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QUESTION;

In not more than 3000 words, discuss the cultural changes that have taken place in your local community upon the advent of westernization.

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. "Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our [language](https://www.livescience.com/65108-brain-megabyte-storage-for-language.html), marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things,"

I CHIAHA ANASTASIA OBIAGERI is from Ezeagu Local Government in Enugu State. Ezeagu is endowed with a rich cultural heritage, and traditional festivals and dances announce the arrival and departure of the various seasons of the year. Ogugo-Chi, Akanu, Oku Owa-Ito, Ibono Okochi, Ibono Udu-Mii, Mgba Ndi-Omu, Mgba Une n’Une, Owhuwhu-Ji and Mgba Ogwu are principal festivals, while the international-famed Ezeagu Atilogwu dance remains the cynosure at traditional dance jamborees in Enugu StateEzeagu is endowed with a which cultural traditional festivals and dances announce the arrival and depurative of traditional festivals of the various seasons of the years. The people are predominantly farmers, cassava on the low – lying plins the liver banks. Ezeagu has, traditional festivals amongst others like Ogugo – chi, Akanu, Ibono – okochi, Ibono Udu – Mii, Mgba une n’ une, Mgba Ogwu and Atiliogwu. Successful farmers also take titles of Ozo and Ekwu dosing specific periods of the year.

The influence of Christianity, the western culture and westerners in Ezeagu has brought a lot of change in the people’s life. Fanatics have found the spread of Christianity of destroy one cultural identity and should approach this with caution because no nation ever survived without cultural identity.

Cultural changes that has happened in Ezeagu include;

1. NO TALES BY MOONLIGHT

A 30-minute children's programme that narrated traditional African folklore, it was superior to every other thing on TV, including other favourites like "Speak Out" and "Storyline." Igbo people tell their children folktales under the moonlight. Folktales are stories that are told by older people to pass messages to the younger generation through the use of animals. Folktales are normally told in the evening after the evening chores. Children normally sit round the fire side in their father’s “obi” or in their mother’s hut to listen to folktales. Normally the elders, their father or mother tells the story. Children then turns in telling their own stories. These story telling sessions normally take place in the evening after the evening chores. They take place in the relaxed atmosphere unlike today’s education which is characterized by the strictness and rigidity. Traditional Igbo child listens to the folktale from infancy to adult life. This reveals that the early Igbo people really enjoyed the traditional stories especially their folktales unlike what is obtainable in Igbo society today. Prior to western education, Africa, particularly in Igbo society, folktales played an indispensable role in traditional education. It was a veritable means through which morals, culture, beliefs, values, worldview and consciousness of the Igbo were handed down to the younger generation. In the early Igbo traditional community, Igbo folktales were invaluable to the early Igbo people due to the communal attributes of the stories. The tales served as tools for conflict resolution in the communities, and is still thought to weld same capability for enhanced consciousness.

The use of the Igbo language and interference by foreign languages and cultures, colonialism, western education, religious practices, insecurity, conflict, and modern technology; especially the social media, are all contributing factors. Many Igbo youths now prefer foreign stories, cartoons, home movies, etc to Igbo folktales. Consequently, storytelling and moonlight activities are disappearing scenes in many Igbo communities, upsetting the initial cultural scheme of teaching and training for Igbo youths. Regrettably, Igbo folktale characters like Mbe, Agu, Ewi, Ezi, Atụrụ, etc, now appear very strange to many Igbo children, who have become better familiar with foreign media characters like Tom and Jerry, lion king, etc. Today, in contemporary Nigeria, oral literature has been affected by a number of factors. There is the factor of the influence of literacy and urbanization, which encourage rural-urban drift and consequently cause urban dwellers to abandon some aspects of their cultural tradition… other forms of modern influences on our traditional life threaten the sustainability, continuity and preservation of the oral mode of our literary tradition. “The impact of folktales is rapidly diminishing with the increasing awareness of modern inventions. The pastime of tale telling is fast disappearing because of other technological innovations like television, radio, C.D‟s, DVD‟s and so forth. Children have therefore various other ways of having fun. Again, the schools seem to be taking over the primary purpose of the didactic folktales”. In evaluating the state of Igbo folktales today, Utoh-Ezeajugh (2012:208) laments, “Folktales are enacted in traditional Igbo communities usually after the evening meal and mostly in open spaces on moonlit nights. Sadly, many of the younger generations of the Igbos (sic) do not know these stories anymore”. In these tales, elders who are vast in the art of oral transmission weave highly engaging tales around animals, spirit and human characters with the aim of impacting socially, morally and culturally on the audiences.

1. CHRISTIANITY WAS INTRODUCED SO TRADITIONAL PRACTICES ARE NOT DONE AGAIN.

 It arrived in Igbo land in 1857. So, with the advent of Christianity in 1857, the traditional religion had a serious rival. At first, the problem which Christianity presented to the traditional religion was not regarded as a serious matter by the people because conversion to Christianity at the initial stage was not an easy task because Christianity was a new religion and something brought to Igbo nation by European missionaries: Rev. Schon and his associates at the shores of the River Niger.

The Igbo feared that if they become Christians, their gods would bring disaster to them. Diviners and medicine men reported that the divinities were angry because of the new religion and warned that nobody should join the missionaries. Others refused to embrace the new religion because they thought that the missionaries wanted to destroy their culture. Despite these reasons and threats, Christianity began to win converts in Igbo land. They had village church-school teachers called church agents. These agents were very active in molding the attitude of the converts, especially the young, toward the traditional society. Most of them, half educated and in many cases utterly misguided, contributed significantly to open disrespect for and disregard of the society’s time-honored customs and religious practices.

In the traditional society, when something goes wrong in the welfare of the individual or his family, he immediately wondered who had caused it to happen. In most cases, the individual would suspect that someone had used evil magic, sorcery, or witchcraft against him or his household, animals, or fields. Whereas the traditional religionists hate and fear these forces, Christians do not believe that sorcerers, witches, and charms have any effect on people or their property. Christians condemned magic; they use prayers and sacrament to drive away dangers and difficulties. So, according to Nze Ugwoshie Madu (oral interview, 2015), in situations where a diviner or *dibịa* (native doctor) was consulted for solutions to family problem to appease the gods, Christian converts in the family insisted that prayer through their priests would be the solution

1. NO MUD HUTS

Igbo houses varied from region to region, but walls are always made of clay, except for temporary housing of which the walls are often made of raffia leaves.  In certain parts of Igbo land, the frame of the walls is first established with wood and then red clay soil is beaten into mortars and used to cover the frames and give the house a sturdy shape.  In other parts, they do not need to use any wood, instead adobe mortars are used. These are laid in stages. The foundation is established and left to dry, then another layer is placed over the foundation, allowed to dry, and another, until the desired height of the house is reached.  Building a sturdy Igbo house takes weeks, if not months. This is often done towards the end of the rainy season for easy access to water that is needed to beat the clay spill into adobe, as well as access to the desired sun heat to dry the layers as the building progresses.  Four triangular stakes are usually placed at the four corners of the walls for holding the roof frame in place.

After the walls have been built to the desired height, the frame for the roof is built. Usually the frame is built away from the structure. The builders will measure the dimensions of the house and establish the desired length of the roof and begin the building of the roof frame. The roof usually comes in pairs, and is positioned in a triangular shape over the house.  The roof frame is built exclusively from raffia branches woven tightly with raffia ropes called *ekekre*.  After the roof frame is done, it is hung up on the stakes on top of the walls and the two sides of the frame are joined at the tip and bound tightly with *ekekre* to form one solid frame.  Having solidly planted the frame on top of the building, it is time to begin to attach the raffia mats that form the shingles of the roof.  These shingles are carefully tied on the frame, starting from the lowest point and being laid in such a way that each subsequent one overlaps with the previous one to ensure clear and smooth water run-off. By the time the highest point is reached, a full sheet of the raffia mat is placed to overlap the joint of the two sides of the roof frame, forming a water tight seal that ensures good protection from the rain for the next one year. While the roof frames may last up to five years before needing a replacement, the shingles (or mats) require replacement every year.

After the walls have been erected and the roof installed, the Igbo turns attention to flooring.  The floor of the Igbo thatched house is filled with red clay soil. Plantain leaves are spread over it, and children and adults (but mostly children) gather to walk through it, dance on it, and mash it down until it’s compact.  The leaves are removed, and the soil is beaten down with the stem from the queen palms. The soil is beaten until it compacts with the existing soil on the floor and forms one unit.  Then, water is splattered over it, and women would use potsherds to scrub it smooth until you can step onto it and not feel any grain of soil on your feet.  The same treatment of smoothing is also given to the interior and exterior walls of the house. Both floor and walls are subsequently painted with a variety of colors ranging from white chalk to black dyes, and often the women who decorate them take care to draw different pictures on the walls for decorative purposes.  House painting and decorating used to be passtime activities after harvest time.   After the house is completed, space within the house is demarcated, designating space for the bed, the fire place (with a hanging drying rack over it) and the position of the drinking guard (*Ite Mmiri* – clay water pot) for household drinking water.

The beauty of the Igbo thatched house lies in its suitability for the tropical climate of the Igbo world.  During the hot dry season, these houses are as cool as an air conditioned western home.  During the cold harmattan or the wet season, it is warm and cozy.

The modern homes, with brick walls and corrugated iron sheets for roof, remain major mistakes in architecture for the Igbo environment. Progress will be made when these traditional materials can be modernized and used to build more comfortable homes in Igbo land. In recent Igbo house the advent of colonization has made people to start using blocks, cements, concretes, tiles, zinc roof for building. Therefore, most of the huts houses are being replaces with the modern structure of building.

1. DRESSING

In the old days, some Igbo women celebrated their feast in ekwerike clothing. In other words, they tied thick fabric around their waist. Others preferred painting their bodies with ufle, nzu, edo, uri and other colored ornaments (instead of wearing clothing) and decorating their waist with bead accessories. Even today women who originated from Igbo tribe love wearing necklaces, beads and pretty ornaments with their traditional and modern attires. Coral-colored beads are still relevant. This is still a particular element of the Igbo traditional attire. Modern Igbo female attire consists of an elegant blouse with pretty puffed sleeves and embroidery on clothing (many blouses are made of wax and guipure materials), wrapper and scarf on the head (gele). Mothers and ladies also like to wear additional wrapper (using 2 instead of 1) and love when this type of dressing is made of Hollandis materials.

Centuries ago, Igbo men preferred wearing loincloth which is a piece of garment that covered the private parts of the male bod This loincloth was often kept in one place by a belt or fastened at the back. Who prefers such type of Igbo dressing nowadays? Well, you will not see an Igbo businessman in a loincloth, but farmers and sportsmen who spent most of the day under the hot sun often dress up in a loincloth and choose to wear a wrapper above. Most men in everyday life wear the simple cotton robes (wrappers) with a light shirt and sandals. Traditional male attire preferred in Igbo culture consists of a special top (it is called Isiagu) and trousers. Isiagu can remind you of another type of dressing loved by Africans – dashiki – but it is still unique for Igbo people who can make it of a fabric of black color without ornaments, use other plain color or give preference to the lion head images on the top. Many Igbo men also love wearing hats with their traditional attire. This hat is often called agwu, okpu agu (such style is loved by title holders) and has stripes on top often looking a lot like a bobble hat. Often men enjoy wearing a red cap which used to be a special sign of the chief, but today it is loved by all members of the tribe. The red color plays an important role because historically Igbo people used red accents in their styles as a symbol of suffering they had to experience to develop and grow Igbo community.

The tradition to let most children stay without clothing until becoming matured people (of course, many girls covered their chest area with beads and necklaces even years ago) has changed. Modern Igbo kids are usually dressed up and look very cute. They look like small copies of grown-ups.

Cultures change over time. Igbo culture is also influenced by European colonization and modern fashion styles. Today you will mostly meet Igbo people in clothing rather than without clothes. The attires have changed a bit, but still, the influence of the traditions is observed nowadays. Modern Igbo families and children look elegant and still unique

1. BIRTH AND NAMING

In Igbo nation, the birth of a child is accompanied by various rites, which involve presentation to ancestors and the cleansing of the mother from the “pollution” at childbirth. The “pollution” of childbirth may be performed after three native days depending on the part of Igbo nation. This practice is also the same in Christianity, where a woman after childbirth offers live animals and special cleansing prayer to God, for remittance into the Christian folk. After that, the naming of the child and its presentation to the people follows. Some factors determine the name given to a child, and this is where conflict arises with the Christian belief. According to [Ilogu (1974)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244017709322), three factors usually determine the name given to a child. They are as follows:

1. The day of the native week on which the child is born (and Christianity believes that the days of the Igbo native week: *Eke, Orie, Afọ*, and *Nkwọ* are named after deities. But they forgot that apart from August, named after Caesar Augustus, that January to December are all names of Jewish deities.
2. The historical incident peculiar to the child’s birth or to the circumstances of the parents.
3. The philosophical or socio religious faith, which the child stimulates in the parents.

After the naming ceremony, there is *Ịgba afa agụ* (as it is called by the Obosi, Abattete, Umuoji, and Nkpor people of Idemili-North LGA of Anambra state). This is the ceremony of finding out the ancestral relationship of the newborn child through divination. Agbaogwugwu people of Enugu state call such reincarnated child *agụ m* (my rib), whereas it is called *ogbo m* (myself) in Ngwo and most towns in Eziagu and Udi LGAs of Enugu State, including many other towns (Okposi, Abankeleke, Uburu, etc.) in Ebonyi State. In opposition, Christians do not accept the traditional beliefs of naming ceremonies. Christians believe that as God is the creator of every human being, names should relate to him. Often coercion is used to force Christians to perform the naming rites. Of course, some Christians do resist