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## **SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITY OF MUSIC IN AYAN FESTIVAL OF OKE-ERO COMMUNITY, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA.**

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### **Abstract**

*Festivals are event characterised by communal participation, performed annually, seasonal or at regular interval. The Ayan festival is a cultural event celebrated in the Oke-Ero community fascinated by music and identity with deep socio-cultural roots that reflects the unique heritage and traditions of the community. Despite the centrality of music in the Ayan festival, there is limited research on how musical performances during this festival serves as a medium of preserving and transmitting socio-cultural identity among the Oke-Ero people. This gap therefore raises the questions on music reflect and reinforce the community's heritage through the musical elements, performance practices and symbolic meanings of Ayan festival. This article aims at exploring the socio-cultural identity of music in Ayan festival. Through the analysis of historical event of the festival, traditions and cultural significance, the study expresses the major role music plays, not only as entertainment but also as a medium of shaping and preserving the socio-cultural identity of the community. Through the study of various traditional instruments, performance styles, types of music employed during the festival, the research show case the rich cultural identity of Oke-Ero community. This paper therefore explores and give deeper understanding on how music has been used to promote, celebrate, preserve and honour the socio-cultural tradition of this community. Qualitative research methods were used in carrying out this work, historical analysis and Archival research methods were also deployed. Data was gathered through descriptive, internet and library sources. The study thus reveals the integral role of music in shaping and maintaining the socio-cultural identity of Oke-Ero community and its importance in preserving cultural heritage, passing it down from one generation to another.*

**Keywords:** Cultural heritage, Symbolism, Traditions, Drumming, Spiritualism.

### **Introduction**

Music plays a major role in shaping and expressing socio-cultural identity of communities especially in cultural life of Africans, serving an artistic role, conveying communal history and values. In Nigeria, different festivals are celebrated to reflects and reinforces the socio-cultural identity of various

communities through the performance and practice of music. The cultural significance of music serves as a symbol to examine the forms, themes, lyrical content, compositional techniques and performance practice of such festival. Among these festivals is *Ayan* festival of Oke-Ero Community Kwara State, Nigeria. Oke-Ero Community is deeply rooted in the traditions of the Yoruba-speaking people, reflecting a connection with historical, social and spiritual phenomenon. Music in this context functions as a symbolic expression of communication, ritual, celebration, entertainment and collective tool of bringing community together in oneness. Drumming, serve as an integral element of music during *Ayan* festival which involves chanting, singing, and dancing of various styles.

This paper study the socio-cultural identity of music in *Ayan* festival of Oke-Ero Community, Kwara State, examining how musical performances reflect the values, beliefs, traditions and historical consciousness of the Oke-Ero community, expressing its functions and discourses of heritage for cultural sustainability. The *Ayan* (drummer) Festival in Kwara State, Nigeria, is a vibrant cultural celebration that showcases the rich musical heritage of the Yoruba people. The festival is an annual celebration held in Kwara State, specifically in Oke-Ero local government areas. The festival is a celebration of unity, peace, and prosperity, bringing together people from different communities to promote social harmony and cultural heritage, the festival is a celebration of strength, courage, and masculinity, the festival has been held for centuries, with roots in the traditional wrestling culture of the Yoruba people. It features traditional wrestling matches, music, dance, and drumming, participants usually include young men from the community that which are often fiercely competitive.

Adopting a descriptive and ethnomusicology approach, this study aims to contribute to scholarly discussions on music in reference to cultural deliberations and resilience in contemporary African societies. Festivals in Yorubaland are seen as an event staged by a community. They are of great importance to the people and in fact could be seen as part of their traditions. Festivals often serve to meet specific purpose, especially in regards to commemoration and thanksgiving. They are mostly associated with celebration and may also provide entertainment which was particularly important to communities. The celebrations provide a sense of belonging for religious, social or geographical groups. Festival reflects history of an events or occasions, religious beliefs and social adaptations of a community thereby focusing on communal unity, rituals and preservation of both materials and immaterial culture. In festival practices, music is seen as one of the major cultural tools that brings community together which can be in genres for different deities such as *Oro*, *Sango*, *Egungun*, *Ogun* etc. while evolving round different dance styles<sup>1</sup>.

The performance entails the use of indigenous musical instruments to shape the identity of the community and preserve its heritage. Culturally, in Yoruba land, people approach different deities for their needs, such as curative measure, rituals, worship, and so on especially during festivals. It is rooted in community beliefs, religion and tradition through some elements such as rhythms, melodies, forms and lyrics providing a channel of transmitting oral tradition and history from one generation to another<sup>2</sup>.

### **Historical Background of Ayan Traditional Festival in Oke-Ero Community, Kwara State, Nigeria.**

The *Ayan* Festival in Oke-Ero Kwara State, Nigeria, is a vibrant cultural celebration that showcases the rich musical heritage of the Yoruba people. Music plays a vital role in the festival, with various traditional genres and instruments featured throughout the celebration. Music is an integral part of Yoruba culture and is used to communicate, express emotions, and tell stories<sup>3</sup>. Traditional Yoruba music features a variety of instruments, including drums, xylophones, and stringed instruments. The Yoruba people have a strong musical tradition, with music playing a crucial role in various aspects of their lives, including festivals, ceremonies, activities etc. Drumming patterns during Egungun festival are not subjective but pass cultural message to the community<sup>4</sup>

The *Ayan* Festival is an annual celebration held in Kwara State, specifically in Oke-Ero local government areas. The festival is rooted in the Yoruba culture, specifically celebrating the rich culture tradition of drumming and its significance in the community of Oke-Ero. The festival is believed to be a celebration of the deity '*Ayangalu*' one of the major figures in Yoruba mythology. It is deeply associated with the deity of drummers and drumming itself, which hold a central place in Yoruba religious and social activities. It is an art of communication with the gods and ancestors, playing social roles such as funerals wedding and religious events. The festival honors their ancestral connection to the drums and their ability to invoke communicate the spirituals<sup>5</sup>. Festival is a celebration of unity, peace, and prosperity, bringing people together from different communities to promote social harmony, cultural heritage Symbolizing unity, tradition, respect and reverence for the power of drumming<sup>6</sup>. Music is a vital component of the festival, with various traditional genres and instruments featured throughout the celebration. The festival showcased the diverse cultural traditions of Kwara State, from music and dance to art and cuisine. The performances were engaging and entertaining, with talented artists showcasing their skills with energetic performance. The local cuisine was flavorful and diverse, with plenty of options to try local meals. The people of Kwara State were friendly and welcoming, making visitors feel at home, the festival was very crowded, making it difficult to move around at times. The festival as of recent serve as cultural preservation tool that brings people both within and

diaspora together. The festivals include various performances like dance, drama, prayer and community feasting.

### **The Socio-Cultural Identity of Music in Ayan Festival of Oke-Ero Community, Kwara State, Nigeria.**

*Ayan* festival contributes significantly to the social and cultural development of the community. The festival reflects and reinforces social norms, ceremonial practices, cultural expression, values and identity, facilitates community participation and engagement during the festival, thus contributes to an exciting and fastest medium form of leisure and business opportunities both at local and international level. The music genre used majorly in this festival is rooted in traditional Yoruba indigenous music. It helps the community to develop and share their culture, which create a sense of values and beliefs in order to provide opportunity for the members of community to exchange experiences and information. The music aids the strength and unity of the community.

Among the traditional indigenous genres used include chanting (*Oriki*) often accompany with drumming and dancing. They are used to invoke the spirit of ancestral lineage, performed by solo or lead vocalist with small ensemble of instrumentation majorly central to Yoruba identity expression. The Music serves as a call to the spirits, ancestors and deities to join the community in the celebration thus serve as link between the divine and the human world. Bata music is also engaged in the festival accompanied with Bata drums often used during ritual performance in the festival. Folksongs is another indigenous traditional genre performed during *Ayan* festival, they are oral poetic forms performed to convey history of the past and relate it to the present, portraying folktales, folklores performed by elders during the festival. They are used to aid story telling which features traditional songs, drums and history of Yoruba people. This helps to keep oral traditions and history which are passed down from one generation to another. Praise songs are also performed during festival to reinforce the values and traditions of the community music is used in unifying community through a shared cultural experience<sup>7</sup>. This fosters unity during the participation through singing, dancing and listening to drumming as an integral medium to an elaborate religious belief system which is characterized by a Musico-ritual interaction between the ancestral, the divine and mortals<sup>8</sup> therefore, occupies a pivotal role either as a solemn, sacred ritual rendition, performed at the shrine of a specific god, often in closely guided ceremonies, or as a flamboyant celebratory performance: open, loud and generally accessible to all and sundry.

Music promotes cultural identity through the unique traditions of *Ayan*, it helps to transmit the history, values and heritage of Yoruba people through the performance of *Ayan* festival, thus reinforces communal bonds within the community. Also, during *Ayan* festival, music, gives commentaries on actions on stage, song and their

costumes represent the degree of their social status, both as a group and as individuals, thus indicate the position of culture in Yorubaland. Enhancement of emotions and physical participation in the act of worship is also identified through *Ayan* festival and this is often leads to ecstatic experiences. <sup>9</sup>Music plays central role in the spiritual and communal aspects of Yoruba festivals. Music serves as a medium of communication between peoples and the ancestors. Employment of songs and dance practices enhances the means of communication. Oral genre is significantly directed towards aesthetic delight which is achieved through artistic performances. It is a ritual affirmation that connects participants with the divine through rhythm.

The festival committee employs the historical and cultural themes to develop the annual events to attract visitors and create cultural images within the community settings. Through the performance practices of the music engaged in this festival, revitalization of culture and traditions were made possible. As a result of this, tourism and economic development enhance social and cultural benefits. The festival is a celebration which helps to develop local pride and identity of the Awe people. The state government has also seen to the promotion of this event as part of their strategies for economic development and cultural tourism.

### **Forms of Musical Performance and Practices Context Engaged in *Ayan* traditional festival.**

The form of the singing style used in *Ayan* festival of Oke-Ero, Kwara State is in Antiphonal style, adopting call and response form. The medium is both vocal and instrumental and sometimes performed by either instrument alone or by unaccompanied voices. The form of the music in most cases is binary. The melodies were found to be basically logogenic and were based on the pentatonic (five tone scale) and hexatonic (six tone scale) scales. The song also reflects the Yoruba language which makes the songs understandable to the audience. The rhythmic patterns of the music reflect both regular and irregular rhythm. <sup>10</sup> The tempo is determined by the function of music at the various point at which it is used, ranges from moderately slow to very fast. The performance is undertaken by both men and women. Most of the songs performed are single line sentences which are full of repetition but at times with slight variations occurring either in the texts or in the melodies. These facilitate story- telling and participation in music. Singers often use ornamentation such as melisma (rapid flow of multiple notes on a single syllable) and vocal tones to add complexity to their performance.

Themes at this festival may be classified under three broad categories; these are; ritual, ceremonial and social. The ritual aspect of it falls in pre-festival activities. The Pre-Festival Activities of the *Ayan* festival in Oke Ero are highly important for setting the spiritual and communal tone of the main events. These preparations involve rituals, offerings and engagement of the community in other to ensure that

the main festival is successful. Cleansing rituals is one of the major pre-festival events, the cleansing ceremonies are held to purify the community and individuals, such involves offerings, prayers and the invocation of spiritual forces to drive away negative spirit and happenings and to ensure that the whole community are spiritually prepared. Consultation and divination are another major pre-festival event. These play an essential role in Yoruba spirituality.

Before the festival the community elders and diviners often perform some divination rites to determine the right process for the festival, the timing and seek guidance from the god (*Ayan*) on how the festival should be carried out. Also, offerings to *Ayan* are part of the pre-festival event. Offerings are made to god of *Ayan* before the festival proper with sacrifices of drinks, food and killing of animals at sacred shrines dedicated to *Ayan*, these are made to offer blessings for the drummers, the community and to ensure success of the festival.

Drummers' rehearsals are also observed at this stage, the drummers that will perform during the festival often begin rehearsals during this time, these are done in form of worship and entertainment. The drums used include; *Iyaalu Bata*, *Omele Bata*, *Iyaalu*, *Dundun*, *Omele -ako*, *Omele abo*, *Omele meta*, *Gudugudu*, and *Sakara*, these drums are played in an accompaniment with *Agogo* (Bell) which gives a timeline for the ensemble as well as *Sekere* (Rattle). It is important that the performances are perfect and reflect the deep spiritual connection with the deity (*Ayan*). Community involvement also contribute to the pre-festival ceremonies. The collective participation of the community reinforces social bonds, smooth running of the event and fulfilling cultural obligations.

Town meetings are held where different groups are assigned roles such as welcoming visitors, public cleaning, organizing rituals and food preparations like; pounded yam, (*Iyan*), yam four meal (*Amala*), ofada rice, bush meat and grilled meats, steamed bean cake(*moin-moin*), fried bean cakes with pap (*Akara*), wine of various sorts like palm wine, zobo, kunu, herbal drinks (*Agbo*) etc. Various community group contribute their resources and labour to ensure everything is in place. Both dignitaries and other guests are invited to partakes in the festival fostering cultural and communal ties. Community processions and announcements are engaged in pre-festival ceremonies. These are observed by town criers or traditional leaders in the days leading up to the festival. These processions serve as reminder for the upcoming event, gather attention and bring the community together. These include the displays of drumming, dancing and singing

The festival proper is highly celebrated and spiritually stimulated, centering around drumming, dance, worship and community bonding. The festival is in the honour of *Ayan Agalu*, the Yoruba deity of drumming, involving celebration of power and sacredness of music in communication with the divine and the ancestors. The

festival begins with an opening procession led by drummers, chiefs, priests and key community figures. The procession often starts from a significant place like shrine dedicated to *Ayan* or central community space and proceed through the town to gather participants. However, just before any performance on the day of festival, music, dance and general festivities awaken the village. The event can hardly take place without the functional role of music; hence music performs an accompaniment role during dancing. The elements of parade or procession are common and it is an integral aspect of the festival. Drummers carried their sacred instruments such as *gangan* (talking drum), *bata agbamole*, *bata*, *omele*, *dundun*, etc and other traditional drums creating rhythmic beats that resonate through the streets calling attention of the community to join the celebration. Traditional priests and community leaders might carry symbolic items like palm fronds, sacred objects or images of *Ayan* to bless the festival grounds. Drumming ceremonies is the highlight of the festival, the performances are both a form of entertainment and spiritual practices. Drummers from the lineage display the mastery of rhythms, communicating through the talking drum with the ancestors. Each rhythm played during the festival is highly symbolic. Praise drumming is observed to honour the gods, ancestors and community leaders, invocation of rhythms is experienced for spiritual presence of the spirit of *Ayan Agalu*. War and victory drums are also performed to celebrate and honor historical achievements and bravery. It was during the public presentation that the entire community was involved as participants, observant and well-wishers. Drummers take turn displaying their talents and during these, the drum beats are believed to evoke powerful responses from spiritual realm. Sacrifices and rituals are central to the *Ayan* festival, in which the offerings are made at the shrines or designated sacred spaces to *Ayan Agalu* seeking blessings, fertility, peace, prosperity and protection of the community. These often involves kola nuts, palm oil and yam as major offerings. Animals like goats or rams are offered to appease the spirits to ensure the success of the festival.

Dance is an essential element of festival accompanied by drumming and are performed during festival<sup>11</sup>. This is also inclusive in *Ayan* festival of the Oke Ero community, they are not just meant for entertainment but also serve as a form of worship and spiritual invocation. masquerade dance also features which symbolizing the presence of ancestors who came to bless them. Community members and visitors also participate in the dance performances. Drummers from *Ayan* lineage are praised and recognized for their skills and importance receiving gift from community. The festival also features cultural performances like story - telling, theatrical performance, choral singing which entails composition that honour *Ayan* deity. After the rituals and performances, the festival moves to the stage of communal feasting, which is an essential aspect of Yoruba festivals where drinks and foods are shared in one mind among the community. This is symbolic of abundant blessings that the festival brings to the community.

The festivals conclude with closing rituals where the drums are ritually silenced as sign that the festival has come to an end. This is done by covering the drums or pouring of libations to thank the spirits for their presence. At the end, the drummers and participants parade the town to symbolize the conclusion of festival in a farewell procession. This serves as a final opportunity for the community to express their gratitude and joy filled with singing and dancing. Immediately after the performance of the festival and the community has wine and dine (the feast-aspect of it), the community departs to their various homes with joy and gladness. This is a time for reflection and thanksgiving of the festival (The Post festival). It helps to solidify the spiritual benefits during the festival. Sacred objects used during the festival are also returned such as drum, masquerade costumes etc. they are blessed and cleaned before being stored and returned until the following year.

### **Conclusion**

This paper examined the socio-cultural identity of music in *Ayan* festival of Oke-Ero community, Kwara State, Nigeria, discussing music as a major identity of *Ayan* festival within Oke-Ero community, highlighting different genres of music within the context of *Ayan* festival as a Yoruba traditional event. Music in this festival is major medium for transmitting indigenous knowledge, reinforcing communal bonds and expressing collective memory. The performance practices were done in three stages; Pre-festival, festival and post-festival activities. The festival conveys the activities of music, dancers, drummers as well as the spectators. It was also discovered that the texts of the songs focused on themes of thanksgiving, praises, requests, forgiveness and so on with the believe that whenever the festival is observed annually all their request is been fulfilled by *Ayan* (the deity). Furthermore, musical instruments used during this festival fall into two of four categories of Sachs/Hornbostel musical classification which are; membranophone and idiophone instruments. Membranophone instruments that are employed by different sections of performers include; *Bata* and *Dundun* drum ensemble. Idiophone instruments used include *agogo*, *sekere*, clappers, and so on. These musical instruments provide a kind of Ostinato rhythm which is repeated often and often on which the vocal parts improvised. The instruments reflect the Yoruba language which makes the songs understandable to the audience, serve as embodiment of cultural memory, custody of identity, spiritual intermediary. *Ayan* festival thus remains crucial in preserving and sustaining Yoruba cultural heritage, values and moral, hitherto, music is an expression of this cultural resilience and belonging.

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## CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF COMPLEMENTISER PHRASES IN SELECTED YORUBA AND ENGLISH NEWS TEXTS

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### **Abstract**

*Complementiser phrase (CP) is the maximal category that is projected from a complementiser which heads the phrase, and its proper understanding can greatly enhance a language learner's competence. Contrasting the syntactic structure of CP in the learners' first language (L1) with that of their target language (TL), which is a crucial scholarly way of identifying areas of convergence and divergence in the two languages, has not enjoyed much comparative investigation. Therefore, this research attempts a syntactic contrastive study of CPs in English and Yoruba texts, with a view to highlighting their similarities and differences. Data for the study were purposively sampled from selected British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news in Yoruba and translated to English with the aid of Google Gemini – an online translation tool. Ten CPs were illustratively analysed from both languages using the Principles and Parameters Theory (PPT) of Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar. In both Yoruba and English, all the CPs have embedded inflectional phrases (IPs). Also, while some CPs (i.e. arguments) are subcategorised by VPs, some (i.e. relative clauses) are subcategorised by NPs. The Yoruba *Pé* and English 'that' are base-generated complementisers; on the other hand, *tó* and *tí* in Yoruba are moved from the embedded IP to the Spec CP, while 'who' and 'where' in English originate inside the VP or PP and move successively cyclically through Spec-IP to Spec-CP. In English, 'that' functions both as a declarative complementiser and a relative marker, whereas Yoruba splits these functions: *pé* for declarative clauses and *tí/tó* for relative clauses. There is therefore a possibility for English L2 learners to confuse relative clauses with noun clauses, especially when they are both introduced by 'that'; hence, there is a possibility for English L2 learners to confuse relative clauses with noun clauses, especially when they are both introduced by 'that'. Subordinate clauses – nominal, adverbial and relative ones – need to be carefully taught and learnt, bearing in mind the differences and similarities*

*observed. The dissimilarities identified should be the focus in the process of teaching and learning the English syntactic structures which have CPs.*

**Keywords:** Complementiser Phrase, English and Yoruba, Universal Grammar, Principles and Parameters Theory. Learning Difficulty

### **1. Introduction**

Contrastive Analysis started when language experts compared stages in the development of a language by taking a model from other developed languages. The activities involved in the changes and development of languages had been known as comparative historical linguistics.<sup>1</sup> Contrastive analysis was introduced by Lado in the book *Linguistics across Cultures*.<sup>2</sup> It was a tool developed to aid second language teaching and learning. CA is the careful study of the structures of languages with the intention of comparing and contrasting their forms. The examination of two or more languages systematically to identify areas where they align and differ is the essence of CA. This process helps in understanding the potential challenges learners might face when acquiring a new language, predicting errors and informing language teaching methodologies.

It will be academically profitable to systematically examine Yoruba and English from the lens of Contrastive Analysis (CA) and broaden the understanding of L2 learners of English and future translators. The complementiser phrase is commonly used in English and Yoruba. Comparing its syntactic features will help in learning both languages better and confirming the claims of universal grammar.

### **2. Statement of the Problem**

Contrastive studies of English and Yoruba exist. Banjo is a study on the syntactic and lexical structures of English and Yoruba.<sup>3</sup> Lawal focuses on the Yoruba words "pé" and "kí" and their roles as either verbs or complementisers.<sup>4</sup> Lamidi studied empty categories in English and Yoruba.<sup>5</sup> Lamidi worked on head parameter and grammaticality in Yoruba-English code-switching.<sup>6</sup> In his 2004 work, he did a study on agreement relations in English and Yoruba.<sup>7</sup> Also, Ogunsiji worked on code switching and code mixing among Yoruba-English bilinguals.<sup>8</sup> It is observed from their works that the mother tongue (MT) features have strong influence on TL learning and use by Nigerians. Raji worked on the similarities and differences in the use of pronouns, plural nouns and prepositions between English and Yoruba languages.<sup>9</sup> There is the need to do a CA of the complementiser phrase of English and Yoruba, and this his study is poised to do that,

### **3. Aim and Objectives**

This study is aimed at investigating the complementiser phrase in English and Yoruba languages for pedagogical and theoretical purposes. The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To identify and discuss the points of convergence in the complementiser phrase of English and Yoruba languages,
- ii. To identify and discuss the points of divergence in the complementiser phrase of the two languages,
- iii. To predict possible areas of difficulty that a Yoruba learner of English language may encounter in the process of acquiring the English language.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted in this study is the Principles and Parameters Theory (PPT), postulated by Noam Chomsky. It is made up of seven sub-theories/modules. The subsystem of the principles includes: X-Bar Theory, Bounding Theory, Government Theory, Theta ( $\Theta$ ) Theory, Binding Theory, Case Theory and Control Theory.<sup>10</sup> The X-bar sub-theory of GB is used in this study in analysing some CPs in both English and Yoruba. The heads of the phrases are identified since X-bar gives primacy to the head. The non-obligatory satellites that converge on the head are also shown in this study.

##### The X-Bar Module

One of the sub-systems of the Principles and Parameters Theory is the X-bar Theory which this research has adopted in order to account for structural differences of the languages under study. Carnie affirms that “the first presentation of X-bar theory appeared in Chomsky”.<sup>11</sup> According to Carnie, “X-bar approach started off as a series of statements that restrict the form of phrase structure rules, but eventually developed into an independent system which allows us to capture generalizations not available with simple PSRs.”<sup>12</sup> Carnie further explains that the X-bar theory serves both as an extension to phrase structure grammars and places a number of restrictions on the form that Phrase Structure Rules (PSRs) can take. In relation to this, Lamidi states that “the development of X-bar Theory is as the result of the inadequacies of the Phrase Structure Grammar (PSG) because the PSG permits too many rules.”<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the X-bar sub-theory accounts for constituents that are lesser than a phrase and constituents that are more than a phrase which the Phrase Structure Grammar could not account for.<sup>7</sup>

##### The X-Bar Schema

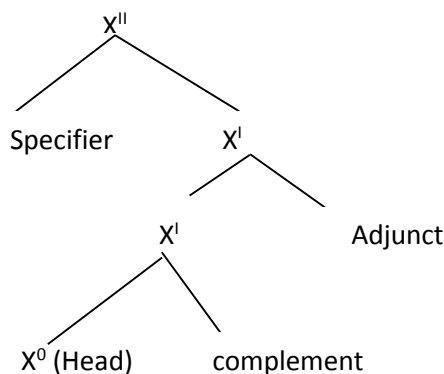


Fig. 1 X-Bar Schema<sup>13</sup>

In the schema, X is the variable representing noun (N), verb (V), adjective (Adj), adverb (Adv), preposition (P), inflection, (I), complementiser (C), etc. which is the head of its own phrase. The item without a bar ( $X^0$ ) is the head, it is obligatory item and it stands for the lexical category which has neither specifier nor adjunct/complement. The item with a single bar ( $X^1$ ) refers to the combination of the head and a complement/adjunct.<sup>14</sup> It is called an intermediate category (coming between the smallest and the largest categories). The item with two bars ( $X^2$ ) is the phrasal category, consisting of the head, the complement/adjunct and a specifier. The maximal projection is separated from the intermediate projection by the specifier which is adjoined to the maximal projection.

## 8. Methodology

Ten complementiser phrases were used as data for this paper. Using purposive sampling, the obtained data were collected from selected 2025 BBC news in Yoruba and translated into English. The translation was done with the aid of *Google Gemini*, an accurate online translation tools. There was a careful comparison of data collected which were analysed using the phrase marking (tree diagram) of X-Bar theory.

## 9. Data Analysis

In the expressions below, the CPs are in bold, five each from both languages. Each *a* is the English translation of its *b* counterpart.

1a the town **where the attack occurred**

1b ìlú **tí ìkọ̀lù náà tí wáyé**

2a Chief Abomtse stated **that the attackers invaded Tse Antswam town.**

2b Olóyè Abomtse sọ **pé àwọn tó wà ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ìkọ̀lù náà yawọ ìlú Tse Antswam.**

3a the number of people **who have lost their lives in the herdsmen attack**

3b àwọn èyàn **tó ti pàdánù ẹ̀mí wọn níbi ìkọ̀lù àwọn darandaran náà**

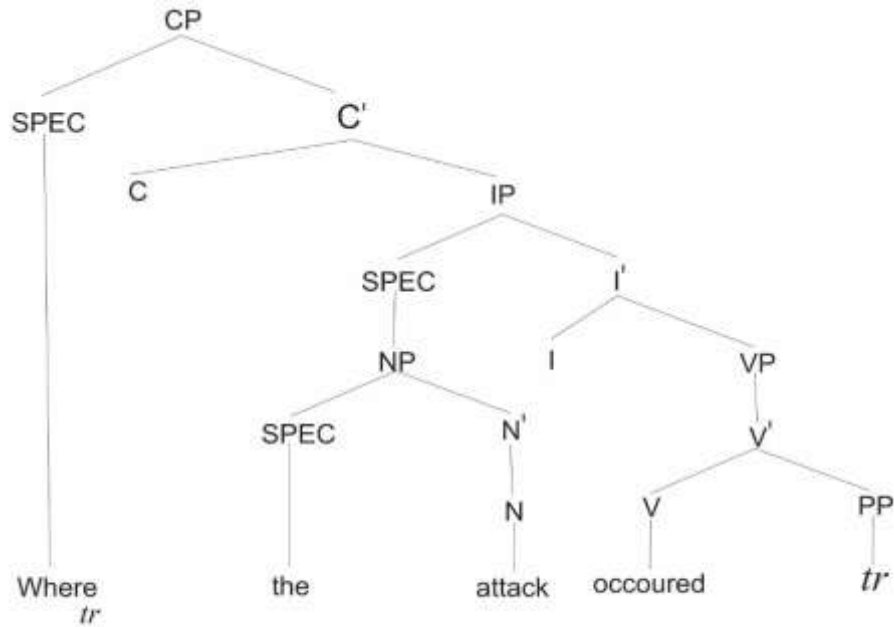
4a He said **the attack was truly heartbreaking for them.**

4b Ó ní **ìkọ̀lù náà jẹ̀ èyí tó ba àwọn lẹ̀kàn jẹ̀ gidì.**

5a He added **that many people sustained severe injuries.**

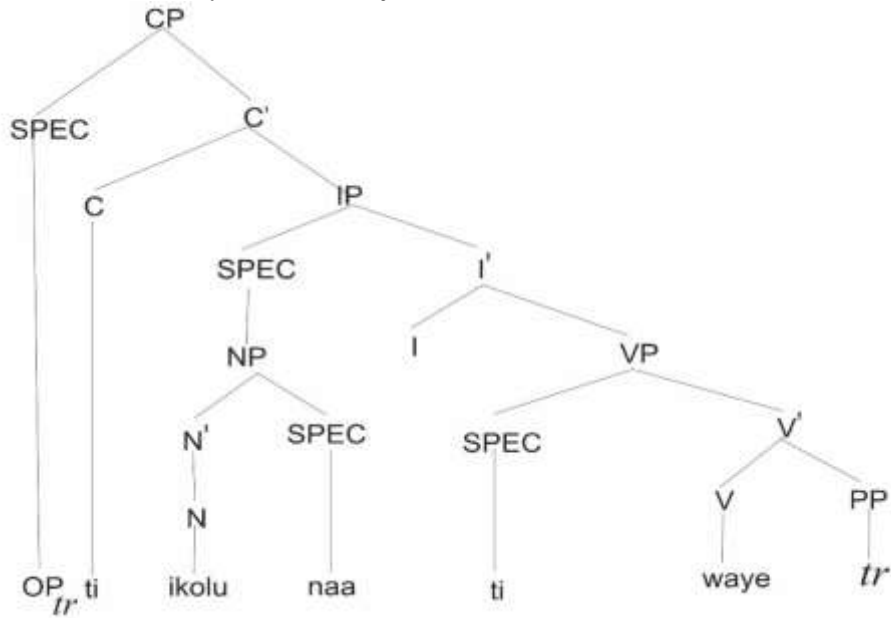
5b Ó fi kun **ọ̀pọ̀ èyàn ló farapa yánnayànnà.**

**Datum 1a: the town where the attack occurred**



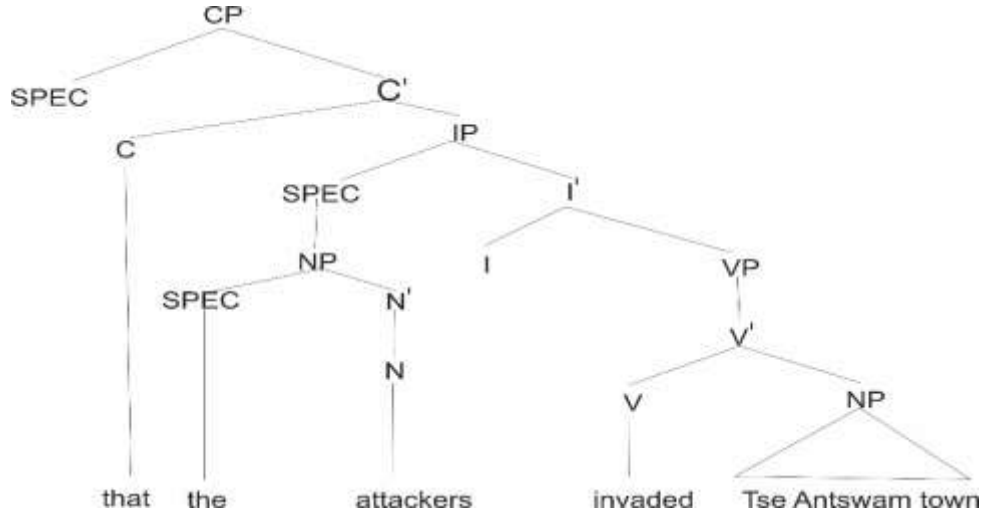
The CP's complementiser *where* is not base-generated; it moves from the sentence-final position (PP) of the IP *the attack occurred at which place*, to the specifier (Spec) position of the CP, leaving a trace with its index. *Where* originates as the complement of the preposition *at* (in deep structure).

**Datum 1b: ìlú tí ìkọ̀lù nàà tí wáyé**



The CP shows a relative clause in which an operator moves from the PP complement of *wáyé* to Spec-CP, leaving a trace. The complementiser *tí* occupies C and licenses A'-movement. In IP, the subject NP *ikòlù náà* consists of the noun *ikòlù* and the specificity marker *náà*. The perfective element *ti* sits in I and selects the VP. Within VP, the verb *wáyé* assigns a theta-role to the PP, from which the operator has been extracted, creating the lower trace.

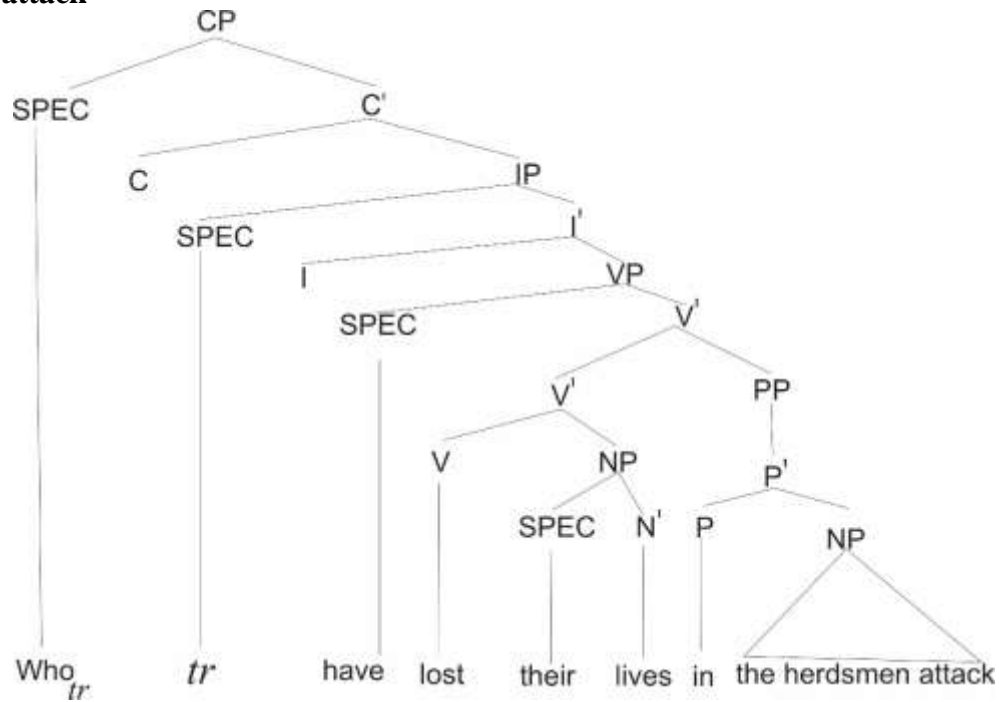
**Datum 2a:** Chief Abomtse stated **that the attackers invaded Tse Antswam town**



The COMP *that* in the CP above is base-generated (not a product of movement); therefore, it occupies the C node. The CP itself is subcategorised by the verb *stated*. The Spec position of the CP is not occupied; the CP is an argument in object position.

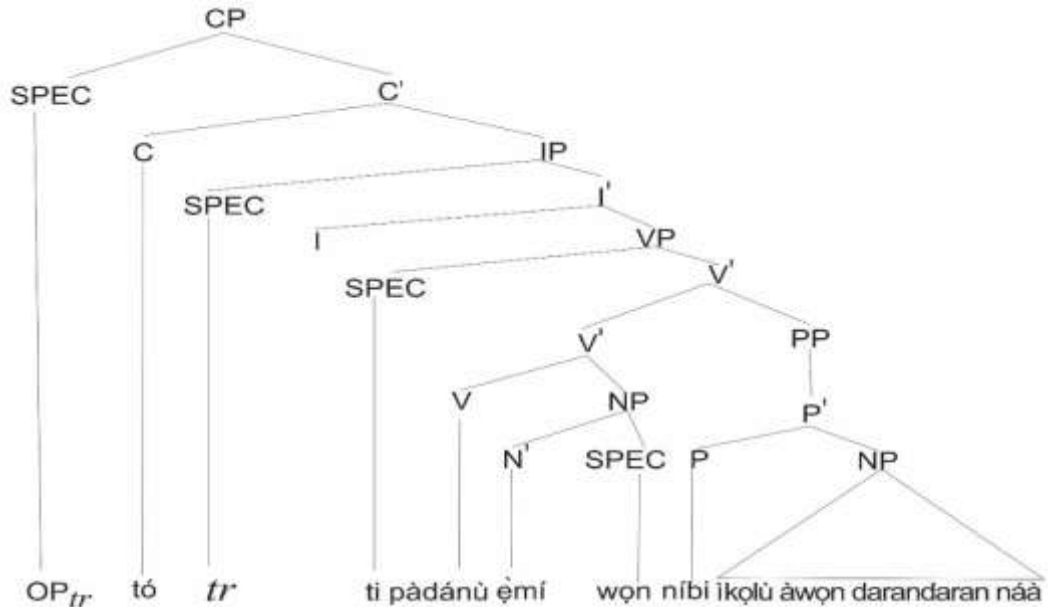


**Datum 3a:** the number of people **who have lost their lives in the herdsmen attack**



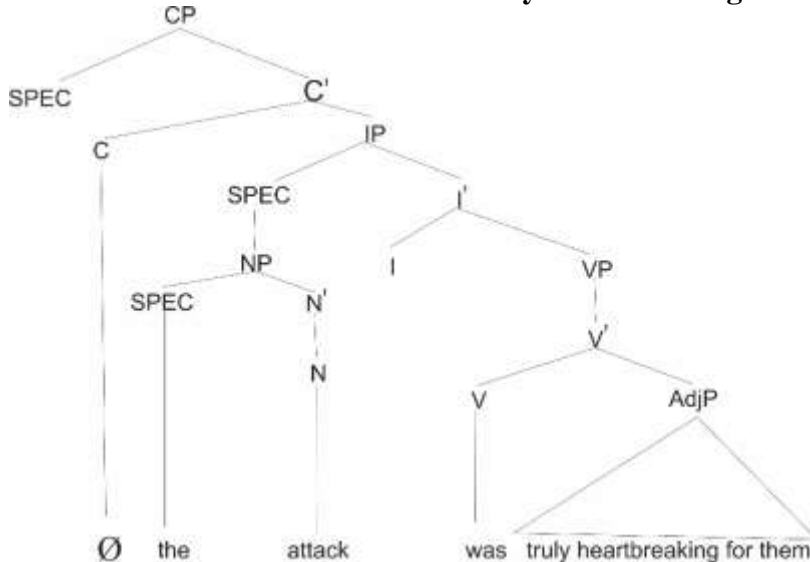
The CP above is a subordinate (relative) clause subcategorised by the NP *the number of people*. It should be noted that the movement of *who* originates in object position, not Spec-IP; it moves to Spec-IP only as an intermediate landing site. The complementiser *who* moves from the Spec IP position to Spec CP, leaving a trace with its index. The C node is not occupied since there is no base-generated complementiser.

**Datum 3b:** àwọn èyàn tó ti pàdánù èmí wọn níbi ìkọlù àwọn darandaran náà



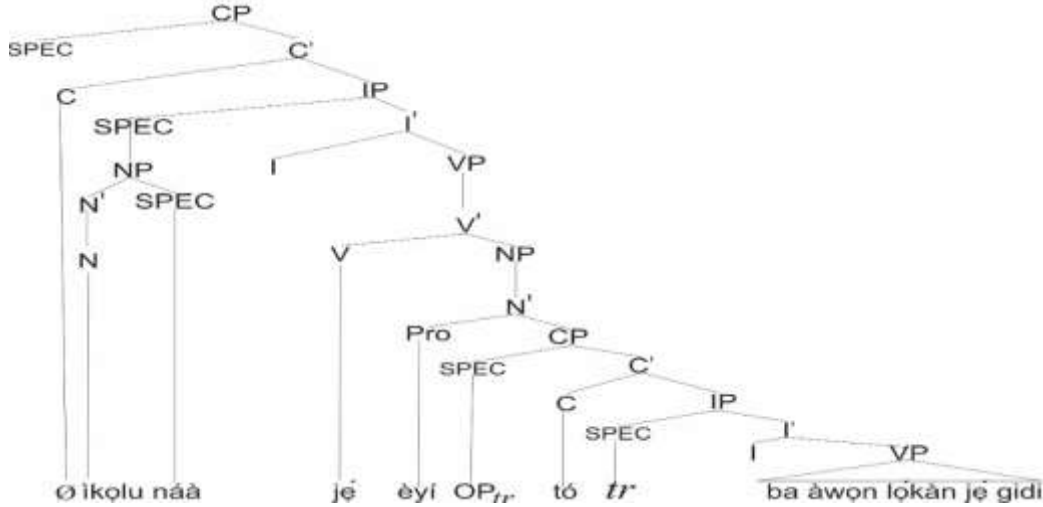
The CP above is also a subordinate (relative) clause subcategorised by the NP *àwọn èyàn*. It is formed by operator movement from within the adverbial PP complement of the lower VP to Spec-CP, leaving a trace. The relativiser *tó* occupies C and licenses A'-movement. In IP, the auxiliary *ti* sits in I and selects the VP headed by *pàdánù*. The VP contains an NP object, *èmí wọn*, analysed as N' with a pronominal possessor in Spec-N'. The PP *níbi ìkọlù àwọn darandaran náà* functions as a locative complement, with the NP *ìkọlù àwọn darandaran náà* occupying the complement of P.

**Datum 4a:** He said the attack was truly heartbreaking for them.



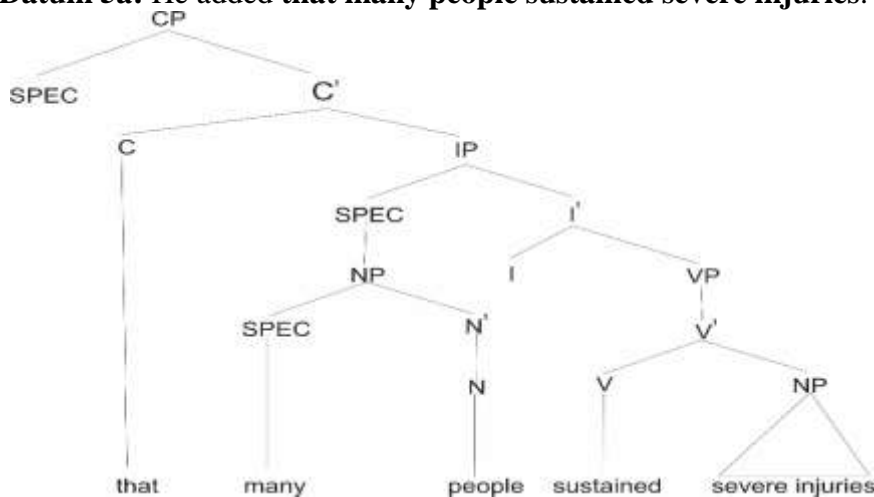
The CP above is subcategorised by the verb *said*. However, there is a case of zero or null complementiser; the COMP exists in the logical form (LF) but not the phonetic form (PF). Therefore, the C node is occupied by the null ( $\emptyset$ ) symbol, indicating elision.

**Datum 4b: Ó ní ìkọ̀lù náà jẹ̀ èyí tó ba àwọn lẹ́kàn jẹ̀ gidi.**



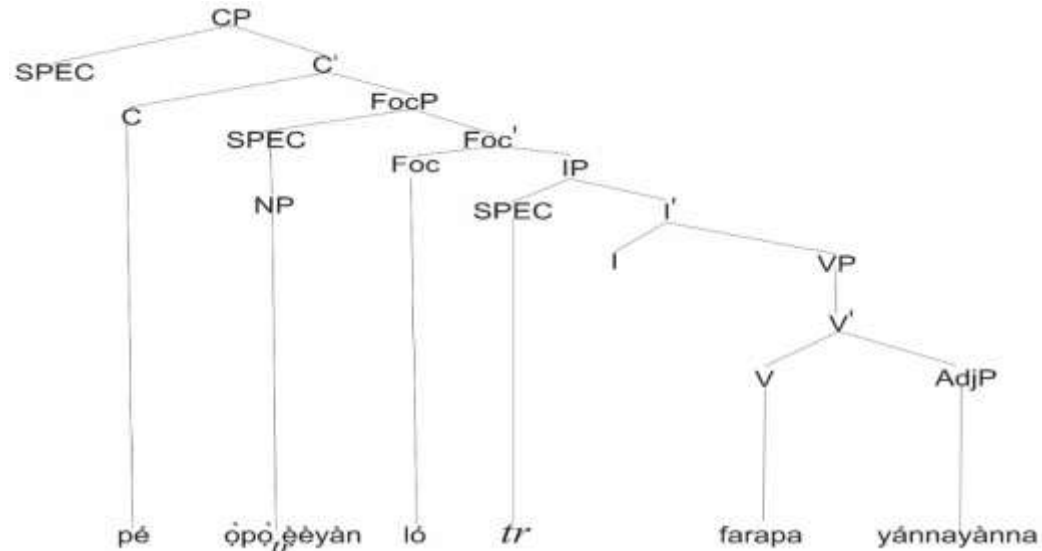
The CP above is also subcategorised by the verb *ní*. There's a case of zero complementiser here as well. The subject NP *ìkọ̀lù náà* occupies Spec-IP, with *náà* functioning as a specificity marker in Spec-N'. The VP contains the **copula** *jẹ̀* selecting the NP *èyí*, which heads another nominalized CP. Within this embedded CP, an operator moves from the object position inside the lower VP to Spec-CP, licensed by the relativiser *tó*. The embedded VP hosts the predicate *ba ... lẹ́kàn jẹ̀ gidi*, where the NP *àwọn* occupies the internal argument position.

**Datum 5a: He added that many people sustained severe injuries.**



The CP above is an argument subcategorised by the verb *added*. The complementiser is not a product of movement and the Spec position is not occupied.

**Datum 5b:** Ó fi kun pé òpò èyàn ló farapa yánnayànnà.



The CP above is also an argument subcategorised by the verb *fi kun*. The complementiser *pé* is base-generated. There is however a focus particle *ló*; therefore, the focus (NP: *òpò èyàn*) is moved leftward from the Spec IP position. The complementiser *pé* selects a FocP projection hosting the focused constituent *òpò èyàn* in Spec-FocP. The focus marker *ló* occupies Foc and licenses movement of the focused NP, leaving a trace in Spec-IP. Yoruba permits focus within embedded clauses, unlike English. The IP contains the auxiliary-like element in I, while the VP is headed by the verb *farapa*, which selects the AdjP *yánnayànnà* as a depictive complement. The focused NP receives its thematic role from the embedded predicate before moving to the left periphery for focus interpretation.

## 10. Discussion of Findings

As seen in all the ten CPs, in both Yoruba and English, all the CPs have embedded inflectional phrases (IPs). Also, it is observed that some CPs are subcategorised by VPs (2a, 2b, 4a, 4b, 5a and 5b) while some are subcategorised by NPs (1a, 1b, 2b within IP, 3a, 3b and 4b within VP). What is a simple NP in English can turn out to be a complex NP in Yoruba as seen in 2a and 2b. Also, as observed in 4a and 4b, an English adjectival phrase (AdjP) may not be expressible as an AdjP in Yoruba but as a CP. As seen in 2a, 2b, 5a and 5b, the Yoruba *Pé* and English *that* are base-generated complementisers; hence, they are not moved. On the other hand, *tó* and *tí* in Yoruba are moved from the embedded IP to the Spec CP (1b, 2b, 3b and 4b) while *who* and *where* in English originate inside the VP or PP and move successive-cyclically through Spec-IP to Spec-CP. (1a and 3a). Base-generated

complementisers typically introduce argument CPs (2a, 2b, 5a and 5b) while operator-moved complementisers characterise relative clauses (1a, 1b, 2b within IP, 3a, 3b and 4b within VP). Both Yoruba and English languages have non-base-generated complementisers. As seen in 1a, 1b, 2b within IP, 3a, 3b, 4b within VP and 5b, when indicating a place or location of movement, the extraction originates inside the VP/PP domain and moves through Spec-IP to Spec-CP.

Additionally, 4a and 4b show that in both languages, a CP can exist without an overt complementiser. It is also observed that overt CPs occur more in Yoruba than in English; there are two more embedded CPs in 2b and 4b without the 2a and 4a having the complementing CPs. As seen in 5b, there is a focus marker *ló*; following split CP, Yoruba exhibits overt focus marking via particles like *ló*, unlike English, where focus is expressed through clefting or prosody rather than dedicated particles. Rizzi (1997) As seen in 2a, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5a and 5b, in English, *that* functions both as a declarative complementiser and a relative marker, whereas Yoruba splits these functions: *pé* for declarative clauses and *tí/tó* for relative clauses. There is therefore a possibility for English L2 learners to confuse relative clauses with noun clauses, especially when they are both introduced by *that*.

## 11. Conclusion and Recommendation

This work applied the Principles and Parameters Theory (particularly, the X Bar Theory), to the study and description of CPs in English and Yoruba. The data source is BBC news in both English and Yoruba languages. The suitability of PPT hinges on its adequacy to produce a descriptively adequate grammar of every human language.<sup>16</sup> This study falls within the purview of Contrastive Analysis. The study identified both the areas of convergence and divergence between the CP of English and Yoruba. Further research may explicate the wh-question CPs in both languages. Subordinate clauses –nominal, adverbial and relative need to be carefully taught and learnt, bearing in mind the differences and similarities observed in the study.

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## FASHION TRENDS, PRODUCTION PROCESS AND USAGE OF ASO-OKE IN YORUBA LAND

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### Abstract

This study investigates the evolving production practices and socio-cultural usage of Aso-Oke, a hand-woven textile central to Yorùbá identity in southwestern Nigeria. Through visual ethnography and field interviews conducted in Oyo and Iseyin in 2021, data were collected via 24 photographic records and semi-structured interviews with 12 master weavers (8 male, 4 female; aged 28-72). Thematic analysis revealed three key trends: (1) significant material substitution - synthetic threads (e.g., Lurex) and dyes now supplement or replace traditional cotton, silk, and indigo; (2) continuity in core weaving techniques despite technological shifts; and (3) resilient ceremonial demand that is expanding beyond elite contexts to include birthdays, naming ceremonies, and modern weddings. While the classical types - Etu, Sanyan, and Alaari - retain symbolic prestige, their production increasingly blends heritage with market-driven innovation. The study concludes that Aso-Oke's survival hinges on balancing authenticity with functional adaptation. Recommendations include revitalising local cotton farming, supporting design innovation, and integrating Aso-Oke into national cultural and educational policy.

**Keywords:** Aso-Oke, Yorùbá textiles, Handloom weaving, Material innovation, Cultural heritage, Nigeria

### Introduction

Aso-Oke ("top cloth" in Yorùbá) is more than fabric; it is a living archive of Yorùbá cosmology, social hierarchy, and aesthetic philosophy. Woven for centuries in southwestern Nigeria, it adorns kings, brides, and elders during rites of passage that mark the rhythm of communal life. However, in an era of fast fashion and global textile markets, this heritage craft faces unprecedented pressures. This study explores not decline, but adaptation: how Yorùbá weavers sustain Aso-Oke as a dynamic cultural practice through material innovation, intergenerational knowledge, and ceremonial relevance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite its cultural prominence, Aso-Oke weaving is in crisis. Historic centres like Iseyin, once home to hundreds of weavers, now count fewer than a dozen active practitioners. Local cotton farming has collapsed, wild silk (*Anaphemoth* cocoons) is scarce, and youth increasingly view weaving as economically unviable.<sup>1</sup> While Aso-Oke remains visible at weddings and chieftaincy events, its production increasingly relies on imported synthetic threads and chemical dyes, raising concerns about the erosion of indigenous knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Existing literature offers rich historical and symbolic accounts but lacks empirical, ground-level analysis of how contemporary artisans navigate these challenges. Without such understanding, preservation efforts risk being symbolic rather than sustainable.

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

The purpose of this study was to examine how Yorùbá weavers in Oyo and Iseyin adapt Aso-Oke production techniques, material choices, and design practices in response to socio-economic and cultural changes in the 21st century. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Document current stages of Aso-Oke production, including tools, materials, and labour roles.
2. Identify innovations in fibre use (e.g., Lurex, synthetic dyes) and design (e.g., ‘aso-oke eleya’, commemorative embroidery).
3. Explore the evolving ceremonial and social usage of Aso-Oke beyond elite contexts.

This study focused specifically on Aso-Oke production and use in Oyo town and Iseyin, Oyo State, Nigeria, two historic weaving centres. The research was delimited to Oyo and Iseyin, excluding Osogbo, Ede, Ilorin, and diaspora communities. Data were gathered from January to March 202, focusing on recent 10–15-year adaptations. Thematically, the study covered production processes, material substitutions, and ceremonial use, without considering market economics, chemical fibre analysis, or comparison with other African textiles. Furthermore, qualitative visual ethnography and interviews were deployed. This focused group enables deep, context-rich insights without overgeneralization.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research contributes to multiple domains:

- **Cultural Heritage:** Provides empirical data for UNESCO-aligned efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.
- **Academic Knowledge:** Advances African textile studies by analysing innovation as cultural continuity, not loss.
- **Artisan Empowerment:** Offers evidence-based insights for weavers, NGOs, and policymakers (e.g., National Institute for Cultural Orientation).

- Education: Supplies curriculum material for Nigerian art, history, and vocational programs to inspire youth engagement.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in “Practice Theory”.<sup>3</sup> and Material Culture Studies.<sup>4</sup>

- Practice Theory explains how weavers’ choices (e.g., using Lurex) reflect a ‘habitus’ - a practical logic shaped by training, economics, and cultural values. Tradition is not static but reproduced through daily action.
- Material Culture Studies treats Aso-Oke as an active agent of meaning. The shift from wild silk to synthetic fibre is not just technical - it signals changing relationships between people, materials, and identity.

Together, these frameworks reject the false dichotomy between “authentic” and “inauthentic,” showing that cultural resilience lies in responsive practice.

### **Conceptualising Fashion and Textile in African Contexts**

The term “fashionable” is used to illustrate whether someone or something aligns with current trends or popular modes of expression.<sup>5</sup> Fashion is often associated positively with style, glamour, and beauty, yet it also carries critiques of materialism and waste under capitalist systems. Nevertheless, many embrace the diversity that changing trends offer, seeing them as opportunities to experience novelty and creativity.<sup>6</sup> In traditional African societies, clothing transcends aesthetics - it is believed to possess protective spiritual functions, shielding the body from evil forces<sup>7</sup>. Fashion, in this context, reflects the mutations of taste within a cultural environment and serves as a mirror of its time. While national costumes are preserved as heritage, what is fashionable today may appear outdated tomorrow.<sup>8</sup> Fashion encompasses not only clothing but also accessories, body art, and even architecture. It is inclusive of style, cuisine, literature, and art - any domain where collective taste shifts over time. In Nigeria, Aso-Oke has emerged as a fabric of national and international vogue, worn at marriages, naming ceremonies, festivals, coronations, and global cultural events. Designers continuously refine their skills, creating increasingly sophisticated patterns. The competitive nature of contemporary Aso-Oke fashion means that artisans who fail to innovate risk becoming irrelevant.<sup>9</sup>

### **Textile as Applied Art and Cultural Practice**

Textile design is an applied art that involves creating patterns and structures on fabric through techniques such as weaving, knitting, printing, and dyeing.<sup>10 11</sup> It balances aesthetic appeal with structural integrity—how yarns are combined affects a fabric’s look, feel, function, and durability. The term “textile” derives from “fibre,” which may be natural (e.g., cotton, silk) or synthetic. Traditional Nigerian textile practices also include batik, tie-dye, block printing, and hand weaving.<sup>13/14</sup>

Also, it was emphasised that textiles permeate nearly every aspect of human life. Textile production spans from ancient handicrafts to modern technological processes.<sup>15/16</sup> Early textile structures originated from basketry and net-making, with woven fabrics likely evolving from interlaced flexible materials.<sup>17</sup> (All woven fabrics, especially Aso-Oke, are produced on looms where warp threads are held under tension through three principal movements: shedding, picking, and beating.<sup>18</sup>

**Aso-Oke: Meaning, Types and Production**

Aso-Oke production is a traditional textile industry in Yorùbáland with deep historical and cultural roots. Yusuf (2014) notes that weaving is a universal human practice that evolved from early use of animal skins and vegetation for protection, later refined through civilisation and technology. Textiles are defined as the interlacing of warp and weft yarns, a process central to Aso-Oke. There are three original types of Aso-Oke, distinguished by colour and fibre.<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 1: Etu cloth, Year, 2021, Photograph, Yusuf Kazeem Kunle, Location, Oyo town.**

- **Etu:** A deep blue, almost black, indigo-dyed cloth with thin light-blue stripes, resembling the plumage of the guinea fowl (etu). It is prestigious and worn widely across Yorùbá land.



**Figure 2: Sanyan Cloth, Year, 2021, Photograph, Yusuf Kazeem Kunle, location, Oyo town**

Sanyan: Made from wild silk of the Anaphemoth, naturally beige or pale brown. Revered as “the king of cloths” (Sanyan baba aso), it is associated with chiefs and kings.



**Figure 3: Alaari Cloth, Year, 2021. Photograph, Yusuf Kazeem Kunle, location, Oyo town.**

Alaari: Originally woven from Sanyan dyed red with camwood; today, most use magenta machine-spun cotton. It is used by royalty to receive guests, while Sanyan

and Etu feature in official ceremonies like harvest festivals and chieftaincy installations.<sup>20</sup>

These cloths reflect leadership, prestige, and religious status and are reserved for significant life events such as chieftaincy rites, weddings, initiations, festivals, and funerals of prominent individuals.

### **Gender, Technology, and Regional Production**

In Yorùbá land, Aso-Oke is woven on two main loom types. Men traditionally use a horizontal narrow loom, producing long, narrow strips (4-5 inches wide). Women use a vertical broadloom, yielding shorter, wider carpets.<sup>21/22</sup> Historically, men wove full-time as a vocation, while women wove part-time, often processing fibres rather than operating looms.<sup>23</sup> However, there exist, such as full-time female weavers in Akwete, and recent trends show women increasingly adopting horizontal looms. Major production centres include Iseyin, Oyo; Ibadan (Oyo State); Ede and Osogbo (Osun State); Ilorin (Kwara State); and Okene (Kogi State). However, many of these towns report declining output due to economic, social, and material challenges.<sup>24/25</sup>

### **Gaps in Existing Research**

While scholars such as Makinde et al. (2009) and Fadeyi (1994) document Aso-Oke's decline and recommend creative adaptation, few studies empirically investigate current production practices, material substitutions, or weavers' perspectives. Most accounts remain descriptive or historical. This study addresses that gap by grounding analysis in field observation, visual documentation, and artisan narratives from Oyo and Iseyin.

### **Research Design**

Qualitative visual ethnography combining photography and interviews.

### **Setting and Participants**

- a) Sites: Oyo and Iseyin, Oyo State
- b) Participants: 12 weavers (8 male, 4 female), aged 28–72, selected via purposive sampling

### **Data Collection**

- a) 21 field photographs documenting production stages (Figs. 1–24)
- b) Semi-structured interviews (30-45 mins), audio-recorded and transcribed
- c) , Field notes on materials, tools, and workshop dynamics

### **Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using codes: 'material substitution', ceremonial expansion, and knowledge transfer.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Verbal consent obtained; participants anonymised; photo permissions secured.

## **Results**

### **Material Innovation**

- a. Figs. 1-2: Cotton bobbins are still used, but 9/12 weavers blend with imported synthetics.
- b. Fig. 3: “Lurex thread” adopted for bridal ‘aso-oke eleya’ (“Young brides want shine,” Weaver
- c. Figs. 4–5: Synthetic dyes dominate; only two weavers use natural indigo.

### **Continuity in Craft**

- a. Figs. 8–9: Apprentices (primarily boys) wind weft bobbins - evidence of knowledge transfer.
- b. Figs. 12–15: Loom mechanics (reed, shaft) unchanged from historical accounts (Eicher, 1976).

### **Expanding Ceremonial Use**

- a. Figs. 16–24: Aso-Oke worn at birthdays, graduations, and naming ceremonies, not just elite rites.
- b. 100% of weavers report demand for commemorative fabrics with names/portraits.

## **Discussion**

### **Innovation as Continuity**

Material substitutions (Lurex, synthetics) are pragmatic adaptations, not cultural loss - aligning with Bourdieu’s habitus.

### **Democratisation of Prestige**

Aso-Oke’s use in everyday celebrations reflects “cultural democratisation” - expanding symbolic capital beyond elites (Bourdieu, 1984).

### **Policy Imperative**

Dependence on imported threads underscores the need to revive Nigeria’s cotton sector to ensure material sovereignty.

## **Conclusion**

Aso-Oke is not fading. It is transforming. Weavers in Oyo and Iseyin sustain this heritage not by freezing it in time, but by weaving tradition into the fabric of contemporary life. The classical triad - Etu, Sanyan, Alaari - endures, now shimmering with Lurex and personalised with names. To honour this resilience, stakeholders must support weavers as cultural innovators, not relics.

The study recommended encouraging local cotton and silk production through government agricultural subsidies. It also supports design innovation (e.g., Lurex, embroidery) as a legitimate cultural expression and documents elder weavers' knowledge via digital archives and apprenticeship grants. Furthermore, the paper suggested promoting everyday Aso-Oke fashion (shirts, bags) to expand its use beyond ceremonies and called for integrating Aso-Oke into national curricula to inspire youth engagement in heritage crafts.

**Figures**



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**Appendix: Figure Captions**

- ✓ Fig. 1–2: Cotton threads on bobbins prepared for warping.
- ✓ Fig. 3: Lurex thread used for warp and weft in contemporary Alaari.
- ✓ Fig. 4–5: Dyed cotton yarns in varied colours for patterned Aso-Oke.
- ✓ Fig. 6–7: Starch preparation and drying of sized warp yarns.
- ✓ Fig. 8–9: Apprentice boys winding weft yarn onto bobbins.
- ✓ Fig. 10–11: Warping process on the floor and winding onto the warp beam.
- ✓ Fig. 12: Reeding process of warp yarns threaded through the reed.
- ✓ Fig. 13: Weaver producing striped Aso-Oke on horizontal loom.
- ✓ Fig. 14: Weaver creating ‘Aso-Oke eleya’ (openwork Alaari).

- ✓ Fig. 15: Close-up of loom components: reed and shaft.
- ✓ Fig. 16–24: Aso-Oke worn at contemporary ceremonies: birthdays, naming, weddings.

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## ASSESSING THE CONCEPTS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEMPORARY DAYS

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the relevance, application, and challenges of servant leadership in contemporary society. Although the concept rooted in humility, empathy, service, and ethical responsibility has gained prominence in organizational discourse, its practical implementation remains uneven across religious, political, and corporate institutions. The research explores how modern leaders interpret servant leadership principles, the extent to which these principles shape decision-making, and the factors influencing their effectiveness in today's complex socio-political and economic environments. Through a review of existing literature and analysis of contemporary leadership practices, the study identifies gaps between the theoretical ideals of servant leadership and the realities of power dynamics, institutional pressures, and cultural expectations. Findings reveal that while servant leadership can enhance trust, collaboration, and organizational growth, its adoption is often constrained by competitive organizational cultures and leadership models driven by authority rather than service. The study concludes by highlighting the need for intentional policy frameworks, leadership training, and institutional reforms to strengthen servant leadership as a transformative model for contemporary leadership practice.*

### **Introduction**

The concept of servant leadership which is probably coined from the biblical injunction which states inter-alia, if you must lead them, you must serve them (Matt. 23:11) had become an age-long phenomenon and still prevalent even in the contemporary days. Quite a good number of leaders would like to lay claim to the

fact that a leader must diligently serve his followers, if he truly wants to be a leader. Thus, leaders who ordinarily would not want to cringe and or genuflect before their followers would necessarily bend, such that the adherents would have the strong conviction that he/she (i.e. leader) is truly serving them to the best of his/her interest and ability. Generally speaking, followers normally enamour leaders with that uncommon trait or attribute of serving those who are ordinarily supposed to be serving them. Often, the followers usually speak well of such leaders as exceptionally nice individuals who would usually be vouched for at any time. The acolytes of the leaders who have the attribute of servant leadership always have reason(s) to cherish their style of administration.

### **Biblical Concepts of Servant Leadership**

Part of the concepts of servant leadership is service over self-interest—a leader’s purpose is to serve others, placing the needs of a group above his/her own<sup>1</sup>. Ideally, altruism should be the watchword of a leader imbued with servant leadership trait. The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* edited by Hornby defines altruism as the fact of carrying about the needs and happiness of other people more than your own<sup>2</sup>. It is always very cumbersome to put the interest and or comfort of others first. However, the person who is desirous to practice the principle of servant leadership would find it relatively easy to do this. Such a person will not mind to suffer, so as to guarantee the relative or absolute comfort of his/her followers. He / She cultivates the habit of joy when the adherents are comfortable, even as he/she is at the receiving end. This is the type of leader that would, for instance, ensure the payment of the salaries of the subordinates first before his/her own is paid. He / She derives absolute joy in seeing his/her disciples feeding well, paying the school fees of their wards promptly, settle electricity bills as at when due etc, even when he/she cannot do some of these with comfort. According to Shashi, altruism is an ethical doctrine that holds that individuals have an ethical obligation to help, serve, or benefit others, if necessary at the sacrifice of self-interest... Altruism is to ... maintain quite simply that a man may and should discount altogether his own pleasure or happiness as such when he is deciding what course of action to pursue<sup>3</sup>. Shashi goes on to enthuse that:

It strains plausibility to claim that these altruistic deeds are done in the hope of a return favour. The game theory analysis of this “just in case” strategy where the principle would be “always help everyone in case you need to pull in a favour in return” is a decidedly *non-optimal* strategy where the net expenditure of effort is far greater than the net profit when it occasionally pays off<sup>4</sup>.

Buttressing the above, according to Adeyemo, Jesus used the opportunity to give his disciples another lesson on the qualities of leadership in the Kingdom of

heaven. In the world, leaders are served and can command people to do their bidding. There, leadership is about power and the exploitation of power. But in Jesus' kingdom, leadership means service to those led. It is quite the opposite of what is common in human society. A leader in Jesus' kingdom must be a helper in the biblical sense of the word; that is, a person who comes alongside to enable others to achieve what they need to achieve<sup>5</sup>.

Besides, a servant leader is bound to be humble. The *Webster's Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus* defines humble as having a low estimation of one's abilities; modest, unpretentious, service ... to lower in condition of rank, to humiliate<sup>6</sup>. It should be noted with utmost significance that Matthew, the supposed author of *Gospel According to Saint Matthew* opines that: Now the betrayer had given them a sign saying "The one I shall kiss is the man" (Matt. 26:48) The humility of Jesus was glaringly demonstrated here. Jesus was probably dressed in a similar way with his disciples, therefore, there was no way by which he could be identified by strangers among his disciples. And that was why the betrayer said *The one I shall kiss is the man* ... If Jesus had wished, he could have dressed distinctly that would make him easily identifiable among his twelve disciples. This he did not do, apparently because of his humility. Notice that in the contemporary days, one can see quite glaringly the leader of a musical band, dressed in such a way that differentiate him/her from his band members, and one can easily pin-point him/her. More often than not, whether in secular or religious band, the leader is always distinct. This, Jesus did not do as the leader of the Christian religion which was a clear demonstration of utmost humility. Doubtlessly, humility is the quality of having a modest and realistic view of one's own significance, free from arrogance and pride. It involves accurately assessing your strengths and weaknesses and recognizing that others are equal or superior, but it does not mean having low self-esteem or lack of confidence. Instead, it is characterized by other-centred, rather than self-centred mindset and an openness to feedback and learning<sup>7</sup>. Howe pontificates that humility is:

A Christian characteristic, epitomized in Rom. 12:3: for I say ... to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. Humility ... is a mental attitude of lowliness ... the opposite of pride. It is that specific grace developed in the Christian by the spirit of God wherein the believer frankly acknowledges that all he has and is, he owes to the Triune God who is dynamically operative in his behalf. He then willingly submits himself under the hand of God ... Thus, humility should not be equated with a pious inferiority complex. It can be pretended on the part of false teachers in acts of self-abasement<sup>8</sup>.

Again, leading by example constitutes part of the concepts of servant leadership. The leader serves as an example by demonstrating the behaviours they want to see in their followers which inspires and motivates the group. Servant leadership do not Lord anything over their disciples. The latter usually allow the former to, not only have their say, but even have their way. Very reasonable consideration is constantly given by the leader to the acolytes, such that the disciples can be happy in whatever they are doing and in anywhere they find themselves. To demonstrate servant leadership, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:5). Ordinarily, the reverse was supposed to be the case. Put differently, the disciples were expected to wash the feet of their master, either individually or collectively. Adeyemo submits that Jesus then poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet and dry them with the towel that was wrapped around him. Not only was he dressed like a slave, but he was doing the work of slave. Washing feet was such a menial job that no teacher would expect his disciples to do it<sup>9</sup>. Buttressing the position of Adeyemo above, Thomas Hale pontificates that:

Luke has written that at the last supper, Jesus' disciples had been arguing about which of them was going to be greatest (Lk. 22:24). So Jesus showed them example that they should seek to be servants. He told them, *I am among you as one who serves* (Lk. 22:27). Then to show them that He had not come to be served but to serve (Mk. 10:45), He washed their feet. He took the very nature of a servant ... According to Jewish custom, even the lowliest slave didn't have to untie his master's sandals. Thus, Jesus was doing the lowest kind of service for his disciples<sup>10</sup>.

### **Concepts that Impede Servant Leadership in the Contemporary Days**

The concept of servant leadership had been played down considerably in the contemporary days. This is probably as a result of ego. Quite a good number of leaders would want to Lord it over their acolyte. The conviction of such leaders is that they are the leaders, therefore, the disciples must necessarily cringe and or genuflect before them. Some individuals are highly egoistic and this would obviously preclude them from practicing the principle of servant leadership. According to Shashi ... in anthropology, this refers to the individual from whom the networks of kinship and relationship and descent are reckoned and traced. In psychology, the term (i.e. ego) is used to refer to the self of the individual and the way they have constructed their personality and identity in society<sup>11</sup>. Shashi goes on to postulate that in Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the ego is the outcome of the individual's struggle to adapt their basic drives (the "Id") to the imperative control of society and culture (the "super ego"). Between their drives and the coercive influence of social expectation, individuals create a sphere of unique personality<sup>12</sup>.

Buttressing the position of Shashi above, *The World Book of Encyclopedia* pontificates thus:

*EE goh*, is a term used in psychoanalysis to describe one of the three parts of mind. The two other parts are the *id* or instincts, and *superego* or conscience. The ego resolves conflicts among the individual's instinctual impulses, his or her sense of guilt, and the demands of external reality. For example, the ego regulates emotions and impulses that might not be acceptable to other people. The ego also governs such areas as memory, thought and decision making, walking and other voluntary movements, and perceptions, such as hearing, feeling, and sight. Psychoanalysts sometimes use the word *ego* to mean a person's self. In popular usage, the word has come to mean selfishness, self-love or self-esteem<sup>13</sup>.

Furthermore, the environment in which a person finds himself/herself will significantly affect the servant leadership disposition of an individual. In the South-Western part of Nigeria, for example, elders are accorded enormous respect and those elders are not supposed to demean themselves by according much respect to those that are younger than them. In a situation whereby the elders want to reverence the younger ones, the latter would become increasingly uncomfortable, since the environment does not permit that. Shashi succinctly opines that: Human and cultural environment refers to aspects of the environment produced by humans. Environment is all that surrounds man and animal. Since time immemorial, environment has been playing a vital role in the life and living pattern of man. Every man is born in an environment. Apart from his surrounding, man's life on this earth is unthinkable. As long as civilization exists on this earth, man cannot but think of his environment. Man and his environment are inseparable. So, environment is that which surrounds us, which exists around us. Everything which is external to us, which is surrounding us and which has effect on us is part of environment<sup>14</sup>. Shashi is not done, as he goes on to postulates that: Everything external to the organism. The physical environment or the ecology within which the people of a community or society are situated. The political and administrative environment includes laws, regulations and official practices in which an organisation or community may operate. The physical, biological and chemical restraints to which action is subject<sup>15</sup>.

Closely related to environment on the concept that would make the practice of servant leadership cumbersome is culture. The culture of people can draw a glaring line of demarcation between the leaders and the adherents and or disciples. Again, the culture of the South-West Nigeria, enmoured exceedingly the respect of

elders or bosses by the young and or the acolytes. Yoruba culture does not compromise this by any standard. According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*. Culture is a term used by social scientists for a way of life. Every human society has a culture. Culture includes a society's arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, inventions, language, technology, and values. A culture produces similar behaviour and thought among most people in a particular society<sup>16</sup>. The book goes on to enthuse that, people are not born with any knowledge of a culture. They generally learn a culture by growing up in a particular society. They learn mainly through the use of language, especially by talking and listening to other members of the society. They also learn by watching and imitating various behaviours in the society. The process by which people –especially children –learn their society's culture is called *enculturation*. Through enculturation, a culture is shared with members of a society and passed from one generation to the next. Enculturation unifies people of a society by providing them with common experiences<sup>17</sup>.

It is pertinent to state unequivocally that the attitude of people can tremendously affect the servant leadership of some individuals. Individually, people are imbued with diverse types of attitudinal disposition, which is inherently peculiar to him/her. This, no doubt, can significantly impinge on the way he/she relates with individuals in the society. The *Webster's Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus* succinctly defines attitude as posture, position of the body; a manner of thought and feeling; behaviour; the position of an aircraft or spacecraft in relation to certain reference points<sup>18</sup>. Supporting the above Shashi states that: Attitude refers to a predisposition to react to a given thing, situation, or idea in a given way. Attitudes are usually associated with underlying, deep-seated predispositions<sup>19</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

The phrase “if you must lead them you must serve them” expresses the concept of servant leadership, meaning a true leader's primary role is to priorities and serve the needs of their followers. This idea emphasizes humility and a focus on the well-being of the group, as opposed to a leader using their position for personal gain. This principle is found in various religious and secular contexts, notably in the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament (Matt. 20:26-28)<sup>20</sup>. Jesus state clearly without mincing words that:

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles Lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:25-28).

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## **TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH AMONG LEADERS IN BETHEL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, OYO**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigates the transformational leadership approach among leaders in Bethel Baptist Association, Oyo, with a focus on how this leadership style influences ministry effectiveness and organizational growth. Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, motivation, and positive change, enabling leaders to inspire followers toward higher levels of commitment and spiritual maturity. The research explores key components of transformational leadership-including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration and assesses how these elements are practiced within the association. The study further examines how leaders in Bethel Baptist Association apply transformational strategies to address contemporary challenges such as declining participation, leadership fatigue, and the need for effective discipleship. Findings indicate that transformational leadership encourages innovation, strengthens relationships within the church community, and enhances the overall mission of the association. The research concludes that when leaders model Christlike character and actively empower their members, they create an environment that supports sustainable growth, increased engagement, and impactful ministry outcomes.*

### **Introduction**

There is probably no doubt that transformational leadership has become one of the most effective and influential leadership approaches in contemporary Christian ministry. Among leaders in Bethel Baptist Association, Oyo, this style of leadership plays a significant role in shaping the direction, unity and spiritual growth of the churches within the association<sup>1</sup>. Evidently, transformational leadership focuses on inspiring followers, enhancing positive change, and assisting

individuals attain their full potential. It emphasizes the leader's ability to influence others through vision, motivation and personal example, rather than through authority alone. In the context of Bethel Baptist Association, this approach is essential because church leaders are expected to guide their members, not only administratively, but also spiritually, morally, and socially<sup>2</sup>.

We should note that a central feature of transformational leadership is idealised influence, where leaders demonstrate strong character, integrity, and christlike behaviour. Leaders in the Association are seen as role models whose lives reflect the teachings they promote. This creates trust, strengthens relationships, and indeed encourages members to commit to the mission of the Church<sup>3</sup>.

### **Brief Historical Background of Bethel Baptist Association, Oyo**

The historical background of the body named "Bethel Association" in Oyo, Nigeria, is most commonly associated with Baptist Associations under the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC)<sup>4</sup>. According to Adebayo, the Baptist work in Nigeria began with the appointment by the Southern Baptist Convention of America of the first missionary to the country, Rev. Thomas Jefferson Bowen in 1849. Rev. T. J. Bowen was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1814 in Jackson Coventry, Georgia, United States of America. He was a brilliant student<sup>5</sup>. As a 22years old boy, he had experience in the quelling of America uprising in Georgian and participated in the second Seminole war. Therefore, he volunteered to join Texas in their independence fight against Mexico. It was during his stay in Texas that Bowen found Christ in 1840. Upon his return to Georgian, he began to preach, and was soon ordained a minister. Bowen's Church was affiliated with the America Baptist Mission, but after a split in 1845, his allegiance shifted to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)<sup>6</sup>. Afterwards, he was called by God to be enrolled in his army to participate with him in the evangelization of Central Sudan (later known as Nigerian). Before 1849, God had impressed in his mind to take the gospel to Nigeria through his reading of explorer books on Africa. This was at the time when not many were willing to go to Africa because of its prevalent hostile climate and attendant health hazards. By the divine providence, Bowen was appointed as a missionary to Nigeria by the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1849<sup>7</sup>.

It should be noted that Bowen, together with Harvey Goodale and Robert F. Hill were commissioned as missionaries to Nigeria. They embarked on their journey on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1849. Unfortunately, only Bowen got to Nigeria. Goodale died in Liberia apparently because of ill-health. Hill was withdrawn because of his unwillingness to accompany Bowen to Nigeria. Bowen landed in Badagry, South west Nigeria on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1850<sup>8</sup>. It was the assiduity of Bowen in Nigeria that brought about many Baptist Conferences, not excluding, that of Oyo.

### **Features of Leadership in Bethel Baptist Association, Oyo**

Leadership of Associations are usually characterized by certain features. Some of these characteristics are peculiar to the said Association. Notice that leadership in the Bethel Baptist Association may not be said to be outrightly autocratic, however, arguably, it is not adequately liberal or democratic as the acolytes would have expected. Democracy from which democratic is derived is defined by the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* edited by Hornby as fair and equal treatment of everyone in an organisation, etc and their right to take part in making decisions<sup>9</sup>. It is observed that some elements of opaqueness is often noticed within the echelon of leadership which the followers are not particularly comfortable with. Quite mindful of this, the leadership is working assiduously to carry out a radical transformation in its leadership style, which would guarantee the joy of every Tom, Dick and Harry. To transform is to renew, to rebrand, to change, to reform, to transmutate, perhaps radically. Lightner defines *transform* as “to change the outward appearance of that which itself remains the same”, “to assume the appearance of another” ... it is used ... of the change of moral character for the better through the renewal of the innermost nature, but always of a transformation that is visible<sup>10</sup>.

It should be noted that those who would carry out the reform are the leaders. Shashi opines that a leader can rouse the blood of an ordinary man and has the strength enough to mobilise people as unified spirit. A good leader is a notional asset and a precious dynamic force. Leadership is a social phenomenon that is a universal social institution which is seen in one form or another in every form of life. Every person who leads a group of people, a community, a society or a nation is termed a leader. He is obeyed, heard or honoured by his followers. He unifies and embodies the opinion of the people and mobilises it to a dignified goal<sup>11</sup>. Shashi continues as he postulates that: Generally, speaking, a person who exerts some political influence is called a leader, but in the real sense of the term leader's activities do not get confined to political field alone. People who wield influence in any shape of life are known as leaders. Usually a leader has to present a model behaviour for others. Leadership is to be understood and defined in terms of dominance<sup>12</sup>. Shashi is not done as he goes on to pontificate that:

The term dominance may be defined as an act or response which affects the attitude and act of another. The methods of influencing others may tend to range from the use of flattery to the act of aggression including suggestion and persuasion. In the light of this, let us try to define leadership. Leadership is the behaviour of other people more than their behaviour affects that of other leader. Another definition would be “Anyone who acts as model to others is often called a leader” or “A man

whose opinions are likely to be carried out is also called a leader<sup>13</sup>.

### **Probable factors that Impede Smooth Leadership in Bethel Baptist Association, Oyo**

It is probable that apparently because of the burgeoning nature of Bethel Baptist Association, Oyo there is no financial autonomy. Although the Association is obviously fast-growing, however, its relatively nascent nature has probably made it not to have financial system that is autonomous which some at the lower rung of the ladder are desperately yearning for. It is really the desire of these agitators to have a financial system that would grant them autonomy to act fast. This is because there had been instance when financial commitment(s) that required prompt and or urgent attention were deleted unduly, and the repercussion had always not been palatable. Take for instance, a patient in the hospital whose medical condition is somewhat critical, needs urgent attention, however, the fund that is needed is not momentarily or instantaneously made available. There is usually administrative bottleneck in releasing fund. Notice that medical institutions in Nigeria are sometimes notorious when it comes to collection of money before the commandment of treatment of their patients. It is probably not their fault because they used money to procure drugs that would be prescribed and the medical personnel too would have to be paid their emolument. It is also significant to note that some of the patients who had been helped hitherto via their treatment before payment vamoosed, thus engendering indebtedness for the medical institutions.

Besides, this is a country with habitual power outage. Thus, fuel would be needed to power the generator (where it is available). Other things that would need money would include assistant of indigent students. In the same vein, there is absolute need for other relatively negligible things like payment of fares for taxi or bus when an employee is sent on an errand to do certain things outside the vicinity of the office. Nevertheless, the Association is fine-tuning the process that would make members of the body to enjoy financial autonomy. According to Shashi: Etymologically, autonomy means self-rule (Gk. *autostnomos*). Applicable both to persons and institutions, the word suggests the presence of or capacity for self-determination and freedom from coercion. Its opposite is heteronomy: rule by external forces. Autonomy is an important issue in philosophical and theological ethics, in psychology, and in political theory<sup>14</sup>. Hornby sees autonomy as the freedom for a country, a region or an organisation to govern itself independently<sup>15</sup>. Further still, Shashi goes on to state unequivocally that ... autonomy refers to one's capacity to exercise self-rule. The ethically ideal society, from this perspective, would be one in which all persons are capable of autonomy and exercise it in such a way as to respect and protect the autonomy of all others. Because the capacity for self-rule is not a given in the human person, autonomy becomes an important psychological category<sup>16</sup>.

Again, some individuals are not particularly comfortable with the human relation of the leadership. *The World Book Encyclopedia* submits that human relations is the field of study that deals with behaviour and interactions between people. In a broader sense, the term *human relations* can describe any form of personal interaction, and the abilities and skills used for such interaction. In this sense, human relations may also be called *Interpersonal relations*<sup>17</sup>. *The World Book Encyclopedia* goes on to enthuse that:

Because people are social beings, individuals live in constant contact with others. Children first learn to interact with their family members and playmates. As children grow, their activities increasingly, centre around their friends, schoolwork, religion, or special interests and hobbies. Students may join clubs and sports teams. Adults may surround themselves with their family or join labour union, political party, or service organisation. In addition, people frequently become parts of temporary groups, such as concert audiences or shopping crowds. In each of these situations, there are possibilities for conflict between various members of the community. The field of human relations seeks to avoid, reduce, or resolve these conflicts in everyday life. All individuals have certain needs, and people differ in what they consider important. Human relations experts try to find the best way of meeting needs and achieving desires with a minimum conflict. They must know why people act as they do, how they react to different situations and what will make them change their minds ...<sup>18</sup>

It should be stated without any spirit of immodesty that some leaders are bereft of human relation. Whereas their disciples want them to be friendly with them, they are not, but somewhat bossy. Shashi defines boss as “a dictatorial leader of a local party organisation ... and his arbitrary dispensation of patronage, often not the official chairman but the power behind the throne” ... Under modern conditions, the need for such mediation seems less stringent and the autocratic nature of boss rule is a subversion of democracy ... System of political control centering about a single powerful figure (the boss) ... Bossism depends upon manipulation of the voters and thus always had some aspects of corruption and fraud<sup>19</sup>. The *Webster’s Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus* defines boss as the manager or foremen; a powerful local politician, to domineer; to be in control<sup>20</sup>. This is the apt description of some bosses whose stock in trade is to continually lord it over their acolytes.

## Conclusion

Followers of Bethel Baptist Association, Oyo would crave quite ordinally that their leadership be imbued with certain attributes that they would enamour exceedingly, rather than lording it over them. The leaders should endeavour to carry them along in whatever they are doing. Opaqueness in the administration of the Association should be avoided outrightly just as everything should be made open to every Tom, Dick and Harry of the Association. There should be financial autonomy within the rank and file of the Association. This would enable prompt or urgent attention to things that need to be attended to in a jiffy.

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**IFANGELISM: EFFORTS AT COUNTERING PROSELYTISM  
ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN RELIGIONS IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*The paper thematically discusses Ifangelism as a concept denoted in the efforts at countering the proselytism activities of the foreign religions practiced in Nigeria (Islam and Christianity). It is a known fact that making converts is a feature of nearly all the religions practiced globally and not an exclusive preserve of the so called “Missionary religions”. Though African Traditional Religion is indigenous to the people, the proselytism activities of the foreign religions have brought about massive conversions from it. Adopting practical and theoretical methods in gathering information from adherents of the Indigenous religion, the paper establishes the origin, goals, purpose and strategies of Ifangelism. It examines its positive aspects. The paper argues that African Traditional Religion is alive among the people despite several attempts to portray it in bad light. On a final note, the research work recommends that adherents of African Traditional Religion should be more zealous like those of the other religious traditions in Nigeria in their efforts at ensuring the continuous survival of the faith even in modern times.*

**Introduction**

Africans are highly religious. Thus, African Traditional Religion began by intuition from the cultural practices of the people and handed down from one generation to another. The advent of the foreign religions did a lot of harm to it. Western oriented missionaries and scholars employed derogatory and opprobrious terms like idolatry, fetishism, paganism, heathenism and many others to describe the religious practices of the people. This resulted into massive conversion from the so called “Pagan” and “Heathen” religions. Hence, the Traditional religion almost became exterminated. In contemporary times however, people have begun to appreciate the

values inherent in the indigenous religion, thereby resulting into syncretism and ambivalence.

For the Yoruba people, *Ifa* is probably the most important of their numerous divinities. As such, the *Ifa* cult is quite popular among them. In fact, it has been regarded as the wisdom of *Olodumare* (the Supreme Being). According to a popular myth, *Ifa* descended from heaven. Since then, it became an integral part of their belief system. It is true that the people got to know about *Ifa*, otherwise known as *Eleri-Ipin*, by intuition and have a strong conviction in its power of clairvoyance.

Over the years however, the Prophets in the Christendom and Imams in Islam have usurped this noble role. To sensitize Africans on the significance of *Ifa* among them, there is the absolute need to *Ifangelise*, otherwise the significance of *Ifa* among them will in no distant time become moribund. In corollary, *Ifangelism* is the process of propagating or disseminating the prowess of *Ifa* to not only the nooks and crannies of Yoruba land but globally. There are those who are yet to hear about the potentials of *Ifa* in their locality. Thus, there is the absolute need for the propagation of his ideals.

The Abrahamic religions have taken over African Traditional Religion via evangelism and *Jihad*. This is because peripatetic movements of missionaries had always been the very hallmark of the new religions. To, therefore, create the necessary awareness in respect of *Ifa*, there is the total need to embark in earnest on *Ifangelism* that will awaken or arouse the interest of people on *Ifa* as the pathfinder of those in one challenge or the other via the instrumentality of clairvoyance.

### **Proselytism and Evangelism Defined**

To proselytize means to recruit or convert especially to a new faith, institution or cause. The *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*,<sup>1</sup> fourth edition, edited by Collin McIntosh defines the verb proselytise as “to try to persuade someone to change their religious or political beliefs or their way of living to your own”<sup>1</sup>. Thus, proselytism is the practice of encouraging or inducing people to join a particular religious movement. It also means to convert someone from a particular faith or belief system to another. Buttressing the above, *Encarta Encyclopedia* defines Religious Proselytizing as “working to encourage belief and practice of a religion”<sup>2</sup>.

Proselytism is a prominent feature of nearly all religious traditions in the world. Because the religion is new, the propagators want to popularize and make it acceptable. As such, several missionary movements, groups, organizations and individuals have been zealous witnesses through words and deeds so that those outside their own religious traditions can be converted to theirs. Scholars of

religion have identified Christianity, Buddhism and Islam as the principal missionary religions of the world. This does not imply that other religious traditions that do not fall within the purview of the above mentioned ones have been found wanting in this endeavour.

Evangelism means the “active calling of people to respond to the message of grace and commit oneself to God in Jesus Christ. While many think of evangelism as a New Testament phenomenon, profound concern for the salvation of all people is also obvious in the Old Testament”<sup>3</sup>. The *Webster’s Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus* also defines Evangelism succinctly as “preaching the Christian gospel, missionary zeal”<sup>4</sup>. In addition, the word evangelist (from which evangelism is derived) is from the verb meaning “to announce good news”, the noun “evangelist” is mentioned only three times in the New Testament<sup>5</sup>.

Christians have drawn great inspiration from the *Great Commission* which states unequivocally thus “go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Thus, the Apostles were the first to engage in Christian proselytism. As time went by, the Church spread her tentacles to North Africa, Asia Minor, India, China and other parts of the world. By the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Europe had been firmly established as a Christian continent. Till contemporary days, new mission fields are being opened by all denominations and sects, resulting into large converts to the faith.

Apparently because of the fact that virtually all religions globally have their origins in different places, evangelism constitutes their major hallmark. Since there is the absolute need to disseminate or propagate the religions in new locations, places or countries, evangelism is invariably inevitable. For instance, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) came to Nigeria via Badagry in 1842 through Henry Townsend and spread up-north to Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ijaye and many other places. What made this possible was doubtlessly aggressive evangelism on the part of the missionaries.

Islam as a prominent world missionary religion which began in the Arabian Peninsula has spread through the zealous activities of honest Arab merchants, travelers, clerics and preachers. This is because propagating the message of Islam is a religious duty and noble deed which attracts *Allah’s* blessings. Thus, many *Jihads* were embarked upon by the *Rashidun* Caliphs and other earliest Muslims and these resulted into making enormous converts to Islam.

### **Strategies for Proselytism Adopted by the Foreign Religions in Nigeria**

The Indigenous religions showed open-mindedness and tolerance towards the foreign religions. In fact, history has it that the *Ifa* oracle mesaged the advent of

the Christian Missionaries to Abeokuta. Similarly, the oracle supported the coming of Muslim clerics, traders and merchants to Yoruba land. It should be noted without any spirit of immodesty that the religions of the children of Abraham converted adherents of African Traditional Religion to their own faith and African Traditional Religion did not bicker.

Indeed, some practices of ATR like singing of choruses, drumming, clapping, and dancing were copied in order to probably woo or convert ATR adherents without much ado. The above listed attributes were not found even in the Bible and probably the *Quran*. As soon as these foreign religions gained footing among the people, intolerance, exclusivism and violence raised its ugly head in Nigeria.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Islam and Christianity have become the most prominent religions practiced by Nigerians. This is due to the strategies employed by the missionaries of these two religions. Some of these strategies employed in the propagation of Islam were trade as well as commercial relationship with North Africa, establishment of Quranic schools and *Jihad* which introduced the emirate system, most especially in Northern Nigeria with the *Shariah* as the legal code.

Christian Missionaries also used educational strategy to convert many people to Christianity. They established primary and secondary schools where the Bible and Catechism was taught paripassu with other subjects in the curriculum. Many pupils and students who attended these schools were baptized and took Christian names.

Another important factor which contributed immensely to the growth of Christianity in Nigeria was the fact that the colonial masters greatly supported the missionaries through their various policies, projects and programmes. In addition, hospitals, dispensaries, maternity centres and other health institutions were also established. Vocational centres where people learnt various skills were also set up in all nooks and crannies of the country. These strategies resulted into a large number of converts to Christianity.

### ***The Central Place of Ifa in Yoruba Traditional Religion***

*Orunmila*, otherwise known as *Ifa* is one of the divinities in Yoruba Traditional Religion. He was also known as *Eleri-Ipin*. Indeed, he was present when man was choosing his destiny. That is probably why he can proffer solutions to many problems or challenges of man no matter how seemingly intractable. He can unravel every mystery surrounding human existence no matter how cumbersome or clandestine they may appear and prescribe the necessary sacrifices that will terminate or put paid to the issues bothering or perturbing mankind.

Abimbola<sup>6</sup> explains that *Ifa* is undoubtedly the most important of the numerous divinities among the Yoruba people. He is also known as *Orunmila*. He also has

other appellations which are *Afedefeyo* (master of several languages) and *Akrefinisogbon* (the small man with a mind full of wisdom). In Yoruba mythology, *Ifa* is believed to be one of the major divinities who descended from heaven into the city of *Ife* by means of an iron chain. As we have noted earlier, *Ifa* is the Yoruba god of wisdom, knowledge and divination.

*Ifa* is believed to be present when the universe was created by God (*Olodumare*). Therefore, his vast knowledge transcends all times and space. Indeed, it is only through *Ifa* that one could reach the other divinities in the Yoruba pantheon. Through him, we can know when the divinities are angry with an individual or the community as a whole. There is no gainsaying the fact that he is the mouth-piece of all other divinities.

Bascom<sup>7</sup> explains that *Ifa* is a system of divination based on sixteen basic and two hundred and fifty-six derivative figures (*odu*) obtained either by the manipulation of sixteen palm nuts (*ikin*) or by the toss of a chain (*opele*) of eight half seed shells. He notes further that the worship of *Ifa* as the God of divination entails ceremonies, sacrifices, taboos, rituals, rites, paraphernalia, drums, songs, praises, initiation and many others which are comparable to those of other Yoruba cults. Only men are initiated into the mysteries of the *Ifa* cult. For the Yoruba, *Ifa* is the most venerated of all the gods. His priests form the first sacerdotal order among the people.

Awolalu and Dopamu<sup>8</sup> avowed that *Orunmila* or *Ifa* is the oracle divinity in Yoruba land. While *Orisa-nla* is the deputy of *Olodumare* with reference to the creation and ordering of the universe, *Orunmila* is his deputy in matters of wisdom, prognostications and foreknowledge. Both scholars noted further that “the priest of *Orunmila* is *Babalawo* (the diviner). *Orunmila* is worshipped everywhere in Yoruba land. His emblems include palm-kernels, cowries and some graven pieces of elephant’s tusk.

### **Origin of Ifangelism**

*Ifangelism* is a strategy of enhancing the values inherent in the indigenous belief system of Yoruba people which originated in very recent times due to the interaction between Indigenous and the foreign religions, especially Christianity. Since Christians obey the Biblical mandate of spreading the gospel message through evangelism (Matt 28:19) and Muslims do same through *da’wah*, ardent practitioners and devotees of *Ifa* engage in *Ifangelism* so as to spread the “gospel” of *Ifa*, thereby ensuring that the Yoruba Indigenous belief system does not go into extinction due to several attempts by the foreign religions to portray it as barbaric, fetish and idolatrous. Just as Christians give the nomenclature of *Evangelists* to those who engage in Evangelism, adherents of *Ifa* deity also refer to those who engage in *Ifangelism* as *Ifangelists*.

### **Major Goals, Purposes and Strategies of *Ifangelism***

1. *Ifangelism* seeks to ensure the continuity of the Yoruba Traditional Religion due to the challenges occasioned by the danger of extinction due to the incursion of the foreign religions.
2. It seeks to enhance the ethical values which are embedded in *Ifa*, who is widely regarded as the wisdom of *Olodumare* (the Supreme Being).
3. In addition, it seeks to promote the indigenous cultural values of the Yoruba people as against the negative connotations ascribed to it by the West.
4. It also seeks to enhance the moral values inherent in Yoruba traditional religion which are widely cherished among devotees of *Ifa*.
5. *Ifangelism* seeks to correct the erroneous views of the populace about the Yoruba belief system.
6. It also seeks to show the areas of convergence and divergence between African Traditional Religion and the foreign ones (Islam and Christianity).
7. *Ifangelism* seeks to showcase and promote the social values which are epitomized by the Yoruba people and their religious practices.

A strategy has to do with a plan of action intended to accomplish specific goals. Eleuibon<sup>9</sup> explained that the indigenous religion was practiced before the advent of the foreign ones. As such, their proselytism activities resulted in massive conversion of adherents from the indigenous religion. However, some remained as ardent devotees of the traditional religion. He identified the following as strategies employed by *Ifangelists* as they go about in their onus of promoting the values inherent in the indigenous belief system.

1. Public lectures are regularly organized in Schools, Colleges, Universities, Institutes and many other places both at home and in the Diaspora on true worship of the Supreme Being (*Olodumare*). Through these lectures, moral values such as honesty, kindness, truthfulness, chastity, generosity and many others which are embedded in the religious practices of the Yoruba are showcased to the world.
2. Festivals are also veritable opportunities utilized by *Ifangelists* to showcase the spiritual values epitomized by *Ifa*, the wisdom of *Olodumare* (the Supreme Being).



**Picture of a festival on High Chief Ifayemi Elebuibon's wall**

3. Furthermore, monarchs, chiefs and other custodians of African cultural values are regularly sensitized on the need to safeguard these cherished values which face the danger of going into extinction as a result of contact with western oriented civilization and religions.
4. In addition, *Ifangelists* also collaborate with government at all levels, international organizations as well as non-Governmental Organizations to showcase the hidden treasures in the traditional belief system of the Yoruba people. For instance, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) give adequate recognition to the Yoruba Traditional Religion.
5. The Mass media has also been used to advance the course of the Yoruba indigenous belief system. Several Radio and Television stations broadcast programmes featuring prominent clerics of the *Ifa* deity. This has gone a long way to educate and inform the general public about these cherished values.
6. *Ifangelists* have also made use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X handle and many others to advance their course.
7. The advent of the Internet has also assisted greatly to promote the course of *Ifangelism*. This is because several websites and blog pages contain valuable resources, materials and topics on *Ifa* deity and its divination system. For example, the *Ancient Philosophy International* (API) House of Culture in *Osogbo* which was founded by High Chief Ifayemi Elebuibon, a world renowned *Ifa* Priest makes good use of the internet in their activities. The API Website is <http://www.elebuibon.com>.



**Side view of the bus showing API's address and website**

8. Elebuibon also noted that many books have been written on *Ifa*. Notable among these authors are High Chief Yemi Elebuibon, Wande Abimbola, Ayo Salami Bogumbe and many others. Not only that, many songs, dramas, poems and many others have been composed, acted and written so as to advance the course of the indigenous belief system of the Yoruba people. Many of these plays and dramas have been widely applauded even in the Diaspora.



**Bus for *Ifangelism***

### **Positive Aspects of *Ifangelism***

*Ifangelism*, no doubt, has its own positive impacts which are highlighted below:

1. To a great extent, *Ifangelism* has succeeded in correcting the wrong perception of the populace about the traditional religious practices of Africans.
2. *Ifangelism* has assisted a great deal to showcase the spiritual and ethical values which are inherent in African Traditional Religion.
3. *Ifangelism* has assisted to portray the African Religion as a living faith which is reckoned with globally.
4. *Ifangelism* has helped enormously to showcase the African cultural traditions to the entire cosmos, thereby preventing it from going into extinction as a result of its encounter with western oriented values.
5. Through *Ifangelism*, adherents of the foreign religious traditions in Nigeria, most especially Christianity have started to appreciate the holy and true values inherent in the indigenous belief system of the Yoruba. In several theological seminaries and institutes where Christian clerics are trained, courses on *Ifa* and the traditional religion are offered. This has helped tremendously to foster the value of tolerance among them. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church's

document titled *Pastoral Attention to African Traditional Religion* details her attitude towards the African Religion.



**Side View of API Bus**

### **Conclusion**

In this study, an attempt has been made to bring to the fore *Ifangelism* as a concept in African indigenous religious discourse. Just as Christians obey the *Great Commission* which is a mandate given to them by Christ and adherents of Islam embark on *da'wah*, a sacred duty to attract *Allah's* blessings, *Ifangelism* also seeks to enhance cherished values of *Ifa*, even in modern age and contemporary times. This has gone a long way to unfold the uniqueness and beauty inherent in traditional African culture cum religious practices.

However, *Ifangelists* need to put more efforts in their activities so as to ensure the continuity of the indigenous/cultural values. It is worth of note that many years of domination by the foreign religions have failed to wipe out the awe, devotion,

reverence and respect accorded to *Ifa* across Yoruba land. Also, practices within the indigenous belief system which appears to have been weakened or moribund should be revived, changed or transformed through *Ifangelism*.

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## **BENEFICIARIES AND BENEFACTORS OF PRACTICAL MISSION WORK: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF LUKE 8:1-3**

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### **Abstract**

*The growing body of research on the focal Bible text, Luke 8:1-3, has addressed the nuances of breaking cultural barriers, since Jesus elevated the roles of women in his ministry; and empowering women for Christian leadership position. Notwithstanding, there remains a notable knowledge gap in contextualising it to bear in the emphasis on lethargic attitude of certain Christians towards generous contribution and its adverse effect on mission efforts. The study argued that practical Christian mission works depend on divine provision to thrive, which is often facilitated through human charity and or generosity. Objectively, the study postulated that, the practice of harnessing, that is, pooling financial resources together, for the purpose of effective Christian mission work is biblical, and it remains the most viable, if not the only practicable means to fund effective Christian mission work. Utilising historical- critical exegetical method, the study attempted exegesis of Luke 8: 1-3. It analysed biblical model of giving, emphasising the women's transformation through healing, discipleship, and partnership in missions. Findings revealed that, purpose-driven mission work precedes material generosity, as the women in Luke 8:1-3 became committed followers of Jesus before releasing their resources. It concluded that, when people have the joys of the gospel, when they feel the consolations of religion themselves, they will somehow or another find means to contribute to the welfare of others. Recommendations included that present day gospel ministers should prioritise discipleship, addressing specific believers' needs, promoting sense of belonging and partnerships among believers. Present day believers in Christ should be more intentional and make deliberate efforts to support Christian mission works both in cash and kind.*

**Keywords:** empowerment, leadership, partnership, transformation, purpose-driven.

### **Introduction**

Giving to support Christian mission is an integral aspect of Christian service and stewardship. In Christianity, releasing one's financial or material resources for mission purposes is one of the ways to acknowledge the blessings and faithfulness of God in believers' lives. Releasing one's material resources for kingdom business is not just to receive blessing in return, in the first instance, it is a way of reciprocating the love and kindness of God to the ransomed. The focal Bible passage, Luke 8:1-3, records the provision Jesus' ministry enjoyed while on earth, through the liberal attitudes of certain women who were committed to meeting his financial and material needs. In the study, beneficiary and benefactor are used in the context of one who receives an advantage and one who gives a monetary gift to a charity, respectively.

There are nuances of breaking cultural barriers since Jesus elevated the roles of women in his ministry, and empowering women for Christian leadership as posited by many scholars, without dedicated efforts on the lethargic attitude of certain Christians towards generous contribution and its effect on Christian mission efforts. To fill this lacuna, the study argues that practical Christian missions depend on divine provision to thrive, which is often facilitated through human generosity. This brings about discussion on beneficiaries as a springboard to benefactors of practical mission work, stressing that, on the part of every Christian, the willingness to participate in generous contribution for the purpose of practical mission work should not be negotiable. The aim is to argue that practical Christian missions depend on divine provision to thrive, which is often facilitated through human charity and generosity. The objective is to clarify that, the practice of harnessing, that is, pooling resources together, for the purpose of effective Christian mission work is biblical, and it remains the most viable, if not the only practicable means to fund effective Christian mission work.

The study adopts the historical – critical method of running smooth biblical exegesis. It avails for in-depth and historical development analysis of the lexicosemantic range of certain significant words in the stock language. The event of Jesus Christ among human in the form and nature of man occupies a fascinating aspect in human history.<sup>1</sup> The grace to be part of the vehicles for carrying this historic event round the whole world means the greatest privilege that would be accorded to anyone. The women in the focal Bible passage defied all odds to give themselves to the services of Jesus and his disciples. The financial necessity to mission work actualisation cannot be overstressed. Mission work, either in the sense of helping believers to remain in faith or reaching out to those that are without, requires fund.

### **Biblical Basis for Mission Work**

The concept of Christian mission has been a popular subject in the body of Christ, and it is one of the keen research interests to biblical scholars. Biblical scholars have from various times and through diverse approaches, attempted to explore the foundation of biblical description on the nature of Christian missions. This section reviews few of such scholarly positions regarding mission work.

There is a view that, God initiated mission from the beginning of creation and mission became significant since the time of Adam and Eve. God initiated and participated in mission activities that led to creation of the universe, and establishment of his relationship with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Immediately after they had yielded to Satan's temptation in the Garden of Eden, mission activities to reconcile God with the created man continued. God searched, called and requested for man's whereabouts. Some scholars have argued that this is out-rightly against the omnipotent attribute of God. That he was probably ignorant of man's whereabouts. The question raised by God testified to his nature and attribute throughout all generations. He continued seeking, to initiate reconciliation between himself and the fallen creation.<sup>ii</sup> He did not want man to be destroyed but to be saved. For mission activities, God raised many prophets and priests in the Old Testament, for reconciliation and to retrace the fallen man's steps back to God. Oates submits that, starting from the day of man's fall, God had been searching and calling man, where are you? (Genesis, 3:9). The call was on repentance, unification of divided self, change of direction and act of surrender.<sup>iii</sup> As God sought for Adam and Eve, he desired a workable relationship with the created man. In the opinion of Rheenens, God initiated reconciliation between himself and the fallen man.<sup>iv</sup> It can be said that the whole Bible stood as a message of God, calling man to retrace his steps to him because he wanted the initial relationship to be re-established.

There is a position that, Christian mission was in the first instance, an effort to reconcile the unsaved to God. Mission engagement included the sender, along with the sender's purpose and authority in sending.<sup>v</sup> There must be some on errand with the purpose of spreading the good news with authority that the sender has in Jesus Christ. Someone must surrender himself to the authority of Jesus Christ to be useful for the work of mission. Kaiser postulates that mission involved commissioning or authorisation that led to movement towards mission work with obedience as an agent for applying blessing of salvation to humanity.<sup>vi</sup> He further argues that mission included task as in the New Testament, which focused primarily on the proclamation of words and deeds of God to save humanity. The mission concept had universal scope that involved how the kingdom of God advanced, how the church fulfilled her mission, and how were those successful mission's results accomplished?<sup>vii</sup> Fuller reasons that, as people came out of the kingdom of darkness to light, the kingdom of God expanded.<sup>viii</sup> He further states that believers

came together to engage in witnessing to those who did not know Christ. Their coming together was to have potential in effective evangelism because there was no amount of work a man can do than a group of people. In group, there was encouragement for sacrificial penetration of major human barrier to achieve communities of responsible converts, where there was none before.<sup>ix</sup>

Adna and Kvalbein postulate that, mission work means a conscious, deliberate, extensive effort to convert non-fellow-religionists to one's religion.<sup>x</sup> Don reasons that, approaches to totally get –man- back- to -God from the time of the fall in the Garden of Eden to the period immediately before Jesus Christ, did not work as God wanted it. Therefore, the coming of Jesus Christ was necessary at the time he came. As he came, the whole nature of God's approach to drawing men to himself, changed with the advent of Jesus.<sup>xi</sup> Jesus took up the job with full force from age twelve and continued to the end of his life. Bultmann agrees that, the theology of the New Testament was centred on Christ's mission.<sup>xii</sup> The twenty-seven books of the New Testament were all mission - inclined to fulfill the purpose of His coming to the world. Don refreshes that mission of Christ was disclosed in the Great Commission. The classic and comprehensive commission was found in Matt 28:18-20.<sup>xiii</sup> The commands in the passage were *to go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things as commanded by Jesus Christ* (Matt 28:19-20).

The study's persuasion aligns with most of the reviewed authors who postulate that concept of mission is first introduced in the Old Testament where God called Abraham to be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:1–3). It progressed to Israelites' election, where they were chosen to serve as light to the nations, embodying God's justice and righteousness (Isaiah 49:6). Mission theme continues in the New Testament, culminating in Jesus' ministry and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). Jesus' ministry provides the clearest example of practical Christian mission. His mission statement presents Him as the one sent to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the oppressed, and bring sight to the blind (Luke 4:18–19). His ministry was characterised by preaching, teaching, healing, and serving, demonstrating the holistic nature of mission work.

Thus, Christian mission has been projected as following Christ's example in proclaiming the gospel and making disciples of all nations. The early disciples continued this mission, they preached, healed, and established communities of faith. The early church embraced the mission of Christ, spreading the gospel beyond Jewish communities to Gentiles (Acts 1:8). Apostle Paul's missionary journeys illustrate how the gospel transcends cultural and geographical boundaries. He often received support from churches, demonstrating that mission is a collective responsibility. The church's mission is not only to evangelise, it is also to care for

the marginalised. Jesus' emphasis on justice and compassion (Matthew 25:31–46) underscores that mission includes acts of service and love. The biblical basis for missions portrays that, true mission reflects God's true heart of love for the lost, the perishing and the suffering.

### Exegetical Analysis of Luke 8:1-3

Luke 8:1 Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ καθεξῆς καὶ αὐτὸς διώδευεν κατὰ πόλιν καὶ κώμην κηρύσσων καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ οἱ δώδεκα σὺν αὐτῷ, 2 καὶ γυναῖκές τινες αἱ ἦσαν τεθεραπευμένοι ἀπὸ πνευμάτων πονηρῶν καὶ ἀσθενειῶν, Μαρία ἡ καλουμένη Μαγδαληνή, ἀφ' ἧς δαιμόνια ἔπτα ἐξεληλύθει, 3 καὶ Ἰωάννα γυνὴ Χουζᾶ ἐπιτρόπου Ἡρώδου καὶ Σουσάννα καὶ ἕτεραι πολλαί, αἵτινες διηκόνουν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐταῖς.

After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3 Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

The passage under consideration introduces a phase in Jesus' ministry where he is constantly on the move (8:1-9:50). It opens with the characteristic Lucan transitional phrase, **Καὶ ἐγένετο**, *and it came to pass*, a stylistic feature in Luke-Acts that conveys a narrative shift. Marshall notes that this phrase has special significance in Luke's Gospel, often marking a new development in the narrative.<sup>xiv</sup> The phrase signifies a significant alteration in Jesus' way of life, he ceases to make Capernaum his base and instead embarks on an itinerant ministry.<sup>xv</sup> The Greek word **καθεξῆς**, *afterward or in order*, suggests a purposeful transition rather than a mere chronological sequence. Jesus was carrying out his mission to proclaim the gospel universally (Luke 4:43). The Greek word **διώδευεν**, an imperfect active indicative of **διώδευώ**, *to travel through*, underscores the continuous and expansive nature of his missionary activity rather than a journey with a fixed endpoint.<sup>xvi</sup> His travels consistently drew crowds (cf. 7:11, 24; 8:4, 18, 40, 45), reinforcing the widespread appeal of his message. The itinerancy reflects Jesus' unwearied diligence in doing good, even in the face of disbelief.<sup>xvii</sup>

The primary actions in verse 1, **κηρύσσων καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενος**, *preaching and bringing good news*, define Jesus' purpose. These present active participles indicate that his preaching and proclamation of the **βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ**, *kingdom of God*, occurred simultaneously with his travel. This kingdom represents both God's salvific activity in the present and the eschatological reality to be fully realised in the future.<sup>xviii</sup> Although it appears as if Luke focuses more on the message of the

kingdom rather than its immediate realisation.<sup>xix</sup> It can be further argued that Jesus' ministry dismantles barriers, particularly the legalistic divisions between the righteous and sinners, emphasising the inclusivity of God's kingdom.<sup>xx</sup>

Two groups accompanied Jesus on his missionary journey: **οἱ δώδεκα** *the Twelve*, and **γυναῖκές τινες** *certain women*. The Twelve, introduced in Luke 6:12-16, are identified here as companions and witnesses rather than active participants in preaching.<sup>xxi</sup> Their role was primarily one of apprenticeship, preparing for future missionary work (Luke 10:2-3). The phrase **σὺν αὐτῷ**, *with him*, conveys their close association with Jesus, emphasising their role as learners. Verse 2 introduces the second group: **καὶ γυναῖκές τινες** *and certain women*, highlighting their significant roles in Jesus' ministry. Unlike certain of the contemporary rabbis who excluded women from theological instruction, Jesus welcomed them into his circle. Luke, more than any other Gospel writer, underscores the prominence of women. Jesus' teaching elevated women's status, making them *co-heirs*, in God's kingdom and challenging their traditional subordination.<sup>xxii</sup> Luke devotes substantial attention to these women, emphasising their transformation through Jesus' ministry. The phrase **αἱ ἦσαν τεθεραπευμένοι**, *who had been healed*, affirms that they had personally experienced his healing power.<sup>xxiii</sup> The perfect passive participle **τεθεραπευμένοι**, implies that their healing was a completed past event with enduring effects. Although it was highly unusual for women to travel with a rabbi,<sup>xxiv</sup> yet, their gratitude for Jesus' ministry overrode cultural constraints.

These certain women had been delivered from **πνευμάτων πονηρῶν**, *evil spirits*, and **ἀσθενειῶν**, *infirmities*, Luke frequently associates afflictions with spiritual oppression, particularly in reference to women (cf. 4:38; 13:11; Acts 16:16). The **δαιμόνισμός**, *demonic possession*, in the Gospels is not limited to mental disorders but encompasses broader afflictions affecting one's entire well-being.<sup>xxv</sup> Moreover, those with unclean spirits were often ostracised, further highlighting the social impact of their healing. A particular focus is given to **Μαρία ἡ καλουμένη Μαγδαληνή**, *Mary, called Magdalene*, from whom **δαιμόνια ἑπτὰ ἐξεληλύθει**, *seven demons had gone out*. The pluperfect **ἐξεληλύθει** signifies that her deliverance was a past event with lasting consequences.<sup>xxvi</sup> The number **ἑπτὰ**, *seven*, is symbolically significant, often representing completeness, perfect or severity.<sup>xxvii</sup> Mary's prominence in the resurrection narratives explains why she is singled out.<sup>xxviii</sup>

The passage also mentions **Ἰωάννα γυνὴ Χουζᾶ**, *Joanna, the wife of Chuza*, a woman of high social standing. The name **Ἰωάννα** means *Yahweh has been gracious*, fitting to her role as a benefactor of Jesus' ministry.<sup>xxix</sup> Chuza, described as **ἐπιτρόπου Ἡρώδου**, *steward of Herod*, likely held a significant administrative position in Herod Antipas' court.<sup>xxx</sup> Luke mentions Joanna's connection to Herod's

household for multiple reasons, the most important being her financial contributions.<sup>xxxii</sup> The third named woman is **Σουσάννα** *Susanna*, about whom little is known. Her mention alongside Mary Magdalene and Joanna suggests she was a notable figure, yet Luke provides no further details.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The phrase **καὶ ἕτεροι πολλοί** *and many others*, affirms that Jesus was accompanied by a significant group of female disciples. The feminine form of **πολλοί** confirms that these were all women. There should be caution against overlooking this larger group, as Luke's emphasis on women's financial and personal support is unparalleled in the Gospels.<sup>xxxiv</sup> It is of note that in male-oriented literature like the New Testament, women are typically mentioned only when they are exceptional or problematic.<sup>xxxv</sup> Here, their exceptional nature is clear: they defied societal norms to support and accompany Jesus. Their participation in Jesus' mission prefigures the inclusive nature of the kingdom of God, where *there is neither male nor female*, in Christ (Galatians 3:28).

The last section of this peri-cope highlights the financial and material support that certain women provided for Jesus' mission. Their role as benefactors is underscored in the clause: **αἵτινες διακόνουν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐταῖς**, *who were ministering to them out of their own means*. The main word **διακόνουν**, an imperfect active indicative, third-person plural of **διακονέω**, is crucial in understanding their role. Its noun form, **διακονία**, is a broad term in Greek, whose meaning depends largely on context. Luke is aware of the various nuances of this word and employs it differently in Acts 6:1-6, where **διακονία** refers both to serving tables (v. 2) and serving the word (v. 4).<sup>xxxvi</sup>

In Luke 8:1-3, another dimension of **διακονία** emerges; ministering through financial support. The Greek word **διακονία** appears thirty-seven times in the New Testament, with frequent occurrences in Luke-Acts (seven times in Luke, two in Acts), as well as in Matthew (five times) and Mark (four times). Sometimes, it retains its original sense of waiting on tables (Luke 17:8; John 12:2). For example, after Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law, she immediately began *to wait*, **διακονέω**, on him (Luke 4:39). Her ability to resume service signified her restored health. However, Jesus' concept of **διακονία** extends beyond this, encompassing acts such as providing food, shelter, clothing, and visiting the sick and prisoners (Matt 25:44; Luke 22:26; Mark 15:41). Thus, the term is not restricted by gender, occupation, or social status but embodies the broader concept of Christian service, characterised by selfless love and true discipleship.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

In Luke 8:3, **διακονέω** clearly refers to *financial and material support*, as indicated by the phrase **ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων**, *out of their possessions*. This phrase defines the nature of their service; it was economic rather than domestic. Like Simon's

mother-in-law (Luke 4:39), these women had been healed and responded by serving. However, their **διακονία** was different: it went beyond table service to sustained financial contributions. It is considered that Luke 8:1-3 is not a healing narrative but a summary passage. Therefore, unlike Simon's mother-in-law, these women are not mentioned to demonstrate the immediacy of their healing but rather their ongoing role as Jesus' patrons.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Traveling missionaries required financial support, and in this case, Jesus and the Twelve depended on these women's contributions because they had abandoned their means of livelihood to follow him (Luke 5:11). Furthermore, Jesus' family was unlikely to be supporting him, as they had previously rejected him (Luke 4:16-30). Thus, in the context of Luke 8:1-3, the women's **διακονία** primarily involved financial sponsorship of Jesus' itinerant ministry.

A closer analysis of the prepositional phrase **ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐταῖς** reveals the depth of their financial support. The Greek word **ὑπαρχόντων**, a present active participle, neuter genitive plural of **ὑπάρχω**, meaning *to exist or to possess*, functions as a noun. It is frequently used in Luke's Gospel to refer to wealth or material goods. In Luke 8:3, it denotes personal financial resources, just as in Acts 2:45, where the early believers sold their *property and possessions*, **ὑπαρχόντων**, to support one another.<sup>xxxviii</sup> In addition, **αὐταῖς**, the final Greek word in the sentence, possessive pronoun, feminine dative plural, meaning *to them*. This possessive pronoun clarifies that the resources belonged to the women themselves, rather than being derived from their relatives. The phrase **ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐταῖς** can therefore be literally translated as, *from the possessions belonging to them*. This construction suggests that the women were financially independent and had their own means of wealth, allowing them to provide for Jesus and his disciples.

### **Practical Application of Inferences from Luke 8:1-3 to Contemporary Christianity**

The focal Bible passage presents a striking depiction of women in the role of benefactors; a position usually reserved for wealthy men in antiquity. Their financial and material support for Jesus' ministry demonstrates their commitment to his mission and reflects the broader inclusivity of the kingdom of God. The women were not merely passive followers; they were active participants, investing their personal resources to sustain Jesus' work. Their commitment challenges traditional notions of discipleship, showing that service, to Jesus, extends beyond preaching to include material and financial support as an essential component of Christian ministry. When people have the joys of the gospel, when they feel the consolations of religion themselves, they will somehow or other find means to contribute to the welfare of others. They will be willing to labour with reference to it, or they will find something which they can sacrifice or spare.

In contrast, there are wealthy men and women in present day churches with little or no concern for the work of God. Such individuals spend a lot on mundane things to the negligence of the Kingdom business. This study serves as an eye-opener and or a clarion call to all the beneficiaries of the Gospel to go a step further to becoming a benefactor as well, supporting the mission work with their material possessions. Following is the opinion that Christian ministry must be targeted to meeting the specific needs of the people. The women that voluntarily accompanied Jesus in his missionary journey were said to have been healed by Jesus. Their dire needs have been met. Though, the particular passage where the healing occurred was not recorded in the Gospels, the soundness of their mind made them fit to follow Jesus through the journey. Thus they were emotionally fit to carry out their ministry of providing financial supports for Jesus' missionary activities. Another position stresses that discipleship should be the hallmark of Christian ministry. It is noteworthy that the women in the text were first committed disciples of Jesus before they released their resources to support his ministry. Ministry should first focus on the heart of people and not on their purse.

### **Conclusion**

Using example of the women in the analysed focal text, the study concludes that beneficiaries of the gospel ministry are expected to be pertinent benefactors of practical mission works as well. The women, having being healed of their diseases became followers of Jesus. They defied all odds to meet Jesus' requirements to follow him; and not only that, they made available their resources to Jesus in appreciation of what he had done for them. Effective Christian mission work thrives in an atmosphere of partnership. The women partnered with Jesus by using their resources to take care of his mission needs. Mission works will make tremendous progress when partnership is encouraged and embraced through generous contribution. Therefore, this study is recommended for Christians, Pastors, theological educators and all who in one way or the other have been beneficiaries of the gospel mission work. Concerted efforts should be made to continually support Christian mission work in cash and kind as exemplified by the women in the focal Bible passage, Luke 8:1-3.

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