

# DOCUMENTATION OF "AKPOLOKI-YAI EMBI-OGE" FISHING FESTIVAL OF TUNGBO CLAN IN SAGBAMA L.G.A, BAYELSA STATE

By

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## Abstract

Documentation of "Akpoloji-yai Embi-Oge" fishing festival of Tungbo-Ebe (Clan) tends to address and revived "the Embi-Oge" fishing festival of the Izon ethnic extraction in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. 'Embi-Oge', this means or simply refers to, "Fishing Festival" common among the people of Tungbo-Ebe (Clan) and has been declining, due to lack of visual or theoretical documentation to prove its existence. In reality, there is no scholarly narrative to explain its importance and sustenance. This fishing Festival functions as a unifying factor among the inhabitants of the clan, which at the same time exhibiting the core culture of the people. This work adopted studio research approach to obtain the existence of an age-old festival that ought to be revived by creating visual awareness using photographic method, as an aspect of Graphic Art to rejuvenate the dying ancient Fishing Festival. The paper after its finding used image segment of the festival to produce works that depict, promote and preserve the Akpoloki-yai" Embi-Oge" fishing festival. The study recommends that more researches on the festival should be carried out as to further preserve the culture.

**Keywords:** Documentation, "Akpoloji-yai Embi-Oge", fishing festival, Tungbo clan, Izon, Bayelsa.

## Introduction

This research seeks to document the "Akpoloki-yai Embi-Oge" Fishing Festival of Tungbo-Ebe (Clan), "Embi-Oge" which means fishing festival common among the people of Tungbo-Ebe (clan). Ogboriogbo (1985) states that, "Embi-Oge" is celebrated once in seven years, which tends to promote, sustain peace, unity and abundance in the productive activities of the people of Tungbo-Ebe (clan) however, the "Embi-Oge" festival was unique and famous amongst the entire Tungbo-Ebe (clan) while at the same time showcasing their Tradition and pre-occupation with concept of visual images, using traditional symbols or icons in creating awareness and arrest attention of audience. Thus, the photography method, which is an aspect of graphics is chosen for the documentation, as studio technique and for the reliving of the identity of the "Akpoloki-yai Embi-Oge" fishing festival." In recent decades, "Akpoloki-yai Embi-Oge" Fishing Festival activities in Tungbo-Ebe (Clan) is slowly declining due to strong western influence on African cultures, even though it is being observed with low key, and gradually fading away the festival is needed for its relevance, interpretation, and preservation of symbolic values of our traditional practices.

Akpoloki-yai Embi-Oge Fishing Festival has continued to provide medium for co-operation and consolidation of the community's happiness, so this research seeks to document "Akpoloki-yai Embi-Oge" Fishing Festival of Tungbo-Ebe (Clan) in Sagbama local Government Area of Bayelsa State. It is important to exploit visual documentation of the festival for the sake of present generation and for posterity. The various activities which when put together clearly identify the way of life of the Embi-Oge, their beliefs, cultural activities, their social norms as well as other mode of existence. This will arrest the degeneration of the cultural festival (2017).

With this cultural rebirth, there is a preponderant need to document, Interpret and preserve the symbolic values of our traditional fishing festival for the benefit of strangers, generations unborn and posterity.

Nigerian constitution (1999), affirms the need to document and preserve Nigerian cultures as it captures in section (21) subsection (a) which states, "the state shall protect, preserve and promote Nigerian culture which

enhance human dignity and consistent with the fundamental objective. This statement showed the country's interest of documentation of culture.

### **Statement of the problem**

The existing problems that arouse the researcher's interest of Documentation is that, the traditional practices of "Akpoloji-yai Embi Oge" fishing festival is slowly declining over the years, visual documentation is needed to retain its traditional practices for the present and generations unborn, the advent of western influence on African culture and traditional practices has eroded it, even when it bears no fetish inclination, the ancestors handed down the festival and it has been in existence for centuries known for its actualization of social and economic benefits as well as its tourism potentials promotes peace, unity among the people. The researcher intends to document this study in other to protect, preserve the practices, symbolic values and the history of the "Akpoloji-yai Embi-Oge" fishing festival of Tungbo-Ebe (clan).

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this research is to visually document the "Akpoloji-yai Embi-Oge" of Tungbo-Ebe (clan) in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State using graphics technique. While, the objectives of the research are to:

- 1) visual documentation of "Akpoloji-yai Embi-Oge" fishing festival through photography.
- 2) develop photographic prints that reflect the cultural origin during the "Akpoloji-yai Embi-Oge" fishing festival.
- 3) graphical preservation and the documentation of cultural phenomena and events.
- 4) research the different roles and expectations of the "Akpoloji-yai Embi-Oge" fishing festival from available sources and relate them with present day realities.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significant of this research is that the visual documentation of the festival "Akpoloji-yai Embi-Oge" fishing festival helped to create more awareness about the celebration of the festival. Imperatively it is also significant in the following ways:

- 1 the documentation of the culture encourages tourist visit the area during its festival .

- 2 It helps to educate the inhabitants, Bayelsa and other persons globally about the Akpoloki-yai fishing festival.
- 3 The study also urge scholars to develop interest in the protection and documentation of our rich and variegated cultural traditions in visual forms.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study duals on “Akpoloki-yai Embi-Oge” fishing festival of Tungbo-Ebe (clan), in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State of Nigeria. The study was delimited to Akpoloki-yai fishing festival of Tungbo-Ebe (clan). As a qualitative studio research, the studio practice production was delimited to photographic prints.

### **Photography Documentation**

Keeping record of something by any means, such as, pictorial evidence, film, video, and writing

### **Pictorial Presentation**

The potentials of prints will reflect on the Tungbo-Ebe (Clan). The print photographs will reflect and project the culture. The prints photographs shown are very symbolic and remarkable due to help in making people know the forms of their cultural histories and that the photographs of the activities are borne from Akpoloki-yai Embi-Oge, Fishing Festival of Tungbo Clan.



### As tradition Male sequel procession

#### Figure: 9

Artist: *Agbalalah, Pere Fyneman*

Title: *"tradition"*

Medium: *photography*

Size: *12 x 15 Inches*

Year: *2022*

As tradition, the male participants have to enter the lake first and clear any debris on the road. Therefore, it is permitted for the leader or been the first person entering to carry a cutlass to enable him clear or put away any fallen woods, tree and others. And also, nobody is permitted to work pass one another no matter the time.



## Fishing

### Figure: 10

Artist: *Agbalalah, Pere Fyneman*

Title: *"tradition"*

Medium: *photography*

Size: *12 x 15 Inches*

Year: *2022*

This is the first stage before the fishing commenced. Already, a male citizen of Tungbo Clan has been picked by the god to carry out some rituals in the forest that is after everybody, male and female has to arrive at the lake. The spokesperson as to start fishing before every other person.



**All Participants Entering the lake after declaration by the priest**

**Figure: 11**

*Artist:* Agbalalah, Pere Fyneman

*Title:* "Embi-efie

*Medium:* photography

*Size:* 12 x 15 Inches

*Year:* 2022

Commencement of the fishing festival, male participants entering the lake to take positions after the rituals of the spokesperson and declared the fishing open, male participants are all over this segment to take position at the depth area of the lake for a great catch.



**Male Teenage Participants with Great Catch**

**Figure 12**

*Artist:* Agbalalah, Pere Fyneman  
*Title:* "Embi-Awou"  
*Medium:* photography  
*Size:* 12 x 15 Inches  
*Year:* 2022

Showing "Embi-Awou" Male Teenage Participants, Their Fish and Tools set to go home After the fishing festival, this shows that everyone is welcome, young and elderly as your strength carries.



**Depicts “Endi- Bai-Owei” Male Participant Exhibited His fish and Tools during the fishing,**

**Figure 13**

*Artist: Agbalalah, Pere Fyneman*

*Title: “Ndi-Bai-Owei”*

*Medium: photography*

*Size: 12 x 15 Inches*

*Year: 2022*

Male participant depicts his net and various fish caught during the fishing festival while still standing the lake, this exhibits the kind of big fish caught in Akpoloki-yai fishing festival of Tungbo Clan



### Extracting Catfish Caught by a Teenager

#### Figure 14

*Artist:* Agbalalah, Pere Fyneman

*Title:* "Ndi-Bai"

*Medium:* photography

*Size:* 12 x 15Inches

*Year:* 2022

Three Participants of two teenagers and a mother trying to extract Catfish caught by her son during the fishing festival, the mother expresses so much joy while extracting at the land.



**“Embi-Fie” Depicts Participants fishing**

**Figure 15**

*Artist: Agbalalah, Pere Fyneman*

*Title: “Embi-Fie”*

*Medium: photography*

*Size: 12 x 15 Inches*

*Year: 2022*

Another view or segment of the fishing been occupied of more female participants fishing, with hoping of seriousness and showing anxiety.



## Going Home

### Figure 16

*Artist:* Agbalalah, Pere Fyneman  
*Title:* "Aba" King of Fish  
*Medium:* photography  
*Size:* 12 x 15 Inches  
*Year:* 2022

"Aba-Ndi" Depicts Participant going home with king of fish killed during the fishing festival, he's most respected fish in Tungbo Clan and Ijaw at large.

## Conclusions

The research has shown that photography images will stand the test of time, in passing information about something than any other form of rebranding festival using creative approaches, visual elements and analysis displaying the very reason of Akpoloki-yai Embi-Oge Fishing Festival. Also, the images will extend the tenet of tradition practice, culture, norms and belief system of the people.

## Recommendations

Akpoloki-yai Embi-Oge fishing festival needs visual documentation due to the fact that the practice is eroding. Thus,

- i the pictorial analyses produced has helped to serve as framework for the documentation of other festivals.
- ii the Ministry of Art and Culture, Tourism and others stakeholders should help in promoting the Festivals.
- iii Akpoloki-yai Fishing Festival should be funded to provide tourism attractions and to generate an income to the clan and Government of Bayelsa State at large.
- iii Government should improve the festival environment and policies to generate further opportunities.
- iv Cultural festivals and similar events should form an integral part of educational curriculum at all levels to us known about their cultures.

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