

**Historicizing the socio-religious and cultural institutions in Idofin community, Kwara, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*A study of socio-cultural institutions affirms that cultural institutions is as old as humanity and can be seen as the physical character of a city or community. The ancient pre-colonial socio-cultural institutions have remained great legacies in various part of Nigeria and have contributed to peaceful coexistence among the Idofin community. However, the importance of the socio-cultural institutions in Idofin community have received no scholarly attention in history. This article examines the flight of socio-cultural institutions of Idofin community as well as their peaceful relations with other communities, which have been abandoned on the historiography of Kwara State. The paper adopts historical and descriptive analysis. It asserts that pre-colonial socio-cultural institutions are mechanism for promoting peace and cooperation.*

**Keywords:** Cultural, Festivals, Pre-colonial, and Religion

**Introduction**

It is a known fact that one can hardly understand the history of an area without having a good knowledge of its geography. Idofin is located within  $8^{\circ}22'N$   $5^{\circ}29'E$  of Nigeria map. The community was established by Abadofin Akinla, who came from otun Ekiti in Ekiti state. Hence, Idofin is historically related to Otun-Ekiti and Ile-Ife according to the people's oral tradition. They migrated from Ile-Ife to Otun Ekiti and finally to their present settlement site. Idofin consists of four different settlements: *Idofin Aiyekale, Idofin Eyin Afo, Idofin Odo Aga* and *Idofin Igbana*. Idofin is one of Ekiti towns in Kwara State. Other Ekiti towns and villages in Kwara State include *Osi, Oke Opin, Epe, Isolo, Isara Opin, Ikerin, Araromi Opin, Ajuba, Etan, Odo Owa, Ilofa, Eruku, Isapa, Koro, Ora Aiyetoro, Ora Aiyegbaju, Eda Oniyo, Erinmope, Aiyedun* (formally *Ekan Meje*), *Ilale* and *Inisan*,<sup>1</sup>*Ekan Nla, Egosi, Ilale, Imode, Imoji, Obo Aiyegunle and Obo Ile*. In this paper, cultural values of the people of Idofin will be examined as relate to social and religious interaction.

It is hard to segregate the religious life of Idofin people from their culture, since religion is defined as a collection of cultural system. To make a clear-cut line of demarcation between where their ethical life ends and where their religion life begins may be difficult. Amponsah defined culture as a collective name for all

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<sup>1</sup> David A. Aremu, *The Archaeology of Northeast Yoruba Kwara State with Emphasis on Early Techniques of Metal Working*, (PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan), 1991, 88



behavior pattern socially acquired and socially transmitted by means of symbol; it is a name for distinctive achievements of human groups, including not only such items as language, tool making, arts, industry, science, law, morals and religion, but also the material instruments or artifact in which cultural achievement are embodied and by which intellectual cultural features are given practical effect, such as buildings, tools, machines, communication devices etc.<sup>2</sup> "Culture," in anthropological terms, means a complete way of life, including elements such as kinship, political structure, language and literature, religion, music and dance, technology, and art. Culture changes at different rates and through various factors.<sup>3</sup> Cultural values of people are demonstrated in tangible and intangible heritage elements. Focus shall be on the intangible element of culture in Idofin as reflected in their festivals, songs and oral tradition. Culture as the totality of people's way of life differs from one community to another. It is the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by their language, religion, social habits and music. Therefore, it is the sum total of the beliefs and actions of everyone in such a given society.<sup>4</sup> It also shapes the way we see the world and has the capacity to bring about the change in attitude needed to ensure peace and sustainable development in a community. The Yoruba passed on their culture from one generation to other in a well-disciplined manner as reflected in *Omoluabi* concept<sup>5</sup>, as it signifies courage, humility, respect, strength, worth, moral excellence, wisdom, as well as moral goodness<sup>6</sup>; and it is expressed in the form of myths, history, stories, riddles, proverbs, arts and crafts. Culture is broadly divided into two categories: the material and non-material cultures. The material culture refers to all that man produces through science and technology while the non-material culture denotes value system, morals and religious beliefs among others.<sup>7</sup> With the

<sup>2</sup> S. Amponsah, "Beyond the boundaries: Toyin Falola on Africa Culture", North Caroline Academic Press, 1971

<sup>3</sup> Aribidesi Usman and Toyin Falola, *The Yoruba from Prehistory to the Present*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2019, 229

<sup>4</sup> Awolalu, J. O and Dopam P.A., "West African Traditional Religion", Ibadan Onionjo Press and Book Industries, 1979, 240

<sup>5</sup> Muiyiwa S. Adebayo, *The Concept of Omoluabi and Political Development in Nigeria: The Missing Gap*, IOSR Journal of Humanity and Social Science, Volume 23, Issue 3, Ver. 4 (March, 2018), pp 01-07, interpret *Omoluabi* as *Omo-ti-Olu(wa)-bi*, literally meaning: "a-child-born-by-God". However, A. K. Fayemi, "Human Personality and the Yoruba Worldview: An Ethico-Sociological Interpretation." *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 9, pp 166-176 analysed it in different way - *Omo+ti+Olu+iwa+bi*. Literally translated "the baby begotten by the chief of iwa (character)," such a child is thought of as a paragon of excellence in character (167). cf., Idowu O. Majebi & Esther A. Oduolowu, *Concept of Omoluabi in Pre-Primary and Primary School Classrooms and Sustainance of Effective Democracy in Nigeria*, Nigerian Journal of Social Studies, Vol. XXIII (2) (Oct., 2020), pp. 1-18

<sup>6</sup> Bosede A. Adebowale & Folake Onayemi, *Aristotle's Human Virtue and Yoruba Worldview of Omoluabi: an Ethical-Cultural Interpretation*, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331382642>. Accessed September 12, 2021

<sup>7</sup> Friday Aworawo., "Enduring Cultural Legacy: Historicizing the Socio-cultural and Political Affairs in Isawo Community, Lagos, Nigeria", *RUN Journal of Cultural Studies*, Volume 2, 2018, 152

understanding of non-material culture that the socio-cultural activities of Idofin community is examined in the subsequent section.

### Socio-Cultural Activities in Idofin Community

The people of Idofin have different socio-cultural activities. They can also be classified as ceremonies which were always accompanied by various rites/rituals. As a heritage, the people of Idofin are blessed with poets and natural philosophers. One of these arts is reflected in the use of 'Oriki' (praise name) in their idiolect. This is used to praise those who have made their parent happy or done great in the community, also to comfort and encourage. Also the community consist of other Yoruba customs, rites and practices such as birth and naming ceremonies where people come together to celebrate a new born. Idofin as a Yoruba community also accommodated all other religions such as Christianity, Islam and traditional worshippers. They also had festivals which were celebrated periodically.<sup>8</sup> Some of these festivals are discussed subsequently.

### Festivals

In Idofin land there are different festivals that are celebrated by the people namely; the *Olofin* festival, *Ojokolo* festival, New Yam Ritual, *Odun Ile*, *Odun Ogun*, *Egungun Elewe* and *Oda*. The spiritual leader of this common festivals is *Elegose*, first son of *Abadofin Akinla*, founder of Idofin kingdom which is institutionalized and passed on within the descendants of *Abadofin*; *Abadofin* has three sons, *Egose*, *Eruwa* and *Awaye*, the kingship institution was rotated among them<sup>9</sup> - *Egose* father of *Ilegose* - *Eruwa (Odo-Eru)* - *Awaye (Igbon)*, however, *Egose (Ilegose)* still remain the spiritual leader. *Ejo Idofin* (Eight high chiefs) in which *Elegose* is among them will decide the programme of the festivals.<sup>10</sup>

**New Yam Ritual:** The *Elegose* with the rest *Ejo* Idofin will decide the period, after that he will proceed as a ritual leader; on the market day, he will go to market square with one other person, carry ritual calabash containing water, he would wear white apparel, tender palm trees leaves and a small bunch of tender palm tree leaves in form of broom, this broom would be deepened inside calabash containing water, and splashing over market square with prayers, he would take small portion of different items of commodity in the market and put them inside another calabash as the right, for three consecutive market days, after that, *Oro-Agan* (traditional curfew) take over, then *Elegose* and others will go to any farm, to harvest yam for this ritual. He would now carry one yam tuber tied with palm tree leaves, move round the entire communities of Idofin, chanting *pa bo jo suro, omo ajepo*. After this ritual, everybody now have right to start eating new yam. It is a yearly base programme.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Oba Pius Oluwole Oni, 48Years, Traditional Ruler, Idofin Odo-Ashe, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018

<sup>9</sup>After assimilation of the three other communities – Odo-Aga, Ehin-Afo and Aiyekale, Kinship became rotational.

<sup>10</sup> Hermon Hodge., Gazetteer of Ilorin Province, George Allen, London. 1929.

**Odun Ile:** Is the period forbid, that no sound of drums (music instruments) should be heard in Idofin communities because, there is a taboo that *Kabiyesi* (King) is pregnant. But, if there is a need to violate the rule something must be paid in terms of money or other forms. The day *Kabiyesi* born, the rule would be broken; the drummers will come out with their drums to celebrate with *Kabiyesi* and the high Chiefs of the communities, for about nine days in every year around the month of August with great feast.

**Odun Ogun:** Is a period where all the young female folks will gather themselves in each wards to celebrate *suku*-show with great feast. It is evening dancing accustomed with beating of calabash and singing, done yearly around August to September for Fourteen days. After that, massive wedding will follow with great feasts for Seventeen days, whoever fails to wed between the scheduled periods would be next year.

**Egungun Elewe Festival:** Is a three years interval event programme, ritual leader lead the course with *Isawo* group to decide the period (day) it would start, while *oluawo, olori-ikoyi* of *erodo* ward would offer a sacrifice of black goat to *oduagba* in the shrine, right there masquerade called by name *Aroegun* will follow them, with *Esarun* to market square with entertainment by *Agbe* drummers. Thereafter, *Aroegun* will tell the public the day Egungun Elewe festival will commence but before Egungun Elewe commences, masquerades will be coming out every night prior to the last day which is normally scheduled for Fifteen days in every wards of Idofin Moba<sup>11</sup>, after Idofin Moba finished, Idofin Ogbolu, in every wards would start their own for Fifteen days again. Idofin do this festival to welcome their forefather that has died for long with a great feast.<sup>12</sup>

**Oda Festival:** Is a festival with calabash use to collect sacrifice offerings. The festival entails following a tunnel, from one end to another. It was told that one of the unfaithful priest of *Oda* died in the middle of the tunnel around *okuta-gba* a path way between Idofin Moba and Idofin Ogbolu. Hence, willing offerings, like yam, grains, sail, money etc., were dropped at the spot, which still exist today. *Igba-oda* (calabash) is always kept in the custody of *Elegose* the spiritual leader, descendants of *Abadofin Akinla* founder of Idofin land, inside a small hut (*ita*-house).

Other festivals in Idofin land; are *Orisa, Sango, Imole, Iwo, Olofin, Epa, Ore, Ere-Ode, Igunnu, Ero-Omola* and so on, celebrating by groups of people or clan, according to schedule period. A little concentration will be given to describe the events surrounding *Olofin* and *Ojokolo* festivals.

**Olofin Festival:** Is observed annually in April at Idofin after the consultations with the Ifa oracle; the day of the festival will be announced. In the morning of the festival the priest (*Aworo*) covered his head with white clothes and other worshippers follow him but they don't dress in white, they walk to the *Olofin*

<sup>11</sup> Idofin Moba here refers to Idofin Igbana, and Idofin Ogbolu as Idofin Odo-Ashe (Aiyekale, Ehin-Afo and Odo-Aga)

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Mr. Joshua Bello, Business man, 69 years, Idofin Odo-Aga, December 2020

shrine at *Ile Ilomo* on the way to Olla which was quite a distance from Idofin *Aiyekale*.

At *Ile Ilomo* the sacrifice to the god of Olofin is offered by *Aworo*. The items offered for the sacrifice include kolanuts, snails, dogs and cocks. The sacrifice is men's affair in which women are not allowed to the shrine. The *Aworo* first offered kolanuts for sacrifice and will start praises and prayers to the gods for seeing another year, for keeping and providing for their wives and children. Praises for good health, good harvest and other innumerable blessings are also offered. The clan (*Asanlu, Oba, Olomo* and *Oloke*) leaders are also prayed for that *Olofin* should uphold them. The *Aworo* pray for blessing of good health, evil should be taken away from the land and long-life for all the inhabitants of Idofin (sons and daughters of the soil and foreigners).

The *Aworo* pray on the dog brought for sacrifice before cutting the neck with a sharp cutlass and the blood is sprinkled on *Olofin* shrine. Men would cook the dog meat and ate all, after eating the people will sing songs while each of the men carry on their shoulder piles of tender palm fronds. As they sing they match their legs alternately on the ground and pushed the palm fronds with shoulders alternately. They enter the town as from 7.00p.m and sing and dance with their palm-fronds on their shoulders. The songs are precise and are meant for praises or ridicule.

As they sing they visit some compounds at *Odo Aqa, Eyin Afo* and *Aiyekale* and ended up at *Olofin* shrine in *Aiyekale*. In the process of rounding up they sing and dance round the shrine severally and would all hang their palm-fronds on the verandah post of the shrine having completed the festival for the year. The ceremony usually ends between 1 to 2a.m the next morning of the day.<sup>13</sup>

### The Festival Songs:

*Olofin* festival songs are sources of joy, encouragement, peace for the people of Idofin and serves as reprove for badly behaved people in the community. The songs are grouped under: entertainment, praise, historical records and corrections.

#### Entertainment:

##### Songs

*Okirimo lee gbo,*  
*E eeeeeee 2x*  
*Ade omo Olofin 2x*  
*Isedo Ajirumo*

*Ade Omo Olofin*  
*Isedo Ajirumo*  
*Ade omo Olofin*

##### Interpretation

Able colleagues  
Y e eeeee s 2x  
We have come children of Olofin  
*Isedo* (praise name) that entertain with palm fronds  
We have come children of Olofin 2x  
Isedo that entertain with palm fronds  
We have come of Olofin

<sup>13</sup> David Aremu and Alice Aremu, *Nigerian Heritage Journal of the National Commission for Museum and Monument*, Vol. 14, 2005, p.132.

This song is proverbial. It may mean that they see themselves as very strong. Their opponents have no power over them.

<i>Orin ile ha ramo ko</i> 2x	We are singing the song of our home 2x
<i>Aa mo bani wi o</i>	We do not talk to anybody
<i>Orin ile ha ramo ko</i>	We are singing the song of our home
<i>Aa mo bani wio orin ile ha ramo ko</i>	we do not talk to anybody

This song is to disabuse the mind of their spectators that they are not abusing anybody but are singing the traditional family songs. This introduced them to singing corrective songs.

### Praises

<i>Iri weli weli amode omo oba</i> 2x king 2x	Small small rain has come children of the king 2x
<i>Ibi tase nsodun niyi omo oba</i> festival.	This is how we celebrate our annual festival.
<i>Iri weli weli amode omo oba</i>	Small small rain has come children of the king
<i>Iri weli weli</i>	Small small rain

They regard themselves as children of the king and they enjoy rain falling on the night of the celebration. They sing the song whenever it is raining during celebration.

<i>Omi legbe legbe</i> 2x	Plenty plenty of water (2x)
<i>Isedo toyo de</i>	Isedo (family praise name) has come from Oyo
<i>Omi legbe legbe</i>	Plenty plenty of water

Supporting their appreciation of rain during celebration, if the rain is heavy, they sing this song. Their reference to Oyo in this song might raise a question; that is they might have got certain thing in common with Oyo, or after leaving Ile Ife they were part of the group that went to Oyo before coming to their present settlement site.

### Historical Events

<i>Jonkele jo odoko di sisi loja</i>	Guinea corn is six pence per small kongo in the market
<i>Jonkele jo odoko di sisi loja</i>	Guinea corn is six pence per small kongo in the market
<i>Jonkele jo</i>	Small kongo <sup>14</sup>

Guinea corn happens to be one of the staple foods of the people. *Jonkele* is the small measuring kongo for guinea corn. *Sisi* means six kobo. In 1960s the people were surprised that guinea corn sold with small kongo cost six kobo. Guinea corn was not expensive at all but in 2001 it cost N 30.00 per the same kongo

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

measure,<sup>15</sup> but with the present economy in Nigeria (2021) guinea corn is now N 400 per same kongo. Things are changing pretty fast.

<i>Agbolofin de agbolofin de</i>	We have come with Olofin
<i>Osupa nran bi osan</i>	The moon is shining like the sun
<i>Agbolofin de</i>	We have come with Olofin

This indicates that the celebration is usually during the full moon.

### Corrections

<i>Okiri molee gbo 2x</i>	Able colleagues 2x
<i>E e e e e 2x</i>	Y e e e e s 2x
<i>Tapotapo 2x</i>	with the bags 2x
<i>Eni t' Ado gbodoko rin re tapotapo</i>	the man from Ado went away with his guinea corn and the bag.

People from Ado-Ekiti do come to buy foodstuff at Idofin. There was a case of a farmer in Idofin and a trader from Ado Ekiti, the trader went away with the money, the guinea corn and the farmer's bag. This song is to warn the other farmer of the person who had lost all to the Ado trader.

<i>Adana roke are o 2x</i>	she prepared food and went with it to <i>Oke Are 2x</i>
<i>Kemo yehun ara rin</i>	she could not see her menses
<i>Adana roke are o</i>	she prepared food and went with it to <i>Oke Are</i>

She offered some sacrifice and took it to *Oke Are* to offer to the gods. *Oke Are* is a mountain at Idofin where the re-known Idofin warrior *Elegbo Ogbonko* entered a cave and died. The *Odo- Aga* and *Igbana* communities took refuge on *Oke Are* during the Yoruba civil war.

<i>Ekini gbogoje oke omo iye han</i>	the first one went to borrow £70.00
<i>Ekeji gbogoje oke omo iye han</i>	the second went to borrow £70.00
<i>Kini yio payin eniyan omo iye nyin</i>	what will kill your children of the same mother
<i>Gbese ni yio pa nyin iyin omo iye nyin</i>	debt will kill you children of the same mother
<i>Ogoje oko is £70.00.</i>	This song is saying: They borrowed the

money and probably were unable to pay back. This is a society that patronizes hard work rather than borrowing.

**Note:** This song dates to since when Nigeria was spending pounds.

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<sup>15</sup> Victoria Olabisi Bello, "Socio Economic History of Idofin In Oke- Ero Local Government Area, Kwara State 1900-1970", ( M.A Unpublished Thesis, Department of History and International Studies, University of Ilorin) 2018, 56

The songs above are not all the songs the *Olofin* worshippers sing during their festival, they are samples of the songs.<sup>16</sup>

### The Significance of the Olofin festival and songs

In our study we observed that the festival songs are for entertainment, praise, historical records and for correction. Before the festival the people bear the wrongs that has been done to them either by stealing or committing adultery with their wives. The festival song serves as a sanction for that and if someone was rebuked on the festival day it will serve as the talk of town and deterrent to others who may want to do same. Some people prevent themselves from been ridiculed on the festival, they travel out of the town until after the festival while other will go and plead with those leading the festival songs before the festival day not to mention their cases and promise to be of good behavior.

The festival also generate positive reactions, like those that are been praised whenever they go out and others see them they praise them more. A lot of people want to be praised during the *Olofin* festival. To such people that are been praised is a mark of honor.

The western civilization has affected the *Olofin* festival in various ways. The membership has decreased, values had changed and the celebration of the festival is no more flamboyant as before. These might be due to the coming of Christian religion, western medication, western education, transportation, legal and political judiciary and others.<sup>17</sup>

### Ojokolo Festival:

The Ojokolo festival is observed between March and April. Before the actual day of the festival, there is nightly entertainment by masquerades for twenty-one days. The masquerades sing songs and dance beautifully to the rhythms of *agbe* drums (that is pots covered with leather). The songs are for entertainment, adulation, condemnation and admonitions. Wrongs ranging from stealing, adultery and laziness to lying are condemned and culprits admonished. Generosity, kindness, honesty, neatness, hard-work etc. are adulated. After the festival, those who were rebuked and condemned are expected to change and be of good behavior. One of the songs was found to be of great interest consequently its meaning was delved into. It goes thus:

*Ojokolo m'omo ko mi o*  
*Mo to fomo ko o,*  
*Oje m'omo ko mi o*  
*Mo to fomo ko o.*

Meaning:

Ojokolo give me children  
 I am qualified to be given children

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Pastor Clement Awoyemi, 73 years, Idofin Odo-Aga, December 29<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Aremu and Aremu, 132.



Oje (another deity in Idofin Aiyekale) give me children, I am qualified to be given children.

It is the belief of the people that the god of *Ojokolo* Mountain is merciful, kind and generous. He has everything to give those who worship him, including children. The people also appeal to the god of the mountain for protection against danger and evils, and derive some satisfaction by so doing.<sup>18</sup>

### Religious Institutions

Prior to the coming of Christianity, the Idofin people had their own traditional religion which they practice, and the people call on God (*Olodumare*) through various deities like *Olofin, Ogun, Ojokolo, Sango, Oya*.<sup>19</sup> They adjust their lives to the strongest and best power in the universe which were the ways of living to believe in existence of supernatural beings.

The Yoruba traditional society is a corporate and religious society. For one to become a member of a community one must participate in the beliefs, rituals, ceremonies and festivals of that community. Religion is the strongest element in traditional Africa culture which exerts great influence upon the conduct of African people. In addition, religion has shaped the lives of Africans and at the same time life has shaped religion as well. Religious activities plays a very prominent role, to some it is their candle light, it gives them insight, wisdom, knowledge and faith is increased through the study of scriptures books and prayer. Religion is the focal point of Yoruba culture and the keynote of their life, in all things they are religious; hence religion forms the foundation of all their governing principle of life.<sup>20</sup>

Before the advent or the introduction of Christianity to Idofin, the people were strong traditional worshippers, making it quite difficult for the missionaries and the merchants from Ekiti to win the people over to Christianity. The missionaries adopted some methods, and these methods helped in converting the people. The first method used which was the most effective was, the missionaries held a meeting with the traditional worshippers and told them that they would be worshipping there gods and celebrate the traditional festivals with them. Then in return the traditionalists will also listen to their teaching and also worship and pray with them. The traditionalists reluctantly agreed with them. Late Pastor Isaiah Are sent by the Seventh day Adventist church from Sao was one of the missionaries that started the method when he discovered that it was very hard to win the people over. He was later joined by Late Pa Jacob Omotosho, son of the soil, who left Idofin in early 1920s to work as a laborer in *Erunmu*, there he became a Christian and came back around early 1940s to spread the message to his people. The method worked well for

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<sup>18</sup> D.A. Aremu, "Ojokolo: Archaeological Survey of the mountain that provides Children for Barren women (in Idofin Custom and Tradition)", *West African Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 1987, 58-60

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, J. O Awolalu and P.A. Dopamu, 240

<sup>20</sup> Jacob Oni, "Brief History Idofin Odo-Ashe" (Unpublished Article) 2008

the missionaries, and they became friends with the traditionalists. With this method they were able to teach the people of the village the Bible and convinced them to leave their traditional worship.<sup>21</sup>

The early converts of the village who were opportune to be educated joined hands with the missionaries and introduced the method of teaching the people of the village how to read and write. Among the early convert of the village that participated in the programme was Late Pa D.A Buremon of the Sudan Interior Mission denomination, now Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA). The people were encouraged to participate in the prayer meetings and church programme and in return the people will be taught how to read and write, the old and the youth were taught how to read simple sentences from the Bible. This captivated the people of the village and it enhanced more participation of the people in Christian activities. Few years later, the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M) built an elementary school in the village to teach both the old and the young how to write and read, which now ECWA primary school is. The SIM were the first denomination to build a school in the village and the school is still the only missionary school in Idofin *Odo-Ashe* till date.

There is no specific recorded date on when Christianity started in the community, according to oral source, it was said that Christianity was first introduced to the people of Idofin *Odo-Ashe* around late 1920s through the early white missionaries sent from different denomination to preach and win soul. These missionaries were joined by the merchant from Otun Ekiti who came to trade, to sell cloth to the people of the village. Some of the white missionaries that came settled at nearby villages and town of Idofin, places like *Oro Ago, Olla, Oko, and Omu-Aran* among other places. For instance, the missionaries from Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M) denomination settled down at *Oro Ago*, because they were highly welcomed there and the people of *Oro Ago* easily accept them and their gospel. It was from *Oro Ago* the S.I.M entered Idofin *Odo-Ashe*. Elder D.C Babcock of Seventh Day Adventist denomination sent a Yoruba pioneer to the village in 1934. Some of the white missionaries that do not live in the village do so because the atmosphere of the village is not conducive for them. The people of the village were so adamant with their traditional religion, they regard the white and their religion as alien, and thus the people of the village did not practice the religion not until 1934.

The first Christian Church to be established in Idofin was Church Missionary Society (C.M.S, now Anglican), after which other Churches like Catholic, Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) and Seventh Day Adventist Church became established. Christianity was able to penetrate deep into the village through the help of Ekiti merchant that came to trade, because some of the merchant understood English and were able to pass the white missionaries messages to the people. The role of the Ekiti merchants, who came to trade in the village, cannot be put aside in the growth of Christianity in *Idofin Odo-Ashe*. The merchant while trading with the people used the medium to spread Christianity by selling to the people of *Idofin Odo-Ashe* at a cheaper price, the people were so happy to buy clothes at a cheaper price and believed that the merchant are good people, so they listen to them. While the other missionaries joined by few converts of the village moved

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<sup>21</sup> Victoria Olabisi Bello, Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Kwara Field, 2014, 64

from one house to the other helping the people to do little house chores and after helping them, they will teach them from the Bible.<sup>22</sup> This method and other methods used by the missionaries helped spread Christianity among the people of Idofin from 1920s till date, we have ten denomination and nineteenth Churches

#### Number of Denominations and Churches in Idofin

NO	Denomination	No of Churches
1. ECWA	Evangelical Church of West Africa	4 Churches AEOI
2. RCM	Roman Catholic Mission	2 Churches AI
3. CMS	Church Missionary Society	2 Churches AEI
4. SDA	Seventh Day Adventist Church	3 Churches AEOI
5. CAC	Christ Apostolic Church	2 Churches OI
6. DEEPER LIFE	Deeper Life Bible Church	2 Churches AI
7. AF	Apostolic Faith	1 Church E
8. BRC	Bible Redemption Church	1 Church E
9. LF	Living Faith	1 Church I
10. C&S	Cherubim and Seraphim	1 Church I
<b>TOTAL</b>		19 Churches

A = Aiyekale, E = Ehin-Afo, O = Odo-Aga and I = Igbana. These are the four communities in Idofin.

Christianity was already in Idofin Odo-Aga before the arrival of the Adventist Missionaries in 1934 by Mr. John from Otun Ekiti. The C.M.S was accepted by only a few, the first denomination in the Idofin before 1934. Meanwhile, prior to 1934 there was conflict among the few members of the village that accepted the faith over whom to become the Baba *Egbe* (the leader) as it is called by the missionaries from Otun Ekiti; in which every male member of the church really want to be the leader of the church. This led to the fall of the church in which the members of the church started losing interest in the church, and Christianity in the village declined to a pause. Starting from 1934 other Christian denominations were introduced to the people of Idofin *Odo-Ashe* while the early few converts left the C.M.S to join the newly introduced churches or Christian denomination. Adventism gained grounds due to some dispute and misunderstanding that happened in CMS Church at that time. Therefore, many of the members of CMS dropped out of the church to join Adventist missionary. Among the newly introduced churches were the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) which was introduced in 1934 and the Sudan Interior Mission, now (ECWA). Other churches were introduced in the later years. The two main churches attended by the people of the village till dates are, Seventh-day Adventist Church and ECWA. Almost half of the people of the village still did not accept Christianity until 1958, because of their strong belief in gods and part of those that accepted and practiced still combine their traditional worship with Christianity by participating in the traditional rituals and rites, other

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, Interview with Pastor Clement Awoyemi, 73 years, Idofin Odo-Aga, December 2020

traditionalists saw Christianity as not worth practicing and regarded those that practiced it as traitors.<sup>23</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In harvesting the festivals of the people of Idofin, it suggest a community rooted in strong cultural values. Their festival songs preaches, moral, diligence, hardworking, faithfulness, justice and unity. The essence of the social cultural practices is to ensure peace and sustain development; which has brought about change of attitude of the people, contributed peaceful relationship and understanding among the amalgam of people in Idofin. Though Christianity has impede the growth of some of the festivals, termed, idolatry; yet within the vein of Idofin people flows their undiluted culture. It is also necessary to note that there is no religious clash between the traditional worshippers and Christians in the Community. Indeed, culture was the life of Idofin community.

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<sup>23</sup> Gbenga Alu, Christianity in Idofin Odo-Ashe, Report, 2008