

Indigenous craft and fishing technologies in coastal areas of southern Nigeria: An attempt at preserving African intelligence

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Abstract

The native craft and fishing technologies of the Òbòlò people in southern Nigeria cannot be divorced from their belief in the transcendent. The deployment of this native intelligence in the processes and techniques involved in the construction of sophisticated fish traps and gears is enforced through their spirituality. Such consciousness of a transcendental influence in crafts technology, especially, in ancient Israel and Africa is attested to by Seely and Seely (2021), Leeuwen (2021), and Vincent (2019). In southern Nigeria, native intelligence is employed in the construction of odek and ogbola (fish trap like odek) used by men only; oyiima (heavy net) for the catch of bigger fish; okwun (basket) for carriage of fresh crayfish and fingerlings by women; Efie (basket) for carriage of fresh fish by men; and ifit (basket) weaved in different sizes for storage of the dry fish by both men and women. In order to sustain their aptitude in native craft and fishing technologies, every July (early and mid) of the year, certain festivals are observed in appreciation of Yòk-Òbòlò (the tutelary deity of Òbòlò people). However, this indigenous technological knowledge is under threat as a result of the gradual loss to death of the local aged intelligentsias, and migration to urban regions necessitated by militancy and chieftaincy tussles in the region. Therefore, this study seeks to document the indigenous episteme revealed in the synergy between indigenous festivals and native craft and fishing, currently an oral tradition, for the purpose of preservation. The study adopts the exploratory sequential design.

Keywords: Craft and fishing technology, Yòk-Òbòlò, Òbòlò cultural heritage eco-sustainability, southern Nigeria