

Ifa Divination and its Significance among the People of Ijebu-Ode in South-Western Nigeria

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Abstract. From time immemorial, divination has been a functional art used by many people, especially the Yoruba people as a means of enquiring into past, present and future circumstances. *Ifa* divination among the Yoruba comes in various forms like, *Ereindinlogun* (which involves the casting of sixteen cowries), *Agbigba* (which employs a set of separate strings with four markers each), *Obi-dida* (kolanut casting), *Omi-wiwo* (water gazing), *Owo-wiwo* (palmistry), *Awo-wiwo* (mirror gazing) and *Iyanrin-tite* and *Ifa-dida* (divination with sixteen palm nuts). This paper used anthropological approach in its investigation. *Ifa* divination is significant among the people of *Ijebu-Ode* because of its prognostic power. They consult *Ifa* oracle for direction in life, to solve problems and make choices. Thus, there are many people of *Ijebu-Ode* that believe in *Ifa* divination in spite of the spread of Christianity and Islam and social changes. This has led to religious ambivalence as people practice Christianity or Islam as the case may be and still consult *Ifa* regularly at the same time. It is recommended that those who consult *Ifa* oracle based on their belief in the prognostic power of *Ifa* should be courageous to identify with the practice and propagate their religious beliefs in the public like other religions. Also, *Ifa* priests should rebrand their practices in order to attract more adherents.

Keywords: Ifa Divination, Prognostic power, Ijebu-Ode, South-Western

1. Introduction

Humans are social beings who are curious about what lies ahead in their future. They want to ensure that the present will not distort the future. This curiosity makes them anxious and in order to reduce their anxiety, they make enquiries about the future through divination. Divination is one of the means human beings used to know what the future holds. This view

agrees with a Yoruba adage that says, *Bi oni ti ri, Ola ko ri bee, lomu Babalawo se n difa oroorun*. That is, “since each day has its peculiar problems, the *Ifa* Priest has to divine daily.” This adage shows that divination can be done daily in order to prevent unforeseen circumstances or to solve existing problems. The Yoruba which include the Ijebu-Ode people believe in predestination and this makes them curious about what the future holds. According to Alofe (2005), *Ori* (head) determines what someone becomes in life. *Ori* which is the bearer of human destiny is the third part of human beings, others being the *Ara* (body) and *Emi* (life-force) (Oduwole, 2018). *Ori* determines one’s destiny at birth and cannot be altered except through sacrifices to the gods, which can only be determined through divination. This fact, shows one of the importance of divination to human beings. *Ifa* divination through the diviners (*Ifa* Priests) helps to identify and solve problems that may be embedded in a cloudy future. The diviners use some system of divination to identify and solve human problems.

Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) identify some systems of divination found among the Yoruba people. They include, *Ereindinlogun* (the casting of sixteen cowries), *Agbigba* system which employs a set of separate strings with four markers each), *Iyanrin tite* (sand cutting), *Obi-dida* (casting of kola nuts), *Omi-wiwo* (water gazing), *Atipa* or *Abokusoro* (necromancy), *Ifa* (divination using sixteen eye). Each of these system has its own peculiar procedure or ways of manipulation. They are done either by magical means or ritual which in some cases involves oral or written text (Parrinder, 1992). Out of all these methods of divination employed by the Yoruba people, Boscom (1969) and Awolalu (2001) consider *Ifa* divination as more reliable and most popular means of divination. Adewale (1978) agrees to this assertion and went on to define *Ifa* divination as a geomantic form of divination connected with the cult

of *Orunmila*, one of the major divinities of the Yoruba Traditional Religion. Notwithstanding the religious pluralism among the people of *Ijebu-Ode*, some of them are seen consulting *Ifa* Priest for divination.

1.1 Ifa Divination

There has been a wealth of studies carried out on *Ifa*. Scholars from African Religion, Anthropology, Folklore, Philosophy, Linguistics, African Studies etc., have devoted themselves to the study of *Ifa* or *Orunmila*, its arts and mostly *Ifa* divination. Notable among these scholars are, Lijadu (1923), Bascom (1969), Abimbola (1977), McClelland (1982), Ibie (1986), Adekola (1998), Ajayi (1992, 2002), Alofe (2005), Adegbindin (2014) and Oluwole (1996, 2014), to mention but a few. They have written extensively on the position *Ifa* occupied in Yoruba pantheon and continually pursue the use of *Ifa* Divination poetry and Literature as source of historical evidence. They all agreed that *Ifa* divination is the highest form of divination consultation amongst the Yoruba people of South-Western, Nigeria.

The Yoruba oral traditions regard *Ifa* as the divinity that is connected with the cult of *Orunmila* (Abimbola, 1976). It seeks to foresee future events or discover hidden knowledge. It is operated by a means of configuration call chapters of *Ifa* (*Odu*), the numerical figures and its multiplies (Adewale, 1978). An inspiring *Babalawo* (*Ifa* priest) must learn at least four verses from each of the 256 chapters of *Ifa* (*Odu*). The 256 chapters of *Ifa* comprise of 16 principals and 240 minor *Odu* each containing mythological stories which the *Babalawo* narrates in the process of divinations. *Ifa* encompasses the revelations, way of life and religion taught by *Orunmila*. That is why it is often said that *Orunmila* is the divinity while *Ifa* is his word (Ibie, 1986). Furthermore, Abimbola (1976) explains that the term *Ifa* can be adopted to mean the same thing as *Orunmila* but with time it became *Ifa* divination method. Adedeji (1991) corroborates this fact when he said, *Ifa* was originally the speeches and teachings of *Orunmila* before it later became the method of divination which was later passed on by *Orunmila* to his followers. However, both words of *Orunmila* and divination paraphernalia can still be referred to as *Ifa* today. Ibie (1986) succinctly puts it that the word *Ifa* implies the revelations way of life and religion taught by *Orunmila*. He further posits that *Orunmila* is the deity while *Ifa* is Oracle.

Furthermore, *Ifa* is regarded as the custodian of knowledge and wisdom of *Orunmila*. His extraordinary possession of wisdom makes him to be eulogised as *Akere-fimi-sogbon* (small but full of wisdom). In *Ifa* lies the knowledge of the past, the present and also the future. It is believed that *Orunmila* was present during the creation of mankind, therefore, he knows all the secrets of humans and *Orisa*. Thus, he can reveal what has been destined and if the destiny is an unfortunate one, he can prescribe remedies to avert the misfortunes. Adewale (1978) affirms that *Ifa* is consulted for several reasons, which include, if a girl wants to know if she has chosen a good life partner, to ensure that the marriage with the person will be a successful one; when new-born child is three days old, *Ifa* is consulted to know what the future holds in store for the child. The parents of the child would also want to be mentored by *Ifa* on some dos and don'ts of the child. *Ifa* priests are also consulted to interpret dreams. The causes of bad, sudden death, accidents, loss of property and similar misfortunes are generally revealed by *Ifa*. In times of national disasters such as drought, flood, famine, earthquake, and outbreak of disease which has become epidemic or pandemic, *Ifa* is consulted in order to ascertain the causes and to know the remedies for peace to reign. *Ifa* divination is done using *Ifa* paraphernalia. Abimbola (1977) identifies the following as *Ifa* paraphernalia: *Ikin* (sixteen sacred palm nuts), *Opele* (divining chain), *Iroke Ifa* (*Ifa* Ivory tapper), *Opon Ifa* (divining tray), *Opa Orere* or *Osu* (*Ifa* ritual walking stick), *Apo Ifa* (*Ifa* bag), and *Ilu Ifa* (*Ifa* drums).

Ifa divination is so important in choice making. For example, the choice of a new ruler or chief is not made without due consultation with *Ifa*. At the beginning of a new year, *Ifa* is consulted to find out what the year holds for the community and if there will be any disaster during the year, the oracle will prescribe ways to avert it. *Ifa* is not only consulted during difficult times, he is also consulted during time of peace in order to enable people to take precaution against anything that could disrupt an orderly course of life. Consulting *Ifa* also reminds one of his or her obligation towards the spiritual beings who are in control of the universe. An investigation can also be made to find out what is going on abroad about relations so as to know the right approach that needs to be taken towards any situation. Thus, this great knowledge and wisdom of *Ifa* made him to be referred to as the King of other Yoruba divinities (*Oba Orisa*). This great recognition and respect accorded *Ifa* among other deities is elucidated by Abimbola (1977:67):

Ifa is more than a branch of Yoruba religion. *Ifa* is the means through which Yoruba culture informs and regulates itself and preserves all that is considered good and memorable in that society. *Ifa* is Yoruba culture in its true dynamic and traditional sense. *Ifa* is a means whereby a non-literate society attempts to keep and disseminate its own philosophy and values despite the lapses and imperfection of human memory on which the system is based.

Although, the practice of *Ifa* divination is prominent among the Yoruba people in Nigeria and the Republic of Benin formerly Dahomey, but it is not limited to them. Awolalu and Dopamu (2005) unequivocally state that it is also practiced among the *Fon* of the Republic of Benin and known as *Fa*. The Ewe of Togo also call it *Fa*. They further state that it is also practiced by the descendants of the Yoruba in Cuba and Brazil, where *Orunmila* is worshiped. This study shows that the people of *Ijebu Ode* that live mostly in deciduous region of South Western Yoruba kingdom are also noted for the practice of *Ifa* divination, which agrees with the findings of Ayandele (1992). The *Ifa* diviners are known in Yoruba as *Babalawo* (Boscom, 1969).

1.2 Terminologies Used to Describe “Ifa”

According to Ayandele (1992), several terms have been used to describe *Ifa* and many attributes have been given to this particular cult. *Ifa* is called *Elerii-Ipin* (the witness of destiny) because it is believed that *Orunmila* was there as a witness when man chose his destiny before coming to the earth. *Ifa* is also called *Orunmila* (*Orun ni o mo ati la* - only heaven knows the way to salvation). Several attempts have been made toward the etymological meanings of *Ifa*. For instance, Abimbola (1976) attempted the etymology of the terms *Ifa* and *Orunmila*. He however, submits that the terms found in *Ifa* oracle are old and aged that the original etymological meanings cannot be achieved. According to Adedeji (1991), *Ifa* is the speeches and teaching of *Orunmila*. In other words, *Ifa* was spiritual paraphernalia through which *Orunmila* resolved difficult and confusing issues. This spiritual object has no eyes. It was kept in *Orunmila*'s mystical bag. Whenever *Orunmila* got to a place and was confronted with difficult issue, he would bring out his *Ifa* from the mystical bag and ask the *Ifa* the way out. Adedeji (1991), concludes that *Ifa* became the method of divination, and later became the name given to the method of divination, which was later passed on by *Orunmila* to his followers. However, both the words of *Orunmila* and divination paraphernalia can still be referred to as the embodiment of *Orunmila*'s acts and

knowledge. Ibie (1986) succinctly puts it that the word *Ifa* implies the revelations, way of life and religion taught by *Orunmila*. According to him, *Orunmila* is therefore a deity while *Ifa* is his Oracle. Abimbola (1976) in his own view asserts that *Ifa* and *Orunmila* are synonymous. He says, the Yoruba god of wisdom is mostly called by either of two names, *Ifa* and *Orunmila*, both of which are the center of controversy. Abimbola (1976) further opines that a number of writers hold the mistaken view that the name *Orunmila* refers to the deity himself while the name *Ifa* refers only to his divination system. He concludes that the name *Ifa* and *Orunmila* can be used interchangeable because it refers to the same deity. Adegbindin (2014) agrees with Abimbola (1976) that *Ifa* and *Orunmila* can be used interchangeably. In the same vein, Oluwole (2014) opines that *Ifa* is the vast tradition of the Yoruba people that is sometimes used as an alternative name for *Orunmila*.

2. Historical Survey of “Ifa” Oracles

In agreement with the position of Abimbola (1976), Adegbindin (2014) and Oluwole (2014) that *Ifa* and *Orunmila* are one and the same, one can unequivocally say that *Orunmila* is the embodiment of *Ifa*, therefore, there is no way the history of *Ifa* could be discussed without the history of *Orunmila*. It is *Orunmila* that owns *Ifa* since *Ifa* is its knowledge and philosophy. According to Ibie (1986), the body of knowledge called *Ifa* is endless, ageless and eternal. He argues that *Ifa* religion is older than other religions because *Ifa* came directly from heaven to earth in company of other major deities. Abimbola (1976) agrees to this historical fact and added that when *Ifa* came in company with other deities, they first landed in *Oke Igbeti* (*Igbeti* hill) at *Ile Ife* which the Yoruba people believe to be the cradle of mankind. That is why one of the praise name of *Ifa* is *okunrin Kukurú Oke Igbeti* (The short man of *Igbeti* hill). The gods were sent by *Olodumare* from heaven to *Ife* mainly to establish order on earth. *Ifa* played a leading role in this divine order because of its wisdom. Abimbola (1976) says, some historians claimed that after a long stay at *Ife*, *Ifa* moved to *Ado*. It was believed that *Ifa* spent the greatest part of his life while on earth at *Ado* and that may account for the saying, *Ado ni ile Ifa*.

Ifa had eight children while on earth (Abimbola, 1976). He returned to heaven in annoyance when *Olowo* his youngest son annoyed him, when he sent for them to come and celebrate his festival with him at *Otun Ife*. Each of the children bowed to the ground before *Orunmila* and greeted him in succession,

saying *aboru boye bo sise* (May the sacrifices be blessed and be accepted). The last born refused to do that which his predecessors had done, claiming equality with the father, saying:

Iwo Orunmila sodun, o sodun ko
Oun olowo naa sodun, oun sodun ko
Iwo Orunmila f'osun ide lowo
Oun olowo naa f'osun ide lowo
Iwo Orunmila bo salubata ide
Oun olowo naa bo salubata ide
Iwo Orunmila d'ade
Bee ni won si ni
Enikan kiif'ori ade bale f'enikan

Meaning:

Orunmila, you celebrate a festival
 I, Olowo also celebrate a festival
 You Orunmila wear a golden bangle
 I, Olowo also wear a golden bangle
 You Orunmila wear a golden sandal
 I, Olowo also wear a golden sandal
 You Orunmila wear a crown
 I, Olowo also wear a crown
 It is said that a crowned head
 Should not bow to another crowned head.
 (Abimbola, 1977)

Things however went wrong on earth after the departure of *Orunmila*. According to Abimbola (1977), the earth was thrown into great confusion, famine and pestilence; it was so great that fertility cycle in human beings was disrupted. When the hardship became unbearable, *Orunmila's* children were forced to commune with their deified ancestor. The children went accordingly, when they got to heaven, they found *Ifa* at the foot of the much climbed palm tree that had sixteen-hot-like branches. The children begged *Ifa* to come back to the earth but he refused. *Ifa* gave each of his eight children sixteen palm nuts and said:

... *bee ba dele*
Bee ba fowo o ni,
Eni te e moo bi nu
Bee ba dele
Bee ba fayaa ni
Eni te e moo, bi nu un
Bee ba dele
Bee ba fomoo bi,
Eni te e mo bi nu un.
Ile le ba fe e ko laye
Eni te e mo bi nu un
Aso le ba fe e nil aye
Eni te e mo bi nu un
Ire gbogbo te e ba fe e nil aye
Eni te e mo bi nu un.

Meaning:

... when you reach home
 And you seek wealth,
 Ask the sacred palm nuts.
 When you reach home,
 And you seek wives,
 Ask the sacred palm nuts.
 When you reach home,
 And you seek children,
 Ask the sacred palm nuts.
 If you desire clothes,
 Ask the sacred palm nuts.
 Whatever that you seek on earth,
 Ask the sacred palm nuts ... (Abimbola, 1977)

Ifa gave the sixteen palm nuts to replace himself. He promised them that the sacred palm nuts will reveal whatever they want. This was how the children of *Orunmila* started to use *Ikin* (the sacred palm nut) for divination. Since then, *Ifa* has been playing an important part in the affairs of the world and he still uphold the moral law. He knows that the ultimate end of the world is good and he is prepared to preserve it at all time against the attacks of evil forces who are the enemies of mankind. He set this system of divination bearing his name, so as to facilitate communication between human beings and deities because he saw that man in his weakness and ignorance, set down in a bewildering and terrifying world would need help and reassurance, so therefore he stands for balance and soundness.

3. The Divination Process

In a divination session, the client is asked to whisper their problem to a coin, cowry shell or any legal tender note. He then gives the money to the priest who in turn put it on the divination tray and strikes it against the divination board (*Opon Ifa*) he invokes the spirit of *Ifa* and urges *Ifa* to provide the appropriate answer to the client's problems without delays. He calls on *Orunmila*, a deity believed to have been present with *Ifa* at the time of creation, and who is believed to know the prenatal destiny (*Ayanmo*) of every human being. He offers *Iba* (salute in acknowledgement of supremacy) to *Ile* (the earth) *Olodumare* (the Almighty God) (Abimbola 1969).

The diviner will also call on ancestor to witness the proceeding before he then cast the palm nuts. The diviner will pick up the sixteen palm nut and holds them loosely in his left palm, he then tries to grasp all with his right and throws them through the half closed fingers into the left palm; if one remains two

strokes (II or O) are drawn on the board if two nuts remain. The process is repeated eight times until two parallel columns of four marks each have been drawn (Abimbola, 1977).

A small version of casting *Ifa* is done by using divination chain (*Opele Ifa*). This tool consists of eight seed pods or small copper-alloy plates with concave or convex surfaces linked together by a metal or bead chain. The diviner holds the chain at its centre point and casts it so that it falls on an already laid cloth before him to reveal a pattern of the *Odu* sign. On sighting the revelation of the cast, the diviner recalls the associated storyline or poem revealed in the *Odu* sign. The client of the diviner must be attentive at this point, because the solution to the problem will be revealed in the *Odu* chant (Pogason and Akande, 2011). In the chants of the diviner, the party concerned hears of others who have suffered various problems, some perhaps greater than that brought the suppliant to *Ifa* and the joy they knew after performing the sacrifices that *Ifa* had asked them to make. At intervals, the diviner taps the divination tray with *Iroke Ifa* (divination tapper). The person consulting *Ifa* is afterwards expected to perform the prescribed sacrifices.

The chants, may at times end with lines revealing that after the person in the *Odu* of *Ifa* had performed the required sacrifice, things became better for him and the lines often run thus:

... *Igba ti o dafa*
Won ni ebo ni o war u
O sir u u.
Igba o rubo tan...
Lo ba dipe ohun gbogbo nlo deede
Orin awo w abo si i lenu ...

Meaning

He took his problems to *Ifa*
 He was told to perform sacrifice,
 And he performed it.
 After he performed the sacrifice
 He became a happy man.
 He started to sing the song of *Ifa* priests ...
 (Abimbola, 1969)

There are different contraptions used in the process of *Ifa* Divination. Bascom (1969) and Abimbola (1979) identify *Ifa* instrument used for divination as the *Ikin* (the sixteen sacred palm nuts), the *Opele* (the divining chain) and various objects that form the *Ibo* (instrument for casting lots). Others are the *Iyerosun* (divination powder), *Opon Ifa* (divining tray), *Osu* (ornamental *Ifa* metal staff), *Iroke* and *Apo Ifa* (bag for keeping *Ifa* divination instrument).

4. The Ijebu People

The Ijebu People inhabit the South-Central part of Yorubaland – a territory that is bounded in the North by Ibadan, in the East by Ondo, Okitipupa and the West by Egbaland. The Southern fringe is open to the sea with the coastlines of Epe, Ejirin and Ikorodu. Despite the political division which has these three towns in Lagos while the main part of Ijebuland is Ogun State and in the south by the Lagos Lagoon (Oduwobi, 2004). The Ijebu people speak the Ijebu language, a sub-dialect of the Yoruba language.

History on one hand has it that the Ijebu people originated from Ile-Ife but on the other hand, the incumbent paramount traditional ruler of Ijebuland, *Awujale*, Oba Sikiru K. Adetona, Ogbagba II unequivocally insists that the Ijebu people are from Wadai Sudan. Ayinde (2011) in his work which focuses on the Ife origin in the history of Ijebu people opines that unlike the position of the *Awujale* on the origin of Ijebu people, majority of kings in Ijebu areas argue in favour of the Ife origin. Some of these kings are, Liken of Iwopin, Ajalorun of Ijebu-Ife, Lenuwa of Ode-Omi, Odobiya of Makun Omi, Orimolusi's regent, Ayangburem of Ikorodu, Akarigbo of Remo (Ayinde 2011).

The origin of the name, *Ijebu-Ode* is traced to two names of original founders, Olode, who was a relative of the first *Awujale*, and *Ajebu*. Some people said that these two men existed at different times. However, as the legend went, they encountered a third man, *Ajana* in a dense forest, which is now *Ijebu-Ode*. Together, they asked *Ifa* (oracle) for advice on where to build their homes. The oracle sent *Ajebu* to the place now known as *Imepe*. The other two men ended up staying together and settling in the place of today's *Ita-Ajana*. Large population of the Ijebu people live in *Ijebu-Ode*. *Ijebu-Ode* is a historic Yoruba town in Ogun State, which was established in the 16th century. The city is known for being the capital of Ijebuland. The Ijebu Kingdom ruler is known as *Awujale*, has his palace there in *Ijebu-Ode* (Odukoya, 1968).

4.1 Significance of *Ifa* Divination to the People of *Ijebu-Ode*

The people of *Ijebu-Ode* who consult *Ifa* Oracle opined that consulting *Ifa* Oracle is not a thing that started with them in this present day, but with the first settlers in *Ijebu-Ode*. They believe that *Ifa* divination practice was brought from *Ile-Ife* and that it is practiced the same way *Orunmila* taught his children. This view agrees with the assertion made by

Onasanya (2020) in an interview. He said, *Orunmila* taught his children how to use sixteen palm nut to consult for people and this same means has been adopted by *Ifa* priest that are in *Ijebu-Ode* up till today. He believed that *Ifa* receives from *Oludumare* and whatever is received is true, thus the reason for their faith in *Ifa* oracle. Oseni (2020), an *Ifa* priest posits that whatever prediction made by *Ifa* priest is believed to be accurate. He added that based on the faith of the people of *Ijebu-Ode* in *Ifa* oracle, hardly will any important traditional event be carried out without consulting *Ifa*. According to Fadeyi (2020), *Ifa* is consulted virtually at every stage of life such as, before embarking on a journey, in times of crisis, before appointing someone to leadership position, before carrying out a social function. *Ifa* is recognised as a social force that can impose rules and guidelines on its devotees and through it can influence general public where opinion will be formulated as codes of conduct.

Iwori-Ayoka is the *Ifa* literary corpus guiding *Ijebu-Ode*. *Ifa* means so much to the *Ijebu-Ode* people. Despite the spread of the two major religions in *Ijebu-Ode*, that is, Christianity and Islam, people of *Ijebu-Ode* still consult *Ifa* divination. Some *Ijebu-Ode* people who claimed to belong to other religions consult *Ifa* oracle secretly and they do refer others to *Ifa* priest when they get solutions to their problems (Ayinla, 2015). The spread of Christianity and Islam has not stopped many of the *Ijebu-Ode* people from consulting *Ifa* oracle because they believe that through *Ifa* divination they can understand what happened in the past, what to do in the present in order to avoid falling into troubles and what to do so as to receive the good that lies in the future. The people consult *Ifa* divination to ascertain the will of *Olodumare* on their present and future life. *Ifa* is consulted in time of prosperity, disaster, want, economic crises or famine, socio-ethnic problems etc.

The significance of *Ifa* divination among the *Ijebu-Ode* people is traced to an event that happened in the 17th century. The story has it that an *Ifa* priest known as *Onisemu* who was from *Itun Leguuru* was consulted by *Awujale*, the king of *Ijebu-Ode* in order to find solution to the problem of water that inundated *Itooro* premises; which often time claimed lives of people. Solution was provided by this *Ifa* priest and sacrifice was made. Since then, the *Ijebu-Ode* people consult *Ifa* before embarking on events. For example, *Ifa* is consulted in making the choice of a new king or chief. The *Ijebu-Ode* people believe in the prognostic power of *Ifa* which is why they still consult him. In other words, the predictive power of *Ifa*. Indicating diagnosis, prophetic signs, has being a

major factor responsible for its resilience among the people of *Ijebu-Ode*. The people of *Ijebu-Ode*. The people of *Ijebu-Ode* like other Yoruba express strong belief in supernatural intervention for healing, security and guidance in life endeavours and *Ifa* is believed to provide this in a more reliable way.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Despite the increase of other religions like Christianity and Islam in *Ijebu-Ode*, *Ifa* diviners are still being consulted for divination. Those who consult the *Ifa* diviners are not limited to their adherents but include some people who claimed to belong to other religions like Christianity and Islam. Those who consult *Ifa* diviners do so basically to find answers to life challenges and situations. They inquire into the cause of problems and *Ifa* divination helps prescribe certain formula to use in order to solve the problems. They also consult *Ifa* to know what the present and future holds for them. *Ifa* is part of the history of *Ijebu-Ode* people and it is still being consulted regardless of religious bigotry in *Ijebu-Ode*. The *Ijebu-Ode* people believe in the prognostic power of *Ifa* and this belief makes them to have faith in *Ifa* and makes *Ifa* divination significant among them.

Ifa oracle has been in place before the emergence of Christianity and Islam in *Ijebu-Ode*, thus, its adherents should be proud to talk about it in public. They should speak about its significance using every available media like the social media just as other religions are doing. *Ifa* priests (*Babalawo*) should appear neat, confident and caring in order to disabuse the mind of people who think they are old uneducated and evil. Therefore, it is high time *Babalawo* started to change people's view about them by using the prognostic power of *Ifa* to advance the life of people and the society. They should rebrand their shrines to look attractive so that they can have more adherents and thereby have a well-established traditional religion practice in *Ijebu-Ode* which generations to come will embrace.

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