

ISSN 1116-8331

Ikale News



Established June 1992

LIQUID
Universal
LIQUID WASH
500ML
250ML
5L



08023958660

VOL II. NO 14, OCTOBER, 2023.

FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Jimoh Ibrahim

100 Days Political Tsunami

* Senator Jimoh Ibrahim marks his 100 days in office with unprecedented projects on support of his constituents

HOT SEAT

How I failed GCE O1 English as school magazine editor

- Guardian newspaper MD, Martins Oloja



Martins Oloja

Also In This Edition



Ayedatiwa

The real reasons why Aketi wants Ayedatiwa sacked



Archive:
What Pa Zeblon did not like as ikale



Interview:
UTAKO DAY 2023
Exclusive interview with Chief Adejuwon

Visit: www.ikalenews.com for Ikale videos, podcasts, much more

EDITORIAL PAGE

FROM THE PUBLISHER

EDITORIAL

Bolu John Folayan, PhD

Editorial Advisers

Martins Oloja
Seinde Oladapo-Fadeni
Eddy Omolehinwa
Olukoya Ogen
Jimi Oyetomi
Felix Ayejunikanwa
Olubode Ojajuni
Goke Owamoboye
Olatunde Ojajuni
Ayo Arowojolu
Folakemi Olufemi-Iseyemi
Omotayo Folayan
Mumini Alao
Olubunmi Ajibade
Afolabi Ayantayo
Abayomi Sheba
Ben Memuletiwon
Debo Temenu
Jumoke Akindele
Dupe Adetuwu
Kemi Omogunwa Adesina
Nike Alaka
Adekunle Ayegbe
Peter Edema

Acting Editor

Samuel Olaniyan

Executive Editors

Tinuola Filatei
Ibikunle Ikuyinminu
Dayo Williams
Tunde Akingbemi
Yomi Ayeleso

Abuja Bureau Chief

Bayo Jimoh

Web Manager

Temiloluwa Tosin

Online/Web Editors

Musa Adekunle
Toluwan Folayan

**Special Project Executive
Oluwaseyi Ogunsola**

Production Editors
Ayo Thomas
Temiloluwa Tosin

Photo Editor

Busayo Adaramoye

Assistant Photo Editor

Fisayo Owamoboye

Foreign Editors

Banjo Owate (London)
Femi Akinnusi (Canada)
Tunde Omolola (New York)
Alex Kunle Babalola
(Houston)
Goke Akingbehin
(Philadelphia)

Consultant (Special Projects)

Prince Adekunle Ayegbe
Eytayo Folayan

Heads (Special Projects)

Felix Odofin
Bayo Jimoh

All correspondence

should please be addressed to
The Editor, Ikale News via
news@ikalenews.com or
ikalenews@gmail.com
Tel: 0802 308 9548

Matters arising

Ale o dede Ikale, Ilaje, Apoi, Ijaw-Arogbo pata po!

A ma kuu ti impeachment fever yi o. Ji Jesu ko wayo o!

In this edition of Ikale News, we bring you news on the impeachment, 100 Days of Senator Jimoh Ibrahim, interviews, archives, Ikale Kids and your other regular features. In this edition, we re-introduce Ikale Proverbs which we started in 2004 and which our readers really loved. Very soon, we will turn it into videos and upload for your delight so you can share. The Ikale dialect must not die.

Gradually, our people are catching up with the online news technology. Last month we had over 7000 visits to our website, ikalenews.com. It is our highest spike since we came back with Ikale News over a year ago. Thank you for your letters, comments and suggestions. We are, however, yet to get your advert bookings. As you know, it is adverts that sustain publications. We will continue to do our best for you.

Who Succeeds Aketi?

Forget that the top politicians are tactically saying it is too early to start jostling for who will succeed Governor Rotimi Akeredolu. It is not. And those who know, know.

Technically (or by unwritten rule), the next governor should come from Ondo South Senatorial District. And when it comes to the Southern Senatorial District, I will give it to Ilaje or Ikale. I have not taken it for granted that Odigbo and Ile Oluji have rights to the

throne too. But this thing is a game of numbers. For these two areas to produce the governor, they will need shop for a candidate that can really shake the earth. Otherwise, the majority will always carry the day. When we talk of majority, Ilaje, Ikale, Apoi and Ijaw Arogbo (the Old Okitipupa Division) is usually one. We will sort out ourselves and produce ONE formidable candidate in both the ACP and the PDP.

For the PDP, the outlook is not clear yet. You know Nigerian politicians love the bandwagon effect. The ruling party sways them mostly. So, obviously, the thick of the action now is in the APC which controls both Ondo and Federal Government. Within the APC we have already hearing drumming of names such as Ehinlanwo, Akintelure, Ibrahim, Akintola Arikawe and Edema. More and more will still come out – serious and so-called unserious aspirants. Former commissioner (currently SSG). Oladunni Odu's name is being dropped here and there for governor of Ondo State. We publish a story in the edition from the Ikale-Ilaje Youth Coalition that they she has over-spent her time and should bow out with grace. I wish to clarify that that is the personal opinion of the group. Let those who support Princess Odu send their opinions too, we will publish. I don't care if we are a battalion in the race. What matters is us being able to form a consensus and deliver the ticket to one of us in the Old O

Okitipupa Division.

Of course, doing foregoing is not a tea party. Even within Ikale, it is not easy forming a consensus of candidate. The important thing is that the consensus must emerge. Ondo South votes must come in huge torrents: One way eventually.

For the People's Democratic Party (PDP), we hear rumours that Senator Bolu Kunlere is considering running for the coveted position. That would bring Igbotako candidates alone to like five (across party lines)!. In politics, anything can happen. Do not write anybody or any party off. Certainly, we don't do that in the newspaper business. A truly serious newspapers will report all sides. So, Ikale News report all sides, based on the law of supply and demand. News publishing is a free market economy. We are available to serve as platform for all.

Ayedatiwa, going ...going ...going?

Elswhere in this edition (in the Bitter Pills column), I expressed my personal opinion on the impeachment cloud hovering over Deputy Governor Lucky Ayedatiwa. We are not members of any political party here but Ikale News was set up to advance the cause of Ikale, Ilaje, Apoi and Arogbo people of Ondo State. So long as Ayedatiwa has not be associated with (much less found guilty) of any gross misconduct, we shall continue to make positive interventions as a community newspaper in his favour. Omo wa ni. E je ko run term e through.

We commend various Ilaje groups who have risen to the occasion. Ori

EDITORIAL PAGE

bibe ko ni oogun ori fifo. Let Lucky be. In politics, disagreements are bound to occur. They should be settled. This is not to say that those opposed to Ayedatiwa who have genuine grievances should not come forward with them. We will even publish in Ikale News so long as they are not defamatory and are factual. But the person wey bend down dey look another person yansh should know say im own yansh dey open too o. It should not never be heard that our people collect bribe to nail one of their own on the cross.

Baba Zebulon Omoranmowo speaks again! As our editorial team was checking through the archives to see what interview we could upload under our ARCHIVES column. You we are a truly old community newspaper (we started in 1992/93 with breaks between though). We normally republish some of our old stories so that now that we have a larger audience, people can read. It is also our style of making these information/stories permanent (once we upload online, it is there forever). So I

stumbled on the interview with did with the Biripo music legend, the late **B a b a Z e b l o n “ Z e b b y ”** Omoranmowo. It is a must read for you. **B a b a Z e b l o n** has no replacement, when it comes to Biripo Music.

Hot Seat

By popular demand we are bringing back from this edition our popular interview column tagged **HOT SEAT**. In the column, we conduct interviews with eminent Ikale at home and in the Diaspora to share their memories of our great ethnic group and our home towns and how journeys of life have panned for them. We also seek their views on contemporary issues on Ikale development. In this edition, on our Hot Sitter is veteran journalist, Ajagba-born Martins Oloja. Oloja, the Managing Director of Guardian Newspapers is a consummate journalist and humble community

FROM THE PUBLISHER


activist.

Letters to the Editor

We have not been publishing letters to the Editor because our readers have not been writing o. Although we have loads of remarks and comments, they are not really articulated enough to be classified and published as letters to the Editor. And we want to hear from you. It is not a one-way traffic. Please drop your thoughts for us. Send to info@ikaleneews.com or bolujohnfolayan@gmail.com Till next edition, a ma ka hedo o!



*Bolu John Folayan (PhD)
Editor, Ikale News*



The entire family of
LILIKEN AND OMOGBEHIN

Cordially invite:

The General Public

to the
Final Burial Ceremony
of our Father, Grand Father, Great Grandfather,
Brother, Uncle, In-law and Husband

**HIGH CHIEF
ELIOT IJISEEMI
OMOGBEHIN**

The Jibulu of Osooro Land

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT

<p>THURSDAY 30TH NOVEMBER, 2023 The corpse leaves Mortuary for a lying in state @ his residence at No 4, Liliken Street, Igbotako Osooro, Okitipupa Local Govt, Ondo State.</p> <p>Christian Wake @ No 4, Liliken Street, Igbotako Osooro, Okitipupa Local Govt, Ondo State. Time: 5pm</p>	<p>FRIDAY 1ST DECEMBER, 2023 Funeral Service @ St. John The Baptist Anglican Church, Igbotako, Osooro. Time: 10am Interment follows immediately @ his residence @ No 4, Liliken Street, Igbotako Osooro. RECEPTION @ St. Pius Pry School's Field, Igbotako Osooro. R.S.V.P 080326809009, 08072209515</p>
--	---

AGED 107 YEARS

Be the guest of: _____

BITTER PILLS

Let us re-awaken our communal spirit in Ikale

Mo ki dede Ikale t'ule t'oko!

Kere, kere, odon ne mee lo o. Adupe n'owo Olo'un.

I missed this column last month because of exigencies of work. I am therefore submitting what I would have written last month. It's about how we can re-awaken our communal or community spirit in Ikale.

I founded Ikale News in June 1992 during the military era. I recall that our team then, comprising my big egbons, Chief Taye Owate, Igbekele Smile and my other team members were always inundated with requests to cover various community days. One of the oldest and most consistent was the Layelu Day organized by the Ode Aye Development Association (ODA) and the Morubodo Day by Ilutitun indigenes. Of course, Utako Day was also prominent. But all our towns, in those days, had their community days once a year, or once in two years. I remember covering Idepe Day, Irele Egun Day and Ajagba Lurere Days. We had Erinje Day and Erekiti Day too, if my memory is not failing me.

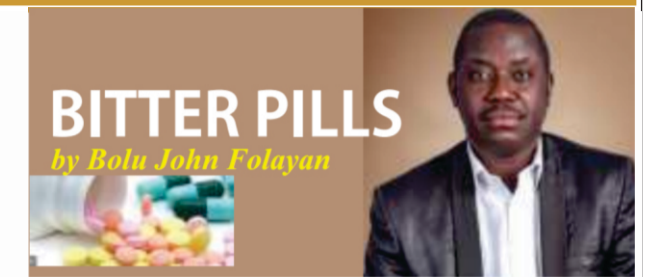
In the past three to four years, I have not heard of any Community Day in Ikale. What is happening? I can understand 2019 was terrible. It was the Covid year and everyone was fighting to be alive and in fact, public gathering was banned. Now that things are normal, I think we should revive our community days.

It is a thing of joy to me that the Igbotako Development Forum (IDF) has taken the initiative by setting up a Committee to organize Utako Day in December this year after about three or four years of not organizing the yearly event. Well, opinions are actually divided on the appropriateness of Community Days. Some people believe it is a waste of time and resources and that it usually does not go beyond the pounded yam, pupuru and obe'ta and the launching of this and that. Yet, some others (that's where I belong) believe the

Community Days are important tools to rally development of the towns and preserve our culture. It helps to foster unity and love. Some of us who raised our children outside Ikale actually use it to bring them home to feel where God chose to bring their fathers and mothers to this planet Earth. And I can bet you that my children really love the Utako Day, whenever I brought them home to be part of it.

Sometimes I pity those who were raised in the cities. (Is it not an irony – the city people think those of us raised in the village are worse off)? Those who grew up in the cities missed a lot in terms of culture. As a kid growing up in Igbotako, I really relished the Ikale culture. I love biripo music and anywhere there was a band I would go stay behind the band all-day, watching the how the Babas played the highly-skilled music. Wow! These days most of the bands I see around do not know how to play biripo music. There are at least five types of biripo music. The ones you hear most at ceremonies are the “kereke-ji” and its “eya”. You rarely hear “ijehe” and “kiriji”. You rarely hear “agbala”. Hmmm. Our cultures are going under. What about the dance steps. Kai!, we don't also have good dancers of biripo these days. It's highly technical, just as bata if not more technical. But look at where bata is today. It's even in gospel and juju music today. This was what motivated me to be doing Biripo Fiesta. The last one I did was over 10 years ago at the Lagos Airport Hotel. I assembled all the stars from and it was really wonderful. You can still watch it our [ikalenews.com/video/biripo_fiesta](https://www.ikalenews.com/video/biripo_fiesta). We have had over 6,000 views of it on Youtube.

We need to do much more to preserve our culture. The local governments and council development areas should be at the forefront. They cannot sponsor all community days but they should set up a Cultural Unit to liaise with community development unions to organize their days. I like to see how Ilutitun Day will be different from Utako Day, so that I will attend. As a teenager, I used to



follow my grandmother who was from Agirifan to Ilutitun to celebrate Okute Festival. It was very unique to Ilutitun people. All our towns have their unique attributes that should form part of their Days.

See how Ijebu Ode people celebrate Oju Ode Oba. Why can't we have something similar? If we celebrate our Community Day every year, we can then come together and celebrate Ikale Day once in three years. People who know me, know that I practice what I say. As member of Ikale Vanguard, I worked with the likes of Dr. Paul Akintelure, Deacon Goke Owamoboye etc to organize Ikale Day in Lagos. The sports centre of the University of Lagos was filled to the brim when we did it. The Abodi of Ikaleland, HRM Oba Francis Faduyile physically graced the occasion. Another one was done at Okitipupa by another organization some years later. But what can you sustain without coming together. Agbajo owo oun e mu ho aya rin. If all our towns unions form a central committee, they can deliver Ikale Day once in four years. It will serve as rallying point for Ikale Unity and all our Obas would be there. I want our lawmakers, chairmen of local governments and political appointees to work on this idea.

Back to Utako Day, this year's ceremony promises to be pure fun. In addition, we are raising funds to deliver a block of offices to the new local development area council headquartered in the ancient town. Biripo music maa yapa. And iyan and pupuru would be up for grabs.

I am privileged to be a member of the Planning Committee again this year and we are introducing quite a number of innovations. The Utako Day is coming up Monday 26th December but there will be a Business Meeting on Sunday 25th in the afternoon. The business meeting is a delegates meeting of youths, artisans, professionals, academics and other stakeholders to discuss the business of how to move the community forward. On the D-Day of celebrations, we do not always have to talk about how to move the town forward. We do not have time to

continue on pg 11

OPINION

INSIDE STUFF
With Oloja Martins


Time to serve God of big things...

It is quite clear that indeed power has changed from the hand of the lanky, foxy and taciturn one to the hand of a very artful dodger who actually prepared for a strategic state **c a p t u r e**. Yes, it is no longer in doubt that our country's architecture of governance has been disrupted for another long walk to freedom. I can see that a great deal of feckless arm-twisting is going on in our national capital.

Besides, it is getting 'curiouser and curiouser' that the governors we want to be the brand ambassadors of federalism, the paradise we often claim we lost and would like to regain for sustainable development are becoming more and more tyrannical.

In some southern states, where the poor are agitated, even some deputy governors also cry. One of them has been locked out of the government house the organic law of the land allocates to him. He is now begging his principal to allow him to work in his office. And sadly, no one cares a hoot about the plight of that deputy governor who now walks alone.

So it is with another victim of political recklessness in another state where the deputy governor has been put on a slab for impeachment by his ailing principal who has curiously relocated the capital of his state to his personal residence in a neighbouring state capital. And no one is asking for the action photographs of governance (as a process) of the recuperating governor who should be asking for the mercy of the God that can heal him. Not even a correspondent in the southwest state has contextually reported what that governor who fought his first-term deputy till their last day in office has been hiding in the old capital of the Western Nigeria.

A lot of news treasures, sorry features are hidden in the pacesetter state capital. No word yet from the civil society organisations including the classic ones that fought for the birth of this democracy that is being demonised by democrats. A great deal has happened to democracy via a strange electoral justice system that has redefined sovereignty in Africa's most populous nation. In Nigeria, our Nigeria, a new elective principle is fast emerging and it is growing luxuriantly

like yam tendrils in the rainy season. Now our political leaders need the courts more than the electorate to be in power.

In our dear country, you can't get to any elective offices except you have the war chest to fight through the labyrinth of the electoral justice system. Here is the new thing, unless most of the big twelve (Justices) cast their ballot for you in their electoral judicial college, the votes of the millions of voters for you will amount to what Shakespeare describes as "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing".

I hope Benjamin Franklin wasn't talking about some of our today's men whom he described as "great talkers, little doers". Our country is transiting really from darkness to uncertainty as our currency, the symbol of our economic freedom is gravitating towards a precipice that is getting more of our children out of school, signalling another voyage from darkness to darkness. And sadly our state actors who should stay at home to examine the state of their wastefulness and bloated bureaucracy are gallivanting around Asia and Europe to lobby to be part of building bricks of BRICs and G-20 that South Africa joined more than a decade ago.

I hope they are re-reading a significant bureaucrat's recent piece, a warning signal, which sets the tone for more questions, which are pointing to a construct that one hopes it is not "too early to say we are losing it" already after a recent euphoria of the first few weeks after taking oath of office. What can be more concerning than consistent gaffes from the office of the chief executive of the federation from United Arab Emirates through the state house to the economic capital of America, their America where a mere bell ringing at a stock exchange was inaccurately contextualised by a carelessly exuberant spokesperson.

Even as we see hope that the presidential spokesperson's gaffes will be taken care of as soon as possible, what the office of the citizen should be concerned with is this: how to stop our leaders from serving the 'God of Small Things'. The ancient words have taught us to note that 'there is a time for **e v e r y t h i n g ...**'. And so, we, the enthusiastic believers in a new Nigeria should begin to inspire our leaders with critical words of hope and encouragement that they should stop serving the 'God of Small Things' and begin to learn how to serve the 'God of Big

Things' immediately.

There is nothing esoteric about serving the 'God of Small and Big Things'. It is simple. I mean here that we have dwelt for so long on this side of the mountain where we serve the God of Small Things that have diminished our stature as the organic giant of Africa and leader of the back race. We have been reported for so long as work in progress. But now we as pilgrims aren't making steady progress as John Bunyan would have reported.

Let's explore this construct through 'The God of Small Things' by Arundhati Roy. Published in 1997, 'The God of Small Things' is Roy's debut novel and was awarded the 1997 Booker Prize. The novel has been banned, being considered "obscene" due to the sexual relationship between people of different castes. There are a few things to consider when discussing the novel's title. On one hand, we can concentrate on the main portion of the title and think about the specific individual it may be referring to – the God of Small Things.

All things considered, from Ammu's fantasy, we get the possibility that the 'God of Small Things' speaks to Velutha, the man whom she cherishes, regardless of the way that society will never accept them being together. In her fantasy (which happens in Chapter 11 and happens to be entitled "The God of Small Things"), Ammu dreams of a man with one arm who holds her near him: He could only do one thing at a time. "If he held her, he couldn't kiss her. If he kissed her, he couldn't see her. If he saw her, he couldn't feel her." (205)

When Ammu wakes from her dream, Rahel and Estha are there with her. Ammu notices a curl of shaved wood in Rahel's hair and knows that the kids have been to see Velutha. She knows even more, "She knew who he was – the God of Loss, the 'God of Small Things'. Of course she did." (206) Velutha's identity as the God of Small Things is fortified toward the end of the book when we find out about Ammu and Velutha's first romantic encounters. Since they know it's impossible for their love to exist, they never talk or consider the future, or what one may consider to be the "big things"; they just adhere to the present. Just as we hardly dream of big things here.

continue on pg 21

COVER

100 DAYS TSUNAMI

Billionaire Senator, Jimoh Ibrahim celebrates 100 days in office with unprecedented support to his constituents

By Samuel Olaniyan (Acting Editor)



Jimoh Ibrahim

Though senator representing Ondo South in the National Assembly, Dr. Jimoh Ibrahim (OFR) enjoying being in the heat of controversies, he is likely to find his recent hitting of headlines very happy.

Just like his first day in the Senate created huge hype in the media, his 100 days in office even created bigger hype as the Igbotako born lawyer turned businessman and politician commedorated his first 100 days in office, he will give N30 million to 100 of his constituents. He kick-started construction township and inter-township roads, distributing solar energy.

In addition, the Global Fleet Group Chairman within 100 days supported the new council development area created out of his local government (Okitipupa) with N25 million cash, and paid inspection fees to the National Universities Commission (NUC) to fast-track the take of his

multi-billion university, University of Fortune, located in Igbotako as this would in his view would create employment for the people when it takes off.

Senator Jimoh, also within this 100 days sponsored a bill on the amendment of Nigerian Insurance Act and motions on intervention of erosion menace in the famous Ayetoro Town apart from facilitating the payment of N200 million additional sum by the Federal Government to the contractor handling the electricity project in Ondo South.

The confident President Bola Tinubu and the Senate President, Godwill Akpabio reflects in the fact that he is member of several important senate committees, even as first term and he even chairs the committee on gas resources, contrary to the impression in the media that there is love lost between him and the President Tinubu and the Senate President.

In an interview with reporters on

Sunday in Igbotako, o Ibrahim also stated that the best of him was yet to be uploaded.

"I have moved a motion on Federal Government's attention over sea incursion ravaging Ayetoro community and I have also seconded a motion for the election of the Senate President among others.

"100 constituents will collect a bank draft of N300,000 each as empowerment and we will also be flagging off road rehabilitations, maintenance and construction in our district from my own personal purse.

"We will also be inspecting no fewer than 400 solar panels installallationa in various communities in our district which are efforts to mark my 100 days in office. Many more dividends are on the way/".

During the celebrations witnessed by thousands of his supporters and community enthusiasts, Ibrahim fave a lecture to selected youths during a seminar tagged, "2nd Aseyori Seminar", hinged on 'Strategy and Innovation' as veritable tools to achieve set goals and aspirations.

He noted that the impact of independent and dependent variables which should not be underestimated form the basis of strategy and innovation to achieve set goals.

"Strategy is the allocation of resources to achieve certain goals while innovation is an act of solving problems; these two become very imperative in achieving set goals and its wrong application also results to failure in achieving goals.

"Understanding the independent and dependent variables better also forms the impact on your stategy and innovation, which gives you a judgement on how closer you are to achieving your set goals and aspirations," he said.

Highlight of the ceremony included: Flag Off of rehabilitation and maintenance of Okitipupa - Igbotako 25.9km general maintenance, flag Off of asphalt overlay from Igbotako roundabout- Big Soul Hotel, flag Off of asphalt overlay and maintenance of 500Meters from Igbotako roundabout- Chief Paul Adeyekun house, flag Off of road construction and asphalt overlay at Odogun 36Meters and width of 7.5Meters, Inspection of installation of 410 solar lights for Ilutitun, Igbotako, Iju Oke, Iju - Odo, Oloto, Igodan- Lisa, Okitipupa, Erekiti - Luwoye, Araromi Obu , Abusoro, Agbetu and presentation of empowerment cheque of 300,000 Naira (Bank Draft) per person to 100 persons from Ondo South Senatorial District.

NEWS

Hon Jimi Odimayo's Office Floats Summer School.

A significant milestone occurred on June 13, 2023, when Hon. (Prince) Okunjimi Odimayo was inaugurated as a Member of the House of Representatives, representing the committed constituents of Irele/Okitipupa Federal Constituency, marking the beginning of a new era.

Since taking office, Hon. Jimi Odimayo has displayed a strong commitment to providing exceptional representation through innovative legislative approaches that have the potential to elevate the Ikale Nation and its inhabitants to greater heights.

As a Member of the House of Representatives Elect, he generously extended financial assistance to widows across wards in Irele Local Government shortly after the 2023 general elections, demonstrating his unwavering dedication to humanitarian causes and a genuine concern for the aspirations of the people.

Summer School, which used to be known as "Remedial" used to be the saving grace of Ikale youths who could not make their GCE at first sitting. Parent Teachers Associations used to sponsor the scheme and it enabled many Ikale youths to earn their credits to proceed to further learning. Remedial Schools no longer exist anywhere in Ikaleland, before this move by Odimayo.

The Irele Prince called for an investigation into the prolonged blackout in Irele Local Government, Okitipupa Local Government, and other local governments within Ondo South Senatorial District. These areas have been without electricity from the national grid since 2014, causing immense hardship for the local residents.

To enhance his representation and ensure that his constituents enjoy the benefits of democracy, on August 1, 2023, Hon. Jimi Odimayo appointed sixty-nine (69) Special Assistants, with three individuals designated per ward across the twenty-three wards (23) within Irele/Okitipupa Federal Constituency. This was in addition to the statutory Legislative aides and the recently appointed Media Assistants.



Jimi Odimayo

According to the astute lawmaker, the Summer lessons aimed to emphasize the value of continuous learning and address previous learning gaps caused by summer holidays in our communities.

Hon. Odimayo believed that Summer lessons offered students engaging and enjoyable learning experiences, fostering a passion for learning.

This approach not only prevented the summer slide but also provided academic support during breaks, contributing significantly to students' overall academic success. It also aimed to elevate education standards, particularly within Irele/Okitipupa Federal Constituency.

What made the summer coaching program more remarkable was its inclusion of post-teaching examinations to assess student performance and identify top performers in each class at various centers.

These outstanding students were

generously rewarded, and Prince Jimi Odimayo received praise from the people of Irele and Okitipupa local governments for his efforts in promoting education in the federal constituency.

The Summer lessons incorporated over thirty youths as teachers, and they received fair compensation for their participation.

Furthermore, his engagement with the community and plans for palliative measures in response to subsidy removal underscore his commitment to the well-being of Irele/Okitipupa Federal Constituency, according to a statement by his media assistance, Victor Adedeji.

Although Hon Odimayo has not announced details of his legislative programme, sources told Ikale News that he established the Summer School as part of efforts to mark his 100 days in office during which he also conducted his first constituency meeting.

POLITICS**Ayedatiwa fights back, seeks injunction against his impeachment- The real reasons Aketi wants him removed***By Samuel Olaniyan (Acting Editor)**Lucky Aiyedatiwa*

Hon. Lucky Aiyedatiwa, the deputy governor, has approached the judiciary by filing a lawsuit to defend his constitutional rights and privileges. He requested a ruling from the High Court in Akure that the House of Assembly lacks the authority to proceed with his impeachment since doing so would violate his constitutional and fundamental rights to a fair trial.

He also asking the court to restore his media aides recently fired and being subjected to the Ministry of Information, headed by a Commissioner, by the Ondo State Governor, Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, who claimed that these actions violated his privileges and rights as the Deputy Governor.

Deputy Governor Aiyedatiwa

expressed concerns about the impeachment process, alleging that the House of Assembly's conduct so far suggests a likelihood of bias against him. He accused the House of Assembly of conducting media trials, without serving him with any notice of gross misconduct, effectively acting as accuser, investigator, prosecutor, and judge.

In his legal action, Deputy Governor Ayedatiwa sought orders of injunction to stop the House of Assembly from initiating, continuing, or proceeding with the process of his removal from office. He also sought an order to prevent the Chief Judge of Ondo State from accepting or acting upon any request from the House of Assembly to set up a panel to investigate allegations of gross misconduct against him.

The chairman of house committee on

information however reassured Ondo State indigenes that the embattled deputy governor would be given free hearing and investigations.

He told newsmen in Akure: "That someone is accused of gross misconduct does not mean that person is automatically guilty of gross misconduct. We have to follow due process and I am assuring members of the public that in this matter, due process will be followed."

Inside sources at Alagbaka told *Ikale News* that there have been serious pressures on the governor to sheath his sword. The governor is still recovering and needs an agile deputy to do quite a number of things for him, they reasoned.

The sources however said Ayetadiwa's case is worsened by the fact that he did not carry the commissioners along when he acted as governor.

Said one impeccable source: "Look, I am an Ilaje man. Not an ordinary one. I am a politician of note. But Ayedatiwa cannot claimed he assisted me or anybody since he became deputy and when he acted as governor. So he is more or less alone in this batte. But as a thorough Ilaje man, I am pleading on his behalf. It is not about embezzlement of money only that people get impeached. If the powers that be do not appreciate you, they kick you out. But find out, who is begging for Ayedaitwa now?"

Those who disagree with this view stressed that Ayedatiwa could not help many people because he was not in charge, even as deputy governor. Aketi's son and wife have been in charge and the singular effort of Ayedatiwa to resist them is that is dangling impeachment on his head now.

Efforts to reach out with Pastor Femi Agagu, whose name is being peddled to replace Ayedatiwa were futile as at press time.

The chief judge of the state is also yet to set up a panel that will finally nail the coffin of the impeachment package, even as rumours fly around that at least 18 legislators have signed the impeachment notice.

STOP PRESS

As at press time, the leadership of APC has advised Ayedatiwa to withdraw his case from the court

NEWS



More eminent Ikales establish foundations to help indigent and brilliant students.

More Ikale students now have more opportunities for help in their educational pursuits, investigations by *Ikale News* has confirmed.

In the past twelve months, at least four of such foundations have been set up. They include the Hon. Jimi Odimayo Foundation, Olufemi Omolehinwa Foundation, B.A. Akinmosin Foundation, Oba Francis Faduyile foundation and the Jimoh Ibrahim Educational Foundation.

The oldest in the lot is Jimoh Ibrahim Educational Foundation, which the current senator representing Ondo South, Dr. Jimoh Ibrahim established to mark his 30th birth over 25 years ago. The Senator in a char with *Ikale News* said the Foundation is currently being reworked and would soon roll out its plans. While it lasted, for about seven years the Foundation gave not less than to 1,000 undergraduates of Ondo State origin.

Retired professor of public sector

accounting, Eddy Omolehinwa set up the Olufemi Omolehinwa Foundation in honour of his late wife. The scholarship is exclusively for Ikale undergraduates one of who must be from Ilutitun where the late Olufemi Omolehinwa hailed from. The maiden scholarship will be awarded this academic session.

The Odimayo Foundation is also rolling scholarships but details have not been announced. However, the B.A. Akinmosin Foundation will give its maiden awards to "brilliant indigent students of Lubokun Comprehensive High School, Igbotako this December" according the executive director of the Foundation, Mr. Femi Akinmosin.

According to Akinmosin, the late veteran principal, Chief B.A. Akmmosin instituted the seed capital of the scholarship in his will, and enjoined well-meaning Ikale people to support his initiative to empower Ikale children through education. Commenting on the development, grassroots journalist and scholar, Dr.

Bolu John Folayan commended the initiatives.

"Nothing is too small to support education. I am a lecturer and I know what little funds can do in the life of a student. I call on more Ikales to set up more foundations. Education is very important. You never can tell what these kids would become tomorrow." He stressed.

Dr. Folayan noted further: "Now that we have these foundations, what remains to be done is to support them. It touched me that Baba B.A. Akinmosin could save as much a million naira for this purpose. Let us donate.

I see these foundation as planting seeds. We should not leave it alone for those who established them to fund. If you love Jimoh Ibrahim, donate to his foundation for help poor students. If it is Prof Eddy you like or the legendary B.A., donate. Its called 'crowd funding' in PR. No matter how small your donation is, you are helping to build the society."

FEATURE

IKALE PROVERBS with Baba Liliken



Oma Ikale

As part of efforts to enrich your Number One community newspaper, we have revived one of our old favourites, IKALE PROVERBS. This column used to be one of our most popular columns. We are making plans to record this encounters with Baba Liliken and upload on ikalenews.com. Watch out.

Ikale News: *Baba Liliken, le o. How many proverbs are you giving us this month?*

Baba Liliken: I will give you four. You know as I always say, we have Yoruba proverbs, and we have strictly Ikale proverbs. I usually give you Ikale proverbs in those days and I am going to continue like that. You know Ikale is not written in black and white like

Yoruba language. If we don't use these proverbs they will die off. Even Yoruba language, is it not dying off?

Ikale News: *Wee puro Baba.*

Baba Liliken: Let us start with this one: 1. APAN MU USU GHI UNA, O BU DIE UNAGUNTANE.

This translates: *The spinster put yam in the fire, but cuts a bit for her sheep.*

This proverb means that when the chips are down, you always care for your own. People who are with you morning and night are the people who are likely and should benefit from you. You always remember those close to you before you remember those outside or far away. In terms of usage, here is an example. You are at a party and they asked you sit at a table of 12 for a particular Club. You are not a member of that Club. They just allowed you to sit with them. Soon, they drinks are being served and the server gives drinks to the authentic Club members before you. You can say "Ah, no problem o. Apan mu usu ghi una, e

gbedo bu die un aguntan e o."

Okay, Number 2 Proverb is ONE'YI INO'E YA, EE ROJU UREN.

Translation: *the person that is stooling should not be reluctant about walking.*

When something is a necessity, there is no point procrastinating about it. It also means that if someone has a problem, he or she should always be ready to face it headlong: try the right means to solve the problem.

For example, if you have a child that is deaf and you are told that there is someone in Ajagba who can cure him or her, and the person who told you had expressed concern that "Is Ajagba is not too far away from you?" You can reply quickly: "Ka gbo, ene'yi ino je ya, ee roju uren o." (Some Ikale towns say "ee roju ehe", literally, does not worry about the leg). The person who is stooling will need to often walk to the toilet now and then, so it is better for the person to prepare his or her mind for that.

Ikale News: *Baba, give us an Ikale proverb that we can use for emphasizing team work.*

Baba Liliken: There are so many of them. You know in Ikale culture, we believe so much in unity and oneness. Ikale says, OKO HA, AYA PA, SEBI JI EJO TI KU RIN. Translation: *the husband ran away; but the wife killed it; what matters is for to have the snake dead.* Ordinarily, one expects that the husband, being the (strong)man, should kill a snake that intrudes into the house. It is therefore unmanly and embarrassing for a man to run away in this situation.

But in this same situation, the wife summoned courage and kill the snake. You can cover the man by saying it does not matter if the man ran away, the critical thing is for the snake to be killed and the wife actually stood in for him. A good example was when the Super Eagles

continue next page

FEATURE

won a match but it was our defender who scored the winning goal instead of the striker. You can say "oko ha, iyawo pa, iyawo pa ejo, ko to kun?" "the husband ran away, but the wife killed the snake, What is left to be done" It literally means, the important thing was to win the match. It also means we are help-meet to each other or one another.

Ikale News: Baba, I particularly hate snakes o. I will run away. There is one proverb I heard last week. I didn't quite get the meaning. I called of my brothers in London. And he told me he was now in Maryland, USA. He moved to London from Berlin just six months ago. I asked him why he moved so quickly and He said "BODAMI, EYE EE PE NI'ORI IGI IYE NE EHO.

Baba Liliken: Hmmm, but it is very simple. It translates, *a bird does not stay long on a fruitless tree.* Your brother is simply saying he left Berlin and London quickly because

he did not find the place profitable. It means he does not associate with something or effort that does not yield dividends, or rewards or blessing – fruits. Eho, in Ikale language means, fruits.

Ikale News: Baba okun meeta (Baba it remains three).

Baba Liliken: OMADE MU UPEKUN DONNE, WO FE GBAN'GHEN ETI. This translates: *A kid holds a cutlass (or Udabo, for Irele people), and you want to slap him on the ears.* It simply means that you have to exercise caution in handling delicate issues or problems. The proverb has nothing to do with kid really.

It means when someone has power in his or her hands, thread with caution in dealing with him or her. He or she can use the power against you. It's wisdom you have to apply, not slapping the little boy. It can also be interpreted to mean that sometimes, someone holding an authority may not know how to use that authority. That does not mean you take the authority off him or her by force. Because he or she is

a kid! A kid won't be that wise. Use wisdom against them, not force.

Ikale News: *Wo se Ba'mi, wa pamue.* (Thanks my father; proverbs won't depart from you.)

Baba Liliken: EE FO GHAN AFOJU FO OJA TI DA. Translation: *You do not need to tell the blind person that the market is over.* This means you allow a person to come to reality by himself or herself. The Ikale traditional market is always noisy and rowdy. So, the blind person who goes to the market will hear the noise when he or she gets to the market. But when it gets to a point that he or she cannot hear any noise again, you don't need to tell him or her to know that market is over.

You have a girlfriend. Anytime she comes to you, you barely greet her. You don't do all the things you used to do to show her affection. And you friend advises you to tell her that you are no longer interested in dating her. You can reply: "

There is no need; *ee fo ghan afoju fo oja ti da.*

Ikale News: Bye for now Baba Liliken.

Baba Liliken: O du'gba se o, omami.

continuation of Bitter Pills: Let us re-awaken our communal spirit in Ikale

look at our roads, schools, security, employment, and so on. We cannot be celebrating everytime without discussing how the community will be better off. Gutters and drainages are blocked. Markets have been the same format for decades. No plans for improving or expanding, etc. So, we thought of having a day to really discuss these challenges and set new agenda. This year, we the Business Meeting is themed: "Raising the Bar in Small and Medium Scale Entrepreneurship in Igbotako" We want imbue the youths especially with the entrepreneurial spirit and energy. You won't believe that successful entrepreneurships from the town like Uncle Nimbe Ayenuyo (Nibeco), Chief S.O. Akinnurun and Dr. Jimoh Ibrahim started their entrepreneurship right from Igbotoko there. Nibeco started his Irowa Farms right in Odojomo there! And today, he is Chairman/CEO of one of the best fast-food chains in Nigeria, Megachicken. Perhaps the first vibrant hotel in Ikale – IGB Hotel – was established in the early 70s by the Ali brothers in Igbotako. U.K. had a fuel station and much later Mummy Carol Akingbehin started fuel holdings.

Thank God for the people who are returning home now to set up businesses. That is the way to go. But we must be more strategic. We want some of our leading entrepreneurs and upcoming ones to share experiences with the younger one. It is not MONEY that is the basic requirement! Common! Come and learn! There is something in entrepreneurs that you must have. That thing is not money.

The Impeachment of Process Against Deputy Governor Lucky Ayedatiwa.
Hmmm, oro buuku toun terin.

Ke ho governor wa, Aketi hi ghee-ghee ghanyi ke?
Why does he want to impeach his deputy? No, no, no. This is not necessary. I do not have the details of the matter between the two of them but I thought Ayedatiwa has been very loyal. Mr. Governor, please let us continue to thank God Almighty that you were back in good health. You have less than two years to go. Please live and let live. Forgive the man, whatever he may have done. Bo tile se ti urangban look-alike that he uses to hero-worship you, forgive him.

Your mom is Apoi. So you know Ikale, Apoi and Ilaje culture very well. They

won't serve you and serve your wife and son. Ko possible. They would rather damn the consequence. This your wife has been so over-bearing and you know it is not our style in Ondo State. And I suspect that this is the real thing annoying you – that Ayedatiwa did not take instructions from them while you were away. And may be he also did not take instructions from you to the letter. Please temper justice with mercy. Don't let it be a trend. Agboola Ajayi ... then Ayedatiwa that you chose by yourself.

If na you, Mr. Governor and you had to act for a sick governor for that long, sir, you no go be loyal reach Lucky Ayedatiwa own sir.. Who does not know how stubborn and independent-minded you can be? You that told Tinubu to go and sit down that you would defeat him hands down? You that told the Cabal to go to blazes when they were persecuting Bola Tinubu. That's the Apoi blood in you and you know all indigenes of Ondo State are stereotyped in Nigeria to be "stubborn" – they actually meant we are strongly opinionated. We no sabi lick boots of anybody.

You can reduce Ayedatiwa's powers and influence. But do not impeach him please. God bless you and continue to sustain your perfect healing. In Jesus Name. Amen

Till next month, a ma hedo o!

HOT SEAT



“It was a big embarrassment for me that as Editor of my school magazine, I did not pass English Language”

Says Managing Director, Guardian Newspapers, Martins Oloja

- Charges Governors to let new local governments and council development areas breathe
- Dismisses zoning governorship tickets as “breeding of incompetent leaders”

proceed to the three year programme, secondary modern school in Ajagba.

There were so many secondary modern schools all over the West at that time so I had the opportunity of attending secondary modern school. At that time Grade 2 teachers were the teachers at the secondary modern school, these were people who had very good training as teachers.

After that I was able to attend the traditional teacher training college, all in the Okitipupa local government at that time. (It was known as Ikale local government at the time, when it was created out of Ondo Province). That was how I started journalism life because in my third year, that final year, I was appointed the editor of the college magazine. And there was an issue with whether I would be academic prefect or editor of the school magazine, but I was eventually appointed editor of the school magazine.

One of my classmates was appointed academic prefect. That was how I started from the teachers college and then from there I sat for Ordinary and A-levels GCE. Before the completion of that one, you know, something happened there. Actually it was because I was the best student in English language. I was so good at English language that they appointed me college editor. But in our final year, I was among those who could not pass because it was WAEC. We were the last set of WAEC in 1981 (when the examination was renamed GCE, General Certificate of Education.)

I wasn't able to pass in English language. It was very surprising. Not because of ability, but because one Youth Corps member called Joel Meigadi from the old Gongola State was a Youth Corps member, an NCE-holder...at that time, they allowed national certificate in education graduates to participate in NYSC...So he came there and he said he observed that some of the students were helping in the final examination.

So he wrote to WAEC and that one affected a lot of good students. Only very few passed English language. It affected a lot of us. It destabilized us. I had to rewrite the exam the following year. Because of my GCE, ordinary and advanced level, I was posted to a secondary school in Ode Aye there to teach even before the result was released. It was Comprehensive High School in Ode-Aye. So (from) there I moved on.

While I was teaching there, there were so many Ghanaian teachers around teaching and helping to teach in some of those secondary schools that the then-Ondo State Government set up within Western Region education policy of compulsory education, somehow, somehow.

So I was teaching when the Ghanaian teacher looked at the way I was taking minutes.

I was the secretary of the Teachers' Union there, meeting, staff meeting for the secretary.



When our Special Correspondent, MUSA ADEKUNLE was asked by the Publisher to book and conduct an interview with top Ikale-born journalist, Martins Oloja, the Managing Director of Guardian Newspapers, he almost fainted. How does a cub report interview the MD of a newspaper such as The Guardian? This is more scary for Musa because he knows little or nothing about Ikale. He is from Ogun State. But the publisher encouraged him that his interviewee would understand and give him “soft landing”. Indeed, he more than soft-landing. Enjoy the interview:

Let's start with your childhood memories. How was childhood like in Ikale? And how did this childhood shape your life so far?

Childhood memories are around a place called Ajagba. The local government in those days had a local authority primary school and from there, I went to a secondary modern school in Ajagba.

This local authority primary school is in a village called Gboroye in Ajagba. And after that one I had a possibility of attending St. Brendan's secondary modern school. In those days in the Western State Government, there was this gap in the way they were doing their teacher training methodology. If you were not able to attend the secondary school, immediately there was this intervention between primary and secondary school, you would

HOT SEAT

???

The way I was taking the minutes, and the fact that the principal there, the late Felix Amuni, who took over from the late Chief CO Akinboye, was the pioneer principal. Because I was one of the pioneer teachers of that school when they started in Ode Aye...around 1981, 1982, up to 1983. So the principal then, who took over from CO Akinboye, who was moved to another school, Mr. Felix Amuni saw me immediately and he decided that I should teach English language even up to certificate year class. And then, those teachers who were more qualified, from Ghana and other places like that, who were graduate teachers, NCE teachers, they rebelled. So that, Mr. Felix Amuni created remedial English for me.

He created it! The man was a great classic. And he could speak very well. He understood the fundamentals of all these things from the University of Zimbabwe. So he created remedial English for me in addition to teaching literature in English, even up to certificate year class, before I moved on to Lagos. I actually desired journalism. Moved on to Lagos and then to the University of Lagos.

What were those things you enjoyed doing that the children of nowadays do not enjoy anymore?

You know, one of the things for the purpose of education was that, at that time, there were trained teachers. Teachers of all sorts, good teachers of all subjects, from that secondary modern school, apart from primary school teachers who were great teachers from all over the place.

My secondary modern school teachers were very good teachers. NCE, from Adeyemi College of Education, from what we need to hear of great College of Education, Abraka, from all these things, they were in secondary, they were in this secondary modern school, they were also in teachers training colleges. So they were all over the place, but they were in secondary modern school. We had access to good teachers. Very good teachers who were teaching at the secondary modern school classics in literature. Subjects, obviously, Geography, History, and so many other subjects that would help you, including those who were preparing for the sciences, like Mathematics and all those basic science subjects. We had good teachers. Not to talk of teachers-training colleges at that time. The standard was

very high.

I don't think that current students have access to such a good teaching opportunity, because you can see one of our seniors, I'm here, one of our seniors at this time, Anthony Akinlo, is now the vice chancellor of the Redeemer's University....So many of them like that who left teacher-trained colleges at that time. Even one left from Form 1 was able to get admission from the teacher-trained college in Odeaye to the University of Georgia to read law! He is a successful lawyer today... One of my students at the comprehensive high school in Odeaye, I taught them literature in English up to certificate year class. At least barely four years ago when he was conferred with this distinction of Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Kayode called me and said I should be there to celebrate with him. He is a SAN.

I taught English language at the comprehensive high school in Ode aye as a pupil teacher, so to say. That tells you the standard. There are so many others like that who have got some distinctions. Just to show you, one Adekunle Funmilayo, whose father was a man of God in Odeaye, is also a very senior lawyer in this Lagos, among others like that who have had some distinctions. So what we enjoyed at that time was good teaching.



I don't believe in rotation of governorship. Rotation hinders the system from working



Even while we were at the teachers-training college, now the late Obafemi Olayeye, who was one of our principals, the last principal in our final year at the teacher-trained college, and then they have turned the place to a university school now, was teaching us English.

A principal, he was teaching, you know, the method of teaching English to enable you to understand the basics, was one of those people teaching us something like Remedial English at the teacher-trained. So we had access to good teachers. There were good teachers all over the place and teachers were happy teachers. Even while I was in Ode Aye, I was teaching so many people literature and English, and even this Remedial English to other secondary school students who didn't have the opportunity of

having good teachers of Literature and English for free in Ode Aye. So the students at that time had access to good teachers because the economy was good, Naira was strong, and teaching was teaching, they were paying teachers, and even parents were involved in giving teachers some things like yam and some other things like that. It was a community service and parents were happy and they would give anything to teachers and teachers were there. So even at that time you had access to good teachers to the extent that some people who didn't make a good grade from secondary school to get direct admission to university or admission generally, they were made to spend a year at the teachers-training school. They called them post-WASCE students and then they used them to train teachers to get Grade 2 Teacher's Certificates. So they had good teachers all over the place. That's what I will always remember. So the background I have had that has helped me in journalism is from teacher-training college I was able to get good grasp of the essentials of the English language.

Interesting story Sir. So when you got to Lagos...

The journey wasn't too bad. I came to the University of Lagos Mass Communication Department here and from there I had the opportunity of being part of the pioneer members of staff who started the first newspaper in Abuja in 1988, the *Abuja Newsway*.

Yes, and I joined them immediately. The publisher, Alhaji Bukazama is alive. I'm always in touch with him. Every week we are in touch. He set up the first newspaper in Abuja, the *Abuja Newsway*. And then he made me to be the Bureau Chief as part of the pioneer managers. I was the Bureau Chief supervising the Lagos office of Abuja Bureau from 1988. And I worked hard. No fax machine, no internet, nothing at that time. Just the manuscript that was sent to Kaduna where we were producing the newspaper for circulation in Abuja. We had an office in Abuja and other places like that. But within two years I was made editor of the newspaper in 1990 December.

Within two years?

I was made editor of the newspaper because the pioneer editor moved on. They did some reorganization and then we moved on. With the reorganization, the pioneer editor of the newspaper, Nick Dazang, who later retired as the director of Voter Education at the Independent National Electoral Commission

HOT SEAT

(INEC), was the pioneer editor. And so many of those graduates at that time. And that was how we started. Since that time, 1990 to 1993, June 12th, the June 12th crisis consumed the newspaper.

The FCT administration closed down the newspaper in 1993 over June 12th crisis because we published some stories that were not pleasant to them. Yes, we revealed some things. Two quick stories that we did that rattled the administration around June 12th crisis.

One, we published a story that IBB, (General Ibrahim Babangida) who was the Head of State at that time and the one who announced the June 12th election, while the crisis was going on, we discovered that IBB's daughter and Abiola's son were dating. And we published it. Within the same period, and it rattled the administration. You can imagine the quality of that disclosure. Somebody from Lagos, at that time, the cost of flying to Abuja was no more than N200, N250 by Nigerian Airways.

On the day we published this story, one man who could not believe the story, where the papers that we brought to Lagos within minutes, we finished them, we were circulating, very few with the vendors, but at that time, Ikoyi Hotel, Central Palace Hotel, Eko Hotel, and all these top hotels, not many, many airports. We sold out. So the man heard about the story of the fact that we published one story, one story that IBB and Abiola also had a secret meeting in the course of fighting June 12th.

One day, there was a secret meeting between Abiola and Babaginda, which even the Social Democratic Party (SDP) members, that was the political party. the political party that Abiola belonged to, and he said he won the election. But it was cancelled after releasing 16 states. He stopped everything. We published a story in *Abuja Newsway*, that IBB, Abiola in secret meeting.

When these SDP people were holding a meeting in Benin, and the late chief attorney, and then he was the chairman, and they were holding this meeting in Benin, when we said, Ah, Abiola and IBB were meeting, and when we were bonding ties, we were struggling in Lagos for June 12th. So one man called our office through the landline, the fixed line in Abuja, where at Fort Lambert Street, he called our line, that



Martins Oloja

he had that we published one story.

He said, yes. He said, could we get a copy? He said, how could we get a copy? He said, we only have some copies in the office, like five copies. He said he would like to see a copy of this newspaper. No internet, nothing.

So he said, if he sent somebody to the office now, would the person be able to get a copy? He said, yes. The man put somebody on a flight in this Lagos, just to get a copy of that newspaper. And the person came to our office, got a copy, and returned to Lagos. Everything was no more than 500 Naira, 250, twice, just the return ticket.

So that's the power of an exclusive story at that time. So, those two stories, the romance between Abiola's son and IDB's daughter, ratcheted the government, and this particular one, this secret meeting, was superb. And then, when they were closing down so many newspapers, they closed down *Abuja Newsway* in 1993.

And the publisher of Kaduna was also arrested in his farm, and all those things. They rattled them, and instead of expanding operation as a result of that persecution, which would have been a good market for us, I think, they did reopen the newspaper.

And we went on like that. I even ran away to this

Lagos. I was hiding in a satellite farm when they wanted to arrest me. Even though they had arrested me earlier, over another story on Abuja and the presidential panel that he set up, and they recruited only two southerners and nine northerners. And none of the southerners could be appointed chairman and secretary. The secretary of that panel is today the chairman of APC. This Abiola candidate was his secretary in 1993. The rest is history.

You are passionate anytime you talk about Abuja. Why?

Because I've had the opportunity of dealing with Abuja now for 35 years plus. Since that 1988, within two years I moved to Abuja in 1990. Since that 1990, that is 33 years now, plus that two years in Lagos that I reported interest of Abuja. Spent 35 years gathering facts, reporting, writing, analyzing things on Abuja. So, I know how Abuja evolved. I have facts on my fingertips. That was how I wrote an article recently about the significance of even appointment of Wike as FCT minister... That in 47 years, I traced history... this would be the first southerner that has been substantive minister of FCT. Even our unity capital. ..First time that a southerner has been appointed as FCT minister. I just heard that people were talking about who was minister in charge of special

HOT SEAT

duties.

And the office located at about 15 Awola Road in Nkoyi, here at that time in 1976. After the proclamation of Abuja by the late General Murtala Mohammed. „So Wike is the first minister from the south. So when I wrote it recently, it received some wave reviews. And they said that this is an authority... supreme intelligence on Abuja by the grace of God. So I can only admit I am by the grace of God an authority on the history of that place. I wait for my book.

MD, I would like to take you back to Ikale. Ikale people are known for teaching, medical doctors, or maybe lawyers. Why did you choose journalism?

I chose journalism because of the advice of that my Ghanaian teacher. He said that the way I was thinking that I should take an interest in journalism. And that I could write well. I followed his advice. I even wrote to the late Tony Momoh who was the General Manager of *Daily Times* and a full-time editor. It was a handwritten letter I did to him. And he replied to me that they didn't have the opportunity of training me in *Daily Times*.

And I got some other jobs to work in some book shops. I thought I was writing to get admission to read mass communication. I wasn't getting in until I was able to get to the University of Lagos.

How do you think the creation of Ikale East local council development area with headquarters in Ajagba will improve development of that area?

This is the kind of question I would not like to answer. You know why? For this creation of local area, development area, so I am not misunderstood. You know they started this thing in Lagos and some states have done it. They are not actually something that we should celebrate in a way. Because the constitution does not allow all these things. It is the State Assembly that is legalizing these things. The constitution that all the local governments that should receive statutory allocations from the federal government are actually listed in the constitution. The one they created in Lagos.

The constitution recognizes 20 local governments in Lagos. You understand? They created some 37 so you have 57. They are working. They are working in Lagos. It's organized and they have a way of

allocating, of using the 20... Allocation to 20 to be shared among the 57. And the one they have just created in Ajagba. So you know we normally celebrate some of these things like that. And this is very good that it's coming out. But the one that has been in Ode Irele, which is statutory. Okitipupa and all those things like that. So many of our people, even some of our people have been local government chairman in Ode Irele. But the local government system is not functioning in Nigeria. The governors don't allow the local governments to breathe. That is the real challenge. It won't matter if every town is local government headquarter. And even the constitution ties the hand of local government chairman and the councilors and all those things.

They only use them where they want to use them. Like they used them in Ogun State recently. And they used the councilors to impeach one local government chairman who criticized their governor. So that is the time when we hear about them. But for them to be able to build roads, to be able to do... Apart from paying salaries as they give them, the governors usually don't allow local governments to function effectively. I do not see how that one is going to affect development remarkably. Because the one that was created in Ode Irele, all the areas, the roads that you see from Ode Irele to Agadagba and all those things like that. And even the local government cannot maintain the roads until succor will come from maybe NDDC or also OSOPADEC or whatever. They can't maintain anything. They can't do anything. They are just there.

So you are affirming that it cannot help the development of the community?

That is my candid view. Development can only come when local governments are truly autonomous. Currently, they are not even listed as one of the components in the constitution.

I have traveled around the world. I know how local governments work. Many people are always aware of their mayor. Mayor of London, very influential. Mayor of New York City, Cambridge, Mayor of Washington D.C. Mayor of Jerusalem. Mayor of New Delhi, Mayor of Atlanta.... Local governments are supposed to be the one that people will hold on to. You have your local government chairman. If really, then you have educated people. At that time, maybe a former vice chancellor or a professor. Or anybody. Some of us who have risen through the ranks in our profession. You can actually go home to the local government chairman.

And you affect your people. You get to work. But that is the person that the local teachers dispense with. And mechanically, or maybe primary health centers. Health care centres. That's what will affect development of any area. Under normal conditions, we should be celebrating it. But that's why I would not like to answer that question. That this is not a thing because I understand that it will not work. That I should be celebrating. I congratulate them on the creation of this kind of local government. But I know that it won't function. It's just a political creation to make the people happy. But I understand how the system works from Abuja. Not to talk of our local governments. You know, people particularly in those states. I am not particularly excited about what is happening in Ondo state in terms of development. Ondo state ...so unlucky. Generally, Ondo state is unlucky.

“After (Gov. Olusegun) Agagu, I have not seen any development in the state generally”

Because of the kind of governance that is happening in that place now. Since the death of Dr. Segun Agagu was celebrated recently after maybe the 10th anniversary of his death. You understand? After the electoral justice system cheated him out of office in 2013. Even the former president of Obasanjo was there. And Governor Adeleke was there. And his brother, the owner of Adeleke University was there. So many other prominent people were there. After Agagu, I have not seen any development in the state generally.

Apart from some mere construction here and there that people cannot feel. So why would I be excited about local development area that they put in Agagu? So I congratulate them on that achievement. I, as a citizen, am not excited. Because I know it won't work. They just appoint somebody to be the head. They will get some people as councilors and so many of those people until this government

HOT SEAT

will go. The next governor may even dissolve everything. But this is not that. Because the kind of unitary system we are on. And unitary constitution that we have. Federalism still doesn't work. And they still do not allow local governments to breathe. What made them to impeach the one (local government chairman) in Ogun State? Because he said something. He said that money that they were always talking about didn't reach that. Nobody probed it. Everybody knew what was happening. But everybody sided with the governor who was angry with that kind of revelation by local government chairman. And then they have removed him. And everybody has kept quiet. Nobody is inquiring.

Nobody is inquiring in a democracy. And they removed him like that. So what will happen to local area development that they just created in our area?

That's why I said it's a very tricky question. For me, I'm not deceived. I am not going to recommend to anybody why I don't have the right to prevent anybody from setting up structures in that place. But I know that it is a mere distraction.

Sir, even when you were talking, you mentioned about a late, Olusegun Agagu. You have interest in the leadership of Agagu. Can you speak of that?

Let me tell you what he did. Apart from other areas, in my area, I was a testifier. Since I was born, I have been reading how to develop the area. There is one bridge. One bridge like this that links Okitipupa people to Irele. Okitipupa local government to Irele. You cannot understand unless you understand our area. From Okitipupa to Ode Irele takes about a hour by road. And almost same time by boat. A thoughtful Agagu did a bridge and in 10 minutes you could move from Okitipupa to Ode Irele. Is that not leadership? You know, for so many years, even when we had one Vice-Admiral as governor of Old Western State, and we had so many people, generals from Ikale. The people had been pleading that they should construct that bridge and close the gap which divided Ikale people. Agagu used a OSOPADEC fund to build a bridge. It was 90 per cent done before he left office, so he gets the credit. Before he became governor Agagu facilitated the building of the road from Ore to Agagada for the first time. He also united Ikale people with their kithmen from Ese Odo by that road And Agagu, like the people will tell you, for the first time he



Martins Oloja

constructed roads through... like he did magic they had never seen in their lifetime. Like the people were able to drive to Mahintedo to Mahin, and so many other communities, courtesy of the way he spent money to construct roads through very difficult terrain. This Agagu, he opened up the place. And he even put a University in Okitipupa, instead of his home town, after upgrading the one in Akungba. This one, the current governor named the place after Agagu. Many people criticized them that, what do you need three universities for? These are the ijaw speaking people in Ese Odo local government.

And from that Ajaba, through Igbotu, to the local government headquarters of Ese Odo. That is Igbokebo. Some of the roads now, I think they are not maintaining them, but they are still good. Within 30 minutes from Ore, I could get to my hometown when Agagu was there. Agagu is forever a hero in Ondo State, and among Ikale people who are honest or who want development.

The Old Okitipupa division used to exercise huge political power due to their unity. But, how can this unity be formed again?

You know, this unity we are talking about depends on leadership at any centre. There are so many centres. You have centres of dissenters in Abuja. You have centres in the southwest....Whatever happens to different units will depend on cohesion from internal democracy within the political parties. Right now, there is a ruling party in Ondo State. There is a position party. People, you know, all over the place. It's winner takes all. Once the political party is in power, either at the state level or at the federal level, you see everybody starts moving there

because of what to eat. And this is the place where people... When you ask people, what do you do? They say, I'm a politician. That can only happen in Nigeria. It's not a profession. It's supposed to be something that people use.

Now, you don't have good political parties that people respect.

They don't even... They don't ask people to come and join their political parties. People now see it as special purpose vehicles to just get to power. After that, if that one is not working for you, you can easily move to another political party. If that one is not working for you, you can move to another political party in this place. So, that way, you don't find unity of purpose that we used to find even with UPN, under the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

There was unity. Even those who were part of this NPN (National Party of Nigeria) in Western Nigeria, they were very bold. The late Adisa Akinloye, as chairman of NPN, was very differential. And there was some distinction between what they were doing and what UPN people were doing. They were just like action group. People were very proud of their membership card. And the slogan of free and compulsory education was very popular and they expanded this thing in those days. With a political party led by the late Chief of Awolowo. They built today's Obafemi Awolowo University as University of Ife. It was not built by the federal government that seized it in 1975. It was built by a regional government led by the Chief Obafemi Awolowo before federal government seized it. It was a regional university for agriculture and tropical medicine. But this is where we are today.

And I think that the unity you are talking about can only come when we find that politics leads to development. Politics leads to national planning, regional planning that can lead to development of critical infrastructure, including special attention to education. Which can only produce clear-headed people and competent people to run the affairs of the country. Not this now, you must at all costs get unity to get to court. To get a mandate that doesn't belong to you. This war we are talking about Agagu that I wrote recently that Agagu died because of electoral injustice.

Made that up to him in 2013 through the Court of Appeal. And he complained about the fact that the court used a rejected piece of evidence by the security people. The security people disclaimed evidence presented by the

HOT SEAT

lawyers to Labour Party there. At the court of, at the tribunal in Akure. And they repeated the same thing in Benin. At that time that security reports implicated some people in 10 local governments. Then the lawyer to Agagu subpoenaed those people, state security service operatives to testify. To say that their reports were being used. They disclaimed.

They said that they disowned the so-called reports. But the court used it to cancel 10 local governments. It was the last court. The last court at that time. It was the, of arbitration. At that level. And then they removed him from office. And he complained. And then President Jonathan set up a committee to review. Not judicial review. But for lessons to be learned that it will not come to pass again that courts will use a fake report to declare an elected person unelected.

To give victory to somebody. They gave victory to Labour Party. And the report of that review was not revealed to Agagu until (Olusegun) Mimiko was sworn in a second time. Lessons were supposed to be learned. Some of the lessons we are still looking for today. How electoral justice system has given us to a corner where you are not elected by the people. Until maybe a panel of five justices cast their ballot for you. Or seven justices or maybe four of them. Their own ballot has overshadowed the ballot of the people. That is what we still have till today. So unity (lack of it). And then backstabbing and all sorts of tricks that are used to put people in power. When internal democracy becomes internal democracy that we can rely on as a mechanism for political recruitment of the people, then we will see that there will be unity. But now, I'm sorry.

As a top Nigerian journalist, assess the lawmakers, please assess the lawmakers from Ikale in the state and the national level.

The lawmakers that we have now are not credible people because of what they do. You know that ordinarily, that is supposed to be the most important and the most powerful arm of government. The legislature...because without it, there is no democracy. If in all those military governments, any time they came up with their corrective fluid, when they overthrow the government, the first institution they will go for is the legislature.

Because they can make laws against the military people.

So they will first dissolve the legislature and then the judicial arm will remain. They can't dissolve the judicial arm. There must be judicial even on that tyranny. Because they will still continue to use them to churn out some decrees. And they will take the decrees to all these judicial arms. But the legislature is not there. So the legislature is a very important arm of government. And the constitution gives them power over the powers. That the executive heads, the president, governors, should not be able to spend certain money without the approval of the legislature. Even though they do all sorts of things now. But now, because of the way they are acting, we cannot even know what they even approved for themselves as remuneration package. They are not credible.

They carry out all sorts of investigations. You

hear in the states that once the governor is not happy with even the deputy or with the speaker, once the governor is not happy, the legislature will just remove the speaker now. Look at what is happening in Ondo.

They have written to the deputy governor. Even the person who has written to the deputy governor is alleged to be behind this thing. You won't see the hand. The governor is not even in the state. The governor is running the state from another state capital.

I wrote about it. So, the legislature that is supposed to be the kind of institution that will... They have so much power under the constitution to investigate, to remove the chief executive. The national assembly has the power to remove the president if he has abused his office. If he has violated any



Martins Oloja

HOT SEAT

section of the constitution. That's an abuse of office. If he is incapable, he is doing well. And there are procedures. But the legislators have not been behaving as legislators.

They have been looking up to the executive. They have been taking executive directives. Which is not good for the constitution. The doctrine of suppression of power which should guide our democracy. It's not working. So, the legislators look at the way they behave in Abuja.

Look at the kind of screening that they did for the executive when the executive just presented some ministerial nominees to them. Look at the way they were screening them. Look at the way they were just talking. They couldn't ask questions. They couldn't even submit some petitions. So, they just dismissed them. Against all those people at the state level. They don't even hear of anything.

They spend money anyhow. They do oversight functions as they like. They pad the budgets beyond the strength of the economy. They don't emphasize the revenue framework.

They'll be talking about expenditure. And by padding and padding how the money will come out. They don't care. So, they do not protect the public finance system. Some of them appear very reckless. And they demonize democracy as a result of that.

They don't care. The representative democracy is still suffering here. It suffers from reverses to the extent that when certain things happen, you do not run to the executive. You run to the person representing you at the state level. Beginning from the local government, your representative, your councilor is supposed to be your first part of call, if actually that councilor is representing you.

That is way the democracy is designed. You are not supposed to be looking for the governor when something happens. You talk first to your representatives in government. Where I am today as a journalist, a senior journalist for that matter, by the grace of God, I should be able to talk to and reason with my own senator. My actual senator may know me, but we have not spoken. What do they do? They will send their aid to bring their stories to publish for them, but we don't see them. But we do the best we can.

My own house of representatives, the one that is representing me directly (we are even from same local government), only one of them in my lifetime was talking to me. After that one, the one that just left, the one that is there, we don't see anybody. At our level, what are we looking for from them other than to work with them? What does it cost to dialogue with opinion leaders periodically? But that is where we are. People do not have access to their legislators.

Do you support the clamour for ondo South to produce a Aketi's successor?

You know, all this rotational whatever that they say, you know, I have grown beyond that and I never supported any local principle. That's rotational whatever. You know, in the way we are practicing democracy, I said it should rotate to this way.

There is even in the constitution, which they ordinarily should even apply to local government appointments for equity, for justice, that our power should be rotating. But the rotational thing that we have been doing, rotating from this place to this place, rotating what has been in need for the people. Another, it has rotated to Mimiko from the central. Now it has rotated to Akeredolu, for instance, in the last almost seven years.

What has been in need?

I believe in proper internal democracy that we choose one of the best. And when the person begins to act within six months, you will see. So, that it is rotating to who? To begin to see what they are doing. Rotation hinders the system from working. We have deputy governor, or a vice president who ordinarily should succeed the governor or president, having understudied and worked with him. But he or she can't.

They don't want him to succeed the boss, partly because of this rotation. Look at what is happening to the deputy governor in Edo State. Yes, Edo State. The governor even locked the gates to his office. He is even begging the governor in a democracy. It's a joint ticket, for goodness sake. Joint ticket. I was referenced to it in my column at the weekend about the people who should serve the God of big things. So, I think that the way we are serving the God of small things here will always make us to remain very, very small. And I think that the rotation thing is not something that should get my attention because I don't believe in it. I believe in getting the brightest and the best who will develop the state in such a way that nobody will ask where does this one come from? Let me give you an example.

It may be a very small example in our democracy. You see, this Akpabio... the senate president. You know he was governor from minority. Rotational, something would not have happened to him, but something happened during the time of internal democracy, the primary. And he is from minority there. He is Anang, not Ibibio, the majority. Ibibio people are a majority. He was governor for eight years. He demystified all these rotational issues. The way he developed the place, the critical infrastructure quality, drainage quality, in so many things that he did. Building, he was building roads, and he unified the Ibibio and Anang people to the extent that he constructed roads around the place. I witnessed it.

And I saw what he did. He demystified everything, all these things about rotational presidency. Forget about what happened to him in Abuja, I am talking of what he did as governor of Akwa Ibom. He did so many things. So, the way to go is to look for a good man who will develop the place, who will pay attention to education. I don't believe in all this rotational system that they are using to produce leaders who have underdeveloped us.

Given the way Dr. Agagu, your hero was shoved out of office, would you say he made some genuine mistakes politically?

Yes. I would say he made some genuine mistakes, politically. Genuine mistake. The mistake that popped out in my mind now was the fact that he did not participate in using the electoral justice system to remain in power. He trusted the judicial system and it failed him.

On a lighter mode, as a busy journalist, how do you create time to rest?

O rest. You know, I'm not a socialite. I don't socialize. That gives me plenty of time to rest. Because I stay home to read and write and that is a way of resting. I selectively attend only very few social events to also wind down and meet people. I exercise around the home. I also travel, being a journalist, apart from shuttling between Abuja and Lagos where I have two homes. Because I'm a citizen of Abuja and a citizen of Southwest.

Thank you very much.

I appreciate you. You're welcome.

FEATURE



Methodist Church in Nigeria, knights Unilag Alumni's World President, Ife Oyedele

By Ibikunle Ikuyinminu (Labola)
Executive Editor, *Ikale News*

When that great philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said "Power is a trust which can only be justified when used for the good of the common man", he was talking about Engineer Ife Oyedele (birthnames Ifeoluwa Olusola Oyedele).

Ikale born Ifeoluwa, Executive Director (Networks) at Niger Delta Power Holding Company Limited is a man noted for his selfless services to humanity. And it is in acknowledgement of the good ideals of service and causes to which he has devoted his life that, at the 52nd Conference Connexional Council of the Methodist Church Nigeria, held at Umuahia, the prestigious Knighthood award was bestowed on this consummate politician and foremost philanthropist.

The Knight of John Wesley (KJW) award was conferred on the Ondo State gubernatorial hopeful and other great personalities across the Archdioceses of Ilesa, Igbobini and

Ifaki by the Prelate of Methodist Church Nigeria, His Eminence, Dr. Oliver Ali Aba during a recognition service and award of merit, held at the Methodist Cathedral, Ifaki, Ekiti State.

In his sermon at the occasion, Rt. Reverend Amos Ogunrinde, Bishop of Osogbo noted that Oyedele and others were honoured because of their sterling contributions to the Church of God and humanity. He remarked that they all had used their God-given talents, positions and resources to promote God's works in their various communities, churches, and the nation at large. And since Oliver Twist asked for more, the Lord Bishop, who stood in for the Bishop of Enugu, the Rt. Rev. Udo U. Nmeregini who was unavoidably absent, appealed that the awardees should continue to contribute meaningfully to the promotion of the vision and mission of Methodist Church Nigeria, even as he warned on the danger of discouragement by the awardees.

Decorating the awardees, His Eminence, Prelate Oliver Aba remarked that the awardees were

people who had left indelible imprints of their contributions and achievements as timeless legacies in the collective memory of their people. The Knight of John Wesley (KJW), Knight of Charles Wesley (KCW), Officer of the Order of the Wesleys (OOW) and Member of the Order of the Wesleys (MOW) are the different categories in the Methodist Church Nigeria National award series. The KJW is the highest in the series and among those who bagged this alongside Oyedele are Erelu Olusola Obada, Former Deputy Governor of Osun State and Minister of State for Defence, Barr. Akinkunmi Sowore, Ondo State Commissioner for Commerce and Industry and Evangelist Sunday Adegoke, Auditor General for Local Government, Ondo State.

Born to the family of Late Chief M.O. Oyedele, M. B.E., and Mrs C.I. Oyedele in Igodan-Lisa, Okitipupa Local Government Area of Ondo State, Ifeoluwa was the Executive Director (Engineering & Technical Services), Niger Delta Power Holding Company Limited, Abuja before his

FEATURE

redeployment as Executive Director (Networks) in the same agency. He is also the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ondo State Power Company Limited and a Non-Executive Director at Sunshine Food Processing Concept Limited. He was also Managing Director Matcom Limited. Engr. Ife Oyedele is presently the President (Worldwide) of the University of Lagos Alumni

continuation of Methodist Church in Nigeria, knights Unilag Alumni's World President, Ife Oyedele

A s s o c i a t i o n .
Ife Oyedele is a fellow of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (FNSE), Nigerian Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (FNIEEE), Risk Managers Society of Nigeria (FRMN) as well as the Nigerian Institution of Power Engineers (FNIFE). He is also a member of the Institute of Directors (MIoD). A politician with a class, he

aspired to the governorship of Ondo State in 2019 but respected the supremacy of the All Progressive Congress (his party) and collapsed his structure for the candidacy of the incumbent Governor Rotimi Akeredolu. He is very likely to run for same office in 2024.

Behold the newest Knight in the society, Sir and Lady Ife Oyedele.



NEWS

Group advises Princess Odu not to run for governor



Princess Odu

A coalition of Ikale, Ilaje and Apoi youths have advised the Secretary to Ondo State Government, Princess Oladunni Odu not to run for the governorship of Ondo State as more aspirants show face in the race to succeed Arakunrin Rotimi Akeredolu.

The group, known as Ondo South Youth Coalition said in a statement that Princess Odu has served the state well enough and should retire in peace.

The statement, signed by the President of the group, Comrade Ayo Obebe, explained that fielding Odu to take the slot of Ondo South at this critical times would be a slap on the face of youths.

“Mama Odu has distinguished herself in public service no doubt. She has been in government in Ondo State since the military era under Onyerugbulem. She has been commissioner twice. She was chairperson of Basic Education twice and now she is SSG. Yet, we cannot point to what she has done for women or youths.

“Besides, the trend now is to field

younger people who understand the challenges facing the youths of Ondo State. It is not fashionable to put people over 70 years old as governor when people like Fayose, Bukola Saraki and Fasola completed their two terms as governors before they hit 50 years or thereabouts.” He said.

The Coalition urged Ikale, Ilaje and Apoi youths to stop lining up behind people for personal gains rather that opt to serve in government and make things happen.

According to Obebe, Ondo South Youth Coalitions is already shopping for a youthful governor in line with trends across Nigeria and would soon unveil its candidate for the next guber election in the state.

“We have all seen what the power of investing in youths politically can do going by the way Peter Obi, regarded as underdog performed in the presidential elections, just by mobilizing youths. We are going to leverage on that strategy,” he reassured.

Time to serve God of big things... *Inside Stuff continuation*

Here is the take-away from this story: Most of us including our leaders don't have any problem imagining a big God who does big things. In fact, we prefer it that way. Our problem seems to be believing in a big God who does big things for us. In Nigeria, our leaders seem to believe only in the Gods of small things. We are a big country always planning small things, dreaming small dreams, thinking only of small things.

What is worse, we rake in small revenue and use the proceeds to buy big things for public officers who are less than three percent of the population. Our leaders don't study Israel, a small start-up country that serves the God of Big Things. Our leaders visit United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, small countries with leaders who believe in the God of Big Things.

They dream big and the world cannot ignore them. They have invested their

oil and gas resources in big businesses across the world. Qatar, a small country of about 2.6 million people just played host to a \$220 billion worth of Soccer World Cup without borrowing a dime. They have mostly gas resources. They also have their Almighty 'Aljazeera', a world-class cable news channel. They serve the God of big things.

Sadly, when you try to pass through our local and so-called international airports in Nigeria, we see clear manifestation of serving the God of small things. First, you see shameful, tiny restrooms accommodating sometimes only two passengers. Most times, wash-hand basins are leaking and ropes are used to tie some components. When you want to clean your hands, you see cleaners handing miserable toilet rolls to passengers, as no tissue papers will be found where they are to be fixed for use. In the entire North of 19 states, there is just one railway line from Abuja to Kaduna.

When you disembark in Kaduna, how do you go from there to capitals of the rest 18 states? There is another magic railway line from Lagos to Ibadan. When you alight from Ibadan, how do you connect other state capitals in South West? There is none connecting anyone from South East to South South. We are an oil producing country but because we serve the God of small things, we import refined products because all our four refineries have for years been unserviceable.

Even the economic capital of West Africa, Lagos can't boast of a mass transit system beyond meretricious BRT system and a Blue-line light rail system being tested in one unnoticeable axis. Only people who serve the God of small things talk about these small things as achievements in this time and age. Let's continue this story of the God of small and big things next week.

IKALE KIDS

Moonlight Games

Hello children, how are you and everyone? Hope you enjoyed your holiday, you are back in school now hope you are enjoying your new class and meeting new friends. Make sure you stay focused and determined, to go higher in your grade from the on-set. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy they say. Happy independence to you all. I also greet Ikale children in the diaspora – UK, Germany, United States, Canada, African countries etc. I urge Ikale parents to use the opportunity provided by *Ikale News* and this column to get their children familiar with home. East or West, home is the best. Not matter how successful you are elsewhere, it is most relevant in your roots. Don't forget home. You can even teach your Oyinbo friends the games we teach here! So, they know you are proud Ikales and proud Africans!

Today, we want to continue on our moonlight games. We shall discuss on modern ones and some of the old generations ones too. Let us start with one of the old ones:

OMO OBA KAN GESIN LO.(A PRINCE RIDING ON AN HORSE.

This game, the children will form a circle. One of them will be in the circle representing a prince while the others will be singing and clapping their hands. The person representing the prince will be moving round in the circle while they are singing and will be demonstrating what the lyrics of the song is saying.

Song : *Omo oba kan gesin lo, gesin lo, gesin lo, omo oba gesin lo, gesin loo*

O mu iyawo re kan dani, kan dani, kan dani, o mu iyawo re kan dani, kaan dani.

Awon mejeeji sowo po, so wo po, so wo po, awon mejeeji sowo po, so wo po.

Awon mejeeji mo o jo, mo o jo mo o jo. Awon mejeeji mo jo, won n mo jo..

(Parents: Please translate the song for the kids.)

As the one representing the prince move round while the others are singing and clapping, when they get to 'o mu iyawo re kan dani', he will pick a fine girl, and the two of them will be moving round to the song, when they get to awon mejeeji sowopo, sowopo. They will hold themselves, and continue moving round, when the song get to awon mejeeji mo o jo, mo o jo, they will be dancing.. And when they are done with the song, another set will take over, And they will go round till all have participated or if they are tired.

Advantages of the game:

It create unity and love amongst the children.

It is a form of exercise

It makes them happy

It helps them develop a listening ear.

It teaches children their local language.

Disadvantages

Some children take it personal when a boy picks a girl as wife.

Those who did not know the song may be put off and decided not to continue.

OH THE GRAND OLD DUKE OF YORK

This is one is a modern one and the Ikale kids in the cities within and outside Nigeria should love it. Children will gather and be sing the accompanying song here..marching as they sing and go round and round...

Song:

Oh the grand old Duke of York,

He has ten thousand men

He march them up, to the top of the hill

And he march them down again

And when they were up, they were up

And when they were down they were down

And when they were only half way up

They were neither up nor down.

They will march up and down and be singing as they do so.

ROSE BUD :

This one too is an old play children will find interesting. Children will gather and form a big circle, One of them will come to the middle and be singing and dancing while the others respond..

Song:

Rose bud, im a little ikale girl,

Rose bud im a little ikale girl.

Rose bud im a little ikale girl

One little ikale girl,

Eeh!! eeh!! eeh

One little

Two little

Three little ikale girls

Four little

Five little

Six little ikale girls

Seven little

Eight little

Nine little ikale girls

Ten little ikale girls.

When they finish the song another person will enter the circle and start singing. And mention another tribe or village he or she comes from. It may even be ibo, Hausa, ilaje, you just need to mention the area.

Advantages

This one keeps them happy and they interact more

It makes them to know different villages and tribes in Nigeria. For instance, for you as Ikale Kid, you it will make you know your home town...you can mention Ilutitun, Akotogbo, Ode-Irele, Igodan, Igbotako, Erekiti, Iju Odo, Ikoya and so on!

OMO OBA FAUSA :

Children will gather and sit in a circle, one of them will take something, it may be pieces of cloth, scarf or even paper, he will hide it in his hand. Will be moving round at the back of those sitted they will be responding and clapping.



Deaconess Omotayo Folayan

Lead : *Omo oba Fausa*

Response : *ki lo fi se fausa*

Lead : *Omo oba kalaba*

Response : *kilo fi se kalaba*

Lead : *oloko ku le ni o*

Response : *A o je igbado oloko*

Lead : *Oloko ku leni o*

Response : *A o je igbado oloko.*

Lead : *E ma weyin o*

Response : *weyin*

Lead : *E ma sofo*

Response : *ofofo o dara.*

When he get to e ma weyin o, he will increase his speed and be running round, he wil carefully drop what is on his hand at the back of one of them unnoticed, and continue running, if the person did not notice by the time he get back to his back he will beat the person and the person will now take turn to play. But paraventure the person noticed before he get back to him, the person will pick and be running after him and the person playing before will sit at his place. He will now start playing his turn. But he can not beat him again.

Its an interesting game. Meaning of the song in brief:

Lead : omo oba Fausa : (Princess Fausa)

Response: what did you do to princes Fausa

Lead : Princess Kalaba

Response : What did you do to princess Kalaba

Lead: The farmer has died today

Response Ha, we will eat the farmers corn

Lead: Don't look back

Response : Look back

Lead: Dont leak the secret

Response: That is a bad thing to do.

Benefits of the game.

It makes children to be smart

It makes them to be at alert especially of their environment

It makes them to keep fit.

It makes them happy and united.

It teaches them to be truthful.

Disadvantages

A child that can not endure the beating may be crying. This is common among younger ones but the older ones knows its part of the play.

They can get easily tired with the running.

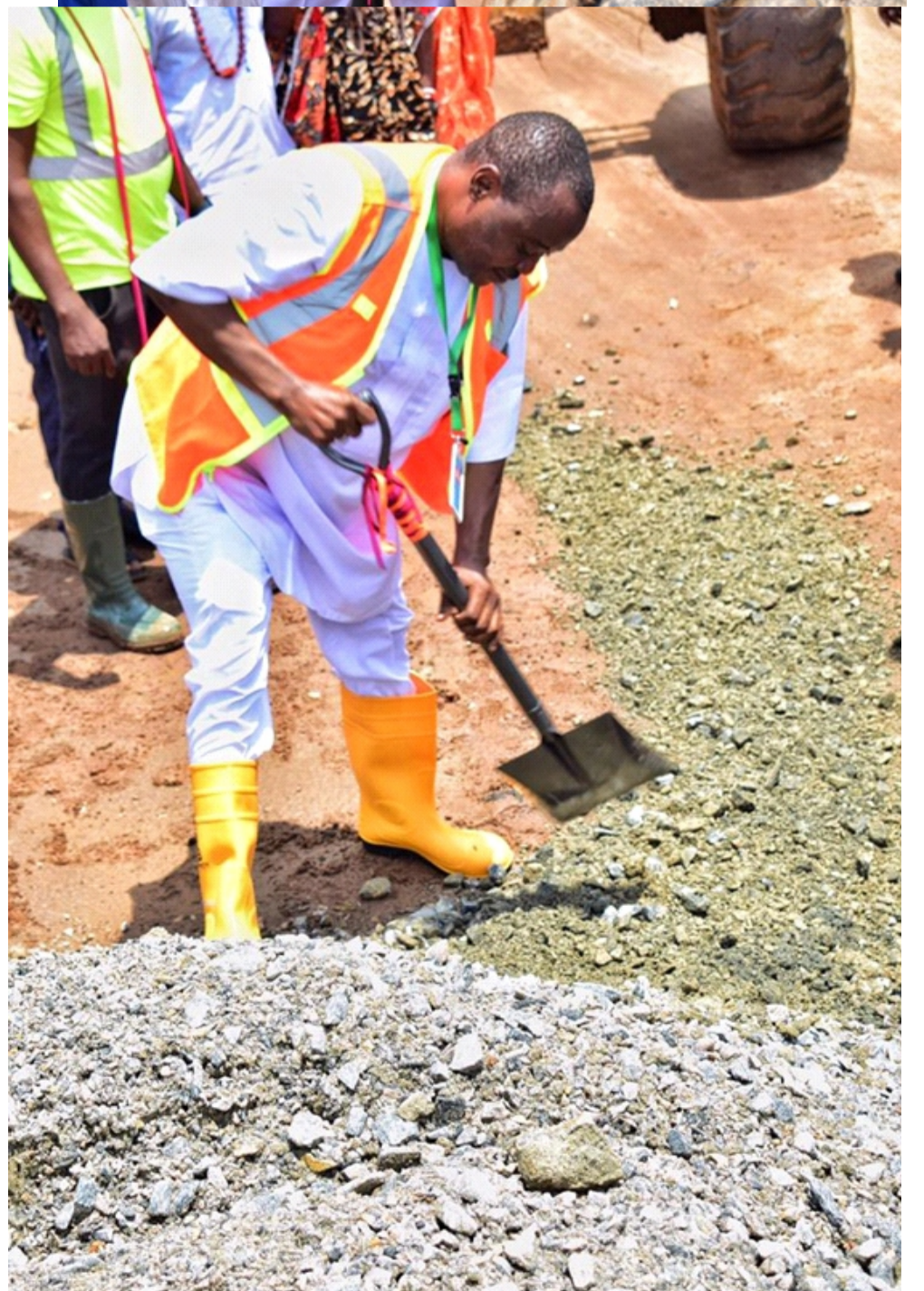
This brings us to the end of our moonlight games for this edition. I hope you enjoy it. If so, try to teach your friends the games. Don't forget to drop your opinions for me in through ikalenews.com. I want to know you are enjoying what we do here.

. Till next month that i will come your way. Be good children. God bless and keep us all.

ADVERTORIAL *100 Days Of Sen. Jimoh Ibrahim In Pictures*



ADVERTORIAL *100 Days Of Sen. Jimoh Ibrahim In Pictures*



ADVERTORIAL 100 Days Of Sen. Jimoh Ibrahim In Pictures



INTERVIEW

“Why Igbotako Day is being revived”

After over three years in the limbo, Utako Day, the founder's day of Igbotako people is scheduled to hold December 26, 2023. Our Special Projects Reporter, OLUWASEYI OGUNSOLA spoke with the Chairman of the Utako 2023 celebrations, Chief Sunday Adejuwon on plans to make the event successful. Excerpts

How do you feel being the planning committee chairman of the Utako Day 2023 sir?

It's been nice because I'm involved in community development. It's something I enjoy doing. It is a privilege to be among those who will directly that will bring all Igbotako sons and daughters together. So it is nice being the chairman of the planning and organizing committee.

What can you tell us about the Igbotako community?

Igbotako community is one of the largest towns in ikale. It is a wonderful town -built on a hill which cannot be hidden. And as such, it is a cradle of development. Apart from being a cradle of development, we have notable sons and daughters that are doing excellently well in their various choosing fields of career.

The men are doing excellently well, so are the women both at home and in diaspora. There is no sector in Nigeria that does not have an Igbotako man, Either at the head or he is dominating, virtually getting to the top. With humility, I can say no other town in Ikaleland boasts of the quality of successful people that Igbotako has produced. So Igbotako is notable for development. We live while other towns follow.

When was the Igbotako community day launched and what have been the gains so far for the people of Igbotako community?

Initially, we had so many Utako Days. If I can recall well, the first edition was during the installation of the current sitting Kabiesi, His Royal Highness Oba Gbadebo Bajowa, the Rebuja of Osooro Kingdom in the late 1970s. After that, there was this gap and due to that gap, people were not doing the event not until 1995, when the Igbotako day bounced back to limelight through the efforts of concerned citizens. After that one, it became an annual event. We had it on a yearly basis. Initially, it was to have fun. But later, It started to be a developmental program. Any money realized was used for the development of the town. For example, the most recent one that they did launch, the money realized from there was used in the construction of some critical things in the



General Hospital. We completed the doctor's quarters and installed some equipment. So our General Hospital is better for it.

Before then, there was this Olu Akinfosile town hall. The town hall that we are known for, it was initiated by Igbotako Youth League some time in 1973. It was built. But because of the delay in completing it, the Igbotako Development Forum, a major stakeholder, a player in the hosting of Igbotako Day, waded in. And they were able to resuscitate the building. And an illustrious son of the town Senator Boluwaji Kunlere came in also to give assistance. And right now, Igbotako Town Hall, a kind of civic center, is a beauty to behold. Events are being held there. So many things are done in that town hall. It is also known as a Civic Center by Igbotako. So, money realized from the annual Igbotako Day, or Utako Day, has been channeled towards developmental programmes in Igbotako that have direct bearing or benefit for the sons and daughters of Igbotako.

Tell us Chief. Apart from developmental projects that you mentioned what is the essence of Utako Day generally?

The essence of Utako Day is that it is an event that cuts across religion, political lines,

it cuts across whether you are a Christian, whether you are a Muslim, whether you are an Urhobo, as long as you stay in Igbotako, whether you are an Igbo man, irrespective of your trade. You are part of us. It is an event that I call unity in diversity. It brings people together. Quite unlike you have Christmas that is predominantly celebrated by Christians, that you have Eid-e-Fitr, Eid-e-Maloud, that is predominantly celebrated by Muslims. Utako Day is celebrated by everybody, whether you are a Christian, whether you are a Muslim, whether you are a traditionalist. It brings everybody together, irrespective of your age, irrespective of your political lines, irrespective of your traditionalism. The Utako event, which is held annually, brings everybody together. It is like our own Christmas. It is like our own Eid-e-Maloud. We also have traditional festival like Iwo but this one is for everybody. It is our own celebration that happens once in a year that brings everybody together. We rejoice with the kabiesi, who rejoice with the chiefs, who rejoice with everybody in Utako on that very day. We pay homage to him officially on that day. So it is an event that brings everybody together, irrespective of where you are. Maybe you are in Nigeria or in the diaspora, it brings everybody together and we are happy for the celebration. We are going to stream this year's Utako Day live across the world. So, it is expanding the horizon. It can only get better.

Being the planning committee chairman, what are the steps you have taken so far? Igbatoko people at home and abroad would like to hear that?

Initially, when I was made the chairman of the planning and organizing committee, I felt hesitant taking it up because I didn't actually know where to start. But I was schooled by the group of people that were assigned to work with me. I headed a nine-man, nineteen-man committee. They encouraged me. My committee members are wonderful. They give advice, brilliant advice. They give good ones. And in so doing, first and foremost, we went into advocacy, telling people on the need to

INTERVIEW

resuscitate the Utako. Bear in mind that the Utako day last celebrated was 2018. Between 2018 and today, we couldn't celebrate any Utako Day.

Why has Utako Day not been celebrated since 2018?

We lost two of our illustrious sons. One, Benson Akindeju, the Asiwaju of Ikaleland, who was an illustrious son of Igbotako. He was a philanthropist; a pillar behind Utako Days. Also, we lost one, Mr Goke Adeteye, who was a lecturer at Rufus Giwa Polytechnic. So, this blow gave us a setback. So, we couldn't celebrate it. But there was clamor.

There was a yearning that we should resuscitate the Utako day. And in so doing, we went into advocacy. After advocacy, we went into sensitization that, look, there is a need for us to resuscitate this Utako day. After that one, there was participation. I was getting good response, positive response from people, both home and abroad. And there is this integration that is asking people to participate. And honestly speaking, Igbotako people are wonderful. They have given us tremendous support.

And I pray, wherever any Igbotako man or woman are, I pray that God will lift them up. And those that have been lifted up, God will never bring them down. They have been so supportive. They have been so good. They have been wonderful. And they are kind-hearted people. They are encouraging the development of the town so that Igbotako can find its place in the committee of nations. I really admire everybody in Igbotako, old and young, male and female.

So, concerning the ceremony, what are the activities that will take place?

It's going to be a week-long activity. Like it used to be. We are starting with sanitation. Keep the town clean. It's going to be a day activity. We are going to walk around the town, sweep, make sure the town is kept in a very neat condition. So that we go around the town, where the necessary we will sweep, where it's necessary we will pick the dead, and where the nursery will dispose them. After that one, there is going to be a program in the Rema Clinic, being sponsored by people in diaspora.

The Rema Medical pre-medical services in the area of fasting blood sugar. They are going to offer services in the area of treatment and maintenance of high blood

pressure. And they are going to offer assistance in the area of optical services, where you go in and check your eyes and see the defect. Whether you are short-sighted or long-sighted.

Even glasses will be given. And they have promised they are going to do that one. That is going to be day two. Day three. One of our brothers who is a philanthropist has promised to sponsor a program that is targeting entrepreneurial management. It will come up a day before the D Day. We call it the Business Conference. The youth can be made to be self-reliant. They will be self-sustaining. They won't be waiting until somebody gives them money. That is our goal. Dr. Bolu John Folayan, your publisher is coordinating that programme. Some of the lead speakers at the event include people like Chief Nimbe Ayenuyo aka. Nibeco, the CEO of Mega Chicken food chain in Lagos.

We have others like Dr. Jimoh Ibrahim a wonderful entrepreneur too. Others include Deacon Goke Owamoboye, Engr Felix Ayejunikanwa, Mr. Femi "ID" Akinmosin and so many others. These are indigenes who started their businesses from virtually nothing and are very successful today. They will share experiences with these youths. Now, going to be another day. It's going to be the 25th of that same day. In the evening of that 25th, there's going to be an Ayo It's a local game. It's going to be an Ayo competition, and It's going to be sponsored by one of our brilliant chartered accountants we have in town, Mr. Funso Adeyelu. So that one will do that.

There again, there's going to be praise and worship that will come up before the event. On the D-Day, it's going to be an event that will bring everybody together. There are other games still in the pipeline.

There will be dance, there will be merriments, and there will be donations towards a major community project as we normally do. There will be rewards for hard labour. There will be awards for people who have dedicated themselves to the services and development of the town. We are going to give awards to outstanding members of the town, outstanding sons and daughters of the town who have given themselves for service for the development of the town, either through financial donation or selfless service. Similarly, the two people that I mentioned, we are going to give them posthumous awards too. Because while they

were alive, they made sure they worked selflessly for the development and upliftment of Igbotako. So that's what we are expecting and we are getting there. It is really loaded. Whatever we realise, we are going to channel it as usual to the development of a project, a developmental project in Igbotako. And that will add value. It's just like a value-added program. It's going to add value to whatever we have or the existing facility we have in Igbotako.

We are going to start it. There's going to be a kind of a committee that will go into it and see what we can do to better. Once it is identified, we'll go ahead and sponsor it. That's where we are going to channel whatever money that is realised that day into.

What are the things that are still outstanding towards the successful ceremony so far?

Honestly speaking, like I said earlier, my people are wonderful. They've been very supportive. Each time I call any of them, they have given us maximum support. We are making good progress. This interview is September. We still have few months to go. What is remaining is we are just praying to God that God gives us today. God bless the day. As far as preparation is concerned, we are on top of it. We have combed every nook and cranny and we have done all our homework. My people, my brothers and my sisters have been very supportive and they have cooperated so far so good. We are only waiting for the day. I said my people have been so supportive. They have been wonderful. I give kudos to all of them, whether home or abroad. They have been so supportive and they have cooperated with me to ensure that the event is remarkable and is successful.

How do you want Igbotako Indigene to support you in your plans?

One issue with fundraising is accountability. The money generated so far, how do you use it?

I have continually narrated how the money is being channelled towards developmental programmes. So also this one is not going to make a difference. Whatever money is realised is going to be channelled into developmental programmes. We are going to study what and what our people lack. It could be water, it could be anything. As long as it is going to have a direct impact on our people, it is going to be beneficial to our people. And like I said earlier on, in all areas that I have called my people, that I have called my brothers and my sisters, they have been

INTERVIEW

wonderfully supportive. They have supported me to date and I have received tremendous support from each and everyone that I have come across. It's all about trust. Once there is trust, people will support.

Can you please highlight what you are looking forward to see personally?

Personally, I am looking to see a funfair. I am looking to see Igbotako in its best. I am looking to see the sons and daughters of Igbotako gathering together for a funfair. I am looking to see Igbotako and sons and daughters gathering together for celebration. I am looking forward to see Igbotako sons and daughters in joyous mood. And I am looking forward to see Igbo Tako sons and daughters in a happy mood. Because that day, God's willing, we are gathering together at the venue and together we shall make Igbotako proud.

What are the challenges that have been faced towards the celebration, the events?

Like any other project or any other program, there is no program or whatever that has no challenges. Cash flow is number one. Money solves all problems. But its coming in. But I can assure you that my people have been very very good. Irrespective of what we are going through, the people that I come across, the ones that I have called upon, they have been very very supportive. Irrespective of what Nigeria is going through, we all know what we are going through. Fuel is now 620 Naira per litre. Under these conditions it is a bit tough to attract donations. But our people love the town so dearly and after working hard for most part of the year, we want to them to come to their hometown and relish it again. So whatever challenges we have, we have been able to surmount the challenges. No pain, no gain.

I learnt that Igbotako is a hometown of so many great ikale people. And you just confirmed it at the beginning of this interview. It has produced the first minister of communication in Nigeria. Senators, professors, top policemen, big professionals like accountants, medical doctors, army generals, even my publisher sir is from Igbotoko town. But the town has not developed as it should be. What is the problem that is facing the community that is not making it develop as it is supposed to be?

When you say develop, it is symbolic. It is symbolic. Igbotako, like I told you, has produced so many great sons and daughters.

Like you said, the first minister of communication, Chief Olu Akinfosile, he was here. But we from Igbotako, we are not that kind of people that would go to public office to embezzle. The man did not embezzle like his counterpart. That is the culture here. And we are not selfish. We won't put everything in our hometown when we are in positions of authority. The other reason for your observation is that we have not planned together enough. We engaged in solo efforts to develop the town and it did not work well. Now we have seen that there is power in unity. And we are doing better via unity. For example, Jimoh Ibrahim (PhD) is from this town. He built standard classrooms in the secondary school in the town. He donated to churches and awarded scholarship. But compare to when we now embraced him to become our Senator.

I am not a politician. But look at the support we are getting from that singular act of love for him (because he won every polling unit in Igbotako wards. He just spent only 100 days in office and what he is doing, he has contributed immensely to the success of this town. He has rolled out so many programs within 100 days. There are roads that have been constructed and maintained in Igbotako. Even from Okitipupa to Igbotako, he is currently maintaining a road that is

about 25.6 kilometers. And even within Igbotako, he is currently maintaining roads within Igbotako and laying asphalt on them. That has not happened in the past 15 years. He has supplied solar systems within the Ondo South senatorial District. And quite a few days ago, he gave about 100 political waves.

It is quite unprecedented. I mean quite unprecedented. So we have our people that are not selfish. We have our people that are thinking of others. We are going to support all our indigenes to continue to come together to make the town greater. So if you say Igbotako has not developed, I may not know in the context which you are speaking from. If this context you are speaking from is my context, like I told you earlier on, between Igbotako and any other ikale town we are not push over we are leading and others are following. In terms of manpower we are leading, in terms of fiscal structures, we are leading. In terms of health care delivery, we are leading. So Igbotako is never a pushover among Ikale towns. We are leading while others are following. We may not have gotten to where we are supposed to get to, but definitely we are going to get there. Yes, we are getting there.

I want to ask, what are the things you feel that can be done to make the community



Oloye Adejuwon

ARCHIVE

“My only regret being an Ikale”

- Exclusive interview Baba Zeblon Omoranmowo granted Ikale News before his death
- “Preserve the originality of Biripo music... that is our identity”

Few years ago, Biripo Music legend, Pa Zeblon Omoranmowo, arguably the greatest biripo musician Ikale produced passed on. or sixty years, he bestrode the traditional musical scene of Ondo State like a colossus. The 'Ikale traditional biripo music had been played before him, but he played it with such dexterity that he is the indisputable master. His name is Chief Zeblon Omoranmowo, the Hendoro of Erinje, Ikaleland. The name of his group, which he formed in 1945 is Ikale Awayemate Biripo Organization. Baba Zeblon, as he is fondly called, is loved by the young and the old alike. His voice is golden and his music is electrifying it makes you to dance when you don't want to. But most importantly, he is a master composer. Sometimes, he sings purely to entertain. At other times, his lyrics are laced with heavy social and political messages. He is a social crusader and for 60 years he has consistently lamented the lack of unity of the Ikale race, through his music. Yet, he has no apologies for his strong messages. In 1979, he sang that soon the military would return to the barracks but that if the civilians misused the opportunity, it would be bye-bye to democracy. That message turned out to be prophetic. In the 1990s, he sang "efubu Chief Zeblon Omoranmowo is not happy with the lack of unity and absence of a sense of purpose in Ikaleland. Here we reproduce an exclusive interview Ikale News EYITAYO FOLAYAN, had with him in 2004. Baba Zeby speaks very passable English mixed perfectly with Ikale and sometimes with Yoruba. Sometimes his Ikale goes deep but we have tried to translate the much we could. Below are excerpts from our interview with him Enjoy it. EDITOR

How many records have you waxed so far?

You mean since I began singing or for this year alone?

The total... altogether The one I released two weeks ago would make it 39; I have waxed 39 records. I do not release records anyhow. It could be once a year or twice a year.

Baba, what is the authentic Ikale music, real traditional Ikale music?

Thank you. They have invited me from Akure and I have explained to them. When you talk of real, original Ikale music, there are just four types of music. One, you have biripo. Second, you have iyere. The third is agbala. Then, you have kiriji. There was one we used to have even before we had asiko; it was called kube. Kube is no longer played

Is your band still intact after all these years?

Oh, very well. If you were here yesterday, you would have met us at our meeting. We used to be 25. But some members have died. Those of us remaining are about 17. Sixteen to seventeen. They are still there-we went to Lagos together to record my latest album.

Did you have a healthy relationship with Mama Comfort Omoge in her lifetime?

Very well. I had done seven albums before Comfort went into the studios to wax her first record. As you know, she played asiko. I encouraged her. We worked hand in hand. Anywhere she went I would follow her. It was Comfort and I who started PMAN - Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria in Ikale. Sunny Ade was the national chairman at a time. We started PMAN together. We went to all parts of the country concerning the association and I remember



that Comfort was appointed a member of the executives because she was the only prominent woman at a time.

Your song about the coming back of civilian administration in 1979 was prophetic. You were even arrested because of it...

Mogbo fo ujoba titon wa, oye ghan ye lo hibe yi, a ma se ire: bee se ire, o ma dugba e o" (I suddenly heard that a civilian government is coming, those coming in should do it well but if not, the government will collapse). I feel fulfilled singing about social problems in Ikale and through his music, I was able to lead a crusade for social reforms in Ikale. For the June 12 crises, and its after-effects, I sang, "ofo kan ye wa, aye e ma, ugbonbatiya, (aye e ma), olika a mika o (a a pen ya)" (A matter is brewing, the world does not know, when the

time comes every ethnic group (in Nigeria) will go its own way).

How do you get inspiration to compose those songs you sing in your records?

Normally, when I want to wax an album, would tell my band members to go to Lagos and book the studios for me. From then on, I start to compose my songs. I may be walking along the farm, the spirit would tell me to sing... to sing in a particular way. It could be I went to the market. If I see two persons fighting. I know the kind of song I would sing. I remember I once sang a song "gele ori re bata ehe re, Olopa ti ko dede lo"...(your head-gear your shoes, the policeman has taken them all away)... that song came to me one day when I went to Igbokoda. There was this woman that

ARCHIVE

took her husband to court for divorce. Unfortunately, she did not have money to pay the normal court levies; it was the court bailiff that helped her out by paying the levies (iwe ori). Once I booked the studio, I would start going about seeking inspiration for songs. If I encounter people fighting. I would wait and watch, and then go on and compose a beautiful song out of it. Often, I looked at the political environment and events around and sang about them. In most cases, what I said came to pass. You remember when I sang about the return to civil rule and warned that the military would - no little kids and younger people know about it. You see, asiko biripo, agbala, Ihere and kiriji those four are typical ikale music. Whether it is naming ceremony, burial, marriage, those are the types of music we play in Ikale.

What kinds of instruments do you use and which ones do you play? Do you think the attitude by the youths of trying to modernize biripo is in order?

Thank you. I don't use too much variety of instruments. I use just four types of drums. They are okiri (that is the one that sounds 'gedebu, gedebu') you have agba (it is the longest; about four-and-half feet); there is the one we call iye ulu (it is a bit robust); then we have the oma ulu (when 'gedebu' speaks, the 'oma ulu' will respond, then the 'iye ulu' will join in the response, then agba' will come in. Those are the four drums we use in Ikale music. Of course we have the "agogo" (gong), pataka and the shekere. Of the four drums I mentioned, there is none I can't beat with dexterity. In fact, you can say I literally trained members of my band on all the instruments.

We have noticed that in your songs, you sing about one 'Okoro' very often. Who is this 'Okoro' and why do you sing a lot about him?

The person we call okoro is this: o ne yo gbanyin, jo gbarinkan, ju wo bafo, jo gbo, juwo fanwo j'oye, Okoro ni. (The person who is smart and clever, intelligent and skillful; you beacon he understands is 'Okoro'). I created the personality in order to bring home my messages. If you are a good footballer, we call you Okoro, because you are very good at playing football. He may be a good musician, we call him Okoro because of that skill. It is not a name of a particular person.

Biripo is a highly skillful music. It has its own norms. You see, those four types I mentioned earlier, three of them gave birth to children'.

Continuation Of "My only regret being an Ikale"



Only one, agbala, never had children. Biripo had a lot of children. Biripo gave birth to asiko. It gave birth to kube and juju. It gave birth to ojeghe Kiriji on its own gave birth to ija. Iyere gave birth to agogo, Agbala is the only musical type that did not give birth to children. The drum you play for the slow agbala is different from the one we play for the fast type.

I do not want to discourage the upcoming ones and other musicians playing biripo. But the truth is that many people who claim to play biripo are not playing biripo. Buwa ba ti mu ila, juwo mu egusi, juwo lopo ma ata ati marigbo, ee se obe. (When you mix okro with egusi and pepper and add marigbo (leaves) to it, it is no longer soup.) If you want to cook okro soup, cook okro soup. If it is pepper stew you want, cook pepper stew. Quite a lot of musicians are not playing biripo. You don't mix biripo with agbala. You don't mix biripo with juju. How can you beat gangan or play guitar to biripo music? It robs it of originality. Some of them think because I am the forerunner and more popular, I don't want others to grow or that I want to block them. It is difficult to advise them. But a typical Ikale person who understands the language - will know when he or she listens that what they are playing is not biripo. You sing zion music, sing juju, then add pop to it, it is not biripo. Have you seen an Urhobo or Igbo sing Ikale music? When you mix it, you lose the value. I don't do it.

How do you distinguish the authentic biripo?

For example through the drumming. The drums in biripo music engage in conversations. The child (drum) calls the mother (iye ulu). Buwo ti ko 'keghere gwa'; oma ulu a wa dahun... o je e 'tete' Iye ulu a wa dahun, oo fi egben dedere". Bo ti fo egben dedere agba yon wa dahun, o ja 'ko dada, ja kodada, ja kodada'. Un yi agba je fo re. Ohun e de bo'ri dede ulu yo kun rin. The drums also

respond to the songs that we sing along.

What kinds of problems and challenges have you been facing as a musician?

If it comes to that, there are many. When I started the band in 1945, that is, this biripo band, I have lost many things. I bought the first vehicle, it was destroyed. I bought a second, it went the same way. I discovered that a member of my band (later killed by the gods) was behind the disasters. They attempted to take my life too.

I once ran under a trailer on a motorcycle. A lot of people thought I had died. God saved me in a miraculous way. Most of the problems were not natural but I thank God that he has been with me all through. Currently, I still face problems. For example, I do not have a record label despite the years I have put into this music. I just wax records and get paid. The marketer can print as many copies as he wants, it is all for him. But it is so because I have no one to promote me and back me. I do not get royalties on my records. Another thing is that no one has bought instruments modern instruments - for me.

I know of other musicians who have people who sponsor them to the studios. Some people even buy vehicles for them and ask them to pay gradually. I don't have anything like that. Yet my record don't stay over three months on the stall- people like my music. I can't say if this is the handiwork of God. I can't say. What I do now is that if you come and say I should come and record for you, you tell me where your studio is, I go there and record for you. If another one comes tomorrow and the terms are okay, I may decide to record for him. I have recorded in so many studios in Lagos. I started in Apapa in those days. But I don't have a studio of my own.

ARCHIVE

What is your advice to Ikales on biripo music?

My advice is that we should not let this great music die. Let Ikales love one another. If we love one another, we will be at peace. I sing about it often in my music. They should not think that if we put somebody up there, it is only for his own benefit; no, it is for all Ikale. I am begging all Ikale musicians to play authentic Ikale music. Let us Ikale lift up these Ikale musicians. If I am brought up for instance, I know it is my duty to bring up other musicians. If I have a studio, it will help those coming behinds to be able to record, and so on. I will certainly lift those I know to be playing original biripo. Envy is too common in Ikale.

When we see that someone is rising, we try to pull him down. This is not the time to practice jealousy. Look at the Ibos. If you have Ibos in an establishment, that Ibo will ensure that he employs other Ibos and put them in convenient departments. An urhobo. man will do the same thing. Our own, Ikale will not employ Ikale; he will prefer to use that vacancy to make money from the Calabarman. It is not good. Love is important. It has glory. It has roots. It brings about unity and development. Let us love one another in Ikale, God will hear out prayers

Can you still play for people at ceremonies...people in the cities think you would not want to come to cities to play.

It is easy I am still very agile as you can see and my voice is as good as ever. Anyote that wants me to play anywhere only needs to write me and inform me Once you get to Okitipupa, just ask anyone that you want to see Chief Zeblon Omoranmowo. Even if the person posts the letter he can post it at the police, give it to the police, mobile police office or civil defence anywhere, I will get it, once Zeblon is on it. I have played in Ijebu Ife, jebu Igbo, Ikare Akoko, Akungba, so many places. I am available. I have played in Lagos at the Ikale Awards.

You sing a lot about politics and political developments. Why? Also why is it that our people in government don't come in to assist a veteran like you?

You see, I don't rely on the government of Nigeria. One yo ha mobaje, oun Oba e Jogh 'enran riu (The Oba can only trouble the kingmaker). This last election we did, I played a prominent role in the emergence of Dr. Olusegun Agagu as govern. Throughout Okitipupa to Aye, down to Osooro and Irele and Ajagha. I played a leading role. I prayed for him and worked for him. But since he got there, I have not even received a letter of appreciation from him. A letter just to say 'hello'.

Continuation Of "My only regret being an Ikale"

That is the problem with Ikale. (Our name: (kale) meaning ika- the wicked land - cannot be eulogized.) Ikale will rather love someone from another place. But the Bible says if we live in oneness, we will be more satisfied.

I have travelled widely; people from other places don't behave like that. It may be an oversight. Some people can say he cannot thank everybody. Not my type It is only Ikale that I know who behaves like that. If the government of Ondo State appoints me into the board or department of its arts and culture, I merit it from what I have done in music. Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola of Osun State appointed a Palace minstrel (Akewi Aafin) into the board of the State Council of Arts and Culture, getting seating allowances and teaching young people there, how then will I not merit more than that in Ondo State.

I knew Agagu very well. He is our son and I prayed for him with his policemen when they visited me. Besides, we were canvassing for him. We used to meet in Chief Ademeso's house. Today, I am here as Mr. Nobody. This development makes me afraid of Ikale. O mo 'fo Ikale bamerun (It makes me afraid of Ikale issues).

What is your opinion and advice on the efforts of Ikale News? The newspaper is doing very well.

It is educating our people far and near. Like this interview, you have come all the way from Lagos. It is not easy. But this will afford a lot of people who want to read about

Zeblon to do so. I will also read about our other people and what they are doing. That is the unity I am talking about. So, Ikale News is something all Ikale should rally round to build. Like I said, Oro Ikale ee yemi gedegede. Ikate fe joun bo'su neni, jiyin n'ola Ee se ren (I don't understand the matter with Ikale at all. Ikale likes to plant yam today and harvest it tomorrow. It is not like that) This newspaper, it is not now that we will see the gains. It is in the future. I thank the young man doing it.

Can you recall your first record Baba?

I did the small records then. I remember the first one... (he sings) That was the first one. The second was when I sang: (He begins to sing:) Hallelo, Halleloya, ajen ghonmare... Allelo, Alleloya, ajen gbonmare. Ajen fe p'oma je. Aposul'oke ma, Ajen gbonmare, oma ajen dagbatan o, a m'oma un'okore, Aposul'eema, Allelo Alletoya, ajen gbonmare (Hallelu, Halleluyah, the witch left the child; the witch wanted to kill his child but the Apostle warned him not to; the witch left the child. The witch's child grew up and the child was given out in marriage but the Apostle did not even know. Hallelu, Halleluyah, the witch left the child.) That was the second of the small records-three minute records.

The third one (of those small records) I sang s e n g h e n e n s e n , orighomohan...orighomotihan ee gbetuna o Jomo, senghenensen, Orighomohan. (I am lucky, dead lucky, I have a lucky head I don't have to warm my head near the fire Jomo, I am lucky indeed.) (Jomo is one of the High



ARCHIVE

Chieftaincy titles in Ikaleland). It was difficult to do when we were waxing small plates- I had to sing four songs in three and half minutes.

Do Ikale musicians get together to work as one?

Very well. I can't be telling you about unity if as a leader I don't promote it. Next Friday, we (the PMAN) will have our meeting. We have biripo, asiko, juju (those who play guitar), fuji they are all there. At our last meeting at Maryland Hotel, we hosted other PMAN members from across the state. They gave me an award there, I will show you (the reporter) when we get to the house.

How has the government been helping

Continuation Of "My only regret being an Ikale"

you?

The government of Ondo State has never done anything to help me. They have never given me any award or financial support. Only the association - PMAN- gave me award. That is the Blackman's problem. If it is in the Whiteman's country, I would have been tired of receiving awards. Our people are like that. *Bu we sufan un ghan, en ki e fo wo kaabo.* (Unless you bribe them, they would not greet you welcome.)

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Ikale News management gave Baba Zeblon Omoranmowo the Legends Awards at the ceremony held at Lagos Airport Hotel in 2010. It was his only Award in his lifetime, most probably, despite all he did to promote Ikale culture. All the*

biripo musicians still honour him till day as the ultimate legend. His works should be preserved and our local governments should preserve his legacies. His name should be preserved. What does it cost our local governments to name streets in major towns after Baba Zeblon Omoranmowo?

QUOTES TO SPICE THE PAGES

"If it is in the Whiteman's country, I would have been tired of receiving awards. Our people are like that. *Bu we sufan un ghan, en ki e fo wo kaabo.* (Unless you bribe them, they would not greet you welcome.)"

"Young biripo exponents should not adulterate the originality of Ikale biripo music."

