

THE INTERVIEW DATA OF POTTERY PRACTICES IN EKEPENE UKIM, ISHIAGU AND AFIKPO IN SOUTH-EAST CENTRAL, NIGERIA

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Abstract

After the library search and description of previous works related to the search, the researcher booked appointments to meet with many of the key informants; she visited the list of proposed respondents and asked questions on how the pottery practices were being carried out in each of the vicinities under study as mentioned above.

1.0 Introduction

The visits made in these areas of study enable the researcher to organize interviews with the selected villages, most especially, the ones on the trade, and custodian of history as well as traditional Rulers in these localities.

After the library search and description of previous works related to the search, the researcher drafted a time line estimating the length of time for executing the entire field work from start to finish. Deadlines were also established for each phase of work. This section thus discusses the steps taken in collecting the relevant data for analysis of the research problem; it provides the detail steps taken to initiate and execute the fieldwork and also discusses the problem encounter during the fieldwork.

1.1. Collection of Oral Data:

The researcher booked appointments to meet with many of the key informants; she visited the list of proposed respondents, removed some names and added others. The researcher started with Obong of the town as the first step, and to intimate them with the research’s plans. During meeting with the Obong of the town and other chiefs, she intimates them with the nature of the research work; its purpose and goals were explained to them. Their blessing and assistance as well as suggestions were also sought. During the interview, each of the respondents met on the appointment date arranged in the list. However in some cases, if not all cases gift and drinks must be given to respondent, though not on demand. After one to one interviews with the respondents, the researcher proceeded to conducting interviews with the group of people who share common and related interest. The interview was conducted in Vernacular, and English was necessary to allow freedom, expression and honesty.

Table 1 INTERVIEW DATA, EKPENE UKIM, A/IBOM

S/N	Name/App. Age/Date of Interview	Educational Background	Village/ Town	Responses/Reactions
1	Madam Atim Akan Etum 72 years 21/11/2011	Non-Literate	EkpeneUkim	Money raise from pottery making is no longer interesting (no gain). Young women do not support in the trade any longer. No financial support from friends& families
2	Mrs. AfiongAsuquo 60 years 25/11/2011	Non-Literate	Noton Ebon	No financial gain to compare with other trades, e.g. farming etc. No more young women and men in the trade. No family support financially to boost the trade.

3	Madam Alice Anang 65 years 27/11/2011	Non-Literate	EkpeneUkim	Lot of people/women left the trade, because it does not sustain the family. Young women left the trade for the aged women. No financial support from the families/friends
4	Madam Cecilia Etim 62 years 30/11/2011	Non-Literate	EkepenUkim	There is decline in pottery making generally, because it cannot support the families any longer. Women join other trade like farming, trading etc. No young women in the trade to support on the business.
5	Mr. ObongOkonItam 67years 28/11/2011	Non-Literate	EkpeneUkim	There is a decline in pottery making. And the younger women have left the trade for the elderly ones, which makes the work slower and tedious.

Table 2 INTERVIEW DATA; ISHIAGU POTTERY VILLAGES

S/N	NAME/APP. Age /Date of Interview	Educational Background	Village/ Town	Responses/Remarks.
1	Mrs Grace Alema 66 years 30/11/2012	Non-literate	Amakpo Amata	Non Response. Farming has taken many people away from pottery making. Trading and farming have changed people from pottery making. Because of time people do not have interest to decorating their pots like before. Young girls are leaving the trade of pot making.
2	Mrs. Caroline Chukwu 65years 5/12/2012	Non-literate	Amaugu Amata	The tedious nature of the work is the problem facing us today. People making pots now are very few. Pots are not on sale like before.
3	Mrs Virginia Eze 58 years 12/12/2012	Non-literate	Amakpo Amata	It is because most of the potters have joined other trades/professions. Some of the work of pots making are now made by the white men. No buyer now, as it used to be. Many potters changed to breaking of stones to make money, but I do not have such energy, that is why I am still making pots.
4	JosphineEze 68 years 15/12/2013	Non-Literate	Amaeze	No response. Some of the market outlets have closed; we now depend on demand/ special order from buyers.
5	Mrs. JanethAroh 70 years 18/12/2012	Non-Literature	Ihietutu	The tedious nature of the work made some men to discourage their mothers from engaging in it. The mmuoite used to sell more than other pots, even outside the town. It represents the goddess of pots.
6	Mrs Celina Oreji 60 years 20/12/12	Non- Literate	AmaobaAmaonye	Despite the fact that craft became tedious, our pots are even more expensive. Potters do other jobs, to support family income.

7	Chief. Damien Alor 70 years 19/11/2012	Non-Literate	Ihietutu	The tedious nature of the work is not good for men, because we prefer working in the farm or trading. We need to wait for large demand or special offers from buyers.
8	Mrs. Codelia Aja 70 years 20/11/2012	Non-Literate	Amakpu Amata	Some of our markets outlets have closed, we now depend on special order from buyers from the few outlets for our pots. If you go to our popular Eke market, you will not find any pot on sale.
9	MrsOgodiya Ajaugo 67 years 30/12/2012	Non-Literate	Ihietutu	The death of railway transport system has made it difficult for buyers to transport their pots. Now with road transport, those who still come to buy, buy small pots specially bowls which are easier to transport to far places. Rice farming is attracting more attention especially among young women and those who still engage in pottery do so with helpers. I know my people have been making pots, but I do not know how many they used to make in the past. I grew up to see my people making pots; I do not know how it started.
10	Mrs. Margreth Okorie 65 years 21/12/2012	Non-Literate	AmaboAmaonye	The reason is that there is no much market for the products now. There are certain ceremonies which require the use of pots, but now some of those pots can be dispensed with the modern containers.
11	Mrs. Theresa Aja 65years 11/11/2012	Non-Literate	Amaokwe	The presence of the Crush Rock Industries have given us new employment. Even though the crushing and sale of crushed rocks is even more tedious, I however generate more income than in pottery. I do not know of any other type of pots except the ones we are making presently. We make use of those that are less time consuming
12	Chief Pius Enyi 55 years 22/11/2012	Literate	Amakpu Amata	The introduction of plastics into the market is seriously affecting local production of pots now. In fact, near absence of ritual practices that make use of pots is another factor.
13	Chief MelcinOnyeama 56years 26/12/2012	Literate	AmaboAmaonye	The location of the Crush Rock Industries where I was months ago is constituting a threat to the local pottery industry in Ishiagu. Look at my village (Amaonye) where pottery originated cannot boost of 5 potters still serious with the craft. The worst is Amaokwe, where the industry is located; there you cannot even see a single potter still in the business.

Table 4 AFIKPO INTERVIEW DATA

S/N	NAME/APP. Age /Date of Interview	Educational Background	Village/ Town	Responses/Remarks.
1	Mrs. OgeriaOkoEvo 65 Years 12/12/2012	Non-literate	EziuchuOrrahOzzizza	We do not have enough customers now. Our people are no more interested in local pots. We still use MkpisiIte to decorate pots.
2	Mrs. Beatrice Isu 66yrs 15/12/2012	Non-literate	EziuchuOrrahOzzizza	Market for our products have reduced because people prefer plastic and metal containers. The type of pots produce is the type I Learnt from my mother
3	Mrs. Pauline Oko 69 yrs 16/12/2012	Non-literate	EzeiokoteAmikpo Ozizza	Most potters are now traders; they trade on fish and farm products, which according to them, are less difficult to do. They use plastic pots/ kettle to pour libation during the wrestling context. Pots are no more attracting market like what it used to be about twenty years ago. During my mother's times, customers used to travel from riverine areas to order for different types of pots.
4	Mrs. Ugo Egwu 55years 18/12/2012	Non-literate	Ozizza	Even White people used to buy our pots. Only now in making pots, we no longer, see young women/ Men that used to come and buy pots in large quantities to distant market.
5	Mr. Egwu 75 years 21/12/2012	Non-literate	Ovum	Even to convey the pots for us, to where they will be fired, children of nowadays have refused to assist.
6	Mr. Egwu Elem 71 years 22/12/2012	Non-literate	Imama Ozizza	The coming of the white people is destroying our culture. Have you ever seen plastic containers used for initiation ceremony?
7	Mrs. OgechiOko68 years 25/11/2012	Non-Literate	EziokoteAmikpo, Ozizza	Many prefer farming now; it is less tedious than pottery and yields more income too. I still go to Eke market to sell pots. At times I return without selling even one. I know it was not like this when my mother was engaged in pottery.
8	Mrs. OriEuka 70 years 11/12/2012	Non-Literate	AmainyimeImama, Ozizza	We no longer see the young men who used to come and buy pots from us in large quantities for resale in distant markets. Only those women who are old still make pots.
9	Mr. EgwuInyia 72 years 22/12/2012	Non-Literate	AmainyimeImama, Ozizza	The coming of the white people is destroying our culture. Have you ever seen plastic containers being used during initiation ceremony?
10	Mrs. EgwuPhilomina 40 years 10/12/2012	Literate	Amainyime, Imama, Ozizza	As an educated woman, how do you expect me to make pots? The teaching I do yields enough money for me to feed my family.
11	Mr. EgwuIsu 75 years 13/11/2012	Non-Literate	Ovum	Even to convey the pots for us to where they will be fired, children of nowadays have refused to assist.

1.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The paper identifies and analyses the Indigenous materials for decoration sourced in the study areas during the fieldwork, examined the physical and chemical content of each of the material sourced in the areas, incorporating all the available data, though emphasis will also be on their pottery forms and decoration, clearer information can be obtained when other aspects of the tradition and the associated institutions are incorporated. For instance pottery being an aspect of art that developed along with other forms of art, a study of some aspects of the crisis in the development of Nigerian art forms will be relevant in the understanding of the changes.

1.3 Physical & chemical analysis of the materials from the study areas.

Raw Materials

Locations Sourced

Rock/Coloured Stones

EkpeneUkim, Afikpo and Ishiagu

Root (African oil bean)

Tree bark (African oil Bean)

Silica (Sand)

Feldspar

1.4 Physical analysis of the materials.

The making of pottery wares or products really begin with prospecting for raw materials deposits with a view to determining what individual potters need for his/her work or the intention, which therefore first analysis for physical properties of the raw materials. In the course of this study emphasis is placed on developing pottery/ceramics colourants or pigments using indigenous raw materials listed above and these materials were sourced in the areas under study i.eEkpeneUkim, Afikpo and Ishiagu.

These materials contain true colouring agents used together with sand (silica). Some colouring pigments used in pottery are derived from materials as earlier mentioned. The metallic pigments are of course the same as natural coloured rocks, red clay and stones which all get their colouring from Iron (Singer, 1963) In the course of this analysis emphasis was placed on :-

- ❖ The introduction of indigenous raw materials for pottery decoration
- ❖ Discussing the various methods involved in the development of colourants.
- ❖ Experimenting with the materials to prove they are ingredients for pottery colours.
- ❖ The actual development of the pottery colours combined with other locally sourced materials.

The art of making colours may be traced back to ancient civilization. The traditional potters used the burnishing method and locally brewed stains to give their pots a good finishing. This was achieved by treating the fired pots with a mixture made from the bark of trees. This acts as a colour/ glaze. It renders the pot impervious and attractive. With increase challenges in Ceramics/pottery production, the modern potters improve these techniques by the addition of more ingredients, which gave rise to the discovery of colours/glaze for the decoration of pottery wares. In Nigeria, nearly all the necessary raw materials for development of pottery colours are available in almost all the states of the federation. These materials are found in raw state which are impure and cannot be used directly for ceramics/pottery colours development, it must pass through some processes of purification/preparation before it could be used in decoration of pottery/Ceramics products.

Table 3 Results of physical laboratory analysis from EkpeneUkim

MATERIALS	PLASTIC LENGTH (CM)	DRY LENGTH (CM)	DRY SHRINAGE (%)	FIRED LENGTH (CM)	FIRED SHRINAGE (%)
Coloured Rock	6	5.9	1	5.7	3
Tree Bark	6	5.6	4	5.3	7
Silica	6	5.8	2	5.4	6
Root (African Oil Bean)	6	5.5	5	5.2	8
Feldspar	6	5.8	2	5.5	5

Table 4 Results of physical laboratory analysis from Ishiagu

MATERIALS	PLASTIC LENGTH (CM)	DRY LENGTH (CM)	DRY SHRINAGE (%)	FIRED LENGTH (CM)	FIRED SHRINAGE (%)
Coloured Rock	6	5.8	5	5.6	4
Tree Bark	6	5.6	4	5.5	5
Silica	6	5.5	5	5.3	7
Root (African Oil Bean)	6	5.6	6	4.9	11
Feldspar	6	5.7	5	5.6	4

Table 5 Results of physical laboratory analysis from Afikpo

MATERIALS	PLASTIC LENGTH (CM)	DRY LENGTH (CM)	DRY SHRINAGE (%)	FIRED LENGTH (CM)	FIRED SHRINAGE (%)
Coloured Rock	6	5.9	1	5.6	4
Tree Bark	6	5.7	3	4.8	12
Silica	6	5.5	5	5.7	3
Root (African Oil Bean)	6	5.6	4	5.0	10
Feldspar	6	5.8	2	5.5	5

1.5 Chemical analysis on the materials.

Chemical analysis has a very wide application in research, development and control, even though the nature of pottery/ceramics raw materials and their reaction necessitates the use of many other methods. Knowledge of the chemical composition of raw materials.colours, glaze and ceramics body is frequently very useful, but because complete analysis of silicate materials by classified methods takes a week to perform, these were not formerly as routine control measure.The classical method of complete analysis is mainly gravimetric, occasionally assisted with colourmetric measurement.

Table 6 Results of Chemical analysis from EkpeneUkim

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS	MATERIAL	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Coloured Rock (Grinded)	EkpeneUkim	Tl-3.79	Coloured Rock (Grinded)	Afikpo	Tl-2.1
		Al-28.0			Al-20.5
		Fe-1.40			Fe-0.50
		Mg-0.36			Mg-0.20
		Ca-0.60			Ca-0.61
		Na-0.02			Na-0.01
		Ko-1.10			Ka-1.01

Table 7 Results of Chemical analysis from Ishiagu

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Coloured Rock (Grinded)	Ishiagu	Tl-1.78
		Al-27.1
		Fe-1.70
		Mg-1.8
		Ca-0.70
		Na-0.90
		Ka-2.1

Table 8 Results of chemical laboratory analysis from EkpeneUkim

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS	MATERIAL	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Root (African Oil Bean)	EkpeneUkim	Tl-1.71	Root (African Oil Bean)	Afikpo	Tl-0.98
		Al-22.16			Al-19.01
		Fe-2.10			Fe-1.91
		Mg-1.02			Mg-1.50
		Ca-0.72			Ca-0.89
		Na-2.01			Na-2.01
		Ko-2.11			Ka-2.11

Table 9 Results of chemical laboratory analysis from Ishiagu

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Root (African Oil Bean)	Ishiagu	Tl-1.29
		Al-20.03
		Fe-2.01
		Mg-1.58
		Ca-0.78
		Na-1.89
		Ka-1.21

Table 10 Results of chemical laboratory analysis from EkepeneUkim

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS	MATERIAL	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Silica	Ekpene Ukim	Tl-2.79	Silica	Afikpo	Tl-1.19
		Al-21.1			Al-21.0
		Fe-1.19			Fe-2.01
		Mg-1.56			Mg-1.14
		Ca-0.63			Ca-0.15
		Na-0.03			Na-0.06
		Ko-1.29			Ka-0.58

Table 11 Results of chemical laboratory analysis from Ishiagu

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Silica	Ishiagu	Tl-1.18
		Al-1.19
		Fe-2.07
		Mg-1.20
		Ca-0.79
		Na-0.89
		Ka-1.69

Table 12 Results of chemical laboratory analysis from EkepeneUkim

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS	MATERIAL	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Tree Bark (African oil Bean)	EkepeneUkim	Tl-0.10	Tree Bark (African oil Bean)	Afikpo	Tl-0.28
		Al-0.09			Al-0.10
		Fe-0.91			Fe-1.70
		Mg-1.01			Mg-1.09
		Ca-1.71			Ca-1.87
		Na-1.05			Na-1.08
		Ko-0.13			Ka-1.01

Table 13 Results of chemical laboratory analysis from Ishiagu

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Tree Bark (African oil Bean)	Ishiagu	Tl-1.00
		Al-1.10
		Fe-0.99
		Mg-1.20
		Ca-1.97
		Na-1.89
		Ka-2.00

Table 14 Results of chemical laboratory analysis from EkpeneUkim

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS	MATERIAL	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Feldspar	EkpeneUkim	Tl-2.07	Feldspar	Afikpo	Tl-1.30
		Al-2.02.			Al-3.00
		Fe-1.05			Fe-2.10
		Mg-1.30			Mg-1.14
		Ca-2.00			Ca-0.17
		Na-2.10			Na-1.20
		Ko-0.19			Ka-1.10

Table 15 Results of chemical laboratory analysis from Ishiagu

MATERIALS	LOCATION	ANALYSIS
Feldspar	Ishiagu	Tl-1.90
		Al-2.04
		Fe-2.01
		Mg-1.91
		Ca-2.05
		Na-2.09
		Ka-2.01

1.6. Colourmetric:

Colour test in qualitative analysis are widespread. The use of colour for quantitative work is possible when there are coloured substances present. A precious qualitative analysis is therefore necessary if no disturbing substances are present, the colour is usually obtained by adding suitable reagents and then compare with depth of colour of the same compound in a solution of known concentration.

1.7. Spectrophotometric Analysis:

Spectrophotometric method for qualitative and quantitative analysis is considered advantage over ordinary wet method.

First, the analysis is completely objective, determining the unexpected as well as the expected elements.

Secondly, it will determine smaller quantities of rare constituents.

Thirdly, it is quick, a complete colour analysis takes only three to four hours and requires only small samples. The apparatus consists of spectrographic, an excitation means of photographic recording, viewing the comparison. In the qualitative work, the spectrogram obtained is compared with pure spectrum which has numerous exact position of the lines given by the test specimen to be identified. For qualitative work the intensities of careful chosen lines (very strong lines show reversal on the photography) are measured comparative to standard photography under identical conditions.

It identifies and analyses, the changes that have occurred in the pottery tradition of the study areas, incorporating all available data, emphasis on a decoration and forms; however proper information was obtained when other aspects of the tradition and associated institutions were incorporated.

1.8. Causes of Change

Civilization which sometimes terms to be modernization has profound influence on traditional pottery and other works of arts in Nigeria as well as many other parts of the world. The aspects of change which modernization influences are in the areas of traditional art and craft. As noted by Aniakor and Cole Christianity, trade contacts, Industrialization, activities of Christian missionaries and British colonial officers are part the reason for changes.

The advent of Christian missionaries and the increasing presence of converts, British colonial officers as well as foreign goods in the later decades of the nineteenth century did have some effects on lifestyle of the people. Thus, the

missionaries and British administrators played an important role in undermining local values and thus towards the decline of traditional art in Africa. However, “the colonial administrator was less directly involved in the destructive process than the missionary. It is important to note that trade and industrialization were perhaps more” destructive factors. And as each these factors are clearly examined, an attempt will be made to draw attention to traditional pottery, the main focus of this study.

1.9. Trade Contact and Industrialization

The impact made upon local art and craft by communication with the outside world, introduced new materials, new tools, weapons and provided a more abundant and cheaper supply of things previously rare and difficult to acquire. The imports originally came from all over the world, India, china, America and other parts of Africa. The period between 1500 and 1850 marked an era of trade contact with the outside world. The Igbos went “well beyond their own borders where interaction with other people doubtless provided ‘feedback’ in cultural and materials terms for homeland areas. In return for ivory and slaves, came a variety of European trade goods.” Consequently, “petty trade flourished in local markets for goods the people themselves did not produce or manufacture, such as salt, others food stuffs, pottery, cloth, tools and other metal goods, some carvings, mats and baskets. Before this time up to the 1860s, these items were traded along with Igbo made goods which consisted “of corn, fish very little and palm-wine in abundance, yam raw and cooked, palm-oil, pepper, bowls and mortar, plantains, fowls, eggs, snail, coca-roots (coco-yam), palm-nuts, ropes, mats and many other products”

Eventually, during the nineteenth century, cheap mass-produced goods, occasioned by industrial revolution, displaced local wares. Cheap European iron pots and bars, bowls and Staffordshire earthenware gradually led to decrease in production and marketing of local arts and crafts. In fact as it happened all over the world, machine product swamped local markets and drove the local craftsmen and women out of business. Japanese enamel wares have largely replaced the carved calabashes, the Lancashire cotton mills have ousted the weaver in African as they did in England, and pottery has surrendered to plastic containers. Among the Bariba of northern Benin, “there is a general shift from the use of ceramics and gourd vessels to metal containers both in the city and rural areas. In “Fulani of North Cameroun, with the modern influx of mass produced goods of metal, plastic and glass, the demand for pottery has decreased. Hurricane lamps replaced pedestal oil lamps and Fulani now eat from enamel basins rather than from earthenware bowls” In Nigeria, Ife, Benin, Nok, Igbo-Ukwu etc. were important and renowned artistic traditions, their “artistic production certainly continued until swamped by imported industrial products in very recent times”

There is no need to emphasize the large part that locally made pottery still plays in the daily life of Nigeria. Nonetheless in 1955 there were some forty-eight stalls selling earthen wares in one Ibadan market (the one that has since disappeared). In 1957 the corresponding number was fifteen and in 1959 it was four. Without claiming scientific accuracy for these figures, they are sufficiently correct to underline the extent to which traditional functional pottery is being replaced by enamelware. Nor will there be any reversal of this trend because these metal basins are infinitely more durable and functional than the vessels which they are replacing. It is also true that the transition from the use of pottery to tin ware is marked in the East as in the West. In 1959 it was not possible to find any other earthenware of real merit in the market at Onitsha.

Among the Niger Igbos, clay pots are being displaced whenever possible. As at 1966; kerosene and petrol tins were preferred as they are lighter, more easily cleaned. Likewise, negro iron pots were used in place of cooking pots. In Inyi of South-eastern Nigeria. The major factor responsible for this turn of event is the flooding of the local markets with enamel, plastics and aluminum wares that are considered particularly durable and convenient to use. Similarly, “cheap European iron bars gradually brought about the disappearance of iron smelting in the savannah interland. In Nigeria, “gold-smithing has become almost a trade practiced in the urban areas. Blacksmiths who still practice, do so under the name iron benders’ involved in the production of “metal chairs, iron beds, iron gate, metal net-work for balconies or houses and fencing”, “The impact of these imports, however was predominantly upon the material side of Eastern Nigeria culture. They had little effect upon aesthetics and spiritual until the twentieth century, when the influence of the Christian educated elite

began” to take root. In Ishiagu, the establishments of mining industries in 1950s has continued to create a serious negative feedback on their pottery traditions. When people discovered that these products have superior qualities and durability, they started buying them in larger quantities for use in their homes in place of the locally manufactured substitutes. Thus the demand and level of production of the local products decreased tremendously. The indigenous craftsmen and women who could no longer sustain life from the meager amount realized from sale of pots abandoned the crafts and took other jobs. Truth remains that Nigerian traditional pottery like other indigenous crafts of Africa “is threatened with decay by the new imports; of plastic materials,” enamel wares and modern pottery products and this may lead to its “decline in time. Thus, it is obvious that not all changes in African traditional pottery resulted from European contact. The indigenous cultural system as well as the attitude of the Africans contributed to some of the problems facing African indigenous pottery.

2.0. Conclusion

The advent of Christian missionaries and the increasing presence of converts, British colonial officers as well as foreign goods in the later decades of the nineteenth century did have some effects on lifestyle of the people. Thus, the missionaries and British administrators played an important role in undermining local values and thus towards the decline of traditional art in Africa.

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