

# Social Function of Ibadan City Anthem in Southwestern Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

*Music in African societies is functionalized. This is true of anthems, which represent the belief, faith, purpose, and hope of a nation, a city, a school, or just an association. This paper focuses on the social functions of Ibadan City anthem. It brings out the place of Ibadan anthem in the daily functioning and activities in Ibadan as composed into the anthem. Three persons were interviewed. Also the content and textual analysis of the anthem was carried out. It was discovered that Ibadan anthem plays the role of education and enlightenment, prayer and petition, history, criticism and correction, longevity for Obas, praise and commendation and many others. The paper recommends that the anthem should be mastered, sung in all the schools in Ibadan city, and should be incorporated into all the activities that may be organized in the city be it conferment of chieftaincy titles, coronations, festivals and ceremonies like burial, and especially festival of arts of Oyo state.*

## **Introduction**

Music has been tested and wholesomely discovered to have the power to educate on current burning issues on national policies. In appealing to human emotions, music has preserved the unwritten records in forms of festivals, rituals and many other socio-linguistic interactions. Even in the modern age, many records are kept in poetic musical forms whose origins are undoubtedly oral and musical. Anthems are songs that herald a group of peoples' intention, hope and aspiration, including their belief. There are different anthems; we have a national anthem like the Nigeria

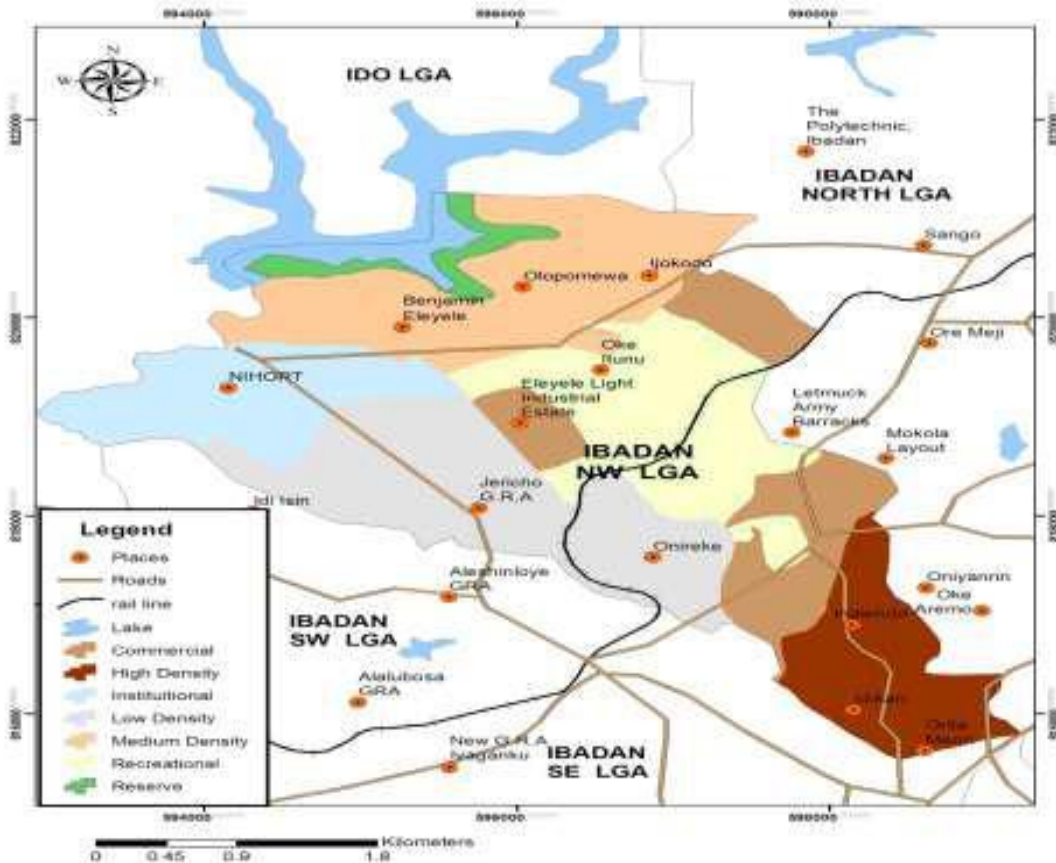
anthem, the state anthem, association anthem, school anthem and community anthem. This paper examines mainly Ibadan anthem and focuses on the text as it relates to the social functions.

### **Music in Yoruba Societies**

In the traditional Yoruba society, songs and music occupy a unique place in the preparation, mobilization and prosecution of war. Scholars such as Olutoye and Olapade (1998) and Ilesanmi (1998) examine the importance of drums, chants and songs among the Yoruba and assert that more than their entertainment roles, they perform religious, social and military purposes. As a communicative device, songs are employed for inspiring warriors and for launching verbal assault in inter-personal conflicts. The entertainment function of music is also not in doubt as people of different cultures, colour, ethnic groups and creeds listen to different music during various ceremonies and at their convenience and during relaxation. It is also noteworthy that messages are put across in the course of playing various types of music; hence music entertains as well as educates. Okafor (2002), acknowledges the worldwide popularity and potent of music as vehicle to carry educational development messages to target audience. But despite this, very little of this potential has been used for pro-social purpose to date. Isolated attempts have been made to utilize music as part of an integrated communication campaign to educate viewers and listeners about pro-social issues like peaceful coexistence.

### **History and Geography of Ibadanland**

Ibadan is located in southwestern Nigeria as indicated in map 1 below. It is the capital of Oyo State, and is reputed to be the largest indigenous city in Africa, south of the Sahara. Ibadan has been the centre of administration of the southwestern Nigeria since the days of the British colonial rule. It is situated 78 miles inland from Lagos, and is a prominent transit point between the coastal region and the areas to the north. Parts of the city's ancient protective walls still stand till today, and its population is estimated to be about 3,800,000 according to 2006 estimates (Oladapo, 2011).



**Map 1:** Ibadan showing some areas of the city (Ajala, 2011)

Ibadan is located approximately on longitude 305/ Greenwich meridian and latitude 203/ North of the equator. It rests within the trans-national zones of the high forest and the savannah (Ajala, 2011). Ibadan has been described as a city of hills and valleys (Mabogunje, 1980), lying within areas steeped in erosion and separated by areas of active and youthful landscape forms. It has a central stream range that runs roughly north to the south and divides the city approximately into two sections in which the formerly Ona stream, but now the biggest river due to many artificial canals and erosion paths caused by widening population and unmanaged water disposal in the city pass. This range lies between 227 meters in height (Tejuosho, 2004). The presence of many hills explains why heavy erosion characterizes Ibadan. Marking the hilly nature of this city, many areas assume identities that explain the naming of certain communities (Ajala, 2008). Examples include Òkè-Àdó, Òkè -Àre, Òkè -Màpó, Òkè Bólà,

Òkè Àremo, Òkè Páàdì and Òkè Sápàtì (Ajala, 2011). The hilly nature of Ibadan makes it possible for easy draining of heavy water generated from corrosive erosion that runs from many of its hills. Mostly, the erosion with heavy carriage capacity transports domestic waste generated by the residents who often explore the carrying capacity of the erosion to empty their waste (Ajala, 2011). As it is often difficult to measure the extent of rainfall that causes the erosion, sudden stops in rainfall result in heaps of waste at the footrests of those hills and mountains that constitute the living areas in the city. This therefore exposes the city and its inhabitants to the risk of flooding. The hilly terrains also make it almost difficult to easily access water at the mountain footrests due to the low-level underground water table (Olayinka, 2010). The city's built-up areas have two main streams, namely, the Ògùnpa and Kúdetì. By 1968, this built-up portion of the city had extended into drainage areas of Odò-Onà and Ògbèrè streams. The Kudeti streams joined Ogunpa at the southern part of the city. However, both streams and their tributaries serve commercial purposes characterized by open market stalls and popular traditional markets. The consequence of this is a sizeable production of market waste where streams are nothing but avenues into which such wastes are poured as unregulated waste often lacking regular government attention and indeed proper legislative intervention (Ajala, 2011).

Ibadan is a metropolitan city, which has as of 2010, eleven local government areas (LGAs) out of 774 such local administrative structures in Nigeria as at 2012; with seven of these LGAs containing the main city of Ibadan, and the remaining four LGAs comprising the city outskirts and adjoining settlements. According to Abeyeba and Akinbo(2002), there is an influx of other nationalities besides that of local indigenes into Ibadan for the socioeconomic and political reasons which urge such migration (Tejuosho, 2004). The apparent deluge of migrants into the city has logically given rise to different patterns of residency and unregulated constructions of many types of building that end up creating the city as shanty, which in many occasions causes erosion blockage resulting in city flooding. The choice of a place to reside in the city depends to an extent on one's level of income and spending power. With this population upsurge, the city has started to contend with the overwhelming production of domestic waste from private and public spaces, without proper

channels for management. In many parts of the city such as Mólété, Odò-Onà, Ináléndé, Fòkò, Beere, Òjé and Òpo-yiosa, debris from domestic waste litter the streets and roads. In addition, the sewage system is poorly managed and proper channeling is undeveloped, thereby generating polluted grey-water and the expected pathological effects of such habitual patterns. As the situation continues unchecked and unmonitored, the identity of Ibadan continues unchanged. Consequently, due to the perfunctory attitude of the government to properly intervene, debris from domestic waste constitutes a logjam that prevents the free flow of vehicular and pedestrian movements in the city. Thus, subject to inadequate environmental health education, low-income earnings, a lack of determination on the part of the authorities and the unplanned use of space together with the surging population, the challenges to policy, planning and human health are both urgent and immediate.

Ibadan is said to be one of the dirtiest cities in sub-Saharan Africa, where domestic wastes constitute close to 85% of soil, water and air pollution (Tejuosho, 2004). In recognition of the risks posed to flooding and the health of its population, a compulsory monthly environmental sanitation program organized by the state government was put in place. Yet, despite these pilot projects the identity of Ibadan remains both unchanged and constant in the habits and practices of its residents. Following the sanitation exercise, the regular stench from gutters once again infiltrated the streets, and domestic waste once again pervaded every nook and cranny of the city: the impending risks to flooding and human health were once again affirmed (Omoleke, 2004).

The above characteristics of Ibadan city had on many occasions exposed the city to heavy flooding, which accounted for heavy destruction of both lives and property. Apart from those incidences in the 1950s- the 1970s; a devastating flood known as *Omiyale*, which literally means water has flooded the house, occurred in 1982, when Ogunpa stream connected with Ona stream flooded its banks and swept off many inhabitants and their property. Many of its victims were those that defied local rules and regulations against building on the river set back in the city. Since then, *Omiyale* was an annual event across Ibadan, suggesting that the 1986 experience was not enough as

a lesson. In 2011, a more devastating flood occurred in Ibadan, and its tragedy surpassed the earlier ones. In the 2011 case, the premier University of Ibadan located in the heart of the city on whose compound runs Ona river through Agbowo down to Eleyele water dam, had its perimeter fencing collapsed due to flood, and many of the animals in its revenue-generating zoological garden were either swept away or killed by the flood. In addition, the University also lost his fishery farms to the flooding and a number of culverts and bridges in the university equally collapsed. Other areas that recorded heavy carnage due to 2011 flood in Ibadan were Apete, Bodija, Agbowo, Odo Ona, Alakia, and New Gbagi among others. At the end of the day the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA) recorded 176 lives lost and damage to property worth about 765 million Naira.

Largely composed by non-western literates, semi western educated literates and western educated literates who have all been barred from the reading culture due to the city's everyday economic hardship that subjected them to over-arching and dusk-to-dawn economic activities, Ibadan is exposed to the danger of restrictive information network through reading. Thus, oral information through entertainment becomes a veritable mean of reaching the people of Ibadan especially on changing their attitudes towards flood and climate change risk control.

### **Concept of Anthem**

According to *Chambers English Dictionary* anthem is a composition for a church choir, commonly with solo passages, usually set to a passage from the Bible. It also defines the word as a song of praise or gladness applied to an officially recognized national hymn or song as national anthem. *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines anthem as a rousing or uplifting song identified with a particular group or cause. It is a solemn patriotic song adopted as an expression of national identity. From the definitions above one can derive the concept of anthem as a song composed which a particular group of people, association or a nation sings as an identity. Today we have anthems for associations, schools, group of people, countries and city among others. Ibadan being one of the cities in Nigeria has the anthem titled **Ibadan**.

## **Ibadan City anthem**

The anthem is segmented into five verses with a chorus after each stanza. The text of the anthem is given below:

1. Ibadan Ilu Ori oke, Ilu Ibukun Oluwa, K'Oluwa se o nibukun, Fun Onile at'Alejo

**Egbe:** Eho e yo ke si gberin, Ogo f'Olorun wa Io'orun,  
Ibukun ti Obangiji, Wa pelu re wo Ibadan

2. Ibadan ilu to ngbajeji, Tiko si gbagbe omo re, Kife ara ko wa sibe, Fun Onile at'Alejo
3. Ibadan, ilu Jagunjagun, Awon to so o dilu nla, Awa omo re ko ni je, K'ola ti ogo won run
4. Mo wo lati ori oke, Bi ewa re ti dara to, B'odo re ko tile dara, Sibe o Ia Ibadan ja
5. Ibadan ilu ori oke, K'Oluwa se o nibukun, Ki gbogbo Joye inu re, Je eleme gigun fun wa

## **Meaning**

1. Ibadan a city on the mount, the city full of God's blessing, may the Lord make you a blessing for indigenes and strangers,

**Chorus:** Shout for joy and sing the refrain, glory to our God in heaven, may the blessings of the almighty, be with you Ibadan city

2. Ibadan who does not discriminate against strangers or religion and does not forget her children likewise, may the love, unity of Ibadan city dwellers abide for ever for indigenes and strangers
3. Ibadan the city of warriors, those that made you great city, your children will not make your wealth and glory to be forgotten

4. I looked from the mountain the beauty of the city is great, though the valleys are not too good, it runs through Ibadan land
5. Ibadan that is built on the hill, may the Lord make you a blessing, may Ibadan chiefs, live long for the peace of Ibadan land.

## **Thematic Use and Function of Ibadan Anthem**

### **1. Education and Enlightenment**

The anthem under study is significant. Stanza one of the song gave the geographical description of Ibadan land. The text says *Ibadan ilu ori oke*- meaning Ibadan a city built around mountains. This is true, when we examine the geographical topography of Ibadan city.

### **2. Peaceful Coexistence Between *Onile* and *Alejo***

The second stanza of the anthem focuses on interpersonal relationship between the *son of the soil*- the indigenes – and the strangers. The text of second stanza reads; *Ibadan ilu to ngbajeji, Tiko si gbagbe omo re, Kife ara ko wa sibe, Fun Onile at'Alejo* meaning that Ibadan who always welcomes strangers, does not discriminate against strangers or religion and does not forget her children likewise, may the love, unity of Ibadan city dwellers abide for ever for indigenes and strangers. The text reawakens our mind to the peaceful coexistence in Ibadan city and which is still being witnessed unlike other places where religious bigotry is causing a lot of killings, maiming and destructions of life and properties. The second stanza further prays for continuity of unity, love and affection to one another in Ibadan. The composer recognises the fact that where there is peace and unity it has to be nurtured and cared for through different means and ways and one of the ways is prayer to the Supreme Being and religious tolerance. The high level of religious tolerance in Ibadan city attests to the text of the anthem. Different religious bodies practice their religions without discrimination or threat from another group.

### **3. *Igboriyin ati Iwunilori*-Praise and Commendation**

In the third stanza of the anthem we discover the *Igboriyin* and *Iwunilori* of the past warriors that helped Ibadan city as the city of



warriors for the old Oyo Empire. The text praises them and made it known that it is these great warriors that brought greatness to Ibadan that everybody is enjoying today. The text reads; *Ibadan, ilu Jagunjagun, Awon to so o dilu nla, Awa omo re ko ni je, K'ola ti ogo won run* meaning Ibadan the city of warriors, those that made you a great city, your children will not make your wealth and glory to be forgotten. As we have read, that great warriors fought at different times and even imperialised some other Yoruba nations. The song concluded in the stanza that they will guard the greatness of the past warriors and the greatness of Ibadan so that generations yet unborn will know that great things, past leaders have done to make Ibadan a great city.

#### **4. History of Past Heroes**

In another angle to the study and analysis of stanza three is the fact that it gives us a historical event, arouse our curiosity about the life and character of the past warriors in Ibadan. Like the text reads; *ilu Jagunjagun*-the city of warriors. The question is: Who are these warriors, their names, growing up, family and genealogy, descendants, and places they have fought? These findings will help descendants and Ibadan dwellers to be acquitted with all these facts about the warriors.

#### **5. The Aesthetics of Ibadan**

Stanza four gave us the aesthetics and beauty of Ibadan. The composer says in the first part of the stanza that “*Mo wo lati ori oke, Bi ewa re ti dara to* meaning that he looked from the mountain top the beauty of the city and it was great. Ibadan as a city is a beautiful place to be. Not just beautiful but also peaceful. The present administration in the state is embarking on keeping the city green and the weekly sanitation is keeping Ibadan city clean.

#### **6. Criticism and Correction**

The composer further explains in the second part of stanza four that; *B'odo re ko tile dara, Sibe o la Ibadan ja* meaning that though the water streams may not be good enough it runs through Ibadan city. This segment of the song brings to mind the rain water that the streams carry which lead to the popular saying “omiyale, agbara ya sobu” meaning the flood destroyed the houses and the stores. At

different times and years Ibadan has experienced flood disasters that resulted in death and destructions of properties. The table below is an example of the floods which the streams that run through the city had caused and must be corrected so that it will not reoccur.

**Table 1: Ibadan Flood Episode Since 1951**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>RAINFALL</b>	<b>Estimated Properties Damaged</b>	<b>Number of persons Recovered/Death</b>
<b>10/7/1951</b>	161 MM	Unknown	-
<b>17/06/1955</b>	173 MM	Unknown	About 14 Recovered and 30 People Died
<b>16/08/1960</b>	173 MM	Over #100,000	15 Recovered and 14 Dead
<b>27/08/1963</b>	258 MM	Over #200,000	29 Recovered and 10 Dead
<b>14/05/1969</b>	37 MM	Over #100,000	
<b>20/04/1978</b>	126 MM	Over #2 Million	About 25 Recovered And 32 Dead
<b>31/08/1980</b>	274 MM	Over #4 Million	50 Recovered and 150 Dead
<b>31/08/2011</b>	445 MM	Over # 100 Billion	About 150 Recovered and more than 200 Dead

**Sources:** Williams (1985), Red Cross, Oyo State (2011).

From the table above the issue of water that flows through these streams must be allowed to flow easily, while the streams are kept from obstructions.

## **7. Longevity of Life for Traditional Rulers**

The stanza five of the anthem is a prayer for long life for traditional rulers in Ibadan city, and what an appropriate prayer for the present Olu of Ibadan who celebrated his centenary birthday, 1914-2014, a few weeks ago. The second part of stanza five reads; *Ki gbogbo Joye inu re, Je elemi gigun fun wa* meaning may Ibadan chiefs, live long for the peace of Ibadan land. Oba Samuel Odugade the current Olu of Ibadan is blessed through the stanza of this anthem as he has lived for one hundred years and maybe he still has another hundred to live

before joining his ancestors. The prayer for long life is not just for the Oba but the chiefs and all Ibadan dwellers.

### **8. Prayers, Petitions and Thanksgiving**

The chorus of the song from stanza one to the end is full of prayers, petitions and thanksgiving. It reads does; *Eho e yo ke si gberin, Ogo f'Olorun wa Io'orun, Ibukun ti Obangiji, Wa pelu re wo Ibadan* meaning shout for joy and sing the refrain, glory to our God in heaven, may the blessings of the Almighty, be with you Ibadan city. The chorus reminds us that humans must depend on their creator as he is the sustainer of life. Such attitude of thanksgiving on its own brings more blessings.

### **Conclusions**

In the discussion of Ibadan anthem in this paper it has been discovered that different functions are discovered in in the stanzas, ranging from education to peaceful coexistence. The anthem should be played on daily basis during festivals, ceremonies and other activities that involve Ibadan people. Though F. M. radio 105.5 do play it on daily basis before the *tifun tedo* national newspaper headline news, there is need to inculcate the song into the mind of all Ibadan dwellers. Also, other cities that has similar anthems should make it a point of duty not just to sing it but to live the life of the song.

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