

A RELIGIO-SOCIO ASSESSMENT OF IGBO NAMING CEREMONY AMONG THE ANAEDO PEOPLE OF IGBO ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The present researcher undertook an ethnographic assessment of the Igbo naming ceremony in Anaedo Anambra state. The aim was to identify the vector quantities implicated in the practice of this ceremony as well as the symbolic acts and fixed expressions that constitute the fabric of the ritual process of the iba nwa afa (naming) ceremony. Also explored were the principal myths underpinning its practices and the extent to which the study of the ceremony could be used as a ladder into achieving a holistic understanding of the basic tenets of Igbo religion. The research paper argued that it is by means of this ceremony that a newly born Anaedo child gets to become defined as an individual human being through the ritual act of being assigned a name by which to identify him or her in the course of his or her earthly existence. Hence, the findings of this research confirm Horton's assumption that the benefit tenets of African Traditional Religion could be discovered through a comprehensive study of the important rituals and ceremonies of the various African peoples. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were executed in this paper.

Introduction

Igbo naming ceremony is one of the Igbo birth rites. The others include: the cutting of the placenta and the umbilical cord, the seclusion and the purification as well as the circumcision rites. Both boys and girls are involved in this practice although circumcision especially for the girls is performed at a later age to come closer to their puberty rite. Among the Igbo, these rites hold the same significance as suggested by Genep (1960) who indicates that:

They are intended not only to neutralize an impurity or to attract sorcery to themselves but to serve as actual bridges, chains or links – in short, to facilitate the changing of condition without social disruption or an abrupt cessation of individual and collective life. (P. 62).

Among the Anaedo, the ceremony of giving a name to the new born child is one that comes immediately after the seclusion and the purification rites are performed. Such a ceremony, as seen by Obiego (1984), is the concern not only of the agnate (*umunna*) but also of the whole village. It brings together relatives and friends from other villages and even from outside the village group. Parents and grandparents are the principal actors concerned in the naming of the child. Hence, the naming ceremony, among the Igbo, is a type of peace offering in which the community comes together to pray for the child and for the health of the parents.

According to Madu (2009), “the question of nomenclature is closely related to what we refer to as identity, for a name identifies a person, a thing or a community” (p.145). Therefore, a person's name is a part of his identity, but the entirety of a person's identity is not exhausted in his name, for there are other variables that must come to bear on what we may refer to as identity. Horton (1995) proposes that the basic tenets of any indigenous religion could be determined through the principal rituals and ceremonies of the people professing the religion. Following this frame work, the present study of Anaedo naming ceremony was undertaken to explore the extent to which the basic tenets of Igbo Religion (its goals, spiritual agencies; key

officiants and the attitudes of the people to the spiritual agencies of the religion) could be discovered through the study of this ceremony. The research is therefore meant to serve as a field test of the validity or invalidity of Horton's assumption set above.

Meaning and aim of Igbo Naming Ceremony

Representing the views collected from Anaedo elders under the above theme are those by C. Afamefuna (Personal communication, 4th March, 2023), and S.C. Okeke (Personal communication, 14th February, 2023), who agreed to be named. For example, according to C. Afamefuna (Personal communication, 4th March, 2023), the purpose of the Igbo naming ceremony is the out-dooring of the child (*Nkupute nwa*). In his view, the naming ceremony, *Iba Nwa Afa*, marks the official presentation of the child to his or her human agnate community (umunna) climaxed by the giving of a name to the baby in the presence of the child's agnate (umunna) - the members of his/her father's kindred).

S. C. Okeke (Personal communication, 14th February, 2023), on the other hand identified a second goal for the naming ceremony among the Anaedo community. In his view, the aim of this ceremony is to fulfill the social-religious obligation that comes into effect after the birth of an indigenous Igbo child. And this is the need to perform a ritual of thanksgiving to the gods and ancestors for the gift of the child and to ask for blessings on his/her behalf as s/he begins his/her earthly journey.

According to Uchegbue (2010), "among the Igbo, naming ceremony is the most elaborate and religiously significant of all the infancy rites" (p.157). In other words, among the Anaedo community, the naming ceremony is intended first as a ritual of giving a name and welcoming of the child into his/her human fold. Secondly, it is understood as a ritual for praying to God, the village deities, and the ancestors to protect and take adequate care of the child as s/he lives among his/her people.

As regards the meaning and importance of this ceremony, C. Afamefuna (Personal communication, 4th March, 2023), opined that the one reason for this ceremony derived from an Igbo myth that a newly born child has a double audience. This encompasses members of his/her peers in the world of the unborn children and those of the human community in which he has been born as well as being blessed with a double-voiced relationship. According to him, to say that a newborn child is invested with a double-voiced relationship means that, until he is named he is still in communion with two types of constituencies, the human constituency and the constituency of the unborn babies.

A newborn baby according to this myth has two dialects with which he communicates with the community. With one speech act, unknown to humans, he talks to his or her peers in the world of the unborn children. And they can allure him or her to come back to them through such continued exchange of views with them. With the other speech act (e.g. crying) he registers his or her presence in the human world; and through this, s/he requests for a name by which to be known and related with. Obiego (1984), points out the myth and reason behind giving a name to children after twelve days of their birth in the following words: 'The world of the unborn children is the world of beings without body'. In such a world, members have no need for a name. Life in the human world is lived by means of a name. We become completely human in being named. And once the child is named, his/her link and invisible loyalty to his or her peers in the world of the unborn children become broken. Liseli (2012) is in agreement with the

above view when he observed that “among the Kongo ethnic group for instance, a new born was not regarded as truly human until the bestowal of a name” (p.39).

From the above observations one can then say that in general, the naming ceremony is one of the first major rituals of great traditional importance to the child and his or her people. With it a child is incorporated and received officially into the human agnate (*umunna*) community and becomes officially separated from his or her prenatal world. In this way one can say that such a ceremony has a double dimension, that is, social and religious, and therefore a turning point in the history of the child.

The time of naming a child

The practice of giving a name to a new baby is important as has been implied above. According to C. Afamefuna (Personal communication, 4th March, 2023), it is a ritual that is grounded on a proper time perspective. Since from information accruing from the present study, it cannot be performed immediately the child is born. For example, according to S.C. Okeke (Personal communication, 14th February, 2023), noted that “the naming ceremony ritual is not performed immediately the child is born. It must wait till the 12th day or three Igbo weeks (*Izu-ato*) of the child’s birth.” He explains that the reason for this is related to an Igbo myth that every new baby must first be given sometime to weigh and choose if he really wishes to stay. That is, whether he/she wishes to be incorporated into the human community or if s/he desires to go back to where he came from.

Although we know that babies are not able to engage in this process, this rationale was built into the Igbo myth explaining why the Igbo naming ceremony is not conducted immediately after birth. In line with this myth, Uchegbue (2010) maintains that when a child dies before the 12th day after birth and therefore could not be named, it is a sign that he has decided not to stay but has chosen the option of departure to the world of the unborn children. On the other hand, surviving up to the 12th day of birth is an indication to the members of his or her agnate community (*umuuna*) that he has weighed and has chosen the option of membership in the human world.

Consequently, according to Obiego (1984), the *Iba Nwa Afa* ceremony commonly takes place on the 12th day from the day of the child’s birth. This space gives enough time for the parents to believe that s/he has given them sufficient signal that it does not intend to die, that he has come to stay. Commenting on this same issue of why the delay of the naming till the 12th day of the child’s birth, C. Afamefuna (Personal communication, 4th March, 2023), explained that this is traditionally done to find out whether s/he would give some extraordinary manifestations of the kind of trait or characteristic s/he is made of. That is, whether he has some supernatural powers with which he might be identified. According to S.C. Okeke (Personal communication, 14th February, 2023), such period of waiting for possible significant manifestations from the baby does not only involve a type of passive waiting for the signs. It also involves the act of consulting the diviners or fortunetellers (*Igba Agu*) in search of who is behind the child’s earthly journey, in terms of his or her destiny spirit (*Onye Uwa*). As Nwoga (1984) put it, the value of waiting for significant signs from the baby is to find a suitable name for the type of being he manifests. In this regard, the period of separation covers the period from conception to the birth of the child. This marks the time of breach between the child and his or her peers in the world of the unborn children. The period of transition, encompassing the time from birth to the 12th day of the child’s birth, stands for that period when the baby strictly speaking is neither fully human nor merely a formless spiritual guest in the world in the manner of his or her peers in the fore-world of children. The period of incorporation stands for the period of the

naming ceremony proper. It represents the actual day of the child's full birth into the human world ascribed with a personal name.

Key officiant/ witnesses to the ceremony in Anaedo

The primary person who gives the name to the child at the Naming Ceremony is the father of the child. The father of the child is the principal officiant in this ceremony as he is the head of the family and a representative of the ancestors in a patrilineal group, the ritual being conducted in the presence of the child's *umunna*. Those who witness the ceremony consist of the elder members of the agnate (*umunna*), and other members of the kindred group as well as people from other village group, both men and women. Other children of the agnate were also welcomed in this ceremony. During the ceremony such children were seen to manifest signs of being happy that they now have another of their kind. Some of them not quite related to the new born appeared happy just because of the feasting that accompanies the naming of the child born in their midst.

The naming ceremony process

In preparation for the actual ceremony of naming the child, the infant is brought outside, leaving the mother's hut for the first time, to be officially exhibited or shown to the assembled guests. He is brought out by the paternal grandmother and then handed over to the father who is the actual person to present him/her to the *umunna*. The process of naming is inaugurated as the child is being formally presented to the agnate community.

Ritual objects in Igbo Naming Ceremony (The Matter)

1. 4 kola nuts or more. (*oji*)
2. 2 or more alligator peppers (*ose-oji*)
3. 1 cock, (*okeokpa okuko*) or more, depending on the wealth of the family of the child, or as my respondents put it in Igbo language, "*ka aka onye ha*"
4. 2 bottles of local gin (*kai-kai*)
5. 2 gallons of local palm wine or more (*Nkwenu/Ngwo*).

Ritual Spoken Words (The Form)

The basic prayer form used in breaking the kola-nut, and in asking for blessings and protections on the child, and on the rest of the agnate (*umunna*) is as follows:

Officiant greeting and addressing god, spirits and ancestors

Chukwu abiaama (He who was before all of us)

Ezechitoke (The king of all creation)

Omama amacha amacha (The known but unfathomable)

Isi nsiko gbalu Igbo ghalii (The crab's head that is a mystery to the Igbo)

Eze bi n'igwe ogodu ya na-akpu na ani (He who lives above with his feet on the ground)

Nwoke oghologho anya (A man with distended eyes that sees everything)

Ndimuo di be anyi (Our gods and ancestors)

Anyanwu na Agbala (The sky and the sun gods)

Ndi mbu na ndi egede (Our ancestors and forefathers)

Anyi ekene (We thank you)

Participants: *Isee!* (Indeed thus we say/agree).

Begging agencies to break the kola-nut for them and make it a sacred meal

Naranu anyi ojia (Receive this kola nut)

Taanu n'otu k'anyi taa n'ibe (Eat it whole, while we share the pieces)

Bianu gozie ojia k'anyi si na ita ya nweta ndu. (Come and bless this kola so that we will obtain life through eating it).

Participants: *Isee!* (Indeed thus we say/agree).

Prayer of thanksgiving and for his welfare

Obi di anyi uto rinne na nwa enyere anyi. (We are very pleased for the child given to us)

Anyi na-ekene unu (We thank you all)

Afa ya bu..... (His name is ...)

Anyi na-ario agam n'iru ya, aruiké, ogologo ndu na ife eji ene ndu anya n'ebe ono (We pray for his progress in the world, for his health, virile and long/strong life and the wealth with which his/her life will be enhanced)

Participants: *Isee!* (Indeed thus we say/agree).

Prayer to the ancestors to pave his way for him

Ndimuo di banyi na Nnannanyi ha (Our gods and ancestors)

Doziere nu ya ezi, (Make smooth his/her life path)

Ka otoo, soro ibe ya mee ife ibe ya na-eme (So he can live long, to do and to take his/her seat among his/her mates)

Participants: *Isee!* (Indeed thus we say/agree).

Prayer for peace and joy

Udo no onu (Peace and Joy)

Ejee abata k'anyi nario ebe nnenanna ya no (Successful going out and coming in, we pray on his/her parents behalf)

Participants: *Isee!* (Indeed thus we say).

Prayer for wealth to sustain life

Ife akuaku ife enwe-enwe K'anyi nario n'isi ha (For animals and possessions We pray on their behalf)

Ka erie taa, k'erie ubochi ozo (May we come again in this family for a similar celebration of joy)

Participants: *Isee!* (Indeed thus we say/agree)

Prayer for the welfare of his entire agnate (*Umunna*)

Ndi b'anyi, anyi ga adisinu (Our people, we shall all live)

Ya gazielu unu nine (May things go well for you all).

Participants: *Iseeeee!!* (Indeed thus we say/agree!!!)

Symbolic significance of the ritual objects

These included the animal gift of a cock, to reflect the abundance of joy of the members of the child's agnate for the gift of a child. Respondents from the communities on the other hand agree that the presence of the four kolanuts or more stands for the spirit of prayer on the part of the *umunna*. With it, prayers are offered for the child to grow to adopt the agnate spirit that will enable him/her to grow without deviation from the discipline and guidance of the community.

Regarding the basis for the presence of four kola nuts or more, in this ceremony, Nwoga (1984) explains that:

In offering kola, multiples of two and four are given and not the odd numbers – thus events demands four, eight, sixteen, sixty-four kola nuts and some multiples of four in between. According to him, when kola nut is split the number of lobes found in the kola nut has been given symbolic meaning. Three is *aka dike* (the strong arm), four is peace, five is wealth and children and so fourth. (p. 28).

In Anaedo, in particular, C. Afamefuna (Personal communication, 4th March, 2023), stated in relation to the symbol of the alligator pepper, that its presence in the naming ceremony was taken to stand as a word of reminder to the parents of the new child during this solemn occasion, namely, to remind them of the fact that parenting can be both joyful and painful, just as the alligator pepper is known to sting as well as bring a nice aroma to he that chews it.

In addition, the birth of a child brings an emotional satisfaction to the parents: To the man, the event is a proof of his manliness and to the woman of her fruitfulness. It moreover provides a status symbol and further, an opportunity for both parents to develop towards greater maturity. Children bring joy to many even when their day-to-day life is full of harshness and poverty. But it is believed that, in the end, with perseverance and effort on their part, the child could grow to become a full-fledged adult that will bring honour not only to himself/herself but also to his/her parents and the *umunna* at large.

An elder from Uruagu Nnewi, S. C. Okeke (Personal communication, 14th February, 2023), observed in relation to the presence of wine in the items presented above, indicating that it is there to symbolize the idea of the celebratory spirit among the agnate blessed with a child. He also said the cock symbolizes the idea of the dawn of a new hope, a new opportunity and blessing in the family through the birth of the newborn child. These clarifications show that Igbo ritual objects, like in the context of the present ceremony, are used as symbols that speak larger and longer than the actual concrete items, which they represent (Turner,1968).

Naming and aspects of Igbo belief systems

The present study contains a lot of clues as regards the belief systems, and ritual practices encompassed in Igbo religious, philosophical and psychological traditions.

Consolatory /Melioristic Names refer to those that reflect the feelings of the parents at the time when the child was born. They are names that evaluate human actions and caution for prudence and patience in human affairs generally. These include such names like: ‘**Ochiabuto**’ (Salutation is not love) and ‘**Osochiegbu**’ (Fate’s accomplice in the downfall of others). They show that some Igbo names have a declarative and warning character, intended to be a life guide to those who bear or use them.

Similarly, some of the names discovered in the field in the study of the naming ceremony show that certain proverbial names are used by Igbo people to justify a position, with all of such names attesting to certain aspects of the core of their belief system. As Obiego (1984) points out, these are names that speak volumes regarding the nature of the Igbo spirit. They are situational names surrounded with circumstantial experiences. Such names are ‘**Nkiruka**’ (Greater blessings still lie in the future), ‘**Iruka**’ (Tomorrow is greater) and ‘**Echidime**’

(Tomorrow is pregnant, so nobody knows tomorrow). These names in Igbo framework are intended to help to counsel and console those not yet well treated by fate.

Igbo Market Day Names refer to the day of the week or the time/event in the community when the child was born. Thus a name like **'Nweke'** shows the tendency of the Igbo to immortalize the name of the day of the Igbo week when the child was born. In this case a child born on the Eke market day is given the name, **'Nweke'**; the one born on Afor day is given the name, **'Nwafor'**. A child born on Nkwo market day, is called **'Nwankwo'** while the name **'Nwoye'**, is given to a child 'born on the second day of Igbo week, Oye day'.

Theophoric/ Destiny Names refer to those that show the religious import of Igbo names. Such names are given either as gratitude to God, such as: **'Chukwudalu'**, 'Thanks be to God'; **'Chukwuemeka'**, 'God has done well' or to a specific village deity, for example, the earth-goddess such as **'Anaemeke'**, 'the earth-goddess has done well' for the birth of the child. A number of Igbo names in this taxonomy contain a lot of information on Igbo religious philosophy and theology. A close examination of some of those names reveals that most names given to the child under this ceremony are shorthand expressions of Igbo religious creed and experiential and circumstantial wisdom. They also make reference to the Igbo idea of God, life, death, ethics, Igbo theology and general orientation to living. For example, testimonial names **'Chukwudi'** (God exists), **'Onyekachukwu'** (Who is greater than God?) and **'Chukwuebuka'** (God is great), contain eloquent clues regarding Igbo idea of God. They assert that God exists; that nobody is like Him; and that He is great. Other names like **'Chukwudalu'** (Thanks be to God!) and **'Chukwuemeka'** (God has done well) are also in the same trend. They attest to the relational character and the idea of Igbo Religion as a religion of gratitude. These names as Obiego (1984:78) points out show that:

For an ordinary Igbo (as with any other group of mankind on earth) the demonstration for God's existence does not begin with the gamut of metaphysical reasoning or the 'five ways' of 'the Angelic Doctor'. On the contrary, it begins from God's providential care for men – from men's experience of that 'awesome immanence of the wholly other' – i.e. men's experience of God coming as providence – good and thoughtful of men, giving children to the barren, food to the hungry, perseverance to the despairing, justice to the afflicted, and peace to troubled household. (p. 78).

Theophoric names or those related to particular Igbo divinities were also unearthed in this ceremony, such as **'Nwanyanwu'** (The child of the sun-god), **'Nwigwe'** (The child of the sky-god), **'Nwamuo'** (The child of a divinity), **'Nwala'** (A child of the earth-goddess), and **'Ngene'** (a name for one of the river deities among the Igbo community). In some of these names, the Igbo demonstrate strongly their faith in the contributions of divinities other than the Supreme Being (Chukwu) in the affairs of their lives.

Some of the names discovered under this column, also reveal the strong Igbo belief in the uncertainty and fragility of the human experience and therefore in humans' dependence on the support and providence of their gods and ancestors. Such are names like **'Chikwe'** (If my Chi approves the plan), **'Nkechi'** (Whatever the destiny spirit decides), **'Ogechi'** (God's time), and **'Anele'** (We wait and see). They speak volumes on the nature of Igbo philosophy and existential orientation.

Testimonial/ Ejaculatory Names reflect the tendency of Igbo people to give a name to a child that depicts their pragmatic view of the child in question or the background of event in his or her family at the time he was born. For example, a name like ‘**Amanna**’ shows that the child was born immediately after the father’s death. And a name like ‘**Ositadinma**’ reflects the idea that things were not so smooth in the family of the child before he was born. The parents start to believe that things could improve in their lives with the arrival of the newborn. In that case the child’s birth is construed as a new way forward in the life of the whole family. On the other hand names like ‘**Uzozie**’ (My road has been straightened), ‘**Obialo**’ (My heart is now at ease or pacified), ‘**Chiedozie**’ (My Chi, destiny spirit, has repaired the damage), ‘**Amaechina**’ (May my family lineage not be closed), ‘**Obiadi**’ (The homestead is now preserved), ‘**Ndirika**’ (He is blessed who survives his suffering), and ‘**Uzoechina**’ (May my path to a good fortune not close). In fact all names generated in this column, sum up the spiritual view of the people, including their beliefs and reactions to the chances and challenges of the human experience. These include their joys and sorrows, fortunes and misfortunes, their happiness and sadness, their hopes, expectations and aspirations and their ethical orientation.

Names reflecting the Igbo religious values and philosophy are those tabulated under **Advisory/ Experiential Names**. In this context a name like ‘**Onwuamaegbu**’ (death does not follow any order in selecting its victims) or a name like ‘**Ekwutosi**’ points to the Igbo moral value and general orientation to living that enjoins us never to talk against people behind their back. All these show that Igbo naming ceremony is more or less like a minefield for the excavation of the major moral and religious values, principles and belief systems encompassed in Igbo Indigenous Religion. In general however, the trend so far shows that naming is a strategic human ritual. It confers identity, and a means of self-reference to the child. It is also a ritual through which an individual is to be known and made reference to. It is therefore an important means for successful living in the world. Similarly names like ‘**Onwuamaegbu**’ (Death does not know how to kill), ‘**Onwuamaeze**’ (Death is not a respecter of persons, it kills even kings), and ‘**Onwuzuluigbo**’ (Death is universal) show the Igbo belief that death is a natural end of life for everybody both the poor and the wealthy. It speaks to their existential observation that death does not select its victims. These names also show that, in Igbo world-view, death, as a phenomenon, is conceived as capricious. It chooses its path and does not go by age or seniority. Other names such as ‘**Adigwe**’ (Group is stronger than an individual), and ‘**Igwebuike**’ (Unity is strength) also discovered in the study of this ceremony, point to an aspect of the Igbo social ethics that emphasizes communal ethos and the Igbo belief that, they can only grow through investment in human and cooperative support of others. Another aspect of such ethics that is oriented to communality is similarly revealed in names like ‘**Ebunilo**’ (Do not carry malice in heart/life) show indications of centuries of experience and a result of an accumulation of the experiential wisdom among the two communities studied.

Some of the names appear to come as a protest by one or both parents of a child who had been a victim of an unjust trial by fate, or an unjust public reproach, victimization, abuse, evil-speaking or gossiping from neighbours or community. This trend is illustrated in names like ‘**Ekwutosi**’ (Do not blackmail others), and ‘**Onuabuchi**’ (Our destiny is not in human hands), ‘**Ochiabuto**’ (Salutation is not love) which attest to the people’s way of responding to social offences and distress.

Names like ‘**Nwadiuto**’ (It is sweet to have a child), ‘**Nwabugwu**’ (Having a child is an honour), ‘**Nwakaku**’ (Child is greater than wealth), ‘**Nwamaka**’ (Having a child feels good) are those that justify the belief among the Igbo that having children is a great investment and a

great blessing. An important implication of all these findings is that Igbo Naming Ceremony is a good-enough-in-road into the variety of spiritual agencies that are appealed to by Igbo religious worshippers. Igbo names are not only chosen very carefully but are also believed to represent the person named. They are also attached with mystical power. Myers (2010) agrees that “your name represents your immortality. This concept readily... explains how African peoples on the continent and later throughout the Diaspora, experience reality as union between both spiritual and the material (p.23)”.

Principal Spiritual Agencies Embedded in Igbo Names in Igbo Indigenous Religion

The present study gave eloquent indication of the typical spiritual agencies in Igbo Indigenous Religion. These were deduced from the above list of Igbo names given to the child at the naming ceremony. The trend showed that in studying these names the following constitute the spiritual agencies of Igbo Religion:

1. Chukwu (the Supreme Being, and the King of all creation)
2. Ngene (nature deity)
3. Amadioha (the god of thunder and lightning)
4. Ndi-ichie (the ancestors)
5. Ikenga (the god of strength, enterprise and fortune)
6. Ana, Ala, Ani (the earth-goddess)
7. Eke (god of creativity)
8. Chi (the child's Onye-uwa, the spiritual agent that sponsored or brokered the child's earthly existence and destiny, and so the child's spiritual double or resident deity).
9. Agwu(god of divination and healing)
10. Udo
11. Ogwugwu
12. Anyanwu

The above list shows that Igbo Religion is a religion that recognizes a plurality of gods. The trend shows that the Igbo people are democratic and inclusive in their religious orientation, evolving an eclectic perspective in relation to the spiritual agencies of their religion. Their way of making reference to the agencies in the prayer form presented above tends however, to betray their tendency to give the first pride of place to Chukwu the Supreme Being. This is followed by village deities and the *Ndi-ichie* referred to, in the prayer given above as *Ndi-muo di b'anyi* (our gods and ancestors).

The attitude of the Igbo as could be deduced from the names given is even more eclectic and egalitarian than hierarchical or exclusive allegiance to the Supreme Being, in their allotment of respect and regard to these agencies. Some of the names highlighted reflect the tragic sense of life that characterizes much of Igbo world view that appears to underpin their religious attitudes, goals, rituals and practices.

Findings from the study of the Igbo naming ceremony demonstrate that there are more spiritual agencies of the religion than had hitherto been identified by previous investigators like Ezeanya (1963) and Arinze (1970). Clues as to the presence of these agencies in Igbo Religion were found embedded in the prefix of most of the names given to the newborn child under this ceremony. For example, some of the names that could be given to a newborn child during the Igbo naming ceremony include: **Chinualumogu** (May Chi fight for me), **Chi-ekzie**, (My Chi has redefined me), **Chikwuebuka** (God is great), **Chinagorom** (Chi has been my advocate), **Chikaodili** (Chi is in charge). Ngene is a name of the god of streams in most villages in Anaedo

land. Ana/Ani/Ala (the earth goddess) is an agency that has been recognized by previous investigators such as Arinze (1970).

In particular, an important discovery from the present study is that Igbo names have meanings. Some serve as a diary of the parent's experience. Others serve as texts attesting to the nature of the peoples' philosophy and orientation to life. Some have some morals behind them. In this way, through naming a person gains not only a personality but also kinship identity. Supporting the above observation, Mbiti (1975) asserts that:

the name is considered in African societies to be very much part of the personality of the person. Therefore, it is taken seriously, and chosen with care and consideration. Often names of people have a meaning, and it is this meaning which must be given due consideration. (p. 87).

To be named therefore, is part and parcel of what it means to be human and to belong to a human community. It contributes to making the individual feel welcomed in the human world. It is therefore a cardinal process in one's earthly experience. The above indication is in line with Liseli's (2012) observation that "naming among the Congolese also holds immense importance. Among the Kongo ethnic group for instance, a new born was not regarded truly human until the bestowal of a name (p. 39)."

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to find out what can be learned of Igbo Religion through the study of Naming Ceremony of Anaedo people. The results proved that the proper study of the Naming Ceremony of Igbo could indeed generate answers to some the three basic questions of religion posed by Horton (1995). The trend shows that Igbo Religion, when studied in the raw, as undertaken in this study, through a field study of Igbo Naming ceremony in Anaedo, has well-thought out answers in terms of its goals, the spiritual agencies of the religion and the attitude of the people to these agencies. This means that with the study of this ceremony the principal objectives of this study have been achieved.

From the results emanating from the study of the Igbo naming ceremony, we have come to discover a lot about the belief systems and some myths underpinning the Indigenous Religion of the great Igbo people of Nigeria. In addition, with the prayer patterns collected in the fieldwork in the course of the present study we now know what one can call the principal goals of Igbo Religion: praise, worship, thanksgiving, and petition for protection and earthly blessings. The result of the study equally demonstrated the inclusive and pluralistic nature of the spiritual agencies in Igbo Religion. This confirms the view of previous investigators (Ubah, 1982 and Echeruo, 1979) that over and above the Supreme Being and other divinities and spirits that are addressed by the worshippers are autonomous forces in their own right.

Even the nature and pattern of Igbo religious practice has been determined from the study of the naming ceremony. We now know from studying this ceremony that Igbo religious practice includes both animal offering and placatory gifts, including speech, body movement, sacrifice and communal meal sharing. Important symbolisms of the religion were also noted in the course of this study showing that rituals in Igbo Religion are covered by the conclusion.

Finally, then, one can say that judging from the trends discovered in the present study of the Igbo naming ceremony, a pluralist and inclusive position is the more justified path to take in making reference to the number of goals, ritual objects, spiritual agencies and attitudes of the

people to spiritual agencies of Igbo Religion. Hence, the general implication to be drawn from the present study is that that a lot about the basic tenets of African Indigenous Religion could be discovered through the systematic study of similar rituals and ceremonies of the different indigenous peoples of Africa like the naming ceremony of the great Anaedo people of Igbo examined in this study.

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