

CHALLENGES POSED BY A CHANGING SOCIAL ORDER ON THE OTU AGE GRADE SYSTEM IN AVHIANWU, ETSAKO CENTRAL L.G.A. EDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

In a time when the English calendar was not available and colonisation had not taken place in Africa, knowing a child's age was basically through the age cohorts known as the age grade. This was the common feature among almost all ethnic groups/nationalities in African societies. This system, not only helped in knowing the age of individuals, but it also helped in basic governance of these communities, especially as it affects rudimentary allocation of roles to individuals in the community. The range of those in an age grade or between age groups is three years. It is a unique cultural way of making sure a child is not cheated of his inheritance in the event of the parent's death and it enhances the status of the family. The people of Avhianwu in Etsako Central Local Government Area of Edo state were not left out in this practise. They had and still have an age grade system called OTU. In this paper, we are going to look at the changes that have occurred overtime in relation to the OTU age grade system. The challenges posed by the changes in the social order on this community are also examined.

Key words: Age grade, adulthood, initiation, Otu, Inuotu, Uni.