

ADVANCED SOCIAL STUDIES *for* **CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA**



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Chapter Twenty-Eight

THE MIAN SOCIETIES OF NIGERIA HAUSA, FULANI, IBOS, YORUBAS, IBIBIOS, IJAWS EFIK AND THEIR ASSOCIATE CULTURES

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Introduction

Nigeria as a country is heterogeneous in nature. She is made up of many ethnic groups whose language, culture, custom, tradition and religion differ. The main society of Nigeria include the Hausas, Fulani, Ibos, Yorubas, Ibibios Ijaws and Efik. This paper will examine their geographical distribution, linguistic classification and their traditional religion.

Hausa

Hausa is part of the Afro-Asiatic Language family. She belongs to the west Chadic language subgroup of the Chadic languages group.

Geographical Distribution

Hausa people are mostly found in Niger, in the north of Nigeria and Chad. Hausa language is taught at universities in Africa and around the world. It is the most commonly spoken language in Nigeria, but unlike Yoruba and Igbo. It is also widely spoken outside Nigeria, especially in Niger Republic, Ghana, Cameroon and Sudan. Radio Stations like B.B.C, Radio France internationale, China Radio international, Voice of Russia, Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, and IRIB broadcast in Hausa.

Linguistic Classification

Hausa is classified as a West Chadic language of the Chadic grouping. It is major subfamily of Afroasiatic. Culturally, the Hausa people have become closely integrated with the Fulani following the jihadist establishment of the Sokoto caliphate by the Uthman Dan Fodio in the 19th century. It is the official language of a number of states in northern Nigeria. It is the most dialect generally regarded as that spoken in Kano and Eastern Hausa dialect which is the standard variety used for official purposes. Hausa language is the most well known Chadic language in Nigeria, though there is less than a enough statistics on native speakers in Nigeria Hausa language is spoken by 24 million people in West Africa and is the second language of 15 million more. Therefore, Hausa has therefore emerged as lingua franca throughout West Africa and the Sahel in particular. Primarily,

the language is spoken among Muslims and the languages in
after associated with Islamic capture in Nigeria and West
Africa on the whole

Traditional Religion

The predominant and historically established religion of the Hausa people is Sunni Islam of the Maliki Madhhab. Islam has been present in Hausa land since 13th century. This was brought by traders and Islamic preachers from Mali and guinea. The hybrid religion practiced in royal courts was disapproved by Muslim scholars of the early 19th century. A desire for reform contributed to the formation of Sokoto, caliphate. The Islam in rural areas was strengthened as a result of the formation of this state. The Hausa people have been the important factor in the spread of Islamic in West Africa. The current Sultan of Sokoto is regarded as the traditional religious leader (Sarkin Musulem) of Sunm Hausa-Fulani in Nigeria and beyond. Maguzawa the African traditional religion which was practiced before Islam are also practiced in the remote areas of Hausaland. People of urban areas tend to retain a cult spirit possession known as Bon which the African Traditional Religion and magic incorporates.

The Ijaws

Linguistic classification

Nine closely related Niger-Congo languages are being spoken by the Ijaw people. They all belong to Ijoid branch of the Niger-Congo tree. Ijaw language comprises of Eastern Ijo western Ijo and Izon which is spoken by about four million people. Two prominent groupings of Izon language are western Ijaw speakers.

(Ekeremor, Sagbama, Bassan, Apon, Angbo, Boma, Kobo, Ogboin, Tarakiri and Kolokuma. Opokuma and south east Izon Nebe, Brass and Akassa dialects represent southeast Ijo. Buseni and Okordia dialects are considered inland Ijo. Another major Ijaw linguistic group is Kalabari. this considered on eastern Ijaw language.

The word "eastern Ijaw" is not the normal nomenclature. Kalabari is the name of one of the Ijaw clans that reside on the eastern side of the Niger Delta. Other "eastern" Ijaw Clans are the Okrika, Ibani (the natives of Bonny, Finima and Opobo) and Nkoroo. The eastern Ijaw and Kalabari people are neighbour to river state in present day Nigeria.

Religion and Cultural Practices

Ijaw people are manly Christian. About 95 percent of the Ijaws are Christian. Majority of them are Roman Catholic and Anglican. They also have elaborate traditional religion of their own. In Ijaw traditional religion, veneration of ancestor plays a central role. Water sprints known Owuamapu figure

prominently in the Ijaw pantheon. Ijaw people practice a form of divination called Igbadal in which recently deceased individuals are interrogated on the causes of their death. Ijaw people believe that humans dwell among the water spirit before being born and their beliefs hold that water spirits are like humans having personal strengths and shortcomings. Prayer in the Ijaw traditional system has a role. The role is to maintain the living in the good grace of the water spirit among where they dwelt before being born in this world. In each year, the Ijaw hold celebrations to honor the spirit for lasting for several days. During their festivities masquerades have a role to play. Men wearing elaborate outfits and carrying masks to dance, the beat of the drums and manifest the influence of the water spirits through the quality and intensity of their dancing. Ijaw people are also known to practice ritual acculturation where an individual from a different unrelated group undergoes rituals to become Ijaw. An example of their case is the issue of Jaja of Opobo who was a slave boy and raised to become a powerful Ibani (Bonny!) chief in the 19th century.

The Igbo

The Igbo word, Igbo is spoken by the Igbo people in different ways like Ibo, Heebo or Eboe. Their language is Igbo which includes Igboid languages and dialects. They are the largest ethnic group in Africa. In rural Nigeria Igbo people are mostly craftsmen, farmers and traders. Yams is their most important plant. They held a celebration annually to celebrate

its harvesting. Igbo were fragmented group before British colonialism. Their culture varies such as in art styles attire and religious practices. This various subgroup were organized by clan, lineage, village affiliation and dialect. The centralized chiefdoms, hereditary autocracy, or kinship customs were not many except in kingdoms such as those of the Arochukwu, Agbor and Onitsha.

During the era of British colonialism in the early 20th century, Eze (Kings) were introduced into most local communities by Fredrick Lugard as "Warrant chiefs". As a result Igbo became overwhelmingly Christian under colonization.

Igbos Culture

Igbo culture is associated with various customs practices and the traditions of the people. It comprises archaic practices as well as new concepts added into the culture of the Igbo either through evolution or outside influence. These customs and traditions include the Igbo peoples visual, art, music and dance forms as well as their entire cuisine and language dialects.

Igbos Traditional Religion

Like any other ethnic group IGBO people Igbo people have their own traditional, religion. Their ancient religion and traditions are known as odiani. The supreme God in Igbo

language is called Chukwu (great spirit). According to the Igbos, Chukwu created the world and everything in it and is associated with all things on earth. Chukwu is a solar deity. These cosmos according to the ancient Igbo was divided into four complex parts, creating known as okike, supernatural power forces or deities called Alusi, mmuo which are spirits and Uwa, the world Chukwu according to the Igbos is the supreme deity in their odinani as He is the creator Igbos belief that all things come from him and everything on earth heaven and the rest of the spiritual world is under His control. The Igbos believed that the creator could be approached through other deities and spirits especially through the god of thunder.

They believed that ancestors protect their living decedants and responsible for rain harvest, health and children. They have wonden figures representing ancestors and patrons. The Igbos believed in reincarnation and that people reincarnate into families they were part of while alive. This regarded an insult if a male is said to have reincarnated as a female.

Fulani

Culture

Traditionally, the Fulani's are nomadic pastoralist trading people. They are the largest nomadic ethnic group in the world. They inhabited several territories over an area

larger in size than the continental United States. The code of behaviour that Fulani people follow is known as pulaaku. This code of behaviour known as pulaaku consist of qualities of discipline, self control, modesty, prudence, patience, wisdom, personal responsibility, forethought, hospitality, respect for others, courage and hardwork. Fulani women are engage in making handicrafts, including engraved gourds, weavings knitting, beautifully made of covers for calabashes known as Mbeedu as well as baskets. The Fulani from neighbouring ethnic groups around them involve in the production of pottery iron working and dyeing. There have been an increasing trend of farmers (sedentary) – Grazier pastoral (nomadic) conflicts nearly in every area of West Africa where the nomadic Fulani reside. such cases are many in the areas like Jos Plateau, Bamenda Highland, Central Middle Belt regions of Nigeria, Northern Burkina Faso, Southern Chad etc. Thousand of Fulani have been forced to migrate from their traditional homelands in the Sahel to areas further south, because of increasing encroachment of Saharan Desertification, Nigeria alone loses 2,168 kilometres of cattle rangeland and crop land every year to desertification. This has been posing serious threats to the livelihoods of about 40 million people.

Frequent droughts have forced many of traditional herding families to give up their nomadic of life and in the process lost their sense of identity. Due to urbanization, the Fulani grazing land have been snatched for developmental

purposes. This has resulted to violent attacks to the Fulanis who often feel their way of life and survival being threatened and other population who often feel aggrieved from lost of farm produce even if the lands they farm on, was initially barren and uncultivated. The expansion of grazing resources as believed by the Fulanis will boost livestock population, lessen the difficulty of herding, seasonal migration, and will enhance the interaction among pastoralist, farmers and rural dwellers. The number and the distribution of grazing reserved in Nigeria range from insufficient to severely insufficient for Fulani livestock.

Fulani Geographical Distribution

An estimated 13, million Fulanis are nomadic making the largest pastoral nomadic group in the world. The Fulanis are found in many countries. They spread over many countries mainly in West Africa and northern parts of central Africa but also in Egypt and Sudan. Fulanies could be seen in Mauritania, Ghana, Senegal, Guinea, Gambia, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Burikina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, Cote d' ivories Niger, Chad, Togo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan the Central African Republic, Liberia and as far East as the Red Sea in Sudan and Egypt. Fulas are minorities in every country they live. They speak other dominant languages of the countries they live making many Fulani bilingual or trilingual in nature. Such languages include Hausa, Bambara Wolot, Arabic etc.

The population of the Fulani people is approximately 40 million. The most widely dispersed and culturally diverse peoples in all of Africa are the Fulanis. The Fulanis are classified into three different groups based on their settlement patterns vis: the nomadic/pastoral or mbaroro, the semi nomadic and the settled or the town Fulani. The pastoral Fulani move around with their cattle through out the year. They did this purposely for grazing. The semi-nomadic are either nomadic or settled nomadic. Though they have live stock they do not wonder away. They are basically "in betweeners."

Fulani Traditional Religion

The Fulanis were the fist African tribe to convert to Islam and they also launched conversion to Islam of Africa people through holy wars or jihads. They see themselves as missionaries of the Islamic religion. They believed in Allah, the single God and in the prophet Mohammed.

The Fulanis pray five times a day as required by the Islamic laws and rituals. They learn the holy Koran by heart; have the duty to make at least one pilgrimage to the Mecca. The Fulanis distinguished themselves from others with their religious practices. They use it to show their superiority and great value- they are proud people. They also use it as an umbilical link with other Islamic practitioners of the rest Africa Tribes Fula are renowned for their great and highly trained traditional religious practitpner or Imān. Their Imans

are prominent members of the Islamic cleric class. The Fulanis believe in shamanism or local practitioners called medicine men and witch doctors, with the supernatural abilities and curative power they possess and often go to see them. Their shamans are also considered as Muslim religious leaders. The impact of Islamic religious practice could be seen in the mode of dressing of the married women and young girls.

The Fulanis practice a lot of rite of passage is that of the naming ceremonies. In accordance with Muslim law, this ceremony takes place after birth. The day the iman announces the name of the child, a sheep is offered in sacrifice. Another ritual of passage is the circumcision of a boy at the age of seven (7). The ceremony signifies the readiness and empowered the boy to perform herding and farming activities. Another one is the marriage of the young girl and the Bangal ceremony making, as previously said the moving in of the new wife into her husband village and house. They do not believe in life after death but instead believe that everyone lives on from generation to generation through their loved descendants. They also believe in ancestral spirits and act in accordance with the awareness of their presence. This is one the reasons why Fulanis have many children.

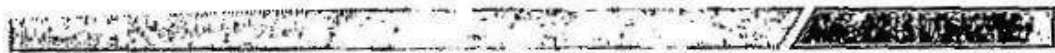
The Yoruba

The Yoruba people are an ethnic group of south

western Nigeria and southern Benin in West Africa. The population of the Yorubas constitute over 35 million people. Their oral tradition includes praise poems, tongue twisters, hundreds of prose narratives and riddles and thousands of proverbs. Their music includes songs of ridicule and praise as well as lullabies, religious songs, war songs and work songs. Rhythm is always provided by drums, iron gongs, cymbals, rattles and hand clapping. They also have other instruments such as long praise trumpets, ivory trumpets, whistles, stringed instruments and metallophones. The most interesting musical instrument is the talking drum.

Yoruba Geographical Distribution

The Yorubas share borders with Borgu in Benin, the Nupe and Eblira in central Nigeria, the Edo, the Essen and the Afemai in mid-western Nigeria. The Igala and other related groups are found in the northeast, and the Egun, fon, Ewe and others in the south east Benin. The Itsekiri who live in the north-west Niger Delta are related to the Yoruba but maintain a distinct cultural identity. Majority of the Yoruba population in West Africa can be found in Ghana, Togo, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The two groups that consist of Yoruba diaspora are the migrants in United States and United Kingdom. Majority of them moved to these areas after economic changes in 1970.



Yoruba Traditional Religion

Their religion comprises the traditional religions and spiritual concepts and practices of the Yoruba people. Yoruba religion is formed of diverse tradition and has no single founder. One of their religions concepts has been the concept of Orisha. An Orisha is the spirit of deity that reflects one of the manifestations of God in the Yoruba spiritual or religious system. This religion has found its way throughout the world.

The Ibibios Geographical Distribution

They are found mostly in Akwa Ibom State. They are made up of the relate Anaang community, the ibibios community, the Eket and Oron communities. The ibibios have larger population, as a result they hold political control over Akwa Ibom State, but the share of government is within Anaangs Eket and Oron. The political system follows the traditional method of consensus. The Ibibio people are located in south eastern Nigeria also known as coastal southern Nigeria. Despite to the existence of Nigeria as a nations, the Ibibio people were self governed. It was during the colonial rule that the Ibibio people became part of the eastern Nigeria. The eastern region was split into three states during the Nigerian civil war. The Ibibios were located at the southern state of Nigeria one of the original twelve states of Nigeria after Nigerian independence. The Efik, Anaam, Aron, Eket and other of their siblings of the Ogoja District, were also in the southern state. The state later was

remained Cross River State Akwa Ibom State was carried out of the then Cross Rivers State as a separate state on 23 September 1983, by Military Decree No. 24.

Ibibio Traditional Religion

Ibibio religion was of two dimensions which centered on the pouring of libration worship, consultation, communication an innovation of God of Heaven (Abas, Engong) and God of the Earth (Abasi Isong) by the constitutional and religion King Head of a particular Ibibio community who was known from the ancient times as the Obony. Ikaisong. (The word Obongo Ikpaisong means king of the principalities of the earth). The second dimension of Ibibio religion is based on their worship, consultation, invocation sacrifice, appeasement, etc of God of the Heaven (Abasi Enyong) and God of the earth (Abasi Isong) through various invisible or spiritual entities (Ndoem) the temple chief priests of the various Ibibio divisions were the priests of these spiritual entities (Ndem). A particular Ibibio Division could consist of many ruler related autonomous communities or kingdoms ruled by an autonomous priest-king called Obong Ikaisong, assisted by Heads of various large families (Mbong Ekpuj) which make up the community. From time immemorial these have been the ancient political and religious system of Ibibio people.

The Efik

The Efik are located primarily in southern part of

Nigeria. Efik is the name of their language. It is also a variation of Ibibio language. In the 16th century the Efik migrated down the Cross River State from Cameroon and founded numerous settlements in the Calabar area in the present day Cross River State. The area along with presents day Akwa Ibom state are usually referred to as Calabar. The Efiks with Annang and Ibibio brothers and sisters also dwell in southern Cameroon including Bakassi.

Geographical Distribution

The Efike are well known naturally and internationally partly because of the prominence of Calabar in Nigerian history and also due to their rich cultural heritage. The Efiks inhabit the coastal area of south eastern Nigeria. The broad culture of the Efiks include Ekombi, the Efik classical music, "Ukwa the only fencing match in sub-Saharan Africa Mbuk" a collection of Efik "folkore" and "Ekpe". Abang dance is performed entertainment and at important festivals. A young female who is about to be betrothed in marriage is confined taught and molded into womanhood" through a host of other traditional dance forms Nkuho". The woman learns moral values of the community and how to appreciate herself. She is confined and not allowed to do any chores. She is pampered and allowed to eat as much as he wants. She is taught the Ekombi dance in preparation for the day she comes out of the confinement. She is not allowed to be visited by the apposite sex (male) except her suitor.

The Traditional Religion of the Efiks

The traditional religion of the Efiks places importance on paying tribute to the village ancestors, particularly those who achieved high rank, since they can affect the fortunes of the living for good or bad. The traditional religion of the Efiks considers Abasi, as the creator of the universe. There are controversies in the issue of Abasi. Some tradition claimed that Abasi's wife Atai persuaded him to let two of their children, a daughter and a son, settle on the earth. They were not allowed to breed. They disobeyed this injunction and became the ancestors of the Efik people. Another version says that Abasi created two people, but again did not allow them to breed. They disobeyed this order again and in punishment, Abasi let loose death on earth. The Ala which the earth deity, is appeased through Ogborri ceremony, make children plentiful and increases harvest. Some Efiks belong to Ekpe secret society.

Efik Language

The people of Efik speak language. Various dialects of their language include Oron, Biase, Annang and Ibibio Eket (Eked) a sub group of Ibibio was also one of the recognized dialect of the people.

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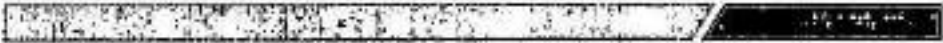
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