**A HISTORY OF AGBOGUGU, EARLIEST TIMES TO 2000**

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**U14/ARTS/HID/003**

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**AUGUST, 2018.**

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**BY**

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF ARTS B.A (Hons) DGREEE IN HISTORY**

**AUGUST, 2018.**

**CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this project is the result of my own independent work investigation; except where otherwise stated, it has not previously been submitted for any degree in another institution.

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Researcher

**APPROVAL PAGE**

This project was written by Okoye, Victor Ikenna with registration number: U14/ARTS/HID/003, and has been approved as having met the requirements for the award of the Bachelor of Arts B.A. (Hons) Degree in History in the Department of History, International Studies and Diplomacy, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu.

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External Examiner Date

**DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to my parents Mr. Okoye Sylvester and Mrs. Okoye Chika for their love, prayers and support.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This research would have been impossible without the help rendered to me by individuals and institutions. My profound gratitude goes to my supervisor; Mr. Uwakwe Christopher for his patience and corrections, I will not forget my Head of Department, Prof. Rina Okonkwo and Assoc. Prof. Innocent FA.Uzoechi, for their enormous help and support throughout the writing of this project.

I wish to thank my fellow students: Ibeh Okechukwu, Osuji Chukwudi, Ogboso Roseline, for their support in the course of this research.

I also wish to thank my father Mr. Okoye Slyvester for his steadfast help and assistance during the course of this research. To all these individuals, I remain eternally grateful and indebted.

**ABSTRACT**

This research focuses on the history of Agbogugu from the earliest times to 2000. It examines the unique history of the town and its customs and traditions through the centuries. The work examines the town's traditions of origin and analyses its position as a member of the Ntuegbe-Nese clan. The study traces its history through pre colonial, colonial and post- colonial times. The research reveals in detail the socio-political and economic development that has taken place in Agbogugu.The people have evolved a complex, stable social, political and religious organization, which was in balance with their character and morals. They had their cultural beliefs and activities which made up their unique identity. This work also highlights the colonial experience of Agbogugu and their reaction to the British 'pacification' of Igboland, the impact of British rule and its work as an agent of change in the people's lives and the developments that occurred due to this forceful impression of culture. In the end, the study maintains that regardless of the changes that have taken place in Agbogugu during the colonial time. The town has developed into a mega socio- economic and political force to be reckoned with in Awgu local government area.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background to the Study**

Agbogugu is one of the twenty five autonomous communities that form Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State. It is located on latitude 6.15N and on latitude 7.28E[[1]](#endnote-2), on the Nigerian map. The town of Agbogugu was once a part of Udi Division. The Awgu Division was created in 1922 due, probably to the cantankerous nature of the towns of Nenwe, Mgbowo, Mmaku and Awgu which were giving difficulties to the district officer who administered them from Okigwe[[2]](#endnote-3). Agbogugu, with Ituku, Isuawaa, Ihe, Agbudu and Ogbaku belongs to the Mbanabo Local Government which was a local government created by Shehu Shaghari administration[[3]](#endnote-4). Abgogugu is bounded to the south by Ihe, to the east by Amuri, to the north by Ozalla and to the west by Isuawaa. Agbogugu has a wooded, level and arable land, stretching from north to south and east to west which is suitable for agricultural purposes. The famed Nvuna River serves as the boundary between Ozalla and Agbogugu. The Enugu-Awgu road runs through the middle of the town connecting it to the Enugu metropolis. The 1991 census put Abgogugu’s population at 12,767[[4]](#endnote-5).

Agbogugu town has nine villages, which are sub- divided into two wards namely. Amakpu ward comprising of Amofia,Umuoye, Obinagu,Umuobom and Shikaghom. The Eziama ward comprised of Umueveh, Umuonwo, Ohumagu and Akwu[[5]](#endnote-6).

The people of this area constitute a homogenous cultural entity in the native ‘Wawa land’ (Enugu). They also occupy one of the most fertile area of the state lying deep in the center of the former east central state between Udi hills and Okigwe . There is no doubt it is the fertility of the area that made most indigenes agrarian in occupation. The period of time covered by this study will trace through the pre colonial, colonial and post colonial history of Agbogugu.

**1.2 Statement of Problem**

The history of Agbogugu has not found its deserved place in Igbo historiography among historian. This is partly because most works on Igbo history tend to focus on the most prominent Igbo towns like the Aro and their neighbours without due diligence to the people beyond the coastlines. As a result of this neglect, not much work has been done to reconstruct the history of smaller Igbo groups like Agbogugu. The study of the history of Igboland from earliest to 1960 has suffered from a number of problems part of which includes but not limited to the following; firstly, not much was documented on the prehistory of Igboland. Secondly, much of what we have on precolonial and colonial history of Igboland deals on a few towns like the Ezza, Afikpo, Aro etc. The final challenge is that Agbogugu is largely reflected in terms of proper documentation of the developments it has witnessed during and after colonization. It is therefore these loopholes that necessitated an enquiry into the historical past of Agbogugu.

**1.3 Purpose of Study**

This work is primarily researched upon to determine and bring to light the pre colonial, colonial, post colonial history and culture and traditions of Agbogugu. It also aims at highlighting the socio- cultural and historical developments that have taken place in Agbogugu from time immemorial to 2000. It is hoped that the present work will unfold the untold happenings in Agbogugu from earliest times to 2000 and finally to arouse the interest of future researchers in this area. Furthermore this work seeks to show the unique culture of the Agbogugu people.

**1.4 Significance of Study**

The paucity of written materials in this area of local history challenges the attempt to reconstruct the history of Agbogugu from earliest times to 2000. Albeit, the significance of this work will be found in the fact that the present effort will be a readily available tool in the hands of future researchers who may desire to reconstruct the history of Agbogugu or any of her neighboring towns. It is also hoped that the present effort will protect a better image of the people and culture of Agbogugu.

**1.5 Scope of Study**

This work covers the earliest history of Agbogugu to 2000. This study involves all the component villages of Agbogugu. The choice of its earliest history involves the reconstruction of the foundation and origin of Agbogugu. It will also cover the history of Agbogugu from pre-colonial to post colonial times, the year 2000 was chosen as the termination of its scope because it was the start of the twenty first century gained. This work covers the earliest known history of Agbogugu dating back to prehistory up to the post colonial era..

**1.6 Literature Review**

As it appears, not much has been written directly about the history of Agbogugu, however, there are a few works that captured either part of the general history about the area of the present study or its neighbors, or the historical developments in the area. Below are some of the literatures reviewed.

Nnamdi S. Onuigbo, in his work entitled, *The History of Ntugbe- Nese : A five town clan.* In this work the author detail part of the history of Agbogugu, including culture and tradition. He also analyzed the history of Agbogugu highlighting its similarities with the south Ntegbe towns. He shows the relationship between Agbogugu and the rest of the south Ntegbe towns. It is well defined and most commendable for its thematic approach to the history of the Ntegbe-nese. Indeed his work is on the Ntegbe- Nese clan, it is therefore not surprising the author didn’t elaborate on more aspects of Agbogugu’s history. However the present effort will do well to do so[[6]](#endnote-7).

S.O Okolo in his book entitled*, History of Agbogugu* discusses important aspects of Agbogugu history. *Mr Okolo* in this work describes the main themes of Agbogugu history, pointing out the pre colonial, colonial and post colonial history. As a work about the history of Agbogugu, its merit lies in the detailed way the author chronicled the history of Agbogugu, starting from its origins to modern times. This work didn`t include some important aspects of Agbogugu history such as its social organization[[7]](#endnote-8).

Sebastian .M. Obi in his work entitled, *A century in search of identity* discusses the theme of Osu in Igboland , The work is a general work on Osu in igboland. The author analyzes the social, psychological, spiritual problem that is the osu caste system. The author writes that the church can function as a change agent and effect changes in the osu problem in Igboland[[8]](#endnote-9).As a general work on Osu in Igboland it is not surprising that the author didn`t write on the Osu history of Agbogugu.

Igwebuike Romeo, Okeke in his work entitled. *The osu concept in Igboland,* discusses the nature and manifestation of the osu problem in Igboland. The author writes in detail about the problem of osu and Ohu in igboland. The author illuminates the origin of osu in Igboland. As a general work on the theme of slavery in Igboland it is not suprising the author didn't write on Osu in Agbogugu[[9]](#endnote-10).

Jude. Achu in his work entitled: *Igbo culture in disarray* focuses on theme of the Igbo culture being displaced by western culture. It is a general work on Igbo culture and the partial displacement of Igbo culture and traditions throughout Igboland. It highlights the ill and wrongs that have risen due to the merging of the two cultures[[10]](#endnote-11). It highlights the general culture of igboland.

GT Stride and C. Ifeka in their work entitled *People and Empires of West Africa: West Africa in History 1000-1800.* As a general work on the history of west Africa, it discusses the general history of Igboland. It concentrates on the Aro history, culture and Aro dominance in Igboland. However although the authors provide illuminating insights into Igboland, the work failed to give an account to other communities that makes up Igboland. The author concentrated on the Aros as though they are the only community in Igboland worthy of note[[11]](#endnote-12).

Fabian Nkeonye, Ukaegbu in his work titled: *The Igbo’s, the Afrikaans root of nations.* This work is focused exclusively on Igboland, as a general work on the Igbos and thus encompassing the whole of Igboland, it illuminates the culture, origins, and customs of the Igbos. It highlights in commendable writing the Igbos position in Nigeria and the world[[12]](#endnote-13).

F. C. Idigo in his work entitled *Igbo History: Hebrew exiles of Eri kingdom*. This work highlights the theme of Igbo descent and origin through the Hebrews. As a general work on Igboland and Igbo origin history, it also enumerates the common customs and traditions that unite the entire Igboland. Though his work highlights Igboland in general but with particular emphasis on Eri history, he did not however discuss any particular theme with regard to Agbogugu and its historical developments. The present work will fill this gap.[[13]](#endnote-14)

Emefina, Ezeani in his work entitled: *In Biafra Africa died: The diplomatic plot*. This work discusses the general theme of Nigerian-Biafra war in Igboland, as a general work on the civil war in Igboland, it highlights the aspects of the war like Genocide and the Northern agenda of Igbo extermination[[14]](#endnote-15). It does not Agbogugu experience in the war.

J.O.J. Asiegbu in his work entitled *Nigeria and its British invaders*. This work focuses on the theme of British invasion of Nigeria, it illuminates the experience of the Igbo people during the British military pacification of Igboland, but how Agbogugu came under British domination was not highlighted[[15]](#endnote-16).

A.E. Afigbo in his work entitled *Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture*. The theme of this work is on common Igbo history, as a general work on Igbo origin, culture and migration. It explores the pre colonial and colonial history of Igboland, it discusses the theme of Igbo origins in Nigeria[[16]](#endnote-17). It does not show the historical development in Agbogugu, this present work seeks to fill that gap.

G.T. Basden in his work entitled: *Among the Igbos of Nigeria.* This work highlights in details the Igbo culture, traditions and life. it is concentrated on the life of the pre-colonial and colonial Igbos as a general work on Igboland it is not surprising the author glossed over other communities in Igboland[[17]](#endnote-18).

Uwakwe Basil Ekwe in his work entitled: *Ikoro 24: A short History of Oduma Town*. The book focuses on the history of Oduma town of Aniri local government area. It examines its origins, culture and traditions. it highlights Oduma from pre-colonial times to modern times. The author’s thematic approach to this work is commendable[[18]](#endnote-19).

Elizabeth Isichei in her work entitled, *A History of the Igbo People.* In this work Prof Isichei discusses the theme of Igbo history. She highlights Igboland’s growth through the impact of modernity. As a general collective work on Igboland, it traces Igbo origins, Christianity, education and how colonialism affected the Igbos[[19]](#endnote-20). It does not show the history of Agbogugu.

J.B Webster and A.A. Boahen in their work entitled, *The Revolutionary Years: West Africa since 1800.* As a general work on West Africa, the authors address West African history through the different tribes that makes up West Africa. The authors addressed Igbo history through the mutual and common traditions and customs that unite Igbo people. As a general work, it is not surprising the authors paid scant attention to the different communities that make up Igboland[[20]](#endnote-21).

Robin Hallet in his work entitled: *Africa to 1875 and Africa since 1875.*As a general work on Africa. This work is most commendable for its thematic exposition on most aspects of African history. The author addressed Igboland through the theme of common culture that unites various Igbo village groups. It is not unexpected as a general work that the author didn’t mention other village groups apart from the Aros[[21]](#endnote-22).

Cajetan Eze in his work entitled*, History of Greater Awgu*, As a general work on greater Awgu, the author focuses on the theme of Igbo history. He discusses the cultural, political, economic and religious institution of Awgu land. He writes on the origins, education aspects of Agogugu history as they relate with Awgu[[22]](#endnote-23).

Ikime, Obaro in his work titled: *Ground work of Nigeria History.* This thesis is a general work on Nigerian history focusing on the theme of origins. it addresses the history of Igboland before the 1800’s as a general work on Nigerian history, the different history of autonomous communities like the Agbogugu people are not present in this work but the present work seeks to fill this gap[[23]](#endnote-24).

**1.7 Methodology and Sources**

The methodology of this work is qualitative which uses narrative descriptions. The material used in this work consists of the primary sources of which the oral interviews with the indigenes of the area and archival materials played an important role. The secondary sources consist of the published books, articles and unpublished projects with relation to the history of the area.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LAND AND PEOPLE OF AGBOGUGU**

Historically the town of Agbogugu belongs to the Ntegbe-Nese clan. This clan claims common descent from a legendary figure or father named Ntegbe. The clan is made up of five autonomous villages called the south Ntegbe- Nese and a sub clan, Okunano. Okunano was primarily a part of the Ntegbe- nese clan but became informally separated because the town of Ozalla was between Okunano and Agbogugu, which in pre-colonial times made communication difficult. During the colonial times Okunano became Okunano sub clan under Nkanu native court area and the five south Ntegbe towns came under 'Owelli court area. Ntegbe was the father to five sons who founded the five south Ntegbe towns. Agbogugu Osie-Aneke was the fourth son of Ntegbe who founded the town of Agbogugu[[24]](#endnote-25). Also related to the Ntegbe-nese clan is Ituku.

Another legend has it that the daughter of an Ihe man married the founder of Ituku. Due to the close relationship between the south Ntegbe towns, they helped each other out and frequented each other’s markets. They were able to fight together when any one of them were attacked. This relationship helped the people of Ogugu when the people of Mmaku attacked them, Ihe, Agbogugu and Owelli intervened and this settled the dispute over land boundaries permanently. Agbogugu with the rest of the south Ntegbe clan made common sacrifices together. They settled disputes together, though they had no common council which united them. The south Ntegbe clan had in common the worship of the earth deity which in Agbogugu is known as 'Ani Agbogugu'. The main shrine is situated at Ogugu. The south Ntegbe had no common totem animal which bound them, but sometimes common rites were performed on behalf of the whole clan. The elders of each village would gather at Ogugu and give a cow to the earth deity[[25]](#endnote-26). One of the priests recalls:

“*Ani the people of Ntegbe Nese clan have brought this cow as a gift to you, receive and protect them. Protect the lives of all the men of Ntegbe and their wives and children, Ani protect Ogugu, protect Owelli, protect Ihe, protect Owelli, protect Awkunanaw, may they all obtain children in abundance and may male children exceed female in number'[[26]](#endnote-27).*

The elders would kneel before the shrine and the priest would then pour a libation. The cow is not to be sacrificed but left to wander Ogugu until it died. It would then be buried in the grove of Ani.

Consequently upon the above relationship, Agbogugu and the south Ntegbe-Nese clan never went to war against each other, but violent disputes between towns were known to happen. During such disputes the use of a gun was prohibited. They also weren’t allowed to kill or kidnap one another, if a member of the Ntegbe-Nese clan, Agbogugu included committed a forbidden crime like murder against an individual from another kindred, his own family was obligated and responsible to provide a scape goat or the murderer to hang[[27]](#endnote-28).

Suffice to state that the origin of Agbogugu is not straight forward or totally comprehensive due to lack of written record to properly document these traditions as they were passes down one generation to another. The absence of written records on the origin of Agbogugu makes the reliance on oral tradition inevitable in tracing the history of the people. This doe not in any way absolve oral traditions of flaws but it must be stated that the stories have also enriched our knowledge about the Agbogugu people and Ntegbe-Nese clan. Agbogugu is one of the twenty five communities that presently make up Awgu local government area of Enugu state. It has the largest population in the Mbanabo area. The people of Agbogugu are known for farming. They farm all year round. In Agbogugu good character is everything, the people love a man who stands for truth. They don’t worship money, and they respect a man who has impeccable character whether he is rich or poor.

**2.1 Socio-cultural organization**

In Agbogugu the family traces their lineage through the paternal lineage. The smallest social unit in the village is the Umunna. An Umunna consists of a small family in itself, a group of small families composing of brothers, cousins. An Umunna can also be groups of related families, where the Umunna consists of a simple group of related families it can be described as extended family. Where it is made up of two or more groups of related families it can be described as kindred. The relationship in the Umunna and kindred is traced through a common ancestor[[28]](#endnote-29).

The Onuma is the next social unit in the village. It consists of two or more extended families or kindred who all live in a section of the village. The families in an Onuma need not be related. An Onuma can be a local grouping, not a kinship grouping. The next unit is the Nkporo or quarter or ward of a town or village. An Nkporo consists of two or more Onuma. In Agbogugu the village or town is known as Mba or Obodo. The entire social unit is schematically outlined as;

**Obodo**

**Nkporo I Nkporo II Nkporo III**

**Onuma I Onuma II**

**Umunna I UmunnaII**

The head of the family is the oldest man advised by the family council which is made up of all adult males. Meetings are held in the oldest man's house to deal with all family matters, typical of which follows meetings before the farming season, settlement of disputes. Upon all suitable occasions, the elder members of the family repeat a list of the forbidden or abominable crimes to the younger ones and impress upon them the necessity for good behavior[[29]](#endnote-30).

The oldest man is the priest of the family. He sacrifices to the ancestors using his own Ofo to the earth deity Ani and the fertility spirit Fiajoku at the family shrines. He as the oldest elder receives a special share in anything sacrificed before it is divided among the family. On the occasion of the Aju feast which begins before the planting season, it is customary for each household member to give the Okokpa a small present out of the animal he kills.

If any member of the family refuses to acknowledge the authority of the oldest man or the other elders, he would be subjected to a family boycott which would then be supported by an oath sworn upon the oldest man's Ofo so that he would be completely cut off from the family. If he were young he would be tied up and beaten and he might be deprived of his property. If he had committed one of the forbidden crimes against an individual from another family, his own family is responsible to see that he hangs himself[[30]](#endnote-31).

A kindred consists of three extended families or more, all which may claim descent from one man. The organization of the kindred is similar to that of the extended family. The oldest man is still the head of the kindred. He is assisted by a council which consists of all the adult males of the kindred but in practice only the eldest men from each of the components extended families. Together with one or two supporting elders usually attends and has any influence in making decisions. The council also meets at the oldest man’s house. The group solidarity of the kindred is extremely strong. All individuals being responsible for acts committed by any one of them against another kindred, both his property and person. The kindred therefore enforced its own decisions in the same manner as the extended family in order to protect its self[[31]](#endnote-32).

Any matter which could not be settled satisfactorily in the extended families was brought to the notice of the kindred before the larger units were consulted, because its decisions were more sympathetic. Even the forbidden crimes if committed within the kindred were often settled by it, although normally the quarter was interested in such offenses.

The quarter is composed of three kindred, all which may claim a mythical descent from one man. The quarter is united in the possession of a common territory with well defined boundaries against other groups.

The head of the executive organization of the quarter consists of a council presiding over by the oldest man. The council is a most ill defined body containing all adult males of the quarter. In practice only the more prominent by reason of their age, wealth or general ability really controlled decisions. In this way a type of inner council which consists of a representative of each of the kindred, supported by a few more capable elders from his kindred is formed. In Agbogugu the system is purely gerontocracy, government of the elders by the elders. The oldest men are always the leaders. The quarter is responsible for the conduct of its individuals as against other quarters, but not to the same extent as the kindred[[32]](#endnote-33).

**OSU**

The institution of Osu and Ohu started gaining ground in Agbogugu in the second half of the 18th century. Agbogugu back then was an economic hub, the Osu were mainly migrants from far and near towns. Some were escaping inter tribal wars and others searching for greener pastures. These people were accepted by well to do families for domestic and farm works, they were then given shrines considered dangerous to true citizens. Thus some of them became spiritual heads of shrines, the Osu in Agbogugu are not considered slaves in the normally sense but are distinct because they have no blood of those that accepted them. During wars they are kept in front to face the enemy directly while the free born follow behind. The major difference between Osu and Ohu[[33]](#endnote-34) in Agbogugu is that Ohu are either bought, exchanged or are permanently hired to perform any duty as may be directed. The Osu are not free and are not allowed, to associate freely with the free born. They were used to bury their masters. They are prohibited from marrying a free born. The Osu caste system still survives in Igboland and Agbogugu, it is thought to have come into existence six centuries ago. In Agbogugu the Osu people are either tied to a shrine or their forefather were slaves in the past tied to a particular family. In those days people from other towns seeking asylum fled to shrines in Agbogugu and gave themselves up to a deity thus losing their societal rights, in Agbogugu they are known as umu Agbala, Umu Ani. There are people whose forefathers were somehow tied to a family, usually through a debt been owed. There is a case which was recounted to me of a family whose forefather stole a ram, when traced to his house he gave up his son in exchange for the ram. This particular family was able to trace their origins and so were able repay the ram to the family their forefather stole it from and then performed a rite at the Oye market. They came to the market in celebratory clothes and danced the Igede musicand so were set free from the shackles of the Osu name. The freedom of an Osu in Agbogugu is only guaranteed if their origins can be traced, if it is established how much was paid or what was exchanged at the point of the original transaction that made them Osu. Also important is the willingness of the family of their original masters to agree with to terms, If an agreement is reached they are presented to the people at the market square to dance the Igede native dance, they celebrate with drinks. At this point they might decide to either relocate to their original towns or to stay back where they are now and be assimilated[[34]](#endnote-35). The colonial era had a wide reaching and unforeseen effect on the Osu institution in Agbogugu, the Osu caste which were seen as outcasts and worthless were the first the first to embrace the Whiteman’s school and from this empowered themselves as educational elites in Agbogugu.

**2.1 AGBOGUGU INTER GROUP RELATIONS**

**Obe**

Obe Ngwuachi is the immediate neighbor of Agbogugu from the North-Eastern direction, the village of Ohumagu in Agbogugu shares boundary with the village of Umuenenta in Obe. Both towns were under the Udi division during the colonial era but are now presently in Awgu and Nkanu local Government area of Enugu state respectively. Agbogugu belongs to the Ntegbe-Nese clan while Obe is a part of the Ewaa-Okpatu clan. In the olden days, both towns engaged in sporadic inter-village warfare that resulted in the killing of thousands of men, women and children over several over years. This long lasting war between these two towns started as a result of fights between the two communities, the two towns had always fought each other but had sometimes declared occasional truce. At a certain time permanent truce was arranged by the establishment of a common market between the two communities, the market was established at the boundary between the two towns. The common market was a success to the benefit of the Umuenenta people of Obe who functioned as middlemen making massive profits from the goods bought from Agbogugu being sold to the rest of the people from Obe. After a while the market started to attract people from across Obe to the anger of the Umuenenta people, they organized a massacre with people from Agbogugu. On a market day the Umuenenta people sneaked away leaving the rest of their Obe village men to be brutally killed by the Agbogugu people. The war caused so strained a relationship between the two towns that no one from either towns dared visit the other town, if they did want to visit they informed their relatives. These wars though it happened long ago has caused chilling relationship between the two towns, few inter marriages occur between both towns, with the colonial rule and the introduction of the church the wars have stopped.

**ITUKU**

Ituku lies in the east of Agbogugu, it is said that Agbogugu is beloved of Ituku. Ituku is related to Agbogugu by marriage as its founder married a woman from Ihe, Ituku is a part of Ewaa clan group which is made up Ugbo, Amoli, Ogbaku, Agbudu, Isu and Obe. Both towns belong to the Mbanabo North development centre of Awgu local government area. Both town though from different clans share remarkably a lot, they have common festivals, dances, and culture. Ituku and Agbogugu inter marry frequently like the parents of prominent Catholic priest Fr Ejike Mbaka whose father is from Ituku and mother from Agbogugu. There has not been any serious war between these two neighbors apart from a land dispute which occurred between the Obinagu village in Agbogugu and the Umu onwo village of Ituku.

**IHE**

Ihe Nwa Shikeaguma belongs to the Ntegbe-Nese clan. It is the third oldest of the Ntegbe-Nese clan,it is older than Agbogugu. It is the closest neighbor of Agbogugu from the south, it is said that the Agbogugu people are more tolerant and easy going than the Ihe people also concerning tradition the Agbogugu people observe more Nso Ani than the Ihe people. Inter marriage is very common between the two towns any people in both towns have relatives from either sides. Both towns have big markets though Agbogugu`s Oye market is bigger, Ihe town market is known as Eke. The two towns being members of the Ntegbe-Nese clan enjoy a cordial relationship. They assisted each other in wars and disputes. During the olden days both towns cross their common boundary to fetch fire for cooking. Both towns worship the earth deities though with different names, they share very common culture like dances Igede, Ikpa, Oke, Odabala. Agbogugu is more populous than Ihe.

**2.3 POLITICAL ORGANIZATION**

The executive head of the village is the council of elders under the chairmanship of the oldest man. The government is based on religion and worship of the ancestors is fundamental in all things. The elders are regarded as closest in touch to the ancestors. It is government by a body of individuals, though a person might rise to a post of leadership. Using the term government does not mean that notice is taken of every case, the governing body only concerned itself with cases which are;

1. A crime against the deities or an abomination that would invite disaster on the entire village. Offenses which were liable to breaking the unity or solidarity of the village. Nkporo, Onuma and Umunna.

The council of elders was mediators and referees rather than prosecutors or judges. The village was a republic and the government was the concern of all. The council had it hierarchy though all elders were members of the council and were equal[[35]](#endnote-36). They include,

1. The more senior elders
2. The holder of the senior Ofo
3. The Ala priest
4. The announcer of decisions at times
5. The holders of an ‘Oke Alo’ staff of judgment (i.e) a special class of judges found in certain communities.
6. Rich or influential men who had attained a special position as judges or arbiters
7. Titled men[[36]](#endnote-37).

The oldest man acted as president, he opened the meetings with a prayer to the gods and ancestors. He asked them to be present to enable them come to the right decisions and to punish any elder who attempted to corrupt justice and any witness who gave false evidence. After this he would split a kola throw to the gods and ancestors, also any elder with bad character would be called to withdraw.

Council and trials are held in the house of the oldest man and he was commonly the announcer of decisions. Although he could ask someone to do so, on his behalf, he also took first share in everything shared and entitled to a special fee.

Any meeting in grove of the shrine Ihu Ani the Ani priest will pray. The accused would say 'Ani if I have done this thing may you kill me after I have eaten this kola', he would then kneel and pick up the kola put before the symbol of the shrine[[37]](#endnote-38).

All laws in the community is passed in the name of Ani or Ofo. If the people want to pass a law they would go to the shrine of Ani and the priest after pouring libation would say 'Ani we of this town have decided that henceforth no one shall do such and such, if anyone contravenes this law, would you kill that man', Ofo would also be used in such a way, he would lay his Ofo on the ground and deposit on it a piece of kola and some palm wine saying “Ani eat Kola nut, Ofo eat kola nut, Chukwu eat Kola nut, Agbala eat Kola nut for the life of the men and women, may you and Ofo take the life of all who speak falsely in this case[[38]](#endnote-39).

In Agbogugu it is abomination for a woman to place a taboo on any form of property 'ido iyi'. Agbogugu is unique in the south Ntegbe in practicing pure gerontocracy, as in the Umunna, Onuma, Nkporo and village. Agbogugu has the oldest man as the president of the government. Agbogugu which has nine villages has nine executive members of the town council for any important meeting. All of them came with their Ofo, they were free to invite few wealthy and influential people noted for intelligence, integrity and eloquence for important decisions. The council is responsible for taking decisions in issues involving sacrifices made to the gods, ancestors and oracles, also about abominations, wars, marriages and burials. This council had full confidence that Ani and other gods would guide and protect than in delivering justice and truth in all issues.

The meeting place is referred to as Obodo or market square. Every village has an Obodo where they meet. They came to the Obodo and took binding decisions which affected every member of the village. If any delicate decisions involving the gods, ancestors, especially concerning abomination or abominable crimes, which needed people of integrity and truthful people, they went to the 'Okika Izu'. It is a special arena in Oye market, where assemblies were held in the olden days. Anyone speaking at the arena, to show that he was saying the truth would pull off his shoes before he speaks. Anybody who had committed abomination at any time in his life time cannot go there. It is still a sacred place. Assemblies are no longer held there. If anyone who has committed abominations that is to be punished with death enters there the consequences will be instantaneous[[39]](#endnote-40).

Wrestling is one of the cultural activities enjoyed in Agbogugu, it is highly regarded and brings honour to the winners. It is usually done when the farm work is has ended. On market days in Agbogugu, Young men visit the villages, looking for a potential challenger. They indicate their power by jumping high in the air. They invite challenges by holding out sticks or pads and should anyone take either, the challenge has then been accepted and the competition is fixed. During the Appointed day, the two villages involved will gather at the market square. There will be singing and people will be roaming about in the square. When the competition starts it involves only one round, should any of the competitors be thrown once the match is won. When this happens the victor is usually carried on the shoulder by his fellow villagers. There would be celebration and merriment, the victor is given gifts, women run after him, songs are composed in his honor[[40]](#endnote-41).

Agbogugu people are mainly farmers. During the planting season they are quite busy, after the planting season there is leisure and enjoyment. There are two kind of feasts one for men another for women. The male feasts which are for the sacrificing of yam to the gods occurs during the ninth, tenth and eleventh months, the third and fifth month are for the women. There are no feasts in the fourth, seventh and eight months, the first moon occurs in July. The new moon is seen before the calculation for the feast days begins.

The shikaghom village is seen as the herald of the feast of Ani Agbogugu.

1. Okika Ani (The feast is announced with the Ikoro[[41]](#endnote-42).
2. Nkwo Ochuchu efi (Cow assembling day).
3. Afor Nta (General hunting day).
4. Eke Opupa mmanya (Carrying wine to the in laws).
5. Oye Nnafor Ani (Ending of the feast).

The feast is highly regarded and no one can show another person the new moon until the chief priest announces it. When he does this the celebration begins with firing of guns, everyone starts jubilating. There are taboos involved with this feast, they are;

1. Anyone who committed abomination in there lifetime should not stay in the town while the feast is on.
2. There should be no spilling of blood on Oye Udene day.
3. There is no death announcement.
4. There are no funeral rites.
5. There is no roofing or putting foundation of on a new house[[42]](#endnote-43).

The chief priest of Ani fixes the date for the start of the festival. That day the Oye market is filled with men and their families, they will come with palm wine, there is singing and dancing. There is a day allocated for general hunting in the village, before the feast begins all the cows are slaughtered. All killings must be done before Oye which is the start of the feast day, because on that day, there is a prohibition on the spilling of blood. Anyone who has died is put away and not mourned until after the feast. There is feasting, eating and merry making all around, people visit there in laws and gifts like yams and palm wine are presented. The communal extended families visit one another, feasting with great jubliation. On the holy day of Oye Udene all mature men carry loaded gun and move to the market, they assemble in a straight line from the north. They go to the grove of Ani Agbogugu singing war songs, narrating and demonstrating their tales of valor in war and their prowess in hunting. They create a circle in the market square while being watched by the women and children. They fire their guns and sing songs of morale. They are dressed with animal skins and warrior regalia[[43]](#endnote-44).

**Adult Investiture**

The adult investiture in Agbogugu is called Iwa Ogodo. It is very well regarded and significant in Agbogugu, it is an important ceremony in the life of a man. One becomes an adult through this ceremony, after this ceremony a young man becomes an adult and gains an adult right in the village. After the ceremony as an adult he pays five shillings annually. Through this he is able to participate in adult functions, like being acknowledged as having shares in the community lands, getting shares in animals sacrificed and be able to have a voice in the village concerns[[44]](#endnote-45).

The rite takes place after the feast of Ani Agbogugu. All males of the age of eighteen to twenty one year’s participate depending on readiness and wealth. The participants would wear loin clothes woven from native materials, the last age grade who participated in this rite will be the one to prepare them for the rite. The participants adorn themselves with native cam wood dyes, inscribing beautiful patterns on their skins. On the day of the rite they are given raffia fans. Arranging themselves tallest to shortest, they form a straight line, marching to the market. Once there, they run through the Ani shrine, the Ani priest waves a seed yam around their heads and gives it to them. Then they are sprinkled with an earth dish called ‘Ochiyi[[45]](#endnote-46)’ containing blood and water, once this is done they become adults and are now men. It is important to note that without one going through this rite, no matter how old he is he still a boy in Agbogugu.

**Funeral Rites**

When someone dies in Agbogugu, there is a meeting held to determine the burial. There is no mourning while the meeting is going on, to consider someone dead before the deliberation is over is never done. The elders of Agbogugu would hold this meeting with the dead body, to determine whether the people of Agbogugu will mourn the dead person. They do this because if the person has lived a bad life or committed ‘Nso Ani’, he or she would be buried unmourned.

After the meeting the elders let the people know that the person is dead. Gun shots are used to announce the death and from that women and children begin mourning. The family of the dead man begins to arrange burial items like a male goat and a cockerel that has crowed for years. If it is a boy that died, a male goat and young cockerel is used, should it be a woman a female goat and an old hen that has never laid eggs are brought. Heroes, men who have done great things are buried with a lamb. On the day of the burial proper, a girl and young man go to the stream, as they go the girl is in front and the man is behind her holding a small machete. They get leaves from the ‘Abosh’[[46]](#endnote-47) tree, also some palm fronds from a barren palm tree, after the water has been gotten it must be placed on the wall never on the ground. The leaves and the palm fronds gotten are put on the dead man's roof. Before any corpse is buried in Agbogugu, rituals are observed. The corpse is laid over with new cloth. Other ritual items like Nzu, Cam-wood dye and warm oil are gotten. Those that attend to the dead are their relatives, ritually one male and one female. The man holding the Aboshi leaf in his right hand, while the woman holds it in her left hand, the dead person is cleansed by both relatives by being washed in ritual water. Then if the dead is a man Nzu and Odo are used to circle his eyes respectively to enable him to see well in the next world, he is also barbed. His right thumb is rubbed with blood from the ritual foul. A harvesting rod is brought down four times as if to pierce his belly, this is done to prevent ill luck to whoever he reincarnates to in the future. He is given palm wine for the last time, he is then buried with special dances and firing of gunshot. The ritual fowl is killed at the head of the man’s grave. Later the ritual lamb is also killed to conclude the burial. In Agbogugu this rituals are seen as very essential and are undertaken to let the deceased enter the land of the ancestors[[47]](#endnote-48).

**2.4 RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION**

Religion in Agbogugu is the fulcrum which the whole village pivots on, everything directly or indirectly is based on religion. In Agbogugu there is a whole pantheon of gods which the people consult. But like in all Igboland, the people of Agbogugu recognize a supreme God who is greater than all the others, Chukwu Abiama.

In Agbogugu ancestral worship is a key in the people`s lives. All over the world ancestral worship is known and in Agbogugu it serves a role of unity and moral righteousness. In Agbogugu those regarded as the ancestors are those who have lived a good and righteous life according to the beliefs of the people regarding morality or character. A man who commits Nso Ani or who goes about poisoning people, when he dies he will be chained spiritually. In Igboland and in Agbogugu, parents endure misbehavior from their children in other for them to be buried well. Funeral rites are taken very seriously because it determines the position of the dead person in the after world. The ancestors are sacrificed to regularly. These sacrifices are always made by a senior member of a family on his behalf or that of his whole family.

**Totemic practices**

The origins of totems are generally unknown but in some cases. It is stated that the founder of the family having fallen sick after consuming the animal forbade his descendant from eating it. In some cases the taboo animal is associated with a cult, like that of the earth deity Ani. The Ani priests observe some taboos. It applies to the priest and his family but can extend to the entire village[[48]](#endnote-49).

1. Man whose wife is with child cannot kill a snake but can partake if it is killed by another.
2. Men from Akwu do not eat a certain kind of tuber called 'ihuobe'[[49]](#endnote-50). If eaten he gets sores and if a pregnant woman at Akwu eats it she vomits it. Females also didn't eat sacrifices that have been sacrificed to the fertility deity Fiajoku.
3. The tortoise is eaten at Agbogugu if gotten from the wild but the ones that come among people are sacred.
4. The brown monkeys is respected by the Umuonwo kindred in Agbogugu

**OBANUKWU**

In Agbogugu there is a deity called Obanukwu[[50]](#endnote-51). This deity is consulted depending on the request of the person who comes there, sacrifices are made to this deity when first coming there and when it has fulfilled something asked of it. This deity has three faces, the lake itself is regarded as a the god and a house beside the lake then a small hut where people come to see the chief priest. This deity is consulted on many things like protection, favor in business, money favor etc. When a request has been fulfilled by the deity. What has been promised must be given. If it is an animal it is slaughtered by the chief priest and certain parts like the heart and intestine are given to the deity, the rest is consumed by those present there.

**ANI AGBOGUGU**

Ani Agbogugu is the major deity of the people, it represents the earth and it is associated with many things like uprightness and good moral character. It’s also responsible for punishing those who desecrate and commit abominations. This earth deity has three shrines in Agbogugu, one in Ohumagu, Umuoye and Shikaghom. These earth deities in all the Ntegbe-Nese towns were all taken from Ogugu. The of priests who serve Ani Agogugu the one at Shikaghom is the most senior, these priests are obligated to feed the deity twice a day. They also administer oaths in Agbogugu, these priests have special taboo governing them, they don't shake the hand of anyone in mourning, they don't eat cassava and anyone who has committed abomination does not visit them in the daytime. Ani Agbogugu is viewed as a just god by the people because it does not allow injustice. In Agbogugu this deity prevents the forceful taking of someone's land, one need only to call on him. The deity has people who are tied to it, they are called Osu these people are seen as the property of the god[[51]](#endnote-52), the deity also has a sacred animal the vulture. It is so regarded that in days of yore any who kills a vulture must bury it as a human, the vulture is seen as an extension of the deity and its appearance always means something.

**Ofo**

In Agbogugu, Ofo stands for the power of the spoken word. Ofo is sacred and not joked with. it is a symbol of justice, authority and truth, one who holds Ofo is does not do so lightly. It is handled careful for it can be easily desecrated, one who holds Ofo is of high integrity and does not speak or behave anyhow. Such a one always speaks the truth no matter how painful it may be. Ofo in Igboland and Agbogugu is used to witness. It is used to reveal the truth, Women do not touch Ofo, it is used to make binding laws affecting all in the village, the greatest Ofo is that of the oldest man and only him can put it on the ground.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**TRADITIONAL** **INSTITUTIONS**

**3.1 Marriage and birth**

In Agbogugu the normal system of marriage was through the paying of bride price for the hand of a girl, though in the days of yore it was normal for two men to exchange their sisters. In what is known as exchange marriage, this system of marriage was very rarely done and property is exchanged to make the marriage formal. In Agbogugu the native system of paying bride price continues unto this day. it serves a myriad of purposes, most importantly it legalized and gave rights to the husband of any children born in the marriage[[52]](#endnote-53).

The bride price served as compensation to the parents for the trouble and expenses in raising the girl. It also served as a means of proclaiming serious intent over a girl and made a marriage more formal and gave a man formal rights under native law to a woman as his wife. If a man neglects to pay the bride price and they both live together as man and woman, as it is done sometimes these days. Should the woman die while in the man`s house he is obligated to pay her bride price before he can bury her or have rights to any children born to them. In Agbogugu the business of marriage is quite a serious affair, a marriage involves not just the bride and groom but the parents and community. To prepare a boy for marriage the father gives him responsibilities and monitors his behavior to determine his maturity, if he is deemed mature he is allowed to start looking for a wife. The business of searching for a wife involves the whole family they all look for a girl of suitable behavior with a good family name. When found the boy does not approach the girl by himself he goes in the company of a friend and meets her. He offers a gift professing desire to marry her.

Once this is done an intermediary is chosen to relay information between the two families, he would announce to the girl’s family that they will have visitors. The boy`s family comes with palm wine and Kola with the aim of declaring intention. After this follows consultation by the girl`s family on the lineage of the boy`s family. They might consult a medicine man Dibia, to enquire into the boy`s family asking questions pertaining to the suitability of the boy for their daughter. If they are satisfied with everything, they send a message to the parents of the girl.

A date is fixed and the boy`s family comes with palm wine and a pod of kola nut, the eldest man from the girl`s family breaks it and prays for the goodwill of all and the success of the marriage. The youngest men present would give the eldest man a cup of palm wine and he would pour libation to the gods and ancestors, the cup of palm wine would be given to the girl to drink and she would indicate her acceptance of the marriage by taking the cup to boy to drink. There is jubilation by the boy when this is done, after this ceremony there will be the Igba Nkwu[[53]](#endnote-54). The feasting and celebration of the marriage, the bride price in those were unending so the man pays part of it and takes his wife home. After the marriage, to symbolize their status as man and wife the man throws a feast inviting his age grade. His new wife would go among them collecting dishes, and then she would be gifted with presents from her husband's friends. From that moment onwards the man`s status as a married man has been formalized and it would be taboo for any other man to chase his wife.

The new wife is presented to Ani Agbogugu in a ceremony by the chief priest, this confirms the marriage in the eyes of the ancestors and gods. After this another ceremony would be performed on the couple to anoint their new status as husband and wife, the man would invite his bride`s parents to his house and feast them. He would present the father with money which is known as `ife ikwo aka`[[54]](#endnote-55) indicating that his daughter is now someone`s wife. He would also present money to the bride` mother for appreciation and permission to sleep with her daughter, money would also be given to her father for all the care given to her. The prospective husband will visit a blacksmith to chip his teeth with hammer and chisel, without this ceremony being performed any child produced would be regarded as taboo and born out of wedlock. So before then the bride doesn’t sleep with her groom[[55]](#endnote-56). The' Ilu Akwa'[[56]](#endnote-57) is the rite of clothing a woman, in those days women went about unclothed. But after marriage they begin putting on 'Jigida[[57]](#endnote-58)`, at the third month of her first pregnancy she is given a cloth to wear over her private parts. At seven months the rite will be performed by elders, when a baby is born there is jubilation. The parents of the new mother are to be informed by a married woman. The young woman's mother begins to prepare for the Omugo. She prepares food and sends to the new mother. A woman when she comes out of the period of Omugo is feasted by her husband. After she gives birth a new mother consecrates her personal god Chi. This is done by a dibia.The new child is given names in a child naming ceremony. The child is given many names but the name it will be known by is given, when it's milk teeth appears. In Agbogugu polgamy exists, back then men had many wives so that they could have plenty hands for farm work. Wealthy men did so to showcase their wealth and a man whose wife couldn't conceive married another wife. Divorce is present in Agbogugu's marriage system. Both the man and woman could divorce each other for a number of reasons such as stealing, using evil fetishes and barrenness or impotence[[58]](#endnote-59).

**3.2 Betrothal Marriage**

This system of marriage is known throughout Igboland and also in Agbogugu. A wealthy man might decide to find a wife for young son he, finds a suitable girl from a well off family. He goes to the father and asks for his daughter`s hand in marriage for his son, before agreeing the girl`s father usually consults his family members and elders. If all is in agreement a rite is performed at the threshold of the girl`s father compound, an elder pours libation there and prays for the success of the marriage. Then everyone there drinks palm wine brought by the boy`s father, also gifts like yams is given to the girl`s family. Sometime after, the same rite is performed with the full kindred in attendance. The mother of the girl brings her daughter to the threshold and a senior elder prays and hands a cup of palm wine to the strongest young man present who symbolizes vigor. Another cup is given to the girl`s mother who drinks and gives her daughter also to drink and who then hands it to her intended to sip. This ceremony is binding between the boy and girl. After this there is feasting and the boy`s father inquires to the amount required for the bride price, the bride price differs between families and kindred. After the bride price is paid it is distributed between families in the girl`s kindred, the boy`s father kills a goat and together with a pot of palm wine gives it to the girl`s father this is called ‘Igba Okwa Anu’[[59]](#endnote-60). Sometimes, the girl might be brought to live with her betrothed family. Sex is forbidden before puberty and before the attempting to have sex the girl gives gifts to her mother and father.

**3.3 Abomination**

Abominations in Agbogugu are considered an offense against the land and its deities. It is the duty of the village council to punish all cases of abomination in the village, anyone who committed an abomination usually accepted the punishment to save his family members from being included or his kin would take it upon themselves to enact punishment. In Agbogugu lesser crimes such as cow stealing are punished by the kindred involved, the Agbogugu code of law is levitical. The earth deity Ani is against any form of abomination and such crimes were swiftly punished[[60]](#endnote-61).

In Agbogugu the rearing of dogs is forbidden, all dogs in Agbogugu were killed off in the 1970`s when a mad dog went about bit and infected people with rabies. These people died so the village elders came together and made the rearing of dogs in Agbogugu Taboo. Also any goats that gave birth while an elder was in the house became taboo. Any cock that crowed in the night and any hen that laid eggs inside the house or laid one egg is taboo and were sold off to people not from Agbogugu or Ntegbe –Nese. Male children born with one testis were not well regarded and rejected because it wasn`t worth the effort of raising a child who could not inherit the father`s properties, it was viewed as taboo and caused by evil spirits. Also babies born with legs out were termed taboo and seen as been caused by evil spirits, the parents would be very mournful and sad the baby would be placed on a mud bed and allowed to starve to death. It was also believed that babies who bud their upper teeth first were taboo, the parents would mourn the child and the baby would be given out to people not from the Ntegbe-Nese clan. Albino babies were taboo and considered evil. Women who climbed palm trees, used hoes to cultivate yam mounds and tied the loin cloth like men were banished. The view was that women should act more womanish. Twin children were detested by the people of Agbogugu, they were viewed as evil spirits and also as sources of sadness and sorrow. The twin children would put in a black earthen pot and it would be closed with a calabash, and it would be carried to the evil forest and be thrown away. Twins were viewed so terribly because people believed only animals gave birth to twins, the mother`s would be shaved and she would be cleansed. Christianity has come and this practice[[61]](#endnote-62) has stopped. The practice of adultery is one of the most abominable acts in Agbogugu, the stain of such an act follows one to the grave. Both adulterers are brought out naked to the market square where a rite is performed to cleanse them of their sin.

**ABOMINATION CHART**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A woman placing taboo on any one`s property | Driven out by husband |
| Treason | One cow fine |
| Women tying cloth like men | Banishment |
| House breaking | Compelled to hang |
| Arson | Compelled to hang |
| False accusation | One cow fine |
| Theft | Compelled to hang |

Slaves who committed murder were compelled to hang themselves. Any holder of slaves is responsible for the acts of his slaves. People who murdered other people were allowed to exchange other people as scapegoats for themselves[[62]](#endnote-63).

**3.4 Masquerades**

Masquerades in Agbogugu is highly regarded and seen as sacred. Before Christianity masquerades were integrated in many village institutions, in the village they featured in burials ceremonies and feasts. Masquerading was for men and any man who hadn`t been initiated into the masquerade society was seen as a woman. Revealing the secrets of the masquerades, unmasking one or exposing one is taboo. In Agbogugu to be initiated into the masquerade society a person must be up to age 15, the initiation tests one`s mettle. It involves trial by ordeal. The secrets of the society are taught to a new initiate by the core members, after initiation a successful initiate would present gifts to the masquerade society. He becomes a member of all masquerades societies in Igboland[[63]](#endnote-64).

**Classes of Masquerades**

The classes of masquerade starts from the smallest to biggest, the smallest are the ones used by children to ply for money and gifts during festive periods. In Agbogugu there are two classes of masquerades ‘Igbo Mmanwu’ and ‘Igbo Omaba’. Igbo Omaba entered Agbgugu in the 1950`s, it first appeared in Umuanebe in Umuevee. Omaba masquerade is usually performed by youths, it is used to bury men and it is colorful and good for dancing. Igbo Mmanwu is more central in Agbogugu, it only appears at night, member's burials and very important personalities burials.

**Age Grades**

The origins of age grade system in Agbogugu is not known, the age grade system is only for males the age grade is important for many reasons. They perform duties collectively. The age grade fosters cooperation between village members and the members help when one of theirs gets married. They organize and bring a new wife home, they also play important roles during war, special warriors were known in different age grades. They helped each other in farming, hunted collectively going into big forests outside of Agbogugu after big games.

**Title System**

Agbogugu titles are taken to obtain social positions of dignity; they were used to portray wealth. The title system in Agbogugu is few and simple compared to that of Onitsha province, titled men and women are regarded highly In Agbogugu.

**Okenihani**

The Okenihani title is one of greatest titles in Agbogugu, the one who takes it has to be of upright character and unstained of ‘Nso Ani’ known and unknown. The title demands strength in farming one had to be a great farmer to consider this title, it involves feeding the whole village, the planting and gifting of many racks of yams .One who has taken this title may dance the sacred Ugene music, this title is highly regarded in Agbogugu. The title carries prohibitions and taboos with it, one who has taken it can no longer live normally, he does not buy yam from the market anymore. Another prominent title is the ‘Omechielu Oha’, this title involves the gifting of a local cow to the village to be sacrificed to ‘Ani Agbogugu’. It is done during the feast of ‘Ani Agbogugu’, and after one donates the cow he is given the title. Women are also titled in Agbogugu, this happens when a woman kills a cow for her dead father such a one is given the title ‘Oka Nwanyi[[64]](#endnote-65)’, she is recognized as a great personality. A man is not recognized as such if he kills a cow only when a man kills a horse he is known as “Ogbuzulu”.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**BRITISH CONQUEST OF AGBOGUGU 1907-1920 AND THE PEOPLES RESISTANCE**

The British invaded Agbogugu in their pacification of Igboland. This military invasion was particularly difficult for the British because of the statelessness of the Igbo nation. The Agbogugu area first felt the British foreign presence around years of 1907-1909. They were visited routinely by the British, there was an uneasy relationship between the people and the British, there were rumors about them from the people of Ihe saying that they were toeless and also news of their fighting and burning came to the people of Agbogugu. The white men came through Amoli[[65]](#endnote-66).

By 1914 Agbogugu decided to attack the British forces, arming themselves with the local Dane guns, bow and arrows. The people of Agbogugu marched to Ihe and attacked the British. The battle went badly for the town of Agbogugu, they lost many people to the British maxim guns. When the news of the battle reached Agbogugu the people at home ran into the bush. When the British arrived in Agbogugu, most of the people had run away, they informed the people they found to come and remove the corpses from the battle, they refused, and they burnt the earth deity Ani Agbogugu`s shrine . The British ordered those they captured while in the town to search for those who ran away. When they came back their guns were seized. That day a man who couldn't run because his wife was in labour was made the first chief of Agbogugu. The people of Agbogugu were told to begin cooperating with the British, apart from Amofia all the other eight villages accepted this order, with the burning and looting of Amofia on 25 November 1914 Agbogugu capitulated[[66]](#endnote-67).

They were ordered to provide free labor to build the eastern railway which linked Enugu to Port harcourt[[67]](#endnote-68), they swore obedience to the British throne. The Agbogugu people resisted the British stoutly in many ways. They adopted guerilla tactics, construction of bush camps, staked ditches and trenches. They used the metaphysical inviting powerful medicine men to prepare charms for them. in Agbogugu the British rest house at Ugwu Obodo was invaded by bees and soldier ants. The people also resisted even after being subdued, they refused to associate with what the British stood for like their schools and churches.

**4.1 Educational Developments**

The establishment of the first school in Agbogugu, came about from the efforts of chief Nwadilibe. In the year 1926, shortly after the school was opened it closed due to the debt owed to teachers. During this period the first chief appointed by the white man Onovo Ngene was against the idea of schools in Agbogugu, he together with the village elders performed a forbiddance against any one going to school and that they should not learn anything. In 1953 Ijeoma Udenta from Umuanebe went with others from Umuevee village to Eke, to request for a teacher from bishop Shanahan. They were given a Mr. Gabriel Onzuluike[[68]](#endnote-69), this was on the condition that the debt owed to the teachers would be repaid. The school was built by the village of Umuanabe but there was opposition and it was burnt down.

The school was shifted to a place called Ukwu Uchakuku muo, a fetish cult called 'Oji Aku' was kept there to prevent the burning of the school. It was later moved to 'Oke Agu Oye', which is a common land. Standard four level was added to the school but the school was also burnt by enemies. A stone building was erected by taxing every male in Agbogugu one shilling, the school added standard five in 1954.The forbiddance that was enacted by the elders of the town was broken in 1958. In 1958 the school was upgraded to standard six, later a preliminary training centre was opened and in 1960 it was made an elementary training centre. This centre was later converted into the famous St. Vincent secondary school, which has trained many successful people in Agbogugu.

**4.2 Introduction of Warrant Chiefs**

In Agbogugu the system of government is gerontocracy, the oldest man in the village occupied a special position as village leader. This position does not have real power but it is accorded enormous respect. The first warrant chief in Agbogugu was Kwelu Chukwu Ude, he was given this post after the battle between the British and the people of Agbogugu because he couldn't leave his birthing wife. He later gave this post to a servant of his called Onovo Ngene, Onovo Ngene[[69]](#endnote-70) became the second warrant chief Agbogugu had. He became a dictator to those he ruled terrorizing his own people. He abused, stole and harassed Agbogugu people, together with his messengers he began a reign of tyranny in Agbogugu .He was deposed later after accusations of torture was leveled at before the district officer at Agbani him denouncing his actions. The village enacted a forbiddance against the institution of chieftaincy, that anyone who becomes a chief will die, the next person to be chief was A.O Ngoke, he lead Agbogugu from 1963 to 1976. The village realized its mistake in the forbiddance against chiefs and went to the earth deity and broke the forbiddance. 1976 was the year the chieftaincy institution was introduced in Igboland. The kingship was to be rotated between the two wards in Agbogugu[[70]](#endnote-71).

HRH Igwe D.N Akputa OON was the first king of Agbogugu, he was born in 1930. He was elected unanimously in 1976[[71]](#endnote-72) because he was considered a leader of the people before he became king. When he became king, Agbogugu had no university graduate he sponsored two students to the University[[72]](#endnote-73) of Nigeria Nsukka, he also organized the reduction of money needed for burials and bride price in Agbogugu.

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**CHAPTER FIVE**

**AGBOGUGU 1967 – 2000**

**5.1** Agbogugu and the Nigerian Biafran War

The civil War started from 1967 to 1970. The internal corruption in the Nigerian government was the aggreviance of the Coup plotters. It came as a result of the 1966 coup which was labeled an Igbo coup. The Northerners felt that they had been targeted by the Igbo. The reaction to the 1966 coup was a counter coup by northern officers. They targeted the head of state General Ironsi and began a pogrom which claimed 30,000 Igbo lives[[73]](#endnote-74).

The Aburi accord was the last plan to unite the aggrieved easterners with the rest of Nigeria but it failed due to the Gowon Administration failure to implement it. On 30th may 1967 Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu formally announced the Republic of Biafra and on the following day he was sworn in as Head of State and Commander-in-chief of the Armed forces of the Republic of Biafra.. The federal military government efforts to end the war swiftly didn't work rather the Biafran forces struck fast into the Midwest attacking rather than defending, given the population of Igboland compared to the rest of Nigeria.

In Agbogugu the federal army captured the town on June 20th 1968, the town was heavily shelled. People ran into the bush for their lives, when the Nigerian forces entered Agbogugu they gave the title Sariki to Chiatu Oke, he was unable to run for his life when they entered the town. He ruled for thirty months, he was instrumental in safeguarding the property of the Agbogugu people.

The Biafran forces stationed at Agbogugu was under the command of colonel Onwuatuegwu, young men from Agbogugu voluntarily entered the Biafran army. The town contributed ninety men to be trained as guerrilla fighters. Mr. C.C Nwafor was their leader[[74]](#endnote-75). This force was used to protect the town from saboteurs, and functioned as sentries at entrances into Agbogugu. During the war people made money from what is called attack market trading in Biafra and Nigeria and exchanging Nigerian money for Biafran Pounds making huge profits. Young men got married easily through this method. After the war Biafran money stopped functioning and people who had given friends who had bank accounts their money when Biafra changed currency didn`t understand what was happening and went as far as involving Ani Agbogugu, this was a terrible war effect[[75]](#endnote-76). Awolowo's advice the money of all in Igboland was seized and only twenty pounds was returned.

**5.2 Agbogugu Developments**

Development and progress in Agbogugu started with the establishment of a school in the town, the compulsory free primary school education policy by the Agbogugu development union contributed a lot to schooling in Agbogugu. The scholarship given by the king of Agbogugu Okaa Omee 1 of Agbogugu Igwe D.N Akputa to two students to enter the University of Nigeria Nsukka, was a turning point in the development of Agbogugu. They were the first students of Agboguguto enter a university[[76]](#endnote-77).

The Agbogugu development union is credited with many development schemes in Agbogugu, it fought for the ending of wicked customs in Agbogugu like the rejection of a child born legs out first, this union also began giving loans out to those aspiring to go to the university. The building of the St John Catholic Church in 1991 was a notable development; the church was built on common land carved out of the St Vincent secondary school. The establishment of a bank in Agbogugu was development which occurred in the 80's, this initiative was attracted by the king of Agbogugu he leased his ownbuilding to the bank CCB Nigeria. The national food reserve market was a project by the federal government which the king brought to Agbogugu through the help of the deputy senate president Ike Ekweremadu, it was set up at the Oye market. The Agbogugu postal agency which was opened by Igwe D.N Akputa before he was king to ease their burden, it was upgraded to a post office in 1993. In Agbogugu all the nine villages have serviceable roads[[77]](#endnote-78). The main developments in Agbogugu were through the efforts of the king they are as follows:

1. The south eastern federal farmers market at Oye market extension.
2. Garri processing plant at Agbogugu -Ozalla old road.
3. The Mbanabo North chief magistrate court Agbogugu[[78]](#endnote-79).
4. The divisional police headquarters for Mbanabo north at Agbogugu.

**CHAPTER SIX**

**CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY**

**6.1 Conclusion**

The people of Agbogugu are numbered among the five south Ntegbe towns. These towns in the Ntegbe-Nese clan have a relationship going back centuries. These south Ntegbe towns make up the Ntegbe-Nese with the exception of Okunano. The town of Agbogugu has nine villages. These nine villages are divided into two wards. Agbogugu was founded by Agbogwu Oshie Aneke, he was the fourth child of a mythical figure called Ntegbe. The south Ntegbe towns have a close relationship. They help each other out when needed. Ogugu was the first town of the Ntegbe-Nese, the rest of the towns come to Ogugu and sacrificed for the common good of all the Ntegbe-Nese.

The town is divided into four social units which are always headed by the eldest man, the town is ruled by its elders but functions very democratically, and they rely on their deities to perform their leadership duties satisfactorily. The people have their unique beliefs which they are governed by and they are deeply religious believing in their deities and ancestors. Religion is what most institutions in the village revolves around. This is further remarked in how they bury their, dead, their native feasts and their coming of age rites.

Culture has played an important role in the lives of the people, they have their native customs of marriage in the town and also they were governed by laws and taboo. Some of these taboos were detrimental to them. Also they had institutions of masquerading and titles taking, these cultural activities were important in the lives of the Agbogugu people. Masquerades appeared in almost all the facets of Agbogugu life. The town also has an Osu population, they were slaves in the olden days but presently Osu can free themselves if they know where they came from.

The town of Agbogugu also suffered from the British invasion of Igboland. It is known that all the south Ntegbe towns were burnt down during this period, the people resisted as much as they could but were over matched by British military superiority. The British introduced the institutions of churches and schools to in Agbogugu, they also appointed a warrant chief a previously unknown style of leadership and this lead to tyranny and abuse of power. The community became developed due to the introduction of schools. The first king of Agbogugu was mainly responsible for the post colonial developments in Agbogugu, the developments were also as a result of the colonial institutions. This development could be tied to the British invasion though their killings and looting will never be justified.

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