Volume 20 Issue 57
Originally issued as A14



Global Journal of human-social science: A
Arts & Humanities - Psychology
Volume 20 Issue14 Version 1.0 Year 2020
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Òrìṣà Bîiyá Kòsí (There is No God Like Mother): A Reassessment of Motherhood in Contemporary **Yorùbá** Society as Viewed by *Ògúndá Méjì* in *Ifá* Corpus

By **Ọlálẹ́yẹ Samuel Káyọ̀dé** & Titilope Olusegun Olalere
University of Ìbàdàn,

Abstract- Òrìṣà bîiyá kò sí, taní je ṣe bí ẹni bíni lọ́jọ́ tó bá nira? or Ìyániwúrà is often used to describe the sacred roles being played by a woman in the life of her child or children particularly in YorùbáSociety. This includes her role from conception to birth, from birth to maturity and ensuring that the child becomes successful in life. To achieve this, many mothers will rather go hungry than see their children move about or sleep with empty stomach. Many will even prefer to go naked or die just for their children to be successful because, they believe that their children are their pride and their tomorrow whether alive or dead. As a result of these unreserved love and roles, many sayings, poems, songs, drama and sweet quotes have been used to describe women such as the above. Besides, these profound and unique roles have been discussed and evaluated in many scholarly works. The roles played by mothers put them in good stead among their children. This is the reason the Society believes that mothers have great influence and dominion over the lives of their children to the extent that if they pronounce any curse on them, it will come into fulfillment in the child's life.

Keywords: *oriṣa, iya, reassessment, yoruba society, ifa divination.*

GJHSS-A Classification: *FOR Code: 220499*



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



© 2020. Ọlálẹ́yẹ Samuel Káyọ̀dé & Titilope Olusegun Olalere. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported License http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/), permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Òrìṣà Bíìyá Kòsí (There is No God Like Mother): A Reassessment of Motherhood in Contemporary Yorùbá Society as Viewed by *Òguńdá Méjì* in *Ifá* Corpus

Ọlálẹ́yẹ Samuel Káyọ̀dé [α] & Titilope Olusegun Olalere [σ]

Abstract- Òrìṣà bíìyá kò sí, tani je ṣe bí ẹni bíni lọ́jọ́ tó bá nira? or Ìyániwúrà is often used to describe the sacred roles being played by a woman in the life of her child or children particularly in Yorùbá Society. This includes her role from conception to birth, from birth to maturity and ensuring that the child becomes successful in life. To achieve this, many mothers will rather go hungry than see their children move about or sleep with empty stomach. Many will even prefer to go naked or die just for their children to be successful because, they believe that their children are their pride and their tomorrow whether alive or dead. As a result of these unreserved love and roles, many sayings, poems, songs, drama and sweet quotes have been used to describe women such as the above. Besides, these profound and unique roles have been discussed and evaluated in many scholarly works. The roles played by mothers put them in good stead among their children. This is the reason the Society believes that mothers have great influence and dominion over the lives of their children to the extent that if they pronounce any curse on them, it will come into fulfillment in the child's life. However, in this modern time where child abandonment is the order of the day, can we still say women play these roles in the life of their children? Can the curse and negative pronouncement of such mothers who neglected their children be binding on them? If a woman is held with such high esteem, what is the fate of the father who works day and night to care for the well-being of both the child and the mother? These are some of the questions in which answers will be provided to in this paper. In achieving this, 10 women, 10 men and 10 children were interviewed and their views were content analysed. In reassessing the roles of women in the Society today, it was discovered that such roles are almost nonexistent today because of the attitude of many contemporary women toward their children in respect of lack of care and abandonment.

Keywords: òrìṣà, ìyá, reassessment, yorùbá society, ifá divination.

I. Introduction

In Yorùbá culture, the saying of *Òrìṣà bíìyá kò sí, tani jẹ́ ṣe bí ẹni bíni lọ́jọ́ tó bá nira* meaning there is no god like mother, who will behave or act like one's mother on the difficult day? is often said and believed. The reason for this is not farfetched. One, considering the fact that in marital relationship, it is expected that the wife should be pregnant shortly after wedlock since children are believed to be the profit of a marriage - *Ọmọ lèrè ìgbéyàwó.* Therefore, if few months after the marriage ceremony, the new bride has not conceived, the relatives would be worried, particularly the woman involved. As a result of this, all necessary measures such as taking of herbs that could aid conception will be resulted to or to consult the *Ifá* oracle. In this kind of situation, the woman will be willing to do anything just to have a child she can call her own. As expressed by Apalowo, after a prolonged delay, if such a woman sees some of her mates that got married around the same time with her having their own children, she would be sad and in such a scenario, she would not mind to be pregnant, give birth to a child in the morning and if the child dies in the evening, because it will at least change her status from being a barren woman to a still birth woman. This validates the saying of the Yorùbá that "*Ọjú ló npọ́n àgàn tó ndábá àbíkú, kí lọmọ bíbíkú nṣe é fún ni?*[1] Meaning 'the affliction of the barren made her proposed for a born to die child, what value would a child that would die add to one'?

However, looking at the extent of love showered on children and the manner in which children were being cherished and treated in those days by women which in turn made them goddesses made their children to always avoid the wrath of the mothers which could lead to negative pronouncement on their lives. As it was in the early days, can we say of the same today in this modern generation of women that detest having children? A generation advocating for abortion and perversed generation that does not care about the success of their offspring. Can we still boldly speak of the concept of *Òrìṣà bíìyá kò sí* as mothers were being cherished by their offspring then? These are questions this paper tried to address. In doing this, interviews were conducted and the views of the interviewees

Author α: Ph.D, Department of Religious Studies, University of Ìbàdàn, Ìbàdàn, Ọ̀yọ́ State, Nigeria. e-mail: kayodeleye2005@yahoo.com
Author σ: Department of History and International Studies, McPherson University, Seriki-Sotayo, Ogun State, Nigeria.
e-mail: titilopeolalere@gmail.com

[1] Bola 'Fajembola, (Secondary School Teacher), Personal Interview, Ibadan, 31/05/2020

© 2020 Global Journals

were content analysed. In reassessing the roles of women in our Society today, it was discovered that so many of the binding factors between a child and the mother are almost empty today because of women's attitudes toward their children in respect of lack of care and abandonment.

II. The Yorùbá Women and Their Attitude Toward Childbearing

As earlier discussed, the Yorùbá generally especially the women can do anything just to have children. They are ready to go extra miles in removing the shame and stigmatization of barrenness from friends, family, in-laws and the rest of the community. The Yorùbá believes that one can still bear the shame of having no money than to not having children because it is arguably believed that it is one's *Orí* – Inner head that provides wealth and riches. Even if one is rich and wealthy with no child, there is no one to inherit such wealth. To buttress this enquiry, Prince Adekunle[2] a musician per excellnce in one of his debut albums sang that;

Ọmọniyì	Children are the prestige
Ọmọnide,	Children are the brass
Ọmọ làṣèyìndè bó bá dalẹ́.	Children shall be left behind after death

Other musicians in this category include Sunny Ade[3], Peter King[4], Elemure Ogunyemi[5], Dele Ojo[6], Emma George[7], Olayinka Babalola[8], Yinka Ayanda[9] and so on. Also, gospel musicians like Tope Alabi[10] and many others are not left out as well. Some Yorùbá writers were also involved in writing to praise mothers for the sacred roles dutifully played in the lives of their children. Many of these writers composed beautiful poems in honour of mothers to show how important children are to the Yorùbá women. J.F. Odunjo[11] expressed this in his *Alawiye Iwe Keji* Book Series. Also, Yoruba Nollywood movie artists were not left out such as Adeyemi Afolayan (Ade love) with the title *Ìyániwúrà*[12] Hence, child bearing is a must in the Yorùbá Society. This particularly even speaks to women so as to remove the pang of being called a witch especially if such a woman is wealthy. This belief has to do mostly with the social structure of the Society unlike developed nations that have social serenity, whereby whether one has a child or not, the government will take care of one's responsibility at old age. In Africa, particularly in Yorùbá Society, one's child or children are the social security that will take care of one's future when old age sets in. This is where the idea of *Àrólé* – a sustainer of the family name that will continue to bear one's name comes in. Therefore, it is not just the issue of bearing children that matters but having *Àrólé* is equally important. Although in the case of a desperate situation, this may not count.

Besides, in the past, before the advent of current civilization, when agriculture was predominantly the only profession available, child bearing is important to help in the farm. Therefore, having many wives and children were considered signs of wealth because one has many mouths to feed. Also, it enlarges the family size and name. For instance, there are some families in Yorùbáland today that wherever their names are mentioned, one can tell the town and family they came from.

Also, the unending joy of being surrounded by many children, most especially women made them desire them at all cost and means. This feeling of joy and love would made them prefer to go hungry than allow their children do. This corroborated Ilesanmi's[13] assertion that Yorùbá women believe that it is honourable to be a mother in spite of the natural attendant problems of child conception, delivery, miscarriages and child care coupled with the cultural attendant demands like family taboos and other demands attached to motherhood. Therefore, barrenness is believed to be evil in Yorùbá Society. A barren woman in Yorùbá Society, regardless of her wealth, riches and affluence is often a miserable and a sorrowful woman. This is demonstrated in Efunsetan Aniwura's attitude toward her slaves after the death of her only daughter during childbirth.[14] As a result of this, all angles are usually explored particularly through the help of *Ifá* to find the root cause and solution to remove the shame of barrenness. What then is the position of *Ifá* toward child bearing?

[2] Prince Adekunle, 1976, Record Label Code: KLPS 87&88 Titled Omoniyi, Omonide, Lagos: Ibukunola Printers (Nig.) Ltd.
[3] Sunny Ade, 1988, Record Label Code: APLS 6A, Titled *the Child*, Atom-Park.
[4] Peter King, 1975, Record Label, Miliki Sound MRBLP103, Titled *Ijo Olomo,* Sonny Roberts' Orbitone.
[5] Elemure Ogunyemi, 19… in the album *Ọmọ nìgbẹ̀yìn ola*, vol 3-1
[6] Dele Ojo & His star Bothers Band, Titled *Iyaniwura,* www.mziiki.com, Retrieved on 15/06/2020
[7] Emma George, 2017, Orisabiiya, m.youtube.com, Retrieved on thr 16/06/2020
[8] Olayinka Babalola, 2018, *Ìyániwúrà*, Lineage Alive Foundation, School of Yoruba Language and Culture, Houston, Texas, www. lineagealive. org, Retrieved on the 16/06/2020
[9] Yinka Ayanda, *Iya mi,* Produced by Seun Oke, m.youtube.com, Retrieved on16 /06/2020
[10] Tope Alabi, 2015, Record Tittle, *Omo Laso,* Gospel Vibes Ltd
[11] Joseph Folahan Odunjo,1967, *Alawiye Iwe Keji,* Ibadan: Longman Publishers Ltd,34
[12] Ashorun Raji Babatunde, 2015, *Iyaniwura*, Olaoye Global Concept NIG. Ltd
[13] T.M. Ilesanmi, 2013, *Obinrin: A Cultural Assessment of Yoruba Women,* Nigeria: astra – J Multimedia Ng Ltd, 13
[14] Akinwumi Isola, 2010, *Efunsetan Aniwura Iyalode Ibadan*, Ibadan: University Press Plc, 9

© 2020 Global Journals

III. The Position of *Ifá* Divination Toward Child Bearing

Ifá, as viewed by the Yorùbá is the word of *Olodumare* under the custody of *Orunmila*, the mouth piece of other gods and the intermediary between God and man in relation to man's destiny which is the purpose of man on earth. It is the explanation to every happening and what seems to be a mystery to humanity in general. This is the reason why Adewale[15] defines *Ifá* divination as the means of explaining the past, present and the future. It is also a means of declaring guilt and innocence in times of dispute and misunderstanding. Again, *Ifá* is the means of dividing land and deciding the issues of war and peace as well as act of discovering hidden knowledge and mysteries. Therefore, *Ifá* divination is performed to penetrate the world of unknown (spiritual) to ascertain what the future holds for individuals, groups, and the nation from the gods in other to avoid their angers, particularly *Olodumare* who Yorùbá believes is the Creator of heavens and earth.[16] As earlier said, *Ifá* divination is a diagnosing tool for both physical and spiritual matters that includes marriage, child bearing and care of such child till maturity. This is what Idowu[17] viewed when he says that the full responsibility of life affairs belongs to *Ifá* divination and the only part of man is to obey as he is ordered through the priests and diviners whom they believe to be the interpreters and middle men of the will of *Olodumare*. He went further to say that "Through all the circumstances of life, through all its changing scenes, its joy and trouble, it is the deity who is in control. Before a child is born, the oracle is consulted and one's rites observed, when a child is born, the oracle gives directions about it, at every stage of life – puberty, betrothal, marriage, taking up a career, building a house, going on a journey and in feet, the thousand and one things which are up to human existence here on earth is in the head of the deity who dictate in law and waiting on the other side of this life to render to him as he deserves."

This is also one reason why *Ifá* is consulted if there is a problem of conception in marriage to know the root cause of the matter and the way to approach it for proper remedy. Again, because of the belief and trust that the Yorùbá have in *Ifá* divination for solution to issues of child bearing, hardly do we have *Odù Ifá* that does not make reference to the agony that (the Yorùbá particularly) women are passing through in other to have children. Such expression like, *Ó nfi omi ojú ṣògbéré ọmọ, ó rọ́mọ lẹ́yìn adìẹ ó bú puru sẹ́kún* etc. are very common in many of the *ẹsẹ Ifá* that has to do with women and issues of conception. However, the causer factors of barrenness in *Ifá* are numerous which ranges from the spiritual to the physical just as we have in *Ògúndá Méjì*;[18]

Okó kangi	Oko kangi (name of a priest)
Sì padà sẹ́yìn	Si pada seyin
A dÍfá f'Onírésé 'le	Ifa divination was performed for Onirese'le
A bù fún t'oko	Also for Onirese oko
Onírésé ọmọ lẹwà	Onirese children beautifies one
Ògòrèsé ọmọ lẹwà ẹni	Okorese, a child is someone's treasure.

Here, *Ifá* speaks about two friends that consulted the oracle because they could not conceive. *Ifá* says one would give birth and the other would be blessed with affluence and fame. However, at long last, the one with affluence would regret not having children. They were asked to offer sacrifice which they did. *Onírésé Ile* offered sacrifice to have children, while *Onírésé Oko* offered her own to have wealth. Their sacrifice was accepted. *Olódùmarè* fulfilled what they offered sacrificed for. *Onírésé Oko* who was rich, while going out dresses gorgeously that attracted people to admire her beauty and the expensive dress, while *Onírésé Ile* had not much clothes to wear but was blessed with many children. Because of this, *Onírésé Oko* usually disgraces her friend with her wealth. So, *Onírésé Ile* decided to pay her back on a faithful day when they went out together for a party. *Onírésé Ile* told other friends present that she wanted to sing a song which they must sing together with her. They all agreed and she started like this;

[15] Adewale S.A. 1978, The Role of Ifa in the Work of the 19th Century Missionaries in Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies, xi/June, 23.
[16] Olaleye S.K. 213, *Ebo as a Healing Technique in Ifa Divination System, An Investigation of Potent Therapeutic Mechanism for Today's Health Problems*, Germany: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, 60.
[17]
[18] Fasina Agboola, 1989, *Ojulowo Oriki Ifa, Apa Kinni,* Lagos: Project Publication Limited, 128-130

© 2020 Global Journals

Onírésé ọmọ ọ̀ rẹ dà?	*Onirese* where is your child?
Ọ̀kọ̀rèsé ọmọ ọ̀ rẹ dà?	*Okosere* where is your child?
Onírésé ọmọ ọ̀ rẹ dà?	*Onirese* where is your child?
Ọ̀kọ̀rèsé ọmọ ọ̀ rẹ dà?	*Okosere* where is your child?
Ajíṣọlá ọmọ ọ̀ rẹ dà?	*Ajisola* where is your child?
Ọ̀kọ̀rèsé ọmọ ọ̀ rẹ dà?	*Okosere* where is your child?

Onirese Oko who had no child was ashamed and went home crying. She went for consultation and was told that she must offer all her beautiful clothes and wealth as sacrifice for her to have children. She was also asked to stop her gorgeous dressing for a while and use every medication prepared for her conception religiously. She obeyed all the instructions and everything went well. This validates the above claim that regardless of one's wealth and affluence, one is nothing in Yorùbá Society if one is childless. Therefore, the Yorùbá would prefer not to be wealthy than not to have children. So, losing wealth and riches for the sake of having children is no big deal. Also, in *Ọ̀bàrà Ìrẹtẹ̀,*[19] as viewed by Awosola there, *Ifá* says;

Pankẹ́rẹ́ tẹ́rẹ́ lawo inú igbó	A tinny cane is the priest of the forest
Eèsún wowo awo imo egi	Fresh elephant grass is the initiate of imo egi
A d'Ifá fún Ọlásùnnsọkún,	Casts divination for Olasunsokun
Obìnrin Ọ̀bàràrẹtẹ̀	The wife of Obararete
Lọ́jọ́ tí nsunkún pé òun kò bímọ	On the day she was crying for lack of a child
Ọ̀pọ̀lọ́pọ̀ ìlẹ̀kẹ̀	A lot of beads
Ni kò jẹ́ kí Ọlásùnnsọkún ó bímọ.	Deprives Olasunsokun of having children

The above illustrates that Olasunsokun husband was a *Babaláwo – Ifá* priest who had tried all he could to make sure that his wife get pregnant but she could not. Most of the time, part of what he prepared for her in terms of aids to get pregnant were given to other women and had worked to solve their problems. Thus, the saying of the Yorùbá that *ọ̀bẹ kìí mú kí ó gbẹ́ èkù ara rẹ̀* or better still, *àtùpà a má tan nà rídí onídí, wọn kìí tanná rídí ara wọn* came to play a big role in their case. It became a sad situation for both of them. At the end, the husband, Ọ̀bàràrẹtẹ̀ called two other *Ifá* priests to come and divine for her wife. It was revealed by *Ifá* through these Priests that her waist beads were what had hindered her conception long time ago. She was then asked to offer the beads as sacrifice together with one goat and some cowries. She offered this sacrifice and she became pregnant. This practically showed that she was not bio-medically sick.

As said earlier, there are so many places in *Ifá* divination where we can find issues relating to this. In fact, there is no major *Odu* that has no reference to barrenness in one way or the other. Again, as mentioned above, besides biomedical sicknesses like *ẹ̀dà*- dripping of sperm from the virginal after intercourse, *inú gbígbóná*-hotness of stomach, *jẹ̀dí*-dysentery, *aràn*- worms, *ṣọmúròrò*-concentration of hormones in the breast, there are many other factors that could be responsible for inability to conceive and bear children. For instance, if a woman is too foppish as explain by *Odu Ọ̀gúndá Méjì* above, it could hinder her conception. At the same time *Ifá* may recommend that a woman should always be gorgeously dressed as we have in Oyeku Meji;[20]

Orunmila lo san wee	Orunmila lo sa wee
Ifa mi oruku yo tooroto	Ifa I said dust came out very tinny
O lori tio ba sunwon	It say he who will excel in life
Ninu ajere ide lo ti i wa	Will come out of brass (struggle to attain it)
Orun tio ba lo ejigba ileke	The neck that will use expensive beads
Ninu ajere ide lo ti i wa	Will come out of brass (struggle to attain it)
Bebe idi tio ba lo alahanrangunkan	The buttock that will use alahanrangunkan (a kind of clothes),
Aso oba tii kona yanranyanran	An expensive clothes for the kings
Ninu agogo ide ni ti i wa	Will come out of brass gong (struggle to attain it)
A difa fAduke	Casts divination for Aduke
Nijo ti n mekun oju se'rahun omo.	On the day she was weeping for being barren

[19] Awosola Fatoosin, an Ifa Priest, Personal Interview, Ibadan, 01/06/2020

[20] Fasina Agboola, 1989, *Ojulowo Oriki Ifa Apa Kinni*, Lagos: Project Publications Limited, 26

© 2020 Global Journals

Aduke consulted the Oracle for lack of children and was advised by Ifa to offer sacrifice and was also advised that unless she takes to foppish life, she would not bear children. Also, families can team up to contribute money for a woman to offer sacrifice without which conception will take place as viewed by *Odu Ìká Méjì*;[21]

Baba gbẹ̀dẹ̀ Ilá	Baba gbede ila
Baba gbẹ̀dẹ̀ Ikàn	Baba gbede ikan
Àgbàdo tinú ìyá ẹ ṣọmọ tuntun wá'nú ayé	The maize sprouts corn cob from its mother's womb
A díá fún Fẹkúnwẹ̀	Casts divination for Fekunwe
Ọmọ wàrè wàrèè 'Fẹ̀ mẹ́fẹ̀ẹ̀fà	The child of Ife six initiates
Níjó tí nsunkún alaìríbí	On the day she was weeping for not having offspring
Ó ngbàwẹ̀ alaìrípọ̀n	She was fasting for lack of a child to back
Ó fọwọ́ osùn nùgiri gbígbẹ	She was cleaning her camwood hands on a dry wall
Ó rọ́mọ lẹ́yìn adìẹ	She saw chicks running after their mother
Ó bú puru sẹ́kún.	She busts into uncontrollable wailing

Ifá, as indicated by Famuagun who said that *Ifá* may sometimes dictate that the person involved should be more concerned with the issue of conception than having any other thing in his or her life as instructed by *Ifá* in *Ọ̀kànràn Méjì*[22]

Okanran kan nihin-in	One Okanran here
Okanran kan lohun-un	One Okanran there
Okanran meji abenu simini	Two Okanran making a perfect match
A difa f'Omolohunjingin	Ifa divination was performed for Omolohunjingin

Who was more concern about material things than having children? She was not bothered until she started seeing what the children of those who had were doing for them. Again, *Ifá* may recommend that before a woman can be pregnant and bear children, she must marry a particular type of person like a Babalawo as we have it in *Ogbèdí* [23]where *Ifá* says;

Ìrọ́fá abẹnu gíngínní	Irofa with pointed mouth
Ló dífá fún àgàn aìbí	Ifa divination was performed for the barren
Èyí tó torí ọmọ dífá	Who consulted Ifa for the sake of children
Wọ́n ní yíó bí ọmọ obìnrin kan	She was told that she would bear a baby girl
Akọ̀ sì gbọ́dọ̀ pa orúkọ rẹ̀ dà.	Her name must not be changed
Dàda ni ọmọ náà yíó maa jẹ́	Her name would be Dada
Babalawo ni yíó sì ṣe ọkọ rẹ̀	She must marry an Ifa priest

There are times that it could be the ability or inability to listen to warning and instructions just as we have it in *Ọ̀bàrà Ìrẹ́tẹ̀* [24]where *Ifá* says;

Ẹ kú àná	How was yesterday
Ẹ kú òní	How is today
Aìfẹ́níi kí	If one does not want to greet
Nlẹ́kú ìjẹta o ṣẹ́é kíra ẹni	Is the reason why one does not say how was three days ago
E kú àná ló dàdùn jù	How was yesterday is the sweetest
A díá fún Adéyọkùn	Ifa divination was performed for Adeyokun
Níjọ́ tí nfomi ojú nṣọ̀gbéré ọmọ	On the day she was crying for lack of a child
Wọ́n ní kó rúbọ	He was asked to offer sacrifice

[21] Awosola Fatoosin, Ifa Priest, Personal Interview, Ologuneru, Ibadan, 01/06/2020
[22] Famuagun Ayelaagbe, Ifa Priest, Personal Interview, Awotan, Ibadan, 23/05/2020
[23] Ayo salami 2000, *Ifa, A Complete Divination*, Lagos: NIDDC Publishing Company, 387
[24] William Bascom, 1969, *Ifa Divination, Communication between Gods and Man in West Africa,* London: Indiana University Press, 182.

© 2020 Global Journals

Wọ́n ní yóó bímọ láyé	He was told he would have children on earth
Wọ́n lọ́mọ ẹ̀ó sì pọ̀	And that his children would be many
Wọ́n ní ó fi jígí rúbọ	He was asked to offer a mirror as sacrifice
Ó ṣẹ̀ é	He offered.

Here, *Ifá* instructed that the person involved should not look at mirror, otherwise she will not bear children in life. There are other countless reasons beyond biomedical ailments that could prevent women from having children in Yoruba culture, and *Ifá* divination is one of the means to resolve it. This is where the role and importance of *Ifá* divination comes out in child bearing in particular and in human life in general. Besides obeying taboos, following instructions and order given by *Ifá,* offering of sacrifice is equally important because this is the one of the therapy that will proffer solution to the problem after diagnosing through *Ifá* divination. However, items for this sacrifice range from personal belongings like clothes, cap, shoes, hoe, cutlass, money etc. to food items of all kinds and animals' parts which can be wild and domestic as we have in *Irosun Meji:*[25]

Àdá fọ̀ fẹ̀jú àwọ̀n	The cutlass used its hands to expand the face of the net
A d'Ífá f'Ónídèrè	Casts divination for *Onirese*
Ọmọ a fàdán ṣẹbọ ọmọ	The offspring of he who made child's sacrifice with a bat

Again, after the offering of sacrifice, *Ifa* may instruct the *Ifá* priest during consultation that *kooko Ifá or ewé Ifá* – *Ifá* medicinal herbs be made as part of the therapy to solve the problem as we have in *ese Ifa* cited above. Here after offering the sacrifice with six bats, six hens and six hundred cowries, medicinal herbs were further recommended for her before she became pregnant. Though, this may not be the case all the time.

IV. Motherhood and the Concept of *Òrìṣà Bíìyá Kòsí*

In Yorùbá Society, motherhood goes beyond biological readiness. According to Ilesanmi,[26] giving birth to children is the beginning of motherhood which involves a lot of activities such as feeding, caring and educating the baby. In some families, there are certain rituals and taboos that some women have to undergo when they newly give birth that are dehumanizing. This sometimes has to do with the kind of food they are permitted to eat, places they can live in, the kind of dress they can put on, and the surrounding atmosphere of where they can sleep for the first few days after delivering for the survival and wellbeing of the child.

Traditionally, Yorùbá women breastfeed their babies for certain reasons. One, the milk is considered a gift of nature for the baby. Emotional attachment of the child while feeding on the mother's breast is another. As the child sucks the breast, he/she will be looking at the mother's eyes as the mother also looks at the product of her womb with all joy. As the child is being breastfeed, he/she feels the warmth of the mother which is believed gives emotional attachment between the mother and the child apart from the placenta that is attached through the mother to the baby from which the baby receives its food and excretes to the mother's system, and through which its survival of breathing in that womb lies. Going through all these physical and emotional stress all in the name of procreation makes the Yorùbá believe that it is only the gods that could perform this right and among the gods, the mother stands out. Therefore, they view *Òrìṣà bíìyá kòsí, tani jẹ́ ṣe bí ẹni bíni lọ́jọ́ to bá nira*? - there is no god like mother, who will behave or act like one's mother on the day that of suffering or is difficult? as important.

Also, the pain of giving birth through the vagina and the pool of the mother's blood poured on the child in the labour room, the breast that the child sucks and the knee of a mother are believed to have spiritual influence on every child. Therefore, if any woman touches any of these parts and place or pronounce a curse on an incorrigible child, it is believed that such a curse is irreversible. Although in those days, only very few mothers would pronounce a curse on their children, no matter the situation. Annoyance might set in after considering all the pains and efforts gone through to raise the child up to that stage. Besides, if anything happens to the child as a result of the curse placed on him or her, would there be a replacement for the child? Though the thought that the child can turn a new leaf at the end of the day might come to her, but if she had cursed the child, she wouldn't be able to reverse it.

These are some of the reasons why a mother would restrain herself from doing irreparable damage in the life of her child. However, one may ask here, considering the current wave of events in the contemporary Yorùbá Society today where some women consciously kill their children, abort them, get pregnant for the purpose of selling such a child, offer them for witchcraft ritual, kidnap and sell other people children, throw them into pit latrine, feed them to death, or sometimes drown them, can we accept as true that such a concept is still binding if a curse is placed on a child that was not given adequate and motherly attention due to those factors mentioned above coupled with social and economic situation of things in the country that turned many women to be breadwinners of

[25] Fasina Agboola, 1989, *Ojulowo Oriki Ifa Apa Kinni*, Lagos: Project Publications Limited, 73
[26] T.M. Ilesanmi, 2013, *Obinrin: A Cultural Assessment of Yoruba Women,* Nigeria: astra – J Multimedia Ng Ltd, 15

© 2020 Global Journals

their family thereby delegating their motherly roles to the care of nannies and house helps? It is important therefore to reassess this concept via the roles of Motherhood in the contemporary Yorùbá Society.

V. Contemporary Yorùbá Women and the Perception of *Òrìṣà Bíìyá Kòsí*

In Yorùbá Society today, a lot of things have changed as far as the roles of women or motherhood is concerned due to western influence, civilisation and foreign religions. Western education for instance brought in the knowledge and the ability to read and write which is not bad, however, its appearance deprived the younger generation's ability to learn and practice the traditional form of education. In fact, it became an old system that must be done away with, and this started the beginning of the tragedy that befell us as a nation. The new educational system predominantly occupies our everyday space to the extent that songs were composed in some parts of Yorùbá Society to discourage people from sending their wards to school. Such songs like the one below were composed in Èkìtì dialect for that purpose;

Elú ò e	Hello here
Èlú o à	Hello there
Ọni kó bímọ mẹ́fà	The person that gave birth to six children
Kọ sọ̀fẹ́fa sí ṣùkùrù	And sent the six to school
Ka a gbódó iyán	That will carry mortal alone
Kà a tìka a tọ́mi	And fetched water alone
Mí a jùyà lójú ọmọ kì mọ tìka bí o è.	I will not suffer in the presence of the children I gave birth to.

This song is not to say that the Èkìtì people are convicting western education in totality. After all, in Nigeria today, Ekiti State was listed as number four on literacy rate by the UNESCO with 74.7% rate, and was ranked as the state with the highest number of professors in the country.[27] Rather, they are quick to see the evil that this brings to the Society in future which is part of what we see in our Society today. Apart from the fact that western education deprived younger ones from running errands for the parents, it also taught them more about western civilisation that brought in knowledge of foreign culture. It also brought foreign religions which encourages us to do away with almost everything about our own culture as viewed by Babalola.[28]

The factors mentioned above hence greatly changed the status and roles played by women in Africa, particularly the Yorùbá Society. As their roles are changing in the Society, so is their traditional attributes also changing. Consequently, motherhood in Yorùbá Society is no longer what it used to be in the past due to some of the factors discussed below. As earlier said, infiltration of foreign culture has damaged our own culture because more attention is being paid to foreign culture than Yorùbá culture. In the past, there was nothing like abortion or divorce. Nowadays, there are many literate girls who are not culturally educated about the implication of sexual relationship that could result in abortion when they are not ready to become mothers at that age.

Today, in some quarters, there are some groups that are advocating for the legalization of abortion even within religious circle. Again, many mature ladies these days do not frown at being single for the rest of their lives simply because many cannot tolerate the cry of babies or the stress of taking care of them. This is a mentality inherited from the colonial worlds through the forms of education, films, travelling and way of life of the developed countries. Some will even prefer to change their gender. A lot have taken their profession as their husbands and kids, therefore attached no importance to having children. In Nigeria today, particularly in Yorùbá Society, there are a lot of baby factories where young girls are hired to give birth to children, and these children are sold out to interested people in the Society, either for ritual or adoption purposes with the intention of getting huge money without any iota of concern for what will happens to the child at the end of the day.[29] Those who are found doing this are one way or the other mothers or mothers to be. Some will even give birth and abandon such children as a result of personal hardship without any consideration of what befalls such children. As a result, many babies have been found on refuse dumps, uncompleted buildings, in front of rich men gates, with the hope that if such a child is found, proper attention and care will be given to the child. Some leave their children beside lonely roads and so on.

Also, the economic problems in the country most time put women as breadwinners of their homes, and that does not give them enough choice and time to take care of their kids. Such children are either left to take care of themselves or are left in the care of nannies and house helps. Some women who are into one business or the other are always focused on it whether locally and internationally all in the name of working for the children they are not

[27] Most Educated States in Nigeria (2020), https://nigerianinfopedia. com.ng, *Retrieved on 23/05/2020*
[28] E.O. Babalola, 1981, *Christianity in West Africa (An Historical Analysis),* Ado-Ekiti: Bamigboye & Co. Press (Nig.) Ltd, 118
[29] *Baby Factories in Nigeria: a New and Challenging Source of Abuse*, www.sciencedirect.com, Retrieved on 23/05/2020

© 2020 Global Journals

properly taking care of, forgetting that *ọmọ tá ò kọ́ ni yíó gbébé táa kọ́ tà*- a child that is not well brought up (built) will be the one to sell off the house built by his/her parents. Such children would later become a problem in the home they are trying to build with the proceeds of the business and the entire Society.

As a result of these factors, the concept of *orisa biiya* had been greatly damaged to the extent that even if some mothers place or pronounce curses on their children, it will not hold any water. (though only few mothers would do that no matter how annoyed they could be). Taiwo,[30] an interview respondent, said she was told that her mother abandoned her when she was ten months old and she did not set her eyes on her until she was twelve years old. She opines that she does not have any feelings for her whatsoever. Therefore, if she places or pronounce any curse on her, it will not have any effect on her. Bamidele,[31] another interview respondent said he did not see her mother until he graduated from the university. According to him, he only recognised his grandmother that brought him up as his mother. Yet another respondent said that his mother left him at the age of three months to be cared for by an elderly woman in their family whom he knows and recognises as his mother.[32] According to him, life was so miserable for him that he made attempt to terminate his life twice by drinking goldsmith chemical (the vocation he was learning then). Unfortunately for him, the chemical did not kill him in all his attempts. He turned a drunkard coming home at odd hours with the hope that one of the evil spirits moving around his town of residence will kill him. These were the incidents that happened in his life which eventually led him to becoming born again and became a Pastor even till today. He went further to say that if anyone should pronounce a curse on him; it would not be his mother that failed to take care of him. Ademola[33] claimed that he forgave his mother who left him at the age of four because he is now a Pastor and that the Bible teaches that one should forgive those who offended them, otherwise he would not have. His mother according to what he was told abandoned him because of *afẹ́ ayé* – worldliness.

As argued by one of the informants, the fact that a woman gave birth to a child is not enough to think that if she places a curse on the child it will come to pass. She said further that bringing a child to the world must be accompanied with adequate care the child needs within the reach of the parents. If mothers are claiming that they suffered to bring their children up, what about the fathers that struggle day and night to provide for both the mother and the child she asked? The fact that the father has no space in his stomach to carry the pregnancy, the virginal to give birth to the child and breast that the child will suck milk from to survive does not indicate that if a child misbehaved to such a father, his curse will not come to pass on the child. Thus, validates the saying of the Yoruba that *onbini ko to onwoni* - giving birth to a child is not up to taking good care of the child. In her final analysis, she believes that both parents have something to do in the life of their children and must be responsible and play their roles as parents before they can pronounce any valid curse on their children if at all they would do. Therefore, for a mother to become *Orisa* before her child, she must have done something great and spectacular in the life of such a child beyond giving birth to an untrained and untutored child alone.

Although, despite these negative reports, there are still some mothers today who take good care of their children in spite of the pressures they are facing. However, the percentage is very low compared to those that the wake and tide of economic hardship and *afẹ́ ayé* have taken away completely. Some of these mothers too are over pampering their children because they suffered when they were growing. As a result, they believe in the principle of *ìyà tí wọ́n jẹ, ọmọ wọn kò gbọ́dọ̀ jẹ́*- the suffering I experience, my child must not experience it. As said earlier, what they failed to realise is that *ọmọ taó kọ́, ni yíó gbélé tá a kọ́ tà*- a child that is not well brought up (built) will be the one to sell off the house built by his/her parents. Eventually, the over pampered children will become rebellious if they no longer get the attention needed and they in turn become a torn in their parents' flesh. At this level, even if such mothers pronounced any curse on such children, it may not work because they have failed in their responsibilities by over pampering their children.

VI. Conclusion

It is important to make a reflection and pick some of the virtues that are still good in our culture in this modern time. *A ò lè sọ p'áyé d'ayé ọ̀làjú ká má a fojú egbò tẹlẹ̀*- and it is not possible for us to eat our cake at the same time have it. In the view of *Ajireni*, a mother of three children who affirmed that the concept can still work in this modern time but is conditional. She said if one fails to play her roles as a mother on a child, let such a mother rain curses on the child for eternity, it will not have any effect on the child. According to her, it is the design of the Creator for women to give birth to children and these children are believed belonged to *Olodumare* that gives to the mothers as he deems fit. For anyone to lay claim to the will of the Creator therefore, without performing her obligations as a mother is like calling *Olódùmarè* a fool.

[30] Taiwo Olaleye, (a PhD Student, Department of History, University of Ibadan), Personal Interview, Ibadan, 30/05/2020
[31] Ilori Bamidele, (a Business man), Personal Interview, Bodija, Ibadan, 20/05/2020
[32] Gideon Olatunji, (a Pastor, Odo-Oba), Oyo State, Personal Interview, 20/05/2020
[33] Ademola Adeyanju, (a University Lecturer), Phone Interview, Akure, Ondo State, 21/0/2020

© 2020 Global Journals

Also, the fifth commandment in the Bible says, "honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the lord your god has given you (Exodus 20:12)". However, this honour begins from the father and the mother. Parents who failed to do the needful are not different from the proverbial man that puts an ant invested wood on his path and expected the company of fowls on his way back. What the Bible says is not so much different from what *Ifá* says in *Odù Ọ̀ṣetúrá or Ọ̀ṣẹ́-Òtúrá*[34] that;

À̀gbàrá kò lọ́wọ́	Erosion has no hands
Ó gbẹ́lẹ̀ kàn'lẹ̀pa dòdò	It digs grand dip to the red soil
A dífá fún ìṣẹ̀ṣe	Cast divination for tradition
Tí ṣọmọ olórí nífẹ̀.	Who is the son of a leader in Ife?
Kílà nbọ nífẹ̀ kátó ríre?	What do we worship in Ife before we get fortune?
Ìṣẹ̀ṣe là nbọ nífẹ̀.	It is the tradition that we worship in Ife
Baba ẹni,	Ones father,
Ìṣẹ̀ṣe ẹni ni.	Is one's tradition?
Ìyá ẹni,	Ones mother,
Ìṣẹ̀ṣe ẹni ni	Is one's tradition
Ìṣẹ̀ṣe là nbọ nífẹ̀ kátó ríre.	It is the tradition that we worship in Ife before we get fortune

In Yorùbá Society, it is the responsibility of the whole elders in any given community to collectively train their children to prevent them from going astray. This corroborates the Yorùbá proverb that says, "*ojú mẹ́rin lọ́ nbímọ, igba ojú lọ́ ntọ*"- it is only four eyes (father and mother) that gave birth to a child, it is two hundred eyes that will look after the child. What this means is that every elderly man and woman in Yorùbáland is regarded as parents. If a child had done something bad, they do not wait to see the biological parents before they discipline the child for bad conduct. Therefore, in those days, issues relating to children upbringing was a matter of "our children" (when we were living communal life) and not "my children" as we have it today. As a result, no mother can claim sole authority on any child to the level of raining curses on him or her. Parents, particularly mothers should wake up to their responsibility by training their children the way they would be useful to the family and the entire Society as a whole since they are closer to these children than the father, rather than chasing shadows all in the name of modernity. They can limit their vocations to those ones that would allow them have proper access to the training of these kids as we have in the past.

End Notes

1. Ademola Adeyanju, (a University Lecturer), Phone Interview, Akure, Ondo State, 21/0/2020.
2. Adesina Jubril, 2007. *Ilana Yoruba Apa Kinni*, Audio cassette, Lagos: Bomfad Records and Company Limited.
3. Adewale S.A. 1978, The Role of Ifa in the Work of the 19th Century Missionaries in Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies, xi/June.
4. Akinwumi Isola, 2010, *Efunsetan Aniwura Iyalode Ibadan*, Ibadan: University Press Plc, 9.
5. Awosola Fatoosin, Ifa Priest, Personal Interview, Ologuneru, Ibadan, 01/06/2020.
6. Ayo salami 2000, *Ifa, A Complete Divination*, Lagos: NIDDC Publishing Company.
7. *Baby Factories in Nigeria: a New and Challenging Source of Abuse*, www.sciencedirect.com, Retrieved on 23/05/2020.
8. Bola 'Fajembola, (Secondary School Teacher), Personal Interview, Ibadan, 31/05/2020.
9. Babalola, E.O, 1981, *Christianity in West Africa (An Historical Analysis),* Ado-Ekiti: Bamigboye & Co. Press (Nig.) Ltd.
10. Elemure Ogunyemi, 1980 in the album *Ọmọ nìgbẹ̀yìn ola*, vol 3-1.
11. Famuagun Ayelaagbe, Ifa Priest, Personal Interview, Awotan, Ibadan, 23/05/2020.
12. Fasina Agboola, 1989, *Ojulowo Oriki Ifa Apa Kinni*, Lagos: Project Publications Limited.
13. Gideon Olatunji, (a Pastor, Odo-Oba), Oyo State, Personal Interview, 20/05/2020.
14. Ilori Bamidele, (a Business man), Personal Interview, Bodija, Ibadan, 20/05/2020.
15. Joseph Folahan Odunjo, 1967, *Alawiye Iwe Keji,* Ibadan: Longman Publishers Ltd.
16. Most Educated States in Nigeria (2020), https:// nigerianinfopedia.com.ng, Retrieved on 23/05/2020.
17. Olaleye S.K. 213, *Ebo as a Healing Technique in Ifa Divination System, An Investigation of Potent Therapeutic Mechanism for Today's Health Problems*, Germany: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing.
18. Peter King, 1975, Record Label, Miliki Sound MRBLP103, Titled *Ijo Olomo,* Sonny Roberts' Orbitone.

[34] Adesina Jubril, 2007. *Ilana Yoruba Apa Kinni*, Audio cassette, Lagos: Bomfad Records and Company Limited

© 2020 Global Journals

19. Prince Adekunle, 1976, Record Label Code: KLPS 87 & 88 Titled *Omoniyi, Omonide,* Lagos: Ibukunola Printers (Nig.) Ltd.
20. Sunny Ade, 1988, Record Label Code: APLS 6 A, Titled *the Child*, Atom-Park.
21. T.M. Ilesanmi, 2013, *Obinrin: A Cultural Assessment of Yoruba Women,* Nigeria: astra – J Multimedia Ng Ltd, 13.
22. Taiwo Olaleye, (PhD Student, Department of History, University of Ibadan), Personal Interview, Ibadan, 30/05/2020.
23. Tope Alabi, 2015, Record Tittle, *Omo Laso,* Gospel Vibes Ltd.
24. William Bascom, 1969, *Ifa Divination, Communication between Gods and Man in West Africa,* London: Indiana University Press.

© 2020 Global Journals