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Religion:

Why Thousands of Igbo Youths are Returning to “Odinani” Practice

By Chukwunwike Ossai

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RELIGION

Religion: Why Thousands of Igbo Youths are Returning to “Odinani” Practice

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There has been a recent wave where thousands of young Igbo people are getting back to Odinani way of life, below is an extensive explanation of reasons why many Igbo Youths are falling back to the religious practice of their ancestors.

1. Pride laced with Cultural Identity

The beauty of complex culture of Ndi Igbo including its traditional practices inspires a pride sense of Igbo heritage among young people. Authors like Chinua Achebe in his works explicated this beauty.

Odinani spiritual doctrine makes emphasis on connecting with nature, forefathers, and community. The anthropological of Onwuejeogwu details how cosmology of Igbo tradition cuts across all aspects of life, making room for a sense of fulfilment which is clearly missing in Western religion, as it disconnects Africans from their ancestors and community.

3. Disillusionment with Modern Religions

The theme of disillusionment in western religious practices as seen in our today's world and highlighted by prolific writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in “Purple Hibiscus” where young people might be forced to turn away from Christianity as a result of its perceived disconnection with the typical African cultural identity and this could gear towards redefining and rediscovering of Odinani.

4. *Academic and Educational Interest*

The research made in “Igbo Traditional Religion and the Christian Missionaries” made emphasis on how the interest on Igbo religion has academically has been on the increase, Angela Okagu’s work encouraged younger generations to dive deep and explore their cultural roots spiritually and academically.

The global trend of falling back to indigenous practices has been discussed by scholars like Ifi Amadiume, where the adaptability and resilience of indigenous African practices was discussed. This context globally supports the reenforcement of Ọdịnani among Igbo people especially the youths.

6. *Cultural Events and Festivals*

The glam and allure of Igbo culture and festivals has been studied and put down by scholars like John C. McCall in his work “Dancing Histories: Heuristic Ethnography with the Ohafia Igbo”. These cultural festivals, rooted deeply in Ọdịnani don’t just educate about Igbo spirituality but also celebrate it, attracting young people back into practicing Ọdịnani.

7. *Social and Community Healing:*

In the works of V C. Uchendu “The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria.” the role of religion in settling conflict or cultural suppression is discussed and evidence shows how Ọdịnani practices have ability to repair communal bonds and also address trauma, culturally. This in turn resonates with the youths looking out for cohesion socially.

The revival of Ọdịnani isn’t a mere return to former ways but a reinterpretation and reclamation of the identity of Ndi Igbo and its Spirituality in there context of modernity.

© Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – “Purple Hibiscus”

© M. Angulu Onwuejeogwu – “The Social Anthropology of Africa”

© Ifi Amadiume - “Male Daughters, Female Husbands”

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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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