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Indigenous People

Traditional Practices and Modern Development

*Edited by Sanjeet Kumar
and Manjula Bangalore Lakshminarayana*



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Meet the editors



Sanjeet Kumar is the founder and CEO of Ambika Prasad Research Foundation (APRF), Odisha, India. He has worked with many Indian organizations and institutes and the Forest, Environment, and Climate Change Department, Odisha, India. His research focuses on tribal communities, indigenous traditional knowledge, traditional therapeutic systems, traditional foods, plant taxonomy, medicinal plants, biodiversity conservation, restoration of floral wealth, management plans for protected areas, threatened taxa, phytochemistry, and antimicrobial activities of ethnobotanical plants. He has written 20 books, several book chapters, and around 150 research papers. He has supervised fifty MSc students and is currently guiding five Ph.D. scholars. He has organized several national and international seminars and awareness programs on medicinal plants and tribal cultures.



Dr. Manjula Bangalore Lakshminarayana started her career as a lecturer at Vijaya College, India. She has 36 years of teaching experience and is currently an associate professor and head of the Department of Botany, SJR College, India. She obtained an MSc (gold medal), MPhil, and Ph.D. from Bangalore University, India. She has many research publications and book chapters in peer-reviewed journals to her credit. She has delivered lectures on IGNOU Gyanvani FM 106.4, the only educational radio channel in India. She has conducted interviews on scientific topics and given voiceovers for many scientific documentaries in Bengaluru Door Darshana Kendra. Dr. Manjula is a life member of many professional bodies.

Contents

Preface	XI
Chapter 1 Indigenous Knowledge and Participative Cultural Heritage Mapping in the Ebo Forest in Cameroon <i>by Ndjounguep Juscar</i>	1
Chapter 2 Indigenous Practices by Tribal Communities of Bonai Forest Division, Odisha, India: A Cause of Forest Fire, Experts' Opinions and Impacts on Bio-Wealth <i>by Sanath Kumar N, Susanta Kumar Biswal and Sanjeet Kumar</i>	19
Chapter 3 Spirits and Spoils: Matter, Memory and the Living Culture of Human Remains in the Andes and the Amazon <i>by Adine Gavazzi and Anna Siri</i>	29
Chapter 4 Traditional Leadership, Indigenous Knowledge, and Local Governance: Implications for Good Governance and Sustainable Development Agenda <i>by Olawale R. Olaopa and Saheed Ogundare</i>	41
Chapter 5 Living the Heritage through Indigenous Music Competitions <i>by Ntshengedzeni Evans Netshivhambe</i>	61
Chapter 6 Positionality of Native People of Nepal from Indigeneity to Modernity <i>by Nathuram Chaudhary</i>	79
Chapter 7 Indigenous Rituals, Panacea for Peace Building, Conflict Management and National Development in Africa <i>by Ude Bassey Obeten</i>	95

Chapter 8

115

The Role of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Achieving Restorative Justice among the Vhavenda of South Africa

by Joshua Mawere and Ndwamato Walter Tshamano

Preface

The contemporary world serves as an example of progress, posing several challenges to biotic elements, abiotic components, and all facets of human existence. The main threat to humanity in the current situation is climate change. Although there are connections between humans and nature on all scales, studies to this date have concentrated on government, industry, technology, demography, and economic patterns. It has also evaluated the long-term analysis of positive and negative influences driving pandemics, new health challenges, and climate change.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, people all over the world became aware of and validated the limitations of contemporary technologies. As a result, people began to appreciate nature, natural goods, tribal people, and their indigenous traditional wisdom. By utilizing the lost and neglected knowledge of indigenous communities in the fields of health, agriculture, the food industry, daily lifestyles, old technologies in various contexts, documentation, conservation, and restoration of traditional knowledge in our lifestyle, people began to return to nature.

The study of traditional indigenous knowledge is highly relevant in the current context. It is important to conduct thorough research on how urbanization and other factors are destroying indigenous traditional knowledge. For global academics, addressing the cultural relevance of indigenous peoples around the world is a difficult but crucial undertaking. According to this perspective, *Indigenous People – Traditional Practices and Modern Development* offers reliable information about indigenous knowledge and how traditions have changed over time.

I hope the book is a huge success because it will be helpful to scholars and international politicians.

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Chapter 1

Indigenous Knowledge and Participative Cultural Heritage Mapping in the Ebo Forest in Cameroon

Ndjounguep Juscar

Abstract

The populations in the EBO forest in Cameroon, mainly the Banen tribe with 4 clans in about 47 villages, had to leave their homes and communities behind in the years 1960s because of post-independence war. The identification and mapping of their cultural heritage is today a step to advocate for the government to facilitate their return in their customary land. Participatory mapping techniques use with their consent, of their cultural heritage, was done to understand their customary land in which they participated in the data collection and validation. The results show that the resettlement efforts, of the Banen people, often claimed since the 1970s is to prioritize immediate needs to return to their ancestral land. The Cameroon government, who had earlier proposed the area for conservation because of its biodiversity richness, has not seen the need to reinstall these people in an area of intact forest. These communities, through participatory mapping, have addressed the loss of their cultural heritage and need for careful planning and coordination. Since cultural heritage plays a vital role in defining the identity of displaced “Banen” communities, they look disconnected. It is crucial for the government to recognize and respect their cultural identity to ensure that their heritage is preserved.

Keywords: Ebo forest, communities, cultural heritage, resettlement, advocate

1. Introduction

Cultural heritage issues for the resettlement of displaced populations in the Ebo forest area are a challenge because they link to loss of heritage, cultural identity, competing priorities, intercultural dynamics, and lack of resources and expertise [1]. There is a need for proper planning that incorporates cultural heritage into legal frameworks, policies, and development plans to ensure its protection and integration within resettlement initiatives.

The unstable political situation of African countries during the year 1950 brought a lot of displacement among rural and urban populations in search of peaceful areas. Colonialism has to ensure population considered its ideology before independence.

Most of these cause civil war in different countries. The case of Cameroon, a central African country was unique. A civil war with some warriors who declared war against colonialism. In order to gain their freedom, the fight was mostly in the forest where France had to track what was named “les maquisar.” The leaders were seen by the transition state at the time as wanted and any of them that were caught were killed in public space. As the war between the “maquisar” and the colonialism/state was going strong, the state saw the need to evacuate people from villages where the warriors were hiding. The proposed displacement was for a period of time but till date, the new government never thing how these people, could regain their ancestral home.

Within this situation, the area where people have been displaced has become, after 50 years, a virgin forest. Here, a lot of interest started growing from the state and other international conservationists. The example of the Ebo forest in Cameroon is more expressive. While the displaced population was brought to resettle in some areas, the Ebo forest, the land of “Banen” and “Bassa”, was proposed for a protected area (PA) in 2006 because of the presence of highly endangered species (primates) in the landscape. While research where still going on, the classification of the area as a protected area has not until 2019, been approved by the state. In early 2020, the proposed area for PA was transferred for logging concession by the state. These communities lobby for coveting of their ancestral home for forest exploitation.

This poor land use planning method, is against the cultural rule and sustainable development of local communities. Land use planning through participatory mapping, is crucial for environmental, social, and economic development. It is also essential for the empowerment of local people and for securing land tenure and is an instrument for securing consistency, continuity, and alignment between national and local development objectives with respect to the use of natural resources, investments in infrastructure, production, and conservation.

Emerging conflicts/overlapping land tenure, in the Yabassi key biodiversity area, reduce the effective impact of the cultural heritage and sustainable investments by local communities. Land use planning and secure tenure are seen as foundations for Cameroon’s Rural Development Strategy, and also a promising tool to reconcile such interests in such a way as to redress the balance between global, national, and local priorities. Therefore, there is a need for methodological integration and the development of new techniques for land use amelioration. Hence, the concept of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) especially by the villages and communities involved.

Cameroon’s 2011 land use planning law provides a supportive framework for modern, inclusive, multi-disciplinary, and cross-sectoral planning [2–6]. Principles defined by law are broadly in line with the generally accepted principles for land use planning though they lack clarity on aspects of obtaining free prior informed consent (FPIC), gender equality, and recognition of customary tenure. Although the legal framework in Cameroon does not explicitly call for the consent of indigenous or local communities with regard to development on their lands, numerous legal instruments and processes form the institutional basis for the free, prior, and informed components of FPIC. For example, the Framework Law on Environmental Management 1961 calls for local stakeholder consultations within environmental impact assessments, and the Orientation Law for Land Use Planning and Sustainable Development 2012 calls for local participation in all decisions regarding land allocation and use.

Participatory land-use planning is an important step in ensuring that local communities are engaged in negotiating development schemes and that such negotiations are transparent. Local land use plans prepared through a well-informed, participatory process are therefore proposed as a potential building block for the implementation of

development strategies, and sustainable and equitable rural development contributing to progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals that will best meet the needs of the people [2, 5, 6].

2. Cultural heritage in the Ebo forest area and process of integrating local knowledge in the mapping

2.1 Ebo forest area and village's cultural heritage

It's comforting to know that the Ebo Forest's communities have a rich cultural legacy and value derived from their ancestral setting. Many of these settlements were removed during the second part of the twentieth century, around the time of Cameroon's independence, and their early history can only be conjectured based on oral traditions that are not well documented. Many of the communities have been regrouped with some other historic villages to form new groups.

Despite the fact that some villages have moved out of the Ebo forest, many members of the community still have strong personal ties to it and regard it as ancestral territory. Prior to Christianity, each family was said to have a sacred site in the forest, marked by a stone or a tree, where they performed their religious rituals. At least one species of crinum lily plant was said to be used for rituals at each location. Prior to Christianity, each family was said to have a sacred site in the forest, marked by a stone or a tree, where they performed their religious rituals. At least one species of crinum lily plant was said to be used for rituals at each location.

On February 23, 2022, the Association of Chiefs of the Ebo Forest Area gathered to remind themselves that the cultural values present in their land tenure area are those that connect them to their ancestral origin and that these values must be preserved and passed down from generation to generation. These values include cultural sites (Sacred forests, Sacred trees), ancient buildings, monuments, tombstones, artifacts, cemeteries, and other cultural sites that affirm their identity as a people while also providing a comprehensive framework for the preservation of their cultural values, beliefs, and way of life.

On the one hand, the chiefs taught to better preserve these cultural values, and they should be identified and rehabilitated, on the other hand, the best way to preserve these values is to collect and share information in order to integrate cultural governance into natural resource management policies for the Ebo landscape communities' sustainable development. **Figure 1** shows the characteristics of cultural heritage.

3. Process of integrating local knowledge in the mapping of cultural heritage

The "Mapping for Rights" method developed by the Rainforest Foundation and supported by MINEPAT in Cameroon is indicated in the process. It is a 7-step process: (1) identification and Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), (2) prospection, (3) Training of the local mappers, (4) Data collection by the local mappers, (5) Data treatment, (6) validation of the data, and (7) transfer of data [2, 6, 7].

In addition, to obtain all necessary information, we used: focus group (to collect information on health, education, village organizational structure and history, and

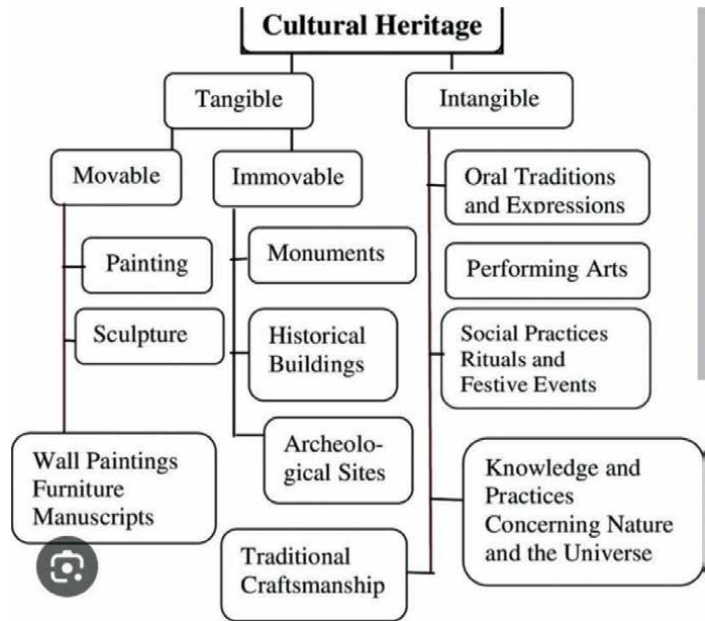


Figure 1.
Cultural heritage structure for resettlement villages.

land tenure), semi-structured questionnaires with all households per village (to obtain socio-economic data (population, numbers of birth/death for the year 2022, gender, age distribution of the population within and outside the community, types of farming activities, other livelihood activities like NTFPs exploitation, annual output, consumption rate and transportation means, etc.).

Community sensitization meetings were held to identify sensitized communities about land tenure rights and the role of local communities in the documentation of their land uses in order to inform regional and national land use plans. The local governance of land and resources was done using villages' Venn diagram and problem tree. Spatial data were also collected using a Garmin GPS.

3.1 Participatory mapping of community's cultural heritage within the Ebo forest landscape

The participatory mapping strategy involved the facilitator bringing the stakeholders or representative groups together to perform the mapping exercise. For this to be done, the village had to freely consent, support, and also agree to participate in the process. The strategy involved the following major steps [8].

3.1.1 Information

In which the community leaders (key stakeholders) were briefed on the project, its importance, methods, expectations, and uses. This step sought to inform the major stakeholders on the project and obtain their approval and commitment. When this was done, we then moved to the next step which was to organise stakeholder sensitization meeting.



Figure 2.
Prospection meeting in Socke.

3.1.2 Prospection

The community as a whole was presented to the project, its objectives, approach, and importance. Here the goal was to provide the community with all the information needed to enable their free prior and informed consent (FPIC) to participate in the project. All sections of the community were involved (traditional authorities, women, men, young people, different ethnic groups, etc.) and sufficient time was allocated to work with each specific group. Community diagnostic tools were also used to understand the dynamics of the community and also collect basic information on the community (**Figure 2**).

Six (6) community mappers, per village, were then selected by their own community with support from the facilitation team to ensure that they represented the different components of the community, and the different types of knowledge about ownership, use, and control of community land and resources as well as possible. Community mappers play a key role in making sure the community map is accurately presented, but also those other members of the community fully understand the final map. An activity timeframe was proposed and validated by the community.

3.1.3 Training of community mappers

Project facilitators and the GIS technician facilitated the training of the community mappers. The selected community mappers were briefed on the importance and need of the process. Mappers were trained on the elaboration of a participatory map, the use of the GPS for data collection, and primate identification. The training was done in theory and practice.

During the theoretical phase, they were trained on map elaboration (elements of a map, different map types, ground map production, transferring the map to paper, etc.) (**Figure 3**).



Figure 3.
Training of community mappers.

After the training on map elaboration, the mappers were trained on how to use the GPS in data collection, the use of the GPS and GPS tablets, the collection of waypoints, and the type of features to collect data on for the production of a participatory map. At this stage, the GPS data collection sign guide sheet containing all the signs and symbols (Key) for the collection of data for the production of the participatory map was distributed to the participants after which the facilitators progressively interpreted each of the signs and symbols to the participants. The mappers were then taken out for the practice phase. They were drilled over and over and made to practice over and over until they got the procedures right and produced accurate results (**Figure 4**).

3.1.4 Data collection

Using the ground map as a reference, community mappers, the GIS expert, and project facilitators identified the different features, areas, roads, and paths to follow for data collection. The community mappers were divided into three groups for the spatial data collection. At the end of each of the three data collection days, the mappers met to collate, cross-check, and verify the veracity of the data collected after which the data was then uploaded into a laptop for proper storage and future use.



Figure 4.
Practice of spatial data collection using GPS.

3.1.4.1 Characterization of the socio-economic level of the population

Focused group discussions were held and semi-structured questionnaires were administered to obtain socio-economic data. Information was also obtained at the various community meetings during the mapping process. Discussions with key informants were held to obtain desired information on the livelihood and social aspects of the community.

3.1.4.2 Identify land uses and elaborate land use map

The different land uses were identified and communicated by the community members. This was done in the process of elaborating the ground map.

3.1.4.3 Elaboration of the ground map

The GIS technician was guided by the chief and the population during the ground map elaboration process. Bold markers of different colors were used to represent different features (roads, houses, rivers, farms, primates' position, ancient settlements, and other infrastructure). Participants were given enough time to react and contribute during the process (**Figure 5**).

3.1.5 Data treatment and map production

After the 3 days of data collection, the data was treated by the GIS expert in unison with the community mappers. Attribute data like names of rivers, streams and neighboring villages, primate species, etc. was obtained and confirmed by community mappers. After treating and incorporating the data and features, a first draft was produced and handed to the community mappers for verification, remarks, and corrections before the production of the final map. Remarks and changes were incorporated as per the corrections (**Figure 6**).

3.1.6 Map and data validation

The map validation was done in two phases; first, by the chief and then by the entire community. Both phases took place in the chief's residence in Ibompoi on



Figure 5.
Elaboration of the ground map.



Figure 6.
Data treatment and map verification by community mappers.



Figure 7.
Chief and community members with validated map.

the 4th of March 2022. The first validation took place in the morning at 10 am and the second at 5 pm in the evening after both parties had made their remarks and corrections which were also immediately incorporated. The final map was then printed out and handed to the chief of the village (**Figure 7**).

4. History and cultural heritage in the Ebo forest landscape

4.1 History of the Banen people from the Ebo forest

According to ethnologists such as Ydelette DUGAST and Reverend Pasteur Dr. Pierre MAHEND BITIND, the Banen is the plural of MUNEN, meaning noble man endowed with spiritual, material, and moral wealth. They are an acephalous people, highly allergic to the notion of chief or commander. They were led by a patriarch, a guide who was often a seer whose role was to watch over the tribe and guide its destiny. Jealous of his independence and dignity, each Munen liked to perch on his own little hill, where he was the only Chief. This distinctive mentality or cultural attitude forced other peoples to consider each of them as an IFEYU, i.e., “a free man” [9].

The name Banen is said to have been given to them by their neighbors (Bassa, Bakoko, etc.) for their character and behavior. Settled in Cameroon around the sixth century, they are one of the oldest peoples. According to Father Angelbert MVENG, their origins lie in the Noun Valley.

The Banen are a homogeneous group, not separated by any other ethnic group. The administrative division that took place in 1930 is the only thorn in the side of the Banen people. This division split the Banen into two regions: Centre and Littoral, into two departments: Nkam and Mbam (now Mbam and Inoubou), and into two Arrondissements: Ndikinimeki and Yingui.

Traditionally, the Banen are grouped together in large blocks called Canton.

4.2 Typology of cultural heritage and their impact on the changes in forest land cover and land use

Before the independence war of the 1960s, the population where settled principally in 03 quarters, Mapombi (chiefs' quarter), Mamanyoi, and Massok. The archeological features that can be found there are old graves, old houses, and fruit trees like mango, guava... These archeological features (especially old graves) constitute cultural heritage for the community members and need to be conserved (**Table 1**).

The most dominant cultural heritage in the landscape is "grave." The "banen" culture like the "bassa" its neighbor, likes conserving and securing the grave of its family members around their family compound. It has a very ancient value to them and they always watch and clean the grave. With no road for frequent movement, they had to abandon them in the forest (**Figure 8**).

Apart from the "grave that they value more, they have other cultural sites like abandoned villages, old markets, old churches, old chief palace, old market prison, and old settlement." Additionally, there are natural sites like the cave (where people

Type of cultural activities	Quantity	%
Cave	4	1.70
Chief palace	13	5.53
Church	23	9.79
Grave	125	53.19
Market	3	1.28
Old prison	1	0.43
Old settlement	14	5.96
Sacred hill	14	5.96
Sacred forest	3	1.28
Sacred rock	2	0.85
Sacred site	7	2.98
Sacred tree	19	8.09
Vestige	7	2.98

Table 1.
Type of indigenous cultural heritage in the Ebo forest landscape.

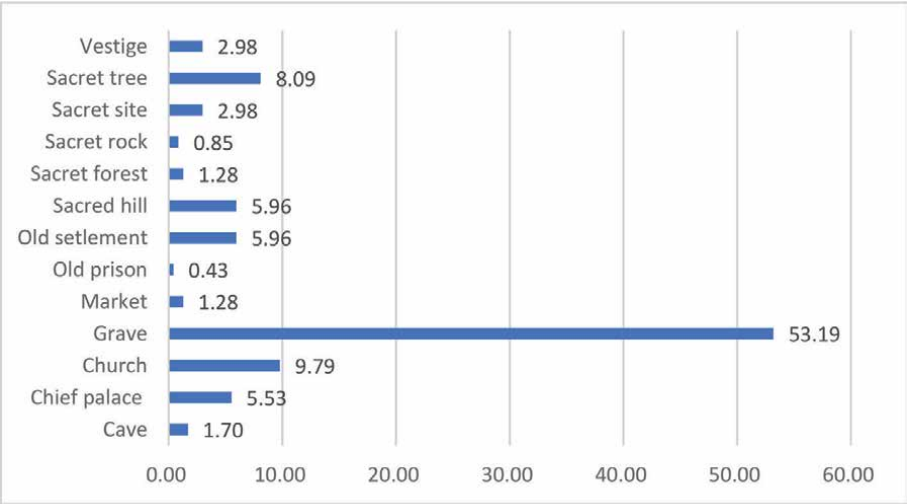


Figure 8.
Proportion of indigenous cultural heritage in the Ebo forest landscape.

were hiding during the Civil War), the sacred forest, the sacred site, sacred tree, sacred hill, and sacred rocks, where the village’s cultural practices were made.

4.3 Sample cultural heritage and displaced communities in the Ebo forest landscape

The archeological features found in the community’s customary tenure are the Ifoko old market, old Chief palace, old secret forest, cemeteries, tombs, old health center, old playground, old plantation, and old settlement. There is also an ancestral bell that was used by the Union de Eglise Baptiste du Cameroun (UEBC) and an old trap.

The listed items A is an old pot, B and C are ancient homes, D is old lamps, E is old pots, and F is an olds trap. Old abandoned dwellings, the chief’s palace, tombs, sacred sites, caves, and old quarters are all cultural features of the community (**Figure 9**).



Figure 9.
Artifact found in the forest during participatory mapping.

The cultural heritage signs are distributed in the landscape per type and according to communities.

4.4 Spatial distribution of cultural heritage and value of the Ebo forest displaced and living villages

The data collected by the local communities within their customary land on their cultural heritage were mapped and it shows the spatial distribution within the landscape. Although villages do not have the same type of cultural heritage, there are common cultural heritage signs like graves. We found in some abandoned villages sites called “historical relics” where people have left because of either inaccessibility, civil war, or disaster (**Figures 10–13**).

In **Figure 10**, we found in and customary land of an abandoned village several cultural activities and heritage like the “Halakata sacred forest,” the old Churches, and the old baptism site during the colonial period.

Figure 10 is for the Ndikbanamouan Village where the Chief and the notable reside out of the customary land and are advocating to the government to create and maintain a road to facilitate “their returning back home.”

Figure 11 indicates the spatial distribution of cultural activities type that are of the cultural heritage of the local communities.

The customary land data were also mapped, indicating the understanding and mastering of their socio-cultural belonging. Most of the government land allocations, like the council forest, and forest management unit overlap with their customary land. Since those land allocation reduces communities access to those areas, it also

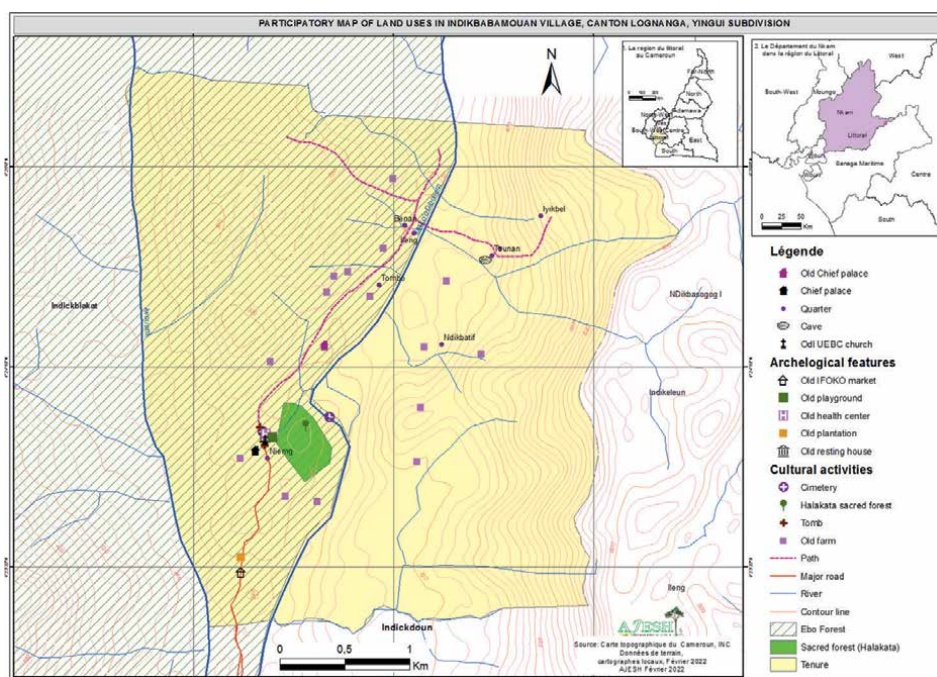


Figure 10.
Participatory land use and archeological feature.

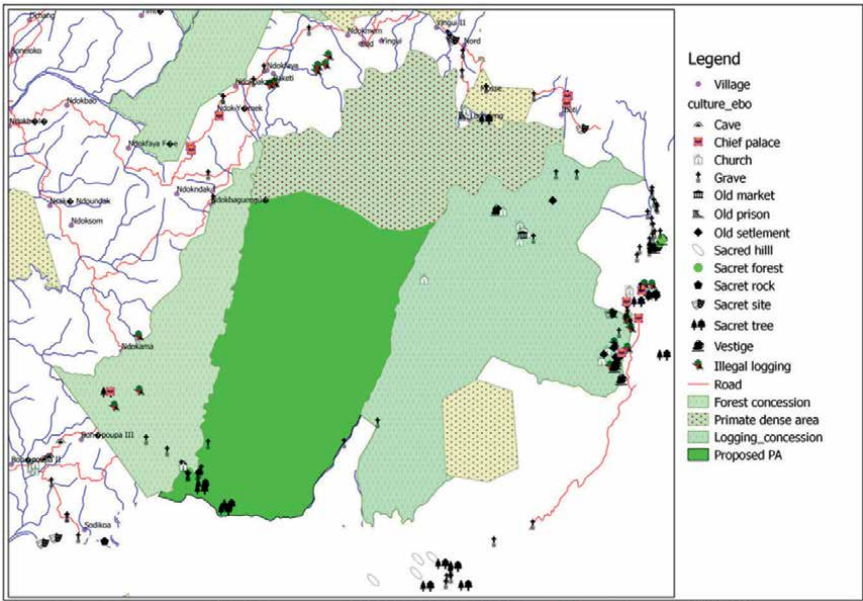


Figure 11.
Cultural activities around the Ebo forest landscape.

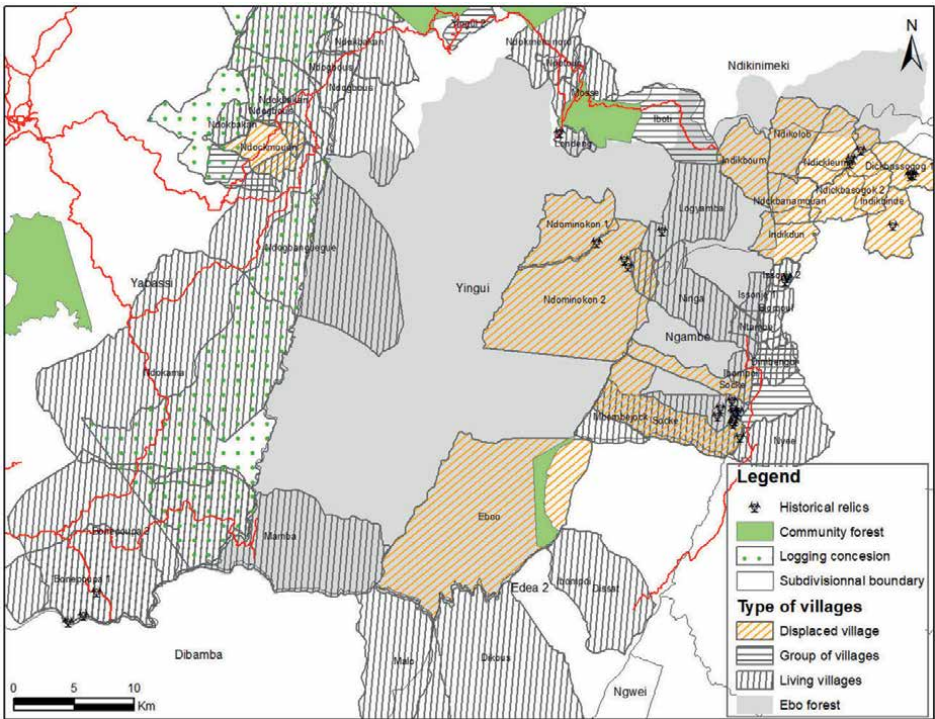


Figure 12.
Customary land and distribution of cultural heritage.

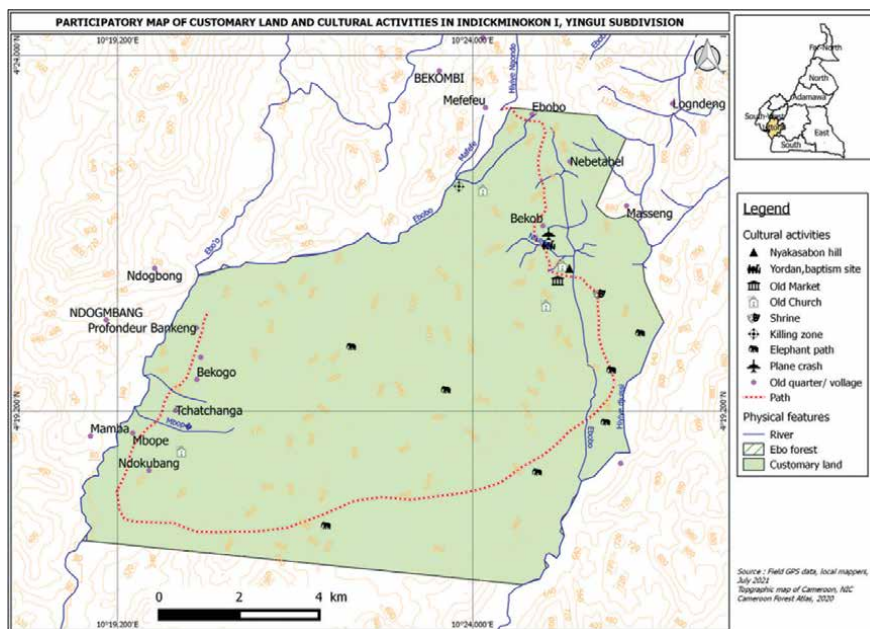


Figure 13.
Cultural activities in Indickminikon I village.

limits their access to their cultural site/ relics for some cultural event. Some of the cultural events, like the local dances, are being disappeared (**Figure 14**).

Communities and related forest dependence cultural activities mapping.

4.5 Contribution of cultural value for sustainable development of rural population in the Ebo landscape

Part of an ongoing memorial crisis [10] in Cameroon, Banen's mobilizations against the Ebo forest classification depend on the instrumentalization of conscious and unconscious representations. These stem from a series of incidents affecting the project's neighboring populations in the departments of Nkam, Sanaga Maritime, and Mbam and Inoubou between 1963 and 2017. While re-readings of the 1963 Banen peasant gatherings in urban centers helped to construct the representation of an Ebo "forced exile" following the war of independence, the rejection of a national park project in the forest in 2006 helped to crystallize a Banen identity around this territory.

"Cahier d'un retour au pays natal," this is the story of a people, the Banens. They left their land in the late 1950s. Historians consider this to be the period of the maquis. Leaving their territory for another where they would find shelter, calm, and security. The destiny of a population then estimated at 10,000 people was turned upside down. But today, hope is reborn. No more maquis. People can go home. And that's what happened on Saturday, May 13 in Ndogbiakat. "After being evicted during the maquis war, these populations were given access to limited portions of land. Today, we're fighting to get them back home," says Samuel Dieudonné Moth, executive chairman of the Forêt d'Ebo development committee.

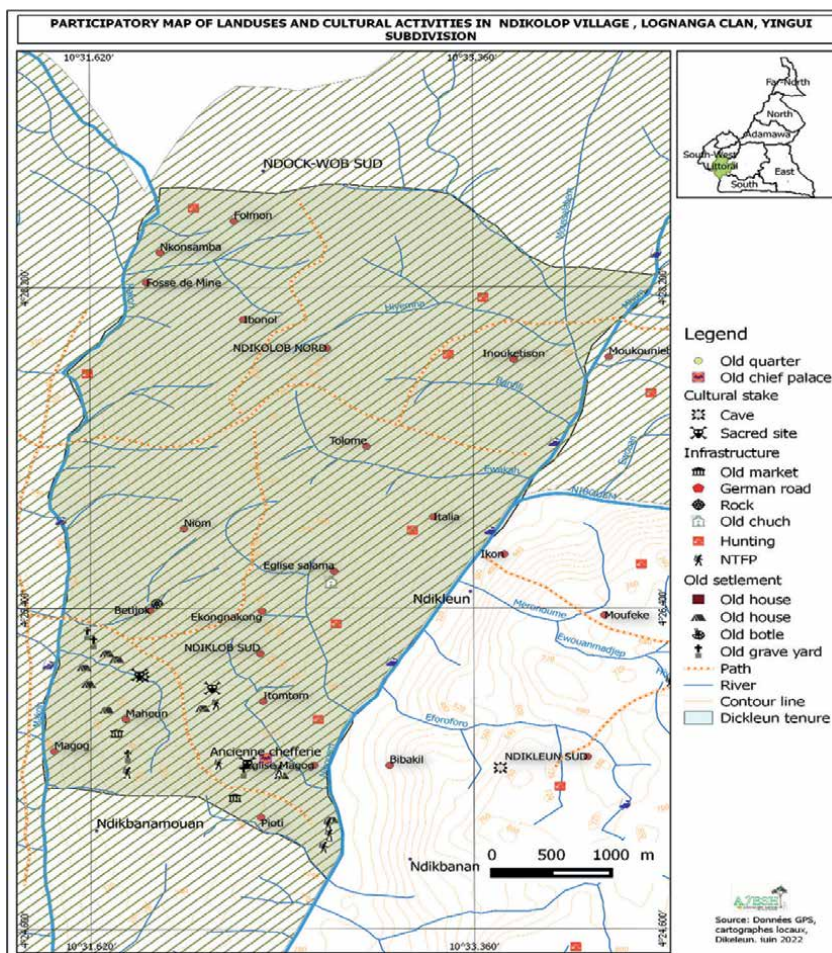


Figure 14.
Participatory land use and archeological feature in Ndikolob village.

A large number of people from different backgrounds, including Njombe-Penja, PK30, Bonepoupa from Moufon Indikeboum, Bikong, and Malibot, began the resettlement process.

This is partly due to the actions of the Ebo Forest Development Committee. The committee succeeded in getting a logging company to take charge of tracing around 40 km of road, 30 km of which has already been completed.

“This road represents development. It will enable people who were evicted some sixty years ago to return home. But it must not be an open door to wild sawing or poaching,” explains Che Patrick Ngwashi, Prefect of the Nkam region (Figure 15) [11].

As part of the problem of large-scale land grabbing in Cameroon, the Ebo development conflict allows us to question local development as a political issue, using the tools of local geopolitics [12]. This geopolitical approach makes it possible to place at the heart of this local conflict, the crisis of the idea of the general interest [13, 14]: it corresponds to the loss of the state monopoly in the management of



Figure 15.
Banen communities during administrative visit in Lognanga clan <https://www.hekok.org/254/cameroun-les-banens-ne-sont-pas-des-sawas.html>.

forest massifs to the benefit of a complex and dynamic system of actors in a forest decentralization. We will analyze the mobilization of local populations against the forestry project, with a view to preserving traditional land rights in the name of local development.

The legalization of the “MUNEN-Retour aux sources” association under receipt n°187/2020/RDA/C19/SAAJP, took place in Douala on May 26, 2020 [15]. It resulted from the plural dynamics within the “Les Banen disent NON” collective during the rejected development conflict over the park project. A series of constraints in the Banen collective action against the classification of the Ebo forest lands contributed to the substitution of a platform logic by another associative logic from April 2020.

The development of conflicts in the Ebo landscape reveals the failure of participatory mechanisms experimented by development agencies in support of national bodies and NGOs from various backgrounds [16] in Cameroon.

5. Conclusion

Issues related to cultural heritage using indigenous knowledge play a vital role in recognizing and mapping the historical range of cultural values that belong to a particular group. The loss of cultural heritage can lead to a sense of disconnection and displacement. It is crucial to recognize and respect the cultural identity of these populations and ensure that their heritage is preserved and valued during the resettlement process. The people, in about 48 villages, of the Ebo forest population who, since a decade have been out of their ancestral land wish to regain their land. The land has a lot of resources which has left the government for its allocation and classification as a state forest. The population wanted the classification to respect their sociocultural heritage within the landscape. The participatory mapping done within this paper is a tool that helps to understand communities' customary land, their local governance initiative, and problem trees for advocacy.

A lot of movement for advocacy using the communities' participatory tools has helped the government to understand the way of integrating local communities into the management of their cultural heritage through workshop exchanges and local administration visit to inquire more about their need. It is now recognized that the population needs to return to their ancestral land and need their cultural features to cave from any land occupation.

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Indigenous Practices by Tribal Communities of Bonai Forest Division, Odisha, India: A Cause of Forest Fire, Experts' Opinions and Impacts on Bio-Wealth

Sanath Kumar N, Susanta Kumar Biswal and Sanjeet Kumar

Abstract

Globally, forest fires are a major cause for concern. In recent decades, forest fires have increased in frequency and severity worldwide, and they are now recognized as a major issue at the interface between the biosphere and atmosphere. The biogeochemical cycle, atmospheric composition, ecosystem structure, animal populations, microbial and insect diversity, and floras are all severely impacted by forest fires. As a result, in the Bonai Forest Division of Odisha, India, an effort has been made to comprehend the loss of biodiversity, gather expert viewpoints and record a tribal habit that also contributes to forest fires. Present observations revealed that there is need of much awareness among the communities regarding causes and impacts of forest fire on ecosystem, tribal life, biodiversity and need to take a step for mitigating the problems with communities.

Keywords: forest fire, biodiversity loss, opinions, indigenous community, tribal food, wild mushrooms

1. Introduction

It is necessary to address properly the causes to mitigate the issue as per boundary. In this commentary, authors glimpse the relationship between forest tree and mushroom collection, which is a cause of forest fire along other man-made causes. The study recommends that there is need to make a scientific strategy to mitigate the issue along with providing food and livelihood to the community. There are 328 million hectares of forest cover in India, with 68 million hectares of tropical moist and dry deciduous vegetation that is prone to fire. However, there is a scarcity of data on the effects of forest fires on various dimensions. Between autumn and summer, deciduous forest floors are covered in dense leaf litter, providing ideal conditions for human-caused forest fires. Controlled fires replace nutrients to the soil, thereby promoting good regeneration of primary floral species [1]. Odisha saw huge fires across the state in 2021, resulting in wildlife and biodiversity losses as well as forest timber losses [2]. There is still some

uncertainty about the actual impact of frequent forest fires on floral and faunal diversity in fire burnt areas. Man-made forest fire, whether intentional or unintentional, is always worse than controlled fire [3]. Therefore, it is vital to determine the influence of these fires on floral and faunal wealth, as well as the regeneration of plant species in the areas where they occurred. With this in mind, a comparative study of floral and faunal wealth was conducted in the seven ranges of the Bonai Forest Division (BFD), Odisha, India, between fire-burnt forest areas in 2021 and those areas that were free of forest fire from 2019 to 2021. The study on traditional practice of indigenous communities and how their life got affected due to forest fire was also carried out and presented here.

2. Study areas

Bonai Forest Division (**Figure 1**) located in Sundargarh district of Odisha state, India, is known by the presence of deciduous vegetation of the Chhota Nagpur Plateau in the Deccan Peninsular Biogeographic Zone. It is situated in the North-Western part of Odisha state in Sundargarh district. It spreads over an area of 2934.21 km². It enjoys the landscape of the Chhota Nagpur plateau of the Deccan Peninsular Biogeographic Zone. Bonai Forest Division has diverse vegetation like Moist peninsular sal forest, Dry peninsular sal forest, Northern dry mixed deciduous forest, dry bamboo brakes and Orissa tropical semi-evergreen forest. Administratively, Bonai Forest Division has seven ranges, namely Barsuan, Bonai, Jarda, Kuliposh, Koira, Sole and Tamra. Among the seven ranges, Koira, Barsuan and Kuliposh come under the mining-impacted areas. Koira and Barsuan ranges have unique bio-wealth [4].

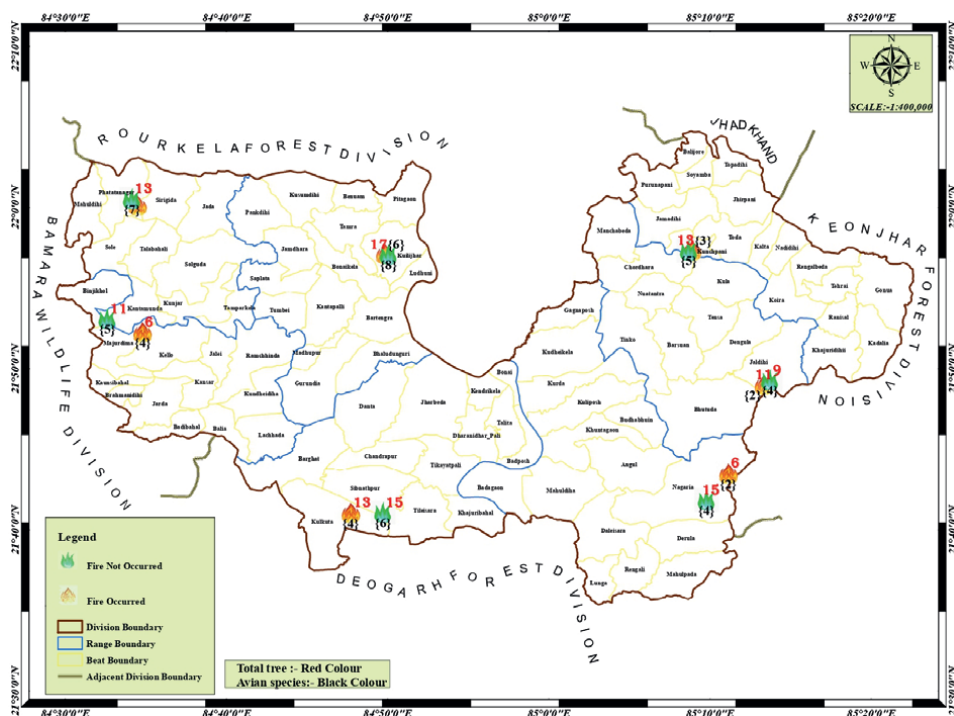


Figure 1. Diversity and population in quadrants taken in seven ranges of Bonai Forest Division, Odisha, India.

3. Methodology

In the year 2020, only 291 fire points were found in the division, however in the previous year (i.e., in 2019) 1965 fire points were detected, indicating the division's vulnerability to forest fire. Random quadrants of 20 m × 20 m from each range were taken in fire burnt areas of 2021 and areas where fire had not happened for 3 years from 2019. This was done to explore the association between often occurring forest fire and bio-wealth population. The opinion was taken after discussion with experts in ResearchGate platform and mentioned in the Observations section. The interaction was carried out with indigenous communities of study areas and their opinion on forest fire and Rugda mushroom (*Astraeus hygrometricus*) collection was recorded and presented in the section of case study [4]. The collected data were analyzed to show that how forest fire is related to the lives of indigenous community of study areas.

4. Observations

The scientific analysis of the field data revealed that the number of tree species with a minimum of 50 cm gbh (girth at breast height) is higher in fire-burned areas in 2021, but lower in places where there has been no fire in 3 years. Authors observed that in fire burnt areas, the growth of trees gained an advantage due to less ecological competition [5, 6]. Alternatively, it could imply that controlled burns are required to counteract the effects of uncontrolled fires and encourage long-term forest growth in regions where herbs, shrubs and leaf litter have entirely dried. Shrub growth and plant population, as well as the population of bird species and insects, are more noticeable in places where there have been no fires for 3 years. Details are listed in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**.

On this important topic of forest fire, a conversation was held on the ResearchGate (<https://www.researchgate.net/>) platform involving numerous researchers. The collected opinions are mentioned here, which could throw light on forest fire.

“Changes induced by fire may include alterations to soil properties (N, C, organic matter, pH, etc.), community shifts toward exotic and/or fire resistant and resilient species, tree regeneration failure, and in the most extreme cases an indefinite shift from forest cover to shrub or grassland. Certain forests are adapted to frequent fire, those of the southwestern United States for example. Trees like ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and western larch possess fire-adapted traits such as thick bark and serotinous cones. Still, even for high fire frequency adapted forests a one-year fire return interval over many years would be very stressful, unless the fire was very low intensity. Yearly high intensity fires would likely favor understory species that rely on fire to reproduce and preclude certain trees species. Such a fire regime might move an ecosystem away from forest cover toward grassland” by Matthew Joseph Ruggirello, National Scientific and Technical Research Council, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

“If forest fire occurs every year in a particular forest area the negative impacts which can be observed are 1) degradation of the vegetation, 2) destruction of microflora and microfauna, 3) loss of biodiversity, 4) loss of the land nutrients, 5) loss of cultivation land, 6) reduction of the cereals production yields, or 7) (2) reduction of grass yields or biomass” by Azizou EL-HADJ Issa, University of Abomey-Calavi, Cotonou, Benin.

“Surface fires burn only surface litter and duff. It removes low-growing underbrush, cleans the forest floor of debris, opens it up to sunlight, and nourishes the soil.

Areas	Tree	Shrub			Herb			Faunal species					
		TTS	Dominant tree	NDT	TSS	Dominant shrub	NDS	THS	Dominant herb	NDH	Avian species	Mammals	Reptiles
FO	14	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	13	9	<i>Bauhinia vahlit</i>	30	3	<i>Blumea fistulosa</i>	5	6	1	2	
FNO	17	<i>Diospyros malabarica</i>	6	14	<i>Celastrus paniculatus</i>	5	4	<i>Cheilanthes tenuifolia</i>	30	8	1	3	
FO	13	<i>Croton roxburghii</i>	40	6	<i>Flemingia chappar</i>	26	15	<i>Desmodium triflorum</i>	50	4	1	1	
FNO	15	<i>Diospyros malabarica</i>	5	10	<i>Helicteres isora</i>	9	18	<i>Canscora diffusa</i>	14	6	1	2	
FO	16	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	14	15	<i>Flemingia strobilifera</i>	4	8	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>	5	2	1	1	
FNO	13	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	16	10	<i>Millettia extensa</i>	7	5	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>	17	7	1	4	
FO	6	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	18	2	<i>Millettia extensa</i>	12	4	<i>Rungia pectinata</i>	40	4	1	1	
FNO	11	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	5	15	<i>Pogostemon benghalensis</i>	30	7	<i>Rungia pectinata</i>	70	5	1	2	
FO	6	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	15	2	<i>Pogostemon benghalensis</i>	22	7	<i>Hemigraphis latebrosa</i>	12	2	1	1	
FNO	15	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	10	10	<i>Clerodendrum infortunatum</i>	30	10	<i>Oplismenus burmannii</i>	9	4	1	1	
FO	11	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	21	6	<i>Cipadessa baccifera</i>	5	13	<i>Hemigraphis latebrosa</i>	11	2	1	1	
FNO	9	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	5	4	<i>Pogostemon benghalensis</i>	13	11	<i>Justicia diffusa</i>	19	4	1	1	
FO	10	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	22	5	<i>Bauhinia vahlit</i>	8	8	<i>Canscora diffusa</i>	6	3	1	1	
FO, fire occurred; FNO, fire not occurred; TTS, total tree species; NDT, number of dominant trees; TSS, total shrub species; NDS, number of dominant shrubs; THS, total herb species; NDH, number of dominant herbs.													

FO, fire occurred; FNO, fire not occurred; TTS, total tree species; NDT, number of dominant trees; TSS, total shrub species; NDS, number of dominant shrubs; THS, total herb species; NDH, number of dominant herbs.

Table 1.
The floral and faunal diversity of burnt (2021) and unburnt areas (In the last 3 years) in 20 × 20 m of Bonai Forest Division, Odisha, India.

Reducing this competition for nutrients allows established trees to grow stronger and healthier. It may clear the weaker trees and debris and may return health to the forest”
by J. C. Tarafdar, Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI), Jodhpur, India.

“Controlled fire is good for breaking dormancy seeds” by Abdul Nasser S Alborki,
University of Benghazi, Benghazi, Libya.

“It has positive effects on seed dormancy and understory competition, as well as enhancing the forest ecosystem dynamics. However, a severe forest fire can negatively affect the species diversity in the forest” by Elmugheira Mohammed, University of Gezira, Wad Medani, Sudan.

“Forest fires in fire-intolerant ecosystems reduce biodiversity, although some species of fauna and flora may benefit. Objective assessment of losses and benefits as a result of fire is difficult to carry out and depends on the adopted criteria. In general, it should be said that the losses outweigh the benefits, because fire (although being an integral component of the environment) transforms it to a great extent when it appears in the environment” by Jan Kaczmarowski, General Directorate of State Forests, Forest Protection Department, Poland.

Controlled burns, according to the experts' opinions and survey data, may be useful in reducing the adverse impacts of other types of forest fires while simultaneously fostering good tree development. Furthermore, the study's findings recommend the following approaches to lessen the impact of forest fire on species diversity in areas where forest fire has occurred. (1) Prior to the fire season, controlled burning with Fireline tracing may be done. (2) In high-risk locations, controlled burning of shrubs, exotic shrubs and herbs may be used to minimize the severity of the fire. (3) It's possible that regulated surface fire could aid in the germination of specific plants and the maintenance of the diversity and population of floral and faunal wealth, including insects. In this line, hence site-specific control burning may be used. (4) Controlled burning could give good quality of leaves in sustained way for the utilization by the indigenous communities without harming big areas of forest.

5. Forest fire and indigenous communities

Indigenous communities of study areas depend on Minor Forest Products (MFPs) like, fruits, leaves, roots, barks, resin, firewood, etc. [7]. Indigenous communities set fire to get good quality of leaves, more firewood and other MFPs. Therefore, in many locations of study areas, they set the fire. Authors observed this practice and created awareness programmes in different locations of study areas (present study).

6. Rugda mushroom: a food and tribal practices

During working on forest fire in study areas, authors noticed a relationship among a tree, community and a mushroom known as Rugda (*Astraeus hygrometricus*). Following the pre-monsoon, the communities set fires to obtain food and a means of subsistence in the form of Rugda. Traditional methods for obtaining forest products are primitive and dependent on local climate and topography. While the quantity of

forests and their products has decreased over time, the practices have not altered, and they must be preserved to contribute to natural systems that are both sustainable and balanced. Indigenous methods for forest sustainability are used by tribal communities around the world. In India, certain communities in Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh gather wild mushrooms to provide a year-round source of income and a staple food during the rainy seasons ([8]; present study). The local tribal communities benefit greatly from the reduction of food insecurity and malnutrition because of the wild mushrooms. There are numerous reports that are available on edible, non-edible and medicinal mushrooms from India and other countries. In the Bonai Forest Division of Odisha, India, authors are studying community conservation, indigenous traditional knowledge, forest fires and the relationship among communities and forest wealth. During the field survey, the authors visited tribal markets to gather knowledge on wild edible food plants and found a mushroom locally known as Rugda that was being sold for between Rs. 400 and Rs. 2000 per kg in local weekly markets of study areas. It was a surprising price in rural and tribal-dominated areas and developed interest to know more about the mushroom in every aspect. Rugda (*Astraeus hygrometricus*) belongs to the family *Diplocystaceae*. It is commonly known as Hygroscopic earthstar, Barometer earthstar, False Earthstar and locally known as Phutka, Boda, Potu and Sargi Boda. The young edible mushroom looks like a puffball and on maturity, the outer layer opens in a star-like manner. It is an ectomycorrhizal mushroom that is grown in association with specific tree species. It used to have a cosmopolitan distribution, but it is now widespread in temperate and tropical areas. It is a water-absorbing puff and is left open to maintain humidity. Rays are cracked and irregular but the spore case is pale brown. The gleba is white and turns brown to powder in mature form. This mushroom was first described by Christiaan Hendrik Persoon in 1801 as *Gaeastrum hygrometricus*. In 1885, Andrew P. Morgan proposed that differences in microscopic characteristics warranted the creation of a new genus *Astraeus* distinct from *Gaeastrum* [9–13].

The literature review mentioned above significantly increased our interest in learning more about mushrooms directly from residents. Thirty-five respondents who were from the Munda, Kisan, Bhuian, Khadia, Gond and Oram groups participated in the discussion on Rugda and recorded their opinions after a random questionnaire survey was carried out. As per the gathered information, they wait for the monsoon to collect the mushrooms, and following the first round of intense rain and lightning, they go out into the jungle early in the morning to gather them (**Figure 2B**). It was stated that they believe increased lightning will produce more Rugda. No scientific validations are available for the above claims made by communities (present study).

They collect these mushrooms and sell in the local markets at an unbelievable rate per kilogram (kg) (**Figure 2c**). They also consume them as a vegetable. It was noticed that everyone wants to purchase them at any cost and locals believe that they are rich with nutrients, having medicinal values. The taste of Rugda is very delicious and authors also consumed it (**Figure 2D**; present study).

Authors are now faced with the challenge of how they would know where to obtain the mushrooms in bulk. We conducted interviews with residents and field personnel from the Forest Department to get the answer to this question once more, and the results disappointed us. The villagers set the fires in the study areas from February to May, which causes them to harvest a lot of Rugda easily (**Figure 2A**; present study) just after the monsoon and provide them with a solid source of income because they can sell it for a high price and use it as a vegetable too. It was noticed that tribal communities also collect them and cook during the celebration of local festivals.



Figure 2.
Rugda mushroom; causes of forest fire and source of food and livelihood, (A) *Rugda* near sal tree in burnt areas. (B) Local tribal women collecting them from burnt areas after monsoon. (C) *Rugda* is being sold in local weekly markets. (D) Authors cooked and consumed it.

Authors selected the 20 forest patches in three ranges of Bonai Forest Division (Sole, Tamra and Jarda) where no forest fires occurred and the 20 patches where fires occurred (Sole, Tamra, Jarda and Bonai ranges). A survey of these 40 forest patches revealed that local populations were observed to be gathering *Rugda* mushrooms in the morning and

during the day in 17 forest patches where forest fires had occurred. Some communities traveled up to 60 kilometers to the sites where forest fire occurred previously, because they were aware of fire occurrences in these sites. These observations clearly revealed that locals set fire in moist and dry deciduous sal forest to get more quantity of Rugda.

7. Conclusion

The present study clearly shows that to mitigate the negative impacts of forest fire, we need to carry out community work with indigenous people in any forested area where forest fire is a big issue. The results of the present study also revealed that, due to the reduced forest cover and density compared to earlier times, wild plants, shrubs, insects and other animal species are now seriously at risk due to forest fires. Rugda thrives on sal tree-associated phosphorus-rich soil, which makes it a contributing factor in forest fires. The study also indicates that to achieve harmonic balance, it is urgently necessary to enhance this mushroom's cultural methods sustainably as well as value addition with indigenous communities. It must be determined how to collect these mushrooms scientifically without using fire or harming other flora and fauna. Numerous awareness campaigns are required, and the community's conservation and mitigation action plan for forest fires must be launched with the help of the local communities.

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Chapter 3

Spirits and Spoils: Matter, Memory and the Living Culture of Human Remains in the Andes and the Amazon

Adine Gavazzi and Anna Siri

Abstract

The precolonial societies of the Andes and the Amazon and their ancestral memory among living cultures have always shown a central interest in the concept of death, to which innumerable material and immaterial testimonies bear witness. Huge necropolises, cemeteries inhabited by heirs, urban ceremonial centres, remains, and booty constantly reused in altars testify to a daily and indestructible relationship with all that dies. Underlying this pervasive, persistent, and millenary cult is the idea that the dead do not leave the living but wait for them in another region of time, accessible through the care of the loot, their memory, and collective ceremonies. From the Paracas and Nasca tombs, which build an entire cosmovision around a burial, to the demonstration of the earthly and spiritual power of the Moche rulers, to the Inca mummies ritually led in procession according to the rules of the calendar, the signal of eternal time constantly penetrates the diachrony of life, celebrating its flow that oscillates between births and deaths. Periodic visits to cemeteries to eat and talk with the dead, the recovery of skulls to recall ancestors in votive form, and the constant symbolic recreation of the cosmos keep alive the memory of spirits eternally alive and redeemed from their mortal spoils.

Keywords: human remains, living culture, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, pre-Hispanic Andean and Amazonian societies, ancestral memory

1. Introduction

There is a river whose waters give immortality; somewhere there must be another river whose waters take it away.

Jorge Luis Borges

On 5 October 2015, a Go competition took place in London between the world champion Fan Hui and AlfaGo, a computer programme developed by the company Deep Mind. After five games in which the algorithm challenged its opponent several

times, the machine won. For the first time, a programme that can learn and decide for itself displaced the cognitive skills, intuition, and imagination of the best human mind engaged in the same task. In less than 5 years, the applications of artificial intelligence in the world of automation exploded. From orthopaedic prosthetics that improve movement to algorithms that compose music, invest in the stock market, control jet engines, or predict cancer diagnoses, every area of human activity has been overtaken by the presence of a machine. Since 2017, companies offering digital immortality have also entered the market in the form of applications that are able to use a person's data after their death and interact with other users forever. Humanity in the new millennium seems destined to live with programmes such as Etern9, Lifenaut or Eternime¹ that challenge the definition of consciousness and erase the boundaries of life [1]. Death has become a traffic accident in the globalised twenty first century, which can be replaced by an eternal and immaterial algorithm. What drives the Western civilisation to break all norms in order to achieve immortality? What are the effects of abolishing time, diachrony and the idea of a border?

The emergence of a technosphere² that permeates human action and planning in the new millennium raises key questions about the value and meaning of death for present and future Western society [2]. However much the living is able to interact with algorithms that transcend the difference between biological and digital through avatars indistinguishable from the original, one difference remains. A programme that learns by itself and incorporates emotions and aspects that its biological original ignores is not born and does not die. It learns and transforms but does not become a venerable ancestor over time. The definition of a life process implies, by definition, its end. But the dead are essential to the Living. The immaterial spirits and the material remains remind us that human time is this, that the living are also indebted to them and that there is a responsibility to leave a message for those who come after. Remembering the dead in matter or in mind gives meaning to the biological chain in which the present is a microscopic link coming from the ancestors and heading towards posterity. Through this radical memory, individuals look to their children and grandchildren with the knowledge that their unique experience contributes to a more significant phenomenon called life.

If humans began to interact as if the dead were alive, if they forgot their own end, if they replaced it with an everlasting and perfect avatar, this sense of belonging to an ongoing process would disappear. Evolution would come to an end and with it, the space-time coordinates that form cosmologies and whole cultural systems. Today more than ever, the identity of a people, like that of an individual, needs the memory of death. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage, like its natural counterpart, describes unique endemism whose diversity is essential for the recombination of ideas, monuments, languages and cultures³. Eliminating this diversity endangers evolutionary differentiation processes and, thus, any cultural continuity [3]. With the disappearance of a language or a monument, ideas and testimonies of exceptional value are lost and the components of the cultural fibre that keeps the fabric of life going. Consequently, protecting the material and memory of human remains by

¹ Savin-Baden and Burden [1] present the theme of digital immortality as part of an evolutionary process of a self-referenced Anthropocene.

² Zalasiewicz et al. [2] introduce the technosphere as a dimension that overlaps with the Biosphere and Ethnosphere progression already defined by Davis (2004).

³ Moore et al. [3] demonstrate the link between biodiversity and cultural and linguistic endemisms.

cultures from the past or the present takes on a significance that goes beyond the individual cultural phenomenon and is intended to spread universal values.

2. Pre-Hispanic Andean and Amazonian death

In the cultural declension of the celebration of death, every human – and to some extent animal⁴ – tradition delimits the space and event of death by signalling it in a way that can be communicated to others [4]. Death is a memorable, celebrated, and monumental event because it conveys an exemplary warning. In many cultures of the past, this aspect is found in a visible way: from the funerary architecture of Cheops to the Famedio of Milan's Monumental Cemetery to the shrine of El Alamein, the demarcation between the world of the living and that of the dead is clear and sometimes grandiose. In the Andes and the Amazon world, this notion constructs cultural landscapes of eternity from a shared vision and infinite local variations. The theocratic Nasca capital of Cahuachi⁵ on the desert coast of southern Peru, for example, stands on a 24 km² necropolis that evolved from an arc of progressive burials thousands of years old [5]. The geological, historical and ethnic interpretation of the transformation of the territory through what Mannoni would have called “global archaeology”⁶ reveals the diverse and constant expression of a society that aimed to maintain the public functions of sacred space, even to the point of constructing buildings that could only be inhabited by the deities and spirits of the dead [6].

The pre-Hispanic funerary cultural landscape, which houses the development of such a system, shows a society defined by the preservation of its own ancestors, which was maintained over time until the cemeteries of today. In Nasca and Paracas, thought of the first century AD, death is a true cult elaborated through complex burials layered around modified and mummified bodies. Especially on the coast and agricultural plateaus, burial in the earth affirms a principle of silent germination that takes place far from the light. The presence of miniaturised objects in graves, reminiscent of the seminal creatures of the Ucku Pacha – the Andean Inframundus – evokes the idea of the seed from which new life will emerge. The heads, in particular, are reused in votive form, symbolising the *pars pro toto*⁷. They appear as offerings at the base of buildings or as recurring emblems in iconography [7]. An entire cosmovision developed around the care of mortal remains thus bridges the world of the living and that of the ancestors. On the North Coast, in Moche societies in the first centuries of the Christian era and in Lambayeque⁸ from the twelfth century onwards, ceremonial centres interpret the presence of the eternal world in the diachronic world through the expression of authority [9]. Sovereigns, rulers, and priests are given otherworldly significance through pompous burials that reflect the strength of spiritual power over political and social power. From Sipan to Chornancap to Túcume and Sicán, each

⁴ In addition to primates, elephants bury deceased loved ones, owls and giraffes organise wakes, dolphins codify mourning, and many others define funerary activities of various kinds. King [4].

⁵ Goldsmiths [5] analysed the Nasca archaeology of the Cahuachi carimony centre in a multidisciplinary way.

⁶ Mannoni [6] was the first to treat landscape and spatial planning phenomena from an archaeological point of view, with an integrated approach that proves essential in American studies.

⁷ Drusini and Baraybar [7] introduce the notion of the votive head into the *antropológico físico* register of offerings.

⁸ Narvaez [8] reconstructed Lambayeque prehispanic iconographic narratives and was the first to demonstrate the existence of cultural biocorridors between the coast and the Chachapoya world.

centre constructs its own mythic narrative that establishes the relationship with the past and gives direction to the present. The symbols of government become those of the ancestral world, and the territory is recognised and organised as a diachronic projection of an eternal system.

The world of the Chachapoya in the Amazonian Andes of Kuelap and Abiseo⁹ takes up this idea and houses the dead in a funerary architecture that hovers in stacks above the abyss and is always visible from the settlements of the living [10]. In this way, a constant relationship is established between the diachronic and horizontal life of the earth's inhabitants and the vertical life of those observed from above. The dead are not really dead. They have only temporarily migrated to another place, leaving behind remains that serve to regulate life cycles and maintain social order. The mummified remains of the Incas carried ritually in public processions throughout the year mark a rhythm in the calendar. At the same time, their appearance illustrates the lineage of the Panacas, the royal families that administered certain parts of the territory¹⁰. The human remains, accompanied by a procession, recall the spirits that animated them during their lifetime and that express an authoritative presence during the ceremonies through the simulacra of their bodies [11]. To maintain a political system, it does not matter whether the authority appears in the flesh or is periodically animated by a mummy. It is the power of their narrative that generates meaning and gives direction to the course of history. All social actors participate in the construction of this collective imaginary that defines, around the ceremonial spaces of eternity, the periodic incursions of the spirits into the world of the living.

3. The ancestral memory of living cultures

The periodic alternation between sacred and profane time, diachronic and perpetual space and time of life and experience of eternity shapes the entire pre-Hispanic conception of landscape and shapes much of the historical record and contemporary ethnography. Underlying this view, from the páramo to the cloud forest, from the lagoons of the Alto Andes to the dry forests of the coast, is a two-dimensional, cyclical notion of existence. The constant rebirth of the biotic network of geoclimatic cycles can be observed in every ecosystem, as can the bistagional alternation of the neotropics. This repetitive phenomenon, which links numerous megadiverse ecosystems, gives rise to just as many cultural endemisms in which animism takes on cosmo-centric, cyclical and reticulated aspects. In the absence of a single visible centre, the ecological cyclicity between land, water and air systems is recognised and codified by myriad traditions of living cultures. Life seems to oscillate constantly between a diachronic and an eternal reality: between the course of rivers and the motionless mirrors of lagoons, between the accelerating transformation of the forest and the motionless presence of the mountain and between the continuous sighing of the ocean and the fossil silence of the desert. In this eternal pendulum between irreversible biology and static eternity, two thresholds define the transition between perceptions of the world: birth and death. In order to exist, it is necessary to cross both and to create, through symbols, forms and monuments, the space in which the ancestors dwell. According to Muñoz [12] who defines the parameters of the ethnography of the dead, their spirits

⁹ Gavazzi and Narvaez explore the symbolic languages of the elaborate Chachapoya iconographic universe, identifying links with Amazonian contemporary ethnography.

¹⁰ Amado [11] demonstrated the persistence of the Inca cultural universe in colonial times.

are invoked through the remains that are regularly cared for, visited, displayed and revered in every indigenous society past and present.

The material presence of the remains is an indispensable element of the intrusion of the sacred into everyday life. At some moments, the dead live, eat and dance together with the living. In the village of Machu Picchu, for example, inundated by a globalised tourist economy that causes environmental and cultural damage from which it is difficult to protect heritage, the cemetery is one of the few joyful environments. The families of the deceased organise regular visits to the grave, offer the deceased's favourite food and spend long lunches chatting, eating and restoring affective relationships that are important for their personal stability. This phenomenon occurs in rural and mountainous areas as well as in cities. The mega-metropolis of Lima is home to 11 million people, and in the southern area, corresponding to the Lurin River valley and the great ceremonial centre of Pachacamac, there are the Jardines de los recuerdos: vast expanses of tropical English meadows dotted with small gravestones and gathering places. In northern Peru and in rural areas along the coast, bones are constantly on the move: the looting of graves is common to reuse the remains, relics and especially the skull on the altars of the master curanderos. From Trujillo to Lambayeque to Piura, the use of skulls on an altar determines the appearance of the spirit of an ancestor, just as a stone reminds us of the sacred mountain from which it came or a ceramic of the temple it represents. Altars delineate the chessboard of sacred space where invisible and dominant energies such as music bend the human will, dispel a disease, resolve a trauma and accompany the living on the path of healing. The collection of bones and skulls, as *pars pro toto*, is an eternal Andean memory.

Narvaez Vargas, reconstructs the Lambayeque collective imagery and visual mythography, identifying the pre-Hispanic origins of contemporary ethnography; spirits heal because they do not get sick, and the deities are boneless [8]. The liquid body of Kon, for example, flies across the landscape by sheer force of will. The Pachacamac of Lima has neither skin nor bones. Humans communicate with them through cartilage: with their ears and eyes, they receive messages, and with their nose and mouth, they transmit them, as the huge repertoire of Andean expressions proves. When they die, their bones emerge and bear witness to their human condition. The spirit and the heart, on the other hand, migrate into the realm of the spirits. That is why it is so important to preserve the bones. Their presence on contemporary altars, such as Inca processions, re-establishes the contact that death has temporarily interrupted but that a ceremonial context can restore.

Mortal remains are also reused to create sacred spaces and places of prayer. In Chiclayo, the Casa de las Animas preserves the remains of a flooded cemetery. The population goes there every day to light a candle, leave an offering or gather for prayer at the beginning of the day.

The millenary persistence of this skull cult, of skulls and more generally of the ceremonial use of bones, extends northward into the Piura area. Polia's comparison between the archaeological record of Ayapate and ethnographic memory shows how the dead continue to exert influence through their material presence and as emissaries of an invisible world [13]. The location of Chiclayo and Piura between the ocean and the Amazon makes it possible to observe a pre-Hispanic heritage in motion between ecosystems. This flow reveals a coexistence between the natural and supernatural worlds that stretches from the coast to the Andes to the Amazon. Animals, products, ideas and especially bones are constantly moving through the bio-corridors. Some graves, for example, are emptied or enriched with remains from contexts far removed

in time and space. Bones from ancient necropolises migrate to cemeteries in other regions and become ambassadors of interregional cults.

In Amazonia, where everything renews itself, the only permanent remains are fossils. They were formed 20 million years ago when the eastern Andes dammed Lake Pebas, and today they nourish the myths of those fossilised ancestral figures that populate the cosmo-visions of the forest peoples. Like human bones, these lithic remains of the Neotropics point the living to the need for regeneration and dialogue with the omnipresent and omnipotent world of spirits. The biotic network in the Eastern Andes is so abundant and persistent that it becomes necessary to forget one's dead in order to make room for the newborn. Among the Jivaro, for example, the dead are actively forgotten by the living, who displace their name and history from individual and collective memory. Thanks to this active displacement, a cyclical identity is created that can be reborn with the same characteristics [14]. It is a daily and indestructible relationship that keeps the forces of the cosmos in balance. At the apex of this unsurpassed megadiverse biotic network are the master plants that have planned and directed the movement and distribution of food resources and the movement of animals for millennia. The master plants are the first to promote a regenerative concept of life, not only in their size but also in their influence on the cultural expressions of the Amazonian ethnic groups. The millennia-old herbal medicine associated with the ayahuasca mixture teaches first to die and then to be reborn [15, 16]. Aya - Huasca means the vine of death in Quechua¹¹.

The contemporary Andean cosmovision, heir to the Inca mummy cult, mallqui, considers the deceased as a seed connected to the ancestors. The mallqui seed tree feeds on the nutrients and underground water provided by the root system and is destined to restore life through its fruits [17]. Transitioning between death and eternity and sharing in the fertility of the cultivated fields involves a journey into the underworld to reach the ancestral origin in a lagoon or mountain. Following Huarochiri¹² tradition and contemporary records [18], the spirit moves to familiar places for 5 days and is veiled by relatives [19], then embarks on a journey to the underworld to return to the origin of life. The Awajun, for example, surround the ground around the body with ashes to ensure that the spirit does not leave the body during this time and leave visible footprints.

In the water cycle, the river of life originates in the lagoons of the highlands and flows down to the sea, the mother lagoon, where it dissolves and dies. The sea water [20, 21], attracted by the constellation of the Lama, passes through the celestial river Mayu, the galaxy, and flows back to the lagoons in the form of rain¹³. The journey through the life of the river and the eternity of the sky is similar. However, the characters are different depending on the quality of life, social status and the work done in life. Once we reach the underworld, the line between human and animal spirits blurs. As Millones¹⁴ points out, animals also play a central role in the underworld [22]. The ancestral guide of the deceased is the swift and powerful hummingbird that accompanies them on their journey through a lime and reversible universe.

¹¹ Narby's best known work (1995), [16] was the first to seek out those bicognitive processes between science and indigenous knowledge capable of transforming the globalised cultural horizon.

¹² According to Avila [18] 5 days is the usual period for appearing, dying or manifesting through natural macro-events: Arriaga records the activity of 5 days to veil the deaths.

¹³ The Andean water cycle is the basis of the celebration of rebirth [20].

¹⁴ Millones [22] defined the most extensive ethnographic record of funerary cults in northern Peru, comparing it to Mesoamerican traditions.

While on the coast and in the Andes, the dead are escorted by animals; in the Amazon, they become so directly. The body of a Shuar, for example, is transformed into parts: The lungs become butterflies, the shadow a deer, the heart a bird and the liver an owl [17, 23].

The idea of dismemberment, prevalent in Sechinese, Nazca and Moche iconography and recounted in ancestral transformation myths, reveals a deep respect for the rules of nourishment and regeneration that imply the sacrifice of the dying. Only by overcoming the limits of bodily integrity and accepting its dissolution is it possible to cross the threshold of death to enter another landscape.

4. Conclusions

When one dies, is it forever? Perhaps not. According to the Huarochirí myths, it is only a temporary state: those who are petrified return to life after serving their sentence, and those who are killed are reborn multiplied by the number of pieces they were cut into. Spirits also return to life. For some, death, which did not exist in the past, was invented to right the wrongs of living communities. For all, however, it is a threshold that demarcates the space of a perpetual and indestructible relationship with that which is reborn. Perhaps the expression “forever” only points to the perpetual cycle of regeneration of living forms maintained by that pervasive, persistent, and millennial cult that sets the boundaries of life. The dead do not abandon the living: they wait for them in another region of time, which they reach through the care of remains, memory and collective ceremonies. The world of the Andes and the Amazon nurtures a continuous symbolic recreation of the cosmos, inhabited by spirits eternally redeemed from their mortal remains. The signal of this eternal time penetrates the diachrony of life, celebrating its pendular motion that oscillates between births and deaths.

In this hybrid and multiform system, humans possess only the bones that the gods lack. The heads are seeds that are reborn as plants and microcosms in the symbolic vision of the ascending return to the mountain of the ancestors. When offered on an altar or at a sacrifice, the hydrogeological system is reactivated, and the cosmic order is restored.

To be human is to have bones. Body parts are transformed into animals, and their identity is reborn. Perhaps they are not fully alive either, because in life they deal with spirits and in death they always return to earth. Crossing the diachrony of profane space and the eternity of sacred space, the characters form a hybrid and living theatre where one dies and is fearlessly reborn again and again. This experience is had every day, in the eternal cycle of day, awakening and sleep. In the dream, the soul detaches from the body, as in death, and is free to cross the earthly entrance to the underworld to navigate the subterranean rivers that mirror the heavenly ones.

When we wake up in the twenty first century in such a different cultural universe, the advance of knowledge and the ancient warning of Tertullian take on a whole new meaning. Antonaros points to the point of no return for a desperate humanity adrift on a vast platform left to its own devices. One has to look over one's shoulder, to one's ancestors, and remember that dying is what makes one human. *Respice post te. Hominem te esse memento*¹⁵. The teaching of the Amazonian Andean spirits and remains lies in the dynamic balance between the course of human life and that of

¹⁵ Tertullian (in Stampini, 1898) and Antonaros (1997) bring the human consciousness of the twenty first century closer to a liminal condition that technological utopias continue to ignore.

sidereal eternity. It is useless and arrogant to think of a transcendence. It is even less intelligent to project a digital immortality that is incapable of dying.

The ancestral relationship between the eternal spirits and the mortal remains is the vector of a relationship that not only enables the living to relate to the departed but also makes the forms of eternity visible and repeatable. Here immortality is reversible. It is not a digital abstraction of an artificial arrow of time but a visible phenomenon that can be measured by all in the cycles of nature. The cosmic vibration reflected in the water cycle passes through reality in various states and returns as part of a diverse and coherent system. The ritual of ascending to the temple or sacred mountain opens the gateway to death and eternity; in turn, the descent of water reveals the gateway to birth and the return to life through fertility. So too, the journey of water in the celestial river of the Milky Way becomes rain in the lagoons. One-half of the journey on earth makes living beings mortal. The other half, through the celestial river, makes them immortal. Even though finding and climbing this river requires major cognitive transformations, this path is alive and active in the sacred landscapes of the Andes and the Amazon. Indeed, there is a river whose waters confer immortality, and in the not-too-distant future, in some region, there will be another river whose waters take that immortality away.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Traditional Leadership, Indigenous Knowledge, and Local Governance: Implications for Good Governance and Sustainable Development Agenda

Olawale R. Olaopa and Saheed Ogundare

Abstract

The traditional leadership institution had far-reaching and overall commitment to protect the local people within and outside their jurisdiction. It controls the allocation of community land held in their custody and trust; preserves law and order; collects taxes; provides social services; promotes education; adjudicates and makes pronouncement on conflicts through utilization of native intelligence defined by local/indigenous knowledge (IK). This guarantees effective local administration and control are facilitated by faithful adherence to the dictates of traditions, socio-cultural values, and norms entrenched in traditional institutions. Unfortunately, these traditional institution and leadership were neglected by colonialism. This chapter, using qualitative historical data and thematic analysis coupled with twin theories of dependency and cultural revivalism, tries to explore, and determine whether the institution of traditional leadership has any relevance in the modern governmental system and sustainable development in Africa. It found and concluded that fundamental to good governance and sustainable development agenda is the acknowledgement of the traditional institution, IK, and leadership as the custodian of society's values and norms, the neglect of which good governance and sustainable development will be a dream. The work is significant in its contribution to research on traditional leadership, IK, and their impacts on development.

Keywords: Africa, traditional leadership, indigenous knowledge, governance, sustainable development

1. Introduction

For centuries before the advent of colonial rule, governance in different parts of Africa was synonymous with traditional institutions and their rulers. Local administration generally centred on the traditional rulers who were considered as the guardians and symbols of cultural values and religious practices, enforcing laws and

adjudication of conflicts, with a few exceptions as in the case of the Tonga in Zambia, the Masai in Kenya and the Igbos in Eastern Nigeria [1, 2]. The traditional leadership institution had far-reaching and overall commitment to protect the local people within and outside their jurisdiction, control over the allocation of community land held in their custody and trust; preserve of law and order; collect taxes, provide, and administer social services; promote education; adjudicate and make pronouncement on conflicts. Recently, they have been significant in the provision of public goods, as facilitator of economic development, elections, and conflict management and resolution [3–7]. Their strength in providing these functions lies in their age-long existence and untenured position, their number and the increase population rate of rural inhabitants who are strategically the target of any development and good democratic governance agenda. All these are facilitated especially by their knowledge and strict adherence to the dictates of traditions, socio-cultural values and norms entrenched in traditional institutions. These defined values and norms, have in fact absolutely remained a fundamental quality of all societies in Africa. They are not only seeing as powerful traditional tools for survival, but they also form the bases of human and society's continued existence in terms of effective and good governance. To be specific, in pre-colonial Africa, these norms and values, even though unwritten, formed and dictates the bases and directions which African traditional rulers undertake governance, exercised power and authority or influence over their jurisdiction and subjects. However, these governance institutions and structures crucial to good governance [8] were distorted during colonial era which brought a new role and changing status of traditional rulers and the institution in governance process [9]. Specifically, the imposed new governance arrangement by the European coloniser over the existing traditional independent authority offered the colonialist the opportunity to easily manipulate, exploit and control African territories. It also made the African cultural values inferior while traditional leaders were reduced to mere adviser in the colonial governmental arrangements [10, 11]. Even, at independence, traditional leaders' roles are less considered in the modern governmental systems as roles are shared and implemented among the political office holders. This then raises some pertinent questions: What are the main features of indigenous traditional administrative systems in Africa; has the system and institution of traditional leadership have any relevance in the governance process in terms of the provision of public goods and services (law and order/administration of justice; management of common pool resources e.g. public land, forest etc.; infrastructure provision and maintenance); what strategies are being employed to facilitate and ensure effective and good governance at the local level, to what extent has African government utilised indigenous leadership and knowledge to promote the democratic interests of rural communities and what are the impediments to successful integration of this institution and knowledge into modern governmental systems for good governance and sustainable development agenda. Using qualitative historical data and thematic analysis, this paper tries to provide answers to these questions by examining the general role of traditional leadership and institution in the pre and postcolonial epochs with a view to determining the extent to which the postcolonial states in Africa has deviated from this system. It will further allow us the opportunity to explain the currently experienced loss of direction in governance which is the bane of poor governance in Africa as reflected in the various prevalent and persistent political, religious, ethnic, and civil conflicts and warp development at the local and national levels in the continent.

The above is not to suggest that there has not been attempt at highlighting the vigorous contributions of traditional institutions and leadership on

development [12–14], public goods [15, 16], and political violence [17, 18] in Africa. Notwithstanding, the lack of sufficient research on traditional institutions', indigenous knowledge (IK) and good governance and sustainable development is worrisome. This chapter is presented to fill this gap, among others, in literature.

2. Theoretical framework

This paper adopts qualitative review of literature on twin theories of the dependency and cultural revivalism in its explanation of how the traditional leadership, traditional institutions and their IK were disparaged, relegated, and manipulated in a way that African resources were incapacitated from continuously performing their usual traditional responsibilities of providing good governance for which they were renowned before colonialism. The dependency theory posits that Africa's socio-economic and political backwardness and indeed the failure of various governance institutions including the traditional institutions have their roots in the forceful integration and incorporation of the continent into the outside edge (periphery) of global capitalist system. The arrangement which only allocated a second fiddle role to the continent in the international capital market. Andrew Gunder Frank, Frank Fanon, Walter Rodney, among other leading proponents are of the opinion that the reason for state failure in Africa is explainable within the context of the activities and motives of the bourgeoisie as depicted in the principles of colonial interventionism and their interest in empire-building. The works of classical Marxist theory, dependency theory can be traced to the works of Lenin and Luxemburg, and which was later developed by American and African scholars like Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Franz Fanon, and Walter Rodney among others [19]. Specifically, as argued by [20], what is being referred to currently as the state of underdevelopment with respect to African countries can only be described within the structure and agenda of the impacts of the interrelationship between production relations and capital formation processes in the supposed developed economies.

On cultural revivalism, the theory ascribes a very significant and powerful influential role to African traditions and cultural heritage. As posited by Gyekye, the main way to successfully deal with contemporary African problems is through renaissance of African indigenous traditions hitherto disparaged and neglected by colonialism [21].

3. Perpetuation of dependency in Africa through foreign ideas

With respect to the traditional rulers, institution, and IK, the colonialists' occupation in Africa introduces the indirect rule, Christianity, and new commerce. The implementation of all these under African traditional rulers with the appointment of puppets to replace them significantly reduced the traditional powers and influence of African rulers and led to the emergence of serious opposition and development of antagonism to the colonisation of Africa. This activity led to the abolition of Atlantic slave trade. The reason for this African traditional rulers' opposition was spurred by the feelings that Europeans commercial activities is taking toll on their domains without due respect for African traditions, religions, customs, and culture and for them as the custodians of these values. This is so in that the newly introduced colonial religion disparaged and condemned African religions as inferior, evil, archaic, and outmoded. Traditional rulers and leaders who fought against the European

domination and control in Africa were overpowered, dethroned, and extradited to give way to the Europeans control and domination of African commerce. These included Caliph Attahiru I of Sokoto Caliphate, Kosoko of Lagos, Jaja of Opobo and Nana Olomo of Itsekiri in the oil Rivers as well as Satiru Revolt by Satirawa in 1906 in Sokoto Sultanate in Nigeria. Others across Africa include Samory Touré of Mandinka Empire, Menelik II, emperor of Ethiopia, Zulu Chief Bambatha of South Africa, In East Africa there was the Maji Maji revolt in Tanganyika by Kinjigitile Ngwale, Priest John Chilembwe of Nyasaland, now Malawi, Abd al-Qadir in Algeria, and the Shona and Ndebele rebellions in Rhodesia, among others. Even after independence, the traditional authorities were incorporated into the newly created local and district government structures except for few countries like post-independence Namibia and Zimbabwe where traditional authorities were formally excluded from local and district government structures [22]. These authorities were not recognised as part of the formal governmental structures, even though they were retained after independence [23, 24]. All these have serious disastrous impact on the development and contributions of traditional institutions, culture, religions, and indigenous resources to governance in Africa.

4. Traditional leadership, indigenous knowledge, and local governance in Africa

In Africa, the formal structures of government have been seen to perform below the expectation of its citizens and as such have become a clog in the wheel of good governance. The import of this claim can be found in the declining quality and quantity of the services provided by these institutions. This unsatisfactory performance has led to the sourcing of another institutional structures for providing essential services to the citizens. These alternatives are found within the purview of private provision or community-based provision usually facilitated by the traditional structures. The efficacy of traditional leaders, institutions, and IK to ensure good governance and guarantee sustainable development has, according to public administration scholars, inspired renewed interest in this area [20, 25–34]. Besides, these institutions have proven to be irrepressible, well institutionalised, and very reliable to the extent that African people are so confident in their capacities to improve their wellbeing through effective provision of required goods and services. These include security, health services, infrastructure - roads, bridges, schools, post offices, administration of justice, mechanisms for conflict resolution, common-pool resources management and credit provision among others than any other institutions or structures [22, 35–37]. The ability of these institutions to do this is facilitated and made possible through some certain unwritten laws (traditions, cultural values, etc) which have their foundations in the IK of the society passed on through stories, myths and legend, folklore, rituals, or songs from generation to generation and which formed the significant part of the general social structure which in turn bring up order, development, peace and stability in these local areas.

In the area of indigenous administration and governance, the traditional pre-colonial African societies across the continent consist of well institutionalised and recognised indigenous administrative and political systems. Examples of these, even though with variations in their features, include the old Ashanti empire and Ewe speaking people in ancient Ghana, the ancient Dahomey empire, the metropolitan and provincial Ashanti empire and the Hausa/Fulani emirate, Igbo society and Yoruba

kingdom in Nigeria. In Nigeria for instance, in the Hausa-Fulani emirate, the administration of law and justice for peaceful settlement of dispute were based on religious teaching of Islam. The Chief Judge was the Khadi or Chief Alkali, appeal to Alikali's judgement goes to the Khadi as the final court. Peace is maintained by the Madawaki who acted as the commander-in-chief of the calvary (force or arm). Among the Yorubas of the same country, although the Alaafin was very powerful regarding the judicial power, he cannot be despotic and autocratic as there are institutions, the ogboni and the Oyo Mesis that provide control and check on his powers. There exists the age-grades and vigilante groups' which assist the local police force and involve in peacekeeping and prevention of crime or punish criminals to guarantee effective security in the community [38]. While the Igbo political system had no formal courts for the administration of justice, the Council of elders and the village assembly took part in the administration of justice. Oracle and earth goddess including Igwekala of Umunoha, the Amadioha of Ozuzu, the Agbala of Awka are institutions that are also made use of in the administration of justice for peace and security. Offences such as murder, incest, deliberate destruction of farm crops and the assault of elders were regarded as offences against these gods, Ala in particular [39, 40]. Other deities and goddess that could be likened with these among the Yorubas includes Ogun (god of iron), Sango (god of thunder), Osun (water goddess), Obatala and Ifa. Whoever acted against the laws and orders of the communities and lied must not swear by them otherwise serious calamity will befall such person [39, 40]. The reverence to these deities in the pre-colonial system and as local standard for oath taking has also assisted in ensuring transparency and accountability in governance [38, 41].

In Cameroon for example, conflict between and among persons in the villages is being resolved at the community level [42]. At this level, although leaders are concerned with personal development, the issue of governance and other projects directed at solving society's challenges are more paramount in their minds [43]. As stressed by [42], in some situations, religious laws are highly respected and considered sacred, an order of the gods in which the elders and priests are the custodian. Social formations and indigenous structures in Central Africa, like in West African societies, are characterised by communitarian, operated and governed on the basis of kinship relationship [44] and reverence to various deities, which fundamentally prevent the type of scandal that often results in excommunication and/or abandonment of family members to their individual destinies as witnessed during colonialism [45, 46]. These pre-colonial societies relied on these institutions/deities for effective administration and governance of their localities.

In the area of infrastructure—roads, bridges, schools, post offices, common-pool of resources management and credit provision among others, there are village/local-based associations, family welfare or age-grade societies formed with significant contributions to rural development in Africa [47, 48]. In Nigeria for instance, most of them, because of the high spirit of communalism and loyalty, embark on various rural development projects like the construction of roads, boreholes, maternity clinics, health centres, Churches, mosques, schools, Post Offices, markets, cultural and recreation centres. In some areas, for rural economic advancement, they organise themselves to cooperative societies where financial resources are pooled together for local trade and commerce. This is often called 'ajo' or 'eesu' among the Yoruba traditional societies. One question that may be posed here is that: how embezzlement or defaulters can be prevented. The use of IK in oath taking ('imule') assist in the prevention of fraud and whoever go against the agreement will incur the wrath of whatever deities that was used in taking the oath.

Related to the above is the issue of corruption prevention. Not oblivious of the existing controversies on the prevalence of corruption in precolonial Africa vis-à-vis the Afrocentric view and that of decolonisation school of thought, this paper subscribes to Afrocentric school that pre-colonial African leaders were responsible and responsive to their subjects and avoided corruption as much as possible [49]. This is so in that their behaviour is guided by their traditional beliefs, culture, and customs. Moreover, upon assumption of office, they swear to oath of allegiance to their ancestors and the belief is that any departure from this and the moral and ethical standards of the society will invite the anger of the ancestors and community gods. This, couple with the communal spirit and love that guided their operation, therefore insulate them from being corrupt.

One of the major age-long African socio-cultural heritage is traditional medicine. Africans and their traditional leaders have been practising and utilising this traditional approach to health [50]. They have equally passed it among generation to solve their health and medical challenges before the advent of conventional or orthodox medicine. This is despite the wrong impression and conception about them. To be specific, the practitioners of traditional and indigenous medicine rely majorly on medicinal plants and herbs for the preparation of healing substances. There is no doubt the fact that present health care systems in Africa is expensive and put African people in serious predicament [51]. The option for African government is either to continue providing a type of health care which cannot be accessed by all in need or reconsider and offer more all-inclusive types of medical care and delivery systems. In this circumstance, given the fact that traditional medicine has been clearly understood and play significant role in African society, its propensities are being investigated and validated and as well supported by the World Health Organisation to complement modern medicine, its practices should be promoted. The promotion and development of African traditional medicine can both foster dignity and self-confidence in communities through self-reliance, while considerably reducing the continent's drug costs and expenses. It serves as an important focus for international technical cooperation and offers the potential for major breakthroughs in therapeutics and health care delivery. Efforts in modern governance should be taken to keep the practice of traditional medicine alive in Africa.

Regarding the way by which conflict and misunderstandings are being handled and resolved, traditional leaders employ native intelligence and IK to manage and put finality to the resolution of a conflict. In every society in the precolonial Africa, the utmost concern of the community is to ensure an enduring peaceful relationship within and between societies. The philosophy of this worldview is encapsulated in the phrase, *kanye ndu bowi*, among the Buem-Kator people of the Volta Region of Ghana which translates literally to mean the "ingredients of social harmony" [52]. Among the Yorubas in Nigeria it is referred to as 'aabo ara eni ni aabo ilu' meaning 'an individual's security amount to the aggregate security of the whole society'. These provide ethical and genuine foundation for every means of communal regulations and is put into use through the levying of essential penalty. This could be psyching rewards received by the people for conformity to the accepted mode of behaviour or the feelings of ethical uneasiness and embarrassment experienced by defaulters [53].

Other traditional and IK techniques and methods employed for conflict settlement/adjudication for peaceful co-existence and harmonious relationships [41], by the traditional rulers in the precolonial African societies is reconciliation. This is often used to amicably settle dispute between and among parties, communities, organisations etc. as in the case of boundary delineation exercises, which is usually accompanied by elaborate ceremonies among the Yorubas of Nigeria have a smack of true

reconciliation [54, 55]. This method was also employed by the traditional societies of Pedi, Pondo, Tshwana etc. in South Africa [55–58].

Final settlement of conflict in Africa is often effectively concluded with oath taking, and at times go with ceremonies intended to celebrate the successful completion of the peace process [40, 59]. In some African societies, the mediator use either indigenous kolanut (*cola acuminata*) or palmwine, eats or drinks a part thereof whereupon each disputant repeats the act and any refusal to drink therefrom is a registration of disapproval and non-acceptance of the reconciliation [59, 60]. This was witnessed in the event of the settlement of Aguleri-Umuleri-Umuoba Annam war in the Eastern part of Nigeria. Other objects used for oath taking in Africa include the iron object (sacred to the god of iron, *apasa* (weaving instrument) and *iru* (chiefly sceptre), royal shrine or religious sanctuaries [41]. The wrath of the gods is invoked for drawing facts of the dispute and gods such as *Sango* (god of Thunder), *Yemoja* (goddess of river) and *Ayelala* (guardian of social morality) are used to ascertain the veracity of the story told by disputants as in the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria [61, 62].

In the management of natural disaster in Africa, there are well-preserved traditional IKS in various local communities. This knowledge has been used to observe and forecast weather and climate using acceptable traditional signs disaster prevention and management at the local level. This knowledge has been proven to be useful and effective in predicting occurrence of floods in Swaziland [53, 63]. It has also been seen to be efficacious among the native societies of the Central African region and Northwestern Cameroon [42]. These predictions enhanced by IK, as argued by [38], as simple and cheap compared to modern technologies, have never disappointed the indigenous people. All these mechanisms and strategies are employed by traditional leaders, institutions, and the indigenous societies to ensure effective and good local governance, promote the democratic interests of rural communities and sustainable development at the local level.

Even though modern governance institutions built on some of the existing precolonial structures, the involvement of traditional leaders and the utilisation of (their) IK for ensuring dedication, loyalty and sincerity is totally neglected under the guise of modern religion and civilisation. This is because the colonial interests portray African locals as barbarians without history and regard their indigenous institutions as conservative and archaic [64]. Thus, instead of allocating functional roles and responsibilities to the traditional leaders who have the mastery of administration of their localities, they are given only ceremonial role to perform. This has a lot of implications for democratic governance, its processes, and challenges regarding improvement in the quality of life of the rural poor.

5. Traditional leadership, traditional institutions, and IK: implications for good governance and sustainable African development

To effectively bring into limelight the implications and the propensity of traditional leadership, traditional institutions and IK for good governance and sustainable African development, this paper takes side with the cultural revivalism school of thought settlement. As argued, postcolonial African and its people should implement a more critical transformative freedom agenda capable of completely liberating Africans and that anything short of this in any guise is nothing but continued European cultural domination [65]. Hence, honest, and sincere development that is viable and sustainable in Africa is that which is rooted in African cultural norms. This

viewpoint of the paper is without prejudice to the critics of the cultural revival school that the only way out of African continent's development quagmire is to totally move away from its past to address the critical challenges effectively and urgently according to the exigencies of the present [66].

Consequently, African governments are yet to utilise indigenous leadership and knowledge to promote the democratic interests of rural communities. This can be deciphered from the modern time administration and governance's lack of focus on citizens' welfare while leaders have also become very powerful, despotic, irresponsible, and irresponsible in the allocation of society's socio-economic and political benefits.

One of the most important strengths of indigenous institutions is their general acceptability by all community members and modern government machineries. Others include orderly succession to office in line with customs and traditions. Also, the stable nature of the institutions over time compared to instability that characterises modern/state institutions, and effective checks and balances which largely prevent traditional rulers from being tyrannical or dictatorial. This ensures and guarantee effective system with low governance cost because of the method of oath taken on assumption of office that prevents waste. Rather than taking oath in the African manner, modern political office holders/leaders prefer the use of Bible and Quran which is alien to African faiths and beliefs. This gives them opportunity to perpetrate corrupt practices with impunity as it is witnessed and pronounced in Africa. The political leaders' preference for western religion stem from Africans sayings particularly among the Yoruba culture in Nigeria that '*Mo nbo wa Olorun kii ya ni Ogun odun*' (meaning that it is indeterminable when God will come to give judge). It takes time to expose you by God compare with African gods if you committed an offence. With this belief by those at the helms of affair, the legislature, executive and the judiciary therefore put-up lackadaisical attitude towards the performance of their duties, responsibilities, and people's welfare. Thus, lack of reverence to African gods and deities in the modern-day government as standard for oath taking has been responsible for poor transparency and accountability in governance as well as the provision of infrastructure and basic amenities in the continent. Of import is that indigenous leaders and institutions provide not only resources in terms of cash for development purposes, but it also makes available ideas, initiatives, and influence in support of local level development.

In peacekeeping and maintenance, prevention of crime, total neglect of the role of traditional leaders and traditions have been responsible for the increasing rate of crime and criminality in Africa. For example, it is a taboo to kill a duck among the Yorubas of Southwestern part of Nigeria. Even if this is done by mistake, the killer must put a coin on the duck's mouth. The belief is to instil fear on the killer not to kill a living thing. Someone with this experience will never dare to kill a fellow human being. Thus, if this had been properly imbibed, the recent spate of killings under whatever reason would not have been happening in the continent. Not only this, the rate at which the life of the members of armed forces are being lost during crises and peace keeping operations in the continent would have been reduced if some of the signs and symbols used for various predictions in the traditional societies have been considered.

It will be interesting to also note that most of the recurring conflicts in the continent would have been permanently resolved if the traditional leaders and institutions were allowed to use their native intelligence and informal conflict resolution mechanisms. The modern adjudication process allows for a victor and a vanquish, a situation that promotes enmity because '*a kii ti ile ejo de, kia tun se ore*' (one does not become friend after a court litigation) [67]. All these are attestation to the significance and

utility of indigenous African traditional institutions to solving societal challenges posed by modern-day representative government and governance process. In other words, it shows African traditional institutions and knowledge constitute a vital resource to democratic governance, citizens welfare and sustainable development agenda and transformation.

Consequently, the question that now arises are: in what way can the norms and values entrenched in traditional institutions be integrated with the modern system of governance; what are the impediments? and how can these be surmounted for harmonious utilisation to ensure good governance and sustainable development agenda in Africa.

Opportunities exist for improving, adopting, and adapting the hitherto neglected traditions. For instance, the aspect of traditional values and norms which emphasise good governance can be revived, harnessed, and promoted by the political elites who are increasingly being appointed into the modern governmental system through award of honorary chieftaincy titles.

Traditional leadership, indigenous institutions and knowledge also offer prospects for building a better system by adapting among others indigenous efforts at decentralisation as found in the various African societies, federal arrangements, and other arrangements that allow and facilitate harmonious relationship among people of different parts. That is, to live together in a community by creating or integrating urban and rural resources and elements for constituting or reforming formal institutions for local level development [35].

Oath taking as one of the norms and values entrenched in traditional institutions can be adopted and integrated with the modern system of governance to promote transparency and accountability in governance. This should be implemented in African ways as there is nobody in Africa, even with the prevalence of orthodox religion, without his or her roots in one of the African traditional religions. If governance is about serving people, any refusal to swear to an oath in African way therefore is a pointer or an indication of intention to rule against the wishes of the people.

All these are benefits or value-addition that the reconciliation will make to modern system of government in the search for good governance and sustainable development in Africa. As noted by [68], society is best managed and significant number of efforts and resources can best expended when policy and its processes are within the context of societal history and culture. To build and or strengthen African states therefore requires sincere recognition of its traditional rulers, its institutions and IK as well as adapting to changing realities in the modern-day democratic government and governance in all ramifications.

The above notwithstanding, process of integrating traditional rulers, its institutions and IK is not without its challenges. For instance, the nature of ascendancy and ascription to indigenous political leadership, institution, and offices, in some communities, are restrictive and this limits leadership innovation and ideas. The tendency is also to concentrate power in a few hands. This type of leadership is not completely open in that the political foundation is entrenched in spirituality, divinity, customs, and tradition, which often time involves high level of secrecy that is incompatible with the ethics of modern government. In addition, the temporary approaches to development projects implementation at the local level is suggestive of the indigenous institutions' weak financial/capital base, lack effective managerial skills, and deficient entrepreneurial qualities.

On conflict resolution and administration of justice, the lack of separation of powers in some of the traditional societies can give room for hasty and undemocratic

sanctions with little or no room for review of cases and appeals. The nature of African traditional societies, indigenous institutions and leadership give room to exclusion of women who forms majority of the population from policy and decision-making in some communities.

Other impediments and threats to indigenous leadership and institutions has to do with challenge from state-based institutions, challenges posed by youths, literate and westernised elites especially in societies that cannot easily detach from its socio-cultural and traditional values; as well as challenges from modernization and monetization which are destroying spirit of communalism by encouraging individualism [35].

Regarding IK, although the existing intellectual property laws and legislations in some African countries, South Africa for instance, does not completely safeguard IK systems [69, 70]. This, in many situations opens the IK to misappropriation, exploited without due recognition and acknowledgement of the guardian of this knowledge. This notwithstanding, intensive efforts on behalf of many developing and less developed countries comprising African countries and Indigenous peoples and communities all over the world have shown the significance of IK as key to their participation in the knowledge economy [71]. Specifically, many African countries have made the crucial effort to formulate their own precise legislation, referred to as the sui generis legislation [72]. In South Africa for example, the Intellectual Property Laws Amendment Act of 2013 extend protection to traditional knowledge referred to as IK. Also, in government gazette, 19 August 2019, in Act No. 6 of 2019 provided for the protection, promotion, development and management of IK through the establishment and functions of the National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Office, among other provisions. In Botswana, Part XII of its industrial property Act provides for Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) to traditional communities and practitioners. In Zimbabwe, even though the burden of legally protecting traditional knowledge lies with the state, the country's constitution of 2013 provides for the preservation of traditional knowledge [73].

Thus, in greater dimension, African countries have continued to be proactive in their thinking and actions regarding the symmetry between IK and sustainable development. This is evident through the various international and intercontinental efforts directed to champion the fortification and preservation of IK in serious global instruments over the past years [71]. Some of these legal acts or instruments include the Rio 1992 set of international instruments, especially the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (5 June 1992) 1760 UNTS 69 (entered into force 22 December 1993) and the ensuing protocols, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (3 November 2001) 2400 UNTS 303 (entered into force 29 June 2004), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (4–14 June 1992) 1771 UNTS 107 (entered into force on 21 March 1994) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [74], among other important international human rights treaties and declarations. Other locations include numerous thematic programmes of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) through its Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) and the WIPO Development Agenda [75]. There are other groups of legal materials and noteworthy policy instruments of continental coverage and those that have regional significance across trade, socio-economic, cultural, environmental, and developmental cooperation in relation to IK. These instruments include the Constitutive Act of the African Union; the African Economic Community (AEC); the statutes of the Pan-African Intellectual Property Organisation (PAIPO), the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) and the Organisation Africaine de la Propriété Intellectuelle (OAPI);

the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance; the Revised African Convention on Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; the African Model Legislation for the Protection of the Rights of Local Communities, Farmers and Breeders, and for the Regulation of Access to Biological Resources; the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); the African Union Framework Document on Agenda 2063; Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA); and the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA). Also included are the instruments establishing three (out of eight) representative African Regional Economic Commissions (RECs)—the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC)—and the Swakopmund Protocol on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Folklore [70, 76].

6. Conclusion

The relevance and significance role of traditional institutions to the transformation of African economies and governance systems cannot be overemphasised. Traditional rulers are the closest to the people, and the custodians of the tradition of the people. Traditional institutions and knowledge constitute crucial resources that have the potentials and opportunity to promote grassroots governance and to facilitate access of rural communities to public services. The goal of transformation is to achieve a speedy increase in social wealth and its driving force is economic development. Traditional rulers in Africa are in a privileged and vantage position to accelerate the achievement of this goal, and as such should not be abandoned. Political and economic development would be better attained when rooted in widely shared institutions and cultural values which traditional authorities represent and any system that downplayed this in governance process does so at its own peril. The neglect of unique cultural norms and values embedded in traditional institutions and knowledge in the modern-day African democracy has been the bane of poor governance and warp development at the local level. What then remains is to properly integrate the institution into the continent's contemporary local government system for good governance.

7. Setting agenda for good governance and sustainable development in Africa: policy recommendations

As can be deduced from the preceding sections, the development of African continent remains retarded and unremarkable compared to its potentials because of colonialism. However, given the continent's significant potentials driven by the people's strength and endurance, what then requires is for Africa to pursue its own socio-political and economic development agenda using its endowments rather than borrowed approach [77]. Setting agenda in this regard, effective leadership demonstrated by traditional leadership appears as the foundation for crossing this hurdle. It is the leadership that derives its power, legitimacy, influence, and authority from the traditions of a particular people. Such leadership entails transparency, accountability, and a profound commitment to community's traditions, religion, culture, and values for the people's well-being. The absence of such leadership acts as an impediment to closing the gap between underdevelopment and sustainable development and

obstacle to good governance. In this context, the incorporation of indigenous leadership approach appears as a developmental alternative. In African societies, some culture exists with deep leadership ideas embedded in peaceful co-existence, communalism, and sustainable development. Motivation from these indigenous models, which have survived over-time, gives fresh strength and enthusiasm into development engagements.

Indigenous leadership regularly involves community consent and agreement, advancing the elders' responsibilities, local intelligence, and knowledge, as well as collective or joint decision making. The philosophies of Ubuntu and Ujamaa adopted in many African countries for instance, are concepts that emphasise partnership, collaboration, compassion, communalism, shared support, social justice and equality through community, mutual respect, and brotherhood. This concerted approach echoes with the necessity for joint effort in bridging the gap between underdevelopment and sustainable development and obstacle to good governance. Thus, indigenous leadership models stress complete reasoning, connecting wide range and multivarious factors, reflecting the details of Africa's development challenges [78]. In this sense, indigenous leadership approach can be utilised to fill the vacuum created in Africa's development transformation agenda. This is against the backdrop of the fact that creative and futuristic leaders who embrace and infuse indigenous values can exploit shared understanding and transform it into substantial concrete improvement.

Examples abound around Africa where traditional leadership and its accompanying integration of IK has been utilised for solving their challenges. The Gracia system in Rwanda for example has assisted in facilitating settlement process after the outbreak of genocide war. The system is a traditional form of community justice which helped to use community involvement, recovery, restoration, and responsibility to foster unity and recovery [78]. Also in Botswana, the concept of 'Kgotla' which highlights negotiation or discussion, compromise, and involvement, is in line with the latest values of good governance. It is traditional community approach to joint decision making involving gathering of people. Among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria, there is a 'Council of Elders'. It consists of highly revered people who plays a very significant role in decision making and in the settlement of conflicts among disputants using native intellect. This is with a view to ensuring and promoting peace and cooperation for harmonious community relations.

It should be stated that leadership is not restricted or limited to individuals only, institutions. It concerns both governmental and non-governmental who have critical responsibility to discharge. By entrenching openness, responsibility, and involvement, they jointly facilitate transformation and close the gap between knowledge and practice. Nonetheless, leadership responsibilities exceed individual and institutional frontiers, it is a joint effort. It involves government officials, community leaders, entrepreneurs, educators, among others, each with a vital role to play. Leadership therefore requires acknowledging that development demands joint effort and cooperation, where all stakeholders participate to physically contribute their quota. To facilitate this process of indigenous leadership approach, there is need for profound acknowledgement of the local perspective, traditions, culture, and values. In this respect, solutions can be made and provided to reflect community's needs by identifying the details of challenges within the context of IK. However, this is not without its problems. For example, to surmount the problem created by organisation challenge involves inclusive approach. This entails partnership between traditional leadership structures and modern governance systems. In this context, the focus must be on

fair distribution of resources, resolving historical discrepancies and guaranteeing that development is enjoyed by all and sundry. When this is upheld and advanced, the continent will be able to take advantage of the combined strengths of different stakeholders for enhanced growth and sustainable development.

To this end, a constitutional reform which will bring an end to the legacy of colonial rule with respect to the power of traditional rulers is required in Africa. This will assist in bringing about the institution and all that it entails their lost glory, dignity, respect and prestige from their subjects and societies. The significant importance of the traditional leadership is attested to by the way former military dictators and successive politicians have relied on and used them as tools to mobilise peoples support for their programmes and electioneering campaigns in most African countries.

Creating an unambiguous constitutional role for traditional rulers with transparent mechanisms for appointment, promotion, discipline, and dismissal of traditional rulers for violating constitutional provisions regarding the institution will reduce unnecessary politicking and political interference and improve the institution's performance.

In addition to this, the constitution should mandate all tiers of governments to involve traditional rulers more in local government affairs while their welfare should be considered and be accommodated in the appropriate government's financial plans. This will go a long way to encourage the institution for better performance and insulate it from dabbling into partisan politics and as well preserve and protect its dignity and integrity.

No doubt, indigenous Peoples have struggle for the recognition of their identities, traditions, culture and their right to traditional lands, domains, and natural resources for years, nonetheless records have shown that their rights have always been desecrated. As one of the most deprived and susceptible groups of people in the world, the global community now realises that, given their crucial role in the preservation and transmission of IK, special actions are needed to safeguard their rights and preserve their unique cultures and way of life [79, 80]. This is attested to by their various struggle in the international scene. Despite all these little has been achieved regarding their acknowledgement and acceptance. Given this background and their essential role in the local community as custodians of natural and indigenous resources, and guardians of the lands and areas and collective rights of indigenous peoples globally, much is needed in term of awareness creation through local, national, and international seminars and conferences to further discuss the prospects of IK and the need to preserve them for sustainable development. This can be facilitated through effective collaborations and partnerships with all stakeholders. When this is effectively implemented, it will stabilise them in their conservation role. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, the Bambuti-Babuluko community is at the forefront of the struggle to protect residual zones of primary tropical forest. In Iran provides a good example outside Africa where the semi-nomadic Chahdegal Balouch manage 580,000 ha of fragile scrubland and desert just as Nemonte Nenquimo, leader of Ecuador's indigenous Waorani people, has over many years protect the Amazon Forest from being depleted by miners, loggers, and oil companies [80].

The role of Non-Government Organisation is in the process of acknowledging the efficacy and prospects of IK for sustainable development significant. Their collaboration with the indigenous people and other stakeholders will facilitate effective dissemination of required information to appropriate institutions and organisations. They can partner with the government in policy formulation with respect to indigenous people and knowledge. This was witnessed in in Indonesia and Peru,

where governments and non-profit organisations are collaborating to design suitable forestry policies that give credence and recognition to the land, resource rights, and opinions of indigenous peoples. It also gives communities with land tenure preferences and offers farmers, fishers, and forest-dwellers education in skills and methods to address climate change and forest management [80]. Besides, Non-Government Organisation can work with indigenous people to improve their economic wellbeing. This can be achieved by assisting them to locate new markets for their local products and to expand their source of income to create flexibility and strength for enhance traditional way of life. One important factor in strengthening indigenous peoples is land tenure. Non-Government Organisation are in the best position to fight for this. This can be achieved through securing of Certificates of Customary Land Ownership and its accompanying land tenure system in collaboration with international organisations and development partners.

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Chapter 5

Living the Heritage through Indigenous Music Competitions

Ntshengedzeni Evans Netshivhambe

Abstract

This research investigates the problem that lies in the perception of cultural dance music performance as a practice confined to homelands, resulting in disconnect for individuals in urban spaces, distancing them from their traditional cultures and practices. To address this issue, it is essential to recognize that traditional music should integrate into city life. While competitions are one approach, it is not the sole solution. Government initiatives should be developed to actively promote and encourage cultural dance performances in urban spaces, fostering a sense of cultural identity and unity among city dwellers. Two case studies show a form of resilience between the competitions that are held by the department of basic education in South African and the collaborative approach by three different cultures (Venda, Pedi and Tsonga) in the Northern part of South Africa called Limpopo province that uses cultural performances to reimagine urban spaces that are accommodative of indigenous performances. These two initiatives challenge the controversial policies of separate development that were put in place by the apartheid regime to divide South African black people by culture. The performances bring all black people together where they were expected to live as separate ethnic groups.

Keywords: indigenous music, cultural dance performance, music competitions, social inclusion, urban inclusivity, unifying force

1. Introduction

This chapter delves into an exploration of the rich and diverse cultural tapestry of South Africa, with a particular focus on two case studies, one is the vibrant performance traditions found within the Limpopo province found in the northern parts of South Africa and the other is the schools' indigenous music competitions run by the Department of Basic education. It seeks to shed light on an intriguing phenomenon: the limited presence and influence of cultural expressions typically associated with rural settings in the bustling urban landscapes. In essence, urban areas tend to mirror an urbanized way of life, often detached from the time-honored practices of indigenous communities. Consequently, urban spaces often do not provide a welcoming stage for indigenous musical performances, especially those that involve mass participation. Indigenous music performance competitions serve as a platform for

culture and heritage to flourish in urban spaces. However, when culture and heritage are utilized in competitive contexts among diverse cultural identities solely for their survival, they risk losing their intrinsic cultural significance. The pursuit of victory at any cost in cultural performance competitions often shifts the focus away from preserving cultural essence, instead setting a precedent that one culture can be superior to another. These competitions may maintain fairness when conducted within the same cultural heritage group, but this equity diminishes when extended to various cultural heritage groups.

In response to this cultural disparity, a remarkable collaborative effort has emerged within the northern part of South Africa called the Limpopo province, uniting three distinct ethnic groups: the Venda, Pedi, and Tsonga [1]. They have taken it upon themselves to harness the power of cultural performances as a means to envision urban spaces that embrace and incorporate indigenous practices. This transformative endeavor not only serves to revive these cultural traditions but also acts as a catalyst for unity among the three ethnic groups, bridging the deep divides imposed by the apartheid regime's policies of separate development [2]. The northern area of the South African country is the only province that has three official distinct ethnic groups that live together [2]. The apartheid regime employed culture, heritage, and language as tools to segregate individuals based on their ethnic identities, a strategy commonly known as "divide and conquer" [3, 4]. However, in contrast, these same three ethnic groups are now harnessing the power of culture and music performances to foster unity among themselves.

Central to this initiative is the ingenious repackaging of culture as a valuable commodity. By doing so, this movement invites urban dwellers to join in the celebration of their traditional heritage, fostering a sense of pride and connection to their roots. In essence, it is a bold step toward creating inclusive urban environments that honor and preserve the essence of South Africa's indigenous cultures in realization of the so-called 'rainbow nation'.

This study is rooted in extensive research, encompassing interviews, performance analyses, scrutiny of radio coverage recordings, archival materials, and a comprehensive review of existing literature. Over the years, the author has dedicated a substantial amount of time to actively engage with and observe various indigenous performances, with specific focus on two cases that happen on an annual basis of cultural dance competitions. Notably, the analysis encompasses the performances of diverse groups participating in the Radzambo Cultural Foundation's traditional dance competition and the South African Schools Eisteddfod Choral Competitions (SASCE).

The Radzambo Cultural Foundation's competition holds particular significance in this study. It stands as a testament to the enduring commitment to cultural diversity and unification through traditional performances within the underdeveloped urban landscape of the northern Limpopo region in South Africa. This competition, spanning more than three decades, has served as a vital platform for advocating cultural preservation and fostering unity through traditional expressions. The choral eisteddfod competitions organized by the Department of Basic Education for schools are renowned nationwide in South Africa [5, 6]. Numerous schools enthusiastically compete in a knockout format, with the final champions eventually uniting all the winning schools to determine the ultimate winner. Within their choral competitions, there exists a category known as "folklore music," which is the main focus of this article. In this category, schools showcase cultural performances, complete with their traditional regalia.

The investigation into these two types of indigenous music performances and the meticulous analysis of the music therein have proven to be invaluable resources for this study. In regards to this first-hand engagement, the author has delved into existing literature, focusing on indigenous music performances and exploring the intricate relationship between music and urban live. Moreover, the author's personal involvement as a former leader of an indigenous music performance group, actively participating in various university competitions during undergraduate years, has imbued this study with a deep-seated appreciation for the profound importance of researching cultural dance performance competitions as a potent means of heritage preservation [7]. Through this study, a conclusion is drawn that embarking on a journey to illuminate the multifaceted connections between indigenous performances, urban spaces, academia and the preservation of cultural heritage could be beneficial in people's lives particularly in the area of curriculum development in South Africa.

2. The importance of indigenusness and indigenous art in urban settings

The inadequate integration of indigenous music and performances, rooted in rural traditions, into the urban fabric of cities across the global South where forced migration is prevalent, can be attributed to a multifaceted issue. It encompasses not only the scarcity of indigenous performances within these urban settings but also the urban planning processes themselves. These processes often prioritize the creation of spaces and venues that primarily cater to "culturally hegemonic" expressions, accessible mainly to the affluent, while inadvertently side-lining the rich tapestry of rural-indigenous art. This inherent mismatch not only impedes the progress and development of cities in the global South but also adversely impacts the quality of life for their most disadvantaged residents. It results in a missed opportunity to harness the cultural wealth of these regions and incorporate it into the urban landscape, which could contribute to a more vibrant and inclusive cultural scene. Moreover, it obstructs these cities from constructing new local and national identities that authentically represent the diverse social realities and cultural heritage of global South countries.

In essence, the failure to integrate indigenous performances into the urban milieu not only perpetuates socio-economic disparities but also stifles the creative and cultural potential that could enhance the vitality and identity of these rapidly evolving urban centres in the global South. As Molho et al. [8] stipulate that.

This widespread diffusion of global urban cultural policy models has left its mark on cities throughout the world. Although they generally espouse progressive values, they often drive forward the marketization and the commodification of local culture and lead to increased exclusion of already marginalized communities ([8], p. 116).

Since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution and the aftermath of World War II, the issue of excessive rural-to-urban migration has become a pervasive challenge in many developing nations [9–11], (Zabivora 2004, Yaohui 1999). This phenomenon can be largely attributed to historical factors such as colonization and the deliberate geographic segregation that characterized many communities and Africa being one of the affected continents regarding the imbalances within developing countries. These communities were often fragmented into small, isolated villages, set amidst expansive rural landscapes, and often distanced from the emerging, less prevalent urban centres. Consequently, African communities faced a pivotal choice: remain in

these underdeveloped rural villages or venture into the slowly emerging urban territories. Persistent inequalities, racial disparities, and the dynamics of urban politics consistently hinder the achievement of social cohesion within city spaces. These factors tend to create divisions between the privileged and the disadvantaged, leading to the isolation of economically disadvantaged individuals from their more affluent counterparts [12].

Wolch et al. [13] introduce the term “environmental injustice” to shed light on how the allocation of urban space often exhibits racial and socio-economic biases, driven by factors such as affordability, race, culture, and income. These determinants, in turn, are frequently influenced by underlying demographic patterns [14]. In the realm of urban geography, this inequality manifests itself glaringly: those residing in suburban areas enjoy access to a plethora of amenities, including green spaces, parks, and venues for social interaction, all of which significantly contribute to their overall well-being. In stark contrast, individuals with fewer financial resources find themselves confined to often unhealthy and substandard living conditions [15].

The reality for many of these migrant individuals who arrive in urban centres is one of cramped living spaces, inadequate housing, and residence in townships or informal settlements constructed from natural materials. This precarious housing situation leaves them vulnerable to the dangers of fires and flooding. It is among these marginalized urban populations that a profound longing for their cultural music performances becomes palpable [16]. This desire becomes particularly pronounced when individuals struggle to secure employment, prompting them to turn to music and shebeens as sources of comfort and stress relief, often finding solace through dance and communal music gatherings [17]. The consequences of eradicating or limiting these cultural practices extend far beyond the realm of music and dance. They have a ripple effect on wider socio-economic conditions, as individuals who are unable to find solace in their cultural traditions may turn to vices as a substitute for escapism. This shift can exacerbate social and economic challenges, ultimately contributing to a cycle of hardship and limited opportunities for those who yearn to preserve their cultural heritage in urban settings.

3. Indigenousness in the city as part of a holistic modeling of urban wellness

Despite the well-documented therapeutic benefits of indigenous performances, these invaluable cultural expressions remain a scarce commodity within urban spaces. Morales-Hernández, Urrego-Mendoza Consuelo [18] compellingly argue that the role of music in nurturing well-being goes beyond its therapeutic aspects and extends to various social functions integral to the human experience [19–21]. Music serves as a means of esthetic enjoyment, entertainment, communication, symbolic representation, physical response, and reinforcement, all within the context of societal norms, social institutions, and religious rites ([22], p. 463). Tweed and Sutherland [22] emphasize the significance of cultural heritage in enhancing societal and community well-being, underscoring the importance of including indigenous music heritage in the holistic well-being of individuals. Indigenous music performances have the remarkable ability to forge a profound connection with individuals who, while growing up, may have been separated from their cultural musical heritage due to the necessity of migrating to urban areas in pursuit of employment opportunities. When these melodies resonate within the cityscape, they evoke memories of home and serve as a means to rekindle and affirm a sense of social identity among the listeners [17].

The quality of life in urban settings is intricately linked to a multitude of attributes that collectively contribute to overall human wellness [22, 23]. Recognizing the importance of these “nebulous” disciplines is crucial for those that are responsible for urban planning, particularly in the provision of socially enacted activities that contribute to the comprehensive health of individuals [24]. Too often, the well-being of urban dwellers is seen through the lens of the affluent and privileged, with theaters and auditoriums catering to their musical preferences, such as orchestral and popular music which are afforded affluent venues and spaces to flourish and to keep the people entertained. However, a conspicuous absence exists when it comes to venues for indigenous cultural music performances. Coplan says most people who come from indigenous rural homelands often go to places such as ‘taverns’, shebeens¹ to find comfort about their lives in the cities. He says that

The word ‘shebeen’ itself seems also to have originated in Cape Town in the early twentieth century among immigrant Irish members of the city’s police force. These constables named the illegal black drinking houses shebeens ([17], p. 113).

If we truly consider the well-being of all citizens as a pivotal indicator of well-planned cities, then indigenous music must be integrated into the comprehensive framework of urban wellness. Many impoverished black individuals find solace and therapeutic release in the urban centres they inhabit through indigenous music performances. This form of artistic expression is notably more accessible to a broader demographic when compared to other highly commercialized and exclusive performance genres, making it a source of solace and enjoyment for the majority. Indigenous music has the unique capacity to cater to both lower- and higher-class individuals within the urban milieu. Those with limited financial means can find healing and social well-being through cultural dance performances, thereby reinforcing their sense of cultural belonging and identity in the diverse cultural melting pot of the urban environment. This is particularly significant for the urban poor, who often constitute the majority of the urban population. The term “therapeutic indigenous music,” as elucidated by Aluede et al. [25], encompasses musical expressions that captivate listeners with resonant echoes of their cultural heritage. It encompasses an extensive repository of musical traditions, instruments, dance forms, and language, interwoven with indigenous beliefs and the surrounding traditional environment. ([25], p. 2). People residing in urban settings frequently turn to the music of their upbringing as a means of reconnecting with their cultural identity and enhancing their sense of belonging, leading to increased happiness and well-being. Ensuring their access to live indigenous performances within the urban context strengthens the bridge between rural and urban cultures, fostering greater national cohesion. Embracing one’s culture within multi socio-cultural spaces boosts one’s self-esteem and confidence while restoring dignity and identity particularly for those that have suffered a cultural marginalization [26].

Residing in urban areas introduces a set of health challenges, as the urban lifestyle often discourages physical activity like walking long distances and accessing organic food. Furthermore, the concrete jungles of cities offer limited opportunities to bask in the natural greenery that the natural world provides. Urban living tends to foster a culture of convenience, leading city dwellers toward processed foods due to time

¹ Shebeen is a term that is used in South Africa which refers to a beer drinking shop in township (See Coplan [17]).

constraints that limit their ability to prepare wholesome meals. As daily life becomes increasingly hectic, living conditions may deteriorate, leaving many urban residents with little time or energy to prioritize their well-being [25–28].

This shift toward unhealthy dietary habits has indirect repercussions on indigenous performance practices within urban spaces. Such performances demand substantial energy and typically span extended periods. The urban lifestyle's impact on physical health can translate into reduced energy levels, making it challenging for individuals to engage in vibrant and sustained cultural expressions. These seemingly small acts of cultural activism, such as participating in indigenous music performances, conversing in one's native language, or donning traditional attire, represent tangible commitments to preserving and celebrating cultural heritage and can contribute to a happy and healthy lifestyle [29].

Urban areas are often designed with a cultural hegemony in mind, especially in spaces housing government institutions and major economic centres. As a result, indigenous performances are relegated to the margins, finding refuge in the most informal of community spaces, such as bars and streets, where they serve as a form of entertainment and sometimes even a modest alternative to begging [30]. This stark contrast between the dominance of mainstream culture and the relegation of indigenous expressions underscores the need for a more inclusive and holistic approach to urban planning that values and integrates diverse cultural practices.

Indigenous music performances frequently unfold without due compensation, in stark contrast to other music genres that demand payment for entry into urban venues [31]. This discrepancy becomes even more glaring when we consider music venues with established reputations, such as legitimate clubs, concert halls, and esteemed cultural institutions like theaters and opera houses. These spaces inherently imply that the music presented is a product of intellectual property, warranting compensation. Indigenous performances should unquestionably receive the same respect and financial recognition, as this recognition can pave the way for sustainability, motivating musicians to continue preserving these rich musical traditions.

One of the key challenges is the inadequacy of existing urban venues for accommodating indigenous performances. These traditional expressions often involve mass participation in cultural dances and rituals, necessitating larger spaces. Urban planning should aim to design venues that embrace inclusivity, fostering a culture of communal performances in urban areas. While most indigenous performances in and around cities currently take place in townships and are organized by civil organizations like the Radzambo Cultural Foundation, these efforts often rely on school premises or stadiums due to their open and expansive nature.

In urban settings, where diverse populations coexist, issues of identity, language, and cultural compromise can lead to discomfort and tensions. Dominant cultures tend to exert their influence on cultural performances and language propagation in urban environments, impacting the representation of indigenous performances [32]. The prioritization of dominant cultures in urban spaces can overshadow the value of indigenous expressions in connecting people and preserving cultural heritage. Morales-Hernández and Urrego-Mendoza [18] stipulate that urban spaces must be accommodative of all who live in it because 'it also fulfils other social functions such as aesthetic enjoyment, entertainment, communication, symbolic representation, physical response and reinforcement, in accordance with norms, social institutions and religious rites' ([18], p. 463).

One of the most formidable challenges facing indigenous music performance, as noted by Harrison [33], is the specter of climate change or global warming. This issue

looms large because the survival of indigenous musicians relies heavily on the use of natural materials for crafting their instruments and performance attire [14]. The use of these natural materials is not merely a practical necessity but is deeply embedded in the core identity of their performances and cultural attire. The musicians' connection to the natural world through these materials is profound, and any disruption in the availability of these resources poses a significant threat to their artistry.

Harrison [33] aptly points out that the concept of "sustainability in the arts" may seem somewhat misplaced, as what is sustainable in the arts often pertains to intangible aspects of heritage. Unlike agriculture, where quantifiable proof of sustainability can be provided, defining sustainability in the arts, particularly in the context of endangered indigenous music practices, is more complex. The sustainability of urban spaces, on the other hand, hinges on their adaptability to change (Arhen, 2013). While Tweed and Sutherland [22] argue that urban sustainability planning frequently focuses on technical issues such as energy reduction and environmental pollution, Grant [34] emphasizes the need for a comprehensive review of the sustainability of the arts, especially endangered indigenous music practices.

This review should engage various stakeholders to create opportunities for indigenous performances to establish a defined presence in urban spaces. Such exposure can connect these performers with new networks and relationships, opening doors to fresh opportunities for them to continue pursuing their passion and preserving their cultural heritage in an ever-evolving urban landscape.

While in many ways heterogeneous in experiences and cultural features, indigenous peoples share: a self-identification as indigenous, a continuation of historical pre-colonial or pre-settler societies, strong links to territories and natural resources, a distinctness of social, economic or political systems as well as language, culture and beliefs, a non-dominant position in broader society, and a resolve to sustain their ancestral environments and social systems ([33], p. 28).

The prevailing perspective on indigenous music often tends to be closely intertwined with culturally oriented practices, typically associated with individuals residing in rural communities. This perception holds true across various cultures, where such individuals are often deemed indigenous or aboriginal due to their deeply rooted connection with nature [35]. Their way of life, situated in spaces devoid of structured urban designs, regulated road grids, electrified houses, or comprehensive water and sanitation systems, reinforces the assumption that they rely on natural resources in their daily existence. This reliance extends to the use of natural materials in the creation of indigenous music, forming an inseparable bond between nature and people within these communities.

It becomes paramount, then, to underscore the intrinsic relationship between nature and these communities in the development of urban spaces. The term 'indigenous' often finds itself relegated to the 'rural' realm, partly because it carries associations with underdeveloped, culturally oriented, and less educated populations or those seemingly incongruent with the conventions of mainstream public performance culture [36]. Consequently, any urban planning aimed at accommodating indigenous performances should transcend the mere physical design of spaces and embrace a holistic perspective that considers the ecological coexistence of these communities alongside the natural world.

The incorporation of indigenous practices and performances into urban spaces can yield a plethora of benefits for cities, particularly within the realms of education

and the broader creative arts industry. Indigenous performances serve as valuable educational tools, offering insights into the cultural heritage, traditions, and wisdom of these communities. Additionally, they contribute to the rich tapestry of the creative arts industry, infusing it with diverse and authentic expressions that can captivate audiences and enrich the cultural landscape of urban environments [37]. In essence, recognizing the profound connection between indigenous practices and nature, and integrating this understanding into urban life, not only promotes cultural preservation but also fosters a more inclusive and culturally vibrant urban fabric that celebrates the invaluable contributions of indigenous communities to the broader tapestry of city life [38].

4. Current efforts in the right direction and case study

UNESCO, as a prominent international body, holds a profound stake in the preservation of indigenous knowledge. Consequently, it wields considerable influence and can play a pivotal role in advocating for the inclusion of indigenous performances within urban areas on a global scale. This influence extends to a vast array of countries, particularly those that have entered into agreements with UNESCO, pledging their commitment to the promotion and safeguarding of cultural diversity [39–41]. These governments are bound by the conventions established by UNESCO, which serve as guiding principles for policy change. Non-compliance with these conventions could potentially result in the loss of their participation and membership status. In this regard, UNESCO possesses substantial political clout to enforce policies geared toward the preservation of endangered cultures, especially indigenous ones teetering on the brink of extinction.

Furthermore, UNESCO has made substantial commitments to the promotion of cultural diversity and the protection of intangible heritage, notably through the 2003 and 2005 conventions [39]. These endeavors underscore a mounting concern that the safeguarding of indigenous music cannot be left solely in the hands of village-based researchers, scholars, and practitioners. Instead, governments must rise to the challenge, utilizing urban and environmental planning as potent instruments to influence policy changes. The aim is to ensure that indigenous music finds its place not only within rural communities but also within the bustling heart of urban spaces as they breathe life in city spaces.

When governments actively encourage indigenous practices or establish dedicated urban spaces for these performances, they bring indigenous knowledge into closer proximity with academics and scholars [42]. This proximity fosters a conducive environment for scholarly inquiry, enabling the documentation and preservation of this invaluable knowledge. In essence, UNESCO's involvement serves as a catalyst for bridging the gap between indigenous cultural heritage and the global academic community, indigenisation of urban spaces and reinforcing the imperative of preserving these rich traditions for future generations. Distinguished scholars, dedicated to integrating previously marginalized subjects into academia, must now explore novel methods for incorporating indigenous knowledge within institutions of higher learning [43–45].

Ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, and musicologists have been instrumental in advocating for the indigenous music performances of various local cultural communities, both on a global scale and within the vast academic context. However, it's important to note that their engagement has often remained superficial, primarily

relying on images and pictures of performers and instruments rather than in-depth, participatory involvement in classroom [46]. These scholarly endeavors have shed light on the rich tapestry of indigenous musical traditions, unraveling their intricacies and significance. However, a notable limitation lies in the fact that much of the scholarly discourse remains confined to academic circles, seldom finding its way into the public domain. Consequently, the very communities whose performances have been studied may be unaware of the profound contributions their music has made to the broader cultural landscape. The efforts of academics and researchers to bring indigenous music performances into urban spaces have facilitated a degree of participatory exchange with practitioners. However, this interaction primarily occurs at the institutional level, involving students and performers [42, 47, 48].

Ethnomusicology, as a discipline, stands as a beacon in this regard, steadfastly committed to bringing African music, among others, to the public sphere. Its efforts continue to take myriad forms, as evidenced in the works of scholars like Mapaya [49] and Grant [34]. In the early 1960s, a more refined term emerged, seeking to convey a less pejorative perception of ethnomusicology, and this term was coined as “world music” as described by Feld [50] to encourage researchers to promote indigenous music of other cultures. These dedicated researchers have been driven by a compelling desire to elevate their research beyond the confines of academia, aiming to promote and propagate indigenous music performances within university, urban spaces and the globe. This transformative endeavor has given rise to the emerging sub-discipline of applied ethnomusicology [31], where scholars and practitioners collaborate, forging vital connections that bridge the gap between research and practice [34].

However, it's essential to recognize that researchers can only advocate for policy change through their findings and recommendations. The true impetus for change lies in the hands of others, particularly urban planners and ecologists. By extending invitations to indigenous performers into urban spaces, these practitioners gain access to a broader audience, sharing their invaluable knowledge with a wider spectrum of society [42]. It is incumbent upon urban planners and ecologists to not only take cognizance of this research but also to delve into its potential contributions to the design of urban areas that are inherently accommodating of indigenous music performances. In doing so, they can champion the cause of cultural diversity, fostering an environment where indigenous practitioners can thrive and where the vibrant tapestry of cultural expression enriches the urban fabric.

Researchers and scholars have emerged as pivotal catalysts in fostering a sense of value and recognition among indigenous practitioners—particularly those who have long languished in the shadow of cultural stereotypes within their rural communities. This phenomenon, often referred to as the ‘local appreciation syndrome,’ is characterized by a lack of local recognition and appreciation for indigenous practices, particularly heritage performances. The impact of this syndrome is profound and has been extensively documented in works by scholars such as Rose [51], Barleet et al. [52], Marsh [48], and Kennedy [47].

Indigenous music practitioners often find themselves trapped within the confines of this syndrome, where their contributions go unnoticed or undervalued within their own communities [31]. The perpetuation of this predicament underscores the pressing need for leadership figures particularly those who wield authority and influence over their subjects. Such leaders possess a unique capacity to champion appreciation for indigenous music performances, nurturing a cultural ethos where the embodiment of traditional music becomes second nature. In essence, these practitioners become vessels, carrying their rich heritage forward to the next generation.

However, the ‘ruralness’ associated with indigenous music has become a double-edged sword. The forces of globalization and urbanization have exerted a magnetic pull on young people, drawing them away from their rural roots and, consequently, their music. Unlike their predecessors, today’s youth often embark on their migration to urban centres at an earlier stage, often immediately following high school, as they pursue higher education opportunities in cities. Sadly, the cultural landscape at tertiary institutions frequently lacks robust representation of indigenous practices. This void contributes to the neglect of these vital cultural disciplines, as individuals prioritize studies that promise job security and an improved quality of life, inadvertently distancing themselves from their cultural heritage.

Academics, educational institutions, and various civil organizations possess the unique capacity to wield their knowledge and influence as potent tools for advocating policy change. Their pivotal role transcends mere social status, extending to their profound contributions to knowledge production and research. These entities hold a position of trust and authority within society, thanks to their unwavering commitment to qualitative and quantitative research. This research, in turn, serves as a cornerstone upon which governments base their informed decisions and policy. As Carr and Servon [27] astutely observe, “If local policymakers and planners care about preserving the diverse urban fabric of their neighborhoods, their economic development plans must also maintain vernacular culture” ([27], p. 29). In essence, these academic and institutional pillars contribute not only to the enrichment of knowledge but also to the preservation of cultural diversity within urban spaces. Furthermore, they play a pivotal role in providing a sense of equilibrium and stability to society, as underscored by Quinn [53].

These individuals hold pivotal positions of influence within the realm of urban planning policy, particularly academics with a profound interest in preserving indigenous knowledge. They emerge as key catalysts propelling the agency to advocate for policy change in this domain. This is underscored by their indispensable role in spearheading research expeditions to unearth and document indigenous music knowledge—a process that often necessitates traversing extensive distances to engage with practitioners residing in rural enclaves. These research endeavors are not only financially demanding but also entail a myriad of logistical challenges [42].

However, the academics’ vested interest in championing the cause of indigenous knowledge preservation fuels their unwavering commitment to overcoming these impediments. Their dedication to conducting interviews and research, despite the formidable obstacles, underscores the deep-seated importance they attribute to both promoting and safeguarding indigenous knowledge for educational purposes. Additionally, these academics recognize the manifold advantages of fostering indigenous music within urban landscapes. Chief among these benefits is the enhanced proximity to practitioners, which facilitates their own research efforts.

Institutions of higher learning stand as prominent beneficiaries of indigenous knowledge. These venerable institutions possess rich repositories in the form of libraries, archives, and museum spaces that house a wealth of indigenous music heritage, manifested in various mediums such as artifacts, audio recordings, videos, and visual representations, including sheet music transcriptions. Consequently, these institutions are uniquely positioned to marshal their collective resources and knowledge production capacities, galvanizing advocacy efforts aimed at reshaping urban planning policies.

The collaborative advocacy undertaken by higher learning institutions carries manifold advantages. It not only serves to promote and elevate the profile of

indigenous music within urban spaces but also significantly amplifies access to this invaluable cultural treasure trove. Moreover, this concerted effort stands to benefit the institutions' students, who often grapple with limited access to indigenous knowledge systems due to financial constraints associated with conducting research expeditions in remote rural areas. By fostering the presence of indigenous musicians and their performances in urban settings, access to this profound cultural heritage is democratized, enhancing the academic pursuits and research opportunities of future scholars.

In the context of cultural diversity within urban settings, these influential entities are instrumental in safeguarding indigenous heritage, which can otherwise be eroded or overshadowed. Their collective ability to empower individuals and effect transformative change, as exemplified by academics, educational institutions, and civic organizations, assumes paramount significance in the ongoing discourse surrounding the promotion of indigenous performances within urban landscapes. To create an inclusive and harmonious urban environment that can embrace a wide array of social experiences, individuals must heed Aboutorabi's concept of structuring physical spaces to align with cultural practices [54]. Non-profit civil society organizations, should utilize urban physical spaces as platforms to facilitate cultural practice experiences, particularly in the realm of indigenous music performances.

The Radzambo Cultural Foundation, a civil society organization located in the northern region of South Africa, has emerged as a cultural vanguard with a remarkable ability to influence policy changes within the realms of creative arts and urban planning. Nestled within the culturally rich landscape of the Limpopo province, this organization boasts a storied history spanning over three decades. Its primary mission revolves around the orchestration of traditional dance competitions, strategically situated within urban spaces across the Limpopo region.

The Radzambo Cultural Foundation has not only orchestrated these events but has also forged impactful partnerships, notably with the esteemed University of Venda. This collaboration extends to the meticulous collection of data encompassing all traditional performances featured in these competitions. This extensive, data-driven approach underscores the organization's commitment to evidence-based advocacy, making a compelling case for the preservation and promotion of indigenous performing arts.

Moreover, the Radzambo Cultural Foundation synergizes its efforts with three local radio stations in the Limpopo region—Phalaphala FM, Munghana Lonene FM, and Thobela FM. This collaborative nexus harnesses the profound potential of culture and music performance as unifying forces. As Rodríguez-Sánchez and Cabedo-Mas [55] aptly emphasizes, music possesses the inherent power to bridge divides and reconnect disparate communities. Indigenous music, in particular, has a remarkable propensity to foster mass participation among community members.

By championing the promotion of indigenous music in urban areas, the Radzambo Cultural Foundation not only underscores the intrinsic value of cultural identity within cities but also endeavors to rekindle and reimagine new identities, especially among the youth and children born in urban spaces where such cultural performances have been conspicuously absent. The innovative model endorsed by the Limpopo province serves as a compelling testament to the feasibility of revitalizing indigenous music performances through the dynamic platform of competitions.

The Department of Basic Education assumes a pivotal role in championing the promotion and preservation of indigenous music performances within urban contexts. A notable illustration of this commitment is the spirited competition that

unfolds among various schools, each vying for the prestigious title of the finest folklore performance at the culminating event hosted in the illustrious Rhema Bible Church, situated in the bustling metropolis of Johannesburg. This indigenous performance competition serves as an integral component of the broader choral eisteddfod championship competitions [5, 6, 56].

The exuberant atmosphere of this event offers a poignant reflection of the profound cultural bonds shared by participants and spectators alike. It is a poignant spectacle where fervent ululations and jubilant celebrations bear testimony to the deep-seated connections individuals maintain with their cultural heritages within the bustling confines of the city. The very presence of this dedicated performance space within the urban landscape underscores a profound yearning among people to forge and nurture links with their cultural roots, even when residing in urban environments distant from their ancestral homelands. This yearning for cultural connection serves as a testament to the enduring significance of culture in individuals' lives, anchoring their identities and engendering a profound sense of belonging, even amid the bustling urban milieu where traditions may appear distant but remain vibrantly alive through these spirited performances.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, integrating indigenous music performances into the urban landscape and incorporating their events as a vital part of city life can establish a robust platform for these traditions. Such inclusion is poised to not only amplify but also broaden their influence and resilience, ensuring their continued vitality and relevance. It is imperative that indigenous musical performances receive the same level of recognition and support in terms of dedicated spaces within the urban fabric as other music genres. Just as theaters, arenas, auditoriums, and concert halls play an integral role in fostering social cohesion within urban spaces, providing appropriate venues for indigenous music will contribute to a richer and more inclusive cultural tapestry within our cities. Incorporating indigenous music performances into the urban landscape not only enriches the cultural policy framework but also serves as a catalyst for meaningful social change. This inclusion fosters an environment that promotes cultural diversity and overall well-being for all members of society. To promote the preservation of culture and heritage, it is imperative for the government to proactively foster an environment within urban spaces that encourages increased participation in indigenous music activities. This can be achieved by creating more opportunities for these activities to flourish among urban dwellers.

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Positionality of Native People of Nepal from Indigeneity to Modernity

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Abstract

Nepal's indigenous people's social, cultural, and political status is complex and constantly changing. This study aims to investigate how modernization has influenced the lives of native Nepalese people in areas such as culture, politics, education, customary laws, and lifestyles. Using an interpretive research design based on modernization theory, information was gathered from Barghars (Tharu village chiefs) through in-depth interviews and secondary sources. Westernization and globalization have considerably impacted indigenous Nepalese communities, affecting their cultural traditions and battles for land rights. Despite these influences, indigenous communities in Nepal and elsewhere have shown resilience and creativity in preserving their heritage while adapting to modernity. Collaboration between policymakers, researchers, and community leaders can lead to comprehensive strategies that respect indigenous knowledge, protect rights, and promote the growth and well-being of communities.

Keywords: native people, positionality, indigenous knowledge, westernization, modernization, customary laws

1. Introduction

Indigenous people's social, cultural, and political status in Nepal is complex and evolving. As they transition from traditional ways of life to modernity, their identities, land rights, and representation in governance structures are deeply affected. Nepal's indigenous population is composed of over 125 distinct ethnic groups, according to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) [1]. These communities, including the Tharu, Tamang, Gurung, and Magar, are at a crossroads between preserving their unique cultural heritage and participating in a rapidly changing society. Their diverse languages, practices, and worldviews contribute to their distinct positionality within Nepal.

This positionality is significantly shaped by their struggle for land and resource rights. The United Nations has released a report titled "Report on the situation of indigenous peoples in Nepal" [2]. The report highlights the historical marginalization

and displacement of indigenous communities in Nepal as a result of land seizures and unequal distribution of resources. These communities are now striving to reclaim control over their ancestral lands and implement resource management practices that align with their traditions. This process of transformation is reshaping their position within Nepalese society.

Additionally, the representation of indigenous people in politics is extremely important. Nepal's 2015 Constitution acknowledges the necessity for proportional representation of indigenous groups in different levels of government [3]. This recognition of their unique identity and contribution to the country's diversity shapes their involvement in decision-making processes and policy creation. In summary, the situation of indigenous people in Nepal involves a constant balancing act between preserving their culture, securing land rights, gaining political representation, and adapting to modern changes. Their ability to maintain their identity while engaging with society demonstrates their resilience and desire for a respected place in a changing Nepal. This issue is multifaceted and influenced by various factors such as history, culture, politics, and socioeconomic circumstances.

2. Native people of Nepal

In Nepal, the *Adivasi Janajati* groups are referred to as “indigenous peoples” or “nationalities” by both the government and the groups themselves when interacting with national and international entities. These groups are recognized as distinct from the rest of the population. The term *Adivasi* in Sanskrit refers to the first or earliest settlers, while *Janajati* pertains to population groups that do not belong to the Hindu varna (caste) system. *Adivasi Janajati* is a classification used to distinguish culturally unique groups. These groups' ancestors inhabited regions of present-day Nepal before the arrival of the Hindus centuries ago. These groups have been marginalized from the dominant social and religious hierarchy.

As per the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) Act of 2002, *Adivasi Janajati*, which refers to indigenous peoples or nationalities, are characterized as ethnic groups or communities possessing “their own mother tongue and traditional customs, unique cultural identity, distinct social structure and written or oral history of their own” [4].

According to official records, the Government of Nepal recognizes 59 groups as *Adivasi Janajati*. These groups, which make up an estimated 35.81–50% of the population, are considered indigenous peoples of Nepal. Despite being a significant portion of the population, they have faced marginalization throughout history in terms of language, culture, politics, and economic opportunities. Among the indigenous peoples, the Magar, Tharu, Tamang, Newar, Rai, Gurung, and Limbu are the largest groups.

As per Article 1 (1.b) of the ILO Convention 169, indigenous peoples are defined as those who reside in independent countries and are considered indigenous based on their ancestry from the populations that inhabited the country or geographical region during conquest, colonization, or the establishment of present state boundaries [5]. These people retain their own social, economic, cultural, and political institutions regardless of their legal status. This definition is highly relevant to Nepal since the Hindus fled to Nepal from India in the 11th century and have governed the country's political economy since the 18th century. Scholars from Nepal believe that the term

MOUNTAIN		
1. Bara Gaunle	7. Lhomi (Shingsawa)	13. Thakali
2. Bhutia	8. Lhopa	14. Thudam
3. Byansi	9. Marphali Thakali	15. Tingaunle
Thakali		
4. Chhairotan	10. Mugali	16. Topkegola
5. Dolpo	11. Siyar	17. Sherpa
6. Larke	12. Tangbe	18. Wallung
HILL		
1. Bankaria	9. Hayu	17. Newar
2. Baramo	10. Hyolmo	18. Pahari
3. Bhujel/Gharti	11. Jirel	19. Rai
4. Chepang	12. Kushbadia	20. Sunuwar
5. Chhantyal	13. Kusunda	21. Surel
6. Dura	14. Lepcha	22. Tamang
7. Fri	15. Limbu	23. Thami
8. Gurung	16. Magar	24. Yakkha
INNER TARAI		
1. Bote	4. Kumal	7. Raute
2. Danuwar	5. Majhi	
3. Darai	6. Raji	
TERAI		
1. Dhanuk (Rajbanshi)	5. Kisan	8. Satar/ Santhal
2. Dhimal	6. Meche	9. Tajpuria
3. Gangai	7. Rajbanshi (Koch)	10. Tharu
4. Jhangad		

Figure 1.
Indigenous nationalities of Nepal.

“indigenous” is determined by the factors of “place” and “time.” Whoever is the first to settle in a particular location is considered the “indigenous” group. In Nepal, the majority of the nationalities are considered indigenous and are referred to as “indigenous nationalities.” As per the Indigenous/Nationalities Act of 2002, “indigenous nationalities” are defined as those ethnic groups or communities listed in **Figure 1**, who possess their own unique mother tongue, customs, cultural identity, social structure, and either written or oral history [6]. The 59 indigenous nationalities are listed as follows:

2.1 Historical positionality of native people in Nepal

The position of indigenous communities is closely connected to historical land ownership systems, where traditional ways of life coexisted with the land in harmony. These systems, which are rooted in indigenous perspectives, highlight the strong connection between indigenous people and their ancestral territories. Nepal’s rich history has been shaped by both Hinduism and Buddhism, which continue to significantly impact the country’s culture, spirituality, and social norms [7]. These religious beliefs have added depth to the local experience and cultural heritage. Essentially, Nepal’s past provides a foundation for understanding the complexity of indigenous identity. It showcases the resilience and adaptability of these communities as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of modern life while maintaining their unique identities, cultural heritage, and aspirations for peaceful coexistence in a rapidly evolving world.

2.1.1 Understanding pre-modern indigenous societies in Nepal

Nepal's indigenous societies before modern times were complex ecosystems that incorporated culture, community, and governance with the Himalayan landscapes. They respected nature, spirituality, and shared values and were known for their communal living, rich traditions, and unique governance systems. The Kathmandu Valley's Newar community showcased their cultural diversity through their grand festivals such as Indra Jatra, which highlighted their profound spiritual connections [7]. Social stability was established through their kinship networks, which influenced the roles and relationships within their communities. Meanwhile, their economic livelihoods were based on agriculture, livestock rearing, and craftsmanship. In ancient times, village councils or "panchayats" were responsible for making collective decisions and resolving conflicts. These councils were an integral part of the governance structure. The people of these societies had a deep respect for the natural world and showed reverence for local deities through animism and shamanism. They lived their daily lives deeply rooted in tradition and interconnectedness, showcasing the harmonious integration of culture, spirituality, and governance within their intricate tapestries. In the past, village councils called "panchayats" made decisions and settled disputes. They respected nature and local deities through animism and shamanism; their culture, spirituality, and governance were intertwined.

2.1.2 Indigenous participation in Nepalese politics and governance

The involvement of indigenous communities in Nepalese politics and governance is a significant step toward addressing historical marginalization and promoting inclusive representation. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 recognizes the rights of indigenous communities and aims to ensure their active participation in decision-making processes at various levels. In the recent General Election for the Elected House of Representatives, which had taken place on November 20, 2022, out of the total number of elected parliamentarians, 54% (267) were from the dominant Khas Arya caste group, 25% (41) were from Indigenous Peoples, 27% (28) were Madhesi, 0.6% (1) were from Dalit, and none were from Muslim. It is worth noting that out of the 41 elected Indigenous Peoples, nine were Newar, six were Tharu, five were Magar, five were Rai, five were Gurung, and four were Tamang. However, despite being Indigenous by birth, the elected members do not represent Indigenous Peoples but only the political parties they are affiliated with. Unfortunately, no political party in Nepal is currently advocating for the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

2.2 Influence of external forces on indigenous communities

The impact of external forces, such as colonization and globalization, has deeply affected the indigenous communities in Nepal. These forces, influenced by both historical events and modern trends, have significantly altered the cultural, social, economic, and political aspects of these communities' existence. This extensive study examines the complex effects of colonization and globalization on indigenous communities.

Nepal's indigenous communities were affected by colonialism, despite the country itself never being colonized. The neighboring regions that underwent colonization

brought with them colonial ideologies and socioeconomic changes that spread to the border regions of Nepal. Bista's work in 1967 found that the British colonial rule in India and Tibet's interactions with foreign powers profoundly impacted trade networks, political dynamics, and cultural exchanges within Nepal's border regions [8]. This exposure to external influences resulted in changes to traditional trade routes and sociocultural practices of indigenous communities.

The impact of globalization, marked by increased connectivity and the growth of market-driven economies, has brought both opportunities and challenges to the native communities of Nepal. As modern technologies, media, and market-oriented economies have spread, these communities have become part of global advancements. While this has opened doors to greater access to information and economic opportunities, it has also endangered indigenous cultures from losing their uniqueness and vitality [9].

The influences of colonization and globalization on the indigenous lifestyles of Nepal can be categorized as follows:

2.2.1 Cultural transformation and identity

Indigenous cultural identities have been significantly impacted by colonization and globalization. Western education, religion, and languages introduced during colonization disrupted traditional knowledge transmission systems. Moreover, as Maharjan point out, the prevalence of external norms disseminated through mass media and popular culture as a result of globalization can potentially overshadow indigenous cultural practices and diminish localization [10].

2.2.2 Land rights and displacement

The impact of colonization and globalization on the territorial rights of indigenous communities has been significant. Historical treaties and borders established by colonial powers have influenced the use of land and territorial integrity of these communities. Unfortunately, the pursuit of globalization has often resulted in resource extraction and development projects that lead to land grabs and displacement, disproportionately affecting indigenous groups [11].

2.2.3 Economic changes and inequality

Globalization has affected Nepal, bringing economic changes that impact indigenous peoples. Access to global markets can benefit indigenous entrepreneurs but exacerbate economic inequalities and create socioeconomic disparities due to limited resources.

2.2.4 Political representation and rights

Colonization and globalization have influenced indigenous communities' political representation and rights. Colonization's legacy left indigenous communities marginalized within national political systems [8]. Globalization's emphasis on human rights and indigenous rights movements, often triggered by transnational advocacy, has led to increased awareness of indigenous issues and policy changes at national and international levels [12].

2.2.5 Cultural revitalization and resistance

Although colonization and globalization have posed numerous challenges, they have also sparked cultural revitalization and resistance among indigenous communities. By leveraging global platforms, these communities are proudly showcasing their cultural heritage and asserting their rights [13]. In the face of external pressures, there has been a growing momentum toward reviving traditional practices, languages, and governance systems as indigenous communities strive to preserve their culture.

In brief, the impact of colonization and globalization on indigenous communities in Nepal has been considerable, affecting diverse aspects of their existence, such as cultural transformations and land right battles. Nevertheless, despite the obstacles encountered, indigenous communities have shown remarkable resilience and adaptability in navigating a dynamic world while preserving their identities and rights. Striking a balance between reaping the advantages of globalization and preserving indigenous heritage is crucial for their long-term development.

2.3 Interconnectedness of positionality, indigenous, and modernity

In our rapidly evolving society, it is essential to understand the nuances of terms such as “positionality,” “indigenous,” and “modernity” in order to fully grasp the intricate factors that shape individual and collective identities. These words encapsulate complex ideas that are deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and social contexts, impacting our perspectives on diverse societies and their connections.

Understanding the relationship between these terms is of utmost importance in the context of indigenous communities adapting to the modern society. The manner in which indigenous people assimilate into rapidly changing societies is a reflection of their unique identities and experiences as they navigate contemporary influences. By comprehending their positionality, we can gain a better understanding of the intricacies of their challenges and opportunities, such as their struggles for land rights and endeavors to safeguard their cultural heritage.

The relationship between indigenous communities and modernity is complex. Indigenous communities face the difficult task of preserving their cultural heritage while embracing the modern way of life that has become globalized. This transition requires a delicate balance between cultural authenticity and adaptation to modern realities. While modernity brings benefits such as economic growth, education, and political representation, it also poses challenges such as assimilation, loss of land, and the erosion of traditional knowledge, which can threaten their cultural identity [14].

Navigating their place within modern society poses a complex challenge to indigenous communities in Nepal. Their endeavor to uphold their cultural identity involves the use of traditional knowledge and practices while also incorporating modern elements into their lifestyles. Despite modern education and digital platforms, indigenous languages and rituals continue to be crucial to their culture. This interplay highlights the adaptability of indigenous communities to preserve their heritage while actively engaging in a changing society [15].

In conclusion, a comprehensive comprehension of positionality, indigenous identity, and modernity provides valuable insight into the intricate interplay between tradition and change, self-determination, and adaptation. The trials and triumphs of indigenous communities in contemporary environments showcase their resilience

and expertise in successfully navigating the complexities of a globalized world while simultaneously upholding their distinct cultural identities.

2.4 Indigenous identity and heritage

Nepal is home to a diverse range of indigenous groups, each with their own unique contribution to the country's cultural landscape. The National Statistics Office reports that there are over 125 different indigenous communities in Nepal. The Tamang community, with a population of around 1.7 million, primarily resides in the central and northern regions. The Sherpa community, known for its mountaineering legacy, has a population of approximately 150,000 and inhabits the high Himalayas. The Gurung community, with approximately 543,000 members, resides mainly in the Annapurna and Manaslu regions. The Tharu community, with a population of around 1.8 million, is located in the Terai plains and is known for its unique languages and cultural practices. The Newar community, with approximately 1.3 million people, resides in the Kathmandu Valley [16]. These indigenous groups, among others, contribute to Nepal's diverse cultural tapestry, each preserving their languages, traditions, and heritage while navigating the complexities of modernity.

2.5 Challenges in preserving indigenous identity amid modern influences

Preserving indigenous identity in the face of modern influences is difficult. Globalization, urbanization, and technology can introduce foreign values and practices that threaten traditional ways of life. Indigenous communities in Nepal and elsewhere face these challenges in maintaining their cultural heritage and self-governance.

2.5.1 Cultural erosion and homogenization

One of the major challenges that traditional cultures encounter is the steady erosion of their customs. The widespread exposure to global media and popular culture has led younger generations to adopt mainstream values, disregarding indigenous ceremonies, dialects, and artistic expressions. Furthermore, the transition from spoken traditions to written languages can displace indigenous tongues, resulting in the forfeiture of intricate indigenous [17].

2.5.2 Land dispossession and displacement

Globalization can harm indigenous communities by displacing them from their ancestral lands and erasing their traditional knowledge tied to specific landscapes. This loss can have devastating impacts on their cultural, spiritual, and personal identity.

2.5.3 Empowerment and self-determination

The United Nations recognized in 2007 that the preservation of indigenous identity is intricately tied to the pursuit of self-determination and political representation. Indigenous communities frequently encounter difficulties in asserting their rights in nation-states that prioritize dominant cultures and economic interests. As a result,

they face the challenge of securing acknowledgment, independence, and the ability to make choices in accordance with their cultural beliefs.

2.5.4 Resilience and strategies for preservation

Indigenous communities are truly remarkable in their ability to adapt and preserve their rich culture despite facing numerous challenges. Their perseverance shines through initiatives such as language revitalization, cultural education programs, and adaption of traditional practices to modern contexts. It is incredibly inspiring to witness their efforts to use modern technology to preserve their oral histories and traditional knowledge, which are gaining momentum. Their dedication to their heritage is truly commendable, and we are fortunate to learn from their wisdom and experiences. In Nepal, the Tamang Language and Culture Preservation Committee has taken steps to promote their language and traditions through schools and community events. Similarly, the Tharu community's engagement in ecological research that fuses traditional knowledge with modern conservation strategies regarding agriculture showcases a way to harmonize traditional wisdom with contemporary challenges [18].

Despite modern influences, indigenous communities in Nepal and elsewhere are finding ways to preserve their heritage while adapting to modernity. Their resilience and creativity demonstrate a strong dedication to their distinct identities and cultural traditions in a rapidly changing world.

2.6 Shifting from indigeneity to modernity

Urbanization and globalization have disrupted indigenous communities' traditional livelihoods and resource management practices. When these communities move from subsistence-based economies to urban environments, their traditional agriculture, hunting, fishing, and craftsmanship practices can be negatively affected. Many young people are attracted to urban wage labor, which can lead to a disconnection between indigenous people and their ancestral lands. This can cause the loss of traditional ecological knowledge related to resource management, as the deep understanding of local ecosystems is not passed down from one generation to another [15]. Globalization can disrupt indigenous resource management practices when communities engage in extractive industries or unsustainable practices to meet external demands. This disruption undermines cultural cohesion and threatens the balance between indigenous communities and their environment, endangering their sustainable resource management systems [19].

The interplay between modern education and indigenous knowledge systems in Nepal is complex, requiring a delicate balance between adopting innovative teaching methods while safeguarding ancient wisdom. As modern education gains ground, there are noticeable shifts in the way indigenous knowledge is viewed, transmitted, and assimilated into contemporary culture.

The perception toward the traditional social organizational system (Barghar System) of Tharu community, the fourth-largest population of Nepal, the selection procedure of the system, and the actors in the system are changed due to the formal education system of Nepal. Most Tharu people are getting education day by day and obtaining the mainstreaming traditions, culture formal school system, as well as social media. Generally, there are Barghars (village chief), Likhandariya (secretary), Guruwa (The Tharu priest), Chirakya (the messenger), Chaukidaar (watchman), Lohra (blacksmith), and Darjiwa (Tailor). The perception toward all the actors of

Aspects	In ancient time	Present time
Perceptions	Village chief	Village leader
Actors of the system	Barghars (village chief), Likhandariya (secretary), Guruwa (The Tharu priest), Chirakya (the messenger), Chaukidaar (watchman), Lohra (blacksmith), Darjiwa (Tailor).	Vice-Barghar like vice president is included, Chirakya (the messenger) and Chaukidaar (watchman) is combined, Lohra (blacksmith) & Darjiwa (Tailor) are optional.
Role of the actors	Judiciary, leadership, administrative, planning and development, rituals and unity	Domination of local representatives and limited to judiciary, rituals, and unity.

Table 1.
Perceptions of the Barghar system within the Tharu community.

the customary laws has been changed; i.e; mostly male household heads have participated in the system, but nowadays, female household heads can be seen in the Tharu community. Similarly, female village chiefs and other actors are also elected in some Tharu villages. Not only is the selection phenomenon the common consensus of the villagers, but also the voting system is adopted in some villages. The role of the actors is overtaken by the local representatives of the local government. This can be summarized as follows in the **Table 1**.

2.7 Impact of modern education on indigenous knowledge systems

In Nepal, modern education can equip indigenous youth with essential skills, literacy, and economic and social growth prospects. Nonetheless, it also presents difficulties in upholding indigenous knowledge due to its emphasis on dominant languages, cultures, and curricula that may contradict traditional practices. Our analysis focuses on the effects of modern education on indigenous knowledge systems in Nepal.

Formal learning settings in modern education differ from indigenous ones. Indigenous knowledge is commonly transmitted through experiential learning, oral traditions, and community engagement, whereas modern education emphasizes classroom-based, text-centric learning. The current change may result in the exclusion of indigenous knowledge and restrict its dissemination. Along with this, modern education predominantly uses dominant languages in instruction, which can lead to language shifts and the erosion of indigenous languages. Modern education may prioritize skills relevant to urban and formal sectors, causing a decline in traditional skills and knowledge related to subsistence agriculture, natural resource management, and craftsmanship.

Bilingual and multilingual education models are being promoted to ensure that indigenous languages remain relevant. These models allow indigenous students to learn in both their mother tongue and the dominant language, fostering a sense of cultural identity while gaining modern education. Thus, the impact of modern education on indigenous knowledge systems in Nepal is a nuanced interplay between adaptation and challenges. While modern education offers opportunities for advancement, it can also lead to the erosion of indigenous languages, practices, and ways of knowing. Efforts to integrate indigenous knowledge into education, promote bilingualism, and empower indigenous communities to shape their education can help balance modernization and cultural preservation.

2.8 Resilience and adaptation among native people

The indigenous communities in Nepal have shown incredible resilience in the face of cultural change. They have adapted to changing circumstances while still preserving their unique identities and traditional practices. These stories of resilience highlight the strength, innovation, and unwavering dedication of Nepal's indigenous people to maintain their cultural heritage despite modern challenges.

There are many stories of indigenous resilience in Nepal that highlight the impressive determination of these communities to protect their cultural identities amidst cultural shifts. Through asserting their rights, adopting new technologies, and combining traditional practices with contemporary contexts, the indigenous people of Nepal prove that they can flourish while still honoring their heritage. These inspiring stories encourage us to appreciate and support the resilience of indigenous communities, recognizing their valuable contributions to Nepal's diverse cultural fabric.

2.8.1 Story 1: The Tharu Community's land rights struggle

The Tharu indigenous community has a strong bond with the forests and rivers of the Terai region. Unfortunately, development projects and encroachment have threatened their way of life and caused their displacement. Tharu activists have taken action to fight for their land rights and the protection of their traditional territories to address this issue. Their unwavering advocacy efforts have resulted in the creation of Tharuhat as an autonomous region, which safeguards their land and cultural practices [20].

2.8.2 Story 2: Indigenous youth promoting traditional music and dance

Indigenous youth from different communities, such as Newar, Gurung, and Magar, are leading the way in preserving and promoting traditional music and dance forms. The Newar musical culture, which was once believed to be a timeless tradition that has lasted for hundreds of years, is now going through major changes in both content and context due to media, migration, and modernization. In a short amount of time, there has been a noticeable rise in female involvement in traditional music, as well as a reduction in caste barriers. Some traditional musicians are also starting to monetize their work. Changes in repertoire, playing style, instrument modifications, and fusion with other musical genres and instruments have transformed the music [21].

2.9 Strategies for preserving core values while adapting to modern circumstances in Nepal

In Nepal, there is a growing realization of the significance of preserving indigenous cultures and wisdom in modern educational frameworks. As a result, there are efforts to incorporate traditional knowledge into formal education systems. These initiatives strive to bridge the gap between traditional practices and contemporary learning, thereby ensuring the continued thriving of indigenous knowledge. Here, we explore notable efforts and their impact.

2.9.1 Curriculum reforms and inclusion

Nepal's national curriculum for school education 2019 includes provisions for integrating indigenous knowledge, culture, and values into formal education.

The framework emphasizes the inclusion of local contexts, languages, and knowledge systems in textbooks and teaching methods [22].

2.9.2 Multilingual education (MLE) programs

MLE programs in Nepal focus on teaching indigenous children in their mother tongue, helping to bridge the gap between their cultural backgrounds and formal education. These programs recognize that learning in one's own language enhances comprehension and cultural preservation [23].

2.9.3 Cultural resource Centers

Numerous schools in Nepal have established cultural resource centers that serve as hubs for indigenous knowledge. These centers host workshops, exhibitions, and seminars on traditional practices, crafts, and ecological wisdom, enriching the educational experience.

2.9.4 Teacher training and capacity building

Efforts have been made to train teachers in indigenous communities to integrate traditional knowledge into their teaching methodologies. Equipped with both modern pedagogies and indigenous insights, teachers can create culturally relevant learning experiences [23].

2.9.5 Ethnographic documentation and textbooks

Collaborations between researchers, indigenous experts, and educators have resulted in ethnographic documentation and the creation of textbooks that reflect indigenous knowledge. These resources serve as valuable references for students and teachers alike.

2.9.6 Cultural exchange programs

Interactions between indigenous elders and students are organized as part of cultural exchange programs. These programs enable direct engagement with traditional practitioners, fostering experiential learning and a deeper understanding of indigenous knowledge.

2.9.7 Community-driven initiatives

Indigenous communities themselves have initiated efforts to integrate their knowledge into education. Elders and traditional practitioners play active roles in curriculum development, ensuring the accurate transmission of cultural values and practices.

2.9.8 Recognition of informal learning

Efforts are underway to recognize informal learning settings, such as community gatherings and cultural events, as valuable sites of knowledge transmission. This acknowledgment enhances the status of indigenous knowledge within formal education.

The endeavors to incorporate traditional knowledge into formal education systems in Nepal highlight the significance of cultural conservation and inclusiveness. These initiatives encourage native communities to take part in molding their education, ensuring that their knowledge and customs are not only safeguarded but also acknowledged within contemporary learning environments.

2.10 Importance of intergenerational knowledge transfer in Nepal

Intergenerational knowledge transfer is crucial for maintaining traditional practices that are deeply embedded in Nepal's indigenous cultures. The skills and rituals associated with agriculture, handicrafts, and healing practices are passed down through generations. Indigenous knowledge about climate patterns, local ecosystems, and natural resource management is invaluable for adapting to changing environmental conditions in Nepal. This knowledge is often shared through oral traditions and must be transmitted to younger generations [24]. Intergenerational knowledge transfer empowers young people to engage with their cultural heritage and actively participate in the preservation of their identity. Youth involvement in traditional activities fosters a sense of pride and ownership [23].

2.11 Future prospects for indigenous communities in Nepal

Sustainable Development and Livelihoods: The future for indigenous communities in Nepal hinges on sustainable development that respects their cultural values and traditional knowledge. Integrating indigenous perspectives into development planning can lead to more resilient livelihoods, incorporating modern and traditional practices.

In the future, there will be ongoing efforts to revive and promote indigenous languages, arts, and practices in the education system. Collaborations between community-led initiatives and educational institutions can ensure the integration of indigenous knowledge into curricula while empowering younger generations.

2.12 Recommendations for policymakers, researchers, and community leaders

- Policymakers should involve indigenous communities in policy formulation to align with their values, aspirations, and sustainable development goals.
- Collaborating with indigenous experts, researchers can help preserve traditional knowledge, languages, and practices while respecting ethical and cultural considerations.
- Indigenous institutions safeguard cultural heritage and manage resources. Building their capacity ensures effective representation and voice of indigenous communities.
- Collaborations between indigenous experts, researchers, and practitioners can lead to holistic solutions by integrating indigenous knowledge with modern science.
- Development projects should take into account the cultural sensitivity and needs of indigenous communities while emphasizing the coexistence of modernization and traditional values.

- Advocate for the integration of indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage in formal education to promote cultural pride, empower youth, and preserve traditional wisdom.
- Prioritize active engagement with indigenous communities in development projects, respecting their expertise and insights.
- Collaborate with schools, communities, and language experts to revitalize indigenous languages and preserve cultural identity.

The future of indigenous communities in Nepal relies on sustainable development, preservation of culture, and inclusive policies. Collaboration between policymakers, researchers, and community leaders can lead to comprehensive strategies that respect indigenous knowledge, protect rights, and promote the growth and well-being of communities.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter comprehensively explores the complex relationship between tradition and modernity in indigenous Nepali communities, revealing key findings and insights. This study delves into the intricate and ever-changing connection between tradition and modernity in Nepalese indigenous communities. By applying a multifaceted approach, many more significant discoveries and perspectives were made. Indigenous people in Nepal have a deep connection to their ancestral lands and a rich cultural diversity. They have demonstrated impressive resilience in the face of cultural changes, adapting traditional practices to modern circumstances while striving to uphold their core values. The transfer of knowledge between generations has become crucial for ensuring cultural continuity and sustainability. Indigenous wisdom, including traditional practices, ecological knowledge, and language, acts as a repository of ancestral heritage that enhances the lives of younger generations. It is vital to preserve indigenous languages, which are often at the brink of extinction, as a fundamental strategy for maintaining cultural identity.

In addition, this chapter discusses how Westernization and globalization have impacted indigenous communities. These external factors have brought about obstacles and chances for change, influencing how indigenous populations interact with modern society. Though traditional ways of life and resource management have been disrupted, these external influences have also allowed indigenous people to become involved in politics and governance. Nepal has a range of indigenous groups, each with their own distinct traditions, languages, and customs. These communities, including the Tharu, Tamang, and Gurung, have developed different methods of preserving their cultural values while also adjusting to modern times.

Language, traditional knowledge, and cultural practices have been emphasized in preserving indigenous identity. Indigenous languages are especially crucial for education, preserving culture, and managing resources sustainably. It is believed that incorporating traditional knowledge into formal education systems is a vital step toward cultural preservation and empowerment. Preserving indigenous identity in the face of urbanization and globalization requires innovative approaches to balance tradition and modernity, as these processes disrupt traditional livelihoods and resource management.

To sum up, the interaction between tradition and modernity in Nepal's indigenous communities is complex and includes resilience, adaptation, and a strong dedication to preserving their culture. This chapter highlights the need for ongoing discussions and research on how these communities transition in Nepal. Recognizing that these communities are leading global efforts to merge the past and future is important. The dynamic relationship between tradition and modernity is not a simple choice, but a continuum where indigenous communities in Nepal and beyond can continue to chart their path toward a more sustainable and inclusive future. In conclusion, the intricate interplay between tradition and modernity within Nepal's indigenous communities is multifaceted, encompassing resilience, adaptation, and a steadfast commitment to preserving their cultural heritage.

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Indigenous Rituals, Panacea for Peace Building, Conflict Management and National Development in Africa

Ude Bassey Obeten

Abstract

Africa continent has a long and complex history and a sociocultural ecosystem imbued with ritual practices that make it particularistic and distinct from the rest of the continents and this has not been appreciated by the global community. Africa as the second largest and second most populous continent after Asia in both respects in the world accounts for about 18% of the world's human population and is endowed with many indigenous spectacles' diversities of cultural ritual practices heritage, and spiritual activities. Despite the rich cultural heritage and ritual practices, Africa has remained a hub for conflict in the world's psycho-political, religious, and economic map. These ritual practices form a matrix in promoting communications, fraternity, and integrations for indigenous self-dignity and identity creation, and collectively convoke a sense of commonality reinforcing social, economic, and cultural ties, and mutually sustaining orientations for enhanced peace-building initiatives, conflict management, and resolution, and a panacea for national cohesion and development within the African space.

Keywords: indigenous, rituals, peacebuilding, conflict management, national development

1. Introduction

Africa as a continent has several complex multifaceted institutions that have lasted over time, adapting to changing contexts while retaining the core content and functions; holding historical cultural significances and indigenous ritual practices. Africa is endowed with rich indigenous rituals, culture and heritage, and spiritual activities. However, the continent has remained a hub for conflicts in the world's psycho-political, religious, and economic map of the world [1, 2]. Ritual practices are abstract and reified notions of religion with no consensual definition [3]. Cultural beliefs and practices find expression through rituals, rites of passage or initiation are some most common ritual practices in Africa. Africa is a multi-ethnic and diverse group, language, rituals, and cultural practices are obvious and symbolic in all activities

and actions. Africa could be considered a ‘paradox—victorian plenty’, while poverty engulfs the continent. In 2023 alone there are five Military coups and takeovers in Mali, Niger, Congo, Gabon, and Guinea, while Nigeria, Cameroon, Liberia, etc. are riddled with terrorism and religious conflicts farmers and pastoralist conflicts etc. This goes to say that, Africa can be characteristically described as ‘*Zeus pandora’s box*’ mixed and grilled with continued conflicts, poverty, hunger, disease, civil disturbance, military insurrections, guerrilla warfare, war of attrition, revolt domestic rebellions, corruption, bad leadership, religious intolerance, terrorism, social unrest and political instability which can be seen across Africa, creating humanitarian crises and emergencies which has an adverse effect in peacebuilding and national development as noted by the United Nations High Commission for refugee [4].

The continent of Africa has a long and complex history and sociocultural ecosystem imbued with indigenous ritual practices that make it particularistic and distinct from the rest of the continents. Africa accounts for about 18% of the world’s human population making it the second largest and second most populous continent after Asia in both respects in the world, and is endowed with many indigenous spectacles and diversities of cultural and religious ritual practices giving it a unique heritage [5]. These African ritual practices form a cementing matrix in promoting communalism, mutuality, communications, fraternity, and integrations for indigenous self-dignity and identity creation, that collectively convokes a sense of commonality that reinforces social, economic, and cultural ties, by mutually sustaining orientations for enhanced peace-building initiatives, conflict management and resolution, national cohesion, and development [6–8].

In its aboriginal nature, Africa and Africa have developed different mechanisms to address and resolve conflicts, security challenges, and development. The values of truth, trust, communalism, sense of identity, democratic ideals, and good governance have significantly influenced the use of rituals in almost all facets of African life because every individual is conscious of the negative implication of failing to keep to terms with the rituals, and taboos. That is why, not much of her conflicts were known not until the invasion of the continent by the Western world. The de-copulation, plundering of African traditional and indigenous economy, social system and technology, religion, and cultural ritual, and the introduction of Christianity and Islam around the nineteenth century gave way to massive exploitation of natural resources and labor force for the accumulation of capital to be reinvested in Europe. This in its true sense affirms that Africa as a continent had a meaningful past before the invasion of the colonialists. African traditional economy was driven by taboos and ritual performance that were cultural obligations and carries with it, serious sanctions and punishment in the event of failure or violation. It is the invasion of the African continent by the so-called European new reformers that hampered the economic, social, and cultural progress in the colonized territories and introduced obsolete forms of social relations that were alien to the natives, thus creating discord between the nationalities and tribes through the implantation of political, economic, military and cultural hegemony. This hegemony has equally contributed in no small measure to undermining Africa’s socioeconomic and religio-cultural development, by the ordering of African cultural, political, religious, and economic features as well as promoting the worst form of alienated individualism, conflicts without a corresponding social responsibility (Rodney). Africans hold tenaciously to their beliefs and practices and observance of rules, customs, and laws are primarily informed by the taboos, cultural and rituals practices, forming moral codes and ethics that hold the society and promote interconnectedness and mutuality [9].

2. Conceptual clarification-African ritual practices

Rituals are cultural emblems of groups or classes' distinctive way of life. This means, ideas of group embodied in institutions, social relations, systems of belief, mores and customs, the use of objects and material life [10], enigmatic organization of societies, cults, and cultural or religious sects providing valuable insight in all human interactions and relationships. Ohaja and Anyim [3] and Kyalo [11], noted that in African cosmology, ritual practices are routine and symbolic actions and repetitive activities through which connections are made with what is considered to be the most valuable dimension of life. According to Mkenda [6], religion and ritual practices are an aspect of the superstructure of a society. Thus, rituals are features of culture and a variant tapestry of African society. African societies are embroiled in religious and cultural rituals and are collective and integrative elements and forces in all ramifications of the economy, spirituality, and socio-cultural features. Whenever rituals are performed in any community, they affect everybody in the community [12], which means rituals take the force of society and affect every facet of society's development. Rituals to Africans engender group cohesion and collective consciousness of the people. This assertion according to Hogan [13] and Hinniells [14], views ritual as practical aspects of the cultural and religious life of the people whose admissibility promotes behavioral change, conformity, and socioeconomic drive within the given society. Hogan further asserts that these rituals express sacred values that are harnessed to promote communalism, mutuality, and a sense of commitment and responsibility in terms of association, communication, relationship, trading, and development. African like any other race are social and ritual animals and therefore cannot be separated from it Hinniells [14]. There are both public and private rituals; Public rituals are collective community rituals used to celebrate important events in the social, spiritual cultural, and economic life of the society. It is pervasive and permeates all aspects and facets of a community's life.

Etymologically, the word or concept of 'ritual' is derived from the Latin word *ritus*, which means "customs" or "rites", "repeated activities and actions that are always carried out in the same way, and to great extent is part of religious and cultural ceremonies" [15]. It is a repeated set and series of action, social and cultural activities rooted in common and shared values. The Oxford Advanced Dictionary [15, 16] defined rituals as symbolic actions concerning the supernatural beings and the mystical; "actions that are always carried out at particular fixed times, especially as part of religious or other ceremonies. Also, Kyalo [11], Sen [17] and Mbiti [18] noted that ritual is a dramatization of ideals, values, and expectations; a bridge between ideas and practical daily life and culturally-modeled symbolic action, which bears enduring sign and image of a particular culture with its collection and aggregation of values and beliefs. Etim observed that rituals are symbolic and patterned action expressed and communicates some hidden, mysterious and untraceable realities with unknown qualities that would otherwise have remained hidden and unable to express. This explains why it is mostly used in religious activities and ceremonies as a way of bridging the gap between the sacred and the profane. Embedded in rituals too are the answers to esoteric, supersensual and metaphysical questions like the existence of God, the problem of evil and deity, how does healing take place, reproduction, the nature of the soul, life after death, the nature of man, the nature of reality, etc. [11, 19]. It confers status and has a transforming role that is metaphysical, and avenue for making present-in-time and space actions that are futuristic; tacitly providing ground for conquering space and empowering man in his desire to control nature for his advantage [11, 19].

According to Mbiti [18] and Lewis [20]; rituals in African cosmology are performed for certain and specific purposes, events, and time characteristically, such as fertility, farming season, success or failure, illness, productivity, harvest [new yam, festivals] among the Yako [Yakurr] of Southern Nigeria, Fishing ‘*agungu*’ and ‘*Eso*’ festivals among the Yoruba of the Western Nigeria, west Africa, also in the Central Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Camerron, Burundi, Zambia, Ghana, Uganda and Malawi etc. The West and Central African ritual and religious practices generally, manifest themselves in communal ceremonies or divinatory and preternatural means and rites in which members of the community, are overcome by force [or *ashe*, *nyama*, etc.] [2]. One religious ceremony practiced in Gabon and Cameroon is the ‘*Okuyi*’, practiced by several Bantu ethnic groups to elevate their consciousness [11]. The people in these countries who follow traditional religious practices often venerate ancestors through rituals and worship the land or a “divinity” through “religious cults” or “ancestral and shrine cults”, respectively for certain and various outcomes [2]. It is important to note that within the African continent traditional religious practices are similar in all attributes and form and this is what make Africa unique and cohesive (**Figures 1–3**).

These rituals are offered as a means of appeasement, atonement, thanksgiving, celebrations of chieftaincy and title awards, wealth, birth, marriage, death, and during initiation ceremonies to age grades, associations, cult groups, illness treatment, divination, etc. However, these rituals have purpose-driven contents that cause the individual and group members to conform to the codes and ethics that, invariably promote cohesion, love, peaceful coexistence, respect, order, discipline,



Figure 1. Maiden girls’ rite of passage ritual among the Yakurr people of southern Nigeria. This is a cultural ritual practice that prepares young girls for adulthood. It is ‘*Ekoi*’ dance to usher-in the new yam festival. Picture taken 2023. Ude Obeten, 2023.



Figure 2.
A young man Moving to the ritual arena for fertility and adulthood initiation rites in Ekori-Yako 2023.
Ude Obeten, 2023.



Figure 3.
This is a new yams ritual arena where rituals for fertility and productivity are performed among the Ekori-Yakurr people of southern Nigeria.

responsibility, trust, and harmony in the society [6, 11]. All these are placed in ritual values, that drive and promote social and economic growth, and development among the group members and society. Rituals engender love and eliminate hatred, distrust, and criminality in business relations. That is why Africans hold them in high esteem as sentiments of corporateness, shared values, commitment, mutual understanding, and communal living are consolidated and enthroned giving rise to a peaceful atmosphere for businesses to strive, friendship ties are strengthened and bonds are established [12]. Charles, further asserts that rituals enact and restore harmony and the spirit of our ancestors are summoned and appeased for the good of the community while sublimity thereof, enhances peaceful coexistence and harmony. Ritual practices facilitate better control and transformation energies into positive, culturally appropriate behavior, thought, and speech and can give rise to and provide insight into appropriate directions that the individual and community might take

in accomplishing its goal. These practices are common among the Igbo, Yoruba, and Nupe people of Nigeria and other culturally similar countries in Africa.

3. Peace building and conflict management

Peace is the most widely desired human condition after security and safety. It is a political condition that ensures justice, equity, fair play, and social stability, through formal and informal institutions, norms, and practices that promote mutual coexistence and sustainable development in society. On the other hand, conflict is man's unending affliction is endemic to human society, and often occurs between and among individuals and groups [21]. Therefore, the management of conflict is very important for human coexistence and can be attained through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and adjudication. For example, in Igbo land in Southern Nigeria whenever there is a conflict, dispute, or criminality the suspects are said to swear in an open arena, or they are shared pieces of meat by the '*Umumna*' People of the clan to eat, and it is expected that within a couple of minutes and days, the culprit will confess to the crime. While among the Yoruba of Nigeria, Mali, and the Benin Republic whenever there are marital disputes or sexual immorality the *Ifa* priest or diviner performs '*magnum*' ritual invocation which causes the culprit's inability to separate after sexual intercourse and the penis to get stuck in the vagina, a condition called [penis captivus or vaginismus]. This is one reason that there is a relative level of promiscuity and infidelity, as well as a reduced level of marital and family disorganization. These practices abound in almost all indigenous African societies and are applied to almost all facets of life. Among the Yakurr [Yako] Ejagam, Mbembe of southern Nigeria, and Yaoundé, Manfe, and Duoala of Cameroon. it is easier to identify a criminal through alligator pepper, and broom rituals. This ritual practice allows the suspect to sit on a stool while the priest performs the ritual, the broom gets stuck on the culprit's neck, or the pepper stuck on his eyes until confession. This makes it easier for the criminal dispensation of indigenous justice and reduces the incidence of crime and time wasted by law enforcement agencies and of government. There is generally a feeling of commitment and a sense of bonding as a result of these ritual practices among the people.

However, African Africans' sense of commitment is anchored on the '*Ubuntu philosophy*' ['I, we exist because you exist'], which beliefs so much in the efficacy of ritual performance and oath-taking towards conflict resolution and management. Once the oath is administered there is usually absolute peace among the consenting individuals and communities. The essence of communalism and collectiveness makes it easy for conflict settlement and management in Africa. For example, from history the tribal war that claimed lives and property broke out between Ekori and Nkpani communities in Yakurr of Southern Nigeria and after settlement, the two communities collectively planted a deity and performed ritual ceremonies that have helped to maintain the two communities without any violence or tribal war for over a century now. This is the extent to which ritual practices can influence peace-building among communities. This means that development and national consciousness among Africans can be influenced by mutual trust through ritual practices because they contain obligations that prescribe actions, laws, rules, codes, sanctions, punishment, and ethical behaviors. Among the Efiks, Ibibio, Ejagan, and Ekoi people of Nigeria, Cameroon, and Cuba, the Ekpe cultural ritual convokes in the initiates a sense of duty and a call to unity, and what will progress the society is of utmost importance to them. The Ekpe

cult and society are a pride because of their unique place in determining and resolving individual, family, communal, and land disputes and conflicts. It is an agent of social control and is used in maintaining and enforcement of law and order in society. These ritual practices therefore are germane to peace conclaves in Africa.

Therefore, peace-building involves conflict resolution and management through the uprooting of the causes of conflict through mediation, conciliation, power politics, arbitration, adjustment, and alternative dispute resolution [ADR] [22]. Conflict management involves a comprehensive interface of activities, accepting the conflict, active negotiation, compromises, and problem-solving initiatives. Thus, ADR could be through ritual undertakings. Many ritual practices across Africa promote unity and peace; the *Ifa religion* of Yoruba, Nigeria, *Eso* of Nigeria, Togo, and Benin, Kushite mythology, the *San* religion of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, the *Nsibidi Ekpe* religion of Nigeria and Cameroon, the *Vodou* of Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria etc. The concept and operational principles of Peace-building, the use, and application of ritual activities are mutually reinforcing in so many ways because the two concepts are people-centered and people-oriented and driven as logical approaches to a sustainable peace process. Peacebuilding is a multilayer activity directed towards the resolution of injustice in a nonviolent way, and to transform the cultural and structural conditions that generate tensions, violence, and deadly or destructive conflicts. According to Gandhi [23], peace-building processes are likened to the Indian '*Ahimsa*', a non-violent struggle and liberation, self-identity freedom that focused more on ideology to sustain development. It is the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships and processes across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. It involves early warning and response efforts in mitigating conflicts, advocacy work, violence prevention, civilian and military peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements, and the establishment of peace zones. African Peace initiatives are intertwined and braided in its ubuntu ideology and ritual life.

On the other hand, conflict management is the application and processes, tools, and skills used to find creative and respectful ways to resolve and mitigate disagreements and disputes. It implies the ability to resolve conflict collaboratively and through effective communication mechanism, such as active listening and assertive speaking [17]. In Africa, one of the easiest and surest ways to resolve issues involving criminality is through the application of ritual oath-taking where the suspects are informed of the negative consequences before the oath-taking. It reduces legal tussles, and time waiting and is usually cost-effective. This approach is presumed to be potent in resolving disputes and promoting truth, trust, and commitment to values and actions that can inadvertently guarantee a free and just, equity and egalitarian society, devoid of corruption, double standards, fear, and poor investment standards among and along the corridors of trade relations.

According to Onu et al. [24], "the concept of peace seems valid and elusive and has elicited controversies from scholars, lay persons, analysts and practitioners from science, religion and philosophy". Nwolise ([1], p. 249), noted that the "concept of peace is believed to have root in Anglo-Norman Word '*pas*', which means freedom from civil disorder, and the Greek word '*Eirene*' and Latin Word '*pax*' rooted from the Hebrew word '*shalom*' and Arabic word '*salaam*' meaning the condition of safety, Welfare, friendliness, fortune, and prosperity". However, from African cosmology and ontology, the word 'peace' has existed in different languages; for example, among the Yakurr [yako] people the word is '*wofai*', while the Efiks call it '*emem*' in

Nigeria, in Swedeen: Fred, Duch: Vrede, German: Frieden and is even depicted in the names many individuals give to their children after birth. And in Swahili: Amani, [aa-mah-nee], salami, suluhu, Yorub: Alafia, alaafia, Hausa: zaman lafiya all meaning, harmony, tranquility, peace, and serenity.

Einstein ([25], p. 371) noted that peace is not the absence of war, but the presence of justice, law, order, and even government. Noted that true peace is not the absence of tension, it is the presence of justice. Discussing the concept Howard (p. 225), noted that peace is highly emotive and not just the absence of war but the maintenance of an orderly and just society. A just society connotes a society devoid of double standards, and criminality but one that observes laws, order, rules and regulations, trust, truth, commitment to ethical values and codes, respect, and a sense of responsibility. It is these values that promote a positive investment climate and rapid development in any nation.

According to Mail [26], to define the term ‘peace’ is to consider the following six meanings of peace:

- i. Peace as the absence of war [tensions and direct violence]
- ii. peace as justice and development [absence of structural violence]
- iii. peace as Gaia [Balance as well as harmony in the ecosystem and ecosphere]
- iv. peace as tolerance and respect [between people and communities]
- v. peace as tranquility or inner peace [spiritual peace]
- vi. Peace as wholeness, making whole [being complete]

According to [19], African rituals, are embodied in cultural and religious heritage which are usually faced with criticisms of being either superstitious, fetish, mundane, or simply irrational, a kind of cultural shock. Rituals are enduring and pervasive as far as African existential reality is concerned and are believed to be illogical, unreasonable, and non-rational by others outside the African continent. Rituals strengthen and renew social relationships and social values, and belief in spiritual powers is rekindled by the general satisfaction it provides to members and the community [20]. According to [20], no matter how our mental and physical capacities and endowment in society, there still exist so many uncontrollable factors that are necessary to utilize and demonstrate whatever chance there may be of enlisting the supernatural aid, to our social and economic life. Onwuejeogwu ([27], p. 251) noted that Africans like the Igbos in Nigeria believe in their ‘*Obi or Ikenga*’ for fertility, business, and investment climate because it is said to have an overbearing guide to determine success or failure in business [28, 29]. Among most African countries; Uganda, Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Morrocco, Tanzania, and Sudan rituals are meant to ward off evil intentions among members and community and for ‘*good luck*’ or some sort of gift. In the “*Gods are not to Blame*” by Ola Rotimi—Playwriter in 1971, the gods through the ‘*Ifa Oracle*’ diviner foretold the birth of Odewale, who was lured into a false of security, only, to somehow get caught up in a consanguineous trial of events by the gods of the land. Odewale was destined to kill the father and marry his mother, all efforts to stop this abominable act failed. This is a classic example of what rituals can reveal and ensure measures are taken to ward off calamities and promote sanity in society. Some rituals define your role and functions

and some rituals are status ascendancy of individuals in the society. This ascendancy and recognition by the public reinforces the beliefs and traditions of society and the need to transmit this cultural aspect from generation to generation. Any attempt to stop certain ritual performances can cause social disorganization, revolt, disorientation, and disruption which may consume the individual members and society.

Rituals are an element of a subculture and can be used to promote commitment and truth and a sense of duty because they can be used as a veritable avenue for the screening of leaders, age-grade members, business partners and eliminate members who may be agents of criminal behavior in the community [12]. For example, in Massey in Kenya, Uganda, and most parts of Africa, security chiefs were asked mandatorily to swear with the serpent to be good behavior and shun corruption, this helped to catalyze their commitment to good governance.

Peace is relatively a function of how conflict situation is handled (Hamakim in Bassey and Ogonnaya ([21], p. 1023). And Conflict according to Coser, is the struggle over values and claims of scarce resources [resource redistribution, political power, raw material, etc.], in which each opponent's objective and goal is to either, neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals. Conflict arises from deep-rooted socio-economic struggles, contradictions, wrong perceptions, distortions, frustrations, and unattainable goals. Conflict in other words is a clash, disagreement between two or more opposing individuals, and groups which sometime becomes violent and may disrupt harmonious activities and peace in the society. Where, it does happen, conflict management becomes inevitable. Therefore, conflict management is essentially, a creative element of change in human relationships and a means of change, in which our social values of welfare, security, justice, and opportunities for personal and group development can be achieved. This can be achieved with minimal compromises and understanding among the opposing individuals and groups in conflict. Therefore, according to, Bassey and Ogonnaya [21] managing conflict requires tested and trusted techniques of peace path, conflict prevention and management, solutions through negotiation; probably through ritual oaths which are common among African to help maintain status quo.

4. What then is development and national development

Development in all human societies is a many-sided process, involving an amalgam of interrelated and interlaced factors. At the individual level development connotes increased skills and capacity, responsibility, creativity, greater freedom, self-discipline, and material well-being. Thus, given the state one finds himself in, development is tied to the state and society as a whole, the superstructures, body of beliefs, motivation, technology, innovation, and socio-political institutions promoting world views. Development refers to a general improvement in people's political, social, economic, and cultural aspects of life towards better living standards [30]. Development as a process implies increasing capacity, space, and potential to regulate both internal and external relationships. Development goes beyond mere increase or improvement in per-capita income or economic growth but includes general improvement in the living standards and welfare of people and society. This includes health, environment, economic, social, spiritual, and cultural features. Development is a multifaceted and multidimensional process that not only includes economic growth but also involves elimination and reduction of poverty, unemployment, inequality, environmental sustainability, and structural change measures of redistribution, equity, political

transformation, and improvement of health., environment as well improving the living conditions of the people and society [31]. This further amplifies Rodney's view that development means the increase in the ability to protect, watch and guard the independence, freedom of individuals, social groups and others irrespective of their will and the society involved. However, the term development is most often used in an exclusive and restrictive economic sense; it is the alignment and justification of the type of economy which in itself is index of other social features [30]. These features include its values, culture, rituals, skills, freedom, and responsibility. Development is transformational and entails all spheres of political, social, economic religious, and cultural life which contribute to the wealth of the nation.

National development refers to the sustainable growth and development of a nation into a more appreciable and desirable one. It entails the overall development of the collective life of the people and society in terms of the social, cultural, political, environmental, economic as well as religious advancement of a nation [31]. Development involves increased awareness and greater freedom, equity, health, creativity, and skills. Self-discipline, responsibility, and material and mental well-being of people and society. National development agenda must ensure even distribution of materials and resources and must be people-oriented and its success must be evaluated in terms of the impact in improving the living conditions of people and society generally. National development according to Obasenjo and Akim [32], is the enhancement of people's capacity over a considerable period in different areas and spheres of life, inducing positive change through planning, predicting, understanding, and monitoring.

5. Rituals: a Panacea for national development in Africa

Rituals are symbols that unite people into a moral community that follows strict codes [33, 34]. Nation-building is achieved through building budes across all facets of interlaced systems and getting everybody involved in society [35]. It emphasizes participatory mechanisms to promote inclusiveness and ownership and taking into consideration their cultural and political backgrounds. According to Henslin [36] rituals are embedded in religion as a matter of faith and how it is applied and relates to stratification systems and fosters social solidarity by uniting all into a community that shares values and perspectives. There is a general misconception that rituals like religion and development do not mix, and a strong belief that rituals hurt development. This misrepresentation and misconception to a large extent has affected the psychic of African traditional practices as having negative effects and does not aid African national development. Development cannot occur in a non-peaceful environment therefore, rituals through ethical principles eliminate criminality abhor laziness, and encourage unity and communal concern for the well-being of members of the society. It includes traditional ethical principles, sanctions, and eschatological beliefs that regulate the behavior, conduct, and actions of individuals, groups, and communities in African society [37]. According to Etim and Olupona [2] ethical principles, sanctions punishment, and eschatological concepts were the factors that kept individuals and government in check and the true conscience and African national development. Africa continent reveals very full workings of the law of uneven development of societies from Ethiopia, Niger, Togo, Congo, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Egypt, Cameroun, Sarrie Leone, South Africa, Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Nigeria, etc. with striking geographical features which makes it different from Europe, America, Asia, Japan and Britain, USA, Japan, Malaysia, China, etc.

In Africa, religious beliefs, cultural patterns, and rituals are associated with the mobilization and discipline of members and the promotion of social justice and equity. Kinship forms, family, and communalism form patterns of social relations with defined positions, roles, and in all spheres of activities. These ties are succinctly tied to ritual practices that provide critical evaluation, functions of social control, cohesion, providing meaning and purpose [33]. The idea of rituals is to promote loyalty, moral obligation, obedience, and ethical code, which are central to humanness, ‘*Jen*’ according to Confucianism, and ‘*Ubuntu*’ in Africa. Some ritual practices like Dokpwe of Dahomey had a wider application of the religious belief that work barn increases efficiency, the Kikuyu of Kenya, Hausa/Madinga of Northern Nigeria and Mali, the Nupe, the tailoring gild of Timbuktu-Mali, and the bronze industry in Benin, in Egypt the *Manicuka* and the *Ayyubids* dynasty achieved a great deal and were structured in age grades to boost traditional economy and development [5].

Africa is inextricably tied to their communal ideology and philosophy ‘*Ubuntu*’. *Ubuntu* is a Nguni Bantu term meaning “humanity and inclusiveness” [8, 11, 19, 38–41]. It is sometimes translated as “*I am because we are*” or “*I am because you are*” or “*humanity towards others*”. In Zulu, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* [40, 42]. In Xhosa, the latter term is used, but most often the term ‘*Ubuntu*’ in a more philosophical sense mean “the belief in a universal bond of love, sharing that connects all humanity and expresses the spirit of mutuality, oneness and collectiveness”. *Ubuntu* ideology is a collection of shared values and practices that Africans hold dearly with a sense of passion, thus as making people authentic human beings whose feelings are cooperativeness [39]. However, within the African continent, these values and practices vary across different ethnic groups, though, they all point to one thing—that an authentic individual human being is part of a larger and more significant relational, religious, communal, societal, environmental, and spiritual world [38, 39]. This presupposes that, man does not exist in isolation. The ritual observance is a sense of commitment, loyalty, discipline, decorum, responsibility, values of honesty and integrity, transparency, obedience, civility etc that helps to restore confidence and hope in the society, as well as the elimination of bad values; like corruption, criminality, greed double standards, etc (Figure 4).



Figure 4.
Akpatuma cultural dance ritual of Obudu. It presents a sense of unity and celebration of important ceremonies. It was performed during the 2022 Calabar festival carnival. Ude Obeten, 2023.

6. Traditional medicine rituals and national development in Africa

In Africa, traditional medicine components are largely dominated by ritual practices; divination, soothsaying, incantations, and libations to appease the gods and to investigate the cause of illness leading to healing. Through these ritual performances, Africans see the more suitable way of treatment by specialists and recipients as the case may be. From Ethiopia, Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia to Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana, in fact in all of Africa, indigenous African traditional medicine [ATM], and curative systems are extremely utilized by large sections of the populations that believe in the efficacy of traditional medicine rituals [7]. The high costs of the contemporary health care system and the technologies that are necessary to drive the system make it difficult for a greater percentage of Africans to access health care services thus the reliance on the potency of traditional medicine. In recent times, there have been calls across the globe to integrate traditional medicine into modern medicine. The African traditional healer/diviner is believed by a lot of African professionals, to have greater success in the mitigation of psychological [spiritual] problems [7]. He adds that “the traditional healer/diviner has wider function than just healing because it incorporates ritual practices to relate with the supernatural (Figure 5).

The traditional practitioners act as consultants on community issues, groups, family, and other relationships, as priests, and as one captivating a great interest



Figure 5.
Ritual performance for fertility, divination for illness, success, misfortune, and any other cause of problem across the African continent with the aid of cowries, shells, and beads, among the people of Nigeria, Ghana, Sudan, Cameroun, Guinea, Kenya, etc. picture taken 2023. Ude Obeten, 2023.

in ecological issues. This practice is common among the Igbo and Yoruba people of Nigeria. The Igbo 'Ezeomou' or the Yuroba 'Ifa Priest' is essentially the mouthpiece of the gods of the land that must be consulted in all matters affecting the land; fertility, illness, farming, war, In Africa's healthcare sector, the contribution of traditional, natural-based products and activities to conventional medicines cannot be overlooked, because African Traditional Medicine (ATM) has over time been the foundation of primary healthcare delivery across Africa. Tamuno Okujagu, Director General, Nigerian Natural Medicine Development Agency (NNMDA) in a Business Day interview, once noted that "the role of traditional medicine in healthcare delivery in the developing countries is known and given". And given the healthcare delivery and economic potential of traditional medicine, countries like Germany, China, India, and South Korea, had opened up and developed their traditional health systems, supported agencies and universities on researches into traditional medicine practice and its application to solve medical illnesses. Also, to expand on the traditional medical model and to provide affordable and accessible healthcare delivery system in Africa, countries like South Africa, Ghana, Egypt, and Morocco had keyed into the traditional medical model and initiatives as well maintained specific institutional mandates to fast-track the coordination of research and development, promotion, and documentation of traditional medicine [7]. In recognition of the growing need to meet the health care services of the populations of the World, the World Health Organization [WHO], acknowledges the huge potential of traditional natural medicine and has continued to influence support and encourage its promotion, documentation, research, and development through several initiatives. This initiative is to complement the biopsychosocial treatment model and ensure availability of medical care, prevention and promotion in all populations of the world.

7. African indigenous rituals and national value system

African traditional culture and religion are embedded with ritual practices that give force and application to the meaning and usage. Values are standards or principles a society holds collectively and are imbibed by members. Nwaubani [43] noted that values are drawn from cultural beliefs, norms taboos, and dispositions that regulate their actions. There is a connection between values and ritual activities as they tend to reinforce each other, and can be used to resolve the injustice without creating tensions [44]. The decline in values is responsible for the many moral decadence among youth in Africa. Therefore, values are the cultural and social norm and are usually cherished behavioral practices, beliefs, and codes that govern human interaction.

Rituals, values, and national development: the divergence of rituals and values in African ontology is difficult to ascertain as both are aspects of African Traditional Religion [ATR] which deals with the ideas that defend or sustain the life of the people in their relationship with one another and the world are inextricable. Values and morals cover issues like justice, right and wrong, dignity, respect for people and prosperity, truth, love, good and evil, the keeping of promises and agreements, beauty, crime and punishment, praise and blame, etc. [5, 17, 32]. These values and morals determine the religious, cultural, political, economic, and social behavior of a people and their stability as well as their development. From the foregoing, Mbon [45] observed that, the development of any nation to a very great extent depends on the moral and intellectual development or otherwise of its people. Supporting this assertion, Anyanwu



Figure 6.
The traditional Prime Minister -Okpebri of Ekoli performing the ritual for peace and declaration of the new yam festival 2023.

and Oyema [8] succinctly observed that, we are not quite aware that any society cannot afford to exist in the absence of morality, trust, justice, liberty, truth, goodness, and faithfulness. Therefore, deducting from the above assertions it follows that for any nation to experience development justice, trust, love, peace, and harmony are important and her citizens must be imbued with all the good life and qualities provided by religion (in this case African Traditional Religion) through its moral education and philosophy. Again, African Traditional Religion [ATR], teaches its practitioners and adherents to eschew evil, bribery, corruption, ethnicity, tribalism, and nepotism since most of these attributes are conflict energizers. These values are the bedrock for cohesion and national development, as no nation can develop maximally where conflict strives and where the populations are confronted with social problems and illnesses (**Figure 6**).

8. Indigenous rituals, and cultural tourism and African development

Africa is the continent of drums and percussion. A compendium of ritual practices, and spiritual and cultural life that cannot be separated from oneself. African indigenous rituals are drivers of traditional religion and heritage. For example, among the Tiv, in Nigeria, and the Zulu of South Africa neither the culture nor the social and political system of the people could be understood without reference to their religion and culture. African Traditional Religion is embedded in African culture and ritual life and vice versa. This is explainable in light of the pervasive influence of religion in the African worldview. African tourism is a product of its ritual activities. This is evident in the Cross River State, Nigeria Carnival is considered the biggest street

party in Africa celebrated annually in December. During the annual carnival event, all forms of African ritual performances are displayed which attract a significant number of spectators. This tourism outfit promotes and boosts the economic and social fortunes of the state. Everything finds explanation, expression, and validation in African religion and indigenous ritual activities. Culture is a multiplier and pull factor that influences visitors' initial decision to travel to different destinations of the world (Figure 7).

The importance of culture in promoting development globally, and the attractions of visitors make culture to be perceived as being icon of important global concern [1, 46]. The global cross-cultural importance of culture in promoting national development has led to the identification of world heritage sites which attracts millions of tourists yearly. Also, at the national and local level, culture is seen as playing a vital local function in establishing and reinforcing people's unique identities and sense of belonging within territorial regions. Culture has made tourism to received great global attention, as a means of entertainment and holiday relaxation. Catching panoramic glimpse of the wonders of nature and other people's cultures promote trade relations and means of boosting the national economy. A typical example, is the Calabar annual Carnival that parade different cultures and ritual performance from different parts of the world like, Cuba, Ecuador, Brazil, South Africa, Cameroon, Mali, Guinea, Libya, Togo, Ghana, America, Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan etc.

African Traditional Religion [ATR], and cultural practices are embodiment of cultural tourism and to a large extent has contributed generally to tourism drive and national development especially among the nations of the continent [47]. Cultural tourism according to [46], is "the aspect of human culture that attracts others from different socio-cultural backgrounds to a particular region to witness and share in its glamour". This often generate social and economic gains to the people and promote cross-cultural relationship and interactions. Cultural tourism therefore, relates to well preserved indigenous and traditional arts, cultural and dramatic displays, ritual exhibitions, handicraft, folklore and other artistic expressions of the culture of people and fashion [48]. It is these rich cultural diversities and heritage that attracts tourists and visitors to these countries and cultures that are alien to them. These cultures are



Figure 7.
The Prestigious Ekpe Masquerade used for peace and unity, law enforcement, and social order in Efik kingdom and Ibibio in Nigeria and Cameroon 2023.

seen as resources holding potentials for the economy growth, education, and recreation with multiplying effect on national development.

Cultural tourism implies showcasing and displaying cultural identities in terms of education, music, local customs, local arts and crafts, traditional dancers, food, and drinks. These implicitly promote socioeconomic growth development of nations [49, 50]. Goeldner et al. therefore, noted that, African traditional culture is tourism itself, especially by the reason that, its preservation, promotion, and presentation are designed to arouse tourist's interest and value for money. For example, the activities of the new yam, fishing festivals such as Leboku New Yam in Ugep, Cross River State, and the Agungun fishing festival in Nigeria and Darbar festival among the Hausa/Fulani in the Sahel region attract several visitors and in exchange boost local economy [51]. It is important to point out that, most of these festivals honor the earth and river goddesses and the ancestral spirits of the land. All these indigenous rituals and cultural practices promote and enhance tourism, and national development at large.

African traditional culture has the capacity to make significant impact on the economy and environment of any nation when appropriately harnessed, and can therefore, be seen as a catalyst for national cohesion and development. The importance of culture cannot be over emphasized, and one obvious benefit of the tourism culture industry is its suitability to create employment opportunities for the youth and reduce incidences of criminality in the society. However, a conducive, peaceful conflict-free atmosphere, is needed for culture and tourism strive as well as to achieve the goals of economic enhancement and contribute to national development. This places the burden and why national re-orientation is necessary as it imbues every Africa citizen with the right moral attitude to receive and interact with visitors to our countries with the view of maximizing relationship and trade relations.

9. Conclusion

Rituals are symbols that unite people into a moral community and are essential to ginger and promote the national development of Africa. They invoke a sense of cultural identity and are catalysts for cultural tourism, indigenous African traditional medicine, and value orientation. Africans have developed different mechanisms to address conflicts, security challenges, and development. Peace is breeding ground for extensive investment, cross-cultural and trade relations among nations of the world. The values of Truth, trust, communalism, sense of identity, democratic ideals, and good governance have significantly influenced the use of rituals in almost all facets of African life because every individual was conscious of the implication of failing to keep to terms with the rituals, and taboos. African Traditional Religion which is embedded in rituals can fast-track national development in Africa if it is introduced into their legal systems and criminal codes. African traditional rituals and indigenous rituals can create new jobs and provide employment. Rituals are the way of African life.

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The Role of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Achieving Restorative Justice among the Vhavenda of South Africa

Joshua Mawere and Ndwamato Walter Tshamano

Abstract

This chapter focuses on exploring the impact of colonization on South Africa, with a specific focus on the Vhavenda community. The chapter aims to examine the role of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in achieving restorative justice. The impact of colonization on the Vhavenda community is a complex issue that has had various impacts on their socioeconomic, cultural, and political development. The chapter uses a literature review research method, which involves a comprehensive examination of existing literature and scholarly works related to the research topic. The findings of this research suggest that the exploitation of the Vhavenda community has had severe adverse effects that continue to affect their lives to this day. The African Indigenous Knowledge Systems offer a unique approach to restorative justice by promoting healing and reconciliation through community involvement, storytelling, and cultural practices. The chapter concludes that the implementation of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems is crucial to achieving restorative justice in the Vhavenda community and throughout South Africa.

Keywords: African indigenous knowledge systems, restorative justice, colonialism, apartheid, Vhavenda community, indigenous peoples, South Africa

1. Introduction

South Africa's pursuit of developing, promoting, and protecting African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKSs) is a timely and crucial initiative, especially given the winds of change currently blowing through the country [1]. On one hand, major transformation and democratization processes are underway, as evidenced by macro-level policies such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Policy of Growth, Equity, and Reconstruction (GEAR), the National System of Innovation, and the African Renaissance [2]. The latter, in particular, seeks to combine identity reconstruction and innovation, human rights, sustainable development, and democratization in South Africa and across the African continent. The African Renaissance is a project that aims to deepen the understanding of Africa, its

languages, and its methods of development [3]. Ndlovu-Gatsheni further argues that “it involves rewriting major tenets of history, both past and contemporary” [3]. AIKSs present significant challenges for the reconstruction and development of strategies in South Africa. Moreover, several global imperatives underpin the need for renewed attention to AIKSs.

The promotion and protection of AIKSs in South Africa is a crucial step toward achieving equity, empowerment, and development. At present, the world is at a crossroads in search of new, human-centered visions of development in health, biodiversity conservation, human rights, and poverty alleviation. All agencies of the United Nations are seeking to promote paradigms of sustainable human development that build on knowledge resources that exist in communities [4]. As a continent, Africa is seeking its own renaissance and striving to establish the terms of its development. Despite the affluence that globalization has brought to a small minority, the world is engraved in subjection, suffering, and dispossession, and contempt for human dignity and the sanctity of life are at the center of human existence. Emotional dislocation, moral sickness, and individual helplessness remain ubiquitous features. Moreover, for a great majority of the population of Africa, the loss of cultural reference points has culminated in the fundamental breakdown of African societies, with dire consequences for the social and human development project as a whole [4].

Extrapolating from the above, the chapter examines the impact of colonialism on the Vhavenda people of South Africa and the role that AIKSs can play in restoring and preserving their cultural heritage.

2. Background of the study

The effects of colonialism on African societies have been profound, and the Vhavenda people of South Africa are no exception. With a rich and unique history that spans centuries before colonialism, the introduction of colonial rule in the late 1800s brought about significant changes that altered the cultural, social, and economic fabric of the Vhavenda community [5]. As one of the indigenous groups of South Africa, the Vhavenda people reside in the northernmost part of the Limpopo Province and have a complex social structure that includes their own language, customs, and traditions [6]. However, the arrival of Europeans in the region in the late nineteenth century brought about significant changes for the Vhavenda people. The dominant colonial powers of the time, the British, sought to establish a governance structure that mirrored their own system of government [5]. The following issues, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, highlight a significant disruption that resulted in poverty and inequality for the Vhavenda people.

The loss of ancestral lands was one of the most significant impacts of colonialism on the Vhavenda people [7]. European colonizers forcefully dispossessed them of their land and herded them into reserves known as Bantustans [7]. This severely impacted their way of life as the Vhavenda people were largely an agrarian society, relying heavily on their land for subsistence. The forced move meant that they could no longer practice their traditional agricultural practices, which resulted in food insecurity and poverty. Another significant impact of colonialism on the Vhavenda people was the introduction of Christianity and Western education [8]. European missionaries introduced Christianity and built churches in the area, which significantly impacted the Vhavenda people's religious beliefs. Western education was also introduced, and many Vhavenda children were forcibly taken from their families

and enrolled in boarding schools where they were taught European values and culture [9]. This process of Westernization significantly undermined Vhavenda's culture and traditions.

The impact of colonialism on the Vhavenda people was far-reaching and devastating. One of the most significant impacts was the introduction of cash economies, which disrupted the traditional exchange system known as the *vhushavhi* [10]. This disruption led to poverty and inequality, as the Vhavenda people were forced to work in European-owned mines and farms for meager wages. Despite these challenges, there is hope for the restoration and preservation of the Vhavenda people's cultural heritage through AIKSs. AIKSs refers to the unique knowledge, skills, and practices of a particular Indigenous community, transmitted through cultural practices and traditions [11]. By providing a link to ancestral knowledge and wisdom, AIKS offers a platform for restoring and preserving the cultural heritage of the Vhavenda people. Against this background, the study aims to create new spaces for dialog and collaboration, building a more inclusive and equitable scientific community that benefits all. This will be achieved through examining the role of AIKSs in achieving restorative justice.

3. Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is a crucial component in research studies as it provides a conceptual structure for understanding and analyzing the phenomena under investigation [12]. Varpo further contends that "it serves as a guide for researchers to develop hypotheses, design research methodologies, and interpret findings" [12]. In essence, a theoretical framework is a collection of interconnected concepts, theories, and models that form the foundation of a study. It helps researchers to organize their thoughts and ideas, ensuring that their research is grounded in existing knowledge and relevant theories. By utilizing a theoretical framework, researchers can establish a logical and coherent structure for their study, enhancing its credibility and validity. This chapter utilizes the concept of the African Renaissance in the study.

3.1 African renaissance theory

The African Renaissance and AIKSs are two interconnected concepts that hold significant importance in understanding and appreciating Africa's rich cultural heritage. This section aims to explore the profound impact of these systems on Africa's development while highlighting their relevance in a global context. By delving into the depths of African knowledge systems, one can gain a profound comprehension of the continent's distinctive contributions to the world. This endeavor allows for a comprehensive understanding of the invaluable insights and wisdom that Africa has bestowed upon humanity. The African Renaissance represents a transformative movement that seeks to revive and celebrate Africa's cultural, social, and economic potential [13]. It is a call for Africans to reclaim their identity, challenge negative stereotypes, and foster a sense of pride in their heritage.

This movement recognizes the need for Africa to take charge of its destiny, embracing its diverse cultures, languages, and traditions as sources of strength and resilience. AIKSs as explained earlier refer to the accumulated knowledge, practices, and beliefs that have been passed down through generations within African communities [14]. These systems encompass a wide range of disciplines, including

agriculture, medicine, spirituality, and governance [14]. AIKSs are deeply rooted in African culture and are often based on a holistic understanding of the interconnectedness between humans, nature, and the spiritual realm [14]. The African Renaissance draws heavily upon AIKSs as a foundation for its vision of a revitalized Africa. By recognizing and valuing the wisdom embedded within AIKSs, the African Renaissance seeks to integrate traditional knowledge with modern advancements, fostering sustainable development and empowering local communities.

This integration allows for the preservation and utilization of Africa's rich cultural heritage, while also embracing the opportunities presented by globalization. In essence, the African Renaissance and AIKSs are intertwined in their pursuit of Africa's development and recognition on a global scale. As a result of recognizing the importance of these systems, one can truly grasp the profound impact Africa has had on the world and strive toward a future that respects its rich cultural heritage while embracing progress. Viewing Africa's path toward sustainable development through this perspective becomes attainable. The interplay between the African Renaissance and AIKSs presents a remarkable opportunity for Africa to exhibit its intellectual and cultural abundance on the global stage. The significance of the African Renaissance and IKS transcends the boundaries of the African continent. In an era of growing interconnectivity, safeguarding and promoting diverse knowledge systems becomes imperative in fostering global comprehension and cooperation, thereby preserving Africa's invaluable cultural heritage.

4. Research methodology

Research methodology is a fundamental component of any study, as it establishes a systematic framework for conducting research and obtaining reliable results [15]. It encompasses the overall approach, techniques, and tools employed to gather and analyze data, ensuring the validity and accuracy of the findings. A well-designed research methodology is essential for achieving the objectives of a study, enabling researchers to identify the most appropriate methods for data collection, such as surveys, interviews, experiments, or observations [16]. Moreover, research methodology plays a vital role in ensuring the reliability and validity of the data collected.

As a result of employing rigorous data collection techniques and utilizing appropriate analysis methods, researchers can minimize bias and enhance the credibility of their findings [15]. This, in turn, elevates the overall quality and trustworthiness of the research. Additionally, research methodology aids in the interpretation and presentation of research findings [16]. Through employing suitable data analysis techniques, researchers can identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the data, enabling them to draw meaningful conclusions and make informed recommendations. Consequently, the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge and provides valuable insights for decision-making.

This study uses the literature review research methodology to collect data. This approach entails a thorough examination of existing literature and scholarly works pertaining to the research topic [16]. By critically analyzing and synthesizing the findings from multiple sources, researchers can develop a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and identify any gaps in the existing knowledge [15]. This methodology facilitates a meticulous exploration of the research topic and establishes a strong foundation for further investigation [16]. Ultimately, a well-executed research methodology is imperative for the successful conduct of this study. It not

only ensures the reliability and validity of the data but also enables researchers to draw meaningful conclusions and contribute to the existing body of knowledge [15].

By means of employing appropriate techniques and tools, researchers can enhance the overall quality and trustworthiness of their research, providing valuable insights for decision-makers in various fields.

5. Vhavenda indigenous knowledge systems

South African AIKSs encompass a diverse and invaluable cultural and intellectual heritage that has been passed down through generations [17]. These systems are deeply rooted in the beliefs, practices, and wisdom of the indigenous people, forming a rich tapestry of knowledge [17]. The purpose of this section is to explore the intricacies and significance of IKS, providing valuable insights into its intellectual foundations, spiritual dimensions, and socioeconomic implications. To illustrate these concepts, the authors' focus will be on the Vhavenda people, an indigenous group residing in the northern regions of South Africa [18]. A comprehensive understanding of AIKS is essential for examining the profound impacts of colonialism and apartheid, as well as for informing recommendations toward achieving restorative justice. As a result of delving into the depths of AIKS, the study can unravel the complexities of South Africa's history and pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future.

At the heart of Vhavenda AIKSs lies a robust intellectual tradition rooted in observation, experience, and critical thinking [18]. The Vhavenda people have cultivated a comprehensive understanding of their natural environment, enabling them to adapt and flourish in the diverse ecosystems they inhabit [18]. Their knowledge spans various domains, including agriculture, astronomy, traditional medicine, and animal behavior. This exemplifies how Vhavenda's knowledge systems are founded on empirical evidence and a profound appreciation for the intricate interplay between humans and their surroundings. Spirituality plays a fundamental role in Vhavenda AIKSs [19]. The Vhavenda people embraced a pervasive life force known as *muthu*, which was believed to permeate all aspects of existence [19]. This spiritual worldview was intricately woven into their daily lives, influencing their interactions with nature, ancestors, and fellow humans. Rituals, ceremonies, and symbolic representations formed integral components of this spiritual tradition, serving to maintain harmony, honor ancestral spirits, and establish communication with the divine [18]. Vhavenda AIKSs thus illuminated the profound connection between the physical and the meta-physical, offering a holistic perspective on human existence [19].

The socioeconomic implications of Vhavenda AIKS systems were extensive and profound. These systems granted the Vhavenda people a distinctive economic advantage, as they possessed a profound understanding of sustainable agricultural practices tailored to their specific environment [20]. They had honed techniques such as terracing, crop rotation, and water management to perfection, enabling them to maximize crop yield while minimizing the detrimental impact on the environment [20]. By harnessing this invaluable traditional knowledge, the Vhavenda people successfully cultivated resilient and productive agricultural systems, ensuring food security for their communities and contributing significantly to regional development. Moreover, Vhavenda AIKSs held significant social implications for the community. Oral traditions, storytelling, and proverbs served as vital conduits for the transmission of knowledge across generations [21]. Esteemed for their wisdom and experience, the elders played a pivotal role in preserving and passing down this

invaluable knowledge [21]. This intergenerational transfer of knowledge fostered a profound sense of collective identity and continuity, fortified social bonds, and promoted cultural cohesion within Vhavenda society.

However, Vhavenda AIKSs faced significant challenges as a result of colonization and apartheid. The process of colonization placed immense pressure on traditional practices, jeopardizing the preservation of this invaluable ancestral knowledge. Furthermore, the marginalization of indigenous knowledge within formal education systems led to the undervaluation and erasure of Vhavenda knowledge. This not only exacerbates existing inequalities but also hinders the rightful recognition of their intellectual contributions. In the subsequent section, this study will delve into the profound impact of colonial and apartheid influences on Vhavenda AIKSs.

6. The enduring impact of colonial and apartheid influences on Vhavenda African indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa

The profound and lasting consequences of colonialism and apartheid on the AIKSs of the Vhavenda people in South Africa cannot be overstated. This section aims to shed light on the enduring legacy of these historical imprints, exploring their implications for Vhavenda communities and their traditional knowledge. As a result of delving into this topic, the authors hope to foster a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the Vhavenda people and the importance of preserving their unique cultural heritage. To comprehend the present-day state of Vhavenda AIKSs, it is crucial to acknowledge the historical context in which they have evolved.

The Vhavenda people possess a profound and ancient cultural heritage that predates the arrival of European colonizers [22]. Unfortunately, the imposition of colonial rule and subsequent apartheid policies have greatly disrupted and marginalized their traditional knowledge systems [22]. The colonization of South Africa by European powers had a profound and lasting impact on the AIKSs of the Vhavenda people. The imposition of Western educational systems, religious ideologies, land dispossession, and changes in governance structures disrupted and eroded these systems. Through closely examining these colonial effects, the authors intend to gain a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between colonialism and indigenous knowledge, thereby illuminating the challenges faced by Vhavenda communities in preserving and revitalizing their traditional knowledge.

6.1 Effects of colonization

One of the most significant colonial effects on Vhavenda AIKSs was the imposition of Western educational systems. As European powers sought to assert their dominance, they introduced formal education systems that placed Western science and knowledge at the forefront, often at the expense of indigenous knowledge [8]. This emphasis on Western education gradually eroded the transmission of indigenous knowledge from one generation to the next, as the younger Vhavenda population increasingly embraced Western perspectives and ways of thinking [8]. Consequently, numerous traditional practices, rituals, and oral histories that form the bedrock of Vhavenda indigenous knowledge have been marginalized or lost, posing a significant challenge for future generations in accessing and appreciating their rich cultural heritage.

The impact of colonization on Vhavenda AIKSs extended beyond education. Religious ideologies brought by European powers also played a role in disrupting and reshaping traditional knowledge [9]. The imposition of Christianity, for instance, introduced new belief systems and practices that often clashed with Vhavenda spiritual traditions [9]. As a result, certain aspects of Vhavenda indigenous knowledge were suppressed or modified to align with the dominant religious ideologies, further eroding the authenticity and vitality of these knowledge systems. Moreover, the imposition of Christianity as the prevailing religion by European colonizers brought about profound transformations in the AIKSs of the Vhavenda people.

The introduction of new religious ideologies undermined the deeply ingrained traditional spiritual practices that were an integral part of Vhavenda culture [9]. The sacred knowledge associated with ancestral reverence and traditional healing practices faced increasing stigmatization and suppression at the hands of Christian missionaries, who dismissed them as “savage” or “superstitious” [23]. Consequently, the erosion and devaluation of traditional Vhavenda wisdom ensued, resulting in the subordination of indigenous knowledge to the dominant Christian paradigm [23]. The advent of European colonization had far-reaching consequences for the Vhavenda community, particularly in terms of their belief systems and cultural practices.

The arrival of Christian colonizers marked a turning point in the history of the Vhavenda people, as their traditional spiritual practices were systematically undermined and marginalized [9]. The sacred knowledge that had been passed down through generations, rooted in ancestral reverence and traditional healing, was suddenly deemed inferior and backward by the Christian missionaries [23]. The Christian missionaries, driven by their own religious convictions, sought to impose their beliefs and values upon the Vhavenda people. They viewed the AIKSs as primitive and superstitious, dismissing them as mere relics of a bygone era [23]. This attitude not only devalued the rich cultural heritage of the Vhavenda people but also eroded their sense of identity and self-worth.

As a result, the traditional wisdom of the Vhavenda community was gradually pushed to the fringes of society, overshadowed by the dominant Christian paradigm. The once-respected ancestral reverence and traditional healing practices became stigmatized, with the Vhavenda people themselves being made to feel ashamed of their own heritage. The suppression of indigenous knowledge not only robbed the Vhavenda community of their cultural identity but also perpetuated a power imbalance, with the dominant Christian ideology exerting control over their lives.

The dispossession of Vhavenda lands through colonial rule had a profound effect on the preservation of indigenous knowledge. Land is intrinsically linked to AIKSs as it provides the context and resources necessary for the transmission and practice of traditional knowledge. During the colonial era, vast tracts of Vhavenda land were forcibly taken over by European settlers and the subsequent administration [7]. This dispossession disrupted traditional modes of agricultural and ecological knowledge, leading to a deterioration in the understanding and application of Vhavenda sustainable land practices [7]. The loss of land not only severed the physical connection to indigenous knowledge but also disrupted social networks and cultural practices that were closely tied to the land.

The colonial era also transformed the governance structures of Vhavenda communities, favoring centralized European systems of administration over indigenous systems [24]. Traditional leadership structures, which played a crucial role in preserving and transmitting indigenous knowledge, were weakened and exploited by the colonial powers [24]. The imposition of European-style governance disrupted

the autonomy and decision-making power of Vhavenda communities, eroding their capacity to protect and promote their AIKSs. With colonialism came the imposition of laws, institutions, and policies that marginalized Vhavenda cultural practices, further jeopardizing the survival and thriving of their traditional knowledge.

The impact of colonialism on Vhavenda AIKSs has been far-reaching and multifaceted. The imposition of Western educational systems, the introduction of Christianity, the dispossession of lands, and changes in governance structures have collectively eroded and disrupted traditional Vhavenda knowledge. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the resilience of the Vhavenda people in their efforts to preserve and revitalize their indigenous knowledge. Through recognizing and supporting local initiatives that promote the revival of traditional practices, such as community-based education and cultural revitalization projects, the research can contribute to the restoration and empowerment of Vhavenda AIKSs.

6.2 Effects of apartheid

During the era of apartheid in South Africa, the Vhavenda people, an ethnic minority in the country, endured profound repercussions on their AIKSs. The apartheid policies enforced by the White supremacist government were specifically crafted to marginalize and oppress non-White communities, resulting in catastrophic outcomes for their cultural heritage and traditional practices [25]. This section aims to delve into and scrutinize the far-reaching effects of apartheid on the IKS of the Vhavenda people, thereby illuminating the intellectual and cultural implications of this pivotal historical period.

One of the most significant effects of apartheid on the AIKSs of the Vhavenda people was the disruption and erasure of their ancestral knowledge systems. Apartheid policies systematically dismantled Vhavenda communities, forcibly removing people from their traditional lands and disrupting their cultural practices [26]. This disruption not only severed the vital connection between the people and their ancestral lands but also severed the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next [26]. The Vhavenda people's spiritual beliefs, healing practices, and agricultural techniques, which were deeply rooted in their ancestral heritage, faced a severe threat of extinction due to the forced assimilation and displacement caused by apartheid.

Furthermore, apartheid policies also marginalized the oral traditions and indigenous knowledge of the Vhavenda people by prioritizing Western forms of education [8]. The imposition of a Westernized education system aimed at assimilating non-White communities into the dominant White culture and eradicating their unique identities [8]. This educational bias resulted in a devaluation of indigenous knowledge, rendering it inferior to the Western knowledge systems. Consequently, the intellectual and cultural contributions of the Vhavenda people were disregarded or suppressed, leading to a loss of confidence and pride in their traditional knowledge. This loss further contributed to the erosion of the IKS of the Vhavenda people.

In the wake of colonialism and apartheid, the Vhavenda AIKSs persistently encounter a multitude of challenges. The forces of globalization, urbanization, and modernization have further eroded the fabric of traditional practices, as younger generations increasingly gravitate toward Western lifestyles. Moreover, the absence of adequate support and recognition for Vhavenda indigenous knowledge exacerbates the situation, hindering its preservation and transmission to future generations.

7. Role of African indigenous knowledge systems in achieving restorative justice

In order to gain a thorough understanding of AIKSs and their impact on the Vhavenda indigenous people in South Africa, particularly in relation to colonialism and apartheid, it is crucial to explore the potential role that AIKSs can play in achieving restorative justice. The consequences of colonization and apartheid have had profound and wide-ranging effects, making restorative justice an imperative. Therefore, this section aims to examine the role of AIKS in the pursuit of restorative justice. AIKSs play a significant role in achieving restorative justice among the Vhavenda Indigenous people of South Africa. Restorative justice is a process of addressing harm caused by a criminal or wrongful act by bringing together the victims, offenders, and communities affected by the wrongdoing. This process aims to restore relationships and promote healing and reconciliation.

The Vhavenda Indigenous people have a rich cultural heritage, and their intricate knowledge systems are deeply rooted in their traditional practices and beliefs. In achieving restorative justice, the Vhavenda Indigenous knowledge systems are critical in several ways:

7.1 Community involvement

Community involvement and participation are at the core of restorative justice in Vhavenda. The AIKSs place great emphasis on communal living, highlighting the critical role that the community plays in conflict resolution, as well as the promotion of healing and reconciliation [26]. Enhancing community engagement is a fundamental aspect of the restorative justice approach in Vhavenda. By actively involving the community, authorities tap into the collective wisdom and shared experiences that foster a sense of unity and togetherness. This inclusive approach not only empowers individuals within the community but also strengthens the bonds that hold the society together. In Vhavenda, the community acts as a vital catalyst for resolving conflicts. By drawing upon their deep-rooted values and traditions, community members contribute to the restoration of harmony and balance. Through open dialog, active listening, and respectful communication, the community collectively works toward healing the wounds caused by conflicts and fostering reconciliation among all parties involved. Moreover, community involvement extends beyond the resolution of conflicts. It serves as a platform for promoting understanding, empathy, and compassion within the community. By way of actively engaging in restorative justice practices, community members develop a deeper appreciation for the impact of their actions on others, fostering a culture of accountability and responsibility. In conclusion, community involvement lies at the heart of restorative justice in Vhavenda.

7.2 Healing practices

Healing practices in the AIKSs of the Vhavenda people promote restorative justice by addressing the historical trauma and injustices caused by colonialism [27]. The Vhavenda people have suffered from systemic violence and exploitation under colonial rule, resulting in the loss of their lands, language, cultural identity, and traditional healing practices. AIKS's healing practices seek to restore balance and harmony in the individual and the collective, using traditional remedies and rituals that address the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of health [27]. These practices are

deeply rooted in the cultural heritage and beliefs of the Vhavenda people, emphasizing the interconnectedness of nature, ancestors, and community. Through the use of AIKSs, the Vhavenda people are able to address the trauma and oppression caused by colonialism and promote healing and reconciliation. Traditional healers play a crucial role in restoring justice by providing a safe space for individuals to share their experiences and receive guidance on how to reconnect with their cultural heritage and identity. Furthermore, the use of AIKSs promotes a sense of empowerment and resilience among the Vhavenda people. As a result of honoring their cultural practices, they are able to reclaim their voice and agency in the face of colonialism's legacy of oppression. This not only promotes healing and restoration but also strengthens the community's ability to resist future injustices and advocate for their rights.

7.3 Conflict resolution

Indigenous knowledge systems offer a rich tapestry of conflict resolution mechanisms that effectively tackle conflicts and restore justice [28]. These mechanisms encompass mediation, negotiation, and reconciliation. This is of paramount significance, especially considering the lasting effects of colonization and apartheid. The enduring remnants of these historical injustices, such as poverty, unemployment, and economic marginalization, continuously fuel violence and discontent. Consequently, the endorsement of indigenous knowledge systems for conflict resolution holds the potential to assuage anger and champion the rectification of these historical wrongs. For example, in the Vhavenda cultural system, marriage is about bringing families together and creating relationships with extended family members and communities [29]. Therefore, problems families encounter, are family and community problems. As a result, elders are involved in the mediation, counseling, and reconciliation of estranged partners. The revival of the system will undoubtedly contribute positively to the reduction of the number of divorce cases among the Vhavenda.

7.4 Traditional courts

In traditional societies, courts have always played a crucial role in the pursuit of justice, serving as a fundamental institution known as the African indigenous knowledge system [29]. These courts uphold customary laws and cultural practices that are deeply ingrained in the collective wisdom and values of the community. The AIKS approach to justice recognizes that it goes beyond mere punishment of wrongdoers; it seeks to restore harmony and balance within the community. By drawing upon traditional knowledge and practices, these courts aim to address not only individual transgressions but also their broader impact on the community and the environment, thereby fostering healing and reconciliation.

The significance of traditional courts as an AIKS in restoring justice becomes particularly evident in the context of colonization. Colonial powers often imposed their legal systems on indigenous communities, undermining their cultural beliefs and practices. This imposition resulted in profound social, economic, and cultural disruptions within indigenous societies. Consequently, traditional courts have emerged as invaluable foundations upon which restoration and decolonization can take place. By upholding indigenous customary laws and practices, these courts enable the reclamation of indigenous identity and self-governance, which are crucial aspects in healing the wounds inflicted by colonization. Moreover, because traditional courts adopt a holistic approach to justice, they provide a means for communities to address the

enduring impacts of colonization, including land dispossession and cultural assimilation. Thus, traditional courts, as an AIKS, serve as indispensable tools for restoring justice and reestablishing self-determination in post-colonial societies.

Overall, AIKSs play a crucial role in achieving restorative justice among the Vhavenda Indigenous people of South Africa. These knowledge systems promote community involvement, healing practices, conflict resolution mechanisms, and traditional courts, which are all essential in promoting healing and reconciliation within the community.

8. Recommendations

Pursuant to obtaining a clear understanding of the role of AIKS in restorative justice, the study proceeds to make recommendations on the recognition and preservation of AIKS.

8.1 Acknowledge and respect indigenous knowledge

One of the key strategies for addressing the enduring impacts of colonialism and apartheid is to acknowledge and show respect for the knowledge and practices of indigenous communities. This entails placing value on indigenous languages and acknowledging traditional knowledge through avenues such as education, research, and partnerships. This will foster a more inclusive and equitable society that honors the rich cultural heritage of indigenous peoples.

8.2 Encourage traditional healing practices

The chapter proposes the incorporation of traditional healing practices as a means to address historical injustices and foster the acknowledgment of AIKSs (Indigenous Knowledge Systems). Traditional healing practices have been transmitted across generations within numerous indigenous communities. By promoting the utilization of these practices, marginalized communities can reclaim their sense of identity and resilience, ultimately facilitating the reconstruction of their social frameworks. **Figure 1** below demonstrates the depths of Africa's profound heritage and expertise in traditional medicine.



Figure 1.
Vhavenda traditional medicine [30].

8.3 Incorporate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum

Incorporating indigenous knowledge into the educational curriculum is a crucial step in acknowledging the contributions of indigenous communities. This will not only help students learn from different perspectives but also teach them to respect and appreciate different cultures. This requires transforming the scientific ethos and practices, while also establishing protocols to protect AIKSs. Institutions engaging with AIKSs should strive to understand the relationship between science and marginalized communities and how science has been used to suppress them. The remnants of colonialism still exist in academia, where non-Western knowledge is often dismissed as outdated. This dismissive attitude silences those whose knowledge is labeled as obsolete and denies them a voice. It is important to create spaces for constructive dialog between individuals and knowledge systems, including those who have been suppressed. This can be achieved by fostering dialog and collaboration between diverse knowledge systems. **Figure 2** illustrates the commendable initiative undertaken by the University of Venda to integrate AIKS into its curriculum.

8.4 Protect and preserve indigenous knowledge

The chapter recommends the protection and preservation of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous communities have historically been marginalized and their knowledge has often been co-opted or exploited without their consent. Therefore, it is important to protect and preserve their knowledge by establishing legal protections and providing resources for their conservation. **Figure 3**, displayed below, showcases a photograph captured during a workshop organized by the Mupo Foundation. The purpose of this workshop was to emphasize the significance of preserving and revitalizing traditional culture, promoting seed diversity, and safeguarding Sacred Natural Sites. It is imperative that similar endeavors are prioritized and effectively executed.

8.5 Foster community-based development projects

In order to redress the enduring consequences of colonialism, it is imperative to prioritize the implementation of community-based development projects. These



Figure 2.
The African Association for the Study of indigenous knowledge systems (AASIKS) conference [31].



Figure 3.
Picture shows the workshop on preserving Vhavenda AIKS [32].

initiatives will serve as a powerful tool to empower marginalized communities, enabling them to break free from the shackles of dependency and reclaim their agency. By fostering self-reliance and mobilizing local resources, these projects will create a solid foundation for sustainable growth and development. One of the key advantages of community-based development projects is their ability to promote participatory decision-making. Through involving community members in the planning and execution of these initiatives, a sense of ownership and responsibility is cultivated. This not only ensures that the projects align with the specific needs and aspirations of the community but also challenges the historical legacy of top-down development approaches that were imposed during the colonial era. As a result of shifting the power dynamics and placing the community at the center, these projects pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable development process.

8.6 Encourage dialog and collaboration

The study proposes that dialog and collaboration are crucial in the pursuit of restorative justice. It emphasizes the significance of fostering relationships between indigenous and nonindigenous communities to promote understanding and collaboration. By actively involving indigenous communities in decision-making processes and engaging in meaningful dialogs regarding issues that directly affect them, it is possible to increase the likelihood of finding effective solutions that will have a positive impact on their lives. Moreover, such efforts can help address the historical injustices caused by colonialism and apartheid.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, exploring the impact of colonialism on South Africa with a focus on the Vhavenda community has shed light on the devastating effects of colonialism on the African people. Dispossession of land, forced labor, cultural assimilation, and segregation were some of the tools used by the colonialists to suppress Africans. However, despite these challenges, African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) have played a significant role in sustaining the Vhavenda community's culture and promoting social harmony. AIKS is crucial in achieving restorative justice as it emphasizes collective responsibility, conflict resolution, and reconciliation. Therefore, there is a need for policymakers and stakeholders to recognize and appreciate the value

of AIKS in restoring justice and healing the wounds of colonialism. As South Africa moves forward, it is essential to acknowledge the painful history of colonialism and work toward a more inclusive and just society based on mutual respect and recognition of diverse cultures and knowledge systems.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Indigenous People - Traditional Practices and Modern Development provides a comprehensive overview of indigenous people, their traditional knowledge, and contemporary advancement in a variety of areas. It also discusses the need to preserve indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge in the present context and how to document and restore it. Additionally, it offers baseline data for developing plans for sustainable development and good governance. This book is a useful resource for academics, researchers, students, government agencies, non-governmental groups, and policymakers. components of the Earth. Only indigenous and native pillars can save us globally. Therefore, at any cost, the world must start a new era with indigenous people and their traditional knowledge. This book is a microscopic aspect of an anthropological study of the evolution, culture, rituals, traditional practices, and modern development of indigenous populations, globally speaking. It also enlightens the readers about the varied means of their livelihood and their social organization, religion, art, and music through three broad sections. The book will be quite useful for students, researchers, intellectuals, and general readers throughout the world. I wish for a grand success that will be a source of inspiration in many ways and a life-changing fount in the contemporary world.

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