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Mpkisi Age Grade: *The Sustained Relevance of Traditional Governance and Community Development in Anioma Society*

By Chukwunwike Ossai

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MPKISI AGE GRADE

Mpkisi Age Grade: The Sustained Relevance of Traditional Governance and Community Development in Anioma Society

By Chukwunwike Ossai · Cultural Heritage · Ozikoro.com

The Mpkisi Age Grade (which can also be called Otu Mpkisi or Mgbe Mpkisi) is a big deal in the Anioma community in Delta State, Nigeria. It is not like an ordinary age grade found in most African communities. It is a mixture of Community work and spiritual vibes that makes it unique in the whole of Ukwuani and Ndokwa. This system does many things: It runs the community like a government. Pushes project development. Controls behaviors with cultural rules. Marks the manhood of growing boys.

How It Started And Changes Way Back Roots Mpkisi originated from: Old Igbo age grade ways(Otu Ogbo)Colonial Changes The whites, through their indirect rule, used age grades for local work It changed from just a fighting group to a community builder

Today's Style Educated and famous people are now members Most places allow women to join Mobile phones and the internet help them plan well

Age Groups Umu mpkisi (Young Warriors):18-35 years Ndi Mpkisi (prime Adults):36-55 years Ndi Isi mpkisi (Elders):56 years and above

Leadership Lineup Onyeisi mpkisi (Big Boss) Odu mpkisi (Spokesperson) Onye Nche (Welfare Guy) Onye Ego (Money Keeper)

Community work Building and fixing roads Keeping the market square clean Building of schools Watching over security Holds culture

Planning of festivals (New Yam and masquerades) Taking care of ancestral shrines Passing down folktales Settles fights Handling of land issues Fixing marital issues Gives oath (Igbu Ichi)

How To Be A Member And Initiation What You Need Must be a free-born boy(old rule) At least 18 years old Payment of a small fine to join

Joining Ceremony Igo Ofo (Kola nut prayer) Iba Aka (Swearing of oath) Iwa Mpkisi (Cross sacred staff) Oriko (Nzu Chalk Blessing)

Signs and Clothes Special Things Ofo Sticks: Sign of power Ogene Bell: Call people together Uvie Leaves: means clean heart Special Dressings Red caps for leaders White wrappers for ceremonies Traditional staff big men

Modernity issues Youths don't really like old ways It clashes with government jobs Village folks are not joining as before

Financial issues It depends on membership dues NGO's are competing with them in projects Things are more expensive now

Examples Of What They Do Utagba-Uno mpkisi: Building of secondary schools Emu-Uno Age Grade: Fixing of solar street lights Ibusa Otu Mpkisi: Originated the vigilante group

Mpkisi Age Grade is still strong in Anioma, mixing old forms of leadership with community growth. Even with modern issues, it can change and still be useful if merged with modernity. Preserving this culture and adding new ideas will ensure its longevity for upcoming generations.

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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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