

## **THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF ODI-OGORI-BA-UGE FESTIVAL, ODI KINGDOM, BAYELSA STATE.**

**MICHAEL-OLOMU, OYINTONYO *PhD.***

Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Federal University Otuoke  
Bayelsa State  
E-mail: michaelolomuoo@fuotuoke.edu.ng

**ESTHER BIPELEGHA**

Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Federal University Otuoke  
Bayelsa State

### **ABSTRACT**

*From time immemorial, culture had always been an indispensable facet of humanity as it basically serves as a nexus between man and his historical roots. Thus, taking into cognizance the importance of culture, this study was conducted to determine the sociocultural significance of traditional festivals in Nigeria, by examining the festivals, pointing out their significances culturally, socially, economically and otherwise. Odi-Ogori-ba-Uge traditional festival held in Bayelsa state was used as a case study. In a bid to generate findings, this study espoused a purely qualitative approach and both primary and secondary methods of data collection were applauded. Data was collated using interviews and participant observation. A total of 30 interviews were conducted after a period of six days and was analyzed using a thematic approach to qualitative analysis whereby the responses were coded (nvivo) and four general themes and two sub-themes were generated. The findings of this study revealed that even with the challenges that globalization and cultural imperialism has posed on festivals, they still continue to be relatively significant especially to the host communities. However, after sixty years of the Ogori-ba-Uge celebrations, the festival has not been included into the Bayelsa State cultural calendar. Among others, this paper recommends that the government and other multinational corporations should enable that the festival is given the international recognition that it duly deserves.*

**Keywords:** Culture, Festivals, Significance, Sociocultural, Tradition, Ogori-ba Uge.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Globally, different forms of festivals are celebrated annually or otherwise with majority of them being around for eons.

Festivals are celebrations and events that are indisputably unique and this is because, no two festivals are exactly alike or a complete replica of another. In the event of any festival, different practices are usually displayed that are truly entertaining and educating thereby creating a platform that unifies people from all walks of life together regardless of their social hierarchy to a given place.

For instance in Asia; India is regarded as the biggest celebrator of different festivals and true to this belief, India has scores and scores of festivals unlike any other country of the world because of the diverse cultures that exist in this sub – continent and also because Indian’s celebrate virtually everything like nature, colour, friendship, love, religion, emancipation etc. (Malhotra 2017).

Every festivity offers a sense of belonging to the participants thereby promoting and contributing to group cohesiveness which is undeniably essential for social solidarity and continuity. They often serve to fulfill specific purposes especially in relations to thanksgiving.

Africa is absolutely not an exception when it comes to multiplicity of festivals. According to Mbamalu 2018 ; In Ghana, the Homowo –festival” which actually translates: making-fun-of-hunger is celebrated by the ‘Ga’ people of Accra in thanksgiving of a period in their history when rains stopped and the sea gates closed thereby leading to a deadly famine that spread throughout the Southern Accra plains. When the rain eventually returned and harvest finally arrived the people were so happy that they celebrated with a festival meant to ridicule hunger.

For a country like Nigeria that is blessed with an argosy of natural resources and a rich blend of unique cultural attributes which defines her identity she celebrate festivals that tend to focus on cultural or ethnic topics particularly to inform community members of their traditions, local myths and with the involvement of elders sharing stories and experiences all provides a means of unity and a sense of belonging glance no ethnic group in Nigeria is void of its own unique history or cultural attributes which are often translated into festivals in order to keep the memories alive, inform the general public and the present generations who are massively being influenced by western socialization about their ethnic history. Among the Igbo ethnic group ‘Igbo Nkwa traditional festival is celebrated in Enugu State in remembrance of their legendary exploits in warfare centuries ago especially of ‘Uto – Nsude’ who was regarded as one of the greatest war generals in Igbo history (Okigbo, 2015).

Suffice it to say that Nigeria possesses great cultural strength that could prove rather beneficial as it has vast economic possibilities great cultural strength that coul prove rather beneficial as it has vast economic possibility and tourism potentials that could be harnessed and developed (Okigbo, 2016).

This study therefore seeks to examine the ‘Ogoriba – Uge (Buffalo) festival. Its significance socially, culturally and otherwise.

The festival is one out of the numerous list of festival celebrated nationally. This study will provide a lucid understanding to both scholars and the general public on the significance of cultural / traditional festival and practices

Furthermore, this study will bring to knowledge the implications of traditional festivals and serve as a source of knowledge and guide for literature and further studies and will equally benefit the state during policy formulation and it’s implementation.

Our culture as our identity and heritage is undeniable and as such it is worthy to note that traditional festival are an essential aspect and element of culture which is highly significant because they foster cultural relevance cultural continuity and cultural historical knowledge.

## **SOCIO – CULTURAL; A CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

Socio and cultural are two words that can be used independently from each other, however in order to explain phenomena and social reality or society from the social and cultural aspect they were merged together as socio – cultural.

According to Vygotsky (1962), Socio cultural is a theory which assumes that: the way people interact with others and the cultures they live in shape their mental activities. It also looks at the important contribution that society makes to an individual development and stresses the interaction between developing people and the culture in which they live. Socio cultural theory further emphasizes not only how adults and peers influences individual learning but also on how cultural beliefs and attitudes impacts how instruction and learning takes place.

Furthermore Mckay (2018), sees the Socio cultural perspective as an approach to understanding and explaining human behavior by seeking to understand why humans behave the way they do and personality development by examining the rules of the social groups in which the individual is a member.

**FESTIVALS:** Some scholars and authorities have given their subjective definition of festivals, although it cannot be said that there is a generally acceptable definition of the concept.

According to Falassi (1987) Thus: A festival can be defined as a periodically reoccurring social occasion in which a multiplicity of forms and a series of co-ordinated events participate directly or indirectly and to various degrees of all members of the community united by ethnic, linguistic, religious historical bonds and sharing a common world – view.

Similarly, cundy (2014) defined a festival thus: As a day or period of time set aside to commemorate ritually celebrate or re-enact events or seasons either agricultural, religious or socio-cultural that gives meaning and cohesiveness to an individual and to the religious, political or socio economic community.

However, Gibson et al (2011) states that: festivals are enjoyable, especial and exceptional and sometimes the only time of enjoyment or celebration in small towns. They are usually full of rituals of entertainment spectacle and remembrance, and they bring people together.

According to Gertz (2005). "Festivals are themed public celebration which is Held annually in most cases or otherwise in the same geographical location or a different location".

Festivals are celebrations that focuses upon a theme and may run for hours, days to weeks the theme or a festival might be an area of interest such as art, or an aspect of the community in which the festival it being held such as the community's history or culture.

## **TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS IN NIGERIA**

With 36 states and over 250 recognized ethnic groups in Nigeria, numerous traditional/cultural festivals exist and are celebrated uniquely by each culture according to their ethos.

### **Argungun Fishing Festival (North\_West Nigeria).**

The Argungun festival is regarded as the most widely known, if not the most popular traditional festival in Northern Nigeria (Oduanya, 2018). Since the festival began in 1934, four (4) major rites are performed by the people before the festival is declared open.

The first rite is meant to purify the rivers before the great fishing day to placate the gods for a hitch-free fishing festival. This is followed by the second and third rites which entail the opening of the rivers for fishing and the purification of the entire town and the fourth rite are land rituals of atonement that is meant to repel evil spirits from the land and solicit a bountiful harvest. (Adelaja, 2018) About 5,000 men and women who are experienced fishers, gather close to the huge river and at the sound of a gun-shot, they all dive into the river with their traditional fishing equipment's such as nets and gourds made of calabash. The fishers are later joined by canoes filled with drummers plus men rattling huge seed filled gourds in order to drive the fishes to shallow waters. The person with the biggest fish is awarded a prize money and bragging rights. In 2005, the winning fish weighed 75kg and needed four men to carry it. There is also canoe riding, duck hunting, bare-handed fishing, during and swimming competitions.

#### **Ikeji Thanksgiving Festival (South-Eastern Nigeria).**

The Ikeji festival is an annual thanksgiving, merriment and propitiation festival hosted by the Aro-ndizuogu people who spread across three (3) local government areas in Imo state, and are historically known for their physical strength in terms of warfare and slave trade. (Akobundu, 2017)

According to Uche (2008), the festival is very rich in both historical and cultural festivities, filled with scintillating performances from masquerades, memorable sights comic acts and magical dancer from different groups and signifies the end of the planting season and the beginning of harvest. On the grand finale 'Nkwo', the big masquerades appears dressed extravagantly in the most appreciated regalias and some of them are seen carrying water in baskets which defies all rules of science.

This festival has survived high measures of antagonism and has now come to be accepted as an intangible cultural heritage worthy of preservation and also as a forum to bring back the sons and daughters of the land from within and in the diasporas. (Akobundu J.M, 2017)

#### **Ogoribauge Traditional Festival**

The OgoribaUge festival is celebrated by the odi people of Bayelsa State in South South Nigeria. The festival is particularly unique for its historical origin.

According to Agedah, (2007),

*"In April 1953, a small group of peasants had gathered at the water-front listening impatiently to a woman who was talking hysterically about a horrible encounter she had with a wild buffalo, while she was harvesting cassava tubers on her farm. Her escape story was later confirmed as true, therefore, meaning that a wild buffalo was charging at people in the bush".*

After the buffalo was killed in 1957 following five (5) years of rampage, a huge feast was held in order to celebrate their victory over the buffalo and also the restoration of economic activities in the kingdom. When the year came round in exactly the date the buffalo was killed (27<sup>th</sup> July, 1958), the women could not contain their excitement but came out in mass hanging their collection of wrappers on flag poles and plantain trees to display their abundance. Odi was agog with celebrations for yet another seven days and that was how the Odi-ogori-ba-uge became an annual festival lasting for eight (8) days for the past

sixty one (61) years and hosted by the people of Odi kingdom. Furthermore, since the inception of the festival, the celebrations have always been agog with different activities dedicated to a particular day and the people always use the inscription: “Odi-Gbanai.-bebe-keni” which translates: “the people of Odi come together with one voice”.

The first day of the festival starts in the evening with a candle light parade and the second day is noticeably the most sacrosanct of all because it is the opening ceremony of the entire festival. It usually graces several important personalities from international, federal, state and local government levels. In attendance also are secular artists who thrill the crowd and also various cultural troops who also mesmerize the spectators with their scintillating performances.

The third and fourth days are strictly filled with fun events made specifically for the youths by the youths. On these days, two gigantic boats which are called ‘Love boat’ are docked by the water-front with well aesthetic designs and loud music. Interested youths climb aboard the boat and when it is full to capacity, the boat sails away on a fun cruise and comes back to the shores at the ‘wee-hours’ of night. The love boats are known as ‘Awigiri’ and ‘Reggae’ love boat respectively.

A particularly unique feature about the festival is that on the second and the third days, all members of the kingdom are seen dressed in uniform attire that was selected specially for the occasion. The festival continues with the street carnival, the women’s day, the men’s day and the final day of the week-long celebration is crowned with the beach carnival.

Cultural festivals such as Odi-ogoriba-uge fosters unity and brings about the creativity in people. (Boroh, 2017) In essence, Odi-ogoriba is used to showcase the tourism opportunities of Odi and her cultural heritage (Timi-nipre, 2017).

### **SOCIO-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS**

Any event worth celebrating definitely has one significance or the other traditional festivals therefore offer vast significances some of which are tangible and others also intangible. According to Arcodia and Whitford (2006); festivals are emerging and growing as vibrant sectors of tourism and leisure industry and are considered having significant economic, environmental socio – cultural and political impacts on tourism destinations and host groups.

Furthermore, Rai (2016) posits that; festivals are significant because they are important to give a meaningful boost to our lives, removing negativity and pressures, filling it with joy and peace and since every culture has different festivals, the reason to celebrate them are also different but the goal is the same which is to celebrate life.

In addition, parry (2015), and Zalmay (2017) on the significance of traditional festivals, are of the view that:

*“Nothing brings people together like festivals do, because life is all about happiness and as human beings social interaction with our fellow beings not only brings fulfillment but helps us grow our capacity to learn languages familiarize ourselves with cultures inquire think, play and work.”*

For them, we are dependent on social heritage which is a mixture of customs, traditions, morals, values, attitudes and festivals not only does this social heritage defines us but binds us together to pass it on from one generation to another and further play a pivotal

role in nation building as they bring people from every religion, economic and social background together.

Although indigenous festivals generates significant economic benefit for the host, it also provides a forum for community cohesion and celebration while concomitantly strengthening and enhancing cultural knowledge and consequently vehicles for festering social capital and community development (Arcodia and Ruhanen 2013).

In conclusion different authorities have illustrated their views on the significance and benefits that traditional festivals provide. The most conspicuous significance that is present in majority of their illustration is the fact that these festivals creates or provides an avenue for community cohesion, social solidarity, cultural presentation and continuity.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theories of symbolic interactionism and functionalism were adopted to guide this study.

#### **FUNCTIONALIST THEORY**

According to functionalism, society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole. Which means that each of the social institutions contributes important functions for society: family provides a context for reproducing, nurturing and socialization: education offers a way to transmit a society's skills, knowledge and culture to its youth: politics provides a means of governing members of society etc.

The functionalist perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts. Functionalists use the term functional and dysfunctional to describe the effects of social elements on society.

In applying the assumptions of this theory to the subject matter which is the socio-cultural significance of traditional festivals, it is quite conspicuous that functionalism as a theory sees every element of society as being essential to achieving social equilibrium or balance. Therefore, meaning that cultural festivals are very important in contributing to the stability of all the social systems as it is an integral and sacrosanct aspect of culture that creates social unity, social recognition, social harmony amongst others.

Furthermore, traditional festivals play both functional and dysfunctional roles. Functional because it has positive outcomes which are both economical and social. Dysfunctional because just like crime, poorly organized traditional festivals can lead to some level of social conflict and deviant behaviors. This perspective is based largely on the works of Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Talcot Parsons and Robert Merton.

#### **SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM THEORY**

Symbolic interactionism is a micro-level sociological theory that focuses on the relationships among individuals within a society. Sociologist, George Herbert Mead (1863 – 1931) is considered a founder of symbolic interactionism, however, Herbert blumer who was a student of Mead coined the term in 1969 and outlined three basic principles.

Blumer's principles of interactionism can be used to explain the significance of traditional festival because they provide explanations for how people interpret different social realities around them and act towards them based on their subjective interpretations. More lucidly, traditional festivals are social phenomena that were created by society (individuals) as a result of some happenings erstwhile in history or just as a form of

celebration in order to bring people together which means that these festivals wouldn't have been created if some kinds of meanings and importance weren't allotted to them.

In essence, the Odi-ogoriba-uge was created because the people of Odi recognized how important the liberation of the community from the mysterious Ogori was to them and because they saw a need to commemorate this memory in order for the future generations to also enjoy and be partakers of that history.

Symbolic interactionism was also influenced by other sociologists and philosophers such as George Simmel, Charles Cooley, and Erving Goffman.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the **case-study-research design**. Samples were further selected through the use of purposive random sampling technique. All primary sources of data was gathered through participant observations in-depth interviews (IDIs). Due to the peculiarity of the subject matter, the communities of UBAKA, EKPERIAAMA, BETHLEHEM AMA, BOLOU AMA, and IFIDI AMA all in Odi kingdom were the focal point for the interviews because they were the communities that were majorly attacked by the 'ogori'. A risk of thirty interviews were conducted within six days.

## **FINDINGS**

From the thirty interviews and six days participatory observations, several findings were made. Which have been analyzed using the thematic approach for qualitative data analysis. Thus four major themes and two sub-themes were generated using the research questions.

### **THEME 1 ; THE ORIGIN OF OGORIBA-UGE FESTIVAL**

Respondents of all twenty five communities in Odi, revealed that the festival originated as a result of the victory from the attacks of a mysterious buffalo that attacked the kingdom of Odi and the eventual killing of the beast. Therefore, there would be no festival if the buffalo did not attack the community and if it wasn't eventually killed. The respondents further gave an in-depth insight on the attacks launched by the buffalo and how it was killed.

#### **SUB-THEME 1; THE ATTACKS OF THE BUFFALO**

In 1953, community members began complaining of being attacked by a beast on their farmland in the bushes. However these stories were regarded as hear-say' until the beast killed its first victim who was identified as Mrs Dorun Iyefagha from Ubaka community. This was followed by the killing of three (3) other women and one (1) man.,

*"The case of the man attacked by the beast was quiet pathetic because he defied all efforts and pleas to dissuade him from entering into the forest. Rather he was claiming that as a member of the Jehovah witness Christian sector, the powers of the beast will have no effect on him. Unfortunately, the four-footed beast attacked him with savage fury, almost dismembered his body and mutilated it beyond recognition". Jehovah witnesses took this as a challenge and went into action by volunteering to pay 40 pounds reward to anyone who could kill the beast.(IDI/Ubaka community respondent)*

No stone was left unturned to find ways to kill the beast. Assistance was sought from all possible avenues as oracles were consulted, sacrifices were made, prayers were offered

and hunters from all walks of life including an 'oyibo' was consulted but still no way out (IDI/ifidi-ama community respondent).

It was further concluded that the beast was not ordinary for it only attacked indigenes of Odi. Although it was later identified as an 'Ogori' – meaning (buffalo). The buffalo did not attack strangers and so when non-indigenes are going through Odi bush path roads, they would announce themselves by chanting loudly and surprisingly, the 'ogori' would not appear.

*The chant they use to shout or sing was: "Ari odi ere ah oh, Ari kalama ere oh, keme gbele kumo oh" which means: I am not from odi oh, I am a stranger please do not hurt me.(IDI/ Ubakacommunity respondent).*

Therefore this led the people to conclude that it must be some influence of wicked spiritual forces determined to punish the people of odi with destruction of life and properties.

### **SUB-THEME 2: THE KILLING OF THE BUFFALO**

All the renowned hunters of odi went after the buffalo with utmost zeal and determination. Hunters such as Arere, Oluku mein, Mark inziri, Lawyer Edesi and Accra edike took it upon themselves individually and sometimes in group to track down animal but were always disappointed as they only manage to see the footprint of the beast but were never able to trace it.

However in early 1957, one Chief Nengi Agedah was scared that the next victim of this buffalo might be his wife or relatives, so he began thinking of a plan to kill the beast and fortunately his daughter, Rachael Agedah chipped in and gave him a clue.

*'Rachael Agedah was a business woman who travelled to the north occasionally on business trips and on her last trip, her uncle confided in her about travelling to the republic of Niger to acquire a charm that could kill the beast". Her father therefore took up the issue from that point and decided to sponsor the trip to Niger republic. So, both Rachael and her father began the journey to Kwara state to meet with her uncle who unfortunately was terminally ill at their arrival. Therefore they continued the journey to Tara in Niger republic without him.( IDI/Ekperigha-ama community respondent)*

They arrived at Tara, met with the 'mallam' who gave them the charm, returned home and administered the charm according to the mallam's instructions which were:

*"The mission should be kept a secret, the charm must be buried in three different locations within the town and when the buffalo eventually dies, nobody should attempt to eat its flesh as that may bring about a great calamity to the entire kingdom" (IDI/respondent obino-ama community).*

Barely three days after the charm was buried, (27th July, 1957). The Ogori was spotted wandering harmlessly on the grass lawns of St Stephen church premises in Bethlehem – Ama community. The Buffalo was then shot down with just one trigger by Hunter 'Akara-Edike' who had no idea that the beast was under the influence of a charm.

After the beast was confirmed dead, the carcass of the Buffalo was tied with a rope and hauled along the town main road, stopping at every community for all to see. Chief Agedah was honored with a title of 'mallam-de-tara' and numerous cash and prize gifts as a token of appreciation.

Therefore to celebrate the massive victory the festival started sixty one (61) years ago in July 27th 1958.

## **THEME 2: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FESTIVAL**

When the respondents were asked if the Odi-ogoriba-uge festival was significant to them, they unanimously agreed that the festival is very important stating that it serves as a period of remembrance to the people concerning the attacks of the buffalo on the land and also a period of entertainment. They also added that the festival was important because it signifies joy, victory and further enhancing love and sharing of the community heritage.

Community members also emphasized the facts that the festival is completely void of fetishism or any latent diabolic practices. In line with this assertion, Hon 'Tonye Isenah' at the opening ceremony stated that "the ogoriba-uge festival is nothing more than a survival party and not a diabolic event".

The elders believe that the festival is of great essence because if not for this annual festival most people especially the youths would have long forgotten about the period when the buffalo was attacking the community and this history would have been a myth by now.

For the youths and young adults the festival is important as it sense as a platform for entertainment. A respondent from Yainmo-ama community states that; "this festival is the only time of the year where we as youths get to actually enjoy ourselves without restriction from our folks but we still ensure that we entertain ourselves responsibly".

## **THEME 3: THE INFLUENCE OF THE FESTIVAL ON THE KINGDOM (ODI)**

Odi-ogoriba-uge has undoubtedly influenced and affected the members of Odi Kingdom and even beyond to a large extent. It is evident that during the festival, the kingdom is full with several activities such as pageantries, talented hunt, raffle draws amongst others. There is also an aura of happiness and euphoria in the air as people go about their different business ventures, families welcoming guests and making merriment.

A respondent from Bolou-ama community stated **thus**; "ah this Ogori celebration has done so many good for us because on a normal day most outsiders would not have heard about Odi and we wouldn't experience this level of excitement and celebration'. From this response it is clear the indeed the festival has exposed the potential of the inhabitants of Odi Kingdom and Odi kingdom itself to the world.

After participating in some of the activities designed for the event, it was gathered that this festival enhances the creativity of the people, as every activity is very exciting, entertaining and informative and most importantly and avenue to wealth.

For instance the awigiri and reggae love boats are designed to board people who are interested in a fun filled cruise which involves singing, dancing and comedy, for a ticket fee of **N500** per person. Fortunately for the ticket collectors, the people are always willing to pay (especially youths) therefore at the end of the day, the organizers will make a lot of profit and those abroad the boat will also enjoy themselves, thereby creating a win-win situation for everyone.

In essence, the festival has contributed to social cohesion, social network, tourism and other business related opportunities for the people as every business venture thrives during this period.

#### **THEME 4: THE INTENSITY OF THE CELEBRATION**

After 61 years of celebration, several modifications have been made and the festival has also experienced different levels of fluctuation which are both positive and negative especially in relations to sponsorship, partnership, attendance, organization etc.

Different participants opined on the level or extent which they feel the festival is celebrated. On this note, some respondents think that the intensity of the festival keeps growing, meaning that it is still celebrated to a large extent.

*'I have never been privileged to see the vice president of this nation or even Davido the musician but because of this festival they are here today and I can see them' (respondent from Ayakoro-ama community).*

Some other interviewees further added that the festival is intense and celebrated to a large extent because the people of Odi value this festival when compared to Christmas and new year celebrations and also that the festival has given them a chance to enjoy what urban dwellers are enjoying such as the presence of world acclaimed dignitaries such as the high commissioner of Malaysia to Nigeria in the 2017 edition.

The assertion that the festival is still celebrated intensely, is particularly among the youths, however some elders of the kingdom had a contrary view. An elderly respondent from 'Isounbiri' community stated thus;

*'I am 54 years old and I have participated in this festival since I was born. The truth is that this festival is declining. It used to be bigger than the way it is now because the primary school field could barely accommodate the entire influx of people. Most of the elders that made this festival thrive are already dead and the rest are too old and weak to participate. So many people moved away to cities and with the high cost of transportation they cannot afford to come back home to celebrate with us, while the ones that can afford it are either too busy or perceive the festival as too local for them to attend and a few others are paranoid that if they come home they would be attacked by witches'.*

Another elderly respondent from Tiokumo-ama community stated thus:

*'before now Odi people in townships did not want to be left behind in the celebrations. They had started converging at home even before the date and very few families did not have guests even total strangers had no problem of finding shelter but now, all that has changed. All the youths care about is partying hard especially at the beach carnival'.*

The above responses shows that elders of Odi believe that the festival is declining and even as it is still celebrated, the principal motive for the festival has been clouded.

#### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The first data derived from the respondents revealed the origin of the OgoribaUge festival. Thankfully, all respondents and participants of the festivals had the same response concerning the origin of the festival. Unanimously, they agreed the festival originated sixty one years ago, after the killing of the mysterious buffalo that attacked the community for five consecutive years killing a total of five people and destroying various farmlands and properties.

Furthermore, it was gathered that the festival is indeed important to the members of the kingdom and even beyond due to the level of publicity, exposure and opportunities that the festival has created for them as a kingdom and respondents also confirmed that the festival has no diabolic interpretation and is nothing more than a victory party. This view affirmed the statement of Isenah(2018).

Findings, further revealed a divergent opinion broadly between the elders and the youths on the level of intensity associated with the celebrations. The elders are of the belief that the festival is gradually declining and it is not as rich as it used to be. On the other hand, the youths believe that the festival that the festival is not declining but rather growing annually. For the youths, the Odi-Ogoriba-Uge festivals is still celebrated to a large, since several dignitaries have visited Odi all because of this festival.

Finally, the interviewees were asked if the festival has had an influence on their lives and they all responded in the affirmative them both individual and as a kingdom in both positive and negative ways but mostly positive.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study examines cultural and traditional festivals in Nigeria highlighting several challenges that these festivals has faced since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially in relations to stereotypes on diabolism. This notwithstanding from the Odi Ogoriba festival it is evident that even in the wake of globalization and modernization, the people of Odi kingdom still place value on this particular cultural heritage.

Thus, from the study and analysis, it was concluded that;

1. No ethnic group in Nigeria is void of it unique heritage and festival.
2. That festivals usually occupy a special place in every known society and embody an intellectual, behavioural and emotional experiences often accompanied by meanings.
3. Not all traditional festivals are related to fetishism as some of them are just an avenue for Thanksgiving and fun.
4. The Odiogoriba-Uge festival is the second most celebrated festival in Bayelsa state next to Adaka-Boro day.
5. The people of Odi cherish the festival and it is highly sacrosanct to the entire kingdom of Odi and Kolokuma/Opokopuma Local Government area.
6. The festival is relatively celebrated to a large extent. Finally, security personnel are always on stand by and alert during the festival therefore, the level of crime subsides during the festival.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusion arising from this study, the following recommendations are hereby suggested:

Firstly, It is encouraged that the celebration of festivals must be kept alive at all cost for it is a major heritage and this therefore calls from effective planning and promotion for maximum participation.

Secondly, The Bayelsa State government and other multinational companies in Bayelsa State should partner with Odi and give the Ogori festival the international standard/status that it really deserves.

Thirdly, after 60 years of celebration it is pathetic that, the Ogoriba-Uga festival has not been included into the Bayelsa State cultural calendar, therefore the government should enable that it is duly added.

Fourthly, Scholars, writers and academies should write more literary works that deals with festivals especially cultural oriented festivals.

Finally, The media also should do their quota in creating awareness and publicity for cultural festivals in Nigeria. For instance they could ensure that these festivals are streamed online for the world to see.

## REFERENCES

- Adelaja,T.(2018). Argungun fishing festival. *Leadership newspapers*. Retrieved 02/11/2018 from <HTTPS://www.leadership.ng./Argungun-fishing-festival>
- Agedah,D.(2007). *Odi ogori ba uge: The true story*. Rivers state Nigeria: convince concepts.
- Arcodia, C., & Whitford, M. (2006). Festival attendance and the development of social capital. *Journal of Convention and Event Tourism*, 8(2), 1–18.
- Cudny W. (2014) The phenomenon of festivals—their origins, evolution and classifications. *Anthropos* 109(2):640–656
- Falassi, A. (1987). *Time out of time: Essays on the festival*.(1st Ed). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Getz, D.(2005). *Event management and Event tourism*. Elmsford NY, Cognizant communication.
- Getz, D. (2010). The nature and scope of festival studies. *International journal of event management research*, 5(1), 1-47.
- Gibson C, Connel J, Waitt G, Walmsley J (2011) *Extent and significance of rural festivals*. In: Gibson C, Connell J (eds) *Festival places: revitalising rural Australia*. Bristol, Tnawanda, Channel View Publications, 3–24
- Mbamalu,S.(2018). Ghana: Homowo festival-when the city of Accra goes quiet. *All Africa publications*. Retrieved from <HTTPS://www.allafrica.com/stories>.
- Mooney,A., Knox,D.,& schacht,c.(2007). *The three main sociological perspectives: understanding social problems*(5th Ed) Belmont CA: Wadsworth publishing.
- Okigbo,D.(2015). The origin of Igbo nkwa, traditional Igbo festival and celebration. *Obindigbo cultural magazine*. Retrieved December 24, from <HTTPS://Obindigbo/2015/12/the-origins-of-igbo-nkwa>.
- Rai,D.(2016). Celebrating life ; Why should we celebrate festivals? Retrieved 05/21/2018/ from <HTTPS://www.Quora.com/why-we-should-celebrate-festivals>.
- Uche,O.(2008). The magic of the Ikeji festival. *Leadership newspapers*. Retrieved 04/06/2018 from <HTTPS://inigerian.com/the-magic-of-the-Ikeji-festival>.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Zalmay,k.(2017). Why festivals are important. The news international. Retrieved 06/10/2018 from [HTTPS://www. Thenews.com.pk/why-festivals-are-important.](https://www.thenews.com.pk/why-festivals-are-important)