

Forgotten Aspects of Epie Culture

James Inipere Neddy

Department Of General Studies Bayelsa State Polytechnic, Alebiri. Bayelsa State

Orchid id: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0246-9793>

*Corresponding Author: James Inipere Neddy

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17312511>

Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>Forgotten Aspects of Epie Culture examined elements of the cultural life of the Epie people of Bayelsa State, Nigeria, that had either fallen into neglect or undergone transformation. Using oral interviews with elders, ethnographic fieldwork, and British colonial archival materials, the research traced how traditions of origin, migration accounts, and marital practices shaped Epie identity across generations. Informants recounted multiple narratives of migration from Benin, neighboring Ijaw territories, and internal dispersals within the Epie Creek, each account revealing the adaptive strategies of a people negotiating continuity and change. Marriage practices illustrated both cohesion and conflict widow inheritance, cousin unions requiring ritual atonement, informal cohabitation, and the more widely recognized marriage by consent. Some customs, such as storytelling, communal kinship ties, and origin traditions, underscored resilience and cultural pride, while others female circumcision and restrictive widowhood rites were identified as harmful practices increasingly questioned by the community itself. The findings highlighted the fluidity of Epie culture, showing how interaction with neighboring groups and colonial intervention influenced both material and non-material traditions. Documentation of these aspects not only preserved valuable cultural memory but also provided a framework for evaluating which elements should be safeguarded for future generations and which should be reformed in the interest of social well-being. By looking at the cultural change within historical and ethnographic contexts, the research illuminated the balance between preservation and transformation in the lived experiences of the Epie people.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Epie culture; marriage practices; cultural change; Bayelsa State; migration traditions; cultural preservation</p>
Received: 18-09-2025	
Accepted: 26-09-2025	
Published: 10-10-2025	
<p>Copyright © 2025 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p> <p>Citation: James Inipere Neddy. (2025). Forgotten Aspects of Epie Culture. UKR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (UKRJAHSS), Volume 1(issue 8), 36-42.</p>	

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a complex, and all embracing phenomenon. The complex nature of this concept makes it difficult to have a single and acceptable definition. As such there are several definitions by different scholars. A few of such definition will be examined here.

One of the oldest definitions to be considered is the definition of E.B. Taylor which is widely accepted. He defines "Culture as the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, customs and other

capabilities acquired by man as a member of society" (Edward B. Taylor 1874:5). This definition by E.B Taylor has been criticized by many anthropologists. Meanwhile Adams Hobel defines culture as the integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristics of the members of a society which are not the result of biological inheritance. Clyde M. Woods concludes that culture is passed from generation to generation through the process of socialization.

General Olusegun Obasanjo in his opening address during FESTAC 77 stated that people and culture are inseparable. For culture is the aggregate of concepts which characterizes a community. This further exposes the fact that a people without culture are in themselves not in full existence. These different definitions of culture clearly shows its complexity.

When two or more culture interact, they undergo changes and these changes takes away parts of their former feature and acquire new forms, these changes as far as human existence is concerned is a must and a necessity and at this state a culture change takes place. Louis Splinder and George Splinder defines culture changes as *“any modification in the way of life of a people whether consequent in internal development or contact between two people with un-like ways of life”* changes attributed to internal developments are generally traced to borrowing or diffusion is what Colin Legum describes as ‘two selves warming in a society’, Lence in his conclusion states that there is much that is new in the old and even more that is old in the new.

For the purpose of this discourse, culture can be defined as the totality of man’s way of life. Culture can also be divided into two broad segments which are the material and non-material culture. The material culture includes all that man produces through technology and science. The non-material or intangible culture consists of religious belief, moral, linguistics, value systems, literacy and artistic output. It is within the sphere of non-material culture that the forgotten aspects of some Epie culture can be found. The sphere of non-material culture that the forgotten aspects of some Epie culture can be found.

Characteristics of Culture

Culture is often dynamic and not static. It changes continuously, shedding some features and acquiring new ones. Culture can be transmitted and shared in a society. From our previous discuss on the definitions of culture needless to stress that fact that culture is not inherited biologically but learned in any given society or community. Culture thus differs from one another as a result of regional differences.

Culture is also transmitted from one generation to another and lasts beyond the life span of an individual. This is to infer that this leads to the continuity in society. Ejiofor has summarized six principles and characteristics of culture as follows: Principle of cultural and peculiarity; principle of cultural imperfection; principle of cultural disequilibrium; principle of cultural synthesis; principle of cultural assimilation. These principles of culture apply to all cultures including the cultures of Epie people (Epie Communities).

All Epie communities have been affected in one way or the other by contact with one another or with their neighbouring Ijaw communities or other ethnic groups in Nigeria, yet the old is completely not abandoned.

Tradition of Origin, Migration and Settlement

There are several accounts of the origin, migration and settlement of the Epie people by informants and literature text and the claims will be authenticated.

According to one informant Elder. Mansa Elu, he said Epie migrated from old Benin and that there were three main villages or communities that sprang out of this migration. These communities include Yenizuepie, Amarata and Akenpai, which were formally known as Ovulmoni. He further said, these three communities when migrating has several stops before their arrival and subsequent settlement at the present Epie territory. The Yenizuepie community, he said was founded by a man called Zue the only surviving son of Itom, Zue lead different emigrants from Benin to different places before arriving at the Epie territory. He founded the Epie communities together, with his three sons Ogene, Oporuwari and Ogoni.

Mansa further stated that the Amarata Community was later founded by a man called Ogua. The emigrants first settled in Isoko land but they later crossed a river to the Egenni area then later settled at Okulogua. Following a dispute over meat, a few of them left the area under a man called Epie and so they moved to the Epie Territory.

The Akenpai community on the other hand was an offshoot of settlement founded by three brothers, Pai, Wamani, Ebeleli. Dispute led them to separate eventually but Pai later returned with his sons, Furubo and Apuke to his former home after his unsuccessful sojourn at Oruma in the Kolo creek area. This informant stated clearly that these three communities were the places of dispersal of many Epie Communities in the region.

There is another account given by C.M. Sorgwe in his book, ‘Epie Atissa Since 1500’. In this account it was made clear that tradition of origin and migration of Epie villages/communities were of three categories. The first was the tradition that traced its descent to Benin. The second was made up of traditions that claim origin from neighbourhood and lastly this tradition of origin that claim to have originated from communities within the Epie Territories.

In the Benin tradition of origin, the author stated that there were three communities associated with the Bini Origin. They include Akenpia, Yenezuepie and Amarata, in accordance with one informant. However, the second tradition story which states that the Epie Migrated from neighbouring communities, is believed to consist of four

communities; Igbogene, Edepie, Biogbolo and Opolo. Both Igbogene and Kpansia traditions have it that their respective communities were founded by emigrants from Elebele in Ogbia Territory.

Edepie tradition by C.M. Sorgwe has it that the community was founded by a man called Awene from Otuasaga in the Kolo Territory. Awene was detailed by one Igbodo of Oruma to settle at the Edepie site as a check against intruders from trespassing. It was in compliance with the order that Awene and his sons Ebi and Amawari founded the community which later became independent.

The author further stated that the Biogbolo tradition claims that the community was founded by a migrant hunter called Ogbolo and his wife Bio. According to the traditions, Ogbolo procured a land from a man called Ogbologbo Opolo. He exchanged the land for a fishing lake called Oburemi.

Traditions recorded by the British Colonial Administration assigned the origin of Opolo to Nembe. The founding father of Opolo is said to have migrated from Ologama to settle in Epie territory. It should however be noted that Opolo is among others mentioned in the Elebele Origin tradition.

The third tradition however was that of the tradition of origin of internal migrants the villages or communities with traditions or internal migrations include Akenfa, Agudama, Etegwe and Okutukutu. Others are Yenegwe, Yenezuegene, Okaka and Ekeki. The first group of villages listed claim migration within the Epie Creek, but claim origin from Bini. The second group however are those that their migration are limited to Epie creek.

The Akenfa and Agudama traditions holds that two communities migrated from a large settlement called Ogborimiri founded by immigrants from Bini. Also there are traditions that state that these two communities were relatively founded by migrants from Oruma and Okaki. Etegwe and Okutukutu communities claim descents from an extinct settlement called Kaliama situation between the present day Opolo and Biogbolo. Etegwe's migration was as a result of intra-family feud, while Okutukutu claim that the movement was as a result of the search for better living conditions. Yenegwe traditions on the other hand has it that, Yenegwe was founded by a man call Egwe, a migrant form Okaka. Colonial records however shows that the community was founded by Ogua migrants. Yenezue-gene, Okaka and Ekeki generally trace their origin to Yenizue-gene, the acknowledged first settlement in Epie land (C.M. Sorgwe 200: 11 - 16).

The various accounts of origin of Epie people given have slight differences as some informants say that Epie Had originated from Bini before they dispersed to other parts of the territory and other versions say even though they came

from Bini, some communities sprang out of neighbouring communities and some internally. The reasons for their movements (Migration) to their present Epie Territory was as a result of the search for better lives and living conditions.

Marriages among the Epie

Marriage among the Epie people is often regarded as a union between two families as it is with many African Tribes/Ethnic groups in Africa. The woman to be married is referred to as 'our wife' by the extended family, which shows that all the members of the family both the husband and wife are brought to a common kinship relationship. According to an informant, Saino Vincent, marriage in Epie land was very much important and that initially there were four kinds of marriages. One of them was known to be "*Ofina-Meh*". In this marriage, after the death of a woman's husband she is shared/handed over to her late husband's brother (immediate younger or elder brother depending on the one willing and available), this is done because; she is seen as a property of the man and is not allowed to leave her husband house. However, some women do not agree to this and if this is the case an alternative is agreed on. In some cases, either the brother of the deceased man refuse to accept the union, if they are forced to continue conflict may arise, so in order to avert conflict the woman is left to be a widow but not allowed to leave the house of her late husband.

The second kind of marriage that was practiced in Epie was one which relatives were allowed to marry especially between cousins. These marriages by relatives are seen as an abomination. Though it was not acceptable, this relationship usually starts with friendship, which eventually leads to bearing of children when a child is brought into the picture, both of them are allowed to marry but are forced to sacrifice an animal which will be used to atone for their perceived evil act. This sort of marriage is referred to as "*Odomo-Etiomo*".

The third kind of marriage was that one whereby a man and a woman just come together to live and in the process bear children. This kind of marriage also usually starts as friendship but in this case they are not related and the man does not undergo normal marriage rite before taking her as his woman. This kind of marriage could be annulled at anytime and it is referred to as "*Odomo-Idu*".

Lastly, is the most acknowledged and recognized kind of marriage among the Epie people. This is a marriage by consent.

In this system of marriage, when the girl grows to a certain age, especially when she attains 18 years of age, she is regarded as an adult and ready for marriage, however, in

most cases; some girls are given out for marriage at the age of 16 years.

When a male is of age and is attracted to a girl he is certain of marrying he enquires from friend and people close to her so as to get to know her more, he makes his findings about her character and that of her family background. After which if he is satisfied and with, he sends out another person's in most cases his friends or member of his family to seek the consent of the girl, if the girl finds interest in him and accepts, another member of his family will go to her parents and tell them about the intention of their son.

However, before accepting the proposal from the man, the parents of the girl will send out family member secretly to know more about the man and his family. In a situation where the man is well spoken of he will be accepted. In other words, some intended grooms could be and are rejected if he does not meet the desired requirements of the girl's family. When and if a man is accepted, he is required to buy certain items like plate, kola, wrappers, drinks, brooms, etc to the family of the girl and on this occasion, a date is fixed for the introduction ceremony.

On the day of introduction, both families will come together to discuss the amount and payment of the bride-price which is called *Ibun* and the bride-price is to be paid I two; the '*Ibun-Ubili*' and the main bride-price the *Ibun-Ubili* is to be paid to the mother's side or people of which the mother's brother (her uncle) is to take their own, the mother's people are however, referred to as *Ubili-Ghene* and after which the main bride-price would be paid to her parent. But most recently her father's people who is referred to as *Ubili-Gene* also collect bride-price and both is usually referred to as *Ubin-Ubili*. After the bride-price is paid and every necessary arrangement is made a day will be fixed for the marriage declaration or celebration. On the day of the marriage, the parents of the bride are expected to prepare different meals depending on how rich they are, but most of the entertaining expenses are covered by the family of the man. They are expected to buy items like palm wine (*tombo*), dry gin (*Kai-kai*) and other items depending on the list given to them by the bride's parents or family of the bride and there and then other intentions will be officially made known to the public, to this end the girl would be asked if she accepts the man's intention to marry her and when she eventually accepts him before everyone present, a wine will be given to her by her father to present to her to be husband, and the ceremony continues. In another case, if the father of the girl decline but disobediently, the girl and man refuse to discontinue the marriage, the father is often forced to deny (disown) both his daughter and the man.

Before the marriage ceremony comes to an end, a process known as "washing of hand" is conducted. This is a process whereby everyone both the parents and well wisher present

come together to contribute whatever they have and present gifts to the bride and groom. Immediately after the marriage ceremony is observed and concluded a day will be fixed for what they refer to as "*Ugbese*" that is excursion. During this time the husband will come to the parents of the girl and tell them that he wants to take his wife to his own home. Before taking her home, he is expected to perform some domestic or house hold chores for his In-Laws and also eat and also engage in certain farming activities for a period of time in the house of new wife.

In cases where the wife has not been circumcised, the circumcision will be done by the husband. Due to this circumcision, it has been discovered that marriages were broken mostly because the girl is discovered to have had canal knowledge with another man. On the other hand if she is discovered to be a virgin, she will be circumcised and the husband is expected to sleep in the same room with her along with her peers (age mate) for a specific period of time until she is healed of her injuries sustained as a result of her circumcision. Once healed, she would be escorted by her friends to her husband's house with different items and gifts and she says, goodbye to her father's house.

Death & Funeral Rites

Death is a necessary end for everyone. It is a natural phenomenon hence; everyone must die at some point. In Epie cultural practice when someone dies, no one is expected to go anywhere especially to the farm or fishing for at least sixteen (16) days, later it was reduced to eight (8) days and most recently four days. Relatives from around other villages, come to the house of the deceased to mourn with the immediate family members. First if an individual passes on (dies) information is sent to both families i.e, his mother's people and father's people. If it's a female who died words of her death would be sent to her mother's people and fathers family and if it is a male (man) words would be sent to his mother's family and that of his grandmother's from the maternal side, i.e. his mother's mother family. According to an informant Chief Keseme Mansa "Needless to inform his father's people because he is already residing and a member of his father's household". Both sides have received the words or message of the passing of their sister (daughter) or brother (son) would send delegates to go and investigate the cause of the death of their son or daughter, however be the case to ascertain the cause of death whether natural or the individual was murder if natural they would perform the funeral rites according to tradition and if it was unnatural and any finger pointing that the deceased was murdered they could chose to make a case out of it so as to bring to culprit to book before the burial of the deceased.

After ascertaining the cause of death they would demand for a token with which they use in sending information back

to their kindred who sent them. If the deceased is a younger person an order would be issued for the burial of the deceased and if an older or elderly person the families would seat down and deliberate on a date for the burial.

When carrying out the burial or funeral rites, some seemed to be more colourful than others this could be as a result of the age difference, status of such a person. If the person is from a royal family or not and the contribution of the deceased helped in the growth and development of his/her community. This however does not justify the fact that normal burial rites will not be followed.

According to an informant, His Royal Highness Willox Tonvie Vincent, when someone dies, whether prominent or not, the deceased and his family will be taken to the oracle to be tried to see if he/she is free from guilt if such person died of natural course or not. This was regarded as mandatory for almost all Epie Community before colonialism).

In order to try the deceased, an object made with bamboo is constructed this object is called “*Aganaga*” and libations will be poured while the priest calls out the name of the oracle and ask the oracle if the deceased was good, the *Aganaga* should move towards the right, but if they were bad or evil, it should go to the left. This bamboo or *Aganaga* is often carries by four able bodied men and the deceased will be placed on it. It is believed that the movement is not done by the men, but that the force of the oracle does the movement. If the *Aganaga* goes to the right, there will be instate jubilation everywhere but when it goes left, the deceased will be declared to be evil and as such would be tied on a mat and taken to the forest (evil forest) each community in the Epie Clan had one of such forest. However, in some cases they were buried instantly, everyone in the village was expected to carry on their normal life and activities as though no one had died and this brought shame to the deceased family.

On the other hand when the person is declared good, a normal burial ceremony is arranged by the family of the deceased depending on the status of the individual. The people in the village and relatives are expected to stay with the immediate family for about eight days, while the family members alone are required to stay at home to mourn the deceased for about 16 days after the burial although some communities stay for 12 days after the burial before carrying on their normal day to day activities. During this period important ritual such as shaving of hairs in respect of deceased was done by the members of the deceased family. It is believed that the dead used the hair as transport fair to the spirit world. Also, the people of Epie believed that those that went with the corpse for burial are to wash their hands and feet before returning to their homes. This is to prevent the spirit of death from following them home.

Child Birth and Circumcision

Child birth brings joy and happiness, not only to the parents of the child but to all the neighbours. In Epie, child birth takes place in a woman’s house under the supervision of the local or traditional mid-wife, certain infants rituals were involved with the aim of preserving the life of the baby. The new child is usually confined in the house for about four days after birth. During the days, access to the new child was restricted to very close relative of the parents. It was of great importance that the placenta be disposed secretly by the grandmother of the child (the mother’s mother). It was also compulsory and customary that the man should at least buy six yards of cloth for his wife at the birth of each child. After the fourth day, visitors can now be allowed to see the new child, and when this is done, the mother of the child was usually thanked and praises were showered on her for safe delivery. During the initial four days of delivery, the mother is given gifts and beautiful beads (especially if it’s a first child or even a male child).

Circumcision on the other hand was a very important cultural practice among the Epie people. Circumcision was the act of excising tissues from the private organ of the female or removal of the foreskin or prepuce from the male organ for a male child; he may be circumcised after the eight day and sometimes is allowed to grow to a certain age before he is circumcised. In either case, the parents must prepare a general food especially yam for a period of four days.

According to Mr. Titus Tomvie an informant, for a female child, the parent must allow her to grow to marriageable status. Sometimes, some girls are circumcised around the ages of 14 and 15 years. That too, the parents or husband (if married by then) must cook for the girls in the community until the circumcision ceremony is over. If the girl is married, circumcision is done as tradition demand and the ritual at some point includes the flogging of her husband and the rubbing with cam wood all over his body. This flogging is done to show that he is no longer a child and that the girl he is taking home is now a full grown woman. Circumcision in Epie land is usually done to a large number of girls at a time. During which these girls were asked to sleep together in a room, eat together and bathe together. There were certain ways a girl must dress to show that she is undergoing such a ceremony. These girls usually were beads round their waist and were painted with native chalks or cam wood all over their bodies.

When, it was the time to eat, there will be general proclamation around the village, announcing the names of the girls, calling out that it was time to eat their food as they all come together to eat. It was however, a taboo for any girl to have canal knowledge of a man before her circumcision.

These girls were not allowed to go home until after they were headed and preparation have been made.

Festivals and Religious Beliefs

Festivals were a uniting factor in Epie-land. Though, there were no official or well known festival celebration before the colonial Era as it is today, there were however, few celebrations done at certain periods. There was a fishing festival among the Epie people but this was not really regarded as a festival.

According to an informant Elder Mansa Elu, the people of Epie did not really acknowledge this festival, they only collected little money or payment from people who wanted to fish, and as a result of this continuous fishing activities of a particular period, the people became eager for that time of the year every year. However, before the fishing festival commences, it was of importance to notify the clan beforehand so that those interested could attend. This fishing was done during the rainy season and before the day or during the weeks before fishing, both ends of the creek or lakes were locked so that fishes would not escape or swim out.

On the assigned day of the fishing, men go into the river or lake with their nets and locally made baskets to commence fishing activities. After the fishing activities, the fishes were taken home, shared among family members, some persons in attendance also bought some and the surplus were usually dried (smoked) and sold out.

Another festival carried out by the Epie people was the wrestling festival. The wrestling contest constituted one of the main masculine sports of the people. Wrestling was highly prized traditional sport in Epie. In the wrestling festival, people from different communities come together to compete. The festival was held in different communities yearly and it was essential that a visit to one community is reciprocated. The people believed that this festival helps bring them together and it strengthens inter-communal relationships. Wrestling champions were acknowledged throughout wrestling bouts. However, the rule in the wrestling contest was governed by kinship bond relationship or cognate descent, which declares that a wrestling champion is not allowed to contest against his maternal home. Below are the names Notable Wrestling Champions:

From Akenfa we had Caesar Bikebo Zachaeus, Newman Wisdom, Promise Joseph, Reuben Joseph, Friday Maxwell. From Agudama we have the like of Nobis Agilobi, Doctor Ugabra, Maxwell Bekede, Aputu Sokari, Bele Ogbele, Titus Akpoutakpu. From Akenpai we had Social Obi and others. From Edepie we had Gborigbo, Ebia and many others. From Etegwe they had One Obeine from Ogbia but his mother got married to a man known as Anake from Etegwe and he started representing Etegwe in wrestling

Contest they had other wrestlers but none was as famous as Obeine. Okutukutu on the other hand boast of many wrestlers but one Ogor nor was more popular and stood out in his time. Opolo had wrestlers such as Izor Odede, Ogidi, Ogina. Biogbolo on the other hand had champions such as Agbor, Doukori, and Igbe Okelekele. Yenizuegene and Yenizue-Epie boast of champions such as Vincent Abadeofein, Egba, Abor Obiriworsi, and Agburogo respectively. Ekeki and Amarata had champions such as Isula, Nagese Utelebu, Seidogon, Godwill Odungba and Fakeme respectively. Onopa and Azikoro boast of champions such as Efone Osein, Mycall, Yege and Eduizogo respectively. Kpansia boast of champions such as Ebebe, Amon, Biama and others meanwhile Igbogene and Yenegwe had champions such as Ben Ibitebi, Sylvanus, Eugene, George, Paul and Jonathan Uderu, Terobu, Uyeneke Uderu and others.

In the aspect of religious belief, the Epie people depended mainly on people's idea of the world around them. They explained their experiences religiously in the light of the natural environment such as swamps, lakes, and streams. Their religion was built on morality and karmic law.

Evidence in the way that they worshipped earlier shows that they believed in a deity which they referred to as '*Igbudu*' that could be worshipped individually and communally by direct contact or through lesser deities. This was on an ancestral worship. The Epie people were adherents of traditional religion. The most common was known as *Igbudu*. The worship of this deity was done every forth night (which was locally known as *Owie, Dege Gani*) which was Thursday, (Big Eke) and another four days will be counted from this 'Big Eke' which is referred to as 'small Eke' (*Owei Dege Gbeli*), also there were other worships of individuals mini-deities. The individuals gods were placed at the end of a person's personal room. Most communities like Amarata claimed these deities as theirs and so they referred to it as *Osuneni* (meaning our father). As a result of the worship of this deity, the people of Amarata especially do not eat the breast fish called 'Igbi' in Epie as it is referred to. The people of Epie believed in *Igbudu* and held a common belief that it controlled the lives of the people and their day to day activities.

After each new year celebration, the worshippers of *Igbudu* came together to fix a particular day of worship, thanking their gods for a successful new year before carrying on their different activities like farming and fishing.

According to traditional religious beliefs, there were certain acts that were seen as an abomination before the eyes of their deity. For instance, in Okutukutu community in Epie, when a woman gives birth to a set of twin, she is forbidden to fetch water at Ede Amuru River. Instead, someone is

asked to fetch water for her and she is expected to take it at the shore of the river.

In Akenfa community, if a woman and a man is caught making love in the forest, they are meant to perform some rituals to appease the gods, and animals were usually used for this sacrifice, as such act was perceived as a taboo. Also in Akenfa community, one is not allowed to use the back of a canoe to land on the shores else such an individual is fined and must perform certain rituals to appease their own gods (Juju known as *Beni-Krukru*).

Abomination and Sacrileges

A number of offences and actions were perceived as abomination among the Epie people. In almost all communities in Epie land. Among the Epie people, adultery could lead to divorce. If a woman committed adultery, her husband was entitled to divorce her and or charge the man she was caught in the act with, an adultery fee known as '*Usa-atten*'.

Stealing was considered an offence but no clear punishment for such offence was clearly shared. However, if an individual was caught stealing from some ones farm or pond, the owner of the farm or pond may decide to let go or punish the thief as he so desire, he may decide to take the thief to the community for punishment and in such case the youth body would undress the thief remaining only his pants and flog him numerous strokes of canes as they so desire and snail shells would be used to tie round his waist while he would be made to carry the stolen item(s) on his head. Then, he would be taken round the community and people would make fun of him.

In Epie-land, it was also an offence and an abominable act for a man and a woman to make love in the forest. If such occurs the both were asked to repeat the act in the forest, certain necessary rituals for cleansing would be performed which entails killing of animals and animal blood offering else the offender would die mysterious death.

Conclusion:

This discourse is title "*Forgotten aspects of the Epie Culture*". The paper x-rays some Epie culture, i.e. the aspects of the culture that seems to have been forgotten. Their marriage rites, funeral rites, celebration of child birth and circumcision, festivals and religious beliefs among the Epie people. An expensive burial ceremony carried out in most Epie Communities which is noticeable in recent times has to be done away with. However, some of the methods used to enforce morality should be revised and modified for modern day use.

It is also worthy of note that one of the reasons for the cultural practice in female circumcision was to help regulate the woman's sexual libido, and as such women

were not as promiscuous as it seem today. However, it is my opinion that female circumcision should not/never be revived while chastity within and without marriage should be encouraged. The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS is as a result of gross moral laxity as seen in our modern society.

As Epie continue to do away with some parts of the old cultures and acquire new ones, nudity and certain negative behaviours noticeable in some foreign cultures should not be allowed to pollute the ways of life of Epie-land.

REFERENCES

1. Adam E, Habel, Anthropology: The study of man. 4th edition, New York, MCGraw Hill Inc, 1972, p.6.
2. Akinjide O. & Ayodeji O. "Nigerian Peoples and Cultures" Department of History, University of Lagos, 1997.
3. Alagoa, E.J. (ed). The land and people of Bayelsa State; Central Niger Delta, Onyoma Research Publication, 1999.
4. Edward B. Taylor, primitive culture, Boston, Estates and Lauviat, 1874.
5. Ejiofor, Cultural Revival Igboland, op.cit, pg. 51
6. Interview with Chief Mansa Keseme, 52 Yrs, Akenfa Epie, 14th October 2024.
7. Interview with Elder Mansa Elu, 91 Yrs, Akenfa Epie, 14th October 2024.
8. Interview with Mr. Titus Tomview, 64 Yrs, Akenfa Epie, 16th October 2024.
9. Interview with Vincent Saino, 64 Yrs, Okutukutu Epie, 16th October 2024.
10. James Fortune E. "Culture History of the Epie people, 1900 – 2000". An essay submitted to Department of History and Diplomacy 2018.
11. Louis Splinder and George D. Splinder, 'Culture Change' in B.J. Siegal (ed.) Biennal Review of Anthropology, Stanford, Stanfors University Press. 1957, 37.
12. Obasanjo, O. "Forward", in FESTAC '77, Black and African World, African Journal Ltd, London, 1977, P.6.
13. Pita N.O. Ejiofor: Cultural Revival in Igboland, University Publishing company Onitsha, 1984.
14. Sorgwe C.M.: Epie Atissa Since 1500: A History of an Edoid Community, Port Harcourt, Osai International Publishing Co. Ltd 2000.