

Igba-Ada Festival: Commemorating the Ohafia Invaders as a Kind of Traditional Carnival through Ovala Festival in Aguleri Cosmology

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ABSTRACT

The ritual festival of Igba-Ada is a traditional carnival which symbolizes commemoration of the synergy between the living and dead and it acts as a spiritual conduit that binds or compensates the entire villages that constitutes Aguleri as a kingdom of one people with one destiny through the mediation of their contact with their ancestral home and with the built/support in religious rituals and cultural security of their extended brotherhood. This research work discusses Mmanwu Festivals and their symbolic representation in an Igbo community focusing on Igba-Ada carnival in Aguleri, Anambra East local government area. Secondary source as a kind method were reviewed and analyzed using the area cultural approach. This festival is a commemoration of how the Ohafia invaders were chased out and conquered by the egalitarian youths of Aguleri by reenforcing themselves in other to wage war against their enemies. Basically, it usually an occasion for jocundity and thanksgiving; people appear in their best through mimic forms and give of their best. The carnival reunites their intimate brotherhood and shows how the Aguleri community uses this through the mediation of its rituals to reassert or validate the continuity and existence of Aguleri [Igbo] Traditional Religion. It is very significant in the sense that at the conclusion of the Igba-Ada carnival, the King acquires the symbolic and political authority to rule and the power to face his enemies and symbolically preserve his realm.

KEYWORDS

Ancestor; brotherhood; carnival; festival; Igba-Ada

INTRODUCTION

The ritual festival of Igba-Ada is a commemoration of ancestral cult festival which symbolizes kingship and acts as a spiritual conduit that binds or compensates the communities that constitutes Eri kingdom through the mediation for the loss of their contact with their ancestral home and with the built/support in religious rituals and cultural security of their extended brotherhood. It is a day festival. This festival is usually an occasion for jocundity and thanksgiving; people appear in their best and give of their best. The offerings are mostly thank-offerings, and the meals constitute an opportunity of communion between the divinity and his 'children'. The renewal of this covenant relationships between communities is done to reunite their intimate brotherhood and to show how the Igbo communities uses this festival to show their gratitude to their gods and ancestors for various reasons known to them and consequently commemorates Eri as their great ancestor in order words under sacred ordination reasserting Aguleri leadership over other Igbo communities as the head of the Igbo race in diaspora.

Origin and Migration

According to Isichei (1980:2) “it is possible to visit Aguleri, and go away seeing almost nothing of the town at all. Most of the houses are set back from the road, and cover a wide area, in the classic Igbo pattern. And one may know the town well and never guesses its immense antiquity, for there is nothing visible to suggest it. Yet Aguleri, perhaps more than any other place, was the cradle of Igbo civilization. A long history, encapsulated in mythology, recalls a man called Eri, sent from God, who lived there”.

According to Idigo (1990), Aguleri is a very large town situated at the bank of the river Anambra called Omanbala by the indigenes and corruptly nicknamed Anambra by the European Settlers. Despite being a largely nautical people who regularly traveled downriver to trade (Borgatti, 2003), Aguleri people are basically farmers. Their traditional way of life was so good and satisfactory that in recent times they have often been reluctant to abandon the land and move into the modern sector of the Nigerian economy (Idigo, 1955:2).

Strictly speaking, no one actually knows when Aguleri was incepted as a town but the truth of the matter is that the history of Aguleri may have dated back to the early part of civilization and modernity in Nigeria. Since there were no written records, the dates of events, origin and migration of Aguleri people depended heavily on time- honoured legends, oral tradition, recent archaeological discoveries and excavations (Omoregie, 1989). Aguleri is a community of “one people – one destiny” (Arkin, 1989: xi). The origin of Aguleri people would be linked to the migration of Igbo race to this present Nigeria as a nation. One school of thought traces the origin of the Igbo people to that of the Jews who were believed to have migrated from Egypt. The words Igbo, Ibo, Ebo, Heebo are said to be a corruption of the name, Hebrew. As D. J Wiseman pointed out through the mouth of (Ikeanyibe, 1999:10) “the word Hebrew in Jewish language meant wanderer or a people with no secure place in society”, although, Aguleri people are part of the larger Igbo group till date.

Settlement

Eri, the founder of Igbo race was among the migrants and he was believed to have moved and settled temporarily with his followers, in an area near the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers (Ikeanyibe, 1999:11 & Idigo, 2001:72). From there Eri moved to the Anambra valley and quickly settled near the bank of the River Omanbala [corruptly called Anambra by the Europeans] at a place known as Eri-Aka near Odanduli stream, which is presently today located between Ivite and Igboezunu Aguleri respectively. Over time, Eri went out on war raids and captured many men and women and his settlement began to grow exceedingly (Idigo, 1990:3). Eyisi (2010:4) asserts that “by the 1280 B. C they had fully established the first Igbo settlement in Aguleri with distinct culture, religion, tradition and language”.

RESEARCH METHODS

Materials used in the course of this study were gathered from empirical method through where the secondary sources were applied. The study applies the method that is systematic which can be or have been applied within a distinct discipline of history and culture of a particular people. This research work consists of documented materials both published and unpublished work of related works on festivals and the history and culture of Aguleri people as it pertains to Igba-Ada festival that has become a ritual carnival in Aguleri cosmology. The materials were reviewed and analyzed using the area-culture approach of

interpretation. This was most suitable because of the culture bound nature of the study. This helped the paper to maintain its originality where cultural ecology is concerned.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Brief History of Igba-Ada Festival in Aguleri Cosmology

Etymologically, the word *Igba-Ada* is an Igbo coinage that means the celebration / commemoration of *Ada* masquerade and according to Nzewi (2000:25), the *Igba-Ada* festival in which “it figures originated in Aguleri – a farming/fishing Igbo community on *Omambala* River basin of south-Eastern Nigeria”. Before now, members of the *Ada* group “are presumed to possess an identity as hunters even though they are historically agriculturists, aristocrats, or mercenaries” (Obeyesekere, 2004:282). No wonder Idigo (1977:120) concludes that “these *Adas* imitate the warlike *Adas* of old who came from the towns east of Umuahia. They are the *Ohafia*, the *Abams* and *Adas*. They were hired by different belligerent towns to fight their battles in those early days” (Idigo, 1977:120). In his unforgettable, wonderful and well illustrated description Idigo again writes that:

The *Ohafias*, the *Abams* and the *Adas* who inhabit the region east of Umuahia were the vandals of this part of Africa in those early days. They were hired by belligerent towns to fight their battles. Their tactics in those skirmishes was that of surprise attack. Suddenly, they swooped down on the enemy, performed their task with lightening rapidity and escaped with their plunder which often included human beings dead or alive.

The *Adas* as they were called did much havoc at Aguleri and the surrounding towns. On their arrival in one village, notice was given to the neighbouring villages. An alarm was raised and everybody in haste entered his canoe and crossed over the Anambra to the opposite bank of the river. The *Adas* could not swim so they were forced to retreat.

The *Adas* did so much havoc in Aguleri that this gave them a column in Aguleri history. They performed every year on the morning anteceding *Ofala*, a play called “*Ada*”. Young men masked themselves, and, armed with sticks attacked anyone who failed to hide himself for a period of about three hours. The *Ada* practice has been outlawed. Damages almost as serious as those caused by the original *Adas* were being perpetuated by the *Ada* masks and for this reason the play has been declared illegal (Idigo, 1977:23).

Re-emergence of Igba-Ada festival in Aguleri Cosmology as a Carnival in Commemoration of Ohafia Invaders

It is important to state here that after so many years of ban was placed on the festival of *Igba Ada* in Aguleri tradition; there was a symbolic divine revelation through ritual divination and ordination that the stoppage of *Ada* festival in Aguleri community has brought serious setback in the number of male children that are being born. On that note, the diviners through sacred ordination and mediation decreed that to avert such future occurrence, the festival of *Igba Ada* should be reinstated and reinstated. Due to this spiritual revelation, the festival was reintroduced but other things were added in other to make it colourful. Not only that, research has shown that the numerical percentage of male population in Aguleri community presently has drastically multiplied against the backdrop of the female. Today, *Igba Ada* festival has become a big carnival in Aguleri history with a different dimension with symbolic interpretation where the *Ada* Masquerades do not handle sticks for destruction but plastic clubs.

Significance of Igba-Ada Festival

On this notion, Peter (2002:23) asserts that such *Igba-Ada* festival is believed to be where “many deities were understood to meet a variety of human needs and when some needs are met, the *status quo* is maintained; when other needs are met, there is a transformation of individuals and societies to new states of being”. In another development, Brown (2004:164) posits that such ritual festival is where traditional religious ties tend to compensate the communities like those ones that make up the Eri kingdom “through mediation for the loss of their contact with their ancestral home and with the built/support in religious rituals and cultural security of their extended brotherhood”. It is on this note that Ilesanmi (1996:2) argues that it cannot be denied that the entire community, including “the 82% who are said to be Catholics”, hold festival of *Igba Ada* in high esteem probably not as an ordinary festival but purely a cultural carnival in remembrance of their dead warriors whose influence are still currently felt in the town politically, socially and religiously. In Aguleri paradigm, *Igba Ada* festival is a symbol of brotherhood and unity among the communities that make up *Omambala* environment. No wonder then that scholars like Nabofa (1994) asserts that “it attracts a lot of audience from neighbouring towns and villages...”. Reacting on this, Falola (2003:147) posits that the royal family of Idigo as the ruling dynasties in Aguleri community uses this festival to forge “relationships with one another by promoting brotherhood relations and the cordial relations among them were sometimes explained in affinal relationships”.

Coming to the ritual importance of the *Igba-Ada* ritual festival in Aguleri cosmology which is the ritual coming together of that philosophy of brotherhood in Aguleri, Igbo religion, it is very significant to reiterate here that the festival has common notion of cementing and galvanizing that philosophy of love and brotherhood and in this festival it is also believed that any woman that is looking for the fruit of the womb especially as it concerns having a male child should pray for such in this festival. The *Igba-Ada* festival has become a yearly ritual carnival where every native born Aguleri man and woman especially the youths in particular showcases with bravado the real trado-cultural heritage of the Aguleri breaking boundaries where cultural ecology of the Igbo race originated from. No wonder Guenther (1975:164) asserts that in such festival like the *Igba-Ada* carnival, “great dancers are widely idolized – especially by boys and youths adults – their song, their idiosyncrasies of dancing and their exploits are talked about widely”, and in that form they are “searching for spiritual ideal” (Warren, 2006:106), and “personal identity” (Alford, 1988:51). In fact, it is this kind of festival that *Nne Mmanwu* the ritual woman specialist prays and blesses everybody. After series of deliberations and consultations by the elders of the Aguleri community along side with their town union, the festival of *Igba-Ada* has been reinstated and reasserted to take its vantage position today in Aguleri custom and tradition and it has become what I can describe as a cultural fiesta that mediates the link between the living and the dead in commemoration of Ohafia machineries’ of those early days to the existence of Aguleri as a community of one people with one destiny where the confluence of the two rivers (*Ezu na Omambala*) situated. It is on this note that De Heusch (1994:233) affirms that “there is no doubt that the river marks the border between two cosmic realms”, where lays the “spiritual power or powers” (Nabofa, 1994:15). Parrinder (1969:58) describes “such sacred place as the home of powerful spirits, whom their leader often represented as a great king who lives in an underwater palace with mermaids and mermen as his attendants.

Most importantly is the fact that the cosmogonic myth about the festival of *Igba-Ada* and the commemoration of the Ohafia warriors “provided an ideological inclusive arena for communal ritual, blending and uniting the various communities at a crucial juncture”

(Levine, 1997:196). The symbolic significance of festivals like the *Ovala* festival according to David Chidester (1992:24) is that “it strengthens the fertility of the land and the political authority of the king and under different historical conditions, these rites of power formed a religious repertoire of practices that were available to the chiefs in asserting supernatural, sacred claims to political power”. Van Dijik (2001:47) posits that festivals like *Ovala* is “the occasion for the King to assert his authority over his sub-chiefs and their subjects and for announcing the ways in which the community will benefit from the various development efforts the paramountcy will undertake on their behalf”.

The festival of *Igba-Ada* in Aguleri cosmology is also symbolic because it shows the strength; position and leadership of the King among his subordinates and entire community due to the fact in the communal mode theory according to McAdams (1988:81) this kind of relationship are understood as egalitarian. It is on this position that Idigo (2002:24) affirms that during the *Ovala* festival, there is this kind of concept of communal ideology that brings together every Aguleri person—man and woman, old and young, titled and non-titled, working together for the common goal, betterment and progress of the festival and Aguleri community as a whole. Uchendu (1965:103) affirms that “there is a great emphasis on communal cooperation and achievement. The communal character of the Igbo must be traced to the formative influence of their traditional social patterns, the influence of their nucleated residence pattern, and the ideological urge to get up”. He argues that “the ideal of cooperation, illustrated in work groups, credit associations, and title-making societies, pervades all aspects of Igbo culture” (Uchendu, 1965:103). No wonder, Hobart et al (1996:239) describes this concept as “mutual-aid activities to the advantage of the village or [sic] community”, in which “the festival is sometimes the affair of a whole town” (Ray, 1976:79).

Buttressing this affirmation further, Eiseman (1990b:72), explains that such remarkable moment requires collective participation in almost every aspect of political, social, economic, and religious life, where the community members are bound together, and that it is very imperative for community like the Aguleri to engage in such group projects for the welfare of their community. It is during this period that the entire ‘Agulerians’ “who are native-born and those who are foreign” (Long, 2004:93) shows what Nnamah (2002:8) describes as the “spirit of *Ogbagidigidi*”— by this I mean the spirit of strong solidarity among themselves and in support of the king. The idea is that the entire indigenes of Aguleri especially the able bodied men will collectively run round the whole village in solidarity to showcase their absolute support for the king and “shout the glory of Idigo and Aguleri at the top of their voices” (Idigo, 1990:34). Burghart (1987:269) argues that it is in this form that “the ritual symbolism of the auspicious body of the King and the identity of King and realm still persist in native belief, but have lost their power to influence the believers. The pomp goes on, but there was a time when the pomp was also powerful”.

This kind of tense atmosphere has been described “as periods of relaxation to moments of peak activity” (Wilson, 1992:337). Also, it is on this kind of festival that Bright (1981:166) asserts that “the tribesmen would gather on stated occasions to seek the presence of [sic] and renew their allegiance to him, and also to adjust matters of controversy and mutual interest among the tribes”. Ukpong (1983:190) argues that by this way “they acknowledge his autonomy, his majesty and primacy”. Nnamah (2002:8) affirms that this is also “a restatement and a re-affirmation of oneness of Aguleri and a moment of expression of their love for the king and Aguleri their fatherland”. He argues that the significance of this is to display strength, capacity and *bravado* to “reassure the King of the capacity, ability and readiness of the men to defend Aguleri – their fatherland” (Nnamah, 2002:8). Such occasion “serve as a catalyst in cementing people’s solidarity”

(Dube, 1996:110), and in order wards the community “are dancing on the shoulders of their ancestors” (Glocke & Jackson, 2011:6), through the mediation of “ordered hierarchy from deity to man” (Rowe, 2008:32) as a community of “one people – one destiny” (Arkin, 1989:xi). No wonder Turner (1968:20) affirms that rituals like the *Ovala* festival “presides over the total ritual and represents an ultimate unity” for community like the Aguleri. This actually buttress the unity of the town and in that situation, the entire people will be in frenzy mood or “altered state of consciousness” (Nabofa, 1994:20ff). It is during this general carnival ambience that certain people mimic certain things. It very pertinent to point out here that the Igba-Ada festival is traditional carnival that involves the whole town which serves as a broader social purpose. No wonder Benjamin Ray comments that during that period:

People return to the town from outlying farms and renew old friendships; son and daughters return to rejoin their families. The town quarters organize dancing groups and engage in general competition. Motor trucks passing through the town are decked out with palm fronds, and those which are decorated are halted by the townsmen and urged to properly display themselves. Socially despised individuals are also singled out and ridiculed in songs and lyrics. A general carnival atmosphere prevails. People chalk their faces, men wear women’s clothing ... a luminal period when people reserve their normal behavior, expressing the exceptional nature of the sacred time before returning to the normal social order. This luminal phase is a time of heightened social integration. It is a time when the people of the town come together face-to-face, free from the social constraints of normal life in an intense form of social communion and solidarity (1976:81).

Amaeze King’s Square: the Converging Point

Equally significant, if not more important is the fact that the traditional monarch uses the *Ovala* festival as an avenue or occasion to commemorate his kingship, and also an occasion for the subjects to reaffirm their solidarity and loyalty to his Kingship, through paying of homage’s and tributes (Idigo, 2002:24). Also, during this period, the Aguleri people gather around the kings square – *Amaeze* which has become a “gentrified space of entertainment and recreation” (Ventakesh, 2006:110), the “center point of cultural activity and important source of innovation in music and other forms of performance” (Wolcott, 1974:83), that “create the most festive atmosphere possible and therefore the most enticing environment to attract the spirits to come” (Sager, 2012:38). Sharp (2001:51) argues that “this is the point where sacred sound and architectural space intersect contributes significantly to experience meaning in sacred performance”. He asserts that it is in this situation that “sacred performance within sacred architectural space creates a new, unique dimension in the sound in order to make it symbolic” (Sharp, 2001:51). Nuckolls (1999:228) argues that “the term sound symbolism is used when a sound unit such as a phoneme, syllable, feature or tone is said to go beyond its linguistic function as a contrastive, non-meaning-bearing unit to directly express some kind of the meaning”. Reichard (1950:257) asserts that it is in this kind of occasion/arena that sounds like that of the *Ikolo* sacred sound has the power to attract and exorcise evil, through mediation of “the performance of its good works that produce immunity against all evil influences” (Arkin, 1989:7).

Igba –Ada and Interconnectivity to Ovala Festival

The ritual festival called *Igba-Ada* was designed as a unifying force for the Aguleri people both at home and elsewhere and it is celebrated a day before the *Ovala* festival. It features religious ceremonies, agricultural trade fairs, dancing and musical entertainments. All these served to strengthen and demonstrate the bond of union that kept both Aguleri and his dispersed brothers together. Thus *Igba-Ada* festival was initiated by Eri himself in a form of a miniature, yearly ritual celebration to remember how the Aguleri reinforced themselves to stop and wage war to attack the Ohafia people who has been attacking her people which eventually led to the successful and final sage. It is a day ritual activity that is held every 4th January which has metamorphosed into cultural carnival.

In fact, the scenario of this event is better experienced than to be explained. It is on this position that Ilesanmi (1996:9) affirms that “it is a symbolic approach which ecumenism has not succeeded in achieving”, and “they cannot be refuted by anything that has come down to us, in lyric, liturgy, or mode of worship from these primordial forces that the concerted might of Islam and Christianity have failed to crush” (Soyinka, 1999:x). Salamone & Mbabuike (1994:211) argues that it is through this method that “the African traditionalist is committed morally, physically, and spiritually to native rituals and ceremonies that never entirely die no matter which foreign missionary religion is adapted, Christianity or Islam”. This invariably becomes a significant success in the maze of cultural ecology in Igbo Traditional where Christendom possesses a great treat for its survival.

In this wise, it is very clear here to say that *Igba-Ada* as an indigenous ritual festival that is breaking boundaries of Christendom where it is believed that the gospel has achieved an amazing success in Igbo land while, the walls of pagandom is claimed to have collapsed Jericho-wise. Nonetheless, Ali Mazrui regrettably laments that:

No African country has officially allocated a national holiday in honor of the gods of indigenous religions. All African countries, on the other hand, have a national holiday that either favors Christian festivals [especially Christmas], Muslim festivals [such as Idd el Fitr], or both categories of imported festivals. The Semiotic religions [Christianity and Islam] are nationally honored in much of Africa; the indigenous religions are at best ethnic rather than national occasions (1991:69-70).

No wonder Frazer (1922:131a) affirms that from “certain festivals of the ancients, we may be able to detect the equivalents of our May Day, Whitsuntide, and Midsummer celebrations, with this difference, that in those days the ceremonies had not yet dwindled into mere shows and pageants, but were still religious or magical rites, in which the actors consciously supported the high parts of gods and goddesses”. This kind of negative attitude towards Africans and their culture from public space/existence throughout Africa, with the recent singular exception of The Republic of Benin, speaks volumes about identity construction and reconstruction in Africa (Chicago Tribune, 1996:8). Mutua (1999:171) argues that the status of indigenous religions within African states cannot be understood without resort to the nature of the colonial state. Ayisi (1972:70) affirms that ethnic festival like the *Igba-Ada* festival “besides being a national festival, it is also a calendrical festival because it occurs annually like the Christmas season”.

Adelowo (1990:166) in his article “*Rituals, Symbolism and Symbols in Yoruba Religious Thought*” argues that the main difference between worship on the sacred day and worship during the annual festival is that, there are more pronounced and elaborate programmes connected with annual celebrations. Buttressing this point further, Adelowo again affirms that:

This is usually an occasion for jocundity and thanksgiving; people appear in their best and give of their best. The offerings are mostly thank-offerings, and the meals constitute an opportunity of communion between the divinity and his 'children' on the one hand, and then among the 'children themselves on the other'. It is a period for special renewal of covenant relationships. On such occasion, the head of the community, the priest-king, the *Pontifex Maximus*, is usually involved. It is he who is ultimately responsible for all that happens during the festivals. He also has a special ritual, which, personally or by proxy, he must perform during each festival (1990:166).

Falola (2003:147) posits that through this kind of festival of *Igba-Ada* and commemoration of Ohafia warriors "the ruling dynasties in the various states forged relationships with one another by promoting brotherhood relations and the cordial relations among them were sometimes explained in affinal relationships". This is to counter the claims that "the gospel in Igbo land achieved an amazing success where the walls of pagandom collapse Jericho-wise" (Ayandele, 1973:126). Idigo (2001:177) regrettably comments that in those days, other Igbo communities come to Aguleri to offer sacrifices in the sacred temples to request for one favor or the other and that helped to maintain the link with their root but since their massive conversion into Christianity, these activities became extinct, only Nri keeps to this norm. Idigo (2001:179) further argues that "the Eri and Aguleri connection is avoided in order to give them the opportunity of projecting Nri as the head of the Igbos. But the truth is that Eri is the founder of Igbo race". Notwithstanding all these controversies and to put the record straight, Aguleri through the sacred ordination still becomes the ancestral home of the Igbo race (Boston, 1960:55).

However, Peters (2002:25) argues that "many traditional sacred centers are the centers for particular peoples in their particular geographical and historical circumstances...a sacred center today has to be the center of the entire expanding universe as well as the center of our own lives. That is a big stretch for some traditional ideas". Kaplan (2000:122) asserts that "such shrines are maintained today even in also "similar ancestral alters are still maintained in the palace (Blackmun, 1997:150). Nabofa (1994:45) argues that such "shrines in traditional Africa are connected with the homesteads. These are places where family religious activities are carried out. It is in such places that the traditional beliefs and culture are first transmitted to the notice of the young ones in the family". Rowlands (1985:208) affirms that "the medicines used at the shrines are produced in the palace (sic); thus in original ritual boundaries which...served to coordinate rites of pollution removal at the palace for the chiefdom as a whole". According to Mary (2002:111) "this means giving territorial expression to the battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil, and as it were establishing Heaven on Earth". She argues that as it is in traditional religion like the whole Igbo religion, the efficacy of prayers requires the mediation "this means giving territorial expression to the battle between the forces of good and the forces and the annexation of a sacred space or shrine (Mary, 2002:111), which Akintola (1992:38) describes as the "shrine of mortality".

Akintola (1992:38) again argues that in the esoteric sense, it is simply the depository containing all the basic cult objects of religious veneration; and it is, in fact, the place where worship is offered, and devotions paid to the Deity, the Supreme Being of Creation. Continuing with the argument, (Akintola, 1992:40) again stresses that "the shrine of mortality accordingly, in this process of spiritualization, that is, of moving man away from his sensuous nature into his bliss and eternity of spirit, is fitted into place as a continual reminder to the initiate that the spiritual nature he desires to acquire or rouse in himself,

can be roused fully and effectively only after the philosophical death of his sensuous or carnal personality”.

Ray (1993:268) asserts that prayers, offerings, and sacrifices therefore require the construction of sacred space, where the forces of the invisible ‘other’ world can be brought into this world and effectively controlled. Wosien (1992:23) affirms that such “sacred structure space facilitates orientation, provides the framework for worship, and transforms chaos into cosmos, thus making human life possible”. Nabofa (1994:45) argues that “such sacred places of worship provide geographical points of reference to religious beliefs and practices. They indicate the physical points of contact between the beings in the suprasensible realm and those in the physical plane. Most of the shrines and sacred places in Africa are etiological. They teach theological, historical and moral lessons. In most cases, the myth, legends and stories that are told around them have little or no historical foundations. Nevertheless, they are valuable resources for transmitting and concretizing religious concepts and lessons, in both time and space”.

Insofar as this invisible energy web also correlates with known areas of anomalies in gravity and space-time, it has been postulated that different dimensions exist simultaneously and that an electromagnetic web of energy interlocks all things on this planet (Olsen, 2004:13). Jett (1995:41)



Figure 1. An Initiate leading the young Ada's during the Igba-Ada festival in 2016
(Courtesy of Madukasi Francis Chuks)



Figure 2. Young Ada's sitting in front of the King's Place at Amaigwe, Aguleri during the Igba-Ada festival in 2016 (Courtesy of Madukasi Francis Chuks)



Figure 3. The Nne-Manwu Chief Mrs. Ejioche Adimorah {Ada Eri} at the middle posed with the young Ada's during Igba-Ada festival in 2016 (Courtesy of Madukasi Francis Chuks)

affirms that “because of this power, which is dangerous or beneficent according to those property of one’s approach, non initiates avoid sacred places, while those with the proper ritual knowledge—especially medicine men—may make pilgrimages to pray, to renew their ritual equipment and the efficacy of their prayers, to obtain medicinal plants, and to collect sanctified soil and water”. However, these festivals overlap irrespective of their nature, every festival is preceded by ritualistic ceremonies and some festivals that are seemingly social have ritual underpinnings/sections in them and similarly, ritual festivals that are seemingly solemn and serious have social dimension too (Nti, 1990:3). But it is very significant to note here that at the conclusion of the *Igba-Ada* carnival, the King acquires the symbolic and political authority to rule and the power to face his enemies and also preserve his Kingdom.

CONCLUSION

Through the annual festival of “Igba-Ada” a commemoration of belligerent warriors, and through the sacred ordination of Aguleri as the first son of Eri, Aguleri has taken her rightful position as regards the tradition and culture of the Igbo’s in diaspora. Igba-Ada is ritual festival as a carnival of coming together for brotherhood in Aguleri, Igbo religion. It is very significant to reiterate here that the festival has common notion of cementing and galvanizing that philosophy love and brotherhood that reintegrates, reunites and reinforces the binding spiritual forces which ecumenism has not succeeded in breaking its wall Jericho wise in Aguleri, Eri Kingdom. This also marks her as the head of the Igbo. Equally significant is the fact that the death of African Traditional Religion is not near because this kind of ritual festival is what ecumenism has failed to conquer among the Igbo people.

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