

Essays

Yoruba Culture in a Changing World

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Abstract

Culture, a way of life, ideology, and philosophy of a people, has been a focal point of scholarly research in the fields of literature, language, history, and sociology, among others. The findings of existing research have established that culture is dynamic. The Yorùbá culture, like other cultures of the world is not static. Hence, in this discourse, we will examine the impact of the changes in the Yorùbá society on the culture of the people.

Data for the study drawn from Yorùbá cultural heritage, literary works, home video, films and oral genres. The data were subjected to content and interpretive analysis. Findings reveal that some indices of Yorùbá culture have experienced constant flux due to the mobile nature of the culture and its contact with other cultures. The research also affirm that the preservation of the culture prompted some stakeholders to change the existing norm in order to add value to the Yorùbá culture for the benefit of the upcoming generation. It further revealed that the changes that the culture witnesses could be seen as a two-edged sword, with both positive and negative impacts. Positive in the sense of elements that enhance sustainable development and negative from the purview of elements that degrade, diminish, and decimate human flourishing.

The research concludes that the response of the Yorùbá culture to changes could impact positively on growth. In other word, human activities in Yorùbá culture should be tailored in positive direction to enhance national and social-economic development. Hence, the revitalization, documentation and preservation of culture should be of interest to the government and policy makers.

Keywords: Arts, Culture, Ideology, *Ọmọlúàbí* Philosophy, Literary Culture, Sociopolitical Institution

Introduction

The term Yorùbá refers to a people and a language spoken largely by the Yorùbá ethnic group in Southwestern Nigeria. The mobility of the Yorùbá people, due to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, commerce, and other forms of migrating factors have spread the people and their language to other West Africa countries, such as Togo, Ghana, Republic of Benin, Gambia and Sierra Leone. The Yorùbá people are also found across North America, the Caribbean, United Kingdom and South America, particularly in Cuba and Brazil. Yorùbá as L1 (first language) is spoken in the Southwestern Nigeria while in other climes where Yorùbá people are found it is either spoken as L1 or L2 (second language). In recent time Yorùbá has been adopted as the official language in Brazil because of the influence of Yorùbá culture on the life of the Brazilian and some of their social institutions.

The dissemination of the Yorùbá language and culture has been facilitated in contemporary times by the social media. In fact, the dissemination of both the values system, custom, tradition has been tremendously aided by technological tools, hence the Yorùbá culture has been assimilated by many people across cultures and this has brought about a lot of cultural changes to aspects of the culture.

Culture is the way of life of a group of people that share same ideology and philosophy. It has been described by Isola (2010:29) as “God’s own way of organizing His people all over the world in cohesive group.” UNESCO (2002) defines culture as,

The set of distinctive spiritual material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group, encompassing, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and belief (cited in Isola, 2010:12).

Ilesanmi (2004:32) notes that there is no aspect of a people’s life that cannot be encompassed in their culture. He identifies tangible and intangible aspects of culture. The tangible aspects include arts, technology, trade, and agriculture. Some of the intangible aspects are language, orature, law, religion, literature, and myth. Edgar (2010:16) also affirms that culture is the deeper level of basic assumption and beliefs that are shared by members of

an organization, which operate unconsciously and in a definite fashion (taken for granted) it explains an organization's view of itself and its environment. The essential role that language plays in the existence of any culture cannot be underestimated. Ilesanmi (2004), Isola (2010) and Bamgbose (2017) posit that language occupies a special place in a culture because it is a major vehicle by which other cultural expects are expressed. Specifically, Isola (2010:19) affirms that language is the hub of other aspect of culture and that when a language dies the culture dies. Bamgbose (2017:227) further explains the above when he asserts that "the loss of any language is a tragedy, as it means the loss of a culture and civilization." From the foregoing, it could be averred that culture can be deployed to engender social integration as well as social and human development, hence, culture is an important phenomenon in any given society. It is also evident that there is a strong relationship between culture and the society. The tangible and intangible aspect of culture stem from the society while the society gives impetus to the interpretation given to any aspect of the culture. Without the society, aspect of culture cannot stand on its own.

Isola (2010) encapsulates the interwoven relationship between culture and African society when he asserts that:

The great African Empires were culturally developed. Available evidence from our indigenous technologies in farming, architecture, music, textile production sculpture, warfare and others proved that African culture sustained progress and development over time. The socio-cultural communities thrived and survived by meeting their daily needs and most especially by guaranteeing continuity through and effective process of socialization that ensured that the younger generation internalized the ideas, norms, values and symbols of society. Evidence of our tangible cultural heritage found not only in the various impressive cultural sites and landscapes all over Africa but also in the contents of national and international museums all over the world. The intangible cultural heritage invigorated the whole system (2-3).

It is evident from the above exposition on African culture that African culture generally plays important role in the progress of the society. It is also evident that African culture is not limited to the continent of Africa, but it could be found all over the globe. The mobility of African culture is evident all over the world. In addition, the intangible aspect of the culture is passed down from generation to generation to give life to the culture and to invigorate the society.

The intervention of the colonialists, trans-Atlantic slave trade and Western Education on the African culture (Yorùbá culture) inclusive, has been explored by earlier scholars. In Isola (2010) view, the Africa culture was undermined by the above intervention. In his view, the colonial imperialist aimed at annihilating the African culture.

In Falola's (2018:1) view, the colonial experience has so many faces to the African culture. In his opinion, most Africa culture were transformed because of colonialism. He asserts that "the colonial experience transformed African cultures, to the extent that many African became strangers to the traditions of old, suffering alienation in the process." The result of the above according to Falola is that the colonizers especially the "Europeans were able to give more of their culture to Africans." The aftermath of the acceptance of the colonizer culture brought cultural changes in most African culture.

The implication of the above is seen in the ways the younger generation, and youth of today are "picking the changes without any force". The Yorùbá culture is not exempted from the above. The Yorùbá culture has gone through a lot of transformation. The Yorùbá culture like all other cultures of African can also be found in different parts of the world. Many of the Yorùbá institutions have taken different forms and shapes both at home and abroad, for instance, Yorùbá cultural heritage is being practiced in foreign countries like El-salvador, a North America country that cherished the Yorùbá language. It is not only that they speak the language, the Yorùbá traditional religion thrives in this country, with Šàngó and Yemoja worshipped. Also in Cuba, a Yorùbá Ulkumi religion is worshipped as Santeria, a syncretic religion under Catholic while the Yorùbá language is spoken freely in Brazil, the Brazilian traced their souls back to Yorùbá land. Many of the deities are also worshipped there. Although, the traditional religions worshipped in diaspora maybe hybridized, does not undermine the fact that the Yorùbá tradition transformed to the ones that exist in diaspora.

It is pertinent to note that the dynamic nature of culture allows the transformation spotted in the Yorùbá culture as exhibited in the diaspora. Worthy of note is that the Yorùbá culture has also undergone a lot of changes in its original domain, Yorùbá land as a response to the progress and growth of the society. Be that as it may, the Yorùbá culture has contributed immensely to entrenching of social order in both the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial society.

Existing literatures on Yorùbá culture have affirmed that the Yorùbá people are endowed with vast of culture, customs, and tradition. A total of seventy-five (75) of Yorùbá culture are discussed in Falola and Akinyemi (2017) *Culture and Customs of the Yorùbá* while Isola (2010) *Making Culture Memorable* dialectically discussed the effect of culture on development. In this

essay, I may not be able to enlist all the aspects of culture, however, I will try to unearth the Yorùbá culture and its effects on the society vis-a-vis the impact of the changes going on in the global space on the culture.

The Yorùbá Culture and a Changing World

The Yorùbá culture is connected to social order in the Yorùbá society and the larger Nigerian society. The order of the society rests on the interconnection between the social institutions and the people in the society. Obono (2016:180) affirms the above when he states that the dialectal connection of the social institutions is maintained and reinforced by the behavior of individual members of the society. In the Yorùbá society, the individual behavior is guided by the Yorùbá culture, be it tangible or intangible, however, the intangible aspect brings out of an individual a perfect gentleman usually referred to as an *omolúàbí*.

In essence, the making of an *omolúàbí* stabilized order of the society. The agents of making an *omolúàbí* are Yorùbá oral traditions, in forms of songs, proverbs, poetry, folktales, and Yorùbá institution like social, political, economic, and religion institutions.

The Yorùbá socio-political institution in a changing World

In line with Adesina (2012) an understanding of the past always helps us to shed light in the low to handle the challenge of the present and project to the future. Hence, it is pertinent to know the fabrications of some of the social institutions in the Yorùbá society. In the past and how it has been deployed in a change world of today. It is against this background that we examine the political structure of the Yorùbá before the intervention of the colonial power. The Yorùbá before the advent of the European practiced a monarchical system of government, where the *Ọba*, (king) is seen as the embodiment of the state. He has the supreme authority and whatever he says is the final hence, the praise name *Kabiyesi, aláṣẹ èkeji òrìṣà* is attributed to the *Ọba*. The colonial power recognized the authority of the *Ọba*, hence, in 1914 during Lord Frederick Lugard indirect rule, he tapped into existing monarchical system of governance to make his governance easy. Asiwaju (1980:437) aptly records this, he asserts that:

In the Yorùbá area, where the indigenous kinship institution fulfilled the same condition of success for indirect Rule as the emirates of the North. Lugard's policy worked out merely to consolidate the intentions of his predecessors such as MacCullum and MacGregor both of whom had wished

for an administrative machinery in which the *Ọbaship* institution could be used to the advantage of British colonial control of Yorùbáland.

In addition to the above, the Native Courts Ordinance of 1914 and Native Authority Ordinance of 1916 which gave the *Ọba* and *Baálẹ̀* the opportunity of chairing the Native Court were put in place. However, it is obvious that the colonialists were doing this for their benefits. There is no gainsaying that the colonialist recognized the significant of the culture in effective governance and social order.

The power of *Ọba* in the contemporary Nigeria has dwindled and relegated to the background. Prior to the civilian regime, the military rulers had rendered the position of *Ọba* useless, there have been cases of a time a first class *Ọba* in Yorùbáland was given an 'house arrest' because the then Military President decreed that he should not travel out of his domain. In contemporary times, though *Ọbas* are not bound by decrees but lot of them are toothless dogs, who are not in control of their domain. The uncouth and unbridled expression of some *Ọbas* position on things pertaining to internal conflict among the *Ọbas* on leadership tussle, land dispute and hierarchical issues have desecrated the *Ọbaship* stool. There are cases of horrendous allegations against some *ọbas* by their subjects, and many of the *ọbas* also says horrid things against themselves. One begin to wonder, if the traditional methods of choosing a *ọba* still suffice in the choice of some *Ọbas*. The loss of Yorùbá norm and values is obvious in the ways and manners some of the *Ọbas* behave. It was in the days of old that the Yorùbá proverb, *àpónlẹ̀ ò sí fọba tí kò ní olorì* is applicable, the contemporary *Ọba* does not see anything wrong in this societal expectation and some others. In fact, the case of many *Ọbas* and their attitude to cultural norm is a case of crumbled culture in a failed state.

In the traditional governance, the *Ọba* does not rule in isolation, the griots, the cymbalists, the minstrels and traditional priests have role to play in governance. Osundare (1989) and *Ọlábímtán* (1988) opine that the minstrels pay tangible role in traditional governance. Adeleke (2007:123) corroborates the above opinion when he notes that the *Ifá* priest and *akigbe ọba* "are information officer or information agency" he emphasizes that they "are obliged to pass informative messages to *Ọba-in-council* on affairs of the state. The minstrel has to be acknowledged as a great resource material of the culture, history, and tradition".

Are the minstrel still relevant in the democratic governance? One wonders whether they still play their role as information officer to the *Ọba-in-council*. If they are, do the *ọba-in-council* listen to them or he ignores them? The action of some *Ọba-in-council* opposed to the fact that the minstrels are playing

their role. However, within the larger Nigeria, the minstrels still participate in governance.”

The Yorùbá satirical culture is usually deployed to participate in modern day governance. The Yorùbá and all African society have ‘the concept known as African shame culture’, a culture that denies and condemns evil. In almost every part of traditional Africa there are some performances that give the citizens the license to comment freely on social and political events in the society. Because traditional Africans relate based on ‘we’ rather than ‘I’, everyone is conscious of how his/her behavior affects the communal well-being. Also, the familyhood nature of most Africans does not allow any member of a family to behave contrary to the accepted norms and values of the society. In other words, any behavior that deviates from the ethics and societal moral code is censured. The response of the society to anyone that gets involved in deviant behavior usually comes in the form of satirical songs and abuse. ‘Songs of abuse is a natural medium of moral, ethical and conscious internalization and socialization in traditional Africa’ (Taiwo 2007:33). Nkem Okoh (2008:228) affirm the above when he asserts that:

In several Ehuani communities, for example one social event or the other normally crops up, in which the peoples oral literature is re-enacted afresh whether the occasion is called Ineh, Ogbanigbe, or Iwaji, satirical songs... are also exploited fully to the benefit of society. They provide one unique opportunity to attack those who have violated the social norms, or engaged in one form of anti-social behavior or the other.

Among the Yorùbá of Southwestern Nigeria and Republic of Benin, the use of satire cuts across all strata. In the traditional Ọyọ of the Yorùbá of Southwestern Nigeria, an Ọba, Jááyin committed suicide in anticipation of a satirical song that was to be sung against him, hence, the popular saying that:

Ó kù dèdè ká gbéwì dákèsán ọba Jááyin tẹrí gbaso

(Johnson 1921:12)

(As soon as the iwì chanter gets close to Akèsán Ọba Jááyin committed suicide)

Ọba Jááyin, the then Aláàfin of Ọyọ, was not ready to face ridicule and shame, he took the bold step of committing suicide, Ọba Jááyin’s action aligns with the Yorùbá saying: *Ikú yá ju èsín lọ* (it is better to die than to be subjected to shame). Being ridiculed and facing shame are psychological, having to do with one’s conscience. How many Yorùbá ọba can respond to shameful acts and being ridiculed the way Ọba Jááyin reacted? Even in the face of their

shameful acts going viral through the social media, many of Yorùbá Ọbas and African leaders generally cannot follow the part of honor as reflected in the history of some Alááfin like Jááyin and Şàngó. In history, when Şàngó was ridiculed by Gbònkà one of his warlords, Şàngó did not sit-tight on the throne. He recognized his failure and accepted that he was unable to manage the failed state. He decided to go back to his maternal country. Are African leaders not sitting tight on the throne when it is obvious that many of them do not have solutions to the problem of insecurity, kidnapping, banditry, abject poverty and all forms of socio-economic woes afflicting their states?

From the account of the death of Ọba Jááyin in the above example, it is evident that the traditional Yorùbá dramatic and performing arts are employed in traditional palaces and public places in order to participate in governance and to bring social order into the society. For instance, the Àşà traditional performers in Ilorin, through their satire, censure the unethical behavior of the ruling class and through this sanity brought to the society. In modern Nigeria, the Yorùbá satirical tradition has taken different dimensions. These include theatre artistes who perform to satirize socio-political events and topical issues, such as Aláwàdà` Group and Àwàdà Kẹrìkẹrì, among other comedians like Bábá Sùwé, Alúwẹ́ẹ́, and Adẹrùpọkọ. There are also other comedians who through radio, television, YouTube, and other forms of social media use humor to lampoon human foolery and satirize both the ruling class and their subjects. The more recent development of such art is the numerous stand-up comedians who have sprung up in the modern Nigeria society. According to Filani (2016), the traditional Yorùbá dramatic performance is the precursor to the development of stand-up comedy. This signifies a major development of the Yorùbá arts to the changing world.

Humorous satirical arts has been a panacea to a failed state in the traditional society. In the contemporary Nigeria society, Lágbájá, Bísádé Ológundé, a renowned Nigerian musician, technologic use of the mask, and the African musical ensemble, like *bàtà*, *dundun*, *sákàrà* and *ogido* is to satirize the ‘failure’ of the African leadership with particular reference to Nigeria (Ọmọtoşo 2017; Sotunsa 2009).

Mask, a costume usually used by masquerades in virtually all African cultures, is an icon used to represent man’s facelessness. Hence, the use of mask represents the voice of the common man, the faceless and the voiceless in society. Through his songs, he defends the classless and less-privileged individuals (Adegoju, 2009; Ọmọtoşo, 2017). The self-interest attitude of many African leaders censored in Lágbájá’s music specifically; he likens a typical regime of a Nigerian military dictator to that of former dictators, like Mahmud Gadhafi of Libya, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Mobutu Sese Seiko of Zaire

and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. He encourages Tyrasib to emulate the likes of world leaders like Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, and George Bush Junior.

With a blend of the above-mentioned African musical ensembles and foreign musical ensembles, he also creates awareness on the state of Nigeria and advocates that the masses should exercise their rights. Using the traditional Yorùbá drum ensemble, with *bàtá* occupying the central position, Lágbájá pre-occupations in his music is to satirize those who have contributed to the failure of governance in many African states. Two of the albums he uses to jibe at the political leadership in Nigeria and their followership include 'Million' and '200 Million Mùmú'. In these albums, Lágbájá condemns how political leaders are looting public funds in millions of pounds and dollars. This is the expected money to be used to provide basic infrastructural amenities in order to improve social and physical development of the nation.

Yorùbá Arts in the Phase of Religious Changes

From the foregoing, it is inferred that *bata* drum has been demystified by Lágbájá. *Bàtá* in the traditional Yorùbá culture is exclusively used for *Şàngó* worship and occasionally used by Alarinjo Masquerade. *Bàtá* traditionally is hardly used for social function. Dundun, another drum ensemble is used mostly in social gathering. However, with modernization, *Bàtá* used by Lágbájá to perform a social function. Aside from Lágbájá music, *bàtá* is used in some churches as one of the mode of worshipping God. In addition to the use of *bàtá*, there are other traditional drum ensembles found in churches, chief among them is *dùndún*. In recent times, particular musical group named themselves after the god of drummers, *Àyàn*, they are referred to as *Àyàn-Jésù*.

A hindsight into church history reveals how all these traditional drum labelled as evil before the Aladura sect introduced the use of drum and dancing into church service. The Pentecostal movement which has hitherto, labelled all the traditional drum ensembles as non-spiritual are now taking the lead in the use of the traditional drum ensembles. The most commonly use in recent time is *şèkèrè*, even, when the medium of singing is in the English language, *şèkèrè*, takes the lead while the other instruments accompany it. As a matter of fact, musical concerts have been organized and the theme is '*şèkèrè* concert' where the artists and other performer drum the *şèkèrè* all of shades and forms. The revitalization of the African traditional drum ensemble in churches negates the aim of the missionary and colonialist who brought Christianity into Nigeria. Gbàdàmóşí (1980:588) captures this aim when he asserts that:

Education in Nigeria has had an impact of a revolutionary character, like Christianity to which it was closely allied at the beginning and with which

it is still substantially linked... it tended to create a dichotomous relationship between the traditional values and more of the people and those being peddled by its champions. Western education, especially the variety provided in missionary institutions, was from the very beginning aimed at subverting the indigenous cultures of the people regarded as primitive and sinful and at producing young men and women thoroughly immersed in the supposedly superior European Christian culture, consequently, traditional ritual songs, dances, drama, games and art were all condemned by the missionary teachers as pagan, while the curriculum bristled with Bible reading, history of European activities, the singing of European songs and the study of English literary classics.

Aside from the use of Yorùbá traditional drum ensembles in gospel music, fastidious look into the theme of the music reveals that the Yorùbá philosophical thoughts and belief, as well as the Yorùbá poetic genres preoccupy the music. For instance, Ìfá, the embodiment of wisdom, and a traditional religion clearly states the three values that are critical to the Yorùbá. He says,

Ohun méta lèdá ñ wá
A n wówó
A ñ wómọ
A ñ waikú baálẹ̀ ọ̀rọ̀.

(Human seeks three things in life
 We seek for money
 We seek for children
 We seek for long life).

These three values are usually part of the things dominating gospel music. In addition, the Yorùbá belief in *àyànmọ́!* (destiny), and *ori* (inner-being) have been the focus of the songs of some gospel singers. Above all, the transposition of the Yorùbá poetic genres like *oriki* and folksongs are preeminent in many of the gospel songs. As a matter of fact, many gospel artists ignorantly ascribe the epithets of some of the traditional deities and gods to the Christian God in the place of worship:

Akọ́dá ayé
Aṣẹ́dá ọ̀run
Èrùjẹ́jẹ́
Ọba mímọ́
Sángiri-là-giri

Àrá-wò-ó
 Oba tí í wólé ikú tìpìlè-tìpìlè

(The creator of the earth
 The creator of heaven
 The terrifying God
 The holy king
 The-one-that-pieces and breaks-the-wall
 Àrá-wò-ó
 The thunderous one
 The king that pulls down the foundation of the domain of death).

The above *oriki* was performed in a Christian gathering (A critical examination of the above *oriki* performance reveals the following: Lines 1 and 2 are registers of the Ifá priest, and there are times they are used generally by the Yorùbá as attributes of Elédùmare, the Supreme God in Yorùbá belief. Lines 3, 5 and 6 are transposed from *ṣàngó-pípè*, these are attributes of Ṣàngó the god of thunder.

The new trend in the development of the deployment of the traditional elements for the composition and performance of gospel music in the contemporary time is the performance of *oriki* poetic genre for a longer period like 15-30 minutes to worship God in Christian gatherings. The performer is usually referred to as a Minister. She usually do a compilation of *oriki* in Yorùbá, the same will be translated to English. The performer usually starts her eulogy of God with the Yorùbá version and switch the code to English to perform the same. Most times, the *oriki* are derived based on God's acts and doing as narrated in the Bible and there are times that *oriki* of some Yorùbá deities are transposed to worship the God of Christian. Though the performers are doing this ignonantly. The above act of translating the *oriki* is to reach a wider audience, and respond to the multicultural nature of contemporary Christians churches. However, this act has helped the dissemination and migration of Yorùbá culture to other parts of the globe, in essence, the Yorùbá culture is responding to the changes around the world.

The Yorùbá Literary Culture in a Changing World

The intangible aspect of Yorùbá culture has been a veritable tool to bring order in the traditional setting. Also in the social space, Yorùbá songs are sung beyond the shore of the southwestern Nigeria. Examples abound of Yorùbá songs laced with their worldview that are performed by Choir from other climes especially from the West. Popular among such are 'Iṣé Olúwa' and

‘Òjúmó ti mọ’. The technology has aided the dispersal of these songs and the performance of these songs by choir from the Western/European culture has gone viral on social media. This attests to Akinyemi (n.d; 266) position on the fact that the Yorùbá oral poetic forms are ‘pliable and adaptable to a variety of time, periods and occasions. However, it is worthy of note that the rate in which the Yorùbá culture is being dispersed to another world is at a snail speed. Falola (2018:6) succinctly capture the above; he asserts that ‘on the whole, Africa has been less successful in exporting its cultures, but it has received more from outside’. Through proverbs, folktale and various poetic genres social charter are formed to guide the behavior of the people. In the social space songs are performed to bring order into the society. Moral issues are formed like bulk of song used for the socialisation and intergration of children into the society. Virtuous behaviour like honesty, loyalty and deligence are main themes of the songs while vices are condemned. These songs are song in schools, homes, traditional performances and the likes. However, Proverbs is another tools used to entrench social order in Yorùbá culture, by Yorùbá proverbs, the codes of conduct guiding the people could be laid. Adeleke (2009:19) emphatically state that ‘the pre-literate societies had avalanches of oral traditions which encapsulated their past experiences, event, relationship of Yorùbá with other neighboring ethnic groups and Western and Eastern countries as well as West African countries can be traced. In contemporary times, there are still other Yorùbá proverbs that can be depended upon to solve some of the issues and challenges facing the global world.

The world at large is changing. Cohabitation between the citizens not peaceful, killing, maiming, kidnapping and violation of human rights is the order of the day. These amount to human right violation. The Yorùbá culture frowns at human rights abuse and violation and there are wise saying and proverbs pointing to this:

- (1) *Omọ kii pa omọ jayé*
(A child need not to kill another child to enjoy life).
- (2) *Ìbì kò ju ibí, bí a se bí erú ní a bí omọ.*
(Slaves and freeborn were equally born).

From the above proverbs, it is clear that the Yorùbá culture from all other culture of the world takes cognizance of the fundamental human rights to life, rights to equality before the law and rights to dignity of human person. The violation of the above rights are the causes of insecurity, kidnapping, banditry, extrajudicial killings and all other vices that are occurring in the globe. Hence,

the protest against the violators of human right as in the case of George Floyd in the United State of America and the End-SARs-Protest that happened in Nigeria in Year 2020 and the redress that followed in other to restore peace. The above proverbs are in tandem with the redress. ‘A child need not to kill another child to enjoy life’, therefore the police officer that killed George Floyd was sentence and George Floyd family was compensated. Though, the handlers of case of the killing in Nigeria was not confronted truthfully like that of George Floyd in America, the reaction of the people as expressed through the End-SARS protest both in Nigeria and the Nigerian in Diaspora is an indication that everybody was crying out for justice as stipulated in the proverbs.

Ethnic conflict, which is an index of a failed state could be addressed by proverb 2. ‘Slaves and freeborn were equally born’. If the above proverb is applied, the argument of some people that the Fulani are controlling the affairs of Nigeria will be outdated, because every citizen of the nation has equality before the law and they have the rights to acquire and own property. Hence, a certain ethnic group will not be killing and kidnapping other for monetary gains. It is therefore, necessary for the leadership to tap into the Yorùbá culture in relating with people around the world in order to restore peace in the land.

The issues of free and natural relationship between the ecosystems is another central focus of Yorùbá culture. Man and its environment are interwoven. Oyelaran (2011) opines that the environment and human must relate symbiotically in other to mutually benefit from one another, hence, in Yorùbá culture there are different taboos to prevent the abuse of the environment. For instance, in almost every part of Yorùbá land, there are sacred grooves (*igbò orò* or *igbò àiwò*). In other to preserve the trees and environment a religious taboo is put in place that nobody should enter the sacred groove because deities and ancestral god live there, hence, the groove is so sacred, non-initiates cannot move close at will. There is also the belief that forest is spiritually protected. Therefore, as the spiritual leaders protect the forest, the political leaders are also protecting it. (Adejumo and Oyebamiji 2019).

The taboo surrounding *igbò orò* sacred groove is the Yorùbá way of preserving the tree in order to avoid ecological crisis of deforestation and to promote afforestation and reforestation. The Yorùbá belief is captured in the maxim that says *igbé lówó wà* “the forest is laden with wealth.” Therefore, the wealth of the nation preserved both physically and spiritually by the taboo surrounding the grooves. In essence, forest products are renewable, and they could be asource of economic gain to the society. Beyond this, the forest products could be exported to boost the national enconomic, in addition it could be avered that the aim of the Yorùbá culture is in tandem with one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that promotes being friendly with other creatures particularly being environmentally friendly.

Aside from taboo that are spiritually inclined, the Yorùbá culture also put in place taboos that project the socio-cultural ideals of the society. These taboos are established to guide and protect the moral standard of the society. There are taboos that restrict sexual activities like incest, animal-human sex, necrophilia and adult-child sex. There are times that taboos are projecting the reproductive, family and material health, as well as personal hygiene. These taboos are employed as potent means of social control.

- i. *Ìran olúòjé kii dómọ lágbàálẹ̀ kí wọ̀n tó fún un lóúnjẹ.*
Olúòjé lineage do not feed their children horizontally
- ii. *A kii jii ri èèpò ègú sí*
(We must not wake up to see the peeling from melon early in the morning)
- iii. *Olùòjẹ ò gbọ̀dọ̀ gori odó*
(Olúòjẹ lineage must not step on mortal)

The above taboo are to promote family health, maternal and child care; and neatness among the Yorùbá people. For instance, taboo 1 on Olúòjé, is scientific and inline with feeding of children uprightly in order to avoid suffocation. (Oyebamiji, 2018). Aside from the use of taboo, aspect of Yorùbá belief are routed through Yorùbá poetic genres like Ifá literary corpus. For instance, in Ifá, the culture of marriage is so entrenched. The excerpts below are representing the Yorùbá belief on marriage:

- i. *Odu ogbè Atẹ*
Ogbè wá tẹ́ kára ó rọ̀ wọ̀n
Eni tó n wa wàákúwàá
Ní i rí rii kúrìí
Ló difá fápọ̀n ọ̀n
Tí ó fàilóbìnrin nilé
N lọ̀ tọ̀rọ̀ ọ̀mọ̀ lówó òrìṣà
(Olálẹ̀yẹ 2015:59)

(Ogbè Atẹ corpus
Ogbè divine so that we have rest
Whosoever seeks for trouble
Will definitely see trouble
He divines for a bachelor
A bachelor who has no wife
That is seeking child from the deity).

- ii. *Òpó íí múléró Moja Àlekàn*
Tọkọtaya tí múlé ró Maja Àlèkàn
Níí máa bímọ re fún ni

(The pillar fortifies the building, Moja Àlekàn
 The husband and wife fortify the home, Moja Àlekan
 This union yields good children for one).

The above excerpt emphasizes the fact that in order to have children one must be married. The trend in family issues in a changing world has shown that this belief is now invalid. In the Yorùbá society and other societies of the world, we have single parents, foster parents and many ladies/man that are not ready to be formally married. Hence, the current trend of having ‘baby mama’ and ‘baby father’.

Also, the Yorùbá culture is opposed to homosexuality and lesbianism (Ajibade 2019). The above view is supported by the following excerpt.

‘Epo seé jẹsu
Iṣu see jẹpo
Àkàsò ló dún-un gàkà’
Obìnrin ẹ e b́ásùn jòkùnrin lọ
Bòkùnrin bá n b́okùnrin-in sùn
Bí i kóko, bíi oówo ni
Bí iku, bí àgbààrin
Bóbìnrin bá n b́obìnrin-in sùn
Bí ẹrọfò, bí oórùn
Bí ẹrọfò, bí i èérí,
Bòkùnrin bá n b́obìnrin-in sùn
Bí ẹni n fólá yanpin ni. (Ajibádé 2019:37)

(Boiled yam is good to be eaten with palm oil.
 Palm oil is good to be eaten with boiled yam.
 Ladder is good to climb a barn/rafter
 It is pleasant for a man to have
 Sexual intercourse with a women
 If the man is having sexual intercourse
 With another man
 It results into lumps, boils and yaws
 It results into various diseases
 If a woman is having sexual intercourse with another woman
 It result into murk and foul odor

It results into mud and dust
 (But) if a man is having intercourse with a woman
 It makes them feel they are on top of the world).

Though, the above excerpt represents the Yorùbá position about same-sex-relationship, it is obvious that, there are some people in the Yorùbá society that are involved in it. In other climes of the globe, homosexuality, lesbianism and bestiality has been legalized because of the over stretch freedom and rights to do what pleases and gives one pleasure. Despite the acceptance of same-sex-relationships in some cultures of the world, the Yorùbá society still holds firmly to her cultural norm as expressed in the excerpt above. Hence, the threat by the Western Political power on Nigeria because of the refusal to pass LGTBQ into law did not affect the Nigerian government decision on the fact that LGTBQ cannot be legalized. The culture of the people is at play here, however, this does not mean that a strand of the people are not involved in same-sex-relationship.

At this point, we will like to mention that the marriage and family institution in Yorùbá society is responding fast to the changes in the world. In the pre-literate society, there are step to be taken before a lady and a man can get married. In fact, marriage is between the families of the bride and groom. However, due to contact with Western culture, families are hardly involved in choosing a wife for their son or choosing a husband for their daughter. The would-be husband and wife choose for themselves, while the parents are expected to bless the relationship. The most obvious affected area is the proposal, where Yorùbá men like the men in the Western world give a surprise proposal to their fiancées at restaurant or any other place chosen. Another thing which opposes greatly to the patriarchal culture of the Yorùbá society, is the scenario of the man kneeling to propose to his fiancée, all these are alien to Yorùbá culture, but the reason for the above is the effect of the Western movies on our youth. Even, the role of the *iyàwó ilé'* (wives in the family) and other kinsmen and women during the marriage ceremony has virtually been eroded by the *alaga ijókòó* and *alága idúró* syndrome, which has become a lucrative business for sugar-coated compere in the society.

Finally, the effort of Yorùbá videographers and film makers worth mentioning at this point. One of the aspects of Yorùbá culture that is being exported to the other clime is Yorùbá films. Yorùbá films are now produced and marketed through (compact Disc) C.D., M.P three, but the trend now is the marketing of Yorùbá films through You-tube. The marketing of Yorùbá films through You-tube has been a major way of disseminating the Yorùbá culture. It is worthy of note that Tunde Kilani, a renowned producer and videographer is taking a lead role in the technologizing of the Yorùbá films as well as harnessing the

Yorùbá orature and films for the transformation of Nigeria as a nation. This is evident in his two films, *Saworo-idẹ* and *Agogo-Èẹ̀wò*, through these films he censured the heinous act of democratic and military leaderships in Nigeria. In addition, his effort in revitalizing the folktale tradition through digitalized folk story session “*Àlọ́ Ọ̀yá Àgbà*” is a step in right direction, which invariably enhances the socialization of the younger generation in this contemporary time. This will invariably lead to human development. Above all, the digitalization of the oral tradition boost the documentation and preservation of the folk tradition.

Conclusion

I will like to reiterate the fact that Yorùbá culture and the society are interwoven. The role of Yorùbá culture on social order cannot be under-estimated. Yorùbá culture recognizes fundamental human rights, truthfulness, transparency, and honesty. Through their culture, the contemporary challenges facing most nations of the world as manifested in kidnapping, insecurity, injustice could be confronted if the traditional ways of handling such as presented in some of the intangible aspect of culture is taking into consideration in the day-to-day interaction of citizens in the larger society. In addition, Yorùbá taboos and superstitions have been a veritable way of social control. Through some of the taboos, the environmental denigration has been addressed. If some of the taboos are harnessed, the global world Sustainable Development Goals will be easily achieved.

The Yorùbá culture response to the issue of gender relation as well as reproductive and family health. However, some cultures of the world are towing the part of same sex-marriage, the Yorùbá culture is in tandem with the Yorùbá traditional societal ideologies on the above issues as reflected in their oral literature.

Some of the indices of kinship relationship is giving way to individualistic life. Many of the roles of kinsmen are now being commercialized. In fact, the parental role has almost been eroded in marriage institution. Politically, there is a change in the power attributed to *oba* in Yorùbá society. Though, the position is still referred but the more the glamour, the less the power. The absolute power is no longer given to the *obas*, little wonder, that the palace of *oba* are prone to attack by protesters during crisis in some parts of the Yorùbá society and even there have been cases of *obas* been kidnapped and huge amount of money is paid as ransom to secure their release. The pertinent questions: Are the *obas* under attack selected by Ifá diviners in line with Yorùbá culture of selecting *obas*? Has the traditional methods of selection of *oba* being impaired?

Where lies the potency of the spiritual power ascribed and endowed to the *obas* by the ancestors? Are the gods/deities' dead?

The essay affirmed that the Yorùbá culture has gone through changes, and it is still in a state of ongoing changes because of the technological development in the society. It is obvious that technology has enhanced the digitalization of many of the intangible aspects of Yorùbá culture, and the social media has greatly helped in the dissemination of Yorùbá culture. Therefore, the influence of Western culture has impacted the Yorùbá culture both positively and negatively. The Yorùbá culture has been dispersed from the source to other parts of the world. Its contact with the world has produced a lot of hybrid culture which both the older and younger generations are now living with. This is the effect of the changing world on the Yorùbá culture. Specifically, Yorùbá language is being spoken in many nations of the world and the desire to teach, learn and speak it is being multiplied daily as some countries and people spent fortune to learn it. Currently, the United States of America takes interest in learning of Yorùbá and its even an advantage in getting employment in some of her institutions. The recent take-off of the BBC Yorùbá is another development to show that the Yorùbá language is making impact in the society. The Yorùbá literature both oral and written have also been spread beyond the shore of the Yorùbá of southwestern Nigeria. The Yorùbá songs, poetry video films are taking the lead out of other aspects of that are exported outside Nigeria. The efforts of our videographer like Tunde Kilani among other cannot be underestimated. In addition, the impact of the new media and technology needs to be recognized.

Therefore, if the Yorùbá language and literature is being celebrated and given space in the global world, it is pertinent for the indigenous Yorùbá at source to take the teaching, learning and speaking of the language, literature and orature seriously. The Yorùbá tree products and herbs are also harnessed to boost alternative medicine. Local herbs and roots are now being modernized into different medicines to cure different ailments, for instance, we have alots of bitters such as *Alomọ*, *Yóyó* bitters, and *Gangarià* that are meant to cure diabetes. However, the resuscitation of fortifying charms such as *areta*, *ayeta* (bulletproof charm), *egbé* (disapperance formula), *mágùn* (coital bolt) is necessary in combatting insurgency and insecurity plaguing the country.

In closing, it is pertinent to note that boosting of the economy of Nigeria as a nation lies on the exportation of Yorùbá culture and other cultures in Nigeria. Currently, the Yorùbá film and Nollywood, and some aspects of the tangible Yorùbá culture like Yorùbá (*àdirẹ*, *aşò òkè*) sculpture, carvings, weavings and art works exported. We need to do more as suggested by Toyin Falola (2018). Adélékè (2020:5) also established Falola's claim, when he asserts that the Yorùbá has enough cultural capital that could be deployed to grow

the Nigeria economy. Hence, it is recommended that beyond the social ordering of the society by the synergy between Yorùbá culture and the society, the government should reassess and consider how Yorùbá cultural heritage may be harnessed for economic growth of the larger Nigerian society. Finally, the government, the custodian of Yorùbá culture and the Youth of today should learn from Akínwùmí Isola (1978:52-60) advice in *Ewì Ìwòyí* when he says:

Taa lomọ iwòyí n fọjú òpè é wò?....
 Wọn sewe ninú bí ẹye
 Wọn se kókòsè bí ẹran ẹ̀ẹ̀dẹ̀gbeta
 Ẹ kò mọ pé baa tọjú àṣà
 Ó le mowó wálé
 Owó tá a fi ra wíḡi o ní dúró ní Nàìjíríà
 Òyìnbó tó n kọ ọ láṣa ọ kúkú gò bí i tíre.
 Bó o bá rí i nílẹ̀, kò jẹ̀ rakaka móhun olóhun
 Àṣàa babaa rẹ̀ ló dì máyà...
 Èwe iwòyí
 Bá a kọ yín lóràn
 Ẹ è ní gbó
 Tẹ̀níọ̀lá, tinú araa yín lẹ̀ fẹ́e máa se
 Bá a bá ràsà aláṣà dìcẹ̀
 Njẹ̀ kò yẹ k'awa náà ó lè ta tiwa
 Ẹ wa jẹ̀ bí arúngún ọmọ gbogbo!....
 Àwa wí tiwa
 Èwe iwòyí o,
 Àwa wí tiwa.

(Who are the youth of today despising...
 They have gizzard filled stomach like a bird
 Their ankle is like 500 kobo worth-meat
 Don't you know that if a culture is preserved?
 It could be boost an economy
 The money spent to import wig will never stay in Nigerian economy
 The European that teaches you her culture is not as foolish as you are
 In her country, she does not cherish other people's culture
 She cherishes her Western culture
 Youth of today
 When we teach you
 You don't listen
 Tẹ̀níọ̀lá you do as you wish
 If we buy other people's culture

Isn't it proper to sell our own
 You are now prodigal sons!...
 We've made our point
 Youth of today,
 We've made our point).

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