

INTEGRATING SACRIFICE AND ECO-SPIRITUALITY IN IGBO TRADITIONAL RELIGION INTO THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: POINTS OF CONVERGENCE

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Abstract

Igbo sacrifice and eco-spirituality offer valuable insights into sustainable development by fostering environmental conservation, ethical resource management, social cohesion, and holistic well-being. Rooted in a deep reverence for nature, Igbo eco-spirituality promotes nature and biodiversity protection, and it importantly aligns with global sustainability development models. Sacrificial practices, including thanksgiving, atonement, and appeasement rites, reinforce the principles of responsible consumption, conflict resolution, and community harmony, which correspond with sustainable development goals. The holistic approach of Igbo sacrifices and eco-spirituality integrates with the goals of the global development agenda, which ranges from environmental, health, and human development. In the course of this research, it is found that this integration or matrix is possible through incorporating diverse indigenous ecological knowledge especially from the Igbo cosmological point of view, into global development discourses. By bridging indigenous wisdom with contemporary sustainability frameworks, Igbo religious practices demonstrate the relevance of cultural diversity in shaping inclusive, ethical, and ecologically responsible global development strategies. Recognizing and integrating these values into modern governance and environmental policies will significantly enhance global sustainability efforts. This study applied the use of both primary and secondary means of data collection for the execution of this research work. The methods of approach include historical and analytical procedures. This study shows that the integration of the global sustainable agenda with sacrificial and eco-spiritual traditions of the Igbo people can provide a unique, culturally grounded approach to sustainable progressive global development.

Introduction

Igbo Traditional Religion (ITR) has been practiced by the Igbo people of southeastern part of Nigeria from the time of their fore-fathers, majorly deals with sacrifice, which in a sense made them religious cum cultural beings and this is deeply rooted in the life of Igbo people, as is widely known. In Africa, to be is to be religious, this includes Igbo people in general. And sacrifice in Igbo traditional religion serves as a means of worship and a framework for moral, cultural, social, and ecological guidance. Hence, the Igbo traditional religion (ITR) is a religion that is characterized by its cosmology, rituals, respect, and reverence for spiritual beings, ancestors, human beings, sacred objects, and sacred places. This formed the basis for eco-spirituality in ITR, which emphasizes or sees nature as imbued with spiritual significance, emphasizing stewardship and sustainable use of resources. Disrupting nature is considered a violation of spiritual laws, highlighting the interdependence between human actions and ecological balance (Iroegbu, 1994). So, sacrifice, on the hand, according to Metuh (1985), is a fundamental practice that involves offering material items, symbolic acts, or prayers to spiritual entities, including the Supreme Being (*Chukwu*), deities (*alusi*), and ancestors (*ndichie*). Sacrifice serves as a medium for communication between the physical and spiritual realms, ensuring harmony and balance. The practice of sacrifice is categorized based on purpose, such as thanksgiving, atonement, appeasement, or petitions for blessings. These offerings may include animals, foodstuffs, or natural products like kola nuts and yams (Nwala, 1985). Sacrifices are also deeply symbolic, representing humanity's acknowledgment of its dependence on divine and natural forces (Uchendu, 1965). Here, the connection with sacrifice and eco-spirituality in ITR are seen as two sides of a coin.

The question arises, how do these concepts in ITR impart in the developing and developed globalized world today? Fundamentally, it is widely known that Igbo Traditional Religion provides a holistic approach to life, integrating spirituality, morality, culture, and environmental consciousness in the daily

interaction of human beings in the world. Its emphasis on harmony with nature and the spiritual realm offers valuable insights into sustainable living and collective well-being. Putting it in another way, Nwala (1985) environmental ethics which is eco-spirituality emphasizes sustainable living, where the environment is treated with respect and care, for its overexploitation of the resources is regarded as a moral and spiritual offense, as it disrupts cosmic balance. This view correctly aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which highlight a collective framework designed to address pressing global issues such as poverty or social injustice, crisis of war, inequality, environmental degradation/climate change, political and economic instability. The Global Development Agenda or Goals by United Nations (2015) aim at achieving some sustainable development by 2030 which include: Ending extreme poverty and ensuring access to adequate food for all, ensuring inclusive and equitable education and improving global health systems, combatting climate change, protecting ecosystems, and promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, building strong alliances across nations to address global challenges collaboratively.

Integrating ITR into the world's sustainable development agenda reinforces the claim or the belief in reciprocity, where humans give back to nature and the divine in acknowledgment of their dependence on them (Metuh, 1985). By integrating spiritual practices with ecological awareness, Igbo Traditional Religion is promoting a harmonious relationship between humanity and the environment, which the SDGs are working hard to achieve. But the difference may be when the awareness is made known by each of the two arms. The ITR has been on this harmonious balance from unknown ages, but the United Nations just started the search for this achievement. Hence, the integration of indigenous practices into the global sustainable development agenda is essential for creating inclusive, economic, healthy, culturally respectful, and ecologically balanced strategies among the people in the society, for harmonious imbalance is highly abhorred in an ordered society. It is also a practical necessity to address today's multifaceted challenges facing the world in general.

Understanding Sacrifice in Igbo Traditional Religion

Many scholars, like Arinze (2008), Ifesieh (1989) and Metuh (1985), in different fora, have explained sacrifice in Igbo and African traditional religions from different points of view, but they all agree that there are rituals involved in carrying out sacrifice. But in ITR, sacrifice is more than a ritual act, it is a profound expression of spiritual devotion and communal solidarity and an intent to appease or seek favour from Gods. Most times, offering of sacrifices are determined by votaries of ITR, if when it is not communal or festive sacrifices. By addressing spiritual, physical, and communal needs, sacrifices ensure the continuity of life, the preservation of cultural identity, and the maintenance of ecological and cosmic balance.

Simply put, sacrifice, is referred to as the offering of gifts or (*aja* or *ichu aja*) in Igbo Traditional Religion. It is a central religious practice that connects the physical and spiritual realms when viewed from the Igbo world view. It involves offering material items, symbolic acts, or prayers to deities (*alusi*), ancestors (*ndichie*), or the Supreme Being (*Chukwu*) to establish or restore harmony within the cosmos. Sacrifice is deeply rooted in the Igbo worldview, which perceives life as a complex web of relationships among humans, the divine, and nature (Metuh, 1985). However, Ifesieh (1989) defines sacrifice from the point of theories being proposed as gifts, magical practices, or as communion between people and gods. But conventionally, sacrifice in the Igboland is taking another dimension towards causing cosmic imbalance rather than harmonious balance. This is seen from the intention of those offering the sacrifice majorly in the southeastern part of Nigeria, where materials for sacrifice involve parts of killed human beings for different purposes. But such was not the case in the olden days, human sacrifice was rare at those pristine times. The act of sacrifice being carried out by the votaries of ITR has its end points, that is whom they offer the sacrifices to or the beneficiaries, this can be seen from Igbo world outlook and the composition of Igbo hierarchy of Beings. The composition of Being in ITR comprises *Chukwu*, which is at the core of Igbo spirituality and is believed to be the Supreme Being, who is regarded as the creator and sustainer of all things. *Chukwu* is omnipotent and omnipresent but is often approached through intermediaries like deities and ancestors (Metuh, 1985). Below the Supreme Being is the Igbo pantheon, which includes various deities, each associated with specific natural elements and human

activities. For example, *Ala*, the Earth goddess, is revered as the custodian of morality, fertility, and agriculture, while *Amadioha*, the god of thunder, represents justice and power (Nwala, 1985). These deities are more of messengers to *Chukwu*, and are central to rituals and sacrifices, which are conducted to maintain harmony and seek divine intervention. Ancestors (*ndichie*) are immediately found below the deities, they are regarded as spiritual guardians who mediate between the living and the divine. They are venerated through rituals, offerings, and prayers, as their favour is believed to ensure protection, prosperity, and continuity for their descendants (Uchendu, 1965). After this comes sacred places and objects being regarded as totems, they consist of natural elements like rivers, forests, animals, and certain trees. They are considered sacred due to the dwelling of spirits or deities in them. Shrines and altars are built in these spaces as places for worship and sacrifice. The sacredness of nature is integral to Igbo cosmology, reflecting a deep spiritual connection with the environment and man (Okoro, 2011). Hence, the votaries of ITR in Anambra state and beyond are crying out woes that the state government is against the ITR through the newly promulgated Homeland Security Law (2025), for many adherents of ITR believed that the state government of Anambra state is targeting to stop the worship of Gods and to punish those in ITR, hence creating avenue for extinction of ITR. At the bottom of the hierarchy of Gods in ITR, man is seen to be at the bottom of this hierarchy. Madu (1997) argues that he manipulates these Gods through rituals and sacrifices made to them in seeking for favours from them or from the Supreme Being. Through the sacrifices and rituals offered to them at different times and places, man maintains cosmic balance among the living, the dead, and the environment. Above all, this hierarchy, rituals, and sacrifices form the components of Igbo traditional religion.

There are different types of sacrifices in ITR, some are done annually, some as the need arises, some done communally, while some are done privately after consultation from the Igbo traditional priests. The different types of sacrifices reflect the diverse purposes they serve, ranging from expressing gratitude to seeking divine intervention or restoring harmony in the society or households. The key types of sacrifices practiced in ITR, among others, include: Thanksgiving Sacrifices are offered to express gratitude to the Supreme Being (*Chukwu*), deities, or ancestors (*ndichie*) for blessings such as good harvests, childbirth, or success in endeavor with material livestock not excluding kola nuts and other things. It is done mostly during festivals and other related events in the lives of communities and individuals (Okoro, 2011). Achebe (1958) relates an instance of a thanksgiving sacrifice to Ani, the Earth goddess, by Okonkwo, when he slaughtered animals and presented yams, kola nuts, and palm wine at his shrine after a successful harvest. This act underscores the importance of gratitude in ITR and the role of sacrifice in fostering harmony between humans and the divine. Thanksgiving sacrifices foster a sense of gratitude and reinforce communal bonds as participants or communities collectively acknowledge the divine's role in their well-being. Atonement Sacrifices are performed to cleanse individuals or communities of sins or offenses against divine laws or the natural order (*nso ala*). They are particularly significant in cases involving taboos, broken oaths, or crimes against the Earth goddess (*Ala*). The sacrifice aims to seek forgiveness and restore harmony to the cosmological imbalance caused by spiritual or physical transgressions. Though it is the diviner who prescribes the type of material offering required to appease the offended deity or spirit. According to Metuh (1985), atonement sacrifices emphasize moral accountability and the need to maintain societal and cosmological balance. Appeasement sacrifices are performed to placate deities or spirits believed to be angered or neglected. These sacrifices are often prescribed when misfortunes or illnesses are attributed to spiritual displeasure due to imbalance in societal order. This sacrifice or ceremony involves prayers, chants, and symbolic gestures to convey remorse and restore the relationship between the human and spiritual realms. Petition sacrifices are made to request divine intervention, blessings, or assistance in times of need. They are common in situations involving health, fertility, protection, or success. Here, the petitioner may present offerings at a shrine or sacred space while articulating their plea to the divine or ancestors. Achebe (1964) demonstrates the practice of making sacrifices to petition the gods for intervention, guidance, or resolution of crises. In the novel, *Ezeulu*, the chief priest of Ulu, performs sacrifices to petition the deity for assistance in resolving challenges faced by the community. He offered sacrifices of food, livestock, and libations, symbolizing humility and submission to the deity's will. The intention is to restore harmony and protect the community from impending crises. Again, Nwapa (1966) in her *Efuru*, relates the seeking of the guidance of Uhamiri, the river goddess.

Sacrifices were offered to petition the goddess for blessings, fertility, and resolution of personal struggles. These sacrifices demonstrate the active role of humans in seeking spiritual guidance and support (Nwala, 1985). Preventive or Protective Sacrifices are conducted to prevent anticipated misfortunes or to protect against potential harm. They are often proactive and tied to divinatory warnings. Preventive sacrifices are usually carried out in response to omens or divination readings. These rituals reflect the Igbo emphasis on foreseeing and mitigating threats through spiritual means. Communal sacrifices on the other hand, involve the entire community and are performed during significant events, such as agricultural cycles, festivals, or crises like epidemics or droughts. These ceremonies often take place in sacred groves or community shrines and are led by elders or priests (*ndi nze na ozo*). Communal sacrifices reinforce social cohesion and collective responsibility for spiritual and ecological well-being (Okoro, 2011). Generally, each type of sacrifice addresses specific spiritual, moral, or ecological needs, ensuring that balance and reciprocity are sustained. These practices remain integral to the Igbo worldview and offer valuable insights on global contemporary discussions on sustainability and cultural preservation.

Eco-Spirituality in Igbo Traditional Religion

As noted above, man is at the bottom of the hierarchy of Gods, but he manipulates them through various means to maintain cosmic harmony and get his needs. He equally uses things found in nature to reach other beings in the hierarchical order. Eco-spirituality in ITR refers to the view or belief that humans are interconnected with beings higher than he is, with natural world (environment) as spiritual entities thereby respecting and caring for them because they are related and needed each other for preservation and harmony within the world. This is rooted in the principle that the spiritual world and physical world are related. Hence, there are many aspects of eco-spirituality in ITR such as: interconnectedness, spiritual presence, ancestral connection, various rituals and practices, sacred trees, animals, and grooves. These simply indicate that certain practices, animals, or trees are considered sacred and are protected. By doing these, the Igbo people, without knowing, are maintaining the environment, which is the problem of the world towards climate change or emerging ecological crisis ravaging the world (Nkama, Okoro, Egbule, 2022).

So, the connection between sacrifice and eco-spirituality in ITR shows a holistic approach to spirituality and ecology. By recognizing nature as sacred and integrating environmental stewardship into spiritual practices, the ITR maintains and ensures a balance that maintains the well-being of both humans and the world. This relationship offers a valuable model for fostering ecological consciousness in the quest for global sustainable development. Hence, reverence for nature in Igbo Traditional Religion has been there since the origin of ITR, and it goes beyond spiritual observance, it is a holistic view that integrates spirituality, community ethics, and ecological responsibility in the world. So, eco-spirituality in ITR can also be seen as a sacred relationship between humans and the environment, all in response to the Supreme being as the only creator. This also portrays the natural environment to be imbued with spiritual essence and governed by divine forces. It reflects a worldview where nature is not merely a resource to be harnessed but a partner in existence (Iroegbu, 1994). This is made possible through ritual processes that are carried out, which are seen as the connecting rod between sacrifice and eco-spirituality.

The Global Development Agenda: The Key Global Development Frameworks for Sustainability

The Igbo worldview perceives the universe as an intricate web of interrelations, and sacrifices and rituals play a vital role in preserving this cosmic balance. Sacrificial offerings and rituals used as a means of reaching to Gods ensure the proper flow of energy between the physical and spiritual realms, averting chaos and misfortune. The global development agenda holds this view in immense potential in ensuring and creating a more equitable and sustainable world. However, achieving these goals requires addressing the challenges of economic inequality, environmental degradation, and diverse cultural/productive activities in the world. By incorporating diverse cultural perspectives, the agenda can be enriched with innovative and context-sensitive solutions, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and sustainable global society. This means that what the global development agenda suddenly

discovered in building and protecting the world has been in operation in the ITR since the origin of the Igbo traditional religion.

The need for a sustainable global society has recently been in the mind of the world powers and leaders, especially the United Nations (UN), due to degradation found in the world over accruing from the activities of men towards the environment. Sustainability, which can be interchanged with the practice of eco-spirituality in the ITR, refers to the continuity of resources for the coming generation and how it can be used consciously to protect the environment or how biological systems endure and remain diverse and productive (Gupta and Kumar, 2013). However, Okanazu and Akele (2018) explained the above that:

Sustainability refers to the need to develop the sustainable models necessary for both the human race and planet Earth to survive. It is the study of how natural systems function, remain diverse, and produce everything it needs for the ecology to remain in balance. Sustainability looks to protect our natural environment, human and ecological health, while driving innovation and not compromising our way of life. (p. 36).

Going by the above explanation, the world's global agenda uses many different organs or frameworks to achieve a sustainable and friendly environment for the present and future generations to come. The global development agenda focuses on people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership, including global reformation. Though as of today, it has been politized by different world leaders in favour of countries they are ruling, leaving the third world countries in darkness or lagging. So, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as adopted by the United Nations in 2015 through its frameworks provide structured approaches to addressing economic, affordable and clean energy, reduced inequality, social, and environmental challenges worldwide, leading to climate change activities and so on. These goals serve as blueprints for results to be achieved by the governments, international organizations, businesses, nations, and civil society to collaborate on sustainable development. Again, the Paris Agreement, which was held from November 30 to December 12, 2015, is an international treaty adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) in 2015. The main objective of COP 21 was to achieve a universal agreement on climate change, which would require countries to limit their greenhouse gas emissions and reduce global warming to well below 2C above pre-industrial levels. The developed countries committed to providing \$100 billion annually to support developing nations in climate adaptation and mitigation (OECD, 2019). Another framework or organ used by the United Nations is the African Union Agenda 2063, which is a long-term development strategy launched by the African Union (AU) in 2013 to drive Africa's economic growth, social transformation, and integration (African Union, 2015). Its objectives include a prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, that is politically united based on Pan-Africanism. It also aims for good governance through democracy, peace, and security across African nations. Other organs are being used by the United Nations to achieve goals for the world. Despite these noble goals, the global development agenda, through its frameworks, faces several challenges that hinder its implementation. These challenges are mostly seen in the developing countries that struggle with financing and capacity to achieve these goals. Geopolitical conflicts, pandemics, inflation, and economic downturns have also slowed these goals (World Bank, 2020). African Development Bank (2020) also points out that political instability, corruption, and external economic dependencies in the form of aid slow down the progress of achieving the stated goals in different countries of the world.

Integrating African Traditional Religion Perspectives into the Global Development Agenda: Towards the Need for Diverse Cultural Perspectives (Dimensional Perspectives)

The need to restore cosmic order from all perspectives has been gaining ground from all quarters of the world due to the ongoing degradation from all aspects of human daily activities and challenges faced in the implementation of the goals of the Global Development Agenda, which is the core problem being faced globally. It is a well-known fact that the developed countries of the world have neglected the third world countries towards sustainable growth and development with its consequent activities. Universal development models being used by developed nations through the UN often fail to address local context

issues, leading to cultural resistance and limited effectiveness. Hence, there is a need for the inclusion of diverse cultural, political, social, and economic perspectives, which are critical in overcoming challenges and achieving global development goals. Environmental hazards of different kinds are on the increase despite efforts made by the UN, war among nations because of failed international relations among nations, hunger in most countries of the world leading to increase in migration from developed countries of the world to undeveloped countries, tribal and religious wars within nations giving rise to many conflict groups fighting and agitating for one thing or another. In Nigeria, there is Boko Haram, which is an Islamic extremist group seeking to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria, and the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) which is a Yoruba nationalist group advocating for the rights and interests of the Yoruba people. In Ghana, the Western Togoland Restoration Front is seeking independence for the western Togoland region. Also in Cameroon, the Ambozonian Defence Forces (OLF) are a group seeking independence for the English-speaking regions. The crisis is all over the world, and so there is a need for dimensional integration in the control of these disasters.

Cultural/political/social or dimensional perspectives or diversities will surely foster a comprehensive, richer understanding of human needs and offer alternative approaches to the growth and development of better living among the people of different continents. By incorporating indigenous practices that are easily accessible through globalisation, development initiatives become more adaptable and context-sensitive. Through this way, the values of ITR will be integrated into the world stage, though these goals have been there before the forming of the structures through which the UN are using today to ameliorate the hardship and crisis of the world. Many scholars were of the view that using the model of ITR and its various practices, the natural environment will always be maintained in its original state, and even when there is transformation which must take place, its negative effects will not be detrimental to the growth and development of human beings.

In the area of enriching sustainable development approaches, Igbo traditional indigenous practices offer profound ecological and spiritual insights that constantly enrich contemporary sustainable development efforts. For instance, Igbo traditional religion's eco-spirituality emphasizes the sacredness of nature, sustainable use of resources, and the moral obligation to protect the environment. This is seen through the yearly festivals and rituals done before the planting seasons and, equally, practices like reverence for sacred forests and rivers, which serve as abodes of deities, promote environmental conservation and deter exploitative use of resources (Okoro, 2011). During these times, the environment is protected and given new shapes because of the upcoming festivals. This ecological harmony in ITR aligns completely with SDG 15, which seeks to protect, restore, and promote terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity. This targets to conserve and restore forests, promote sustainable forest management, combat desertification, restore degraded land, and even take urgent action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats (United Nations, 2015). The above communal stewardship evident in Igbo traditional practices mirrors the modern concept of collective resource governance, which has proven to be effective in achieving long-term sustainability (Berkes, 2008).

Going further, the preservation of cultural heritage from all nations of the world remains an important venture undertaken by all nations, both developed and developing countries. Loss of cultural values implies loss of people, hence, the need to preserve the cultural or traditional knowledge becomes very important. Incorporating Igbo eco-spirituality into global development frameworks helps ensure that future generations from different nations of the world inherit these time-tested practices (Uchendu, 1965). In Igbo eco-spirituality, the people practiced community-based conservation where communal labor was used to clear weeds and debris around the water bodies and various paintings signifying cultural items. Globalization and rapid urbanization have indeed led to the erosion of many indigenous knowledge systems, especially in developing countries. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has identified the safeguarding of indigenous knowledge as critical to promoting cultural diversity and innovation (UNESCO, 2003). Hence, the key ways to safeguard the indigenous knowledge by UNESCO include: by promoting intangible cultural heritage, by supporting community-based initiatives, by providing capacity-building programs and raising awareness about the importance of indigenous knowledge and its contribution to sustainable development, through

publication and other events. Recognizing this value fosters global equity and inclusiveness, thereby reducing inequalities and racism.

In the effort to advance climate action and biodiversity conservation, the indigenous eco-spiritual practices, such as the Igbo reverence for sacred forests and their use of ritual offerings derived from nature itself, contribute to the global efforts in combating climate change and conserving biodiversity. The Igbo understanding of nature as a living entity imbued with spiritual significance encourages sustainable practices, reducing the human footprint on ecosystems. From this, one can see the basis for protecting and reverencing all these objects in African traditional religion (Iroegbu, 1994). In the area of rainmaking, for example, ritual objects used in offerings are derived from the natural environment, and this also makes the rainmakers preserve the natural things found in the forest. Herbs for the health care system in the ITR are cautiously guided and protected for future use because of their benefits in healing the lives of people. Sacred groves, often protected as spiritual sites, act as reservoirs for biodiversity and natural resources, this aligns again with SDGs 13, 14, and 15 (Okoro, 2011). Some of the SDGs 13, 14, 15 include: taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, conserving and sustainably using the world's oceans and marine resources, protecting biodiversity and ecosystem among others. These practices, both from ITR and SDGs, serve as practical models for integrating ecological preservation with cultural, economic, and spiritual values, creating a more comprehensive framework for climate action.

In the area of gender equality, traditional sacrificial practices and eco-spirituality cum Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) have much roles to play in seeking to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by addressing issues such as discrimination, access to resources, leadership roles, and participation in decision-making processes. Igbo traditional sacrificial practices and eco-spirituality in indigenous religions, including other traditional religions, offer unique perspectives on gender roles, power dynamics, and environmental stewardship, which align with this global objective. For example, SDG 5 focuses or aims on: ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, and ensuring women's full and effective participation in leadership and decision-making (United Nations, 2015). Here, one calls to mind the Director General World Trade Organization (WTO) in the person of Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who is the first woman and first African to lead the WTO from 2021 to date. This is perfectly seen in ITR, where in many indigenous cultures, including Igbo society, women play a central role in eco-spiritual practices, particularly in the preservation of sacred groves, rivers, and shrines (Okafor & Agbo, 2018). Equally, female priestesses and spiritual leaders, such as the *Ezenwanyi* (female spiritual leader) in Igbo land, oversee environmental rituals and are responsible for ensuring the ethical use of natural resources (Iwuagwu, 2020). SDG 5 also emphasizes economic empowerment for women, and this supports many eco-spiritual traditions for women's livelihoods through sacred crafts, medicinal plant knowledge, and agricultural roles (Iwuagwu, 2020). It ought to be noted here that some traditional sacrificial rites and eco-spiritual practices serve as mechanisms for gender reconciliation and healing in cases of domestic violence or social conflicts, this again reinforces SDG 5's goal of eliminating violence against women (Okafor & Agbo, 2018). The integration of sacrifice and eco-spirituality within the United Nations global frameworks contributes significantly to women's participation in environmental conservation and leadership, it enhances socio-economic status and promotes sustainable development. Recognizing and supporting these traditions in modern developmental frameworks can strengthen gender equality, ecological resilience, and community well-being. And these global development frameworks will equally provide guiding principles for economic growth, sustainability, climate action, human rights, and disaster resilience.

Evaluation and Conclusion

There are many challenges and obstacles towards the integration of ITR with Global Development Agenda into the world stage especially from the perspective of United Nations through its global frameworks. For it is project through which its path ways must be mapped out and followed, while in the case of ITR practices, it has evolved, and its core principles remain relevant because its practice has

been part of daily living among the Igbo people. Due to this fact, contemporary Igbo communities often reinterpret sacrificial practices in ways that align with modern lifestyles while retaining their spiritual essence. However, it has the problem of being accepted globally as one of the cultural diversities to be adopted into the main line of world operations. The Igbo indigenous practices have evolved, so it has the potential to serve as a bridge for global collaboration on sustainability from diverse cultural points of view. By integrating cultural and ecological knowledge systems like Igbo traditional religion into the global development agenda, diverse stakeholders can work together to address complex global challenges. This bridging of indigenous practices with Global Sustainable Development (GSD) effectively ensures cultural contextualization and community empowerment, which will enhance the proper integration of local customs and values into development strategies for greater acceptance and effectiveness of interventions.

The cultural conventions, with their cultural diversities, help to create opportunities for indigenous communities like the Igbo people to contribute unique insights to global development initiatives. Integrating these indigenous cultural approaches, helps the development strategies of global development frameworks to adopt holistic and culturally rooted solutions that challenge the implementation models. However, there are many challenges towards the implementation of the Global Development Agenda (GDA) and its integration with Igbo traditional religious practices and other traditional practices all over the world. These challenges are from different dimensions. Sach (2015) points out that from the point of view of economic disparities, the uneven distribution of wealth and resources creates barriers to equitable development, especially in low-income regions. Again, Rapid industrialization and unsustainable practices continue to exacerbate climate change and biodiversity loss, complicating efforts to achieve environmental goals. The application of universal solutions often neglects local traditions, values, and practices, leading to resistance and limited success. Worse still is the political instability and wars found in most nations that disrupt development programs, displace populations, and divert resources meant for poor people for other personal enrichment by powerful elites.

Hence, in all these, there is a need to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives for effective results in realizing the goals for proper integration. This culturally integrated approach or strategy will address the frequent disconnect between global goals and local realities, and it will ensure effective alignment with SDG goals on promoting inclusive and participatory decision-making. Again, the inclusion of traditional ecological knowledge contributes innovative approaches to resource management, disaster resilience, and social cohesion. This collaborative framework not only strengthens global partnerships but also enhances the relevance and impact of sustainable development initiatives. By leveraging these cultural systems, development strategies can become more inclusive, ecologically sound, and culturally respectful. This study highlights the transformative potential of integrating traditional wisdom or values into the global development discourse, creating pathways toward a more sustainable and equitable future.

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