid fifties, a resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2023.

# CHAPTER THREE

## SOCIO-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF IGUE FESTIVAL IN EKIADOLOR TOWN

### **Introduction**

This chapter delves into the profound socio-cultural significance of this annual celebration, serving as a cornerstone of identity and the heritage for the people of Ekiadolor Town.

With its origins dating back to centuries, the Igue Festival represents a fusion of ancient rituals, religious reverence, and communal cohesion.

Through meticulous research and cultural analysis, we embark on a journey to unravel the layers of symbolism, ceremony, and community that defines this auspicious occasion.

This chapter covers the traditional practices and rituals practiced by the people of Ekiadolor during the Igue Festival. It also covers in details how the Igue Festival is celebrated by both the people of Ekiadolor Town and the Benin people as a whole. This chapter also covers the impacts of modernization on the cultural traditions of the Igue Festival in Benin Kingdom.

## **Traditional Practices and Rituals in Ekiadolor Town**

The Igue Festival is a traditional celebration that is deeply embedded in the cultural and religious heritage of the Benin people of Nigeria, particularly in the ancient city of Benin.

The origin of the Igue Festival, the making of sacrifice to one's head has always characterized the Benin people from time immemorial, tradition says that when the ancient man becomes conscious of his creator and his success in any undertaking, he appreciates his head and his God, he believes that his head has led him through his successful adventures of the year.

The first people who occupied the land of Benin at that time ran a system of gerontocracy where the old ruled, these old men were referred to as *Odionwere*, after this period came the *Ogiso* era.<sup>1</sup> The Ogiso's ruled the land of Benin between(40B.C-1100A.D), after this period came the *Oba* era, which was otherwise known as the second dynasty in Benin, this dynasty started with Oba Eweka I in 1200A.D.

The Igue Festival is a remarkable annual event that is characterized by elaborate ceremonies, rituals, and vibrant ethnic displays. The Igue Festival which is also known as the King's festival came forth in the 14<sup>th</sup> century

during the reign of Oba Ewuare the I, who was in power between the year 1440 and 1473.

Oba Ewuare, indeed, all the other Obas of Benin Kingdom are regarded as deities who are truly men and truly gods who are meant to be worshipped. Oba Ewuare was renowned as “Ogidigan Ebo no ye erhen khue” translated to mean *the strong deity that baths in fire*.<sup>2</sup>

The festival was a state event, instituted mainly in worship and the reverence of deities and the ancestors, for goodluck and victorious destinies. The Igue Festival was a conglomeration of rituals ceremonies, full of sacrifices, prayers, propitiations and elaborate festivals. The major animal of choice to be sacrificed was the leopard. Oba Ewuare’s Igue Festival was purely sacred, its aims and intentions where purely religious.

During the Igue Festival, the Oba received no visitors. Most of the rites to be performed were usually done within the palace walls. The glamorous and lavish palace rituals of the Igue Festival came to an end in 1897 during the popular British punitive expedition that led to the exile of Oba Ovoramwen to Calabar.<sup>3</sup>

The Igue Festival in Benin City is a set of annual cycle of rituals and rites that are performed to purify and strengthen the Oba and the Kingdom in preparation for the New Year. History has it that the festival has being celebrated for more than a thousand years.

It marks the the harvest of the first new yam season, it features traditional dance and procession of chiefs to the palace to re-affirm loyalty to the great Oba of Benin, before the main event, chieftaincy titles are bestowed upon selected worthy elders of the Benin Kingdom.

In the just concluded Igue Festival that held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2023, the newly appointed chiefs were Chief Ekhovbiye Oviasogie, he was bestowed Uwangue of Benin title, Chief Adanihuowan Igbinovia was honored with Eribo of Benin title, Chief Osamwonyi Osagiede has being made Ovienrioba of Benin alongside Chief Orobosa Enoma - the Osaogwe of Benin.

Also Chief Edegbe Ugbogbo was elevated as the Olaye of Benin while Chief Uyigwe Ugiagbe is now known as Obaroduagbon of Benin, others are Chief Amadi Stevens(Obamariaye of Benin), Chief Uyiokpen

Ajayi(Aiwerioba of Benin), alongside Chief Joseph Inuaghata(Aiyobazogie of Benin).

Also elevated are, Chief Friday Omoragbon(Osaguobadiaye of Benin), Chief Amadin Osayande(Ogieroba of Benin) and Chief Osayawe Odia(Eriyo of Benin). Similarly, Chief Osamede Omorogieva is now the U'se of Benin, while Chief Enoghayinagbon emerged the Obamedo of Benin.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Chief Samuel Ehigie is now known as Aitiloba of Benin, while Chief Osadebamwen Ediae(Obazumamwen of Benin), alongside Chief Godwin Ekhorutomwen who was named Obazumamwen of Benin.

During the Ekponmwanbor(Thanksgiving) traditional rites in Oba palace, palace Chiefs with their family members, friends and well-wishers and other palace functionaries, paid tributes to Oba Ewuare II.

Members of Igbeziken Royal group, joined by excited women voices that peeled above the maracas, dancing joyfully with the Chiefs who are expected to stay on course and make significant impacts, in adoration to Almighty God and the Benin throne. Paparazzi and visitors, craved to catch a glimpse of Oba Ewuare II - the apex of Royalty, decked in his unique traditional finery at the ceremony.

During the Igue Festival, the people of Benin turn out in their best attire and the whole city is practically caught in a crazy frenzy. Men and women dance and sing in pious glorification, renewing and worshipping the gods or their ancestors and at the same time praising the Supreme God that had protected them throughout the year.

Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town, Ovia North East, is a vibrant cultural celebration deeply rooted in the community's history. With a rich tradition dating back centuries, the festival holds immense cultural significance, serving as a symbol of unity, ancestral reverence, and continuity.

Marked by elaborate rituals, colorful ceremonies, and traditional performances, the Igue Festival is a time when the community comes together to honor its heritage and strengthen social bonds. At the heart of the Igue Festival is the veneration of ancestral spirits, a practice deeply ingrained in the belief system of the community.

The festival unfolds in a series of meticulously planned events, each carrying its own historical significance. The preparation period involves community-wide efforts, from decorating sacred places to crafting intricate costumes and artifacts. The way and manner in which the people of

Ekiadolor celebrate their Igue Festival is slightly different from the way the Benin people as a whole celebrate theirs.

The Ekiadolor people celebrate their Igue Festival in a more quiet and solemn way. On the day of Igue Festival which is held every December on any date that is fixed by the Oba, (they recently celebrated Igue Festival on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2023) every family that resides in Ekiadolor community, comes together in the comfort of their different homes and give thanks to their god for another successful year, they thank god for the year that ended and also ask that he blesses the upcoming year with fruitfulness and plenty. .

The Igue Festival in Ekiadolor is a time where the people in the community come together to celebrate the Igue Festival in accordance with the way it is celebrated in the palace,<sup>5</sup> during the festival, they bring cock, they slice coconut, kola and other items. What they do is that they use these items to pray on their hair to protect them to another year, whatever they lacked they say it during the course of their prayers, whatever they need is also mentioned during the course of their prayer, whatever request they might have is also tabled before their god,<sup>6</sup> these prayers take place on the

eve of the festival and the next day, celebration begins, people move from house to house wielding the *ewewe* leaf, in the past, they always got the *ewewe* leaf from the moat.<sup>7</sup>

There are no specific ritual practices involved in the celebration of the Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town, the only thing they did was after praying with that cock, they kill the cock, cut the head of the cock, spill its blood on the ground, and then they cook it and eat, but the coconut must be sliced and eaten on the eve of the Igue Festival,<sup>8</sup> the Igue Festival was supposed to be a public holiday, but the Ekiadolor people do not have a special holiday, so if the Igue Festival were to fall on a working day, the working class citizens of Ekiadolor Town would surely go to work, when they get back from work, they celebrate their festival, every one including women and children participates in the Igue Festival, the only people that except themselves from participating in the festival are those that call themselves Christians.<sup>9</sup>

### **Impact of Modernization on Cultural Traditions**

Following the dictionary meaning of the word ‘modernization’, modernization simply means ‘the process of updating something or making it work in a contemporary setting.

The impacts of modernization on cultural traditions, particularly evident in festivals like the Igue Festival, are profound and multifaceted, shaping the very fabric of these age-old practices.

One significant consequence of modernization is the gradual dilution of traditional cultural practices. As societies become increasingly interconnected and influenced by globalized trends, younger generations often find themselves drawn to more contemporary lifestyles, leading to a decline in participation and adherence to longstanding customs.<sup>10</sup>

This phenomenon manifests in various ways, from dwindling attendance at traditional ceremonies, to waning interests in the stories and rituals that once defined the essence of cultural celebrations. Consequently, there's a risk of losing the richness and depth of cultural heritage as it becomes overshadowed by modern sensibilities.

Moreover, modernization brings about changes in the very rituals and practices that constitute the core festivals like the Igue Festival. As communities adapt to evolving socio-economic and political landscapes, traditional ceremonies may undergo alterations or reinterpretations to align with contemporary values and norms.<sup>11</sup>

While some modifications may serve to breathe new life into cultural traditions, others may lead to a loss of integrity, sparking debates over the preservation versus adaptation of heritage practices, as traditional celebrations become increasingly commercialized, the emphasis shifts from preserving cultural heritage to generating economic revenue.

Festivals like the Igue Festival, one which is rooted in spiritual significance and communal cohesion, may now be overshadowed by commercial interests, with vendors, advertisers, and tourism agencies capitalizing on the event of profit.<sup>12</sup> This commercialization not only alters the dynamics of the festival but also raises questions about the authenticity and integrity of cultural practices when subjected to market forces.

However, amidst these challenges, modernization also presents opportunities for the revitalization and promotion of cultural traditions. The increased visibility afforded by technological advancements, such as social media and digital documentation, can amplify the reach and impact of festivals like the Igue Festival.<sup>13</sup>

Through online platforms, communities can share their cultural heritage with a global audience, fostering appreciation and understanding

across geographical and cultural boundaries. Additionally, modernization facilitates the preservation and transmission of cultural knowledge through digital archives, ensuring that future generation have access to their cultural legacy.

Furthermore, modernization plays a pivotal role in shaping the identity of individuals and communities, influencing how they perceive and engage with their cultural heritage.<sup>14</sup>

As societies navigate the complexities of globalization and modernity, cultural traditions like the Igue Festival serve as anchors of identity, reaffirming a sense of belonging and continuity amidst rapid change. By embracing both tradition and innovation, communities can navigate the challenges of modernization while safeguarding the essence of their cultural heritage for generations to come.

## End Notes

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6. Oral interview with Mr Sylvester, who is in his mid fifties, a resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2003.

7. Oral interview with Mrs Amadin who is also known as (Big Mummy), a grandmother and a native of Benin, December 19, 2023.
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## CHAPTER FOUR

### IMPACTS OF MODERNIZATION ON IGUE FESTIVAL

#### **Introduction**

The Igue Festival stands as a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the Benin Kingdom, celebrated annually with fervor, reverence, and a profound sense of tradition.

Rooted in centuries-old customs and beliefs, this ceremonial event has served as a cornerstone of Benin's cultural identity, embodying the spiritual essence and communal solidarity of its people.

However, amidst the tide of modernization sweeping across societies worldwide, the Igue Festival finds itself grappling with the forces of change, adaptation and preservation,

This chapter therefore aims at unraveling the dynamics surrounding the impacts of modernization on the Igue Festival, it also aims at understanding the various contemporary practices of Igue Festival using our case study- Ekiadolor Town and how modernization has influenced these various practices.

This chapter also looks at the various perspectives of the people inhabiting the town of Ekiadolor and their various opinions concerning the Igue festival.

### **Contemporary practices in Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town**

The Igue Festival is an elaborate festival in which the people of Benin come together at the end of the year to thank God for a successful year. The Igue Festival is characterized by cultural dances and all forms of cultural displays to mark that day, Ekiadolor Town which is a case study of this research project, is a small part of the whole of Benin City.

The contemporary day Igue begins with the *Ague*, which is a period of fasting when the Oba and his Chiefs go into strict seclusion, they are not allowed to see anyone during this period. It is only after the successful completion of the *Ague* that the Igue can begin in earnest.

All the palace chiefs, dressed in their royal regalia assemble together at the Oba's palace to pay homage to the Oba. After this, men and women clad in their Benin cultural attire dance and sing to their traditional songs with fervour. The Oba himself along side his chief guard, his chief priest and his palace chiefs also sing and dance along to their Benin traditional music.<sup>1</sup>

Modernization has had little to no effect on the practices of Igwe Festival in Ekiadolor Town<sup>2</sup>, the people of Ekiadolor have been able to maintain the tradition of killing a cock and using it to pray on their heads which is a tradition that was passed down by their grandfathers.<sup>3</sup>

Every December, the Oba's palace creates a calendar for Igwe Festival and other activities or events in the palace, then Ekiadolor Town would then pick a date that is most convenient for the people, but it must be in line with that of the palace decision<sup>4</sup>, what the residents of Ekiadolor do is just a festival whereby they gather their children, distant relations, siblings, e.t.c, together, bring coconut, kolanut and other items to thank their god or their heads that they've successfully seen the end of the year and also pray for long life to see other years. Some people who have lot of money to spare even kill cows and goats to celebrate their Igwe Festival.<sup>5</sup>

### **Influence of Modernization on Igwe Festival**

Before delving into the influence of Modernization on Traditional Festivals, it is pertinent to understand the meaning of modernization. According to vocabulary.com, modernization is the process of updating something or making it work in a contemporary setting. Britannica has

defined modernization as the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society. Modernization can also be described as ‘the process by which an underdeveloped region changes in response to inputs (ideologies, behavioural codes, commodities and institutional models) from already established industrial centers...’<sup>6</sup>

It is therefore a process of transformation and development through which traditional characteristics, be it economic, political, religious and cultural environments are being advanced ideologically to fit into international standards with the introduction of modern system and materials.<sup>7</sup>

Modernization can also be perceived as the process by which a society moves from having a traditional, agrarian, rural society to having a more secular, urbanized society, through the process, they change in terms of values and belief, population, geography and ideology. In this case, modernization theory regards the ‘traditional’ method as archaic, detrimental to development and belongs to the third world, while the modern way of life is contemporary and belongs to the western world.

Modernization is consequently a process of diffusion that draws a heavy gap between the traditional societies and modern societies, in which is believed that the former is inferior to the latter. This classifies the traditional societies as dependents of the western world when the development principle is concerned, but if not, such societies would be responsible for their own state of poverty and underdevelopment.

Modernization has influenced traditional festivals with the advent of modern technologies like the social media, modern music, language, etc. The social media has being used to promote and create awareness for traditional festivals in these recent times, in the past, information about traditional festivals were often passed by a town crier going around the village to pass information, but with the advent of social media like Facebook, Whatsapp, TikTok, Snapchat, Twitter, Television, Radio, etc,<sup>10</sup> passing of information is done in a more easier and civilized manner reaching a larger audience, virtual reality, live streaming, and online exhibitions enable people from different geographical locations and socio-economic backgrounds to engage with cultural traditions that they may not have had access to otherwise.

New technologies such as digital cameras, smart phones, and video recording equipment allow for easier documentation and preservation of cultural traditions. This ensures that rituals, performances, and practices can be recorded and shared with future generations, helping to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. Language has also been influenced by modernization on traditional festivals, taking the Igue Festival for example, the music and dance that was used in the past to commemorate the festival is quite different from what is being used now and this is as a result of modernization.

Modernization has also helped to preserve cultures and heritage, it can provide platforms for the documentation and preservation of cultural traditions like the Igue Festival through museums, and academic research.<sup>11</sup>

As societies modernize, traditional festivals have been altered to fit into contemporary lifestyles, potentially diluting the authenticity and depth of cultural traditions, the internet and social media platforms mentioned above can facilitate the global exchange of cultural traditions. People can learn about and participate in cultural practices from around the world, leading to a rich tapestry of global exchange and hybridization.

## **Community Perspective on Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town**

There are several perspectives gotten from the few people that were interviewed during the cause of this research on Igue Festival, According to Mr Sylvester, a resident and an informant in Ekiadolor Town, his perspective on the Igue Festival is quite on the traditional side, he is of the opinion that modernization has not influenced the traditional practices of Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town, they still follow the ways of their forefathers in the celebration of Igue Festival, he said and I quote, ‘we are still maintaining the old traditions laid down for us by our ancestors, we are still maintaining the tradition of killing a cock, spilling its blood, using it to pray and then eating it, modernization has not influenced Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town.

Another perspective was from Mr David Emokpae, who is a resident and informant of Ekiadolor Town who also has the same opinion that modernization has not affected Igue Festival and its practices, ‘on the day of Igue which is usually on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, I would wait for my elder brother to pray first before I carry out my prayers, my elder brother would be

the one to tell us younger siblings when to pray which is in line with our grandfathers’.

Contrasting perspective was presented by Prince Aimuanmwosa Ero who was of the opinion that modernization has greatly affected Igue Festival and its celebration. He said, ‘modernization has really changed the way and manner in which Igue Festival is celebrated, with the advent of modernization, cultural practices of his grandfathers has being altered, he said, in the past, people, men, women and children would be seen wearing their cultural attires to attend the festival, but nowadays, people have imitated the dressing of the white man, people are seen wearing English wears instead of their traditional native wears, he also said that, during the festival, titled Palace Chiefs are seen wielding and throwing the *Eben* in the air which is very symbolic and important to the Benin Culture, ‘*when the Eben falls from whoever is holding it, the person dies immediately or within the time frame of seven days*’<sup>14</sup> but nowadays, Palace Chiefs are seen just holding the *Eben* and waving it in the air.

Modernization has influenced the sort of music that is being played during the festival. He said, ‘that time when we were still little, people are

seen dancing joyfully and gyrating to the beat of traditional music, but now, you hear less of traditional music and more of contemporary music coming from a DJ(Disc Jockey). He also said ‘modernization has also affected the time span of Igue Festival, he said, according to tradition, Igue Festival is supposed to span for a month which is the month of December, but now, Igue is celebrated just for a day.

Despite these contrasting perspectives presented by these people of honor, on the modernization of Igue Festival, there is a striking balance between their different perspectives.

One, Igue Festival is a festival of thanksgiving that is celebrated by the people of Benin to thank their head for the successful completion of the year and to also ask for grace to go through the next year, although their mode of celebration in Ekiadolor Town is quite different from the mode of celebration in the palace.

Two, the month of which the festival is slated to be celebrated is still the same although with different dates and span of time. The Igue Festival that is being celebrated right now would not be the same way it would be celebrated on twenty years to come because what was old school to a person

in recent time would be old school to a person in the 20<sup>th</sup> generation, the way and manner of celebration would keep revolving for generations to come.

## End Notes

1. <https://youtu.be/z14mMwky-xc?si=3hRaYfPDsyikRn3C>, 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 2024
2. Oral interview with Mr Sylvester, who is in his mid fifties, a resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2003.
3. Oral interview with Chief E Agbonevbare, who is in his early sixties, a palace chief of Ekiadolor Town, March 2, 2024.
4. Oral interview with Mr Friday, who is in his late fifties, an elder and resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2023.
5. Oral interview with Mr David Emokpae, who is in his late twenties, a resident in Ekiadolor Town, March 2, 2024.
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12. Oral interview with Mr Sylvester, who is in his mid fifties, a resident of Ekiadolor Town, December 19, 2023.
13. Oral interview with Mr David Emokpae, who is in his late twenties, a resident in Ekiadolor Town, March 2, 2024.
14. Oral interview with Prince Aimuanmwosa Ero, a man in his mid twenties, a prince and also resident of Benin, 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 2024.

15.Oral interview with Mr Osakpolor Osakpamwan, a man in his early twenties and a resident in Benin, 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 2024.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the study and present the concluding thoughts.

#### **Summary**

The chapter one of this study contains the introduction to the background of the study of the impacts of modernization on Igue Festival where Ekiadolor Town was used as a case study, with the aims and objectives on why this project research was carried out. It also contains the statement of problem which seeks to investigate how modernization has impacted the Igue Festival, with the scope of the study and also the significance of the study, the methodology adopted in carrying out the research and various literature that was reviewed in relation to the study

The chapter two of this study examines the origin and development of Ekiadolor Town where the origin of the town was discussed extensively and also how the town has developed from its inception till date. This chapter

also talks about how the residents of the town has maintained peaceful co-existence with their neighbors from time immemorial till date.

The chapter three of this study delves into the socio-cultural significance of Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town, starting with the introduction of the chapter, and then the traditional practices and rituals in the town. This chapter goes further to elaborate on the impacts of modernization on cultural traditions, how cultural traditions that was passed down from generation to generation have being impacted with the changing times.

The chapter four of this study talks about the impacts of modernization on Igue Festival, starting with the introduction, it also contains the contemporary practices in Igue Festival in Ekiadolor Town. This chapter also contains the influence of modernization on Igue Festival and also the various community perspectives on Igue Festival where residents of Ekiadolor gave their different opinion on whether or not modernization has being influenced by modernization.

## **Conclusion**

The modernization of Igue Festival has undoubtedly brought both positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, modernization has helped in revitalizing interest in the festival among younger generations, preserving cultural heritage, and attracting tourists, thereby boosting the local economy.

Moreover, technological advancements have facilitated better organization and promotion of the festival making it more accessible to a wider audience.

However, the modernization of the Igue Festival also presents challenges. There's a risk of diluting the authenticity of the event as traditional practices may be overshadowed by commercialization or modern entertainment. Additionally, there might be conflicts between preserving tradition and adapting to changing times, leading to debates within the community.

Furthermore, the modernization of the Igue Festival has sparked a dialogue about the intersection of tradition and contemporary values. It has prompted discussions within the community about the relevance of certain

customs and rituals in today's society, leading to a deeper appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage.

Moreover, the integration of modern elements into the festival has provided opportunities for collaboration between local artists, musicians, and craftsmen with professionals from other fields such as event management, marketing, and technology. This cross-pollination of ideas has enriched the festival experience and contributed to the overall cultural landscape of the region.

On the other hand, the rapid pace of modernization may also pose threats to the sustainability of the festival in the long term. As societal values evolve and demographics shift, there's a risk of losing traditional knowledge and practices if they are not actively preserved and transmitted to future generations

In conclusion, while modernization has brought various benefits to the Igue Festival, it's crucial to strike a balance between preserving its cultural essence and embracing innovation. While it has brought about economic growth and cultural exchange, it also presents challenges in maintaining the authenticity and integrity of the festival. By embracing

change while remaining rooted in tradition, stakeholders can ensure that the Igue Festival continues to evolve and thrive as a vibrant celebration of cultural heritage.

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#### **List of Informants**

<b>Names</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Place of Interview</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>
Mr Sylvester	54	Teacher	Ekiadolor Town	19/12/2023
Chief E. Agbonevbare	62	Palace Chief	Ekiadolor Town	2/03/2024
Mrs Amadin	50	School Proprietor	Ekiadolor Town	19/12/2023
Mr Friday	58	Retired Teacher	Ekiadolor Town	19/12/2023
David Emokpae	27	Business man	Ekiadolor Town	2/03/2024
Prince Aimuanmwosa Ero	27	Business man	Ugbowo	10/03/2024
Mr Osakpolor Osakpamwan	25	Business man	Ugbowo	10/03/2024
Mr Amadin	72	Retired Teacher	Ekiadolor Town	19/12/2023

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