

## **Globalization as a Threat to Cultural Identity: A Case Study of Igba Ijele Dance Group of Awkuzu, Anambra State**

**By**

**Ikemerike Ikechukwu John**

**&**

**Efurhievwe Margaret Akpevweoghene, PhD.**

**Department of Music, Faculty of Arts, Delta State University, Abraka.**

### **Abstract**

Globalization as a threat to Cultural Identity: A Case study of Igba Ijele Dance Group of Awkuzu, Anambra State is an empirical research work that investigated how globalization constituted a threat to cultural identity using the Ijele Dance Group as a case study. The Igbos of Nigeria place a very high premium on music and musical practices of all sorts. This is because music is a means of cultural identity that serves multifarious purposes. They use music to educate, entertain, inform, communicate, relax and socialize. Hence, every form of music and musical practices among them speak volumes about their belief system, principles of life and ideologies. However, these music and musical practices that provide unquantifiable services is at the verge of bastardization courtesy of globalization. To this end, this study examines the place of Ijele Dance Group in the lives of Awkuzu people and the impact of globalization on the music and musical performance of the group. The study revealed that globalization is gradually eroding and beclouding some basic principles and ideologies behind the group's music. It also proffered solutions to the problem.

### **Introduction**

Traditional music play a central role in the culture of Awkuzu people. Every aspect of their culture appears to be an opportunity to highlight their rich cultural heritage. Like other Igbos found in the southeastern part of Nigeria, Awkuzu people seem to appreciate in grand style the immeasurable benefits of traditional music. No wonder, they apply it to entertain, educate, inform, train and even retain and transmit their culture from generation to generation. Efurhievwe (2012:285) states that "music is a discipline that has gained root in the history of

human existence... as a symbolic form, music has a cultural and political history. It articulates and shapens identities". To them every type of traditional music serves special and multiple purposes and therefore need special attention. In fact, 'traditional music of all kinds remain an indispensable part of their life-long activities right from cradle to grave' (Ikemerike, 2015). Among the several kinds of traditional music, that form part of the culture of Awkuzu people is the Igba Ijele dance.

The Igba Ijele dance is the most prestigious, famous and popular dance among the people of Awkuzu. It is an exclusively male dance group revered and appreciate by all and sundry despite the fact that other forms of traditional music exist. The high level of appreciation and reverence accorded the dance by the people of the community generally call for attention. However, this stance is tilting towards zero on the weighing scale because globalization has collapsed cultural boundaries and made world a small village. The music of the people, which is an integral part of the people's cultural heritage, need to be preserved, perpetuated and performed by the owners. This makes room for excellent rendition. Nevertheless, when foreigners accessed and even performed this traditional music, inadequacies set in due to lack of understanding of principles and ideologies. This no doubt makes room for acculturation, hybridization and possibly imperialism.

### **Conceptualizations**

Taylor (1871:12) provided a definition of culture that has continued to influence the perception of culture globally. In line with that definition, "culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society." Nwosu and Kalu (1978:3) share the same view as they see culture "as the gamut of the knowledge, beliefs, customs, traditions and skills that are available to the members of a society. They further emphasized that this includes a great deal of man-made artifacts, activities, ideas and feelings. This implies that culture centers on people. It revolves around people and their activities. Perhaps this was why Azide (2008:28) defines culture as "the totality of a people's way of life." In fact, this means the way people do their own things regarding any aspect of culture, which may be material or immaterial. When culture shows in the products of a

people, it becomes material. This is because any one can behold and assess them. However, culture becomes immaterial when it applies to how the people act, feel and behave. Ukeje (1986) articulated these properly when he asserts that:

Culture may be defined as the fabric of ideas, beliefs, skills, tools, aesthetic objects, methods of thinking, of eating, and of talking as well as customs and institutions into which each member of the society is born. In short, it includes the way each individual makes a living, the music he plays, transportation, the house we live in and the food we eat. (p. 58)

For the 1988 Cultural Policy for Nigeria Culture remains:

The totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours. (p. 5)

This means that culture could serve as a special means of identity. Researchers have revealed that no two communities, countries or races are the same. None shares identical culture. There are always slight differences that make one different from the other. Often, these differences appear in the people's way of life. This is the major reason why culture could serve as a quality parameter for measuring and differentiating one race, country or community from another. No wonder, Akpabot (1986) sees, "culture as a way of thinking, feeling, and believing in a given society which gives the society a distinctive identity." For Aziza (1996)

Culture is the totality of the pattern of behaviour of a particular group of people, consisting of their greeting habits, dressing, social norms and taboos, food, song and dance patterns, rites of passage from birth through marriage to death, traditional occupations, religions as well as philosophical beliefs (p. 3).

Ibekwe (2009) affirms that culture “constitutes the totality of customs, ritual, norms and values that regulate the people’s pattern of life.” Supporting the foregoing, Okafor and Emeka (1998:154) maintains that culture is: “all the knowledge, belief, customs, values, ideas and skills available in a society by which the society can be compared to or differentiated from others.”

Supporting the above definition of culture, Ekwueme (2004) says:

The sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings – the customs, beliefs, art, music, and all other products of human thought made by the particular group of people and transmitted from one generation to another (p. 193).

In a similar development, Chukwuemezie (2003) reaffirms that:

Culture is a collective way of life or pattern of behaviour of a given society. It is a value system that is handed from generation to another. Culture is the embodiment of the people’s language, their dressing pattern, eating habits, their arts, music etcetera. Culture embraces all the ways of life of a particular people. (p. 34)

In sum, culture includes all man’s adaptive processes as well as all the guiding principles that have enabled man to adapt those processes for his survival in a society (Orakwue, 1994). However, Meziebo (1992) provided an exception to the above as he emphasized that only the ways of a people, approved by a large segment of the society, are termed culture. By implication, all unacceptable norms, attitudes and behaviours are taboos and do not belong to the culture of the people.

Hornby (2010:367) simply defines dance as “a series of movements and steps that are usually performed to music.” In the same vein, dance is a series of steps and movements that match the speed and rhythm of a piece of music (google.com). Dance is also a performing arts form consisting of purposely selected sequences of human movements (wikipedia.org). According to Wikipedia, the movements involved may be aesthetic or symbolic in value but it remains dance once performers and observers within a particular culture acknowledge it as dance. It

further explained that choreography, repertoire of movements as well as place of origin and historical period serve a major purpose in the description and categorization of dance. Nzewi (1981:433 – 434) sees dance as “stylized and structured movement in time and space.” Nzewi explained that dance also include aspects like acrobatics, gymnastics and mime properly structured or set to music. In line with Nzewi’s assertion, Okwesa (1983) says:

Dance is the oldest of the arts, which concerns itself with the movement and gesture of the body in space and time of the accompanying music: either to express ideas or emotional experience of man in his environment. (p. 23)

Harper in Onwuka (2012:5) confirms the statement when he says, “dance is an art which the basic materials is the movement of the body in space and time”. In fact, dance is a major art and an essential element in Nigerian culture generally and Igbo culture specially. It is the movement of the body in response to stimuli. The bodily movements do not occur in isolation. They contain values and are artistic, expressive rhythmic time and space. Dance forms an integral part of our culture and appears in every area of our life.

Traditional music is the folk music of a group of people (quora.com (2017). Traditional music is also the indigenous music. Akin Euba (in Ezenwobodo, 2009) defines traditional music as “that class of music which was practiced in Nigeria before the country came under European influence.” He explained that this form of music results mostly from a combination of singing with some form of accompaniment. Earlier, the International Music Council conference at Sao Paulo in 1954 defines traditional music as “The product of musical tradition which has been evolved through the process of oral transmission; the factors that shape the traditional one.” Often, traditional music serve as a means of expression. This means that traditional music allow groups or individuals concerned to share their feelings as well as communicate with one another.

To this effect, every society that perform traditional music use it as an avenue to show their cultural heritage. This kind of music transfers from one generation to another through oral tradition and is features during festivals, ceremonies, rites of

passage, rituals, and recreations. Chernof (in Idamoyibo, 2013) notes that, "traditional music is an art form that results from a spontaneous and emotional creation that is an uninhabited dynamic expression of vitality." Deductions from the author's submission imply that the performer of the traditional music creates and recreates their artwork freely in the course of the performance. Music among Nigerians generally is a functional art. The skill and mental alertness of the performer guide the scope of the performance.

### **Music and dance**

In Nigeria like some other African societies, dance exist in three broad categories namely: instrumental dance, vocal dance and instrumental/vocal dance. The last category is a combination of both the instrumental and vocal types. It is important to note that dancers derive their dance rhythms from the accompanying instruments be they vocal or instrumental. Hence, no dance in Nigerian traditional dance stands meaningful without instrumental or vocal music. This is because the nature of traditional music and dance demands that they supports each other as parts of a whole. In fact, "the cultivation of music that is integrated with dance or music stimulates affective motor response is much more prevalent in African societies." (Nketia in Okpala 1991). Perhaps this is also, why Onwuka (2012) affirms that music is a *sine qua non* for all traditional dances. It appears that dancing become energized when appropriate vocal, instrumental or vocal/instrumental accompaniment follows.

### **Music and dance as part of Igbo culture**

Music and dance form an integral of part of Nigerian culture generally and Igbos in particular. There is no aspect of their daily life activities that do not involve one form of music/dance or another. They are inherently musical. Like every other African, "music follows them from cradle to grave" (Nketia in Ikemerike, 2014). Their music comes in connection with the tribal customs and rituals of the people. A closer look at every traditional music among the Igbos reveal easily their belief system, way and attitudes to life. After all, culture means stands for the people's language, dressing pattern, habits, arts, music and tradition Chukwuemezie (2004).

### **Music and dance as means of socio-cultural identity**

Nigeria is a country blessed with multiple ethnic groups. These ethnic groups have diversified cultural backgrounds, which are evident in their political, economic, and socio-cultural lives. Music and dance form essential aspects through which these ethnic groups mold, perpetuate and transmit their cultures. Hence, Odogbor (2008) noted “music in traditional Nigerian setting plays a central role in that it has continued to be used as a carrier of the people’s history and tradition and for the inculcation of cultural values.” Furthermore, since music contains the culture of a people, it could serve as means of expressing the cultural heritage of a given society. In fact, music gives a society life and cultural identity (Ekong, 2008).

Among the Igbos of Nigeria, music and dance remain an efficient instrument for teaching, transmitting, and preserving traditional values, ideals, philosophies, beliefs, history as well as socio-cultural norms. Music and dance do not just serve entertainment purposes but many other purposes. Iyimoga (1981) remarks that “music, like any other aspect of cultural education, is capable of molding the individual in several ways; and that through music one is to a variety of things”. Confirming the above fact, Rust in Onwuka (2012) notes:

A significant part of the general cultural pattern of any society is intimately related to human experiences and because of this, reflects the spirit of the age in any society withy fidelity. Dance is an inseparable arm of socialization process by which cultural patterns come to be incorporated in the personalities and members of the society. (p. 60)

### **Geographical location of Awkuzu**

Awkuzu town is a community in Igbo land noted for her rich cultural heritage. The original name of the town was OKUZU. However, this was adulterated by the missionaries during the colonial rule. In the 1800s, the missionaries who were not conversant with the Igbo language changed it to suit their purpose. According to a centurion, Mazi Omenife Okafor, Awkuzu was one of the progenies of the fifth child of Eri. His only daughter Iguedo bore the founders of Ogbunike, Nteje, Umuleri and Nando. The town is currently located in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra state and shares common boundaries with Umunya, Nteje, Ifitedunu,

Ukpo, Ukwulu, Nando, Igbariam, and Abba. The community is famous for its large population, which gave it the sobriquet IBILIBE OGADA. This implies the swarming locust. This extreme large population serve as a boost to Awkuzu people boundary disputes. They easily overran and degrade any of their neighbours who dares to challenge for supremacy. Awkuzu has three main quarters viz: Ezi, Ifite and Ikenga. The three quarters have thirteen other subdivisions namely: Iru-Anyika, Aka-Ezi, Igbu, Ozu, Ezinkwo, Nkwele, Umuobi, Ukpomachi, Dusogu, Otoko and Umudioka

### **Leadership, governance and occupation**

Eze Awkuzu is the highest political and traditional office in the land. Whoever holds this office goes with the title Eze Awkuzu. The title and office is an exclusive of for the heirs to the Ibilibe Ogada throne. Nnamenyi or traditional Prime Minister is next in line. However, unlike the office of Eze Awkuzu that of the traditional prime minister is democratic. Eze Ana, the mouthpiece of the gods is another important title in Awkuzu land. He holds the most sacred staff known as Ofo Awkuzu. The Ezeana sees to spiritual well-being of Awkuzu land. Prior colonialism, the Ezeana protects, preserves and promotes the political status of Awkuzu. Titled men, and other prominent persons in the town also share in decision making concerning the leadership and governance of Awkuzu. The people of Awkuzu are predominantly farmers.

### **Historical Origin of Igbaljele**

According to Mazi Ukaonu, an eighty-four year old man, who happens to be the oldest member of the dance group, Igba Ijele dance was an offshoot of the famous Akwunehenyi dance of Igboezunu Aguleri. After a very successful outing ceremony performed in honour of the Akwunaehenyi dance of Igboezunu Aguleri, neighbouring villages like Umudiana Ikenga Umueri and Umuatuolu Umueri borrowed the dance and performed it excellently. It was at this instance that his grandfather, Mazi Odezuluigbo Ukaonu and his friends negotiated with Umudiana Ikenga Umueri for "izi egwu ijele"(introduction of the dance) to Awkuzu. At their first outing ceremony, the Igba Ijele dance group performed so well that they joined the league of other notable groups from Nneyi, Nando, Nsugbe, Ivite Aguleri, Igbariam and Nteje to popularize and introduce the Igba Ijele dance to other villages and communities.



## Structure of Ijele

In Awkuzu, the group has a gigantic masquerade, the king of all masquerades and a symbol of royalty. The Ijele household has a king, queen and other family members including the royal guards and servants. Igba Ijele is the only music that entertains the Ijele family. This special group of entertainers accompanies the Ijele and its family whenever the masquerade has a performance. The majestic body movements that the Ijele family make in accordance to the sounds from Igba Ijele is Igba Ijele dance. Ijele is the most revered masquerade in Awkuzu particularly and Igbo land in general. It is the King of all masquerades. At inception, the Ijele has about forty-five different masquerades perform on top of it in actual life. However, modernity and change has interfered seriously with the original structure of the Ijele. Presently, the forty-five figurines positioned on top of the Ijele stand for those former masquerades. The size, weight, and significance of the Ijele makes it the crown of all masquerades. This is also the reason why it is welcomed into the performance venue with seven canon shots and appears last in any performance arena.

It comprises two segments: the upper and the lower segments, divided at the centre by a big python. The upper segment is Mkpu Ijele while the lower segment is Akpakwuru Ijele or Ogbanibe. The middle section which demarcated the upper and lower segments is called Eke - Ogba (Python). Ijele towers about 15 ft to 12 ft based on gravitational balance construction. The Ijele is an intricate artwork that demands a lot of creativity. Several expensive multi coloured velvet materials (ododo), bamboo sticks, woods and canes were artfully put together to produce what seem like a great wonder of the century. The Ijele is so massive that it takes one hundred men about six months to prepare it for performance. Due to the weighty and size of Ijele, it is always necessary to provide a large outdoor house for it around the performance arena.

Nne Ijele meaning "Mother of Ijele". She is a very beautiful woman masquerade that holds a big ox tail with a carved enamel plate. She dances only to royal and majestic tunes of the flute. Ijele Father called "Onuku" is a man with a large oval face dressed in chieftaincy regalia. Ijele Police is a group of six police officers that guard the father and mother against unnecessary encroachment by the public. Ijele Palm Wine Tapper accompanies Ijele for the sole purpose of picking its rear as it

performs. Another significant personality is the Ijele fan carrier or Akupe carrier. It is not really a masquerade but it plays crucial role of leading the Ijele with its symbolic powerful fan called Akupe. The absence of the fan and its carrier signifies danger. Once the Ijele loses sight of the fan and its carrier, it disappears. In fact, the fan carrier determines the movement of the Ijele. The Ijele only moves or remains stationary at the initiative of the fan carrier.

### **Symbolic meaning of items found on the Ijele**

The Ijele represents an entire community and its people. Every item used in the making of the Ijele has specific meaning in Igbo land.

**Ijele Mirror:** This mysterious mirror picks and sees anyone with charm or destructive weapons. The mirror magnets the person to Ijele for punishment. This mirror is reflective and creates an aesthetic beauty.

**Ijele Python:** This is a big snake signifying royalty and might of Ijele. The Ijele trees, animals, coloured men, and several people engaged in many aspects of human activities depict the wholesomeness of Ijele. The Ijele signifies a totality of human existence.

**Mermaid Objects:** The mermaid objects on the Ijele signify that Ijele is the greatest and most powerful of all masquerades.

**Ijele Horse:** The horse represents majesty and greatness.

### **Organization of the group**

The Ijele dance group is properly organized. The members consist of males and females of quality character. The membership of the group is restricted to responsible indigenes of Awkuzu only. Aspiring and acknowledged members of the group must be mature and within the age ranges of eighteen and above. The administrative arm allows for the posts of a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, Provosts, and Patrons. The Chairman is the leader of the group. He is a male of reputable character, social status, with good leadership qualities. He sees to the welfare of the group, arranges rehearsals, engagements, stores and maintains the musical instruments and costumes for the group. The group's Secretary keeps the groups register, official records and sees to the group's correspondences. The

treasurer maintains the financial records of the group. The provosts are two physically fit men who maintains peace and order during the group's meeting and performances. The Patrons are indigenes of proven character, social and financial status, who provides moral, financial, emotional support for the group. Other notable positions in the Ijele group are; instrumentalists, soloists and singers. The dancers are those who make adequate body movements to the Igba Ijele music. The instrumentalists play the Igba Ijele music with the required musical instruments. The soloists are the lead singers while the singers are other members of the group who sing in response to the lead singer.

### **Occasions for performance**

Igba Ijele is a very special dance group. Awkuzu people hold it very highly. To this effect, the group and their music never perform except on very important occasions. The annual ofala of the traditional ruler of Awkuzu and the Awkuzu new yam festival are the most important occasions in Awkuzu that everyone expects the Igba Ijele to perform. During such occasions, the entire Ijele family and music arrive the performance arena at the admiration of all. Today, Igba Ijele perform during burial ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, house warming occasions and other social events. However, the Ijele masquerade never appears on such occasions. Only the Ijele music, dancers and singers appear on behalf of the entire group. It is also vital to note that the Ijele dance comes last wherever it performs. No other dance performance comes after the Ijele because it is the king of all dances.

### **Recruitment and training**

Igba Ijele is a very special dance group. Due to the reverence and dignity accorded the Igba Ijele, trial and error technique never applies in the performances. In order to ensure perfection, all members go through thorough training in their respective areas of performance. Imitation, listening, observation, and practice form the major methods of training. The members spend countless hours listening, observing, imitating and practicing to perfect on the skills learnt. It is the duty of the older and more experienced members to expose the new ones to the required skills. The teaching and learning process start with simple and basic techniques and then progress to the complex and more difficult aspects. This apply to both instrumentalists, dancers and singers. The members learn the group songs in

unison. The teaching and learning sessions lasts for four hours every Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The venue is usually the Chairman's compound. Absenteeism from practice without due permission attracts a fine or sanction.

### **Dance formations used in Igba Ijele**

Only two major dance formations are common in Igba Ijele. They are the block formation and the linear formation. The linear formation occur in the first dance movement. To this effect, it appears at the beginning of the performance. The block formation is for the main performance. This begins immediately after the first dance formation and lasts through to the end of the performance. These formations serve to provide orderliness, aesthetics and control. The Ijele itself initiates and coordinates the necessary dance formations and movements. Both the linear and the block formations involve gentle forward kicking of the foot, short right steps, and gallant stamping of the feet in line with the beats as well as forward arm stretch and U shape bends.

### **Costume of Igba Ijele**

The Ijele Masquerade itself is the center of attraction. It has everything that the people have come to behold. The instrumentalists play secondary roles. They are only there to entertain the Ijele. Although the instrumentalists also dance as they perform, the Ijele Masquerade is the main dancer. It does not require any one to dance along with it. To this effect, all efforts are concentrated on making the Ijele Masquerade look as glorious and as beautiful as ever. The Ijele Masquerade has the most colourful costume. The costume is multiple coloured strip pieces of cloths with beads and bells. Other members only wear white vests and shorts with strips of coloured cloths tied around the waist.

### **Musical instruments used in Igba Ijele**

The Ijele dance group use ten different traditional musical instruments that cut across all the classes of African musical instrument as classified by Curt Sachs and Eric Hornbostel. The instruments are; three wooden drums of various sizes, one slit wooden gong, one metal gong, one pot drum, two notched flutes, two twin rattles, and a bunch of small sized bells.

### **Analysis of Igba Ijele Music**

Ijele Awkuzu Ira Delu Traditional

The musical score is arranged in a system of 11 staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts: Tenor (treble clef) and Bass (bass clef). The Oja part is in treble clef. The Okpokolo, Ogene, Uyo, Ekwe, and Potdrum parts are in 4/8 time. The Igba1 and Igba2 parts are in 4/8 time. The Ekpili part is in 4/8 time. The score consists of 8 measures of music.

2

Tenor

Bass

Oja

Okpokolo

Ogene

Uyo

Ekpili

Ekwe

Igba1

Igba2

Potdrum

3

The musical score is arranged in a system of eleven staves. The top two staves are for Tenor and Bass. The third staff is for Oja. The next three staves are for Okpokolo, Ogene, and Uyo. The seventh staff is for Ekpili. The next three staves are for Ekwe, Igba1, and Igba2. The bottom staff is for Potdrum. The score begins at measure 17. The Tenor part has a melodic line with some rests. The Bass part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The Oja part has a rhythmic pattern. The Okpokolo, Ogene, and Uyo parts have rhythmic patterns. The Ekpili part has a rhythmic pattern. The Ekwe, Igba1, and Igba2 parts have rhythmic patterns. The Potdrum part has a rhythmic pattern.



In Awkuzu, the Ijele is a gigantic masquerade, the king of all masquerades and a symbol of royalty. The Ijele household has a king, queen and other family members including the royal guards and servants. Igba Ijele is the only music that entertains the Ijele family. This special group of entertainers accompanies the Ijele and its family whenever the masquerade has a performance. The majestic body movements that the Ijele family make in accordance to the sounds from Igba Ijele is Igba Ijele dance.

The researcher analyzed Igba Ijele music based on scale and tonal organization, rhythmic structure, harmonic structure and melodic Structure

**Scale and Tonal Organization**

(a) Key: The piece of music is in the key of C major.



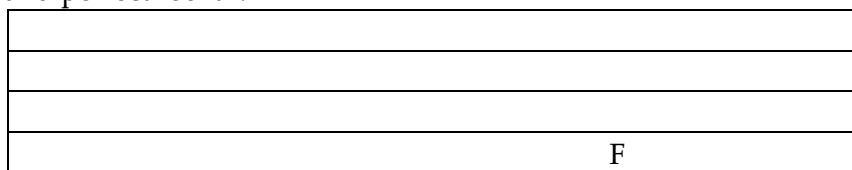
(b) Scale: The scale of the piece of music consists of notes C, D, E, and F respectively. Therefore, the scale is a four-tone (tetra tonic) scale.

(c) Tonal Center

Notes	Frequency
F	2
E	15
D	2
C	7

From the table above, the note with the highest frequency is E major while the notes with the lowest frequencies are D and F. respectively. Therefore, the tonal center is E major.

(d) Range: The range comprise of intervals of major second, major third, minor second and perfect fourth.



Lowest note

highest note

The highest note is F major while lowest note is C major. Therefore, the range is a fourth.

(e) Form: The musical form used in this piece of music is solo.

(f) **Phrases:**

There are three phrases in this piece of music.

**Rhythmic Structure**

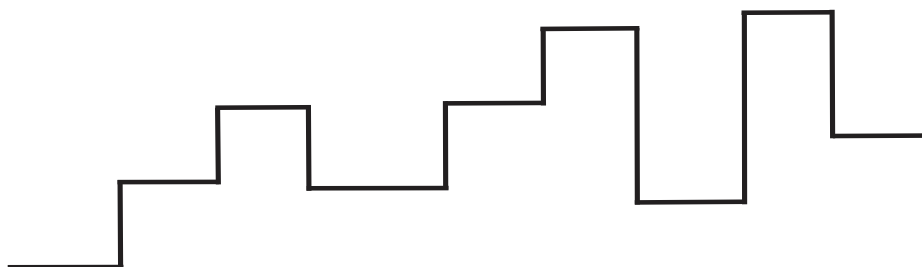
- (a) Notes: Crotchet notes and quaver notes feature prominently.
- (b) Time: The time signature is 2/4.
- (c) Tempo: Moderate

**Harmonic Structure**

The melody is monophonic with no overlapping. It also has no harmony.

**Melodic Structure**

(a) Melodic Contour



(b) Intervals:

The intervals of major second, third, minor second, perfect fourth and unison.

Intervals	Frequencies
Major 2 <sup>nd</sup>	3
Minor 2 <sup>nd</sup>	2
Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3
Perfect 4 <sup>th</sup>	2
Unison	14

The most commonly used interval is that of the unison (14).

**Song text:**

Ira deluooooo	let everyone be calm
Ira deluooooo	let everyone be calm
N'igba m achorookwu	my music need calmness
Ira deluooooo	let everyone be calm

**The Effects of Globalization**

Consequent upon globalization the Igba Ijele Dance Group has witnessed several unprecedented changes in the following areas:

Structure– The Ijele group connotes royalty. The family members shows responsibility and hierarchy. The figurines explain human activity, powers of the marine spirit and the relationship of humans and daily life activities with the unseen forces. The music stands for entertainment, joy, happiness, unity and

peaceful co-existence. In order word, the musical group has at glance described all there is to know about the people in question. Sadly, globalization has changed all this. There is a significant reduction and defacement of the figurines on the masquerade. This mocks our culture and presents our values, principles and ideas in a bad light.

Performance Style – Abinitio, the performance style of Igba Ijele permit that only the king dance in the arena while the household play supportive roles. In Igbo tradition, it is a mark of respect for the royalty. However, today at the sound of the Igba Ijele music everyone steps into the arena joyfully dancing and reeling to the music. Originally, spectators should on no account dance with the royalty. This is an erosion of our culture and tradition.

Occasions for Performance –From the beginning of times, the Igba Ijele never perform at menial occasion such as naming, burial and marriage ceremonies. This royalty, the King and his family. Hence, Igba Ijele graces grand occasion like Ofala and New Yam festivals. Globalization has caused the Ijele to perform every time and place without regard to the symbolic meanings attached to it. This is acculturation at its’ peak.

Principles – The Igba Ijele is symbolic. Several meaning go with virtually everything about it. For instance, it symbolizes royalty. In Igbo culture, the King is the highest authority in the land. He hardly ever travels much less with the entire household. Allowing the Igba Ijele travel to faraway locations is a great misrepresentation and devaluation of our cultural principles. Globalization has degraded our values and principles. Future generations and foreigners will find it extremely difficult to understand what our true values, norms and principle of life are due this form of misrepresentations. In fact, hybridization is already creeping in via globalization.

### **Conclusion**

The Igba Ijele Dance is a golden treasure among the people of Awkuzu in particular and the Igbo race in general. The Igbos of Nigeria attach great importance to cultural dance groups such as the Ijele because it plays a grand role in their daily lives. Their music and dance form an integral part of the Igbo culture

as it depicts the belief system, principles and practices of life. No wonder the race apply music and dance to inform, educate, socialize and entertain people. For instance, the Ijele group connotes royalty. The family members shows responsibility and hierarchy. The figurines explain human activity, powers of the marine spirit and the relationship of humans and daily life activities with the unseen forces. The music stands for entertainment, joy, happiness, unity and peaceful co-existence. In order word, the musical group has at glance described all there is to know about the people in question.

However, it does appear that globalization is gradually eroding these treasured values. Most acts and principles that dignify the group, educate, socialize and inform the public rightly about the Igbo culture remain bastardized. Originally, the dance group perform alone at very important and dignified occasions like Ofala and new yam to mark end of the occasion. Nevertheless, today, it's common for the group to perform during burial, marriage, naming ceremonies with several non-members dancing along. Some of the figurines original found on the masquerade no longer exist. Most times, the group breaks cultural boundaries to perform in foreign lands.

This neglects the underlying principles and ideologies as royalty in Igbo land hardly travels to a foreign land with the household. It is important to note that although globalization has popularized the group, made it a national and international symbol and enhanced our economy it is gradually becoming a threat to our cultural heritage. The Traditional Ruler of the community, cabinet members, Village Heads, High Chiefs, Politicians and the Elites must converge propound and perpetuate laws that guide the performance of the dance group. This will help preserve the Igbo culture and tradition that it represents. "The world has become a global village ... its attendant impact are felt in nearly all spheres of life" (Efurhievwe and Nweke, 2022:20). They further said that there is already a growing acceptance and adaptation to the gain inherent in global movement and interaction, despite the many disadvantages it has in traditional society where it erodes cultural values"

Considering the fact that the group is a national heritage, the government should provide funds to maintain the group and preserve our culture.

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