

**WOMEN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN ONDO,
SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA, 1875-2008.**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

To

God Almighty

To

My darling husband **Ikechukwu Nwaokoro** who is the hub of my
pursuit of post-graduate studies

To

My dear children

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

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ABSTRACT

Patriarchal system dominated traditional Ondo society as reflected in the preference for the education of boys. Despite the influence of modernity which leveraged the women with equal opportunity of education with men, existing literature on Ondo have not adequately addressed the issue of women education in the town. This study, therefore, examines the historical dynamics of women education and its impact on the society at the micro and macro levels between 1875 and 2008.

George Peter Murdock and Ann Oakley's Sex and Gender analysis, complemented with Anthony Giddens's Theory of Social Change was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. Primary data used for this study include archival materials (Intelligence Reports and Ondo Provincial Files at the National Archives, Ibadan), school records and oral interviews. The purposive and snowball interview approaches were adopted. Informants include professionals, education officers, traditional title holders, school girls and parents. Secondary data consist of books and other print materials, including theses and dissertations. Photographs and almanacs related to women education in Ondo were also utilized. Data were subjected to historical analysis to reflect changing trends.

From inception of Western education in 1875 to 1906 when Ondo formally came under British colonial rule, girls' enrollment in primary schools was less than 20%. From 1906 to 1953, secondary education for girls was non-existent, though boys had been enjoying this since 1919. The implication is that women were excluded from all levels of colonial administration because of the apparent educational disparity. From 1954 to 2008, there had been a tremendous change in women education, especially with government policy on free and compulsory Universal Primary Education in 1955 and the founding of three girls' colleges in 1954, 1955 and 1985 respectively. Expanded female education led to women's increasing participation in politics and professions formerly considered reserved for men. Over the years, women came to dominate nursing and teaching but fewer in medicine, engineering and other science-based professions. Before independence, female percentage in nursing was about 35% and medicine less than 3%. By 2008, it had risen to about 80% and 40% respectively. In teaching, the percentage in 1960 was about 30% in Primary schools and 13% in Secondary schools. By 2008, it had increased to about 90% and 65% respectively. Despite women's educational advancement, Ondo society remains essentially male-dominated and the society continues to perceive women in relation to their domestic roles as indicated in interviews conducted. This reinforces the argument that rather than being the inventors of gender binary, colonialism only exacerbated an already contrary condition.

Expanded female education and consequent participation in the labour market has led to financial emancipation and improved status for women, but the full social identity of the woman is hampered by the patriarchal nature of the Ondo Society. There is therefore a need for cultural re-orientation in the reality of persisting male dominance in Ondo.

Keywords: Women education, Gender, Patriarchy, Social change, Ondo.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Adeyemi College of Education
AG	Action Group
ALC	Abeokuta Ladies Club
AOPSON	Association of Primary Schools' Head Teachers of Nigeria
AUD	Ansar-Ud-Deen
AWU	Abeokuta Women's Union
C&S	Cherubim & Seraphim
CAC	Christ Apostolic Church
CFR	Commander of the Federal Republic
CMS	Church Missionary Society
COPSON	Conference of Primary Schools' Head Teachers of Nigeria
COWAN	Country Women Association of Nigeria
DIG	Deputy Inspector General of Police
D.O.	Divisional Officer
DPO	Divisional Police Officer
Dr	Doctor
ECC	Egba Central Council
ENA	Egba Native Administration
FAGMOS	
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women Organization of Nigeria
Fr(s)	Father(s)
FUTA	Federal University of Technology, Akure
GOMAN	Gospel Musician Association of Nigeria
HND	Higher National Diploma
HOD	Head of Department
HON	Honourable
HRM	His Royal Majesty
IRK	Islamic Religious Studies
JP	Jerusalem Peace
NAI	National Archives, Ibadan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIEPA	Nigeria Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
NSCDC	Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps
NUT	Nigerian Union of Teachers
OAU	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife
ODC	Ondo Development Committee
OND	Ordinary National Diploma
PMAN	Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria

Rev	Reverend
SLOOGA	Saint Louis Ondo Old Girls' Association
SNA	Sole Native Administration
SSCE	Senior Secondary Certificate Examination
TESCOM	Teaching Service Commission
U.I	University of Ibadan
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WASC	West Africa School Certificate
WASSCE	West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination
WIN	Women in Nigeria
WORDOC	Women's Research and Documentation Centre
WUSTO	Wesley University of Science and Technology, Ondo
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background to the study

Scholarly interests in women and their changing roles in the areas of motherhood, income generation, production of goods and services, both inside and outside the home, have been on the increase lately¹. However, these changes, especially in developing countries, have not been extensively studied. This work, therefore, sets out to investigate the various changes that have occurred in the traditional roles and status of Ondo women and the factors responsible for such changes. One of such factors, which forms the central theme of this study, is Western education. It should, however, be noted that this cannot be treated in isolation as there were other connected factors, such as colonial rule and missionary activities, which acted together to bring about the changes.

This work reveals that before the advent of Western education in Ondo, there had been a form of indigenous system of training the young. This, and the position of women in traditional Ondo, form the focus of Chapter Two. This background study is important because, in order to establish that a change has occurred, there is need to examine how things were before the change. Chapter Three centres on the activities of the Missionaries, the advent of Western education and the British colonial rule. The next four chapters deal with the subject and factors of social change with particular emphasis on Western education and its effects on Ondo women. The year, 1875, is important because that was the year in which Western education was introduced to Ondo. The year, 2008, is equally significant because it was the year the first university in Ondo was established.

1.2 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to investigate and examine the development and impact of Western education in Ondo, with particular emphasis on the changing socio-economic and political statuses of women. The specific objective is to investigate and analyse the following:

1. women and traditional education in Ondo;
2. the historical background of Ondo women;

3. women in the early phase of Western education in Ondo;
4. Ondo women under British Colonial Rule; and
5. the impact of Western education on Ondo women.

1.3 Significance of Study

This thesis is considered to be necessary because it addresses a very important aspect of the “woman’s question”, that is, female education. It is incontrovertible that education remains a very important tool for institutionalizing the advancement of individuals. It is, however, disturbing that the history of educational development, not only in Nigeria but Africa generally, has been such that, until recently, was characterized by fundamental gender disparity – that which pays little attention to the female.

This study therefore, could make a significant contribution to the field of women education and development with the investigation of the specific effects of Western education on their status especially with regards to the whole process of role change. The findings of this research could:

- a. Serve as guidelines for policy makers and educational planners in formulating policies, determining priorities for programmes and projects, bridging gaps and taking care of existing deficiencies, with respect to women education.
- b. Serve as an addition to the growing literature on women in Nigeria and particularly in Ondo. In the literature on the socio-political history of the Yoruba and Ondo (as revealed in the course of this research) references are made in passing to the activities of women. Even in the literature on women, very little, and at times nothing, is said about Ondo women. One of the aims of this study, therefore, is to attempt to bridge that gap in historical knowledge.

1.4 Limitation of Study

It is important to note that this is not intended to be a general survey of the development of Western education in Ondo. Rather, it is an attempt to assess its impact on the economic and social roles of women within the period of study. In geographical terms, Old Ondo kingdom comprised Ondo metropolis and subordinate towns like Igbado, Ajue, Igbindo, Odigbo, Oro, Imorun, Ilunla, Erinla, Igunshin and Araromi (Obu). These towns were believed to have been

founded by emigrants from Ondo and are thus subordinate to the *Oşemowe*.² The Ondo Province Annual Report of 1929 indicates that Okeigbo, Ile Oluji and Ayesan were all subjects of *Oşemowe* of Ondo³; and in 1930, there was a report on Odigbo's wish to throw off all allegiance to the *Oşemowe* and become an independent town⁴, an indication that Odigbo was a part of Ondo kingdom. Patrick Ogunshakin, an indigenous Ondo historian gives an account of Ile-Oluji's origin and sovereignty.⁵ Introduction of cocoa during the colonial period led to the establishment of numerous settlements like Oboto, Bolorunduro, Tekunle, Bagbe, Ugbuogho, and a host of others. This study is limited to Ondo metropolis and three of the settlements: Bagbe, Igbado, and Ugbuogho. There are aspects of Ondo history especially those that center on male chieftaincy title holders and the peculiar features of their households. These have been extensively studied by Olufunke Iluyemi.⁶ The present study focuses on broader issues of the family, female chieftaincy title holders, traditional institutions that concern women and how Western education has impacted on them.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study involved the use of primary and secondary data. Primary data include oral interviews, archival records, missionary papers and school records. Ninety five individuals drawn from various backgrounds were interviewed. Since men are the significant others in socio-economic relationships with women, men were interviewed alongside with women. The informants include market women, education officers, school girls, civil servants and other professionals. The fact that I was born and brought up in Ondo afforded me some advantages. First, I was able to conduct my field research without any guide or interpreter. I speak Ondo dialect fluently and this enabled me to communicate with both the Western educated and non-literate informants. Secondly, it gave me the opportunity of having experienced the process of training the girl-child in a home environment. What I could remember of my own childhood experiences as a growing child in Ondo helped to fill some gaps in the investigation – it gave me insights into the rudiments of training the girl-child and the manifold roles of women in child-training in general. Interview questions were designed to draw out the facts about how the informants were trained in different aspects of social life when they were young, how they trained their children, what they remembered about the initial attitude of Ondo parents to girl-child education and the changes they have noticed so far. Facts were also drawn about the socio-economic statuses of the traditional women and the differences they have noticed among the present generation.

I also gathered information from schools in Ondo. Among the schools visited were Saint Stephen's (Anglican) Primary School, Saint Mathew's (Catholic) Primary School, Bishop Philips (Anglican) Primary School, Salvation Army Day Primary School, All Saints (Anglican) Primary School, Ansar-Ud-Deen Primary School, Saint Catherine's (RCM) Primary School and Saint Peter's (C.A.C) Primary School all in Ondo. Others were Ondo Boys High School, Community Secondary School, Saint Monica's (Anglican) Girls' Secondary School, Saint Louis (Catholic) Girls' Secondary School, Methodist Grammar School, Saint Peter's (C.A.C) Secondary School, Saint Helen's Unity Secondary School, Saint Mary's Primary School, Ansar-Ud-Deen Grammar School, Independence Grammar School, Adeyemi College of Education and Wesley University of Science and Technology, Ondo. Apart from personal interviews with the Principals, Head Teachers, some of the teachers and students of the schools, I was granted access to the invaluable information contained in the schools' records such as Log Books, Admission Registers, Class Registers and School Magazines. The choice of schools was informed by their peculiarities such as: Christian mission, Islamic, government, single sex or co-educational schools. Others are because they are pioneer schools e.g Saint Stephen's was the first primary school and Ondo Boys High, the first secondary schools and Saint Louis Secondary, the first girls school of college standard in the town.

In addition, I made use of archival materials at the National Archives, Ibadan. I also derived very important information from books, pamphlets, journals, magazines, Theses, Dissertations. The bulk of these were consulted at the History Departmental Library, Kenneth Dike Library, Faculty of Education Library and WORDOC Library, all in the University of Ibadan. Other Libraries consulted were History Departmental Library and Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; Faculty of Education Library, University of Lagos. Unwritten sources such as pictures and almanacs related to the study were also utilized.

1.6 Defining Education

Education means different things to different people, depending on the perspective from which it is viewed. The tendency today is that when the word 'education' is mentioned, many think only of Western formal education. This arises probably because the world is getting

more used to this type of education. This notion is reflected in the *Encarta World English Dictionary* which defines education as the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school or similar institutions.⁷ Caution needs to be exercised here; first, is it only in school or similar institutions that education takes place? Does this definition not tend to equate education to schooling? This is what Majasan tries to correct by quoting Malinowski who warned that “education is bigger than schooling”.⁸ It becomes necessary to perhaps look at education from various perspectives as this will give a more embracing meaning.

From the sociological point of view, Haralambos and Holborn describe education as one aspect of socialization which involves the acquisition of knowledge and the learning of skills⁹. Avoiding the error of narrowing education to the activities within the school, they explain that in non-literate societies, education was hard to distinguish from other aspects of life, since young people learned their “lesson” largely by joining in the social group. Knowledge and skills were usually learned informally by imitating examples provided by adults, instructing the young being a part of the daily routine.¹⁰ Of course, this definition recognizes that education goes beyond the school. It predates the existence of schools. In this context, it involves the process that helps to prepare young members of society for the diverse roles which they must assume as adult members of their society.¹¹ The young is hereby being provided with the knowledge, skills and values which a society believes are necessary. This has to do with the society deliberately transmitting its cultural heritage, values, skills and accumulated knowledge from one generation to the other.¹² The process by which this transmission is done is what makes it formal or informal. When it is deliberate, planned, graded and within the classroom, it can be termed formal, When it is deliberate, planned but outside the school and not graded, it can be termed informal.¹³ Despite the process, it is a known fact that the objectives are the same – impartation of skills and knowledge.

As can be observed, the view here tends to see education in terms of its relevance to the society. But before this, education as it relates to the individual should not be ignored. The liberal perspective of education views education in relation to the individual rather than the society. From this view point, education is held to be the promotion of the well-being of the individuals, its main job being to encourage them to develop their full potentials as human beings.¹⁴ In this sense, the bringing up of the young with a focus on the development of the character¹⁵ becomes very vital; as one of the goals of human education remains the child’s

development of a virtuous character. Virtue here can be described as the characteristic that makes one “tend to think ... or act excellently.”¹⁶ This explains why Obafemi Awolowo views education as an instrument for the development of mind and body,¹⁷ a process of instruction and experience which induces and helps a man develop and bring out the best in him in order to evolve an integral personality.¹⁸ Of course, this involves not only character development, but includes the possession of expert knowledge in some skills. This combination makes the integral personality that Awolowo talks about. It is only when this is achieved in the individual that the improvement of the society at large can be enhanced. Individuals who can manage their lives can serve not only their own, but also the progress of the society.

From the political perspective, education can be explained in terms of its relevance to the state, the emphasis being the development of new attitudes towards government and the law.¹⁹ An advocate of this view was Plato who observes, “Of all things that I have mentioned, that which contributes most to permanence of constitutions is the adaptation of education to the form of government.”²⁰ This, perhaps, explains why his ideal human being was the philosopher ruler, male or female, the ultimate product of the educational system set forth in the *Republic* and *The Laws*.²¹ This perspective stresses that in addition to building people who are morally upright, education aims at building good citizens. Good citizenship in this sense involves the individual’s readiness to take a full and active part in the affairs of his/her country or state. This requires training in loyalty, service to the state, obedience to law, responsibility for community work and readiness to make personal sacrifice for the benefit of the state.²²

This perspective also sees education as not just an instrument of reforms and change, but as a tool of fostering national unity in countries with diverse elements. Education here is portrayed as possessing the ability to build nationhood out of multiplicity of elements. Kelvin Ihenetu subscribed to this view by citing the Nigerian, Ghanaian and American experiences. Of America, he wrote, “United States of America ... a multi-cultural and multi-racial state, made up of immigrants from various continents... has used education as the melting pot of cultures. She has used the schools as a place where children of immigrants, coming from diverse cultural backgrounds are merged in order to be acculturated into the American way of life”²³ This has contributed greatly to the process of Americanization. The result of this is that “in and out of school, every American exhibits great sense of patriotism, sharing common ideals...The immigrant is made to gradually shed his/her old loyalties and take on the

American ones.”²⁴ Education from this perspective is explained in terms of its aims and utility, which include the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen, citizenship structure, promotion of national consciousness and unity, national progress and patriotism. This should, however, be with caution in order to avoid the possibility of falling into the error of indoctrination.

From the economic perspective, education has been described as that which helps to develop man who in turn develops the natural resources around him.²⁵ This has to do with preparing each new generation for a productive working life. In traditional societies, it involved training the young in the inherited, time tested technologies of hunting, fishing, cropping and other essential survival skills.²⁶ In modern societies, its acquisition can be described as a common route for upward mobility²⁷ as it has opened a chance for both men and women to take up professional jobs as teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers and so on. This gives the individuals the opportunity of changing their status and class. A child who does not receive formal education will later be disadvantaged in making his contribution to society, may occupy a subordinate position and suffer hardships.²⁸ Education in this sense involves a life-long process in which an individual continuously acquires new capabilities (in form of acquisition of skills and knowledge) needed to secure gainful employment, manage his life and contribute to the development and progress of the society.²⁹

This brief discussion reveals that it is difficult to have a single standard definition of education, which will suit all societies and purposes. Rather, each perspective tries to explain education with respect to its multifarious utility. A combination of all the aspects makes for a properly educated man or woman to evolve. For instance, before an individual can be said to be educated in the real sense, he must combine knowledge in some skill with good character and a full participation in all activities of the community in which he lives. He needs to be trained to be able to do these. In a nutshell, education implies teaching and teaching implies knowledge.³⁰ Whatever the purpose, method or goal, the core element of education is teaching and learning, that is, the impartation of information, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through examples, observation or practice until ... the individual develops the ability to play the different roles expected of him in the family, community and society at large. He is knowledgeable in some skills, of good character and possesses mastery of the given culture. It is only then that the individual can be said to be educated.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

First and foremost, it should be noted that any research that focuses on women will definitely throw up issues involved in gender analysis. B.E. Akande claims that in the study of women, their relationship with the significant others³¹ (men) cannot be ignored. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men and the social relations between them in a particular historical and socio-economic context.³²

The complexity about sex and gender is revealed in *The Encarta World English Dictionary*'s definition of sex to mean "male or female gender, either of the two reproductive categories, male or female..."³³ The question is, are sex and gender synonyms? Are there biological or other explanations to human behaviors especially with regards to the relations between male and female? George Peter Murdock subscribes to the biological explanations of human behaviours; he suggests that biological difference such as greater physical strength of men and the fact that women bear children, lead to gender roles being determined out of sheer practicality. He argues that given the biological differences between men and women, a sexual division of labour is the most efficient way of organizing the society.³⁴ His reason for this is that:

Man with his superior physical strength can better undertake the more strenuous tasks... not handicapped, as is woman by the physiological burdens of pregnancy and nursing ...³⁵

In an attempt to draw a line of distinction between gender and sex, Goodman states that sex "is a biological category female and male" while gender "is a social or cultural category, influenced by stereotypes about 'female' and 'male' behavior that exist in our attitudes and beliefs. Such beliefs are often said to be 'culturally produced' or 'constructed'".³⁶ He establishes this by saying that:

Gender can be seen as a pattern constructed in society which in turn influences our views of ourselves... as gendered individuals, not just as

women and men but as people who have been taught that there are values assigned to sex.³⁷

Gender as such becomes a social and cultural prism through which differences between the social categories of male and female are refracted.³⁸ This theme courses through Ann Oakley who upholds the belief that cultural, rather than biological factors, determine gender roles in the society. This is based on the argument that humans learn the behaviour that is expected of males and females within the society, and this behaviour is not produced by innate characteristics. Whatever the biological differences between males and females, it is the culture of a society that exerts most influence in the creation of masculine and feminine behaviour.³⁹ This argument is based on the fact that in most societies, stereotypes are reinforced throughout childhood and adult life. From this viewpoint, gender is socially constructed in the sense that differences in the behaviour of males and females are learned rather than being the inevitable result of biology. She reinstates this by claiming that: “Human cultures owe their creation to human inventiveness rather than invincible biological forces”.⁴⁰

David Morgan’s and Linda Birke’s arguments represent a meeting point in the debate. They focus on the interaction between sex and gender. Linda argues that women’s biology actually and materially affects their lives and suggests that feminists cannot ignore biological facts.⁴¹ Morgan in the same vein argues that “distinction(s) between men and women ... is the outcome of a complex interaction between the biological and cultural rather than the primary assertion of the former”.⁴² These arguments find their purpose in the attempts to establish the relationship between sex and gender as determinants of the inequality that exists between men and women. Virtually all gender and feminist theories agree that women are universally oppressed and devalued, despite the disagreements over the roles of biology and culture.

Gender discourse, especially that which focuses on the Yoruba, gained serious attention in 1997 with Oyeronke Oyewunmi’s *The invention of women: Making an African sense of Women Gender Discourses*. In it Oyewunmi argues that “the fundamental category called ...woman did not exist in Yorubaland prior to its sustained contact with the West”. She argues “against the ideology of biological determinism which is dominant in Western gender discourses : the conception that biology provides the rationale for the organization of the social world”.⁴³ This conception is dominant in George Peter Murdock’s theory.⁴⁴ Oyewunmi

emphasized this “non-gendered” ideology in one of her later works “Conceptualizing Gender: Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies”.⁴⁵ In it she describes the traditional Yoruba family as non – gendered because “kinship roles and categories are not gender – differentiated, ... the fundamental organizing principle within the family is seniority based on relative age and not gender.”⁴⁶ Some aspects of Oyewunmi’s argument have come under severe criticism from some Yoruba gender scholars. Bibi Bakare – Yusuf contends with what she describes as Oyewunmi’s assumption that a particular variable of power is the same everywhere in isolation from any other form of enablement or constraint. She argues that even if one concedes that seniority is the dominant language of power in Yoruba culture, Oyewunmi is wrong to conclude that it is indeed the only form of power relationship operating outside of other forms of hierarchy.⁴⁷ She also opposes Oyewunmi’s argument which blames gender inequality or ‘the erasure of egalitarian and anatomical relationship between the sexes’ on colonialism.⁴⁸ She questions the ease with which ‘colonial’ gender ideology could erase the pre-colonial structures which the passage across the Atlantic could not. Not denying the violent disruption wrought by the colonial processes, Bibi-Bakare suggests there must have been an element within Yoruba culture that allowed for easy adaptation of colonial rule.⁴⁹

Marjorie McKintosh, on the other hand, reinforces the argument that the Yoruba did not have a concept of gender similar to that found in Western societies, as sharp boundaries were not drawn between the sexes.⁵⁰ She argues that labour roles outside the domestic context were often shared between men and women but admits that:

Only women were given the jobs of raising children, cooking food for the family, washing clothes and cleaning the compound. Those gender-specific responsibilities at home limited their ability to pursue other activities, including earning money⁵¹.

She also admits that men controlled the governments of the Yoruba states during the 19th century and under colonial rule;⁵² in the religious sphere, women did not participate in certain practices such as the Egungun, and those who dared the Oro, regardless of their rank were subject to death;⁵³ at home, wives were expected to greet their husbands by kneeling down or curtsying⁵⁴ and though ill-treatment was not allowed, men were allowed to use some degree of physical force in controlling their wives.⁵⁵ Now, the question is, if men exercised this great

influence in government, in religion, and at home, what is the basis for denying gender distinctions, as stereotypes are reinforced in all spheres of life?

This study takes a standpoint that opposes the “Yoruba has no gender” ideology. Oyewunmi admits that “Ondo and a number of polities in Eastern Yorubaland manifest cultural specificities different from Oyo Yoruba culture”.⁵⁶ It is intended in this study to elaborate on the specific Ondo situation. It is incontrovertible that in traditional Ondo, people were ranked by seniority, but that does not in any way exclude other variables such as social status and gender : social status in the sense of the elements that determine the stratification of the society; a slave for instance irrespective of chronological age is subject to his master and other freeborn in his master’s family; Gender in the sense of “ways” of seeing and representing people based on sex difference.⁵⁷ While it is not intended to create unhealthy conflict between Ondo men and women, it cannot be denied that Ondo is not and never has been immune to gender construction and categorization. To deny the gender politics of Ondo tradition is to deny historical reality.

From the very beginning, the Ondo tradition embraces and acknowledges gender differences. The tradition of origin centers around a pair of twins of both sexes. The female, Pupupu became the first monarch. She lost out because of what Olufunke Iluyemi describes as her innate feminine inclination to domesticity⁵⁸ which her male – dominated cabinet could not tolerate. There is no arguing that womanhood was valorized by Pupupu’s ascendancy to power. Her rejection and the consequent preclusion of the “women race” from the throne equally gives a picture of what Tsaaior James Tar refers to as a “dominant repressing ideology; an ideology that is usually executed through the subtle process of exclusion through inclusion⁵⁹; that “takes women into account and then marginalizes them”.⁶⁰

Following the subordination of women in Ondo traditional politics, the office of *Lobun* and her *Upoji* (cabinet) was introduced.⁶¹ Through this, women appeared to have been offered a space especially with regards to the process that allows only the *Lobun* to crown the new *Oşemowe*. In real sense, it appears this role was apportioned to consolidate patriarchy. This was achieved through the *Opopade* tradition which seals the eternal preclusion of females from the Obaship of Ondo.⁶² Ironically, oral traditions reveal a number of male Obas who committed grave offences (graver than Pupupu’s display of domestic inclinations) yet, this did not call for the termination of male rule.

Gender polarities are daily enacted in Ondo ordinary life. In a typical polygamous Ondo society, men are known to have several wives and very large families over which they exercised enormous authority. Of course, the *Iya-Ile* (*Iyanle* in Ondo dialect), the most senior wife that Oyewunmi talked about in her argument, exercised great influence especially over the younger wives. This however did not make her less subordinate to the father of the house. The Ondo proverb “*Opa yi a mu na Iyanle, O ghoke aja hun iyawo*” (the cane used in flogging the senior wife is kept in the ceiling waiting to be used on the younger wife) is an example of the proverbial representation of women as a subordinated social category. Irrespective of their age in the family, they are sometime subject to like abuses in their male dominated environments. This questions the argument about gender hierarchy in the family and other social and political institutions being a colonial invention. This study maintains that rather than being the inventor of gender binary, colonialism only exacerbated an already contrary condition.

But things are changing; new issues are emerging in the family and society at large. Women are working towards their liberation and this brings us to the subject of social change. Anthony Giddens, describes change to mean showing how far there are alterations in the underlying structure of an object or situation over a period of time. Using human societies as a case study, he explains that to decide how far and in what ways a system is in a process of change, we have to show to what degree there is modification of basic institutions during a specific period.⁶³ Lloyd describes social change to mean the adaptation of traditional societies to modern conditions.⁶⁴ Social change in this sense, as Adeoti explains, can be viewed as social development, progress or modernisation. Modernisation, to him, means a continuous transformation of the institutions and structures of society from a “traditional towards a more modern one.”⁶⁵ The most complex aspect of this explanation is perhaps the one that has to do with modernisation. To the countries of the West, modernisation is explained with regard to the social changes associated with industrialization. This modern thinking is characterized by the belief in progress and faith placed in science and efforts to sweep away the prejudices of previous generations and replace them with a more rational basis for social life.⁶⁶ With regards to Africa, however, modernisation is always explained as it applies to Europeanisation or Westernisation.⁶⁷ This concept has many critics. Not denying that external factors can, and do, produce socio-political and economic changes in a given society, Otite

and Ogionwo highlight that endogenous factors such as conflicts and social problems can bring about changes in a society.⁶⁸

A more radical critic is Mojubaolu Okome who contends that generally, the term ‘modern’ is always erroneously taken to be the abandonment of the African for Western culture. She claims that between the pre-historic age and the 15th century, history reveals evidences of continuity and change in the African continent. Therefore, the dichotomous relationship between tradition and modernity must be nullified⁶⁹ and modernity should be regarded as “new” or “contemporary” something that each and every society undergoes without implying that any / all new evolutionary change is Western. This makes it possible to meaningfully treat changes that are homegrown, neighbour – influenced, and Asian inspired from those that are Western – influenced.⁷⁰ Due to the complexity associated with the interpretation of modernisation as either Westernisation or Europeanisation, it perhaps becomes necessary to “stick to the less precise development or social change.”⁷¹

In the context of this study, however, social change involves shifts, alteration or modification in the social, economic and political statuses of women and Western education provides the solid case study from which to observe and make sense of these shifts.⁷² The changing economic and social roles of women, the changes that are occurring in the family and other institutions, as well as attitudes, values and beliefs about women are illustrations of the fact of social change. Onigu Otite and W. Ogionwo observe how values and attitudes about the status of women in Nigeria have changed during the past few decades. They explain that:

The image of the woman is no longer simply one of a wife and mother and her sacred duty to serve the man. Society no longer frowns on girls working while waiting to get married; and education of women no longer considered unimportant ... Attitudes towards work, marriage and family are also changing.⁷³

The changes in the status of and general beliefs about women as a result of Western education form the central theme of this study.

1.8 Literature Review

The growing concern over women as a disadvantaged sex has stimulated some activities in the study of science of society. In 1982, Nina Mba published her *Nigerian Women Mobilized*⁷⁴ which is a study of the political activities of African women in Southern Nigeria from 1900 – 1965. Her work is a response to the question of the validity of studying women as a separate segment of society rather than as member of the various social economic groups in the society. Her argument is that such a study, especially in Nigeria, is necessary for the following reasons: First, role differentiation based on sex existed to varying degree in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial societies of Southern Nigeria and the self-image and actions of the women were frequently sex-based. Secondly, there is the necessity to redress the imbalance in the treatment of Nigerian women in Nigerian Historiography. Bolanle Elizabeth Akande's Ph.D Thesis "Impact of Education and Rural-urban Locations on Contemporary Roles of Yoruba Women in the Oranmiyan Local Government Area"⁷⁵ is relevant in this discussion. In it, she reinforces Mba's emphasis on the need for separate study on women as a separate gender. She however admits that in the study of women, the significant others (men) cannot be ignored.

Bolanle Awe, an authority in women studies, published her edited work, *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective*, in 1992.⁷⁶ In it, she maintains that most of the existing works on Nigerian history record little or nothing about the activities of women despite the fact that Nigerian women have been active participants in the development of their various societies. She attributes this deficiency to the fact that Nigerian historians, until recently, exhibited a certain degree of Western bias, their writing being the masculine centered view of history. To prove this, she makes reference to the fact that the Oral traditions of most African societies have concentrated on wars and battle fields. These areas, according to her, were where men predominated and exercised authority. This explains the various authors' focus on role models from pre-colonial times to prominent women who distinguished themselves in the colonial era. The relevance of these works lies in the fact that, through a general survey of the activities of prominent women in Nigeria, they provide a guide to the specific situation in Ondo, where a number of women have excelled and their successes have been recognized and sometimes rewarded by the society.

On education is Majasan's⁷⁷, "Indigenous Education among the Yoruba and Its Relevance to the Contemporary Educational System". In it, he examines in considerable details the agencies and institutions of Yoruba education, such as, child-rearing practices, folklore,

organised plays, traditional rites, different forms of associations among others. He draws attention to the purpose and comprehensiveness of the objectives of the Yoruba traditional education. He also points out that some cumbersome aspects of traditional education form obvious impediments to modern development. Closely connected with the subject of education in Nigeria is Babs Fafunwa's *History of Education in Nigeria*.⁷⁸ This is a general survey of the educational development in Nigeria-traditional through colonial to the post-independence era. Other works in this direction include Ebenezer O.M Kpasa's *History of Education*⁷⁹ and J.M Kosemani & Okorosaye Orubite's *History of Nigerian Education: A Contemporary Analysis*.⁸⁰ Both deal extensively with educational development in Nigeria except that Kpasa added the discussion on educational ideals in the Western World before considering the development of education in Africa and Nigeria in particular.

Oladele Taiwo, in his *Agencies of Education*,⁸¹ identifies and discusses four major agencies of education: the home, the school, the community and the state. He presents the home as the most important, because, it lays the foundation on which the other agencies later build, its influence being the most pervasive and lasting. He describes the school as being assigned the responsibility of imparting certain skills and capabilities, of socializing the child and of affording him needed opportunities for self improvement. The community he explains as having the duty of continuing the process of socialization started by the school, of inculcating into the child a sense of duty to himself and to others, of affording him opportunities of playing leadership roles and of generally helping to make him a more useful citizen. The state is identified as being saddled with the responsibility of providing abundant educational opportunities and the security necessary for the promotion of educational interests. Education is presented in this work as the total effort of a community to raise its economic, social and political standard of life. Rather than being the responsibility of the school, it is the business of the entire community and every agency or interest group should be made to serve some useful educational purpose.

The findings of the general works reviewed on women education indicate that in most developing societies, very little or no importance is placed on the education of girls. The edited work of Elizabeth King and M. Anne Hills⁸² reveals that apart from the belief on the part of parents, that the education of girls is of no economic value, since she would marry and the whole benefit will go to her husband, there are myriads of other factors (early marriage, religion, heavy domestic work among others) which militate against female education. The

result of Jandyala's survey⁸³ of the East Asian situation agrees with that of Karin A.L. Hyde⁸⁴ about the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa, into which Nigeria belongs. They both observe that the most obstacle to the full equability in education exist only in people's minds in the unsubstantial diaphanous forms of prejudice, traditional beliefs and cultural stereotype. Andrew Sunday Ademola's⁸⁵ survey of the Kikuyu of East Africa and Simon Ademola Ajayi's⁸⁶ work among the Yoruba of Western Nigeria all point to the fact that the initial slow enthusiasm towards female education is due to the fact that most African Societies believed that the traditional roles of a woman can be learnt and perfected without the help of a formal school.

Oyedeji, Omolewa and Asiedu's *A Handbook of Literacy Education for West Africa*⁸⁷ among other things highlights the indifference of many West Africans to the advantages conferred by literacy. Of significance to this study is its analysis on the low premium placed on the education of females. One major reason given by the authors is the attitude which many hold, that the woman's place is in the kitchen. Others are the Islamic purdah system, domestic and child-bearing challenges, and early marriage which were common practices in many West African communities. The relevance of these reviewed literatures is the fact that they act as a guide to the specific situation in Ondo especially in examining general attitudes to and the impediments to female education.

On the subject of social change, Anthony Giddens⁸⁸ in his work *Sociology*, in a general term, describes change to involve showing how far there are alterations in the underlying structure of an object or situation over a period of time. P.W. Musgrave,⁸⁹ in his *The Sociology of Education*, published in 1965 observes that one of the institutions that have undergone changes as a result of Western education and urbanization is the family. The change is indicated by the rising status of the woman in the marriage relationship. Urbanization and occupational changes have also altered the functions of the family in several ways. Ojite and Ojionwo⁹⁰ in their own work, *An Introduction to Sociological Studies*, observe specifically how values and attitudes about the status of women in Nigeria have changed over the decades as a result of Western education.

The question, however, is: how far has Western education removed the low status of women? In conducting an investigation into this, Aina Olabisi⁹¹ in her work "Women, Culture and Society" describes the present position of Nigerian Women, despite Western Education, as

subordinate in the culture of male supremacy, exacerbated by patriarchy, capitalist ideology, foreign religions and sex-biased legal structures. Osita Eze⁹², in his “Human Rights in Africa: Some Selected Problems”, observes that despite the fact that women are now found in the various professions, their traditional role as perceived by men has persisted. Olabisi however admits that a lot is being done in removing or at least reducing the existing gender inequality; the woman’s question coming into the national and international agenda is by itself a great achievement.

In Karen Tranberg Hansen(ed) *Africans Encounter with Domesticity*, Contributor LaRay Denzer in her article, “Domestic Science Training in Colonial Yoruba, Nigeria” examines how the Yoruba transformed the European ideology of domesticity to fit its indigenous cultural assumptions and changing needs; she also analyses the role of domestic science in schools and how Yoruba women used the new techniques and knowledge gained to create and exploit new economic opportunities.⁹³ Peel’s *Religious Encounter and the making of the Yoruba* focuses on theorisation of religious change in Yorubaland. The mutual engagement of Christianity and the Yoruba people; Christian conversion and inculturation; interaction between Christianity and traditional religious institutions on one hand; and the two with Islam on the other are some of the themes discussed.⁹⁴ Religious transformation occupies a central position in any discourse on social change.

Most of the existing literature on Ondo focus on socio-political development, missionary activities or Ondo and her neighbours during specific periods. Patrick Ogunshakin,⁹⁵ one of the pioneer authors on Ondo history published his work in 1976. Though he makes few references to women, his work concentrates on “those aspects of our political set-up and sociological development, including cultural art e.t.c.” The intention of this work as thus stated does not have women as its focus. In 1991, J.K. Olupona⁹⁶ (as reviewed by MacNezer Mabayoje Faseun) in his “Women’s rituals of Reproduction and Wealth” discussed the *Obiton*, the puberty rites among the Ondo. This was followed in 2002 by a study by Macnezer Mabayoje Faseun⁹⁷ in his “Obiton, Puberty Rite, Dance Drama and Poetry of Ondo Women.” In it, he gave an historical account of the origin of *Obiton*, describing in considerable details its spiritual essence. In 2003 however, a major development took place when Olufunke Iluyemi,⁹⁸ in collaboration with Ondo Development Committee (ODC), published *Ondo Tradition and Culture (The Female Angle)*. This is a detailed account of women in the socio-political development of Ondo. The author explains that her choice of

this historical work, being purely from the female angle, is because of the desire to make it more focused and to whet the reader's appetite about the male angle. On Western education and women in Ondo, however, not much has been done. Except for the brief discussion in Oguntuyi's⁹⁹ *History of the Catholic Church in Ondo*, virtually nothing has been written on women in the educational development of Ondo.

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CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL ONDO

2.1 Historical Background of Ondo

Ode Ondo, which is commonly called Ondo, is one of the ancient kingdoms of Yorubaland. It can be described as a complex mixture of the *Oka*, *Idoko* and *Ifore* peoples. These peoples were believed to have been earlier migrants to Ondo. There has not been a satisfactory account of their origins, though, evidence seems to point to a date from about the late fourteenth century to the early fifteenth century.¹

As mini states, *Ifore*, *Idoko* and *Oka* developed a simple political system under a ruler called *Oloja*.² There is no evidence of kingship institution among these earlier settlers. What is clear is that each of the three had a separate identity and developed a centralized government with the *Oloja* at the head, surrounded by his council of chiefs and officials. To these early inhabitants were added immigrants, especially from Oyo and Benin, the former being more dominant and powerful to establish political hegemony over them. Today, the Oyo migrants are regarded as the founders of not only the kingdom, but the dynasty of Ondo.

2.2 Women and Traditional Politics

The dynastic history of Ondo began in 1516 with the ascendancy of Pupupu to power. A daughter of Alaafin Oluaso of Oyo, she was a lead figure among the immigrants to which the founding of Ondo is associated. This marked the beginning of the involvement of women in Ondo traditional politics. Her rise to power did not only mark the beginning of kingship institution in Ondo, but her fall also marked the subordination of women in the traditional politics of Ondo. There is no detailed record of the reign of *Oba* Pupupu. History has it that, one day, during her reign, her chiefs came to her palace for an important meeting and while the meeting was in progress, she got up and asked to be excused so that she could go and herd in her chickens and other animals. The chiefs who were predominantly males noted this and decided that after her, no other woman would be an *Oba* in Ondo.³

At her death, her first son Airo, which means, exchange in Ondo language was chosen by the chiefs to replace her. This was in 1530. However, the need to put on the traditional ruling council a woman to represent women's interest prompted the establishment of the office of *Lobun*. The *Lobun* and her cabinet, which formed the *Upoji* or *Eghae* was recognized as a

separate coordinate machinery of the traditional government.⁴ She represented the voice of the women. She was always referred to as *Oba Obinrin*. Her selection was by the male chiefs, and not the *Osemawe*. Unlike the other titles, when appointed, she was not to step on an unswept floor (*Ale Kasen*) and any clothes worn in a day must be washed before she could put them on again. Even her soups must be prepared daily. The rituals surrounding her installation were as elaborate as those of the ruler, and her person, like that of the ruler, “became sacrosanct thereafter, subject to a number of taboos. She was the priestess of Aje the god of money and performed various religious ceremonies”.⁵ In addition; the *Lobun* also took charge of women’s affairs including the markets located in the city and in the farmsteads. She established markets and had authority over them. This by extension meant that the economic wellbeing of the kingdom was her concern.⁶ The *Lobun* who must be a descendant of Pupupu was and still is the only person traditionally accepted to crown the king. Without a *Lobun*, no *Osemawe* can be crowned. The queerest aspect of the relationship between the *Lobun* and the *Osemawe* is that, after the coronation, the *Lobun* and the *Osemawe* were bound by tradition never to set eyes on each other till death. If a *Lobun* died, the position remained vacant until the reigning *Osemawe* died and a new one was to be enthroned.

It is not surprising, therefore that, women were generally silent in the Ondo traditional politics. Though *Lobun* and her cabinet performed some religious functions, especially in the worship of the traditional gods and in the establishment of markets⁷, the actual decision-making with regards to governance rested solely with the *Oba* and his cabinet.

2.3 Social Status of Women in Traditional Ondo

Women all over the world share certain realities. Though differences do abound, research has revealed the commonalities that exist among world women. Eva M. Rathgebe⁸ has, however, warned against making cross-cultural generalizations about the status, condition, interests and needs of women as each society, among other things, has its own cultures and traditions. The situation of women must therefore be examined, to some extent in the context of these local conditions. While trying to avoid the error of generalization, it is a known fact that historically, women as a social group have been subordinated in most societies.⁹

The gender representations depicted here applies to practically every human society. Some sociologists and anthropologists believe that there is not, and never has been a society in

which women do not have an inferior status to that of men.¹⁰ Sylvia Leith Ross writing about the African woman asserts that,

the woman is of little account ... Her whole life is in his (her husband's) hands... She has no will, no means of redress. He (the husband) believes that he is lord and master and the woman his property...¹¹

A report about the mid-19th Century Chile reveals that the status of the woman was that of a minor. She could neither be guardian nor administrator of estate nor witness legal instruments. On marriage, a Chilean girl came under the authority of her husband. He administered the common property of the marriage and was the legal owner of the profits or salary of the wife who could not practice a profession or hold a paid position without his authority.¹² Articles 131 and 133 of the Chilean Civil Code legally recognized the authority of the man over the woman. The husband "owes his wife protection, while she in return owes him obedience".¹³

The situation was not different in medieval English society where it has been reported that women were equally held in subordinate position. John Stuart Mill argues that had Queen Victoria and Elizabeth not inherited the throne, they might not have been entrusted with political duties.¹⁴ Catherine Wallace, comparing the 20th century British woman with her mother and grandmother, claims that,

it was only in 1930 that women were given the same voting rights as men. Today, we take it for granted that men and women should be treated as equals. But a hundred years ago, no one challenged the position of women as second class citizens. We must thank a few brave men and women who fought long and bitterly for such things as women's suffrage and the availability of methods of contraception. Owing to their efforts, much has been achieved. Can we therefore now say that in Britain today, women have as much freedom and opportunity as men? Unfortunately, they do not...¹⁵

A similar report about Yugoslavia during this period states that:

women had neither political nor economic equality with men. They enjoyed no political rights. They could neither vote nor be elected to the legislature, nor form part of the executive or the judiciary. They could not become judges, nor enter into diplomatic corps nor become members of the stock exchange... the husband was considered the head of the family and had sole authority. The wife was obliged to obey his orders...

parental authority lay with the father in virtue of his autocratic rights in the family¹⁶

In ancient India, the status of the women was not different. The Law of Manu states concerning the woman that, her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth, her sons protect her in old age – a woman does not deserve independence.¹⁷ It was from the mid-19th century, that women in America started to enjoy equal status with men. It was a gradual process. The right of suffrage was granted to them only in 1920 with the Nineteenth Amendment. With this came other privileges and rights. Before then, the woman lacked the right to make contracts, keep her wages after marriage, have equal guardianship of her children or own property in her own name as a husband controlled his wife's property.¹⁸

Coming home to Nigeria, Olabisi Aina observes that the Nigerian woman is born into a culture of male supremacy as exacerbated in the general preference for a male child.¹⁹ In most, if not all, Nigerian societies, great importance is placed on male children as the perpetuators of the family name. When a woman begets a male child, she is said to have developed a tap root in the husband's home, while the one with only girls would be seen as having only fibrous roots. The implication is that she can easily be pushed out by another woman who may bear a male child.²⁰ Olabisi cites the Igbo example where the woman who has three boys in quick succession is honoured by her husband by killing a goat to celebrate the feat. On the other hand, a woman who has three girls in succession is considered a failure and stands the risk of having another woman brought in to carry on from where she failed.²¹ Ifeyinwa Iweriebor aptly describes the mothers of only baby girls as being presented with the equivalent of certificates of attendance, not merit.²² Strengthening this Amazigbo observes that “the traditional Nigerian society believed that the Nigerian woman in her parents' home before marriage:

- Is protected by her father
- Married: her husband protects her and makes decisions for her
- At the death of her husband, she follows her sons who make the decisions and protect her²³.

These are the traditional conceptions of femininity in Nigeria and other developing nations Olukayode O. Taiwo describes the Nigerian society as largely patriarchal, male-dominated, and gender inequality being an essential part of the socio-cultural milieu.²⁴ Chinua Achebe, in his novel *Things Fall Apart*, tries among other things, to fictionalise the low status of women

in Igbo society which is a picture of how it is in several other places of Nigeria. Uchendu, Okonkwo's uncle is quoted as saying, "we all know that a man is the head of the family and his wives do his bidding. A child belongs to its father and its family and not to its mother and her family"²⁵ To Okonkwo, the tragic hero of the novel, "no matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children (and especially his women), he was not really a man"²⁶ No wonder he ruled his household with a heavy hand and his wives and children lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper.²⁷

It is against this background that the status of the traditional Ondo women will be examined. The social background of Ondo women was very complex. The pre-colonial Ondo woman lived under a wide variety of conditions; She fits into the picture painted by Kenneth Little of the African woman who was either a woman of rank, or a slave; either a wife, a wife to be, or a widow; either a trader, farmer, or weaver.²⁸ At the same time, she lived in a society that favoured men over women, that which placed a greater value on male as against female children. There were cases in Ondo of a man marrying a second wife because the first failed to produce male children.

In traditional Ondo, a young girl was under the authority of her father who could give her out in marriage to any man of his choice. No girl ever refused her father's wishes. Marriage transferred to the husband the rights over the woman, her domestic labour, sole sexual access and all the children born by her.²⁹ He took full control and responsibility of his wife, that is, he was lord and master³⁰ of the home. Her children were of more importance than her. The husband was considered the head of the family and had sole authority. The wife was obliged to obey his orders. She was regarded a little higher than slaves. In fact she saw herself as one. If the wife should leave her husband's lineage by divorce, she must repay the bride-wealth to her husband or if he was dead, to whoever inherited her.³¹ Children belonged to the husband whether he divorced or was divorced.³²

Although the patrilineal form of organization prevails, the Ondo reckon descent bilaterally.³³ By her marriage, a woman is only alienated to a minor degree from her own descent group. She retains membership and rights in the land of her group.³⁴ All the children born by her, while legally married belong to her husband's descent group, while any child born outside marriage belongs to her own descent group, though the genitor who may or may not assume marital responsibility could claim the child and assume the responsibility for his upbringing.³⁵

The common principle guiding inheritance of property in Ondo is similar to the rest of Yorubaland. A man's self-acquired property will be shared according to the number of wives he had, or rather according to the number of women who have had children by him (*Udi-Igi*). A man's property, therefore, passes to his children through his wives who are mothers to those children. It does not matter the number of children a woman has. The property will be shared equally according to the number of women. At other times, property could be shared according to the number of children (*Ori-o-j'ori*).³⁶ The woman does not inherit from her husband's property. In fact, she is regarded as a part of the property to be inherited by one of the male members of the family excluding her own sons and any elder brother to her late husband. It is a very common custom for a younger brother to inherit one or two of the deceased's wives, but an elder brother would not inherit his deceased younger brother's wives or property.³⁷ A childless woman did not have a share of her deceased husband's property, but she could be given an apartment of the husband's house to live in till she died. The apartment did not belong to her. She could also be given a portion of land to farm, if she decided to remain in the family. At her death, the land would revert to the husband's family. Her siblings had no claim to such apartment and land.

Unlike in the Igbo society where a woman had no right to any land in her lineage and could not directly inherit anything from her father, as the property of the father went to his nearest male relative if he had no son³⁸, in Ondo a woman could, and still can, directly inherit property, including land, from her father.³⁹ When the land belonging to the deceased is divided and the permanent crops thereon, the deceased's brothers are entitled to a share as well as his sisters. The deceased's daughters and sons are entitled to their shares, which are heritable, by their own children.⁴⁰ The property of a dead woman, however, passed to her children and if she had none, the property would go to her parents or elders of her lineage for distribution to her own siblings. The Yoruba customary law frowns at the idea of a husband inheriting from his deceased wife's family or personal property.⁴¹

The inheritance of chieftaincy titles is another area of importance. Of the traditional titles in Ondo, only a few are hereditary. These include the title of the *Osemawe* (the King), the *Jomu*, *Sora*, *Akunnara* and a few others. Women cannot succeed to any of these titles. Of all the female chieftaincy titles, which include *Lobun*, *Lisa Lobun*, *Jomu Lobun*, *Sasere Lobun*, *Aogbo*, *Orangun*, etc, only the title of *Lobun* is hereditary. This does not, however, mean that a deceased *Lobun* will be directly succeeded by her daughter, but whoever will succeed her

must be a member of the particular family which has sole access to the title. This is because, by the time a *Lobun* dies, her direct children may not have attained the desirable age to qualify them for the title. Her children, however, have claim to the title probably after one or two other members of the family might have occupied the post, by which time they too may have attained the desirable age. Also, the *Lobun's* children may not inherit the title immediately upon her death as it has to rotate to other eligible candidates in the family.⁴² Of the other female chieftaincy titles, none is hereditary.

In the past, it used to be that the daughters of the *Osemawe* were the only females who could take the titles of *Aogbo*, *Odofindi* and *Orunto*, but for many years now, the same rule that applies to the other titles applies to them. They are all open to individuals who probably have excelled in certain areas of life either as successful traders, e.g. Madam Femiwa, the late *Orangun* of Ondo,⁴³ or because they have wealthy and well-behaved children. The choice of the people to take the non-hereditary titles is the prerogative of the *Osemawe* and his council of chiefs. It is of note that interested candidates can lobby the King, the Chiefs and the *Lobun* and this can go a long way to influence the choice.

Lloyd noted that in the Ado society, there were chiefs who held titles of their mother's lineage. It was explained that since there were no eligible men in the lineage, the title was given to a daughter of the lineage. But since she could not take the title because she was a woman, she gave it to her son.⁴⁴ This does not apply to the male chieftaincy titles in Ondo. The only instance of a title strictly reserved for males being given to a daughter of the lineage was that of the *Jomu* lineage c1590 – c1599. The tradition claims that after the death of *Jomu Nla* in c1590, there was no male child by him to take the title. Since no female was allowed to take the title, it was given to a man outside of the lineage. Thus, the tradition was broken. It followed, however, that people were dying in large numbers in the lineage and the *Ifa* oracle was consulted. The oracle said it was because the tradition had been broken and demanded that a son of one of the daughters of the dead *Jomu Nla* who was married to a man at Igbindo be chosen to take the title.⁴⁵ Apart from this incidence, there is no other record of a male chieftaincy title being given to a daughter of the lineage.

THE OPOJIS



Figure 1: *Source: Ekimogun News, 19th Edition, 2006. P.13*

2.4 Economic Life of Women in Traditional Ondo

Traditionally, Ondo people are farmers.⁴⁶ This is because the soil is fertile enough to support a viable agrarian economy. In the pre-colonial era, the crops generally cultivated were yams, cocoyams, cowpeas, melon and a few other vegetables and food crops mainly for local consumption and the surplus disposed of at the local markets. Cocoa cultivation for export did not gain prominence until well into the colonial period. In the traditional agricultural set-up, the Ondo woman had only what the husband gave her. Unlike the male children who after working for the father for a number of years, were entitled to a portion of cultivable land⁴⁷, the female children had no such privilege. They only received household items from their parents. During planting season, the husband usually did the cultivation and burning of the bush together with the felling of the trees after which he would make the ridges. If he was kind, he could allot a small portion of the land to each of his wives. Such narrow portions were usually referred to as *Otara*.⁴⁸ On this portion of land, the woman would plant vegetables for household use. The yams belonged to her husband. She sold the surplus of the vegetables at the market and from the proceeds bought some non-farm items, like salt, fish among others.

On the other hand, the husband could decide not to give her any portion of land. But she could plant her vegetables in-between the ridges of yams made by her husband. At the end of the harvesting season, the husband could give the woman a portion of the overall proceeds from the farm. He could also decide to buy her clothes during festive seasons. The woman had no direct access to the products of the farm except those given to her by her husband. The woman merely worked for the husband.⁴⁹ The *Akuro* system was very rampant in pre-colonial Ondo. This meant the woman could find a portion of land usually by the side of a river and not too far from home, and cultivate it. The crops usually planted on an *Akuro* land were mainly vegetables for the home and the surplus disposed of at the local markets, but it was never viable enough to affect the socio-economic position of the woman.

Trade was one of the mainstays of the pre-colonial Ondo economy, next to agriculture. There is considerable historical evidence to show the high degree of local and external trade that the Ondo women engaged in during the pre-colonial period. Before the eighteenth century when the Ondo people began to trade with Agbabu and the Ijo at the Okitipupa coast, trade was mainly local with the neighbouring villages like Igunshin, Bagbe, Ilu-Nla, Erinla, Oboto and

Tekunle. There is, however, no historical data to show the volume of the trade. The articles of trade were mainly farm products, chickens, goats, locally made textile materials, oil and pottery. As there were no wide roads and motor transport, people trekked to and from the markets carrying their wares on the heads or employing the services of slaves.

By the eighteenth century, however, the Ondo people, including the women, were said to be engaged in trading activities with the Ijo and other slave dealers at the coast of Okitipupa.⁵⁰ Evidently, this trade was prompted by the wave of the slave trade which swept across the whole of West Africa during this period. Okitipupa was the major slave market from where the slaves were taken to Lagos. Lazy and outspoken house servants together with state offenders and kidnapped individuals were the victims. In exchange for slaves, the Ondo people got salt, glass, beads, gin and textile materials. Though the slave trade was stopped and the institution of slavery eradicated by the European rule,⁵¹ trade with Okitipupa and Agbabu still continued especially in fish, cassava balls (*purupuru*), and other materials even up till the present day.

Apart from trade, the Ondo women also engaged in weaving. This was done with the traditional vertical loom. Unlike in Shaki where men engaged in weaving of cloths, it was mainly a woman's job in the old Ondo. Among the cloths obtained was *Poku*, which was a thick coarse material used locally. Others were *Alaari*, *Sanmiyan*, *Etu*, *Petuje*, *Pendano*, *Omolangileya* and a host of others usually worn during important festivals or used as articles of trade. These materials except *Poku* are still obtainable in contemporary Ondo. For no apparent reason, Ondo women no longer engage in weaving. The materials usually called *Aso-Oke* are now brought from around Oyo, Iseyin and Shaki in Northern Yorubaland.⁵²

The economic involvement of the Ondo women, especially where trading is concerned, is an important area to look into in understanding their socio-economic mobility down the centuries. Historical evidence point to specific women who through trade have been able to move up the ladder of the society. These are women who, through personal efforts, especially trading, have become rich enough not only to be able to build houses, but even to take chieftaincy titles. A typical example of this is the Late Madam Femiwa of Losunla Street,⁵³ Ondo. Though from Ife, but married to an Ondo man, she was able to rise to prominence through trade. She was said to have started very poor. In fact, the husband was not rich enough to have a house. She started as a petty trader in tobacco, potash and agricultural

products which she usually carried to Agbabu and other village markets. But she gradually rose to the position of selling beads (*Akun*) and *Aso-kei*, which are valued articles among the Ondo. She was able to build a storey house and was believed to have owned a cattle ranch in Okeigbo. Due to her industry, she was installed the *Orangun*, one of the important female chieftaincy titles in Ondo.

A number of Ondo women were able to attain a position of social prominence through their personal commercial activities. Through trade, the pre-colonial Ondo woman was able to realize a measure of economic independence⁵⁴, economic autonomy being the prevailing concern of women everywhere.⁵⁵ Though a number of men disagreed with the idea of a woman carrying out independent activity outside the home, a greater section of the society recognized trade as a reputable women occupation. This does not, however, mean that only women engaged in trading activities. Men also did.⁵⁶

2.5 Traditional Education in Ondo

Every society, from the primitive to the complex, has its own system of education, although its goal and method of approach may differ from place to place. It is a known fact that the culture of the society is always consciously being transmitted from one generation to the next. Culture in this context consists of accumulated knowledge, values, norms, mores, beliefs and attitudes of a society.⁵⁷ Anthony Giddens defines it as the ways of life of the members of a society, or of groups within a society, which includes art, literature and painting. He identifies other cultural items as including how people dress, their custom, patterns of work and religious ceremonies.⁵⁸ Every society makes conscious efforts to transmit its culture to succeeding generations. This cultural transmission is necessary so that people can fit into the existing pattern of life and associate with others in a predictable, efficient and humane way.⁵⁹ This inter-generational transmission of culture has been a distinguishing characteristic of man since the earliest beginning of human society. This has been taking place in Africa, before the coming of the Europeans and can be termed traditional education. Various forms of traditional education have existed in Africa for hundreds of years before any contact was made with the outside world. Babs Fafunwa describes indigenous education in Africa “as being as old as man himself.”⁶⁰

Generally, traditional education is always informal.⁶¹ The child learns from his parents and other elders, the importance of traditional religion and customary law. He learns the traditions and history of his people, imitating the habits and customs of his parents and elders.⁶² Traditional education in Africa had functionalism as its main guiding principle. It emphasized job orientation, physical and moral values. It was education for the practical needs of life and for full participation in all activities of the community.⁶³ Ebenezer Kposa⁶⁴ gives the “curriculum” of traditional education as including:

1. Manual skills, which consist of tool making, construction, farming, husbandry, weaving, cooking, e.t.c.
2. Mores – social behaviour.
3. Folkways, which consists mainly of tradition and customs.
4. Religion – Rites and incantations (and medicine)
5. History – Stories of ancestors and past events

The different categories of teachers include first, the parents who teach mores, later elders who teach history and customs, specialist teachers like priests who teach religion, teachers of apprentices who teach skills. These will be discussed in details in succeeding paragraphs.

F. A. Karani sums up traditional education for girls thus:

Traditional education was largely a practical education through which one lived by doing and observing The girl was taught good manner and learnt such tasks as cooking, tending children, fetching water, collecting firewood, doing garden work, cultivating, sowing, weeding and harvesting ... A few older women played some public roles as medicine women but the place of the woman was largely in the home... The woman's role was essential to the well being of the family...⁶⁵

This is the picture of female traditional education in virtually all the African Societies. It is against this background that traditional education in Ondo will be discussed.

In traditional Ondo, there were ways the young ones were taught the culture and tradition that were considered valuable. This, with particular emphasis on training the girl-child and the role of women, shall be discussed under the following sub-headings:

- a. The Home/Family
- b. Vocational training

- c. The *Otu* or Age-grade
- d. *Obiton*

2.6 Family Unit and its Educational Role.

The family is a very important agent of traditional education. Anthony Giddens⁶⁶, a Sociologist, defines family as a group of persons, directly linked by kin connections, the adult members of which assume responsibility for caring for the children. According to him, for many people, the family provides a vital source of solace and comfort, love and companionship. B.O. Oloko, quoting Murdock, defines the family as “a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction; it includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children owned or adopted by the sexually cohabiting adults.”⁶⁷ The functions of the family include laying the moral, spiritual and intellectual foundation on which the child is to build later. Apart from providing the physical care, it also teaches the ways of the society. It is within the family that the child’s personality is developed in the early and formative years. Here, the child learns the pattern of behaviour needed to exist in her environment. The parents are the first people the child comes in contact with. She notices and imitates how they and other members of the family behave. The parents transmit to the child their own values of right and wrong and teach her from birth what is morally acceptable to the community.⁶⁸ In a nutshell; the family is the child’s first environment, which strongly influences her personal development.⁶⁹

A family’s ideals of morals are the foundation for the child’s personal discipline. A child does not realize the difference between right and wrong. She is born without culture, and education is designed to guide her in learning a culture, moulding her behaviour in the ways of adulthood and guiding her towards her eventual role in society.⁷⁰ Shindi describes the home as a psychological laboratory within which the human nature takes shape. It is in the home that behaviour is formed, while the human personality is still plastic and can be readily moulded.⁷¹ Family interactions provide the child with emotional bonds and relationships which constitute the basis for later relationships in life. Just as it is important for a building to have a good foundation, so also it is of utmost importance for an individual to have a strong foundation and training in the early years of social development. The family/home serves as an important agent of providing this foundation.

Traditional education in Ondo as in any other society is usually carried out in stages. Learning in the family begins at birth and by adolescence; an individual who possesses the normal biological drives and self-motivation would have learnt much of what there is to know about the entire culture.⁷² It begins with the training of the pregnant mother even before the child is born.⁷³ She is trained to observe certain taboos and guidelines on food, sleeping position, temperamental control, avoidance of lifting heavy things, and even what time of the day she cannot go out of the house. Pregnant women were discouraged from going out under the hot sun or very late in the night because it was believed that evil spirits, who could harm the unborn babies, usually roam about during this period. At birth, the new-born is induced to announce her arrival by crying. Failure to do so could lead to cold water being poured on the child or its being held head down and the buttocks slapped. It is always a cause of great anxiety if a baby fails to cry at birth.⁷⁴

The first stage of learning usually begins from the home into which the child is born and grows up. At this early stage, that is, from birth to about six years, the child is close to the mother and is dependent on her for her needs. As a baby, she feeds her mostly with breast milk. The experience of breast feeding has been identified as one of the reasons for the closeness between the child and the mother.⁷⁵ Among the training the infant receives is good toilet habit. When the delicate moments are over, the mother begins to train the child not to wee on the bed or her back⁷⁶ by holding her suspended with both hands until the child urinates or resting her on her thighs to defecate. Between the ages of one to two years, the child already in most cases has stopped to wee or defecate on the bed or on the mother's back.⁷⁷ Gradually, the child masters handling toilet matters without assistance. When the child has been weaned, it is the duty of the mother to introduce her to good feeding habits. For example, she is trained to take her food in sizeable balls (*okele*), not to take excess soup with her *okele*, not to chew noisily or with her mouth open to the extent of revealing its contents for others to see. The training in eating habits continues throughout childhood. The child learns to wash her hands before and after eating. She also learns that even though a great deal of communality exists, she is not expected to beg for food. If, for instance, other people are having their meals, she is not to stand around waiting to be invited but should return home for her own meals.⁷⁸ In Ondo, it is a common saying that *e ma ku o hun lili jeun*, that is, he/she does not know when to say goodbye to allow people have their meals.

At infancy, the child watches the gestures and expressions of the mother and other members of the family. She learns her first language from her mother and knows what it means when she smiles, frowns or weeps.⁷⁹ As the child begins to utter her first words, it is the duty of the parents and other older siblings to teach her acceptable standard of speech. The role of the mother is particularly significant in this stance because she spends more time with the child. As soon as she makes any recognizable sound, the mother helps interpret it and makes it meaningful. With the help of the older siblings and the elderly women in the family, the child acquires the basic vocabulary between birth and the age of four when she begins to look outside the extended family circle.⁸⁰

As the child grows older, she becomes aware that she is not just a member of her immediate (nuclear) family, but there are other members of the extended family or even the community who are interested in her well-being, especially her training. This is what Anthony Giddens calls 'Childhood Socialization' which is the process by which, through contact with other human beings; the infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable human being, skilled in the way of the given culture.⁸¹ It is a common saying among the Ondo that "*Onu kan e bomo I, Ugbane e toun*",⁸² which literally translated means "a child is born by a person, but is trained by 200 people", the 200 people referring to the community. Adeoti refers to this as collective chastisement.⁸³ Although various members of the family, both nuclear and extended, participated in the education of their young ones, the parents, most especially the mothers were held responsible for any sign of improper behaviour in children.⁸⁴ It was and is still a common saying among the Ondo that "*omo yo baa ti san, tuwa dede, iye baa ti san, ti yie nukan*",⁸⁵ which literally translated means, "the well-behaved child is ours, but the badly-behaved child is the mother's". Women in traditional setting and even now are generally regarded as the custodians of morality, and receive the blame for lack of it. This notion is supported by the Holy Bible, which asserts that, "a wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother" (Proverbs 10:1). Because the woman is almost always the closest to the child,⁸⁶ she most often becomes the first and the most permanent teacher⁸⁷ from whom the child inductively picks up the first facts of life, ranging from selfish expression of physical desires to tolerant consideration and understanding of others' needs and views.⁸⁸ Shindi asserts that though the father may provide the guide-lines (as per discipline in the home), the mother bears the brunt of the task of making the daughters worthy.⁸⁹

Among the first things a girl is taught is greetings, that is, how to greet and how to respond to greetings. In traditional Ondo, a girl is taught to greet her parents and elders kneeling down, while boys would prostrate (*dodobale*). It is a shame for a girl to grow up not appreciating the importance of greetings. A girl learns the different greetings for different times of the day and for various occasions e.g. rainy or dry season, sitting, standing, burials, festivals etc. A girl is not taught greetings when she is already old. Teaching begins from childhood.⁹⁰ Along with greetings, she is also taught to be cheerful. This is because a woman who lacks the spirit of cheerfulness may have problems with her husband's family.

As the girl advances in age, she begins to get accustomed to some daily routine. Although no rigid rules abound, at least, she begins to get used to the routine of sleeping and waking. The mother teaches her to wake up early in the morning to participate in household chores. She learns to sweep the compound, beginning from the bedroom called *oupo*, then to the other outer surroundings. She is not expected to wait for a reminder before carrying out these assignments. She joins her older siblings to fetch water and to prepare meals before going to the farm. It is an aberration for a girl to prepare meals in an un-swept *Adio* (kitchen). An unswept environment is referred to as *Ale Kasen* i.e., a stale environment indicating an absence of the freshness of the daily cleaning exercise. She learns all these in preparation for the roles she is to play as a wife.⁹¹

Personal cleanliness is part of the training a girl receives from her mother. This training usually begins very early, at least, as early as when the child is capable of learning. She is taught to bathe regularly to avoid body odour. She is also taught not to get used to wearing dirty clothes. She also receives training on how to keep her hair tidy. Accompanying cleanliness is the training in fashion, dressing and beauty. A lady who pays little attention to her appearance could be referred to as *Obun* meaning a dirty unfashionable person.⁹² When the girl begins her monthly periods, a new set of training begins. The issue of personal cleanliness is re-emphasised. More importantly, she begins to receive training on how to handle her relationship with the opposite sex. This is very essential because, a girl who gets pregnant or loses her virginity before marriage brings great shame, not only to herself but also to her family, most especially her mother.⁹³

It is the duty of the mother to teach her daughter(s) how to take care of children, how to bathe them, feed them and prevent them from danger. She acquires this training by taking care of her younger siblings or any other baby-child in the neighbourhood. She is taught to strap

baby on her back from a very early age. This she learns with local toys called *omolangi*, until she is good enough to carry a baby. This training is very essential because among the Ondo, traditionally, the woman straps her baby on her back wherever she goes and it was important that she did it very well. Tending younger siblings is one of the various ways a girl gets prepared for motherhood. In Ondo, it is common for a young child, especially a girl, to address the elder sister who nursed her as mother. In most cases, she accompanies her when getting married as *amusuna*.⁹⁴ There are occasions when the young girl lives with this elder sister till her own time of marriage.

Generally, indigenous African education places considerable emphasis on character-training.⁹⁵ Traditional education in Ondo is not an exception. Every member of the family, most especially the parents are concerned about the child growing up to be honest, humble, and of good report. She, therefore, receives training in unwritten codes of behaviour, conventions, morals and general laws of the society.⁹⁶ Oladele Taiwo refers to this as good manners.⁹⁷ It is important for a girl to be obedient and display respect for elders. Elders in this respect include her parents, aunts, and uncles, those in authority, particularly the chief, the diviners, older neighbours⁹⁸ and other older family members.

She is not expected to call older people by name. The very old ones are to be addressed as *Bai* (father) or *Yei* (mother). The not too old ones are to be addressed as *Egin* (senior). A woman is not expected to call her husband or his siblings, even when younger than her, by their names. That will be regarded as disrespectful. She is also expected to be humble and well-behaved. It is a popular saying among the Yoruba that *iwa rere l'eso eniyan* which means "good behaviour is the greatest ornament". The importance of the home in the acquisition of this ornament is reflected in the saying that, *Ile la ti nko eso rode*, that is, "Charity begins at home."

Character training is of very great importance in Ondo traditional education. A display of lack of good character leads to an individual being referred to as *abiiko*, that is, born but not trained,⁹⁹ or *Akoogba*, a word used in describing an individual that despises discipline. An individual for instance who displays great intelligence in skills without respect for age is referred to as uneducated. People will always describe him as *e n'eko*, that is, he lacks training though a genius in his skills. Words like *omoluwabi* or *omogidi* are used to describe individuals who combine good character with other acquired qualities.

Among the training a girl receives is consideration for the feelings of other people. In Africa generally, the concept of an individualistic approach to life, the idea that a person's affairs are his exclusive concern is a very strange one.¹⁰⁰ The girl soon realizes that she is not only related to the members of her immediate family, but also to the members of the extended family and in fact, the community as a whole. Nothing should be done to endanger the well-being of other members of the community. The home is the place to start to give this training. The child learns that she cannot always have her ways as she is taught to respect the feelings of others and give some considerations to the convenience of other children in the home. It is at this time that the child is taught habits of unselfishness; that she should not be useful only to herself, but to others as well. The need for polite language and a sense of appreciation are also to be impressed upon the child very early in life.¹⁰¹

Apart from the direct and indirect training a child receives from parents and other elders, numerous proverbs and folk tales are employed to drive home certain truths. Folk tales, very important aspect of oral tradition, consist of testimonies of the past which are deliberately transmitted from mouth to mouth.¹⁰² They are usually related to people's beliefs, daily lives and nearness to nature. Among the many types of folklores are fairy tales, stories of the gods and heroes, fables, tales of ordinary men and women, some with super powers.¹⁰³ Tales were told to children in the evening after the day's work. Children sat together to hear elders, mostly women, tell folklores and pose riddles. The tales, which are both exciting and informative, serve dual purposes. First, they provide a source of entertainment. Second, they also teach morals. Some of the tales usually provoke laughter among other reactions. The intention of this is to deter listeners from playing, in actual life, the parts of the characters that were ridiculed in those tales.¹⁰⁴ There are tales directly aimed at discouraging vices such as laziness, dishonesty, rudeness, selfishness among others.

Directly connected to folklores is folk music, which is the indigenous music without authorship that originates from the people and is handed down from one generation to the next through oral transmission. Folk music is largely based on the myths and beliefs of the people, legendary and historical events in the community.¹⁰⁵ The role of women in the folk music and its usefulness in child-training is thus expressed:

Starting from home, music is integral in daily domestic chores and activities as well as family ceremonies. Women have used music for instruction. Women are the first teachers of children. Fables and folk songs are used to instill the values and norms of society in the subconscious of young children. The tales are intended not only to educate, but also to assist children in their thinking process, memorization, judgment, choices and decision which serve as a guide throughout their life experiences. Women also actively participate in several community affairs where, for example, they organize instruction for a particular dance for which they are noted or help in teaching and preparing children towards any event, say a festival.¹⁰⁶

Proverbs and riddles are also used as media for developing the child's reasoning power and skill in decision making. Proverbs in particular are used for many purposes among which are to bring out clearly the meaning of obscure points in conversation and argument. A cultured adult is expected to have good knowledge of these and be able to apply them at the appropriate times.

All the instructions a girl receives from the time she was born till when she gets married are generally referred to as home training. It is essential that a girl has a proper home training. To describe a girl as having no home training is a slur on the parents,¹⁰⁷ most especially the mother, who the society looked upon to give the daughter the necessary training to prepare her for marriage and life. When eventually the girl gets married, she is expected to exhibit a colourful display of the training she had acquired at home. In a polygamous society such as Ondo, a woman engages in a constant competition for her husband's attention. Her weapons of contest include deep respect and obedience, hard-work, hospitability to husband's relations and friends, and her cooking skills. Of course, how fashionable and neat she is can also be a very strong weapon. Her success depends on how adequately she had been prepared by her mother.¹⁰⁸ It is common for a man to have a favorite among his wives. This is known as *aghayo* who may not necessarily be the first wife or even the most hard-working. As important as these qualifications are, the favourite wife is usually the one who can combine them with a good cooking skill. She knows how to prepare the best food for her husband and prepare it on time. A woman who lacks good cooking skills, no matter how beautiful and fashionable, is considered a disgrace to herself and her mother who trained her. This situation is not peculiar to Ondo. Sunday Adebola writing about similar situation among the Kikuyu of East Africa claims that if such woman was unlucky to be childless, she stood the risk of being returned to her parents and the dowry demanded.¹⁰⁹

2.7 Vocational Training

One of the aims of traditional education, apart from home training, is job orientation, which is, equipping the individual with skills for survival and perhaps accumulation of surplus.¹¹⁰ Roger Lee gives this a clearer meaning by saying that “not only do we want to educate our children to develop into excellent beings but we also want them to be able to produce the things they need in order to live fully and well.”¹¹¹ In traditional Ondo society, girls were taught trades and skills geared towards economic survival. P.W. Musgrave¹¹² explains that in the traditional societies, it was normal for the child, boy or girl to learn his/her future occupation within the family. While the boy, for instance, followed the father in hunting or blacksmithing, the girl, apart from the domestic training she received under the strict supervision of her mother, was also trained to handle her mother’s trade.¹¹³ In the process, she got to have a good knowledge of the trade. This is a very good example of a girl inheriting the trade of her mother.

Apart from the trade being directly learnt from the mother, girls could also be apprenticed to parents’ relatives, friends and other competent craftsmen. This was aimed at removing slackness and instilling strictness in order to ensure that the child received a thorough training. It must be emphasized that girls were usually apprenticed to female rather than to male instructors. The common trades that women engaged in traditional Ondo were weaving, dyeing, hair making and trading. These crafts were usually learnt both by observation and through instruction.¹¹⁴ As noted elsewhere above, among the traditional vocational training a girl received from her parents was agricultural education. From very early in life, she followed her parents and older siblings to farm and observed how things were done. O. O. Omorogbe, describes the Nigerian rural women (a class into which the traditional Ondo women belonged) as the food growers and makers.¹¹⁵ She required training to be able to perform this functions well. Before the introduction of cash crops to Ondo, women engaged in the cultivation of food crops such as cassava, cocoyam and vegetables. It was important to know which crop to plant on which soil, how to plant, weed, tend, harvest, process where necessary, and preserve the crops. Despite that other trades and crafts abounded, agriculture was practiced by every woman in traditional Ondo. It is worthy of note that in traditional Ondo, like the rest of Yorubaland, it was important for a woman to engage in one trade or the other. Laziness was greatly frowned at.¹¹⁶ The strong emphasis on hard work and diligence can be better understood in the following Yoruba proverbs: “*Ise loogun ise*” that is hard work

is the antidote to poverty, “*Agbojulongun fara re fosi ta*” that is he who makes do with inherited property is inviting poverty. The child was made to understand that nobody has a right to food until he had worked for it. By these sayings, the Yoruba strive to inculcate a liking for hard work in the young ones.¹¹⁷

2.8 The Age-Grade (*Otu*)

Traditional education is all embracing and every social institution involves educational activities, which lead the individual to acquire behaviour-patterns, abilities and skills necessary for effective citizenship in the community in which he lives.¹¹⁸ Age-grade, known as *Otu* in Ondo, has been identified as one of such institutions. This can be described as a group of people in a society who are of the same sex and approximately the same age.¹¹⁹ Age-grades and the relationships between them are an important part of the organisation of several African cultures. The Bantu tribes of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, and the Igbo society of Eastern Nigeria had very elaborate age-grade systems. The traditional African educational system finds expression in the age-group association.

A typical example of Age-group classification is given by Fafunwa as follows:¹²⁰

5 – 9 years	36 - 39 years
10 - 14 years	40 – 43 years
15 – 19 years	44 – 43 years
20 – 23 years	48 – 51 years
24 – 27 years	52 – 56 years
28 – 31 years	57 – 60 years
32 – 35 years	61 years and above

As seen above, the age-grade, among the Yoruba, was a series of grades through which an individual passed from his birth to the time when he becomes an elder in the town.¹²¹ Just as the men had their *Otu*, so the women had theirs. It is a common saying in Ondo that *me de s’otu e i?* which literally means “am I of the same age grade with you?” This simply points to the fact that age is an important element in the life of the Ondo and reverence for those who are older is particularly strong. This is a part of the lessons a child acquires as she grows up.

Apart from the social and economic obligations of the age-group members to one another, the groups helped their members to acquire behaviour patterns. The groups were known to reprimand and make group members to pay fine if their rules were violated. Violation of the law of the land could lead to expulsion of the erring member from the group. So the group in a way helped to train the members the skills necessary for effective citizenship in the community. They also acted as a forum where women exchanged ideas and skills for coping with their day to day problems.

2.9 Obiton: Puberty Rite as Agent of Traditional Education

The *Obiton*, among the Ondo Yoruba, is a connubial rite of passage often associated with puberty. This does not involve adult female circumcision, which anthropologists refer to as clitoridectomy – as practiced by both the Kikuyu of Kenya, in east Africa or the Bemba of Zambia, in Southern Africa.¹²² *The Riverside Webster's II New College Dictionary* defines Puberty as a derivative of the Latin word *Pubertas*, which means adulthood, that is, “the stage of maturation in which an individual becomes physiologically capable of sexual reproduction.”¹²³ Rite can be described as the customary or prescribed form of religious ceremony for example, the rite of passage as a significant event in a person’s life that indicates a transition from one stage to another, as from adolescence to adulthood, and that may be marked by a ceremony or rituals.¹²⁴

Each of the hundreds of thousands of the ethnic nationalities (tribes) of Africa has its own form of puberty rites for both males and females. A number of African writers have made attempts to fictionalize them. The works of Camara Laye in *African Child*,¹²⁵ Alex Haley in *Roots*,¹²⁶ Ngugi Wa Thiong’o in *The River Between*¹²⁷ and *Weep not child*¹²⁸, Mugo Gatheru in *Child of Two worlds*¹²⁹ are all reflections on the initiation rites into adulthood as socio-cultural motif for illustrating the adhesiveness of their value.¹³⁰

To the African, puberty rite was a rite of passage. It was a movement from one world to another. Most African societies have rituals, which are held when people are beginning to take a new position or play a new part in their society. When children grow up, they are ready to work, marry and perhaps fight, if males. They must be carefully trained for these responsibilities and rituals are part of their preparation.¹³¹ For the male and female children,

moving into adulthood means the time to circumcise the foreskin, which unlike in other religions like Judaism and some African tribes like Yoruba is done at infancy. Other than being a way of initiating the individual into adulthood, it was also a time to deliberately train the youth to embrace the values of the land.

McNezer Faseun traces the history of *Obiton* to the outbreak of an epidemic at a particular point in Ondo history. His account claims that the youths were dying in large numbers and the *Ifa* oracle prescribed sacrifices, with edible things as items of rituals. This seemed to have pacified the gods. This marked the beginning of the initiation ceremony, particularly that of the *Obiton*. It also explains the myth and the belief of the Ondo people that the evolution of the *Obiton* came as a propitiation of belligerent spirit worlds which afflicted the youths. It later came to be used to cure women of all sorts of ailments and barrenness.¹³² Among the Ondo, *Obiton* is a mark of honour for whoever had undergone it and derogation for who had not. Both the *Obiton* (the female version) and the *Aapon* (the male version) conferred honour on the initiates. It was derogatory for a girl to be told “*We I s’Obiton, we s’Aapon’ku we I se?*” (you did not perform *Obiton*, neither did you perform *Aapon*, what did you perform?)¹³³ The *Obiton* was a matter of pride, a mark of completeness. For a woman to be referred to as a proper woman, she must have performed the *Obiton*.¹³⁴

Jules-Rosetta in an attempt to distinguish between the educational focus of male and female initiation rites states that:

Men’s initiation rites have a political focus in training males to assume permanent leadership responsibilities in their respective communities. Therefore, they often entail instructions in the group’s folklore and oratorical skills. In contrast, Women’s initiation rites focus on domestic responsibilities and are structurally linked primarily to the family rather than to the community at large.¹³⁵

Olusola Avoseh talking about female initiation ceremony, *Ovie Sese* among the Ogori people of Old Kabba Province in present day Kogi State explains that the participants in the ceremony were young virgins who were brought together from various families for the last time before they enter into adult life (e.g. marriage or the world of work). This usually took place a few months prior to marriage. He explains thus:

The objective was to inculcate moral virtues into the girls and a mechanism was devised to differentiate virgins from non-virgins. During this period of the ceremony, the girls were put under the tutelage of an elderly woman and they were taught housewife and motherhood responsibilities.¹³⁶

One major difference between the *Ovie Sese* and *Obiton* is that virginity was not a prerequisite for *Obiton*.¹³⁷

Citing the Massai and Pokot examples in East Africa, Angela Fisher also reveals that a very important aspect of the female initiation was the confinement period when “instructions from older women on sexual matters and married conduct were received.”¹³⁸ Among the Ondo, the *Obiton* initiation ceremony was one of the agents responsible for the training of young girls for the roles they were to assume as adult members of their society – that of wife and mother. It also became one of the pre-requisites for any female to attain high social status like the *Upoji*, the highest titles for women in the land. Chief F.O. Otuyemi confirmed that in the old Ondo, a woman could not take traditional titles without having performed the *Obiton*¹³⁹. *Obiton*, therefore, was not merely a puberty rite but also a rite of passage.

It is important to note that in most African Societies of today, the initiation ceremonies have undergone major noticeable modifications. Olusola Avoseh talks about contemporary *Ovie Sese* ceremonies having been modified by contact with Western education and Christianity, but he did not give details of the modification. McNezer Mabayoje Fasehun, however, has observed that the *Obiton* has taken a gradual process of moving from appeasement of forces (a ritual performance) and shaded into a rite usually organized during important family ceremonies. He links this to the contemporary *Zwange* dance of the Tiv, the *Atilogwu* dance of the Igbo and the *Gule Mamkulu* dance of Malawi, which have all metamorphosed into sheer artistic pieces. *Obiton* has become a dramatic piece of entertainment.¹⁴⁰ In the Ondo of today, it is no longer regarded as an agent of education. It is no longer a prerequisite to take traditional titles, neither is it of any spiritual relevance. It is kept alive only by the girls who perform it for mere entertainment.

The above analysis brings into focus the position of women in traditional Ondo, before contact with the West. The contributions of women to societal development in pre-colonial times spanned all facets of life. As wives and mothers, they bore the burdens of family and society, complementing these with economic and social responsibilities. As teachers, they also played very powerful roles in moulding the lives of the young, thereby helping in the

overall ordering and organization of the society. In summary, this chapter examined the socio-political and economic conditions of Ondo women before the advent of Western education. This is essential because, in order to establish that a change has occurred, a comparison may need to be made between the present and the past positions.

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CHAPTER THREE

COLONIAL RULE AND WESTERN EDUCATION IN ONDO

3.1 Introduction

In the history of Africa, missionary activities, Western education and colonial rule were often linked¹ and to this list was added commerce. These make up what Osoba and Fajana refer to as constituting British interest in Nigeria in the 20th century.² The initial rapport between Europe and West Africa began in the 15th century with the Portuguese taking the lead. The aims of the Portuguese exploration, which brought them to Africa were, among others, to conduct trade and establish Christian allies that would resist the spread of Islam. Portugal dominated the trade with Africa for a very long time. Then, other European nations like Britain, France, Spain and Belgium began to make their appearance in Africa. Talking specifically about Nigeria, Fafunwa recorded that Portuguese merchants who were the first to arrive, visited Lagos and Benin and paid a courtesy call on the Oba of Benin in 1472. By 1515, a school had been set up in the *Obas* palace by some Portuguese Missionaries who were the first Missionaries to set foot on Nigerian soil. Between 1515 and 1574, Portuguese influence spread to cover Lagos, Brass and Warri where trading posts, churches and schools were established.³

As Western European nations increased their contacts with Africa, especially with the introduction and increase in the volume of slave trade, this initial missionary endeavour was frustrated. One major reason for this was that the early missionaries got so involved with commerce that the work of evangelization suffered. After these initial abortive attempts, Christianity began to be successfully introduced to Nigeria from the mid – nineteenth century. The first set of missionaries arrived in Badagry in 1842.⁴ They belonged to two main Christian bodies – the Roman Catholic, and the Protestants. But within the Protestants, there were Wesleyan Methodists, Church Missionary Society (C.M.S), the Southern Baptist Convention, the Church of Scotland Mission and other splinter groups.⁵ The Wesleyan Missionary Society arrived in 1842, followed by Church Missionary Society in 1845. The Church of Scotland Mission arrived in 1846, the Southern Baptist Convention in 1850 and the Roman Catholic Mission was opened in Lagos in 1868.⁶ From here, missionary activities began to spread to other parts of Yorubaland.

3.2 Missionary activities And the Birth of Western Education in Ondo

Perhaps one of the most important impacts of the Christian religion, and by extension of British colonial rule, on Ondo was the introduction of Western education. It has been observed by many scholars that in Africa, generally, the principal means in which Christian missionaries spread the gospel was by mission schools. Through schools and other institutions, missionaries tried to touch upon every aspect of African daily life as mission stations served as schools, medical centres, training and skill acquisition centres, among others.⁷ The strong desire of the missionaries to reach the people through schools can be best understood in the words of Bowen, one of the 19th century Missionaries:

We desire to establish the gospel in the hearts and minds and social life of the people, so that truth and righteousness may remain and flourish among them... This cannot be done without civilization. To establish the gospel among any people, they must have Bibles... They must read the Bible and this implies formal instruction (i.e., education).⁸

The situation was not different in Ondo. The tendency was to belong to the church of the school you or your children attended.⁹ The annual report of Ondo province in 1924 points to the fact that “education was confined to the efforts of the various mission bodies in schools conducted by Catechists or teachers”¹⁰

Christian missionary activities started in Ondo in 1875 with the arrival of Reverend David Hinderer in the town, after obtaining permission from the Executive Committee of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S). He was accompanied by Messrs C.N. Young, Hunsu Wright and William M. Dada. They arrived in Ode – Ondo on March 29th, 1875 to formally found the Christian Church of the Anglican denomination in Ondo.¹¹ Rev. David Hinderer later returned to Lagos leaving the three C.M.S. workers in his team to continue with the mission work at Ondo. By 1876 the congregation which had earlier worshipped “under wild fig tree in the streets” achieved a major stride when the C.M.S built a church called Saint Stephen’s Church, Oke – Aluko, Ondo, which has since become the headquarters.¹² The founding of Saint Stephen’s Church was immediately followed in the same year by the establishment of the Saint Stephen’s Primary School, Odosida, Ondo as a co – educational school.¹³ This marked the beginning of formal Western education in Ondo. All Saints

Primary School, Ogbonkowo, also a co – educational school was established by the same C.M.S in 1908.¹⁴ Then, other missions began to make their appearance in Ondo. The presence of the Catholic Mission in Ondo began in 1884 when Ondo town was visited by Rev. Frs M. Chause of Lagos and T. Holley of Abeokuta during their exploratory tour of Southern Nigeria.¹⁵ In 1904 and 1916, Rev. Frs M. Wouters and Freyburger visited Ondo.¹⁶ On the two occasions, a certain man called Mr.Gabriel Akinkuotu popularly known as Daddy, a native of Ondo and a Lay reader in the C.M.S, All Saints Church, Ogbonkowo Ondo received the visiting Catholic Missionaries warmly and lodged them in his house.¹⁷ As a result of a misunderstanding with the All Saints Church authority, Daddy Gabriel and eight others had formed a splinter group which said their prayers in a private house. This splinter group formed the nucleus of the Catholic Church in Ondo.¹⁸ The success of the Catholic Mission in Ondo had been attributed to one Mr Joseph Makinde who served there between 1917 and 1923. Oguntuyi reported that he worked hard and contributed to the development of Catholic Church in the town.¹⁹ The first Catholic School, Saint Mathew’s Primary School was established in 1916, as a male school²⁰ Saint Catherine (Girls) Primary School was established as a girls’ school by the same Catholic Mission in 1946.²¹ The Salvation Army Corps arrived at Ondo in 1937. Their school, Salvation Army Day School, Oke – Odunwo, Ondo started same year with eleven boys and five girls.²²

Among the indigenous churches was the Cherubim and Seraphim church. It was founded in 1925 in Lagos by Saint Moses Orimolade Tunolase (The Baba Aladura), as the first African indigenous church, independent of foreign influence.²³ This church was introduced to Ondo in 1927, by Madam Christianah Olatunrinle. She was the daughter of Chief Awosika Sasere, an eminent Chief in Ondo, whose family profited both from Christian education under the C.M.S and the economic development of Ondo (Timber and Cocoa) which began in 1920. Prior to her conversion to the C&S in 1927, she was the *Iyalode* (First Lady) of Saint Stephens Anglican Church in Ondo.²⁴ The Messiah African Church, founded in Lagos by J.K. Coker in 1901, was introduced to Ondo in 1936. The Patron of the church in Ondo, High Chief Ebun Olawoye claimed that “as part of its contributions to the development of education, the church established a primary school within its premises at Oke – Agunla, Ondo.”²⁵ The Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C), which began with Apostle Babalola’s divine call to Christian ministry on the 25th of September, 1928 was introduced to former Ondo province (by Apostle Babalola himself) in 1929.²⁶ Their school, Saint Peter’s C.A.C Primary School, Oke – Igbala was founded in 1954 as a co – educational school.²⁷

3.3 Establishment of Colonial Rule in Ondo

Colonialism has been described as not just a system of administration, but a whole way of living and thinking.²⁸ This is because colonial rule with all its attendant implications was felt in all facets of life. It profoundly affected the family; the economy, notably through the introduction of wage labour and the change brought about in the agricultural economy; political institution because of the new administrative set up; the religious institution because of the introduction of Christianity; and education because of the spread of the Western formal system. Western and formal, in this regard, refers to the systematic instruction in subjects characteristic of the curricula used in Western countries.

British intervention in Ondo politics began in 1872. Prior to this time, there was an internal political instability in Ondo following the death of *Oba Arilekolasi* around 1860 – 1861.²⁹ The political unrest led to the flight of the people, including the reigning king from Ondo to Okopa (Oke-opa). About two kings reigned and died in Okopa.³⁰ In 1872, the first British emissaries arrived at Ondo to find the whole place deserted. That year, Captain Glover from Lagos sent Goldsworthy to restore *Oba Jimkun* to the throne and to discuss the return of the Ondo refugees.³¹ It was after this that the people returned to Ondo. Following the intervention by Goldsworthy were series of treaties with the *Osemawe* and his Chiefs. These were supposed or believed to be treaties of peace and friendship only, but not that which would subordinate the King and his Chiefs to the Queen of England. By 1899, however, a protectorate was declared over Yoruba country by an order in Council.³² This marked the actual beginning of British rule in not only Ondo, but the whole of Yorubaland. The creation of the protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1906 marked the imposition of formal British administrative control over the whole of Southern Nigeria.³³ The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 led to the birth of the new Ondo Province, which comprised Ekiti, Ondo and Okitipupa Divisions.³⁴ Like the other provinces of Nigeria during the colonial period, the administration of Ondo Province was based on a pyramid comprising Assistant District Officers in charge of Districts, District Officers in charge of Divisions and a Resident in charge of the Province. During 1915 to 1938, the Resident was responsible to the Lieutenant Governor of the Southern Provinces based at Lagos from 1915 to 1925 and at Enugu from 1926 to 1938. The Lieutenant Governor was responsible to the Governor of Nigeria. The *Osemawe* was regarded as the head of the Ondo town. He was appointed Native Authority of Ondo ‘sub-district’ by Gazette Notice (page 858 of 1933 Supplement to the

Laws of Nigeria) and was recognized as a second class chief. He was the President of the Native Court, while the other *Iwarefa* Chiefs were the principal but not the only members of the *Osemawe's* Council. The District Head assisted by his Chiefs and the village heads saw to the collection of taxes in the District.³⁵ This is a brief account of the administrative set-up of the Ondo District in the colonial period.

There has been hot arguments over whether Colonial rule is advantageous to women or not. Nina Mba argued that generally, the changes in customary laws of marriage brought about by colonialism benefitted women by giving them greater security in marriage and making it easier for them to obtain divorce and the rights of married women to property were increased in some areas.³⁶ Oyeronke Oyewunmi has severely criticized what she calls Nina Mba's assumption of the status of wives as identical with the status of women which has led to her inability to grasp the fact that in the cultures of Southwestern Nigeria "the rights of ... wives, daughters and sisters derived from different bases".³⁷ Women's lack of access to their husbands' property did not constitute secondary status for women because as daughters and sisters, they had rights to their father's, mothers' and brothers' properties. She queried Mba's failure to recognize that the polygamous marriage arrangement in most Nigerian societies raise the complexity about which wives inherited what property, given that some wives had been married to the same husband longer than others. She also accused the English legal system Mba believed in as being responsible for constituting "women into second-class subjects."³⁸ She summed up her argument by asserting that "the idea that women, or for that matter any category of people among the colonized, benefited from colonial rule does not reflect reality."³⁹ Whatever perspective anyone chooses, the analysis provided in this study gives an illustration of how British colonial rule impacted on indigenous socio-political institutions of Ondo and how this has directly or indirectly impacted on women.

One effect of colonial rule in Africa as a whole is that as a result of the effective establishment of political control, the indigenous political structure witnessed a progressive disintegration of status structures.⁴⁰ Asiwaju has observed that an important consequence of the coercion, which characterized British administration (especially at the initial stage) was a drastic and widespread erosion of the Yoruba indigenous political authority. In the administrative, as well as judicial sphere, the indigenous rulers lost in status and prestige.⁴¹

Talking generally about the experiences of African women in the colonial period, Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome observed that under colonial rule, women lost a great deal of authority and

the opportunity to participate in decision making due to their exclusion from all levels of administration,⁴² though in actual sense, colonial rule only emphasised an existing structure which excludes women from active political participation. As can be observed in the preceding paragraphs as far as direct participation in the administration was concerned, the British indirect rule system did not accord any prominent position to Ondo women though there are indications of women's participation in the initial peace negotiations with the British. Nina Mba cited Iyalode Lanlatu's example in Ibadan,⁴³ Marjorie Mackintosh also cited the Lisa-lobun's in Ondo but observed that the political authority of female chiefs generally declined.⁴⁴ As had been observed, though the Native Courts and Councils were presided over by the District Commissioners, the *Osemawe* was recognized as the District head and the President of the Native Court and the other *Iwarefa* Chiefs were members of his Council. Women were, however, never represented in the Native Administration. The executive meetings, which usually held in the *Oba's* Palace every eight days did not have women representation except when the business to be discussed had to do with the appointment of a new *Osemawe*.⁴⁵ Women chiefs attended the Council meeting of chiefs held at the Native Hall Court when divorce cases were to be heard.⁴⁶

It has been argued that the colonial Administrators excluded women from their administration because they were products of late Victorian and the Edwardian middle-class society and were not familiar with the concept of women as public figures. They looked upon home as a refuge from the vicissitudes of public life; it was the woman's duty to preserve that home and the man's duty to insulate the woman from the pressures of public life. Women were considered unsuitable for the rigors of public life, hence, they were not allowed to vote, to contest election, sit in Parliament, or to be employed in the civil service.⁴⁷ Richard Aldrich confirms that the pre-20th Century English society was characterized by "female domesticity and male vocationalism ... politics, church and law ... being male preserves".⁴⁸

The historical reality of the British colonizing and civilizing mission irrevocably changed Ondo society. Concomitant with this irretrievable change was the place of women. The status of men too underwent a radical transformation. The loss of power by the *Osemawe* and his chiefs also meant the loss of the powers by the *Lobun* and her council of chiefs. The difference lies in the fact that while the male chiefs were able to enter the new order (through the Native Administration and Native Courts) the women never enjoyed such opportunity. Female chieftaincy witnessed an increasing loss of importance.

The spiritual significance of the female chiefs also declined with increased penetration of Christianity and greater awareness brought by Western education. The *Upoji*, that is, Council of Female Chiefs among other things, consulted the oracles and performed necessary sacrifices, as prescribed by the oracles, in times of epidemic and other calamities. With Christianity and Western Education, the rituals were still performed but people's reliance on them greatly reduced; and the Western health care delivery system was taking care of epidemics and other health related problems. More importantly, a number of the *Upoji* members became Christians and hence could not partake in rituals.⁴⁹ Though the taboos were still being strictly observed and the *Lobun* was still surrounded by men and women servants, the status symbol generally associated with chieftaincy declined drastically during the colonial period. In view of this, one might ask how much of the female chieftaincy remained, especially with regards to the precise relationship with the colonial government. The truth that stared one in the face is that from the colonial period onwards, the female chieftaincy began to be more ceremonial than functional.

One aspect of social life of the Ondo that received a great impact as a result of colonial rule was the family. Colonial policies on marriage and divorce marked a transformation in the status of the women. There are several aspects of this. The first is that European presence affected the family institution. In pre-colonial Ondo, marriage was arranged by parents, often times without the consent or opinion of individuals involved. It was purely an affair between families and not two individuals, the essential condition being that the two families, not the parties to the union, agree. As a general rule, females were given in marriage without their consent.⁵⁰ Under colonial rule, girls were "reported for doing what they liked under the European ideas of personal freedom and usually chose their own husbands. The parents could only protest if they thought the match unsuitable but they no longer commanded absolute obedience".⁵¹ In this way, parents lost control of the choice of partners for their children. In other words, women began to have a choice and a voice of their own rather than have decisions made for them.

Change can also be observed in bridal arrangement. The customary present of yams, firewood (*Utigi Ogun*) and other items given to the parents of the bride began to be given in form of cash. Even though some of these items, especially yams, and clothes have continued to be included, the inclusion of cash has altered the traditional modes of dowry. Julius Ugbeligho Boshung while examining the Obudu experience concerning the replacement of

marriage by exchange with cash payment, claims that it was an attempt by the colonial Administrators to promote the use of British currency.⁵² The men were now forced to produce export crops that would fetch them the new money to enable them pay dowries. Christian missionaries also introduced the practice of contracting Christian marriage with the idea of marriage being for life and monogamous, the only ground for its dissolution being adultery. The 1863 Marriage Ordinance confirmed the existing practice of contracting Christian marriages. This was replaced by the Marriage Ordinance of 1884, which was based on the same principles of monogamy as the English Law of Marriage. The 1884 Act applied only to the colony of Lagos, but was extended to the protectorate in 1914.⁵³ This could be regarded as a direct attack on polygamy. This attack on traditional system of polygamy, which was strengthened by the teaching of Christian missionaries and the general spread of enlightenment⁵⁴ (as a result of Western education), caused a dramatic transformation of the family. In the pre-colonial period, as explained in Chapter two, patriarchal controls over women not only in Ondo, but in most developing countries, made them the pawns of the extended family. They and their children provided labour on the farms.⁵⁵ Apart from this, the acquisition of wives was regarded as a mark of affluence and prestige. A man's wealth was measured by the size of his family and consequently that of his farms.⁵⁶

The attack on this traditional system affected the organization and supply of labour and consequently the production of food. Men who adopted monogamy had to make do with one wife. The resultant effect of this was that many had to reduce the size of their farms to what they could manage, or in the alternative, call for help of members of their lineage.⁵⁷ This though would always be at a cost. Another effect of the adoption of monogamy was the excessive use of women, both for labour and child-bearing. To meet the great need of children, since there was only one wife for a man, the couple had to produce all the children that could be produced from one woman, especially if the male child delayed in coming. As a result, many women fell sick or died in the process of child birth.⁵⁸

The Marriage Ordinance enhanced the legal status of women, especially with regards to divorce. The rights of the wife on dissolution of the marriage are more favourable under the Act than at Customary Law.⁵⁹ Under customary marriage, a wife could be sent away at the wishes of her husband whereas a "woman could not leave her husband except for serious causes *viz*: impotence... serious diseases"⁶⁰ or serious ill-treatment. Under Ordinance marriage, both husband and wife had equal recourse to divorce. Also, the ordinance enhanced

the rights of married women to property. Section 41 of the Ordinance provided that the succession to the property of person who married under the ordinance and died intestate should be in accordance with English Law, which indicated that the wife stood to inherit from her husband, if he died intestate.⁶¹ In Customary Law, however, she was one of the items to be inherited.

By native law and custom, a woman belonged to her husband for life. Even at the death of her husband, she still belonged to his family through the levirate and widow inheritance system under which she was inherited by a male member of his family, excluding her own sons. When divorce was introduced by the colonial administration, the women became conscious of a new kind of freedom. The widow who did not wish to be inherited could free herself by the refund of the dowry paid on her by her late husband. Apart from widows who were trying to escape from leviration, women who were dissatisfied with their spouses also resorted to divorce. Also, under the Marriage and Divorce Ordinance, marriages arranged for under-aged girls were rendered null and void if either of the parties (most often the girl) pleaded ignorance of the Union.⁶² Many girls (women) actually freed themselves from such unions by refunding the dowry.

With easy access to divorce, the rate of divorce suits became alarmingly high with a devastating effect on the family. Ayandele opines that the marriage regulations of the colonial administration upset many homes by encouraging divorce and making it easy.⁶³ As a result of this, the colonial administration came under pressure from native chiefs and missionaries over “the facility with which women could now obtain divorce”.⁶⁴ In 1935, Melville Jones, the Anglican Bishop of Lagos and Bishop Akinyele of Ondo expressed strong disapproval of the divorce laws:

There is a great and rapidly growing laxity in respect of marriage. Divorce is now so simple that girls marry and divorce in rapid rotation a considerable number of men. No proof is required by the Native Courts that there are any grounds for divorce. All that takes place is that the paramour has to repay to the husband the dowry and the marriage is then dissolved. In the old days, things were very different, adultery and divorce were rare and were severely punished...⁶⁵

At the conference of Chiefs in September 1938, the Ooni of Ife made a historic speech on the same subject of “easy divorce”. The notes of the speech were presented to the District Officers of the Ekiti, Okitipupa, Ondo and Owo Districts.⁶⁶ An extract from the speech is presented below:

No sooner this country was opened up to legitimate trade than civilization brought with it a tendency on the part of woman to forsake her husband in favour of a richer man. ...Since the establishment of the Native Courts, woman has always had her own way, and in consequence the standard of morality among the men and the women becomes deplorably low. ...The idea held by the Political Officers that a girl has the freedom of easy divorce is not in keeping with Yoruba Custom. ...Please permit me to say that in my opinion divorce should not be as easy as at present. Instances can easily be given where during the year, one woman was wife of three or more men in turn. Is that not definitely absurd?

The Ooni now gave suggestions that:

That girls who choose their husbands themselves should as in the old days marry them, and if they do not, should be very heavily fined for breach of contract and be made to refund the necessary dowry. ...I have no doubt that you have seen the growing evil that is in easy divorce, and I hope that the future of our homes would from now receive our serious attention...

The colonial administration in response to this looked into the different cases of divorce and discovered that the great number of them were caused by under-aged betrothals and inherited widows and therefore concluded that it was better to have divorce made easy rather than interfere with the liberty of the subject.⁶⁷ The bias of the Ooni was evident even to the Ondo District Officer, as reflected in his response to the Ooni’s speech:

I have listened with very great interest to your discussions. I cannot disguise from myself that the views which I have heard in this conference have been the views of the men that we should punish unfaithful women. You must remember that you Chiefs have a duty, not only to your men but also to your women. ...You want your subjects to have good wives. Are you doing anything in your countries to fit your girls to become good wives? Are you giving them such an education as will make them better women? Have you got schools where girls can be taught on modern lines? Is it right to lay the blame for broken marriage upon the women alone? Are there not occasions where husbands are to blame? All these questions are points that we should consider...⁶⁸.

With this, the women gradually came to the realization of the fact that they did not have to marry men that were not their choices, be inherited by deceased husband's relatives or remain in a marriage that had become unfavourable. It must be noted, however, that though majority of the women during this period underwent the traditional form of marriage, many of them took advantage of the divorce laws to free themselves of undesirable unions. There is no doubt that in situation like this, abuse would be inevitable. Divorce and adultery cases were on the increase. At the Ondo Native court in 1941 out of 1770 cases, 65 were for adultery.⁶⁹ The introduction of adultery compensation by the colonial administration led to another major problem. Adultery became a criminal offence. Fines were charged and men in Ondo town turned it to their advantage so they could obtain damages. The district officer expressed disgust over how Ondo Chiefs had turned adultery compensation into a profitable source of income.⁷⁰

The situation became worrisome because, with marriage becoming this "commercialized,... men are next above encouraging their wives to commit adultery in order that they can sue the seducer for damage".⁷¹ All attempts by the District Officer to stop this practice were firmly resisted by the Ondo Chiefs. In 1938, he pointed out at the council meeting of Ondo Chiefs that it was about 18 months that he had suggested the abolition of adultery compensation. The Chiefs replied that they were not prepared to change it at present.⁷² In 1939, they were still not ready⁷³ and by 1942, the District Officer had to seek the help of Administrative Officers to stop the practice.⁷⁴ The analysis here points to one reality. Though many women took advantage of the divorce laws to free themselves of undesirable unions, it is incontrovertible that this greatly disrupted the social structure in a way. Though adultery was not new to the old Ondo, but it was not rampant. The colonial officers, themselves, admitted that "divorce was much less prevalent before the advent of Government"⁷⁵ and "adultery was rare before the country was opened up."⁷⁶ It was not only the family institution that was affected by colonial rule; changes were also noticed in the agricultural sector, which also affected the women.

3.4 Colonial Rule and Economic Change

The economic condition of Ondo and the whole of Nigeria underwent a drastic transformation during the colonial period. One thing was obvious about the economic policies of the different colonial powers; this was the exploitation of the economic resources

of their colonies with the least possible cost to the metropolitan government. The economic policy of the colonists was based on the stimulation of local production of export cash crops like palm produce, cocoa, groundnuts, cotton, and so on. Of these crops, only cocoa cultivation will be treated because of its predominance in Ondo. Though introduced during the colonial period, cocoa cultivation is still very prominent in the post-independence Ondo economy.

Cocoa cultivation was introduced to Nigeria in 1880 from Fernando Po. Some years later, the Lagos Botanic Station, founded in 1887, introduced cocoa culture into the Western Province.⁷⁷ Cocoa has been described as being extensively grown in the Ondo province.⁷⁸ Initially, cocoa production expanded very slowly because the peasant farmers were reluctant to adopt the new crop, which after all was considered of no immediate domestic use. With the spread of the knowledge of its importance, however, production rose very rapidly especially from about 1905.⁷⁹ The increased cultivation of cocoa in Ondo entailed a rapid territorial mobility as people moved from Ondo town to the outlying villages, especially Bagbe, Igunshin, Erinla, Ilunla, Lemosho, and so on, and after 1920, farmers began to move North East towards the heavily forested areas near the Owena River to establish cocoa farms.⁸⁰ Most of the farmers lived in the villages, erected permanent buildings, sometimes plastered with cement and roofed with corrugated iron sheets. They came home, that is, to Ondo township occasionally, during important festivals or family meetings. Though these village dwellers retained ties with the urban Ondo town, they regarded themselves as rural rather than urban dwellers.⁸¹

Apart from the territorial mobility brought about by cocoa cultivation, there was also a degree of occupational mobility. This means the ability of an individual to change from one occupation to another, and in particular from a low income to a high income occupation, or to change to an occupation other than that of the parents.⁸² In this context however, the change from one occupation to another is most applicable. The cultivation of cocoa led to a noticeable shift from some occupations. The influx of European goods for instance led to a sharp decline in the traditional crafts like smithing and textile industries. Also, to get the imported goods and pay taxes, cash was needed. These forced many men who were initially engaged in the craft and smithing industries to take to cocoa cultivation through which the much needed cash could be obtained. Cocoa cultivation undoubtedly made the people of Ondo town to prosper exceedingly.⁸³ Through the export of cocoa, many farmers became wealthy enough, not only to pay their taxes, but also to acquire more cocoa plantations.

Cocoa farmers also used surplus income from the sale of cocoa and other crops to expand their own enterprises and to train their children for non-agricultural employment. In fact, a number of cocoa farmers were able to send their children to England for studies through the returns from the cocoa cultivation. Also, the wealth brought by cocoa cultivation enabled the farmers to maintain or strengthen their position in their home towns by contributing to family ceremonies or community projects and often by building a house (or houses) in the home town.⁸⁴

During the earlier years of cocoa cultivation, women enjoyed no special advantage that could affect their status as cocoa grew to become a prestige crop cultivated by men whether on plantations or on private farms. Women continued to carry out most of the labour intensive tasks such as planting, weeding, harvesting and processing. What this means is that farmers' wives worked on their husbands' farms until the tree crops matured and the farmer could afford to substitute hired labour for that of his wives and children.⁸⁵ The wives of the cocoa farmers rarely possessed cocoa plantations. They only laboured for their husbands.⁸⁶ After the sale of the seeds however, the farmer could give the wife (wives) money for personal use or buy her new clothes, especially during important festivals or celebrations. The woman during this early period of cocoa production was not positioned to improve her status through cocoa production. But later, women did not only work on their husbands' farms but they owned personal cocoa farms. A number of them acquired cocoa farms through personal efforts, especially through trade. Some of them were given the farms by their husbands. Others inherited the farms from their deceased fathers. Many of the women cocoa farm owners employed the services of caretakers who maintained and harvested the farms in return for a share of the crop. On the other hand, a number of them enjoyed the help of their husbands. Majority of those who employ the services of caretakers are the urban dwellers who own cocoa farms in the rural areas. Without doubt, possession of cocoa farms brought immense wealth to the few women who had ventured into it.⁸⁷ One major impact of cocoa production apart from the increased earning it brought to the farmers is that a substantial amount of the earnings derived from it were utilized in the education of children in such a way as to qualify them for any other occupation than cocoa farming.⁸⁸ In situations where a man is unable to train all the children from all the wives (especially in a polygamous setting), the woman from the proceeds of her own cocoa plantation usually handled the education of the other children who most often were the females.

Today, cocoa cultivation is still the major cash crop in Ondo and women are actively involved in it. At Ugbuogho, a village near Ondo, Mrs. Julianah Oseyemi explained that apart from the cocoa farms owned by her husband, she owns her own inherited from her father who died in 2004 and she has authority over her proceeds.⁸⁹ Alhaja Basirat Yekini is a migrant farmer who accompanied her husband from Iwo. She confirmed that initially, women involvement in cocoa farming was very low as most women faced the production of food crops. Her cocoa farm was given to her by her husband who also helps her with tending the crop. Their four children are being sponsored in school, from the proceeds from their cocoa farms.⁹⁰ At Bagbe, a village located few kilometers from Ondo, towards Ore, a couple, Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Julianah Olorunyomi, own four cocoa plantations. They migrated from Ondo town to Bagbe in 1972 in search of fertile land for cocoa cultivation. They acquired their first two farms and worked on them together. Occasionally, they hired helps. In addition to the farm work, the wife engaged in trading. They later acquired two more farms. At the time of the first interview with them in 2006, they had built their own house and three of their surviving four children were university graduates, trained by them from the proceeds of their cocoa farms. Today, they are both too old to manage the farms, which they had leased out to crop sharers, who manage them for a percentage of the proceeds.⁹¹ In addition to cocoa production, the colonial period was also characterized by trading activities.

Trade occupied a very prominent position as an agent of social change since the pre-colonial time. Since there were no natural barriers in the Nigerian geographical environment, interactions among the early peoples were encouraged. The trading interactions among Nigerian people, apart from fostering commercial activities, united the people and encouraged exchange of culture resulting into social change. Apart from inter-group commercial relationships, trading activities were extensively carried out internally among various Nigerian peoples. As noted earlier in chapter two, commerce has been a major occupation of Ondo women, not only before, but during and even after the colonial period. During the colonial period relatively few women were in government employment, others being actively engaged in trade. This, as had been observed earlier, is because there were cultural attitudes which did not consider women's education to be important. Consequently, more men than women entered the modern sector.⁹²

While majority of the women during this period engaged in petty trading, a number of the enlightened ones took advantage of the new colonial economic system by buying wares from the European firms, prominent among which was John Holt and Company Ltd. Though the number of women merchants was relatively small in comparison with the men, the few who engaged in trading did it on an extensive scale. They bought goods, especially textiles, on wholesale. These they later sold on retail in the town and village markets. Some sold in bulk to other retailers. These women had big shops and stores of their own. Examples of these women were Mrs. Mati Akinsete, Madam Dada Akinboboye and Madam Towobola who gained prominence in the 1950s.⁹³

A number of other women during this time engaged in the sale of potash, tobacco, soap, among others. Many of them were retailers. The second set of women merchants did not depend only on the markets in Ondo. They travelled to as far places as Agbabu and Okitipupa to sell their wares and brought fish in return to be sold at Ondo.⁹⁴ The large scale commercial activities of Ondo women did not end with the colonial period. An increased number of them engaged in trading on a large scale after independence. They travelled to Lagos, Aba, Onitsha to buy their wares which included textiles, shoes, bags and ceramic wares.⁹⁵

3.5 Female Education – A General Overview

The finding of the general works reviewed on Women Education all indicate that in most developing societies, families place a lower value on educating their daughters than on educating their sons.⁹⁶ Even in developed countries such as the United States of America, Melinda Bartley reports that:

The education of women... has been influenced by attitudes and beliefs regarding the proper role of women in society, as well as by the social and economic roles women have actually played. Not surprisingly, early access and the quality of education available to women were generally shaped out of an ideology of the woman's role in society being defined as different from, and in some instances, inferior to that of the man's...⁹⁷

It has been argued that women have been under – represented, their careers and aspirations being subjected to interruption by the demands of child care and they often spend considerable amount of time in the home.⁹⁸ Among the various factors that militate against female education were early marriage and the wish to protect daughters from undesirable

influence which traditional societies associate with Western education.⁹⁹ In Muslim societies, such as Northern Nigeria, Western education was regarded as a threat to both Muslim and Hausa values, a threat seen as especially dangerous to women whose duty it was to protect the tradition.¹⁰⁰ Isi Omorodion identifies this as religious bias. To this she adds cultural bias and sex preference (for sons) and financial constraints as major factors responsible for the under – enrolment of females in schools in Nigeria during the first few decades that followed the introduction of Western education.¹⁰¹ Examining the situation in Yorubaland, Simon Ademola Ajayi associates the initial slow enthusiasm towards Western education with the fact that “the Yoruba and other peoples in Nigeria and Africa as a whole had their own clearly defined social systems of duties and rights including the role of women, ...a woman’s ultimate role is to be a good wife and mother, which she can learn from her mother without the help of school.”¹⁰² It is generally believed in most Nigerian and African societies that the quality that identifies a woman is motherhood, which is considered her most important role. This she could acquire without formal education. The result of this is that while boys were trained, even if with meagre income, girls were encouraged to early married life.¹⁰³ Examining the Kikuyu experience in East Africa, Andrew Sunday Adebola explains that the introduction of Western education could not remove the basic duty of a woman, which is that of being a wife to a man. Since the preparation a girl needed to perform this duty could be completed traditionally without Western education, most parents did not see why their girls should waste their time by going to the mission school.¹⁰⁴

In Ondo, one reason that had been identified as being responsible for poor girls’ enrolment in schools in the early years of Western education was that Ondo parents of the time saw education as a direct investment and the males were thought to be more beneficial than the females. In the words of Mrs. Akinmurele Oyinkansola, the Administrator of Zonal Education Office, Ondo, some of the parents at that time believed that females would get married and all the benefits and glory would go to their husbands.¹⁰⁵ This was corroborated by Chief (Dr.) G. T. Olatunji, the Principal of Independence Grammar School, Oka, Ondo, who recalled that his uncle had a pair of twins, a male and a female. While the male was the only one trained, the female was made to sell vegetables and other things to support the training of the male. He said this affected the female child’s life chances as her life was “injured and hampered.”¹⁰⁶ He believed that this was more of prejudice and inverse discrimination against the female child than poverty.

Another strong reason put up by A. Oguntuyi is that majority of Ondo parents at the time had no clue to the idea of sending girls to school. Schooling and European dressing were seen as identical and a girl in European dress was always very conspicuous because there were not many of such girls. Parents saw danger to morality in that¹⁰⁷ and as a result refused to send their girls to school. In fact, the idea of female education was generally regarded as unnecessary and wasteful as many felt that the woman's place was in the kitchen and she did not need formal education to function effectively there.¹⁰⁸ Chief Mrs. Olufunke Iluyemi expressed how everybody was surprised that her father decided to send her to school. They thought it was a waste and there was "active discouragement" from her father's friends who strongly believed that no matter how much was spent educating a girl, her ultimate place would still be in the kitchen.¹⁰⁹ There was also the problem of general poverty, in a situation where the parents were not able to send all the children to school, the sons took priority. In a highly polygamous setting (into which Ondo belonged during this period), the tendency was to train a child from each of the wives. Most often, the preference was for the male with little or no consideration for the female.¹¹⁰

One other major problem was that it took the indigenes a lot of time to acknowledge the advantages of Western education.¹¹¹ The economy was predominantly hinged on agriculture so the people preferred to keep their children at home for work on the farms. As a result, it was difficult to get boys into schools, not to talk of girls.¹¹² Apart from the indifferent attitude towards educating girls, parents also nursed the fear that their children would be caned too harshly by the teachers, so they sent the boys who they believed were strong enough to withstand the harsh treatment and kept the girls who they considered fragile.¹¹³ The fear of the girl getting pregnant before leaving school was another reason, why many Ondo parents of the time refused to send their daughters to school.¹¹⁴ This was confirmed by the Log book of Saint. Monica's Girls Secondary School which revealed that a girl was pregnant and sent home in 1963.¹¹⁵ The admission register also recorded two others in 1957.¹¹⁶ The result of this was that in Ondo, the pace of female education was initially slow.¹¹⁷

It should be noted that the poor enrolment of girls in schools was not as a result of the Missionaries or school Administrators deliberately debarring the girls from school. There are records to prove the anxiety of the school Administrators over this.



MRS. OYINKANSOLA AKINMURELE
The Administrator, Education Zonal Office
Barracks Road, Ondo

Figure 2:

Source: St. Lous Secondary School, Ondo. Golden Jubilee Brochure, 1954-2004. P. 28

An example of this was the recorded speech of Mr. Aig – Imoukhne, the Head Teacher of Saint Stephen's (Ang.) Primary school Ondo in 1931,

The number of children continued to grow so much... primary alone, 195, but of this, there are only 21 girls. If you include the infant school, the total number is 318, of which only 63 are girls. I hope it is not only out of place to impress upon the parents and guardians here present and our native rulers too, the necessity of giving to their girls the same opportunity for learning which, they now throw open to boys.¹¹⁸

This was in 1931. It took fifty six years after the introduction of Western education in Ondo before concern began to grow about poor female enrolment in schools. This situation is not peculiar to Ondo town. Olabisi Olaleye observed that in Yorubaland generally, the pace of female education was initially slow though it picked up momentum and achieved greater results in some parts than in Ondo province.¹¹⁹ One of such places was Lagos and Abeokuta. Nina Mba reports that following the founding of a boys school in Lagos by the CMS in 1859, the female institution in Lagos was founded in 1872. The Methodists and Catholics followed in 1879 and 1873 with the Methodist Girls School and St. Mary's Convent respectively. The Abeokuta Baptist Girls School was established in 1900.¹²⁰ Though the proportion of girls to boys in the mission schools was extremely low, it is nothing to be compared with Ondo which recorded her first Primary School (co-educational) in 1875, Boys Secondary School (Ondo Boys High School) in 1919 and the first Girls School in 1942. The late entry of Ondo into the world of Western Education in comparison with Lagos and Abeokuta was because these two cities enjoyed the presence of educated returnees, foreign missionaries and merchants who formed their elites during this period. Having understood the importance of education, they, their wives and daughters clamoured for quality education not only for their boys but also for their girls. For example, the establishment of Queens College, Lagos in 1927 was far more the result of pressure from elitist Lagos women's organizations for a girls' secondary school that will correspond with King's College for boys.¹²¹ The late exposure of Ondo women to Western education explains their lower level of sophistication, compared to women in Lagos and Abeokuta during this period.

3.6 Girls and Secondary Education in Ondo

As noted earlier, the first primary school in Ondo, Saint Stephen's Primary School was founded by the CMS in 1875. This was followed by All Saints Primary School (also by the CMS) in 1908 both were co-educational. Then came Saint Mathews Primary School by the

Roman Catholic Mission in 1916. By 2008, the number of Primary Schools (all co-educational) had risen to 26.¹²² Secondary education started with the founding, by the C.M.S in January 1919, of Ondo Boys High school, Ondo.¹²³ It was the only secondary school in the town for several decades. It was reported to have become a centre for Cambridge Local Examination in 1945. As the name implied, it was basically a boys' school. Being the only secondary school in Ondo, it meant that the few girls who went to primary school had no opportunity of secondary education. They had to make do with their standard six certificates. In fact, in the 1920s and 1930s, the maximum level of education received in some parts of Ondo province was standard four. Pupils had to go to Ilesha or Ibadan to complete the standard six.¹²⁴ Mrs. F.A. Adegbenbo confirmed this. In 1936, she, together with her sister, Mrs. M.T. Ariyo had to travel to Ibadan, at the encouragement of their father, Late Canon Moses Craig Adeyemi, to complete their primary school.¹²⁵

Canon Adeyemi was not a typical Ondo parent at the time. He belonged to an elite class of Christian Clergy, like those in the late 19th century Lagos and Abeokuta mentioned earlier. A product of Saint Stephen's Anglican Primary, Ondo, Canon Adeyemi's quest for education took him to St. Andrew's College Oyo, in 1898; Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, where he graduated in 1911; Cheltenham College of Education, England for a year's post graduate course in teaching. He returned home in 1912 to pursue what turned out to be a brilliantly successful teaching career.¹²⁶ His exposure in the course of his educational pursuit explains his passion not only for the education of his wards, irrespective of sex, but his championing the cause of Missionary education in Yoruba land. Another example of Ondo parent (this time a Muslim) who had substantial touch with Western education was Late Chief Sara Kadiri Oladapo. We are not very certain of his educational pedigree but available records indicate that he was a great advocate of education. This he manifested when he released his building at Alo Street, Ondo to provide classrooms for the first set of boys of the Ondo Boys High School in 1920.¹²⁷

The first girls' school, Ondo Anglican Girls' School, was established in 1942.¹²⁸ The late Canon Moses Craig Akinpelumi Adeyemi, the Vicar of Saint Stephen's Anglican Church at the time conceived the idea of founding an exclusive girls' school in order to emphasize the importance of female education and the development of their inherent potentials.¹²⁹ The school was the only girls' school in the whole of old Ondo and Benin Province- including the present Kwara and Kogi states. It was fed with girls from St. Stephens Primary School.



Late Canon Moses
Craig Akinpelumi
Adeyemi

Figure 3: *Source: Jubilee Community Grammar School Ondo
50th Anniversary Brochure. 2006. P.15*

Mrs. Florence
ABIMBADE Adegbembo
(Nee Adeyemi)



Her 80th Birthday Celebration Brochure, Feb. 2008 Front Page Source:

Chief Mrs.
M.T. Ariyo
(Nee Adeyemi)



Figure 4: *Source: Jubilee Community Grammar School Ondo
50th Anniversary Brochure, 2006. Page 30*

and All saints (Anglican) primary school, Ogbonkowo. The Ondo Native Administration provided grants to erect buildings and provide facilities for the girls.¹³⁰ The school was later moved to Surulere in Ondo, the present site of Jubilee Community Grammar School, into which it metamorphosed. Chief Mrs M.T. Ariyo, the daughter of the late canon Adeyemi and an old student of the Ondo Anglican Girls' school revealed that the school was not a grammar school but a 'development' of the girls' section of Saint Stephen's Primary School. The syllabus in the school was very much inferior to that of Ondo Boys' High School, the main emphasis being Domestic Science, with no variety of courses like the sciences which could broaden the horizon of the girls.¹³¹

The report below clearly gives an idea of the philosophy of education for boys and girls during the colonial period:

There is only one Secondary School in the province-the Boys High School at Ondo ... There is little question that the school is becoming more and more an influence for good in the town ...¹³²

Of the CMS Girls School and training class: "good work is done here in training girls for marriage."¹³³

This gave an illustration of the educational policies of the Colonial Administrators of the time *viz a viz* women education. This, in turn, was a reflection of the policies affecting women in Victorian England where the emphasis on education of women was mostly domestic involving cookery, housekeeping and such related crafts.¹³⁴ It was no surprise then that the poor perception about female education dominated the colonial education policies in Nigeria. The result was the emphasis on domestic science for girls. The indifference of colonial authorities to the quality of education women received is illustrated in the following extract:

...where customary beliefs oppose women's education, it seems only fair to concentrate teaching on those matters which are most obviously characteristic of females... It is certainly better to have a school for serving and cooking than no school at all. A teacher may well give the girls a smattering of Mathematics, science, hygiene, etc, as they learn how better to cook, keep the house tidy, mind the children and contribute to rural progress.¹³⁵

A major characteristic of the kind of education the colonialists approved for women was the enhancement of 'natural vocations' for women, which were highly domesticated and were

not like the education men received. The situation continued into the 1940s and part of the 1950s. Girls were not admitted into Ondo Boys High School until September 1968 when it was merged with the Divisional Junior High School. The school was then re-named Ondo High School. The 1968 and 1969 admission register reveals that the ratio of boys to girls admitted was about 5:1¹³⁶ respectively, showing that the girls were still very much lagging behind in the acquisition of secondary education. Under the principalship of Mr. A. F. Olagundoye (an old student) the school was returned to boys only in 1986, and the name changed to Ondo Boys High School as before. Mr Olagundoye's explanation was that a mixed school was against the dream of the school's founding fathers.¹³⁷

Prior to this time, a few enlightened parents who could afford the cost sent their girls outside of the town to acquire post primary education. Mrs M.T Ariyo explained that after attending the Ondo Anglican Girls' School, her parents sent her to United Missionary College, Ibadan, where she trained as a Grade II teacher before proceeding to the United Kingdom for further studies. Chief Mrs Iluyemi attended Queen's School, Ede. (Other girls' schools of college standard at this time included Saint Theresa's College, Ibadan, Queen's College Enugu, Queen's School Lagos. Kudeti Girls' College, Ibadan. These schools embraced clientele from all over Nigeria and the entrance examination was very competitive. Only few girls got in).¹³⁸ With this and the high cost of sending girls out to these girls' colleges, which most parents could not afford, majority of the girls had to settle with primary or modern school education. (See chapter four, (4.3) for the details about Modern Schools).

The effect of this educational imbalance was very serious. Apart from the fact that the girls could not have easy access to higher education, majority of Ondo men who had higher education, some from overseas schools found out that they could not find suitably educated Ondo females for wives. The tendency, therefore, was for most of them to marry from outside Ondo, especially Ijebu and Egba girls whom they probably met overseas.¹³⁹ This was a cause of great unhappiness for most Ondo parents at the time. There was also anxiety among the Missionaries. They faced the problem of finding suitably educated girls for their catechists to marry. The young Catholic catechists knew that they had to marry converted young girls because the Catholic Church frowned on the idea of girls starting to learn catechism after marriage. Apart from meeting the demand for educated wives for the clergy, the Catholic believed that generally, educated boys should have educated wives "to keep a good family

balance.”¹⁴⁰ To solve this problem, beginning from 1922, some girls were being sent to Catholic Training Centres at Ibadan and Topo, where they learnt writing, sewing and other domestic skills that will prepare them for marriage. To ensure the success of this programme, the Church gave loans to their employees to pay dowry and have their fiancées sent to Topo and Ibadan for training.¹⁴¹

One major event that gave Western education (for both boys and girls) a boost was the launching in January 1955 of the free primary education. In the early 1950s, constitutional changes in the country created a need for political parties. One effect of this was that the active Western educated elements in the country converted their improvement associations into political parties.¹⁴² This led to the development in 1952 of three major political parties in Nigeria one of which was the Action Group (A.G) headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Having won the election to the Western House of Assembly in 1952, the A.G made education and health its top priority. This was implemented in January 1955 when the Universal Primary Education U.P.E was introduced throughout Western Nigeria.¹⁴³ This free universal and compulsory scheme involved free and compulsory primary education for boys and girls of school age.¹⁴⁴ With the U.P.E, parents became more enlightened and there was no more serious discrimination on sex basis.¹⁴⁵ All the primary schools became co-educational. For example, Saint Matthew’s Catholic Primary School, which had been a male school became co-educational in 1955.

One other major factor that acted as an eye opener to some ignorant Ondo parents, especially in the 1960s, was the visit of Mrs Hannah Dideolu Awolowo to Ondo. Her husband, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was serving a jail term. Mrs Awolowo came to hold a political rally on behalf of her husband. The sight of a woman, mounting the podium and speaking English eloquently, addressing such a large audience was the first of its kind. This had a positive impact as many Ondo parents decided to take their daughters’ education more seriously.¹⁴⁶ It was no surprise that the 1950s and 1960s witnessed a drastic change in the general belief about girls’ education. This led to a re-awakening and the establishment of two girls’ schools. Prior to this, few brilliant girls whose parents could not afford secondary education were awarded scholarships to secondary schools outside the town. In 1952, the Native Administration awarded a total of forty seven (47) scholarships, 11 of which were for females in this order: four to Saint Theresa’s College, Ibadan, five to Queen’s School, Ede and two to

Saint Anne's, Ibadan.¹⁴⁷ The founding of Saint Louis Girls Secondary School marked a turning point in the history of girls' education in Ondo.

ST. LOUIS GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL, ONDO

The School was established by the Catholic Mission in January 1954. This was due to pressures from Rt. Revd. T. Hughes, the Catholic Bishop of Ondo Diocese who saw the need to produce higher class females as educated wives and so corresponding to Boys' secondary school. The school started with thirty students. The population gradually increased to a range of 200 to 350 yearly enrolments. At inception, all the seven teachers were Revd. Sisters, including the Principal, Reverend Sister Mary Chrysostom.¹⁴⁸ The major subjects offered at inception included English Language, Mathematics, Christian Religious Knowledge and History. Science subjects and Geography were added later. Though a Catholic School, admission was open to qualified girls irrespective of religious affiliation. Mrs. Adegoke Nafisat, the wife of Professor Adegoke, though a Muslim was among the second set of the school.¹⁴⁹ Due to the high discipline in the school, the rate of drop-out due to pregnancy is very low. From 1998, when Mrs. Akindojutimi assumed the principalship of the school, there are only two girls who got pregnant and had to leave school.

Scholarships:

Girls have enjoyed numerous scholarship schemes among which are the yearly Professor Adegoke and Dr. Fasehun awards.

Achievements:

Among the school's numerous achievements was their coming first in the 1996 National JETS Competition. They also got the first position in the award of the Association of National Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools in 2008, and award as the best secondary school in Nigeria, also in 2008.¹⁵⁰

OLD STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION (SLOOGA)

Saint Louis's School, Ondo is blessed with one of the best Old Students Union in Nigeria. The old students union of the school have branches in Lagos, Ibadan, Ife, Akure, Owerri, Benin, USA and of course the mother home town-Ondo.¹⁵¹ It is made up of seasoned professionals. Despite the fact that they are scattered all over the place, they hold their annual meeting on the school's compound on 25th January of every year.¹⁵² The association has been of immense help to the school.



Students Of St. Louis Girls Secondary School Ondo.

Figure 5: *Source: St. Louis Secondary School, Ondo. Golden Jubilee Brochure, 1954-2004. Front Page and P. 32*



Principals Of St. Louis, Past & Present

Figure 6: Source: St. Louis Secondary School, Ondo. Golden Jubilee Brochure, 1954-2004.



**Some Of The Old Girls Of
St. Louis Girls' Secondary School
Ondo**

Figure 7: Source: St. Louis Secondary School, Ondo. Golden Jubilee Brochure, 1954-2004.

First, their members have continued to be incomparable role-models to the students. They provided street lights for the school. The foundation of the school hall was laid by them – which is still under construction. When the school celebrated her 50th Anniversary in 2004, the old girls painted all the buildings in the school.¹⁵³ Also, one of the strong members of the association, Princess Oladunni Odu was the Chief Launcher of the Golden Jubilee Ultra-Modern Hall.¹⁵⁴ One unique feature of the school is that since inception, though there have been few male Vice Principals, the principals have always been females.

SAINT MONICA’S GIRLS’ GRAMMAR SCHOOL, ONDO

In 1952, the supervisor of Anglican Girls Schools in the old Western Region, C.L. Rance in a report to the Ondo Native Authority revealed that the Anglican Church was working towards the development of secondary schools for girls “in the near future so that girls education may go forward as boy’s education has done in this country”.¹⁵⁵ This intention became a reality on 2nd February, 1955, when the Anglican Mission established Saint Monica’s Girls’ Grammar School, Ondo.¹⁵⁶ The school remained under the control of Anglican Communion, Ondo until it was taken over by the government in the 1970s.¹⁵⁷ The School started with fourteen students¹⁵⁸ out of which 12 survived and sat for the West African School Certificate Examination in 1960. Miss Diana M. Shaw was the first principal.¹⁵⁹ Initially, the school offered only Arts subjects. Among the subjects taught in 1958 were Latin, Geography and History. By 1959, Mathematics, Arithmetic, Religious Knowledge, English Literature and Needlework were added.¹⁶⁰ Health Science was mentioned for the first time in 1963,¹⁶¹ Biology in 1966,¹⁶² Chemistry in January 1967,¹⁶³ and Physics in March (the same year).¹⁶⁴ After Miss. D. Shaw, eight other principals (3 males and five females) have headed the school.¹⁶⁵

Achievements so far:

In addition to good performance in external examinations, the school’s under 12 and under 15 Handball teams represented Nigeria in a competition in Terano, Italy in 1986 and took the third position. They won the silver for the best well-behaved team on the tournament. Their team as part of Ondo State team came first in the under 12 National Handball competition in 1988. In 1986, their Hockey team became champions in a state competition. Their quiz team won a trophy in 1988 and 1989.¹⁶⁶

OLD GIRLS’ ASSOCIATION:

The Old Girls' Association is playing significant roles in the development of the school in the following areas:

The school library was built and commissioned by them at the school's 50th Anniversary celebration in 2005. They still control the school's boarding system. They make donations for school projects and give yearly awards to outstanding teachers and brilliant students.¹⁶⁷

INDEPENDENCE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, ONDO.

Independence College, later re-named Independence Grammar School, Ondo, a co-educational school was established under the auspices of the Ondo Education Promotion Association on 15th January, 1962.¹⁶⁸ 15 students were enrolled at inception.¹⁶⁹ All the pioneering teachers were males until February same year when a female joined the team. Another female joined in 1963.¹⁷⁰ The gender disparity in the staff constitution continued throughout 1960s and 1970s. In 1977, there were 17 male teachers as against 3 females¹⁷¹. The situation did not show any serious improvement until the 1990s. In 1994, there were 22 males and 18 females and by 2000 it was 20 against 19. Despite the increasing number of women in the teaching staff, this did not reflect in the headship of the school. From inception to date, there have been only two female principals.¹⁷²

OLD STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION:

The researcher could not obtain much information about the Old Students' Association. However, there is record that in 2007, they constructed a gate for the school's main entrance, and renovated the school computer room in 2008.

Achievements:

The school is doing very well in sports and games. The students have won various competitions at local and zonal levels.

Scholarship Awards:

The students have enjoyed a number of scholarship awards, provided by philanthropists within Ondo community. These include the Olabanji Akinbule Award and the Francis Adenegan Award which Olalekan Olasan won in 1997.¹⁷³

Independence Grammar School was followed by other co-educational secondary schools. In 2008, there were 20 government secondary schools in Ondo: 3 females only, 3 males only and 14 co-educational.¹⁷⁴ The third girls' school, Saint Helen's Unity Secondary School, Ondo was established by the Ondo State Government in September 8th, 1985 with 46

students.¹⁷⁵ Student's yearly enrolment at the senior section gradually increased over the years: 1989 it was 128¹⁷⁶, 1993 it was 273, 2000 it was 288 and by 2006, it was 300.¹⁷⁷ With these developments, greater educational opportunities were opened to Ondo girls. Those who had completed their primary education now had the opportunity of acquiring secondary education without having to travel outside Ondo. Adeyemi College of Education (ACE) was established in 1963 as a teachers' college for the production of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) graduates. It formerly commenced in May 1964 with 93 students comprising 24 women and 69 men. Its objective was to produce qualified teachers (of both sexes) for the secondary schools, teachers' training and technical colleges.¹⁷⁸ In 1972, the college was merged with the University of Ife (Now Obafemi Awolowo University). Following the recommendations of the University's council at its meeting on 25th May, 1981 the President-in-council approved that Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo be granted an autonomous status, and a Governing Council. Thus as from 1981/82 session, the college began to admit students for 4 year degree programmes.¹⁷⁹ Out of the 14 provosts of the college since inception, only one is a female – Dr. (Mrs.) P. O. Fayemi whose tenure ran from 1985 to 1990. There has also been one female registrar, Mrs. V. O. Akindehin (1999 – 2005).¹⁸⁰

The impact of the college on the development of education not only in Ondo but Nigeria as a whole includes increased educational opportunity for the community through its various full time and sandwich programmes; production of well qualified graduates of both sexes, to teach different subjects at all levels of education – primary, secondary and technical within the town and outside. The college also organizes conferences, workshops and seminars for teachers head teachers and principals to enhance their teaching and administrative competence.¹⁸¹

These developments led to expanded opportunities for educational development, not only for males but equally for females. This is a significant index of change. Up till the 1950s and 1960s, very few girls went for post secondary education. Chief Mrs Iluyemi explained that as a student of the University of Ibadan between 1960 and 1963, she could recall that there were only two or three Ondo girls, but others travelled outside the country for further studies.¹⁸² Today, at least for those who wish to pursue a career in education, further studies can be achieved within the town. The situation continued to improve. As Western education continued to gain a foothold in Ondo, it, as should be expected, began to have noticeable

effects on the society as a whole and the women in particular. The changes brought about in the lives of the women and their socio-economic status form the central theme of this research.

In conclusion, this chapter revealed the impact of colonial Rule on Ondo women. Colonial influence brought a lot of changes in the position of women. In government, they were completely excluded from all levels of administration. Chieftaincy also witnessed a gradual decline of prestige. In the agricultural revolution that characterized colonial rule, the men dominated cash crop production and accruing wealth for a very long time before women began to participate. In family sphere, women's rights in marriage and divorce were made more secure. Underage betrothal, leviration, and widow inheritance, choosing marriage partners by families of an individual rather than the individual, also drastically reduced. Colonial education did not favour women as it prepared them for domestic responsibility while the boys received trainings in skills that prepared them for active participation in the colonial economy. Gradually, the problem of girls' education began to receive attention.

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CHAPTER FOUR

WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

4.1. Introduction

The first index of social change is the gradual change in the attitude towards girls/female education. The increased enrolment and retention of girls in schools, especially after the launching of the Universal Primary Education in Western Region in 1955 attests to this. From the 1950s and 1960s upward, there began a noticeable change in the attitude of Ondo parents towards the education of their daughters. Information from selected primary and secondary schools in Ondo show a drastic increase in girls' enrolment in schools. In some cases, especially in the 1980s there appeared to be more enrolment of girls than boys, as revealed in Tables 1-4:¹

Table 1: Saint Mathew's Catholic Primary School Pupils Enrolment (1979-1986)

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	% of Female enrolment
1979/80	58	60	118	50.8%
1980/81	181	179	360	49.7%
1983/84	52	71	123	57.7%
1984/85	87	94	182	51.6%
1985/86	62	71	133	53.4%

Source: Saint Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Ondo. Admission Register.

At the Salvation Army Day Primary School, Ondo, the school's attendance register reveal the following:²

Table 2: Salvation Army Day Primary School Ondo Pupils Enrolment (1971-1990)

Year	Class	Boys	Girls	Total	% of Female enrolment
1971/72	pry 3	26	20	46	43.5
1974/75	pry 2	20	16	36	44.4
1982/83	pry2A	19	13	32	40.6
1982/83	pry 5	21	37	58	63.8

1984/85	pry 4	30	34	64	53.1
1984/85	pry 5	12	38	50	76
1984/85	pry6	12	09	21	42.9
1985/86	pry1A	14	17	31	54.8
1985/86	pry5A	14	11	25	44.0
1986/87	pry5	16	18	34	52.9
1987/88	pry1	12	17	29	58.6
1988/89	pry3	13	15	28	53.6
1989/90	pry3	12	16	28	57.1

Source: Salvation Army Day Primary School, Ondo. Attendance Registers.

At Bishop Philips Anglican Primary School, Surulere, Ondo, the 2006/2007 Enrolment chart³ reveals the following:

Table 3: Bishop Philips Anglican Primary School, Ondo 2006/2007 Enrolment Chart

Class	Boys	Girls	Total	% of Female enrolment
Kindergarten	20	36	56	64.3
Pry 1	22	28	50	56.0
Pry 2	26	23	49	46.9
Pry 3	28	22	50	44.0
Pry 4	26	32	58	55.2
Pry 5	22	28	50	56.0
Pry 6	31	21	52	40.4

Source: Bishop Philips Anglican Primary School, Surulere, Ondo. 2006/2007 Enrolment Chart.

At Saint Catherine (Catholic) Primary School, Oke-Igbala, Ondo, the total number of pupils for the 2008/2009 academic year was 420: 195 boys and 225 girls,⁴ the female enrolment constitutes 53.57%

At the secondary level, there is also an indication that points to increased female enrolment in secondary schools. Saint Monica's Girls Secondary School, Ondo opened in 1955 with fourteen students. There had been a steady increase since then. The number rose to 45 in 1961, 72 in 1967, 143 in 1988, 195 in 1989 and 515 in 1991.⁵ Among the "new generation" Secondary Schools in Ondo is Methodist Grammar School, Oke-Agunla. It was founded on 26th September, 1980.⁶ The Admission Register reveals the students enrolment for the following years:

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Table 4: Methodist Grammar School, Oke-Agunla Students Enrolment Chart (1980-1985)

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	% of Female enrolment
1980/81	39	60	99	60.6
1981/82	57	68	125	54.4
1982/83	55	65	120	54.2
1983/84	90	110	200	55.0
1984/85	87	108	195	55.4

Source: Methodist Grammar School, Oke-Agunla, Ondo. Admission Register, Volume I

The increased enrolment of girls in schools can be attributed to the increased awareness among parents and Ondo society as a whole, about the importance of female education. It has been realized that a woman's place is no longer only in the kitchen. One other possible factor responsible for the improved attitude of Ondo parents towards the education of their daughters is that most often, after completion of studies, educated girls always win the admiration of ignorant parents who fail to send their daughters to school. There has also been an increasing realization that educated girls always bring educated sons-in-law which always boosts the family image.⁸

With the declining prejudice against female education, many women have come to enjoy the ideals and benefits of Western education. With this, the women have gradually moved out of the inferior cadre they occupied in the society.⁹ Philip Forster, in his assessment of the impact of Western education on Ghanaian society describes Western education as:

having tangible advantages in terms of individual wealth and prestige ... formal education has become regarded almost as a 'juju', the possession of which confers certain successes upon its possessor¹⁰

One of the most positive developments that came with women education is the increased participation in wage employment by women. This is not just in Nigeria, Ahavo citing the Kenyan experience explains that the positive development that has occurred in the public service has opened up a broad category of employment to women today.¹¹ In jobs and skill acquisition, women favourably rub shoulders with men.¹² There is virtually no profession in which women are not found, though the number may be fewer in some.

4.2 Women and Domestic Science Training

The initial set back in female education to a large extent was responsible for women's late entry into the world of career and professional development along Western line. From the

beginning, missionary education with its emphasis on domestic training for girls, was dominant in Ondo province and indeed the whole of Yorubaland. The 1930 Ondo Province Annual Report reveals that the principal missions in the Province were the CMS, Roman Catholic and the Wesleyan.¹³ All 132 schools in the Province with the exception of Government School, Owo and Ondo Boys High School were under the management of the missions.¹⁴ As indicated before, the focus of girls' education during this period was to prepare girls for marriage, so the curriculum consisted more of sewing, embroidery and cookery, with Arithmetic and Religious Studies.

The implication of this was that while boys received training in agriculture and industrial skills necessary for the new jobs created in the colonial economy, girls focused on domestic subjects that prepared them for their future vocations as wives and mothers.¹⁵ LaRay Denzer's study on domestic science in colonial Yorubaland shows that missions of all denominations adopted the approach of channeling girls' education towards preparing them to handle domestic rather than public responsibilities. She cited the example of the school set up in Badagry by the first Methodist Missionary, Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, which included an afternoon session from Monday to Thursday during which girls learned sewing and embroidery. Anna Hinderer at the Anglican in Ibadan in the 1850s, taught her female pupils needlework daily from 12:00 until 2:00pm.¹⁶ The prevailing belief about the primary goal of girls' education was to inculcate good morals and modest behaviour, not to offer training for new jobs or in academic subjects.¹⁷ Despite the concern of some parents about their daughters gaining new skills as a step toward getting modern jobs, there was still that belief that no matter her status or level of education, a woman should "remain basically African in her attitudes and behaviour towards parents, husband, children and home."¹⁸

One major development that accompanied domestic science training in schools during the late colonial period was the conversion of the knowledge acquired into income generation. LaRay Denzer cited the example of Lagos where for instance, girls proficient in needlework became dress makers and Akure where numerous girls sold baked products which they learnt how to make at the CMS Training Home.¹⁹ In the same vein, the Ondo Anglican Girls' School emphasized domestic training. It was not a surprise that the first products tended towards domestic science related careers or taught Domestic Science in Schools. Mrs. Florence Abimbade Adegbembo, a product of the Anglican Girls School, Ondo later studied Domestic Cookery, Needlework and Nutrition in Relation to Cookery in England in the late

1950s. She put her training into income generation by joining the teaching service. She taught Domestic Science in several schools at Ibadan and Ondo. She was appointed the first matron of Adeyemi College of Education in charge of catering in 1964.²⁰ Mrs. Florence Olufunmilayo Otuyemi attended the Anglican Girls School in Ondo in the late 1940s/early 1950s. She later went to Britain in 1964 where she studied catering though she learnt nursing in-between. On her return to Nigeria, she worked as a caterer in a private organisation in Lagos and now operates a hospitality outfit at Ibadan.²¹

Among the women in the hospitality business in Ondo is Mrs. Solomon Kehinde, the owner/proprietress of Mary Upper Hotel, (formerly Onilegogoro Hotel) located at Yaba area in Ondo. Unlike Mrs. Florence Otuyemi and Mrs. Florence Adegbebo, she could not complete her primary education due to financial constraints. She learnt tailoring which she had practiced for two years before deciding on hospitality business. She had the opportunity of attending a certificated one week training programme at St. Francis Primary School, Owo, where she received training on various kinds of food and drinks and their preparations. As at 2008, she had been in the hospitality business for close to thirty years, have erected her own building and her three children are university graduates. She acknowledged the success of her business was due to the maximum moral and financial support she enjoyed from her husband.²²

Madam Olamojiba was another hospitality magnate in Ondo. She started her business when hospitality business was not so popular in the town. The unique aspect of her is that while other women were taking advantage of knowledge gained in school, she never went to school but rose to prominence by deed of hard work. She started as a petty trader, then to a food canteen operator before finally coming up with the Olamojiba Hotel, one of the most popular hotels in Ondo. One striking thing about her is that, though non-literate, she ensured sound and quality education for all her children. Because of her excellence in business, the title of Iyalaje was conferred on her by the *Osemawe*, a title she held till her death in 2011.²³



Needle Work Class Woolwich Polytechnic London 1961
Mrs. Adegbembo, Miss Granger, Mrs Mogafu

Figure 8: Source: Field Collection

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4.3. Women In Education

Today, while a number of the educated Ondo women could be seen meeting the growing demand for midwives and even doctors and pharmacists, both within and outside the town, a great majority of them are engaged in teaching. The initial suspicion of promiscuity associated with women education and the working girl had gradually disappeared²⁴, and with it the doubts cast on her intelligence and ability to engage in “masculine” endeavours. John Stuart Mill remarks that it is no longer reasonable to argue that women’s position is only in the home or that they are intellectually inferior to men.²⁵

During the early years of Western education in Ondo, very few women participated in wage employment. Since more attention was given to male education, it is not a surprise that very few women engaged in teaching and other aspects of wage employment. At Saint Stephen’s Primary School, Odosida, the pioneer primary school in Ondo, it was revealed that from inception to the early 1930s, very few women were in the teaching staff. In 1932 and 1933 respectively, the staff strength was 7, all males. In 1935, out of the 8 teachers, only 1 was female, to teach sewing.²⁶ In the 1940s and 1950s, the female percentage fluctuated between 20% and 30%.²⁷ In 1962, it was about 30%.²⁸ From the 1970s, however, due to expanded secondary education for girls and the opportunity of higher studies for some, there is a drastic change in the situation. In 1973 there were 9 female and 9 male teachers.²⁹ A decade later, the number of female teachers was 15 against 5 of males³⁰ and by 2008, it was as if men had gone into extinction in the profession. It was 1 male to 24 females.³¹

At Saint Mathew’s Catholic Primary School, Ondo, the situation was not very different. The Head Teacher claimed that up till 1960 when he passed out of the school, it was more of males affairs for students and teachers.³² Girls were not admitted to the school until 1955, following the introduction of the compulsory Universal Primary Education and the ratio of female teachers was far less than the males almost throughout this period.³³ From the 1970s however, the situation has completely changed. In 1978, it was 6 males to 22 females³⁴; in 1988, 3 to 24³⁵; 1998, 3 to 29³⁶; and 2008, 5 to 33.³⁷

At the secondary school level, using Independence Grammar School, Ondo, the first co-educational secondary school as a case study, the gender disparity among teachers appeared to be similar to that in primary schools, at least for the first 15 years. It appeared to be closing up during the subsequent years. At inception in January 1962, all the teachers were males.³⁸ In February same year, one female, Miss. Simbiat Akinmuboni joined the teaching staff.³⁹ In

1963, another Miss. Olu Akinnifesi joined, but later resigned her appointment to become a nurse.⁴⁰ The situation remained like that till the end of the decade.⁴¹ However, in 1986, it was 20 males to 15 females and fluctuated over the decades till 2008 when it was 28:33.⁴² At Saint Louis Girls Secondary School, it was a female affair. At inception in 1954, all the teaching staff were reverend sisters. Though men have over the years joined the teaching staff, the percentages have always been lower than females. The worst was in 2003/2004 session when the ratio was 4 males to 40 females.⁴³

What can be deduced from the above analysis is that women slowly entered into teaching Profession. Majorie Mckintosh recorded that teaching and nursing were the only professional careers open to more than a handful of educated women during the early and middle colonial years.⁴⁴ Writing particularly about colonial Lagos, Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain observed that in the late 1940s, women whose roots lay in the Sierra Leonean returnee tradition were unusual in their preference for these “intellectual occupations”, but in the following decade, the popularity of such work increased among many Yoruba women.⁴⁵

Teachers at whatever level gained authority over their students and sometimes the students’ parents.⁴⁶ Generally, the popular perception of teaching was high, compared to dressmaking and female teachers were usually regarded as wife materials because teaching was regarded to be more convenient for raising family. This notation is still prevalent in today’s Ondo. This probably explains why women grew to dominate the teaching profession in Ondo but this however does not appear to apply to leadership opportunities. Saint Louis Girls’ Secondary School, because of its peculiarity never had a male principal.⁴⁷ The story is different at Independence Grammar School where from inception to 2008, only two female Mrs Akingbola (Late 1970s – early 80s) Miss. F. A. Akintelure (Later Mrs. F. A. Adekeye) has been principal (1984-1994).⁴⁸ On a general level the Table 5 below shows the constitution of secondary schools’ teaching staff for Ondo West Local Government to which Ondo belongs for the year 2007:

Table 5: 2007 Ondo West Local Government Secondary Schools’ Teachers Statistics

Male Teachers	537
Female Teachers	761
Total	1,298
Male Principals	23
Female Principals	15
Total	38

Source: Ondo West Local Education Authority Annual Statistics, 2007.

The gender disparity in leadership is also pronounced at the Ministry of Education Area Office, Ondo. From inception in 1976, till 1996, only two women have headed the Area Office. They are Mrs. V. O. Akinbobola (1976) and Mrs. E. O. Oluwole.⁴⁹ No other woman headed the Area Office until 2005 and 2008 respectively when Mrs. Ipinlaye and Mrs. Obigegbo assumed leadership of the office.⁵⁰ The Local Government Education Authority Ondo Branch was established in 1995. It is headed by the Education Secretary. It was in 2007 that it recorded its first female secretary.⁵¹ Similarly the Ondo Branch of the Teaching Service Commission, from its establishment in May 2002 has been headed by one female, Mrs. O. O. Akinmurele who assumed office in 2007.⁵² All the others have been males. Although, women like Mrs Obigegbo are not Ondo indigenes, but only served in Ondo as government education officers.

One important teachers' association is the Nigerian Union of Teachers. The current chairman Mr. J. O. Adekanmi claimed that a number of women teachers have held offices within the organization though there is no available data to support the claim.⁵³ Another important association in the teaching profession is Association of Primary Schools Head Teachers of Nigeria (AOPSON) formerly known as Conference of Primary Schools Head Teachers of Nigeria (COPSON). Since inception, the association has never produced any female chairman/chairperson though women at various times have served as Deputy Chairman, Treasurer, Public Relation Officer and Financial Secretary. Women's interest in the association increased during the 2007/2008 election in which the fourteen positions were won in equal proportion, that is, men won seven including the chairmanship, women won seven including the Vice Chairmanship, Treasurer and Financial Secretary.⁵⁴

The point of argument in the above analysis is that, over the decades, there has been an undeniable increase of female participation in the teaching profession but this has not guaranteed them complete equality with men in leadership opportunities. However, it is clear to everyone that there has been a tremendous improvement over what it was a century ago.

Training the teachers – An assessment of the development of the teaching profession will necessitate a discussion on the production of teachers to meet the demand of the expansion in education over the years. Initially, most schools focused on the education of males. Hence, the first set of indigenous teachers were males. With the expansion of girls education, there was desperate need for teachers not only for the girls' schools but those with higher qualifications to teach in the teacher training colleges. In 1952, there was mention of Rt. Revd. T. Hughes, the Catholic Bishop of Ondo Diocese allowing the Native Administration teachers to be trained at the Catholic Elementary Teachers' Centre, Akure and even helping some to get to Higher Elementary College, Abeokuta. Some teachers were also being sponsored to take the Elementary Teachers' Course at the Government Teachers' Training College, Ibadan. Specific mention was made of the Ondo Native Administration sponsoring some women teachers at the Government Women Training Centre, Ilesha.⁵⁵ Prior to this time, teachers were going to as far places as Abraka to obtain training. This explains why in 1951, the Local Education Committee was pre-occupied with discussions on the establishment of a Divisional Teachers' Training Center in Ondo.⁵⁶ This became a reality in January 1953.

A turning point in the development of female teachers in Ondo was the establishment in 1955 of the Saint Helen's Teacher Training College by the Anglican Mission. The establishment of the college was spearheaded by Bishop T. O. Olufosoye. It was for the training of female teachers. The student population at inception was thirty but gradually rose to about 1000 in the 1970s. Majority of the teachers in the college were males. The First Six Principals were females who evidently must have obtained their training from outside the town. Only three male principals headed the school until it was phased out sometime in the 1980s.⁵⁷

Students for the Teacher Training Colleges were to be recruited from the candidates who would have passed standard VI and the entrance examination. One other avenue for recruiting students was through the Secondary Modern Schools. The expansion in primary education that followed the introduction of the UPE in 1955 led to the establishment of Secondary Modern Schools. D. A. Murphy, the Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Education, Western Region in Ibadan, in a letter dated 26th June, 1954 informed the Residents of all the provinces of the region, and the Administrator of the Colony of Lagos, of the aims of the secondary modern schools:

It is estimated that one-tenth of the primary school leavers will go to Secondary Grammar Schools. Of the remaining nine-tenths, it is estimated that one-quarter will wish to go to Secondary Modern Schools. The course will be a three year course, for girls as well as boys ...⁵⁸

The curriculum for the Modern Schools included English, Vernacular, Social Arithmetic, History, Geography, Civics, Rural Science, Needlework, Handicrafts, Art, Music, Physical Education and Religious Knowledge. The subjects were to be treated in practical way and designed to give pupils opportunities of expressing themselves and fitting themselves for adult life.⁵⁹ The schools were to be staffed by Higher Elementary Certificated Teachers. It was the hope of the Education Officer that “in future years, the majority of primary school teachers will be products of the Modern Schools ... (and) all entrants to Elementary Training Colleges will have passed through the Modern Schools before hand”.⁶⁰ This implied that in addition to taking care of the excess products of the expanded primary schools which could not be accommodated by the Grammar Schools, the Modern Secondary Schools were also for the production of teachers for the primary schools.

There were four Secondary Modern Schools in Ondo town alone in 1955. They were owned by the Roman Catholic Mission, the Anglican Mission, the Native Authority and the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society.⁶¹ Due to economic reasons, the AUD School was closed down in August 1955 and the parents of the 9 children on roll were advised to register their wards in other Modern Schools in the town.⁶² The highest point in “training the teachers” was the establishment of Adeyemi College of Education in 1964. Many women also looked outside the town for opportunities for higher studies. As more and more time and resources were being devoted to educational development, Ondo came to be known as better educated than other Native Authorities in the Ondo Division.⁶³ The expanded educational programmes of the 1950s tremendously aided women education in Ondo. Female participation in teaching is not restricted to primary and secondary schools. Evidence abounds of their involvement in post secondary institutions. At the Adeyemi College of Education, females were not only involved but one of them emerged as the provost in 1985 and another as registrar in 1999.⁶⁴ Professor (Mrs.) Esther Adesulu is an example of a female Ondo indigene who has a successful career in university lecturing, and rose to become a professor at the University of Ife.⁶⁵

A major landmark in the educational development of Ondo is the founding of the Wesley University of Science and Technology, Ondo (WUSTO) by the Methodist Church, Nigeria in

2008. The Federal Government of Nigeria through the Nigerian Universities' Commission officially handed over to the Methodist Church Nigeria the provisional license of the University on 7th May, 2008. This was followed by the formal opening of the University a week later (14th May). Academic activities commenced in the university in November, the same year with forty students who registered for the first academic session. WUSTO is the first indigenous private institution dedicated wholly to science and technology in Nigeria. The university commenced its academic activities with only two colleges, that is College of Applied Sciences and that of Food Science Technology.⁶⁶ The impact of the university on Ondo is being suggested as a subject of later research. It is too early to assess the impacts in the current study.

4.4 Women In Health Services

Women are represented in every profession within the health sector, though the first to be entered into by indigenes was midwifery. Before Western healthcare became widespread, health issues were handled by herbalists (*Onisegun*) and diviners (*Babalawo*), some of which were women. Though they lacked formal training, they were experienced in traditional health practices. With the arrival of the Europeans, Western health facilities were introduced and experts were needed to offer the necessary services. The report of the Ondo province Medical Officer in 1933 shows that the medical team consisted of four officers⁶⁷ who were presumably expatriate men. In 1946, Grade II midwives were attached to 20 of the 28 Native Administrative Dispensaries where domiciliary midwifery, antenatal and child welfare were practiced.⁶⁸

Marjorie Mckintosh observed that of Lagos and Abeokuta especially, most of the early teachers of midwives were Europeans.⁶⁹ It is the same in Ondo. There is record of Mrs. Crawford, a qualified Nursing Sister who gave free services in the matter of assisting in training of midwives in Akure.⁷⁰ There was another reference of 14 midwives being trained in Akure and Ondo.⁷¹ Denzar observed that though nursing was regarded as an “intellectual occupation” there was an initial reluctance of some Western educated women to enter into nursing. She attributes this to their dislike of the manual labour required, they were paid less than foreigners for doing the same work and were at first not allowed to wear shoes⁷² when at work. Over the years, nursing and mid-wifery gradually expanded to become the dominant section of the health sector. Predominantly a women's profession, it is usually respected and appreciated by the generality of the people who view them as saviours. Mckintosh describes

nurses, dressed in their distinctive uniforms as wielding considerable authority over their patients and those people's families.⁷³ Chief Mrs. Stella Akinribido, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) at the Ondo State Specialist Hospital, Ondo confirmed that her decision to go into nursing was initially motivated by the way nurses dressed.⁷⁴

In addition to monetary reward, there is no doubt that many go into nursing out of a passion to render service to humanity. A newspaper publication in 1969 gave this side of the nursing profession:

The lamp is really very heavy. From the time of Florence Nightingale, Nurses have been playing very leading role in the cure of patients in the hospitals-the world over. Even after the doctors might have attended to you, nurses still hover around to help. Theirs is really a ... humanitarian service,
...⁷⁵

Unlike Nursing there were few women in medicine, physiotherapy and pharmacy. But their representations appear to be increasing over the years. Mackintosh account reveals the presence of female medical Doctors in Lagos since as far back as late 1930s and 1940s.⁷⁶ There was no gender indication as per the percentage of female to male? Up till after independence, medicine remained an overwhelmingly male field. Dr. Olawoye, the HOD of Dental Clinic at the State Specialist Hospital Ondo estimated the present level of women participation in medicine as 65% male, 35% female.⁷⁷

The degree of representation of women in the medical profession to a large extent determined their leadership opportunities. The Nigerian Medical Association which has been described as an egalitarian society in which every gender has equal opportunity has never recorded any female president both at National and State levels. Women have served as Treasurers, Public Relation Officers and Financial Secretaries. Dr. Olawoye attributes this to the tasking nature of the office of the president.⁷⁸ The story is different with nursing. From the inception of the State Hospital, very few men had occupied the office of Chief Nursing Officer. It has always



**Chief Mrs. Stella Akinribido
Chief Nursing Officer
Ondo State Specialist
Hospital. Ondo.**

Figure 9: Source: Field Collection

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been occupied by women. The gender distribution can be estimated at 80% female and 20% male.⁷⁹

Evangelist (Mrs) Bola Akinterinwa, a retired Supervisor and Deputy Chief Pharmacist with Ondo State Health Management Board revealed that right from 1970s, unlike medicine which has consistently been male dominated, pharmacy has recorded an increasing female participation.⁸⁰ Even up till today, there are more females in pharmacy than in medicine. This is because of the belief that pharmacy is more lucrative than medicine. Among the female pharmacists of Ondo indigene are Mrs. Afusat Oyeneyin and Mrs Odusote (Nee Faturoti) who happens to be the first Ondo female pharmacist⁸¹ and of course Mrs. Akinterinwa herself. After her graduation from the university of Ife in 1971, she served as a pharmacist at the General Hospital Ilesha (1975), General Hospital, Ondo (1976) and later at Ondo State Health Management Board, Akure where she rose to the position of Supervisor and Deputy Chief Pharmacist, a post she held until her retirement in 1983. Among their contemporaries in the medical profession at the time was Dr (Mrs.) Akinkoye who retired from the university College, Ibadan.⁸² Mrs. Bola Akinterinwa explained that there are no gender-related prejudices, as there is no position a female cannot occupy within the profession.

4.5 Women In Law Enforcement Agencies

During the Second half of colonial era, especially in Lagos, women were hired as customs clerks, cooks for the army and as police constables.⁸³ The story is different in colonial Ondo. In 1930, the Native Administration Police Force consisted of “one Oga Olopa and fourteen rank and file”. The report was that “the conduct of the men has been satisfactory throughout the year”.⁸⁴ In 1942, all the members of the force were men.⁸⁵ In 1946, the officer in charge of Ondo Province Police Force, Mr. E. A. Oluwole reported that the strength of the Native Administration Police Force was 18 men out of which 14 were posted to Ondo and four to the outstations.⁸⁶ Women did not feature seriously in the Police force until well into the 1960s. Despite the initial controversy surrounding the presence of women in the force, overtime, it came to be acknowledged that “behind the immaculate and stern uniform of a Policewoman lies a gentle, affectionate and understanding heart.”⁸⁷

Nigeria Police Force, Ondo Division:

The Yaba Division was the first to be established in the 1960s, to be followed by the Enu-Owa and Fagun Divisions. Through the 1960s, 70s and 80s, women participation in the Police was low as most women preferred to go into teaching and nursing.⁸⁸ The percentage of women in the Police force increased especially in the 1990s because of the increasing cases of women's involvement in crime, coupled with cases of rape and other vices against women. The idea was that female victims and culprits would be able to open up better to females than males.⁸⁹

There is no doubt that advancement in the police depended seriously on educational achievements. Mrs. J. M. Mathew attributes her rapid promotion to the position of DPO, the first female since the inception of the Division, to the higher qualifications she possesses and God's favour. This gave her confidence to overcome all attempted gender-related intimidation.⁹⁰ Perhaps the most striking in this discussion is the story of Mrs. Florence Oye Adebajo, retired Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG). An Ondo indigene, she joined the Police force in the late 1960s, "a time many able bodied men were seeking sanctuary in the villages to escape being conscripted to any of the security agencies."⁹¹ She is the first and so far the only Ondo and indeed Nigerian woman to become a DIG. An account of her career is contained in Appendix 3 on page 202.

Nigerian Prison, Ondo Branch:

Nigerian Prison, Ondo Branch was founded in 1964 as a combined one (i.e. for male and female inmates). Generally, combined prisons are headed by men, though, there are always female sections headed by women. The idea is for the development of close relations between the female prison officers and the female inmates for the purpose of easy reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration. Due to expanded educational opportunities, the percentage of women in prison service has increased to about 25% in the 2000s as against about 10% in the 1980s and 1990s.⁹² There is no doubt that the low participation of women will affect their representation in leadership over the years, a few women have been able to climb up to the post of Controllers of State Commands, and Assistant Controller General of Prison, none has attained to Deputy Controller General and Controller General of Prison.⁹³



Picture showing **MRS FLORENCE OYE ADEBANJO.**
Deputy Inspector General of Police (RTD)



MRS J.M. MATHEW
DPO, Fagun Division
Ondo



INSPECTOR VERO AKINTAYO
Nigerian Police Force,
Fagun Division, Ondo

Figure 10: Source: Field Collection

Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC).

NSCDC, Ondo Branch was established in 1987. Since inception, two women, in 2006 and 2007 respectively have served as Divisional Officers (D.O). Due to educational attainments, many female officers have held important positions within the organization. At the time of visit in July, 2012, the welfare Department was headed by Mrs. Akintunde Omotola, Administration by Mrs. Akinfolarin Feyi, both Asst. Superintendent of Corps. The place of educational qualification is evident. Apart from Mrs. Akintunde who holds a first degree, other senior women in the Division hold higher degrees.⁹⁴

4.6 WOMEN IN LAW

Despite the increasing number of women going to school, their participation in the legal profession has been low, though it appears to be improving. The reason for the initial low female participation was because, generally, law was regarded as a masculine profession.⁹⁵ In Ondo, one major reason was traditional ideology. Getting girls to go to school at all was a problem; let alone getting them to study law. Honorable Justice Rasheed Olabamidele Fawehinmi explained that the traditional idea that placed less value on female children could be corroborated with the Chinese proverb which says that daughters are born facing out, while sons are born facing in. This means that a woman depletes the family by marrying out. These traditional philosophies did not only keep girls from school but was also responsible for their late entry into professions that were regarded as male preserves.⁹⁶ It is a recent phenomenon that women began to venture into the profession. Barrister Stella Udu Opined that today, half of the lawyers being called to Bar at the Law School, Abuja yearly are women. However, very few of them end up practicing the profession. Majority prefer corporate jobs because of the difficulties associated with practice. With respect to Ondo, though there are many Ondo female lawyers, majority of who reside outside, none practices the profession in the town. The only Ondo indigene who is into practice has her chamber at Ore, a nearby town.⁹⁷ Majority are in Lagos, Ibadan, Akure and Abuja. The only practicing female lawyer in Ondo is Barrister Stella Udu, an Ebonyi State indigene.

Barrister Oluwole claims that generally only 4 percentage of female lawyers are into practice.⁹⁸



Barrister Stella Udu
The only practicing female lawyer
in Ondo in 2012

Figure 11: Source: Field Collection

This was corroborated by Honourable Justice Rasheed Olabamide Fawehinmi, who claimed that despite the increasing female participation in the legal profession, very few of them get involved in practice. Though he could not remember the first female Ondo lawyer, he however recalled that Ondo Town has produced a number of female lawyers, who had at one time or the other become magistrates and judges. Late Mrs. Kuteyi retired as a Magistrate in Lagos. Miss Akinnawonu also retired as a magistrate in Lagos. Mrs. Iyabo Arinola Awokoya is a barrister, also based in Lagos. Mrs. Ogunwunmiju served with the Ministry of Justice in Ibadan, and later as a judge in Ondo High Court. She is at present a judge in the Federal Appeal Court in the eastern part of Nigeria⁹⁹.

The Nigerian Bar Association Started in Ondo around 1972. It is an egalitarian association in which there is no gender-based discrimination. This explains why every member is referred as a gentleman.¹⁰⁰ Despite this, however, no female has ever headed the association, women have occupied other offices except that of the president. Barrister Stella Udu attributes this to the challenges associated with the position rather than to gender discrimination.¹⁰¹

4.7 Women in Engineering

As far as the engineering profession is concerned, Engineer Ajibola Sylvester Adenika disclosed that in the mid to late 1960s, as an undergraduate, nearly all the students learning the profession were males. The only two females he knew, though they were not from Ondo, were technicians (Holders of HND).¹⁰² The reason for this is not far-fetched. Generally, engineering profession (be it civil or mechanical) is physically demanding. The hazardous nature of the profession makes female involvement difficult. For example, in construction work, there is need for adequate supervision of contracts in the field which requires physical presence all the time. Other difficult areas in the profession include construction of bridges, roads and others which require physical energy, trekking long distances, digging of grounds and so on which sometimes are not convenient for females. This is why some of the few female engineers, who are most often technicians are into consulting rather than construction.¹⁰³ He acknowledged that there may be female engineers of Ondo indigene but he could not recall any.

There is a trend that can be noticed among educated parents. This is the tendency to get their children to engage in their professions. Though it cannot be generalized, it is evident in some cases. Engineer Adenika opined that though none of his children took to engineering, but it is natural for parents to want their children to take over their firms when they are old or too old

to manage things.¹⁰⁴ The trend can be high in other professions. Hon. Fawehinmi opined that most often, parents desire to leave image behind e.g. as a lawyer there may be that desire to have one or more of the children becoming lawyers so the family can be referred to as a family of lawyers which could boost the family's image. This probably explains why three of his children are lawyers.¹⁰⁵ Chief Mrs. Stella Akinribido, the Chief Nursing Officer at the Ondo State Specialist Hospital, Ondo also motivated two of her children to study nursing and microbiology.¹⁰⁶

In summary, this paper examined gender inequality in education and how this hampered women's career development. Specifically, it has described the Ondo –experience. It argued that even though female education started late and made an uneven progress, it nevertheless opened several doors of opportunities to women. Women over the years came to dominate nursing and teaching but few in medicine and much fewer in engineering. Women are registering their presence in the legal profession and though the number is still minimal, they are also represented in the Law Enforcement Agencies.

ENDNOTES

1. Saint Mathew's Catholic Primary School, Ondo. Admission Register
2. Records of the previous years were not available. The schools Admission Register was also not available.
3. The Assistant Head Teacher, Mrs. Olukemi Opeke who gave the information could not provide the record of the previous sessions.
4. Mrs S.O. Ajetunmobi, the Head Teacher. Aged 55 years. Interviewed on 14th May, 2009. The Researcher could not gain access to the school records.
5. Saint Monica's Girls Secondary School's Admission Register.
6. Methodist Grammar School, Oke Agunla, Ondo. Log Book. p1
7. Methodist Grammar School, Ondo. Admission Register.
8. Mrs. F. O. Olusegun (J.P) The Principal, Methodist Grammar School, Oke-Agunla, Ondo. Interviewed in her office on the 13th of June, 2007.
9. Mrs. Olukemi Opeke, 50+. Assistant Head Teacher, Bishop Philips Memorial Primary School, Ondo. Interviewed in her office on the 12th of June, 2007.
10. Philip Forster. *Education and Social Change In Ghana*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 2000. p. 183.
11. Disam O. Ahavo. "Women and Occupational Classification" in Mary Adhiambo Mbeo and Oki Ooko-Ombaka, (eds). *Women and Law in Kenya: Perspectives and Emerging Issues*. p. 9.
12. Mr. Femi Adeniyi, 60+, a retired school principal. Interviewed at Ondo on 14th June, 2007.
13. NAI. Ondo Prof 4/1, "Mission", Ondo Province Annual Report, 1930 p.66.
14. Ibid "Education under the Code": p.52.
15. LaRay Denzer. "Domestic Science Training in Colonial Yoruba land" in Karen Tranbery Hansen, (ed). *African Encounters with Domesticity*. USA: Rutgers, 1992. p.118.
16. Ibid p120
17. Ibid p120
18. Ibid pp 120-121
19. Ibid p130
20. From her Biography contained in her 80th Birthday Thanksgiving, Investiture and Installation as Iya-Ijo of St. Andrew's Church Pamphlet, 23/2/2008.
21. Mrs. Florence O. Otuyemi 70 years – interviewed at Ibadan on 02/04/2012.
22. Mrs. Kehinde Solomon, 54years, an Akure indigene, was interviewed in her office at Yaba, Ondo.
23. Madam Olamojiba died in 2011. The information about her was obtained from Chief Festus O. Otuyemi, an acquaintance.
24. Onigu Otite and W. Ogionwo. *An Introduction to Sociological Studies*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited Nigeria, 1994. pp 338-390.
25. John Stuart Mill. *Less Equal Than others*. London: Green Reader and Dyer, 1869. p2.
26. Saint Stephen's Primary School, Ondo. Log Book Vol. 2, p 182, 229, 279.

27. Ibid p135 – 195, 212 – 221
28. Ibid Vol. 3 p 243, 244, 283.
29. Ibid p 34 – 35.
30. Ibid Vol. 4 p 135-136
31. Ibid
32. Mr. Edward Tolulope Fasehun, 58 years, the Head Teacher of Saint Mathew's Catholic Primary School, Ondo. Interviewed in his office on 20th February, 2008.
33. Mr. Pius Eniola Olamide, 74 years, retired Director at the Ministry of Education and an ex-pupil of the school. Interviewed at Ondo on 21/5/2012.
34. Saint Matthew's Catholic Primary School. Log Book I Vol. 1. p251-252.
35. Ibid Book II Vol. 2. p 240 – 242
36. Ibid Book II Vol. 3. p42.
37. Ibid Book III Vol. 4 p.12-15.
38. Independence Grammar School. Ondo. Log Book I. p.6.
39. Ibid Log Book I. p4.
40. Ibid Log Book I p.10.
41. Ibid pp.39, 40, 132.
42. Ibid Log Book II. p.157.
43. Saint Louis Girls' Secondary School, Ondo. Log Book. I p. 138.
44. Majorie Mckintosh. Yoruba Women, Work and Social Change. p.175.
45. Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvian "Le Travail des Femmes a Lagos" *Zaire*, 5, 1951 p.171 cited in *Majorie Mckintosh. Yoruba Women, Work and Social Change*. p.175-176.
46. Majorie Mckintosh. Yoruba Women, Work and Social Change. p.176.
47. Mrs. E. O. Akindojutimi. Principal, Saint Louis Girls Secondary School, Ondo. Interviewed on 10/5/2012.
48. Mrs. Olufolake J. Fadamowo, the principal of the school interviewed on 25/6/2012.
49. Mr. B. R. Akinsanmi 57 years, the Ondo Area Education Officer, interviewed in his office at Barracks Road, Ondo on 8/5/2012.
50. Area Education Office, File No.: AEO/OD/0962/Vol. III.
51. Honourable C. A. Ijilegan, 50 years, the Education Secretary, Local Government Education Authority (LGEA), Ondo Branch. Interviewed at Ondo on 23/5/2012.
52. Mrs. E. T. Okhuga, 35 years, Senior Executive Officer, General Duties. Interviewed at TESCO, Ondo on 8/5/2012.
53. Mr. J. O. Adekanmi, 57 years, Chairman, NUT, Ondo Branch and Head teacher, All Saints Primary School, Ondo. Interviewed on 23/05/2012.
54. Mrs. S. R. Adedoyin, the Chairperson of AOPSON, Ondo Branch and Head Teacher, St. Mathew's Primary School, Ondo. Interviewed on 23/05/2012. Following the retirement of the Chairman as the serving Vice Chairperson she stepped into the apex position in July 2011, thus breaking the record.
55. NAI. Ondo Div. 1/1, 32, No. NATT4/91 Native Administration Visiting Teacher's Hand Over Note 8/9/1952.

56. Ibid; "Minutes of sub Committee for the Proposed Divisional Elementary Training Centre, Ondo" held on October 25, 1952. p.139
57. Pa Samuel Adelokun, 86 years. Former teacher of Teacher Training College, Ondo. Interviewed at Ondo on 15/5/2012.
58. NAI. Ondo Div. 1/1 1764. "Secondary Modern Schools-Responsibilities of Local Authorities". 26/6/1954. p2.
59. Ibid p.4
60. Ibid. "Modern Schools and Supply of Teachers". 16/5/1955. p. 13.
61. Ibid. Ansar-Ud-Deen Secondary Modern School, Ondo. 8/8/1955. pp. 59-60.
62. Ibid p.79.
63. NAI. "Ondo Town." File No. 120c Annual Report Ondo Division 1953. p.3.
64. Rev. B. F. Adeniji. Former Provost of the School. Interviewed on 18th June, 2012.
65. For details of interview with Mrs. Adesulu, See Appendix I on Page 200
66. J. Fatokun. *Methodist Witness in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Postive Press, 2009. p144
67. NAI. Ondo Prof 1.1, "Medical and Health Department" File No. 200 Vol. 11. Annual Report 1933. p.81.
68. NAI. Ondo Prof 4/1 Vol. 11 "Health" File No. 200. Vol. xv, Ondo Province Annual Report, 1946. p.73.
69. Marjorie Mckintosh. *Yoruba Women, Work and Social Change*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. p178.
70. NAI. Ondo Prof 4/1. Vol. II. "Health." File No. 200. Vol. xv, Ondo Province Annual Report, 1946. p.71.
71. NAI. Ondo Prof 4/1 "Health" Annual Report Ondo Province, 1942. p.8.
72. LaRay Denzer. "Yoruba Women: A Historiographical Study" Unpublished paper given at the African Studies Association meeting, Washington, D.C., Nov 2005 N.P. cited. Cited in Majorie Mckintosh. *Yoruba Women, Work and Social Change*. p.180
73. Marjorie Mckintosh. *Yoruba Women, Work and Migration*. p.181.
74. Chief Mrs. Stella Akinribido, 60 years. Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), Ondo State Specialist Hospital, Ondo. Interviewed at Ondo on 15/5/2012.
75. *West African Pilot*. Thursday Jan. 2, 1969. p2.
76. Marjorie Mckintosh. *Yoruba Women, Work and Migration*. p182.
77. Dr. F. S. Olawoye. Chairman, Nigerian Medical Association, Ondo Branch and HOD, Dentistry Department, State Specialist Hospital. Interviewed on 15/5/2012.
78. Dr. F. S. Olawoye
79. Chief Mrs. Stella Akinribido. See Appendix II on page 202 for details of interview with her.
80. Evangelist (Mrs.) Bola Akinterinwa, 74 years. Retired Supervisor and Deputy Chief Pharmacist, Ondo State Health Management Board. Interviewed at her residence in Ondo on 13th August, 2012.
81. Evangelist (Mrs.) Bola Akinterinwa
82. Evangelist (Mrs.) Bola Akinterinwa
83. NAI. ESO 26/2, 13554 Cited in Marjorie Mckintosh. *Yoruba Women, Work and Social Change*. p174.

84. NAI. Ondo Prof 4/1, "Ondo Division Native Administration Police and Prison". Annual Report, Ondo Province, 1930. p.36.
85. NAI. Ondo Prof 4/1 "Police" Annual Report. Ondo Province. 1942. p.8.
86. NAI. Ondo Prof 1/1. "Police" File No. 120c, Annual Report, Ondo Division, 1946. p. 22.
87. Marjorie Mckintosh. *Yoruba Women, Work and Social Change*. p.175.
88. Mrs. J. M. Mathew, 44 years. DPO, Fagun Division, Ondo. Interviewed in her office on 10/5/2012.
89. Mrs. Janet Omolade, 49 years. Division Crime Office, Fagun Division, Ondo. Interviewed on 10/5/2012.
90. Mrs. J. M. Mathew.
91. Akeem Adedeji. *Contemporary Security Issues in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Mrs. Florence Oye Adebajo (DIG, RTD)*. Lagos, Nigeria: AL-Kaharu Publishers, 2010. p.iv. (check Appendix III on Page 203 for the details of her career as compiled by Akeem Adedeji).
92. Mrs R.N. Ezenwa, 40 years Assistant Controller of Prison, Head, Ondo Female Prison. (Anambra State indigene.) Interviewed in her office at Surulere Street, Ondo on 07/05/2012.
93. Mrs R.N. Ezenwa
94. Mr Osasona Kayode, 35 years. Assistant Superintendent Corps (Kabba indigene.) Interviewed at Ondo on 23/05/2012.
95. Barrister Stella Udu, 32 years, Ebonyi State indigene. Interviewed at her chamber, Idimoge St., Ondo on 15/5/2012.
96. Honourable Justice Rasheed Olabamidele Fawehinmi, 84 years. Interviewed at his residence in Ondo on 8th August, 2012.
97. Barrister Stella Udu.
98. Barrister Oluwole Tokunbo, 45 years. Chairman, Nigerian Bar Association, Ondo Branch. Interviewed at his chamber at Oye Akinnawonu St., Ondo on 15/5/2012.
99. Hon. Justice Rasheed Fawehinmi
100. Barrister Stella Udu.
101. Barrister Stella Udu.
102. Engr. Ajibola Sylvester Adenika, 70 years, Interviewed at his residence in Ondo on 11th August, 2012.
103. Engr. Ajibola Sylvester Adenika.
104. Engr. Ajibola Sylvester Adenika.
105. Hon. Justice Rasheed Fawehinmi
106. Chief Mrs Stella Akinribido.

CHAPTER FIVE

DOMESTIC TRANSFORMATION

5.1 Introduction

Social structures, institutions, attitudes and values do not remain unaltered.¹ Among the observable changes that have occurred in the Nigerian society is the changing economic and social role of women. It has been observed earlier that when the ideals and benefits of Western education were being accepted by Africans, Nigerians inclusive, women were at a great disadvantage. This is because parents for many reasons generally preferred sending their male children to school rather than the females. With greater awareness in the society, the situation began to gradually change. This has greatly affected the status of women. Ondo is not an exception to this. As Western education started to gain a foothold among Ondo women, it began to have some noticeable effects on them. With education, the woman has gained access to knowledge and information needed to change her outlook, her way of life and therefore her position in the society.² She is equipped to earn a living through participating in the formal sector. Mrs. Opeke remarked that “it is now that the educated woman actually fits into the position of help meet, being an asset unlike before when all she could do was trading (most times petty) or farm with all the attendant constraints”³ With the economic empowerment that accompanied formal education, women became contributors to family expenses, hence needed to be consulted, thereby becoming a part of the decision making process. Her role no longer ends in the kitchen; she is no longer to be seen and not to be heard.

The effect of this is that generally, the society’s view and perception of women are changing and there is a personality shift among the women who have been able to acquire formal education as they have a better perception of themselves and are more conscious of their own welfare.⁴ A. M. Olusakin, assessing the position of the woman today vis-à-vis counterparts before the contact with the West asserts that,

In the olden days, a woman had little or no status... the society viewed her as her husband’s property with little or no say in the affairs of the home... However, only few people would deny the functional roles of women in the larger society. Even though the average woman still performs her basic traditional role as a daughter to her parents, sister to her siblings, wife to her husband, mother to her children, daughter or sister-in-law to her husband’s family, she is now economically viable, contributing financially to the upkeep

of the family... The status of the educated Nigerian woman steps beyond the confines of motherhood.⁵

Sola Adekoya, commenting on the same issue, asserts that now that Nigerian society (Ondo inclusive)

has been exposed to the new order, women passivity... has become –assessed and re-ordered... Today's women are not just for the kitchen, they have become also 'bread winners'... With women not dependent on men economically, their social status has considerably changed.⁶

5.2 Marriage and Family

Significant changes have taken place in family life, not only in Europe and America, but all over the world over the last few decades.⁷ Education has been identified as one of the factors responsible for this. In Ondo before the European contact, marriage was more of an affair between the two families rather than the two individuals. Marriage was arranged by the families with the individuals involved having no say in it. Traditions played a major role, both in the choice and contracting of marriage. One result of this was that by virtue of the fact that the spouse was chosen for the husband by arrangement within the two families, there was not much external show of romance in the husband – wife interaction.⁸ Western education has seriously altered this as Western educated people lay emphasis on romantic love which emphasizes the idea that people will be attracted to one another and this attraction will lead the partners being bound together.⁹ Besides, educational settings also provide room for ample social interaction among sexes, which have formed the foundation for lifelong friendships and marriage. Thus, the Western educated woman has more say in the choice of partner for marriage.¹⁰ Gone are those days when a father would give out a young daughter as a gift to his friend who could be more than thrice her age.

Musgrave observes that generally, certain changes have occurred in the institution of marriage over the last century. One of these is that “it is coming to be viewed today more as a partnership of equals than ... a relationship between a dominant male and an almost servile female.”¹¹ This change is particularly made possible because the usual wide age-gap between

the husband and his wife (which makes the woman extremely submissive or even docile) has been removed. It is not uncommon for Western educated women to call their husbands by their names, especially among the city dwellers. Among the not so educated and the rural dwellers, the common practice is to call their husbands by the names of their first children. Also, the present educational process has helped to eliminate the problem of under-aged girls being given out in marriage. On the average, a young girl of six years has to pass through primary and secondary schools. If she decides to go further, it is obvious that she would have attained puberty, while still studying.¹²

The traditional image of the woman has been that of a wife and mother and her sacred duty was to serve the man.¹³ In most societies of the world, the ideal role of the man was such that required that he be the provider, strong and aggressive outside the home and completely dominant within. The wife on the other hand was supposed to be the home-maker and mother, caring for her family and submissive to her husband. The Yoruba family setting was not an exception. The husband usually had the final say in family decision making on important matters and the wife was expected to show extreme reverence to the husband, even to the extent of kneeling down when presenting things to him.¹⁴ Within the family, the woman was viewed as a bit higher than purchased slaves. In fact, she saw herself as one; referring to her husband and other members of his family, including her own children, as *Logho mi*.¹⁵ This probably explains why the woman was shared along with other properties at husband's death.

One other aspect of marriage that has also undergone a significant change is the importance attached to virginity. In pre-Western Ondo, there was always great joy and gladness accompanying a new bride being found a virgin. It was referred to as *Ubali*. The blood stained cloth would be brought to the girl's father amidst great jubilation. A girl that was not found a virgin brought great shame to her family, especially her mother. Today virginity for women is no longer an object of celebration. The man, (husband) of course may appreciate it, but it is no longer for public discussion and jubilation.¹⁶ Mr. Femi Adeniyi, exclaimed that "Western education suppressed our religion and gave room for laxity in behaviour". He explained that in the old setting, intending couples were not allowed by tradition to have intimate knowledge of themselves until their wedding night.¹⁷

Dowry¹⁸ has been and still is an essential element of a valid customary marriage. Florence Butenga,¹⁹ writing about the situation in Kenya asserts that if a man does not pay dowry to the parents of the girl he intends to marry, no marriage will be recognized by her family and community. In Ondo, even when Christian marriages are to be contracted, parties to such marriage do still pay dowry before going through the marriage ceremony. This is referred to as *Uşoan*. Payment of dowry is so embedded in the system that even educated women worry if their husbands have not paid their dowry.²⁰ In the whole of Ondo kingdom, the dowry is still an essential part of the marriage ceremony. As in the pre-Western education era, in addition to other things, the eight cowries, known as “*Eejo*” was a very important part of the dowry and even now, it is still being demanded. While generally the cash would be returned to the groom’s family as an indication that their daughter was not being sold, the traditional cowries, “*Eejo*” would be kept as a memorial and mark of acceptance.²¹ This confirms the extent to which women who have become westernized still subscribe to customary value and norms and the legal systems which uphold these.²²

Western education has not also altered the arrangement that the married Ondo woman, whether at home, outside or in the rural setting joins the husband’s family, is expected to respect and give reverence to all those who were there before her²³ including other wives in the extended family. Even though as noted earlier, it is becoming common among educated Ondo women, especially those residing in Lagos, Ibadan and other urban centres to call their husbands by name, the husband’s siblings and other relatives (especially the not very young ones) still receive a high degree of respect. They, at times refer to them as uncle / brother, aunty / sister or coin various nicknames for them. The fact still remains that whether Western educated or not, every woman seeks and works towards being accepted by the husband’s family. One possible way of achieving this is to try and please the members of the husband’s family.²⁴

In virtually all parts of Africa, the only quality which identifies a woman as one is motherhood.²⁵ Western education has not altered this. Mojubaolu Okome, describing it as one of the most important institutions upon which a woman’s claim to power could be made gives a popular proverb, “Motherhood, *Orisa bi Iya o si, iya la ba sin* (There is no deity like the mother, mothers are the ones that we ought to worship).”²⁶ Among the Ondo of today, children are still being highly valued both for the pleasure they bring and the emotional satisfaction they give and most especially as those to carry on the family name. Therefore,

barrenness constitutes a great challenge to a system such as this, that in which gender definitions stress the woman's role as a mother, and not just as a wife.

As noted in chapter one, polygamy was a usual practice in the old Ondo. It was normal for a man to have many wives and children. Apart from this being for prestige, much labour was needed on the farm. With Christianity and Western education however, the emphasis is on "one man, one wife". Unlike in the old setting when the woman may be instrumental to her husband marrying a second or more wives, the Western educated woman detests a second wife for her husband and the idea of her being a second wife. Marjorie Mckintosh observes that the local people's reaction to the Western view about polygamy gives an example of the people's ability to synthesize familiar and introduced patterns. "While some men acceded to monogamy, others conformed nominally, with a single church wife but other wives married in traditional ceremonies."²⁷ When such occurs, it is always a cause of great frustration to the 'church wife' concerned.

One other area in which Western education has significantly affected the family is in accommodation arrangement and the tendency to live a more private life. Andrew Sunday Adebola, writing about the Kikuyu society before the contact with the West claims that

the concepts of an individualistic approach to life, the idea that a person's affairs were his exclusive concern was quite strange... the individual man was not only related to members of his immediate family, he was also a member of the extended family."²⁸

This concept was reflected in the accommodation arrangement among the Ondo in which it was not uncommon for extended family members to live in large quarters known as *Agboli*. Within this system, both child training and other issues were of common concern. However today, schooling, and the types of occupations it leads to, may be closely connected with spatial mobility and thus increased distance from kin and home community. These weaken kin solidarity, which may lead to enhanced opportunities for individualism.²⁹ The gradual extinction of kin solidarity is further aggravated by the fact that the relatively educated families often have enough resources to hire flats or apartments that offer maximum privacy for the family.³⁰ This does not give opportunity for regular interaction between the children of educated parents and their extended family. It also encourages each family to mind its own

business and maintain “personal life” as against the past when somebody’s business was everybody’s business.³¹ This however, is not without its attendant problems. With the new accommodation style, the child grows without the communal training which existed before Western education. The prevalence of participation in formal occupation by Western educated couples simply means that most often, children of such homes spend a lot of time alone before their parents return from work. The tendency is for the children to keep themselves busy with the television and home videos, which most often pass wrong signals to them. This is a major problem facing many Western educated families today, civilization in the wrong direction, and is one of the major causes of teenage pregnancies and juvenile delinquency cases in our society now.

Though Western education has led to the improving status of women generally, the Ondo society is still patrilineal and therefore, women in normal circumstances do not become the head of lineage. Even in nuclear Western educated families, men are still very much the recognized heads. Educated women enjoy increased participation in decision making, but the final decision most often lies with the men. Research has also revealed that despite Western education and increasing participation of women in wage employment, the domestic roles of the woman has not changed. Boulton M.G, in her research conducted on some British families, reveals that although men might help with particular tasks, it is their wives who retain primary responsibility for children.³² Elsa Ferri and Kate Smith in their own survey found that it is only in very few cases that the husband is responsible for the children or to look after them in times of illness. Even when the woman had paid employment outside the home and the man was unemployed; it was still more common for the woman to take major responsibility for routine childcare and events of illness. They conclude that this survey only suggests that the increasing employment of married women outside the home had made comparatively little impact on the contributions of their male partners to childcare.³³

In Nigeria, the situation is not different. Amaka Okafor, who holds a Master’s degree, claims that with her educational achievements and her job demands, she is wholly in charge of domestic work in the home. Among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, where she hails from, a man who engages in domestic duties is regarded as “Woman Wrapper” and is usually an object of derision among his peers. As a result of this, most Igbo men, even if they could cook or do other domestic work would prefer not to.³⁴ Mr Adewale Olafimihan, believes that the domestic duties are for the woman. He claims that if his wife is away from the house, he

could cook but there is no reason for him to do that if she is around.³⁵ Mrs Adeola George, a University graduate and a Vice Principal in a Senior Secondary School claims that if she is out of town, her husband could handle cooking, washing and other household chores. The moment she returns, he withdraws from these activities because it is generally believed among the Yoruba to which she belongs that domestic duties belong to the woman, no matter her level of education.³⁶ In Ondo, a wife whose husband engages in domestic work, especially in the kitchen receives strong disapproval from the members of his family. The irony of it is that it is even the female members who most often express the strongest disapproval.

This points to the fact that, despite Western education, the domestic domain is still very much the women's responsibility and their men assist little in this area. Even among educated women, if their husbands decide to help in any domestic activity – like washing of plates, such will be done secretly and will usually be abandoned once a knock is heard on the door or a visitor is sighted afar off. This is because any husband who is engaging in unexpected domestic activities is subjected to ridicule. The wife can also be accused of using charms on him to make him carry out her wishes. Many husbands who participated actively in domestic duties with their spouses while abroad have been known to abandon such activities once they are back in Nigeria.³⁷ Despite Western education, even coupled with urbanization, the Nigerian society still believes primarily in the role model of women as perfect housewives, the worth of a woman is still being primarily measured in terms of her success in family matters.³⁸ Though a woman may be very successful in her chosen career, it is still expected that the domestic 'arena' receives adequate attention from her. This explains Bolanle Awe's view that in spite of the impact of colonialism and Westernization on their lives; the majority of Nigerian women still live as their grandmothers before them and perform the same roles.³⁹ The common scenario is that the educated woman, who works in the formal sector, comes back to do the domestic work, but sometimes engages the services of a house-help to ease the stress. The rural counterpart, on the other hand, goes to the farm, on her way home fetches the wood for fuel, on arrival rushes to the stream to get water, and then settles to prepare the meal. She does all this alone, except if she has grown up daughters to give a helping hand.

One other area in which Western education has greatly affected the family is in the economic sphere. In the traditional society, the family was not merely a social unit, but an economic unit as well. It has been noted elsewhere in this essay that in addition to other functions, the

family in the traditional setting was responsible for skill acquisition as it was normal for the child – boy or girl to learn his future trade from his parents. There were instances of girls inheriting their mother's trade; this continuity has been disrupted by Western education, coupled with urbanization. The shift from the traditional subsistent economy to a more complicated, formal and industrialized one, makes it less likely that the family can provide direct training or pass jobs down the family line.⁴⁰

5.3 Health Care.

One by-product of Christian missionary activity, British colonial rule and Western type education in Nigeria is the introduction of Western type of medical and health care.⁴¹ This has greatly enhanced the family. Prior to this period, medical and health care was in the hands of specially trained people who combined knowledge of herbal cure with powers of divination. Initially, Western medical practice ran against strong psychological and cultural barriers among Nigerian people. Gradually, especially in the 20th century, more Nigerians as a result of increased contact with Western medicine came to accept its superiority in coping with certain varieties of diseases.⁴² Gbadamosi and Ade-Ajayi observe that following the introduction of Western type health delivery services, the confidence of the indigenous population remained in the traditional herbalist and diviners. Over time, the local population began to rely to a noticeable degree on the medical competence of the hospitals.⁴³

In 1941, the Ondo Province Annual Report reveals that Western health care was firmly established in Ondo. There is report on the opening of a new maternity home at Ondo where an average of 40 babies a month was delivered. Ondo was described as leading the way in ante-natal and maternity welfare⁴⁴, compared to other Divisions in the Province. In 1946, there is report of Dispensaries being added to the maternity home “where domiciliary midwifery, ante-natal care and child welfare are practiced”.⁴⁵ The report goes further to state that “these homes are popular and there is no doubt that the more civilized women prefer to have their children in a home.”⁴⁶

Among the benefits of Western education is that it makes the woman who has acquired it to have high standard of health and better quality of life. It has been generally observed that educated women are better equipped to raise smaller and healthier families,⁴⁷ make modern home and have high standards of cleanliness and attractive living conditions, which will enable them bring up healthy children.⁴⁸ One reason that enables Western educated women

have smaller families is that they generally are more concerned with the quality of education and material and social satisfaction their children receive.⁴⁹ To achieve this, they limit the size of their family either through the use of contraceptive or other family planning methods. This is an innovation brought about by Western education and health care.

In the traditional setting, women were known to have many children, since labour was needed on the farms. The situation was worse when a male child delayed in coming. Incessant childbearing posed a great danger to the health of the mother.⁵⁰ One of the results of the enlightenment that accompanied Western education is that women that have acquired it, because of the information they have access to, view family planning as a tremendous relief from incessant child bearing and unwanted pregnancies. Their non-literate counterparts still view their security in their husband's house to depend on the number of children they have—the more the children, the greater the security.⁵¹ One major advantage the literate woman enjoys is that she could read and understand literature, posters, handbills and other messages about family planning which her non-literate counterpart cannot enjoy unless some expert read and interpret to her. Mrs V. O. Akinboboye described women having access to information, through Western education, as freedom and liberation of the mind.⁵²

Apart from the fact that Western education affords the woman a great control over the frequency and spacing of childbearing, thereby leading to smaller families and consequently healthier children, it also influences her use of health services during pregnancy, childbirth and for child care. Without doubt, the women who had acquired Western type education are better positioned to apply improved hygiene and nutritional practice, thereby reducing both maternal and infant mortality rates. An encouraging report in this regards came in 1953 about the construction of the Ondo Native Administration Hospital by the Works Department. It included a full size administrative block with theatre and other facilities. The special attraction was the weekly visits of the Red Cross, led by Mrs. Hamilton, the wife of the District Officer. During the Saturday visits, women received instruction on baby care. Lectures and demonstrations were also given and needy mothers provided with special assistance.⁵³ This explains why “attendance (at the clinic) has doubled and trebled and the clinic today is highly popular in the town ...”⁵⁴ And “their weekly visits are much appreciated.”⁵⁵ Western health-care has greatly expanded over the years.

In Ondo before the European contact, pregnant women were forbidden from eating certain foods and fruits because they were believed to be injurious to the foetus. For example, it was

believed by some that if pineapple was eaten during pregnancy, it could make a baby have severe rashes. It was also believed that children fed on eggs, fish and meat were being taught how to steal. Lessons received during ante natal sessions have brought better understanding on these issues. This, in no small measure, has helped in liberating the minds of women from superstitions, ignorance and old wives tales.⁵⁶ There is better understanding about some diseases, which had been termed mysterious because of ignorance. Lack of education leads to natural problems being enlarged and given wrong perspectives, for example, women were known to have lost their babies to preventable and curable, infant diseases such as jaundice, diarrhea and so on. The frequent occurrence of this has led to such beliefs as *Abiku*.⁵⁷ There is no doubt that improved health care has drastically reduced infant mortality with all the *Abiku* and witchcraft talks that accompany it. Mrs Abike Akinbinu⁵⁸ recalled how she lost two babies to neo-natal jaundice. Her Western-educated daughter has four children who were all jaundiced after birth. They all survived as a result of improved medical care.

This is however, not to assume that Western healthcare has completely eradicated traditional health practices. There are assumptions that despite the presence of modern health institutions, the patronage of traditional health practitioners has not reduced. Iyaafin Lucia Adebusuyi, asserts that educated people including modern health workers, doctors in particular, patronize them in large number. Though she recognizes the technological advantage of modern health care but also claims that certain ailments can find cure only in herbs.⁵⁹ The impact of Western education on traditional health practices can be observed in the packaging of products, dosage prescription and registration of their associations with State and Federal Governments. Virtually all the executive members are educated. This has brought a lot of innovation to the practice.⁶⁰

5.3 Widowhood and Inheritance

The common principle guiding inheritance of property in Ondo, and in many other parts of Yorubaland, is that a man's self acquired property will be shared according to the number of wives he had or rather according to the number of women who have had children for him. A man's property, therefore, passes to his children through his wives who are mothers to those children. It does not matter the number of children a woman has. The property will be shared equally to the number of women who had children for him. The woman does not directly inherit from her husband's property; rather she is regarded as a part of the property to be

inherited by one of the male members of the family, excluding her own sons and any elder brother to her late husband. It is a very common custom for a younger brother to inherit one or two of the deceased's wives. But an elder brother could not inherit his deceased younger brother's wives or property.⁶¹

The Igbo customary law of succession even goes a little further by excluding all female (wives and daughters) from administering a dead man's estate.⁶² The rule originates from the custom, which forbids property inheritance by women. If, therefore, they cannot inherit, they obviously cannot administer the estate. The practice according to Nwogugu is entrenched in patrilineal societies which accord the right and privilege to inherit to sons alone, excluding daughters and wives from inheritance.⁶³ In the Ondo of today, despite Western education, the woman still does not inherit from her husband, but her children, irrespective of sex, do inherit from their father.⁶⁴ Widowhood, not only in Ondo but all over Nigeria, was always accompanied not only by physical, but emotional and psychological abuses. Widowhood rites are not only always dehumanizing, but are often regarded as obligatory irrespective of the type of marriage contracted and the deceased's personal law.⁶⁵ It is very difficult, in fact, unheard of, for a widow not to undergo these rites whether she had children by the man or not. Under most customary laws, a woman that was suspected of having a hand in the husband's death (which was very common) faced trial by ordeal to vindicate or convict her. Taking an oath to swear non-involvement was also not uncommon. Physical abuses included denial of general cleanliness measures as washes, hair plaiting, and so on. As with the Igbo, she was required to shave all the hair on her body.⁶⁶ She had to sleep on tattered mats and her movement restricted for a specified period.

It is significant to this study to note that in Ondo, despite Western education and Christianity, these burial rites are still being observed with vigour though with some slight modification. Mrs. Florence Adegbebo⁶⁷ explains that the custom of the widow sitting on tattered mats, or even on ashes and not bathing for days is fast disappearing. She, however, maintains that it should not be assumed that widowhood is not without ordeal. Despite Western education and Christianity, movement during mourning period is still strictly restricted, even up to three or four months. During the *Iwefo*, a rite performed ten days after the burial, the widow must stay awake throughout the night. She is then taken somewhere to bathe after which she would dress in black for three lunar months or more. In contemporary times, she may be required to stay at home for a shorter period, especially if she is engaged in formal employment. There are some aspects of the mourning rites that need to be highlighted: first, even if the woman

has no child (through whom she can get inheritance from her late husband), she is expected to go through all the traditional mourning rites. Second, it is of particular interest that men who lose their wives are not required to go through these rites.⁶⁸

One major reason for the persistence of these customs is that women, even educated ones accept the widowhood ordeal out of fear that is rooted in superstitions. Women generally fear the terrible repercussion of non-compliance. It is important that (in the words of Mrs. Florence Adegbebo) in addition to academic education, women should also acquire enlightenment education, which has to do with getting to know their rights and avoid the ‘that’s how they do it’⁶⁹ pattern of doing things. For example, when her husband died on 11th March, 1999, though she stayed at home for three months, she refused the *Iwefo* rites on the basis that her husband died a Christian. She also had her bath as at when due as against the old practice. Only very few women are bold enough to do this. Majority still observe the rites despite all the unpleasantness. The confused state of women about widowhood rites is best expressed by Toyin Olakunri as follows:

It is the women folk who held tenaciously to the traditional rites and practices, and yet it is us who want changes. The two differing views belong to the opposite ends of the age structure...⁷⁰

5.4 Women Education and Domestic/ Family Violence

Violence can be described as the use of physical force to injure somebody or damage something.⁷¹ This includes the threats of violence. It also means the illegal use of unjustified force or the effect created by the threat of this.⁷² The United Nations have defined gender-based violence as any act that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. These include threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life.⁷³ ‘Domestic’ refers to anything relating to or used in the home, or everyday life within a household. It can also relate to family or involving the family or people living together within a household.⁷⁴ Domestic violence therefore, can be described as a form of violence against women, which is usually perpetrated by their husbands or other intimate partners. It is often referred to as “partner violence or wife battering”. This can include psychological abuse, such as, constant belittling, intimidation, humiliation and coercive sex. It frequently includes controlling

behavior such as isolating a woman from family and friends, monitoring her movements and restricting her access to resources.⁷⁵

In the past, the concept of violence referred primarily to tangible acts of aggression and destruction subject to legal sanctions. Today however, it includes abuse of the weak (physical and psychological) within and outside the home, the domination of one sex by the other, and unequal access to goods and services.⁷⁶ The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children have included Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) commonly called female circumcision, wife battering and early marriage.⁷⁷ Wife battering can include physical assault such as hits, slaps, kicks, beatings and even floggings. There is the report of a man who tore the WASSCE scripts his wife was marking.⁷⁸ This also is a form of violence.

Hon. Fawehinmi cited a number of court cases in which he was directly involved that dealt with violence against women. These included sexual harassment, rape, accusations of witchcraft, among others. A woman was accused of witchcraft and was stoned to death. He passed a death sentence on the culprits and the judgment was accepted by the Supreme Court. A driver raped one of his female passengers. The driver was jailed for seven years. A husband at Ikare killed his wife in a cassava plantation in the farm. The woman was macheted by the man in the farm. In Ondo town, a man killed his mother on the ground that she was responsible for his woes in life. The man was executed by Court judgement.⁷⁹

The trend of this ugly incidence has not changed. The trend is getting worse every day especially among the non-literates with very low percentage among educated elites. There were newspaper reports to corroborate this. *Iroyin Yoruba* of 15-21 March, 1961 reported a farmer at Onitsha who was convicted of murdering his wife for failing to bring him a stick to pluck oranges. He macheted her to death. He was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment.⁸⁰ In July of the same year, there was the report of another man who macheted his wife and her lover whom he caught in the act of adultery and thereafter handed himself over to the police.⁸¹

For some years now, many studies have addressed the issue of the status of women in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. It has been revealed that the status of women in one way or the other impacts on their susceptibility to family violence.⁸² Many societies, especially in developing countries condone wife beating as a husband's right.⁸³ There is the general belief

that a man may chastise his wife by beating her.⁸⁴ This is strengthened by the belief in male superiority and the view that women are possessions to be treated as the men considered appropriate. This was very evident to the colonial officers who observed that “the position of women in those days was much more that of a chattel than is the case today”⁸⁵ and there was that strong belief that “in ancient times, ... violence was the only remedy for matrimonial irregularities.”⁸⁶ This may be a bit of an exaggeration though, as it fails to reflect the mechanisms that could be mobilized to confront abuse such as the intervention of family elders and in very serious cases the local chiefs and the Oba. Women were known to have been temporarily withdrawn from their husbands due to ill-treatment. If it continued, it could lead to the dissolution of the marriage.⁸⁷

In traditional societies, men beat their wives when they felt that they had not adequately fulfilled their obligations and in most cases, any form of resistance was construed as an immoral act of disrespect and loyalty a wife supposedly owes her husband. The Ondo culture does not expressly prescribe wife-battering as a lawful norm, in fact, ill treatment of wives by their husbands is frowned at but, it can be observed that it is excused as a lawful reaction to provocation offered by the women (the aggressor) and justified on grounds of correction or chastising an erring wife. What constitutes provocation or erring conduct, however, is best left to the individual to adjudge.⁸⁸ There is no one single factor to account for violence perpetrated against women by their spouses. Research has, however, focused on the inter-relatedness of various factors.

Historically, in most cultures, there has been this unequal power relation between men and women which has been strengthened by many factors. Women’s economic dependence, patriarchy and women’s low status have been identified⁸⁹ as aiding perpetration of violence against women. Male control of family wealth inevitably places decision-making authority in male hands, leading to male dominance and property rights over women and girls.⁹⁰ The usual age difference between the man and his wife can also be a factor. The age advantage enjoyed by the male makes the woman vulnerable as a great deal of obedience and domestic service is expected. Where desires are not met, violence could arise. In modern societies, harsh economic condition such as the structural adjustment programme in Nigeria, increases in poverty, unemployment, stress and alcohol abuse have led to increased violence in the society at large.⁹¹ These factors also act indirectly to raise women’s vulnerability by encouraging more risk-taking behaviour, that is, more alcohol and drug abuse.⁹² Excessive

consumption of alcohol and other drugs has been noted as a factor in provoking aggressive and violent male behaviour towards wives and even children.

In many cultures, the Ondo inclusive, a woman's worth is always tied to her ability to be married and remain married. As a result of this, women are often encouraged to endure abusive relationships. In Ondo, a woman's place is with her husband. Divorced or separated women are not always held in high social regard compared with women who are married.⁹³ *Eulokojoko* is used to describe a woman who cannot stay married. According to the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, women accept family violence and violation of their basic human rights due to social prejudice and their low self-esteem. For instance, mothers who perpetuate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) believe that they are acting in the best interest of the child by adhering to traditions, not minding the implications of such action on the reproductive health of the child.⁹⁴ Perhaps, it could also be in an attempt to avoid the displeasure of some older family members that mothers succumb to pressure to have FGM for their child.

The consequences of violence against women or wife battery can be physical, economic and psychological, some with fatal outcomes. Physical injuries range from bruises and fractures to chronic disabilities such as partial or total loss of hearing and vision and burns may result in disfigurement. Violence during pregnancy can result in risk to the health of both the mother and the unborn foetus. In the worst cases, all these examples of domestic violence can result in the death of the woman. Battered women have a high incidence of stress and stress-related illnesses and very low self esteem,⁹⁵ not to talk of psychological and behavioural effects on the children. The children of battered women suffer immensely. In most cases, the children were present when their mothers were beaten. This could lead to increased risk for such emotional and behavioural problems such as anxiety, depression, poor school performance and low self esteem.⁹⁶

Discussion on domestic violence is of relevance to this study because research has indicated a relationship between a couple's level of education and incidence of family violence against women. Zheng reports that statistics from one Chinese city in 1993 reveals that of the 3,899 cases of family violence, 61.5 percent occurred between husband and wife and that very few of those with college (university) education were involved.⁹⁷ Adebayo Ajala in his own study of families in Ibadan Metropolis proposes that the level of a woman's education significantly

affects whether or not she would be a victim of family violence. The higher the level of a woman's education, the less likely she suffers family violence, as the marriage relationship is supported by a more egalitarian relationship that exists when the couples are well educated.⁹⁸ In the course of this essay, it has been discussed that increasing female enrolment and retention in school and the encouragement and opportunity of higher studies reduces the chance of early marriage. The likeliness is that schooling increases the age at which girls marry and also, they likely find spouses among school mates thus reducing the spousal age difference and the strength it gives male dominance. Marriage more or less now becomes a relationship of two equals rather than that between a dominant male and a much younger docile female. It has been observed that Western education accords the woman economic empowerment as she is better equipped to enter the labour market. This, to a large extent reduces male dominance and the wife's vulnerability to family violence. It follows naturally that the ability of the woman to contribute to family income increases the chance of decision making being a participatory exercise. This makes it less likely that she will be a victim of family violence.

There is also no doubt that Western education has posed an increasing challenge to cultural norms and attitudes about the status of women. This in a way is acting as catalyst in the reduction in cases of violence against women. As observed earlier, by native law and custom, a woman belonged to her husband for life. Even at his death, she still belonged to his family, to be inherited by a male member of his family. The cultural disregard separated or divorced women suffer also has been a factor that kept them in abusive relationships. Western education, and all its benefits, has made the women to become conscious of a new kind of freedom. Without doubt, the incidence of family violence is a joint function of, among other things, the couple's level of education, which invariably determines occupation, and spousal age difference. Reduction and even total eradication can be achieved if the fundamental problems of girls' enrolment and retention in schools are addressed. It is also important that affirmative action is taken to encourage women to attain higher level of education. In this respect, academic education should be combined with legal and human rights education. This will enable women break loose of inhibitive traditional philosophies and begin to see themselves in the right perspective.

Curriculum reform is also being suggested. Curricula that teach non-violence, conflict resolution, human rights and gender issues should be included in elementary and secondary

schools, universities, professional colleges and other training settings. Curriculum reform that works towards eliminating the gender stereotyping in schools are important steps in achieving gender equality.⁹⁹

There is also need for education that is focused on reviewing male behaviour and the development of new models of masculinity. Okeke observes that there are examples of male leadership trainings on gender violence in most parts of the world. He suggests that services that aim at changing violent behaviour should address associated issues of drug and alcohol problems. Men need to challenge other men to stop abusing women and to change the norms that encourage violence. This requires supports for men to act as healthy role models to younger men and the raising of boys in a non-violent climate to respect women.¹⁰⁰

It should be noted that the responsibility of eradicating or reducing family violence against women is not just that of the government, it involves communities and their leaders. There is need for social change, especially as regards gender role expectations. This is very essential in order to instill a deep-seated set of values that would be a foundation for responsible citizenship, irrespective of the sex of the individual. There is also the need for government agencies, non-governmental organisations and the media to embark on strong public education programmes whose aim should be the creation of awareness and instilling of values necessary for the building and sustenance of human rights culture within the society¹⁰¹

5.5 Fashion and Entertainment.

Omer –Cooper, Ayandele, et al, commenting on the missionary activities and the changes that accompanied them, especially through Western education and Christianity write:

conversion to Christianity necessarily involved weaning Africans away from... traditional social values... they preached... against such practices and institutions as ... traditional dances and modes of dressing. In return, they extolled the adoption by Africans of European ways of life, for instance, of European modes of dressing...¹⁰²

Majasan, however, observes that with the overwhelming invasion, the Yoruba have not completely succumbed to Western culture, but have had to adopt, under heavy pressure, a double attitude to several issues.¹⁰³ One of such issues is dressing. The Yoruba form of

dressing continues to be used, not only among the non-literates, but also among the literates, despite their adoption of European type. In corporate organizations, schools and government offices, native wears are allowed especially on Fridays. Women in the formal sector, most often use native wears after work on weekends and during occasions such as weddings, child-namings and burials.

Among the Ondo, the use of *Àso-òkè*, especially the “*Àlàári*”, “*Sánmíyán*” and “*Etù*”¹⁰⁴ have persisted despite Western education. *Àso-òkè* is a traditional hand woven occasional wear which is still being held in very high esteem among the Yoruba of today. It has been observed that the more educated Ondo women believe strongly in the use of *Àso-òkè* during ceremonies. The *Àlàári* is regarded as the most highly valued while the *Etù* remains very popular among the elites and elders. The importance attached to *Àso-òkè* is demonstrated when a married daughter, niece or sister gives birth to her first child. For the naming ceremony, along with other items presented to the mother is *Etù* or *Àlàári* outfit.¹⁰⁵ Western education has not changed this practice. During a marriage ceremony, the items that the groom is expected to buy for his intending wife include native wears, with bag, shoe and headgear among other things. *Etù*, *Àlàári* and *Sánmíyán* are always included on the list. Though the couple that desire Christian marriage may go to church in English attire, native wears (*bùbá* and *Ìro* for women, *Bùbá*, *sòkòtò* and *Agbádá* for men) are still being used for the traditional ceremonies. In fact, in the 1950s, 60s, and even in the contemporary times, it was and still not uncommon to see couples in native wears, with the bride carrying a bouquet, performing Christian wedding.¹⁰⁶ This is a typical example of continuity and change.

A trend that is of particular interest is the increasing use of trousers by women. In the traditional setting, it was regarded as an abomination for women to wear trousers. It was not merely frowned at, but Olufunke Iluyemi claims that it was thought to be dangerous to the well being of the society as it was capable of attracting the wrath of the gods, especially Sango, the god of thunder. She confirms this by the popular Ondo song

*A sipè ghun sango o,
Obièn en wò sòkòtò,
A sipè ghun Sàngo o,
Obièn en wò sòkòtò.*

We must placate Sango (god of thunder)
We must beware of its wrath
Women must not wear trousers
So as not to attract the wrath of the god of thunder¹⁰⁷



A white wedding in Traditional Attire. Note the bride holding a bunch of flowers. An example of continuity and change

Figure 12:



Alaii lo'aso (Alaari Olori Aso) Alaari, the lead cloth of the Ondo, both before and now

Figure 13:

Source: Order of Funeral Service of Late Mr. Amos Akinsola Otuyemi, 9th Jan. 2009

JDY Peel reports a similar belief at the first appearance at Ondo of the African agents wives wearing European costumes, which led some people to think that women so dressed “can create harm upon the inhabitants of the country”¹⁰⁸ (the particular costumes were not indicated). He cited C.N. Young’s Journal of 10th April, 1877 which points to the fact that Lisa’s wives were at first not easily persuaded that Mrs. Philips and Mrs. Young were actually women.¹⁰⁹ This shows the extent to which certain European wears were a puzzle to the Ondo during this period. Even late into the colonial period and during the years following independence, certain Western dressing was still unsettling to some people. A publication in *Iroyin Yoruba* in 1961 titled “Imoran Fun Awon Obirin” (Advice to women) attests to this:

“ *Nwon kò tilẹ̀ fẹ̀ ró aso mó. Èwù tínwón nwò pàápàá kò to omo ojò kan wò sórùn. Èése ...? Àṣà irú wo lèyí ...?* ”¹¹⁰

This can be translated thus: “they don’t even want to tie wrappers again. The dress they put on is too small even for a day old baby. What? ...What kind of culture is this ...?”

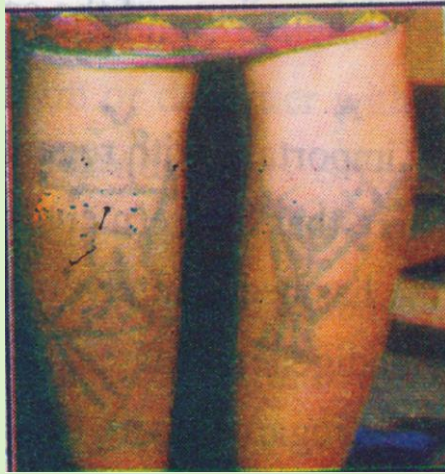
Today, however, the women have long discovered that wearing trousers or any European dress does not incur the wrath of Sango. Though in certain Christian circles, wearing of trousers by females is still being frowned at, but generally literate and some non-literate women put on trousers as a demonstration of liberty.¹¹¹ It is not uncommon to see women wear trousers to work, markets or even parties with their husbands. Mrs. V.A. Adepeko opines that women now have more freedom to wear clothes of their choice as there are not many restrictions on them as it was in the past.¹¹²

Ondo traditional fashion for women included the use of beads (*Iyùn, Àkún and Ìèghè*) alongside gold trinkets. They were worn around the neck by women in general, but titled women wore on their wrists and ankles. The *Iyùn* and *Àkún* were especially worn during traditional ceremonies.¹¹³ This custom has continued despite Western education and Christian influence. Traditional make-up in Ondo included the *Aayin*, a herbal paste used to darken the eyebrow and the facial marks called *pele*. Antimony known as *Tiròò* was a fine powder obtained from a bluish stone. This was applied to the lower lid to brighten the eyes. While *Tiròò* is still being used, the *Ááyin* has been replaced by the modern eyebrow pencil.¹¹⁴ *Oṣù* (Camwood) and *Làálì* were red and black pastes used to beautify the body. The *Oṣù* was for the body while the *Làálì* was used for the feet. With modern cosmetics, their use has greatly reduced. *Kolo* (Tattoos) was another important aspect of female Ondo Traditional make-up. Beautiful patterns were incised into the body either with needles or small sharp knives.

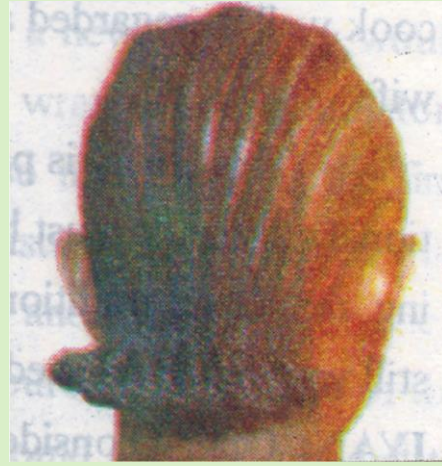
Herbal dyes were applied for permanent effect. Tattoo patterns included *Pélé*, *Ìbàdílayéwà* and so on. *Kolo* is however not so popular nowadays.¹¹⁵ Ondo tribal marks consist of two vertical marks cut into the cheeks of children during circumcision. This was regarded both for adornment and identification. Its application is dying out though it is still being practiced in some quarters.¹¹⁶

Perhaps, the most controversial in this discussion is the female circumcision now referred to as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). In traditional Ondo, female circumcision was mandatory because of the superstitious belief that women who were not circumcised would lose their children. It was believed that any child whose head touched the clitoris during birth would die.¹¹⁷ With Western education and Western-type health care, this has been severely criticized. Though FGM has reduced, it is still being practiced. Even, some educated folks still uphold the old belief, and even add that non-compliance could make a girl promiscuous.¹¹⁸ It must be noted that FGM is not peculiar to Ondo. Ayodele Atsenewa confirms that it is still being practiced in many parts of Nigeria.¹¹⁹ It has also been a subject of concern and debate in many quarters, especially among Non-Governmental Organisations and Women associations such as Women In Nigeria (WIN). The interest stems from the fact that FGM is not only superstitious, but is a health hazard and constitutes a violation of reproductive rights of women.¹²⁰

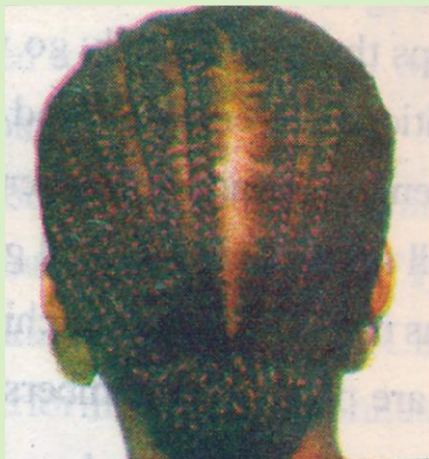
Hair-do was an important aspect of traditional women make-up in Ondo. As indicated earlier, a girl was taught to keep her hair tidy always as a woman's hair was her pride and a major indicator of her self-esteem and the level of her grooming. The major way of keeping hair was by plaiting it into beautiful styles such as *Lúdodo*, *Ìpàkó-elédè*, *Panumó* and so on. With the coming of Europeans, Western-type hair fashion was introduced. Today, women both literate and non-literate, not only in the urban, but also in the rural areas can be seen with permed hair, designed into different styles. The use of hair extensions has become prevalent. It is to be noted, however, that despite the Western influence, women still wear the traditional *didi*. A few of the available modified *didi* styles are shown in the pictures below. One significant impact of the introduction of Western type hair fashion is the occupational advantage it gives the women. Today, there are several modern hair-dressing salons owned and managed by women.



An Ondo Woman with the traditional
Tattoo (kolo) on her legs



Keyinsoko hair style



"LABAMOLE" hair style



LUDODO (Suku) hairstyle

Figure 14:

Source: Olufunke Iluyemi, Ondo Traditions and Culture (The Female Angle) Page 121

Ondo Traditional cuisine has been extensively discussed by Olufunke Iluyemi¹²¹. Relevant to this study is the fact that despite Western Education, the eating habits of the Ondo have not completely changed. The evidence of change can be seen in kitchen settings and the inclusion of modern items on the menu – rice, cereals and so on in Western educated homes but generally, the old menu has survived till the present. Traditional *iyán* (pounded yam), *àmàlà* (made from yam or plantain powder), *èbà* (made from cassava) and the traditional soups are still being widely eaten. *Iyan* still remains the lead food at occasions despite the presence of rice and other Western foods. It is still being wrapped with leaves and eaten with the traditional *Obelá* but at times, with vegetables (*èfò rìrò* or with *ègúsí*).

Considerable change can also be noticed in the area of entertainment. As noted earlier in traditional Ondo and other African societies, folklore and folktales occupy an important position both in entertainment and child – training. Generally, fables and folksongs are used to instill the values and norms of society in the subconscious of young children.¹²² Tales were told to children in the evenings at the end of the day's work. The tales provided a source of entertainment and character training. Today, parents are too busy to have time to tell tales to children. Besides, the television has taken the place of folktales in most homes. With rural electrification, a number of homes in the rural areas enjoy Western – type of entertainment. The result of this is that, rather than the neat entertainment and the character training folktales are noted for, children are exposed to odd things as they engage themselves viewing home video and television. Many of the Western educated Ondo women interviewed during this research identified the negative influence of home video and television as one of the major factors responsible for the increasing rate of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy.

A new phenomenon in today's Ondo is the development that is taking place in the Music industry. This is the emergence of female musicians. Mrs. Mercy Bademosi, popularly known as 'Ajidewe' emerged in 1986 as the first female indigenous traditional musician. Though she trained as a midwife and later as a teacher, her interest in music which started since 1969 could not be ignored. She eventually left nursing to found a band that specializes in cultural music in the Ondo dialect.¹²³ She attributes her success to the support she received from her husband but more importantly to the Western education she received which has in no small measure helped the quality of her music and her acceptance by both literate and non-literate people.

Mrs. Oyeseto Akinsete Akinwande, popularly known as ‘Seto’ is into gospel music – the first of its kind in the town. Her interest began from her primary school days when she led a cultural group. The flame was fanned when she had the opportunity to study music in the secondary school. A graduate of Business Administration and Management from the Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti. Her education has given her unquantifiable advantage over her non-illiterate counterparts.¹²⁴

In summary, this chapter discussed Western education and domestic transformation. The family was greatly impacted by the introduction of English system of marriage and the colonial policy of divorce. Also, though the status of women improved, Ondo society remained essentially patriarchal. Changes also occurred in the areas of dressing, foods, accommodation arrangement and entertainment. It emphasized that though noticeable changes occurred in these areas, in the real sense, it was more of a complex blend between the old and the new.



Mrs. Oyeseto Akinsete Akinwande



Mrs. Mercy Bademosi "Ajidewe"

Figure 15: Source: Field Collection

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124. Mrs. Oyeseto Akinsete Akinwande, 38 years. Interviewed at Ondo on 14/5/2012. Check Appendix V on page 207 for details of interview

CHAPTER SIX

WOMEN IN ONDO RELIGIOUS CHANGE

6.1 Christianity and Traditional Religion

Religion was one institution that was profoundly affected by the West. The religion of the Ondo, through the religious ceremonies that were performed, gave the people a sense of belonging. It was an institution that concerns the people's belief in divine involvement in their lives and in the universe. It was the domain of the supernatural. This essence of religion has been captured by Emile Durkheim's description:

The social group comes together in religious rituals, full of drama and reverence. Together its members express their faith in common values and beliefs. ... the integration of society is strengthened. Members ... understand the moral bonds which unite them.¹

Major festivals in Ondo include *Odun Oba, Ogun, Umugho or Odun Oramfe and Odun Moko*. There were also *Odun Ifa, Odun Osanyin and Odun Ifore*.² Some of these, especially the *Ogun*, was a focus of major public festival.³ Indeed, the introduction of the Christian religion brought with it Western education; and also meant in the long run the acceptance of foreign culture and a denial of traditional religious and cultural practices that were not in accord with the Christian faith. Julius Ugbelisho describes this as paving the way for cultural imperialism.⁴ This is not to assume that religious change in Ondo was a drastically total one. Rather, it was more of a syncretic phenomenon as many Ondo remained loyal to their traditional religious practices well into the 20th century. The Ondo Province Annual Report of 1941 shows "how strong the hold of these juju observations still is throughout the whole society in Ondo town"⁵. J.D.Y Peel observes that a desire to bear and successfully rear healthy children was a major reason women turn to the mission; this same need got them deeply locked into the Orisa cults⁶

The early Christian Missionaries had one very important motive in their contact with the people. This was the determination to transform the indigenous people's religious beliefs, that is, changing them from the worship of 'idols' to Christianity. The Christian religion was, indeed, a new force which the people of Ondo could not give a spontaneous adoption, but it sure crept into the marrow of the society. Webster observes that "rapid conversion began in

1911 and Ondo moved rapidly and steadily to become the most Christian of all Yoruba areas.⁷ Victor Osaro Edo has observed that Christianity brought tremendous changes in several aspects of peoples' social life.⁸ This is evident in the fact that Christianity brought new patterns of life and worship.⁹ Many men and women became Christians. Christianity as a whole offers a wide attraction to the women, as Fadipe has pointed out:

the idea of a heaven with golden streets, peopled by angels with wings and shining faces; of heavenly choir with golden harps and of a life of sensuous, if not innocent pleasure offers a very powerful inducement.¹⁰

One of the effects of the adoption of Christianity, is that the traditional religious institution suffered a great decline. Such gods as *Ogun, Babaji, Luaye, Sango, Esu and Oranfe* were dwarfed by the fast growing popularity of Christianity. The sacrifices that were offered to appease the gods were gradually set aside. There were instances of traditional gods' worshippers and custodians (who were sometimes women) burning their shrines and other worship items after conversion to Christianity. This greatly eroded the mysticism surrounding the gods. In the traditional setting, the society, through the gods, had a firm control over the thoughts and deeds of its members and regulated their everyday conduct. The fear of immediate retribution and the strong belief in the ability of the gods to detect criminals checked the peoples' actions. For example, it was generally believed that a married woman who became pregnant through adultery was going to face the wrath of the gods at child-birth. This kept many women from adultery. In other words, the sanction to morality which was the prerogative of the gods was gradually eroded by Christianity and Western education.

Twin murder was prevalent in Yoruba land before contact with the West.. Patrick Ogunshakin reports that in Ondo, the birth of twins brought death to the babies and anguish to the mother.¹¹ Peel also observes that it was considered an ominous event since multiple births, while appropriate for animals were viewed with abhorrence in human beings.¹² He referred to Phillips' Journal in which the Ondo were described as "violent and touchy on the subject of twin-killing ..."¹³ They held that a twin birth was an abomination in the land which if unexpiated would bring sterility to crops and people. The very significant aspect of this tradition is that the woman is held responsible for this unusual occurrence. Peel records that the Idoko who had the responsibility of appeasing the gods, removed the twins to be killed, took away the mother's wrapper, cooking utensils and fined her family.¹⁴ The man is

completely absolved. Nothing but the teaching of the missionary has caused this custom to cease.

Christianity gives a degree of recognition to the women, because of the popular belief that in Jesus Christ, there is no Jew or Greek, no male or female, neither bond nor free, but all are one before God. It must be understood, however, that in spite of the 'fulfillment' the women seem to have, they have limited opportunity for leadership except perhaps in the Cherubim and Seraphim churches. In the Anglican and Catholic and other mainline churches, which are the most prominent in Ondo, female leadership seems to be more pronounced in the female organizations within the churches rather than leading the entire congregation as their male counterparts do. Most Christian churches had women's or mother's association, or league, which met regularly and carried out membership duties, fund-raising and philanthropic activities. These associations also fulfill welfare and recreational¹⁵ and in some cases perform educational functions to their members. A few of these church organizations will be discussed here.

(a) **The Mothers' Union**

The Mothers' Union is an international Anglican Organization, which has branches in all Anglican Church Dioceses all over the world. The female members of the Anglican Church of Saint Stephen's Cathedral, Oke Aluko, Ondo are actively involved in this organization. The Mothers' Union was founded in 1876 in the United Kingdom by Mary Summer. The aim is to unite women in prayers and to instruct them on issues concerning marriage, religion, child upbringing¹⁶ and to promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children.¹⁷ Membership of this Union is open only to female members of the Church who are married according to the Church ordinance. Divorcees, single ladies and women who had been married to more than one man may not be admitted into this Union. This Union is of much help in that it runs day care centres for use by the members, though other people can also benefit from such centres. This association offers opportunities of improvement for women of lesser status. This is achieved through interactive lessons in domestic science given by professional members. At their meetings, knitting and baking were taught and a number of the less privileged women have been able to make a living out of these.¹⁸

(b) **The Women's Guild**

This is another Women's organization through which Anglican Christian Women come together and share things of common interest. It is usually called '*Egbe Aya Bishop*' in Ondo and other Dioceses in Yorubaland. Unlike the Mothers' Union, this association is open to all women who have gone through the baptismal rites. All the baptized women whether married, single, or divorced belong to this organization. The aims and ways it helps the members are similar to those of the Mothers' Union.

(c) **The Legion of Mary**

Legion of Mary is a Catholic Society. It is a society of men and women. The educational relevance is stated in the society's objective, which is to teach male and female members to aim at living spiritual life in the pattern of Mary. The members are advised to help the needy, as well as participate in other charitable activities.¹⁹

(d) In the Christ Apostolic Church, there are a number of societies exclusively for women. Among these is "*Egbe Imole*", i.e. "The Association of Light" symbolizing that they are the light of the world as Jesus commanded His disciples to be in Matthew Chapter 5 verses 14 – 16. There is the Egbe Obirin Rere (Good Women's Association).

These various church organizations help in one way or the other to help the smooth running of the church and in a way help the women have a sense of belonging. They see the organizations as avenues to gain new experiences which may not be available in their immediate home lives.

Apart from this, a number of them like the Ondo branch of the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) caters for rural women, especially at Igba (a village near Ondo) through adult literacy programmes and cookery lessons.²⁰ This is of great help to women of lower educational opportunity to improve their status. Though this association does not give direct financial assistance to members or to the rural women, the periodic monetary contributions are always used to help the church and for charitable purposes, for example the Ondo Branch of the Y.W.C.A caters for abandoned children.²¹ These associations also make efforts to remove causes of marital disunity by occasionally inviting the husbands of members to seminars and meetings where the problems of marriage and their solutions could be discussed. This is apart from the evangelical programmes they embark upon.

Of interest is the rise of female titles in some Christian churches. There is *Ìyá Ìjò*, the mother of the congregation, who with other officers coordinate the activities of the women. Madam

Christianah Olatunrinle was the *Ìyálóde* (First Lady, an equivalent position to *Ìyá Ìjo*) of Saint Stephen's Anglican Church, Ondo in the 1920s up till 1927 when she converted to the C & S Movement. Mrs. Florence Abimbade Adegbembo became the *Ìyá Ìjo* of St. Andrews Anglican Church, Idimoge, Ondo on the 23rd of February, 2008. In the CAC church, the *Agbèbí* serves as the midwife and usually resides in the mission house, organizes ante-natal sessions and handles deliveries. The leadership responsibilities serve as a way through which the women have been able to show their capabilities, which they were often thought to lack.

6.2 The *Odún Mokò*

The *Odún Mokò* is an example of the restrictive taboos that women were subjected to in the traditional Ondo. It is an annual festival performed usually in the month of November. In the olden days, women were kept in-doors for the seven days before the actual *Odún Mokò* day.²² On the *Odún Mokò* day, rituals were performed by the *Mokò* priests for the well-being of the whole kingdom. Women, except the *Lobun*, were not only prevented from this festival, it was forbidden for them to set eyes on the *Àwòrò* Priests or the *Mokò* deity. There is no doubt that Christianity and Western education have modified this festival. Patrick Ogunshakin reports that this custom was “tabooed on November 28, 1926, when a band of Christian women held a procession round the town during that year’s *Mokò* festival.”²³ Olufunke Iluyemi refers to today’s version of the festival as “much –watered down”²⁴ because women are no longer restricted for several days but rather, only on the *Mokò* day. In some quarters, especially in the Anglican Church, the *Mokò* day is now being observed as “Jesus day”. The women leave home very early, gather in the church to venerate their God and return home later in the evening.²⁵ This is a strong indication that the *Odún Mokò* is gradually losing the mysticism that surrounds it. This also extends to the worship of other gods. Also, with modernization and rising status of Ondo women, they are not only beginning to resist the annual restriction but some, because of religion and others because of job demands, defy the *Mokò* festival, for example, nurses, doctors and women police who are on duty do go to work. The courage to defy the taboo of *Odún Mokò* is, however, not generalized as majority of Ondo women still remain indoors on *Odún Mokò* day, no matter the level of their education or status.²⁶

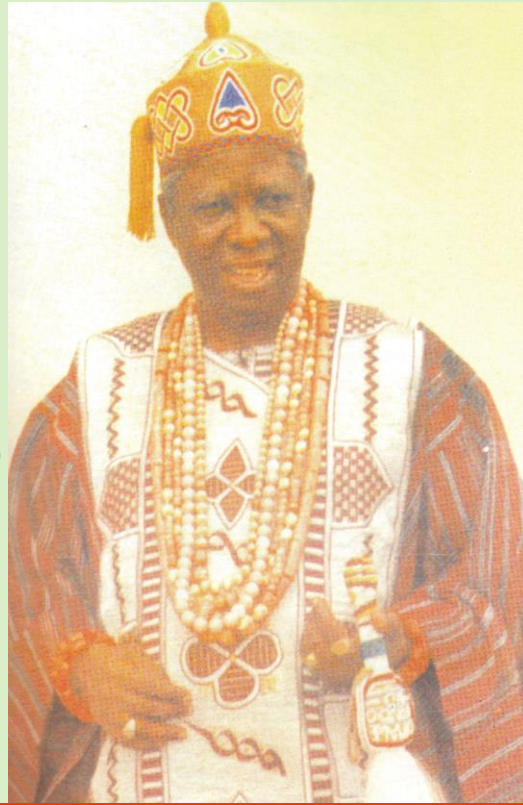
6.3 Some Traditional Institutions and Western Education

The discussion on Western education and traditional institutions that affect women begins with the *Lobun*. Though not a member of the palace, her role both in traditional and contemporary Ondo cannot be ignored. Traditionally, she was and still is the only person to crown the king. Western influence has not altered this. The *Lobun* and the *Osemawe* are still bound by tradition never to set eyes on each other after the coronation.²⁷ Though strange, this tradition still stands. The *Osemawe*, no matter his level of education, inherits all the queens from previous kings. Though we cannot confirm sexual relationship, but he is bound by tradition to take care of them and ensure that their well-being receives adequate attention.

Of particular interest to this study is the position of the first daughter of a new *Osemawe*. Between five to seven days before the coronation of an *Osemawe* elect, a special religious rite known as *Opopade* takes place. This ceremony is peculiar to Ondo and can be seen as an offshoot of the *Pupupu* saga. It is the symbolic coronation of the crown Princess who, owing to the *Pupupu* affair, can never aspire to the throne.²⁸ Olufunke Otuyemi describes the *Opopade* as a special traditional arrangement put in place to compensate the princess for not ascending the throne. This stems from Ondo people's firm resolve, after *Pupupu*, never again to give the rulership to a woman or her descendants.²⁹ The *Opopade* ceremony which usually lasts for seven days, is always accompanied with pomp and pageantry, during which the crown princess dances to traditionally appointed places in the town to offer prayers and perform required rites. The rites on each day consist of libation and traditional prayers offered for all by the princess, including a long peaceful reign for her father, the *Osemawe*, happiness and prosperity of his subjects and the entire royal family and indeed the whole of Ondo kingdom. Kolanuts and hot drinks, particularly aromatic schnapps are used for the libation and traditional prayers.³⁰

On each day the dancing starts and ends at the *Aghofin* i.e the women's wing of the palace. Beautifully dressed in traditional attire (*Iro, Ipele, buba* and beads) with designs of special chalk markings on her upper body and face, the princess is sent forth with dancing, prayers and *oriki* by the *Oloris* who are also on hand to welcome her back at the end of each day's dancing trip. On the final day which is the climax of the whole glorious show, the *Osamawe* himself is on hand to receive the princess from her dancing trip. The *Osamawe* and the *Olori* are seated on their royal chairs to receive the princess whose throne chair is placed in between those of her father and mother. In the presence of the well-wishers and invitees, with the royal drums never berating, the princess dances gracefully and finally kneels reverently before the *Osamawe*. Beaming with paternal pride, the *Osamawe* touches her head and

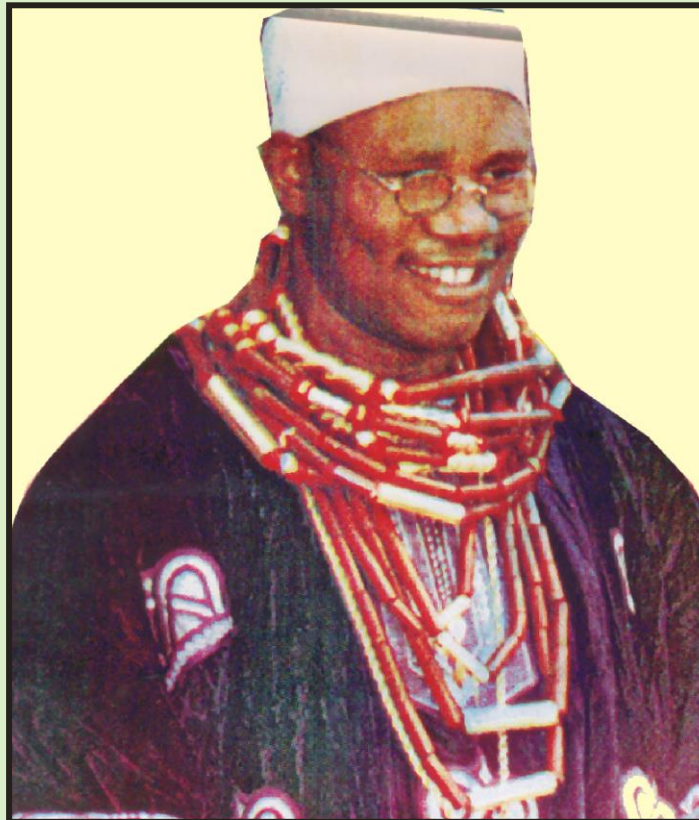
*Late Oba Dr. Festus Ibidapo
Adedisewo Adesanoye ((CRF)
Osungbedelola III
The Osemawe of Ondo
Kingdom (1992-2006)*



*Oba's First daughter, Princess Yewande Adesanoye (Now Mrs Yewande Fadoju)
performs the Opopade Ceremony in 1992*

Figure 16:

Source: Olufunke Iluyemi, Ondo Traditions and Culture (The Female Angle) PP xiv, 31



*His Royal Majesty Oba Dr. Victor Adebambo
Kiladejo (Jilo III) The Osemawe of Ondo Kingdom 2008-Date*

*Oba's First daughter,
Princess Adekemi Kiladejo
dressed for the Opopade
ceremony in 2008*



Figure 17:

*Source: Oba Dr. Kiladejo's Coronation Almanac. Produced by Chief
Kehinde Akinbinuade, Yesan of Ondo Land. 2008*

shoulder with *Irukere* and congratulates her on the successful completion of her “coronation ceremony”. The father and later, the mother pray for her happiness and success in life. The *Olopopade* then majestically sits on her throne. People dance in groups before the royal family, paying homage to them and offering prayers for their continued happiness.³¹ The princess, following this ceremony is forbidden by tradition from carrying any load on her head. The *Opopade* ceremony is of relevance to this study because first, it marks the perpetuation of patriarchy in Ondo *Obaship*. It establishes the crown princess acceptance of the fact that traditionally, she has been accorded her kingship due, and hence, she and other princesses of her parents, and their offsprings, accept their preclusion from the *Osemawe* stool.³² As noted in chapter one, this tradition appears to be the sealing of the eternal preclusion of females from the Ondo *Obaship*.

Second, Western education or Christianity has not removed this tradition. In 1992, for the coronation of Oba Festus Ibidapo Adesanoye (though a Chartered Accountant,) the *Opopade* was performed by Princess Yewande, a university under graduate at the time. For the coronation of Oba Dr. Victor Adesimbo Kiladejo (Jilo III) in December 2008, the *Opopade* was performed by Princess Adekemi.³³ This is despite the fact that Oba Kiladejo is a Medical Doctor, a product of the University of Ife now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.³⁴

However, the fact that the princess and their offsprings can never ascend the *Osamawe* throne is compensated for by the right to bear *Omooba or Otunba* and completely enjoy within the community all the rights of their royal birth. The *Otunbas* are the extended family members related to the throne through their mothers who are princesses. Their privileges include a special place of honour at the *Ugha* (the *Osamawe*'s court) and they do not pay obeisance to any chief. Ondo tradition reserves a whole hierarchy of distinct chieftancy titles to them, such as *Lotomoba, Lisagbon, Aogbo, Lotin among others*. Also, as part of the *Osamawe*'s installation rituals, *Oke Otunba* (their quatre) is one of the key points where the *Osamawe*-elect must call to receive prayers and pour liberations to his ancestors. The *Otunbas* can also aspire to the *Eghae*, the highest titles of the Ondo.³⁵

6.4 Western Education and Muslim Women In Ondo

It has been argued that Yorubaland was known to the Muslim world before the nineteenth century. Babs Fafunwa suggests seventeenth century. His claim is based on Ahmed Baba, a Timbuctu Muslim Scholar's writing in which Yorubaland is described as a country where “unbelief predominates and Islam is rarely found.”³⁶ This claim is strengthened by the fact

that Ahmed Baba died in 1627.³⁷ Samuel Johnson, however, opines that Islam came to Yorubaland towards the close of the eighteenth century.³⁸ As a result of Fulani domination during the first quarter of the 19th century and of the policy of conquest adopted in the interest of the faith, whole communities were Islamized of which the Yoruba capital, Oyo, was one.³⁹ From here, the religion spread to other parts of Yorubaland. Patrick Ogunshakin's report indicates that Islam came to Ondo in 1888 when it was first noticed along Okesida, among Hausa people who had migrated into the town. This implies that Christianity predates Islam in Ondo. The record shows that the first Central Mosque was built by the late Alhaji Mohammed Alimi who had migrated from Lagos on missionary work that same year. The piece of land on which the Mosque was built was granted by *Oba Jilo*.⁴⁰ A few notable natives were recorded to have accepted Islam, such as, Pa Bello Mimiko, Balogun Rufai Akinyosoye, Pa Yesufu Akinnibosun and a host of others.⁴¹ Webster's report indicates that since conversion to Christianity started in the early 20th Century in Ondo, conversion to Islam became very negligible.⁴² Unlike the heavily Islamized northern part of Yorubaland, especially around Oyo and Ilorin, only a minority of Ondo indigenes are Muslims.

One characteristic of Islam is that wherever it spread to, the rudimentary knowledge of the Quran, the Hadith and the Sharia began to be taught to the followers of the religion.⁴³ The primary purpose of Islamic education is to facilitate the growth of Islam in the community.⁴⁴ With particular regard to children, it aims "at familiarizing them with social manners from very early years and habituating them to some important educational principles such as eating, drinking, greeting, asking permission, conversation, justice..."⁴⁵ But more importantly, "to link the child, since he starts to realize, to the principles of faith and teach him the pillars of Islam and the foundations of sharing."⁴⁶

It is important to note that there is room for secular education as observed in the following:

As for imitating non-Muslims in what may benefit the Muslim Community scientifically and promote it economically and culturally, such as benefitting from the sciences of medicine, engineering, physics and secrets of atom, up-to-date means of warfare and the likes, such imitation is unanimously permissible⁴⁷

What is the position of women and their share in such education? In general terms, a number of scholars have tried to define the position of women in Islam. Ifeyinwa Iweriebor asserts

that Islam does not regard women as persons. She based her arguments on such quotations as “men are superior to women on account of the qualities in which God has given them pre-eminence.”⁴⁸ This argument has come under criticism. Endurance Keyamo argues that Islam supports the education of women and accords them equality with Men.⁴⁹ He supports his arguments with quotations like, “... I shall not lose sight of the labour of any of you who labours (in my way), be it man or woman...”⁵⁰ Abd-Allah Nasih Ulwan also argues that “women are equal to men in legal capacities, that is, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage... and as regards reward in the hereafter.”⁵¹ He supports his argument with quotations like: I do not waste the deed of any doer among you, any male or female- the one of you is as the other.”⁵²

Despite these arguments, however, it is of common knowledge that in most Muslim societies, using Northern Nigeria as example, women were not treated as men, they are not allowed to pray in the Mosques except the very elderly and children. After marriage, they were and in some cases still are to be confined in Purdah.⁵³ In Moslem marriage, the woman completely lacks independence. She lacks freedom of movement and all her contact with the outside world is subject to her husband’s approval.⁵⁴ While the man is allowed by the *Koran* to marry four legitimate wives and have an indefinite number of concubines, the woman must remain faithful to her husband.⁵⁵ The Purdah, and the attendant movement restriction, causes a situation of economic dependence which reinforces the husbands’ authority over the wives. Under the Purdah system, women usually occupy themselves with the care of infants, preparation of food and other activities that will not take them out of the compound. Women are generally considered as dependents, rather than as economic partners of the husbands and are subject to his personal authority.

Marjorie Mckintosh however, observed that Islam eliminated most of the roles previously played by women in Yoruba religious practices. Women were not allowed to lead Muslim congregation and if they were allowed to pray in the mosque, they were normally seated in separate areas where they could not be seen by men.⁵⁶ Their involvement in leadership responsibilities is limited especially where such organization involves both sexes. Islam does not give a woman leadership over men. Though Muslim women can lead social organizations like schools, hospitals etc. they lack religious backing to lead men and women.⁵⁷

Talking specifically about Ondo, the situation is a bit different. First, only a negligible proportion of Ondo people are Muslims. The Purdah system has not been common except among immigrants from Oyo, Iwo, Iseyin or some other parts of Northern Yoruba. This is not to say, however, that Islam did not register its presence. Apart from mosques which dotted the town, the Ansar-Ud-Deen Primary School, Iyemaja Street, Ondo was established in 1942⁵⁸ to cater for educational needs of Muslim children whose parents were not comfortable with influence of Christian mission schools. Ansar-Ud-Deen Secondary School Ondo was established in September 1980 with 201⁵⁹ students. Today, the two schools have been taken over by the Ondo State Government. The Principal, Mrs F.O. Olusegun (J.P.)⁶⁰ explained that the Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) is like any other optional subject. The girls wear caps instead of *Hijab*.⁶¹ Being a government school, Islamic culture is not imposed on the students and the teachers.

With the introduction of Western education, the growing necessity for some formal education of women and girls conflicted with certain deeply-rooted social attitudes. Western education was regarded as a threat to Muslim values; it would prevent girls from early marriage, which had been the usual practice. There was also the fear that Western education would jeopardize the Islamic religion. Though opposition to the education of girls appears to be diminishing, there are still serious challenges facing the emancipation of women in Northern Nigeria. First, the education of girls and women have not removed their status of inferiority *vis-à-vis* their husbands. In parts of Northern Nigeria, young girls are still being withdrawn from school by parents to be married.⁶² There was also the rampant practice of the girl-child being used as a guide for the blind and other forms of handicapped beggars. The point of emphasis here is not the religious backing for what they do, but that these girls are being denied the opportunity to obtain education.⁶³ Efforts are being made by the various State Governments in Northern Nigeria to ensure that school-aged girls are in school.⁶⁴ No doubt, a lot still needs to be done.

Having overcome the initial suspicion to Western education, the changing attitude to Western education has impacted greatly on Muslim women. Those who took advantage of it have had opportunity to enjoy its benefits Prof (Mrs.) Oyeneyin Maryam, a retired pharmacist, Alhaja K. Junaid, a retired Matron, General Hospital, Ondo and Alhaja Amusat Olufunke, former Education Secretary, Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) are a few examples.⁶⁵ Compared to their Christian counterparts however, the percentage of educated Muslim women is still very low. Majorie Mckintosh cited a newspaper article in 1953 which

advocated the formation of more clubs for Muslim girls and women as a means of remedying the backwardness that stemmed from illiteracy or semi-literacy among this faith.⁶⁶

NASFAT (NASIULLAHI Al-Fathri society of Nigeria and the Ansar-udeen society of Nigeria) are two of the major Islamic societies of Nigeria. They have chapters in Ondo. The central bodies of these organizations are controlled by men alone. Within these organization, however, women have their own executive council which coordinate the activities of women.⁶⁷ There are entirely female Muslim organizations. FOMWAN (Federation of Muslim Women Organizations of Nigeria) focuses on improving the socio-economic status of women, youths and children. The MALYUBAH is an organization of special Muslim women (women in purdah). These organizations are entirely controlled by women.⁶⁸ The *Alasalaatu* Organization was initially a name given to women section in every Islamic organization. It later came to be used for men and women who devote themselves for invocation of peace and blessing. This is through special prayer that holds every 8 days for the Prophet, society, men and women of Islamic personalities. The central body is now controlled by men but women have their own wing.⁶⁹

In conclusion, this chapter focused on the interaction between Christianity and traditional religion on one side, Christianity and Islam on the other and how these impacted on the women. With the growing influence of Christianity, the patronage of traditional gods (some of which the custodians were women) suffered a decline. The initial suspicion of Muslims to Western ideas gradually crumbled and many Muslim women came to enjoy the ideas of Western education. The emergence of Christian and Muslim female organizations and some of their activities were also discussed.

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58. Ansar-Ud-Deen Primary School, Iyemaja St., Ondo, Log Book, p. 1
59. Ansar-Ud-Deen Secondary School, Ondo, Log Book. p. 1. Also see: Ansar-Ud-Deen Secondary School, Ondo, Admission Register. Vol I
60. Mrs. F.O. Olusegun (J.P). Interviewed on 14th May, 2009. She was the Principal of Methodist Grammar School, Ondo at the time of Researcher's visit in June 2007.
61. A kind of head cover, worn by muslim women.
62. See *The Guardian*, Thursday, February 15, 1996. p. 23
63. Endurance Keyamo. *Girl-Child Education in Northern Nigeria*. p.41
64. See Niger State, GEP 2 Newsletter, *A Quarterly Newsletter of the Girls' Education Project*, First Edition Vol. 1, Issue 1, Jan-March 2009. See also Borno GEP Newsletter, *A Bi-Annual Magazine of the Girl Education Project*. Vol. No. 2, June 2008
65. Katayeyanyue Kamaldeen Adams 30⁺. Interviewed at AUD Secondary School, Ondo. 18th May, 2012.
66. *Daily Times*. 2 May, 1953. p. 7 cited in Majorie Mckintosh. *Yoruba Women, Work and Social Change*. p. 197.
67. Alhaja Okewole Bilikisu, 50⁺. Interviewed at Ondo on 18th May, 2012.
68. Alhaja Mojibat Alimi, 50⁺. Interviewed at AUD Secondary School, Ondo on 18th May, 2012.
69. Alhaja Mojibat Alimi.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

7.1 Women's Civic Associations and Sororities

There is a long history of women's groups and organizations based on mutual assistance in activities, which required collective effort in times of sickness, birth, death, marriage, for thatching huts, weeding, planting and harvesting.¹ Women-organizations appear to be a prominent feature of virtually all African societies. Their existence predates the colonial period. This section deals with some of the women's associations in Ondo both traditional and modern, their roles and the changes that have occurred in them as a result of Western education.

Indigenous Voluntary and Religious Organisations.

It is a bit difficult to gather information about the structure and operation of some of the indigenous organizations. This is because many of them are no longer functioning (as they have been overshadowed by the modern ones.) The indigenous voluntary organizations were usually in the form of *Egbe*, *Otu* and *Esusu*. The *Otu* (age grade) was the association of boys and girls or men and women who belonged to the same age. It was a series of grade through which an individual passed from birth to the time when he/she became an elder in the town.² The *Otu* and its functions have been discussed in chapter two. The *Esusu* can be regarded as an association of a number of people. Unlike the *Otu*, it is not age – based. The main purpose was the collection of monetary contributions, which were usually saved for a fixed period of time usually between sixteen days to one year.³ At the end of the fixed period, the total money would be distributed to members according to their contributions. The *Esusu* was of great advantage to the members as they could obtain loans from the association to establish new business or expand existing ones. Loans could also be obtained for other personal purposes. The constant social intercourse which characterised these associations has been a means through which the individual got socialized into the society. By their regular meetings to discuss the *Esusu* credit system, how they could arrange to help themselves and for ordinary feasting, the associations helped to “smoothen rough edges, create confidence in the individual and so develop his/her personality.”⁴ The *Egbe* was an association of a number of men and women who came together for mutual help and assistance, but more especially for social activities. The *Egbe* was for mutual assistance to members and there were obligations,

which members must fulfill to one another. As part of the operation of the *Egbe*, the members were expected to make weekly, bi-monthly or monthly contribution of cash. This could take various forms. One was at the admission of new members who were usually made to pay membership fees as fixed by the Executive Committee (*Asoju*), which usually comprised the *Iya Egbe* (The President), *Akapo* (The Treasurer) and a few others as chosen by the members of the *Egbe*. Another way of raising funds was through fines on members who contravened the rules and regulations of the *Egbe*. The third was through a periodic contribution of money according to the ability of the members. At the end of the period, usually a year, the total collection would be shared among the members according to their contributions.

The importance of the *Egbe* lay in the fact that members could raise loans to establish business or expand existing ones. Through the wealth so acquired, the women have been able to bring about a change in their status. Failure to pay the loan, when due, was not taken lightly by other members. Any member who failed to pay her loan risked expulsion from the *Egbe*. The other members could also gather and proceed to her house chanting abusive songs. To avoid this embarrassment, any member who took a loan usually ensured prompt payment.⁵

In the old Ondo, there were the associations of *Orisa*. These associations comprised of both male and female *Orisa* worshippers. The functions of the associations included calling upon the *Orisa* on behalf of the community in such critical occasions as war, drought, pestilence, famine, and so on. They also ensured the regularity of the traditional festivals and the continuity of the rituals. Their political functions included calling upon the *Orisa* before the selection of a new king or chief. The *Ifa* worshippers were particularly important in this. They often exerted political influence on the rulers and the chiefs through prophecies and foretelling the future. During the annual *Ogun* festival, they could be seen dancing with the symbol of their *Orisa*. People usually consulted them for help as they were believed to possess great knowledge of traditional medicine.

Market Women Associations

One important feature of Ondo economy in the pre-colonial period was that women dominated the markets. Markets and market activities were generally regarded as predominantly women affairs. There was a social atmosphere in the market, which was both a 'club house' and a place of business for the women. Attending a market has been described

as a way of life among Yoruba women and petty trading as being not only a commercial activity, but also a pleasure, a necessity, a skill and the essence of social life.⁶ Western education has not removed this. Despite the fact that a large number of Ondo women have acquired Western education, quite a number still engaged in trading. Even Teachers, Nurses, Office workers, educated women engaged in trading in one way or the other, though not all have stalls in the market.

Occupational association, in its broad sense, entails more than market associations. It embodies the associations of all those who practice the same crafts or engage in the same trade commodities, who organize into separate guilds according to their crafts and trade.⁷ There are associations of carpenters, hunters, blacksmiths, drivers, tailors, e.t.c. This section of the essay will however deal with the association of market women. The market women association actually refers to a number of women coming together to form different groups, according to the commodities they trade in. There are associations of fish, textile, grains, pepper, chickens, yams, plantain sellers and a number of others. The arrangement of the market tells more about the organization of these associations. There is a separate section for each commodity and the women take shops or stalls according to the commodity they sell. It is common for the Ondo women to say “*Egbe L’aja*” or “*Egbe L’usu*” as the case may be, which literally means the association of fish and yam sellers respectively. Nobody can be allowed to set up in any trade except she belongs to one of these associations. This, however, applies more to the women in the township as a number of women in the country side engage in trading activities without necessarily belonging to any of these associations.

It should be made clear that there is no restriction placed upon entry into these associations. All the intending member needs to do is make her intention known to the leader of the association (*Iya Egbe*) to which she wants to belong. The association will make her to pay entrance fee, which could be in form of kolanuts and drinks that are consumed by the members or it could be in form of money, depending on the laid down rule of the association.

The market association has been found to help in uplifting the economic status of women down the ages. This is because of the financial assistance it renders to its members. In fact, one of the main functions of the associations is the provision of capital to members to expand their businesses. They derive their capital from contributions of members, levies and fines. The educated and semi-literate ones among them usually keep a record of their contributions.

Most often, interests are charged on the loans given to members. This helps to increase the financial base of the associations. The relevance of this lies in the fact that women can be empowered enough to contribute to the education of their children, especially the girls. The market associations usually make occasional visits to the *Lobun*, presenting her with gifts and discussing the general affairs of the market with her. The *Lobun* is traditionally regarded as the head of markets, as the name implies 'Obun' being the Ondo name for markets.⁸ When new markets are to be established she takes a leading role (usually assisted by the *Aogbo* and *Lisa Lobun*) in the associated rituals. Apart from this, in times of discontent among the market women, the *Lobun's* council always provides a forum of making the grievances known to the authority concerned. If the authority should remain adamant, there are forms of protests the women could embark upon to show their dissatisfaction. One of this is that, the market women under the leadership of the *Lobun* and her council of chiefs can boycott the markets.⁹ They can also show dissatisfaction at unfavourable government policies for example, the market women are reported to have actively participated in the protest against the District Officer's decision of 1925 that the reigning *Osemawe* should be exiled. Though the king *Oba Jisomosun II*, was believed to have been eventually exiled to Ile-Ife,¹⁰ there are some points to note in the reaction of the market women to the event mentioned above. The first is the participation of the market women in political matters, especially the use of their economic power to demonstrate against unfavourable government policies. The second is that the organization of these various market associations under the *Lobun* and her council of chiefs ensured their unanimity in mobilizing female opinion. It should also be noted that this traditional role of the *Lobun* and the female chiefs has persisted to the present.

This type of mobilisation of women during this period is not limited to Ondo. A similar and much more forceful political action and organization took place in Abeokuta, under the leadership of Mrs. Oluwafunmilayo Ransome-Kuti. Abeokuta was absorbed into the Indirect Rule administration following the amalgamation in 1914 of the protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria. As part of the new regime, direct taxation (poll tax) was introduced to Abeokuta in 1917 to replace tribute and forced labour. The excesses of the tax assessors were high. Girls as young as 15 years were taxed; wives were taxed separately from their husbands. This coupled with excessive enforcement of sanitary regulations led to major disturbances in Egbaland in 1918.¹¹ The women in Egbaland saw themselves as being deprived relative to women in other parts of Nigeria who did not have to pay tax. There were serious grievances over the brutal collection process. Women were often stripped naked by

the tax collectors to see whether they were old enough to pay tax. This was resented as an insult to womanhood. There were also grievances over price-control and the failure of the Sole National Administration (SNA) to provide welfare, medical and educational facilities for women and their children, that were commensurate with the taxes they paid. Under the auspices of the Abeokuta Ladies Club (ALC), later Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU), Egba women under the leadership of Mrs. Kuti continued to agitate against government policies that were considered unfavourable to women. As tax payers, the AWU demanded representation on the Egba Native Administration (ENA) council and all other committees that were concerned with Egba affairs.¹² The AWU employed the use of mass demonstrations, petitions, propaganda, legal processes and the press. Prolonged and determined opposition was mounted on the Alake and the SNA system. By 1949, with the support of the Ogboni and the Majeobaje society, AWU's main objectives had been achieved: the tax rate on women had been abolished, the Alake (Ademola) had abdicated, the SNA had been replaced by the Egba Central Council (ECC) and women were given representation in the new government. The council comprised thirteen ex-officio chiefs, sixty-nine members (males) and four women. Despite that this was not equal to men, it was at least a departure from the colonial policies of excluding women.¹³

Modern Voluntary and Social Organisations.

There are several modern voluntary and social organizations in Ondo. Only a few of them will be discussed in this essay. Before going into specific organizations, it is important to mention that these modern social organizations are different from the indigenous voluntary organizations discussed earlier in that there is greater ostentation in their activities. They are more of societies of friends and there is a lot of conviviality in their activities. A typical example of this is the Ekimogun Ladies Progressive Society. It is non-political, non-religious but purely social and philanthropic. It is based in Ondo town and all its members are educated.¹⁴ The members meet once in a month, and monthly contributions are made by members, unlike in the traditional voluntary organizations where the money contributed is used to help the members set up businesses through loans, the Ekimogun Ladies Progressive Society uses their funds for philanthropic purposes.

Another example of the voluntary social associations among Ondo women is the Fagmos Club. Unlike the Ekimogun Ladies Progressive Society, Fagmos Club is based in Lagos. It is exclusively for Ondo women, majority of who had been friends from youth. All the members

are educated: in fact, over 80% are University graduates. Founded in 1978, the club got its name from the initials of the founding members put together. The aim of the club is to promote the culture of, and progress in Ondo town and Ondo state as a whole. This they tried to achieve by yearly donation of drugs and other medical equipments to the maternity ward of the Ondo General Hospital. The members also donate in cash and kind to motherless and old peoples' homes. Meetings of members usually hold once in a month during which contributions are made. The money is, however, not loaned to members as in the indigenous voluntary organizations. Meetings are always accompanied with great ostentation including feasting, drinking and dancing and husbands are not usually invited except it is a special occasion like an anniversary day. These meetings, however, are not only occasions for feasting as the members often invite professional caterers to teach them domestic science. Unfortunately, they have not been able to impact the rural women directly as many of them are heavily engaged in their businesses. The club is only open to women who are married and living with their husbands. There is no room for single ladies or divorcees. The association makes efforts to help members in family affairs and any member that is troublesome in the house risks expulsion from the club.¹⁵

There is also the Young Ladies Circle of Ondo Kingdom.¹⁶ It was established in 1978 with twelve members. The number has steadily increased over the years. The focus is to promote unity and help one another. During their meetings, the members who are in the medical line from time to time give health talks on feeding habits, stress management and other health – related issues. They also receive training on how to be good wives and mothers. Like the Fagmos Club, all members must be stably married, educated and exhibit high degree of discipline. The Ladies Social Circle¹⁷ is another voluntary association based in Ondo. Founded in 1975, its focus is togetherness, unity and progress. Its activities include helping members financially through the *Ajo*, (Cooperative arrangement) It is opened to women who are Ondo indigenes or non-indigenes married to Ondo men. They organize talks and seminars on child-training and other family-related issues.

La Finesse Club of Ondo is a social organisation established in 1986. Mrs Kehinde Awosika is the secretary.¹⁸ The aim of the club is to bring women together for development. They meet



Princess (Mrs) Kehinde
Oriade Awosika

**Principal, Jubilee Community Grammar
School, Ondo. May 2005-Date(13th June, 2009)
and Secretary, La Finesse Club, Ondo.**

Figure 18:
Source: Jubilee Community Grammar School, 50th Anniversary (1956-2006) Brochure. P.10

once a month. They make monetary contributions along the *Esusu* pattern. They raise funds with which they make donations to schools and hospitals. They are also concerned about the empowerment of their members. The minimum educational qualification for admission into this club is University degree. All forms of misconduct like adultery, fighting, and so on, attract strict discipline. The bedrock is education as most members are Principals, Bankers or other professionals.¹⁹ These modern voluntary organizations are taken as case studies to show how Ondo women have been able to get themselves mobilized through the formation of voluntary organizations. Through these organizations, the women are able to have a sense of belonging and fulfillment. The sense of inferiority is completely removed as the members see themselves as friends and 'sisters', irrespective of their different vocations. Apart from this, through their activities, they contribute to the progress and development of the Ondo community.

It is necessary to highlight the impact of the new forces of social change on these various organizations. As noted earlier in chapter two, there are some that are purely indigenous and traditional. Examples of these are the *Esusu*, *Otu*, *Egbe*, the associations of the *Orisa* worshippers and the market women. There is no doubt that Western education and Christianity have greatly affected the culture and operations of these associations. In the pre-colonial and Western education times, the *Otu* (age-grade system), apart from carrying out community works and being a unifying factor was also an agency of traditional education. It was one of the social institutions whose educational activities helped the individuals to acquire behaviour patterns necessary for effective citizenship within the community. However, the *Otu*, for no clear reason has completely become extinct, as associations tend to be determined by relationships in schools and later by professions. School mates tend to relate together, thus gradually replacing the age-grade arrangements. Of course, the society lost the relevance of the system. Even the traditional *Egbe* has given way to the modern ones. The market associations, however, have strongly survived with some modifications. The use of 'President' and 'Treasurer' instead of the traditional *Iya Egbe or Alaga* and *Akapo* reflects the impact of Western education. In fact, the office of the Secretary, the use of membership, contribution cards and registers by these organizations are reflections of the changes brought about by Western education.

In the pre-colonial period, the treasurer always ran into difficulty because of lack of efficient banking system. She either risked keeping the money with her at home or went into the clumsy system of digging a hole in the ground to keep the money. With the introduction of British rule, however, came a more sophisticated and convenient banking system. It is not uncommon these days to see the associations operating bank accounts with two or three members of the association as signatories. Another area of note is the payment of membership fees by intending members. Before the colonial period, membership fees consisted mainly of kolanuts and drinks usually consumed by the members but nowadays, the associations prefer this to be in cash, a direct result of the prevalence of money economy. This is probably to increase the capital base of the associations. Even the use of the associations to raise capital can be seen as a direct result of the wider economic opportunities opening up during the colonial and post-colonial periods. The *Otu* probably went out of existence because it could not meet up to the new economic demands.

The adoption and modification of the *Esusu* system in form of raising loan can be said to be a way of making use of an old system to meet current economic demands. A typical example of this is the Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN) which was founded by Mrs. Bisi Ogunleye in 1982, as an NGO.²⁰ Though not Ondo based, COWAN is being mentioned here because it represents an adaptation of “a traditional Funds through the *Esusu* to support the technical and credit need of its members.”²¹ As in the traditional savings method, members are encouraged to save for the purpose of ensuring; first that women (members) have the financial capacity to pay their children’s school fees through targeted savings (Educational Savings Schemes), Second, there is also the healthcare savings for medical emergencies for participating members. COWAN also provides credit facilities for women especially, rural poor women, involved in agricultural activities to enable them procure simple agricultural implements like hoes, knives, hiring of tractors and purchase of fertilizers. Credit facilities are also extended to people involved in cottage industries such as oil-palm extraction, palm-kernel cracking oil presses. COWAN is particularly of interest here because it uses the *Esusu* system of loans, to meet its members needs. This is a typical example of the adaptation of old systems to meet modern needs. COWAN is being presented here as an ideal to which Ondo modern women organisations could aspire. It can be observed that, apart from donations made to organisations by some of these clubs, their meetings are almost always characterised

by feasting and conviviality. Like COWAN, the funds at their disposal can be transformed to economic use, reaching women of different backgrounds for development.

The continuing development of Christianity led to a drastic decline in the spiritual influence of the *Orisa* worshippers. As more people became Christians, the loyalty to them reduced. One of the major effects of colonial rule, missionary activities and Western education is the introduction of European Healthcare delivery system, evident in the establishment of hospitals, maternity and health centres. At the initial stage, T.G.O. Gbadamosi and J.F Ade-Ajayi asserts that for a long time “the confidence of the indigenous population still remained in the traditional herbalists and diviners... it is in fairly recent times that the local population began to rely to a noticeable degree on the medical competence of the hospitals.”²² The increasing reliance on hospitals means decreasing patronage of the traditional healers and diviners. This has however, been contested as seen in Chapter four.

It can, to a degree, be said that the emergence of the modern voluntary and social organizations are a direct result of Western education. As noted in the discussion on the Fagmos club, virtually all the members are old school mates. All the members of the Ekimogun Ladies Progressive Society are Western educated women. La Finnesse Club of Ondo as a principle does not admit anyone with less than Bachelor’s degree. It can rightly be said that education is a force of mobilization among the educated women to form progressive societies or clubs. We also see Christianity exerting influence on the modern societies, for example, Fagmos’ emphasis on the stability of marriage shown in the admission of women who are stably married and non-admittance of divorcees can be taken as a Christian virtue being incorporated into this organization. The formation of women into different church organizations is also a direct response to the new forces of change. This has been discussed in Chapter six.

7.2 Women and Modern Politics

This section examines the extent to which the acquisition of Western education affected female participation in politics. It has already been revealed in chapter two that since after *Pupupu*, women have generally become passive in traditional politics. Though there were female chiefs, decision making with regards to governance rested on the *Osemawe* and his

council of chiefs. With the establishment of European Colonial rule, women became more alienated since the Colonial Administrators considered women unsuitable for the rigors of public life. After 1900, when the machinery of colonial administration was set up in Southern Nigeria, Nina Mba observed that it was as though women had been rendered invisible to the exclusively male Colonial Administrators.²³ Following the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914, the new Ondo Province (which comprises Ekiti, Ondo and Okitipupa Divisions) was born. It was noted in chapter three that the *Osemawe* and his chiefs were able to find a place in the colonial government. The *Osemawe* was appointed Native Authority of Ondo “sub district”²⁴ He was President of the Native Court, while the other *Iwarefa* chiefs were the principal, but not the only, members of the *Osemawe’s* council.²⁵ There is no mention of female participation. The Executive meetings, which usually held in the palace every eight days did not have women representative except when the business to be discussed was the appointment of a new *Osemawe*.²⁶ The explanation for this is not farfetched.

Apart from the fact that the Colonial Administrators did not believe in women as public figures, there was also the problem of educational handicap. Bolanle Awe views Western education as an important factor for upward mobility in the colonial society. In a situation where little attention was paid to the education of women, women could not be appointed to any important position.²⁷ It can be recalled that at the inception of Western education in Ondo, very few girls went to school, and until 1954 when Saint Louis Girls Secondary School was established by the Catholic Mission, there was no opportunity for secondary education for girls. The boys had been enjoying this since 1919 when Ondo Boys High School, Ondo was established. The implication was that the boys were educationally advantaged to take up jobs, either as teachers or clerks in the colonial government. More or less, this apparent disparity in education came to justify and confirm male superiority in the politics of the time.

The events of 1950s and 1960s pointed to the apparent concern about women’s education and participation in development generally. With the establishment of two girls’ schools of college standard and a number of co-educational secondary schools, more girls went to school and even went beyond the secondary school level. Despite the increasing educational opportunities, however, there has not been corresponding increase in political participation. The Action Group (AG) which was the dominant political party in Western Nigeria has been

described as an essentially cadre party controlled by a group of Yoruba elite,²⁸ with no cut-out provision for political career advancement for women. Generally women were not in the fore front in political matters. In Ondo Province of the 1950s', women most often did not solicit support for themselves. Nina Mba observes that there were no constitutional provisions for women representation in the various organs of the party and very few women ever succeeded in reaching the decision-making bodies. Only at the constituency level could it be said that women had any real representation."²⁹ Ondo probably was not one of the few areas. The totality of women participation in party politics can be seen only in their activities as supporters and campaigners for contestants (who were usually males) as the AG to which majority of them belonged did not make provision for elective positions for women.³⁰

Women's direct participation in governance in Ondo did not begin until after 1960 when the new government realized that the women were apathetic about political participation. Then the idea of co-opting females as members of some committees was considered. This gave the opportunity to a few women, like Chief Mrs Eburn Fadashe and Mrs Adeyemi, who served in the Education Committee between 1960 and 1963.³¹ A handful of other women have also been involved. The Late Mrs. Janet Aderotoye served in the Ondo State House of Assembly (1979-1983), Chief Mrs Olufunke Iluyemi was Commissioner for Education (1984-1985) and Commissioner for Commerce and Industries (1985-1987).³² Mrs Febishola Adeleke was Commissioner of Education, 1999 – 2002. Mrs. Ehiyemi K.O. was also Commissioner for Education from 2002 to 2003.³³ There may be a few others. The fact is that educational disadvantage alone may not be responsible for the low level of women participation in politics today. In spite of the fact that many Ondo women today (resident in and outside of the town) have made landmark achievements in their various chosen careers, this has not caused a drastic improvement in their political participation. Osita Eze's observation about the urban woman becomes very relevant here. He states:

Even though women can now be found in the various professions, formerly regarded as exclusive to the men, they have not gone as near as competing with the men in terms of their participation in the political and economic life of the society. The reason for this may be found in the fact that the traditional role of the women as perceived by the men has persisted and that being late entrants to the field of modern education, their effective entry into the various professions has been delayed ...³⁴

Bayo Lawal, in his assessment of the low level of women participation in politics, especially from 1960, identifies the long period (30 years) of military dictatorship as a debilitating factor.³⁵ Analysts of women and military rule in Nigeria agree that military rule has impacted very negatively on the lives of the women, especially with the near or total exclusion of women in government.³⁶ Angela Odah reveals that from the first military government – that of Aguiyi Ironsi (January 1966 to that of General Muritala Mohammed, which terminated in February 1976), no single woman was in government. The government of General Yakubu Gowon is especially analysed thus:

none of the military governors appointed was a woman. Gowon also had a Federal Executive Cabinet made up of 11 Civilians and 14 members of the armed forces and police and none of them was female... The state government also had appointed state cabinets, most of them had no more than one woman.³⁷

Coming home to Ondo, the Ondo Local Government was created in 1976 following the creation of Ondo State that same year. From this time till 1996 when the Local Government was split into Ondo East and Ondo West Local Governments respectively, only one female Mrs. Ajike Akinterinwa occupied the chair as a care-taker Chairperson in 1987. From 1996 to date, no other female has occupied the chair of the Ondo West Local Government, into which Ondo belongs.³⁸ The details are given below:

Chief Aladejayan Fawehinmi	1976 – 1977
Chief Oyebade (The Ologotun)	1977 – 1979
Mr S. O. Ogunboye	1979 – 1983
Chief Bade Gboyega	1986 – 1987
Mrs. Ajike Akinterinwa	1987 (for six months)
Chief Kelunde Onajin	1987 – 1989
Mr. Makanju	1989 – 1990
Mr. Akinkun Robert	1990 – 1991
Chief Akinbohun	1991 – 1992
Chief Ayodeji Oladayo Iwakuseyin	1992 – 1993
Mr Samuel Ikudaisi	1994 – 1996
Chief Olabisi Johnson	1996 – 1997
Mr Johnson Akinlosotu	1997 – 1998

Mr Fola Amure	1998 – 1999
Prince Alfred Adesida (Aldoma)	1999 – 2001
Prince S. A. Adeseeke	2001 – 2002
Barrister Yinka Akinyosoye	2002
Mr. Adejare Oshin	2002 – 2003
Elder Ojo Akinpelumi	2003 – 2007
Mr. Valentine Ikusika	June – December, 2007
Hon. Patrick Ayokunle Sekooni (J.P)	2007 – 2009 January ³⁹

Source: Ondo West Local Government: So far. File no: OD/OBA/0956, January, 2009. P.13.

In 2001, a woman was voted as Councillor and in 2002, another woman, a retired Headteacher, Hon (Mrs.) V. Doyeni emerged as the first female House leader. A few other women have also served as supervisory councilors.⁴⁰ Compared with men, however, the number is still negligible.

In the Ondo State civilian administration of 2003 – 2007, there was only one female (Princess Titilayo Akinwande) member of the Ondo state House of Assembly. And from 2007 to date, there has been only one female member, Princess Olubintan Caroline Asake.⁴¹ This is happening when there are many women who are Lawyers, University Lecturers, Medical Practitioners and other professionals.⁴² Perhaps, there are other problems. It is true that thousands of Nigerian women are university graduates today out of which an appreciable percentage holds higher degrees in various disciplines.⁴³ It will however, be an illusion to assume that all the women are adequately educated for maximum participation in politics. It is a well-known fact that majority of Nigerian women, especially the rural dwellers are still non-literate and hardly know the issues involved in elections, much less in the general political life of the state.

There is also the problem of finance. Bayo Lawal observes that women's relative poverty and unequal economic opportunities deprive them of the ability to compete with men.⁴⁴ There is also the problem of deliberate manipulation of procedure for the nomination and selection of candidates in favour of men.⁴⁵ Perhaps, the greatest challenge is the phenomenon of violence and thuggery, which has assumed an alarming proportion. This encompasses threat to life, property and children, physical assault and even assassinations, murder and arson.⁴⁶ These keep women away from politics. This made T. G. Adesugha to conclude that "Women are too



*Late Hon. (Princess) Akinwande Titilayo. The only female member of Ondo State House of Assembly 2003-2007
(from Ondo State House of Assembly Almanac, 2006)*



Hon Princess Olubitan Caroline Asake. The only female member of the Ondo State House of Assembly, 2007-Date

Figure 19:

Source: Ondo State House of Assembly Calendar 2009

peaceful for the politics we have nowadays”⁴⁷ Domestic demands also pose their own challenge.

Irrespective of educational qualifications, women, by and large, are still being tied down by domestic responsibilities, which tend to impede advancement in other areas. There is no arguing the fact that many women will never enjoy the support of their husbands in the pursuit of political career.⁴⁸ This is because of the fear that active involvement in politics could conflict with efficiency in domestic and other motherly responsibilities. For instance, a man can attend meetings until late in the night or even be away from home for several days. This is generally regarded as unwholesome for women. Chief Akinyemi Babatunde explained that the politics of today “is raw, corrupt, characterized by falsehood which women may not want to participate in.”⁴⁹ Some are of the opinion that generally women are not always able to fight for their right to a reasonable extent.⁵⁰ This is however subject to debate. Examples abound of women who are fighters for human rights. Some women because of their commitment to certain issues have been able to fight for what they believe and their victories have become world acclaimed. Nina Mba recorded the political activities of women like Mrs. Oyinkan Abayomi,⁵¹ Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti,⁵² Chief Mrs. Margaret Ekpo.⁵³

However, in order to encourage women to strive to occupy more political space and participate in the decision-making process, first and foremost, parents should be encouraged to give their children equal chance in education, irrespective of sex. Having obtained equal educational footing with men, their interest in politics should be stirred up through seminars, talks and workshops.⁵⁴ Education should be given to politicians in general to refine politics so that it can be played by both sexes and the male politicians should encourage their female counterparts to survive.⁵⁵ The time is ripe for drastic electoral and constitutional reforms to guarantee more peaceful and fair elections. Violence and thuggery must be eradicated by the strict application of the relevant electoral laws and imposition of heavy sanctions on culprits. This will create an enabling environment in which women politicians can compete with their male counterparts in free and fair elections.⁵⁶

In summary, this chapter discussed women’s groups and associations with a focus on the impact of Western education on their activities. It was also argued that despite women’s educational achievements, there is no corresponding increase in political participation. This

indicates that in addition to educational disadvantage, there are other possible factors responsible for keeping women away from politics.

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14. Mrs. M.T. Ariyo – She is a member and the President of the society for many years in the 1980s.
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40. Information from Hon. Mrs. Sileola Akindoju, 50+ years. Interviewed at the Ondo West Local Government Secretariat, Ondo on 10/5/2012
41. See the pictures on p. 189
42. See *The Guardian.* Friday, August 26, 1988.
43. Ibid.
44. Bayo Lawal "Overcoming the Barriers to the Emergence of Women Political Leaders in Nigeria." p.2

45. Ibid
46. Ibid p. 5
47. Mr. T. G. Adesugha.
48. Mr. T. G. Adesugha.
49. Chief Akinyemi Babatunde, 46 years, is the Labour Party Leader for Ondo West Local Government Constituency II. He was interviewed on 15th May, 2009.
50. Hon. Oreoluwa Adeniyi, 70 years, is a former Councillor in Mushin Local Government, Lagos and former Vice chairman and member of Lagos State Hospital Board. He is now based in Ondo and a leader in the Labour Party, Ondo West Local Government Constituency I. Interviewed on 15th May, 2009.
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CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has presented a history of the development and impact of Western education on Ondo town, with particular emphasis on the socio-economic and political statuses of women. This involved an analysis of the position of women in the family and the community with regards to their relationship with men. This study revealed that as a result of the patriarchal system which dominated the Ondo society, women's immense productive and reproductive contributions did not grant them equal status with men. This contradicts certain previous assumptions that "women's world was not subordinate to that of men but rather... complementary."¹ One issue that emerged in this essay is that, though patriarchal, the Ondo society did not ignore the centrality of women as mothers of the race and as custodians of certain basic institutions that are necessary for the survival of the society. The Ondo also allocates important roles to women in socio-political sphere, especially with peculiar functions of the *Lobun* in the installation of the *Osemowe*.

With the arrival of the Missionaries, Western education was introduced and later, British colonial rule. Under Colonial rule, men were able to find a place in the new order through the Native Authority and the Native Court, while women were completely precluded from the Native Administration. Colonial Policy on education failed to bridge the gender gap as it emphasized preparing women for marriage rather than for leadership roles within the society. This apparent disparity in education came to justify and confirm male superiority in the politics of the time and the years following independence.

One other theme that emerged in this study is the transformation that took place in the family. The introduction of the Marriage Ordinance which was based on the principle of monogamy of the English Law of Marriage was a direct attack on the traditional system of polygamy. This study argued that the introduction of monogamy affected the organization of labour and in a way led to the excessive use of women both for labour and child bearing. It was also argued that though many educated women were monogamously married (in church or court), there were cases where men married other women in the traditional way causing great frustration to the 'church or court wife'. This blend of the old with the new was also reflected in several other areas such as dressing, music, foods and health care. The Colonial Policy on

divorce, which though accorded the women a new kind of freedom from undesirable and abusive relationships, led to serious upsets in various homes.

This study also revealed that the value attached to marriage and motherhood is still very high. Every woman, educated or not, seeks to be married and stay married. Inability to bear children remains a cause of great unhappiness to the woman concerned despite her level of education. Western education also seemed to have no significant impact on the women's involvement in domestic activities. Hence, despite career pursuit and the sophistication that Western educated women are known for, domestic work can still be reasonably said to be predominantly their responsibility.

One other argument that emerged in this study is that though women participation in schooling and consequently in the labour market led to financial emancipation and improved status, it will however be an illusion to expect complete equality with men. In other words, the change has not been total.

Generally speaking, however, the benefits of education cannot be denied. It improves the quality of life, promotes health, expands access to paid employment, increases productivity in market and non-market work and facilitates social and limited political participation. The evidence is also convincing that these benefits are especially large for women² as explained in the preceding chapters. More women are entering into the paid employment and some are even getting to management positions. The contribution of female education to the homes and national development can no longer be denied.

Looking at the importance of female education generally, Elizabeth King writes:

An uneducated mother without skills that are valued outside the home has less ability to influence choices within the family. If her daughters are uneducated, as well, a vicious cycle is perpetuated... By contrast, an educated mother has a greater value outside the home and thus has an entirely different set of choices than she would without education... She is able to influence family decisions... And can insist on the development of all (her children), ensuring that her daughters are given a fair chance. The education of her daughters makes it more likely that the next generation of girls, as well as boys will be educated... The vicious cycle is thus transformed into virtuous cycle.³

Looking at female education in Nigeria today, it is obvious that in several places especially in the South, the traditional and cultural constraints to female education appear to be declining. Despite its benefits however, in most Northern states these constraints even coupled with that of religion still persist⁴ to a high degree. An attempt is being made in this chapter to highlight some of the constraints to female education and effective participation in the labour market.

8.2 CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN'S EDUCATION TODAY.

One of the challenges that confront female education in Nigeria and other developing countries today is the problem of poverty which has not been completely removed especially in the rural areas. Though in Ondo and some other states of Western Nigeria, education at primary and secondary levels is tuition free, it is a known fact that several other miscellaneous school charges exist. Learning materials, uniforms and other wares, transportation and in some cases boarding fees are some of the non-tuition costs of sending children to school. For a variety of reasons, out-of-pocket expenses may be greater for girls than for boys.⁵ One of the school girls interviewed in the course of this research confessed that the greater problem facing her is the inability of her parents to pay her fees. Coupled with this is that despite the influence of Western education and Christianity, polygamy still exists in some places with the accompanying large families. Apart from the fact that girls in these families have greater burden of household work, the parents in most cases are unable to give the numerous children enough individual attention and may also not be able to send all of them to school. In such situation the girls suffer more. So women work very hard to send their daughters to school⁶.

Among the women that were interviewed in the course of this research, a number of them were trained in school by their mothers. Majority of Ondo women today, no matter how meagre their income, whether literate or non-literate always strive to see that their children, girls inclusive, receive formal education.⁷ There are some though, who believe that with or without schooling, a child can be successful. By success, they mean wealth acquisition. Few women's opinions were sampled in this regard. Their responses are a pointer to the fact that, despite the present level of awareness, there are still a few parents who are not very particular about their children's education. Five were interviewed, three of them were non-literates, one

had primary education and one had West African School Certificate. Four of them desire to educate their children, irrespective of sex to whatever level they (the children) desire. Ironically, it was the one with W.A.S.C that declared her intention to get her children apprenticed into some trade. The particulars of the women are given in the table of oral informants.

Females in their quest for Western formal education also face the serious challenge of the alternative demands made on their time. House chores, tending younger siblings, assisting mothers in their trade are a few of the numerous situations that compete with schooling. These results in poor grades and in very serious situations, the affected girls end up dropping out of school. Coupled with this is the poor attitude of some female students to education. Many secondary school girls despite their capability and intellect, do not aspire to pursue higher education. This is worse in the rural areas. There are those that believe they don't need formal education to live well. They base their argument on the fact that there are many women, who, irrespective of their educational qualifications, are prevented by their husbands from taking up jobs. If a woman marries well, that is, to a rich man, she can even live in greater luxury than her counterpart who is toiling hard to earn certificates. To this group of girls/women, the personal development that accompanies formal education is of little or no concern. Other challenges include sexual harassment from teachers and senior male students, financial handicap of parents, peer pressure, low rate of assimilation because of domestic work load and difficulty in understanding science subjects especially mathematics. One of the girls talked about the nature of her parents' jobs which involve frequent transfers and its resultant negative effects on her studies. In cases of divorce the children suffer both financially and psychologically. This also disturbs their education.

One major challenge facing girls' education in Ondo today is that some of the girls reach puberty before they complete secondary school. Unlike in the 1950s and 1960s when very few girls got pregnant while still in school, more girls are getting pregnant in schools these days.⁸ This attests to the falling moral standard associated with the modern society. Cases abound of primary school pupils getting pregnant while waiting for admission into secondary school. This is common among girls who for whatever reason experienced a delay in their education and reached puberty towards the end of their primary education.⁹ The interview of some secondary school girls indicate that some girls enter the Junior Secondary School (Basic 7-9) in their mid-teens as revealed in the bibliography. Generally, girls who become

pregnant are sent out of school. Only very few resume studies after having the baby. Others either because of shame or lack of necessary encouragement from parents end up in premature marriages with all the associated problems.

When girls get married (either prematurely or otherwise) and still desire to complete studies, they face new set of challenges. Some find it difficult to combine the volume of work at school and at home. Because their present educational status cannot get them high paying jobs, they face financial constraints. This is aggravated in some cases by the attitude of some husbands who are both jealous and uncooperative. This is however not the general picture. Cases abound of husbands who are wholly responsible for their wives' education and get assistance (works, helps etc.) for them so that they can concentrate on their studies.¹⁰ This though depends on the man's financial capability.

Among the societal problems facing education is the peer group influence. Some children get into different kinds of vices as a result of this. The situation is worsened by the fact that a lot of parents, because they are too busy, do not give the children the necessary attention. As a result of Western education, many women who would have stayed back to tend the home and the children are away, pursuing their careers. Television and the home video readily fill the vacuum. This is claimed to be one of the factors responsible for the increasing rate of school girls getting pregnant and dropping out of school.¹¹ It has also been argued that education for both boys and girls face a common problem. This is, that generally, the whole education horizon appears seriously impoverished.¹² The environment does not appear very conducive to learning due to inadequate and outdated infrastructure. This also can make schooling very unattractive.

It therefore becomes very necessary to look for possible ways of facing these challenges. The societal issues can be faced by mounting enlightenment campaigns so that the society as a whole becomes fully aware of the importance of female education. The media can be of much help here. Through organized programmes, they can immensely help to re-orientate and positively change the attitude of individuals and policy makers to women's education.¹³ Well-articulated advocacy and awareness campaign should also be intensified upon by Government and non-Governmental organizations to sensitize the populace on the need to give equal educational opportunities to their children, irrespective of gender.¹⁴ It is also necessary for the government to increase budgetary allocations to educational sector to ensure

improvement on instructional and infrastructural materials in schools.¹⁵ There is also need for government to collaborate with NGOs to ensure the survival and expansion of its adult literacy programmes and vocational training schemes. The non-literate women in the metropolis and their rural counterparts should be covered in these programmes. There is also the need for intensified campaigns to re-orientate girls and women and convince them that education primarily is for personal development with other added benefits. This will help them to develop positive attitude to education. While not underplaying the importance of motherhood and building a home, the women need to realize that these should not be taken as excuse to deny themselves of formal education. In order to assist married female students to continue with their education, the local government should organize subsidized nursery schools and childcare centres. If this is done, the women will have more time for their school work and other necessary activities.

It was noted in this study that excessive domestic burden is a major factor that impede females' quest for formal education. It was also noted that in most homes, despite Western education, the male members usually resent domestic activities. There is therefore the need for educational programmes and campaigns, using the media in order to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes about the roles of women that are incompatible with modern day living. For instance, the mass media could embark on campaigns that would promote men's / boys' involvement in domestic work.¹⁶

It was equally noted that some girls don't see any serious need for formal education since there are women who despite their educational qualifications, have been prevented from taking up jobs by their husbands. Realizing the negative effect of this practice, it then becomes very necessary to organize enlightenment programmes to sensitize the men folks about the necessity of their educated wives being given full support to make their contribution to national development. The contribution of the women should be seen as complimentary, rather than competitive. In order to minimize the occurrence of pregnancy among school girls, enlightenment campaign programmes should be organized, by the schools and the media to sensitize the students about the dangers of premature sex. It is also being recommended that sex education be included in the school curriculum.¹⁷ Despite the emphasis on formal education, the virtues of traditional education should not be neglected. It is a known fact that in the traditional society, chastity was not only an individual affair but a family issue. In this respect, formal and traditional education should complement each other

to uphold moral rectitude among the youths. The issue of moral instruction in schools became a subject of discussion in the newspapers in the years following independence. This is because there was general concern about the moral degeneration of educated youths. Through organized programmes and the media, parents should also be alerted about the dangers of child-neglect. It is important that parents, especially mothers, despite busy schedules, make time to monitor the activities of their children and wards.

It is also very necessary that the educated women of Ondo origin assist to positively influence the attitude of other women and growing girls to education. This they can achieve by organizing women's functional literacy programmes including reading and writing, training in sewing, family planning and so on. They should also serve as role models to the young girls. Seminars can be organized. Women who have excelled in their chosen careers can be invited to talk to school girls on the importance of education. In the 1960s, there was an NBC programme, "Women at the Top" aimed at inviting and interviewing women who have reached "the top in whatever field... to talk about how they made it to the top"¹⁸. There is no doubt that similar programmes can be of immense help in this regard. Efforts can also be made in the awarding of scholarships to assist women and girls. It is important to note here that some efforts are being made in this direction. There are records of scholarship awards by the Ondo Development Committee (O.D.C.) to some Ondo indigenes of both sexes in tertiary institutions in October, 2002.¹⁹ In 2007, Pastor Mrs Damilola Kuteyi donated N13, 000, 000 (Thirteen Million Naira) to the O.D.C towards empowerment programme for women, widows and scholarship for girls.²⁰

Finally, it is contained in the National Policy on Education that,

Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change: any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an Educational revolution ...²¹

It becomes imperative that the needs of women be adequately considered and taken care of if the educational revolution needed to bring about the intellectual and social change is to yield meaningful results.

ENDNOTES

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3. Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hills, *Women’s Education in Developing Countries: Barriers, Benefits and policies*. P.VII
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6. Chief Mrs Olufunke Iluyemi, 70 years. Interviewed in Ondo on 19th of February, 2008.
7. The detailed particulars of the girls interviewed are given in the table of Bibliography.
8. Chief Mrs. Olufunke Iluyemi.
9. Mr. Edward Tolulope Fasehun, 58 years. Head Teacher, Saint Matthew’s Catholic Primary School, Ondo. Interviewed on 20th February, 2009.
10. Mrs Kehinde Awosika 52 years. Principal, Community Secondary School, Ondo. Interviewed on 13th June, 2007.
11. Mrs Oyinkansola Akinmurele, Administrator, TESCOM, Zonal Office, Ondo. Interviewed on 13th June, 2007, Mrs Omolabake Kuti confirmed this.
12. Chief Mrs. Olufunke Iluyemi.
13. U.O. Amazigbo. “Women, Education and Society” in Grace Osakue, Jane Okojie and Duncan Osakue, (eds). *Women and Education*. Zaria, Nigeria: Published by Women In Nigeria, 1992. p. 8
14. Angela Abah Odah. *Military Rule and Nigerian Women*. Lagos, Nigeria: Friedrick Ebert Stiftung, 2002. p. 153
15. Ibid.
16. Bolanle Elizabeth Akande. “Impacts of Education And Rural-Urban Locations On The Contemporary Roles of Yoruba Women in The Oranmiyan Local Government Area” Ph.D Thesis, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. 1988 p. 210
17. Mrs. C.M. Ibikunle. Vice Principal, Saint Louis Girls’ Secondary School, Ondo. Interviewed on 15th June, 2007. She is an Old student of the school (1973-1977 set) She claimed that because sex education was introduced to the girls very early, both during her years as a student and now as a Vice Principal, cases of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy was very rare in the school.
18. *West African Pilot*. July 3, 1969. Front page.
19. Oluwafemi Mimiko and Dayo Awude. *Bearing Testimony: Twenty years of Ondo Development Committee*, 1986-2006. p.51 see also *Ondo Development Committee: Ondo Civic Centre, A Community Development Effort*. Lagos: Chebychev Ventures. N.D. p. 30

20. Mr. Akinboboye, the Executive Secretary of the O.D.C. He was interviewed on 11th May, 2009.

21. Federal republic of Nigeria. *National Policy on Education*, 4th Edition, 2004 p. 7 section 4:9

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When you teach a man you teach just an individual, but when you teach a woman, you teach the whole world, because as the woman gives birth, she teaches her child the same thing you taught her and the wisdom never ends

Figure 20:

*Source: The Sagasun 30 years of Grooming Girls to prominence.
A Magazine Publication of Federal Government Girls' College, Sagamu, Ogun State. 2008 P.56*

APPENDIX I

PROFILE ON PROFESSOR (MRS.) ADESULU, ESTHER A.

Age: 60+

Home Town: Ondo

Educational Institutions Attended with Dates:

1. Secondary School – St. Louis Girls Grammar School Akure, 1961-1965.
2. Christ School Ado-Ekiti (Higher School Certificate (HSC) 1966-1967.
3. University of Ife (B.Sc. Zoology) 1968 – 1971
4. University of Ife (MSC Zoology) 1976
5. University of Ife (Ph.D Zoology) 1981

Working Experience:

Graduate Assistant. October, 1971, OAU, Ile-Ife I became a professor of Zoology in 1994 at OAU Ile-Ife.

Positions Held so far:

1. Head of Department of Zoology OAU Ile-Ife.
2. Member of Senate of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife.
3. Head of many other Committees in OAU, Ile-Ife.
4. Member of Board, National Road Crops.
5. Current, Dean of College of Natural and Applied Science. (WUSTO)

Your View on Female Education in Ondo:

The education of females in Ondo is still very low when compared with their male counterparts. There is still preference for male children. Though the condition is improving, male dominance is still prevalent in Ondo, even among the literates. The rate of female education is improving day by day.

How did your Parental Background affect your Educational Advancement?

My parents never went to school. My father was able to write very well because he lived with a white man. Also, my mother was able to read Bible and she taught us when we were in primary school.

My parents were not stark illiterates but did not have enough education to work with. I was motivated by my parents. I was the first female in the family to be educated. My father paid my school fees in full at both primary and secondary school levels. When I gained admission to higher institution, my brother took up the challenge in order to ensure that I have good education.

My parents were farmers and the desire to change the family fortune influenced my decision to be educated, so I could help my family as much as God would enable me. My parents were worried about me; I promised and determined not to disappoint them.

Which profession was most populated in the Colonial era?

Most of our women were nurses during the colonial period while most males were teachers (Primary & Secondary Schools) teaching and Nursing were the most popular professions during the colonial period.

Though women participation in the teaching was very limited during the colonial period because they were not given education by their parents.

What is your view on domestic violence against women?

The fact remains that, many men are envious of their women as regards educational advancement or position. Few men support their wives in terms of educational pursuit. (She narrated a story of a man who tore the WAEC scripts his wife was marking due to a minor misunderstanding).

What is your opinion on the need for women education?

Women education is a factor for development in the community. If you educate a woman, you educate a nation. It allows women to be part of decision making and source of provision for family needs. Women education is of economic importance to the nation.

Any gender challenge?

Right from the outset, I worked among men. Many men felt that women should not compete with them. Men usually struggle to suppress women in any position of responsibility. But if a woman is hardworking, with God's grace, she will excel. Therefore, I was able to record much success in my educational career as a result of my determination, despite various challenges.

Achievements so far:

- i. I retired from OAU, Ile-Ife in 2010 successfully
- ii. Material possession
- iii. Help to indigent students in schools.
- iv. Children education.

APPENDIX II

PROFILE OF CHIEF MRS. STELLA AKINRIBIDO

Age: 60

Home Town: Ondo

Educational Background:

St. Catherine Primary School, Ondo

Hope Grammar School, Ado-Ekiti

Summa Memory Hospital (Mid Wifery) Benin, 1976

School of Nursing, Ado-Ekiti, 1983

Year of Entry into Service, 1977.

Leadership Positions:

I have held series of positions in various General hospitals in Ondo State. I was the HOD of my Department at the General Hospital Ile-Oluji and Ondo General Hospital. I served as Deputy Chief Nursing Officer before I was promoted to Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) in 2011 at Ondo Specialist Hospital.

My promotion was very rapid due to my educational qualification. I have attended series of conferences, seminars and programmes on health matters. The experience gathered from these places have helped me advance in my career pursuit.

Achievements:

- i. By the grace of God I have spent close to 35 years in the service. My interest in Nursing has helped me this far. I was initially motivated by the way Nurses dress. Later on, with the support of my husband, I was able to move on.
- ii. I have motivated two of my children into this profession. My first son has B.Sc. Nursing, currently working in the USA, my second child has B.Sc. and M.SC Microbiology (UI & FUTA)
- iii. I have my own personal building.
- iv. I was honoured by the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, in 1997 as Yeye Oge of Ado-Ekiti due to neatness of my uniform.

Date of interview: 15/05/2012.

APPENDIX III

THE STORY OF MRS. FLORENCE OYE ADEBANJO.

The war period was a time which most Nigerians will prefer to forget in a hurry. Any lady that therefore joined the Nigeria Police Force at the time must be a super woman.

The story of Mrs. Florence Oye Adebajo, retired Deputy Inspector General of Police (D.I.G) therefore, is that of a woman who did the unthinkable by joining the Nigeria Police Force at a time many able bodied men were seeking sanctuary in the villages to escape being conscripted to any of the security agencies. Luckily for her, she came out in flying colours in Cadet Inspector course 16 that ran between 1968-1969.

After her commission to the Nigeria Police Force, she was posted to Rivers State where she remained till 1971, serving first in the 'A' Division and later at the state Police Headquarters as the Staff Officer in charge of Personnel. She was later deployed to the Police College, Ikeja in August 1972, after completing Advanced Detective Course, at Wakefield, England which ran from January-May, 1971.

For a whole decade, Mrs. Florence Adebajo was involved in the training of freshly recruited Policemen. Her success in this assignment is underscored by the large number of her trainees who are holding high ranking positions in the Police throughout the length and breadth of Nigeria today.

As a result of her excellent performance while teaching at the Police College, Mrs. Adebajo was transferred to Ogun State Command as a Divisional Police Officer in charge of Lafenwa Division in February 1981 and in June of the same year she was elevated to the rank of Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) and posted to the Lagos State Police Command. Her next duty post was the Force Headquarters where she served as an Assistant Commissioner of Police (A.C) in charge of training.

A versatile Police Officer, Mrs. Florence Adebajo has served in virtually all sensitive police formations some of which are:

- i. Police Medical Services
- ii. Force Provost Marshall
- iii. Anti Fraud Department
- iv. Security & Intelligence Bureau
- v. Personnel.

In addition to all the above positions, she also served as the Commissioner of Police in charge of Port Authority Police Command. It is worthy to note that she is the first and the only female officer to have so far served as the Administrator of the Nigeria Police Medical Services; the first and only female officer so far that served as the Commissioner of Police Ports Authority Command and the first and the only female officer to have so far commanded the prestigious Police Staff College, Jos.

Mrs. Florence Adebajo has an insatiable appetite for knowledge. Thus she has attended many professional courses within and outside the service. It is therefore not surprising that she was awarded a Masters of Science in Strategic Studies by the Senate of University of Ibadan in the year 2000, after she had successfully completed the National War College, course 7 at Abuja.

Mrs. Florence Adebajo has retired from the Police as a Deputy Inspector General of Police, but is not tired. Thus the Police authorities still find her useful in directing the affairs of Nigeria Police Force Micro Finance Bank Plc where she is a serving Chairperson. She has also been playing prominent roles in the several international organizations she belongs to.

An indigene of Ondo town in Ondo State, the Sunshine State of Nigeria, Mrs. Florence Oye Adebajo is happily married with children.

Compiled by Akeem Adedeji

Culled from Akeem Adedeji. *Contemporary Security Issues in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Mrs. Florence Oye Adebajo (DIG, RTD)*. Lagos Nigeria: AL-Kaharu Publishers, 2010. pp iv-v.

APPENDIX IV

PROFILE OF MRS. MERCY BADEMOSI

Education:

Awosika Pry. School from	1961 – 1967
Jubilee Modern School	1972 – 1974
Schooll of Midwifery, Kute Lagos	1977 – 1979
Teacher Training College, Ondo (Grade II)	2001 – 2003.

Work Experience/Brief History of your Music Industry:

After my graduation from school of midwifery, I practiced as a Nurse in private hospitals. I eventually went into music industry in 1986 at Ondo. I had started singing since 1969 with a particular cultural group in Ondo. Since that time, I was unable to practice because my parents wanted me to go to school and become a nurse. Because I had the gift from God, I decided to withdraw from Nursing profession. I came back to Ondo in 1986 to form a group, which majors in cultural music in the Ondo dialect.

With the financial and moral support of my husband I was able to develop the industry. I started to produce cassette/Album/Video CD in 2005. Among my products are:

1. *Samonami* 2005 – VCD
2. *Moduroti Olorun* 2006 – VCD
3. *Aseyori* 2007 – VCD
4. *Ogo Ojo* 2008 – VCD.

Impact of Western Education on my Music Industry:

Through I am into cultural music/traditional music, my educational advancement has helped my music industry in no small measure.

- i. The quality of my music is as a result of my education
- ii. It has enhanced my acceptability by both illiterate and educated people.
- iii. In fact my VCDs have traveled out of the country to places like USA, London due to its quality.
- iv. I have been invited to the USA and London to sing in Ondo dialect to Ondo indigenes in these diasporal states.

I am the first Ondo female indigenous traditional musician to compose songs in Ondo dialect.

Associations I Belong to & Leadership Positions held:

I became the Provost of Performing Musician Artist of Nigeria (PMAN) at the state level in 2007.

Achievement:

1. Training of my Children, they are all now graduates.

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APPENDIX V

PROFILE OF MRS. OYESETO AKINSETE AKINWANDE

“Seto” is the first female Ondo indigene to emerge as a Gospel musician in Ondo. She sings in the Ondo dialect.

Educational Institutions Attended with Dates:

St. Paul’s Pry. School, Yaba, Ondo	1980 – 1986
St. Monica’s Girls’ Grammar School, Ondo	1987 – 1992
Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti (OND) – Business Administration	1995
Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti (HND) – Business Administration	2005

Brief History of Your Experience in Music Industry:

I have started leading a cultural group right from the Pry. School when I entered secondary school, I offered Music as a subject. This developed me in the technical aspect of music.

I officially started to sing in 2004 which resulted in the production of a Video Compact Disk (VCD) titled *Olorun Ileri* (God of promise).

Positions held in Music Organizations:

- Chairperson, Gospel Musician Association of Nigeria (GOMAN) Ondo Branch since 2008 till date.
- Treasurer, Performing Musician Artist of Nigeria (PMAN), 2009 till date.

The success of my music industry is traceable to the support of my husband and the money I realized from where I am working. He usually follows me to studio to listen to the songs and do some necessary editing before the cassette is produced. Also, I am one of the Principal Examiners at Nigeria Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, (NIEPA) Ondo. This has also been very helpful.

Achievement so far in the Music Industry:

I have produced 4 labels (4 Audio and 3 VCD and 3 Lives Video).

1. *Ilere* (God of Promised) 2004
2. *Emi a tayo* (I will excel) 2007
3. *Ayomipo* (My joy is full) 2008
4. *Oluwajoba* (the Lord reigns) 2011.

Impact of Western Education on Your Industry:

The impact of Western Education on my music industry cannot be over emphasized. Most local musicians particularly in Ondo are illiterates. My education has helped me to stand out among them.

The quality of my music has been due to my level of education

It has helped me to be acceptable to both educated elites and the illiterate people

It has also enhanced my invitation to various programmes like church crusade, seminar, ceremonies, birthday, burials across the country like, Lagos, Ibadan, Akure, Enugu, etc.

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2. St. Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Ondo.
3. Bishop Phillip's Anglican Primary School, Ondo.
4. Salvation Army Day Primary School, Ondo.
5. All Saints Anglican Primary School, Ondo.
6. St. Catherine's Catholic Primary School, Ondo.
7. St. Peter's CAC Primary School, Ondo.
8. St. Mary's Primary School, Ondo.
9. Ansar-Ud-Deen Primary School, Ondo.
10. Ondo Boys' High School, Ondo.

11. St. Louis Catholic Girls' Secondary School, Ondo.
12. St. Monica's Anglican Girls' Secondary School, Ondo.
13. Methodist Grammar School, Ondo.
14. St. Peter's Secondary School, Ondo.
15. Independence Grammar School, Ondo.
16. St. Helen's Unity Senior Secondary School, Ondo.
17. Ansar-Ud-Deen Grammar School, Ondo.
18. Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo.
19. Wesley University of Science and Technology, Ondo.

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3. Ondo Local Education Authority, Ondo. File No. LGUBEA/OD/Public Primary School.
4. Ondo West Local Government: So far. File no: OD/OBA/0956, January, 2009. P.13.

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S/N	NAME OF INFORMANT	AGE	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
1	Aba Faith (Miss)	13	Student JS2	Ondo	14th May, 2009
2	Adams Katayeyanyue Kamaldeen (Mr.)	30+	Teaching	Ondo	18th May, 2012
3	Ade-Ajayi Christianah (Mrs.)	77	Retired Head-Teacher	NTA Personality Profile	10th March, 2007
4	Adeboboye Agboola (Prince)	70+	Palace Official	Ondo	4th May, 2009
5	Adediran C.O. (Mrs)	50+	Head Teacher	Ondo	14th June, 2007

6	Adedoja Hanna (Miss)	15	Student JS3	Ondo	14th May, 2009
7	Adedoyin S.R. (Mrs.)	50+	AOPSON Chairman	Ondo	23rd May, 2012
8	Adefiyiju Opeyemi (Miss)	13	Student JS1	Ondo	14th May, 2009
9	Adegbembo F.A. (Mrs)	80+	Retired School Head Teacher	Ondo	19th Feb, 2008
10	Adegboye Tobi (Miss)	13	Student JS2`	Ondo	14th May, 2009
11	Adegoke Rachael (Miss)	15	Student JS1	Ondo	14th May, 2009
12	Adekanmi J.O. (Mr.)	57	NUT Chairman	Ondo	23rd May, 2012
13	Adekeye Febishola (Mrs.)	60+	Politician/ Educationist	Ondo	17th May, 2012
13	Adeniyi Dada (Mrs)	90+	Farming/Trading	Ondo	15th June, 2007
14	Adeniyi Femi (Mr)	60+	Retired Principal	Ondo	14th June, 2007
15	Adeniyi Oreoluwa (Hon)	70+	Politician	Ondo	15th May, 2009
16	Adepeko V.A. (Mrs)	53+	Assistant Head Teacher	Ondo	20th Feb, 2008
17	Aderemi Mijudat (Miss)	13	Student JS2	Ondo	14th May, 2009
18	Aderinsola Felicia Gilbert (High Chief Mrs)	70+	Retired Educ. Inspector/High Chief	Ondo	12th June, 2008
19	Adesugha T.G. (Mr)	52+	Civil Servant	Ondo	14th May, 2009
20	Ajetunmobi S.O. (Mrs)	55+	School Head Teacher	Ondo	14th May, 2009
21	Ajiboye Wasilat (Miss)	14	Student JS1	Ondo	14th May, 2009
22	Akinbinu Abike (Mrs)	70+	Farming/Trading	Ondo	25th July, 2008
23	Akinboboye (Mr)	Not Certain	Exec. Sec of O.D.C.	Ondo	11th May, 2009
24	Akinboni Lasisi (Mr)	80+	Farming	Ondo	14th April, 2006
25	Akindele Bolanle (Mrs)	64+	Retired Nurse	Lagos	23rd July, 2008
26	Akindoju Sileola Hon. (Mrs.)	50+	Politician	Ondo	10th May, 2012

27	Akindojutimi J. Olufunke (Mrs.)	50+	School Principal	Ondo	10th May, 2012
28	Akindolie Esther (madam)	80+	Farming	Ondo	15th April, 2006
29	Akinduro Funke (Miss)	15	Student SS2	Ondo	14th May, 2009
30	Akindutire P.O. (Mrs)	50+	Teaching	Ondo	14th June, 2007
31	Akingbesote J.O. (Mrs)	40+	School Teacher	Ondo	14th June, 2007
32	Akinmurele Oyinkansola (Mrs)	50+	Administrator, Educ. Zonal Office, Ondo	Ondo	13th June, 2007
33	Akinsanmi B.R (Mr.)	57	Area Education Officer	Ondo	8th May, 2012
34	Akintimi Olubunmi (Mrs)	40+	School Teacher	Lagos	29th April, 2009
35	Akintola Theresa (Mrs)	50+	School Teacher	Lagos	14th Feb, 2007
36	Akinwande Oyeseto Akinsete (Mrs.)	38	Musician	Ondo	14th May, 2012
37	Akinyemi Babatunde (Chief)	46+	Politician	Ondo	15th May, 2009
38	Akinyemi Folakemi (Miss)	14	Student SS2	Ondo	14th May, 2009
39	Akinyemi Moses	60+	Retired Civil Servant	Ondo	15th April, 2006
40	Akitomide Toyin (Miss)	14	Student JS2	Ondo	14th May, 2009
41	Akjoboye V.O. (Mrs)	50+	School Teacher	Ondo	15th June, 2008
42	Alayande Saidat (Miss)	16	Student JS2	Ondo	14th May, 2009
43	Alimi Mojibat (Alhaja)	50+	Teaching	Ondo	18th May, 2012
44	Ariyo M.T. (Chief Mrs)	70+	Retired School Head Teacher	Ondo	13th June, 2007
45	Aroyemu Temidayo (Miss)	17	Student JS1	Ondo	14th May, 2009
46	Awosika Kehinde (Mrs)	52+	School Principal	Ondo	13th June, 2009
47	Ayeni Bose (Miss)	18	Student SS3	Ondo	14th May, 2009
48	Ayeni Funke (Miss)	13	Student JS1	Ondo	14th May, 2009

49	Ayo Iyabo (Mrs)	46+	Bush meat seller	Ondo	15th May, 2009
50	B.F. Adeniji (Rev)	60+	Former Provost	Ondo	18th June, 2012
51	Bamidele Adikat (Mrs)	40+	Kolanut seller	Ondo	15th May, 2009
52	Barrister Oluwole Tokunbo	45	Chairman, NBA, Ondo	Ondo	15th May, 2012
53	Barrister Stella Udu	32	Lawyer	Ondo	15th May, 2012
54	Benson Beatrice (Mrs)	41+	Plantain/Banana Seller	Ondo	15th May, 2009
55	Engr Ajibola Sylvester Adenika	70	Rtd. Engineer	Ondo	11th August, 2012.
56	Fadamowo Olufunke J. (Mrs.)	50+	School Principal	Ondo	25th June, 2012
57	Fasehun Edward Temitope (Mr)	58+	Head Teacher	Ondo	20th Feb, 2008
58	Fasuyi (Mr)	Not Certain	Official of Ondo West L.G.A.	Ondo	Jan., 2007
59	George Adeola (Mrs)	45+	Vice Principal	Lagos	6th August, 2008
60	Hon. Justice Rasheed Olabamidele Fawehinmi	84	Rtd Justice	Ondo	8th August, 2012
61	Ibikunle C.M. (Mrs)	Not Certain	Vice Principal	Ondo	15th June, 2007
62	Ijilegan C.A. (Hon)	50	Education Secretary	Ondo	23rd May, 2012
63	Ijituyi A.O (Mrs.)	54	Boarding House Mistress	Ondo	22nd May, 2012
64	Iloyemi Olufunke (Chief Mrs)	70	Retired Civil Servant/ Commissioner	Ondo	19th Feb, 2008
65	Kuti Omolabake (Mrs)	50+	School Principal	Ondo	12th June, 2008
66	Madam Olayinka Ikugbayigbe	70+	Trader	Lagos	6th Dec, 2006
67	Matthew M.J. (Mrs.)	44	DPO, Fagun Division	Ondo	10th May, 2012
68	Mercy Badamosi (Mrs.)		Musician	Ondo	14th May, 2012
69	Ogunsola Roseline (Miss)	14	Student SS1	Ondo	14th May, 2009

70	Okafor Amaka (Mrs)	49+	School Teacher	Lagos	6th August, 2008
71	Okewole Bilikisu (Alhaja)	50+	Teaching	Ondo	18th May, 2012
72	Okhuga E.T. (Mrs.)	35	Senior Executive Officer, General Duties	Ondo	8th May, 2012
73	Okunola Adenike (Miss)	16	Student SS2	Ondo	14th May, 2009
74	Oladele Kafayat (Miss)	15	Student JS1	Ondo	14th May, 2009
75	Oladoyinbo Risikat (Mrs)	35+	Shoes Seller	Ondo	15th May, 2009
76	Olafimihan Adewale (Mr)	40+	School Teacher	Lagos	6th August, 2008
77	Olatunji G.T. (Chief Dr)	50+	School Principal	Ondo	13th June, 2007
78	Olorunyomi Joseph (Mr)	70+	Farming	Ondo	14th April, 2006, 23rd May, 2012
79	Olorunyomi Julianah (Mrs.)	70+	Farming/Trading	Ondo	14th April, 2006, 23rd May, 2012
80	Olubunmi Akintayo (Mrs.)	40+	Civil Servant	Lagos	29th April, 2009
81	Olusegun F.O. (J.P.) Mrs	50+	School Principal	Ondo	13th June, 2007, 14th May, 2012.
82	Omolade Janet (Mrs.)	49	Division Crime Officer	Ondo	10th May, 2012
83	Opeke Olukemi (Mrs)	50+	Assistant Head Teacher	Ondo	12th June, 2007
84	Oriade Nike (Miss)	15	Student SS2	Ondo	14th May, 2009
85	Otuyemi Festus O. (Chief)	70+	Retired	Ibadan	19th October, 2007
86	Otuyemi Funmi O. (Mrs)	70+	Caterer/Trading	Ibadan	19th October, 2007
87	Otuyemi S.O. (Dr Mrs)	57+	Pharmacist	Lagos	15th Jan, 2007
88	Otuyemi Tayo (Mr)	65+	Quantity Surveyor	Lagos	24th July, 2008
89	Pa Samuel Adalakun	86	Former Teacher	Ondo	15th May, 2012
90	Pius Eniola Olumide (Mr.)	74	Rtd. Director, Ex-pupil	Ondo	21st May, 2012

91	Prof (Mrs) Esther A. Adesulu	60	Lecturer	Ondo	5th May, 2012
92	Salami Bilikisu (Miss)	13	Student JS1	Ondo	14th May, 2009
93	Solomon Kehinde (Mrs.)	54	Business Woman	Ondo	14th May, 2009
94	Yusuf Rukayat (Miss)	15	Student JS3	Ondo	14th May, 2009
95	Yusuf Sidikat (Mrs)	55+	Provision/Cosmetic Seller	Ondo	15th May, 2009

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