

**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN INDIGENOUS BURIAL RITES IN SELECTED
ÈKÌTÌ COMMUNITIES, NIGERIA**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This work is humbly dedicated to the following people who at one time or the other had exerted a serious influence in my life:

- (i) Pa Pius Abegunde Adeleye
- (ii) Late Chief Awi Omololá
- (iii) Mrs Taibat Bilau

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous burial rites in southwestern Nigeria are traditional rituals performed before and after burial to honour the dead and ensure the well-being of the living. Previous studies on burial rites among the Ekiti have concentrated on the art of burying, celebration of the dead, and their socio-economic implications, with little attention paid to their changing patterns as determined by foreign religions and modernity, especially from the 19th century to the present time. This study was, therefore, designed to examine the continuity and change in burial rites in selected Ekiti communities, with a view to highlighting their socio-religious implications.

Talcott Parson's Modernisation Theory, which is concerned with the progressive transformation of traditional practices of a society, was adopted as framework. The ethnographic design was used. Adó-Èkitì, Ìkéré-Èkitì and Ìkòlé-Èkitì communities were purposively selected because they were the largest cities and constituted the hub of socio-economic, religious and cultural activities. In-depth interviews were conducted with 60 indigenes, comprising six traditional high chiefs, two members of the Aborigine Ògbóni Fraternity, four *Ifá* priests and eight adherents of indigenous religion who were inclined to indigenous burial rites. Five sessions of focus group discussions were held in each of the selected communities, with six participants each who were between age 60 and 100. The participants were one Aborigine Ògbóni fraternity, two *Ifá* priests, two community heads and one indigene. Data were content-analysed.

Twelve resilient indigenous burial rites were identified in the three communities: *Yíya-Èsisilè, Òdìgbóró, Pakájà, Ewúré-Etìgbè, Omi-Èrò, Èran-Bàwè, Òsorò, Gbàrà-mògbó, Itipá, Òkú-Sùn-yèwù, Upè and Òkè -Aède*. The first five rites are performed for deceased *Ifá* priests to help separate the individual from other *Ifá* priests, while the second five elements are rites performed by traditional high chiefs to ensure that the ghost of the deceased does not haunt both the deceased family and the co-traditional chiefs. The last two rites are exclusive burial rites performed for departed *Oba* in Ìkéré-Èkitì. Ten identified rites; *Ifèyìngbè, Ekún-sìsun, Òòsà-Igbélé, Pípon-omi-Òsun, Osé, Adiyè-Ùràná, Òsorò, Ugbó-Òrìro, Abóbakú* and *Etìgbè* are no longer performed due to the influence of Christianity, Islam and modernity. In Adó-Èkitì, *Ifèyìngbè* and *Ekún-Sìsun* were special rites for the extremely old people; in Ìkéré-Èkitì, *Òòsà-Igbélé, Pípon-Omi-Òsun* and *Osé* were the exclusive burial rites for a departed *Oba*; in Ìkòlé-Èkitì, *Òsorò* rites is performed to bring out the *Egígún* (masquerade) of the deceased. The *Ugbó-Òrìro* burial site for *Eni-Òrìsà* (companion of gods) is now called *Ugbó-Ajé* and is the present location of Olá-Olúwa Muslim Grammar School, Adó-Èkitì; Ansar-Ud-deen High School, Ìkéré and Ansar-Ud-deen High School, Ìkòlé. It was believed that the influence of foreign religions led to the erosion of some indigenous burial rites.

Indigenous burial rites among the Èkiti people have undergone considerable transformation, particularly with respect to *Ifèyìngbè, Òkú-sùnyèwù* and *Ugbó-Òrìro*, while some practices like *Upè, Òdìgboro, Pakájà* and *Gbàrà-mògbó* remain resilient in the selected Ekiti communities.

Keywords: Changing patterns of burial rites, Indigenous burial rites, Èkitì communities

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Burial rites are the last honours accorded the dead. These last honours are in form of ceremonies and rituals performed to bid the deceased a farewell and also to make the path to *Òrun alákeji* through for the victim's final destination. When death is unnatural, rituals are meant to send the victim away finally so that he or she will go to where he is destined to go. They may be done so that the angered divinities would be appeased. Burial rites proper begin at the point of death especially for the aged: the rites strongly connote the fact that the dead person still lives on in another world or in another environment. In other words, death is not the end of life but a transition to another realm¹. The Yorùbá believed that a dead person is also aware of everything that takes place during the burial and that if things are done amiss the victim would turn against the family and children altogether².

It is against this background that the Yoruba³ particularly Ekiti⁴ people attach much importance in preparing their dead to the world beyond. It is in fact correct to hold that celebrating the dead is necessary no matter the odds in Ekiti. This belief is proved by the sentiments expressed at funerals: when a child dies, they say he or she is dead, but when an old person dies, they say: *Ara Àbá tàbí Èyè gbóná* - father's or mother's body is hot. This shows that it is only children that die, old or aged people do not die. It is also believed that when a husband dies, the wife would never say that her husband is dead, that

¹Aloysius M. Lugira, 2009, *African Traditional Religion*. (3rd edition Oxbridge), U.K: Chelsea House Publishers, 74.

²A.O.Oguntuyi Monsg. 1979. *A Short History of Ado-Ekiti*. Ado-Ekiti: Bamgboye and Co. press Nigeria Limited. 9; see also O. Imasogie 1985. *African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: University Press Limited. 38

³The Yoruba constitute one of the major ethnic groups in modern Nigeria. They are mostly found in the south-western part of Nigeria. They occupy the whole of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states and a substantial part of Kwara and Kogi States. A considerable number of Yoruba people also inhabit the south-Eastern part of the Republic of Benin (Former Dahomey).

⁴Ekiti is a state in western Nigeria, declared a state on October 1, 1996 alongside five others by the military under the Late General Sanni Abacha. The state was carved out of the territory of old Ondo state.

is, *oko mi kú*. She would rather say, *ó ti pesè dà*-he changes position. Besides, weeping is an important part of funeral rites because Ekiti people regard weeping as the money the deceased would spend in heaven. According to Oguntuyi⁵, weeping rite is seen as a privilege enjoyed by old people-the deceased while young ones are denied this privilege. For those below sixty years, they only mourn for them, they strive to avoid weeping for this category of people. *Ìsìnkú* - funerals are key occasions for celebrating the life of a person who has died, especially one who has lived a long, successful life and left a good legacy.

However, the contact of indigenous religion with modern trends and western lifestyle has, over the years, engendered changes in some aspects of burial and funeral rites among Ekiti people. This contact is such that the African is caught between a past he cannot retrieve and a future he cannot fully comprehend. Doubtless, most scholars agree that change is a distinctive character of religions, but so is its correlative constancy. Corroborating this contact, E.B Idowu⁶ writes, where an indigenous culture is strong enough it exercises power of rejection, in which case it takes what it chooses of the alien culture and refuses what is incompatible with its own ethos. In some cases, there are additions, in terms of its rites, and in other cases, subtractions, that may mean abandonment of the old for the new. An example here is the abandonment of the offering of *adiyeÌràná* – the pathway/fare fowl, which the people believes would pave way for the deceased's journey. In fact, there have been a lot of modifications, physical alterations⁷, adaptations and total extinction in some burial rites in Ekiti that calls for scholarly attention to point out the implications of this on traditional religion, cherished culture and tradition that are gradually going down the drain.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Previous studies are predicated on the indigenous burial rites generally and their importance which are separation, transition and reincorporation. Thus, studies by scholars

⁵A.O. Oguntuyi Monsg. 1979. *A Short History of Ado- Ekiti*. 9.

⁶Emmanuel.B. Idowu, 1975. An introduction: Religion and cultural renewal, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religion Studies* vol 9, No 2. December, 75-83.

⁷Isola Olomola, Jan/July 2000. The Decline of Traditional Deities: A Case Study of Egungun Ado. *ODU: A Journal of West African Studies*: New series No. 40. 61-64.

such as Mbiti⁸, Imasogie⁹, Badham¹⁰, Nabofa¹¹, Adiele¹², Etuk¹³, and Adogbo¹⁴ among others chronicles the general belief of Africans on the immortality of the soul; and judgement of deceased spirit which is based on his earthly character. Idowu¹⁵, Awolalu¹⁶, Adelowo¹⁷, Babalola¹⁸ Olatunji¹⁹ and Adegoke²⁰ focused their works on Yoruba belief, the act of burying the dead in the Yoruba traditional practice, ancestral spirit, judgement after death, different rites that must be observed, qualifications for being an ancestor which includes good earthly living, proper burial rites performed by his children and next of kin, and the importance attached to having a son as a successor; even those who wrote on the indigenous burial rites in Ekiti with which we are concerned in this study like Ojo²¹, Oguntuyi²², Owoeye²³, Olomola²⁴ and Ibitoye²⁵ worked on the belief of Ekiti on after-life, the essentiality of burial rites and the consequences of indecent burials. However, nothing had been said about continuity and change in indigenous burial rites among the Ekiti people, *vis-à-vis* the elements of continuity and change; the catalysts or factors responsible

⁸John.S.Mbiti, 1982, *African Religion and Philosophy*, Nairobi: Heinemann, 110-119

⁹O.Imasogie.1985.*African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: University Press Limited, 45-50.

¹⁰P.Badham.1989. God, Soul and the Future Life. S.T.Davis(Ed). *Death and Afterlife*. London: Macmillan. 40-55

¹¹Michael Y.Nabofa, 1978, Erhi: *The Concept of the Human Double and the Paradox of Self-Predestination in the Religion of the Urhobo*, University of Ibadan, Ph.D Thesis, 240-250.

¹²S.N.Adiele.1991. Religion and Contemporary Issues: The Church and Burial Ceremony among the Igbo of Nigeria” in *African Journal of Biblical Studies*. VI: 2, 21-30.

¹³Udo Etuk. 2002. *Religion and Cultural Identity*. Ibadan: Hope Publication, 160-178.

¹⁴M.P.Adogbo.2003. The Signification of Rituals of Destiny among the Urhobo in *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, 36: 1-2, 80-84

¹⁵Emmanuel B.Idowu, 1996, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*. London: Longmans Green and Company Ltd, 190-208.

¹⁶J.O.Awolalu.1981. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. U.K: Longman Group Ltd. 50-58.

¹⁷Emmanuel D.Adelowo, 1987, Death and Burial in Yoruba, Quranic and Biblical Religion, *Orita* 19: 2, 104-117

¹⁸E.O.Babalola.1992. Death and Burial Rites among the Yoruba Traditional Society – A Biblico-Musicological Appraisal *Bible Bhasham*, India; M.O.Adeniyi and E.O.Babalola.2001.*Yoruba Muslim in Christian Understanding*. Ipaja: Eternal Comm. 60-61.

¹⁹Babatunde Olatunji. 1975. *Àsínkú àti Ogún Jije* O. Olajubu (Ed) *Iwe Asa Ibile Yoruba*. Ibadan: Longman Nigeria Ltd. 69-88.

²⁰E.O. Adegoke, 1995. *A study of the role of women in the Burial rituals of the Ife of south western Nigeria*. Ph.D Thesis. University of London:

²¹G.J.A. Ojo, 1966. *Yoruba Culture*. London: University of Ife and University of London press Ltd. 115

²²A.O. Oguntuyi, 1979.*History of Ekiti*. Ibadan: Bisi Books; *Àsínkú àwo n ará Adó*.12-20.

²³K.M Owoeye, 1999. *Events and history of Itapa-Ekiti*. Michigan, Ann Arbor: Kolossa printers Ltd. 43-44

²⁴Isola Olomola, 1988, Contradictions in Yoruba folk beliefs concerning post-life existence: the Ado example. *Parish Journal des Africanisters*, 35:1, 108.

²⁵I.T.Ibitoye.2013.*Historical Background of Ekiti*. Ado: Bimbo Press.np.

for change, the effects of continuity and change, and the socio-religious implications for burial rites. This is the gap the study attempts to fill in scholarship.

In the light of the observations above, we ask the following questions: Can it be true that there are changes or discontinuity in the performance of burials today in Ekiti? If the answer is yes, what then are the elements of continuity and change in indigenous burial rites among Èkìtì people? What are the catalysts or factors combined to weaken and strengthen indigenous burial rites? What necessitated the plan to ban burial of the dead in family compounds?²⁶ Will this not undermine the traditional and religious values of the people? Why should someone who dies in an urban area have to be buried in his or her village? What are the effects of those who are supposed to be buried in *Ugbó-Òrìro*-forbidden bush and *Ugbó-Aláparà*- sacred bush but are not buried there? What is the implication of nonexistence of *Ugbó-Òrìro*, *Ugbó-Adéré*, and *Ugbó-Aláparà*? What are the impacts of burial rites on the religious, cultural and socio-economic life of Èkìtì people? Do traditional burial rites have any future? Do these changes occur as a result of western civilization, Christianity and Islamic religions? These are some of the questions this study seeks to answer.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study examined the practice of indigenous burial rites among the Yoruba with special reference to Ekiti-a Yoruba community. The main objective of the study is to identify the burial rites that are enjoying continuity and the ones that have discontinued in recent times with the aim of having holistic understanding of the elements in burial rites of the aged, high chiefs and *Ifá* priests; the catalysts/ factors responsible for discontinuity of these rites in burials; and also examines the emergent mode of burials in recent years. The study assesses the relevance of burial rites on the people and the effects of change or negative implications arising from improper performance of burial rites.

Similarly, the work investigates the impact of modernity on indigenous religion in relation to burial rites as a whole as well as the response of adherents of indigenous religion to modernity on change, thus enabling the researcher to make adequate and appropriate recommendations not blurred by ethnic or cultural prejudice.

²⁶Why Yoruba Bury their Dead at Home. WeeklyTrust Saturday 28 January 2012. <http://weeklytrust.co.ng/index.php/features/10595>. Retrieved on 20th January 2014.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this work is limited to three selected Ekiti communities in Èkìtì State of South-Western Nigeria. Although burial rites are not peculiar to Ekiti, the research site has been dictated by the belief of the indigenes about the enlightenment that came up among the three communities that brought about great change in burial rites. There were Christian and Muslim missions who were pioneers in the provision of western education and medicare services. These institutions were said to have brought rich harvest of converts to the communities and contributed to the growth and expansion of the missions while indigenous religion starts to dwindle. The establishment of high schools and tertiary institutions in these communities exposed the people to European culture, new opportunities and consequent transformation of the society and traditions. Hence, Adó-Èkìtì, Ìkéré-Èkìtì and Ìkòlé-Èkìtì became the hub of social, economic and religious life of Èkìtì that brought noticeable change, thus necessitating the choice of the places.

1.5 Significance of the Study

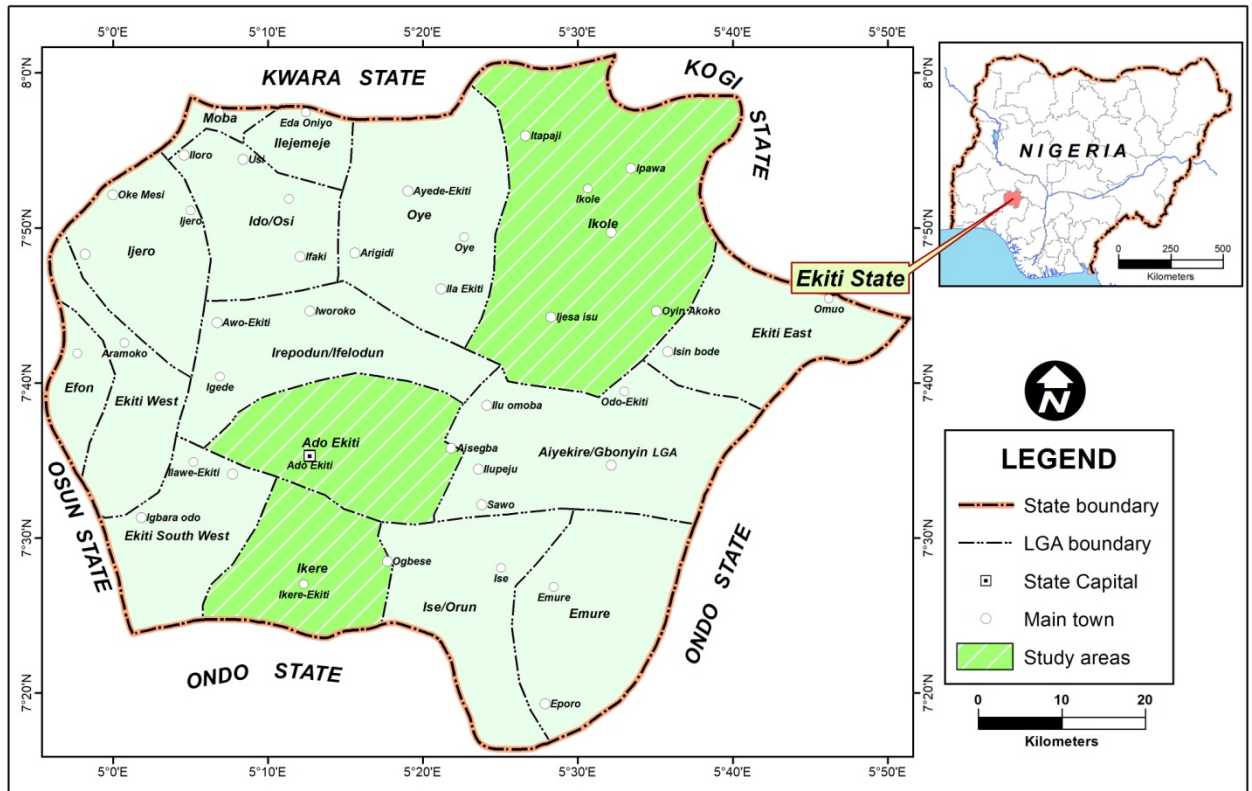
Given the above research objectives, the significance of this study cannot be overemphasized. The study provides appropriate knowledge on the nature of burial rites that have been affected by change. In that sense, it provides adequate information as to how the indigenous burial rites of Ekiti impinge on their modern religions. It offers comprehensive information on the catalysts and effects of indigenous burial rites on the people. Apart from the above, the study reveals some elements that have refused to change, thereby contributing to the dynamic nature of religious and cultural practices in the field of African Indigenous religion.

The study is significant because it addresses the issue of sentiments and indignation that often occurs between indigenes, ideas and beliefs on burial rites in indigenous religion and that of culture. It draws the attention of indigenous priests, adherents of indigenous religion and the society at large to the ill consequences of change of some burial rites in Ekiti. The study also creates awareness that will make indigenous worshippers identify themselves with their own distinctive personalities and uphold their cultural religious values in the face of self-imposing western culture, Christianity and Islamic religions, by this means serving as a reference document for scholarship in the area of African indigenous religion.

1.6 Limitations of Study

The process leading to the conclusion of this work did not go without some constraints. This started with lack of any written work/literature on the changing patterns related to burying of the dead especially in the three communities of Adó-Èkìtì, Ìkéré-Èkìtì and Ìkólé-Èkìtì. The researcher, therefore, was constrained to depend solely on the evidence of oral tradition for historical references and information. Unfortunately, oral tradition quite often could lack reliability, authenticity, originality and critical quality control due to the level of education of those interviewed. Another major problem is secrecy attached to some of the burial rites especially the burial rites of *Obas*, *Ògbóni*, traditional high chiefs and priests. However, a large amount of data was gathered due to the researcher's close relationship with some prominent traditionalists and indigenes of these communities with the promise not to divulge the sources of information.

1.7 The Ethnography of Èkìtì



Three selected communities in Èkìtì State – study areas

Background Knowledge of Èkìtì

Èkìtì people were said to form one of the unique and largest ethnic groups in Yoruba land. They are culturally homogenous and speak a dialect of Yoruba language known as Èkìtì. Perhaps this made Adelowo²⁷ to refer to Èkìtì land as *Okun* land. However, the word *Okun* land has been rejected by indigenes of Ekiti because there is another tribe called *Okun* land for example Igbomina or Ekiti Kwara. Some Èkìtì communities were said to have traced their origin from *Òrùnmìlà's* sons who established major towns such as: Arámoko, Ìjèrò, Itaji, Ìjèlú and Oyé in Èkìtì as found in *Odù Ìwòrì meji* where *Ifá* says:

²⁷ A.O.Oguntuyi Monsg, 1979. *A short History of Ado Èkìtì* Bamgboye co. press (Nig) Ltd, 4-5. The word “OKUN” is a dialect of Èkìtì. Okun land in this case refers to Ekitiland. E.D. Adelowo. 2000 “The Role of Religion in the New Millennium” Being the keynote address delivered during the NASR Conference held at the University of Ado Ekiti on November 5-9.

<i>Apá ní gbókoó tan iná osó;</i>	The priest whose name is <i>Apá ní gbókoó tan inaosó</i>
<i>Orúrù ní wèwù èjè kanlè;</i>	And the priest whose name is <i>Orúrù ní wèwù èjè kanlè</i>
<i>Ilè ni mo tètètè</i>	I stepped on the ground
<i>Kí ntóó topón;</i>	Before I made a divination
<i>Òpè tééré erékè</i>	The skinny branches
<i>Níi yàsí ya búkà m̀er̀ìndínlógún;</i>	Has sixteen branches
<i>A díá fún Òrúnmilà</i>	<i>Ifa</i> divination was cast for Orunmila
<i>Nwón ní baba ò ní bímo sòtù Ifè yí</i>	They said he will not have child at Otu Ife
<i>Mo gbó tíí,</i>	I heard
<i>Mo rín won, rín won</i>	I laughed at them
<i>Ìgbà tí ó kòó bí,</i>	When he had the first child
<i>Ó bí Omo-ni-mo-bí-tán-ni-mo-fí-ńsará;</i>	He gives birth to <i>Omo-ni-mo-bi-tán-ni-mo-fí-ńsará</i>
<i>Òun ni nwón fí joyè alárá</i>	He was the one installed as Alara
<i>Ìgbà tí ó t̀ùún bí,</i>	When he gave birth another time
<i>Ó bí Òràn-omó-tájorò ;</i>	He gives birth to <i>Òràn-omó-tájorò</i>
<i>Òun ni nwón fí joyè Ajerò</i>	He was the one installed as Ajerò
<i>Ìgbà tí ó t̀ùún bí,</i>	When he gave birth another time,
<i>Ó bí Omo-ni-mo-bí-tán</i>	He gave birth to <i>Omo-ni-mo-bí-tán-tán-ni-mo-fí-ńsará</i>
<i>Ni-mo-funfun-lára-gbérugbéru</i>	That I became <i>funfun-lára-gbérugbéru</i>
<i>Òun ni nwón fí joyè Olóyémoyin</i>	He was the one installed as <i>Olóyémoyin</i>
<i>Ìgbà tí ó t̀ùún bí,</i>	When he gave birth another time,
<i>Ó bí Omo-ni-mo-bí-tán-ni-mo-kégikégi ;</i>	He gave birth to <i>Omo-ni-mo-bí-tán-ni-mo-kégikégi</i>
<i>Òun ni nwón fí joyè Alákegi.</i>	He was the one installed as <i>Alákegi.</i>
<i>Ìgbà tí ó t̀ùún bí,</i>	When he gave birth another time,
<i>Ó bí omo ni mo bí Omo-ni-mo-bí-tán-</i>	He gave birth to <i>Omo-ni-mo-bí-tán-</i>
<i>Ni-mo-ńségií-tà-lójà-Ejìgbòmekùn ;</i>	<i>Ni-mo-ńségií-tà-lójà-Ejìgbòmekùn ;</i>

Òun ni nwón fi joyè Ońtaji Òlélé. He was the one installed as Onitaji
Òlélé

Ìgbà tí ó tùún bí, When he gave birth another time,
Ó bí Omo-ni-mo-bí-tán, He gave birth to *Omo-ni-mo-bí-tán*
Ni-mo-ńfèlúú-tà-lójà *Ni-mo-ńfèlúú-tà-lójà*
Ejìgbòmekùn ; *Ejìgbòmekùn ;*

Wón mú un, nwón fi joyè Eléjèlúmòpé. They picked and installed him as
Elejelumope

Ìgbà tí ó tùún bí, When he gave birth another time

Ó bí Ìgbà-tí-mo-bímo-tán-ni-òrán-mí-tóó-gún-gégé ; He gives birth to *Ìgbà-tí-mo-*
bímo-tán-ni-òrán-mí-tóó-gún-gégé

Òun ni nwón fi joyè Owáràngún-àga ; He was installed as *Owáràngún-àga*

Ìgbà tí ó tùún bí, When he gives birth another time

Ó bí Ìgbà-tí-mo-bímo-tán-ni-wón-ńfòwò-omò-mí-wò-mí ; He gives birth to *Ìgbà-*
tí-mo-bímo-tán-ni-wón-ńfòwò-omò-
mí-wò-mí

Òun ni nwón fi joyè Olówò lótù Ifè. He was installed as Olówo
in Òtu Ife

Òrúnmilà wáá dájó odún, Then *Òrúnmilà* fixes date for
his festival

Ó so fún gbogbo àwon omoo rè méjèèjo. He invited his eight children.

It is clear from the above *Ifácorp* that there are cities in Èkìtì that emanated from *Òrúnmilà* such as *Arámoko*, the head quarters of Èkìtì West Local Government with the king title *Alará*; *Ìjèrò*, the headquarters of *Ìjèrò* local government whose king is *Ajero*; *Oyé* the headquarters of *Oyé* local government whose king is *Olóyé*; *Ìtaji*, whose king is *Olútaji*; *Ìjelú*, whose king is *Eléjèlú*. It should be noted here that *Oyé*, *Ìtaji* and *Ìjelú* are all from *Oyé* local government area in Èkìtì State.

Just like every major sub-ethnic division in Yoruba land, Ekiti also believed that some of them came from *Olofin*, one of the sons of *Oduduwa* had sixteen children and in the means of searching for the new land to settle and develop, they all journeyed out of

Ile-Ife and settled in the present day Ekitiland. They discovered that there were many hills in the place and they said in their mother's language that this is *Ilè Olókìtì*- the land of hills. Therefore the *Òkìtì* later blended to Ekiti. This was also the opinion of that Ekiti historian and Priest Oguntuyi²⁸ when he said that the term Èkìtì was derived from *Òkìtì* meaning hilly outcrops and that an Ekiti man would feel more at home being called Èkìtì than Yoruba. So, Èkìtì derived her name through hills. It is interesting to also note that, all towns in Èkìtì state take a common suffix, Èkìtì, after their names.²⁹ For instance, Adó-Èkìtì, Ìkéré-Èkìtì, Ìkólé-Èkìtì, Ìdó-Èkìtì, Ìfàkì-Èkìtì, Oyé-Èkìtì, Ìlawe-Èkìtì, Òmùò-Èkìtì, Ùsì-Èkìtì, Ìjéro-Èkìtì, Arámoko-Èkìtì, *etcetra*. They speak a common dialect of Yorubá language and it was known around 1900 as the confederation of Èkìtì kingdoms.

Though the state is a homogenous one, there are slight differences in the Èkìtì dialect of the Yorubá language spoken by the people. This is informed and influenced by their spatial location, especially the border communities of the state. For example the people of Adó local government area do not speak expertly the same dialect with the people of Ijero local government area, while the people of Ìkólé speak something different from the people of Ìkéré area. The communities that are mainly influenced by their locations include Òtún (Mobaland) that speaks a dialect close to the one spoken by the Igbomina in Kwara state. The people of Òkè-Àkò, Ìrele, Òmùò-Òkè speak a dialect similar to that of the Ìjùmú in Kwara/Kogi state. The people of Èkìtì West and Èfon-Alaaye local government areas, that is the Èfon-Alaaye and Òkèmèsì communities, speak a similar dialect like that of Ìjèsà. However, the most striking thing about the Èkìtì is that wherever you find yourself in the state, you will understand the language being used in spite of the dialectal variations.

According to Adésina³⁰, the estimate population of the people as at 2006 was about 2.7million people. There are over forty major towns in the state, each with over 50,000 people (*National Population Census, 2006*). Èkìtì state was created alongside five other states- Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Gombe, Nazarawa, and Zamfara by the then Head of state and commander-in-chief of the Armed forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, late General

²⁸A.O.Oguntuyi Monsg, 2007, Traditional Ekiti Kingdoms. Ado-Ekiti: Hope Paper Mills, 2

²⁹S.A Olatunji, 2015, An Intercultural Exploration of Prophetic Symbolism in the Book of Ezekiel and Selected Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ekiti State Nigeria, A Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, 97-100.

³⁰Adesina Adetola, 2008, *Ekiti Kete: The value, the virtue and the vision*. Ikeja: open way global concepts, 2.

Sani Abacha, in a nation-wide broadcast to mark the 36th Independence Anniversary of Nigeria.³¹ The state was carved out of old Ondo state; it covers the former twelve local government areas that made up the Èkìtì zone of the Old Ondo State. Eventually, it was unanimously agreed that Ado Ekiti should be the capital city.

Socio-cultural Life of Èkìtì people

Traditional accounts say that Ekiti consisted of sixteen kingdoms, and that old Adó, Ìkéré and Ìkólé were the largest of these kingdoms. The basic social unit among the three communities is the compact patrilineage with its associated extended family - *Omo ulé* or *omo ebi*, presided over by its oldest member - *olóri-omo-ulé* who performs rituals on its behalf. In most areas in Èkìtì there is now a tendency for members to move out of the lineage compound and live apart. *Olóri-omo-ulé* is headed by an adult male or oldest member from each family and the onus is on him to perform rituals on behalf of the people.

There are many types of chieftancies in Èkìtì. But for the importance of this study, two chieftancies shall be concentrated upon. They are the ward chiefs and the religious chiefs. The ward chiefs are to bring peace and sanity to the community. The religious chiefs are responsible for offering sacrifices to various divinities in Èkìtì, hence the name *Àrò-oba*, meaning that the one who performs rituals for the king and the people. In these communities, principal priest chiefs abound. For instance, in Ado-Ekiti, the Apete, in particular, is the head of Ifa diviners and priests throughout old Ado kingdom; children were brought before him by their parents to find out or enquire about the fate of the children and also to know who among the dead in the family reincarnated. It is to be understood that the people have advanced and that chieftaincy issues especially the ward and religious chiefs are guided by the extant laws of the land and Ifá consultation for the screening exercise.

The people of Ekiti are hard working, upright, studious and very articulate. Ekiti men are predominantly farmers and prominent while the women engage in petty trade. The people of Èkìtì, like other Yorubá people, have very strong customs, such as marriage customs, naming customs, inheritance, market and burials.

³¹*Daily Sketch* 1996 Tuesday October 1, 1-2.

Religious Life of Èkìtì People

For most part of the pre-colonial times, up to early 20th century, Èkìtì people were adherents and devotees of African traditional religion with fervent worship of the supernatural, as ancestral and embodied spirits of varying categories most of which revolved round *Oba's* palace institution. The people believe in the Supreme God whom they call *Àbarisà* that is the father of all deities –*Bàbá-àwon-òrisà*, before the coming of Christianity and Islam. The name *Olórun* and *Olódùmarè* did not appear clearly before the coming of the two modern religions. It is believed that the name *Olórun* and *Olódùmarè* became popular among the people at the inception of Christianity and Islam.³²

The name *Olórun* revealed that there is something called *Òrun-alákeji*- heaven and that there is someone that owns it. *Èni tí ó ní òrun ni Olórun*- someone who owns heaven is God.

Countless names were ascribed to God in Yorùbáland such as *Atéřerę-kári-ayé* *Elẹ̀bùrú Ìkẹ̀*, *Òbìrìkítí* *Ọba tó n pọ̀jọ̀ ikú dà*, *àwámáridí*, *Alápá à n sá sí*, *Elétí gbóhùn gbáròyẹ̀*, *Ìmólẹ̀ ayé*, *Àkódá Asẹ̀dá*, *Ọ̀yìgìyìgì Ọba Àikú* the King that never die. Two *Ifá* corpus established the fact that nobody hears the death of God. The first is *Ogbè Ọ̀yẹ̀kú*:

<i>Kòròfo awo àjà ilẹ̀</i>	<i>Kòròfo</i> the priest of the underground
<i>L'ó difá fún Olódùmarè</i>	-divined for <i>Olódùmarè</i>
<i>Tó sọ wí pé a kò ni gbọ̀ kú rẹ̀ láéláé</i>	That no one hears your death forever
The second is <i>Ọ̀kàrà Ọ̀sá</i> :	
<i>Ọ̀dómọ̀dé kii gbọ̀ kú așọ</i>	The young will never hear the death of cloth
<i>Yeyeyẹ̀ lașọ n gbó</i>	Cloths will only turn to rag
<i>Àgbàlagbà kii gbọ̀kú Olódùmarè</i>	The old people will never hear the death of <i>Olódùmarè</i>
<i>Yeyeyẹ̀ lașọ n gbó</i>	Cloths will always turn to rag

It is noted here that God will never die and no wonder in Yorùbáland God is called *Olórúnkọ ẹgbàágbẹ̀je*– the one who responds to diverse names.

³²A.O. Oguntuyi Monsg, 1979. *History of Ekiti*. Ibadan: Bisi Books, 18-20

Besides the belief in *Olódùmarè*, the people have a number of divinities called *Òrìsà*-deities or lesser gods such as *Egúngún*, *Oítadò*, *Òdede*, *Aérégbé*, *Olóta*, *Onígbogídí*, *Òrìsàlà*, *Ifá*, *Ògún*, *Òrìsà-Ojídó*, *Òrólè Olósunta*; *Udiroko*, *Oro Oru*, etc. The people believe that it is man that brought the deities into being – reality, hence the statement:

Òniyàn lí mórìsà ayé – It is man that brought the deities into reality.

Ké sù d'òrò - Before they become objects of worship.

Òniyan ní m'ótòrùn á lé- It is man who brought cudgels (cane) home from the bush.

K'è si d'ùkó ebora - Before they become handful instruments of the deities.

The above statement shows that the deities were not just the figment of the people's imagination but embraces the truth that they came into existence through man. That is the essence of primordial deities, such as *Ẹ̀sàngó*, *Ògún*, *Ọlọ́ta* etc. The primordial deities were those that had supernatural powers bestowed on them by *Olódùmarè* and did exploits during their life time and through their extra ordinary deeds, when they died, people considered them to be objects of worship.

It should be noted that every family has its own deity. Each of these deities has festival such as *Ogun, ọ̀dún ifá* and *Udiroko* in Adó Èkìtì, *Olosunta* and *odún-oba* in *Ìkéré-Èkìtì*, *Orò-òru* in *Ìkòlè* etc and the festivals are celebrated annually. The calendar starts in May and ends in October³³. Some of the ancient customs and traditional rites are fast giving way to modern ones. Notwithstanding, there are major festivals in these communities such as:

Egúngún is central to the traditional religion of Ekiti people, and it is said to be their principal tutelary deity, second only to *Abarisa* in terms of benevolence. *Egúngún* represents the collective wisdom of Èkìtì people. Aside, *egúngún* especially in Adó appears during installation and burial rites of *Èwí*, the traditional ruler and some of his principal chiefs. They also appear during special occasions such as initiation or investiture and funeral ceremonies of deceased members of society. Masquerades were kissing

³³Oral Interview with Prince Atitebi S.Ó, Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are, *Ìkéré-Èkìtì* Interviewed on 6/08/2016.

masquerades during the installation of the present *Ògògà* of Ìkéré-Oba Adéjìnmí Adú Alágbado.

Udiroko festival is one of those celebrations in the life of Ado Ekiti people, it is a by-product of *Ajase-Ewi*- the *Ewi*'s supernatural power of conquest where the *Kabiyesi*-the king adorns first class crown and displays on stage several others as a confirmation of authority. The festival is also said to be the New Year day celebration of Ado Ekiti. The festival is said to be as old as the people themselves. It was established by their ancestors as the anchor of unity, understanding and a pivot of projection for greater attainment.

Another prominent festival in Adó-Èkìtì is *Odún Ifá*. *Ifá* happened to be one of the *irúnmọ̀lẹ̀* - deities that came from *òrun* – heaven to the earth. *Ifá* is *Òrúnmìlà*, *Òrúnmìlà* is *Ifá*, the real meaning of *Òrúnmìlà* is *Òrun ló mẹnì tí yòò là*. *Ifá* stayed so long in Adó-Èkìtì, as a result people have the saying: *Adó nilé Ifá* – Adó is the home of *Ifá*. During celebration the following songs are rendered:

<i>Ifá ká re lé o</i>	<i>Ifá</i> let us go home
<i>Ọmọ ẹnì rẹ</i>	lovely child
<i>Ọmọ ẹnì rẹ</i>	lovely child
<i>Ifá ká re lé o</i>	<i>Ifá</i> let us go home
<i>Èwí n lé Adó</i>	<i>Adó</i> the home of <i>Ewí</i>

During the celebration of *Odún Ifá*, people came together especially those who have needs such as money, wife, husband, children, houses etc. Their needs are presented during the festival. The following saying established the needs of people:

<i>Bí ẹ bá délẹ</i>	When you reach home
<i>Bí ẹ bá fẹ owó</i>	you desire money
<i>Ẹni tẹ ẹ máa bi nù-un</i>	ask <i>Ifá</i>
<i>Bẹẹ bá fẹ aya tàbí ọkọ</i>	you desire wife or husband
<i>Ẹni tẹ ẹ máa bi nù-un</i>	ask <i>Ifá</i>
<i>Bẹẹ bá fẹ ọmọ</i>	you desire children
<i>Ẹni tẹ ẹ máa bi nù-un</i>	ask <i>Ifá</i>
<i>Bẹẹ bá fẹ kólẹ láyé</i>	you desire a house in this world
<i>Ẹni tẹ ẹ máa bi nù-un</i>	ask <i>Ifá</i>

This shows that *Ifá* has answers to all questions according to Yorùbá belief - questions that bother human beings. They did not play with this belief at all. If there are needs to be met, *Ifá* is the answer that is the medium through which the people get those needs.

Olósunta is the deity of Ikere, who the people believe to protect them from any invaders. The Ikere history have it that, there was an *Ifá* priest named *Òjò Olósu* who specialized in healing and caring for children using traditional medicine. During this period in question, there were terrible happenings ravaging the land such as diseases, calamities and deaths. *Òjò Olósu* was called upon, as an *Ifá* priest, to divine what to do to avert and overcome such occurrences. He divined and *Ifa* said the people should offer *Ààre* - a stranger, as sacrifice to him. The people could not get hold of *Ààre* for the sacrifice, therefore, they decided to make use of *Òjò Olósu* who incidentally was *Ààrè*- stranger. The elders of the land agreed to lay hold on *Òjò Olósu* by force but as a strong *Ifá* priest, he was able to discover their evil plans and he ran away. He was pursued by the people but he disappeared from their sight. They got near a big rock and detected a hole beside the rock. Thinking that *Òjò Olósu* ran into the hole, they set fire into the hole with the intention to put him to death. Thereafter, as they left the place to go home, *Òjò Olósu* cried out from the top of the rock saying *Ùkéré*³⁴. Since then, Ikere people believe that *Òjò Olósu* resides in the cave-rock.

Therefore, *Olósunta* hill with a large cave in form of shrine where sacrifices are offered to the gods provided security and shelter for most warlords and their armies. It is also the venue for the *Olósunta* festival which is annually celebrated by the Ikere-Èkìtì people. *Olósunta* was believed to be a famous warrior who possessed supernatural powers. These powers he used whenever the people of the community were going for battle or whenever they were attacked by their enemies.

The following deities besides *Olósuntà* are still very much visible in Ìkéréland with various priests and people that give their worship to them: *Ògún*, *Egúngún*, *Òsun*, *Òrìsàlá*, *Ìwèsù* or *Èsù* worship and *Obalùfòn* worship - the chief priest of *Obalufòn* is *Àkámùjà*.

³⁴ Oral Interview with Oba Ganiyu Obasoyin, Aged 61, Olukere of Ikere Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/6/2017.

The people believe in a future judgment as this may be inferred from the following adage *Ohun gbogbo tí a ɣe láiyé, lí a o de ìdènà Ọ̀run ká* that is, whatever we do on earth we shall give an account thereof at the portals of heaven. The belief in the doctrine of reincarnation which some people referred to as the metempsychosis or transmigration of souls³⁵ is very obvious among Ekiti people, hence they affirm that after a period of time, deceased parents are born again into the family of their surviving children. It is from this notion that some children are named *Babátúndé* that is, father comes again. *Yétúndé* or *Ìyábò* that is, mother comes again.³⁶

They also believe in *Èmilalè* or *Alálè* that is ancestral spirits; these are the spirits inhabiting their land. Old people would not eat without giving a small portion to the *Èmilalè*. They cannot drink palm wine without allowing a small quantity to drop on ground for *Èmilalè*.

The rulers of the communities are called *Obas*. Their installation, coronation and burials are performed with solemn and lengthy rites which set them apart from ordinary people. Their appointments are, partly by *Ifá* divination, made by the king makers who are variably the high chiefs. They are appointed from among the children of past *Obas*-rulers. The following *Obas* are presently the rulers of the understudied and underlisted communities:

Ado-Ekiti- His Royal Majesty *Oba* Rufus Adejugbe Aladesanmi 111, who ascended the throne in December, 1990, is the 28th *Ewi* of Adó-Èkìtì. The first known *Ewi* was *Birítíòkun*, a prominent Prince of the house of *Òdùduwà*, was born and bred in the Palace in *Ilé- Ife* where on account of his oratorical skill became remarkable among his peers who nicknamed him *Elewi*. Ado- meaning, *i bee laa dó sí-* this is where we will settle. Ado people generally honour and credit their *Oba* with near-mythical powers of sound judgment and infallibility saying:

<i>‘Un u k’Èwí ayé bá ti wí</i>	Whatever <i>Ewi</i> pronounces
<i>L’Ègbà òrun ì gbà</i>	The lords of cosmos accepts

They also have several popular sayings called *Oriki* such as:

<i>Adó òrá à,</i>	Ado, the very artful
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³⁵S. Johnson, 2001, *The History of the Yoruba*, printed with updated map, Lagos: CSS Ltd, 26.

³⁶Samuel Kayode Olaleye, 2014, Akosejaye: trend and status in Yoruba communities, *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*, 4: 1, 94.

Omo a m'úkàrà s'ábé, eu jewho eats his cake under his vest.

Ìkàrà s'èjì s'inú agbada,

Even when only two cakes abound in
the pot,

T'èmi ùkókó.

Must surely have a whole cake.

Adó-Èkìtì and Ìkéré-Èkìtì were neighbouring communities, so close that one might find it difficult to know the boundary. No wonder then that both communities even sermonized, as follows:

Kú ná bá kú lóko Adó

When there is no fire on the farm in Adó

À n mú'ná lóko Ùkéré

Adó people could collect tinder for lighting
fire from Ìkéré

Kúná bá kú lóko Ùkéré

When there is no fire on the farm in Ìkéré

À n yà mú'ná lóko Adó

Ìkéré people could collect tinder for
lighting fire from Adó

Ìkéré-Èkìtì-His Royal Majesty *Oba* Adéjímí Adú Samuel Alágbado Àgílala Ògbénúote-soro 11, the present Ogoga and the 27th Ògògà of Ìkéré Èkìtì, he was announced and presented with the staff of office as the new Ògògà on 6th July, 2015. Ìkéré-Èkìtì is now seen as the second largest population in the entire Èkìtì state. In the east, it is bounded by Ìsè-Èkìtì. In the western south, it is bounded by Ìgbàrà-odò and Ijù, in Èkìtì state and Ondo state respectively. While in its northern axis, Adó Èkìtì, the state capital gives it a kiss. An average Ìkéré person is bold, courageous and outspoken. No wonder then they are accorded utmost respect any where. Someone says, when Ìkéré sneezes, Èkìtì as a whole stands on its feet. Meaning that, if there is any crisis in the state and Ìkéré people are not involved such crisis would not last but the moment they are involved, it would take Gods intervention to bring such crisis to an end. The name Ìkéré came from Ùkéré - a local seed that resembles groundnut. This was as a result of the swampy of the environment suitable for planting the seed throughout the year.

Ikole-Ekìtì- His Royal Majesty *Oba* Adéwumí Ajíbádé Fásiku Aládéselú 1, the paramount ruler of *Egbé-Oba* kingdom. The title of the *Oba* is *Elékòlé* meaning that the king of Ìkòlé, the one who owns Ìkòlé or the lord of Ìkòlé. According to tradition, there are twenty-four *Oba* called *Baále* in Ìkòlé, but *Elékolé* is the head. In *ÌkoléÈkìtì*, there are towns such as;

Ìkòyí,Ìsába,Otúnja,Aráromí,Ìjèsà-Isu,Òrin-Odo,Ùsín,Temídire,Àrà,Ikunrin,Ugbona, Ìjebú, etc.

The above mentioned *Obas* – *Èwí, Elékolé,* and *Ògògà* are among the “recognized *Obas*” in Èkìtì – recognized obas means an *Oba* so designated under the applicable law of the state *pelúpelú* meaning that the class of *Obas* who are generally referred to as *Aládémérindínlógún* in Èkìtì. The *pelúpelú*, in the olden days was a forum where the colonial (district officers etc) publicized government policies and the traditional rulers discussed matters affecting Èkìtì. For instance, the 1920 *pelúpelú* solicited the concurrence of the traditional rulers to the introduction of poll tax-*owó-ori* or *owó-ile*. In fact, when we talked of an *Oba* or a traditional ruler, in those days, we would be talking of a supreme ruler, *Aláse Èkeji Òrisa*- the next to God, or second-in-command to the divinity, *Ikú Babá Yeyé, Ekun, Olúayé,* an all powerful king, a dictator, one that was never challenged, *Olóri àwon aworo, Olóri àwon abore*- the Chief Priest, the embodiment of the people’s culture, custom and tradition. He is the father of all- *Babá gbogbo ayé*. An *Oba* is not supposed to be offended, molested, or insulted. One who insults, molests and offends an *Oba*, insults and offends *Olódumare*, divinities, the ancestors, and the people. Such a person runs the risks of losing his or her life.

<i>Eni bá r’óba fín,</i>	He who insults the king
<i>L’oba á pa.</i>	Is the one that the king kills.
<i>Kín la ñ f’oba pe</i>	What do you call the king?
<i>Ooba o</i>	O! king,
<i>Oba áláse</i>	The king, the wielder of sceptre
<i>Oba.</i>	King.

Apart from the traditional religion being practised by the people, there are other two main religions in the land. They are Islam and Christianity.

According to the interview conducted,³⁷ Islam was introduced into Ekiti in the later part of the nineteenth century by the Ado returnees from Ibadan who were captured during the Èkìtì parapò war. The growth of Islam was said to be steady during the reign of

³⁷ Chief Imam Jamiu Keulere. Interview Respondent. Age 65. Chief Imam A.U.D. Central mosque, Ado. Interviewed on 19/12/2013. See M. Mason 1970. “The Jihad in the South: An Outline of the Nupe Hegemony in Northern Yorubaland and Afenmai”, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 5: 2, 7, 189-192.

Àmódu Adéwumí, the son of Àlì Atéwógboye who succeeded to the throne in 1910 and reigned till December 1936 in Adó Èkìtì. During his reign, there was the reflux of many *Atoyóbò*-exslaves of Èkìtì origin from Òyó and influx of *Ará Òyó* - many Òyó - Yorùbá and Ìlorin – Yorùbá settlers. Some of these *Atoyóbò* and *Ará Òyó* were Muslims. By 1930, the Muslim communities had grown in numerical strength to such a level that they built mosques in these communities-Ado, Ikere and Ìkólé. This expansion is associated with the efforts of the members of the local branch of the *Ansar-U-Deen* (AUD) established in these communities in 1941. They established primary and secondary schools as agencies of propagation of Islam between 1940s and 1980s. Today, there are central mosques, medium sized mosques located at various quarters of the communities and smaller mosques built by individuals near their private homes and companies or business centers. For instance: Alhaji Akínbámi, Alhaji Arómokéye, etc. For a long time, Islam did not appear to have disturbed the peace of adherents of traditional religion. The adherents of both religions interacted with all and tolerated each other. But the love was shortlived when the Muslim clerics began to wage war against worshippers of traditional deities. However, there were verbal attacks and public assault against traditional worshippers by disciples of Islamic clerics. These were resisted with various weapons. Islamic cleric lost some of their followers; some were struck down with small pox. In the process, many of the prominent *egúngún* priests and other performing artists died.

Christianity is said to have penetrated much of Yoruba land in the second half of the nineteenth century and reached the Èkìtì land in the early 1800s³⁸. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) led the way in May, 1894 when Bishop James Johnson and Charles Philips penetrated parts of Èkìtì, up to Adó Èkìtì³⁹. Some ex-slaves returnees such as Helena Doherty of Ìjerò-a woman; Isaac Ifámúboní of Ùyìn/Adó; Oba /Òsewà of Adio; Charles Jémiriyè of Ìgèdè; Akinlùyi of Àísègbá were tremendously used. They eventually became the pioneer converts and messengers of peace to formal missionaries in parts of Èkìtì. Olómóla affirmed that only the Church Missionary Society, popularly known as CMS was active in a few parts of Èkìtì in the 1990s⁴⁰. The Church Missionary Society

³⁸J.A Adeniran, R.A Fayose, and J.A Fapohunda, 1974. *A short history of the introduction of Christianity to Ekiti*. 1894-1974, Ado Ekiti, See also Isola Olomola 2005. Ekiti Parapo aspirations since 1890s, 74.

³⁹Isola Olomola, 2005, Ekiti Parapo Aspirations since 1890s, 75.

⁴⁰Isola Olomola, 2005, Ekiti Parapo Aspirations since 1890s, 75.

established its first primary school (Emmanuel) at Odò Àrèmú, Adó Èkìtì and the Roman Catholic Mission opened its first school named St. George at Agèrè, Adó Èkìtì. By 1973, CMS (Anglican) alone had over 300 primary schools, 56 secondary modern schools and 36 grammar schools with a total pupil enrolment of 112,000 in the various Èkìtì communities⁴¹.

Members of these communities embraced the modern religions and the more they identified with them, the more traditional life is eroded, the less enthusiastic the people become of the traditional beliefs and practices, the more noticeable the decline in the traditional burial rites. They, therefore, felt that there was no need to contribute to family or lineage festivals or take chieftaincy titles, all of which they believed had vestiges of paganism; they were convinced to believe that Christianity was superior and more civilized. Indigenous religion was relegated to the background. The traditionalists were not happy with these developments. Eventually, the relationship became sour.

⁴¹Isola Olomola, 2000. The Decline of Traditional Deities: A Case Study of Egungun Ado, *ODU: A Journal of West African Studies*, 40: 1, 7, 69.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Death and Burial Rites in Africa

Africa is a continent with a great cultural and religious diversity; hence the beliefs and views which the various ethnic groups have about death and burial rites are many and varied. What is discussed and with whom it is discussed has a lot of limitations within the diverse African, religion-cultural context. For example, discussions about death and burial rites may be limited to adult males and females in some areas, it is considered unusual to have formal discussion about death and burial rites unless when there are incidents of death to handle. In such situations, the discussions are centered on assistance and roles which family members, friends, colleagues and other people may render or play to provide relief.

One then may ask for the *rationale* behind holding discussion of death and burial a ‘no go’ area. One is inclined to say that there can be no other reasons other than man’s ignorance and fear. Ignorance because of man’s failure to understand that death is part of development. According to Faley⁴², death concludes human life development.

The various ethnic groups in Nigeria for example have both different and similar beliefs. Interaction with major ethnic groups in Nigeria depicts common position on snake, sex and death. It is commonly believed that if snake is mentioned especially in the night, snake will appear. Therefore for fear of snake bite, snake is not mentioned at night. Sex is a ‘no-go’ area among all ethnic groups in Nigeria and probably beyond. It is erroneously believed that if sex is discussed, adolescents will become flirtatious. This is why the clamour of sex education has not got a solid footing. In the same vein, researching on death in the past was a taboo (*tabu*) because people believed that discussion on it will make death strike. However, in contemporary times, it has become a

⁴² A.O. Faley, 2001, *Human life Development: A basic text in developmental psychology*. Ibadan: Striking-Horden Publishers Nigeria Limited, 75.

ready topic of discourse. Today, there is a growing obsession about death. Lifton opines that death is the most important question of our time⁴³.

The word death means the ending or extinction of man and all vital functions or processes in an organism or cell. According to Imogie⁴⁴, it is the condition or quality of being dead. Based on his careful study and examination of death in Africa, Lugira asserts that death is the time when the soul leaves the body to become a spirit⁴⁵. He explains further that the essence of being human is independent of physical properties. Lugira's position is based on the premise that the soul has no corporeal manifestation, its departure cannot be seen or otherwise objectively determined, hence, the cessation of breathing is taken as a sign of death. Imogie confirms Lugira's submission by saying that death is a state of no more life. Ogungbemi while describing man explains that man has a soul without which he cannot exist. He argues further that by his soul, man performs various operations, for example being conscious and self-conscious⁴⁶. In other words Ogungbemi strongly believes that death sets in when the soul leaves the body. Awolalu captures this belief vividly when in his view of man: The African Traditional view of Man, he said that: Africans understood that however long a man lives; death comes as a necessary end. It spares no one whether young or old. But death simply means the separation of the body from the spiritual substance that is, soul⁴⁷.

Olaleye buttresses this view by referring to the soul as one of the component parts of man. His observation is as follows: the soul is the real man, the essence of being. It is this soul that the Yorùbá religion believes reincarnates and continues to exist in the hereafter⁴⁸. As Imasogie aptly puts it, personality soul does not die⁴⁹, it lives on.

Having said this, the following definitions are discovered: death is

- i. The event of dying or departure from life

⁴³ Robert J. Lifton, 1970, How America lives with Death .*Newsweek*, April 6, 81

⁴⁴ A.O. Imogie, 1984, Death and dying: A Needed Focus in Health Education Curriculum in Nigeria, *Physical Health Education and Recreation Journal (PHERJ)* 1:58-69.

⁴⁵ Aloysius M. Lugira, 2009, *African Traditional Religion*. (3rd edition Oxbridge, U.K: Chelsea House Publishers, 72.

⁴⁶ S. Ogungbemi, 1992, An Existentialist study of Individuality in Yorùbá culture, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* xxiv: 1-2, 101.

⁴⁷ J.O. Awolalu, 1992, The African Traditional View of Man, in, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, vol vi/2 December, p.115.

⁴⁸ Samuel Kayode Olaleye, 2014, Àkòsèjáyé: Trend and Status in Yorùbá communities of South Western Nigeria, *Ilorin Journal of Religion Studies (IJOURELS)*, 4: 1, 94.

⁴⁹ O. Imasogie, 1985, *African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: University Press Limited, 50

- ii. The permanent end of all life functions of an organism or part of an organism
- iii. The time at which life ends
- iv. The extinction of life or a state of being dead⁵⁰.

The submission here is that it is a point at which a person becomes physically dead.

Contrary to Imogie's assertion that death is an extinction, Olaleye held that, death from Yorùbá point of view is not an extinction, but a change from one life to another⁵¹. Paul Badham captures this feeling succinctly this way: If death means extinction, there is no question but that old age, suffering, disease and death will gain the ultimate victory over each and every one of us, and thereby bring to nothing the belief that each of us is eternally precious to an all-sovereign God⁵²

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that people who take death to mean the total 'extinction' is likely to describe burial rites as gratuitous, meaningless and unreasonable. But those who believe that death is a change from one life to another are likely to see burial rites as having meaning.

Put differently, Udo Etuk believes that death is a conclusion to every life⁵³. Ogungbemi who adopted the same view but with a little modification, went further and maintained that death is an individual encounter with reality and the finality of life on earth⁵⁴. Mbiti shares the same view and remarks that sooner or later everyone personally faces it⁵⁵. Maxine sheets – Johnson explains that death is not merely an entronement but also a separation. It is, he argues, a cessation of the lived body and a slow decay of the physical one⁵⁶ Udo Etuk conclusively states that since the moment anyone is born into the world, he or she becomes a candidate for death⁵⁷ Adiele also holds that: No matter one's

⁵⁰ Web (HYPERLINK) <http://www.oqsci.princeton.edu/egibin/web> on 15th December 2004.

⁵¹ Samuel Kayode Olaleye, 2014, Àkòsèjáyé: Trend and Status in Yorùbá Communities in South Western Nigeria, *JOURELS*, 4: 1, 94

⁵² P. Badham, 1989, God, the Soul and the Future Life, *S.T. Davis (Ed), Death and Afterlife*, London: Macmillan, 43.

⁵³ Udo Etuk, 2002, *Religion and Cultural Identity*, Ibadan: Hope Publications Limited, 178.

⁵⁴ S. Ogungbemi, 1992, An Existentialist Study of Individuality in Yorùbá Culture, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, 24:1-2, 108.

⁵⁵ John S Mbiti, 1970, *African Religions and Philosophy*, New York: Doubleday Co. Inc. 195

⁵⁶ Maxime Sheets – Johnson, quoted by Paul Badham, 1989, God, the Soul and the Future Life, *S.T. Davis (Ed) Death and Afterlife*; *Supra*, 43.

⁵⁷ Udo Etuk, 2002, *Religion and Cultural Identity*. Ibadan: Hope Publications Limited, 178.

attitude towards death, people must always die⁵⁸. This belief is echoed by Gyasto; we are alive, and therefore we will die⁵⁹. This is the simplest, most obvious truth for our existence.

At present, in most places the more conservative definition of death is the irreversible cessation of electrical activities in the whole brain, as opposed to just in the neo-cortex has been adopted. For our use in this study, a definition of death as given by Oláléye, a change for one life to another is embraced. This means, one is translated to another life.

From the foregoing discussions, the universality and continuity of death is of course acknowledged; and we like to agree with Mbiti that, as far as traditional African concepts are concerned death is death and the beginning of a permanent ontological departure of the individual from mankind to spirit hood⁶⁰. Africans believe that death is not the end of man; rather, it is a gateway to another life.

In Christian religion, death is seen as merely a gateway into a higher quality of life in heaven for a believer. In conceiving death as a gate-way into another form of life, Christianity does not however admonish that death ought to be magnified. On the contrary, it counsels that they should be situated in relation to the resurrection, which gives them meaning. Here, Paul becomes more emphatic and ecstatic, saying: For what is mortal must be changed into what is immortal; what will die must be changed into what cannot die⁶¹. Throughout the Holy Bible, there is a close link between death and sin. Death is part of the judgment that comes to Adam after his disobedience. Therefore, Apostle Paul regards death as the inevitable consequence of the presence of sin in the world.

Muslims, like their Christian counterparts, believe that bodily death does not end life. In particular, Muslims hope to gain mastery over death in paradise, if while on earth they did the bidding of *Allah*. According to Sura v1.60: it is the (*Allah*) who takes your soul and hath knowledge of all that you have done (Emphasis mine). Also in *Sura XCIX*,

⁵⁸ S.N. Adiele, 1991, Religion and Contemporary Issues: The Church and Burial Ceremony among the Igbo of Nigeria", in, *African Journal of Biblical Studies*, VI: 2 21-30.

⁵⁹ G.K. Gyatso, 2003, Geshe Kelsang Gystso's Books retrieved on <http://www.deathanddying.org> on 12/12/2009.

⁶⁰ John.S Mbiti, 1975. *An Introduction to African Religion*, London: Heinemann, 110.

⁶¹ I Corinthians 15:16-19. This quotation is taken from Good News Version of the Bible, published by United Bible Societies London, 1976.

7-8: Then, anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, shall see it. And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.⁶² This shows that physical death does not put an end to life. There is life after death. In other words death is the termination of man's physical and earthly life.

In Africa, death does not alter or end the life or personality of an individual, but only causes a change in its condition, this is expressed in the concept of ancestors – people who have died but who continue to live in the community and communicate with the families. Mbiti called this the living-dead⁶³. Among the Edo in Nigeria, death does not dissolve the relationship between the deceased that is incorporated into the ancestral spirit community and his family⁶⁴ as he now can be invoked at the family shrine⁶⁵. The Etsako people in Nigeria also believed that a man's death does not write a *finis* to his life⁶⁶. Among the traditional Igbo, people did not simply embrace death, nor did they become obsessed by the thought of it. Rather, elaborate sacrifices were made to slake the anguish it causes, not only reducing the pains which death causes but to see death as a transition, and not the absolute end of man's life. It is just the separation of the body and the spirit, the decay of the body and the transformation of the spirit from one mode of existence to another⁶⁷.

However, many people who are not inclined to any religion but who are educated believe that all life, including human life, evolved naturally and without purpose. In that case, there is nothing man expects to happen beyond this life. Our consciousness is merely the result of neurological activity within the brain. Once the body quits functioning, the brain dies and we no longer exist⁶⁸. This view supports extinction. Most Africans would find it impossible to accept the idea that death ends it all as earlier argued. It is generally believed in Africa that death is not the final end of man. The belief that the

⁶² D. Salloum, 1992, The Islamic View of Man, in, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, VI:2, 98

⁶³ John.S Mbiti, 1975, *Conceptions of God in Africa*, London: S.P.C.K., 320ff.

⁶⁴ Membership in the ancestral community is dependent on two things: The deceased character on earth which is the sole responsibility of the man during his earthly existence; and proper funeral rites.

⁶⁵ O. Imasogie, 1985, *African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: University Press Limited, 64.

⁶⁶ John A. Onimhawa, 1996, Euthenasia: A Philosophical – Theological Evaluation of the Traditional Nigeria Experience, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XXVII: 1-2, 127.

⁶⁷ E. Ikenga Metuh, 1987, *Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religion*, Onitsha: Inuco Publishers, 249-252.

⁶⁸ W.A.R. Thompson, 1977, *A Dictionary of Medical Ethics and Practice*, Bristol, Great Britain: John Wright and sons Ltd., p37; see also J.F Danielli, 1968, Life, M.D Law and M.V. Dixon (eds), Chambers Encyclopedia, 8: 533.

deceased is only making a journey from this earth to another better place is well defined in the mode of burial and funeral rites given to a dead in Africa.

There are people who see death as evil and punishment for human race as a whole⁶⁹. Understood this way, death is not only dark and menacingly ugly, but it is also heart-rending and crushing. The real or actual death faces the human person with the dizzying possibility of nothingness, his not existing at all. As such it is the impenetrable limit of his real existence. It is the act to be lived through by the Individual alone⁷⁰.

Among the people of ancient Greece, death was seen as resulting from the acts of demons or evil machination that are envious of human efforts, achievements and exploits⁷¹.

The idea that death is an evil and a destruction of the supreme good is also reflected in the types of names the Igbo give to their children. A few examples will suffice here: *Onwudiwe*-death is full of anger; *Onwuchuruba*-death scares away wealth; *Onwuatuwegwu*-death does not yield to any type of fear; *Onwubiko*-a plea to death to pleasure spare⁷².

Generally, 'Death' is never regarded as a thing of joy. In other words it is that which is unpleasant to the total well being of mankind. According to Hallgren, death is an enemy of mankind⁷³. Ayegboyin states it better; death is one of the warriors against human beings⁷⁴. While the findings of Ayegboyin dominated the thinking and belief of most Africans in general and the Yorùbá in particular, Ilesanmi attempts to reflect on the forces that plague mankind. He states that death is one of the evil forces that are under the direction of *Èsù*⁷⁵. He explains further that all the evil forces such as *Iku*-Death, *àrùn*illness, *Òràn*-trouble that plague man are all associated with *Èsù*. Therefore, *Èsù* can

⁶⁹ Aloysius M. Lugia, 2009, *African Traditional Religion* (3rd Edition), Oxbridge, U.K: Chelsea House Publishers, 72-74.

⁷⁰ Soren Kierkegaard, quoted by John Wild, 1955, *The Challenge of Existentialism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 38.

⁷¹ Samuel O Abogunrin, 1991, Immortality and Resurrection in Early Judaism, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* 23:1-2, 18.

⁷² Edmund Ilogu, 1974, *Christianity and Igbo culture*, Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 129.

⁷³ Roland Hallgren, 1992, "Religion and Health among the Yorùbá", in, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XXIV: 1-2, 68.

⁷⁴ Deji Ayegbonyin, 2005, But Deliver us from Evil... The Reposte of the MFM and its Implications for the 'Reverse in Mission, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XXXVII: .38.

⁷⁵ T.M. Ilesanmi, 1995, The Hearststones of IFA cult, in *IFE: Animals of the institute of cultural studies*, No 6, 34.

send any of these forces to plague any human being at will. Ilesanmi's assertion is certainly engrossing and demonstrates the nature of death, that death is traceable to *Èsù* – who holds the power of life and death over mankind⁷⁶. Hence, death is seen as a painful but an inevitable ordeal that everybody must go through at one time or the other. It may be painful, joyful, sudden, and it may be early or late in life.

Nabofa points out some causes of death. One of these is death which occur naturally or what people refer to as natural death⁷⁷. In this situation, the person would have gone through the stages of life and later dies. Life is a transition from infancy, childhood, adulthood, old age and eventually death. Udo Etuk remarks that, a man who has lived to be very old would have lived to see his children, grand children and great-grand children. The funeral of such a man is always a festival, attracting all his descendants, friends and relations⁷⁸.

Another cause of death which is very interesting and needs to be scholarly examined is that resulting from accident according to Imogie⁷⁹. An accident is an unplanned act that may either injure the victim or result in death. Accidents could occur on the roads involving vehicles, at home due to falls, children reaching out to drugs and taking them in excess. Also accidents may occur in school when dilapidated buildings or poorly constructed buildings suddenly fall on students and perhaps lead to the death of students. However accident can be viewed as one of the trivial or immediate causes of death, not remote or real causes. In his submission, Kubler-Ross quoted by Udo Etuk says if the life we are presently living is going to end, the ending is always attributed to a malicious intervention from the outside by someone else and that it is inconceivable to die of a natural cause or of old age⁸⁰.

Africans, Udo Etuk explains further, see death as being brought about by someone or something outside the individual. As a result, if death is caused by known diseases, or by clear accidents, the people believe that such diseases and accidents have befallen the

⁷⁶ Emmanuel Bolaji Idowu, 1986, *Olódùmarè: God in Yorùbá Belief*, London: Longmans Green, 81.

⁷⁷ Michael Y. Nabofa, 1978, Erhi: The Concept of the Human Double and the Paradox of Self-Predestination in the Religion of the Urhobo, University of Ibadan, PhD Thesis, 196-199.

⁷⁸ Udo Etuk, 2002, *Religion and Cultural Identity*, Ibadan: Hope Publications, 181.

⁷⁹ A.O. Imogie, 1984, *Death and Dying: A Needed Focus in Health Education curriculum in Nigeria*, 1: 58-69.

⁸⁰ Udo Etuk, 2002, *Religion and Cultural Identity*, Ibadan: Hope Publications, 183.

victim due to the machinations of some malevolent and maleficent agent⁸¹. Corroborating this observation, Aloysius Lugira says; each individual death always has a cause associated with supernatural powers⁸² which include mystical powers like magic, witchcraft, and sorcery⁸³. Hence, people could be killed by charms, black-power, or gods such as *Ògún* – the divinity of iron; *Şàngó*-the divinity of thunder. According to *ÌrosùÒsá*, *Şàngó* is called *A ké rara jánú ayé*, he is also known as *Alápadúpé; Ayélála, Amadioha, Levan, Japenwa*, etc. because such people are evil doers or thieves. It is on this that African believe that death due to an ailment which defies medical intervention and death through sophisticated war weaponry such as chemical, biological, nuclear weapons and death resulting from Boko Haram insurgents in the North Eastern part of Nigeria are attributed to the malevolent spirits who are intent on harming. This explains why each time a person dies suddenly or untimely, consultations are made to detect the remote cause of such death; and prayers are offered to the spirits of the ancestors to receive the dead man's spirit into their abode, and to also punish whoever was responsible for or instrumental to such death. However, today, people are never bothered to find out the remote causes of death, most especially, death due to unnatural occurrences, rather people seek for immediate causes of such deaths.

Having considered what death is, and causes of death, we can now examine the fear death ignites as viewed by scholars.

2.1.1 The Fear of Death

There is no doubt that human beings generally fear death. The fear of death is a universal phenomenon. People who do not have any religion, people who do not belong to a regular religious grouping, people who do not think that God exists to reward any life lived here on earth, and people who think they are genuinely and whole heartedly believed in the future life, all fear death. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross says, Death is a fearful, frightening happening, and the fear of death is a universal fear even if we think we have mastered it

⁸¹Udo Etuk, 2002.*Religion and Cultural Identity*, Ibadan: Hope Publications, 182

⁸² Aloysius M. Lugira, 2009, *African Traditional Religion* (3rd Edition), Oxbridge, U.K.: Chelsea House publishers, 74.

⁸³ Cewa of Zimbabwe sees the sorcerer as one who causes illness and death to his victims by the use of magical preparations see Max G. Marwick, 1965, *Sorcery in its Social Setting*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 9, 75-77.

on many levels⁸⁴ John Burbridge argues that death is a threat, which cancels all human possibilities. Death, he says, is not only the ultimate limit of natural life, but also a negation of life itself⁸⁵. O.H. Green corroborates this type of opinion when he avers that death is something to be avoided exactly because it frustrates all forms of human desires⁸⁶. Green's description of death shows that it is the ultimate impediment to human functioning and is therefore seen as an objective evil for man.

It might prove helpful to ask why death is such a frightening thing. Why do most people look upon their own death with dread? Stephen Davis identifies the following six reasons why man fears death:

- i. Man knows that death is unavoidable; but does not know when he will die. Accordingly, man lives constantly under the fear of death.
- ii. Death is unknown.
- iii. Every person must face death alone. Perhaps if we could experience death together, death would not be so alarming to us.
- iv. In death, man will be separated from his friends and loved ones.
- v. In death, man's personal hopes and aims about the future will not be realized.
- vi. There is real and fearful possibility that death does indeed 'end it all' for every person⁸⁷.

The above stated reasons lead people to wonder whether there is life after death or not. Stephen Davis went further to suggest four main answers to the question: What happens to man, if anything, after death? According to him, these answers are the major options we find suggested by reflective people both religious and irreligious, throughout history: The first option according to him is that nothing happens to man after he dies because death is the end of man. He may live on in other people's memories, or perhaps his influence will continue for a time, but as a conscious, acting individual he does not survive his death. Secondly, after man's death his body disintegrates permanently, but his mind or soul is reborn in another body (animal or human) here on earth, perhaps to be

⁸⁴ Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, 1969, *On Death and Dying*, New York: Macmillan, 5.

⁸⁵ John Burbidge, 1989, God, the Soul the Future Life, *S.T. Davis (ed) Death and Afterlife*, Supra, 44.

⁸⁶ O.H. Green, 1989, God, the Soul and the Future Life, *S.T. (Davis (Ed) Death and Afterlife*, Supra, 45.

⁸⁷ Stephen Davis, Introduction, S.T. Davis (ed), *Death and Afterlife*, viii.

reborn again many times. The third answer is that, after death man's body disintegrates, but his mind or soul lives on forever in an immaterial world. The last option is, after death man's body disintegrates, but at some point in the future God will miraculously raise it from the ground and reconstitute him as a person⁸⁸.

Defending his own version of the death ends all, Kai Nielsen argues that what happens after death is that our bodies simply rot and nothing survives thereafter. He describes the belief in an afterlife as both incoherent and unreasonable⁸⁹.

The above options are, however, not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, many Christian and Islamic scholars embrace both options 3 and 4. While the adherents and scholars of indigenous religion adhere to option 2.

In the light of the foregoing, one will not be making a hasty judgement to say that most human beings in Africa, both the educated and illiterates, religious and non-religious believe that death does not annihilate life. In other words, life continues after death.

For this same set of people in particular, even though death, as an event, is puzzling to man and is said to be inimical to life, it is however acknowledged that it is an inevitable and inexorable reality.

Apart from these opinions highlighted above, some other scholars have held the view that only the hope of immortality will ever make man to overcome the fear that death inspires. B. Russell is precise on this matter. In this connection he says: If we genuinely and wholeheartedly believed in the future life, we should cease completely to fear death⁹⁰. The phenomenon of ancestor worship, which is prevalent in most traditional religions, is also an affirmation of immortality among the people and panacea for the fear of death.

Although medical research has greatly decreased the annual number of death, however optimistic the statistical surveys, nevertheless much our lives span has been increased since 1900. Whatever the figures may show on murder, suicide and other forms of violent death, the inevitable fact of death remains unchanged. It is still our ultimate experience on earth. From the moment a child is born the fight against death begins, the mother devotes years of attention to the protection of the life of her child. She cooks,

⁸⁸ Stephen Davis, Introduction, S.T. Davis (ed), *Death and Afterlife*

⁸⁹ From options 1-3, most people will agree with Paul Badhum here that death is perhaps the greatest evil that could befall any individual. See Paul Badhum, 1989, God, the Soul and the Future Life, in *S.T. Davis (Ed) Death and After-life*, supra, 43.

⁹⁰ Kai Nielsen, 1989, The Faces of Immortality, S.T. Davis (Ed), *Death and Afterlife*, Supra, 1.

washes the clothes, the environment, the medical check ups and inoculation. But inspite of her loving care, the child has already begun to die. Before many years, the tangible signs of weakness will be obvious. The dentist will check the decay of our teeth; glasses will be needed to help improve our vision. Skin will wrinkle as time passes and our shoulders will drop and our steps become slower and less sure, almost without realizing it we have become to move closer to death. Health insurance will be used to help us cushion the blow. Life insurance will be purchased to govern our final experiences and obligations. We suddenly see our whole life as a great and never ending battle with death. In the end we know that death will always win.

Since death is an inescapable phenomenon, then it calls for a ritual disposal of the body of the deceased. As echoed by Adiele, people must always die just as they have to be buried⁹¹. Burial rites vary from one ethnic group to another but the motive behind it is the same. This is why Africans take full burial rites seriously. According to Urhobo belief, the soul of the deceased stays near the body or hover around the premises where the corpse is placed, watching over all the burial and funeral performances on physical part. The soul would be there for about ninety days before it finally goes into the land of the dead to be fully incorporated into the happy folds of the ancestors, which is if he is considered worthy to be among them, but if not, he will be driven out to lament his fate⁹².

The submission that the dead can only become an ancestor is based on how well he had lived his life in the physical world, was rightly expressed by Adogbo. He said, those who lived good and fulfilled life, free of sins, died at old age and are given the appropriate funeral rites, occupy prominent positions in the land of the dead called *erivwi*. On the other hand, those who were evil are banished from the spirit world to the bad bush where they live a frustrated and restless life. They become malignant spirits who are responsible for some of the calamities (such as epidemics, drought, etc) that happen in the world of the living⁹³.

⁹¹S.N. Adiele, 1991, Religion and Contemporary Issues: The Church and Burial Ceremony among the Igbo of Nigeria, *AfricanJournal of Biblical Studies*, VI: 5, 21-20.

⁹² S.N. Adiele, 1991, Religion and Contemporary Issues: The Church and Burial Ceremony among the Igbo of Nigeria, *AfricanJournal of Biblical Studies*, VI: 5, 21-20.

⁹³Michael.Y Nabofa, 1978, Erhi: The Concept of the Human Double and the Paradox of Self-Predestination in the Religion of the Urhobo, University of Ibadan. A Ph.D. Thesis, 240-250.

Nehring's summary with regard to burial rites of the Igbo culture is noteworthy and should be taken seriously in this regard. She declares that there are two funerals whose main objective is to safely accompany the deceased from the realm of the living to the spirit world. It is after a successful second funeral that the deceased will pass from the realm of *ita okazi* - a period of torment into a state of peace and contentment⁹⁴.

This second phase of funeral begins a few days after interment and may last from seven to forty days, involving several sacrifices, dancing and feasting. Thus, people refer to this second funeral as very elaborate and expensive. This assertion is justified by Uwalaka who averred that, in Igbo, a mother's corpse is not like a father's corpse. A father's corpse is something that is important to a child. But a mother's corpse brings terror. The day that a child's mother dies, that day, the child will pay the world a debt he owes on account of the breast milk with which his mother fed him⁹⁵.

Taking a cue from Uwalaka, one can therefore assert that the second phase of funeral (the second burial) has to do with ritual performance. That it is after the ritual of the second burial that the deceased would get to a place of rest. Among the Edo, a special rite is performed immediately following the regular funeral ceremony. Bradbury calls this *Ukomwen* meaning planting or installation⁹⁶. The *rationale* behind this is to elevate the dead to the status in which he can be worshipped as an ancestor.

Smith while writing on the best time to bury the dead among the Nguni in South Africa says: burial takes place often before sunrise as it is believed that sorcerers move round in the afternoons seeking for corpses to use for their evil purposes⁹⁷. It is clearly observed in Nguni tradition, that the best time to bury the dead is early in the morning.

The relevance of all these to the present discussion is to say that our beliefs about the nature and meaning of death determines to a large extent our attitudes not only to death itself but also to the dead.

⁹⁴ M.P. Adogbo, 2003, The Significance of Rituals of Destiny among the Urhobo, Orita: *Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, xxxvi: 1-2, 83-84.

⁹⁵ Abigail Nehring, Burial Rites of the Igbo culture/people – opposing views. <http://people.opposingviews.com/burialrites-igbo-culture-237html>. Retrieved on 20th January, 2014.

⁹⁶ M.A. Uwalaka, 1992, Women in Religion and Nation Building, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, Xxiv: 1-2, 16

⁹⁷ R.E. Bradbury, 1965, Father and Senior Son in Edo Mortuary Ritual, *African Systems of Thought*, Edited by M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen, London: Oxford University Press, 100.

2.2 Death and Burial Rites in Yorùbáland

Death is known as *Ikú* among Yorùbá people, and he is the personality who gets rid of people from this earth. Other names ascribed to *Ikú* are: *Ìrànsé Olórun*⁹⁸ - messenger of God. Idowu like other scholars says that death is the inevitable conclusion to man's earthly existence⁹⁹. Again, to the Yorùbá death is not only inevitable, but it is also a 'debt' which we must all pay. There are short expressions among the Yorùbá to the effect that *Gbèsè ni ikú, gbogbo wa ni a óò sán*- death is a debt that must be paid by everybody whether rich or poor. While Yorùbá admitting that all human beings will one day taste death, however see it as merely an inauguration that is an introduction of life in a new form in the spiritual realm of existence.

In his work, Adégòkè¹⁰⁰ fashioned out three traditional beliefs which he termed myths on the origin of death. The first was the relationship between death and earth and how both were given responsibilities to carry out. The earth was allowed to swallow humans while death was permitted to kill or take man's life. The second was quoted from *Odù Ifá* called *Ògúndà Kẹtẹ̀*. It has to do with regular meetings held among the divinities where each divinity was made to host other divinities. Death was one of them, having participated in others, he refused to host any of the meetings. Instead of this, he started killing people.

Ìtàn mìràn jẹ yọ láti inú Odù Ifá – Ògúndà kẹtẹ̀ sọ pé, ikú jẹ ọkan lára àwọn ọ̀rìṣà tí wọn dìjọ máa ń ẹ ipàdẹ̀ àtìgbàdẹ̀gbà, èyí tí ọ̀rìṣà kọ̀ọkan máa ń gbà bí ó bá ti kàn wọn. Ó pọ̀n dandan kí ọ̀rìṣà yòówù tí ó bá gba ipàdẹ̀ yìi pèsè oúnjẹ àti ohun mímu. Ikú lọ sí gbogbo àwọn ipàdẹ̀ yìi, ó bá wọn jẹ, ó sì bá wọn mu sùgbọ̀n kò gba ipàdẹ̀ kankan ní tirẹ̀. Ìjàpá, tó jẹ ọkan lára àwọn tó pèsè sí ẹbọ tí Ìjàpá rú làà ní ọwọ̀ ikú ọ̀jìjì.

A le yọ àwọn ọ̀títọ̀ ọ̀rọ̀ kan láti inú itàn ọ̀kẹ̀ yìi nípa Ikú. Àkókó ni pé Ọ̀rìṣà (Èni tí ó rí ẹ̀) ni Ikú. Kíi ẹ̀ lórí ènìyàn nìkan ni Ikú ti lénù, ó ní lórí àwọn agbára ipanirun èyí tí a ti fún un láti ìgbà ìwásẹ̀ - ìgbà tí Olódùmarè ń dẹ̀dàá. Èkẹta, jínjìn ààyé tó wà láàrin Ikú àti èni tí ó fẹ̀ pa kò ẹ̀ pàtàkì. Ikú lágbara láti pààyàn bí ọ̀ba ti kùmọ̀ rẹ̀ sínú ọ̀kun,

⁹⁸Emmanuel Bolaji Idowu, 1996, *Olódùmarè: God in Yorùbá Belief* (Revised and Enlarged), Ibadan: Longman Nigeria Limited Plc, 201.

⁹⁹Durotoye A. Adeleke, 2005, Even the Gods are Fools, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* Xxxvii: 21.

¹⁰⁰Ebenezer O. Adegoke, 1995, A study of the role of women in the burial rituals of the Ife of South-western Nigeria, A Ph.D Thesis University of London.

oriṣiürisii ilú, àwọn olú-ilú àti àwọn ojú-ilè ayé gbogbo. Lákòótán, a le bẹ Ikú nípa rírú àwọn ẹbọ kan fún un, èyí tí àwọn awo Ifá le dá fúnni. Nígbà miiran, adiyẹ, ewúré àti àgùntàn le wà nínú ohun ẹbọ.

Ikú – Death was seen as one of the *Òrìṣà* or *Irúmọlẹ̀* - deities that were joined together and held regular meetings with other deities. Each of the *Irúmọlẹ̀* was expected to host a meeting annually whenever they are having it. *Ikú* attended all the meetings hosted by *Irúmọlẹ̀*, ate and wined with them but refused to host any of the meetings. *Ìjápá*–tortoise happened to be the attendant in the meetings, he told *Ikú* to prepare and host a meeting but rather than agreed with tortoise, *Ikú* wanted to kill him, but was rescued by *ẹbọ* - sacrifice which he offered.

From the above, it is deduced that *Ikú* is an *Irúmọlẹ̀*, who voluntarily kills people at will and who can be appeased by *ẹbọ* - sacrifice to defer or delay the day of death.

The third has to do with the assertion that death have no specific role to carry out during creation since man was created to live endlessly and not to die. But because of the negative attitudes of man, *Olódùmarè* designed death as punishment and as a means for the aged to reach or visit *Òrun* and come back to the earth.

Ìtàn tó gbajúmò miiran láàrin àwọn Yorùbá sọ pé lásìkò iwásẹ̀. Ikú kò ní isẹ̀ kankan torí pé àwọn ènìyàn kò nilò láti kú nígbà nàà. Ọ̀nà wà láti ayé sí ọ̀run. Bí ènìyàn bá ti dàgbà, ó le lọ sí ọ̀run kí ó siáa lọ gbé ibẹ̀ pátápátá. Àwọn ọ̀mọ̀dé àti àwọn ọ̀dọ̀ máa n ẹ̀ ẹ̀ wò ẹ̀ gbogbo igbà sí ọ̀run pẹ̀lú okùn tí wọn máa n gùn. Olódùmarè ló já okùn nàà torí pé àwọn ènìyàn tí n wá sọrun jù. Olódùmarè wá mú ikú wá sáyé gégé bí ọ̀nà láti rí i pé àwọn àgbàlagbà ló n wá sí ọ̀run gégé bí babańlá tó ti kú. Àwọn àgbàlagbà nìkan ni ikú wà fún nípilẹ̀şẹ̀. Şùgbón ní inú ẹ̀şẹ̀ Ifá tí a mò sí Ọ̀yẹ̀kú pàlàbà, àwọn àgbàlagbà bá Ikú ẹ̀şẹ̀ ipàdé, wọn sì bẹ̀ẹ̀ pé rọra ẹ̀şẹ̀ pẹ̀lú àwọn, kí Ikú máa pa àwọn àgbàlagbà nìkan, kí ó máa pa àwọn ọ̀mọ̀dé. Ikú gba àbá wọn, láti igbà nàà lọ ni Ikú ti n pa tọ̀mọ̀détàgbà. Ní igbà iwásẹ̀, àwọn ènìyàn kíi şàdédé kú, àwọn àgbàlagbà tí Ikú pa nìkan ló máa n kú. Èyí ni Odù “Ọ̀yẹ̀kú-pàgbà-má-pèwe”. Wọn fejó sùn pé àwọn ọ̀mọ̀dé ti n lówó, wọn ti n gbé rere ẹ̀şẹ̀, bẹ̀ẹ̀ ló sì jẹ̀ pé àwọn àgbàlagbà le má şàşeyorí tó bẹ̀ẹ̀. Báyi ni wọn dábaà pé bí Ikú bá pa àgbà, kí ó máa pa èwe nàà. Àwọn ènìyàn bá pé ipaadé, wọn ránńşẹ̀ pe Ikú fún ibéèrè. Ikú dé. Wọn ni kí ó sì má fi àgbà didà pa ènìyàn mò. Wọn ní bí ó bá pa àgbà, tí ó sì mú ẹ̀mí àwọn ọ̀mọ̀dé

kò léèwò. Àpanupò káriayé wà lóri èyí, báyii ni ẹ̀ àdéhùn pé bí òun bá ti pa àgbàlagbà, òun yóò máa pa ọ̀mọ̀dé náà. Èyí lo fa ọ̀pọ̀lọ̀pọ̀ Ikú. Ní ìgbàkúùgbà tí Ikú bá pa ọ̀mọ̀dé, a máa ń dá Ikú lẹ̀bi. Ẹ̀gbọ̀n bí óbá pa àgbàlagbà àwọn ènìyàn á sọ pé Ikú ẹ̀ dáràdára.

From the above Yorùbá words, it is understood that *Ikú* did not have any specific duty to perform in the beginning because human beings were not made to die. If anyone aspires to go to *Alákeji*– heaven, there was a path that has been made from earth to *Alákeji* through which the young and the old people could tread and got there. But it was discovered that the young made frequent visits to *Alákeji* at will, *Olódùmarè* decided to cut off the rope to *Alákeji*. Hence, it is only the old people that are permitted to visit *Alákeji*, and the visit could only come through *Ikú*. Discovering this, the old people were displeased, they held a meeting with *Ikú* that he should involve the young. *Ikú* agreed and from that time, *Ikú* began to kill both the young and the old people.

It is observed that the initiates – Awo do not die according to Ìdòwú¹⁰¹. Hence, the saying:

<i>Ikú pa abírí, abírí kú</i>	<i>Ikú</i> slew <i>abírí</i> , <i>abírí</i> died
<i>Èní kò sí ǹnkan</i>	You say there is nothing wrong
<i>Ikú pa abìrì abìrì r̀orun</i>	<i>Ikú</i> slew <i>abìrì</i> , <i>abìrì</i> went to heaven
<i>Èní kò sí ǹnkan</i>	You say there is nothing wrong
<i>Ibi tí ikú ti pa ògíní</i>	The place where <i>ikú</i> slew <i>ògíní</i>
<i>Láí ẹ̀yẹ̀ ò dẹ̀bẹ̀ jẹ</i>	Never again do birds go there to feed
<i>È sí tún wí pé kò sí ǹnkan</i>	You still say there is nothing wrong
<i>Ẁon ni, kò sí ǹnkan:</i>	They answer, there is nothing wrong
<i>Ẹ̀ awo k̀i kú</i>	For the initiate never dies
<i>Awo k̀i r̀un</i>	The initiate never sees corruption
<i>Ẹ̀ ẹ̀ l'awo máa ń lọ sí ìtunl̀à</i>	The initiate only goes to ìtunl̀à-place of endless, true living.
<i>Ìtunl̀à, ilé awo</i>	<i>Ìtunl̀à</i> , the home of the initiates

It is believed that whoever dies, his spirit has led the body – *ẹ̀mí rẹ̀ ti loyẹ̀t* they believe that the corpse that is, the deceased body is still sacred.

¹⁰¹ E. Bólájí Ìdòwú *Olódùmarè: God in Yorùbá belief*. 201.

2.3 Changing Trends of Burial rites in Èkìtì land

In general, the Èkìtì like many other peoples of Africa, do not deny the reality and the changelessness of death. However, as with other human beings, some deliberate efforts are made to hinder or postpone its coming. According to Olalẹyẹ¹⁰², there is a specific *ẹbọ* -sacrifice that prolong life, he calls it *ẹbọ igbo*-old age sacrifice.

But death is not merely a passage but also a duty, an honour or veneration. This explains why, for example, the Èkìtì regard the death of an aged or elderly as a happy event and as a blessing to the entire family and community at large. Contrary to the belief of some scholars that sees death as an enemy. Generally in Èkìtì, the death of highly successful individuals is celebrated and often entails highly colourful and expensive rituals.

According to Èkìtì people, death is just a means whereby the present earthly existence is changed for another¹⁰³. For this reason, man cannot just be thrown away as a rag into refuse. Thus when an old person dies, it is announced with words and expressions such as *Àbá ti papòdàor Èyé ti relé* meaning the father has changed position, or the mother has gone home. It is believed that the rites accorded the dead on earth will clear the way for him to go unhindered into the spirits world. Hence the issue of cremation does not arise. That of course will not only be regarded as an act of desecration but more than that, it is an act of callousness and ingratitude. To cremate a corpse is automatically regarded as having burnt one's parent. Because a deceased to the Yorùbá, is not just a corpse but a living-dead. Thus when the child gives information about the burial of his deceased parent he will say: *Mo fẹ sin Àba mi* or *mo fẹ sin èye mi*- I want to bury my father or I want to bury my mother. It is not "I want to bury my corpse". The corpse is considered just in form of a person going on a journey, needed to be accompanied with all affections and gifts, bidding him farewell and wishing him thoroughfare. Thus they will say: *kọ bá délé ko kílẹ, kọ bá dónà ko kéré ọ̀nà*- when you reach home greet the people, when you get to the way greet the passerby. All burial rites especially accorded the one who died a natural

¹⁰²Samuel K Olalẹyẹ, 2004, Àkọsẹjáyẹ: Trend and Status in Yorùbá communities, *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*. (IJOURLES), 4:1, 90-91.

¹⁰³Olatunji A. Oyeshile, 2002. Towards an African Concept of a person: Person in Yorùbá, Akan and Igbo thoughts", in *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, Xxxiv: 1-2, 112.

death are meant to accompany the living dead on his journey and to see him through to his destination as well.

Our observation has been that the practice of the burial rites of the dead has been redefined in Èkìtìland compared to what obtains today. One of the distinct practices that seem to have changed is the practice of offering worship for the dead which ofcourse the people referred to as *Bibá baba sòrètàbí bibá baba ní gbólóhùn*. This rite is still been practiced but with little modification. It is very clear among the people to talk or mention the name of the deceased either father or mother whenever there are crises or problems that require their intervention.

Another noticeable change is the rite of weeping for the dead and the use of trainedcriers at funerals such as Afolabi Alakinyede popularly called *Abéḷékún sòkún*. Infact these people are versed in it. In modern times, professional mourners are gradually fading away from the scene.

Another distinct practice is the practice of a great funeral. Some people see the practice as a show of pride, a blatant show of affluence and ostentations displays of wealth and status, while others see it as an avenue to show due reverence to the deceased.

Today, in Èkìtì, cows are slaughtered, the number of cows depend largely on the financial resources and ability of the children and other family members. The slaughtering of cows has become mandatory and the children of the deceased can only be granted the indulgence of postponing it to a later date which may be several years after the event. Until a cow, at least is slaughtered, the funeral ceremony is not recognized by the extended family and the entire community or neighbourhood and is a stigma on the children.

It is true that, some burial rites are things of the past in Èkìtì, though some of the practices are still present today.

Among the continuity in burial rites is the question of *Yíyí èhìn òkú padà* – turning the back of the dead. *Yíyí èyìn òkú padà* is celebrated today in Èkìtì by the influential and wealthy relatives of the deceased. It should be noted herethat some who loved their deceased parents so dearly do enter into this type of ceremony in order to keepon remembering thepleasing rolesplayed by their parents.

Olurode and Olusanya¹⁰⁴ write on the continuity of *ita* (rite for the death of the aged on the third day after death) and *ije* (rite for the death of the aged on the seventh day after death). The *ije* is a more elaborate ceremony than the *ita*. Poor performance of the *ije* is seen in a very bad light and as a disgrace both to the deceased and his family. Hence, this practice is strictly adhered to today in Èkitiland.

Daramola and Jeje¹⁰⁵ assert that it is against their tradition to allow the dead to go to heaven with dirty body. As someone who is preparing for a journey he would not prepare and dress shabbily. Necessary preparation has to be made because he is unable to make it by himself before death nocks, therefore, the deceased family and relatives are required by tradition to prepare him neatly for the journey to *Òrun* –heaven. It is also believed that the destination to which the deceased is going is cleansed hence, he must be kept clean. There is no burial that will be done with red clothes, rather the people use white shroud. White clothes or shroud that is *aṣo àlà* symbolizes purity, cleanliness and blameless.

It is quite observed that before the influx of Christianity and Islam, the above stated rites and ancient practices were in place and as a matter of fact people were born into them, they are part of man but when modern religions set in we now have different or modified practices. Awolalu¹⁰⁶ calls this new ideas or modification or ways of burying the dead. However, as we have discussed in this thesis, ancient practices including burial rites have continued despite the incursion or interference of the aforementioned modern religions.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

¹⁰⁴Lai Olurode & P.O. Olusanya, 2011. *Nigeria Heritage: The Yorùbá Example, Bariga, Lagos: Rebonik Publications Ltd.*, 125.

¹⁰⁵Olu Daramola and A. Jeje, 1967, *Àwọ̀n Àsà àti Òrìsà Ilẹ̀ Yorùbá*, Ibadan : Onibonoje Press,

¹⁰⁶J.O. Awolalu and P.A. Dopamu, 1979. *West African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: Onibonoje Press & Book Industries (Nig) Ltd, 261.

Talcott Parson's Modernisation Theory is used as framework around which the findings of this study revolved. Modernisation theory actually originated from the ideas of Max Weber and it provided the basis for the modernisation paradigm developed by Harvard Sociologist Talcott Parsons. Parson was so critical of the traditional values of underdeveloped countries – he discovered that people were so much attached to traditional customs, traditional rituals, traditional practices and traditional institutions, which he argued were the “enemy of progress”. He further states that since society is not static, therefore for dynamism to be in place there is a need for progressive transformation of traditional or cultural practices to a modern society. To actualise this theory, Parson highlights five models or paradigms:

- (a) The parochial way of doing things
- (b) Pre-conditions to take off
- (c) The take off proper
- (d) Maturity level
- (e) The age of high mass consumption

This theory looks at the internal factors of a country while assuming that with assistance, traditional countries can be brought to development in the same manner whereby more developed countries have been.

Furthermore, Parson notes that there are a variety of variables that contribute to social progress and development of societies and seeks to explain the process of social evolution. The variables are:

- (i) The adoption of technological and mechanization which made people abandoned their old method of burials;
- (ii) Industrialization;
- (iii) Education – eradication of illiteracy;
- (iv) The drift of people into big cities; and
- (v) Development of mass media techniques.

Parson tries to point out the evolutionary advantage of specific institutions, he identifies religion as one of the conditions of building human societies. Some of the advantages identified by Parson include:

- (i) Easy communication

- (ii) Exposure to modern ways of communicating through internet
- (iii) Better education
- (iv) Comfortable life

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear, that the rapid growth of the communities, modern technology, western form of education, modern health facilities, and influence of modern religions are factors of change that affected indigenous burial rites. In those days, indigenous religious adherents were so accommodative, they embraced other religions especially the modern ones. This is incomformity with the explanation given by William Friedland that modernisation involves the society's capacity and ability to accept or accommodate the necessity for change.

The concept of modernisation further identified the most striking features as, cultivation of national and religious identities. Thus, openness is allowed. On the review of literatures, it is generally held that changes in indigenous burial rites came up as a result of urbanisation, western education, modern religions etc.

2.4.1 The implication of the theory

The implication of the Talcott Parson's modernisation theory to the current study is obvious. From the definitions of death and burial rites highlighted in this chapter by various authors Mbiti¹⁰⁷, Idowu¹⁰⁸, Awolalu¹⁰⁹, Nabofa¹¹⁰, Adiele¹¹¹, Adelowo¹¹², Oguntuyi¹¹³, Udo Etuk¹¹⁴, Ojo¹¹⁵, Owoeye¹¹⁶ and Ibitoye¹¹⁷ that death is the separation of the body from the spiritual substance. It is this spiritual substance that others call personality soul that does not die. But when the body that houses the soul dies, what

¹⁰⁷ J.S. Mbiti, 1982. *African Religion and Philosophy*. Nairobi: Heinemann, 110-119.

¹⁰⁸ E.B. Idowu, 1996. *Olódùmarè: God in Yorùbá belief*. London: Longman Green and Company Ltd. 190-208.

¹⁰⁹ J.O. Awolalu, 1981, *Yorùbá Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites* U.K: Longman Group Ltd. 50-58.

¹¹⁰ M.Y. Nabofa, 1978, Erhi: The Concept of the Human Double and the Paradox of Self-Predestination in the Religion of the Urhobo. University of Ibadan, A Ph.D Thesis, 240-250.

¹¹¹ S.N. Adiele. 191. "Religion and Contemporary Issues: The Church and Burial ceremony among the Igbo of Nigeria" in *African Journal of Biblical Studies*

¹¹² E.D. Adelowo, 1987. Death and Burial in Yorùbá, Quranic and Biblical Religion, *Orita 19:2*, 104-117.

¹¹³ A.O. Oguntuyi, 1979. *History of Èkìtì*. Ibadan: Bisi Books.

¹¹⁴ G.J.A Ojo. 1966. *Yorùbá culture*. London: University of Ife and University of London Press Ltd. 115.

¹¹⁵ K.M. Owoeye, 1988, *Events and history of Itapa-Ekiti*. Michigan, Ann Arbor: Kolossa Printers Ltd. 43-44.

¹¹⁶ I.T. Ibitoye, 2013. *Historical Background of Ekiti*. Ado: Bimbo Press, np.

¹¹⁷ Udo Etuk. 2002. *Religion and Cultural Identity*. Ibadan: Hope Publications, 160-178.

follows is the burial which is the traditional rituals performed to honour the dead and ensure the well being of the living. That is, a ritual disposal of the body of the deceased (burial rites) which has mostly been influenced by modernisation within the society and has opened the three communities to development through the adoption of western culture which made the three communities to witness rapid population growth and urbanisation. It is imperative to state that Parsons modernisation theory is very relevant to this study considering his models and variables of modernisation. Parson addresses the problem of parochial way of doing things which is underdevelopment and therefore appeals for maturity and thereafter suggest that traditional societies will develop as they adopt the above mentioned variables.

Thus performances of burial rituals are behaviours observable from the primary groups that that person interacts with and one identifies. Observation is one of the most powerful methods of transmitting cultural values and traditional rites. Through this together with oral interviews, one considers the elements of change and forces responsible for change without bias. If the forces are positive, then people because of their new experiences imbibe such ideas and if the forces are negative, the people modify their traditional rites or avoid such outrightly as a way of keeping their cultural reality as it is perceived, experienced and expressed by members of the society.

To this end, the approach helped the researcher to observe the elements that have changed and those that remained without bias and accept the statements and observations made in the field as valid. With this approach, it becomes very important to judge only by evidence and not by any preconceived notions or presuppositions. That is, to discover and describe the given experiences as they are presented in their pure form, as the immediate data of consciousness presents them.

The theory has introduced an understanding or a new way of doing things based on modern perspective. The people eventually give up parochial way of burying the dead through the importation of technology, western education and medical science. The theory has introduced a kind of interest that the people have. It also helped atleast to keep cultural reality as it is perceived and lived by members of the society without discarding core indigenous burial rites and cultural heritage.

Based on the above, Parson's work provides a scholarly template for the treatment of indigenous burial rites, and this is why this present study is anchored on Parson's modernisation theory.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This chapter presents the research methodology applied in this study. The research paradigm followed in this study is qualitative. According to Terre Blanche *etal*¹¹⁸ paradigms are all encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their inquiry. Methodology specifies the practical application of what is to be studied, how the researcher intends to practically go about phenomena to be studied which include the population; how the sampling was conducted; methods of data collection and data analysis will also be outlined in detail.

A research design is a plan or a blueprint that guides and informs how the study will be conducted¹¹⁹. This implies the procedures by which we approach problems and arrive at answers. It also provides control over those factors that could influence the outcome of the study. Hence, the use of qualitative, descriptive and explorative design to explore and describe the experiences of the people who are the custodians of burial rites and who have attended indigenous burial celebrations in the three communities in Èkìtì. Semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation and focus group discussion are combined to gather vital, correct and relevant information for the purpose of explaining observed phenomena.

Ayantayo¹²⁰ defined qualitative research as studying uncountable issues such as moral behaviour of a particular people, or spirituality of a religious sect. In other words, qualitative research involves the use of different materials, case studies, personal experience, life story interviews, interactional and visual texts that describe experiences and meaning in individual lives. This thesis will exploit qualitative approach in his

¹¹⁸ M. Terre Blanche et al 2006. *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the social sciences* (2nd Edn.) Cape Town: UCT Press.

¹¹⁹ E. Babbie and J. Mouton. 2008. *The Practice of Social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

¹²⁰ J.K. Ayantayo 2015. *Rudiments of Research and Research in Religious Studies*. Ibadan: Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

research and findings. The qualitative approach will include an oral interview with respondent, this interview will be conducted through verbal or telephone while constructive and technical questions will be asked from the respondents so as to get reasonable information from them. Furthermore, the thesis will make use of literatures and other relevant data, that is, books, journals, web-links, also studies from respected authors in this area of research will be examined and reviewed for this thesis. The *rationale* for using a qualitative approach in this study is the nature of the phenomenon that is under investigation which is the people's understanding and descriptions of indigenous burial rites. The intention of this study is to gain a rich and complex understanding of specific religious phenomenon.

3.2 Study Population

The population of the study is the people of Adó-Èkìtì, Ìkéré-Èkìtì and Ìkòlè-Èkìtì, the three communities under study. The resource persons interviewed include: *Ifá* priests, Aboringine Ògbóni confraternity members, Traditional Chiefs and Adherents of indigenous religion age ranging between 60 and 100 years, male and female, literate and semi-literate leaders of indigenous religion. They were about sixty (60) people. It is our belief that people of this age bracket should be capable of understanding clearly and freely discuss indigenous burial rites without prejudice. Though they were semi-literates, the researcher made efforts to come down to their level and freely ask questions using local dialects to elicit adequate information from them.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Ayantayo¹²¹ described sampling as an act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample that can fairly represent part of a population for the purposes of determining characteristics of the whole population. In this study, therefore, sampling is the selection of research participants from the entire population, and involves decisions about the people, behaviours and religio-social processes that could be observed. The sample for this study comprises male and female, 12 *Ifá* priests, 18 traditional high Chiefs,

¹²¹J.K. Ayantayo 2015. Rudiments of Research and Research in Religious Studies. Ibadan: Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan Press.

6 members of Aborigine Ògbóni fraternity, and 24 adherents of indigenous religion who were inclined to indigenous burial rites from many lineages were randomly selected for interview in the three communities.

3.4 Research Instrument

The instruments used are structured and unstructured interviews¹²² with focus group discussions designed to collect information from different people in the three communities.

3.4.1 In-depth interview Schedule

Parts of the oral interviews are structured on the prepared questions for this purpose. Such as: Could it be true that there are changes in the performance of indigenous burial rites today in Èkìtì? What then are the elements of continuity and change in indigenous burial rites among Èkìtì people? What are the catalysts or factors combined to weaken and strengthen indigenous burial rites? What is the implication of non-existence of Ugbó-Oriro, Ugbó Adèrè, and Ugbó Aláparà?

Some other relevant unstructured questions were asked according to the responses of the respondents to the questions asked. Follow up questions were also used.

3.4.2 Focus Groups Discussions

Focus groups are a qualitative research method and a way of listening to people and learning from them. They are guided group discussions to generate rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs. Ayantayo¹²³ asserts that the use of focus group discussion in research in Religious studies goes with asking a religious group (in this case indigenous religion) about their opinions, beliefs and attitude towards indigenous practices such as burial rites.

Salient points of the interview were written down as briefly as possible while at the same time the whole discussion were tape recorded for use after a formal consent of the interviewees have been obtained instead of concealing it. Both written and recorded

¹²² S.A Salau. 1998. *Introduction to Research Methodology*. Ilaro: LIMBS Press, p.7

¹²³ J.K. Ayantayo. 2015. *Rudiments of Research and Research in Religious Studies*. Ibadan: Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan Press.

information were synthesized and made use of. This, of course, afforded the researcher the opportunity to listen to the recorded cassettes to ensure accuracy.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

In traditional approaches, the concept of Validity refers to confidence in the measuring instruments¹²⁴. That is, it determines the extent to which measuring instruments measure what they are supposed to measure.

In this study, the researcher conducted interviews with the people who have had an experience either as custodians of indigenous burial rites or watching what happened at indigenous burial ceremonies. The aim was to allow the participants to describe their experiences during the interview. The participants' personal individual interviews and focus group were conducted. The research instruments were constructed by the researcher and cross-checked by scholars of religious studies. These were scrutinized by the research supervisor before their application.

3.6 Research Procedure

Terre Blanche *et al*¹²⁵ point out that interviewing is probably the most commonly used form of data gathering in qualitative research. This study used semi-structured interviews for data collection. They were used as a guide to have an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the people on indigenous burial rites. There are two stages in the procedure.

The first stage is the visit to the three communities where the researcher introduced himself to the respondents and allowing sufficient time for rapport building. The participants were informed about the aims of the study, the benefits of the study and how their participation could make a valuable contribution to the subject matter.

The second stage is the interview proper. Twenty people were selected in each of the three communities. The people were divided into groups composed of five members, questions were asked about their perceptions, beliefs and opinions about indigenous burial rites. The interview was conducted in such a way that members of the groups were free to

¹²⁴S.Kvale. 1989. *Issues of Validity in qualitative research*. Lund: Student Litterateur.

¹²⁵M. Terre Blanche, K. Durrheim and D. Painter (Eds.) 2006. *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences* (2nd edn.) Cape Town: UCT Press.

share their views on the continuity and change in indigenous burial rites in their communities.

The interview took place at the time when each respondent had indicated that he/she was comfortable. All participants were from the three communities who had volunteered their participation in the study. Those who agreed to participate also referred others whom they knew. All the interviews were conducted in the languages that the respondents were comfortable with, which is Èkìtì-Yorùbá and English. The interviews were audio recorded verbatim, which was agreed to by each respondent.

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis

As was earlier said, the data were collected from three communities in Èkìtì-State. Interviews and focal group discussions were gathered directly and personally by the researcher from the resource persons interviewed. Data were analysed descriptively *vis-à-vis* content analysis to examine the contents of recorded information.

CHAPTER FOUR
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN INDIGENOUS BURIAL RITES IN MODERN
ÈKÌTÌ SOCIETY AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Death and indigenous burials among Ekiti People

Death stops all living things to live on as earlier said; it is an unavoidable end of any living matter including man. Death is an equal right for well behaved, wicked, kind, short, tall, Christian, Muslim and traditional believers, rich, poor, king, servant, slave, young or old, male or female, etc.

According to the traditional believers, in one verse of *Odù Ifá* named, *Òtu ru po n o fun* recited for me by Awí O mo lo lá who is the current chairman, International Council for *Ifá* Religion Èkiti State chapter:

<i>Tí a bá soore a a kú,</i>	Whether or not we are philanthropists, we shall die
<i>Tí a bá s'íkà, a á kú,</i>	Whether we are wicked, we shall die
<i>Oló run O ba 'ò dári ikú ji enìkòòkan</i>	The king of heaven does not exonerate any one from death
<i>Èrúkó ilé abídí Sàngèrè,</i>	A very strong hoe with a very strong handle
<i>Pàràkòyé, ò dári ikú ji enìkòòkan</i>	God does not exonerate anyone from death
<i>Á dífá fun Àìkúlolá tí n somo</i>	Cast divination for Aikulola,
<i>Won L'òtún oòró</i>	Who is an indigene of Otun Ooro
<i>Wón ní ebo ni kí ó se torí ikú</i>	He was asked to make sacrifice because of sudden death
<i>Ewúré méfà lebo</i>	Six she goats were the ingredients
<i>O kábo móra, ó rúbo</i>	He made the sacrifice
<i>ni ikú kò pàá mó</i>	That death never kill him

This verse tells us that whosoever you may be, kind, wicked, poor, old, God-*pa□ra□ko□yé-* one whose ways cannot be understood by anyone, almighty will never spare anybody from death. Death could come naturally or accidentally.

Naturally, death could come as a result of all sorts of sicknesses, old age-hypertension, depreciation of body metabolisms, spiritual attack, committing suicide. Accidental-death could result from all sorts of accidents (e.g. motor), effects of war including chemical bombs, war weapons. Nevertheless every man is afraid of death. According to *Èjìogbè* chapter 2, verse 3 as recited for me by an *Ifá* Priest¹²⁶; it says –

Oká nain-nain l'ébu;

The person whose name is *O□ká nain-nain l'ébu*

Eré lawo isàlè□ àbàtà

The person whose name is *Eré lawo i□sa□le□□ a□ba□ta□□*

O dá fún Olófin – Àkúda

Made a divination for *O□ló□fin – Àkúda□*

Nígba ti n fojojúmó□ da ògbè méjì gborogboro When *ògbè*

méji□gbo□ro□gbo□ro□ comes in his

everyday divination

Won ni nítorí Kínni?

They said because of what?

O ni è□rù ikú nba òun

He said he is fearing death

Nwo□n ní kó kára-le

They told him to be ready

E□bo□ni kí o s□e

To make a sacrifice

Ó rúbo□ adan àti òdìdè□

He sacrifice a bat and a flying mouse

Lórin awo kósí lé□nu

He started singing the song of cult

Ó ní mo s'o□kú ro□, me de□□ kú ;

He said I hang death, I turn

into

mouse

Deere ni t'ádán,

Bat always be in upside down

Deere ni t'òdìdè□, deere.

Likewise a flying mouse

¹²⁶Oral Interview with Awi Omolola. Aged 62, *Ifá* Priest, Moshood, Ìké□ré□ Èkìtì Interviewed on 8/7/2016.

Death should not be seen as a terror based on this *Ifácorpous*. It is not designed to instill *erù*-fear into anybody.

As *Eleda*- God wants it to be, it is always so. Many are destined to die old; while some through the message of *Ifá* to him would be monitored to die old if he could make sacrifices or die young if otherwise for instance, in the Holy book of *Ifá Ogbè Òyèkú-Ogbe yèbí baba àmúlùmálà* which says:

<i>Mi ba ri kéré, mi je kéré</i>	If I see small, I eat small
<i>Mi ri gidi, mi je gidi</i>	I see big, I eat big
<i>Dá fun Àgbà, a bu fun E dan</i>	Cast divination for <i>Agba</i> , and <i>Edan</i>
<i>Wo n ní kí wó n rúbo àkú</i>	They were to make sacrifice

	sudden death
<i>Wó n ya nwó n ni eku emó</i>	Rats were divined for them
<i>E dan rúbo odindin eku e mó kan</i>	<i>Edan</i> offered a whole rat for sacrifice

<i>Àgbà ni eku e mó kéré fun òun láti rú</i>	<i>Àgbà</i> said rat is too small for him to offer as sacrifice
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<i>Ó ni ewúré ni òun yòò rú</i>	He decided to offer a goat
<i>Wó n pa ewúré sebo</i>	A she goat was killed for sacrifice
<i>Èsù ni ki àwo n o mo aráyé</i>	<i>Èsù</i> asked the children of the earth

<i>fonwo ewúré. kí wó n fi gbájú Àgbà</i>	To use the goat skin to cover <i>Àgbà</i>
<i>Wó n fo wó bájú Àgbà</i>	They beat <i>Àgbà</i>
<i>Àgbà fohun iyèrè</i>	<i>Àgbà</i> proclaimed <i>iyèrè</i> voice
<i>Ó ní o un ru gidi, o un je gidi, oun ku gidi</i>	He said he offered big, he ate big

<i>Ló bá kú gidi</i>	So he died big
<i>E dan ní mo ti sebo àkú winrin, winrin, winrin</i>	<i>Edan</i> said I offered small sacrifice to nullify death

From the above *Ifá corpous*, it is very important that one follows the instruction given without removing from it. If *àgbà* has done or abided by the instructions given by *Ifá* he

would not have died, though he offered sacrifice but not according to instructions given. *Edan* offered sacrifice according to the instruction given, he was not killed by *Iku*. There are lesson to learn here: death can be postponed or delayed; any instruction released by *Ifá* oracle should be followed religiously; obedience is very important when it comes to *Ifá* divination.

In Èkìtì communities, there are people called *eṣṣni oṣṣriṣṣaṣṣa*, among whom we have *Abuké* -the hunchback, *Aroṣṣ* -the lame, *Àṣṣin* -the albino, and *Adéṣṣtèṣṣ* -the leper. In a nutshell, one of two things makes death of a normal person unnatural: the time death strikes; and what killed him or the kind of death. Such deaths result from *òkú aláboyín*, *òkú àbíkú*, *òkú eṣṣnití sṣṣàngó pa*, *òkú eṣṣnití sṣṣànpònná pa*, *òkú eṣṣni kú sínú odò*, *òṣṣdóṣṣ*, etc.

The burial of *oṣṣmoṣṣdé*– the young was referred to as *òkú òṣṣṣfòṣṣ*¹²⁷. It is *òkú òṣṣṣfòṣṣ*-terrible death or mournful death because he is not expected to die young since he has not attained old age.

In Ìkéṣṣréṣṣ Èkìtì, it was observed by Prince Atítebí¹²⁸ that a deceased member of Methodist or African church could be brought to their cemetery regardless the age of the deceased provided the person has been confirmed in the church before his or her death.

In *Ifá Òṣṣkaṣṣnrán Oṣṣbàrà* chapter 5, that says: some children were born in the *emèrè* or *oṣṣṣgbánje* – born to die children, they always die young and we say they return to the spiritual realm and can come back again.

Oṣṣkànràn Oṣṣbara chapter 5 recited for me by Awi *Oṣṣmoṣṣloṣṣlá* an *Ifá* Priest – (see the appendix figures 2 and 4) which says:

Aridéṣṣgbadé ni sawo won lóde isálayé Aridéṣṣgbadé is their *Ifá* Priest in the
town of Isalaye

Àkùkoṣṣ gágàràgà ni sawo woṣṣn lode isálú-òṣṣrun Big fowl is their priest in *isalu*
òrun

Díá fún àwoṣṣn oṣṣmoṣṣ reṣṣwe-reṣṣwe Cast divination for
babies/children

¹²⁷E.M. McClelland, 1982, *The cult of Ifá among the Yoruba*. London: Ethnographical, 82.

¹²⁸Oral Interview with Prince Atitebi S.O. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Àréṣṣ Ìkéṣṣréṣṣ Èkìtì Interviewed on 14/4/2016

that dies of small pox is buried in *Ugbóorò*- the sacred bush or *Ugbóòrìro*- forest and the priests of *Şànpò*□*nná* are the ones responsible for the burials.

Idowu¹³¹ observes that when a death occurs due to *Şànpò*□*nná*, it is usually said of the deceased that the king has removed him or *Ilẹ*□*gbóná gbée lo*□. Hot earth has carried him away. In the past, there were *Şànpò*□*nná* processions. However, nothing of that nature again. Rather, the rites are carried on in houses or within compounds with little or no drumming and dancing. *Şànpò*□*nná*'s emblem and his shrine are located outside the village or town. According to the researcher's informant, those killed by *Şànpò*□*nná* are taken to a river and buried. It is observed that *Şànpò*□*nná* does not wish to see sacrifices of blood. Hence, when he is attacking people in a certain place, they must not slaughter animals. Awi states that when the pestinence-small pox occurred in a community, the members of the community would be required to observe a number of taboos and to offer *e*□*bo*□- or *e*□□*ro*□□- propitiatory sacrifice. He further said that the victim of *Şànpò*□*nná* was never buried at home but taken to the forbidding bush. However, animals are killed during the annual ceremony of *Şànpò*□*nná*.

Şàngó and *Ja*□*kúta* stand for the wrath of God. *Ja*□*kúta* is one of the lesser divinities of heaven- the primordial; whereas *Şango* is believed to have once been humanbeings who were raised to the status of a divinity- the deified. He became deified after his death, and he took on the attributes of *Ja*□*kúta*, the original thunder divinity of Yorubaland. *Ja*□*kúta*, literally means the stone thrower, or the fighter with stone or one who hurls stones or fights with stones¹³². *Ja*□*kúta* and *Şàngó* are regarded as co-workers in creating lightning and thunder. It is in this sense that Yoru□*bá* particularly Èkìtì tradition regards *Ja*□*kúta* and *Sa*□*ngó* as being functionaries of God's ministry of wrath and justice.

Those who have committed one crime or are in doubt of their character usually tremble with the emotion of dead or terror whenever there is lightning or thunder. The name *Şàngó* is not to be mentioned when storm is in progress. Therefore, his main function is to punish moral offenders and keep the erring ones away from perpenetrating

¹³¹Emmanuel B Idowu, 1970, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*. London: Longmans Green, 97-101, J.O. Awolalu and P.A. Dopamu, 1979, *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Onibonije press & Book industries (Nig) Ltd, 193.

¹³²Oral Interview with Awi Omolola, Aged 62, *Ifa* Priest, Ìkẹ□ré□ Èkìtì. Interviewed on 8/7/2016

more evils. The victims of *Ṣàngó* do not receive normal burial. *Apete* priest -the Adó Èkìtì traditional chief undertaker for the victims of lightning. In Ìké-ré, *Àkámujá* is in-charge of those who died unnatural death. When all relevant preparation had been made, *Apete* will then perform the necessary sacrifice with the assistance of other priests. Fashina Famuagun¹³³, who is *Adifálù Awo* of Adó Èkìtì maintained that *è-rò*- propitiatory pomade must be prepared while rituals are performed on the fateful spot where the unfortunate incident happened. It is consequently believed that if the rite is not performed, there will be no peace in that home. Uninitiated people are not expected to go near the place. The priest *Apete* or *O-baji* the Odò Adó counterpart of *Apete* as chief undertaker for all manner of 'unnatural' deaths and suicide keeps this thunder stone in his house. The body is thereafter taken to *Ugbó Alápaárà* - to be buried by the priests. The belongings of the victims will be forfeited to the priests and the victim must not be mourned. It is believed that the victim has been rewarded for his evil acts since the descent of *Ṣàngó* never occurs except to show his displeasure against those guilty of perjury, theft, robbery, fraud and misconduct¹³⁴.

Hunchbacks and the crippled are called *eni òrìṣà* that is they are owned by *òrìṣà òlá* diety. *Òrìṣà-òlá* is said to have made man as a rough figure and it was *O-bàtálá's* task to perfect man fixing other body organs. To him is ascribed the honour of forming the child in a woman's womb and so all physical deformities hunchbacks, albino etc., are regarded as his mistakes or his punishment for wrongdoing¹³⁵. The belief that the hunch is removed before burial is refuted by Jacob Orisámika¹³⁶ the *Olóri Awo* of Èkìtì. According to him, there is no place in Èkìtì where the hunch is removed, the victim is only buried with *Ìkòkò Odù òlá*- black big clay pot. In another interview conducted with an *Ifá* priest, the hunch is said to be removed before such body is buried. The hunch is used for medicine. The type of medicine they used the hunch for was not made known to the interviewer. Thereafter, the corpse is buried with the hunch in *Ugbó Orò*.

¹³³ Oral Interview with Chief Fashina Famuagun, Adifalu Awo of Ado Ekiti, 653 years, interviewed on 20 November 2015

¹³⁴ J.O. Awolalu & Dopamu, 1979, *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Onibonoje press, 84.

¹³⁵ Emmanuel B Idowu, 1970, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*. London: Longmans. 21, 71; see also E.M. McClelland, 1982, *The cult of Ifa among the Yoruba*. London: Ethnographical, 12.

¹³⁶ Oral Interview with Chief Jacob Orisamika, Aged 62, *Ifá* Priest, Òréré Òwu, and Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/10/2016

Infact, the kind of burial rites performed on the dead is determined by the type of death. It is important to understand that not all deaths require the cause or that the cause of every death must be sought for particularly among the Èkiti.

There are different ways of knowing what kill someone. The first is *àyèwò* – *Ifá* divination – *Ifá* is consulted regularly in Èkitiland, as the people believe that Adó-Èkiti *Lulé Ifá*– Adó is the house of *Ifá*, to know what their future would look like, and to know the step to take for their lives to benefit others and be desired by the people. There are other areas where *Ifá* divination could be very useful, they are: Occasions of loss, if a barren woman desire pregnancy, if there is a strange disease, and any situation that is beyond human imagination and ability. The *Ifá* priest allows the person to speak silently with *Ifá* by mentioning the name of the deceased and his or her mother upon a coin or naira notes which is then given to the *Ifá* priest. He then casts *Òpèlè*- divining chain together with some poems and then interprets what he discovered to be the cause of the death.

The second method is *Abokusòrò* - speaking with the dead. This is usually done in the night and at the grave side and also in the absence of the families of the deceased. The *Abokusòrò* speaks with the deceased, using the language only understandable to him, he then calls upon the deceased and asks from the victim the cause of his death and the people responsible for his or her death. *Abokusòrò* then informs the family of the cause of the dead and the people that were involved in the victims death.

Besides the above, there is *Pípe tàbí jìjì Èlédá ẹni* – calling or waking up the dead. Here the practitioner asks for the deceased's name and mother's name. The victim mother's name is important because mother's are closer to their children and that it is only the mother that knows the father of her child. He then calls the deceased's name aloud three times. The deceased answered and then questioned as to what caused his or her death. The deceased could then be armed with the medicines with which he would kill those who were responsible for his or her death. This is very similar to *Òkú ríró*- arming of the dead or standing the dead.

Another method is *isẹ wòlì*- prophet they also made use of *Wòlì* – prophets, most especially those who would not deceive them and those who possess special power that would allow them to speak with the dead. The *Wòlì* might prepare a special water or oil for them to sprinkle or used to rub their body; again the prophet may also prepare a special

prayer for them which most of the time the relatives would dream and the truth would be revealed to them through dream – this is what the people called *iṣé Wòlù*

Lastly, there is *ibúra* – swearing. If allegation is leveled against a suspect and he or she denies it, the suspect would then be made to drink a little water that has been mixed with *ilèpa* – laterite dug from the grave of the deceased before burial. That if the suspect is responsible for the death of the victim, he, too, should die within a period of seven to twenty-one days. It is believed that if the accused was involved in the death of the victim, as he or she drinks the water would die before the expiration of the said period. This particular method was used at the palace of Olómùò (though not part of the research areas) in Èkìtì State barely five years ago. A woman suspected of sorcery and witchcraft was allegedly killed by the water prepared and mixed with *ilèpa òkú* which resulted in the arrest of the high chief *Òrójò*.

4.2 The Burial rites of *Ifá* Priest and *Ògbóni*

Ifá priests are those that are initiated into the *Ifa* religion. This is most common among the Yorùbá of the south-western part of Nigeria with Ile Ife as the headquarters. According to chapter 3 verse 2 in *Ògbe Òyèkú*, which says that *Àjò l'ayè, Òrun n'ilé* meaning that human beings are sojourners on this earth, heaven is their home. In other words, after living on this earth for a while, we will all move to heaven to stay or live permanently. Living on this earth has no time limit. One day man would die to move to heaven and live there forever. During his stay on the earth, man is expected to give birth to offsprings or children of their own who would make the continuity of his race or generation. No wonder the following sayings:

<i>Taló sọ pé ikú o lóògùn</i>	Who says there is no medicine for death
<i>Ikú lóògùn</i>	Death has medicine
<i>Ọmọ logùn ikú</i>	Offsprings or children are the medicine of death
<i>Kí baba ó kú</i>	Let father die
<i>kómọ ó máa bé</i>	Let children live
<i>Òhun le mí fi tójó</i>	This prolongs lifespan-longevity

Hence, the prayer: *kóba ó jómọ ó le dábírà lẹhìn gbogbo wa-* that the king of heaven should allow children to be able to be celebrate all of us. Whoever fails to have children to continue his race is seen as *àkúrojú*-dead without children.

Yoruba used to give birth to as many children as possible in those days. One chapter of *Ifa* called *Òsé méjì* supported this, when it says in verse 1 that:

Tí mo bá ti dé

Whenever I come

Ilé Olúwo ni mo ó dé sí

I used to stay at Oluwo's house.

Òde de Ape na ni mo te te í ya

The home of

Apena is where I

first visit

Àtètè dé ko j'é kí n ráy e ké s'ólúwo

Coming late makes it unable

for me

to call Oluwo

Babaláwo Opó, s'e fá fún Òpó

The *Babalawo* that cast *Ifa* for

Opo

(pillar)

Opó sawo ro'de Owu

When Opo was going to Owu town

Opó sawo lo tí tí bí ìgbà, ó so nu bi epe. To cast *Ifa* for them there.

Àwo n ará ilé re wati, wó n ko rí.

His family members searched

for him

O kanjúwa ènìyàn ni I b'o ke le tí n lami lójú to ro-to-ro, A greedy person used to take extra big bolu's in his mouth with tears coming out of his eyes profusely.

A dífá fún E da n,

They cast *Ifá* for *Edan*

E da n n sawo n ro de Ibàdàn.

When *Edan* was going to cast

Ifá for

thepeople of Ibadan.

Ñjé E da n dé o, awo Ibàdàn,

Now, *Edan* has come, the

Babalawo

<p>Ó bá ma so□jisé□ i□ma□le wo□lé. of</p>	<p>of Ibadan I ought to be a staunch priest</p>
<p>Pa□ta□ki□ ló lakan seji, A dífá fún ye□yé olómún oru,</p>	<p>deities Pa□ta□kí cuts one into two Who cast <i>Ifá</i> for that mother with very big breast as moulded pot</p>
<p>Ló□jó□ tó fé□ lo□ te□ o□de Ìbàdàn dó. town of</p>	<p>When she was to found the Ibadan.</p>
<p>Ó rúbo□ Ijó ló n jó, ayo□□ ló n yo□□.</p>	<p>She made a sacrifice She was dancing and rejoicing</p>
<p>Ó s□e kótó, orin awo ló kósí lé□nu.</p>	<p>She sang the song of the <i>Babalawo</i>'s saying</p>
<p>Ó ní Èjì-ose de e e e, awo Ìbàdàn</p>	<p>Two <i>O□se□</i>'s had come, the <i>Babalawo</i> of Ibadan</p>
<p>Tí n'ó bá te□te□ kú láyé, Agbo o□mo□ ni n'ó su□n o o o.</p>	<p>If I don't die young I would sleep in the midst of</p>
<p>many</p>	<p>children.</p>

As earlier written above, the end of any creature is death. Whenever a man or woman dies, burial is the next thing to do.

The burial rites vary from one cultural group to another, a religious group to another. The burial rites of Christians are different from those of Muslims, also the traditional- *Ìsẹ̀se* priests vary from one traditional worshipper to another, for example that of *Ifá* priests are not same as *Ò□sun* or *Ògún* worshippers, hunters or warriors, have varying burial rites.

Here we want to look into that of *Ifá* priests. As soon as *Ifá* Priest dies, word is sent to other *Ifá* priests through the means of *Àrokò oùn*, the *Àrokò oùn* would then bring together a congregation of *Awo*. There they would move enmasse to the house of the

deceased *Awo*, and this was done mostly in the midnight when people would have slept and because in those days, there was nothing to hinder them, one can go from one place to another in the night without any harassment or molestation from security personnel.

The second day morning, the *Awo* came together without greeting anybody but with signs. Whoever is not initiated should dare not present during this ritual performance. Thereafter the children of the deceased were made to provide the following: *Emu ẹtù*, *obi aláwẹ̀ mẹ́rin*, if they are well-to-do, it could be more. The *obi*-kolanut is for prayer and there is another one that would be wrapped to the family of the deceased.

On the seventh day, there must be provision of he-goat, *ẹmu ẹtù* and *obi*. These items would be used to pray that he should not appear again. This is what the people call *yíya ẹ̀sìsílẹ̀* - prayer that his ghost should not disturb them again both the deceased family and the co-*Awos*. Thereafter, pounded yam and *otí*-wine are freely served but this is not the case in those days. It was *ẹmu*-palmwine and schinapp. *Ewúrẹ̀ dúdú*-black goat would then be prepared for the *Awos* by the deceased family. The *ewúrẹ̀ dúdú* is the food for *Awo-ijẹ Awo*.

When death comes as a mystery, people assemble to confirm whether he was killed by his enemies. There are various ways and methods the people could employ to know the remote or mystical causes of his death. The following songs are rendered during his burial:

1. <i>Ko □ sọpé o □ hun o □ ní báwa pé e e</i> <i>Ikú ló y'ọ □ wó □ re □ □ l'áwo,</i> <i>Ko □ so □ pé o □ hun o □ ní báwa pé o o,</i> <i>Alágbájá ma □ a ti lo □.</i>	He did not say he would not meet with us, death has removed his hand from the tray, He did not say he would not meet with us, The man has gone-died
--	--

2. <i>Awo mo □ □ wí 'ún lo □ o,</i> <i>Oríre l'agbóhu □ n awo,</i> <i>Oríre e e.</i>	Diviner did not bid us farewell, his voice was heard from a distance, far distance.
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<i>Màà je □ kí ǹnkan s □ é e □ nìkankan o.</i> <i>A ya òkú re □ o.</i>	Do not allow any evil to befall any of us We perform the ritual separating you from
--	--

us

A kò bá o rìn mó□ o.

We do not need your company any more.

3. *Ifamuagun! Ifamuagun!*

Ó pé kòò tíí jeku eléku

It's been long you have been eating
another persons rat,

Ó pé kòò tíí jeja eléja

It's been long you have been eating another persons
fish

Elékú màà béèrè o

The owner of the rat will inquire

Àlùjanjankíjan

Àlùjanjankíjan

Eléjá màà béèrè o

The owner of the rat will inquire

Àlùjanjankíjan.

Àlùjanjankíjan

As the grave is leveled the following song is rendered:

4. *Ògbìgbò kira ra l'ó□run*

Ogbìgbò greet our people in heaven

Ògbìgbò kira ra l'ó□run.

Ogbìgbò greet our people in heaven

The members of the cult group hold a feast and then return to their homes.

The burial rites of *Ògbóni* members and that of *Ifá* priest are almost the same but with little modification. When one of them dies *Àrokò* is sent to the *Ògbóni* priests who are expected to visit the house of the deceased to confirm the death of one of them and to perform the necessary rites. Some of the rites are performed in the night, when people especially those who are not members would not be able to see them and witness their deeds. Food and drinks are freely served. White and brown kola-nuts are broken and tossed into the pit. Pigeon and hen are killed and their blood drained into the hole, and their heads are thrown into it. The heads of rats, and fish, Shea-butter, palm-oil, small quantities of *èkuru* -beans, *àkàrà*-bean cake, and pounded yam are disposed of in the same way. As these offerings are placed in the pit, they say:

Lágbájá, orò re ni a wá se yio

Mr X or Mrs X we are here for your burial
rites.

Nìgbà tí o wá láyé, ajo□ nǐé□, a jo□ n mu

When you are alive, we ate and drank
together.

Ìgbà tí o kò sí mó□, màà bá wa mu mó□

Do not eat or drink with us again.

Màà bá wa lo sí òde mó Do not share our company any longer.
Orò tí a s e fún Olúgbó, Arè sà, Olúkòyí The ritual ceremony which was performed
Ni a s e fún o yí o for *Olugbon, Aresa, Olukoyi* is hereby
performed for you.

The burial rites of an *Ifá* priest varies from one town to another but have many similarities. That of Adó, Ìkólé, Ìkéré and nearly all other towns in Èkìtì are similar.

In this chapter also we will look into how the burial is done in chronological order. Immediately the *Ifá* priest died, the nearest *Ifá* priest would be called by his children to come to see the corpse. That priest would straighten the corpse, cover him up with cloth and he would call others. The priests would meet at the *Olúwo's* house- *Olóri-AwoIfá's* house for deliberations on steps to take. Some of them under the chief *Elésa*- the *Asípa Awo* would go to the house of the deceased, called the children and give them instructions. For example, what the *Awos* would collect from them, materials needed and if the deceased is having the loads- materials of *Awos* with him they would give them to the *Awos*.

Cleaning/bathing of the deceased follows. This is done after kolanuts have been used to pray. A she goat would be killed at the point, this is called *Eran balu we*. They then put the corpse in the coffin, but the face is opened for people to see. Graveyard called *Etígbè* would be dug at the point where his family would show to the *Awos*. The *Awos* would use kolanut to make *Ìwúre- àdúrà*- prayers before digging the grave called *obì iwónlè*.

The burial rites go further, all the *Awos* and the children would use wrappers tied on the right shoulder; this is called *pakájà*. Meanwhile, *Omi ero*- concoction for rendering evils harmless or useless, must have been prepared using *òdúndún*- lettuce, *tètè àtètèdáyé*- amarantus, and *ro ro wó* leaves with incantations.

Wooden staff called *Òdigboro* or *Ìtilè* would be carried on the right hand while going to where the coffin is. All the *Awos* would line up on a single file with *Ìtile*. They may start coming to the corpse from the outskirts of the town knocking the ground with the *Ìtilè* as they move. Songs would be rendered where one *Awo* would lead the singing as solo and all others would follow. Some of those songs include:

Solo: Ojú le ni to ní, Today is tough

All: Ògbòrò, ojú le

Ògbòrò it is tough

Solo: Ikú awo mo so□□ro□□ lóni□ o,

The death of Ifá priest

calls for

celebration today

All: Agu□nmo□□na□, ikú Awo mo so□□ro□□ o,

agu□nmo□□na□.

Agùnmòṅà, death of Ifá priest

calls for it

Solo: Ojú mo rómi goro o,

It is hard to bear

All: E□ni a si gbe□□yi□n lojú ro.

But the one that is last should

feel it

Solo: Igi a gbé le□pa, te□□yi□n ní ju□, ojú i te□□yi□n, e□□yin ni ju□ o,

È□yi□n ni ju o, ajá Onijan o,

All: Ojú itè□yìn o, è□yìn ní ju□ o.

End cannot be ashamed, the

end is

better

Solo: B'ugbin kan ku lain-un,

If a snail should die

All: Eyin ugbin e s alai sun-an.

The end of a snail would be better

As they were coming, they would be led by the person carrying the *Omi- ẹ̀rò* pot on his shoulder, who would be using broom to spray the water in the pot on ground. On getting to the corpse's coffin, the first male born and two elderly priests would put their own *itilẹ̀* on the coffin making three. Others would hold their own upright around the coffin. Worshipping with prayers for children and *Awos*, the *Ifá* of the deceased using the snail and two (2) kolanuts. His first son would be given one of the sacred palm nut- *Ìkín* of his father, one out of the four of the kolanuts- *awé-obi kan* to hold. These would be put on the palm of the deceased at the point of final closing of the coffin.

The carved *Ifá* wooden bowl with the sacredpalm nuts – *O□pón Ifá pe□□lú Ìkín inú re□□* would be closed and a person, usually his child would carry it on his/her head and dance to some songs as written above going to the graveyard called *Etígbè* or *Iboji□*, then the coffin would be closed finally. The *Ìtilẹ̀* would then be changed to the left hand as they move to the graveyard in a single file. This song is then rendered:

Solo: Ojókó kókó o' tije'ku ele'ku, It's been long you have been eating

another persons rat

Ojókó kókó ó tije'ja ele'ja, It's been long again you have been

eating another persons fish

E'le'ja mei yáa bére- re. The owner of the fish will inquire.

All: Àlu'jan- kinján.

Àlu'jan- kinján.

All the *Awos* would submit the *Ìtìlès* at a point near the grave. A she goat would be used to worship the *Ìtìlès*. The blood of the goat would be used to spray the *Ìtìlè*. The coffin would then be put in the grave. His *Ifá* would be cast by any of his apprentices at the bank of the grave- *Etígbe*. *Ifá* would reveal where the *Ifá* should be kept or whom to will. Another she goat would be killed called *E'wuré Etígbe*. The blood would be used to spray the coffin at the head region of the corpse. The *omi èrò* would be used to spray all persons at the graveside including children and *Awos*. The *omi-èro* pot would then be broken by knocking it on the coffin in the grave.

The most senior priests or chief priests would use their hands to pour sand/ earth on the coffin saying that, henceforth they no more deal with the deceased in any way. The children would then put their own sand on the coffin. The young *Awos* would fill the hole with sand, matching on it and continuing to sing:

Solo: Ó me i lo o,

He or she is going

All: Òní oro, é i lo o, òní oro.

Today's festival, he is going,

today is festival.

Entertainment of guests including *Ifá* priests and non- *Ifá* priests would follow.

As soon as an *Ifá* Priest dies, word is sent to other *Ifá* priests. They would all assemble to confirm whether he was killed by his enemies. There are various ways and methods the people could employ to know the remote or mystical causes of his death. The following songs are rendered during his burial:

Ko so pé òhun òní báwa pé e e

He did not say he would not meet with us,

Ikú ló y'ò wó re l'áwo, Death has removed his hand from the tray,
Ko so pé òhun òní bàwa pé o o, He did not say he would not meet with us,
Alágbájá ma a ti lo. The man has gone-has died
Awo mo wí 'ún lo o, Diviner did not bid us farewell,
Oríre l'agbóhu n awo, his voice was heard from a distance,
Oríre e e. far distance.

Màà je ki nnkan sé enikankan o. Do not allow any evil to befall any of us
A ya òkú re o. We perform the ritual separating you from us
A kò bá o rìn mó o. We do not need your company any more.

Ifámúá gún! Ifámúá gún!
Ó pé kòò tíí jeku eléku It's been long since you have been eating
 another

person's rat,

Ó pé kòò tíí je ja e lé ja It's been long since you have been eating
 another

persons fish

Elékú màa béèrè o The owner of the rat will inquire
Àlùjanjankíjan *Àlùjanjankíjan*
Elé ja màa béèrè o The owner of the rat will inquire
Àlùjanjankíjan. *Àlùjanjankíjan*

As soon as the rites have been corrected performed, the grave is covered with sand as they rendered the following song:

Ògbìgbò kírà ra l'ó run *Ogbìgbò* greet our people in heaven
Ògbìgbò kírà ra l'ó run. *Ogbìgbò* greet our people in heaven

4.3 The burial rites of the aged

Burial of people in the past varied but all types of burial were based on traditional rites, which depended on the nature of the death. The death of a young person is

considered a sad omen for the family and the community; therefore, there is no feasting and dancing during the burial. The scene at the grave-side of such a person is that of confused emotions; while some are weeping, others are cursing those who must have been responsible for his premature death. Those who died on hunchback were buried in a deep forest; pregnant women who died were also left in the deep forest. Otherwise the dead were buried in or near their houses. It is clear that when a death is attributed to a divinity, the adherents of that divinity- worshippers and devotees are responsible for the funeral rites of such a death. Indeed, they must not be given a befitting burial but a kind that will send them away never to return. Those who died through such means are not an entry into the abode of the ancestors.

According to Jemiriye¹³⁷, *Onisa ngó ni yoo sin okú e ni tí Sa ngó pa -* The priests of Sa ngó will carry out the funeral rites for a person that dies a death attributed to Sa ngó- death through lightning. *Àwo n Àwòrò Aiyélála ní sìn kú e ni kú ikú Aiyélála -* The priests of *Aiyelala* will carry out the burial rites of a person that dies a death attributed to *Aiyelala*. *Àwo n e ni ilé ijo sìn ko kan ni yoo sin en i ikú ilé ijo sìn bá pa pe lú -* It is the people of any particular worship that will carry out the burial rites of a person that dies a death attributed to their religion as well, whether such person is a Christian or a Muslim.

The Ekiti people, regardless of their religious persuasion, do not view death as the end of life. Rather, they see it as the beginning of a journey to the ancestral world. Therefore, there are numerous funeral rites and traditions that must be observed to ensure a safe and honourable passage of the deceased into the afterlife. The burial rites depend crucially on the kind of death. In this chapter, we shall be examining the burial rites of *Oba* – King, Traditional high chief, Ifá priest and the aged.

In the olden days, a sudden and untimely death was so common among the people and could occur anytime- *Ikú òjijì wó pò láàrín àwo n èniyàn ni igbàkúùgbà ló sè leèse lè*. As earlier said, whether death comes naturally or accidentally, burial is the next thing to do.

¹³⁷T.F.Jemiriye and Eniola Sikiru, 2005, *Religion- An Introductory Study*. Ado-Ekiti: Petoa Educational Publishers.

In the days of old, in this area of Èkìtì, burial rites differ. We have that of the king, chiefs, common man, the deformed- of various kinds, old, and young. We also have burial rites of circumstances that warrant the death e.g. those who died of fallen tree, water, wall of building, fallen walls etc. In a nutshell, burial rites are changing gradually some burial rites are continuous while some are faded away with time.

Traditionally, immediately an aged died, the face, including the nose and the mouth- *ìgbánu* of the deceased is tied up. This cloth is meant to cover the deceased mouth to prevent flies from entering; and also to hinder the deceased from taking immediate vengeance on his or her enemies. This kind of vengeance may manifest itself in the sudden death of such an enemy who comes to condole the bereaved. The burial of ordinary subjects of the town is similar to that of the chiefs, the deceased chief is seen as the father of his street and as such he is influential and his burial must not be done privately. The deceased children are expected to feed most if not all members of the street that he belong to. But the burial of ordinary person would only take care of the immediate family, relatives, friends and well wishers in terms of caring for people at the burial ceremony. The *Ọmọ ulés* -family members only are involved. In Ikere, there is “*gbàrà-mogbó* -“I just heard”, people will be given *otín*-drinks only as rich as the children of the deceased are, there is nothing like frying *àkàrà* – beans cake for the guests or for the dead.

The children would give one goat, fifty kolanut and money for bathing the corpse –*eṣran balùwè*. In those days, it is pigs they used for burial but things have changed. The family would prepare the graveyard, for this also, one goat, foods and drinks for the family members, but no money. The next is the burial of the deceased which also involves food and drinks for the family and friends.

In Ado Ekiti, there are songs that are supposed to be rendered when death knocks at the door of an aged. Such songs include:

Aṣi wa ó

We are searching for him or her

A mo ri

We cannot find him or her.

As the searching is goes on, some women engage in making *àkàrà*- bean cakes for guests, the family would collect two goats, palm wine about ten gourds, and pounded yam (50 wramps). This is done on a special day that is convenient for them. Nowadays family would collect a cow, cartons of beer, palmwine, schnapps, kolanut etc. The

holistic support. Community members provide labour such as pitching of the tent, cooking and baking, assisting with buying drinks and other errands.

The following stages are crucial to the burial of the aged:

The Meeting of the Deceased Relatives

The meeting comprises the relatives of the deceased where issues on the burial will be deliberated upon. Although, it is not compulsory that the burial be done immediately, postponing the date of burial would give room for proper planning towards the burial of the deceased and also allow those who are supposed to be in attendance to be physically present – (see the appendix figure 8). The meeting is designed mainly to disclose or discuss the roles expected to be performed by the deceased relatives, the amount of money needed, the sharing of the said amount among the children and family, the feasting, fixing of burial date, the venue to use for entertaining the guests, the time of cloth to put on, all these and more would be discussed in the meeting so that things are done decently and orderly.

***Iboji Gbígbe* - Grave Digging**

The site or place to be dug for the grave is done on instructions. Some deceased do instruct their children when they were still living, about the place and spot they should dig and bury the victim and how deep the grave should be. Before starting the digging, the first male born has to point to where the corpse will be buried in case the deceased has not specified where he would be buried before he dies. This is usually within the courtyard, in his sitting room, or in his bedroom in the olden days. Thereafter the sons-in-laws are expected to dig the grave to specification. In some areas, the deceased relatives can hire a professional digger of graves, who would do it on behalf of the family and are paid. Apart from payment received by the diggers, they are most times care for by the *Omólòókú*.

***Okú Wíwè* - *àti Ìdíkú*- The Cleansing of the Corpse and burial cloths**

In Èkiti, the cleansing of the corpse is an important rite. The importance of cleansing the corpse cannot be overemphasized, as it is designed to dress properly for the

deceased since the people believed that he or she is embarking on a journey to another world just as one prepares oneself before embarking on a journey. It is therefore considered right to dress the corpse properly so that he would have a place in *òrun*-heaven and so that his or her appearance there would be commendable. It is also the last opportunity which the children and the relatives have for lavishing their care on the aged person and they are happy performing this rite.

Ideally, women should wash deceased women and men should wash men, whereas a spouse is allowed to wash a deceased partner. However, in Èkìtì traditional setting, women are not allowed to wash corpses. Washing of the corpse, male and female is the responsibility of men. It is considered *dèwò* - taboo for a woman to wash a corpse of a deceased. The reason is that women are not allowed to see and know *orò* and *Awo*-mystery. One thing that is paramount is that in this part of the country, it is cloth that they use to wrap or wear on corpse before burying it. This could be seen in the book of *Ifa Òyèkúméjì* chapter 1, which says:

Òpá gbóngbó ni síwájú agbon-ni

A very strong whip goes ahead the early riser

Esè méèjì ni jìjaddù ònà gborakàngborakàn

The two legs move in one row

Awon Atipa abenu gbongbon

Those who use staff to walk different colours

A dífá fún òrúdojo as□o□

Cast divination for 155 clothes

A bu owó kan fún kèlè

kèlè the redish *aşo*

Ti n se as□o□ pupa lóde pàpó□

Known as red cloth in the town of *pàpó* town

Nígba tí wo□n ni e□bo□ ni ki wo□n s□e (ru)
sacrifice

When he was told to offer

Arútùmi Ès□ù ni ki won tu

So that they would not partake in sudden death

Kí won mabáa lo sórun òjìjì, Orun igbóná

Àwon O□run dojo as□o□ ko e□bo□

155 clothes offered sacrifice

Kèlè ti n s□e as□o□ - pupa lóde paapo□ lo rúbo□

Kèlè – red clothe in the town of *Pàpó* offered sacrifice

<i>Wó□n sefá fún kè□lè□</i>	Divined for <i>Kèlè</i>
<i>Kò pé□, kò jìnà, òkú agbo□n díí nílè</i>	Not long, the landlord died.
<i>Baale wo□n fo sánlè ó kú</i>	Their leader fell down and died
<i>Wó□n bè□rè□sí n gbé as□o□ soku níkò□ò□kan</i>	Clothes were placed
on the dead	one after the other
<i>Wó□n ní wó□n ye òkú – funfun, dúdú, àìrín, àlà</i>	White, black were said to befit the
	dead
<i>Wó□n gbé kè□lè□ jade,</i>	<i>Kèlè</i> (Red cloth) was brought out,
<i>Wó□n ní eleyi kò ye□ òkú</i>	Kele (Red cloth) was rejected
that it	Does not befit the dead
<i>Wó□n gbé kè□lè□ sé□hìn</i>	<i>Kèlè</i> was set aside
<i>Léhìn isìnkú, kè□lè□ ni às□é bayi ni àwo□n</i>	After burial, <i>Kèlè</i> began to
wonder	
<i>Babaláwo oun se senu ire kifa.</i>	This is how <i>Ifá</i> priest call <i>Ifá</i> corpous
<i>O ni oun Òsèrè magbò nìkan ni nbe□ lé□hìn</i>	It was only Òsèrè magbò that made
<i>ti o se□bo□</i>	sacrifice
<i>O ni kè□lè□ run, kè□lè□ tù</i>	That <i>Kèlè</i> was unacceptable
<i>As□o□ tóbá yan ’bo□ kílì yún- ‘run (Lo□-ò□run).</i>	The cloth that was divined
	would not go to <i>Ọrun</i>

It is clearly noted that cloth is used for wrapping the corpse for burial and the type must not be coloured red-*kèlè*- as revealed by *Odu□ Ifá ò□yè□kú méji□*. Here the clothes of all sorts were brought so as to choose some that befit burials. *Kèlè* was rejected because it does not befit burials. An interview with Prince Atitebi¹³⁸ revealed the importance of using white clothes for burial. This includes the sacredness of the deceased destination – *òrun*. The deceased is making a sacred journey to a sacred place. Body washing is very important, this, the people do not joke with. On the literary view, taking bath refreshes the

¹³⁸Oral Interview with Prince S. O. Atitebi. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are Ìkéré□ Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/2016

body and also brings peace, softness to the body. The rite of using white cloth is performed to make sure that the deceased gets to *Ọrun* with clean body.

At the burial, relatives invoked souls of the departed to reincarnate in the family. Children born into the family immediately thereafter were usually regarded as re-incarnations but were naked at birth. Such children are named *Babátúndé, Yétúndé, Ìyábò, Yéwándéet cetera*. This belief is still in place and the people still hold to it tenaciously.

While the Èkitì traditional religion adherents share the existence of heaven with Christianity and Islam, the belief that a man lives the same kind of life in the spirit world as on earth is characteristically the belief of these people and is still strongly held. Sometimes the expressions at funerals and the great importance attached to the ceremony itself attest to this fact.

The corpse or body then has to be wrapped up while the sponge and *ìgbàní*-mouth cover that was used to cover the deceased's mouth will be given to the first son of the deceased to keep.

The deceased would be dressed by his relatives before it is laid in state. This is an indication that the deceased is making a journey and is being prepared ready and fit for the new world-afterlife into which he or she is going. People moved very close to where the deceased is laid and utter words of farewell such as *padà wá ko wáyà lódo omo*- come back and fill the house.

***Ìtẹ̀kùú* -The Corpse Lying- in-State**

Here the corpse is laid outside in the coffin, dressed properly or neatly for people to view. As people see the bodies in the coffin, there are mixed feelings, as some would be recasting the victim's good deeds and be weeping, others would be pondering on the deceased shortcomings though within their hearts. This would not be made known. Majorly, people talk well of the dead even if the deceased was bad when he was on planet earth. The people solemnly made pronouncements such as:

Ikú fì ikà silẹ̀

Death abandoned the wicked

ó mú ẹ̀ni rere lọ

He took away the good.

Ikú ẹ̀ ikà

Death has done wickedly

Ikú o ò ʒe dá a o

Death! you have not done well.

The deceased children and relatives also pay their last honour to the victim wishing him or her well and beseeching the victim or the deceased to come back and that he should not abandon them. *Kó padà wá kó wá yà lódò ọmọ* - come back and reincarnate.

At this stage, the following words are uttered:

Má jò kùn

Do not feed on centipedes

Má j'ekòlò

Do not feed on earthworms

Oun kan ba n nje l'Órun

What people feed on in Orun

Ni ko bá an je

That should you feed on¹³⁹.

Women thereafter chant the palegyrie (*orikì orilè*) of the deceased.

Opósi – Coffin

At the beginning of life in the Yorùbá society, it was not in their habit to bury the dead. However, an incident happened that changed the situation of things. According to one of *Ifá* corpus which goes thus;

Ìdí pì,

Ìdí rise,

Èrà pì,

Èrà rise

Obìnrin kú nilé oko

Wife died in his husband's house

Ó relé àlè lóò jí

Only to come back to life at her concubine's house,

Bo ó kòlá o kólá;

Buy okro, if you wish to buy okro

Bó ó gbèni o gbèni -

Take gift if that is your wish,

Ewo I'aboro woju oloja I'oja Ejigbo! Why looking at traders face at Ejigbo market

A i wo o o-

It is forbidden to behold,

Oju oku lo n wo n ni.

It is a corpse's face.

The explanation of the above *Ifá* corpus is all about *Òrúnmilà* and one of his wives. – *Ìdí*. This wife wanted to divorce *Òrúnmilà* and marry another man. But *Òrúnmilà* was opposed to this; thereby gives this wife a close monitoring that made it

¹³⁹Emmanuel B Idowu, 1962, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, London: Longmans Green & Co. Ltd, 199.

difficult for the wife to carry out her plan. It resulted in her playing pranks of pretending as if she died. This plan worked as *Ìdí* was asked to be thrown into the bush by *Òrúnmilà* according to the usual method of disposing the corpses then.

After throwing her into the bush, the concubine who had been waiting untied her. *Ìdí* and her new husband immediately left the community for another place. *Ìdí* from the new settlement always goes to *Èjìgbò market to sell okro*. *Èjìgbò* market was a general market where everybody comes to buy and sell in those days every market day. One of those days, she was discovered by someone from her former community. The bearers having sighted her, kept close look at her as if he wanted to buy *okro*. This made the woman rebuked him sharply and said, *Bó ó kòá o kólá, Bó ó gbèni, o gbèni, Èwo làbòrò wójú olójà L'èjìgbò, Aìwó ó, Ojú òkú lo ñwònni* - buy okro if you wish and get gift; what warranted looking at the marketer at *Èjìgbò* market, looking at corpse's face is forbidden. This was reported to *Òrúnmilà* who organized and ordered some able bodied men to go there and bring her back to him¹⁴⁰.

Eventually, the shame of what she did turned to a sickness that actually killed her. Rather for them to throw her to the bush as before, and for the fear that she may be pretending again, a grave was dug and she was buried there. The burial place was watched for some days to avoid anybody coming there to exhume the body and take it away. This according to the *odù-ifá* corpus was the beginning of burying the dead in the ground in Yorubaland.

The onus is on the *àrólé* that is a first male child of the deceased to purchase a coffin and the type of the coffin depends largely on the financial capability of the deceased *àrólé*. Fakuyide¹⁴¹ discuss the time he was to burry his father in law that members of the town were looking down on them about the type of coffin that would be brought because the deceased children were poor. He said, help came from different people and this caused the people to change their mind concerning them. It seems there is a kind of competitive spirit that made people to wanting to do what they are financially incapacitated to do by having regard for the deceased children with costly coffin or casket. Although this is

¹⁴⁰Oladipo Yemitan & Olajide Ogundele, quoted by Olajide Amos Oluseyi 2015. "Conflict Inherent in Church Cemetery and Traditional Home Burial in Aisegba Community of Ekiti State, Nigeria". M.A. Dissertation, University of Ibadan. 13-14.

¹⁴¹Oral interview with Deacon Taiwo Fakuyide, Aged 48. Christian. interviewed on 19/8/2016

cherish by the aged that their children would grow to adulthood and be wealthy to arrange great funeral ceremonies for them when they die.

In the past, only the well-to-do- can afford a coffin¹⁴². Today it is a common practice, even some go to the extent of purchasing or making costly casket or coffin for their corpse. It is also observed that those things that the deceased loved to eat when he was on earth are included. The coffin is then lowered into the grave at the head and feet.

Places of Burial

Choice of the site or place to be dug for grave is done on instructions. Some deceased do instruct their children when they were still living, about the place and spot they should dig and bury him/her and how deep the grave should be. In Èkìtì, those who died of old age are usually buried at home after death. Other places are the verandah of the house, the living room and even bedroom of the deceased. Recently, in Èkìtì state, there was a plan to prohibit burying the dead inside the deceased houses and anywhere within residential quarters. According to the special adviser on land matters to Governor Káyo ò ò dé Fáyé ò mí, Elder Re ò ò mí O ò ló ò runléke ò, the plan should be seen as part of ongoing urban renewal initiatives¹⁴³. Olorunleke further stated that housing has become a major market in the world. As a way of regulating the market, there is the need to shore up the value of property and improve on their marketability by discouraging burying the dead within and around all residential areas¹⁴⁴. Of course, some people viewed this plan as a good means to take possession of the land from the owner if no one is buried there. Otherwise, there could be problem if a dead man is buried there, thus preventing them from taking it because of the implication on people's tradition. However, Chief Alex Olú Àjàyí¹⁴⁵ noted that, some aged parents, before their death, chose where they should be buried and no one should change such a will. In fact, if such a will is violated, the consequences would be so unbearable for such violator and even for the community at large.

¹⁴²Oral Interview with Chief Sunday Adebayo, Aged 61. *Ifa* Priest. Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/3/2016

¹⁴³Oral Interview with Rev Father Fagbohun. Aged 52. Cleric, RCM. Interviewed on 9/5/2016.

¹⁴⁴*Why Yorubas Bury Their dead At Home*. <http://weeklytrust.com.ng/index.php/features/10595>. Retrieved on 20th January 2014.

¹⁴⁵Oral Interview with Chief Alex Olú Ajayi. Aged 88. Traditional High Chief. Òkè orí Omi, Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/3/2016

What emerges from our understanding of this issue is that, burying the dead at home is a way of keeping the deceased as members of the family. This shows that the living and the dead are one. Hence, the ban would have adverse effect on Èkìtì culture, belief and norms. In other words, Èkìtì people do not bury their dead in strange lands - cemetery, but in their own houses.

The Burial

The deceased family, relatives and mourners bid the departed good bye:

Ó di gbére Our next meeting is until return

Ó d'arìnàkò It is now a matter of chance meetings on the way

Ó d'ojú àlá Our meetings will now be in dreams

This shows that Èkìtì see burial as seeing off someone who is going on a journey. Hence they provided in the grave those things which the dead might need on such a journey, most especially in the case of kings, some of whom were provided with an entourage of *abóbakú*, those who die with a king. However, the practice has changed. This will be discussed extensively in chapter six of this work. The word return in the above dirge has meaning. Those who make the journey of death at a ripe age return when a child of the same sex is born into the family. The return from the dead is revealed in the names given to the child, for instance *Ìyàbò* - Mother comes again, *Yétúndé* - Mother comes a second time or Mother comes again, *Babátúndé*- Father has come again, *Babajidé* - Father wakes up and is back; *Babádé* - Father comes.

Feasting and Dancing

Feasting and dancing consist of beating drums, playing the cultural songs, making noises, are the main parts of the ritual. If the deceased's family is not rich or do not have enough money for feasting and celebration, money is collected from tribes, family and close friends(see the appendix figure 11). This is commonly done in Ìkéré Èkìtì on Monday that follows the death of the deceased. The joy accorded this kind of burial is noticed in the greetings to the children of the deceased with slogans such as: *O mo lóo kú a ba ja l'ó ru n; Òkú a ná owó ire o; È hìn òkú á dára o* – Deceased children, congratulations, the dead will bless you, and you will be favoured after

this occasion. This is done because the people think that dancing and feasting after the death will depict the deceased's achievements on earth, how he/she was able to behave to the community. If they fail to do it, then the deceased who is joining the ancestors will be concerned and unhappy, and be wandering because he/she has not been remembered.

The family or relatives of the deceased would be using songs for prayer that the dead should not tarry to reincarnate. Such songs include:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <i>Òkú ọ́lómọ kii sù n gba gbé</i> | The dead that leaves children behind
does not over sleep |
| <i>Òkú ọ́lómọ kii sù n gbàgbé</i> | The dead that leaves children behind
does not over sleep |
| <i>Baba te te wá o kó wa ya lówó ọmọ</i> | Quickly come over; father, let
your child gives birth to you |
| <i>Baba te te wá o kó wa ya lówó ọmọ</i> | Quickly come over, father, let
your child gives birth to you |
| <i>Òkú ọ́lómọ kii sù n gba gbé o</i> | The dead that leaves children behind
does not over sleep. |

The practice of shooting profusely or sporadically arose from the belief that it made the deceased more brave and courageous when he re-incarnated. Gun shooting was also a medium of informing the community of the demise and burial of an important personality. Chief Ologun Adele¹⁴⁶, one of the informants revealed that the shooting of guns was to honour the deceased and traditionally done to make the journey to Orun-heaven peaceful for him. This was witnessed during the burial of high chief Egbèdi Òjó Ajíbádé of Òkè Èwí in Adó Èkìtì some years ago.

Pípín Ogún – Process of distributing deceased properties

This has been an age long practice and still been practice in the communities today. When an aged dies, his wife or wives entered the *opó*-widow's house for at least three months, some a year or six months. This period, the wives should not wear any other clothes but black to show that the death of the husband is painful to her. Black stands for

¹⁴⁶Oral Interview with Chief Ologun Adele. Aged 78. Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 18/06/2017

mourning. The wife or wives are mourning the deceased. After the *ilé-opó* the children of the deceased gathered all the property of the deceased father to be shared among them. Here, it is undeniable fact that not all members who shared from such property are blessed through it. This fact is established by the Yorùbá sayings:

Èní jogún ó yàtò sí èni t'ógún gbè

The one who inherit will is different from the one who enjoy it or bless by it

A gbójú lógún fi ara rẹ̀ fòsì ta

The one who depends solely on parents property is moving towards wrechedness

The elders in the deceased family are to share the property for them, if the deceased father, before his death had three wives, the property would be divided into three, the first for the first wife and her children, followed by the second wife and children and finally the third wife and her children equally. Even if the deceased had more than three wives, the property would be shared among the number of wives and children. Please note that the people do not share the deceased property based on the number of children but on the number of wives. For instance, if the first wife has four children and the second wife has two children, the property would not be shared by giving greater percentage to the first wife because she has four children. Therefore, the property is shared equally. This is known as *ìdì –igior Ori òjori* that is, all heads are equal. If the deceased father has farm land or other property the same way the first was shared, would be shared and distributed equally.

The wives also become the possession of the male children of the deceased father. Should the deceased do not have male child that could possess one of the wives, then the younger brother of the deceased is allowed by tradition to take one of the wives for keep. This is what the people called *Ìsúpó* – meaning that the woman or wife marries someone who is not her original husband, rather taken as a possession after the death of the real husband. If she was old, she was assigned to her husband's relations who should look after her. She should be fed and supplied with her minor needs.

Today, the father, before his death, would have shared his property through legal means with his wives and children.

The male child being the *àrólé*-holder of the house may be favoured based on what is obtainable in such a community. Male preference is strong among the Ekiti people,

primarily for the reasons that they could assist on the farm, for inheritance and because they will continue to answer the family name.

4.4 The Burial Rites of *Oṣbas*-Kings

The way a king is buried is quite different from the way anybody else is buried. The burial of a king is the concern of everyone in his domain. Once a king dies, it is ideal to say it just like that; rather, with some deep respect, one will say the king has been transformed-*Ọba ti gbésẹ̀, ọbá wàjà* or that a strong pillar has been removed. The same respect that is accorded a king in his life time will still be accorded him even at his death. Before the announcement of the death of a king goes round, elderly men would have concluded series of rituals after which they beat the drum announcing his death in the thick of the night. Once people hear such kind of drum, they already know what it means.

The burial rites are highly secret. It is a taboo to put them in the mortuary, they will never be taken to mortuary. To mention just a few things: in *Ìkéṣé*, immediately an *Oṣba* died, the relatives should not weep, but go to Chief Sao- the head Chief of *Ùrò* quarters, where *Oṣbas* came from and tell him. He would come to the palace with them. He will dress the corpse, put all the belongings of the *Oṣba* in a room, lock up the room, and keep the key until a new *Oṣba* is installed, relatives can then weep. Fetching of *Òsun* water into the palace follows. *Òsun* river or water, according to some traditionalists, possesses some virtues ranging from healing to blessings. The water had been attested to for having healings and blessings, this can be fetched when there is need for healing or other benefits. However, the fetching of water into the palace at this crucial time is not because of its mystical nature or sacredness; rather it was the only river in *Ìkéṣé Èkitì* at that time that is *Òsun* river was the nearest and the only river around. This has faded away, because of the availability of water resources all over the streets in the town. Different sources of water such as spring, borehole, well, tap, stream, etc are readily available where people could easily access water. The princes and princesses would go to inform the chiefs in the town that *Ara Baba gbóná*- their father is having high temperature. *Ìbéḍó* -an age group of 40 – 44 years old, would blow *Upe*-local trumpet, run round the town with cutlasses, kill goats, pig, fowls, and cut down trees to show that

an unforeseen had occurred. Awi Omolola¹⁴⁷ revealed that the last real burial of *Oba* that followed normal process in Ikere Ekiti was that of *Oba Olókúngboye* Amùdípò-tè-mo-lè in 1937.

Some of the songs that Ibedos will sing while felling the trees in the town are:

- (1) Solo: *Ohun kan* - One voice
 All: *S'e la jo fò* - We all said it.
 Solo: *Òrísé ohùn*- We don't miss the voice
 All: *Orí pohùndà* - The voice never change
 All people: *Ajofò, ajosa*- We all said so, we all move
- (2). Solo: *Oní-a-sá*, Whosoever would run away,
Ògbe se mopa o-Ògbe se river will kill
 All: *Òfiro*- Stand still.

Ibedos of Uro Quarter, Chiefs Ekuasa- the head of warriors, *Ùro* and *Òisa* *Ùrò* under the supervision of Chief Sao would do the digging of the grave or cemetery at *Òkè-aède*. *Òkè-aède* is where *Obas* are buried in *Ìké-ré*. In those days, nobody knew the burial ground of *Obas*. The corpse will be put into the coffin. Many sacrifices that were not disclosed would now follow. Seven songs would be rendered. In olden days, many slaves would be buried alive with the *Oba*. This was done with the notion that the slaves would continue their services in the hereafter. This is no more done nowadays. All the widows would move to *ilé-opó*- widows – house.

Ògbè Àte, *orí ko ka ndínlò gbo n e se keji* says: *Ògbè Àte*, chapter 29 verse 2 so pé,

Iná ni pó n e ja lójú It is the fire that burns the fish
Òpo oo ru n ní pó n aláka n léyín It is the high temperature of sun that burns

the crabs shell

Igún ló je bo, je bo ni kó kí e lé bo kúu i náwó a ná It is the vulture that eats much of

sacrifice and behaves ingrate to offerer

¹⁴⁷Oral Interview with Chief Awi Omolola. Aged 65. *Ifá* Priest and Lecturer. *Ìké-ré*. Interviewed on 8/7/2016.

Ì bá kí e□lé□bo□ kú u náwó e□bo□ a□ná i□bá tí ré□bo□ Had it been it is
thankful to

mi□íran jẹ the offerer of yesterdays sacrifice it would
have gotten another sacrifice to eat

Àkàlà ló je□ru□, je□ru□ ni kó kí e□lé□ru□ kú It is the scavenger that eats
sacrifice and

ìnáwó e□ru□ a□ná, does not thank the offerer

Ìbá kí e□lé□ru□ kú ìnáwó e□ru□ àná, ì bá tí re□ru□ Had it been it is thankful to
the

mi□íra□n jẹ□ offerer of yesterday's sacrifice, it would
have gotten another sacrifice to eat

A dífá fún orí tí ñ sunkún alái□láya. *Ifá* sacrifice is made for the head that is
crying of having no wife

The *O□ba*'s children would now celebrate, using a lot of foods and drinks for the whole town. This is called *Òòs□à – Ìgbélé*. The *Ọmọ Ọwás* -princes and princesses would be given foods and drinks specifically by the *O□ba*'s children.

Chief Sao would then appoint a Regent till the next *O□ba* would be installed. *Ose□* -a carved sculpture or a carved figure of the king, specially made by traditionally inclined artist, this carved sculpture would be dressed like the *O□ba* and put in front of the palace till a new *O□ba* would be installed. If you don't know, you would have paid homage to the sculpt-*Oşe□*. There is no *Oşe□* nowadays, instead banner is used. This is to show that technology has affected this aspect of the rituals.

4.5 Burial Rites of High Chiefs

The burial of the twelve high Chiefs in *Ìké□ré□* resembles that of the *O□ba* but within their own quarters. The *Ìbe□□dós* would do the preparation of the grave/cemetery, blow trumpet and run round the quarters. The children of the dead would feed them. The *O□ba* would be notified before weeping at all. The *Ọba* will collect money and one she goat. In the olden days *Olúkéré* also would be given one big she goat.

After this, the family members of the Chief can then weep and mourn. By the culture of Ikere from the beginning, they should give one goat to the chiefs- *àgbà Ulé* and

pointer to the fact that the deceased *Ifá* priest has been separated, he is no longer with them bodily. The items required for this rite are *Òbúkọ* he-goat, *ẹmu ẹtù*, *obì aláwẹ mẹrin*, they must be presented by the deceased children or family. The items could be more depending on the financial position or status of the children. These items would be used to pray that he should not appear again – *Yíya ẹ̀sìsílẹ̀* - prayer that he should not disturb them again both the deceased family and his colleagues that are still living. This would be followed by eating and drinking, *Iyán*-pounded yam and *Ọtí*-wine are freely served. This type of rite is mainly performed by the initiates, non initiates are not allowed. In those days, it was schinapp and palmwine that were used. *Ẹwúrẹ dúdú* – black goat would then be slaughtered and prepared for the *Awos* – initiates by the deceased families. The *ewúrẹ dúdú* is the food for *awo* – initiates – *ìjẹ awo*. The reason behind the use of black goat was not disclose. This must be followed religiously without missing any.

4.6.2 *Òdìgboro*

The *Ifá* priests would carry on their right hands specially made wooden staffs called *Òdìgboro* while going to where the coffin is placed. All the *Awo* – initiates who were present line up on a single file with *Òdìgboro*. They start coming from the outskirts of the community to where the deceased is, knocking or hitting the ground with the *Òdìgboro* as they move. This is done to show or alert people that one of them has passed on. In Adó Èkítì, *Òdìgboro* is called *Ìtípá* in Ìkólẹ̀, it is called *Ìtìlẹ̀* but in Ìkéré, it is *Òdìgboro*. Several songs would be rendered as one of the initiates would follow. Some of those songs are as follows:

Solo: <i>Ojú le ní tóní</i>	Today is tough
All : <i>Ògbòrò, ojúle</i>	<i>Ògbòrò</i> , it is tough
Solo: <i>B'n gbin kan ku lain-un,</i>	If snail should die
All: <i>Eyin ugbin e s'alai sun-an</i>	The end of snail will be better

On getting to the corpse's coffin, the first male born and two elderly priests would put their own *Òdìgboro* on the coffin. Others would hold their own uprightly round the coffin. Then there would be worshipping with prayers for children and *Awos*, the *Ifá* of the deceased using a snail and two kolanuts. The deceased first son called *Dáodù* would be given one of the sacred palm nut-*Ìkún* of his father, one Kolanut- *awẹ-obì kan* to hold.

These would be put on the palm of the deceased at the point of final closing of the coffin. The *Òdígboro* would then be transferred to the left hand as the priests move to the *iboji* graveyard in a single file.

According to Chief Èṅgbeṅdi Ajíbádé, *Òdígboro* or *Ìtípá* as is called in Adó, is done in order to mourn the departed traditional high chief by his colleagues. The traditional high chiefs gathered particularly chiefs of the same rank with the deceased. They would hold walking sticks – *Ìtípá*, file a line and put on ragged black clothes to show that they are in a mourning mood. At this stage there is no music, no entertainment as they move to give advice to the children of the deceased. In those days, this was done under the cover of the night so that people would not know who they were and what they were doing. Thereafter, there is demonstration of parting, where everybody will have to drink from the same cup and the last person to take a sip from the cup would smash the cup on the grave/coffin.

A particular animal's blood specifically she-goat should be shed and only chiefs who attended the burial would be allowed to eat from the goat, this is called *ẹran- ìtípá*—the goat of staff. Some goats that is, living ones would go with the high chiefs, the number of goats that will go with the chiefs depends solely on how wealthy or buoyant the children of the deceased are. But in those days, the number of goats depended on the rank of such deceased high chief. However, the number of goats to be given to high chiefs would be different from the chiefless ones—ordinary chiefs.

4.6.3 *Pakájà*

This is a stage where the children and the *Awos* of the deceased use wrappers to mourn the deceased. This type of wrapper is tied on the right shoulder different from the usual way of tying wrapper. When this type of wrapper or cloth is worn, it is a symbol of the peculiarity of the group and mourning for the deceased. In a situation where the children of the deceased are not Ifá inclined, they would not be forced to join the other Ifá priests for the rite. But it is expected that at least one of the children of the deceased should have embraced Ifá or indigenous religion so that the work of the deceased parent would not end in the family by the time he is buried.

4.6.4 *EwúréEtígè*

This is performed for a deceased *Ifá* priest at his grave-yard-*Iboji*. The item used is a she-goat which would be killed and the blood used to spray the coffin at the head region of the corpse. The implication of this is that the deceased will be at peace and would not in any way disturb the living that is, the deceased family. It is only the blood of the she-goat that would be used while the flesh of the she-goat is eaten by the priests. She-goat symbolizes fruitfulness and peace, the item is used so that there would be fruitfulness among the family and the children of the deceased; and for the victim to have a peaceful rest in *Alákeji*.

4.6.5 *Omi Èrò* rite

This is a concoction for rendering evils harmless; protect members of the cult and the bereaved from pollution. But in this case *Omi-èrò* is prepared using *òdúndún* – lettuce, *tètè àtètèdáyé* – amaranthus and *ròròwó* leaves with incantations. Having prepared the *Omi èrò* inside a clay pot someone would carry it on his shoulder and lead other priests, he would be using broom to spray the water in the pot on the ground. The *Omi-èrò* would also be used to spray all persons at the graveside including children and *Awo*. The *Omi-èrò* pot would then be broken by knocking it on the coffin in the grave.

Singing: *Ugba òdúndún o*

Ugba tètè

Ugba ro□ròwó

Òní lò de á dèrò

Díá fún Etí kò tánràn

Omọ Olófin

Etí kò tóràn óní àyà n fo òhun

Wón ni kí ló n kọ lóminú

Ó ní omi inú aféfé légélégé

Tí n kọmọ gúnugún

Ó ní òhun ló n kọ òhun

Ó ní omi inú efúfùfù lèle□lè

Tí n kọmọ nijà

Two hundred lettuce

Two hundred amaranthus

Two hundred *ròrò□wó*

There will be calm today

Divined for *eti kò tóràn*

A child to *Olófin*

Etí kò tóràn said he was afraid

What is making you to be disturbed

The water inside the well

That took away vulture

That is what makes him fearful

That is the water in the store

That trains one to fight

<i>Óní òhun ló n kọ òhun</i>	That is what makes him fearful
<i>Ó ní omi inú àwọn ajẹfun jẹdò</i>	The fear of eaters of flesh
<i>Ó máa n kọ òhun</i>	That is what makes him fearful
<i>Òrúnmilà ni</i>	Òrúnmilà says
<i>Bó ò bá fẹ kóminú kọ</i>	If you don't want to be disturbed
<i>Tètè báyii ko lọ rée</i>	Hurry up know
<i>Tójú kúọ, kó tójú kùọ</i>	Look for kúọ, look for kùọ
<i>Kó tójú ẹranko gbágbá tí n fì inú igbá selé</i>	look for an animal that resides in the calabash
<i>Kó tójú àgbàlagbà tí ò gbófá tó tẹpá kùkù wọjà</i>	Look for an elder who does not understand Ifá that enters market through walking stick
<i>Kó tójú àgbàlagbà tí kò gbófá to sọkún iyèrẹ</i>	Look for an elder who does not understand Ifá that cries for <i>Iyèrẹ</i>
<i>Kó tójú omi tóóró, èjẹ tí ò yẹ á bù bójú</i>	Look for water that is not good for washing of face
<i>Kó tójú àjájá ẹni jáńjá</i>	Look for <i>àjájá ẹni jáńjá</i>
<i>Tí kò jẹ kí ibi ó já lu èniyàn</i>	Who does not allow evil to befall one

Interpretation:

<i>Òdúndún la á pè ni kúọ -</i>	lettuce is called <i>kúọ</i>
<i>Tètè ni kùọ -</i>	Amarattus is called <i>kùọ</i>
<i>Ìgbín ni ẹranko gbágbá tó fì inú igbá selé.</i>	Snail is an animal that lives in calabash
<i>Òkété làgbàlagbà tí ò gbófá to tẹpá kùkù wọjà</i>	Rabbit is the aged that does not understand <i>Ifá</i> divination but enters market with walking stick
<i>Eyèlẹ làgbàlagbà tí ò gbófá tó sọkún iyèrẹ</i>	Pigeon is the aged that does not understand <i>Ifá</i> but crying daily for <i>Ifá</i> divination
<i>Epo pupa ni omi tóóró, èjẹ tí ó yẹ á bù bójú</i>	Palm oil is the clean water that should not be use to wash one's face
<i>Ìyèrẹ irosùn ni àjájá tí kò jẹ kí ibi ó já ní ilé awo.</i>	<i>Ifá</i> corpus is the <i>àjájá</i> that does not

allow evil to befall awo initiates.

From the above *Ifá copus*

Òdúndún – lettuce

Tètè - amarattus

Ìgbín – snail

Òkété– rabbit

Eyélé – pigeon

Epo pupa – palm oil

Ìyèrè osù–*Ifá copus*

The leaves mentioned in the above song that is lettuce, *amaratus* and *wòròwó* are symbols of calmness, softness and harmony.

4.6.6 *Òkú Sùn ye wu* - Burying Corpse at Home

Interviews with people on burying corpse at home showed that the dead are still part of the family, both the living and the dead are one. Chief Ajísefíni¹⁴⁸ for instance, stated that those who bury their dead in cemeteries are believed to have thrown their loved ones away to a foreign land. He further stated that some aged parents, before their death, chose where they should be buried and no one dared change such a Will. Chief Ògúnsakin Sájìyàn¹⁴⁹ of Ìkólé Èkìtì argued that in a situation where the dead would be forgotten after the burial, he prefers that the dead be buried around the compound so that people will look at the dead as part of the family. Chief Olominu¹⁵⁰, Prince Adetifa¹⁵¹ and Prince

¹⁴⁸Oral Interview with Chief Bode Ajisefina, Aged 63. Traditional Chief. Are Ìkéré Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/2016

¹⁴⁹Oral Interview with Chief Ogunsakin Sajiyan, Aged 65. Traditional Chief. Ìkòlé Èkìtì. Interviewed on 20/7/2016.

¹⁵⁰Oral Interview with Chief. Chief Olofinu Isolu. Aged 68. Traditional Chief. Ìkòlé Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/8/2016

¹⁵¹Oral Interview with Prince Adetifa Adefemi. Aged 65. Traditionalist. Ereguru Adó Ètì. Interviewed on 20/6/2016

Atitebi¹⁵² argued that they hold tenaciously to their tradition by channelling their requests at such grave sites and by asking the dead for protection over the family members he/she left behind. Although other religions are not against such practice, however, according to Alhaji Adéríbigbé¹⁵³, the practice is the most grievous sin in Islam as it is tantamount to placing these dead on the same pedestal with God referred to as Shirk in Islam.

The people gave reasons why they bury their dead at home: Any member of the family could have easy access to the dead through sacrifice, which Mr. Ògúnsakin¹⁵⁴ said could not be allowed if buried in cemetery. According to Odofin Àré, Ìkéré, Chief Bode Ajiseḡníní¹⁵⁵ said, Our Christian and Muslim brothers believe in Bible and *Qu'ran* respectively while the traditionalists believe in *Ifá*, *Òpèlè*, *Ògún* and other traditional beliefs. Our belief is that once you don't offer sacrifices to the dead, your prayers would not be answered. The Ikere chief, who recalled that he lost his father on March 10, 1986, said the family members still offer sacrifices to his late father at the tomb, because of the belief that he is always with us. In a separate interview, P.A Ògúnsakin¹⁵⁶ recalled that his late father, Chief Ègbèdi Ògúnsakin, who died in 2001 in Adó Èkìtì at the age of 98 years, has expressed his wish to be buried at home despite being an Anglican. He sees it as an honour to bury his father at home having struggled all his life to build his house. Also, Mr. Taiwo Fakuyide¹⁵⁷ explained that the practice is to show children the graves of their ancestors in the family. According to him, if my children did not grow to know my father or my grandfather, I can show them their graves.

Acting according to the above sayings, the typical Èkìtì man sees nothing wrong in attending the Christian service on Sunday and on subsequent days of the week, be engaged in the traditional rites. This was established by Olu Arówósemo¹⁵⁸, who confirmed that he goes to church on Sundays and that his going to church does not hinder him from worshipping his *Ifá Olókun Asooro móye*. Thus an Ekiti man could seek solutions, to his problem-spiritual, economic, health etc at the feet of herbalists, who

¹⁵²Oral Interview with Prince S. O. Atítebí. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are Ìkéré Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/2016

¹⁵³Oral Interview with Alhaji Aderibigbe. Aged 48. Muslim Cleric. Adó Èkìtì. 8/4/2017

¹⁵⁴Oral Interview with Peter Ogunsakin. Aged 63. Retired Principal. Adó Èkìtì. 17/9/2016

¹⁵⁵Oral Interview with Chief Bode Ajiseḡníní, Aged 63. Traditional Chief. Are Ikeké Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/2016

¹⁵⁶Oral Interview with Peter Ogunsakin. Aged 63. Retired Principal. Adó Èkìtì. 17/9/2016

¹⁵⁷Oral Interview with Taiwo Fakuyide. Aged 48. Christianity Adó Èkìtì. E21/2/2017

¹⁵⁸Oral Interview with Chief Olu Arowosemole, .Aged 63. Ifá Priest. Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 27/2/2016.

provide him with charms, amulets, and medicine for the trio-purposes of prevention, protection and cure¹⁵⁹. Thus, despite the fact that people had been converted to the modern religions, they still pray to their ancestors who they believe could solve all their life problems.

It is the responsibility of spirits of the dead buried at home to protect the residents and the family members; Mr Òjò Samuel¹⁶⁰, a resident of Ado Èkìtì also spoke in support of people burying their dead at home. He said, it is the right thing. I don't respect people who bury their dead in the cemeteries. He concluded by saying that if his dad dies today, he won't allow him to be taken to the cemetery. Another reason given by the people is for the deceased to have contact with the family and the property he left behind. So, by being buried at home, he or she can see what is happening to his family. The cases of removal of corpses for the purpose of ritual was another reason why people resorted to burying their dead close to them in order to monitor their dead, especially if they are wealthy, influential or righteous. Àjàyí Délé¹⁶¹ narrated his unpalatable experience in recent time with the way some unscrupulous elements in the society were removing parts of the bodies of the corpses from cemeteries. He reiterated that until government provides public burial grounds with fence and adequate security, people would continue to bury their corpses at the family compound. In the same manner Adélówo¹⁶² viewed this from the perspective of Yoruba song:

<p>Òkú, ajebo su n 'ye wu, sleeps (is</p>	<p>The corpse of an eater of sacrifice buried) in the room,</p>
<p>Òkú, imóle sun 'lé, buried) in</p>	<p>The corpse of a muslim sleeps (is the house,</p>
<p>Òkú, onígbàgbó sùn 'ta.</p>	<p>The corpse of a Christian sleeps (is buried) outside.</p>

¹⁵⁹I.S.Aderibigbe, 2001, "The Yoruba Christian and the Dilemma of Cultural Identity: A Viewpoint", in, E.A. Odunmuyiwa (Ed) *Religion, Science and Culture*, IKenne, NASR, 151.

¹⁶⁰Oral Interview with Ojo Samuel. Aged 52. Christian. Interviewed Adó Èkìtì on 16/9/2016.

¹⁶¹Dele Ajayi. Interview Respondent. Aged 57. Christian. Interviewed on 07/03/2017.

¹⁶²E.D. Adelowo, 1987. "Death and Burial in Yoruba Qur'anic and Biblical Religion" in *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XIX/2 December, 109.

In the light of the above, it can be stated that not many Ekiti people wanted their dead buried in cemeteries for they believe that they could not keep their relations in such a desolate environment where rain and sun beat down on the deceased. They would rather want them to be near them where they could quickly recall them and feel their absence. Chief Fasogba¹⁶³ affirmed that this was the reason why people would want to have at least a building of their own so that there could be a place for them to be buried when they died. She further said that many of those buried in the cemeteries were buried there on request from the church although many children of the dead did not endorse this idea. But they supported the idea so they would not go against the church request. Even those who die in urban areas are brought back to be buried in their villages, this is due to a compound of ancestors and witchcraft beliefs. The people are so attached to this practice and are not close to abandoning it in the face of the unrepentant nature of modernity.

4.6.7 *Ìje* Rite

In Èkìtì communities, the *Ìje* – seventh day rite for a deceased male and female, is observed for both sexes probably, on the mystical significance of number seven. According to Káyo Ọ́ọ́dẹ́¹⁶⁴, the number seven is seen as the mystic number and is greatly used in magical ceremonies and religious rituals. Chief Arowosemole¹⁶⁵, Chief Gabriel Isaiah¹⁶⁶, Chief È Ọ́gbẹ́ Ọ́dí Ajíbádẹ́¹⁶⁷, Alómóge Clement¹⁶⁸, and Ògúnmilúyí Ọ́ Michael¹⁶⁹ stated in different interviews conducted that poor performance of *Ìje* -rite for the death of the aged on the seventh day after death, is seen in a bad light and as a disgrace both to the deceased and his family. Awi Omolola¹⁷⁰ throws his weight to support the practice as saying that *Ìje* cannot stop in Ikere community and other communities in Èkìtì. It would not be easy for modernity to put a hold to *Ìje* rites in the communities because it is an occasion for feasting and merry-making, dancing round the community or neighbourhood. Ordinarily, people love to have fun as such, it is widely accepted by the communities.

¹⁶³Oral Interview with Chief (Mrs) Fasogba. Aged, 68. Traditional Chief, Odò Àgèrè, Adó Èkìtì 21/2/2017.

¹⁶⁴J.O.Kayode, 1975, *Symbolism in the Religion of the Yoruba*. A Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, 349-355

¹⁶⁵Oral Interview with Chief Olu Arowosemole, Aged 62. Ifa Priest. Odo Ọ́ Adó Èkìtì 27/2/2016.

¹⁶⁶Oral Interview with Chief Gabriel Isaiah. Aged 64. Traditionalist. Òkè Ìlá Adó Èkìtì, on 11/05/2016.

¹⁶⁷Oral Interview with Chief Egbedi Ajibade. Aged 75. Traditionalist. Orere Owu Adó Èkìtì, on 11/05/2016.

¹⁶⁸Oral Interview with Chief Clement Alomo Ọ́ge. Aged 56. Traditionalist. Ìké Ọ́ré Ọ́ Èkìtì, on 18/4/2015.

¹⁶⁹Oral Interview Michael Ogunmiluyi. Aged 62. Traditionalist. Ìkò Ọ́lé Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/02/2016.

¹⁷⁰Oral Interview with Awi Omolola Ọ́lá Aged 62, Ifá Priest, a lecturer. Ìké Ọ́ré Ọ́ Èkìtì. Interviewed on 8/7/2016.

Moreso, the people believe he/she has gone home where the aged normally go. Therefore, to them, this calls for celebration.

4.6.8 *Eran Ba-we*-Slaughtering of cows and goats

This is performed for a deceased high chief by his co-high chiefs. People believed that until the blood of animals is shed, the spirit of the deceased still lingers in the family, still moving around. So they would kill a she-goat on the grave of the deceased. The secret behind using she-goats, according to High Chief Abe, is because he goats can not produce children. In our ranches, for example, out of 20 cows there may be only one male. Back to our midst that is tradition, it is the he-goat that people use for sacrifice; nobody will use a she-goat for sacrifice. The saying goes: *Orí Ònkò la ma n ba nidi èsù* – it is the head of he-goat that is found at Èsù shrine. That is why a she-goat is not used for such rituals. He further states that if one is rearing goats and such she goat should give birth to he goats such owner would not be happy because such he-goat cannot bear children.

The researcher has never witnessed the burial of an aged-*arúgbó* or an adult – aged 50 and above, where a cow or goat at least was not slaughtered. Having performed these rites, children of the deceased who are wealthy and slaughter mainly cows. People of average means are not left out, they slaughter a cow at least even if it means to borrow to buy it. A verse in Odù Ifá called Èjì o-gbè¹⁷¹ says

<i>Òdá – owó, awo koro</i>	<i>Òdá owó</i> is the priest of <i>Koro</i>
<i>Aabo obìnrin re,</i>	<i>Aabo</i> his wife
<i>Omọọ wọn òkè Ijẹrò</i>	The daughter of Ijẹrò-town
<i>Bí òdá owó ti n dá mi,</i>	As I am scarce of money
<i>Bẹẹ ni aabo mi nbo mi</i>	So also law receiving favour terms of money
<i>A díá fún Òrúnmìlà</i>	Cast <i>Ifá</i> divination, for <i>Òrúnmìlà</i>
<i>Nijọ to Olojọ mẹta</i>	When three strange visitors,
<i>O wọ silé baba</i>	will reside in his house
<i>Ifá o sí ní ookan aayọona</i>	Aro <i>Ifá</i> has nothing to offer them
<i>Ní Òrúnmìlà bá pe Aabo, Obìnrin re</i>	And <i>Òrúnmìlà</i> called <i>Aabo</i> , his wife
<i>pé kí ó kó àwọn nńkan iní oún lọ</i>	To go and dispose all his property in the

¹⁷¹Wande Abimbola 1968. *Ijìnlẹ ohùn e nu Ifá apá kìní*. Glasgow: Collins. 20-21.

Those individuals who are not buoyant financially to slaughter a cow each and are not ready to be indebted to anybody may decide to join others. In the time past, there was *èsúsú* or *àjò*, people joined simply because they realized that a day would come when they would need financial assistance. And this *èsúsú* or *àjò* - daily contribution, is a way of gathering money. There are different ways to this, for example, it could be daily contribution, weekly, monthly. Once a group of people with likemind agreed together, they reach a consensus on how to be having meetings and the exact money to be contributing and to be aware of the time and day the contribution will end. Executives would be chosen among the people, if the contribution is fixed at five days, individual is expected to bring his or her own contribution to the meeting by self not by proxy. Whoever needs money would have to inform members through writing and the money is released to the applicant and be paid back as and when due. The slaughtering of cows and goats has become mandatory that the children of the deceased can only be allowed to shift the celebration if it is discovered that the families are not able to purchase a cow at least to a later date when they are financially buoyant to slaughter a cow.

4.6.9 The *Gbàrà-mogbó* rite

This rite is very important especially to the people of Ìkèrè-Èkìtì. Immediately an aged that is one who is above age sixty dies, the family of the deceased come together and start frying *àkàrà* -beans cake. This is also discovered among the people of Adó-Èkìtì through Pa Kóláwolé Ògúntóyìnbó of Ìdòlòfin in Adó Èkìtì. He affirmed that the frying of bean cake immediately a person is confirmed dead, began during the time of Pa Ògìrìgbò, who happened to have plenty children and in order to satisfy them decided to make *àkàrà*. It was discovered that *àkàrà* – beans cake could go round the children without bringing up dissension or disagreement among them. Therefore, *àkàrà* was prepared and the children ate the bean-cake and were so happy and were praising their father. This was how frying of bean-cake immediately someone dies started in Adó-Èkìtì. The importance is to show the community that the deceased have good children even if the children are not around during the death of the parents, they must send money to people at home for the rite of

Gbàrà mogbó. As they perform this, songs of different kinds are rendered to signify that the children witness the end of their parents. Songs such as:

Olungbaun Olungbaun - The Owner has taken
in in Olungbaun - Truly, the owner has taken.

But whoever fails to perform this would be seen as being unserious and irrelevant in the society. He or she becomes an object of ridicule in such a community. This is the more reason why some who do not have money to perform this will not have any option but to borrow and do it. The rite is mostly dominated by women and housewives of the deceased. A case in point was narrated by Mr Ogundola through his wife Mrs Ogundola of a particular man who failed to carry out the proper burial rites for his late father because of his financial constraints. But when the ridicule was too much for him to bear, he sought for money and performed the rites in a meaningful way. So, he could walk round the community with free mind, no molestation of any kind from any body and quarter.

4.6.10 *Yíyí Èyìn Òkú padà*

A set of ceremonies known as *yíyí èyìn òkú padà*. This is different from *Isinku* – the burial ceremony. It is obvious to observe this being celebrated in Ekiti today – (see appendix figure 7). This rite is celebrated by the children for their deceased parents most especially the influential or well-to-do children. For a parent who before his or her death was good to their children, they, apart from the care and honour accorded him or her when the deceased was alive, they celebrate the victim even years after his or her death.

The funeral rites for deceased members of the *Ògbóni* and *Ifá* priest are still performed the way they were performed in the past with little moderation.

4.7 The Benefits of Burial rites on Ekiti people

One may wonder if burial rites ever had any benefits. The benefits of burial rites on Ekiti people have been multi-faceted, multi-layered and all-pervasive. In the light of this, we shall be examining the religious, psychological, social, economic and cultural benefits of burial rites on the people of Èkìtì.

4.7.1 Religious Benefit

Burial rites are important for spiritual upliftment of the people of Èkitì. They use the occasion to solicit blessing from the gods and ancestors of the land. The rites also afford the people an opportunity to renew their covenants; thus, the link between human beings and the spiritual beings is renewed and strengthened. Just as Yoruba children wave to a relation setting off on a journey, asking him to help them greet their father, mother, brother and so on as the case may be, so also Èkitì mourners send messages to relations who have gone on before. Through prayers, offerings, people encountered the spiritual being and there is communion and communication between them and the spirit world. The *Egúngún* appear to impersonate the deceased persons during funeral ceremonies. This impact results in people having festival in these communities where the people pray to the departed to come back and fill the house.

In Ìkéré Èkitì, before *Olúkéré* can proceed on the annual *Olósunta* festival, he must go to the palace of *Ògògà* to pay homage by visiting the tombs of past kings requesting for permission to pray for the first citizen of the town, that is, *Àrẹ̀mọ̀kùnrin* Ìkéré. *Ògògà* will then shower *Olúkéré* with gifts and as well add a black goat to the cow provided by the town for the *Olosunta* sacrifice. This is a way to indicating that the power of the departed will be passed on without dying. That is why it is absolutely wrong to say *Ọba kú*, rather, *Ọbá wa* □ □.

4.7.2 Psychological and Social Benefits

Èkitì people value the burial and funeral of the aged. It is a day that quarrels are settled among the relatives because all the relatives of the deceased must come home. In fact, it is a time of re-union. Burials provide opportunity for people from different walks of life both at home and abroad, to meet and re unite. It is also a time to rejoice and felicitate together, most especially, when the drummer beats the drum and people began to dance. It becomes obvious that the beating of the drum and the dancing serves as a means of exercise through which one is made fit to live a healthy life as a social being in the society. As one dances and shakes his body, sicknesses are shaken off and then, one is fit socially in the society as a healthy body. Besides, many disputes, as said earlier, which have been unresolved for a long time, are settled during this period. Also, meetings on how to move the family forward are held. In other words, burials from the psychological

and sociological points of view encourage peaceful co-existence among the people of Èkìtì.

4.7.3 Economic Benefit

Economically, the impact of burials on the economic life of Èkìtì people cannot be over-emphasized. During burials, prayers are offered for the prosperity of the deceased families, relatives and community. Both the market women and business men in their various shops will witness high degree of patronage especially if the deceased was an influential person before his or her death. People will be demanding for new dresses such as *aşo ebi*. This culture of *Aşo ebi* is much pronounced among the people and there are divers ways this could be made used of. The deceased children could identify a particular cloth that is so dear to them. Such could be bought and brought home so that relatives could see it and embrace it or reject it. If such is embraced and accepted by the pople,the clothes is bought in large quantity and be sold and shared with friends and those who are interested and wished to participate in such burial ceremony. Individuals then sew the cloth to his or her desired styles. The cloth is not expected to be won before the burial celebration. They are to keep the cloth for the funeral. After the funeral, one can decide to be wearing it as he or she likes. The reason for wearing it on this particular day is to maintain uniformity and credibility.After the ceremony, the cloth becomes the property of the person and everybody goes back to his or her respective homes after the ceremony.

Group uniforms or the cloth of family/kin or cloth worn by members of any group by people collectively – *AşoEbi* are worn during the celebration, this is one of the ways of expressing and maintaining unity among the people, which has from time immemorial been institutionalized. Anybody who wants others to celebrate an important event with him or her often chooses a cloth for the ceremony.Artists also make burials livelier today; they make use of their skills to make caps of various sizes and of different colour, stickers and emblems. These stickers and emblems usually bear inscriptions such as, *Bàbá wa tàbí Màmá wa, sùnre* o- our father or our mother, rest in peace; *Adieu ba□bá* or *ma□má*; etc.,with this a lot of money are often realized. Young girls and boys carrying trays of sweets, biscuits, sachets of water, little donuts and ice creams on their heads to sell to the guests, thus boosting their economic life. Sales representatives of various bookshops will

also witness a high degree of patronage, since people do go there to buy greeting cards that they will send to their relations, friends, deceased families and well-wishers. But for those who despise burials, they see it as having negative impact on the people, both sellers and buyers. The blocking of road to motorists is taken as another negative impact of burials as people will be forced to trek during the burials. In the final analysis, one can easily conclude that the impact of burials on the life and thought of Èkítí people cannot be overemphasized.

This is a way of giving alms and charity to people. On both sides of the street, at the front of many houses, it is not unusual to find children and relatives of the deceased cooking outside those houses. The living rooms and some other reception rooms of those houses are temporarily used as dinning rooms where the sympathizers are entertained with food and drinks. This is to show that money cannot be left out in this kind of celebration as deduced from the following Ifá divination:

<i>Àkàsò ló dùn gòkè</i>	One gets to the top through a ladder
<i>Ojú kikan kò ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ǹnkan fún ni</i>	to be in a haste brings nothing
<i>Ó dífá fún ẹ̀jẹ̀dínlógún orodú níjọ́ tí wọ̀n lo sẹ̀kú rí</i>	Divined for sixteen <i>Ifá copus</i>
<i>lóde Ìbíní,</i>	in Benin city
<i>Àkàsò ló dùn n gòkè</i>	It is easy to climb through a ladder to haste
<i>Ojú kikán ọ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ǹnkan fún ni</i>	To be in haste done no one good
<i>Ó dífá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà</i>	divine for Ọ̀rúnmilà
<i>Ọ̀rúnmilà yì lọ le wọ̀rí lóde Ìbíní</i>	Ọ̀rúnmilà enters Benin
<i>Wọ̀n ni kí baba o kára lẹ̀ ẹ̀</i>	Father was told to prepare
<i>Ẹ̀bọ ni kó ẹ̀</i>	he was ask to offer sacrifice
<i>Ó gbẹ̀mọ ẹ̀bọ fín</i>	he made sacrifice
<i>Ẹ̀bọ dà</i>	his sacrifice was accepted
<i>Ẹ̀jẹ̀ ẹ̀ni tó sẹ̀wọ̀n rí</i>	Someone with Ọ̀wọ̀nrín
<i>Ọ̀hun ni wọ̀n n pè ni ogbè ịsẹ̀</i>	This is called <i>ogbè ịsẹ̀</i>
<i>Ire owó, ire ajé, kó jé ti wa</i>	The blessing of money,

Another Ifá that support this is as follows:

Òpó tí a bá fẹ̀hìntì

Ikán ti mú ìdí è jẹ

Ádífá fún ajé tó ẹ̀ iyá ilé

Ajé ló bí ilé

Òpó tí à bá fẹ̀hìntì

Ikán ti mú ìdí rẹ̀ jẹ

Á dífá fún ajé tó n ẹ̀ iyá ọ̀nà

Ajé ló bí ọ̀nà

Òpó à bá fẹ̀hìntì

Ikán ti mú ìdí rẹ̀ jẹ

A dífá fún ajé

Tí n ẹ̀ yèyè ọ̀jà

Ajé ló tún bí ọ̀jà

Áwọ̀n mètè-ẹ̀ta ti kòlẹ̀ ọ̀run

bọ̀ wá sí ikòlẹ̀ ayé

Wọ̀n ni wọ̀n o kára nílẹ̀

Ebọ̀ ni kí wọ̀n ẹ̀

Ilé nìkan ló gbébo

Tẹ̀bo rẹ̀ fín

Ìjẹ̀ ajé kára lé

Ilé ibo lò n lọ

Ilé tẹ̀mi là n lọ

prosperity to be ours

The pillar that which one rest
on

eaten up by termites
cast *Ifá* for *ajé*, the mother of
ilé

Ajé gave birth to *ilé*

The pillar to rest on

Eating up by termites

Cast *Ifá* for *ajé* the mother of
ọ̀nà – the way

Ajé gave birth to *ọ̀nà*

The pillar to rest on

Eating up by termites

Cast *Ifá* for *ajé*

The mother of *ọ̀jà* - market

Ajé gave birth to market

The three were coming from
heaven to the earth

He was asked to make haste

They were told to sacrifice

Only *ilé* make sacrifice

And accepted

Prosperity follows me home

Which house are we going

We are going to my house

4.7.4 Cultural Benefit

Burial rites serve as a source of valuable data on the historical past of the people. For instance, through burial rites, people recall their late or deceased forefathers and past

warriors who they believed to be in the world beyond. It also provides the forum of open discussions and criticisms of misconduct believed to be capable of bringing calamities to the land. Continuity between the living and dead is maintained by communal offerings at burials.

The Impacts of burials on the religious, social-cultural, and economic life of Èkiti communities cannot be over-emphasized. It serves as one of the informal processes by which man is taught to govern his behaviour with unwritten rules and regulations that make him aware of the possibility of reward or punishment. In spite of the negative effects of Christianity, western education and modern civilization on the traditional beliefs and practices, some adherents of Christianity and educated elite find it difficult, if not impossible to dissociate themselves completely from the traditional practices into which they were born. They often resort to it from time to time, especially in the time of crisis and tension.

4.8 The Elements of Change

Burial rites, as a religious practice, had melt with a series of changes in its encounter with modern civilization and foreign religions in recent years. For sometime, it has been argued that the progressive extension of scientific knowledge sparked the emergence of modern civilization and its attendant influence in this present generation of ours.

4.8.1 *Adi*□*ye*□ *Ùràrà*- Pathway Fowl

Going by the findings as regards the performance of burial rites in the past up to the present time, there have been elements of change. Investigation reveals that in the past, “*Adie*□*iràrà*” was seen as sacrifice to make his journey easy. It was revealed that the fowl was killed and consumed by people outside the town¹⁷² and also within the compound of the deceased¹⁷³.

¹⁷²Chief Olóminu, Ìsolò. Interview Respondent. Aged 68. Traditional Chief. Interviewed on 16/8/2016.

¹⁷³Emmanuel B Idowu, 1970, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, London: Longmans.

The rite is significant in the following ways: to clear off evil spirit at the *oríta-méta* that may hinder the smooth journey of the deceased to *òrun-* heaven; to remind people that death is inevitable, we must all die, *Adiye urana ée s'óhun àjégbé* meaning that as you eat my own fowl, others will equally eat yours when you die; it shows that there is life after death. Traditions say that, in the afterlife, the deceased will show his appreciation by thanking the people that conducted the ritual for him.

It was discovered in the three communities that *adiẹ iràna* is not killed and consumed at burial ceremonies; what we see today is the slaughtering of cows which we called *Ebo iràna* in this study. The tradition of sending ahead a fowl has been modified. According to chief Ògúnsakin Şàjjiyàn¹⁷⁴, Chief Olóminu¹⁷⁵ and Mr Ìşòlá¹⁷⁶, the use of *adiẹ iràna* has been replaced with palm fronds which they believed to possess for usual power for protection. This is understandable when the corpse is being transported home, perhaps the deceased dies in another town different from his own town. Palm fronds which stand for victory and protection are placed in front, at the rear and sides of a vehicle conveying a corpse to hallow the deceased, to show the sacredness of the corpse, to protect against accident and to avoid unnecessary distractions or delay by security agents on the road. They are also placed to ward off evil that may want to attack on the road and to serve as warnings to people to keep off. They are also placed to remind people that someone has just died and therefore they should comport themselves in a decent and sacred decorum. Therefore, if we compare the degree of commitment and intensity of participation in the past with that of today, one can easily conclude that the practice of sending a fowl “*adiẹ-Ìràna*” at present attracts less attention and dedication.

Among the elements of change that have taken place in the burial rites is outright cancellation of the usual practice of slaughtering *adiẹ etígbè* on the grave. In Pa. Abégúndé¹⁷⁷ and Prince Adetifa's submission¹⁷⁸, a fowl with black feathers would be slaughtered by the graveside. Thereafter, the blood of the fowl would be poured on the grave and those that carried the corpse will fry the fowl and eat at the graveside.

¹⁷⁴ Oral Interview with Chief Ògúnsakin Şàjjiyan Aged 68. Traditional Chief. Ìkòlé Èkìtì Interviewed on 20/7/2016.

¹⁷⁵ Oral Interview with Chief Olóminu Aged 68. Traditional Chief. Ìkòlé Èkìtì. Interviewed 16/8/2016.

¹⁷⁶ Oral Interview with Mr Ìşòlá K.F.A Traditionalist. Ìkòlé Èkìtì. 20/7/2016.

¹⁷⁷ Oral Interview with Pa. Abegunde. Aged 86. Traditionalist. Adó Èkìtì Interviewed on 21/04/2017.

¹⁷⁸ Oral Interview with Prince Adetifa Adefemi. Aged 65. Traditionalist. Ereguru Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 20/6/2016.

In another form, Prince Adefemi Adetifa¹⁷⁹ from Erégúrù in Adó Èkìtì and Prince Atitebi¹⁸⁰ from Àrè in Ìkéré Èkìtì, stressed that after the death of the deceased, no matter how poor a family may be, they will muster all their resources to buy and slaughter an animal. The size of the goat in this case may not matter. The blood from the slaughtered animal is allowed to flow freely and soak into the ground. This way the spirits of the departed ancestors are invited to partake in the ritual, for it is believed that these spirits are responsible for escorting and welcoming the new spirits into the after life¹⁸¹. One of the important things that must accompany a deceased person to the hereafter is this animal which he must hold the rope and the placenta of the person. But today, slaughtering a cow or any other animal in funerals is no more a ritual to feed the departed ancestors and provide wealth to the spirit of the deceased in after life but meat to provide food for the living members of the communities these days when a great deal of food and drink are consumed, the amount of feasting can easily be equated to that on a wedding day.

According to Abe, Àbídákun and Ògúnşakin, when a person dies, the people take also *adiye*-fowl kill it by pulling out its head and buried the pulled out head on the spot where the deceased head is located in the grave. The remains of the fowl that is, the body would be throwned over the building of the deceased and the fowl's body landed at the back of the building. According to Chief Abe, the Ejigbo of Adó Èkìtì; he said when he was younger, he and his friends usually asked the children of the deceased to quickly go and buy a fowl because if they failed to get one and throw the body over the building of the deceased the spirit would not have rest. This they were doing to take care of themselves each time they needed to eat meat. They decided to meet with those who have not performed such rites so they could perform them. All these they were doing just to take care of themselves not because of the dead.

4.8.2 *Ìta* Rite

¹⁷⁹Oral Interview with Prince Adetifa Adefemi. Aged 65. Traditionalist. Ereguru Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 20/6/2016.

¹⁸⁰Oral Interview with Prince S. O. Atitebí. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are Ìkéré Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/2016

¹⁸¹Oral Interview with Prince S. O. Atitebí. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are Ìkéré Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/2016

Chief Adétifá while discussing the *Ìta* rite in Èkìtì, observed that the rite is a *sine qua non* for the dead which is expected to be taken seriously, believing that the deceased will be around for a number of days before he will have a place in the abode of the ancestors, that is, if the necessary rites are properly carried out. It is unfortunate that today *Ìta* rites has paved way for *Ìjẹ* rites which is meant only for entertaining the guests that are around during the burial ceremony. *Ìjẹ* rites are cherished because of the fear of being ridicule by the society and to show the ability or level of the deceased children at performing elaborate ceremony for the dead. The people observed that *Ìta* rite is a way of sending the spirit away completely, never to resurface in the family and that *è□□ta* that is three symbolizes that the deceased has been cut off from the family. *È taá nù* – having nothing to do with the leaving

In the three communities in Èkìtìland, people did not joke with *Ita* rite, they made sure that nothing obstruct them from performing such a rite because they believed that doing so would bring blessings, peace and prosperity to the deceased family and children; and also allow the spirit of the deceased to have a peaceful rest. However, due to what people would eat and the fact that people are in the habit of pleasing their friends and loved ones they prefer *Ìjẹ* to *Ìta*. This is why they concluded that *Adìẹ irànà ni kù se ẹran àjẹgbé*, it means that as you have come to celebrate my deceased parent with me so also I must come to celebrate yours.

4.8.3 E□kún-Sísun- Weeping Rite

In those days, *ẹkún sísun*-weeping was regarded as a burial rite for the aged while mourning was seen as a burial rite for those who died young. Weeping is regarded as the money the deceased *Arúgbó* would spend on his/her way to heaven and in *Ò□run*-heaven. Weeping is performed only for those who died at the ripe age of sixty and above. This is done three times a day for seven days. Ordinarily, weeping at burial ceremony is a welcomed development when you see a dead body on the ground or in a coffin lifeless, it becomes imperative to weep, that one day the one who is alive now whether he likes it or not would become lifeless one day and people also would be present at the victim's burial to weep. Weeping for the dead in those days especially in Adó-Èkìtì was taken as a rite for those who did well while on earth. Those who lived their lives to bless others and promote

the well-being of the community and mourn for those below age sixty and those who were unable to fulfil their obligation to his family and community. This is still in place today but is not embraced as a rite to be done three times a day. The rite of mourning for those below sixty years of age in those days has taken another dimension. It is important to note that today no matter the age of the deceased people weep and mourn. The question we need to ask is why is it that widows are made to enter *ilé opó* for a particular number of days? This is a way of mourning the deceased. It is not only those below age sixty that are mourned even today. If the deceased was old or young, people do weep and mourn to show their love and such occurrence was on pleasant to them. For those below sixty years, this type of blessing is not extended to them, they would only mourn for them, and they make sure that weeping is avoided by all means. This is done to starve him on his way to *Oṣun Esisan* and to retaliate the sorrow caused to his parents. The above practice was supported by Awi Omolola¹⁸² who classified the rites into two—the grieving and the celebrating. In Ikere community, those who are of ages 58-60 are called *Òsàkà* group, if one should die before reaching the age of *Òsàkà* he is considered or seen as *Emèrè- born- to –die*. It is true that no matter how old a deceased is, people will still weep considering the position of the deceased in the family, the deceased may have been the pillar of the family, leader in the home, community and so on. An occurrence of this brought some wise sayings such as, *Àgbà kó sí ní ilú, ùlú ba jé; baálé ulé kú, ulé d’ahoro; e hín ká, ulé e rín ti wó-* the society spoilt for the lack of elders; the family is in disarray due to the demise of the family head; smiling is no more fluent as a result of removal of the teeth from the mouth and many more.

When weeping rite is being performed for the aged, they say:

Ma j’o ku n, má je ko ló, Eat neither millipede nor
earthworm,

Ohun k’án bá I je, Whatever they are eating in heaven,
li kó i-án je, Eat it with them.

Ñ s e ni ko bu ri nbu ri n, Make haste to
ko dura b’omi ago. re-incarnate

¹⁸²Oral Interview with Chief Awi Omolola. Aged 62. *Ifá* Priest and Lecturer. *Ìkéré* *Èkìtì*. Interviewed on 8/7/2016.

<i>Wón ni kí olókira</i>	Olókira was to
<i>Ó rúbọ ni kùtùkùtù</i>	Sacrifice early in the morning
<i>Kó má baa ẹ àsetì</i>	So that he would not fail
<i>Ẹ ò ni ẹ àsetì</i>	You will not fail
<i>Ẹ ò ni mú àmúbó</i>	Get and loose will not be for you
<i>Ẹ ò ni tejú ilẹ̀ mólẹ̀</i>	You will not offend elders

<i>Ilá so</i>	<i>Okro</i> bear fruits
<i>Ó so ogún</i>	Bears twenty fruits
<i>Ó so ogbón</i>	Bears thirty fruits
<i>Ẹ ó má pọ̀ si</i>	You shall continue to increase and be fruitful

4.8.5 *Ìfẹ̀yìngbẹ̀* Rites

In Adó Èkìtì, once there is death the corpse must be buried on the market day. If the market day would still be three days or four days ahead, the grave is dug and the corpse properly dressed and is kept there but not filled up. During this time there was no coffin as we have today. This is called *Ìfẹ̀yìngbẹ̀ – fifi ẹ̀yìn tì*. It is the belief of the people that some *À̀n̄jònú*-angels do come from heaven to earth to take part in buying and selling during any market day, and that as a result, these angels would accompany the dead to wherever he or she is going. If the children of the deceased were around, then the burial would go on but if the children of deceased were not around, the corpse would not be buried-*fifi ẹ̀yìn tì*-until the children are around to see their dead parent before burial. However, if the children sent a message to the family as to why he would not attend the burial, if the reasons given were genuine, they would go ahead to bury the deceased. If the reasons were not tenable though the deceased would be buried but it became a shame on the children and relatives for them not to have come to celebrate their parents. The corpse could be at that stage for days, nothing would affect it. There was a traditional way of keeping the corpse from decay. Today, there is mortuary readily made available for such, even if it is still traditionally okay to bury the corpse on the market day.

4.8.6 Food and Personal Effects in the Grave

The dead was buried with costly things such as money and gold in those days, the traditional chiefs were buried with some slaves or wives who are to assist them on their journey and serve them in the next world. According to high chief Àbe, at the burial of a high chief, there must be killing of people preferably an *erú* that is a slave to accompany the dead. It is believed that those sacrificed would provide the deceased high chief with attendants on his last journey.

Chief Awi Omolola¹⁸³, Chief Adegboye¹⁸⁴, Omotayo Opeyemi¹⁸⁵, *Ifá* Priest Ògúnléye¹⁸⁶ and Revd Ajagunìgbàlà M.O¹⁸⁷ for instance explained that in those days when a person dies, he becomes sacred. That is the more reason, they say *ó ti fì ikú saájù wón or ó ti fì ikú jù wón*— through his death he has become their senior. At that time, people were buried according to their position in the society. But the practice of burying materials with the dead, according to Temítópe Joseph¹⁸⁸, is a waste of resources. Criminals visited the graves of such rich people to cart away the valuables buried along with them. It is believed that this type of rite had ceased and abandoned or relegated to the background.

4.8.7 Bed as against Mat

The use of bed for lying in state of the deceased is a modern method and it is a way of making life in *òrun* easy for the deceased. To them, it is believed that what obtains here is obtainable in *òrun*- heaven. Therefore, it is a welcome thing that the dead is allowed to have a peaceful sleep when bed is used. The advantage of modernity appeared here, not all that is western should be discarded. There are positive and negative effects of modernity.

4.8.8 *Abélékúnsokún* - The Use of Professional Criers

¹⁸³ Oral Interview with Chief Awi Omolola. Aged 63. *Ifá* Priest and Lecturer. Ìkéré Òkìtì. Interviewed on 8/7/2016.

¹⁸⁴ Oral Interview with Chief Adegboye Aged 62. *Olori Oba* Ana Ikere Ekiti. Interviewed on 23/11/2016.

¹⁸⁵ Oral Interview with Omotayo Opeyemi Aged 48. Christian. Ìkéré Òkìtì. Interviewed on 23/11/2016.

¹⁸⁶ Oral Interview with Ifa priest Ogunleye. Aged 82. Traditionalist. Òkè Ìlá. Adó Òkìtì. Interviewed on 28/02/2016.

¹⁸⁷ Oral Interview with Revd M.O. Ajagunigbala Aged 61. Christian Cleric. Ìkéré Òkìtì. Interviewed on 07/07/2016.

¹⁸⁸ Oral Interview with Temitope Joseph. Aged 58. Christian. Adó Òkìtì. Interviewed on 20/02/2016.

The possession of criers is made up largely, ofcourse, of relatives and friends of the deceased, but is led by professional mourning women and at times men. Recently, it was led by a man named Afọlábí Alákínyedé now late. But one of his children who was trained has taken over the job. Professional mourners are chosen for their poetic turn of expressions, they sing in a sad tone, which rises and falls in a modulated wail: 'he is gone, the lion of a man. Professional criers are not so common today in Èkitiland. This category of people is employed for the purpose of mourning for the deceased. As they do these with the *Oríkì* of the corpse, the people dance, sing and move round the community and people give them money, this ofcourse may last for few days before the burial.

4.8.9 Ritual Bathing for the Dead

In the past, *Ifá* oracle would be consulted to find out what and what would be required items for the washing of the dead. Normally the items included a fowl and a chicken, a piece of white cloth, alegator pepper and black soap. All these materials are essential when it comes to ritual bathing for the dead. As fowls and chickens are sacrificed it means that the parent and the children are separated at death. Since the depature of the fowl we never adversely affect them, the children wish that the departure of their parents might not adversely affect them. The use of *ewé ọsàn wéwé*- lemon leaves to wash the corpse is to avoid swelling but today this is not so because of the embalming facilities in our hospitals.

It is believed that through ritual bathing, the corpse is made ready for the journey to afterlife. It is also performed to remove dirt, evil marks on the body and to gain victory over uncleanness and attacks. Hence, traditional soap - *ọsẹ dúdú* and new local sponge – *kainkaintuntun* are more effective when it comes to ritual bathing for the dead. The new sponge used is usually kept by the most senior son or daughter in the family of the deceased. It is kept out of the reach of anyone who can use it or path of it in making or preparing bad medicine to cause *àkúfà*-that is recurrence of death in the family. The sponge is also seen as a testimony that the children of the deceased took proper care of their deceased parent.

4.8.10 Coffins - *Pósi*

It is obvious to see people making use of glittering coffin or casket made of mazonia wood – (see appendix figure 9). But, in those days, only important or prominent Yoruba people were buried in coffins. Chief Ogunsakin Sajiyan¹⁸⁹, Chief Olu Arówóse-mo-le¹⁹⁰, Chief Awi Omolola¹⁹¹ and Prince Atitebi¹⁹² stressed that in those days, though coffin was not common, there were people who would have made one for themselves even when they were still living, placed and kept in the ceiling. This is to show that, to an old man, death is not seen as a threat. Information has it that the type of coffins in those days is different from the ones we construct today. Those made in those days were carved and designed inwardly, but today coffins are mostly carved and designed outwardly. Skilled carpenters are employed for this nature of work. But on some occasions, the children of the elder brother to the deceased took it as an obligation to supply it especially if the children are still young and incapacitate to procure one. Chief Ogunsakin observed that, the height of the corpse is measured with a stick, the same stick is used to determine the length of the coffin to be made, as well as the grave to be dug. The stick is latter broken into pieces and buried with the coffin.

4.8.11 *Òòṣà Ìgbélé*

Immediately the husband dies, his wives assembled together to enter into *ilé opó* – house of mourning to mourn their departed husband for at least three months, some observed it for six months and some set aside a year to mourn their departed husband. The elders in the family of the deceased are responsible to take the wives to *ilé-opó*. Before entering this house black wrapper and top (*bùbá*) together with black headtie – *Gèlè dúdú* are to be used by the widows during the period.

They are to put black bead (*ilèkè*) on the left hand (wrist). They should not go out to buy or sell, not even go to farm or engage in any job outside. They are not expected to travel to other communities until they are done with the programme. But they could go out

¹⁸⁹ Oral Interview with Chief Ogunsakin Sajiyan, Aged 65. Traditional Chief. Ìò-ìlé-Èkìtì. Interviewed on 20/7/2016.

¹⁹⁰ Oral Interview with Chief Olu Arówósemolè. Aged 63. *Ifa* Priest. Odò Adó, Adó-Èkìtì. Interviewed on 27/2/2016.

¹⁹¹ Oral Interview with Chief Awo Omolola aged 63. *Ifa* Priest and Lecturer. Ìké-ré-Èkìtì. Interviewed on 8/7/2016.

¹⁹² Oral Interview with Prince S.O. Atítebí. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are Ìké-ré-Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/2016.

during the night to a nearby household to extend greetings to people around or to appreciate their supports during the burial of their deceased husband and return to their base. The female elderly ones are responsible for what they would eat, drink and money to spend during the period. They are the ones to be in charge.

One of the activities to be performed by these widows is to visit the grave of their deceased husband early in the morning everyday to shower prayers on him. They do weep during this period but above all they pray that the deceased husband should not forget them and that he should forgive them their sins and spare their children. The people believe that the dead hears, then they speak to their dead and sees what is going on around though they are dead.

A widow that is pregnant before the death of her husband, is not allowed to come out of *ilé opó*, until she delivers the baby in the *ilé –opó*. When they are ready to come out the elders in the family of the deceased are the ones to meet with them and discuss on their coming out of *ilé opó*. New clothes are made for them and dressed uniformly. Foods are prepared and move round all the town to tell people the time they are coming out of *ilé-opó*. During the meetings of the widows, all the black clothes used during their staying at *ilé opó* were set ablaze – burnt.

Prince Atitebi¹⁹³ said the widow is confined to the inside of the house so that she would not be able to have sexual intercourse with any man. During this period ranging from sixty (60) days to ninety (90) days, she is not expected to visit anybody outside her vicinity.

This is a rite specifically for females whose husbands had died *Opó* widows. The rite shows that the widows are in mourning mood, mourning the death of their husbands. They are to stay at home for some reasons: the first reason is that those who came to visit them at home are received by them. Secondly, they are to stay at home to avert disaster, it is possible for a widow to be moving on the ways and her hearts flunders away and fall into a pit, ditch. Even in industrial communities, widows were hardly allowed to go to work—they were allowed to stay off work. Days spent at home by widows after the demise of their husbands depend on the culture of the deceased. In Adó Èkìtì, they are expected to

¹⁹³Oral Interview with Prince S. O. Atitebi. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are Ìkéré Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/2016.

stay at home for forty days and maximum of three months. Chief Abe cited a particular time when the widows were going to Ojidó a street within Adó metropolis they went in the cover of night because nobody should meet them on the way, and nobody should see them. A particular man should lead them and echo *Oorò me i bọ*-festival is coming. They must not greet anybody; they are expected to put their hands on their chests. Nobody is permitted to look at them.

4.8.12 *Ugbó Orírọ and Alápara* □

To each community, there is *Ugbó-Òrìro*, *Ugbo-Adéré*, *Ugbó-Aláparà*, *Ugbó-Asò* □, *Ugbo-Oro*, etc where the pregnant, the albino, the hunchedback etc are buried. However, some of these sacred forests have given way to the erection of churches, mosques, banks, schools all of which are openly run. For example, the *Ugbo-Eigun* for Ado Ekiti until about 1945 is the present location of the Cathedral Church of Emmanuel, Okesha, and a part of it gave way to the Inland Club, a recreation ground, and the rest was taken over by the Apostolic Faith Mission, for its church and mission headquarter in Èkìtì, in 1977. Now the mission headquarters is at Ajilosun, Ikere road, Ado-Ekiti. A more fearsome grove, set apart for victims of lightning and all those who died unnaturally such as dead pregnant women, and dead hunchback gave way in 1972 for the Ola Oluwa Muslim Grammar School and private residential houses. Indeed the name of *Ugbo-Alapara* - the grove of victims of lightning has been altered to *Ugbó-Ajé*- grove of money. Hence, the location of Ola Oluwa Muslim Grammar School, Ilawe road, Adó-Èkìtì is now termed *Ugbó-Ajé* as against *Ugbó-Alápara* □. In Ìké □ ré □-Èkìtì and Ìkó □ lé-Èkìtì, the groves around the communities gave way to schools, churches and public utilities. The present location of the *Ausar-U-Deen* (AUD) High School, Ìké □ ré □-Èkìtì and the AUD Secondary School, Ìkó □ lé-Èkìtì that was established by the Muslim community in 1962 were the sites for the burial of those who died unnatural death. Any one that died young was buried in *Ugbó Òròro*, because the death was considered to be a sorrowful one. Those who died in pregnancy were never taken home for burial rather the corpse was expected to be buried in the bush. All her properties are buried with her. According to

Arówóşe□mọlẹ¹⁹⁴, it is the duty of *awo*-harbalist to perform such burial rites. But in the present time, the situation has changed, it is rare to see such deceased taken or buried in any bush like Ugbó orò or Ugbó òriro.

The old traditional society of Èkìtì has been tremendously transformed with the result that much of the traditions have been left in abeyance since 1937. Virtually all the fearsome forests have gone, the renowned *Olóri-Ugbó*- priests of the grove who officiated at burial rites are dead and to sustain the awesome traditional burial rites in the modern times is a problem.

4.8.13 Elaborate Burial

Burials sometimes wait weeks or even months to bury an important person who has died after a long and successful life, waiting until all members of the family can gather and until they have accumulated sufficient funds to put on an elaborate or appropriate burials or celebration.

There are also changes in the expansion in scope of the social aspect of burials, that is, in terms of their elaborate preparation and the amount of resources devoted to them, especially by people living in the cities. It has, in short, become a show of wealth arising from the desire to impress others. In the past, young people were only interred with little pomp and pageantry. However, these days, there could be feasting during the burial of fifty years old man and woman. Elaborate burial consists of beating drums, playing the cultural songs, making noises, are the main parts of the ritual. If the deceaseds family is not rich or does not have enough money for elaborate burial, money is collected from tribes, family and close friends. They think dancing and enjoying after the death will depict the deceased's achievements on earth, how he or she was able to behave to the community – (see appendix figures 5 and 6).

4.9 The Catalystsof Change

The emergence of modern culture was received with mixed feeling because its impact on traditional religion generally and indigenous rites in particular is of both

¹⁹⁴ Oral interview with Chief Olú Arówósèmo□lè□ aged 63, *Ifá* priest. Odó Adó, Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 27/02/2016.

positive and negative. Idowu as quoted by Anyanwu says; Christianity came to Nigeria. Dressed up in European garb and it was associated with civilization European etiquette and manners with a corresponding disdain for their (Nigerian) own culture¹⁹⁵.

Corroborating this, Awi Omolola¹⁹⁶ notes that the provision of schools by the Christian missions has a two-way effect: The first is a negative one i.e. hostile attitude towards the indigenous religion. The second is positive as it presented Christianity as the only authentic faith that can fill the spiritual vacuum of the elites¹⁹⁷. The positive effect of European culture on the indigenous societies of Adó-Èkìtì, Ìkéré-Èkìtì and Ìkólé-Èkìtì can be referred to as achievement of the Christian mission while the negative effect of European culture on the indigenous religion of these communities can be termed religious and cultural downsides.

4.9.1 The Influence of Christianity and Islamic Religions

During the reign of *Oba* Daniel Anirare Aládésanmí II, the *Ewi* of Ado Èkìtì who reigned between 1937 and 1983 made the growth and expansion of Christianity, Islam and western education possible not only in Adó-Èkìtì but the whole of Èkìtìland. These factors invariably affected indigenous burial rites adversely in recent years. Their incursion has de-emphasized the significance of indigenous burial rites among the Èkìtì. The negative impact of both Christianity and Islam upon indigenous religion and its attendant practices is apparent in the breakdown of the ancient practices of which burial rites is one¹⁹⁸. Most, if not all, traditional beliefs and practices have been described as paganism and bukward of Satan¹⁹⁹. In fact, people prefer to spend or invest their profits on their farms, businesses, and buildings.

4.9.2 Western Form of Education

¹⁹⁵ Oral Interview with Chief Ogunsakin Sajiyan, Aged 65. Traditional Chief. Ìkólé Èkìtì. Interviewed on 20/7/2016.

¹⁹⁶ Oral Interview with Chief Awi Omolola. Aged 62. *Ifa* Priest and Lecturer. Ìkéré Èkìtì. Interviewed on 8/7/2016.

¹⁹⁷ Oral Interview with Chief Ogunsakin Sajiyan. Aged 68. Traditional Chief. Ìkólé Èkìtì. Interviewed on 20/7/2016.

¹⁹⁸ E.B. Idowu 1982. *Olódùmarè: God in Yorùbá Belief*. Ikeja: Longman Nig. Ltd.

¹⁹⁹ A. Ajayi, 1981, 50Q/ A on West African Traditional Religion. Adó Èkìtì Omolayò Press.

First and foremost is the introduction of western education by Christian missionaries. Schools and Colleges were opened where the people were taught how to read and write liberal education and subjects such as: History, Geography, Mathematics and language were also taught in both primary and secondary schools²⁰⁰. Prominent among the schools are: Christ's School, Adó-Èkìtì; Mary Immaculate Grammar School, Adó-Èkìtì; Ado Grammar School, Adó-Èkìtì, Egbè-Oṣa High School Ìkòṣilé-Èkìtì, Àmòyè Grammar School, Annunciation School, African Church Comprehensive High school all in Ìkéṣé-Èkìtì. Emmanuel Primary School, Òkésá, Adó-Èkìtì and a host of others. Alómóge²⁰¹ confirmed this when he said that the knowledge of reading, writing and figures helped the people in many ways: keeping of accounts, reading for pleasure and ability to write letters. Generally, the liberal education emancipated the minds of the people and prepared them as nationalist leaders²⁰².

It must also be noted here that people criticize Èkìtì most especially Ìkéṣé Èkìtì people, for their elaborate funeral and commemorative rites. It was obvious to see the Ìkéré indigenes coming out on Monday morning to commemorate their dead ones with drumming and dancing.

4.9.3 Modern Health Facilities

Coupled with the western forms of education are the improved medical facilities, hospitals, dispensaries and health centers where modern methods of treatment are used. According to Chief Awi Omolola²⁰³, people were taught how to prevent the attacks and spread of disease in their various localities and the importance of hygiene especially in rural areas. With the improved medical facilities, people now know the need to vaccinate against any form of pestilence. If there is an outbreak of any dreaded disease, medical scientist has a ready answer. There is a reduction in the number of people who are

²⁰⁰Oral Interview with Chief Ogunsakin Sajiyan.Aged 68.Traditional Chief.Ìkòṣilé Èkìtì.Interviewed on 20/7/2016.

²⁰¹Oral Interview with Chief Clement Alomóge.Aged 60.Traditionalist.Ìkéṣé Èkìtì.Interviewed on 18/4/2016.

²⁰²Oral Interview with Chief Ogunsakin Sajiyan.Aged 68.Traditional Chief.Ìkòṣilé Èkìtì.Interviewed on 20/7/2016.

²⁰³Oral Interview with Chief Awi Omolola.Aged 62.Ifá Priest and Lecturer.Ìkéṣé Èkìtì.Interviewed on 8/7/2016.

attacked with the afflictions of *saṅpoṅṅá*, afflictions such as small pox. As a matter of fact, World Health Organisation (WHO) has eradicated smallpox. So if one should curse *Ṣànpònná ni yóò pa ó- Ṣànpònná* will kill you – One will only choke. This is due to the modern health facilities put in place by the government at all levels.

4.9.4 Modern Technology

Another one is the development of science and technology. No doubt, these advances in knowledge and amazing discoveries have been used to improve the ways in which human beings live. Prince Atitebi²⁰⁴ amplified this by saying that the development of science and technology has been used to improve people's knowledge of the universe. Through modern technology we are able to build houses, roads and bridges, to travel fast, to communicate with the entire world, to use internet etc., these are indeed beneficial to mankind²⁰⁵. Also, the announcements that death has occurred- *Ìtúfò ṅòkú* in the earlier times were made with kolanuts, loud whistles, coded drum beats or lung-blown horns or the use of visual signals such as light beacons, smoke signals or signal flags and money depending on the popularity of the deceased. But today, the popular medium now includes the use of electrical devices such as telegraphs, teletypes, telephones using electrical wires and cables, or the use of radio waves to send sound and video signals, as in radio, television broadcast, and mobile communication systems. Events or burial ceremonies are even covered by mass media using the above stated appliances.

Traditionally, the dead are buried within the three days of their death. However, with the advent of modern technology, corpses now stay in the mortuary for as long as the relations want. On the victim of *Saṅpoṅṅá*, people are now embracing the need to be vaccinated against small pox, and if there is an outbreak of the dreadful disease, modern science has a ready answer. In consequence of such advancement, the practice of propitiatory sacrifice has become a thing of the past. In those days, it was a taboo to take the corpse to the mortuary for embalment, burial was always done as quickly as possible. But a traditional method was always adopted in case the burial could not take

²⁰⁴Oral Interview with Prince S.O. Atitebi. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are Ìkéṅré Èkiti. Interviewed on 14/4/2016.

²⁰⁵Oral Interview with Chief David Ogunjobi Sawodi. Aged 60. Traditional Chief. Ìkòṅlé Èkiti. Interviewed on 20/7/2016.

place immediately, perhaps because the children of the deceased were not yet around or for any tangible reason. In this method, the deceased body would be robbed with *Ògógóró*-local gin or alcohol. A small quantity of dry gin may be poured into the deceased's throat. *Ògógóró* is believed to possess the ability to slow down the rate of decomposition. Gold, iron materials such as cutlass, charcoal pressing iron or gold are used at times. Today, things have totally changed.

4.9.5 Shortage of Burial Space

Shortage of burial space in these communities has contributed to popular use of other alternatives to traditional burial such as burying in designated areas- common graveyards, cemeteries. This was the intention of the former government of Èkìtì state to prohibit burying the dead inside family houses and anywhere within the residential quarters which has caused a nuisance. There are graves all over, inside the houses, verandars, in fact, a stranger could walk on such graves without knowing, and this does not urgur well for cities such as Adó, Ìkéré and Ìkòlé. It makes such communities unhygienic and not habitable for people.

Because of shortage of burial space, there are plans now to establish public cementeries in these communities to take care of the dead. Apart from the ones owned by Christians and Muslims to cater for their dead members, before now, it is revealed that there were no public cemeteries anywhere in the state. Chief Abidàkun²⁰⁶, in his submission, said that the old tradition of burying the dead at home is still practised but because of shortage of burial space, the people now prefer a public burial ground.

4.9.6. Challenge of Westernization

Western culture is seriously posing a treat to African culture. It is clearly observed that many of those things that are beneficial to Africans and are Africans in nature have been taking over by westernization. For instance, during indigenous burial, trumpets drum sets, and Christian songs are freely displayed. One discovered that before the coffin is finally closed and nailed, the corpse whose nose and other openings are covered with

²⁰⁶ Oral interview with Chief Oluyemi Abidakun aged 76, Traditional High Chief, Adó Èkìtì, interviewed on 14/11/2017.

cotton wool. It is surprising to note that the cotton wool is kept there – not removed before burial. In indigenous traditional religion belief, if such was not removed, it would make the dead to reincarnate in their children not as a normal person but one with diverse deficiencies.

4.9.7 Rapid Growth of the Communities

Development of Adó, Ìkéré and Ìkòlé began into 1940s through the building up of respective bush areas. By the early 1950s, the communities began to grow up to and beyond their erstwhile outskirts. In Adó Èkìtì, streets were developed and schools were established, streets such as Odò Adó, Ìrònà, Òkèsá etc. Schools such as Christ's School and Adó grammar school. In Ìkéré, there were schools such as Àmòyè Grammar School, Annunciation School etc; in Ìkòlé Èkìtì there was Egbè Ọba High School. As a result, people from different villages came, most especially the villagers brought in their wards to attend those schools thereby gave room for enlightenment and aged who were custodians of burial rites from their respective villages mixed with different people and influenced the indigenes with new ideas and visions. Specifically, the numbers of people that are versed in burial rites are dwindling, from all indications, it is clear that burial rites will soon become a thing of the past because the youths of these days in these communities do not have interest in tradition and the elders that know how are dying, discouraged and brainwashed to accept the new ideas of burying their loved ones.

It is obvious that the indigenous burial rites cannot alienate itself from the modern trends – it cannot but make use of the modern techniques or ways of burial. It is true that some changes or modification indigenous burial rites by traditionalist in Ekiti is as a result of modernity. Such a trend is already noticed, for example the modern use of coffins designed outwardly. However, indigenous religious worshippers need to be conscious of the fact that modernity could lead to extinction.

4.9.8 Nonchalant Attitude of Adherents

Some traditionalists do not value what they have and as such could not transfer it to their children. The few that valued the tradition are ashamed of displaying their belief openly because of modernity. No wonder, then, that the present generation of children,

especially those in their teens, care-less about the old practices. Some do not even understand their culture and language, not to talk of taking part in indigenous burial rites.

All the above factors combine together to water down and eradicate some rites not only burial rites but the entire traditional religion, making it a second class religion on our native land.

4.9 The Effects of Change on the people

The burial rites strongly connote the ardent belief of our people that in actual fact, the dead person is not actually dead. It is believed that he is also aware of everything taking place during his burial and if things were done amiss he could turn against the family and children altogether.

A lot of stories have been told to buttress this; there is a particular event of this kind whereby the family failed to perform a certain ritual. Precisely, it is a goat, which was not killed for her burial. A few days after this, the deceased person appeared in a dream to her eldest son telling him that she had not been allowed into the abode of her forebears because the goat had not been killed. Immediately the ritual was performed, there was not any such appearance in the dream again. This shows that it was disastrous to abandon or neglect the proper burial of one's parent.

Abimbola²⁰⁷ also writes on the aftermath of abandoning the proper burial of ones parent. According to him, quoting from Odù Ifá known as: Òtúrúpon méjì:

<i>Pèpé, awo ilé;</i>	<i>Pèpé</i> is the <i>Ifá</i> priest of the House;
<i>Òtìtá, awo òdè;</i>	<i>Òtìtá</i> is the <i>Ifá</i> priest of Outside;
<i>Alápàándè ò dè ò ló kó ò lé tán,</i>	It is the Ethiopian swallow who builds his
nest,	
<i>Ló ko ò júu rè ò s'ódòòdo,</i>	And curves its entrance downward
<i>Kò kanmi,</i>	The nest is neither on water
<i>Ó wáá Ko ò júu rè ò s'ódòòdo.</i>	Its entrance just drops down in a curce
<i>A díá fún Oyepolu,</i>	<i>Ifá</i> divination was performed for Oyepolu
<i>O ò mo ò Ìsòrò n'ifè ò</i>	Offspring of sacrifice-makers at Ifè

²⁰⁷Wande Abimbola, 1976, *Ifá: An Exposition of Ifá Literary Corpus*. Ibadan: Oxford University press, 157-159.

<i>Èyí tí ìyáa rẹ̀ ọ́ fí silẹ̀</i>	Whose mother would die and leave him
<i>Ní òun nìkan s ọ́s ọ́ lénje lénje.</i>	All alone in his early childhood
<i>Ìgbà tí Oyepolú dàgbà tán</i>	When Oyepolú grew up;
<i>Kò mo ọ́ ohun orò ilée babaa rẹ̀ mó</i>	He did not know the sacrifices and taboos of his
	father's household.
<i>Gbogbo ǹkan rẹ̀ wáá dàrú</i>	His life became confused,
<i>Ó wá obìnrin</i>	He looked for a wife to marry,
<i>Kò rí</i>	But he found none
<i>Bé ẹ̀ ni kò rí ilé gbé.</i>	In addition, he had no comfort at home.
<i>Ló bá m'éejì K'ée ta,</i>	He added two cowry-shells to three,
<i>O looko aláwo</i>	And went to an <i>Ifá</i> priest for divination
<i>Wó n ní gbogbo ǹkan orò ilée babaa rẹ̀</i>	He was told that the sacrifice and taboos of his father's household
<i>Tó ti gbàgbé</i>	Which he had neglected
<i>Ló ndà á láàmú</i>	Were the cause of his troubles
<i>Wó n ni kí ó lo</i>	He was told to go
<i>Sí ojú oórì àwo n babaa rẹ̀</i>	To the graves of his ancestors
<i>Kí ó máa lòó júbà</i>	To beg for power and authority
<i>Ìgbà tí ó se bé ẹ̀ tán</i>	After he had done as he was ordered;
<i>Ló wáá bè rẹ̀ sí í gbádùn ara rẹ̀</i>	He started to enjoy his life
<i>Ó n lájé,</i>	He started to have money
<i>Ó lóbìnrin</i>	He had a wife.
<i>Ó sì bío pè lú</i>	And he had children
<i>Ó ni bé ẹ̀ gé ẹ̀ ni àwo n awo òún wí</i>	He said that was exactly what his <i>Ifá</i> priests had
	predicted.

This was a man who did not bother about his lineage, he did not pay attention to the dos and don'ts of his routes. Incidentally, he couldn't get a wife and his wife seems to be a curse and miserable. He tarried long penury both eventually was made to retrace his

steps and got the right thing to do. He was to make sacrifice and it was accepted by his dead parents. This is telling us that ancestors are of great benefits to mankind.

There are negative implications of burial especially if the dead are not properly buried through traditional rites. The following ills are noted:

4.10 Social Disturbances

The dead person has to be detached from the living and make a smooth transition to the afterlife as soon as possible through proper funeral rites. If the complete rites are not observed, then, it is believed that the soul of the deceased may come back to disturb the living relatives. Drewal²⁰⁸ told a story of a king who was not properly buried when he died. His three sons had no money for a proper burial. The first son saw his father's corpse and fled. The second dressed the corpse up only to leave it behind. The third, after trying to sell the body in the market – for medicines, finally abandoned it in the bush. Many years later when the eldest son had become king, his wife could not have any children. They each consulted a diviner and came to the same conclusion, that he was being punished for his father's improper burial. But his father's remains no longer existed. To add to his trouble, his wife was then raped by a gorilla, and she ran away pregnant and ashamed. She gave birth to a child that was part monkey and part human and abandoned him in the bush. She eventually returned and told the king her story. He went to consult a diviner who advised the king to return to the place of his father's unfinished burial and perform the proper rites, where his father would materialize in a costume. The above story reveals that the deceased will be concerned and unhappy if he or she is not properly celebrated. He will be queried from the ancestors, as to why he has not been properly initiated, or sent to them, perhaps he did not perform well, or achieve well while on earth. If he had performed well, why is prosperity forgetting you? Of a truth the people concerned will surely face the consequences. A common imprecation for those who refused to give proper burial ceremony to their loved ones who died is *Òkú ìgbé*, - Bush death meaning 'May you die in the bush, alone and uncared for, and so receive no funeral rites'. It also means good for nothing person. Ekiti people hold unto the belief that their

²⁰⁸T. Drewal, Margaret, 1992, *Yorùbá Ritual*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 42.

dead and ancestors spirit still stay around as seen in their appraisal to their departed souls as:

<i>Baba rere lo</i> ,	Good father is gone
<i>Ó di ewúré je lé-je lé</i> ,	He becomes the goat that eats in the home
<i>Ó di àgùntàn je mo-mo-je mo</i> ,	He becomes the sheep that eats palm,
<i>Ó di aláa a mu tó nje légbé é o giri.</i>	He becomes lizard that feeds on the wall surface.

Social disturbance in the night which might result in the inability to enjoy good sleep, fear and other disturbing occurrences. Adetifa²⁰⁹ expressed the experiences he had sometimes ago, concerning their failure to properly bury their late father who was an *Ifa* priest in a traditional way. He said in the night he would be hearing different voices, noises and disturbances from the ceiling to the extent that they had to run away from the building because it was as if the ceiling would collapse on them. He noted that when they could not bear it any longer, they consulted an *Ifa* priest who divined that they should approach the burial site of their late father through sacrifice²¹⁰ and beg for forgiveness for their refusal to properly bury him. They obeyed and approached the grave of their father which was incidentally in the verandah of the house. It was only after this- appeasement- that the family was able to enjoy peace in the home, they could sleep well and such horrible occurrences ceased. An *Ifa* verse has it:

<i>Rírú e bo ní Í gbe'ni,</i>	Performance of rites solves one's problems,
<i>Ài rú re ki Í gb'e ni ya n.</i>	Non-performance does not prosper one.

This is to show that the ancestors are relevant in the world of the living, even though they are dead. They are appeased and often appealed to for assistance in times of troubles or crises.

4.10.1 Family Pollution

Ancestors have enormous power to watch over their descendants. Therefore, people make an effort to remember their ancestors on a regular basis to avoid pollution. It

²⁰⁹Oral Interview with Prince Adetifa Adefemi. Aged 65. Traditionalist. Adó-Èkìtì. Interviewed on 20/6/2016

²¹⁰Sacrifices are usually prescribed through divination to be offered to the ancestors who are believed to be the causative agents of such disturbances.

is believed that the love that exists between a parent and a child here on earth should continue even after death. And since the parent has only ascended to another plane of existence, it should be possible for the link to remain strong.

According to Prince Adetifa²¹¹, the relatives of the dead cannot bury the dead. It is held by Prince Atitebi²¹² that if the body is buried by members of the family without inviting the ritual priests, such death would continue in the family. An *Ifá* priest Olú Arówósemo²¹³ informed us that if members of *Awo* are not invited for the burial rites of any of them and is buried by the family, terrible things may happen in the victim's household. He gave an instance of a man who was killed by thunder. One of the children of the deceased visited them- *Ifá* priests, to inform them that although one of them had died, they would not need the attention of the priests in the burial and that they would rather bury the dead themselves. The family buried the dead themselves but disaster struck in the family three days after the burial. Such disaster was seen as a direct result of the contact with the dead body and a repercussion for not inviting the priests who would have prevented such a bad occurrence. He informed us further that the *Ifa* priests earlier rejected were now invited after this incident to perform the rites he should have performed in the first instance. The tide of evil then stopped in the family.

4.10.2 Infant Mortality

The *ijúbà*- honour given to one's parents on earth is expected to accord them even when they are dead. This type of honour is expressed in *Odu Irete Eguntan*²¹⁴, where *Ifa* says:

Júba \square *iyá pè* \square *lú ba* \square *bá re* \square , Honour your mother and your father
Kí o ba le pé \square *láyé*. That you may live long.
Rúbo \square *fún iyá òun ba* \square *bá re* \square , Make sacrifice for your parents,
E \square *bo* \square *ìtó* \square *jú òdodo àti e* \square \square *mí ìrè* \square *lè* \square , sacrifice of sincere care and meekness,

²¹¹Oral Interviewed with Prince Adefemi Adetifa. Aged 65. Traditionalist. Adó-Èkìtì. Interviewed on 20/6/2016

²¹²Oral Interviewed with Prince S.O. Atitebi. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are Ìké \square ré \square Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/1016.

²¹³Oral Interviewed Chief Olu Arowosemole. Aged 62. *Ifa* Priest. Odò Adó, Adó-Èkìtì Interviewed on 27/2/2016.

²¹⁴Samuel.K.Olaleye, 2016, The Nexus between the Ten Commandments of the Bible and the Guiding Laws in *Ifa* Oracle, *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, Vol 04- issue 02, April, 132.

Kí o ba le tún ara re□ bí. that you may liberate yourself.
Rúbo□ iyá òun ba□ bá re□, Make sacrifice to your mother and father,
E□ bo□ itó□ jú òun ìgbó□ ràn, sacrifice of care and obedience,
Kí egun wo□ n má so□□ kale□□ lé That their curse will not come upon
o□ lóri. you.
Egun ba□ bá òun iyá re□, The curse of your father and mother,
Ni egun Olódu□ mare□. is the curse of the almighty!
Rúbo□ fún iyá òun ba□ bá re□, Make sacrifice for your mother and father,
E□ bo□ i□ fé□ òdodo, a sacrifice of sincere love,
Kí o ba le ní isinmi, that you may have rest,
Kí o ba le ní ibùkún. That you may have blessing.

It is a mark of honour and respect to give one's parents befitting burial rites after death. This will help to protect the living from sudden death and infant mortality. Prince Atitebi²¹⁵ stated that most of the old people know when it was their time or turn to die and as such prepare for it. He said:

Àgbà kọ ba sùn An elder who sleeps
Ke ro ijọ ukú rẹ, has no thought of his inevitable death
Ùsùn ùyà lí sùn has slept the sleep of shame.

He cited the example of his own father when he was about to die. He said that his father personally told him when he would die and the exact place he would like him to be buried after he might have died. This he adhered to and today there is no problem in the family and the family is peaceful. But he narrated the one that happened to a sister of his who rejected the instruction given to her by her late father and was made to face the consequences. She fell down and died. It was later discovered that the trouble came as a result of her non-challant attitude towards rituals she was supposed to offer. Another case narrated by Atitebi²¹⁶ confirmed that a woman was made to consult *Ifá* priests as a result of sudden and mysterious death in her family. The priests gave her a list of needed

²¹⁵Oral Interview with Prince S.O.Atitebi. Aged 60.Traditionalist.Are □ Ìké□ré□ Èkiti.Interviewed on 14/4/2016.

²¹⁶Oral Interview with Prince S.O.Atitebi..Aged 60.Traditionalist.Are Ìké□ré□ Èkiti.Interviewed on 14/4/2016.

materials that would be used for the sacrifice. She provided the materials, sacrifice was carried out and there was a meaningful and dramatic change in the family. Negative occurrence stopped in the family and the people were able to have a breathing space, no more misfortune, no more untimely death, no more sickness that leads to death in the family. The wishes of the dead must be respected, if the wishes are not honoured on how he or she wanted to be buried the people would be responsible for the disobedience. There are instances when children are made to consult their parents who had died – their dead fathers or mothers for prayer so that their lives would be better. Also we have situations when men have slept and have claimed to have seen in their dreams their dead fathers or mothers telling them what would happen and what must be done to avert the impending dangers and prescribes the appropriate sacrifices to ward-off the dangers. This was supported by Awi Omolola²¹⁷. He stressed that it is a calamity not to adhere strictly to instructions from one’s parents concerning their burials before their death. He cited an instance of a woman who could not bear fruit of the womb. She was told to offer sacrifice to her dead grand mother who was buried at *Òkè yaadi* in Ìké-ré-Èkiti, unfortunately she could not locate the exact location where her dead grand mother was buried, and her own mother who could have pointed out or located the place was also dead. In those days there was no white washed tombstones to show as we have today. According to Awi Omolola, the woman is still battling with her predicament.

The ancestors are there to protect their own from evil supernatural process. The following *ẹ̀sẹ̀Ifá* from Wande Abimbola²¹⁸ has this to say:

<i>Òsán ní ò sán pé,</i>	Daylight does not keep longer than usual
<i>Òru ní ò ru pé</i>	Night does not keep longer than usual
<i>Òkùnkùn ò kùn pé</i>	Darkness does not keep longer than it usually keeps
<i>Ò pa bàtà m’ó mo lé sè pé pépèpé</i>	He who provides a pair of sandals for a child’s feet
<i>A díá fún Báaléjọ</i>	<i>Ifá</i> divination was performed for Báaléjọ

²¹⁷Oral Interview with Chief Awi Omolola. Aged 65. *Ifá* Priest and Lecturer. Ìké-ré-Èkiti. Interviewed on 8/7/2016.

²¹⁸Wande Abimbola, 1976. *Ifá: An Exposition of Ifá Literary Corpus*, 156-157

<i>Ti ñt'ìkó òlé òrun bò wáyé.</i>	Who was coming from heaven to earth
<i>Bá a bá léjò o</i>	If one has a problem
<i>Sé b'órun e ni là á báá so</i>	One should take it to ones ancestors
<i>Yóò gbè ó o</i>	He shall protect;
<i>Baba e ni kì í gbé ní tì</i>	One's dead father never fails to protect one
<i>Yóò gbè ó o</i>	She shall protect you.
<i>Iye e ni kì í gbé'ni í tì</i>	One's dead mother never fails to protect one
<i>Yóò gbé ó o</i>	It shall protect you
<i>Ikin e ni kìí gbé'ni í tì</i>	One's sacred <i>Ifá</i> divination palmnuts never fails to protect one.

4.10.3 Abject Poverty among Children

Many children and people who are in the habit of burying their dead properly are doing it, not because they are wasteful but because they believe that one of the ways of making progress and shun a poverty in life is when their parents are pleased with them²¹⁹. Therefore, the dead can only be pleased if he or she is given a befitting burial. However, it would not be pleasing, if the dead is not accorded the expected rites.

4.10.4 Calamity and Misfortunes

Failure to perform the necessary burial rites is to incur or invite calamities and woes to the entire town. This is possible because the practices of a person may bring havoc to the whole people. Since the Yorùbá believe in the immortality of the soul, they believe that a man who dies does not just perish like that but continues to live on in the next world after life. It is therefore no surprise that ancestors are able to inflict punishment upon those who do not live right or accorded them a worthy and befitting burial rites. It is

²¹⁹Oral Interview with Chief Ògúnsakin, Aged 68. Traditional Chief.Ìko òlé Èkìtì. Interviewed on 20/7/2016.

on this that Àyántáyò quoted by Oyèwolé²²⁰ says people do observe various rules and regulations concerning burial rites and sacrifices to maintain a peaceful society and to avoid any social pandemonium.

In one *Odu* *Ifá* verse known as *Òtúúrípò* n *Méjì* earlier cited, where a man named *Oyepolú* was made to sacrifice because of his condition. Also, Atitebi²²¹ narrated an incident where someone was told to offer sacrifice to his ancestor for him to be released from the spell of poverty. The man did it and his life changed, he became wealthy, stinkingly rich. The living-dead, that is, the dead person sees the happenings in his family and as a result he is able to vindicate or punish people.

4.10.5 Object of Ridicule

Anyone who refuses to bury his father or mother who dies in a proper way will invariably not be buried by his own children when he dies. Such a person may even be deprived of some rights in the community where he belongs. He may even find it not convenient to walk freely in the community because people will look at him as being unserious and irresponsible person who could not pay his last respect to his dead father or mother. Not only this, he might become an object of ridicule, a laughing stock as he is by passed by people everyday and he dare not take part in other people's burial ceremonies at all. He certainly will not be reckoned with in his community.

4.11 Research Findings and Focus Group Discussions

4.11.1 Description of Participants

Thirty-five individual participants were interviewed for this study. The participants were described in terms of age, gender, home language and place of residence. Of the thirty-five participants, the majority were males – 30 males and 5 females. The age range was between 60 and 100. All of them were residing in townships – Adó-Èkìtì, Ìkéré-Èkìtì and Ìkòlé-Èkìtì.

²²⁰Oyewole, M.O. 2011. The Socio-Economic Impact of Burial Rites in Ìpè Àkókó community. An M.A. Dissertation, Ibadan: University of Ibadan, Ibadan. .51.

²²¹Oral Interview with Prince S.O, Atitebi. Aged 60. Traditionalist. Are Ìké-ré-Èkìtì. Interviewed on 14/4/2016.

Focus groups were also conducted and a total of twenty-five-25 respondents – who made the sizes of the groups ranging from 4-6 members, participated in the interviews.

In the interview with selected *Ifa* priests, *Ògbóni* Priests, Traditional Chiefs and Indigenous religion adherents in the three selected communities²²², the issues of continuity and change in burial rites were asked on these words: Elements of continuity and change; factors/catalysts of change; benefits of continuity and the effects of change. They were further asked to give sayings to justify or back up their views. The findings show that there are elements in burial that have changed and that there are elements that have remained. The changes were not unconnected with the wind of modernization.

4.11.2 Interpretation of the Themes

(i) Elements of continuity in indigenous burial rites highlighted:

The respondents highlighted the elements that have continued in spite of the catalysts or factors of change. This includes *Yíya Èsìsilẹ̀* - serves as a ritual of separation that the deceased would not come back to disturb the living especially the family and relatives of the deceased. Others are the *Òdìgboro*, *Pakájà*, *Òkú Sùnyẹ̀wu*□, *Gbàrà-mogbó*. Etc. According to the respondents, they prefer that the dead be buried in a traditional way and that the dead be buried around the compound so that people will look at the dead as part of the family.

After burial, the wives of the deceased chief would start weeping and chanting *Orikì* at the graveyard of the deceased chief. *Orikì*—comprises the sayings that show the characteristics possessed by the deceased. A discussant recited some of the *Orikì* that are chanted during burial in the three communities:

From Adó-Èkìtì

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------------------|
| (i) | <i>Omọ Àrẹ̀mọ̀ lódi Odò</i> | The Prince from down town |
| | <i>A bù kẹ̀lẹ̀ gídìgbò à gbà</i> | The one who takes big bowl for adult |
| | <i>Omọ a fọ yaa o o kú jí lúlẹ̀ ọrun</i> | One whose voice awakes the dead |
| | <i>Ukú rẹ̀ dún á o o</i> | Your death is painful to us |

²²²The collection of this data is done within the three communities in Ekiti State at a very low, down to earth and informal level. The interviews conducted numbered 60(sixty). The interview was carried out using informants between February 2016 and December 2017. It is noteworthy that the ages of the people interviewed ranged from 60 to 100years.

- Sùn re o o*
- (ii) *Omọ a foyọ mefà yórí ègbé*
Ijó kòkòkàn kòò líbè
ní Kèrún
Ùşe kù sá pá ti bé dè mulẹ
- A ti a bèrèrè lóy Àrẹmọ*
- Omọ Olótòrùn kan*
mí p'ọlọjà igbè
Ibi àn mórí àrẹmọ solẹ sí
Ùrókò Ùlòdà náà ti bọ Kọlọjà
Ìjàjà idabò lúmayọ l'ádó Èwí
Omọ ọ téní gbigba í mészó
Èjìgbò yangàn
Ọ dò laa o
- (iii) *Omọ Olúrokò kegé Ùlá*
Ùrókò ko Soledé
Ùrókò Balémọ gbàjà ruru
Ọnà Òkè Àrìgùn
Òyè ajọ ko gbule ẹru
tọmọtọmọ, Ọnà àrìgùn
Omọ Olodede ènukò Ùlá
Omọ alágèrè làjòkà mejì
Ugogo èrukù é rí bẹ ní làgbá
Ọnà Èkútè
Ọnà yé rẹ yèrè yéré
Ugbó Èkútè mẹmumẹmu
Omọ Alágèrè àjòjì kò wẹşẹ
- Rest in peace.
A child of *afoyọ mefà*
The day one is removed from it
left with five
What brought roselle and melon
together
is a question to be asked from the
prince
One who is in possession of cane
for flogging the Igbe chief
The birth place of the prince
The teak or dark tree of chief Ilọda
In *Imayọ* street Adó-Èkítì
The son of beauty
Èjìgbò yangàn
Good night
- The son of Òkè Ùlá teak
Oak tree (Africa Teak)
Oak Tree of *Balémọ*
The way to òkè Àrìgùn
Children inclusive on Àrìgùn road
The son of *Odede* of Ùlá street
The one who splits *Agere*
The Èkútè way
The easy way
Ekute forest that drinks palm wine
The son of *Agere*, the stream that
strangers are not allowed to drink

Àjòjì ko bá wẹsẹ libẹ
á d'oni ebọra
Ọmọ Olóri aládé elémùpo Ekiti
Ọmọ arẹyẹ rẹmọ boni nigbá
Ọmọ Ọ̀sùsẹ Ẹ̀ròkó Kẹẹ láyè
Kaan gbá dé dé lóri
Ọ mọ̀ dò laa o o

from
 Strangers that wash there
 become spirits
 The Chief Prince of Elémùpo Èkìtì
 The son of *arẹyẹ rẹmọ*
 The one who works and honoured
 And is crowned
 Good night.

From Ùsin – Ìkòlé-Èkìtì

Usin à ò yó
Ọmọ aloko sun an tohùntohùn

Ọmọ Olúsin, un sun ayeye kọpọ
Ọmọ eléré mẹfa takọ tabo

Leti Ùsin
Èjì ișerá ulé
Èjì ișerònà
Èjì kokù iretí oni kàà yá bomi
ramun létí Ùsin
Ọmọ a mín màà lùù sọdún ìgbàgbọ

Ọmọ oni bàtà kèeró kálo kábọ
lúgbà ọ̀sẹ Ọ̀pọ̀
Sun l'áyà Olódùmarè

The son of Ùsin
 one who possessed all round beauty
 with sweet voice
 The son of Olusin
 One with six rewards both male and
 female
 at the brink of Ùsin
 Two resides at home
 Two for the road/way side
 The remaining two

 One who celebrates his faith
 with cow
 One who wore beautiful shoes
 On Sunday morning
 Rest in the bosom of God

On the issue of taking corpses of kings and traditional chiefs especially religious or ritual chiefs to mortuary, the people frown at this and see it as an *èwò* – taboo. That even the traditional chiefs that fell during wars, their bodies were preserved and brought back

home for burial. There were some leaves and herbs which no flies or germs can touch or go near; these would be used to preserve the corpse.

In an interview conducted with an *Ifá* priest in *Ìkéré Èkìtì*, his idea is put forward thus:

Only religious ceremonies or rites were observed where the custodians of burials and masquerades performed their necessary religious rites on the dead or corpse. But social ceremonies have been added to the religious aspects of burial. The deceased children and relatives may decide to invite and bring their musicians, peer groups, religious groups, social groups, and entertainers etc to display after the final rites had been carried out.

(ii) Elements of change in Indigenous burial rites identified:

In the various interviews and focus group discussions held for this study, respondents have views that supported the quest of man after cultural transformation, which according to them has brought tremendous and far-reaching changes to the way the people burying their dead. A High Chief interviewed said:

In the olden days, corpses of high chiefs and *Ògbóni* priestswere not taken to church either to be displayed, prayed for or buried. Today, owing to different chieftaincy titles offered in churches to old and well-to-do members, the corpses of traditional chiefs are taken to church for prayer. Some children of the deceased chiefs who are Christians may even decide to burry their fathers in church cemetery.

Hear this from a focus group discussant:

When a traditional chief dies, the announcement would not be immediately made until all ritual that has to do with chieftaincies was completely done. Such rituals include religious rituals and the ritual that has to do with lineage of such deceased chief. Until after such rituals are performed nobody knows whether the chief was dead or alive. Any attempts made by anybody to visit the chief or give any report, would be resisted or the person would be told *Baba ò sí nilé* – father is not at home, you cannot see him now. If the visitor should ask the deceased's wife, she would decline making any statement. When they were ready to make such announcement, it was done through the use of *àrokò* that is a Yorùbá communication device. Today, there are cases where the announcement would be made even

before the co-high chiefs got to know about such death, through social media – radio, television, internet etc.

(iv) Factors/Catalysts of Change in Indigenous Burial Rites discussed:

Another discussant says:

In those days when Christianity and Islam were not as spread as they are now, traditional high chiefs were buried with some slaves called *erú*. Today, people do not use the word slaves but *iránşé* regular servants. Whatever property that the high chief has in life should be with him and the servants would be available to help carry those properties such as anklets, many costly materials, drinks such as aromatic Schnapps; these drinks would be put inside a container called *şágo* made of earth ware. The belief was that chief will still need these things where he is going – *Òrun*. Important chiefs and the children of the deceased would donate costly clothing for burial. Important chiefs, in those days, there were no dichotomy among the traditional chiefs but they know their ranks. Important chiefs, traditionally called *Eléí Marun*– five head chiefs in Adó Èkìtì. These are chiefs who have notable compounds, official residential places. Any chief without notable compound is regarded as messenger chief but today many claim to be high chiefs.

An interviewee who happens to be a woman traditional chief in Adó Èkìtì also stressed the factors that were responsible for change in indigenous burial rites in the communities thus:

The establishment of schools and colleges helped people to have knowledge of education. As a result, people, especially the youth in Èkìtì are deviating from their traditional religion and throw their customs overboard because of what they regarded as derogatory terms which are unreservedly applied to describe their indigenous religion by the so called educated ones.

She stated further that:

Indigenous religion if care is not exercised, will fall into oblivion in Èkìtì, especially among the educated people because this category of people now regards indigenous burial rites as outmoded. This is occasioned by the

education got from the western world where their world view had been coloured by alien culture.

An interviewee who is an adherent of indigenous religion from Ìkéré-Èkìtì attested to this fact as he said:

Prior to the advent of education through Christianity, if a person has headache, stomachache or whatever the complaint might be, the practice was to consult the oracle to ascertain the source of the problem or what taboo had been broken so as to know what sacrifice to offer. For example, when a Yorùbá man dies in a mysterious way, the *Ifá* oracle is consulted to know the cause of the death. The corpse is not touched until consultation is over.

It is needful to know that the practice of consulting *Ifá* oracle can only happen when it is discovered that the situation surrounding the death of such person is not clear. He went further to affirm that:

With the improved medical facilities today, people's outlook had greatly changed to the extent that if a person dies mysteriously, he or she is placed on scientific oracle-post-mortem test to detect unnatural death which of course is not viable to unraffle the mystery behind such death. If the death is natural, the normal rites will continue but if is caused by some evil agents such as witches, wizards, medicine men and others; certain rituals will be performed to empower the dead person to launch a counter attack on the one who causes the untimely death.

This conformed to what is noted in chapter four that if a person is ill, he or she will just go straight to the medical doctor that has access to modern facilities instead of going to *Ifá* priest for spiritual guidance.

An *Ifá* priest in Adó-Èkìtì corroborated this in a focus group discussion thus:

There is rapid growth in the three communities, people moved from villages to big towns such as Adó, Ìkéré, Ìkòlé to look for jobs. More often than not rites are broken so as to know what sacrifice to offer left unperformed since those who should perform them have left the villages for greener pasture. Attendance at traditional burial rites has been decreasing and the prestige of these rites had gone down markedly, especially with the young people. Even the young people who are supposed to carry on the tradition are not interested and not ready to abide by the dos and dons of

the traditions. They cannot observe the taboos, such as abstaining from fornication, sexual morality, desceit etc. They are happy anytime they engage in social vices.

Ìdòwú²²³ speaks of a people with half-hearted zeal for learning the tradition and of officials who have unwittingly drifted away from what the past generations of worshippers would accept as correct tradition. In particular, we found this to be the case in Èkìtì. It is in the aged and few adherents of indigenous religion that take the practice seriously.

Again, it is observed that in the process of giving the dead an appropriate burial the family or the community may insist that a large funeral must be held even when an individual prefers a smaller event. This has led many people to incur huge debts especially in the big towns. It is even interesting to know that this notion has crept into the villages. The simple low-cost *aso e bí* -family dress, is no longer enough and what is supposed to be a simple ceremony marking the final burial rites is turned into a blatant show of affluence which, very often, is deceptive. In fact, the death of the old man could be as a result of the uncaring attitude of the children. There are cases where bereaved families have to acquire and wear at least three costly clothes before the end of the funeral ceremony that would not last more than seven hours, neglecting the deceased dependants. Some of these people borrowed large sums of money to purchase costly clothes in order to appear gorgeous before the people that have been invited and not necessarily secure a resting place or eternal rest for the deceased. It is noted that monies borrowed to buy expensive clothes, casket and other things to accompany the dead to *òrun* will not be paid by the dead, but will be definitely paid for by the deceased families which ofcourse would give them bad names in the society.

Furthermore, the negative effect of modern religions such as Christianity and Islam has done a lot of havoc to indigenous burial rites in Èkìtì land. Since there is hardly any place for irreligious in Africa²²⁴. An *Ifá* priest noted that an attempt to introduce any foreign religion to the traditional society means an invasion or loss of ground on the part of the indigenous religion. According to him, the emergence of Islam and Christianity in Èkìtì state has de-emphasized the importance of indigenous burial rites. This is apparent in

²²³E.B.Idowu, 1970. *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*.

²²⁴Oral interviewed with Chief Olu Arówósemolè. Aged 61. *Ifá* Priest. Odò Adó, Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 27/2/2016.

the breakdown of ancient practices, ruin of ancient temples, the neglect of rituals including indigenous burial rituals and the recent move by Èkìtì state government to ban burial of the dead in family compounds. This plan negates the belief of the people²²⁵. Another instance is the event of the sacrifice of fare fowl which is one of the most important aspects of burial rites is now fading out.

(iv) Effects of Change in indigenous burial rites elucidated:

At the prayer chapele of Aborigine *Ògbóni* fraternity in Ìkòlé Èkìtì, a leader (*Apèná*) in the fraternity in a focus group discussion was of the opinion that:

If someone refuses to give due burial rites to his parent as a result of his carefree attitude or negligence thereby making his parent a wanderer as he will not be welcomed by the ancestors over there, he too will not have someone to accord him due burial rites and as such will not be welcomed by the ancestors when he dies. They based their submission on the law of Karma – It is what you sow that you reap. In other words; others surely do to him exactly what he did to his predecessors. Aside this, it brings about the wrath of ancestors on the children and the family of the deceased in the communities.

The above statement was confirmed by an *Ifá* priest, *Ògbóni* members, high chiefs, the aged and the traditionalists – see appendix figure 13 for one of the meeting points of the researcher and the interview respondents.

He affirmed further that:

The co-members of the group are expected to bury the dead in their traditional way. But if the deaceased before his death does not want *Ògbóni* members to perform the burial, he is expected to have done it for the co-*Ògbóni* before his death. However, this injunction is in contradiction with the traditional practices that border on cultural values and proper burials of the initiates.

All the members of focus group discussion agreed to the fact that there are elements of change and continuity as regards burial rites among the Èkìtì such elements include the fare-fowl (*adiẹ irànà*), sleeping on the grave, Ìfẹ̀hìngbè, fetching river Oṣun to *Ọba*'s palace, *bibá òkú yáwù àti fifa eégún òkú wolé*, food and personal effects in the

²²⁵ *Why Yoruba Bury their dead at home*. <http://weeklytrust.com.ng/index.Ph.D./features>. Retrieved on 20th January 2014.

grave, *Ugbó Òrìro*, *Ugbó Adéré* and *Alápara*. Investigation revealed that in the past, the sacrifice of fowls, usually with black feathers, for the departed soul was very common. It is believed that there are lots of evil spirits on the way of the departed soul, so this *adiè-irànà* (the part way) fowl is sacrificed to clear the way. Also, people do not stay in the house of the deceased for days to mourn the deceased.

(v) Benefits of Indigenous Burial Rites on the people:

But when a befitting burial rite is performed for one's parents, the sons of the parent will bless them and the labour of their hands and they will find help and favour wherever they turn to for help. Because the type of rites that is usually carried out during burial are intended to inform the deceased that he should not sleep in heaven, but should keep a close watch over the vacuum created by his death. As an ancestor, he is in a position to always intervene during difficult times. They also watch closely over the conduct of their living descendants, rewarding virtues and punishing bad conduct.

It is obvious that with the progress made by these modern religions, some of the adherents of indigenous religion and *Bàbá Ìsìnkú* in burial rites have been lost to either Christianity or Islam. The people believed that it is unfashionable these days for anyone to declare himself as an adherent of traditional religion in public records such as those of the hospitals and application forms to institution of learning where religion is indicated.

Furthermore, from the findings, it was discovered that the ancestors *Òkú* *Òrun* are a sort of overseers and are interested in the proper application of social ethics. Like the living elders, the ancestors could punish anyone who violates the rules and ethics of the society.

However, in the light of results findings, some members of the focus group discussion especially the born again high chiefs, were of the view that what remains of indigenous burial rites in recent years is its social aspect. Its spiritual value is on decline. Hear this from a discussant:

In those days, the burial site of the hunchedback- *abuké*, the pregnant woman who dies in pregnancy was *Ugbó Oríro* but the situation is different today; the burial site is at home. Burial rite, irrespective of the form it takes these days, is regarded as a period of celebration and an occasion for thanksgiving.

It is not far from the truth that if we compare the degree of commitment and intensity of participation in the past with that of today, one can easily conclude that some indigenous burial rites at present attract less attention and dedication. Grown up people have turned some of the rites into objects of socio-cultural displays rather than having religious importance.

Without mincing words, most people agreed that there is the *laissez-faire*-attitude of the adherents of indigenous religion and the custodians of burial rites in recent years, as disclosed by a respondent. This has eventually brought untold decline in zeal and degree of commitment on the part of adherents.

Most of the respondents also agreed on the changes that have taken place in indigenous burial rites. The central theme that comes out among the respondents is constantly the catalyst or machineries that occasioned the changes.

There is not doubt that there are many religious ceremonies and rites in West Africa. For instance, changes in status and major events in the life cycle are marked by ceremonies and rites among the Ekiti, as in many other cultures. Funerals are key occasions for celebrating the life of a person who has died, especially one who lived a successful life. It is also clear from our introduction that indigenous religion has been affected by ‘revolution’ to use Mbiti’s²²⁶ terminology, including burial rites.

Nevertheless, some *Ifá* priests, *Ògbóni* members and traditionalist held that regardless of the coming of modernity, traditional practices especially burial rites can never be seen as outmodel or archaic. According to them, we do not just bury our dead anyhow or anywhere because there are consequences attached to it, if such is done anyhow or anywhere.

4.11.3 Integration of findings with the Literature and the theoretical framework of this study

From the literature reviewed, the understanding of burial rites in Yorùbá culture as expressed by Ìdòwú²²⁷, Lucas²²⁸, Awolalu and Dòpámú²²⁹, Adéníyì and Babalọlá²³⁰ is that

²²⁶J.S. Mbiti, 1969. *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 216.

²²⁷E.B. Idowu, 1996. *Olódùmarè: God in Yorùbá Belief*. London: Longmans Green and Company Ltd. 190-208

²²⁸J.O. Lucas. 1948. *The Religion of the Yorùbá*. Lagos: CMS Bookshop.

there are steps involved in preparing the dead for burial. The findings also seem to be consistent with the above scholars and with the study of Adelowo²³¹ and Adegoke²³².

On the issue of sacrificing a fowl – *adiẹ irànà*. and the pouring of water on the grave. The findings concur with the study of Ìdòwú²³³, Mckenzie²³⁴ and Ọlátúnjì²³⁵.

On the places of burial and location of tombs in some Èkìtì communities, Ọjó²³⁶ noted that there are graveyards, invariably adjacent to the church compounds, extensive in areas marked out by brightly painted or white washed tombstones. This confirms Owoeye²³⁷ opinion and concurred with the present findings.

The general feeling expressed by the respondents is that people are downgrading indigenous religious practices such as burial rites. This also seems to concur with Olomola²³⁸ who expressed that although there is a wide range of improvement brought by modernity, nevertheless this has steadily eroded indigenous religion with accompanied rites. This is consistent with the theoretical framework of this work that maintains that traditional religious beliefs and cultural traits become less important as modernization takes hold. The findings conclusively agreed with Awolalu²³⁹ that whether Africans like it or not, some aspects of their religion will change through modernization. According to Kendall²⁴⁰, urbanization accompanied modernization and the rapid process of industrialization. However, modernity should not be taken with levity by the adherents of indigenous religion.

²²⁹ J.O. Awolalu & P.A Dolpamu 1979. *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Onibonjoje Press.

²³⁰ M.O. Adeniyi and E.O. Babalola 2001. *Yorùbá Muslim in Christian Understanding*. Ipaja: Eternal Communities Ltd.

²³¹ E.D. Adelowo, 1987. *Death and Burial in Yorùbá, Quranic and Biblical Religion, Orita* 19:2, 104-117.

²³² E.O Adegoke 1995. *A Study of the Role of Women in Burial Rituals of the Ife of South Western Nigeria*. Ph.D Thesis. University of London.

²³³ E.B. Idowu, 1996. *Olódùmarè: God in Yorùbá Belief*. London: Longmans Green and Company Ltd. 190-208

²³⁴ Peter Mckenzie 1975. *Inter Religious Encounters in West Africa*. 98-101.

²³⁵ B. Olatunji, 1975. *Àsìkú àti Ogún Jìjẹ*. Ibadan: Longman Nigeria Ltd. 69-88.

²³⁶ G.J.A Ojo. 1966. *Yorùbá Culture*. London: University of Ife and University of London Press Ltd. 115.

²³⁷ K.M. Owoeye, 1988. *Events and history of Itapa-Èkìtì*. Michigan, Ann Arbor: Kolossa printers Ltd. 43-44.

²³⁸ I. Olomola, 2000. "The Decline of Traditional Deities: A Case Study of Egúngún Adó" *Odu: A Journal of West African Studies*. No 40 Jan/July.

²³⁹ J.O. Awolalu, 1981. *Yorùbá Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. U.K: Longman Group Ltd. 50-58.

²⁴⁰ Diana Kendall. 2007. *Sociology in Our Times* (6th Ed.) Belmont: Thomson/Wadsworth.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

So far, we have been able to discover that vast members of these communities do not belong to or know anything about those days – the past, when the indigenous religion was intact. Only few individuals who have intimate knowledge of those days can discuss very freely the full details of traditional burials in those communities. Of course, a considerable number of these citizens are or have become Christians, Muslims, or sophisticated and have willfully forgotten the necessary details. Some of the renowned priests are dead; however the awesome traditions can still bounce back and be sustained in modern times as established in this work.

Interviews with some of the adherents of indigenous religion show that certain aspects or elements of indigenous burial rites for many generations up to this time have continued and are unchanging. Regardless of intensive Christian evangelization and Islamic penetration into the communities, belief in *Ifá* still finds expression among Ekiti people professing one or another form of religion. An average Ekiti man turns naturally to *Ifá* for guidance in regard to the future²⁴¹ The *Ìta*- the third day of celebration- is still very much alive.

In Orisamika's observation²⁴², it is still considered the greatest disgrace to a family that fails to hold the proper funeral ceremonies at the death of one of its members. This is why the Èkìtì attitudes to procreation are extremely positive. Without children, who will bury you in a meaningful way²⁴³.

²⁴¹Oral Interview with Chief Olu Arowosemolè. Aged 65. *Ifa* Priest. Odò Adó, Adó- Èkìtì Interviewed on 27/2/2016.

²⁴²Oral Interview with Chief Jacob Orisamika Aged 62. *Ifa* Priest. Orere Owu, Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/10/2016.

²⁴³Oral Interview with Chief Jacob Orisamika, Aged 62. *Ifa* Priest. Orere owu, Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/10/2016.

5.1 Summary

From this study, it is clear that the belief that death does not end life is common to the various societies of the world. The belief is found in Africa, among the Yorùbá and in the communities understudied. These societies, while admitting that all human beings will one day taste death, *Awáyé málo kò sí* – One that comes to the world without leaving does not exist, meaning that death is certain for all persons; and that nothing can be done to escape from death on God’s own appointed time. That is why the Yorùbá would say *E ye kì í mò fò ló jó ikú*- a bird does not know how to fly in its day of death.

As earlier pointed out, the people of the communities uphold the religion of their forefathers. They eat religiously, talk religiously and walk religiously. In short, they are in all things deeply religious.

However, indigenous religion is caught up in a world of revolution. As a result of modern religions and western culture, indigenous beliefs and practices of Èkìtì people have been influenced²⁴⁴ to a certain degree by outside forces. Hence, things are no longer in water-tight compartment. With particular reference to burial rites in Èkìtìland, many factors combined to weaken²⁴⁵ its hold on the people and this has given many people the impression that indigenous religion and its attendant rites in the land has suffered an eclipse. The modern religions- Christianity and Islam acting as a social force- have played down the significance of indigenous religion. As a result, certain customs have died a natural or forced death while many traditional rites have either crumbled or disappeared²⁴⁶. This in the long run had led to the decay in Èkìtì moral code, for instance, decay in Èkìtì moral code started when Christians preached directly against some indigenous beliefs such as the spirit world, the divinities, ancestors and their sanctity around which a good deal of moral code was built. This was the beginning of cultural change in Èkìtìland.

A pessimistic and casual observer of indigenous religion in Ekiti will immediately conclude that the obituary of the religion is only a matter of time. Nevertheless, if the

²⁴⁴Isola Olomola, 2000, “The Decline of Traditional Deities: A Case Study of Egungun Ado”. *ODU: A Journal of West African Studies* no 40 January/July. 64-70

²⁴⁵Oral interviewed with Chief Jacob Orisamika. Aged 62. *Ifa* Priest. Orere Owu Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/10/2016.

²⁴⁶Oral interviewed with Chief Jacob Orisamika. Aged 62. *Ifa* Priest. Orere Owu, Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/10/2016.

situation can be critically examined as we have done here, one will see that what we have discussed above is not the end of the matter and that we cannot take mere appearance for reality. It is obvious that civilization has its limitation in changing the people's way of life²⁴⁷. *A kò lè so pé ayé dayé òyìnbó ká máa fì ojú egbò te lè*. – One cannot say because the world has become the world of the whites -civilization one should be stepping about with the face of leg's sore.

Today, the supreme place of religion in the life of African is now fully recognized. Wrong terminologies earlier used to describe the indigenous religion of Africans have now been discovered that it was used by few individuals who were ignorant of other people's beliefs. Sequel to this, the people of Èkìtì especially the elderly ones no longer feel ashamed to be associated openly with the indigenous religion of their fore-fathers. With this attitude, we can at least say, with some degree of certainty, that the future of traditional religion in Èkìtì is not all that bleak.

Secondly, the spirit of nationalism has also inflamed the interest people now have for their indigenous religion. The search for the independent African nations and the general search for identity throughout the continent have augured well for the developing interest people now have for the religion²⁴⁸. As a result of this, there is a growing awareness now more than ever of the need to keep the religion of the forefathers by concerned educated Africans. Prominent among these educated Africans is Chief Omotoso Eluyemi²⁴⁹ who founded the centre for Yoruba cultural studies along Obalufon Street in Ile-Ife; Chief Jacob Orísámíkà²⁵⁰ - *Olóri Awo Èkìtì*, the founder of *Òrísámíkà* plaza, Ajíbádé Lane, opposite Skye Bank, Adó Èkìtì and the coming together of all indigenous religion adherents under one acceptable and unique umbrella known as the International Council of *Ifá* Religion which was duly registered on 19th October 2001 by the government of Nigeria. A prominent place is also given to the study of indigenous religion in the educational system in most of our higher institutions. The effort to propagate the

²⁴⁷Oral interviewed with Chief Clement Alómóge. Aged 60. A Therapeutic Doctor and Traditionalist. *Ìkéré Èkìtì*. Interviewed on 18/4/2016.

²⁴⁸A. Abioye, 1986, *Advanced Studies in West African traditional religion for higher schools*. 17

²⁴⁹O. Eluyemi, 2001. "Attitudes of Government to Traditional Religion in Nigeria", cited by T. Oyelade in E.A. Odunmuyiwa (ed) *Religion, Science and Culture*, 130-132

²⁵⁰Oral interviewed with Chief Jacob Orísámíkà, Aged 62. *Ifá* Priest. Orere Owu, Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 16/10/2016.

religion is further engineered in a global interest to a level that Universities abroad have embraced the study of the subject²⁵¹.

The continuation of the traditional religion in Èkìtiland is further assured by the fact that the indigenous religion still wields greater influence on Èkìtì people, whether be he a Christian or a Muslim. There is the divided loyalty from followers of both religions who sometimes revert to traditional sanctions in time of troubles. This is the time when a large percentage of the Èkìtì people, educated and uneducated, consult a *babaláwo* or any other traditional leader for guidance. They can be said to attach themselves at heart to the traditional religion, though outwardly, they profess Islam and Christianity. What can we say of a Christian who hangs a spell and covers it with a Jesus calendar or an Almanac? The belief in witchcraft and sorcery still continues, people regard them as channels of misfortune and they seek protection in the traditional way against them. The protection, which is usually by magical means, is provided by the traditional medicine man.

In many homes today in Èkìtiland, before a Christian/Muslim wedding could take place, the bride and the bridegroom have to go to the parents home to have the traditional blessing of her parents where the ancestors are invoked and libation is poured. Where this aspect is omitted, people have incurred the displeasure of the ancestors, which may result into unfruitfulness on the part of the bride. During a child naming ceremony, it is imperative for the officiating man or priest to offer prayer to the ancestors for the gift of a baby, after which he then pours libation on the floor to the same *Òkú Òrun* -ancestral spirits and divinities.

Moreover, burial and funeral ceremonies are the concern of everybody irrespective of his or her religious tradition. Burials are often announced over the radio, television and even covered by the mass media.

*Dèjì Òbé*observed that:

Most Nigerians hold to two faiths; to church or to mosque for a social life, but they hold too to the indigenous faiths of their fathers in times of disequilibrium²⁵².

²⁵¹E. Bolaji Idowu, 1982, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 203-207.

²⁵²Deji Obe, quoted by O. Olaoba, 1995, Traditional religion practices in Yoruba palaces. *Orita*: xxvi/1 June, 12.

Furthermore, certain practices in indigenous religions have been translated into, or absorbed by Islam and Christianity. In Christianity, for example the Pentecostal churches have absorbed much that are of African in practice, although the Bible²⁵³ enjoins people to worship God with singing, drumming and dancing, we know that these were not part of the Christianity brought to Èkitìland. The appearance of these is an indication of the influence of indigenous religion on Christianity and even on Islam. We also note that among Èkìtì, incantations enter prayers in form of negative or positive assertion. For example;

Igbá tí a bá fì lé o lówó kù fò - Any calabash under care never breaks.

Also, the Yoruba attributes of God are freely used in prayer, for example:

Oba a bù fún ni bí òpò òjò – King, who generously
give like heavy rainfall.

In all these, old languages are used to express new ideas. This is due to the fact that the new religions ideas could be easily understood in the language of the old in which they were first expressed.

Again, many people still resort to indigenous religion in times of crises. When all is well, they follow the new religion with ease but let there be any problems or crises, and people forget all about the new religions, which they believe, cannot give them the much needed protection and they seek after the diviner whom they now believe can give them guidance.

5.2 Conclusion

There is no doubt that burial rites, once powerfully entrenched in the three communities in Èkìtì, have generally declined under pressure of more vigorous missionary religions, European culture and modernisation. In a situation where the two foreign religions on the one hand, and European culture on the other have the literacy while indigenous religion lacked the attractions of these catalysts are really formidable and their incursions into traditional societies are generally unstoppable. Their acceptance in these communities brings a wide range of opportunities and improvements. These opportunities are felt in the areas of western education, improved medical facilities, developments in the

²⁵³*Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version (RSV). Psalm 150*

area of science and technology, and introduction of western civilisation. However, the negative effects of change on the indigenous religion cannot be over-emphasized in the sense that it hinders the growth and development of indigenous religion.

Finally, an average Èkìtì man may profess Islam or Christianity because it is the mark of a civilised man to do so; at least he is a traditionalist in the sphere of the supernatural. The rites of *Ifẹ̀yìngbè*, fetching of *Ọ̀sun* water to the palace, *Òdòṣà Ùgbélé*, *Ugbó Oriro*, food and personal effects in the grave, the rite of pouring water on the grave, and the grave fowl may have ceased; *Adie irànà* -the fare fowl, may no longer be slaughtered for the dead but the core or the basic traditional beliefs associated with these persist and influence his life.

5.3 Recommendations

On the future of indigenous religion and its attendance rites particularly burial, the researcher opines that the future looks promising and recommends as follows:

If civilisation or modernisation has been hailed as an exhilarating challenge to create new values and meanings, it has also been feared as a threat to an existing pattern of values and meanings most especially on indigenous religion.

We believe quite well that it is impossible for religion to remain entirely indifferent to civilisation. However, from the study conducted, it is clear that modernity, Christianity and Islamic religions adherents should respect both the culture, religion and personality of their hosts that is, African traditional religion. Accommodation of other religious traditions by indigenous religion in Èkìtìland is cordial and impossible to deny, the indigenous worshippers put up a high degree of accommodation and hospitality to other religion and their adherents. The religion has not been noted for open resistance that ever led to violence or conflict. Olaoba²⁵⁴ affirmed this by saying that African indigenous religion among other religions, has demonstrated a great level of compromise as it has silently exhibited appreciable points of tolerance. He further states that when the modern religions failed, recourse would be made to Indigenous religion in the city as a means of problem solving. Even in the face of provocation and intimidation manifested in the ways

²⁵⁴O.B.Olaoba, 2007, Perspectives of Non-Violence and Peace in African Traditional Religion, Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies, 39:2, 80-85.

and manner of Christian/Muslims evangelism, disdain for and rejection of anything African, indigenous worshippers maintained the status *quo* –with the following song:

Ìgba gbó aládúra, The faith/prayers of the praying church
Yó mu ní j'è bi O ló run o. will surely bring one into conflict with God.

This explains why there is hardly any conflict between adherents of traditional religion and Christianity or Islam in Ekitiland. There is no doubt that, among the religions, things are not done the same way all over.

Báyi í la ñ s e ní lééwa, This is how we do in our house,
Èèwo ibòmíràn. Is a taboo elsewhere.

Modern religions should follow the Highway Code of Idowu²⁵⁵ on caution, openness, sympathy and reference which the work recommends.

For the adherents of indigenous religion to have usual result, the kind of result that will make traditional religion unique and be embraced by more people, there is the need to go back to those days when existing patterns of values and meanings are cherished.

If the remaining traditional priests and indigeneous religion adherents are more spiritually and traditionally inclined and not lose focus of the goals and aspirations of their forebears. Those who are versed in *Ifa* divination should be open and ready to impart the knowledge to young people especially the interested individuals. *Oro tí a ñ s e tí a ko fi wó n o mo e ni ki í pé parun.* Any festival that is practiced without carrying the youth along will soon go into extinction.

Elders and parents are challenged that things should be done properly and that things should not go wrong in their presence. *Àgbà ki í wa l'ója k'óri o mo tuntun wó*- An elder cannot be in the market and allow the head of new-born baby to bend. They should take time to educate their wards and younger ones on religious beliefs and practices; such as religious beliefs and practices on burial rites. If they are thought and were made to participate in it from time to time, they would not find it difficult to carry it out themselves when they grow old, thereby, avoiding any curse from dead parent for not carrying out proper and befitting burial rites after their death.

²⁵⁵Emmanuel B Idowu, 1973, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, London: SCM, 16-21.

More of research work should be channelled towards publishing more papers on religious beliefs, most especially on African traditional religion which has no written records as an attempt to educate the public. We discovered that lack of proper understanding of what the indigenous religion of the Yorùbá is all about caused some people to have some wrong notions about the Yoruba beliefs in burial rites and ceremonies. For those currently studying religious studies as a course, most especially those in African traditional religion should endeavor to summon courage and never mind the fact that they are often referred to as archaic persons or *baba awo* and students of a religion which is old fashioned. If they allow discouragement to set in, then, only God knows what would be the future of the religion in the nearest time. Resource persons from herbal homes should be challenged to give students religious talk on how to handle first, the phenomenon of death which gave birth to burial as well as burial itself and also to bear in mind that there is life after death. Hence, the need to live rightly while on earth.

Adherents of traditional religion should make it a point of duty to enlighten the people on the need to embrace their cherished cultural heritage. It is obvious that indigenous religion has suffered a serious setback in its encounter with modern religions. Traditional adherents were the common goals of these modern religions and they won converts so much so that the indigenous religion, for sometime, appeared moribund²⁵⁶. The burial rites of *Obas* – the traditional ruler and some of their principal chiefs which conventions stipulate must be performed in the traditional form.

Iñ jaasé Let us do it
Bón tii sñe, The way it is usually done
Keñbañ árí bó ti yeñ keñrí. So that it will be just as we wanted it to be.

However, Eluyemi²⁵⁷ through his paper titled “Attitude of Government to Traditional Religion in Nigeria” laid claims to their rights to public holidays as accorded to Christians and Muslims. Again, scholars such as Bolaji Idowu²⁵⁸, Awolalu²⁵⁹,

²⁵⁶Oral interviewed with Chief Olu Arowósèmolè, Aged 61. *Ifa Priest*. Odoñ Adó, Adó Èkìtì. Interviewed on 27/2/2016.

²⁵⁷O.Eluyemi, 2001, Attitudes of Government to Traditional Religion in Nigeria cited by Oyelade in E.A. Odunmuyiwa (Ed) *Religion, science and culture*, 132.

²⁵⁸E.B. Idowu 1973. *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. London: SCM, 16-21.

²⁵⁹J.O.Awolalu, and P.A.Dopamu, 1979, *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Onibonoje Press, 26

Dopamu²⁶⁰, Nabofa²⁶¹ and a host of others have convinced the whole world that traditional religion with its accompanied rites such as burial rites is not a fossilised religion²⁶². This is a fact, which we can no longer ignore. The working group of FESTAC colloquium and Black World Development has rightly reported that: the African Traditional Religion is living, even in the town. In other words, it is current, present and active in the mind of individuals and in collective relationship. It coexists with Christianity, Islam etc.²⁶³

Therefore, creation of awareness is very important, Yorùbá in general and Èkìtì in particular today are in search of self-identity. She is in a situation where her culture and religious practices have been adversely affected by modern religions, culture and practices. Sequel to this, the indigenous worshippers should be more than ever determined to identify themselves with their root and to project their own distinctive personalities. Some of the educated Yorùbá now interpret the religion of their people in such a way that the spiritual truth and value of indigenous religious are brought to light. Also, indigenous religion should be popularised more than ever before through the stage and films. Divination, incantation, sacrifice, ritual, medicine and worship should be seen as even machineries but should be made to feature in plays and films and that they are veritable tools of reminding Yorùbá in general and Èkìtì in particular of their rich cultural heritage. Through this awareness, traditional medicine, which is an arm of indigenous religion, will be given recognition by the government of Nigeria, and the move to integrate it into the health care delivery system and to be a course of study “Herbal Medicine” in our Universities as declared by a former Health Minister Professor Onyebuchi Chukwu will be actualised.

Of equal importance here is the sponsored religious programme tagged *Opón Ifá* on the Òsun State Broadcasting Corporation worshipper in Osun State under the leadership of *Áwìsè* of Òsogbo, Chief Fáyé mí Elebubon. There is *Ìsèsè Làgbà* between 6.30 and 6.45pm Saturdays on Amuludun F.M 99.1 station Ibadan, Oyo State. In Èkìtì state, there is a programme on Èkìtì F.M. 91.5, every Saturday morning between the hour of 8.00 and 9.00 anchored by Chief Olu Ogundòlà. These programmes are mainly exposition of the *Ifá*

²⁶⁰P.A.Dopamu, 1979, *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Onibonoje Press, 26

²⁶¹M.Y.Nabofa

²⁶²J.O.Awolalu, and P.A.Dopamu, 1979, *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Onibonoje Press, 26

²⁶³M.Amade, 1978, “*FESTAC Colloquium and Black World Development*”. Lagos: Nigeria magazine, 213.

corpus and the purpose is to show the relevance of traditional religion to modern time. With all this, people are developing a keen interest and getting familiar with the religion of their forefathers²⁶⁴. There is again a programme known as digging deep comes up every Monday between the hour of 12.00non and 1.00pm on New Cruse F.M 92.7 Kájọlà, Ìkéré-Èkitì anchored by Mr Jídé Ògúnlúyì.

Moreover, with the current rush of both Muslims and Christians toward accepting chieftaincy titles, which involve rituals and ceremonies that are associated with indigenous religion, and the fact that burial rites and ceremonies are able to attract greater number of people, we can now say that indigenous religion and its attendant practices such as burial rites cannot die either forcefully or naturally but it will persist side by side with other foreign religious practices.

²⁶⁴ O pón ifá is a weekly religious programme on Òsun state broadcasting corporation, on every Thursday between the hour of 10pm and 11pm. Broadcasting service of Èkitì state (BSES), every Saturday between the hour of 8.00am and 9.00am sponsored by the Management of Afé Babalá University, Adó Èkitì.

STRUCTURED INDEPTH ORAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Oral interviews will be conducted among some respondents comprising important personalities such as: Traditional high chiefs (men and women), *Babaláwo-Ifa* Priests, *Ògbóni* and so on. The questions will give us an insight into our course of study.

A. Biographical details

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex:
4. Township:
5. Traditional Chieftaincy Title:
6. Occupation:
7. Date of Interview:
8. Level of Education:

B. Guide Questions

1. For how long have you been in Èkìtì land?
2. Are you familiar with indigenous burial rites among Èkìtì people?
3. What is your assessment of the performance of indigenous burial rites in your area?
4. Do you notice some changes that have taken place in indigenous burial rites among your people? What are these changes?
5. How do you react or respond to the changes being championed by the foreign religions?
6. Is there any thing idolatrous you know in the performance of indigenous burial rites?
7. What are some of the noticeable idol worship, if you agree to its being idolatry?
8. Do you agree that non-performance or improper performance of burial rites breeds negative implications on your society?
9. If yes, can you suggest ways to curb the negative implications of non-performance or improper performance of burial rites?
10. What in your opinion are the elements in burial rites that have remained unchanged?

11. Can you disclose why some elements in burial rites appear to persist?
12. Has the indigenous burial rites any religious impact in your area? If yes, what are the impacts?

Ató□nà Fún Ètò Ìfò□rò□wánilé□nuwò

A ó se ifò□rò□wanilé□nuwò fún àwo□n èniyàn pàtàkì pàkìpàkì láwùjo□, àwo□n bíi: Àwo□n olóyè Ìlú (lò□kùnrin lóbìnrin), àwo□n Babaláwo àti bé□è□ bé□è□ lo□. Àwo□n ibéèrè tí a ó bi wó□n wò□nyí yóò jé□ ató□nà fún is□é□ iwádìí wa.

(A) Ìròyìn aje□mó□-ibí

1. Orúko□:
2. O□jó□ orí:
3. Ako□nbábo□:
4. Ìlú:
5. Orúko□/àkó□wé Oyè:
6. Is□é□:
7. O□jó□ Ìfò□rò□wánilé□nuwò:
8. Ipele È□kó□/Ìmo□□:

(B) Ìbéèrè Ató□nisó□nà

1. Ó tó igbà wo tí o ti ñ gbé nilè□ Èkìtì?
2. Ñjé□ o mò□ nípa àwo□n ètò àti ilànà àdáyéba nípa Okú sínsin láàrin àwo□n Èkìtì?

3. Kíni èrò rè□ lóri àwo□n ilànà àdáyéba nípa okú sínsin láduágbo re□?

4. Ñjé□ o kiyè sí i pé àwo□n àyípadà kan ti dé bá ilànà àdáyéba nípa òkú sínsin láàrin

àwo□n èniyàn àwùjo□ re□? Àwo□n àyípadà wo ló dé bá a?

5. Kí lo se sí àwo□n àyípadà tó jé□ pé àwo□n è□sìn àtòkèrè wá ló sokunfà wo□n?

6. Ñjé□ ohun tó je□ mó□ às□à ibò□ris□à wà nínú ilànà òkú sínsin àbáláyé?

7. Àwo□n ilànà wo ló je□ mó□ às□à ibò□ris□à, bí o bá gbà pé ilànà òkú sínsin àbáláyé ní

ibò□risà nínú?

8. Ñjé□ o gbà pé àìsorò òkú sínsin rará tàbí àìsèé dáràdára le sokunfà àjálù sáwùjo□ re□

9. Bí o bá gbà bé□è□ ñjé□ o le dábàà àwo□n ò□nà tí a le gbà dé□kun àwo□n àjálù tí àìsorò òkú

sínsin rará tàbí àìsèé dáràdára le fà sáwùjo□

10. *Kíni èrò re□ lóri àwo□n ilànà òkú sínsin tí kò yí padà?*
11. *S□e o le so□ ohun tó fà á tí àwo□n ilànà/ètò isínkú kan kò fi yí padà?*
12. *Ñjé□ ètò isínkú àbáláyé nípa lóri è□sìn ládùúgbò re□? Bì ó bá rí bé□è□, àwo□n ipa wo ló ní?*

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A. Primary Sources

1. Interview

Many people of varying ages, sexes, occupations, faiths and status were interviewed.

For easy reference: some of the outstanding respondents are listed below.

List and Particular of Oral Interview Respondents

A. ADÓ ÈKÌTÌ LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

S/N	Name	Status	Age	Place	Date
1.	Chief Ade Adéyemo	Adherent of indigenous religion	70	Ado Ekiti	21/6/2017
2.	Abegunde, Pius	Adherent of indigenous religion	74	Ado Ekiti	21/6/2017
3.	Chief Adebayo, S.	Ifá Priest (custodian)	61	Ado Ekiti	16/3/2017
4.	Prince Adétifá, Adefémi	Adherent of indigenous religion	65	Ado Ekiti	20/6/2017
5.	Chief Adúlójú S.	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	78	Ado Ekiti	20/6/2017
6.	Chief Alex Olu Ajayi	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	88	Ado Ekiti	16/3/2017
7.	Chief Arówósemòlè, Olu	Ifá Priest	62	Ado Ekti	27/2/2017
8.	Chief Falade,	Ifá Priest	90	Ado Ekiti	27/2/2017
9.	Pa Pius Oluyemi Famuagun	Adherent of indigenous religion	87	Ado Ekiti	15/6/2016
10.	Ogunsakin Francis	Adherent of indigenous religion	72	Adó Èkìtì	10/5/2018
11.	High Chief Abe	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	72	Adò Èkìtì	21/2/2018
12.	Chief Ifadunsin, I.	Ifá Priest	60	Adó Èkìtì	16/6/2017
13.	Chief Gabriel Isaiah	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	68	Adó Èkìtì	11/5/2018
14.	Chief Fasuba Adeleye	Indigenous	82	Adó Èkìtì	7/5/2017

		Traditional High Chief			
15.	High Chief Ajibade	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	88	Adó Èkìtì	6/7/2018
16.	High Chief Àbídákun	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	76	Adó Èkìtì	14/11/2018
17.	Chief Orisamika Jacob	<i>Ifá</i> Priest	62	Adó Èkìtì	16/10/2018
18.	Chief Olu-Atoki	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	74	Adó Èkìtì	12/11/2018
19.	Chief Mrs Fasogba F.O.	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	68	Adó Èkìtì	21/2/2017
20.	Chief Korokoro	<i>Ifá</i> Priest	62	Adó Èkìtì	19/4/2018

B. ÌKÉRÉ-ÈKÌTÌ LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

1.	Prince Atitebi S.O.	Adherent of indigenous religion	60	Ìkéré Èkìtì	14/4/2017
2.	Ojo Abegunde	Adherent of indigenous religion	65	Ìkéré Èkìtì	18/4/2017
3.	Alomoge Clement	Adherent of indigenous religion	60	Ìkéré Èkìtì	18/4/2017
4.	Omótáyò M.O.	Indigene	60	Ìkéré Èkìtì	08/05/2018
5.	Onile Dorcas	Adherent of indigenous religion	63	Ìkéré Èkìtì	18/3/2017
6.	Chief Sapetu	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	66	Ìkéré Èkìtì	20/3/2017
7.	Pa Ògúndáre Kéhíndé	Indigene	81	Ìkéré Èkìtì	6/7/2018
8.	Chief Sao-Iro quarters, Ìkéré Èkìtì	Indigenous traditional Chief	67	Ìkéré Èkìtì	7/7/2017
9.	Chief Awi Omolola	Ifá Priest & Lecturer	62	Ìkéré Èkìtì	8/5/2018
10.	Chief Stephen Ogundola	Indigenous Traditional Chief	81	Ìkéré Èkìtì	7/7/2017
11.	Chief Oloṣítí	Indigenous Traditional Chief	68	Ìkéré Èkìtì	4/3/2018
12.	Chief Mrs Adegboye F.F.	Oloriṣ Ogoṣa ana	63	Ìkéré Èkìtì	4/3/2017
13.	Akinlaja J.O.	Indigene	61	Ìkéré Èkìtì	5/3/2017
14.	Mr Olufemi	Adherent of indigenous religion	60	Ìkéré Èkìtì	5/3/2017
15.	Ibitomisin Aina	Adherent of indigenous religion	63	Ìkéré Èkìtì	18/3/2017
16.	Chief Ajisefinni	Indigenous traditional Chief	63	Ìkéré Èkìtì	7/7/2017
17.	Chief Oḍoḻofin	Indigenous traditional Chief	68	Ìkéré Èkìtì	15/11/2017
18.	Ganiyu Oḃasoyin Olukéré	Priest of <i>Olosunta</i>	60	Ìkéré Èkìtì	21/2/2018
19.	Mr Ayeni	Adherent of indigenous religion	68	Ìkéré Èkìtì	21/2/2017
20.	Asagunla Femi	Adherent of indigenous religion	63	Ìkéré Èkìtì	19/4/2016

C. ÌKÒLÉ-ÈKÌTÌ LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

1.	Chief Famoroti	Indigenous Traditional Chief	65	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	20/7/2017
2.	Chief Ogunsakin Sajiyan	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	68	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	20/7/2017
3.	Chief Olominu	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	68	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	16/8/2017
4.	Isola K.F.	Adherent of indigenous religion	60	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	20/7/2017
5.	Ajayi Oladele	Indigene	62	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	20/7/2017
6.	Chief Ogunjobi David	Indigenous Traditional Chief	60	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	20/7/2017
7.	Omotola Tunde	Adherent of indigenous religion	68	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	20/7/2017
8.	Ajayi Peter	Farmer/Traditionalist	66	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	11/3/2017
9.	Alfa Ismaila Kazeem	Indigene	60	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	11/3/2017
10.	Chief Olomodekọle	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	72	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	11/3/2018
11.	Adeola Kolade	Adherent of indigenous religion	64	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	16/2/2017
12.	Ojo Folasade	Adherent of indigenous religion	65	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	16/2/2017
13.	Adeleke Adeolu	Indigene	64	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	16/2/2017
14.	Olawumi James	Indigene	68	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	16/2/2017
15.	Ogunmiluyi Michael	Indigene	62	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	16/2/3017
16.	Chief Sajọwa	Indigenous Traditional High Chief	74	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	16/2/2018
17.	Chief Oloketuyi	Indigenous Traditional Chief	68	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	14/6/2017
18.	Chief Bamotibẹ	Indigenous Traditional Chief	75	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	14/6/2017
19.	Chief Ajiboye Ajọngbọlọjọ	Apena Baba Ogboni	65	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	14/6/2018
20.	Chief Rawa	Indigenous Traditional Chief	72	Ìkòlẹ̀ Èkìtì	14/06/2018

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APPENDICES

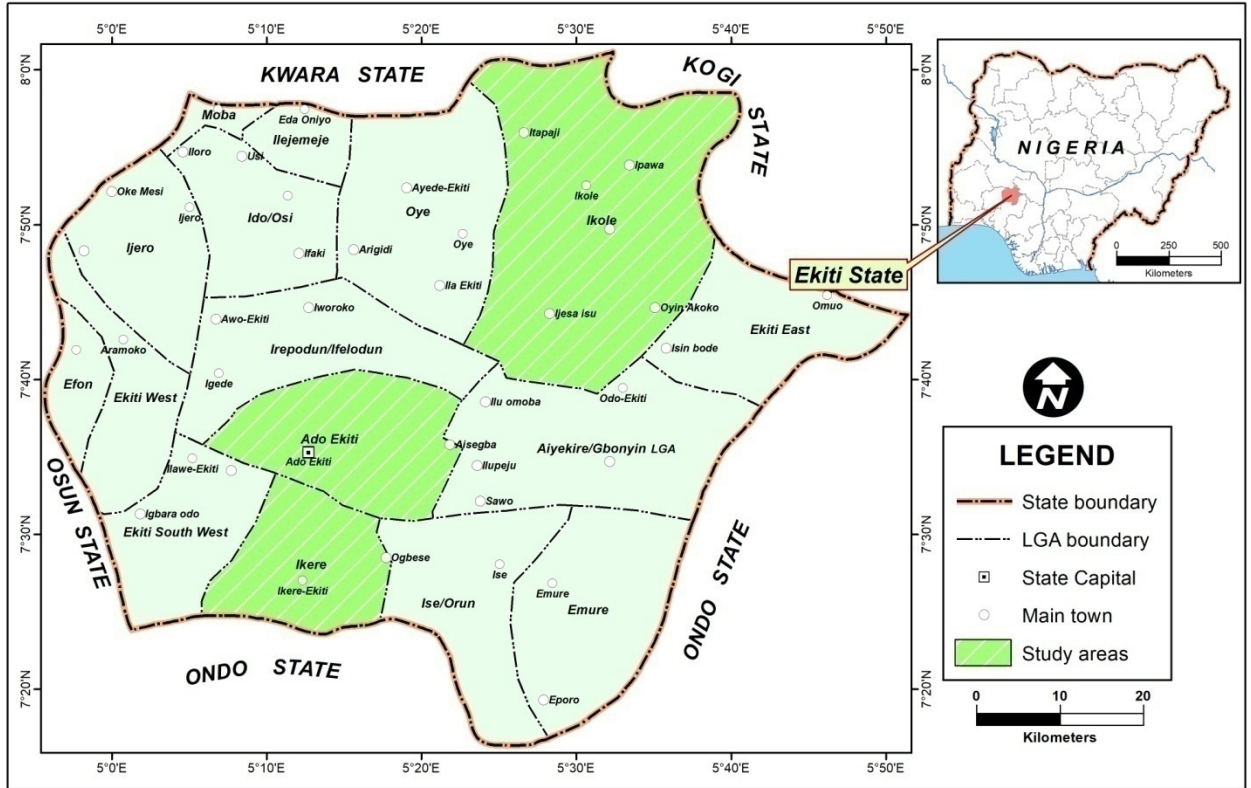


Fig. 1: The three selected communities in Èkìtì state – study areas.



Fig. 2: One of the custodians of *Ifá* burial rites.



Fig. 3: At the burial site of a deceased *Awo*. People bid him farewell. Here is one of the *Awos* (Priests) with his regalia.



Fig. 4: An Ifá Priest, Chief Awi Omo lo lá with his divining material on the mat.



Fig. 5: Omo Olóku- Deceased families adorned in Aso o e bi- family clothing to celebrate the demise of their loved one.



Fig. 6: The Corpse (Coffin) displayed outside contrary to the old practice (inside display) with other priests celebrating the deceased.



Fig. 7: These are some of the priests at the burial site of one of them - Awo.



Fig. 8: Deceased relatives holding meetings before the commencement of burial activities and rites.



Fig. 9: The corpse of an aged is made ready for viewing just before burial.



Fig. 10: The Corpse (an aged woman) is made ready for burial. Note the type of coffin.



Fig. 11: At the Burial site of a Deceased *Awo*.



Fig 12: One of my interview respondents - Chief Ajiboye Ajongbọlọjọki



Fig. 13: Prayer chapel of Aborigine Ògbóni Fraternity (Ìkòlé Èkìtì) where the researcher met with the interview respondents.