



# GENDER COLLABORATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN ILE-OLUJI: A REVIEW OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF JEGUN AND LOBUN

---

Johnson Olaosebikan **AREMU (Ph.D)** <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor and Ag. Head,  
Department of History and International Studies  
Faculty of Arts, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti  
**E-mail:** [johnson.aremu@eksu.edu](mailto:johnson.aremu@eksu.edu); [johnsonolaosebikan@gmail.com](mailto:johnsonolaosebikan@gmail.com);  
**+2348032477652**

## ABSTRACT

The traditional political structure of Ile-Oluji of Ondo State in South-western Nigeria presents a unique example of gender collaboration in State administration. This is largely exemplified by the existence of the offices of Jegun (the traditional male paramount ruler of the town) and the Lobun (traditional female leader, or 'King' of the town), two collaborative political institutions in Ile-Oluji. Despite this sterling observation, there is a dearth of research on the evolution and activities of the Jegun and Lobun of Ile-Oluji. This raises some pertinent questions: when did the two institutions emerge in Ile-Oluji? How are the two state officials appointed? What are their respective duties? How have they been relating together in peace without any pronounced rancour? Adopting the historical research method of archival search, participant observation, focused group discussion, structured oral interviews as well as content analysis of relevant secondary sources; this study interrogates these problematic.

**Keywords:** Ile-Oluji, Female kings, Gender equality, Traditional administration, Yorubaland

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ile-Oluji is the headquarters of present day Ile-Oluji/Oke Igbo Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. It is located between latitudes  $7^{\circ} 2'$  and  $7^{\circ} 13'$  north of the equator and longitudes  $4^{\circ} 8'$  and  $4^{\circ} 52'$  East of the Greenwich Meridian (TipTopGlobe.com). It may be found in South-western Nigeria, inhabited by the Yoruba, a highly urbanized ethnic group who live in large cities and towns (Bascom, 1969; Atanda, 2007). Over the ages, the Yoruba have evolved a monarchical system of government headed by a king. Two important elements define this political tradition. First, as a predominantly patrilineal society, the office of the king is considered the exclusive prerogative of the males. Second, it is a taboo to have two kings reign simultaneously in any town. Incidentally, what is generally regarded as an aberration in Yoruba political culture appears to be the norm in Ile-Oluji in present day Ondo State of Nigeria. Apart from having a female king, the town is also practicing what may generally be regarded as dual-kingship system in which the male and female kings reign simultaneously. Despite this outstanding intriguing revolution in the political landscape of the Yoruba of South-western Nigeria, there is a dearth of historical researches on the structure of collaboration between the male and female political leaders of Ile-Oluji. This study seeks to fill this gap. It shall examine the emergence and functions of the dual paramount institutions of political administration in Ile-Oluji with a view to determining the efficacy of dual kingship structure in contemporary Yoruba political culture.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The historical and cultural construction of women as an inferior, fragile being compared to their more dynamic, charismatic and stronger male counterparts has given rise to the near exclusion of the female gender from key political participation over the ages (Afolabi and Olasupo, 2008: 8). Though women have been allowed to occupy various leadership positions such as regents, Queen mother, Iyaloja (Women Head in the market), and Iyalode (Woman Prime Minister) (Barnes, 1991; Awe, 1977) in Yorubaland, they have largely been excluded from occupying the exalted position of the king in almost all the Yoruba communities (Afe, 2009; Oti and Ayeni, 2013). The case of Ile-Oluji where a female traditional king exists, therefore, deserves some study. This is against the backdrop of the recent outcry of a Yoruba male Oba that "it's a taboo to have a woman Oba in Yorubaland" (Ogunmodede, 2008). This indeed raises some salient questions: what informs the institutionalization of the female kingship system in Ile-Oluji? How effective has been the practice of dual-kingship system over the years? And how have both the male and female kings been relating with minimal rancour since existence?

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The basic aim of this research is to examine the nature of collaborative political system between the male and female genders in Ile-Oluji. The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify the roles of women, exemplified by the Lobun, in the political, economic and social administration of Ile-Oluji;
- ii. highlight the functions of the male king (Jegun) of Ile-Oluji;
- iii. examine the factors responsible for the peaceful relationship existing between both the male and female kings of Ile-Oluji;

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Most studies on Yoruba traditional political culture have dwelt extensively on the institutions of male kings, regency and women chiefs (Fadipe, 1970; Akinjogbin and Ayandele, 1980; Afe, 2009; Ogunmodede, 2008). Apart from Afolabi and Olasupo's work (2008), there has been no major work on the activities of women substantive traditional rulers in South-western Nigeria. The basic aim of this study is, therefore, to interrogate the various intricacies involved in the practice of female kingship system in Ile-Oluji. To this end, the specific objectives of this research are to: document the historical emergence of female kings in Ile-Oluji in South-western Nigeria; evaluate the effectiveness or otherwise of dual kingship system in South-western Nigeria and; identify the challenges facing the female kingship institution in South-western Nigeria. The outcome of this research is expected to: affirm the reality of female kings in South-western Nigeria; expose researchers to the stages of evolution of female kingship institution in South-western Nigeria; enhance our understanding of the impact and challenges of gender collaboration in traditional political system in South-western Nigeria and; stimulate further research into the activities of female kings in South-western Nigeria.

## **LITERATURE UPDATE**

The literature on the kingship institution in Yorubaland has evolved over the years. Samuel Johnson (1921:40), generally regarded as the pioneer Yoruba historian, affirms the monarchical system of government of the Yoruba. He notes that the king was appointed from among the Royal Princes. The monarchy was open to the freeborn male citizens of the royal family; though the New World Encyclopedia reports that a few female Oba's rose to power in Ilesa and Ondo, but these were comparatively rare. The debate on whether or not women should be allowed to ascend the throne in Nigeria has been a major bone of contention. At the centre of the debate are Afolabi and Olasupo (2008) and Olojede (2009) who submit that the female gender should be allowed to become kings in Yorubaland and other parts of Nigeria. On the other side of the divide however, Kukah (1983: 240) and Ogunmodede (2008) have argued vehemently against the development, seeing it as an aberrant idea. Even then, both Afolabi and Olasupo and Olojede's research focus has not been so particular about Yoruba female kings. It is clear, therefore, that the historical emergence of female kings in Ile-Oluji has escaped the minds of historians and anthropologists. This is the focus of this study.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed the eclectic method of inquiry and analysis. Thus, a combination of historical, descriptive and interpretative methods of data collection and analysis were adopted. The study relied on primary sources of data which were generated through oral interviews. Fieldworks were also carried out in Ile-Oluji while participant observation technique yielded important results. The information obtained were complemented by secondary data sourced from journal articles, textbooks, archival materials, newspapers and magazines and other relevant materials including theses, dissertations, and government gazettes. Facts and information obtained were subjected to corroboration and critical analysis to enhance objectivity. Data so collected were subjected to qualitative analysis.

## A SHORT HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ILE OLUJI

As commonly found with most Yoruba towns, three different traditions have tried to explain the origin of Ile Oluji. The first account, submitted by the Benin historian, Egharevba, is that Ile-Oluji was founded by Benin migrants during the reign of Oba Ozolua –the Conqueror, who was the Oba of Benin between 1483 and 1514 (Chief Akindeji Akinlemibola, Personal Communication, 11 September 2018). The second account, submitted by the refereed Anglican Priest and Yoruba historian of high repute, Rev. Samuel Johnson (1846-1901) was that the town was founded by the descendants of an Alaafin of Oyo (who succeeded Oranmiyan/Oranyan). Alaafin Ajaka ruled Oyo Empire twice as he was once deposed. Some reports have it that his first and second reign began in 1042 and 1137 respectively; it was however not stated if Ile-Oluji was founded in his first or second reign. Rev. Johnson recorded that a wife of Alaafin Ajaka of Oyo gave birth to twins. The Alaafin, not willing to kill them and their mother as custom at that time demanded, ordered they be taken afar to a remote place, and that they should be regarded as dead within Oyo Empire. Another version of this account claims that the event occurred during the reign of Alaafin Oluaso of Oyo around the 14<sup>th</sup> Century). The third account claims that one of the wives of the first King of Ile-Ife, Ooni Oduduwa who also had different titles to his name such as Olofin Aye once gave birth to twins. Because Ooni Oduduwa was unwilling to kill them and their mother as local custom demanded then, he ordered that they be taken to a far away remote place and entrusted them and their mother into the hands of his trusted servant, *Ija* (Yoruba Language) or *Uja* (Ile Oluji-dialect). He ensured they were regarded as dead within Ile-Ife. It is essential to note that there are conflicting versions regarding the sex and names of this set of twins. The most accepted account by these three is the third; It is reported that no single evidence within the town could link the lineage of Ile-Oluji to Benin or Oyo while there are significant evidences that the founder was a male from a set of twins and direct descendant of Oduduwa (Chief Akindeji Akinlemibola, Personal Communication, 11 September 2018).

### The Third Account

There are existing evidences to show that the people of Ile-Oluji are direct descendants of Oduduwa, the Son of Lamurudu, King of Mecca. Oduduwa was believed to have migrated from Mecca to Ile –Ife with a large entourage after the Mecca Civil war that led to the death of Lamurudu. He, Oduduwa had held the title of Olofin Adimula before he left Mecca (a reason Yoruba Obas are eulogized with this phrase ). Enroute to Ife, he passed through Ekun among other places. Reports have it that Oduduwa left behind his brass-smith called Sunwen and his priest, Akasa (Chief Akinfemiwa Lawrence. Personal Communication, 11 September 2019).

A while after he had settled in Ile-Ife, Olu-Ulode (meaning Olu from Ulode) his beloved wife gave birth to a set of male twins. Twins were then considered as taboo in Ile-Ife and it was their custom to kill them and their mother. However, because he loved them, Oduduwa was reluctant to kill them; he named one “Esilosi” (i.e favorite) and the other “Oluwa” (i.e Lord). Esilosi had “Orere” as his second name. He then ordered that they be taken afar to a remote place. He entrusted them and their mother into the hands of his trusted servant, *Ija* or *Uja* (Ile-Oluji dialect). He ensured they gave him a daughter, called Okuta whom he took along with him to Ile-Ife. She was later nicknamed “pupupu” and became the first Osemawe of Ondo. Some years after settlement in Ekun –Ijamo, Olu, their mother fell ill and died, but the people thought she was asleep. On the eighth day, they sent a message to Oduduwa that

Olu slept for seven days and had not woken "Olu sun koji" (Olu slept and didn't wake up). Realising that she was dead, Oduduwa ordered that she be buried in an earthen pot. Thereafter, the town was referred to as "Ile ti Olu sun tikoji" (i.e the land where Olu slept and did not wake) which was later contracted to Ile-Oluji.

After a long time, Oluwa, one of the twins died and the other, named Esilosi/Orere grew strong and powerful and became the first king of Ile-Oluji. He took the title of "Jegun". (i.e a Conqueror), and was known as Jegun Orere and reigned for fifty years, 1372-1421(High Chief Oyebade Adeoba, Personal Communication, 16 August 2018). Ile-Oluji Kings bear the title of "Jegun" till date. Meanwhile, the exact time the town was founded is not known as it was believed to have been in existence before Oduduwa passed through (i.e Ekun) en route to Ife. However, an Ile-Oluji tradition suggests that the twins and entourage got there at the beginning of the fourteenth century (High Chief Oyebade Adeoba, Personal Communication, 16 August 2018).

### **THE JEGUN (OBASHIP) INSTITUTION IN ILE-OLUJI**

The institution of the Oba in Ile-Oluji Kingdom is ancient and well entrenched, dating back to 1373 with the ascension to the throne of Jegun Orere (Atete) as the first king of the town. As at date, thirty Jeguns have reigned in Ile-Oluji. The Jegun is the paramount ruler of Ile-Oluji. He is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces of the kingdom. He is today appointed by the Governor of the State on the advice of the Kingmakers, and in line with extant laws of the State. The Jegun of Ile-Oluji stool is of first class status and the last Jegun (Kabiyesi Suulade Adedugbe) was once Chairman of the Ondo State Council of Obas. There are three ruling houses in Ile-Oluji. These are the Jilokun, Jimoko and the Odundun ruling houses (Chief Akindeji Akinlemibola, Personal Communication, 11 September 2018).

In spite of the whittling down of the powers and influence of traditional rulers by the colonialists and successive governments in independent Nigeria, the Jegun of Ile-Oluji still wields enormous traditional authority. He is the custodian and major exponent of Ile-Oluji culture. He is the head of all traditional institutions and the chief priest of all the gods and deities in Ile Oluji Kingdom. He is the final authority in traditional governance. Like other genuine Yoruba Obas, the Jegun of Ile-Oluji is regarded as "Alayeluwa, Igbakeji Orisa". In other words, he is accepted, respected and feared as being next to the gods. He is the "Baba-yeye" (father and mother) of all the people in the land.

The Jegun discharges his enormous functions with the assistance of six High Chiefs (Iwarefa) who form the inner caucus of the Jegun-in-Council headed by him. The Iwarefa are: Lisa, Jomu, Odofin, Sama, Odunwo and Sasere. Next in rank to the Iwarefa are the Ikule group of chiefs. They are one hundred and thirty-three (133) in number. They are friends and advisers to the Jegun, and assistants to the High Chiefs. Next is the Elegbe group. This was headed by the Odole. The Elegbe chiefs, numbering about 150 in number, are historically warriors and enforcers of the law. Executing the traditional worship of the town is the Alaworo chief/priest identified by their gods. There are 26 Olofin priests, 5 Balufon priests and 6 Ode priests (Oba J.O. Adetimehin, Personal Communication, 16 August 2018).

For ease of administration and to bring government closer to the people, Ile-Oluji was divided into districts. In the districts, the Olojas (descendants of the Ile-Oluji female royal lineage, otherwise known as Otunba) are installed by the Jegun and are directly responsible to him. Numbering 12, the Olojas head groups of villages while

23 Baales head individual villages or communities (Mrs, Lamitan Akinlemibola, Personal Communication, 16 October 2018).

For instance, there are Olojas in Bamikemo, Usama, Awaye, Ayede, Maderinodo, Ola, Eyingun, Lota, Lipaanu, Uloen, Madehin-Oke and Olorunsogo (Mrs, Lamitan Akinlemibola, Personal Communication, 16 October 2018). The Baales on the other hand may be found in farm settlements of Okeloro, Akinye, Iyire 1, Eyingun, Kolawole, Leegun, Akintade, Asantan, Agogo, Ayesan, Igbokuta, Igbokuta/Oke Aruwa, Iyire II, Losunla, Olabosipo, Lota Adewakun, Ologundudu, Ajebambo, Ayetoro, Oke-Agbara, Lipepeye and Ojowo.

It should be noted that only the Jegun has the authority to install chiefs, Olojas and Baales although he can delegate others as necessary. The Olojas install chiefs in their districts subject to Jegun's approval. Chiefs, Olojas and Baales are suspended, removed or otherwise disciplined by the Jegun-in-Council.

The Lobun, (Head of the female chiefs) her high chiefs and other chiefs are subjects to the Jegun's overall authority, even though he does not install them, except the Yannibade who is a princess or Otunba. The Lobun is installed by the Jomu-Lobun while she (Lobun) installs all her high and other chiefs.

The Jegun presides over the weekly peace meetings (Court) held in the palace. The court adjudicates in all family and land matters. Its decisions were final. It is interesting to note that litigants were made to take mandatory oaths at the Orere Shrine at the Ugha (palace) before their cases were opened for hearing. Today, there are clamours from some people that the Jegun should delegate the palace meetings to his High Chiefs so as to avoid insults from enraged litigants; and that serious cases would eventually be referred to him for adjudication.

## **JEGUN'S OUTINGS**

In the pre-colonial era, the Jegun hardly ventured out of the palace and did so only ceremonially during the *Odunlodun/Aje* in May, *Owe* in July and *Ogun* in August, But as time went by, the Jegun started to go to Church and visits his chiefs during their leisure hours. In recent times, especially over the last twenty-five years, the Jegun went out for official civic functions and for private events like book launch, house warming and business /house commissioning.

## **THE LOBUN CHIEFTAINCY INSTITUTION: ORIGIN, INSTALLATION AND FUNCTIONS**

The Lobun chieftaincy institution is a very important traditional political office in Ile-Oluji. History has it that the first Lobun was Yeye 'Rise (Arise) from Ilesa in present day Osun State who came to visit her relations (some say her daughter) in Ile-Oluji. Noticing that the Obon (market) was not well organized, she proffered suggestions on the proper setup and administration of same. Somehow the Jegun heard about Arise and discussed her with his Council of Chiefs which promptly decided that she be appointed the reformer and administrator of the markets. It must be noted that Arise was not an indigene of Ile-Oluji let alone a member of any royal family. She was an appointee of the Jegun and an adviser in regard to the female folks and local marketing, hence the Lobun "Akanye's" main appellation.

It is important to note that the Lobun who is the traditional controller of markets and the head of Ile-Oluji women has her own retinue of Chiefs called the Opoji chiefs. They are in three categories. These are: The female High Chiefs who are first class chiefs; the Ikule chiefs who are second class and; the Elegbe chiefs

who are third class, just as they exist in the male Chieftaincy system. The Lobun appoints her chiefs, albeit with the Jegun's consent and installs them in her palace which is her husband's house. The only exception is the Yannibade, a title reserved for princesses or Otunba, who is installed by the Jegun himself (Madam D. Adetomiwa, Personal Communication, 19 August 2018).

It is probably as a result of these realities that the Lobun has always been erroneously regarded by many indigenes and observers as "Oba Obinrin" (Female Oba or queen of Ile-Oluji). The fact, however, is that the Lobun is not a Queen. An unpopular version of the history of Lobunship in Ile-Oluji is that an Odolua woman called Menbeunyola Mensaghaghogun brought the chieftaincy from Ondo and was the first Lobun. In fact she is said to be the third Lobun. An established "heredity" is that Lobun Ulowemoe begat Lobun Menbeunyola who begat Adenuwesi who did not become Lobun but begat Lobun Ogunto a sister of Chief Nathaniel Adewakun, father of the present Lobun Adeulie Adetomiwa.

Over time, the Lobun chieftaincy has become "hereditary" even though officially any married, responsible woman that is over 50 years of age or in her menopausal age can become Lobun (Chief Akindeji Akinlemibola, Personal Communication, 11 September 2018).

### **THE INSTALLATION OF THE LOBUN**

Once appointed by the Jegun, the Lobun is installed by the Jomu Lobun, the second High Chief of the Lobun-in-Council. The Alaworos (male Olofin priests) conduct the traditional rites starting from the Igbojumare (Olofin Grove) in the centre of the town (the Roundabout). For seven days, the new Lobun danced round the town like the male chiefs.

The Atite (large raffia round hat) is the traditional main paraphernalia of office of the Lobun and her chiefs. It was meant to shield them from the scorching sun in the markets of old and in their movement's from the town to surrounding villages. With civilization, the Atite has been replaced with modern large ornamented hats bearing the titles of the wearers. The Current Lobun, Her Royal Highness, Yeye Dorcas Adeulie Adetomiwa (nee Adewakun) was installed the Lobun on 4th November 1995. A trained teacher, she is the first educated Lobun of Ile-Oluji (Yeye Dorcas Adeulie Adetomiwa, Personal Communication, 10 May 2018).

### **Taboos**

Considering her high office, the Lobun had some taboos attached to her office both in the olden days and present times. For instance, she must not see a corpse; she must not carry anything (e.g earthen pot, fire wood box of any sort of load) on her head; she must not tread an unwept floor and she must not drink water left overnight.

### **Cognomens**

Lobun's cognomen include (1) Akonye (2) Akonye kun'lu (3) Or'epod'omo be (ori epode omi obe) (4) Ori ketejem'usu (O ri kete je omo usu).

### **Her Burial**

The Lobun is buried as a normal individual there is no sacrifice made. If she practiced any religion, she would be buried in that way of the religion. Her chiefs and children would dance round the whole town and do a befitting burial for her.

### **The Role of Lobun in the Political System of Ile-Oluji**

The most significant traditional political function of the Lobun, aside from administering the markets and installing her own chiefs, is to cook and serve a new Jegun customary meat supplied by the kingmakers as part of his installation rites.

### **The Role of Lobun in Market Administration**

The Lobun is in charge of market administration in Ile-Oluji. She discharges this duty with the help of the Opoji Chiefs. It is essential to note that Ile-Oluji has two market squares. These are Onifaro and Oja Oba markets. Onifaro is the major market that receives foreigners. Onifaro market periodicity is every three days and five days. Traders from neighbourhood like Bamikemo, Kinye, Ayetoro and Olorunsogo come to Onifaro market to trade. Before these traders start trading in the market, they must have sent their head or a representative from their king to Lobun and the Opoji that they would be coming to Ile-Oluji to trade and the must be register, this act is to curb infiltration of criminal element, it is also to enhance accountability of foreign traders (;Yeye Dorcas Adeulie Adetomiwa, Personal Communication, 10 May 2018).

.Lobun and the Opoji also have some roles to play when Ile-Oluji traders leave to trade in other towns and villages. It is the role of the Lobun to go to the head of the village or town, or meet with the person in charge of the market administration to inform them that the traders from the town would be coming to trade in their markets. Lobun and the other leaders must reach an agreement. Ile-Oluji traders also go far to buy goods for sale in the town. Those that sell goats went to Osogbo/Ikirun for their supplies while provision sellers went to Ondo/Ibadan. They bought local mats from Ipetu-Ijesa; for Aso-Oke, they visited Oje-Ibadan and Oje-Ede markets, motorcycle parts were bought in Onitsha just as cut and sow materials were also bought in Ibadan. Onifaro market is such an interesting market that the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria patronise it (Mrs. Bola Onitiri, Personal Communication, 6 June 2018).

Oja Oba is the second market in Ile-Oluji. This is a regular market. The traders in this market trade everyday and it is located beside the Jegun's palace. Information had it that only the death of Jegun can stop this market from opening. This is because, immediately a Jegun dies, the marketers park their goods and leave the market square. Thereafter, the male chiefs decide where the market would be located until another king is crowned.

### **The roles of Jegun and Lobun during Aje Festival**

Aje festival (Odun Aje) is also be referred to as Odunlodun. It is Jegun's personal festival that is celebrated annually in May. It is also worshipped when an Opoji chief dies. (Yeye Dorcas Adeulie Adetomiwa, Personal Communication, 10 May 2018). Its purpose is to thank Olofin for all his blessings on the people. Every year, the Jegun has to appease the god of trade or wealth. But the Jegun does not perform the rites alone. Rather, he assigned the women to worship and appease the god. Those women assigned are Lobun and the Opoji chiefs. The Lobun and her Opoji chiefs will then go to the shrine to say prayers and wish the town many good things. They usually covet the favour and grace of *Aje* for successful trading activities in the year and general development and wellbeing of the town and its inhabitants. All other women of the town, most especially traders, would also be



present during the ceremonies (Personal observation as a witness of 2018 ceremony).

During the worship process, *Aje* was usually decorated with precious cowries shells and other goods like clothes, plates, dolls etc. These were placed on a young woman's head who carried it from their host house to the *Aje* shrine. Drummers and their households would follow them as they all danced to the *Aje* shrine. Pigeon is used for the scarification at *Aje* shrine. Jegun will feast his chiefs and his guest who came to visit both male and female (Mr. A. Ogunduyile, Personal Communication 12 January 2019).

The Lobun and her Opoji (1st class) are the main celebrant of Odun Aje. Lobun and her chiefs would meet at Oke-Atiba in Mama Arise's house, being the first Lobun of the town. It was considered a great honour to go to her house first before going to *Aje*'s shrine located at the main roundabout of the town.

The following day after the festival, the Jegun will organise a feast in honour of the Prince, Princess, as well as the sons and daughters of the town in the palace. A ram will be killed and different dishes are usually served during the celebrations. It is essential to add that the Jegun also assigned to Lobun the additional responsibility of being the Chief Priestess of *Aje*, the goddess of commerce and wealth. If there is no Lobun in office, the *Aje* god is not worshipped (Dr. Pious Osunyanmi 12 January 2019).

Apart from the above mentioned roles, the Lobun is now also saddled with the responsibilities of general women and children's affairs throughout Ile-Oluji kingdom and is the first to be consulted as occasions demand. The Lobun and her chiefs have in recent decades taken their reserved seats in the Jegun's palace during Lerin which holds at nine days interval, at chieftaincy installations, and other important palace meetings.

#### **The role of Opoji Chiefs**

The Opoji chiefs perform functions assigned to them by the Lobun. Sometimes, the Lobun delegated her chiefs to other towns instead of going there herself. She would send them to go and meet the market leaders in other towns or their kings and tell them her traders would be coming to trade during their market days. This was in a bid to protect the interests of Ile-Oluji traders and promote peace during the market days. Apart from that, the first class Opoji chiefs are regarded as the king makers of the Lobun institution. They meet after the demise of the Lobun to advise the Jegun on the appointment of a new Lobun. They also act as women leaders in the society at large.

### **CONCLUSION**

There is no doubt that women still remain highly marginalized in all spheres of Nigeria's life. This is more glaring now when the proportion of men to women in politics and in decision-making positions is compared. Several factors, which include socio-cultural practices, lack of finance and women empowerment, religious discrimination, lack of political funding, illiteracy and inadequate education, marginalization in political party hierarchy, patriarchy settings, early marriages, and stereotypical constraints among others, have been identified as inhibiting women's low participation in leadership and politics.

The above submission notwithstanding, women in Ile-Oluji appear to be highly favoured than their counterparts in other traditional political settings, especially through the institution of the Lobun. With assigned constitutional roles in the socio-political and economic lives of Ile-Oluji, the task of mobilizing the women folk for

community development becomes very easy. Similarly, it has promoted the principle of collective responsibility in traditional political administration of the town. But much more than that, it has enhanced effective women representation in the political power structure in the town.

## REFERENCES

- Afe, A.E. (2009): Chieftaincy Institution and Traditional Taboo in South-Western Nigeria”, *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.1, No.1.
- Afolabi, M.M. and Olasupo, F.A. (2008): “The Female Gender in Traditional Leadership in Nigeria: A Socio-cultural Perspective” in J. Hutchinson (Ed.), *Engendering Leadership Through Research and Practice, Conference Proceedings*, Perth, July 21-24. Perth: University of Western Australia.
- Akinjogbin, I.A. & Ayandele, E.A. (1980): “Yorubaland up to 1800”, in Ikime Obaro (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Atanda, J. A.(2007): *A Comprehensive History of the Yoruba People up to 1800*, Ibadan:John Archer.
- Barnes, S.T. (1991), "Gender and Politics of Support and Protection in Pre-Colonial West Africa", Paper presented at the Conference on Queens, Queens Mothers,Priestesses and Power: Case Studies in African Gender, New York: New University, April 8-11.
- Bascom, W. (1869): *The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria*, New York.
- Fadipe, N.A. (1970): *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Johnson, S. (1921): *The History of the Yorubas*, London: Lowe & Brydone.
- Johnson, S. (1973): *The History of the Yorubas*, London: Lowe & Brydone.
- Kukah, M.H. (1983): *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Ogunmodede, F. (2008) “It’s a Taboo to have a woman oba in Yorubaland-Owa Ajero of Ijero”. *The Compass Newspaper*, 21 November.
- Ogunremi, D. & Adediran, B. (1998): *Culture and Society in Yorubaland*. Ibadan: Rex Charles Publication.
- Olojede,I, (2009): “Women: The Neglected Force in Public Administration”, 41<sup>st</sup> Inaugural Lecture, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, 5 May.
- Oti, A. & Ayeni, O. (2013): Yoruba Culture of Nigeria: Creating Space for an Endangered Specie. *Cross-Cultural Communications* 9(4).
- TipTopGlobe.com, (nd.). Ile-Oluji: Map, Population and Location. Available online @ <http://www.tiptopglobe.com/city?i=1615975&n=Ile%20Oluji>

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1: Some Jeguns of Ile-Oluji

1.	Orere or Atete	1373-1421	48 years
2.	Igbo	1421-1481	60 years
3.	Olumobaiye	1481-1498	17 years
4.	Olubaiyebo	1498-1513	15 years
5.	Olubereoje	1513-1523	20 years
6.	Ogunkokoleru	1523-1545	12 years
7.	Okankunla	1545-1563	18 years
8.	Olunawonde	1563-1573	10 years
9.	Adegbihin	1573-1579	6 years
10.	Afesojoye	1579-1599	20 years
11.	Afogodosola	599-1611	12 years
12.	Ojejenirere	1611-1629	18 years

### Appendix 2: Some Past Lobuns

1. Yeye Rise (also known as Yeye Latibo?)
2. Yeye Ulowomae, wife of Adedunmowo, son of Osemawe Arilekolasi of Ondo Prince Adedunmowo's mother, Fayemoju, was from Ile-Oluji.
3. Yeye Menbeunyola
4. Yeye Olafeade (Lobun January 1943-1950). She was the daughter of Jegun Jilubokun land wife of prince Ogunmokonwa, son of Jegun Abesoko who reigned 1695-1721. Abesoko is now part of the Jibulokun Ruling House.
5. Yeye Oguntomade (Ogunto) (Lobun 1950-1964). Yeye Lobun Ogunto married prince Oluwanriade Adesominu, son of Jegun Jilubokun Yeye ogunto was inherited by Prince Ezekiel Anjorin Ademeso.
6. Yeye Alawe (?)
7. Yeye Esther Omansanminu Adesoji (Died 1977)
8. Yeye Olalosoye (Lobun 12/1/78-1991)

### Appendix 3: Lobun's Council of Chiefs (Opoji Chiefs)

#### Opoji: First class

1. Lisa Lobun
2. Jomu Lobun
3. Odofin Lobun
4. Sama Lobun
5. Sasere Lobun
6. Suporu Lobun

#### Second class

1. Orangun Lobun
2. Ogede Lobun
3. Samo Lobun
4. Renu Lobun
5. Wajayo Lobun
6. Adafin Lobun
7. Iwanuro Lobun

8. Sendenyan Lobun
9. Ayanade Lobun
10. Anen Lobun
11. Orunto Lobun

**Third class**

1. Lotudan Lobun
2. Igbaya Lobun
3. Sinwa Lobun
4. Loeyan Lobun
5. Sowe Lobun
6. Ayanoye Lobun
7. Sinla Lobun
8. Lianye Lobun
9. Sorun Lobun
11. Sowa Lobun