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HISTORICAL LEGACY AND ITS LIVING ATTRIBUTE ON THE CONTEMPORARY NKORO (KIRIKA) KINGDOM 1800-2010

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Abstract:

This paper explores the concept of historical legacy and its enduring impact on contemporary NKoro Kirika society from 1800-2010. The paper examines NKoro "Kirika" past from the 1800 which predated colonialism and terminated in 2010 which marks the exit of the last monarch of the kingdom. The paper, therefore, argue that historical legacy as a living attribute refers to the cumulative impact of past events, decisions, and cultural practices that have continued to shape the present NKoro "Kirika" people and society. The study adopted the interdisciplinary approach in generating the needed data. The study, however, established that the past legacies of NKoro Kirika history has continued to be a living attribute in her contemporary society following it influence on their social norms, traditional institution values, and relations with their neighbouring kingdoms. With critical analysis of NKoro "Kirika" past events and experiences, the paper noted that the contemporary NKoro Kirika people has established an informed cultural narrative to equip the society in the future. The paper further became scholarly searchlight on social issues, such as, revitalization of cultural identity through shared or collective memories of the past, sustenance of ancestral links, protection of traditional political sovereignty through political institutions and management of conflicts via indigenous diplomatic mechanisms. The paper, recommends that it is expedient for societies to acknowledge and learn from the past to build a more equitable, informed and just society in the future.

Keywords: Historical legacy, Living Attributes, NKoro Kirika Kingdom, Culture and Tradition

INTRODUCTION

Historical legacy of Nkoro Kirika people plays a profound role in shaping their identity, informing their values, and guiding their cultural development. The collective memory of the past Nkoro Kirika people forged through their experiences of triumph and tragedy, influences the trajectory of their contemporary development. Nkoro Kirika historical legacies has been its source of inspiration and pride, policy decisions making, and shape the relationships within their neighbour hood. Throughout history, Nkoro Kirika people have grappled with the difficulties of their past, navigating the tensions between preservation and progress. The ways in which Nkoro Kirika people engages with their past legacy serves as their bond of unite, foster social cohesion, and promote their values. However, the examination of historical legacy and its living attribute on the contemporary Nkoro "Kirika" Kingdom seeks to explore the intricate relationships between Nkoro Kirika past, present, and the future. Analyzing the ways in which historical legacies shape the contemporary Nkoro Kirika identity, policy decisions, a trace must be made to the people's history of origin, migration and settlement to enable the paper explore effectively on the collective memory the people. Kings (2025 oral source) opined that Nkoro "Kirika" historical legacy of origin has strong influence on her continues existence. He further establishes that, Nkoro "Kirika" migration has also shaped her contemporary philosophy of existence as well as her settlement.

EXPLICATION OF CONCEPT

Historical Legacies: Historical legacies refer to the lasting impact of past events, decisions, and cultural practices on contemporary society. This includes the social, economic, and cultural structures that have been shaped by historical events and continue to influence present-day society. Historical legacies could also be the enduring consequences of past actions, events, and decisions that continue to shape the present (Mahoney, 2000).

Living Attributes: Many writers have overtimes argued that every mistake of the past that are not properly resolved or managed to a logical conclusion will eventually resurface in the nearest future either as a problem or as a solution to a problem. This could then be referred to as a historical legacy and cannot be considered as a death past but rather as a living past. However, there are many sides of historical legacies that distinguish history as a living attribute of society. Hence living attribute in this context refers to those past happenings that are still having strong grip or shaping the present society (Percy 2021).

The People of Nkoro Kirika Kingdom: Percy (2018) opined that Nkoro Kirika kingdom is located at the Niger Delta fringe who shares boundaries with the Ogoni "Khana" at the North, Andoni at the South and West and Opobo at the East, who are linguistically made up of two different languages, the Defaka language spoken by the Afakani people and the Kirikaye (Ijaw) language generally spoken by both the Kirika-apu and the Afakani-apu. Jenewari (1983), in agreement with this assertion opined that Nkoro is close to the coast not far from Andoni, Opobo and Ogoni and can be identified with two different languages, "Kirikaye and Defaka". Nkoro Kirika kingdom is an ancient kingdom that has reigned over 400 years in the mix of known Ijaw and Ijaw speaking ethnic nationalities in the Niger Delta Fringe but still mentioned the "Kirikaye" Ijaw language, culture and traditional norms and values without much influence from their neighbours despite the religious, political, socio-cultural and economic affiliations.

Geographical Nkoro Kirika Kingdom

Nkoro kingdom is located on the eastern fringe of the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Nkoro kingdom is bordered to the North by Khana Local Government Area, to the South and West by Andoni Local Government Area and to the East by Opobo kingdom. According to Percy (2019), Nkoro kingdom is surrounded by Andoni, Ogoni and Opobo. He further maintained that, Nkoro boundary with Andoni begins at a point on Marine Beacon Ten (10) on the south and west and terminated at Dime-Ama with a network of creeks stretching out and separating Nkoro territory from all the adjoining Andoni occupied territories. The ancient Nkoro kingdom covers over 2,000 km of both land and sea.

Why the Name Nkoro Instead of Kirika

The original name of Nkoro people was Kirika while the language is Kirikaye. The Kirika people name their kingdom after the first monarch and the father and leader of the Kirika now "Nkoro" people. The name Kirika had it first changes to "Corro" in 1846 treaty of love peace and unity signed between Bonny and Andoni Kirika now Nkoro Amayana-Owoi (King) Amabara the eleventh (II) Monarch of Kirika was an observer and third party in the treaty, later to Nkoro by the white colonial oppressors who had created more damage to African culture than repair. The name Nkoro came as a result of war between Bonny and Kirika (Nkoro) Kingdom. Bonny Kingdom considering the Nkoro "Kirika" as a small kingdom they can destroy easily, but when their thought failed, they ended up giving Kirika a nick-name "Nikorika-Ama" (kingdom that cannot be set ablaze) (Alagoa 2005)

Historical Legacy of Nkoro Kirika People's Migration and Settlement

Even though scholars are on a serious disagreement concerning the actual place of Nkoro Kirika ancestors' origin and migration, available tradition show that Nkoro Kirika ancestors' exodus from their original or ancestral habitation emanate as a result of social factor "war". All the available literature provided a common ground of agreement that a protracted war which emanated from the sharing of Tabala Tebe "Tilapia head" forced the Nkoro forbears who as at the time of the war were defenseless or vulnerable to all the parties involved in the war to consider migration as the only and best option to ending the war, hence, the exodus of the people.

Secondly, traditions have it that in course of their search for a war free environment, they stopped over at Bille territory, but could not inhabit long in those areas as a result of hostilities and vulnerabilities to external aggressions, hence the onward movement to Okirika territory where they inhabited for some time and by early 15th century, they left the Okirika territory to search for a virgin land of their own which eventually brought them to Iyoba in present day Bonny territory. However, Iyoba they consider peaceful habitation turned out to be a war zone as they experience frequent attack from their supposed Ogoni neighbours precisely the Bodo people, and their counter attacks response, force another phase of exodus, but this time they sojourned on ward to the Eastern limit of the Niger Delta coastal environment. As at early 16th century the Nkoro people had landed at Ibi-Aga-Furu-Tie (site of good hope or fortune) meaning that at that point the people where hopeful to have gotten a habitation that met their three major reasons first war free environment, second, environment for good hope (economic sustainability) and third a virgin territory of their own. At Ibi-Anga-Furu-Tie, the people could through their leader Inyaba I within the period 1641-1699 establish a trade contact with the Ogoni (Kpean) group which further address their second need of exodus from their ancestral home.

Furthermore, during the reign of Amanyana-Owoi Otuagba a new Nkoro site was founded which was directly opposite the Ibi-Anga-Furu-Tie, and search part was sent to investigate the site if there were any occupant, but fortunately, none human habitation was found hence the onward exodus to the new site in 1700. The acceptability of this new site matched their first, second and third needs of their exodus which are hostility free environment, virgin land of their own and economic viability of the environment. At least, this historical trace of why the Nkoro forbear had left their ancestral home for a new settlement which is the present Nkoro environment could be considered as what the researcher referred to as historical legacy of the Nkoro Kirika people (Anikuroka 2025).

Evaluation of the Impacts of Nkoro Kirika Ancestors Migration and Settlement Legacy on her Contemporary Society

Jubonye (2025 oral source) opined that the situation that prompted the exodus of Nkoro Kirika ancestors gave the reason to build their new found Kingdom with the force of love and unity. The force of love and unity that emerges

amongst Nkoro Kirika ancestors form their quest for a war free but powerful and transformative society. However, the Nkoro Kirika ancestor's experience of absconding from their homes and seek refuge elsewhere, often gave them an unimaginable trauma, loss, and hardship. Therefore, in the face of such adversity, they also discover a deep and abiding sense of love and unity that transcends to generations. This force of love and unity were born out of the shared experiences of suffering, displacement, and resilience. As a people that has come together to rebuild a cultural identity, they form strong bonds with one another, forged in the fire of shared struggle and hardship.

Moreover, the force of love and unity was also a source of healing and reconciliation amongst the Nkoro Kirika ancestors. As a people they build their culture in line with their shared past, experiences, and perspectives, they structured their cultural belief such that it would help them to break down barriers and build bridges of understanding, unity and love, this led to a deeper sense of empathy, compassion, and forgiveness, which they consider was a powerful antidote to the trauma and pain of the past. Hence the establishment of "Kari-Oru" burial tradition that inspire them to work together as a people without prejudice but rather on a more just, equitable, and peaceful environment as one people.

Historical Origins of Kari-Oru Burial Tradition amongst Nkoro Kirika People

Many factors have posed itself as a hard rock for Nkoro people to crack, amongst this confronting hard rock's which can be primarily referred to as challenges are, socio-cultural threat to their human capital development and economic sustainability. These identified rocks called challenges has provided hindrances to progress and opposing human capital developmental in Nkoro Kirika Kingdom.

The Kari-Oru Burial Traditions of Nkoro Kirika People

Tradition as an aspect of a people, should not contradict the tangible potentials of culture but rather should portray the attributes found in culture. It is on this premise that this paper has accepted to discuss the Kari-Oru burial traditions of the Nkoro Kirika people as an attribute fueled by Nkoro Kirika historical legacy.

Kari-Oru is a burial tradition of the Nkoro Kirika people, its origin is traceable to the ancient days when love, unity and patriotism were the way of the people. According to Ernest (20125) available tradition described that Kari-Oru burial tradition of the Nkoro Karika people originated at a time when wizardry was alarming and younger generations as at then were put under some form of threat, magical or traditional spirituality was becoming almost the practice of the day whereby families would attack families with strong charm and magical powers, whereby leading to the elimination of promising younger ones. This new normal became a norm whereby undermining the principle that guided the historical mantra of the migration and settlement of the founding fathers.

This new normal forced the establishment of Kari-Oru burial tradition to punish any evil doer that was not known till their death. The people actually considered the use of Kari-Oru burial tradition as the most desirable way of eradicating evil practices within Kirika (Nkoro) Kingdom. It is therefore a tradition that was nevere practiced in their ancient home where they migrated from, but was adopted through general acceptability by the people due to the new normal of evil practices in the kingdom that contracts their exodus mantra of fraternity which is "brotherliness", equity "collective communism" and justice "fairness to all". The evil happenings include witchcraft/wizardry, evil means of acquiring success, and use of magical powers either to manipulate, control or attract love and support from others in the kingdom and beyond. However, according to the testifier, this Kari-Oru burial tradition became necessarily has it help to minimize the wide spread of these evil doers in the kingdom.

The Nature and practice of Kari-Oru Burial Tradition amongst Nkoro (Kirika) People

According to Sanga (2025 oral source) the Kari-Oru burial tradition is usually practice during burial of a person. it is like a traditional means of judgement on everyone in Nkoro Kirika kingdom. The testifier added that the practice is conducted in three ways such, first a person already known as evil person before death, a person discovered as evil person after death and the person discovered as evil person after burial.

Person Already Known as Evil Person Before Death: person already known as an evil person: according to Sanga (2025 oral source) in Nkoro Kirika does not require divination which is spiritual enquiry processes about a person life on earth if it is peace and devoid of evil practices. Knowing an evil person in Nkoro Kirika Kingdom is done through traditional divination it is a process where a family or person divine to ascertain reasons for sudden death, misfortune and other evil happenings in the family or person and it is expose to the family or person what is responsible of all evil happening and if it is discovered to be a particular person either as a family member or non-family person, such person or family raised alarm by summoning the evil person before any traditional authority for adjudication and spiritual investigation and if the spiritual investigation (divination) often carried out on the accused person turns out to be factual, such person is now known as evil person while alive. The person is subjected to oath taking to stop such person from further evil.

Upon the died of such evil person, he or she is not committed to the mother earth, because the person has committed evil against the land and as such has been rejected by the land. Therefore, such persons are taking to evil forest where a full traditional sacrifice is carried out to prevent the person from re-incarnating. If for any reason the family ignores the fact and buried the person the land will reject the person by showing many traditional signs and if the family still insist that their dead relation is innocent the family experience sudden deaths until they perform the traditional rite.

The second phase is when family members are ignorant about the evil activities of the dead family member and for any reason burry such person, same traditional signs will be visible to them to quickly act to salvage the family from untimely and sudden death. However, the remedy to such situation is that, the family invites a deity known as "Igbobia" to exhume the body from the soil and take to the evil forest where such body belongs and traditional sacrifices are perform to also stop such evil person from re-incarnating back to the kingdom. If the family member maybe in doubt ignore the

traditional signs without going for traditional or spiritual inquiry of the legitimacy of the person in the soil, they share same fate of untimely and Suding death.

The last phase is the inquiry before burial. This mostly happen when the family is having some feelings concerning such family member while alive maybe could not confront the person based on the persons social status and influence. In such cases after death the family first go for divination "spiritual inquiry" about the legitimacy of the person to be buried in the land and if it turns out that the person is indeed an evil person, they immediately resolved to the traditional rite on the person to avoid any form of penalty from the land.

The Attribute of this Historical Legacy as a Socio-Cultural Threats to Contemporary Nkoro Kirika Human Capital Development

Following the nature and the reason of Nkoro people's exodus from their ancestral home, they believe it is only in the atmosphere of love, oneness and justice that peace can be achieved, hence, introduction of the Kari-Oru tradition and ensure its sustenance by the successive generation. However, despite the challenges and threat associated with the handed down Kari-Oru burial tradition, the younger generation still held tight to it, seeing it as one amongst the numerous Nkoro "Kirika" traditional norms and value systems.

The Threats of the Kari-Oru Burial Tradition on Contemporary Nkoro Kirika Human Capital Development.

Akinimiye-ofori (2025 oral source) The threat imposed by this traditional burial rite called Kari-Oru is a serious issue in Nkoro Kirika society as it affects the younger generation whereby creating a serious setback on their human capital development of the kingdom in the following ways:

(1) The Kari-Oru tradition has resulted to the untimely death of many young people. In fact according to the testifier, many family has recorded death of their younger one in the kingdom as a result of some doubting that their dead father, mother or uncle is an evil person following the person's involvement in Church and as such the Kari-Oru tradition are denied of the person and those who knows persons evil deeds or in some case in partnership with the person in constituting the evil and are still alive invoked the spirit of such person to act and the actions usually result to death of people in the family and it is usually promising young persons.

(2) Sometime the misplacement of "Ofor" "incantation by those sent by the family to inquire about the legitimacy of the person if to be buried in the land also provide a serious break in the traditional norms. For instance, when a right ofor incantation such as, we are to inquire of you to tell us if you have secret of evil that we do not know of you, remember we don't follow you to everywhere so we cannot say you are evil or not, do not hide anything from us, talk to us so that we can accord you the proper burial rite according to the tradition.

(3) Instead of place the incantation "ofor" in that manner some time the people sent to inquire of the person places their inquiring wrongly through this incantation, we don't believe that your evil, we know you as a good person, but we are just doing this to fulfil all righteousness, please tell us what to tell our people about the type of burial rite should accorded you.

(4) In such situation because the family has proclaimed the person's goodness and express doubt on the person's involvement in evil, the person concedes the truth and rezoned "I don't have idea of what killed fowl child let alone what killed human being, see my hand and leg I am free from evil.

(5) Happily, the people return home to their family and broker the news of good hope and such person is buried without the Kari-Oru burial rite and subsequently the family will start experiencing untimely dead of their loved ones especially the younger one,

(6) Method of ofor-tua "Incantation" while libating, in the days of past when someone dies and through the traditional means, the person is confirmed evil and is taking to the evil forest for traditional rites to prevent the person from re-incarnating back to the kingdom, the incantation is usually placed on the person such as, "we did not judge you guilty of evil you actually judged yourself knowing what you did in the secret and we are here to perform this traditional ritual on you, do not in any way, through dream, or physical or spiritual attack any person here present also do not attack any person from your family because no one in your family actually sent you to do evil rather provide them with money to enable them complete all traditional rites concerning your burial" to restrict the evil dead person from attack the family that lead to loss of lives. Today the people pushed the evil person against their family through same means of incantation such as "we are not the people that judge you guilty but your family did so do not in any way attack us rather go back to your family members who accused you of evil, we are only here to carry out traditional rite on you. This wrong Ofor incantation has in many cases resulted to untimely death of younger and promising ones in the family.

(7) At some point instead of placing the incantation in this right manner, "this tradition is an old practice handed down to the people by their ancestors who saw it as a need to eliminate evil in the kingdom. In the past, the incantation is, you're not the first that this traditional rite is carried out on and if the people refuse to move away from what is considered evil in the kingdom you will not be the last. But today, it is now placed in this manner, you're not the first and you will certainly not be the last, so do not allow yourself to be the last ensure other came after you the tradition most not end in your leg, hence resulting to loss of live in such family.

The Failed Impact of the Kari-Oru Burial Tradition of the Nkoro Kirika People

According to Igbikeyemieari (2025 oral source) in contemporary Nkoro Kirika society, the actual aim of the introduction of Kari-Oru burial tradition is no-longer as it was in the past and it is also not serving the purpose to which it was initiated rather it has become a cultural menace or a repugnant cultural practice to the people of Nkoro Kirika. Although, there were some human factors that has actually resulted to the changes. These human actions include

The people no-longer have shame and fear of this historic traditional burial rite. In the ancient times when a family member is traditionally diagnosed evil, shame goes to such family members and shamefully, such body is taking to the evil forest this was seen as a means of making those alive to refrain from evil practices. But today families are no longer ashamed rather families now take praise for having and evil person they now decorate to be a strong man in the family meaning that the Kari-Oru tradition is no longer serving it purpose.

Secondly, evil doers now use the Kari-Oru tradition as a means to perpetrate their evil on their targeted families. For instance when person dies in a family, such person might actually be innocent, the person may not have involved in any form of evil practices that should warrant Kari-Oru burial rite but because there is an evil target on such family, the people spiritually manipulates such innocent person and uses a familiar spirit to kill young ones from that family and blame it on that innocent person that was buried for a very long time, whereby warranting the family despite the loss of their young ones to also spend money to perform the Kari-Oru burial rite

It is also noted that some person especially those in charge of the deity saddled with the responsibility to perform the Kari-Oru burial rite because of the goat, yam and the table money manipulate innocent spirits to accept being guilty to enable them to be consulted to step in for the traditional burial rite and have those things they needed from the family.

Analysis of the Historic Legacies of Kari-Oru Burial Rites of Nkoro Kirika People

These Kari-Oru values and norms were actually created to meet the realities of the old Nkoro Kirika society. it was created at the material times when the people were still living with the fear of their past society that prompted their migration. Hence the culture needs a change rather than been static. all cultures need to be dynamic in nature so that it attracts general acceptability capable of changes as times progresses with the changing demand of the society. Nkoro Kirika people has re-modernized many of their ancient cultural values such as Bo-Bai that restricts women from coming into the kingdom in soaked cloth or body, even though they were trapped by rain while returning from their daily activities to suit the contemporary realities so this culture needs a change. If there has been traditional solution that could led to the change in such highly reverence culture value to suit social acceptability, then other cultures like "Kari-Oru" should be revisited to accept the contemporary realities.

CONCLUSION

The past is never truly past. Historical legacies such as, decisions, and cultural practices continue to shape the present and future, influencing the social, economic, and cultural structures that govern every human historic society. This enduring impact of the past on the present is what is referred to as historical legacy. Historical legacy as a living attribute of society, continues to evolve and adapt to changing contexts while remaining a powerful force in shaping the contemporary world. From the lingering effects of past history of migration and settlement to the ongoing cultural threat to human capital development. Historical legacy is a palpable presence in human lives, it influences social norms, institutions, and relationships, often in subtle but profound ways. Yet, despite its significance, historical legacy is often overlooked or underestimated, treated as a relic of the past rather than a living, breathing force that continues to shape the world. With the historical overview of the Nkoro past, and present society discussed through the Kari-Oru burial tradition it is indeed a nuance to Nkoro Kirikal cultural liberation.

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Fred Obediah	M	52	Civil Servant	Youth Leader	Nkoro Town	21/07/2021
Anikuroka Pius	M	71	Rtd Civil Servant	Head Master	Nkoro Town	21/08/2021
Kerene Percy	M	75	Rtd Civil Servant	Chief-Elect	Iwo-Ama Nkoro	21/07/2025
Sanga Atoku	M	50	Self Employed		Nkoro Town	12/8/2025
Kings Patrick	M	62	Rtd Civil Servant		Iwo-fe Port-Harcourt	17/4/2025
Jubonye Tugwell	M	52	Retired Army Officer		Port Harcourt	10/4/2025
Ernest Eras	M	40	Civil Servant		Nkoro Town	5/4/2025
Akinimiye-ofori Lawrence	M	69	Retired Naval Officer	MWO	Nkoro Town	6/8/2025

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