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Empowering Women in Igbo Spirituality: *Embracing Diversity and Village-Specific Traditions*

By Chukwunwike Ossai

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EMPOWERING WOMEN IN IGBO SPIRITUALITY

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The real essence of Igbo spirituality lies in it's rich diversity and how it can empower the women, demonstrating that women can hold significant spiritual power, depending on their local traditions.

In Igbo spirituality, women play different and many significant roles, it is deeply rooted in the culture of each village. For instance, Nwaka-ego, from a particular village where women perform “iru agwu” rituals, it's shows this kind of diversity. Here, women are not just participants but are big-time players in the spiritual practices such as feeding chi, placing Ikenga Chi, carrying Oji, and even joining the village masquerade at any age.

The idea of women being restricted in Igbo spirituality came from wrong beliefs or teachings spreading on social media like Facebook and X (formerly Twitter). But those teachings does not reflect the true, village-specific traditions that decides spiritual roles. What women can do in spiritual matters is determined by their customs of “ora mmuo” or village not by outside or modern interpretations.

What some people might consider “aru” or taboo in one village might be normal in another. For instance, in some parts of Enugu and Imo, “ikpu aru” is not observed, rendering those taboos meaningless to their local customs. Same way, how they respect some animals like

python can change; in Akpugo, that respect doesn't apply.

Before labelling something as taboo or women cannot participate in Igbo spirituality, you need to understand the special spiritual laws of the woman's village.

Omu of Okpanam, photography by Northcote Thomas, Chi uwa nile

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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An enthusiast in tech with deep passion for studying and showcasing the vibrant cultural heritage of southern Nigeria . Combining my skill with my obsession towards African history and traditions to create contributions that impacts the digital space.



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