

**The Demise of the Performance Art of Masquerade:  
A Case Study of the Phenomenon in Igbogene in Bayelsa State**

**Saviour Nathan A. Agoro**

*Department of Theatre Arts, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, P. M. B. 71, Yenagoa,  
Bayelsa State, Nigeria, West Africa*

*Telephone: +2348037056676, +2348068228296, E-mail: snagoro8455@yahoo.com*

**KEYWORDS** Classification. Ceremony. Institutions. Missionary. Entertainment. Organisation

**ABSTRACT** The Demise of the Performance Art of Masquerade: A Case Study of the Phenomenon in Igbogene in Bayelsa State is a study of the now extinct performance idiom of masquerade among the Igbogene people. The paper outlines the origin of masquerade in Igbogene. It looks at its organisational structure, pays attention to the functions of masquerade as well its classification. The paper also appreciates the staging of masquerade, but it is critical of the factors that contributed to the demise of the phenomenon on the arrival of the Christian missions in the community. It grapples with a number of such factors, suggesting that missionary misdirected zeal, lack of cultural education, as well as the coercive nature of the masquerade organisation are principal factors in the demise of the art of masquerade in course of its relationship with Christianity. The paper is convinced that in order to forestall crisis in the Niger Delta there should deliberate attempts in forging joint cultural endeavours among communities the kind that existed between Igbogene and Elebele, and between the Epie and Engenni using Igbogene as a representative community.