

## PHILOSOPHY OF ÌBÒLÓ-YORÚBÁ OF SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA ON WOMEN-RELATED PROVERBS

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### Abstract

Oral traditions of any society are like mirror to see their interpersonal relationships and their daily activities. Proverbs in Yorùbá nation cannot be over-emphasised in every aspect of their lives. The aim of this work is to analyse some selected women-related proverbs in the bids to actualize the philosophy of Yorùbá people on the position of Ìbòlò women in the Yorùbá nation from a pragmatic perspective. The cultural influence on Yorùbá women is very great. Women are mysterious, naturally and vastly different from men in appearance, characters and behaviour. They are everywhere seen physically in dreams, at work, at play, at workshop, at home, on the farms and marketplaces; yet, as conspicuous as they are, people's views about them differ from place to place, especially culturally (Ilésanmí 2013). All these are represented in the Yorùbá proverbs related to female or womanhood. This is because, the daily activities and societal relationships of people give birth to proverbs. As a native speaker of Yorùbá language, we used some data from our knowledge of Yorùbá proverbs, personal observations, consultations and interactions with elders and some published texts on Yorùbá proverbs. The theoretical framework adopted is the Sociological theory of literature. The findings of the research show that, women in Yorùbá societies are of great importance and can never be over-emphasized in all human endeavours as there are multitudes of proverbs on them as a mirror to see the nature of womanhood.

**Keywords:** Women, Oral traditions, Cultural Influence, Society Yoruba Proverbs.

### Background Information

Culture is melting pot for the innumerable ideas that have been nurtured for several centuries before becoming the cherished values of a community. The values were jealously guarded to perpetuate them; they were included in the minds of subsequent generations through proverbs, myths, folktales and music (Ilésanmí 2013). Proverbs can be regarded as vital memory bank for all the Yorùbá ways of life and living, including philosophy, values, beliefs, ethics and political economy. All the ways of life of Yorùbá nation, their day-to-day interpersonal relationships and experiences in the society are richly embedded in the proverbs. This is because multifarious proverbs are coined out by the elders through the societal interpersonal relationships within themselves, animals, natural phenomena, social events and many others to mention but few. In the olden days, before the advent of technology and nowadays invention of internet facilities, search engine, Wikipedia, encyclopedia, dictionaries etc, proverbs of Yorùbá were like the search engine to proffer solutions on many ambiguous issues in the society. That is why a Yorùbá proverb goes thus: “Òwè lẹsin ọrò, bọrò bá sọ̀nù, ọ̀wè la fi ní wá a” (Proverbs are horse-footed to solve a problem, when the truth is elusive, it is proverb that we use to discover it).

This literally means, in many instances, proverbs are highly essential in the conversation of

well-cultured Yorùbá people for the meaningful societal co-existence. Among the Yorùbá of south-western Nigeria, proverbs can be likened to be one of the measures of perceptive intelligence and wisdom. Therefore, anyone who is favoured and knowledgeable in the utilization of appropriate proverbs in different situations at the right time, is accorded honour and respect as a wise person. Odùjinrin (1967) opines that, Yorùbá of western Nigeria are fond of utilizing many proverbs when they make speeches in their daily activities. Therefore, it is highly interesting to note that, their proverb usage blends harmoniously with the issues and points they treat and thereby drives the point home in a way that the audience enter their feelings.

Adékeyè (2001) defines proverbs as the philosophical sayings of a group of people handed over from one generation to the other. He further explains that proverbs can also be called the poetry and moral science of the people who own it. Proverbs contain traditional observations on the nature of things in society and they throw light on the subjects and drive the points home when they are relevant. Fádipè (1970) in his own view about Yorùbá proverbs, goes thus:

As a final example of the sociability of the Yorùbá, one may mention his/her frequent use of abundant proverbs. Of all African people, the Yorùbá are probably unsurpassed for the wealth and appropriateness of their proverbs... Proverbs are sometimes used to avoid giving a blunt direct answer which is a necessary thing to do when expressing one's opinion before elders even when such opinion has been directly solicited. However, most frequently, the proverbs are used in bringing out clearly the meaning of obscured points in arguments. Thus, to the Yorùbá, 'the proverb is the driving force in a discussion'. If an argument becomes entangled, the proverbs are used to restore clarity.

Yorùbá people who lived in the Southwestern part of Nigeria are renowned for their rich cultural heritage which survived until the advent of colonization (Bascom 1969). Moreover, like the Akan of Ghana and Dogon of Mali, the Yorùbá are famous in their use of proverbs to attend to all life situations, hunger, love, hatred, pleasure among other things.

#### **Theoretical Framework: (Sociological Theory)**

One of the most important and popular theories of literature that is accurate to analyse societal issues is Sociological Theory. This is so because, without the daily activities of people in society, there would be nothing like literature because, literature is like the baby of interrelationship of the people in society. Therefore, proverbs as one of the products of the relationships of people and all the natural phenomena in their environment can reasonably be analysed with Sociological Theory of literature.

Barber (1979) reads thus: "Sociology is a way of trying to understand society, its structure, how it works, the forces that bring about changes in it". The opinion of Beier stresses the importance of sociological theory to know deeply about society, and to discover some facts that can bring about changes and developments for peaceful co-existence.

In his own opinion too, Ògúnṣinà (1987) opines that: Literature is concerned with men and his society. It is an art composed of words in such a way that it proffers entertainment, enlightenment and relaxation. It attempts to develop, elevate, expand and transform the experience of its audience. What Ògúnṣinà is also pointing out is that, literature and society are closely interwoven and that all the actions and happenings in the society transform

differently to what is called literature among which proverbs form part. Barber (1979) explains further when he says: "One needs to exploit a theoretical framework that will explain the interrelationship between literature and the society that produces it" The above excerpts also point out that society and literature are inseparable. Proverbs among the Yorùbás is so unique and important to the extent that hardly can a well-cultured Yorùbá person speak without the inclusion of accurate proverbs at the appropriate time in his/her discussions. In his own view too, Ajibádé (2009) says: Sociological theory is broadly categorised into two – macro and micro sociology. But the focus of the two is both on the study of society and interpreting the relationships. Everything bothers the cultural understanding of society and the interpretation an individual can give to various scenes and incidences within a given society.

The summary of the above Ajibádé's opinion is that, though he categorised sociology into micro and macro, yet the focus of the two is to proffer solutions to those cultural issues, traditions and multifarious happenings that may be ambiguous.

Proverbs occur informally in day-to-day verbal communication, their reference being a person or a situation known to both the audience and the user before they are uttered. The Yorùbá value proverbs very highly, for they are wisdom lore of the race. And, because proverbs are traditional, and originate from the observation of natural phenomena and human relations, old people are regarded as a repository of proverbs (Ọlátúnjí 1984).

The language of proverbs has a rich vocabulary of words, phrases, combination of words, symbols, pictures, allusions, associations and comparisons. It is drawn from the whole of society so that every art of society is captured in the proverbs... Symbols belong to proverbs. Indeed, proverbs are symbols of communication packed into short sentences or even anecdote and stories, sometimes carved on wood, stone or other materials, or even sung or danced or acted. They are drawn from and refer to all activities of society, natural objects or phenomena (Mbiti, 1997).

### **Proverb**

A proverb is a short, generally known as a sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation (Mieder, 2004). Proverbs can also be referred to as a short sentence, which is well-known and at times rhythmic, including advice, sage themes and ethnic experiences, comprising simile, metaphor or irony which is well-known among people for its fluent wording, clarity of expression, simplicity, expansiveness, and generality and is used either with or without change. The proverbial expression of Yorùbá is termed *Òwé*. Just like other societies in Africa, Yorùbá people value their proverbs very highly and, they consider it to be the 'wisdom lore for the race' (Ọlátúnjí, 1984). Yorùbá proverbs were derived from Yorùbá literature which include riddles, legends and Ifá oracle, which is said to be an embodiment of Yorùbá philosophy and beliefs (Ọmófóyèwá, 2017). "Proverb is an aphorism, a wise saying, based upon people's experience and is a reflection of the social values and sensibility of the people". Proverb often evolves from traditional lore, history, and religion, and is usually attributed to elders as it is believed to contain words of wisdom from the elders and ancestors" (Ọlátúnjí, 1984). Furthermore, it is important to state that, proverbs are important informative and useful linguistic signs of cultural values and thoughts. Proverbs

constitute a rich resource to analyse the way we process and conceptualize the world. They are a conceptual universal phenomenon with high cross-cultural and communicative value, they also have instructive power. In the traditional African setting, proverbs can be used to instruct the young ones on how to imbibe good conduct. Akporobaro (2006) adds that, "proverbs are used by elders to instruct their fellows about specific codes of conduct and to remind listeners of age-old wisdom and truth". For instance, the Yorùbá proverb *Mọ̀jà mọ̀sá là á mọ̀ akínkánjú lójú ogun* (discretion is a better part of valor). What this proverb means is that, part of being brave and valorous is knowing when to be firm and when to feign soft. In the parlance of sociolinguistics, this proverb encourages one to be tactful in all one does. Another instance is the Yorùbá proverb *Igi gogoro má gún mi lójú, láti òkèrè làá tí wò ó* (one avoids danger at the early stage). What this means is that, it is better to identify a hazard capable of causing a future risk to curb it early. This proverb encourages that one should tackle a problem capable of causing huge consequences from when it is minimal. A proverb is, therefore, a form of language with a special structure and meaning that cannot be easily altered. Although it is a form of language, it is important to examine the meaning of language in general terms.

### **The Ìbòlò in Yorùbá Nation**

The Ìbòlò is a sub-ethnic of Yorùbá based in Òṣun and Kwara States in Nigeria. They are in towns like Òkukù, Odò-Òtìn, Ìjágbo, Èrìn-Òṣun etc (Òṣun state) and Òfà, Èrìn-Ilé, Ganmò, Amóyò and some other town in Kwara state. Ìbòlò dialect is very similar to Òyó dialect, which means the Yorùbá language they speak is very close to the standard Yorùbá of Òyó. Closely related to the Ìgbómìnàs are the Ìbòlò, with their principal town of Òfà. The Ìbòlò are known for their peacock symbol "Omọ Ọlókín" (Children of the peacock) and respected for their passion for wrestling "Ìjàkadi lorò Òfà" (wrestling is the state festival at Òfà). For much of their history, the Ìbòlò remained closely integrated to Òyó empire (Afoláyan, 2004).

The Yorùbá as the umbrella of Ìbòlò, are one of the most popular ethnic groups in West Africa and Africa at large. They are predominantly found in south-western and north-central region of Nigeria and some parts of Benin Republic and Togo. Yorùbá people are surrounded by some minor ethnic groups in Nigeria as well as in Benin. To the northwest in Benin, they share border with the Bariba, the Ebira to the northeast in Central Nigeria, the Nupe to the North and the Edo, Afemai and Esan groups to the east in mid-western Nigeria (<http://answersafrica.com>). The tribe constitutes about 21 percent of the Nigeria population, therefore can be regarded as one of the major tribes and one of the largest ethnic groups in the West African country.

They can be found in Benin Republic and Togo. They are in the diaspora through migration and due to the Atlantic slave trade. Therefore, they can be found around the world as distinct communities in countries like Brazil, U.S.A, Cuba, Jamaica, Venezuela, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago Sierra Leone, Haiti and many others, and that is they have communities like Ọyótúnjì in South Carolina in the United States of America; Itaparica in Brazil of South America and host of others where Yorùbá culture testifies to the meaningful and progressive of Yorùbá existence in the diaspora.

### **Women's Image in Yorùbá Proverbs**

Proverbs are expressions of wisdom acquired through reflection, experience, observation and general knowledge, and they are closely interconnected with the culture of a given society.

To have deeper knowledge and understanding of realities of life, customs, social values and traditions of a society, especially that of gender-power relations, there is the need to examine the proverbs that form significant aspect of linguistic practice of the people. The people to transmit their beliefs, knowledge, wisdom and social values of their society use proverbs (Ajíbádé 2009). There are various ways by which women in Yorùbá nation are referred to among which are: *iyawó* (wife), *iyá/yèyè* (mother), *obinrin* (woman), *adélébò/abílẹ̀kọ* (married woman), *omọge/omidan/wúnńdíá* (spinster), *iyako* (mother-in-law), *omobinrin* (girl), *opó* (widow), *abiyamọ* (nursing mother), *iyáálẹ* (senior wife), *dókodọkọ/aşẹwó* (promiscuous woman), *orogún* (co-wife/rival) etc.

### Women as Mothers and Wives

The vital roles that women play as wives and mothers for the procreation and continuity of human existence are very great, therefore their roles and significance can never be underestimated. Their vital roles in taking good care of their husband, children's upbringing and managing their home can never be underestimated. A matured man without wife is not accorded deserved respect due to the importance of marriage and co-existence of woman and man in the family settings. Some of the proverbial examples that testify to women as wives and mothers are as follows.

1. *Àilóbinrin ò ẹ̀ ẹ̀ dákẹ̀ sí, gbogbo ayé ní í báni gbọ ọ.* (One who has no wife does not keep quiet, everybody should be told about the situation).
2. *Obinrin kíí báni nájà ká pòsẹ owónàà, owó fíla fíla ní wọn ní kó ranni.* (Women do not trade with one for someone to lack and complain of poverty, because they usually bring in fortunes).
3. *Abiyamọ kíí gbọ ẹkun omọ rẹ kó má tatí were.* (A mother does not hear her child crying and refuses to respond).
4. *Ọrísà bí iyá kò sí, ta ní jẹ ẹ bi ẹni tó bí ní lójó tó bá nira?* (There is no god like mother, who will act as one's mother during the suffering moments).
5. *Bámi na omọ mi kò dénú iyálomọ.* (A mother is not always sincere when she asks people to beat her child on her behalf).
6. *Àpónlẹ kò sí fún ọba tí kò ní ọlórí* (There is no respect for a king without a queen). Proverbs 1 and 6 above testify to the importance of companionship of women in men's life which is seriously taken as collective responsibility by the entire community with necessary solutions. A matured man that is due to get married who refuses, and a king without a queen are not accorded deserved honour in the society due to the relevance of womanhood in societal settings. More so, due to the closeness and unreserved love of women for their children who will always do everything humanly possible to protect them is seen in the proverbs 3, 4 and 5 above.
7. *Bí obinrin kò bá jowú, ọbẹ kíí dùn.* (If a woman is not jealous, her food will not be delicious).
8. *Obinrin burúkú ẹẹ fẹ, àna burúkú ní kò ẹẹ ní.* (One can marry a wicked woman, but it is dangerous to have a wicked in-law).
9. *Ọbẹ tí baálẹ ilẹ kíí jẹ, iyáálẹ ilẹ kíí sẹ ẹ.* (The eldest wife does not prepare the soup that her husband does not like).
10. *Omọ tí kò bá ní iyá kíí gbé egbò ẹyin.* (A child who has no mother should not keep a sore on his back)

The rivalry and jealous nature of women in the polygamous family where competitions to be their husband's favourite is testified to in proverb 7, while the relevance of good in-law especially mother-in-law for a successful marriage is attested to in proverb 8 above.

Also, for a successful marital relationship, it is expected of a good wife not to trespass her husband's boundary nor behave contrary to her husband's wish. That is why there is Yorùbá proverb like number 9 above which says, a good wife should not cook a kind of soup that her husband does not like. This means, women must be obedient to their husband according to Yorùbá philosophy of life. Proverb 10 above is also an example of Yorùbá proverb that intensifies the closeness of mother and the child. A child without mother may be cheated unnecessarily, but which may not be taken lightly by mothers because, women can fight with their last breath even at spiritual realm because of their children.

#### **Promiscuous and Funny Nature of Women**

11. Ojú ló n rójú ʃàánú, adélébò tó n gba àlè fún àpón. (It is a matter of being sympathetic that makes a married woman to date bachelor).
12. Bí obinrin bá rojò ọkọ fún àlè, kò le ro ti àlè fún ọkọ. (If the woman gossips about her husband for her concubine, she cannot gossip about the concubine to her husband)
13. Kò jẹ kí n gbádùn ni obinrin n gba ọrẹ fún. (He is pressurising me' are those men that women make friends with)
14. Bí obinrin bá ʃe àidára tán, 'mo ha mò' ní í kẹyìn wọn. (It is 'had I known' that women always give as excuse after committing atrocities).
15. A kii bi dókòdòkò kó má rí rò (A promiscuous wife will always have an excuse to make).
16. Adásínìlòrùn obinrin ịsọnu, tí í tún aṣọ ró lójú baba ọkọ. (It is a promiscuous wife that adjusts wrappers in front of her father-in-law).

It is pertinent to note that, many Yorùbá proverbs portray women negatively most especially as promiscuous due to some avoidable pressure from mens folk. Some of the examples of those proverbs are 11,12,13,14,15 and 16 above which reveal how cheap some women may be to have extra-marital affairs with bachelors; revealing her husband's secret to their concubines; adjusting wrapper in front of father-in-law which may lead to abomination; falling to consistent pressures of men to double-dating or living promiscuous life, etc. Women are also tagged as those who always regret avoidable mistakes after the deed has been done and who will always have flimsy excuse whenever they are caught messing up.

Where and how marriage is contracted also have great impacts on the success and continuity of the household in the Yorùbá Ìbòlò society, hence,

17. Ìyàwó tí a fẹ́ lójú ijó, iran ni yóò wò lọ. (A marriage contracted at a party will be ended by the wife's frequent party attendance).
- Therefore, Yorùbá people are very careful when it comes to the issue of contracting marriage so as not to have negative effects at the long run. Yorùbá people usually follow protocols of consulting good families whenever their matured wards are due for marriage.
18. Obinrin lódàlẹ̀, obinrin lèkẹ̀, kẹ̀yàn má fínú hàn fòbinrin, ikú tí í paní nì. (Women are treacherous people, women are liars, let no man keep secrets with a woman, they are deadly).
- In Yorùbá society, women are seen as those who have close connections with evil spirits that can carelessly kill their husband because of flimsy excuse and collaborations with external forces. This is also attested to in Ifá corpus of Ọ̀wónrín méjì, ẹ̀ṣẹ́ kẹ́fà of Abimbólá's Ìjìnlẹ̀

Ohùn Ènu Ifá where it is believed that if a man is to be killed easily, his wife should be closely contacted. It is believed in Yorùbá philosophy that man should never keep deadly or sensitive secrets with his woman or else those secrets would later be utilised against him or to kill him. Another synonymous proverb that testifies to women's nature of not fit to keep secrets and their dangerous nature, according to Yorùbá philosophy, also goes thus: 'ògbèrì kò nínú ikóròsì, bèè ni àtárì obinrin kò lè gba erù awo dúró'. (The un-initiated cannot keep secrets, so also women cannot keep secrets. It is not safe to keep top secrets with women because of their nature.

More so, women could be deadly at the realm of keeping many concubines at a time secretly without knowing one another. Some women are so promiscuous to the extent of dating several men beside her legitimate husband. Many of them are so clever that those men will never suspect each other talk less of the husband. This can even lead to illegitimate pregnancy and bastard children. Apart from that, it is the concubines that always know the husband which may even lead to an untimely death of the legitimate husband when the enjoyments of the promiscuous life reached a climax. Therefore, death may come from either the concubines or even the promiscuous wife. Hence, the proverb 19 below:

19. Obinrin bíṃọ́ fúnni kò pé kó má pani, obinrin kò pé kó má pani, obinrin ní àlè mǝfà, àlè mǝfà wọ́n ọ́ mọ́ra wọ́n. (Whether or not a woman is the mother of your children does not prevent her from murdering you; a woman has six concubines and none of the concubines know one another).

Other female vices exhibited in Yorùbá proverbs is waywardness and stubbornness. Some women, after they have been suspected of their wayward life by the husbands may destabilise the whole situations by fomenting troubles with the husbands in order to cover up. That is what Yorùbá proverb 20 below attests that:

20. Obinrin pẹ́ lóde, ọ́ fògbójú wọ́lé. (A woman kept late outside but enters house with bold face).
21. Àirọ́mọ́bí àgàn ló ń mú un dábáá àbíkú, ọ́ ní kóun tilẹ́ bí i silẹ́ kó sì kú. (Childlessness frustrates a barren woman to suggest giving birth to àbíkú, she doesn't care if the child die immediately). Due to the importance attached to childbearing in Yorùbá African society, some barren women may go to any extent to give birth to a child in order to be accorded the respects for mothers in the society so as not to be tagged as barren and wicked.

22. Obinrin sọwà nù, ọ́ lóun ọ́ mórí ọ́kọ́ wáyé. (When a woman is morally bankrupt, she will conclude of being unfortunate to secure good husband)

Good characters, moral uprightness and societal accepted behaviour are part of the characteristics Yorùbá people take to considerations in marriage contracts, hence, a lady of bad characters may remain for years as spinster due to bad behaviour. That is why some other Yorùbá proverbs say 'iwà lẹwà' (good character supersedes beauty); and 'obinrin tó dára tí kò níwà, asán ló jẹ́'. ( A pretty woman who is morally bankrupt is a useless woman) apart from proverb 22 above which says that a lady may be complaining of not being lucky to get a good husband, not considering that she caused the calamities for herself due to unaccepted behaviour.

23. Òrìṣà jẹ́ n pé méjì obinrin kò dénú. (A woman's prayer to have a co-wife is not heartfelt). No matter what, women are not always comfortable in polygamous home in Yorùbá society which is also attested to by Ifá corpus of 'Ọ̀wónrín Méjì'. The above proverb 23 explicates

that even if it is the woman that initiates her husband to marry another wife for any reason whatsoever. It is not heartfelt at all, they are not happy about it, jealousy, restlessness and many other troubles surround acceptance.

Yorùbá people are so disciplined that immediately they know the legitimate fiancée of their daughter, they guide against seeing other men parading or wooing her in order not to cause troubles of double-dating or molest their family with immoral behaviour, and that is why there is a Yorùbá proverb that says:

24. A kii mọ ọkọ ọmọ ká tún mọ àlè rẹ. (It is forbidden to know a daughter's legitimate husband and know her concubine as well).
25. Epo ló ẹ ẹ ẹṣu, àkàsò ló dùn ún gun àkà, obinrin dùn ún bá sùn ju ọkùnrin lẹ. (It is the best to eat yam with oil and the best thing to climb a granary is with a ladder, it is more pleasant for a man to fuck woman than man).

What the above proverb 25 is teaching the society is discouraging the trend of homosexuality which is not acceptable in Yorùbá nation. In recent years, the issue of gay and lesbianism has crept into the society all in the name of civilizations and modernization. This is to alert people of societal norms and to run away from unacceptable actions that may cause calamities in society.

#### **Rivalry and Jealous Nature of Women**

There is general notion that women generally do not feel comfortable having rivals in their husband's house. Even when they are still damsel in their youthful stage, having rivals doesn't go down well female gender, hence the issue of jealousy sets in. So far, proverb is one of the oral traditions that mirrors African ways of life, therefore, there are Yorùbá proverbs that portray Ìbòlọ women about their rivalry and jealous nature, some of which are as follow:

26. Oṣiṣà jẹ n pé méjì obinrin kò dènú (A woman's prayer to have a co-wife is not heartfelt)
27. Bi obinrin kò bá lórogún, ọbẹ ọkọ kii dùn (If a woman has no rival, the husband's soup is not prepared with intention of making it delicious).
28. Ìdí ni orogún, kò sí ọṣẹ tí a lè fí ọ mọ (Co-wives are anus, no quantity of soap can wash it clean).
29. Obinrin tí kò lórogún, kò mọ àrùn tí ń ẹ ọ̀n (A woman who has no co-wife (rival) does not yet realise what disease she has contacted).
30. Má dó mi má dó iyáálé mi, òbò ẹni là á fowó mú (Do not fuck me, do not fuck my senior co-wife, one must control only one's vagina).
31. Obinrin m̀erindínlógún ní ń ẹ lódè Sàngó, Oya ní tó ba ẹ tẹmi ni, pẹpẹfúró ló mú ọ̀n gbọkọ lówó gbogbo wọn (Sàngó has sixteen women but it is the tenderly care Oya that makes her become the favourite).
32. Obinrin dí méjì owú de (When women become two in number, jealousy sets in). Looking at the proverbs number 26 to 32 above, it is crystal clear that women are naturally rivalrous and can go to any length to subdue their opponents especially in the polygamous settings. Proverb number 26 shows that even if a woman prays for a co-wife, it is just a deceitful prayer. Proverb 27 explains that in a polygamous setting, each woman always prepares her soup deliciously to win the heart of the husband. The simple meaning of proverb number 28 is that no matter how close the co-wives, there are still little grudges inside their hearts as rivals. Proverb 29 explains that, until a woman has a rival, she wouldn't realise her

weaknesses in the household. Number 30<sup>th</sup> proverb is a warning signal for a woman who doesn't allow sexual intercourse with the husband always that she may soon be forgotten and packed off in her matrimonial home. It is clearly explanatory in proverb number 31 that out of the sixteen wives of Sàngó, Oya subdued them with her tenderness and became the favourite and apple of Sàngó's eyes, while the number 32<sup>nd</sup> proverb simply means that immediately a man marries a second wife, rivalry and jealousy set in naturally and competition begins almost immediately.

### Conclusion

We shall conclude by pointing to the fact that, though there are many women-related proverbs in Yorùbá society of which high percentage of them mostly mirror the negative aspects of women, men are the causes of some situation's women find themselves because of the perceived superiority of men over women as laid down by the African culture, right from the time immemorial. Meanwhile, women are like salt in the soup and sugar in the palp of any society without which the society will remain standstill because of the unequal relevance of women in the societal development in procreation, child-upbringing, companionship, economic enhancement etc, and their roles as peaceful and charming creatures that possess seductive qualities to tune men folks to order for peaceful co-existence in the society. Therefore, it is not enough to point accusing fingers at female folks due to some of their weaknesses according to many negative Yorùbá proverbs against them, but reflects on their relevance as part of the pillars that hold the existence of any given society. The relevance of women can never be over-emphasised.

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