

GEO -HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF OKE-OGUN PEOPLE

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Abstract

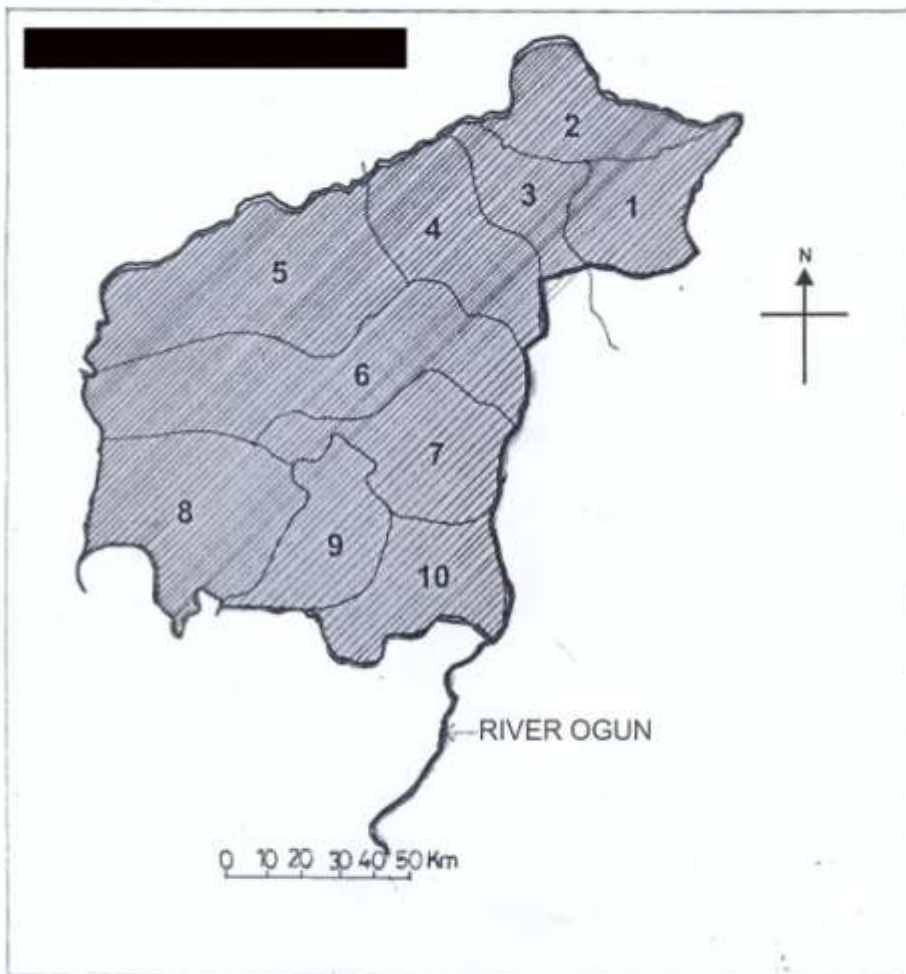
As big as Nigeria territory is, with the claim of about 140million population and 36 states including Federal Capital territory (FCT) Abuja, there is a set of people who are not well recognized including their environment. Even in the whole world, there is no any country where this group of people cannot be found. Their sons and daughters are spread all over the world with their distinctive difference. They are influential, composed, accommodating, sensible, and very vast in deeds and well to do. Many people in general and some historians in particular regarded this set of people as Oyo people. But they are not. Though, their origin are traced back to Oyo empire but they are important people on their own with their adapted cultures, customs, norms, language, human relations, dialects, climate, weather, humidity and land. They are special region in Oyo State, South Western part of Nigeria. Who are these people? What are the factors that make them differ from other Yoruba race? Where are they? How do they look like? Therefore, it is on these templates that this paper set out to `ice the cake` on this particular group of people, (Oke-Ogun) in so many respects

Historical Background

Oke Ogun, the upper part of Oyo State, is an old and important part of the state. It is a large rural community in the northwest part of Oyo State, South-west of Nigeria. Oke-Ogun was formerly regarded as Oyo North in the Old Western Region. Given its geographical location, it is a gateway to the northern part of the country from the South. Oke-Ogun belongs to the Yoruba stock. The people of Oke-Ogun also belong to the group of people who are regarded as Oyo proper or Oyo Yoruba. They are distinct from Egba, Ijebu, Ondo or Ekiti Yorubas. Oke-Ogun occupies the entire north of Oyo State and certain areas around the west central. The size of *Oke-Ogun* is about one-third of the whole of Oyo state. Its boundary runs along the Ogun River, which is a fertile area, feeding the large urban

population of the state capital, Ibadan. Oke-Ogun has ten local government areas, out of the thirty-three in Oyo State. These ten local government areas are: Olorunsogo, Irepo, Oorelope, Saki-East, Saki-West, Atisbo, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Kajola and Iseyin.

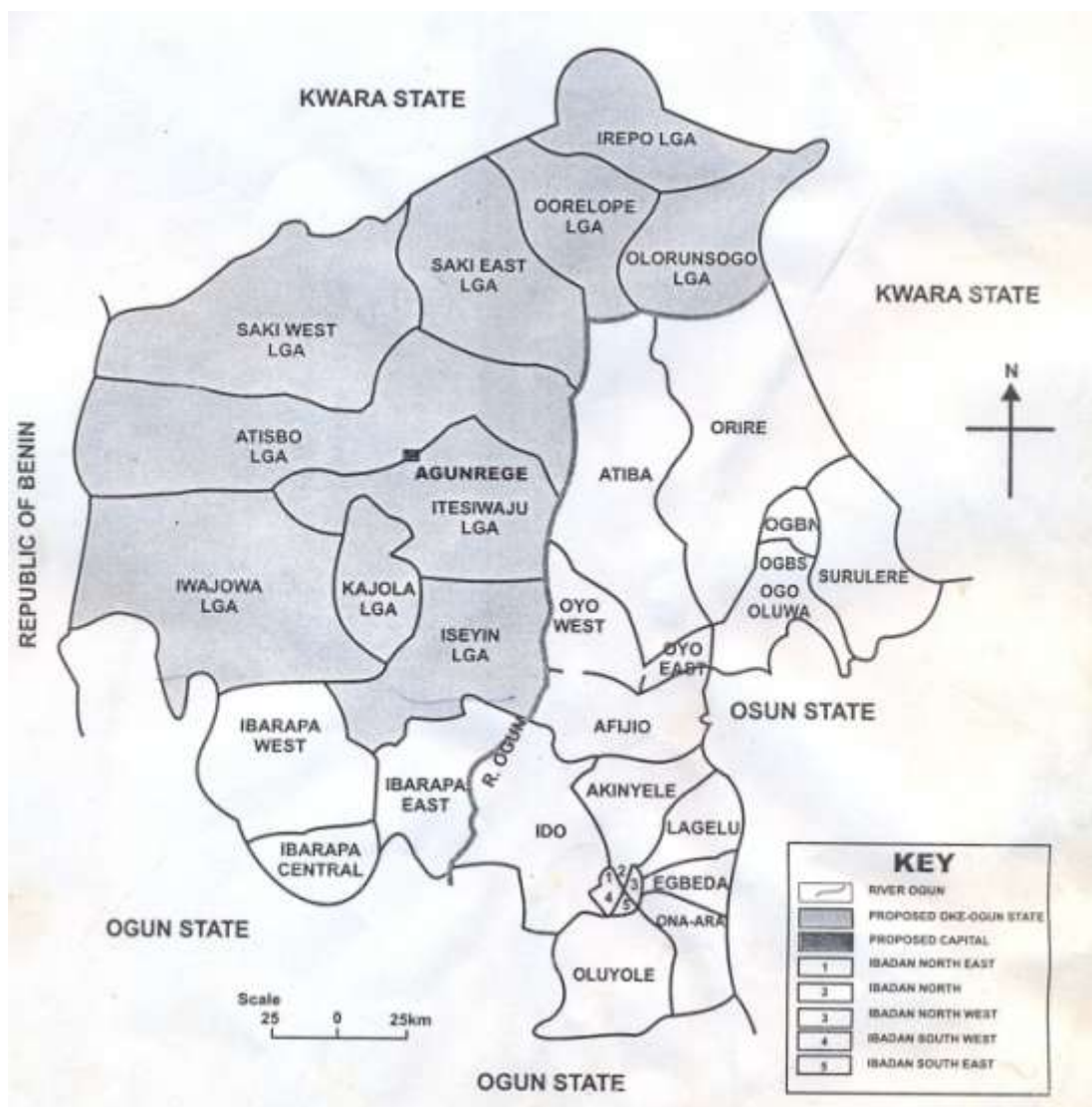
Figure 2: MAP OF OKE-OGUN



Key:

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. OLORUNSOGO | 4. SAKIEAST | 8. IWAJOWA |
| 2. IREPO | 5. SAKIWEST | 9. KAJOLA |
| 3. OORELOPE | 6. ATISBO | 10. ISEYIN |
| | 7. ITESIWAJU | |

The northwest part of Yoruba land is generally given the name Oke-Ogun area, especially in Yoruba literature. This is as a result of the prominence of the Ogun River from where the area derived its name. All the towns and villages bearing Oke-Ogun are in the upper part of this river. Oke-Ogun has Oyo west local government area and Ogun River as its southern boundary. It is bounded in the north by Borgu division in Kwara state, Benin Republic in the west and Orire local government area in the east. Some of the Oke-Ogun towns and villages are very close to the Republic of Benin border and serves as their neighbouring country. The below Map acknowledges this as well.





In terms of population, it is second only to Ibadan land, the capital city of Oyo state that has eleven local government areas. About 25% of the population of Oyo state lives in Oke-Ogun. According to the 2006 census, its population was 1,485,158 million and its total area was 15,025 square kilometers. The table below pinpoints these facts and figures.

Geo-Political Zone	Number of Local Government Areas	Population (2006 Census Project in Millions)
Ibadan	11	2,559,853
Ibarapa	3	320,718
Ogbomoso	5	654,183
Oke-Ogun	10	1,485,158
Oyo	4	560,982

Oyo State 2006 Population Census (5,580,894)

The temperature of Oke-Ogun region is uniform throughout the year with very little deviation from the mean annual average of 28⁰c. The daily range of temperature is put at 10⁰c in the wet season but rises from 10⁰c to 12⁰c in the dry season. Oke-Ogun region, like any other part of Nigeria, experiences a tropical climate with distinct wet and dry seasons. The total rainfall in the region is about 1,378mm with a low coefficient of variation of about 10%. Rainfall in the area is seasonal and temperatures are usually very high during the day and mild at night. Its harmattan period every year is too high. This is because almost all the towns and villages in the region are naturally endowed with mountains, hills, rivers, lakes and valleys.

Oke-Ogun area, the northern region of Oyo State falls between the Savannah zone. Also, its climate, which is not excessively harsh, is typified by the tropical rain savannah with dry season. Its vegetation is made up of grass of Guinea Savannah type. The soil, which is rich and very suitable for agricultural purposes, is no doubt, under exploited. Oke-Ogun region is acknowledged as the food basket of Oyo State.

Almost all the land surrounding Oke-Ogun is cultivated with the exception of hilly areas.

The Oke-Ogun towns are:

1. Ado-Awaye
2. Agunrege
3. Ago-Are
4. Ago-Amodu
5. Agbonle
6. Alaga
7. Ayegun
8. Ayetoro-Ile
9. Ayetoro-Oke
10. Baasi
11. Baba Ode
12. Elekokan
13. Iganna
14. Igboho
15. Igbojaye
16. Idiko-Ile
17. Idiko-Ago
18. Igbeti
19. Irawo-Ile
20. Irawo-Owode
21. Ilero
22. Ilaji-Ile
23. Iluku
24. Ilaji-Oke
25. Ijio
26. Itasa
27. Ipapo
28. Igbope

29. Iwere - Ile
30. Iwere-Oke
31. Iserin - Ile
32. Iseyin
33. Isemi-Ile
34. Ilua
35. Imia
36. Komu
37. Kisi
38. Ofiki
39. Owo
40. Okaka
41. Otu
42. Ogbooro
43. Osoogun
44. Oje-Owode
45. Okeho
46. Oke - Amu
47. Sabe
48. Sepeteri
49. Saki
50. Tede
51. Wasinmi

The origin of the majority of Oke-Ogun towns listed above dated back to several decades when its founding fathers were living together in Old Oyo Empire. Then, they could not take any decision without consulting the then Alaafin of Oyo Empire. Generally, the people of Oke-Ogun believe that they descended from Oranmiyan, the legendary founder of the Oyo Empire. They were the principal inhabitants of the "Ekunotun" division of the empire.

It could be observed as well that, in terms of administration, Oke-Ogun region was modeled after the government of Alaafin of Oyo. This was because Oke-Ogun ethnics, characters, cultures, norms, myths and historical affinities are closely related with that of Oyo-people. Besides, Oke-Ogun often acknowledged the suzerainty of Alaafin in many respects. The founding fathers sought for declaration, pronouncement, covering note, traditional influence and royal blessings which had since then served as yardsticks for the stability, tranquility, political, socio-economic developments and peaceful co-existence with one another from Alaafin of Oyo before they settled in the area. They are still seeking Alaafin's consent when they are ready to do any essential thing in the area. Notably as well, there are some towns and villages in Oke-Ogun which their own founding fathers migrated from other areas to their present locations in Oke-Ogun.

In terms of dialect, some people regard Oke-Ogun people's dialect to be "Onko". This is not all that true because there are two major dialects in Oke-ogun. The people from Iseyin, Kajola, Iwajowa, Itesiwaju, and parts of Atisbo local government areas are Onko speaking people. The Yoruba dialect from Saki-West, Saki-East, Orelope and Irepo local government areas is neither Onko nor Yoruba Ilorin, but very related to the Oyo dialect. The Onko people will say "mo" (drink) for "mu", ori (head) is pronounced "eri", "odon" (year) for "odun", and tun is pronounced "ton".

Traditionally, the people are predominantly farmers, combining the traditional method of farming with the modern one. As Oke-Ogun is endowed with fertile agricultural area, 80% of the people are farmers with the majority engaging in subsistent farming. The land is good for large-scale production of a wide variety of agricultural products like maize, melon, cassava, yams, guinea-corn, cowpeas, bananas, beans, fruits, vegetables, to mention a few.

Cash crops, like kolanut, palm tree, cashew and cocoa are also cultivated.

Oke-Ogun land is blessed with a long and larger river. Some of these rivers do not dry up even in the dry seasons. The most popular among them is river Ogun that passes through all the land of Oke-Ogun and goes straight to Abeokuta in Ogun State. Other popular rivers in Oke-Ogun include: Ogba River in Iseyin, Ofiki in Ofiki town and Iganna, Isanrin River in Ilua and Ado-Awaye, Jalugbe River in Ilero, Oyan River in Ilaji-Ile, Oyalugbo River in Okeho, Oyada River in Tede, Omi River in Iwere-Ile, and so on.

In addition, Oke-Ogun region is endowed with many natural resources. The area located within a limestone belt runs westwards from "Irawo Ile" and "Ijio" in Atisbo and Iwajowa local government areas respectively to Ewekoro and Sagamu, and northwards to Sokoto. A cement industry can be conveniently located in this region. Other mineral resources in Oke-Ogun region include: the marble deposits at Igbeti in Olorunsogo local government area, gold and clay at Asabari hill in Saki West local government area, kaolin in Osogun and Ado-Awaye in Iseyin local government area, granite in Okeho, Ofiki, Irawo-Ile, Itasa and Komu in Kajola, Atisbo, Iwajowa and Itesiwaju local government areas respectively. It is a region that is also well endowed with natural tourist attractions. Examples are: the Manor House at Iseyin, Ado-Awaye suspended Lake, Sepeteri - animals Kingdom, Igbeti Marble and Hill, Iwere-Ile Hill, the Royal Forest in Igboho, Moshra Garden in Okeho with God miraculous endowed mountains to mention a few.

One important feature of the Oke-Ogun people is their tribal marks. The people make '*pele*', '*abaja*' and '*keke*'. The people are also identified with traditional dresses, especially "*Aso-Oke*" or "*Aso-Ofi*", which are hand-woven textile strips from narrow horizontal loom. Apart from

normal dressings that they use it for, they even produce cap and "ipele" from it. The cap is the men's head-gear, which could be "origi", or *abetiaja / Labarikadd*. "Origi" is an ordinary cap with about ten inches long, rather close fitting and it is bent in the top. *Abetiaja*, a ear-covering cap, is shaped like a sector with sharp, pointed ends at both sides. When it is opened, it has two divisions like "dogs-ear" as its name denotes for covering the ears. The one for women is "Ipele". It is usually put on the head or on the shoulder or tied round the wrapper as a cord. It is about ten feet long and one feet wide. It is of seven sheets. Another notable identity feature of the Oke-Ogun people is their God-endowed good moral and honest way of life. They are very respectful, diligent, honest, hospitable and accommodating.

However, the Oke-Ogun people do not live alone. Their population is a mixture of different tribes. The major Nigerian ethnic groups living in Oke-Ogun towns are: Hausa, Fulani, Ibo, Igede, Ogoya, Ibada, Igala, Agatu, Gbari, Nupe, Ijaw, Efik, Tangita, and Ebir. All these groups of people bring buoyancy to the economic activities of the area. Mostly, the Fulani enhance the economic buoyancy of the region and are highly noticeable in all the towns and villages of the area. They have been residing for long in the area. Some of them could not trace or even claim any origin than Oke-Ogun. They see themselves as part and parcel of Oke-Ogun. Numerically, they take one-quarter of the population living in the area. Their staying there for long is encouraged and aided by the vast arable land of the area and the proximity of the place.

Besides all these, many of Oke-Ogun young men are skilled workers. They are traders, hunters, tailors, weavers, bricklayers, blacksmiths, and shoemakers. Women engage principally in trading, plaiting of hair, weaving and little farming. Consequently, since their standard of living now is above the subsistence level, there are people among them now dealing in buying and selling of industrial products, like fairly used cars

(*Tokunbo*) and buying and selling of books, high quality textile products, foodstuffs, building materials and automobile of different types.

Today, most of the able-bodied men are now educated and holding very important positions all over the country and beyond. Many of them are in professional works like lecturing, engineering, medicine, banking, law, to mention a few. Oke-Ogun has many primary and secondary schools but only two higher institutions: The Polytechnic, Ibadan Satellite Campus (Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Saki) and two Schools of Nursing, privately owned by Muslims and Christians all established in Saki.

The Political Set-Up of Oke-Ogun

The political set-up of Oke-Ogun was monarchical in structure, modeled after the old-Oyo form of government. The machinery of government consisted of the town council, with the king as the head. It was made up of civil chiefs (*o/oyes*), sectional chiefs (*baales*) and other functionaries like military heads (*Baloguns*), age-groups (*Egbe*). The king was both the monarchial and paramount head of the people and administration. He assumed the office after being adjudged competent by the kingmakers and endorsed by Ifa oracle. His functions ranged from making laws in collaboration with the council of chiefs, ensuring the implementation of the laws, acting as final appellate authority in serious cases to performing some rites.

There was also council of chiefs. The senior chief is second in rank to the king. The chiefs sat at one time in a judicial capacity, especially in their wards, at another as legislature, and at still another as council of the executive, discussing measures to be taken to ensure public welfare, organize sacrifices, plan rites, settle disputes that within their capacity, organized meetings, direct communal works, conduct different festivals and ceremonies, ensure security and above all they serve as the king's ear in all respects.

Additionally, they also served in advisory capacity to the king. Their advice may be accepted or rejected by the king.

Most of them constituted kingmakers. Next to the town council of chiefs were the *Baales* (the ward chiefs) who saw to the affairs of constituent unit of the people. Their functions included conducting domestic affairs and dispensation of justice in their jurisdiction. They were, however, expected to keep the king informed on any important events which happened under their respective controls. Other functionaries who were not directly involved in the administration of the town were *Balogun* and the age groups. The *Balogun* was the head of the military personnel who were drawn largely from the hunters and, sometimes, age-groups, during the time of war. Their functions were to provide external security and defence for the people. Also, there were "associations" called "*Egbe*" in Oke-Ogun land, formed for the purpose of promoting and protecting common interest, especially in the fields of religion, economy, social activities and recreation.

The age group designated under the name "*Egbe*" was a corporate entity whose members were born, nearly at the same time and often acted together, especially in the conventional manner of life which the society believed to be right. Prominent among them were "*Egbe Inukan, Egbe Ajolaye and Egbe Iwajowa*". Their functions ranged from carrying out civil duties to policing, such as clearing the footpath, guarding public morality and supervising markets.

Oke- Ogun's Three-Phase Training for Their Children

The Oke-Ogun people believe that as much as a child had to be pampered, he also had to be trained. There were three phases through which a child had to pass in his educational development. This included the development of character or moral training, intellectual training and vocational training. The development of character involved

inculcating in children the codes of manners and etiquette of the people. Children were told many stories, folklores and myths mostly at night in order to teach them the virtue of obedience, honesty, truthfulness, patriotism and courtesy.

They were taught to be deferential to seniors. Much importance was attached to greeting by the people and every conceivable occasion and situation had a salutation. A male had to prostrate himself before his elderly people, while the female would kneel down in order to enhance moral training.

On the ground of intellectual training, the Oke-Ogun people were not an exception in the abundant use of rhetorical elocution. They used proverbs frequently in their conversation especially during the settlement of disputes, *ayo* game, meetings, festivals/ceremonies and the likes. They also trained their children Yoruba numeration, mostly through play. Another intellectual training was the art of using melodious voice in poetry, notably *Ijala* by the hunters, and *Esa* by the *masquerade* devotees.

The Oke-Ogun people used to undergo vocational training through apprenticeship system. Children were trained often, not by their parents, but by their parents' friends or relative craftsmen so that discipline could be ensured for the children. Some crafts were peculiar to some compounds and were, thus, hereditary. They were drumming, dyeing and sometimes healing of certain ailments and re-arrangement of fractural bones or traditional bones surgery. The vocational training prevalent among the people were hunting, blacksmithing, iron-pot making, clay pot-making, cloth weaving (especially *Aso-Oke*), traditional medicine and trading.

The Occupations of Oke-Ogun

The Oke-Ogun people were predominantly "farmers." There was hardly any compound without its quota of farmers. This offered them a practically self-sufficient household economy. This enabled the area to have private big farm settlements. They also engaged in other occupations. Some occupations were associated with some towns.

For instance, blacksmithing and iron pot making were mainly associated with Saki, while *Aso-Oke* cloth-weaving was identified with Iseyin and Ayetoro-Oke.

The specialties of the women were traditional local clay pot-making, manufacturing of sheabutter and soap, indigo dyeing, hair plaiting and selling of farm produce. It was usual that the women, upon marriage, adopted handicrafts already specialized in by their husbands' compound. There are big farm settlements and several small-scale industries established by the private sector. These include many petrol filling stations, saw-mill industries, printing press, block industries, blacksmith industries, gold smiting, iron pot industries, commercial and community banking services as well as transport services.

There are many big markets around the region. There, foodstuffs, clothing materials and cattle are the main items being sold. All these commercial enterprises attract both national and international investors. It has been noted as well that, there were local and central markets where their surplus goods were sold and bought. The local markets were those held during the hours of daylight and held by lamplight at night.

The central markets were held at intervals of five days eight days and lasted for the greater part of the day. Also, the cattle markets were fixed based on agreement of people living in the towns that owned these markets. Some of them are listed in the table below:

Daily Markets

S/N	Market Names	Towns /Locations
1.	Sango	Saki
2.	Gbonje	Okeho
3.	Oja Oba	Ilero
4.	Obanisunwa	Okeho
5.	Yante	Iganna
6.	Obawojo	Saki
7.	Oba	Iseyin
8.	Agbe	Iseyin
9.	Oba	Sepeteri
10.	Ogidigbo	Saki
11.	Obada	Awaye
12.	Ebedi	Iseyin
13.	Obaninsunwa	Igbanna
14.	Oja	Ayetoro-Oke

5 Days Markets

s/n	Market Names	Towns/ Locations
1.	Obada	Ipapo
2.	Mokore	Okaka
3.	Towobowo	Otu
4.	Eemo	Igbojaye
5.	Obada	Komu
6.	Oba	Baba-Ode
7.	Owode	Okeho
8.	Irepodun	Ilero
9.	Oba Oninayin	Inayin Olonko

10.	Obada	Ago-Amodu
11.	Ajgunle	Sepeteri
12.	Olugunwa	Oke-Amu
13.	Olorunda	Iganna
14.	Obada	Tede
15.	Araromi	Igbope
16.	Alakuko	Tede
17.	Owode	Ago Are
18.	Owode	Irawo-Owode
19.	Baasi	Baasi
20.	Oba	Igboho
21.	Ogbooro	Ogbooro
22.	Serafu	Iseyin
23.	Odoogun	Odoogun

8 Days Markets

s/n	MarketNames	Towns/Locations	Days
1.	Gbedu	Itasa	Wednesday
2.	Oba Okere	Saki	Saturday
3.	Oba	Ofiki	Sunday
4.	Oba	Owotoro	Friday
5.	Abuugudu	Ofiki	Monday
6.	Sanisala	Saki	Friday
7.	Irepodun	Ago-Are	Wednesday
8.	Araromi	Iganna	Thursday

9.	Adeoye	Oyan	Sunday
10.	Oba	Ijio	Monday
11.	Binukonu	Okeho	Monday
12.	Owode	Okeho	Tuesday

Cattle Markets

s/n	Market Names	Towns/ Locations	Days
1.	Iseyin	Iseyin	Friday
2.	Okaka	Okaka	Monday
3.	Ibudo Musa	Itasa	Wednesday
4.	Ago-Are	Ago-Are	Monday & Thursday
5.	Irawo	Irawo	Monday
6.	Igbeti	Igbeti	Tuesday

There were many ways by which *Oke-Ogun* people rendered economic assistance to one another. These included establishing a mutual aid group for lending to individual members the collective help of the remaining members in agricultural work, known as "*aaro*" in the olden days. There was also one called "*esusu*" by Yoruba forefathers which provided saving funds for the participating members. They also rendered services to one another through "*owe*", that is, occasional work requiring communal or collective assistance. This service was given free and members were provided with food and drink at the end of the work. All these are still operating in *Oke-Ogun*, the northern region of Oyo state even till today though in modern day formats. Besides, co-operative societies are still serving as one of the strongest economic ins assistance and boyant for *Oke- Ogun* people. It has been most reliable stronghold and pillars to economic well -being.

Religious Traditions of Oke-Ogun People

The Oke-Ogun indigenes are religious. As far as the Oke-Ogun people are concerned, the full responsibility of all the affairs of life belongs to the Supreme Being, God. Thus, religion is a unifying factor. Oke-Ogun is a multi-faith society. The three prominent religions in Nigeria - African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity are present in Oke-Ogun and they co-exist.

African Traditional Religion

Prior to the advent of Islam and Christianity the people had their own religious systems which stemmed from their social and cultural life. According to Idowu, every religion comes into being within a particular culture and its practices are greatly influenced by the nature and complexion of that culture. The Oke-Ogun people as other African people embraced African Traditional religion right from onset before the coming of Islam and Christianity.

Islamic Religion

Geographically, Oke-Ogun is not far from Ilorin. There is a direct link between the two communities but historically Islam did not get to Oke-Ogun through Ilorin. Islam was introduced to Oke-Ogun through the royal family of Alaafin of Oyo. The then Alaafin of Oyo, Lawani, contacted his counterpart, the Okere of Saki, through whom the Islamic faith was spread throughout Oke-Ogun. Among the notable Islamic movements, organisations and societies that are present in Oke-Ogun area are Hammadiyyah, Nawar-ud-deen, Ansar-ud-deen, Tijamyyat, Anwarul-Islam, Toblik and Alasalatu , NASFAT, QUADREB, just to mention a few. They were formed to foster Islamic faith and traditions.

Christian Religion

Christianity got to Oke-Ogun in 1901. It was brought by a Baptist Missionary, Reverend William Clarke, who travelled extensively from Ijaye to areas in the northwestern part of Yoruba land. During his journey as he was trying to explore a possible place for settlement, he came across the place now known as Oke-Ogun. He discovered that, in this area, there was no church but that the people were religious, as he observed their worshipping of gods. He made his discovery known to the representative of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nigeria, Reverend Jefferson Thomas Bowen. The latter had concern and the dream of setting up a mission work in Oke-Ogun became actualised with the arrival of Louis Mayfield Duval, a Canadian by birth. It was on June 4, 1901 that the then Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, United Southern America appointed him to come down and pioneer the work of mission growth in Oke - Ogun with Saki as base. Thus, Christianity in Oke-Ogun began in Saki town.

No sooner had Reverend L.M Duval and his wife settled down in Saki, the pioneering work commenced. Through their relentless effort, a few converts were made and they became the pioneer members of early Baptist families in Saki. Among those strategies that aided the growth of Christianity in the area were home visits, youth empowerment, open-air services and above all establishment of Baptist Medical Centre and Elam Group Schools at Oke-Adagba. First Baptist Church, Adagba and Otun Baptist Church, both in Saki, were established 1902 and in 1908 respectively, while the struggle to win more converts and establish more Churches continued with the involvement of more missionaries both white and natives. Church Missionary Society, in 1908, and Catholic Mission, in 1915, joined later and gradually the area known as Oke-Ogun today was reached with the Gospel of Christ. It is significant to note that, the introduction of education and health-care delivery greatly

increased conversion and church membership. The Industrial Training School which was established in 1907 through the efforts of Reverend L.M Dual and Dr E.C Maclean to train people in general knowledge of woodworks and other related craftworks had engendered increase in the number of converts. The Yoruba Bible was the most potent factor in the spreading of Christianity in the area, as those people who had learned how to read and write were reading the scriptures themselves in their own language.

The growth and expansion of Christianity were not without some setbacks. These include: the insistence of the missionaries that converts needed to adopt Biblical names as their new names as their new names at conversion, which some people resisted. Besides, differences in patterns of worship was not in the interest of many and they turned back to their former religions. The issue of polygamy also had adverse effect on the growth of Christianity in the area, as many of the converts already had more than one wife. Despite all the setbacks, Christianity still had a foothold in the area and now spreading to all nooks and crannies of Oke-Ogun region of Oyo State.

Although, Bible declares one Lord, one faith and one baptism, it is clear that Christians still have different denominations.

These denominations have todo with doctrinal differences and interpretations of the word. Christian denominations are numerous. Some notable ones are: Roman Catholic, Baptist, Anglican and Methodist. These are known as mainline churches. African indigenous Churches include: the Christ Apostelic Church, Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Celestia Church of Christ, Church of the Lord(Aladura), The Apostelic Church, with manybrands. Pentecostal Churches include: Presbyterian and Mennonites. All these are present in town and villages of Oke-Ogun.

Religious Inter-Personal Relationship of Oke-Ogun People

However, despite the differences in religious beliefs in each of the above-stated religions, there was and there are still considerable formal and informal interactions among their adherents in Oke-Ogun at various levels of their daily living. They live, play together, and celebrate religious feasts together at different times of the year. Oke-Ogun is more or less a one-family region. Everyone has relations with people from other religions. Some have African Traditional Religion adherent as father, mother, brother and sister, and other various levels of relations. The adherents of the religions are so woven together that no one can claim not to have people of other faiths as his or her relatives.

Therefore, avoidance of interaction is highly impossible. When celebrating religious festivals, some people give out materials needed for the celebration of these festivals to those in other religions. Some people call on their relatives, friends and club or society members to dine and wine with them during their religious festivals. During masquerade festival, both Christians and Muslims, old and young, take part. When it is time for Eid-el kabir, Christians and African Traditional Religion adherents celebrate with their colleagues and relatives. The same happens during Christmas.

In the words of Dukor, he rightly notes that nowadays, Muslim, Christian and Traditional festivals have the participation of non-members from other religions. Adherents of different religions offer help in specific ways to meet one another's dire needs. They tap spiritual resources to help each other and comfort one another with tears and loving touch at needed times.

They are sensitive to the plight of one another and are always ready to give immediate assistance.

Economically, in Oke-Ogun, people of different religions trade together. Both Muslims and African Traditional Religionists are in the service of Christian employers. The same is true of Muslims employing the services of Christians and African Traditional Religion followers. Similarly, some eminent members of African Traditional Religion are enjoying the services of both Christians and Muslims as their employees. Therefore, economically, real interaction is on going everyday among various religious groups in various places. In schools, teachers from different religious faiths are working together. There has never been a public school with only teachers and/or pupils belonging to only one religion.

In sporting events, people of different religions are involved doing things together. Communal or family projects usually bring people of different religions together for interactions and exchange of ideas. On the political scene, people of different religious faiths form political parties. There has never been a time in Oke-Ogun when a particular person was selected and voted in by only the adherents of a particular religion. It has ever been a joint venture of various religious faithful. Hospitability is real among the adherents of religions. African Traditional Religion adherents have both Muslims and Christians as tenants, so also are Christians and Muslims.

Finally, adherents of *different* religions come together for prayers when there was a perceived power of the enemies manifesting. For instance, this was done towards Nigeria's Fourth Republic elections by former Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon. He organized a national prayer programme tagged "Nigeria prays". In this programme, people of different religious faiths came together to pray for the nation. Olayiwola has rightly noted that;
When political, economic and social problems befall us, we decide to pray. We turn religious overnight and even some of

those who claim to be free-thinkers become religious consciously or unconsciously and they pray to God for divine assistance at the time of trouble.

The Major Needs of Oke-Ogun`

However, the region lacks development in many areas of life. Infrastructure is non-existent, communication and power supply are still at infancy and the link to good economic activity is obviously a dream. A region of about 1.5million people has no gigant tertiary institution as of the time this paper is written.

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