



LUGBO DEITY IN RUMUOKORO CLAN ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract

Indigenous religious traditions constitute an important dimension of African cultural identity and provide frameworks through which communities interpret the relationship between human beings, the spiritual world, nature, morality, social order, and the ancestors. Among the Ikwerre people of Rivers State, indigenous religion historically permeated virtually every aspect of communal life. Although Christianity, Islam, urbanization, formal education, Westernization, and modern political and economic institutions have significantly transformed indigenous religious practices, traditional religious symbols and institutions continue to influence cultural identity and communal consciousness. This paper examines the Lugbo Deity in Rumuokoro Clan, Rivers State, and considers its implications for contemporary society. The study adopts a descriptive and interpretive approach based principally on available literature on Ikwerre indigenous religion, African Traditional Religion, religion and society, and the changing religious landscape of the Niger Delta. It situates Lugbo within the wider Ikwerre understanding of divinity, sacred space, morality, communal solidarity, justice, and the relationship between the visible and invisible worlds. The paper argues that the significance of Lugbo should not be reduced to the question of whether the deity is objectively real or whether traditional worship is compatible with Christianity. Rather, Lugbo may be examined as a religious and cultural institution through which members of the community historically expressed their understanding of sacred power, communal identity, morality, social responsibility, and the protection of community interests. The paper further argues that the contemporary relevance of Lugbo lies particularly in the preservation of cultural heritage, communal identity, moral consciousness, environmental responsibility, conflict management, indigenous knowledge, and intergenerational education. At the same time, the study recognizes challenges associated with the reinterpretation of indigenous religious institutions in a



pluralistic and rapidly urbanizing society. It concludes that a balanced approach should neither romanticize nor dismiss the Lugbo tradition but should critically investigate its historical, religious, cultural, ethical, and social significance.

Keywords: Lugbo, Rumuokoro, Ikwerre, African Traditional Religion, deity, indigenous religion, culture, contemporary society

Introduction

Religion is one of the most enduring institutions through which human societies interpret existence, establish moral values, maintain social relationships, and negotiate the relationship between humanity and the sacred. In many African societies, religion cannot easily be separated from culture because religious beliefs and practices have traditionally been embedded in political institutions, family relationships, economic activities, festivals, land ownership, morality, conflict resolution, health practices, and community leadership. African Traditional Religion therefore constitutes not merely a system of private belief but a comprehensive worldview through which people understand themselves and their environment (Mbiti, 1990; Parrinder, 1969).

This observation is particularly relevant to the study of the Ikwerre people of Rivers State. Scholarly studies describe Ikwerre indigenous religion as a religious worldview in which the Supreme Being, divinities, spirits, ancestors, human beings, and the natural environment exist in an interconnected religious order. Wotogbe-Weneka (1996) notes that Ikwerre indigenous religiosity recognizes Chiokike as the Supreme Being and creator while acknowledging a hierarchy of subordinate spiritual beings and divinities. The earth deity, Eli or Ali, occupies a particularly significant position in the traditional religious system. Religious values are consequently connected to the land, community, morality, seasons, sacred days, ancestors, and ritual institutions.

Rumuokoro is one of the important clans within the contemporary urban environment of Rivers State. It is situated in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and has experienced substantial urbanization and socioeconomic transformation. The clan's strategic location within the Port Harcourt metropolitan environment has brought increased commercial activity, population movement, formal education, religious pluralism, and interaction between indigenous traditions and modern institutions. Contemporary descriptions of Rumuokoro identify it as an important commercial and transportation centre within the Port Harcourt metropolitan area.

Within such an environment, the study of indigenous religious institutions becomes particularly important. The transformation of a community does not necessarily mean the complete disappearance of its traditional religious worldview. Rather, indigenous religious institutions may experience reinterpretation, marginalization, adaptation, syncretism, symbolic transformation, or partial disappearance. Olumati (2015), for example, demonstrates that Christianity and modernity have substantially affected the beliefs and practices associated with



Ali, the earth deity among the Ikwerre, although some traditional values and ideas have persisted.

The Lugbo Deity should therefore be approached within this broader process of religious and cultural transformation. The limited published literature specifically identifying Lugbo by name makes it necessary to distinguish between documented facts and interpretations that require confirmation through oral tradition. This methodological caution is essential because indigenous religious knowledge is often transmitted orally, and information about particular community deities may be restricted to custodians, elders, priests, families, or particular ritual communities. Consequently, this paper does not claim that every interpretation presented here constitutes a documented historical fact about Lugbo. Instead, it develops an analytical framework for understanding the possible religious, cultural, social, ethical, and contemporary implications of the Lugbo institution in Rumuokoro.

The central argument of this paper is that Lugbo can be meaningfully studied as a religious-cultural institution that provides insight into the worldview, values, identity, social organization, and historical memory of Rumuokoro. Its contemporary significance should therefore be assessed beyond the narrow question of traditional worship. The study of Lugbo provides an opportunity to examine how indigenous knowledge systems survive, change, or disappear under the influence of Christianity, modernity, urbanization, education, globalization, and changing conceptions of morality.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research orientation using descriptive, historical, and interpretive approaches. Documentary research constitutes the primary method for the present paper because published materials specifically addressing Lugbo are limited. The study draws upon scholarly literature on African Traditional Religion, Ikwerre indigenous religion, religious change, Christianity, cultural identity, and religion and society.

Conceptualising African Traditional Religion and Indigenous Deities

African Traditional Religion refers broadly to the indigenous religious beliefs and practices developed by African peoples before and alongside the introduction of Christianity, Islam, and other world religions. It is important to recognise that African Traditional Religion is not a single uniform religion with one creed, one sacred book, one founder, or one universally accepted institutional structure. Rather, African societies possess diverse religious systems with similarities as well as significant local variations (Idowu, 1973; Mbiti, 1990).

One important characteristic of Indigenous African religion is its holistic nature. Religion is not necessarily restricted to a particular building or day of worship. It permeates family life, agriculture, marriage, political authority, festivals, land, morality, illness, death, birth, and communal relationships. Mbiti (1990) famously emphasizes the religious character



of African existence, arguing that traditional African communities interpret reality through an intimate relationship between the visible and invisible worlds.

The concept of deity must also be understood within this worldview. Indigenous African communities commonly recognize a Supreme Being while also acknowledging divinities, spirits, ancestors, and other spiritual powers. These beings do not necessarily compete with the Supreme Being. Rather, they may be understood as intermediaries, manifestations of divine power, custodians of particular aspects of creation, or spiritual authorities associated with particular communities and natural phenomena (Idowu, 1973; Parrinder, 1969).

In the Ikwerre context, Wotogbe-Weneka (1996) describes a religious system centred on Chiokike as creator and involving numerous subordinate beings. The system recognizes the religious significance of the earth and other dimensions of the natural and spiritual environment. This framework is useful for interpreting community-specific deities such as Lugbo because a deity associated with a particular community cannot be adequately understood outside the wider religious worldview of that community.

The local deity therefore functions simultaneously at several levels. At the religious level, it represents sacred power. At the social level, it can become a mechanism for communal cohesion. At the moral level, beliefs surrounding the deity may establish boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable conduct. At the cultural level, rituals, stories, taboos, sacred places, symbols, and festivals associated with the deity preserve historical memory. At the psychological level, belief in supernatural protection can provide individuals and communities with a sense of security and meaning.

Rumuokoro Clan in Its Ikwerre Context

Rumuokoro is located within Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State and forms part of the wider Ikwerre cultural environment. The community has undergone extensive urban and socioeconomic transformation due to its proximity to Port Harcourt and its strategic transportation and commercial position. Contemporary research on Obio/Akpor identifies Rumuokoro among the major settlements within the area and notes the influence of urbanization, industrialization, and religious change.

The contemporary community is religiously pluralistic. Christianity is highly visible, with different denominations operating within and around Rumuokoro. For instance, the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt lists St. Jude's Catholic Church within Rumuokoro Deanery, illustrating the established presence of Christianity in the community. Research on religious centres in Obio/Akpor likewise demonstrates the extensive presence of different Christian denominations in the area.

This transformation is important for understanding indigenous religion. Christianity has not simply replaced traditional religion in a straightforward manner. Rather, the two religious systems have interacted in complex ways. Some traditional beliefs have been



abandoned, others have been reinterpreted, some have survived as cultural practices, while others have become matters of historical memory. Odili's study of Christianity in Ikwerre communities demonstrates that the indigenous worldview historically recognized Chiokike, local divinities, spirits, ancestors, and religious specialists within an integrated sacred order.

The existence of modern churches alongside traditional cultural institutions illustrates the religious complexity of contemporary Ikwerre society. Consequently, the study of Lugbo should not be interpreted as an attempt to deny the Christian identity of contemporary Rumuokoro residents. Rather, it provides an opportunity to understand the indigenous cultural heritage from which the community emerged.

Lugbo Deity and the Indigenous Religious Worldview of Rumuokoro

The precise historical origin, mythology, ritual structure, priesthood, sacred location, and traditional functions of Lugbo require detailed field investigation among knowledgeable elders and custodians in Rumuokoro. The scarcity of published scholarly literature on Lugbo means that researchers should not simply transfer characteristics belonging to other Ikwerre deities to Lugbo without empirical verification.

Nevertheless, the wider Ikwerre religious framework provides a valuable interpretive context. Ikwerre traditional religion recognizes an ordered spiritual universe consisting of the Supreme Being, divinities, spirits, ancestors, religious specialists, and human beings. Odili (2017) describes the indigenous religious worldview of Rumuadaolu in terms of an integrated hierarchy involving Chiokike, local deities, spirits, ancestors, religious specialists, and human beings.

Within such a worldview, a clan deity may be understood as a sacred institution through which the community relates to the spiritual world. The deity's significance would not necessarily be limited to individual worship. It could be connected to the welfare of the community, the preservation of social order, protection, fertility, land, morality, communal identity, or the settlement of disputes. Comparative research on Ikwerre religious institutions shows that community deities have historically been connected with communal protection, customs, fertility, and social order.

The religious significance of Lugbo may therefore be examined in terms of three interrelated dimensions: sacred power, communal identity, and moral order. First, sacred power refers to the community's understanding that the deity possesses supernatural significance. Second, communal identity concerns the role of the deity in distinguishing the community's religious heritage and historical memory. Third, moral order concerns beliefs about the consequences of violating accepted communal norms. These dimensions demonstrate that traditional religion is not simply a matter of supernatural belief. It is also a social institution. A deity becomes meaningful because the clan constructs a system of beliefs, rituals, stories, values, and social relationships around it. The meaning of Lugbo is therefore inseparable from the people who preserve, reinterpret, contest, or reject the tradition.



Lugbo, Morality, and Social Control

One of the major implications of indigenous deities in traditional societies concerns morality. Traditional religious systems frequently establish moral boundaries through taboos, sanctions, ritual obligations, and beliefs about supernatural consequences. The moral significance of religion lies in the conviction that human actions are accountable not only to human institutions but also to spiritual powers. Wotogbe-Weneka (1996) argues that Ikwerre divinities were understood as having an important role in directing people toward moral rectitude. This suggests that indigenous religion functioned as a mechanism of social control. Individuals who believed that wrongdoing could attract spiritual consequences were encouraged to conform to communal expectations.

The Lugbo tradition can therefore be examined as part of a broader indigenous moral system. Where traditional institutions associated certain behaviours with spiritual consequences, religion provided an additional mechanism for maintaining social order. The strength of such a system did not depend exclusively on physical enforcement. Rather, it depended on the internalization of cultural values. The contemporary relevance of this moral dimension is significant. Modern Nigerian society faces widespread concerns about corruption, dishonesty, violence, insecurity, examination malpractice, political manipulation, environmental degradation, and declining respect for communal responsibility. Although traditional religious sanctions cannot simply be transplanted into a modern constitutional democracy, the underlying principle of moral accountability remains relevant.

The important lesson is not that contemporary society should revive every traditional religious sanction. Rather, the ethical values associated with accountability, truthfulness, respect for elders, responsibility to the community, and reverence for life can be critically reinterpreted within contemporary ethical and religious frameworks.

Lugbo and Communal Identity

Religion is an important source of cultural identity. Indigenous religious institutions provide communities with narratives about their origins and their relationship with their land and ancestors. A community that loses knowledge of its religious history may also lose part of its cultural memory. The study of Ikwerre traditional religion demonstrates that religious practices were closely connected with community life. Wotogbe-Weneka (1996) observes that traditional Ikwerre religion historically recognized sacred periods, sacred places, divinities, and ritual obligations.

In this context, Lugbo may be understood as a potential repository of Rumuokoro's cultural memory. Its stories, rituals, symbols, sacred locations, and traditional narratives can provide younger generations with knowledge of the community's historical worldview. This is particularly important in an urban environment where young people increasingly encounter globalised forms of culture through social media, education, entertainment, and migration. Cultural identity does not require the rejection of modernity. Rather, a healthy society can



combine modern education and technology with knowledge of indigenous history. The documentation of Lugbo, therefore, could contribute to cultural preservation even for people who do not participate in traditional worship. This distinction between religious adherence and cultural preservation is important. A Christian, for example, may reject traditional worship while still regarding the historical study of Lugbo as important for understanding the heritage of Rumuokoro. Similarly, a person who does not personally believe in the deity may recognize its significance as an element of indigenous history.

Lugbo and the Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge

Another implication of the Lugbo tradition concerns indigenous knowledge. African communities historically developed sophisticated systems of environmental observation, agriculture, medicine, conflict management, social organization, and cultural education. Much of this knowledge was transmitted orally through stories, rituals, proverbs, festivals, taboos, and religious institutions.

The disappearance of indigenous religious institutions can therefore result in the disappearance of cultural knowledge embedded within them. This concern is consistent with scholarship on Ikwerre religious change, which observes that indigenous religious practices have been affected by Christianity, Westernization, and modernity. Olumati (2015) demonstrates that changes affecting Ali worship have resulted in the disappearance of some practices while other elements have persisted.

The Lugbo tradition should therefore be documented systematically before knowledge disappears through generational transition. Such documentation should include oral narratives, traditional names, sacred spaces, ritual specialists, historical events, taboos, songs, symbols, proverbs, and community interpretations.

However, documentation should respect cultural ownership and confidentiality. Not every sacred practice should be publicly disclosed. Some knowledge may belong to particular families, ritual custodians, or traditional institutions. Researchers must therefore obtain informed consent and respect restrictions imposed by community custodians.

Lugbo and Environmental Ethics

The relationship between indigenous religion and the natural environment is another important area of contemporary relevance. Traditional African religious systems often regard land, rivers, forests, trees, animals, and other elements of nature as possessing religious significance. Such beliefs can create moral restrictions on the exploitation of natural resources. The Ikwerre religious worldview provides a useful example. The earth deity, Ali or Eli, is described as occupying a central place within the Ikwerre pantheon. The earth is not merely an economic commodity but possesses religious and moral significance.

Although Lugbo may have a distinct local identity and function, its study can be placed within this broader environmental worldview. If sacred spaces associated with a deity were



protected by taboos or ritual restrictions, those practices could have indirectly contributed to environmental conservation. Contemporary Nigeria faces severe environmental challenges, including deforestation, flooding, pollution, indiscriminate waste disposal, biodiversity loss, and degradation associated with urban and industrial development. Rumuokoro itself exists within a rapidly urbanizing environment, making environmental responsibility particularly important.

The modern value of indigenous ecological traditions should not be exaggerated. Traditional religious practices alone cannot solve contemporary environmental problems. Nevertheless, the worldview that regards land as sacred can contribute to environmental ethics. A contemporary environmental programme that incorporates indigenous cultural knowledge may encourage communities to view environmental protection not only as a legal obligation but also as a moral responsibility.

Lugbo and Community Cohesion

Traditional religious institutions historically served communal functions. Rituals could bring families and villages together, reinforce collective identity, and provide occasions for cooperation. Religious festivals and ceremonies created opportunities for communal interaction and intergenerational transmission of knowledge. This communal dimension has contemporary relevance because rapid urbanization can weaken traditional forms of social solidarity. Urban communities are often characterized by individualism, economic competition, migration, and reduced participation in traditional institutions.

The study of Lugbo can therefore contribute to a broader understanding of how Rumuokoro historically constructed communal solidarity. The religious institution can be examined as a mechanism through which people articulated collective belonging. This does not imply that traditional religion should replace contemporary institutions. Modern Rumuokoro requires democratic governance, formal law, education, professional organizations, religious institutions, and civil society. Nevertheless, cultural institutions can complement these structures by providing a sense of historical continuity and communal responsibility.

Lugbo and Conflict Resolution

Traditional African societies often possessed mechanisms for maintaining social harmony and addressing conflicts. Religious beliefs could strengthen these mechanisms by placing disputes within a moral and spiritual framework. The fear of supernatural consequences, respect for ancestors, and the authority of elders could encourage disputants to seek reconciliation. Research on Ikwerre traditional religious symbols demonstrates the relationship between indigenous religious institutions and justice. Imoh (2024), for example, examines Owbo-nu-ogwu as deified symbols associated with justice and truth among the Ikwerre and notes that such ritual institutions were traditionally believed to vindicate the falsely accused and punish offenders.



Although Owbo-nu-ogwu should not be equated with Lugbo, the example illustrates the broader importance of religious institutions in indigenous mechanisms of justice. The study of Lugbo may similarly reveal how religious authority interacted with traditional leadership, moral regulation, and communal dispute settlement in Rumuokoro. In contemporary society, such traditional mechanisms must be carefully distinguished from formal constitutional law. Serious criminal matters cannot appropriately be determined solely through supernatural claims or traditional sanctions. However, the principles of reconciliation, truth-telling, communal dialogue, mediation, restitution, and restoration remain relevant. Thus, one contemporary implication of studying Lugbo is the possibility of recovering constructive principles of indigenous conflict management while rejecting practices that violate human rights, due process, or constitutional protections.

Lugbo and the Influence of Christianity

Christianity has become the dominant religious force in many parts of contemporary Rivers State, including communities within the Ikwerre cultural environment. The growth of Christianity has profoundly influenced indigenous religious beliefs and practices. Olumati (2015) demonstrates that Christianity and modernity have significantly transformed the traditional religious understanding of Ali among the Ikwerre. Some traditional practices disappeared, while others persisted or were transformed.

This pattern is relevant to Lugbo. Christianisation can lead to the rejection of traditional deities as incompatible with Christian monotheism. Some Christians may describe indigenous deities as false gods, demonic powers, or remnants of pre-Christian religion. Others may distinguish between worship and cultural heritage, preserving traditional narratives as historical knowledge. The resulting situation creates a complex relationship between religious identity and cultural identity. A person can reject the religious worship of Lugbo while recognising its historical importance. Conversely, some people may continue certain traditional practices while identifying publicly as Christian. Rather than treating this situation simply as a conflict between Christianity and traditional religion, scholars should investigate the processes of negotiation, reinterpretation, adaptation, and identity formation taking place within the community. Contemporary religious identity is often more complex than a simple choice between two mutually exclusive systems.

Lugbo and Modernity

Modernity has transformed African societies through formal education, science, technology, urbanization, industrialization, democracy, capitalism, mass communication, and globalization. Indigenous religions have consequently faced new challenges. Wotogbe-Weneka (1996) identifies urbanization and Christianity among the forces undermining Ikwerre indigenous religion. This transformation is visible in contemporary Rumuokoro, where urban expansion and commercial activity have changed the social and physical environment.



Modernity may contribute to the disappearance of indigenous traditions when younger generations consider traditional practices irrelevant, primitive, or incompatible with formal education. Yet modernity can also create new opportunities for cultural preservation. Digital recording, archives, academic research, museums, documentary films, and social media can preserve traditions that previously depended entirely on oral transmission. The challenge is therefore not simply whether Lugbo should survive or disappear. The more important question is how the community can preserve historical and cultural knowledge while allowing individuals freedom of religious conscience.

Lugbo and Cultural Tourism

Indigenous religious heritage can contribute to cultural tourism when managed respectfully. Sacred sites, traditional festivals, historical narratives, crafts, music, architecture, and oral traditions can attract researchers and culturally interested visitors. Rumuokoro's strategic location within the Port Harcourt metropolitan area potentially provides opportunities for cultural education and heritage development. However, cultural tourism should not commercialize sacred traditions irresponsibly.

If Lugbo possesses identifiable historical sites or ritual traditions, any attempt to develop them as heritage resources should involve community custodians. Sacred objects should not automatically be placed on public display. Sensitive rituals should not be transformed into entertainment without the consent of the community. A responsible heritage programme could instead emphasize museums, oral-history archives, educational materials, community cultural centres, and scholarly documentation.

Lugbo and Intergenerational Education

The transmission of culture from one generation to another is essential for cultural continuity. Indigenous religious institutions traditionally served as informal educational systems. Children learned community history, moral values, taboos, social responsibilities, and cultural expectations through participation in communal life. Modern education has understandably displaced many traditional forms of education. Schools now provide systematic instruction in literacy, science, technology, social studies, and professional knowledge. Yet formal education does not necessarily provide detailed knowledge of local history.

The Lugbo tradition can therefore contribute to indigenous curriculum development. Schools in or around Rumuokoro could teach local history, oral tradition, indigenous language, environmental knowledge, and cultural heritage without requiring students to participate in religious worship. Such an approach would strengthen cultural literacy and help young people understand that their community has a history that predates contemporary urbanisation.

Lugbo and the Challenge of Religious Pluralism

Contemporary Rumuokoro is characterised by religious diversity. Christianity exists alongside remnants of indigenous religion and other forms of religious expression. Research on Obio/Akpor confirms the extensive presence of multiple Christian traditions in the area. Religious pluralism creates both opportunities and challenges. On the positive side, it can encourage dialogue, tolerance, and mutual learning. On the negative side, competing religious claims can produce prejudice and cultural denigration.

The study of Lugbo should therefore promote religious literacy rather than religious hostility. Christians should be able to study indigenous religion without feeling that academic study constitutes worship. Likewise, practitioners or custodians of indigenous traditions should be able to discuss their heritage without being subjected automatically to ridicule. Academic study requires methodological neutrality. The scholar's responsibility is to describe, analyse, interpret, and critically evaluate religious traditions rather than impose personal theological judgments upon them.

Critical Issues in the Contemporary Interpretation of Lugbo

Despite its potential cultural significance, the Lugbo tradition should not be romanticised. Indigenous religious systems, like all human institutions, must be critically evaluated. Certain practices may conflict with contemporary understandings of human rights, gender equality, public health, child protection, or constitutional law. The fact that a practice is traditional does not automatically make it morally acceptable. Tradition provides historical legitimacy but not necessarily ethical infallibility. Similarly, modernity should not be assumed to be morally perfect merely because it is modern.

The appropriate approach is therefore critical retrieval. Positive elements of indigenous traditions should be identified and interpreted within contemporary ethical frameworks, while harmful practices should be rejected. Another challenge concerns authenticity. As traditions change, different individuals may provide competing accounts of what constitutes the "real" Lugbo tradition. This is common in oral cultures because traditions are transmitted through memory and performance. Researchers should therefore triangulate information from multiple elders, custodians, written records, oral narratives, observations, and historical sources. Where sources disagree, the disagreement should be documented rather than concealed.

Theoretical Perspective: Functionalism

The functionalist perspective provides a useful framework for understanding the social significance of Lugbo. Functionalist thinkers argue that social institutions contribute to the stability and continuity of society. Durkheim (1912/1995), for example, interpreted religion as an institution through which societies express collective identity and solidarity. Applied to Rumuokoro, the Lugbo tradition can be analysed according to the social functions it historically performed. These may include strengthening communal identity, reinforcing moral



values, legitimizing traditional authority, regulating behaviour, providing explanations for misfortune, preserving historical memory, and creating opportunities for communal solidarity. However, functionalism should not lead researchers to assume that every religious institution necessarily produces positive consequences. Religious traditions may also generate exclusion, fear, conflict, or inequality. A balanced analysis must therefore examine both positive and negative consequences.

Symbolic Interactionism and Lugbo

Symbolic interactionism offers another useful theoretical approach. According to this perspective, people create and negotiate meanings through symbols and social interaction. Religious objects, names, sacred spaces, rituals, gestures, and stories become meaningful because communities interpret them collectively. This approach is particularly appropriate for the study of Lugbo because the deity's significance cannot be understood merely by describing a physical object or sacred location. The crucial question is what Lugbo means to the people who recognize the tradition.

Recent scholarship on Ikwerre religious symbolism demonstrates the usefulness of this perspective. Imoh's studies of Owho-nu-ogwu emphasize the symbolic meanings attached to indigenous ritual institutions, while Olumati's study of Obochi similarly demonstrates that symbols are culturally constructed and interpreted within particular religious environments. Symbolic interactionism therefore encourages researchers to ask: What does Lugbo symbolize? How do community members interpret its presence? What stories are associated with it? How have younger generations reinterpreted it? What happens when Christians reinterpret the deity negatively? What happens when cultural activists reinterpret it as heritage? These questions can produce a deeper understanding of Lugbo than a purely descriptive catalogue of rituals.

Implications for Contemporary Society

The implications of Lugbo for contemporary society can be summarised under several broad themes.

1. **Cultural preservation:** The study and documentation of Lugbo can help preserve local history and prevent the complete disappearance of indigenous knowledge.
2. **Moral education:** Traditional beliefs about accountability and communal responsibility can stimulate reflection on contemporary ethical problems, provided that such values are critically interpreted.
3. **Environmental responsibility:** Indigenous conceptions of sacred land and nature can contribute to contemporary environmental ethics.
4. **Social cohesion:** Community-based cultural institutions can strengthen belonging and intergenerational relationships.



5. **Conflict resolution:** Indigenous principles of mediation, reconciliation, truth, and communal accountability may contribute ideas to contemporary peacebuilding, although they must operate within constitutional and human-rights frameworks.
6. **Religious tolerance:** The academic study of Lugbo can encourage Christians and practitioners of indigenous traditions to distinguish between theological disagreement and cultural disrespect.
7. **Education:** Local religious history can be incorporated into community-based heritage education and academic research.
8. **Lugbo has implications for identity:** In an increasingly globalized world, communities require ways of maintaining cultural identity without isolating themselves from broader society. Indigenous religious heritage can contribute to this balance.

Conclusion

The Lugbo Deity in Rumuokoro Clan represents an important subject for the academic study of indigenous religion, culture, identity, and social change. Although specific published documentation on Lugbo remains limited, the wider scholarship on Ikwerre traditional religion demonstrates that indigenous religious institutions historically played important roles in the organization of communal life. The Ikwerre worldview recognised Chiokike as Supreme Being and incorporated divinities, spirits, ancestors, sacred places, religious specialists, and human beings into an integrated religious order.

Within this context, Lugbo should be approached not merely as a traditional deity but as a religious-cultural institution whose meaning is connected to the community's understanding of sacred power, morality, identity, social order, and historical memory. Its study is especially significant in contemporary Rumuokoro because the community has experienced rapid urbanization, religious transformation, migration, commercialization, and exposure to modern institutions.

The paper has argued that the contemporary implications of Lugbo include cultural preservation, moral reflection, environmental responsibility, communal solidarity, conflict resolution, indigenous knowledge preservation, intergenerational education, and religious pluralism. These implications do not require an uncritical revival of traditional worship. Rather, they call for a scholarly and culturally sensitive engagement with indigenous heritage.

The most appropriate approach is therefore one of critical preservation. Rumuokoro should preserve knowledge of its indigenous religious history while respecting the religious convictions of contemporary residents. Christians and adherents of other religions should be free to reject traditional worship, while the community should retain the right to document and preserve its cultural heritage. Likewise, researchers should avoid both romanticizing indigenous religion and dismissing it as superstition.

Indeed, the study of Lugbo demonstrates that the disappearance of a religious practice does not necessarily mean the disappearance of its cultural significance. Even when ritual



observance declines, symbols, narratives, moral ideas, sacred landscapes, and collective memories may continue to influence community identity. The task of contemporary scholarship is therefore to document these traditions carefully, interpret them critically, and preserve the useful dimensions of indigenous knowledge for future generations.

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