



An Assessment of The Socio-Cultural Significance of Ibegwu Festival in Agbeji, Dekina, Kogi State

Yusufu, Blessing Elejo, Ph.D.¹, Jibrin, Amos Ochimana²

¹Department of Religious Studies, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria

²Postgraduate Student of Religious Studies Department, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria

Published Online:
02 July 2025

Article DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.55677/CRB/I07-01-CRB2025>

License:

This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

ABSTRACT: Ibegwu is an annual festival that is usually celebrated to mark the beginning of the harvesting of yam. It is celebrated to honor the spirits of the ancestors and appease them for the release of blessings. The Ibegwu festival is a socio-cultural festival that plays significant roles in the Agbeji community. It is an important aspect of the people's cultural and religious beliefs. Ibegwu, which is also known as the spirits of the ancestors, are believed to have the power to influence the present and the future. The Igala people believe in the afterlife and in their ability to communicate with their ancestors' spirits through ceremony and ritual. It serves as a medium for the preservation of culture and spiritual reawakening; it also binds people together in the community. The study explores the role of the Ibegwu festival in the social, cultural, and religious life of the Agbeji community. A qualitative approach, secondary form of data collection and participant observations were used. The findings reveal that the Ibegwu cultural festival provides community bonding, enables preservation of cultural beliefs, and purifies the people and the community. It concludes that the Ibegwu festival is central to the people's lives, as it continues to preserve the cultural beliefs and positively transform the lives of the people, regardless of the various challenges that confront it. The Ibegwu festival should be revitalized or sustained to bring peace, harmony, and cultural continuity to the Agbeji community.

KEY WORDS: Ibegwu, Festival, Socio-cultural, Agbeji Community, Women.

INTRODUCTION

Festivals are annual ceremonies that are undeniably peculiar and this is because, no two festivals are the same. In the occasion of any festivals, diverse practices are showcased that are genuinely amusing and educating which thereby creating a medium that binds people together, help them transmit value from one generation to another and it helps the people in the expression of their cultural heritage. The importance of festivals has been highlighted by scholars as it brings about the preservation of cultural heritage and reinforcing communal unity. For instance, festivals, according to Olorunyomi(2005), are "an avenue for the articulation of communal values, solidarity, and a sense of belonging among members of a community". In a similar vein, Nwafor highlights that traditional festivals function as a vehicle for moral code reinforcement and oral tradition transmission in addition to offering amusement (2013).

Ibegwu, which literally means "ancestors" is celebrated in Agbeji community annually, is both social and cultural ceremonies that manifest the beliefs, traditions and customs of the people. This is in agreement with Akoh when he said, Ibegwu festival is one of the annual or major festivals that is celebrated in honour of the ancestors. During this festival, sacrifices are made to the divinities, spirits and ancestors (2015). Similarly, Isaiah in his work, "The Igala Traditional Religious Belief System: Between Monotheism and Polytheism" vividly establish that among the Igala:

Ancestors are specially remembered once every year at the Ibegwu festival. The day of this festival occurs shortly before yams are harvested. It marks the beginning of the period of harvesting yams. In this period, the ancestors are appreciated for their protection throughout the previous year and are appeased to bestow more blessings in the coming year. The Ibegwu shrine is cleaned thoroughly during this period in preparation for the festival(2015).

It is a channel through which the community reaffirms its shared identity and deepen community bond. It is believed that the spirits of the ancestors, known as ibegwu, can influence the present and the future. Through ritual and ceremony, the Igala people believe they can stay in touch with their ancestors' spirits and maintain a strong belief in the afterlife. In support of this notion, Mathias et al., stated that, “this Ibegwu is practiced, virtually nearly in all the nine local government areas in Kogi East District (Idah, Ibaji, Igalamela, Odolu, Ofu, Dekina, Ankpa, Olamaboro, Bassa and Omala local government” (2024). The Agbeji community honours their ancestors, the Ibegwu, with a festival that features masquerading, traditional songs, dances and sacrifices. Additionally, the event provides an opportunity for the town to honour its history and traditions. This paper seeks to explore the concept of Ibegwu, analyze its cultural practices and rituals. It also examines the socio-cultural significance of Ibegwu and the challenges facing Ibegwu festival.

Brief description of Agbeji Community

Agbeji is a small town in Dekina Local Government Area in Eastern Senatorial District of Kogi State, Nigeria. It is a unique town in Dekina Local Government because of its proximity to Anyigba – a university town in Kogi State. Agbeji lies approximately between latitude 7°30'N and longitude 7°10'E within the Derived Savanna vegetation zone of Nigeria (Amhakhan and Achimugu 2011; Aina et al. 2013; Essien 2014). Agbeji is surrounded by smaller towns, villages and homesteads, whose inhabitants in numerous ways have left their impact on the environment. It has an altitude of 420m above sea level and covers an area of 10kilometres square. Agbeji has a humid tropical climate. The climate is characterized by seasonal alternation of the Tropical Continental (TC) and Tropical Maritime (TM) air masses and all year round high temperature with an annual range of 24.10 to 31.20C. One major characteristic of this climate is wet and dry seasons (Essein et al. 2014).

The concept of Ibegwu Festival

Agbeji Community, like every other community in Igala land holds unique beliefs system. Amongst them is the belief in the existence and worship of God (*Ojo*). Also, the Igala 'belief' in the existence of ancestors (Ibegwu), is founded on the related African truth that life is a continuum, a transition between the living, the dead and the unborn. The Igalas believe in the involvement of the ancestors in the affairs of men as agents/purveyor of the divine fate from *Ojoonu* or *Ochamachala* (Awodiet al. 2022).

According to Negedu (2025), “the Ibegwu are ever-living and active, once they have died, they become ‘everlasting’. The Africans regard these beings as being alive and keeping surveillance over the affairs of the living”. He continues that during the Ibegwu festival is the period that the ancestors are remembered once every year. This happens shortly before the harvesting of new yam, as this is done to mark the beginning of harvesting of yam. He said in this period, the ancestors are appreciated for their protection throughout the previous year and they are appeased in order to shower more blessings upon them in the coming year (2025).

Mathias (2024) in his work “Ibegwu: ancestors on the mission of prevention and punishment of adultery among Igala people of Nigeria”, highlighted the concept of Ibegwu; Ibegwu means ancestors. Ancestors were the fathers and the elders of the Igala communities that have gone into a grave beyond (dead). Every elder in the community when dies translated and joined the ancestors. Ancestors still remain part of the destinies of those that are living. At death, only body decomposes but the spirit continues to be active and soul has a link with the people that are living. There is a festival in honour of Ibegwu (ancestors) called Otegwu. Otegwu is observed annually. It involves provision of sacrifices to the dead ones. It also involves eating and feasting at the community burial grounds where elders have been buried. Masquerades also come out as part of the festival to signify the coming and the presence of the ancestors. Ancestors play significant roles in the lives of the living.

Ancestors (Ibegwu) protect the living from harms. When the living is harmed, they fight for them and avenge on their behalf. Ibegwu punishes people who have done evils to their fellow kinsmen/women by plaguing the offenders with diseases that are incurable or with strange affliction. Ibegwu also punish people who deprived others their lawful possession e.g. farmlands. For instance, offender may be bitten by strange snake without cure. Ibegwu can also punish people who betray others and the trust those people have in them with strange ailment. Ibegwu can also punish people who afflicted the orphans and the widows with strange diseases. Ibegwu also punishes act of adultery and finally people can also swear by Ibegwu to establish or affirm their position in a matter or an issue. Ibegwu were ancestors who are subordinate to the Almighty Being. Our ancestors (Ibegwu) keep eyes on their offsprings and prevent mischief from being committed against them. Ibegwu were sent by God to serve as messengers or emissaries for God.

Ibegwu means the spirits of the ancestors. The purpose of Ibegwu is to guide against evil practices in the Igala communities. They guide against unwholesome, unculturable and ungodly practices like incest, adultery, abortion, children having sexual affairs in their parent's matrimonial beds or rooms, cases of poisoning and charming of fellow men. Ibegwu also intervene in cases of illegitimate inheritance, non-befitting burial (when burial items are not properly provided or children using their hands to bury their parents). Ibegwu also intervene in land adjudication and dispute resolution.

Cultural Practices and Rituals involved in Ibegwu Festival

The uniqueness of Ibegwu festival is such that certain rituals practices are carried out in the course of the festival. Rituals are means of communicating with the spirit world, these rituals are conducted to seek the favour of the ancestors and deties, and to ensure the good of the community. “Africans are notoriously religious, and each person has rituals that connect them with the spiritual forces that influence their lives” (Mbiti 1969). These rituals are performed for several reasons. For instance, purification and cleansing is

part of the rituals that are performed during Ibegwu to ensure harmony between the living and the dead. This is because; the people believe that spiritual and physical wellbeing are interconnected. This shows how spiritually connected Agbeji community is to its ancestors.

Ancestors Veneration: Ancestors Veneration is an important aspect of Ibegwu festival. This is an act of honouring the spirits of their dead forefathers through offerings sacrifices and pouring of libation. In Agbeji community for instance, families of Egwu-afia (the spirits of the ancestors that come out in form of masquerade) normally prepare for their arrival. They come out most times during festivals. Supporting this, Ayegba succinctly explained that:

The Egwu-afia is the representative of the spirit of the ancestors who come out from time to time either during events, burials, or special occasions, etc. where they are to perform a function. In a literally term, Egwu means the dead one, while *afia* (avia) means the long height, as both are Igala words used to describe the spirit of the ancestors in that form (2023).

Akoh in his work, "The Analysis of Theology of the Sacrifice in Igala Religion" asserts that the Ibegwu festival, can be hardly celebrated without masquerade (*Egwu*), Kolanut, palm wine, and local drink (*Ote-oburukutu*). To him, the presence of these things symbolizes that the deceased left behind legacy and responsible family in the world (2015). The *Egwu-afia* family would prepare beniseed soup with goat meat and pounded yam. This food is normally taken to the shrine with *Ote-oburukutu* (local wine). This is to honor the spirits of their ancestors. After the whole cooking and purification, in the afternoon around 3 or 4 pm, the spirits of the ancestors will come out in the form of *Egwu-afia*(masquerade) to greet their children for the food and drinks offered to them earlier. On their arrival at the compound of their children, all the children and grandchildren will come and pour libation for their ancestors to march on, after which the *Egwu-afia* would pronounce blessings upon them, and they will return to their shrine. This has spiritual consequences, as it leads to blessings on those that are qualified and curses on offenders. It also establishes and strengthens the relationship between Ibegwu (ancestors) and their living ones.

Purification and Cleansing rites:Ibegwu festival involves purification rites to cleanse the community and the people of any unforeseen evil or plague and to harmonize the people and their ancestors. For instance, in Agbeji community, on the day of Ibegwu festival some compounds perform purification rites. Very early in the morning, everybody in the compound would go to the backyard of the house before the purification process would commence. The purification is mostly carried out by someone who is not the son of the father of the house or the grandchildren of the dead forefathers. Whoever carrying out the purification process is given certain instructions to work with. He or she would run through the compound and use the purification leaves to beat each house. After the procedure, the people will be informed to return to their respective houses. It is believed that anyone who remained inside the house when this process is carried out would encounter punishment from the ancestors.

Masquerade performances: Masquerading is another important cultural practice among the Igala people. Masquerades are believed to embody the spirits of the ancestors; they perform significant roles in festivities. For instance, they can educate, entertain, and compel societal norms via dances and dramatization during Ibegwu festival. In Igala land, there exist different masquerades, like *Egwu-afia*, *Olagenyi*, *ukpokwu*, *owuna* etc. Most of these masquerades can also be found in Agbeji community. During this festival, masquerades like *Egwu-afia* and *Olagenyi* among others do come out to first greet their children and grandchildren by moving from house to house. They also entertain the community in the process, they are specialists who sing and beat traditional drums for the masquerades, it is the beating of drums and singing, with the chanting of the people, which makes it entertaining because the masquerades dance in the process.

Socio-cultural significance of Ibegwu Festival in Agbeji community

Like any other festivals celebrated in Igala land, Ibegwu has proven to be an integral part of Agbeji community religious beliefs, as it continues to play significant roles the people's social and cultural life. In addition, Rosemary (2023) stated that, the Alekwu practice which is a term used to describe Ibegwu in Idoma language, reinforce community cohesion and provide a sense of identity, cultural heritage, and continuity. Additionally, the belief system provides a framework for resolving disputes, maintaining social order, and seeking justice within the community. This section shall consider the sociocultural significance of Ibegwu festival in Agbeji community.

Maintenance of order: In sociology, the phrase social control mechanisms refers to the social measures that regulate the behaviour of individuals or groups which could be informal or formal (Rosemary 2023). Since ancient times, African societies have developed ways to restrain human excess. This implies that humans should become aware of the beliefs and gods that punish them for their wicked actions. Despite the growth of Christianity and Islam, this practice has persisted because most people think that these religions' legal systems are sluggish to execute justice. Because of this, African religion is still significant today. The Ibegwu belief shared some similarities with "Shongo and Ogun," the gods of justice, are revered in many Yoruba societies. Additionally, OgwugwuUmuhuUkpor, a feared deity among the Nsukka people of Enugu State, is the community's method of administering divine justice. In a similar vein, the Alekwu deity is practiced by the Idoma-speaking people of Benue State. Due to the increasing wickedness in our culture, this ancient god of justice has refused to outlive its usefulness. Furthermore, the Ibegwu was founded in locations like Ogugu in Olamaboro LGA, Kogi State, in order to punish offenders and maintain the sanity of its peoples' conduct. This is due to the belief that the Ibegwu, or ancestors, watch over their people to prevent them from acting evilly. This idea aids in

controlling their behavior and day-to-day activities. Similar to this, the Ibegwu belief has greatly aided the Agbeji community's serenity through the rules that govern the area. Among the Ibegwu laws that support communal harmony and guard against evil are the prohibitions against adultery for married women. If it occurs, the person may suffer from illnesses or unexpected death. Another regulation is that the society forbids the use of insults like *me bie*, which refers to (drinking a woman's menstrual blood). In addition, the Ibegwu (ancestors) forbids stealing, money rituals, and the murder of brothers or sisters. Similarly, Ibegwu forbids abortion since it is considered as taking of another person's life. The purpose of all these regulations is to maintain order in the society.

It is a force for social cohesion: We have many cultural festivals in Igala land that bring people to together, Ibegwu is one of those festivals. Ibegwu festival binds the community together through its shared beliefs and practices. From the researcher's experience of the Ibegwu festival, the festival celebration is a period of great joy and happiness for the community. For the teenagers and youths, it is a period of great joy and entertainment for them because; this is the only period that some of them are allowed to go out in the course of the celebration without any form of restriction. During the festival, the sons and daughters of Agbeji from abroad come together to celebrate their culture and honour their ancestors. This happens, as the people believe that it is an avenue for socialising and meeting new and old friends. The sons, daughters and relatives that come from all over the country meet together even people who have not seen for two years, three years and more have opportunity to meet each other and they also eat together from the same pot. This results in strengthening the bond that exists between siblings and families. Furthermore, for people that have not been in good terms before the Ibegwu day, the significance of Ibegwu is seen in the fact that it unite people together, irrespective of one's educational and financial statuses. This practice promotes unity and peace among families and individuals within the community.

The Ibegwu festival celebration helps in the sustenance of tradition. Tradition has to do with the transference of beliefs and customs from one generation to another, mostly via the word of mouth. Ibegwu is an aspect of the people's customs and traditions that happens annually at different times in different places within the Igala community. For the Agbeji community, it is mostly celebrated in the dry season, between November and December every year. This practice has been in existence even before the birth of the researcher and has continued to exist. There has not been a year that passes without celebrating Ibegwu. In addition, during this festival, the elders of each family seize the opportunity to teach their young ones about the unique culture of Agbeji and its significance to their lives; this is often done through storytelling, folklore, dances, and songs. This will not only help the people to value their cultural heritage, but it will also ensure its continuity and preservation.

The Role of Women in Ibegwu Festival

The place and role of women in Africa society cannot be undermined; this is because women are endowed with great potentials and abilities. Their roles cut across every facets of life, including family, career, education, politics, science, entrepreneur, religion etc. In African traditional religion, women play diverse roles especially in events like festivals. This is supported by Mite, (69) he asserts that women play significant roles in religious activities of African society. Mbiti (71) believes that one of the areas where this role is prominent is in offering prayers for their families in particular and their communities in general. He further explains that in many areas they act as women priest (priestesses). Below are the roles of women in ibegwu festival in agbeji community:

Women serve as priestess during Ibegwu

Before now, in Igala traditional religion, the priesthood position was mostly held by men. However, as things are changing, women now perform priesthood functions. Okpe supporting this view, he said, "In the past, Igala society, traditional priesthood was almost the activity of men. However, in recent times this role in Igala indigenous society is now carried out by women to the extent that they appear to exercise more expertise at it than men" (190). One of the participants of the Ibegwu festival said that women perform certain roles, like performing sacrifices and making prayers on behalf of the people. They also conduct purification rites during this festival. She further said that, on the day of Ibegwu, a particular woman who acts as a priestess carries out cleansing and purification rites to set the house in order before the arrival of their ancestors (Ibegwu). Certain items like water and cottonwood are used for that cleansing (interview, Ichame). According to Alami, who is also a participant, she said the reason for the cleansing and purification rites is to make the house pure before they welcome their ancestors. She said it is believed that things like fighting within the family, adultery, fornication, and women's monthly cycle (menstruation) are believed to make the house unclean. She also said that even the sexual act of a married couple is considered an impurity. Because of the aforementioned, the house is supposed to be purity (Personal interview).

Food preparation

Food forms an important aspect of the Ibegwu festival. This festival is characterized by eating and drinking. It is the responsibility of the men to provide all the food that would be used for the festival, and it is women's responsibility to prepare it. In an interview with Metuwo, she said the food is not to be prepared any old way; there is a special way it is supposed to be prepared. She also said that the food that is used for the festival is pounded yam and beniseed soup. The women would prepare it, pound it, and also take some part of the food to the shrine of *egwu Afia* (masquerade that represents the spirit of their ancestors). This is done by an because a woman is not allowed to enter the *egwu afia* shrine (interview). After a part of the food is taken to the *egwu afia* shrine, the rest is shared among the family and eaten together by the family.

Women as Entertainers

Women act as entertainers during the Ibegwu festival. They dance, especially when following masquerades. In Agbeji community, women are the most spectators in this festival. In addition to dancing, Women also sing and chant during Ibegwu festival. It is believed that different songs are rendered during the Ibegwu festival. Aside the fact that songs can entertain, it also add colour to the festival. Most songs are to give honor to the spirit of their ancestors that come out in the form of masquerades (Personal interview, Metuwo). Most of these songs express people's feelings of joy and thanksgiving. They convey the faith of the worshippers about their ancestors, their assurance and hopes with reference to the hereafter.

The Challenges facing Ibegwu festival

Though the Ibegwu festival continues to play a crucial role in Agbeji cultural identity, it has encounters challenges from modernization and the influences of other religions like Christianity and Islam. Also, education, age and rural to Urban migration are part of the challenges of this great festival.

Influence of Islam and Christianity in the Land: These religions continue to exert dominance on Agbeji Community religious beliefs, and this pose a threat to the existence and continuity of Ibegwu festival. In addition Mathias (2024) added that:

Christianity and Islam are really weakening the influence of Ibegwu among Igala people. However, this does not mean that the Ibegwu belief system has gone into extinction. The impacts are still been felt in the community. The punishments of breaking Ibegwu are still being experienced in the communities. Even as a child, I have witnessed people experiencing its punishments.

The majority of the populations of people in Agbeji community are either Christians or Muslims, with minority belonging to African Religion. Agbeji Community is overwhelmed with diverse churches and mosque. This becomes a challenge as most adherents of these religions kick against the Ibegwu practice. They preach against this cultural and religious belief of the people thereby, creating apathy towards the festival. In an interview with Aminu, he says that, "the Christians and Muslims in the community shy away from participating in the festival because; they feel that it is against their religious beliefs" (personal interview).

Rural to Urban migration: This is another challenge that is facing Ibegwu festival in Agbeji community. Those that are supposed to take over the baton of leading the people in their religion and cultural life are running to urban areas. Most citizens of Agbeji community are urban dwellers; they run to those urbanized cities in search for white collar job and a better life. This has been a great challenge to both the progress and continuity of this great festival, as one could only see a handful of persons that are available for the festival.

Financial Limitation: Ibegwu is a festival that requires celebration in an elaborate way and finance contributes largely to the success of Ibegwu festival celebration. The practitioners need money to buy materials like yam, chicken, kolanut, goat, local wine (*Ote-oburukutu*) which would be used in the course of the festival. But the current reality is that there is inflation in the cost of those things. This makes it difficult for the people of Agbeji community to celebrate Ibegwu in an elaborate way. Even with the support of their children in urban areas, they still cannot have enough money to finance this festival, this is because majority of the people are farmers and business people.

Education and Age: Education has both positive and negative impacts when it comes to the practice of Ibegwu. It could be a means by which Agbeji community enlighten their people on the role of Ibegwu festival in their lives and community at large. Adversely, it has also affected the practice of Ibegwu in the community, as those educated citizens no longer pay attention to this festival. From careful observation, one could say that, the educated elites feel ashamed to associate with anything related to Ibegwu, even though some of them were practicing it before they became educated. Age also stands as a barrier mitigating the continuity of Ibegwu festival this is because, most of the custodians of this festival are in most cases aged people. While the older people who have this knowledge and wisdom are dying drastically, it becomes a thing of concern if Ibegwu festival would continue to exist or not because it becomes difficult to see available young individuals within the community to entrust this responsibility to. The young ones that are supposed to take over are neglecting their roles because some of them see the practice as not hygienic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Christians and Muslims in Agbeji community should not address the festival with derogatory terms. It is just a celebration in honour of their ancestors. Same way Christians celebrates a saint that is how Agbeji community celebrates Ibegwu. Ibegwu is a form of celebrating their cultural heritage and should be embraced with all willingness and joy.
- ii. While the elderly people with this knowledge are gradually aging and some are dying, it is recommended that the younger generation should be encouraged to take active role in this cultural festival in order to help in the preservation of their culture and beliefs.
- iii. The government should offer financial assistance to the community for this celebration. Doing this will make the celebration elaborate and more fun than it has been.
- iv. The educated sons and daughters of Agbeji community should offer support for the success of Ibegwu festival celebration. Since they are educated, they can offer fresh ideas and initiatives that could make the celebration relevant to the contemporary trend.

CONCLUSION

This work has examined the sociocultural significance of Ibegwu festival in Agbeji community. The study shows that Ibegwu festival, which is the celebration in honour of their ancestors, is an important aspect of their culture. The celebration is accompanied with offerings and sacrifices, which helps to maintain peace and harmony between the people and their ancestors. It is significant to the people as it helps in the maintenance of order, unites the people together and serves as a means for the sustainability of the people's cultural heritage and tradition. It was discovered that overtime; this festival has been faced with several challenges like the influence of Christianity and Islamic religions, rural to urban migration, financial limitations. Also age with education is affecting the practice of Ibegwu festival. In spite of the aforementioned challenges, the celebration and practice of Ibegwu festival continues to exist and has never gone into extinction. The existence of Ibegwu festival shows the significant role it plays in the lives of the people and the Agbeji community.

REFERENCES

Books

1. Akoh, Israel.(2015). *The Analysis of the Theology of the Sacrifice in Igala Religion*. Makurdi: Obeta Continental Press.
2. Boston, J. S. (1968). *The Igala Kingdom*.Oxford: Oxford University Press,
3. Mbiti, John.S.(1969).*African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann.
4. Nwafor, C. (2013).*Traditional Festivals in Nigeria: A Socio-Cultural Perspective*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
5. Olorunyomi, S. (2005).*Cultural Expressions and Communal Unity in African Festivals*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

Journal Articles

1. Ayegba, A. A. (2023).Egwu-AfiaIgala Cultural Practice among the Indigenous Igala People of Onitsha, Anambra State and its Role in Peace Sustainability in the Society.*International Journal of Trend in Research and Development*, 10(3), Pp. 288-291.
2. Awodi et al. (2022).Culture and National Integration: a Study of Cultural Festivals among the Igala Speaking People of Kogi State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 8 (11), Pp. 18-29.
3. Daniel, R. O. (2023). Dynamics of African Traditional and Cultural Practice as a Social Control Mechanism: A Deterrent Theoretical Analysis on the Alekwu Belief System among the Idoma People in Nigeria”. *Wukari International Studies Journal*, 7 (3), Pp. 141-151.
4. Essienn et al. A Study of Species Composition of the Derived Savanna Vegetation at Agbeji, Kogi State, Nigeria”.*Journal of Biological, Pharmaceutical and Chemical Research*, 1 (1), Pp. 7-16, 2014.
5. Matthias, Olufemi D. O., Funmilola, Aduke A., and Deborah,IbechoneP. (2024).Ibegwu: Ancestors on the Mission of Prevention and Punishment of Adultery among Igala People of Nigeria. *International Journal of Law, Politics and Humanities Research*, Vol.5 No. 6, Pp. 23-38.
6. Oyintonyo, Michael O., and Esther B. (2018).The Socio-Cultural Significance of Traditional Festivals in Nigeria, A Study of Odi-Ogori-Ba-Uge Festival, Odi Kingdom, Bayelsa State. *Journal of Economic, Management and Social Science*, 4 (4), Pp. 140-152.
7. Okpe Nicholas Ojoajogwu. (2018). “An Assessment of the Socio-Religious Roles of Women in a Traditional Igala Society”. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*. 5 (8), Pp. 187-192.

Internet Sources

1. Isaiah, Negedu A. (2025, January 9). “The Igala Traditional Religious Belief System: between Monotheism and Polytheism”. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/og.v10i1.7>.
2. Mbiti, J. (1988). “The role of Women in African Traditional Religion”. Published in *Cashiers des Religions Africaines* afrikaworld.net/afrel/atr-women.htm.

Appendix 1: Oral Interview

S/N	NAME	AGE	ADDRESS	OCCUPATION	DATE
1	Metuwo Salifu	55	Agbeji	Trader	13/01/2025
2	Ichame Ikani	43	Agbeji	Trader	21/02/2025
3	Alami Ibrahim	66	Agbeji	Trader	24/01/2025
4	Aminu Mudi	38	Lagos	Gas Vendor	24/01/2025