

Matthias Olufemi Dada Ojo

*Department of Sociology
Crawford University of the Apostolic Faith Mission,
Igbesa, Ogun State, Nigeria
femfenty@gmail.com
matthiasojo@crawforduniversity.edu.ng*

**Incorporation of Ayelala traditional religion
into Nigerian criminal justice system:
An opinion survey of Igbesa community people in
Ogun State, Nigeria**

Abstract: Ayelala is a popular deity in the western part of Nigeria. The deity is well known for its efficacy in punishing offenders of law and order when invoked. With 52 participants, this study investigated whether Ayelala should be incorporated into Nigeria Criminal Justice and political Systems. A total of 94% of the participants agreed in one form or the other that the deity is very efficient in punishing offenders of law and order when invoked. For its inclusion in Nigeria Criminal Justice System, 54% wanted it to be included and implemented. The study, therefore, recommended that survey should be conducted in Nigerian society on whether traditional criminal justice system like Ayelala should be included in the Modern Criminal Justice System or not. If the people so desired that it should be included, government should take steps towards the implementation of the decision of the people. Other recommendations are discussed in this paper.

Key words: Ayelala, criminal justice system, invocation, offenders, corruption

Introduction

Ayelala deity is a popular deity among the Yoruba people. The deity is predominantly worshipped among the Ilaje and Ijaw people in Ondo State of Nigeria. However, the influence of this deity cut across all the entire part of Yoruba land, even beyond. The wielded influences of this deity are in the area of detecting and punishing offenders and taking of oath which are considered very dreadful and well respected among the Yoruba people. This paper thoroughly investigated the opinions of the people on whether Ayelala should be incorporated into Nigeria Justice Systems or not. A survey was carried out on the question, using the Igbesa Community as a research setting.

The research was carried out because of the need to suppress the wave of corruption in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the criminal justice system in Nigeria has not been able to overcome the problem of corruption which has seriously impeded the socio-economic development of the nation. Moreover, it has been clearly established that Nigeria criminal justice system is corrupt itself. Therefore, the system has nothing good to offer in efforts to fight corruption in Nigeria. Hence, there is a need for us to go back to the traditional ways through which corruption can be suppressed in Nigeria as a nation. The incorporation of traditional methods of controlling crime and ensuring justice are considered much more effective than the modern day criminal justice system which is very foreign to the Nigerian people.

Ayelala deity has been selected based on the acclaimed efficiency and efficacy of the deity in detecting and punishing offenders of law. Therefore, this research work sought to know the opinions of the people on whether or not Ayelala deity, should be incorporated into Nigeria criminal justice system which, perhaps, may be more effective and reliable than modern-day criminal justice system which is totally alien to the cultures of the people of Nigeria in administration of justice.

Literature review

Afe (2012) explained that Ayelala was formally a slave woman who was used as a sacrificial 'lamb' over the issue of adultery committed by one Tene-tan (a commoner) with the wife of Keko (a high chief). By the time she was about to be killed, she exclaimed Ayelala (*the world is terrible*).

Ayelala is a deified goddess whose place of origin can be traced to the people of Ilaje in Ondo State, Nigeria. This slave woman was made to bear the consequences of the sin of another who had run to take asylum among the Ijaws; an act which caused serious disaffection between the Ijaws and the Ilajes. It is important to add that before sacrificing her, a covenant of reconciliation and ritual kinship was made between the Ilajes and Ijaws on the following terms, among others – Ayelala was to kill any member of the parties to the covenant who plans evil against one another; Ayelala was to punish with death, any member of the two groups who practices stealing, sorcery and witchcraft against each other (Don 2006)

According to Ahiokhai (2012), Ayelala is a good example of a deified ancestor. The deified ancestors were human beings who had lived extraordinary and mysterious lives on earth, so much that when they died they were deified as god (Omotoye 2011). Ikaile people worship Ayelala (Jemiriye and Awosusi 2007) but it is a deity that is widely worshipped and synonymous with Ilaje people.

Although the Ilaje are found along the coast of West – Africa, their traditional territory lies between latitude 6⁰ and 6⁰ 30 N and longitude 4⁰ S and 6⁰E. The Ilaje constitute one of the Yoruba subgroups in the South Eastern part of Yoruba land. They constitute the bulk of the people in Ilaje and Ese Odo Local Government Areas of Ondo State (Ajetunmobi 2012).

The most important ritualistic instrument for the maintenance of order and social justice is Ayelala. The deity is considered to have an uninterrupted extensive power in the traditional administration of social justice (Ajetunmobi 2012; Afe 2012).

There are two types of crimes: namely social and spiritual crimes. Social crimes cover those which upset the societal harmony. Notable among such crimes are adultery, fighting, lying, stealing, ego centrism and similar ones. Spiritual crimes are viewed with more seriousness. They include: incest, murder, suicide, killing sacred animals, unmasking masquerades and speaking of evil of elders. These crimes have serious consequences upon the entire community. Usually, many of these crimes are committed against covenants made between the family and the ancestors, community and the land, or the community and the divinities (Ogunbiyi 2010).

Ayelala is known to be an effective deity that punishes crime of various types. Ayelala is a powerful and widely respected goddess because of her capacity, and wizards caught up in the clutches of Ayelala are known to confess their sins in the open. It could be invoked to unravel the cause of diabolical cause of mysteries (www.ilajecwa.org.uk).

A victim of robbery would go to a shrine and ask the goddess to sanction the culprit in a particular fashion and would promise rewards to the goddess. The culprit, possessed by the goddess, would make his way to the shrine and confess. Most often, series of strange deaths may occur in the culprit's family (Aina 2013). Afe (2012) argued that the spirit of Ayelala can be invoked in civil and criminal matters such as: adultery, theft, witchcraft, murder and related social crimes capable of causing social disorder in the society.

In 2005, when the Oba market in Benin City went up in flames, the hoodlums in the area had a field day; looting traders' belongings in the market and breaking into many shops not affected by the fire were emptied by looters. However, when a service of Ayelala was employed and the announcement was made that the looters should return the goods they have stolen or face the wrath of Ayelala, the goods earlier carted away resurfaced in the market in the following day (Don, 2006). Those that refused to return the goods were killed by Ayelala. Most Benin City dwellers are contented that the looters "got just rewards" (Njokede 2010).

Ayelala may also be placed in an agricultural farm land. According to Ato-lagbe (2011), Ayelala is often placed in a farm land or plantation to forestall loss of farm products to thieves. Ayelala infests thieves and trespassers in its

domain with mumps – a disease that causes terrible swelling of all body parts. The offender would not get any relief until he confesses and brings back all items stolen from the farm. Ayelala was a time placed in some Yoruba indigenous compounds. Moreover, it can be placed in cocoa plantations to curb cocoa pods theft.

Finally, Ayelala can be invoked to sanction an oath made between two parties. Oath taking in the traditional sense is a condition where total loyalty or adherences to certain agreement and conditionality is prescribed and administered in the beneficiaries of the agreement, and the exercise is usually fetish. Anyone who has taken such oath will not escape the punishment or sanction of a particular supernatural force or deity if the oath is broken. Oath taking is usually done at the Ayelala's shrine. (Oviasuyi *et al.* 2011).

The process involved in the invocation of Ayelala deity required some material things and processes.

According to Larr (2013), to invoke Ayelala deity, there must be a cock or duck, white cloth, seven needles, seven parrot feathers, seven alligator peppers and seven native chinks. All these ingredients will be concealed in the stomach of the cock or duck and wrapped with the white cloth. The cock will be eventually soaked in the Ayelala water and a curse will be pronounced on the evil doer. When the evil doer is caught by the deity he or she will swell as the cock or duck swells in the water.

Ayelala is highly praised by her worshippers and highly revered by them. Fatumbi (2013) rendered the praises of Ayelala as follows:

Praise, praise, praise,
 Mother, mother, mother,
 The Very mother, the very mother, the very mother.
 Hail! Chief of the mothers: the mighty and awesome Queen.
 She, who baths in gin like the foreign men,
 She who takes vengeance when the evil – doer has been forgotten,
 She, who can never be guilty when she takes action,
 May it be so.

Ayelala prowess and power, according to Familusi (2012) is a credit to women folk. However, it should be noted that influence of Ayelala has been seriously limited among the Yoruba people as a result of introducing "civilization". Obioha (2010) argued that at various times and in various circumstances, Africa has interacted with the rest of the world. These are in the moments of Trans – Atlantic slave trade, Colonialism, post – colonialism and the present age of current globalization and these have affected, worrisomely, the economies, politics and cultures of the African people. Moreover, "civilization", according to Arowolo (2010) was just another concept of domination; imposition of incoming new culture over traditional cultural values. Ayelala

values in areas of social justice and social order have been seriously affected by the Western culture and foreign religions.

Finally, the cults of Ayelala have been infected with corrupt priests. Ayelala, according to Kreutzer (2011) has been alleged of aiding the social problem of human trafficking by supporting the activities of human traffickers in Nigeria. Human traffickers had been alleged of using Ayelala to intimidate their victims to succumb them to the control of their traffickers.

Methodology applied

This research was purely survey research. It involved the collection of information from a sample of individuals through responses to questions (Schutt 2004). Both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied. Qualitative research relies on interpretive or critical social science. Qualitative data give researchers rich information about social processes in specific settings. Qualitative research relies on the informal wisdom that has developed from the experiences of the researchers. On the other hand, quantitative research relies on a positivist approach to social science. Researchers using quantitative approach speak a language of "variables and hypotheses". Quantitative researches emphasis precisely, measuring variables and testing hypotheses. It is contrary to the core assumptions and goals of interpretive social science (Neuman 2003).

Non probability sampling design was used to select the respondents who participated in the study. The research setting itself (Igbesa community) was conveniently sampled by the researcher, and the same convenience sampling was used to select the research participants. A convenience sample is a group of elements (often people) that are readily accessible to and therefore convenient for the researcher (Adler and Clark 1999). For the research instruments or tools, in depth interview was used under the qualitative research method. In depth interview involves open-ended relatively unstructured questioning in which the interviewer seeks in-depth information on the interviewee's feelings, experiences and perception (Schutt, 2004). However, a structured questionnaire was used under the quantitative method. Questionnaire is a survey instrument containing the questions in a self administered survey (Schutt 2004). A questionnaire forms an integrated whole where the researcher weaves questions together so that they flow smoothly (Neuman 2003).

In the process of data analyses, content analysis was used to analyse the data derived from the interviews conducted and the photographs relevant to the study. However, frequency and percentage methods were employed in the analysis of the data gathered from the administered questionnaires. The recommendations and the summary were based on the outcomes of the findings from the research.

Data analyses and interpretations

The data analyses and interpretations were based on the fifty (50) questionnaires administered among the respondents and the two in-depth interviews granted by two personalities contacted on the study. As explained earlier on, the questionnaires which formed the quantitative part of the study were analyzed using percentages and the qualitative part of the study (in -depth interviews and photographs) were analyzed using content analyses.

Socio-demographic data of the respondents

The Socio – Bio Data Characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study were explained using the table below:

Table 1 Socio – Demographic Data of the Respondents

	Socio - Data	Frequency	Percentage
1	Sex		
	Male	27	54
	Female	23	46
	Total	50	100
2	Age		
	15years – 20years	1	2
	21years – 26years	4	8
	27years – 32years	7	14
	33years – 39years	17	34
	40years and Above	21	42
	Total	50	100
3	Occupation		
1	Teaching	30	60
2	Civil Service	18	36
3	Doctor	1	2
4	Student	1	2
	Total	50	100
4	Religion		
	Christianity	37	74
	Islam	11	22
	Traditional Religion	2	4
	Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

The first variable examined in the study was the sex of the respondents who participated in the study. The table above shows that 54 percent of the

respondents who participated were male; while 46 percent were female. It can be comprehended that the two sexes were adequately and fairly represented in the study. The second variable considered was the age- range of the respondents who participated in the study. Cursory look at the table shows that those between 15 years and 20 years were 2 percent; those between 21 years and 26 years were 8 percent; those between 27 years and 32 years were 14 percents; those between 33 years and 39 years were 34 percent and finally those 40 years and above were 42 percent. The table shows that most of the respondents who participated in the study were adults with social experiences.

Another variable considered in the study was the occupation or profession of the participants who took part in the study. The table shows that 60 percent of the respondents were teachers, 36 percent were civil servants, 2 percent, doctor and another 2 percent, student. The analyses show that most of the respondents were teachers. Teaching is a noble profession where numerous social phenomena were being taught.

Moreover, civil servants worked directly with the politicians and people who occupied positions at the government level. Hence, 36 percent of them who participated in the study were believed to be insiders to the happenings in the field of politics, governance and Criminal Justice System, and the wealth of experiences they contributed to this study was considered to be of high value to the study.

Finally, the study examined the religious affiliations of the participants. Religion was a central issue in the study.

Hence, religions of the respondents were examined because it has to do with the study. The analyses on religion showed that the majority of the respondents were Christians (74 percent). The adherents of Islam were represented by 22 percents and 4 percent were Traditional Religions practitioners. The Igbesa community which was the setting of the study is a Christians' dominated community. The community is not far from Badagry in Lagos State, a place where the White Christian Missionaries first visited in Nigeria. Hence, Badagry and its environs (Igbesa Community included) are Christian dominated areas. Hence, the highest number of Christians (74 percent) who participated in the study was not by accident.

The study started by requesting the participants to signify their awareness of Ayelala as a deity. The responses supplied indicated that 50 percent of the respondents were strongly aware that Ayelala as a deity exists. 38 percent also indicated that they were aware; while 6 percent indicated that they were somehow aware. Finally, 6 percent were not aware. The analyses showed that most of the respondents were aware (although the degrees of awareness vary) that Ayelala exists. Ayelala is a popular deity and well known throughout the western part of Nigeria and even beyond. The popularity of the deity was confirmed by the majority of the respondents who signified their awareness that the deity really exists.

The study also investigated whether the participants agreed that the deity was feared by the people or not. The data analyses show that 40 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that Ayelala deity was really feared by the people. Another 56 percent agreed that the deity was really feared by the people, while 4 percent somehow agreed too. Ayelala is a fearful deity among the Yoruba people. The fear emanated from the power of the deity to punish offenders or criminals with deadly diseases. Everything about the deity brings fear. The shrines of the deity were usually loaded with fear and all the powerful charms and objects (see Figure 2) can even make the innocent to tremble. It was the fear that usually terrified offenders and criminals when brought before the Ayelala shrines.

The study also investigated the power of the deity by requesting the participants to signify whether they agreed that the deity is very powerful or not. Running through the analyses, 32 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that the deity is very powerful; 36 percent agreed that the deity is very powerful and 16 percent somehow agreed that the deity is very powerful. However, 16 percent did not agree that the deity is very powerful. The over-whelming majority of the respondents who agreed one way or the other that the deity is very powerful confirmed the general knowledge of the deity to be a very powerful one.

The efficiency/efficacy of the deity was also investigated in the study; 38 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that the deity is very efficient when invoked to punish crime; 40 percent of the respondents also agreed with the same statement; 16 percent also somehow agreed with the efficiency/efficacy of the deity in punishing crime when invoked. Finally 6 percent did not agree that the deity is efficient in punishing crime. The critical look at the analyses shows that majority agreed, one way or the other, that the deity is efficient in punishing crime. Hence, it can be concluded that the deity is very efficient in punishing crime. It is the efficiency and efficacy of this deity that made many to believe and rely on the deity in punishing offenders or criminals of law. Many people that have been done wrong usually dragged the purported wrong doers to the shrine to swear in order to prove their innocence of the wrong doing. Such purported wrong doers were usually requested to swear and drink Ayelala's water (see Figure 1) to prove that they were innocent of the offences or crimes alleged against them. Most of the time, Ayelala shrines were usually busy places with numerous people- victims of crime and the alleged criminals, waiting to be attended to in administration of justice (see Figure 3).

The testimony of people being punished by Ayelala was also investigated in the study. 50 percent of the respondents who participated in the study testified that they had heard or witnessed in the past somebody punished by Ayelala's invocation for a particular crime or offence committed. 40 percent of the respondents had not heard or witnessed such incident and 10 percent cannot really say or confirm such experience of witnessing somebody punished by Ayelala.

However, the majority (50 percent) who claimed that they had heard or witnessed, in the past, somebody punished by Ayelala really confirmed that the deity truly punishes wrong doers. Many people were known to have died as a result of punishment from Ayelala deity for crime or offence committed by such people. An example of such featured in (Figure 4). Most of the time, death was usually the punishment for committing offence or crime when Ayelala was invoked, except the offenders or criminals confess and appropriate rituals are done to reverse the death consequence.

The study also investigated what the participants thought of Nigeria police in the administration of justice. 4 percent of the respondents claimed that Nigeria police has done excellently in administration of justice. 2 percent of the respondents signified that the performance has been very good so far. 18 percent of the respondents rated the Nigeria police's performance in administration of justice to be good; 10 percent rated it to be poor; 14 percent, to be very poor and finally 52 percent rated it to be fair.

The ratings as reflected from the analyses were not all that favourable to the police. Nigeria police are not living to the expectations of most Nigerians because of the corruption within the Nigeria police and the entire Nigerian society. Nigeria police is also known to have been politicized, and "to dance to the tune of the government rather than being people's oriented police". One of the two interviewees had this to say during the interview:

"Nigeria Police is working on the structure in Nigerian society. I would like to refer to the comments made by the former commissioner for police in Rivers State on the State's Assembly crisis. The man said he was receiving instructions from his boss. There is hierarchy in Nigeria police. The commissioner was responsible to the Inspector General of police, who is, in turn, responsible to the president. According to him, he was carrying out the order from above. Hence, the Nigeria police would side with the government who put them into place. Some of the police may be willing to do well, but they may found themselves helpless". IDI/ Crawford University, Igbesa /04/07/2014.

"I do not see people having full confidence in the Nigeria police. If the people have full confidence in the Nigeria police there would not be jungle justice that pervades the entire society. The recent case of Soka in Ibadan, Oyo State was a demonstration of insecurity in Nigeria. The den recently discovered by police, was where kidnappers murdered people, and sold their human parts for money, and for power rituals to the politicians and the big people in the society. This shows that the police in Nigeria cannot secure the lives of the people. If the police were to do their work thoroughly, they would uncover those behind this atrocity. But I do not think that police can have a successful investigation on this. Many people involved in this atrocity were big politicians, big people who have names in our society, so people do not have confidence in the police. Ejigbo case is another example; where a woman was beaten up and had her private part smashed with pepper (she was alleged to have stolen pepper). It was a serious jungle justice on the part of the people. This happened because the people do not have confidence in the police. They preferred taking laws into their hands." IDI/Crawford University/04/07/2014

An analysis of the above quoted response shows that Nigeria police cannot adequately protect the lives of the people and cannot be trusted with bringing justice to them. "A jungle justice" is a strong indication of not having confidence in the Nigeria police as rightly stated by the interviewee.

The administration of justice was equally taken into consideration during the study. The respondents were asked to rate the Nigeria courts in administration of justice in Nigeria. Six percent of the respondent said the administration of justice by Nigeria courts was very good; 26 percent signified it to be good; 44 percent viewed it as a fair one, 8 percent said it was very poor and 16 percent, said it was poor. It can therefore be summarized from the analyses of the responses that Nigeria courts also were not considered to be doing their best in the dispensation of justice in the country.

The interviewee who participated in the study gave these responses concerning the Nigeria courts during the interview conducted:

"The Nigerian courts are better than the police. Although, we have some bad 'eggs' among them. The present Chief Justice of the Federation is doing a thorough work. We have some corrupt judges being booted out of the judiciary because of their bad behaviours. This is very commendable. I have not heard where an executive would give a judgment to the judiciary to be read on a particular case. This is to show that Judiciary is still independent. However, this does not mean that we do not have some bad eggs among them". ID1/ Crawford University/ 04/072014.

The interviewee, from the comments made above, has more confidence in Nigeria courts than the Nigeria police. Although, he was still of the opinion that some bad 'eggs' exist within the judiciary.

The study investigated how preferred, from the respondents' views, is the administration of social justice and social order in traditional ways to Modern Criminal Justice system. When data supplied on this were analyzed, 30 percent of the respondents well preferred traditional way of social justice and social order to Modern Criminal Justice System; 36 percent also preferred the same to modern criminal justice system; 20 percent also somehow preferred it to Modern Criminal Justice, and finally, 14 percent did not prefer traditional ways of social justice and social order over the modern criminal justice system. The analysis shows that majority wanted and preferred traditional ways of social justice and order to the modern criminal justice system. Hence, it signified that many still believe that traditional ways of dispensing justice and order were considered more effective and reliable than the modern criminal justice system which has been considered to be loaded with corruption and injustice.

The study went further to investigate whether the respondents wanted Ayelala to be invoked to punish criminals/offenders in our society. The analyses showed that 24 percent strongly agreed with its invocation; 34 percent also agreed; 12 percent agreed somehow and 30 percent did not agree.

We discovered from the analyses that those who wanted that Ayelala should be invoked to punish offenders were in the majority.

Invocation of Ayelala during the swearing in ceremony for the elected politicians and public office holders appointed was also investigated during the study. Fifty percent agreed that Ayelala should be invoked during swearing ceremony for the elected politicians and appointed public office holders; 20 percent also agreed with the invocation; 8 percent somehow agreed, while 22 did not agree. The analyses of the data signified that overwhelming majority of the respondents wanted Ayelala to be invoked during the swearing in ceremony for the elected politicians and appointed public office holders. However, such application of the invocation would depend on the individual belief as one of the interviewees pointed out:

"Requesting the politicians to swear with Ayelala during the process of taking oath of office by politicians would be based on the individual belief". ID1/ Crawford University/ 04/07/2014.

Furthermore, the study wanted to know if swearing with Ayelala during inauguration of elected politicians or public office holders would curb corruption or not. Corruption is considered to be an endemic polity disease in Nigeria, and as such political system cannot meet the aspirations of the people of the polity as stated by an interviewee in the study thus:

"The political system, meeting the aspirations of the Nigerian people is empirical. The system may be meeting the aspirations of some people and not meeting the aspirations of others. However, at the level of entire society, I do not think the political system is doing well because of the harsh and unfriendly economy in the country. Most of the problems in the Nigerian economy sector were as a result of bad leadership from our politicians". ID1/ Crawford University/ 04/07/2014.

On the magnitude of the corruption in Nigerian society, the interviewee commented thus:

"We do not have empirical basis to justify the extent of corruption in Nigerian politics. However, going by the media reports on television, radio and newspapers, one can really say that the problem of corruption in Nigerian politics is at the highest ebb. Using the word "monumental" would be an underrated adjective". ID1/ Crawford University/ 04/07/2014.

It can be concluded from the above comments that corruption, no doubt, is a big problem in Nigerian society. From the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires administered, 66 percents of the respondents were of the opinion that invocation of Ayelala in Nigeria Criminal Justice System would curb or reduce corruption among politicians and public office holders. Twenty

percent did not subscribe to Ayelala's invocation, in curbing or reducing corruption, and 14 percent cannot say whether its invocation would reduce corruption or not. However, the majority who were of the opinion that invocation of Ayelala would reduce corruption signified that many people believed it would reduce corruption because of the potency and the efficacy of the deity in dealing with offences and crimes in the society.

The study again requested the respondents to signify whether they wanted Ayelala to be incorporated into Nigeria Criminal Justice System to punish offenders and restore Sanity into Nigerian Society, especially among politicians and public office holders. When the data on this were analyzed, 54 percent (the highest) wanted it to be incorporated into Nigeria Criminal Justice System. Thirty percent did not want it, while 16 percent cannot say whether it should be incorporated or not. However, the analyses showed that the majority of the respondents wanted Ayelala to be incorporated into the Nigeria Criminal Justice System. Hence, it was a strong indication that many believed in the efficiency and the efficacy of the deity in administration of justice and, therefore, wanted its inclusion in Nigeria justice system.

The respondents were requested to mention how Ayelala can be incorporated into Nigeria Criminal Justice System. Many responses were given concerning this and the summary of the responses are highlighted below:

1. Some respondents suggested that implementation of Ayelala deity as a part of the Nigeria Criminal Justice System should first commence at the local or community level before being gradually introduced at the other levels of government.
2. Some respondents suggested that traditional Criminal Justice System should be introduced into the school curricular; by this the awareness of it would be created at the grass root level.
3. Public awareness was another way recommended by respondents through which Ayelala invocation into Nigeria Criminal Justice can be encouraged. Awareness should be made so that people will know the significance of the deity in the administration of justice and order. Hence, orientation programmes on this should be carried out.
4. Some recommended that before Ayelala deity can be introduced, it should be tested and verified and confirmed to clear all doubts. After this, its introduction into the Nigeria Criminal Justice System should be from ward level, to local government, to states and to the entire country.
5. In order to legalize the invocation of Ayelala, the bill must be sponsored and such bill must be passed into law. Therefore, the National assembly must ensure that the due processes are followed regarding the inclusion of the invocation into Nigeria Criminal Justice System.
6. Finally, some respondents advocated that regular evaluation of the system should be conducted to block all possible or likely loopholes in the invocation of Ayelala in Nigeria Criminal Justice System.

The study was aware that some challenges may hinder the implementation of Ayelala as part of the Criminal Justice System. Hence, the study requested the respondents to highlight possible challenges that the inclusion of Ayelala into Nigeria legal system may encounter. The under listed were the challenges mentioned by the respondents:

1. Ayelala is a deity dominated in the Western part of Nigeria. Other regions may not buy the idea because they would consider it as an imposition from other region.
2. Nigeria is a secular state with different tribes, languages and different religions. Other religions i.e. Christianity and Islam may not agree to the inclusion of Ayelala as part of Nigeria Criminal Justice System.
3. There may be emergency of false Ayelala priests which may bring corruption into the system.
4. Politicians may block the introduction of Ayelala into Nigeria Criminal Justice System, because some of them are corrupt and they know that Ayelala is very efficient in dealing with offenders and criminals. Hence, accepting its inclusion in legal system means these corrupt politicians have already dug their graves.

The second interviewee in this study spoke extensively on the challenges that inclusion of Ayelala into legal system may face, thus:

"There are issues to examine in the incorporation of Ayelala into the Criminal Justice and political systems. We need to consider the moral value of it. Secondly, Nigeria is a secular State. Other regions where the worship of the deity is not practiced may not buy the idea. It means every region would likely implement the incorporation of their common deities in their regions". ID1/ Crawford University/ 04/07/2014.

The interviewee went further to clarify that the implementation of Ayelala as part of the legal system may only succeed at the regional level, not at the federal level. He commented thus:

"If the incorporation of Ayelala into Criminal Justice and political systems is done at the region, what of those elected to serve at the federal level? What are they going to use to swear for them? Hence, it would be so difficult to harmonize this. Moreover, the harmonization of all the deities from all the regions may be very difficult". ID1/ Crawford University/04/07/2014

The interviewee also mentioned the problem of manipulation from fake priests as mentioned by the other respondents. The interviewee talked of Ayelala invocation and how corruption may mess up the system:

"There would be problem of manipulation. The entire society of Nigeria is very corrupt. What is the possibility that Ayelala priests would not be corrupted by the so called Nigerian politicians and Criminal Justice System? When the Ayelala priests are corrupted, can invocation of Ayelala be a genuine and effective one in the hands of corrupt pri-

ests? Hence, corruption may lead to the manipulation of the whole process and eventually the objectives may be defeated". ID1 / Crawford University/ 07/04/2014.

Lastly, the study requested the respondents to briefly give their personal opinions on incorporation of Ayelala into Nigeria Criminal Justice and political systems. The responses of the participants are highlighted below:

1. If Ayelala is introduced into the system, it will make justice less expensive, and if it is well managed, it will make the Nigeria Criminal Justice system efficient and effective.
2. The introduction of Ayelala would reduce the rate of crime in Nigeria society.
3. The inclusion of Ayelala in the Criminal Justice System would reduce the rate of corruption among politicians and public office holders.
4. It would also reduce the rate of fraud in financial and non-financial organizations.
5. Finally, it is a welcome idea for social justice and order, because it would bring sanity into the Nigeria Society.

Summary, conclusion and recommendation

The study discovered that Ayelala is still recognized as fearful, powerful and efficient deity in administration of justice. The study also discovered that the police and the courts are not doing their best to give the type of justice demanded for by the people. The aspiration of the people and expectation of "good justice" were not adequately met by the Modern Criminal Justice System.

This is reflected in the ways the respondents rated the police and the courts in this study. Therefore, there should be alternative from the traditional ways of ensuring justice and social order. The respondents have demonstrated overwhelmingly that Ayelala should be incorporated into Nigeria Criminal Justice System, which they considered preferable to the Modern criminal justice system.

It can be concluded, therefore, that Modern Criminal Justice System has failed many Nigerians. Hence, there is a need to look inward into the traditional ways of ensuring justice and social order which is considered more effective, efficient and more reliable than the Modern Justice System, as demonstrated in this study. The study does not request the government to do away entirely with the Modern Criminal Justice System but traditional justice system should form part of the Criminal Justice System, so that where the Modern Justice System is weak the traditional justice system can take care of the lapses.

Based on the findings in this study, it is recommended that government should embark on extensive opinion surveys of the people on the inclusion of traditional justice system into modern criminal justice system. Such surveys must be carried out by competent hands, and adequate reports and recommen-

dations on the issue must be presented to the government and should be implemented without any prejudice. If the inclusion of traditional ways of justice and order i.e. Ayelala is so desired by the people, the government should take bold steps in harmonizing the same into the existing Modern Criminal Justice System with all legal backings. The government should also put into place, the legal and socio-political structures that would accommodate the changes in the Nigerian society. Finally, constant evaluation and re-evaluation of the traditional criminal justice are needed to take care of the shortcomings, by proffering solutions to them. If all these steps can be taken, it would end the problem of Nigeria Criminal Justice System and officials that are ineffective, corrupt and repressive as stated by Abdul Karim (2012).

Bibliography

- Abdul Karim, Yahaya. 2012. Socio – Economic Effects of Judicial Corruption in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 1 (1): 31-36.
- Arowolo, Dare. 2010. The Effects of Western civilization and Culture on Africa. *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 1 (1).
- Atolagbe, A. M. O. 2011. Security Consciousness in Indigenous Nigerian Houses: A Preliminary Survey of Yoruba Ethno-Medical Devices. *Ethno-Methodology* 5 (1): 57-62.
- Afe, Adedayo Emmanuel. 2013. Taboos and the Maintenance of Social Order in the Old Ondo Province, South – Western Nigeria. *African Research Review – An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia* 7 (1) serial 28 : 95-109.
- Aina, Adebayo. 2013. Maduabuchi Dukor and the Legacies of Ontological Practices in African Thought System. *Open Journal of Philosophy* 3 (1) : 168-173.
- Ajetunmobi, R. O. 2012. Theories and Concepts in Migration and Settlement Studies: The Case of the Coastal Yoruba. *The Social Sciences* 7 (2) 289-296.
- Aihiokhai, Simonmary A. 2012. *Ancestorhood in Yoruba Religion and Sainthood in Christianity: Envisioning an Ecological Awareness and Responsibility*. www.saintleo.edu/media/
- Adler, Emily Stier and Roger Clark. 1999. *How It's Done: An Invitation to Social Research*. Canada : Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Don, Akhilomen. 2006. The Resurgence of Ayelala in Benin Kingdom: An Indictment of the Conventional Dispensation of Justice in Nigeria. www.xa.ying.com
- Fatumbi, Awo Falokun. 2013. *Oriki Egun – Praising the Ancestors*.
- Familusi, O. O. 2012. African Culture and the Status of Women: The Yoruba Example. *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5 (1): 299-312.
- Jemiriye, T. F. and Akinola Awosusi. 2007. Irunmole (Spiritual Entities) of Yoruba Traditional Religion. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 4 (4): 548-552.
- Krutzer, Mary. 2011. The War on Migration and Trafficking into Prostitution from Africa to Europe. www.transatlantic.sats.edu/publications/books.
- Larr, Frisk. 2013. Africa's Diabolical Entrapment: Exploring the Negative Impact of Christianity, Superstition and Witchcraft on Psychological, Structural and Scientific Growth in Black Africa. Retrieved from www.books.google.com.

- Njokede, Sunday. 2010. Ayelala: God Killed Looters of Oba Market Fire in Benin City. www.sharareporters.com.
- Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2003. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 5th edition. USA: A and B.
- Omotoye, Rotimi Williams. 2011. The study of African Traditional Religion and Its Challenges in Contemporary Times. *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 1 (2): 21-40.
- Ogunbiyi, Olatunde Oyewole. 2010. Hebrews 10:26-31 in the Context of Covenant Making in Africa. www.unilorin.edu.ng/publications/Hebrew/.
- Oviasuyi, P. O., Ajagun, S. O. and Lawrence Isirajoje. 2011. Fetish Oath Taking in Nigerian Politics and Administration: Bane of Development. *Journal of Social Sciences* 27 (3): 193-200.
- Obiona, Uwaezuoke Precious. 2010. Globalization and the Future of African Culture. *Philosophical Papers and Reviews* 2 (1) : 1-8
- Schutt, Russell. 2004. *Investigating the Social World. The Process and Practice of Research* / 4th Edition. USA: Pine Forge Press.
- www.ilajecwa.org.uk.

Figures



Figure 1 Source: www.nairaland.com

A woman swearing at Ayelala Shrine. Swearing with Ayelala Deity is considered more effective and reliable than the modern ways of swearing and oath taking among the Yoruba People.



Figure 2 Source: tripwow.tripadvisor.com

An Ayelala Shrine. The Shrine commands fear and respect among the Yoruba people. No person guilty of an offence can go unpunished at the Shrine



Figure 3 Source: www.forum.419eater.com

People sitting down and waiting to be attended at Ayelala shrine. The people consisted of both the accusers of crimes and the alleged offender.



Figure 4 Source : www.mjemagazine.com

A woman who died of Ayelala's invocation. Many have died of Ayelala's invocation in the past for swearing falsely at her Shrine or through her spells for the offences they have committed.

Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to thank the interviewees who participated in this study despite their tight academic schedules:

1. *Dr. Amos Olotunde Abisoye* (54 years), a Political Sociologist in Department of Sociology, Crawford University of the Apostolic Faith Mission, Igbesa, Ogun State, Nigeria.
2. *Sunday Eleboda* (44 years), a debater on Social Issues and a lecturer in the Department of Marketing, Crawford University of the Apostolic Faith Mission, Igbesa, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Matthias Olufemi Dada Ojo

Odeljenje za sociologiju, Kraford Univerzitet Misije apostolske vere,
Igbesa, država Ogun, Nigerija

Uključivanje tradicionalne Ajelala religije u nigerijske pravosudne i političke sisteme: anketa o stavovima pripadnika Igbesa zajednice u državi Ogun u Nigeriji

Ajelala je božanstvo popularno u zapadnom delu Nigerije. Ono je poznato po svojoj efikasnosti u kažnjavanju izgređnika kada je invocirano. Ova studija, koja je uključivala 52 učesnika, imala je za cilj da istraži da li Ajelala treba da se uključi u pravosudne i političke sisteme Nigerije. Ukupno 94% ispitanika se složilo da je, u ovom ili onom obliku, božanstvo efikasno u kažnjavanju izgređnika kada je prizvano. Ukupno 54% učesnika je bilo mišljenja da prizivanje ovog božanstva treba da bude uključeno i implementirano u okviru krivičnog sistema. Autori studije predlažu da se sprovede šira anketa o uključivanju tradicionalnih sistema krivične pravde kao što je Ajelala u moderni sistem u nigerijskom društvu. Ako narod odluči da bi ih trebalo uključiti, vlada bi trebalo da se potruži da implementira odluku naroda. U radu će biti reči i o drugim sličnim preporukama.

Ključne reči: Ajelala, krivični sistem, invocacija, izgređnici, korupcija

Incorporation de la religion traditionnelle Ayelala dans le système politique et pénal nigérian: un sondage d'opinion de la communauté Igbesa dans l'État Ogun, Nigeria

Ayelala est une divinité populaire dans la partie occidentale du Nigeria. Cette divinité, lorsqu'elle est invoquée, est réputée d'être efficace dans le châtement des contrevenants à la loi et à l'ordre public. Ayant inclus 52 participants, cette étude s'est interrogée si Ayelala devrait être incorporé dans le système pénal et politique du Nigeria. Un total de 94% des participants était d'une manière ou d'une autre d'accord pour dire que la divinité, lorsqu'elle est invoquée, est très efficace dans le châtement des contrevenants à la loi et à l'ordre public. Quant à son inclusion dans le système pénal nigérian, 54% voulaient qu'elle soit incluse et appliquée. C'est pourquoi, l'étude préconise que le sondage devrait être mené dans la société nigérienne sur la question si le système traditionnel pénal comme Ayelala devrait être inclus dans le système pénal moderne ou non. Si les gens désiraient qu'il soit inclus, le gou-

vernement devrait prendre des mesures en vue de l'exécution de la décision du peuple. D'autres recommandations sont discutées dans cet article.

Mots clés: Ayelala, système pénal, invocation; contrevenants, corruption

Primljeno / Received: 8.08.2014.

Prihvaćeno / Accepted: 17.11.2014.