

5

GLOBAL EVALUATION OF AHIAJOKU AND ODENIGBO LECTURES IN DEVELOPMENT OF IGBO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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Abstract

This paper examines the contributions of Ahiajoku and Odenigbo lectures in the development of Igbo language and culture. It discusses extensively the history of Ahiajoku and Odenigbo lectures, their contributions in the popularization of Igbo language and the ethnic group worldwide. The paper further highlighted the essence of the formation of the great Ahiajoku and Odenigbo and their controversies at the point of establishment.

Finally, the paper informed every Igbo speaker to speak the language and teach other people around him the rudiment and value of Igbo language.

Keywords: Global, Evaluation, Development, Language, Culture

Introduction

Ahiajoku is traditionally means the celebration that is annually done in honour of the yam god, Ahiajoku or lfejioku as the dialect may be is culturally celebrated by Igbo people in the South East of Nigeria. In the other hand, Odenigbo is a public lecture organized annually to Christianize Ahiajoku lecture. Both take place in Owerri Imo State the founders State.

The contributions of the Ahiajoku and Odenigbo lectures in the development of Igbo language and culture are derived from the total topics presented by the lecturers. Now let take them in turns, historically.

History of Ahiajoku lecture; according to Government of Imo State (1979) first civilian Governor of Imo State Chief Sam Onunaka Mbakwe inaugurated the annual intellectual event called Ahiajoku lecture. Little did he know that, the experimental cultural assembly which he had invited some scholars and academics which Prof. MJC Echeruo declared opened, would established the highest form of Igbo general assembly through which the Igbo would gather annually to deliberate on issues concerning At conceptualizing this intellectual cultural meeting,

the Obowo, Imo State born Governor looked back at the Igbo world and searched cautiously for an aspect of Igbo cultural life that would give a stamp of authority to the whole exercise and interestingly came up with the idea of Ahiajoku which as a festival in many areas of Igbo land is celebrated annually in honour of the yam god, Ahiajoku or Ifejioku as earlier said. Over the years, notable Igbo scholars at home and in the diasporas had been invited to the esteem Igbo Assembly to discuss any aspect of the race that would help to improve the Igbo world and to build a great Nigeria.

The Essence of the Formation of Ahiajoku Lecture

According to Nwabueze (1985) for the communities comprised in the geographical area now known as Nigeria, the establishment over them of a common government is perhaps the most momentous single event in history. It is particularly for Igbo's who until then had never experienced any political organization larger than the village group or clan.

No doubt, there had existed among the Igbo some common identity based on a common language and common cultural patterns. But they were never organized as one political entity or nation. The Nris or Aros many have wielded some authority over a considerable part of Igbo land but their authority as it was and purely spiritual, not political. In matters of government village-group or clan existed.

The essence of the formation Ahiajoku was to bring Igbo man into the context of modern Nigeria government and political. This idea also contributes in the development of Igbo language and cultural hence every lecturer has right to choose language of his choice between Igbo or English language.

The Ahiajoku lecturers and the topics of lectures

Prof. MJC. Echeruo (1979), Ahamefuna: A Matter of Identity.

Prof. Bede N. Okigbo) 1980(. Plant and Food in Igbo Culture

Prof. A.E Afigbo)1981(. The Age of Innocence.

Prof. A.O Anya)1982(. The Environment of Isolation or The Ecology and Socio-Biology of Igbo Culture and Political Development

Prof. Donatus Nwoga)1984(. Nka na Nzere The Focus of Igbo World View.

Prof. B.O Nwabueze)1985(. The Igbo in the Context of Modern Government and Politics in Nigeria a Call for Self Examination and Self Correction.

Dr. Pius N. Okigbo)1986(Towards a Reconstruction of the Political Economy of Igbo Civilization Prof. M.A Onwuejeogwu (1987). Evolution Trends in the History of the Development of the Civilization in the Culrural Theatre of Igbo land in Southern Nigeria.

Prof. A.N Okoro)1988(Chukwuka Dibia.

Prof. M. O. Chijioke)1989(Ugwumba: The Greatness of a People.

Prof A.O Animalu)1990 (Ucheakonam: A way of Life in the Modern Scientific Age.

Prof. R.O Ohuche)1991(Ibu anyi danda. The Centrality of Ede in Igbo Culture.

Prof. G.M. Umezuruike (1992). The Hub of Igbo Cultural Renaissance in the Scientific Age

Prof. Emmanuel Obiechina (1994). Ncheteka: The Memory Story and Continuity of Igbo Culture.

Prof Uchendu (1995), Ezinuuio: The Extended Igbo Family and Civilization.

Prof C.A. Ornwumechili (2000). Tgbo Enwe Eze)The Igbo have no Kings

Prof EN. Emenanjo, (2001). Igbo or Igboid: Asusu N agburu ndi Igbo) Langue in Igbo Civilization (

There were no lectures in 1983 and 1993 perhaps due to the charged political atmosphere at those times. Also, between 1996 -1999 there were no lectures. During this period either by his alleged theocratic inclination or a veiled containment effort banned the lecture with a military fiat. In 2000, the current government of Achike Udenwa in keeping with the resilience spirit of Ndiigbo creditably re-inaugurated the lecture. Titled Igbo enwe Eze?

Prof. Emmanuel Nlenanya Onuu)2002(Uzo ndu na Eziokwu: Towards understanding of Igbo traditional religion life and philosophy.

Prof. Chinualuogu Achebe)2008(

Prof. Bart O, Nnaji (2009) Ka ihe di: The Power of Light Energy as a Fundamental instrument for Socio Economic Development.

Prof. Chinedu Ositadimma Nebo)2010(. Nigeria sectoral under Development Leadership Challenges; The Igbo Perspective.

Prof. Ben A. Eheazu (2011), Global warming and Climate change.

The 2011 Ahiajoku made the 34th lectures since the beginning from 1979 -2011

History of Odenigbo lectures

Odenigbo is the name of a public lecture which the Catholic congregation of the Owerri Archdiocese supports for the praise of God and the time support of the spirit of the Igbo people through spreading of the gospel, good things, good behaviour and true learning among the general public who are interested in the Igbo language.

Odenigbo lecture series was instituted primarily to Christianize Ahiaioke lectures

This was as a result of the objection of misguided Christian supported by the then military administrator of Imo State as supposedly born again' character named colonial Zubairu to the Abajioke nomenclature which the regarded as 'Pagan' nothing could be further from the truth because before the advent of European Christianity. the concept of Chukwu, Almighty God, was already ingrained in Igbo culture Prof. Afigbo called it an attempt to wipe the cultural state of the Igbo people clan (Afigbo, ,2000).

The Odenigbo lecture was delivered in Igbo language in 1999, Chinua Achebe presented a lecture titled "Echi di ime taa bug boo: Tomorrow is pregnant today is early enough.

The Contributions of Ahiajoku and Odenigbo Lectures in the Development Of Igbo Language and Culture are contained in their Tenets

1. Imo State Government (1979) for Odenigbo, there are many good things in Igbo land and those that came from other lands that required support and acceptance among us, especially in things concerning good behaviour and good learning making good things increase growth and which can be established among the Igbo people. Therefore, Odenigbo is a lecture causing good things to be written, established and widely known, Uche Ohia (2008).
2. The Igbo language has not had the honour, respect and support that it should have among the Igbo to speak, explain and interpret the thoughts. Some Igbo people who use Igbo language to do certain things are neglected or took down or ignore their activities. This is why Odenigbo should become a real progressive force in using Igbo language to interpret people's thought. As this is being done, Odenigbo will start to take interest in using Igbo language to do thing among the Igbo race. The joy and abundance that are in the Igbo language will emerge.
3. In the world now, writing and reading Igbo language has become a challenge facing Igbo language speakers, it is not enough to use Igbo language to speak or explain things, that is why Odenigbo encourages the Igbo people to use Igbo in their life endeavor (reading and writing).
4. The Christian congregation in Igbo land is one of the places where Igbo language is of great importance that is why Igbo language has become the chief language in things concerning God in all their activities. When this is extended to our culture Jesus Christ that is the saviour of the whole world will be saving the Igbo from the sins and also saving Igbo language from the neglect of the European government.

As he saves the Igbo, He is called Odenigbo, True Odenigbo, Odeniwa.

In his own contribution in the development of our language and culture Nnaiji (2009) referred to the aspect of Igbo unity by the former Governor of Anambra State Chief Nwobodo in his paper titled "Ka ihe di' n' ala Igbo;" Chief Nwobodo appointed indigenes of what is now call old Imo State into key positions in old Anambra State.

Why can't the present generation of Igbo leaders continue with such appointments in order to deepen Igbo unity and culrure of Igbo people? The Ahiajoku and Odenigbo lecture expose many setbacks of Igbo culture and the language.

Conclusion

By reflecting back to all the contributions of the Ahiajoku lecturers and Odenik starting from 1979 and 1999 respectively, one will conclude that each topic of lecture develops the Igbo language and culture; hence the Quest lecturer has the right to choose the language he prefers provided the audience understands it.

- (a) The Ahiajoku and Odenigbo lectures bring Igbo scholars and linguists together a the whole world know that Igbo language is one of the major African languages. Though it is spoken predominantly in Biafra (Former Eastern Nigeria) and Midwest the present Delta State.
- (b) It is widely spoken in almost all the countries of this world by the Igbo and the admirers in Diaspora, the Ahiajoku and Odenigbo made Igbo language more popular among other languages in Africa even in teaching of science subjects.
- (c) Ahiajoku and Odenigbo forced scholars of Igbo language and literature start debate again on the problematic of creating literature in an indigenous language in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual situation.
- (d) Finally the evaluation of Ahiajoku and Odenigbo lectures on the contribution of Igbo language and culture have established cultural day for all Igbo speaking race on the globe. It is pertinent to note and necessary to inform every Igbo speaker the importance of speaking Igbo language and teaching of their words. Igbo language, Because the language of the people is their most important heritage on which the survival of their culture and their continued existence on earth as a people largely depend upon (Eheazu, 2011). The current administration in the state placed much emphasis on culture and language urging the organizers of Ahiajoku and Odenigbo to organize a world class event of cultural harvest.

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- Odenigbo to organize a world class event of cultural harvest.