**IGALA SOCIETY AND THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSITION TO MODERNITY**

**Abstract**

This study tries to investigate the social dynamics and evolving practices in post-contact Igala society. Extant literature on Igala society are revolving around the history, kingship and domination, myth, and culture. Drawing from qualitative-dominant approach through primary and secondary sources, this study tries to add to the existing conversations in ways that renegotiate the challenges of transition to modernity. It specifically attempts to interrogate the evolving trends in Igala historical development. As the findings suggest, Igala society, though a land in transition has continued to navigate and absorb the shocks and challenges arising from its contacts with foreign religions and western influence to achieve some level of equilibrium in development.

**Key words: Igala, Society, Transition, Modernity, Development**

**Introduction**

Igala society, primarily a traditional African society has undergone remarkable changes in the area of sociocultural development, since her contact with Islam, colonial administration, Christianity and Western education from the 19th century, with accompanying challenges. Igalaland is located at the confluence of rivers Niger and Benue of Nigeria. According to the 2006 National Population Commission Report, Igala numerical strength is at 1,484,345. Igala ethnic group contemporarily is found mainly in Kogi State of Nigeria, while pockets of them reside in Anambra, Enugu, Edo, and Delta States. The vantage geographical location of Igala has elicited strong opinion of scholars such as J.S. Boston 1968, J. O. Ijoma 2010, T.A. Miachi 2012, as having contributed much to Igala historical development that span centuries, through contact with surrounding neighbours such as the Benin, the Jukun, the Nupe, the Idoma and the Igbo, with profound impact on her sociocultural practices. With the emergence of foreign religions and western culture in Igalaland from the 19th century up to the middle of the 20th century and afterwards, much cultural transformation occurred. Moreover, the competitive postures of these change agents in Igala society, have tended to exacerbate much pressure on Igala culture, leading to culture resistance and assimilation, as well as syncretic practices. In the face of the challenges posed by the competitive stance of these variables, Igala's march to modernity has been tampered, moderated, given rise to a mix of cultural nuances with copious imprint of Igala ethnic identity clause, leaning strongly on Igala development trajectory.

Although literatures on Igala society during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras, (encompassing Igala kingship, political development and domination; Igala history, tradition and culture; Islamic penetration and impact) abound, however, the aspect of Igala transition to modernity and the challenges that accompany such developments within the evolving social dynamics, have not been covered necessitating this work.

Boston (1968) focused on the traditional heritage system of Igala kingdom, which revolves around the Igala king, the Attah, and the king makers, and how the Attah held sway over the subordinates. The author further highlighted the activities of Igala traditional festivals such as the Egwu festival, and its influence in the maintenance of the Attah's authority over the subjects, and in sustaining Igala traditional worship system. Ayandele (1996) analysed the general effects of Islam and Christianity on Africa. The author points out that the two religions have played contrasting influence on the African continent. Ayandele posits that, Islam tends to be more integrative than supplantive with African culture, when compared to Christian influence in Africa, which tends to be disruptive. Adegbe (2006) examines the religious life of Igala monarch, Attah Aliyu Obaje, who ruled from 1956 to 2012; and the roles he played in the development of Igala society and Islam in Igalaland; which showed evidence of compromise with Islam, the Christian faith, and Igala traditional system. Ijoma (2010) points to the socio-cultural exchanges that ensued between Igala and her neighbours, as a result of their proximity and, the inter-group relationship that flourished; leading to cultural exchanges on all sides. Miachi (2012) describes the roles of the masquerades cult in Igala society, as one imbued with sustaining Igala culture and kingship authority. The author points out how the activities of the masquerades facilitate Igala social, political, religious and economic development and harmony, by means of collaboration and sustainability of the social system. Abdurrahman (2016), highlights how the coming of western education in Ankpa, a notable town in Igalaland, has contributed to the low patronage of Islamic education by Muslim parents during the colonial and post-colonial eras, who felt that the acquisition of western education has a better economic prospect over Islamic education. The result was the conversion of a number of Muslims children to the Christian religion in Ankpa, and other Igala communities where the same attitude to the evolving trend occurred. From the foregoing, it is clear that there is silence on published literature on Igala, of the evolving challenge of transition to modernity, premised on the competitive postures of change agents in Igala society.

**Conceptual and Theoretical clarification**

The concept of ‘modernity’ is built on the idea of attainment of a certain level of progressive movement within a society, consequent upon changes in the socioeconomic and political spheres from an earlier position. This may explain the position held by S. L. Snyder that, modernity implies “innovation in technological, governance and socioeconomic” spheres, from an earlier state of communality to “individual subjectivity”, with disinterest in religion to “… growth in bureaucracy and urbanization”. The conceptualization of modernity according to sociology discipline does not differ much from the above definition. Modernity is seen here as the “era of human development which started in Europe around the year 1650 and ended in around 1950, characterized by changes in scientific, technological and socioeconomic….” spheres. This era according to this assertion saw “the rise of intellectualism and individualism”, marked by “development of stable and centralized government in countries”(Smarter UK, n.d). In the efforts to further explain the concept of modernity in relation to traditional societies, attempts have been made to equate the concept, modernity particularly to Europe, while Africa was seen as being synonymous with traditional society.

However, it is important to note that traditional societies were never static, and that Africa and Igala society in particular, prior to contact with western culture and Islam, had factors such as trade, migration, conflicts and so on, which engendered change/transformation. Thus, the idea or concept of modernity as used in this work does not in any way suggest that Igala society was a static society until these change agents came to Igalaland. The work argues that the activities of these variables in Igalaland, though engendered changes in Igala socio-cultural lifestyle, it also led to competition for influence among them, which in turn resulted to cultural resistance and assimilation as well; the endgame being the manifestation of compromise in the area of sociocultural development. R.A. Kumar notes that “modernity does not necessarily weaken tradition”, since it “needs tradition in order to overcome its limitations…, which serves as “the backbone of modernity” (2011:38). In other words, there are certain elements of survived tradition within the arena of modernity which are resilient to changes and act as enduring pillars to absorb and, to as well resist the shocks inherent in culture contacts and changes.

In his work, A Study of History 1934 – 1961, Arnold J. Toynbee made a theoretical postulation of historical events by means of “Civilization”, as they occur within the context of nation-states. He argues that civilizations as they occur in history “are rarely immune from outside influence, either from past civilizations or present ones”. Toynbee’s position is that in the clash of civilizations or cultures whenever it occurs, the result will usually lead to “fruitful exchanges, some to near total collapse and others to retrenchment and resistance.” Toynbee’s theory of clash of civilization may well explain the incidence of Igala’s challenge of transition to modernity in the midst of competing variables, and Igala efforts to navigate and to as well resist the encroachment on her cultural identity. In other words, the arrival of Islam, colonial rule, Christianity and western education in Igalaland led to some changes in Igala socio-cultural lifestyle, but at the same time it engendered compromises and cultural resistance as well.

The fact of inherent resilient displayed in Igala’s response to contact with foreign cultures, including the challenges of navigating and absorbing the shocks emanating from such encounters, inform the adoption of qualitative – dominant approach methodology, which in essence highlight the evolving trend in Igala historical development in a lucid and narrative manner. Interviews constitute part of the source of this work, which also include written works.

**The Impacts of change agent variables in Igala society**

Among the earliest incursions of foreign religion to Igala territory from the 19th century was the Islamic religion. According to T.A. Miachi, Islam was introduced to Igalaland as a result of the secondary effect of the 19th century Fulani jihadist's activities in Northern Nigeria, which led to the dislocation and settlement of fleeing Islamic adherents in Igalaland. T. Makar has pointed to the prominent roles of economic and political factors, beside religion, in explaining the 1804 Jihad in Hausaland (cited by Kukah, 1993:2). Miachi points that

...the migration of some Hausa stock from Bebeji area of Kano, or of Nupe, and of Gwari or Bassa, into Igalaland, for fear of the jihadists, has led to the permanent establishment of their descendants respectively identified as the Angwa, Akwuchi, (from Kano), the Bassa (from the Nupe Stock) and Bassa Komo (from Gwari or Bassa stock) living in Igalaland today (2012:112).

Miachi’s position on the coming of Islam to Igala territory seems plausible, as an event of the 19th century, as against the proponent of pre-jihadist period, considering that Islamic clerics likeAlhaji Suleiman Adamu (2016), the Chief Imam of Ankpa Central Mosque, and Alhaji Seidu Mohammed (2019), Chief Imam of Dekina community asserted to the claim. Ankpa and Dekina communities are known as the foremost posts of Islamic penetration in Igalaland; as the two communities have continued to play significant roles in the development of Islam in the area.

Islam in Igalaland was initially resisted by Igala nobles who felt that the religion was a threat to their age-long indigenous traditional religion and culture. However, with the passage of time, resistance relapsed as a result of the support given by Muslim clerics and scribes to Igala monarch, in the form of performing the roles of advisers, courtiers, and administrators of charms. This, in the long run contributed to toleration and the subsequent conversion of Igala indigenes to Islam. The acceptance of Islam in Igalaland, was however facilitated by some underlying factors such as, the existence areas of similarities between Islam and Igala traditional religion and culture (M. Adegbe, 2006:9). For instance, both religions accept the practice of polygyny in the sense that a man could be married to more than one woman at any given time. The idea of having a large family with many children, who could help the household during farming season was one of the major reasons behind the practice of polygamy in most pre-colonial Nigeria communities. Since Islam supports polygyny, it was not difficult for a traditional Igala family to easily switch-over to the new faith considering other accruing benefits. In the same vein, the practice of traditional medicine in the form of spiritism, magic and sorcery as obtained in Igala traditional religion, has similar application in the activities of Muslim mallams, whose stock-in-trade as medicine men revolves in the sell of, and the administration of charms and medicine for curative purposes. This was usually done, in most cases, in conjunction with the proselytization of Islam to Igala indigenes. Furthermore, the idea of unchallenged position of male-headship over their wives which is obtained in most African communities, has a similar teaching in Islam, where the man is permitted in the Qur’an to flog his wive(s) where necessary to get their submission (Surah 4:34).

All these beliefs and practices found in both Igala traditional religion and Islam, are however, seen as barbaric and pagan practice to the Christian faith. The existence of the above mentioned common grounds was significant to Islam penetration in Igalaland, as they helped to create an atmosphere of cooperation than competition between Islam and Igala traditional religion and culture, which engendered conversion and syncretic practices as well.

With the coming of colonial government following the capitulation of Igalaland, from early twentieth century, and the imposition of indirect rule system in Nigeria, the lot of Islam in Igalaland seem to have improved. The colonial policy of imposing non indigenes as resident administrators in places like Ankpa and Dekina was known to have aided much conversions to Islam in Igalaland, though the policy equally led to protest in those areas. O. Kalu, points out that, "it can hardly be doubted that the practice of placing large numbers of pagans under Fulani District Heads and supporting the authority of these by the powers of government when and where necessary led to an extension of Islam (1978:57).

During the colonial rule in Nigeria, the knowledge that political and economic upliftment, has correlation to identifying with the ruling class and ‘the superior religion’ further aided much conversion to Islam in Northern Nigeria generally. For instance, the conversion of Igala Crown Prince, Aliu Obaje, in 1956 to Islam, was seen as something ‘curious’ because of the circumstances surrounding his coronation and conversion, with the presence of “the premier of Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello and Mr. Sawa Smith the representative of the queen of England” (Adegbe, 2006:12).

Islam as a religion lays claim to the supremacy of its teaching over other competing faiths. But, in its long stay in Africa, it has manifested variegated postures towards indigenous religion as well as to the Christian faith (Holt, 1970:569). This occurrence has brought about syncretic practices. However, Islamic scholar like A. R. I. Doi is of the view that as long as the fundamental articles of faith-seen in the five pillars of Islam, are not tampered with such cooperation could be allowed (1970:33). The five pillars are: the confession of faith (Shahada), prayers (Salat), alms-giving (Zakat), fasting during the month of Ramadan and pilgrimage (Hajj).

Islam in Igalaland prior to colonial rule was peripheral and minor in terms of acceptance. With the institution of colonial rule in Igalaland from the early part of the 20th century, which coincided with the introduction of Christian religion and western education, Islam, felt threatened. This scenario led to some counter measures employed by Islam adherents to forestall conversion of their members, and which would as well help to strengthen and stabilize the faith in Igalaland.

The administrative policy of colonial rule in Nigeria was based on indirect rule system, through indigenous established political system. However, in the case of Igala and other designated non-Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria, the colonial administration differs; with the imposition of non-indigenes as resident rulers. Some reasons have been adduced for the attitude of colonial Britain towards the non-Muslim areas. One such claim, was the belief that Islam being a mono religion, was superior to pagan religion, and next to Christianity (Clarke, 1982:189-190). The other reason was the claim of ascribed racial superiority of the light-skilled Fulani rulers over the blacks. F.A. Salamone, notes that the British colonial policy in Nigeria towards the Muslim North and non-Muslim has racial undertone. He points out that:

The evolutionary anthropology, posited people at various stages of development. Hamatic peoples, presumably, were further advanced than various "Negroid" peoples, and Muslims were obviously closer to Christians than 'pagan's. The fact that the Fulani claimed non-negroid, Arabia, ancestry and were Muslims allowed them to be categorized as 'true rulers' and natural allies of the British (1971:53).

This perhaps could explain why from the onset of colonial rule in Nigeria, Igala land was divided into two, from 1906 to 1918, with some parts ceded to the Northern and Southern zones. Idah, the seat of Igala traditional authority was ceded to Southern Nigeria under Onitsha province, while Dekina and Ankpa came under Bassa and Munshin provinces in Northern Nigeria. Igala traditional authority under the Attah during the colonial rule lost its power and influence with this division. In 1956, the Attah Igala, Umoru Ame Oboni, was deposed on accusation of human sacrifice during the annual celebration of Ocho festival at Idah. Miachi, viewed the action of the British authority at Kaduna, in deposing the traditional ruler as "an irreplaceable gap and damage in the political history as well as in the social and cultural development of the Igala people” (2012:131).

Colonial rule in Igalaland was further supported by the two arms of Western imperialism in Africa, that is, Western education and Christianity, though the Christian faith in its pristine state remains apolitical. According to Ayandele’s postulations, the Bible is ‘the spiritual arm’ of colonial domination in Africa. In the case of Igala, due to the negligent attitude of the colonial administrators in Igalaland, who focused more on Muslim areas, Western education was late in coming. The missionaries on the other hand, who were the harbingers of Western education in colonial era were much engrossed on conversion and evangelization than on secular training from the 1900s. The missionaries who were left with the responsibility of education development, when eventually they began serious work in the area from the 1940s, focused on the production of manpower needs for the mission works. Education from colonial point of view must be tailored to addressing colonial needs and, to maintain the status quo ante. According to the Education Report of the North of 1940, it was noted for instance that,

In matters of dress, correct practice in the form of salutations and courtesies to chiefs and those in authority, and in general/behaviour and mode of life, the school boys were required to conform to the best traditions of local society (Turaki, 1993:83).

The education policy of the colonial administration in Igalaland obviously revealed the duplicity of the colonial rule, as one built on self-interest and exigency, without addressing the needs of the people in terms of development and relevant.

However, it was obvious that the effect of missionary schools in Nigeria and Igala in particular had a mixed result. This was as a result of the fact that their primary aim as earlier noted was the propagation of Christian religion and conversion. They were as well involved in indoctrinization of western culture among the pupils. They were also known to have advocated mainly the use of English language as the sole means of communication in the schools, with little or no effort made to incorporate native Igala language in the school curriculum. It could as well be said that the same pattern of neglect of Igala language noticed in Native Administrative Schools, while projecting the Hausa language, because of interest in Islamisation of the north, was adopted by the missionaries in Igala. But considering the diversity of the emerging Nigeria polity, it was necessary to have a common central language to carry all along.

With the colonial rule and the introduction of western education through the mission schools in Igalaland from 1900s, new vistas of opportunities for the educated Igala elite emerged in the new dispensation. Acquisition of western education not only broadened the peoples’ knowledge in whole area of life, but also created new economic, political as well as religious elite. This, perhaps, was among the reasons the colonial authorities were reluctant in allowing the missionaries a freer access to the north, apart from the often claim of providing shield to Islam, from Christian encroachment. It was also partly the reason in Igalaland, the Native Administrative Schools continued with the northern curriculum system of education, which was tailored to suit the Emirate system in the ‘core north’. Therefore, education which acts as a natural agent of transformation in any environment with the potential to engender change, (similar in degree or scope to such known indices of change, like roads, railways and other means of communication), became a veritable partisan tool in the hands of both the colonial government and the Christian missionaries in Igalaland. Generally, acquisition of education acts as bridgeheads in both intra and inter-ethnic relationship among the Nigerian peoples, especially among the educated ones. One important effect of western education in Igalaland, which cannot be drawn far from the influence of western culture, was that, it led to changes in the peoples life, aspirations and orientations. The result was the adoption of the culture of individualism – akin to western life-style by a good number of them. Thus, western education in Igalaland brought about some result different form the life-style found in Igala traditional setting, where education, thought, conducted in an informal way, was basically communal in character formation and learning. This may also help to explain the behavior of detachment, which some western educated Igala elite, began to exhibit towards aspects of Igala cultural practices, especially the ones they see as not in tandem, with their new perception of reality. However, the manifestation of such behavioural attitude, (from the perspectives of the generality of the people), was seen as a disrespect to their cultural norms and identity. This explains why Islam which seemed to be closely related to the communal nature of Igala lifestyle was more congenial and acceptable to a greaternumber of the people. On the other hand and as noted above, some of the Igala educated elite as well as Christian converts during the period did not only manifest evidence of detachment to their cultural norms, but began to act in a disdainful manner towards their traditional institutions. These incidents were to become a sour point in intra-cultural relations and why some staunch Igala adherents of A.T.R. and Islam subsequently, refused to send their wards to mission schools for fear of conversion. However, since the mission schools became from the 1940s, the main providers of education in Nigeria and Igala in particular, it became obvious that willy-nilly, the people do not seem to have much option than to accept it, except where they opted for Islamic education, which has little prospects in the emerging Nigeria setting for those intending to further their education career. As noted earlier, a combination of the activities of Native Administrative School (NAS), mission schools, as well as Islamic schools, played significant roles in giving Igala society its distinct form, where for instance, in a family, adherents of A.T.R, Islam and Christianity became a common sight.

**Igala Development in Perspectives**

Mbiti notes that there is a degree of changes in Africa cultural practices to the level of her contact with foreign culture. He notes that “between he period of the second half of the nineteenth century…, to the middle of twentieth century, such contact led to fundamental changes in areas of religion, economy, politics and social life as well. (1989:211). This implies that in the march to modernity, African cultures have been challenged, leading to changes in some cases as well as resistance; while in other instances compromises or syncretism emerges.

M.S. Abdulkadir writes that despite the fact that Igala had a centralized political system, which enhanced trade, unlike some ‘stateless communities’, their “traditional religion was one of the supporting pillars of the monarchy, since many of their functions were spiritual” (2011:1-20). In other words, any threat to their religion became a threat to their authority, since Islam abhorred many of the traditional practices they engaged in. In addition, Abdulkadir further argued that the Igala were traditionally agriculturalist not traders, and therefore, their rulers engaged in lots of rituals. Moreso, the festivals that are connected to their beliefs have religious practices attached to them, which run against the teachings of Islam;

since Islam challenges some of these privileges and prerogatives of the rulers, it was natural that conversion became difficult from the top and then to the ordinary people, despite the hierarchical nature of the society. (Abdulkadir, 2011:1-20).

Therefore, despite the fact that Islamic religion may have had a long history and contact in the land, it was not until the colonial era following the dismantling of the Igala political authority that many conversions to Islam in Igalaland began to take place. But, even at that, with the emergence of Christianity and Western education, aligned with the knowledge that social, economic and political advancement were anchored on advancement in western education, it was not a free fall for Islam in Igalaland despite the fact that certain colonial policies and activities encouraged conversion to Islam in Igalaland during the period.

In the efforts to counter perceived threat from Christianity and Western culture in Igalaland, Islam adopted some counter-measures. These measures were a reaction to perceived threats from other contending variables, which implies that the changes that ensued were not indigenous to Islam.

One of the major effects of colonial rule in Igala society in their education policy was revealed in the decline of interest in indigenous and Islamic education primarily because of the economic and political values attached to its acquisition. Though, indigenous education, and to a lesser extent the Islamic education were informal in nature and practice, yet they were foundational to the acquisition of knowledge in pre-colonial time. While indigenous Igala knowledge system as it occurred in most Nigerian communities capitulated with the coming of colonial rule, Islam on the other hand reacted differently. Their reaction led to the founding of upgraded forms of Islamic schools known as Islamiyya schools in Igalaland. The significance of these schools lies in their ability to incorporate western education principles to strengthen Islamic education. This was similar to the reaction of Yoruba Muslims in the Southwest of Nigeria, to the threat of Western education to their faith – which led to the provision of “Western education for Muslim children within the context of Islam” (Gbadamosi and Ade-Ajayi, 1980:355). This was what the Igala and most African countries failed to do with respect to indigenous knowledge system from the onset of colonial rule in Africa, which would have made current education programmes more relevant to the needs of the contemporary society, than what we have today. Further response of Islam to Christian conversion threat through western education, led to the formation of Muslim organizations such as Jamiyya Juma’at, essentially women Friday congregation, patterned to the Christian Mother Union and Women Guild Organisation, which emerged in Ankpa in 1963. (Mohammed, 1986).

In the same vein, the relationship that flourished between Igala and Islam as a result of area of similarity, such as the practice of polygamous marriages, which supported conversion to Islam, which had its foundation on the existence of the culture of early marriage system, has become challenged by the emerging socioeconomic realities in the country. Though the practice of polygyny has not stopped in Igala society, especially among the adherents of Islam and the traditionalists, there is no doubt that the combined effect of Western education, the Christian religion and economic crunch emanating at times from (climate changes)have whittled down the practice in Igalaland (Apeh 1989:56-57).

But, despite the onslaught of Islam and Christianity in Igala society, the belief in Igala tradition and culture has continued to wax strong among certain adherents of Islam and Christian converts as well. For instance, Chief Mohammed Isa Ekele, the traditional ruler of Alloma-Igala-Owa district of Ofu Local Government Area, though a Muslim, believes strongly that Igala cultural identity clause should not be subsumed by Islamic culture or any otherin the area of marriages, intra-cultural relationships, burials among others (2019).

In his assessment of the effects of modernization on Igala Muslims of Kogi State, Muhammed Sani Haroon, an Islamic scholar made three postulations. In the first category are those professors of Islam who have tried to remain firm to the tenets of Islam by way of conscientious efforts to obey, and submit to the words of Islamic Holy book, the Qur’an, and the sayings of Prophet Muhammed, the Hadith, despite the push and pull of modernizing influence to lower their guards. In the second category are those adherents of Islam found to be in the middle-ground of faith who could bend their belief and faith in order to accommodate extraneous influence coming from the surrounding environment. The third category of Haroon postulation falls on those who are seen as mere professors of Islam, and who do not see any difference in their lifestyle and that of non muslims in their midst. Their behavioural tendencies tend to depict no difference between them and people of other faith. (M.S. Haroon, 2016).

It should be noted that the above postulation of M.S. Haroon, can be widened to capture similar reactions of people of other faith in Igalaland to explicate the influence of modernization in Igala society. Though, it might seem to be a haster observation, however, available evidence tend to suggest that in their relationships to the influence and effect of agents of modernization, Igala society reaction is dictated more by immediate exigency than by faith-belief.

It is therefore not surprising that even among the adherents to Islam and Christianity in Igalaland a good number of them still consult native traditional healers secretly when faced with some persistent challenging problems like health issues, spiritual problems and economicdownturn (Omede, 2018).

These behavioural tendencies seem to align with the assertion of Simon Ottenberg, who is of the opinion that in culture contacts, it is usually difficult for a foreign domineering ideology to totally destroy or eradicate all the elements of congeniality found in a local one. This could be seen in the early culture contact between indigenous cultures and western cultures, during the colonial era generally.It was also evident in the contact which Igala culture had with Islam,Christianity and western culture which, though brought some changes in Igalaland, but, did not succeed in eradicating totally, aspects of Igala culture among the adherents of Islam and Christian religion, which have persisted in Igala land. In fact, the various Nigerian peoples and cultures resisted the early onslaught of the western culture through various local mechanismsavailable to them such as outright rejection and exclusion. The incidence of culture clash at this period, between the Igala culture vis-à-vis western and Islamic cultures, aligns with the adoption of Toynbee’s theory; ‘the clash of civilization’ in this work to explain the challenge of transition to modernity in Igala traditional society, and how they have managed to navigate the imbroglio. In other words, the transition to modernity in Igalaland was not a straight-jacket occurrence, but one interjected by factors like Igala tradition, Islam, Christianity, western educationand culture. This explains the varied reactions to the transition in Igalaland, seen in acceptance, rejection, changes, syncretic practices as well as resistance in some cases.

**Conclusion**

Igala society, a traditional African society has undergone some level of sociocultural changes over the years of its encounter with foreign change agents like Islam, Christianity and Western education. Partly due to the nature of its demographic impact, in addition to the competitive and divergent goals expressed by these change agents in Igalaland, the encounter led to rejection, resistance, assimilation,

compromises and uneven development in Igala sociocultural lifestyle. Furthermore, despite the continual impact of Islam, Christianity and Western education and culture in Igala society, and their contributions to Igala sociocultural development, Igala culture has remained resilient in its encounter with these agents of modernization in Igala society.

**Findings**

1. Pre-colonial Igala society as a result of her geographical location at the confluence of rivers Niger and Benue, and proximity with surrounding neighbours like the Idoma, Igbira, Jukun, Benin and the Igbo, encountered intercultural exchanges in her sociocultural development.
2. Igala land from the 19th century onwards has to contend with the emergence of agents of modernization like Islam, Christianity, Western education and culture in her sociocultural life.
3. The subsequent coming to Igalaland of the above mentioned change agents, has variously impacted Igala society, to the extend that with the division of Igala land into two during the colonial era from 1906 to 1918, into Northern and southern protectorates had adversely affected her sociocultural development as a group.
4. The division led to the lost of Igala political and religious authority over majority of the populace which invariably paved the way for the contest that ensued among the contending variables.
5. The initial reaction of Igala to the intrusion onforeign religion, that is, Islam and later Christian was outright rejection.
6. With the passage of time the knowledge of economic, political and social accruement of values attached to belonging to either of the faiths, that is Islam and Christianity was to rekindle of interest leading to acceptance and conversion.
7. Islam being the first change agent to arrive in Igalaland was able to secure some form of legitimacy in the eyes of the masses because of some area of similarities with Igala indigenous religion.
8. With the coming of Christian religion with western education and culture, the threat of losing her lofty position in Igalaland led Islam to adopt some of the Christian practicesin order to avert the mass conversion of Muslim to Christianity, and thereby retain her influence on Igala Muslim adherents.
9. Generally, though the coming of these change agents to Igala land had brought some changes in Igala socio-cultural lifestyles, it invariably resulted in compromises and resistance in some areas
10. In the midst of the challenges posed by these change agents to Igala sociocultural development, by virtue of its divergent interests, Igala culture has shown some element of resilient and resistance to the emerging scenarios.

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