

**THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIGENOUS
SONGS, PRAISE POETRY AND PROVERBS AMONG
SELECTED COMMUNITIES OF THE KETU PEOPLE OF
OGUN STATE**

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ABSTRACT

The socio-cultural significance of indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs among selected communities of the Ketu people of Ogun State has not received enough scholarly research. The observation is that Yoruba oral literature has been receiving considerable scholarly attention while insufficient scholarly effort has been devoted to documenting and analysing the distinctive oral traditions of the Ketu people of Ogun State. Consequently, many indigenous songs, praise poems and proverbs remain inadequately documented despite their importance in preserving the history, language, philosophy, moral values and cultural identity of the people. The study, therefore, identified and documented selected Ketu oral art forms, examined their stylistic features, analysed their socio-cultural functions and investigated their contributions to the preservation and propagation of Ketu cultural heritage and communal memory. The study, also, aimed at contributing to scholarship on African oral literature, folklore and Yoruba studies having addressed an existing knowledge gap in the documentation and analyses of Ketu oral traditions.

The study adopted a qualitative research design based on fieldwork. Primary data were collected through oral interviews, participant observation, live performances and audio recordings from knowledgeable custodians of Ketu oral traditions across their selected communities in Ogun State. Secondary data were equally obtained from relevant books, journal articles and other scholarly publications on African oral literature, Yoruba oral traditions and folklore. A purposeful sample of sixty-five (65) oral texts consisting of fifteen (15) indigenous songs, ten (10) praise poems and forty (40) proverbs were analysed in this study by using Functionalist Theory and Aesthetic Theory.

Findings revealed that indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs remain indispensable components of Ketu oral tradition. Indigenous songs function as instruments of moral instruction, social criticism, communal mobilisation, historical preservation, entertainment and cultural education. Praise poetry preserves ancestry, genealogy, migration stories, communal identity and historical memory while celebrating virtues such as courage, integrity, diligence and leadership. Proverbs communicate indigenous philosophy, regulate social behaviour, promote peaceful coexistence and preserve communal wisdom through concise and figurative expressions. The study further established that these oral art forms possess remarkable aesthetic qualities expressed through imagery, symbolism, metaphor, repetition, rhythm, dialectical variation and performance techniques which enhance audience participation and artistic appreciation. It also revealed that modernisation, urbanisation, religious transformation, migration and the declining use of the Ketu dialect constitute major threats to the continuity of these oral traditions.

The study concluded that indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs remain vital reservoirs of Ketu history, identity, cultural values and indigenous knowledge. It recommended systematic documentation of Ketu oral traditions through audio-visual recordings and written transcription, greater inclusion of indigenous oral literature in educational programmes, encouragement of intergenerational transmission through festivals and cultural activities, increased scholarly research on other aspects of Ketu oral heritage, amongst others. The study, therefore, contributed to the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the Ketu people of Ogun State.

Keywords: Ketu people, oral literature, indigenous songs, praise poetry, proverbs.

Word Count: 470

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this Dissertation was carried out by **TAIWO, OLAMIDE EMMANUEL** with Matric Number - **PAR/FR/24/25/0021** in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated graciously to God Almighty for Jeremiah 29:11.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

African societies, overtime, have historically preserved their histories, beliefs, customs, philosophies and communal experiences through oral tradition. Before the development and widespread use of writing systems in many indigenous African communities, knowledge was transmitted through verbal and performative forms, for example: songs, folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, chants, praise poetry, rituals and festivals. Oral literature, therefore, became an important cultural mechanism through which communities sustained their values, identity and historical consciousness. According to Finnegan (1977), oral literature in Africa possesses artistic, social and intellectual qualities comparable to the written literature because it reflects the collective experiences and worldview of the people.

Oral literature refers to the very artistic verbal expressions transmitted orally from one generation to another within a community. Unlike written literature, oral literature depends largely on memory, performance, audience participation, repetition, tonal variation and communal interaction. Ong (2002) observes that oral cultures organise and preserve knowledge through rhythmic and repetitive patterns which also aid memorisation and continuity. Oral performances are, thus, not merely acts of entertainment but important cultural activities through which indigenous societies transmit moral instruction, historical narratives, social values and communal philosophy. In many African societies, oral tradition functions as a living library of communal memory. Through oral narratives and performances, communities preserve migration histories, genealogies, spiritual beliefs, political structures and indigenous knowledge systems. Okpewho (1992) explains that African oral traditions serve sorts of social and cultural purposes beyond

aesthetics because they help to maintain social order and reinforce communal identity. Oral tradition also strengthens intergenerational continuity by connecting younger members of society with the experiences and wisdom of their ancestors.

Among the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria, oral art forms are of central position in social and cultural life. Indigenous oral expressions are deeply integrated into festivals, marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies, religious worship, kingship institutions, funerals and daily interaction. Yoruba oral tradition includes songs, praise poetry, proverbs, riddles, chants, myths, folktales and ritual performances. These forms function as instruments of education, entertainment, moral instruction and social regulation within the society. Recent studies by Badru et al. (2025) reveal that Yoruba oral performances continue to preserve communal values and indigenous cultural practices despite the growing influence of modernisation and westernisation. Indigenous songs constitute one of the most vibrant aspects of African oral tradition. Such songs accompany social ceremonies, religious rituals, communal labour, celebrations and mourning. Indigenous songs often embody communal wisdom, historical experiences, satire, praise, resistance and spiritual expression. In Yoruba society, songs serve both aesthetic and functional purposes as they educate, entertain, mobilise and preserve social memory. Olaleru (2025) notes that Yoruba oral performances continue to retain important traditional features such as rhythm, repetition, symbolism and audience participation even within changing contemporary contexts.

Praise poetry, also known as *oriki*, remains a significant aspect of Yoruba oral literature. Yoruba praise poetry, commonly expressed through *oríkì*, celebrates the identity, ancestry, achievements, occupations and social status of individuals, families, communities and deities. Praise poetry combines the use of poetic language, imagery, metaphor, drumming and performance techniques in ways that reinforce communal belonging and historical consciousness. According to

Oloko et al. (2025), Yoruba praise poetry functions not only as verbal artistry but also as socio-cultural instruments for preserving lineage history and indigenous identity. Through praise chants and poetic expressions, oral art performers sustain the memory of heroes, ancestors, rulers and notable communal figures.

Proverbs equally occupy an important position within Yoruba oral communication. Proverbs are shortened expressions of wisdom which reflect the philosophy, ethics, beliefs and practical experiences of a people. Among the Yoruba, proverbs are regarded as important rhetorical devices used to instruct, caution, advise and resolve conflicts. Proverbs often communicate complex ideas through symbolism, metaphor and figurative language. Mabawonku (2022) observes that Yoruba proverbs continue to influence modern communication and musical expressions because they remain powerful carriers of indigenous wisdom and cultural philosophy. Proverbs, therefore, function as reservoir of communal knowledge and moral values within the society.

The Ketu people of Ogun State possess rich oral traditions which are reflecting in their indigenous songs, praise poetry, proverbs, rituals and festivals. In Ketu communities, oral performances continue to preserve communal history, cultural identity, traditional institutions and indigenous beliefs. Through songs and praise poetry, social experiences and ancestral memories are transmitted from one generation to another. Proverbs equally regulate social interaction and communicate communal wisdom within the society. Oral art performers, elders, drummers, chanters and traditional custodians, thus, play important roles in sustaining the cultural heritage of the people.

However, modernisation, urban migration, religious transformation, technological advancement and declining interest in the use of indigenous languages have increasingly

threatened the survival of many African oral traditions. Younger generations are gradually becoming detached from traditional oral performances and indigenous cultural practices. Oyewale (2025) argues that many Yoruba oral traditions now face serious problems of conservation because of changing social realities and the growing influence of foreign cultural nuances. The gradual decline in the use of indigenous oral practices creates the need for scholarly documentation and critical examination of these traditions before valuable aspects of them disappear completely.

Despite existing studies on Yoruba oral literature, limited scholarly attention has been devoted specifically to the socio-cultural significance of indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs of the Ketu people of Ogun State. Most previous researches examine Yoruba oral traditions from broader perspectives without focusing adequately on the peculiar oral expressions and cultural realities of Ketu communities. This study, therefore, examines the socio-cultural significance of indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs among selected communities of the Ketu people of Ogun State with a view of understanding their functions in cultural preservation, communal identity, moral instruction, historical memory and social interaction.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study aims at determining the socio-cultural significance of indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs of the Ketu people of Ogun State; while its objectives are:

1. to identify and document selected sixty-five (65) oral art forms, which are to include: fifteen (15) indigenous songs, ten (10) praise poems and forty (40) proverbs of Ketu communities in Ogun State;
2. to examine the stylistic features of the selected indigenous songs, praise poems and proverbs in the Ketu dialect of Yoruba;

3. to analyse the socio-cultural functions of indigenous songs within Ketu communities, especially in relation to their use in events, communal and cultural life;
4. to investigate the role of praise poems in expressing identity, ancestry, lineage, history, reputation and social status of families and communities of the Ketu people;
5. to examine how proverbs function as instruments of advice, moral instruction, motivation, caution, social regulation, satire, reconciliation and indigenous philosophy in Ketu society; and
6. to explore how these oral art forms contribute to the preservation and propagation of cultural heritage, moral instruction and communal memory among selected Ketu communities.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite ample scholarly contributions to Yoruba oral literature, there remains insufficient academic attention to the specific oral traditions, linguistic heritage and cultural expressions of the Ketu people of Ogun State. Most existing reseraches on Yoruba oral literature discuss Yoruba culture from generalised perspectives without adequately focusing on the peculiar historical experiences, oral performances and socio-cultural realities of Ketu-speaking communities within Yewa land. Consequently, many indigenous songs, praise poetry traditions, proverbs, chants and oral performances among the Ketu people remain undocumented, under-studied and insufficiently analysed in literary scholarship.

The problem becomes more serious in view of the growing threats facing indigenous African cultures and languages in contemporary society. Modernisation, urbanisation, migration, western education, religious transformation, technological advancement and declining interest in

indigenous languages have increasingly weakened the transmission of oral traditions from older to younger generations.

Furthermore, there is a noticeable gap in literary and cultural scholarship concerning how these oral art forms function as instruments of communal identity, indigenous philosophy, cultural preservation, moral instruction and historical memory among the Ketu people. Another dimension of the problem lies in the gradual disappearance of many oral performances due to inadequate documentation and scholarly preservation. Since oral traditions largely depend on memory and performance, many valuable indigenous expressions risk extinction when custodians of such traditions die without transmitting them to future generations. This situation creates an urgent need for systematic scholarly investigation and documentation of Ketu oral traditions before important aspects of the people's cultural heritage become permanently lost.

Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by examining the socio-cultural significance of indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs among selected communities of the Ketu people of Ogun State. This study contributes to the documentation, preservation and scholarly understanding of Ketu oral traditions while also demonstrating their relevance to communal identity, indigenous knowledge systems and cultural continuity.

1.4. Thesis

This study argues that indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs among the Ketu people of Ogun State are interconnected oral traditions that preserve cultural heritage, transmit indigenous knowledge, reinforce communal identity and perform enduring socio-cultural functions despite the challenges of modernisation.

1.5 Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research method. It is based on fieldwork (ethnography) where the oral art forms are collected among selected communities of the Ketu people of Ogun State. The primary data are collated through oral interviews, participant observation, audio recordings and translation of the language used during the observed performances. Oral custodians such as elders, traditional singers, praise poets and community storytellers served as key informants. The researcher's personal observations of some cultural choral groups during live performances are also relied upon. Secondary data are sourced from books, journals and scholarly works on Yoruba oral literature, folklore, African oral traditions, functionalist theory and aesthetic theory.

For the purpose of analysis, the study selected a total of sixty-five (65) oral texts collected from informants. These include fifteen (15) indigenous songs, ten (10) praise poems and forty (40) proverbs. These oral texts were collected in their original Kẹtu dialect of Yoruba and later translated into English for analytical purpose. The choice of this purposive sampling is needed in order to focus on culturally rich and relevant oral materials that best represent the socio-cultural practices of the selected communities.

The analysis of the data was textual and interpretive. The indigenous songs were examined based on their themes, performance context and social functions. The praise poems were analysed in terms of structure, imagery, historical references and cultural significance. The proverbs were interpreted based on their meanings, philosophical contents and socio-cultural relevance in Ketu society. Attention were also be given to linguistic features such as symbolism, metaphor, repetition, tonal expression and idiomatic usage.

1.6 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What indigenous songs, praise poems and proverbs can be identified and documented among selected Ketu communities in Ogun State?
2. What stylistic characteristics are present in indigenous songs, praise poems and proverbs in the Ketu dialect of Yoruba?
3. What sociocultural functions do indigenous songs perform within Ketu communities, especially in events and communal activities?
4. How does praise poetry contribute to the expression of identity, ancestry, lineage, history, reputation and social status of families and communities among the Ketu people?
5. In what ways do proverbs serve as instruments of advice, moral instruction, motivation, caution, social regulation, satire, reconciliation and indigenous philosophy in Ketu society?
6. How do indigenous songs, praise poems and proverbs contribute to the preservation and sustenance of cultural heritage, moral instruction and communal memory among selected Ketu communities?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it contributes to the understanding of African oral literature as a vital source of indigenous knowledge, cultural identity and social organisation. Oral traditions remain central to the preservation of history, morality, philosophy and communal values in African societies.

Importantly, this study is important to scholarship in African oral literature and folklore. By focusing on indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs among selected communities of the Ketu people of Ogun State, the research expands existing knowledge on Yoruba oral traditions.

While many studies have examined Yoruba oral literature broadly, this study provides a more focused examination of Ketu oral expressions; thereby, filling a noticeable gap in regional and linguistic scholarship. Okpewho (1992) emphasises that localised studies of oral traditions are essential for understanding the diversity and complexity of African oral cultures.

Again, the study is significant to cultural preservation. Many indigenous oral traditions are increasingly endangered due to modernisation, urban migration, religious change and declining use of indigenous languages. Oyewale (2025) notes that Yoruba oral poetry and other traditional verbal arts face challenges of continuity in contemporary society. This study therefore serves as a form of documentation that helps to preserve indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs for future generations.

Besides, the study is relevant to language and its development. By analysing collected oral texts in the Ketu dialect of Yoruba, the study highlights the richness of indigenous unique expressions and contributes to the preservation of dialectal variation within the Yoruba language. This is important because dialects carry unique cultural meanings, idioms and worldviews that may not be fully captured in standard forms of the language.

In addition, the study is significant for educational purposes. Indigenous oral literature is a valuable instructional resource that can be used in teaching moral values, history, social ethics and cultural awareness. Proverbs, songs and praise poetry often contain lessons that can support character development and cultural education in schools. According to Mabawonku (2022), Yoruba proverbs remain effective tools for conveying wisdom and guiding behaviour in both traditional and modern contexts. This study documents the lessons attached to the sixty-five oral texts collected through its in-depth analysis.

Moreover, the study contributes to cultural identity and community awareness among the Ketu people. Oral traditions such as songs and praise poetry help individuals and communities understand their origins, values and social structures. They also strengthen communal unity and pride. Through documentation and analysis, this study helps to reinforce awareness of cultural heritage among younger generations.

The study, lastly, remains useful for future researchers in African oral literature, folklore, linguistic and cultural studies. It is so because it is a reference point for further academic investigation into Yoruba dialects and oral traditions, especially within the under-researched communities of Ketu-speaking people of Ogun State.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study examines the socio-cultural significance of indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs among selected Ketu communities in Ogun State. It focuses on how these oral art forms preserve cultural values, communal identity, historical memory and indigenous knowledge among the people.

The study remains limited to selected Ketu-speaking communities in Yewa land of Ogun State. It analysed fifteen (15) indigenous songs, ten (10) praise poems and forty (40) proverbs collected in the Ketu dialect of Yoruba and translated into English for interpretation.

This research concentrates mainly on the socio-cultural functions and aesthetic features of these collected oral art forms. It also applies Functionalist Theory and Aesthetic Theory as its theoretical framework for in-depth analysis.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Oral Literature: These are verbal artistic expressions transmitted from one generation to another through speech, performance, chanting, singing and recitation within a given culture.

Songs: These are traditional musical expressions performed during ceremonies, festivals, rituals and communal activities to entertain, educate and preserve culture.

Praise Poetry: Oral poetic expressions used to celebrate individuals, families, communities, ancestors, rulers, occupations and communal achievements.

Oral Poetry: Poetic compositions transmitted and performed orally through chants, songs and recitations within the community.

Proverbs: They are short traditional sayings that express wisdom, moral lessons and communal experiences.

Indigene: A native member of the Ketu community with ancestral and cultural ties to the area.

Dialect: The distinct variety of the Yoruba language spoken by a group of people of common communal identity; for example, Kena for Ketu people, Ijebu for Ijebu people, Egba for Egba land and et.c.

Yoruba: One of the major ethnic groups in southwestern Nigeria with a rich cultural and oral literary heritage.

Ketu: The subgroup of the Yoruba people occupying parts of Yewa land in Ogun State and sharing common linguistic and cultural traditions.

Yewa/Yewa land: The geographical and cultural region in Ogun State inhabited largely by Yewa-speaking Yoruba communities in Imeko/Afon and Yewa North Local Government Areas

Beliefs: Accepted religious, spiritual and cultural ideas held by the Ketu people.

Customs: Traditional ways of behaviour and communal practices observed by a group of people.

Traditions: Inherited cultural practices, values and customs passed from one generation to another.

Events: Organised social or cultural occasions.

Social Values: Accepted principles and standards guiding behaviour and relationships within a community.

Identity: The cultural and communal sense of belonging shared a group of people.

Cultural Transmission: The process through which cultural knowledge and practices are passed from older generations to younger ones.

Performance: The artistic presentation of oral texts through singing, chanting, recitation, drumming and dramatic expression.

Communal Interaction: Social relationships and participation among members of the community during oral performances and cultural activities.

Tonal Variation: Changes in pitch and voice modulation used to create meaning and artistic effect in oral performances.

Moral Values: Principles of good conduct and behaviour promoted through oral traditions.

Wisdom: Practical knowledge and life experience expressed through proverbs and oral traditions.

Ancestors: Deceased forebears believed to maintain spiritual and cultural influence within the community.

Imagery: Descriptive and symbolic expressions that create mental pictures in oral performances.

Drumming and Dancing: Musical and bodily performances accompanying oral expressions during cultural activities.

Oral Performance: Live presentation of oral literature before an audience through speech, music, gesture and movement.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of Related Literature

Oral literature occupies a central position in African cultural expression and serves as a repository of indigenous knowledge, historical consciousness, communal values and social experiences. Among the Yorùbá people, oral literature exists in different forms, such as: indigenous songs, praise poetry (*oríki*), proverbs (*òwe*), folktales (*àlò*), riddles (*àlò àpamó*), myths (*ìtàn àròsọ*), legends, chants (*ìjálá, èsà, rárà*), incantations (*ofò* or *ògèdè*), dirges (*èkún iyàwó* or funeral laments) and oral history (*ìtàn*). These genres function not only as artistic creations but also as instruments for preserving cultural heritage, transmitting moral values, reinforcing communal identity and sustaining social order. Contemporary scholarships generally acknowledge the importance of these oral forms being vehicles of cultural continuity; although, scholars differ in their emphases on their literary, historical, educational, performative and socio-cultural dimensions.

A major pinpoint in oral literature scholarship is the role of indigenous songs as repositories of communal memory and cultural identity. Finnegan (1977:23) argues that songs are among the most pervasive forms of oral literature because of their adaptability to different social contexts and their ability to communicate communal values through performance. Similarly, Okpewho (1992:28) maintains that songs are not merely musical compositions but verbal art forms whose meanings emerge through the interaction between performer, audience and performance context. This position is reinforced by Beier (1956:23), cited in Onyejekwe and Ikeokwu (2013:67-68), who observes that there is virtually no occasion in Yorùbá life that is not accompanied by songs. According to him, songs accompany births, marriages, funerals and everyday life. This shows that

songs are integral aspect of Yorùbá cultural existence. Songs also serve as instruments of social commentary and communal regulation. Asigbo and Lotachukwu (2022:123) observe that traditional singers often function as social critics who challenge undesirable behaviour and celebrate communal ideals through song performance. Nwosu (2024:85) further notes that funeral songs, praise songs and ritual songs frequently address issues relating to morality, leadership, religion and communal welfare. Such findings reveal the relevant role of songs in shaping collective consciousness and maintaining social stability.

Recent studies continue to emphasise the cultural significance of songs. Odeh (2021:9) observes that indigenous songs preserve African worldviews, communal identities and traditional values despite the pressures of modernisation. Ekpe (2024:8) similarly notes that oral songs function as living libraries through which historical experiences and indigenous knowledge are preserved. Both scholars agree that songs serve as channels through which communities maintain connections with their past. However, while Odeh focuses on the survival of songs in contemporary society, Ekpe places greater emphasis on their role in preserving historical memory and cultural continuity. The educational and moral dimensions of songs have also received considerable scholarly attention. Nwosu, Ibezim and Ugochukwu (2021:85) argue that indigenous songs function as informal educational tools through which children learn communal responsibilities, social norms and acceptable behaviour. Their position aligns with earlier observations by Finnegan (1977) and Okpewho (1992), who contend that oral songs combine entertainment with instruction. These studies demonstrate that songs contribute significantly to socialisation and moral development within traditional African societies. Scholars further emphasise the performative nature of oral songs. Kolawole (2023:29) argues that oral texts derive their full meaning from performance, where text, music, performer, audience and dramatic

expression interact to create artistic experience. Ohia (2024:12) similarly notes that the artistic value of oral songs becomes fully realised during live performance. This performative perspective extends earlier literary approaches by demonstrating that songs are dynamic artistic events rather than static verbal texts.

Popularly related to indigenous songs is praise poetry, also known as *oríkì*. Contemporary scholarship consistently identifies *oríkì* as one of the most significant genres of Yorùbá oral literature because of its role in preserving identity, genealogy and historical memory. Sanni (2023:1220) defines *oríkì* as a genre whose content derives from history, character, lineage, achievements, appearance and other attributes of individuals, families or communities. According to him, praise poetry functions both as an aesthetic form and as a cultural archive through which Yorùbá history and values are preserved. One recurring theme in the literature is the historical and mnemonic function of praise poetry. Orotoye (2023:19) argues that *oríkì* serves as a cultural memory system that preserves lineage and identity through symbolic naming and allusion. Similarly, Welch (2019) views praise poetry as a ritualised form of spoken history through which collective experiences are recalled and transmitted. Barber (1999:2), cited in Sanni (2023:1222), and similarly maintains that *oríkì* provides an accessible means of tracing family lineage and celebrating ancestral achievements. These scholars converge on the view that praise poetry preserves historical knowledge and reinforces communal identity.

The objects of praise poetry have also attracted scholarly attention. Oloko, Yusuff and Fatuase (2025:47) observe that praise poetry extends beyond individuals to include deities, lineage groups, communities and symbolic figures. Bukola (2024:12) notes that praises directed at deities such as Sàngó, Òṣun and Ọgún reinforce spiritual beliefs and ritual practices by presenting divine beings through symbolic and metaphorical language. Armstrong (2024:369) similarly argues that

town praise names function as collective identity markers through which communities are represented as historical and cultural entities. Recent studies further highlight the stylistic richness of praise poetry. Oloko et al. (2025) identify metaphor, repetition, parallelism and idiomatic expressions as major stylistic features that elevate the objects of praise beyond their ordinary status. Armstrong (2022) likewise observes that stylistic variation contributes significantly to the emotional and performative intensity of praise poetry. Carter-Ényì (2021) extends this discussion by emphasising the performative dimension of *oríkì*, arguing that audience participation, rhythm, gesture and musical accompaniment contribute to the construction of meaning during performance. The social and psychological functions of praise poetry have also received scholarly recognition. Orotoye (2023) argues that praise poetry serves therapeutic purposes by affirming identity, restoring dignity and promoting emotional well-being. Contemporary scholars further observe that praise poetry continues to adapt to changing social realities. Akporobaro (2012) notes that *oríkì* may be used for both commendation and condemnation, while Bukola (2024) demonstrates that modern praise poetry increasingly celebrates political leaders, celebrities and institutions. These developments illustrate the adaptability of the genre and its continued relevance in contemporary society.

Another important genre of Yorùbá oral literature is the proverb. Proverbs occupy a central position in African oral traditions because they embody communal wisdom, moral instruction and social regulation. Akporobaro (2012:78) describes proverbs as powerful instruments for transmitting culture, morality and social values from one generation to another. Finnegan (1977), cited in Ashipu (2013:10), similarly observes that proverbs occur extensively in African conversations and oratory, where they are employed to embellish speech, conceal meaning and communicate wisdom indirectly. One of the major concerns in proverb scholarship is their role as

instruments of moral correction and social regulation. Adeeko (2019:158) argues that African proverbs function as socially encoded instructions that regulate behaviour while preserving communal harmony. Odebunmi (2021:62) similarly contends that Yorùbá proverbs serve as moral templates through which honesty, diligence, respect and responsibility are defined and reinforced. Both scholars agree that proverbs provide effective mechanisms for correcting undesirable behaviour without direct confrontation.

The educational significance of proverbs is another area of scholarly consensus. Finnegan (1977) observes that proverbial expressions play an important role in informal education systems where moral instruction is embedded in everyday communication. Eze (2022:212) further argues that proverbs facilitate moral education by linking abstract values to concrete imagery, thereby making lessons memorable and effective. This educational role explains the continued relevance of proverbs in traditional and contemporary African societies. In communal and judicial settings, proverbs also function as instruments of mediation and conflict resolution. Yusuf (2022:89) notes that proverbs are frequently employed in Yorùbá customary law to justify decisions, caution offenders and reinforce communal values. Their indirect nature softens criticism while strengthening the authority of elders and traditional institutions. This position supports earlier observations that proverbs contribute significantly to social stability and communal harmony. Recent scholarship further highlights the psychological impact of proverbs. Akinwumi (2023:81) argues that proverbs encourage reflection because listeners are required to interpret their meanings and apply them to specific situations. Olajubu (2021:111) similarly notes that proverbs function as verbal sanctions that discourage deviant behaviour and promote conformity to accepted social standards. Through these functions, proverbs serve as effective instruments of non-formal social control.

The foregoing review demonstrates that indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs occupy central positions within Yorùbá oral literature. Scholars consistently agree that these oral forms preserve cultural heritage, transmit indigenous knowledge, reinforce communal identity and promote moral values. However, they differ in their analytical focus. While studies on songs emphasise performance, education, social commentary and cultural preservation, research on praise poetry focuses largely on identity, genealogy, history and aesthetics. Studies on proverbs, on the other hand, concentrate on moral instruction, social regulation, conflict resolution and communal wisdom. Despite these valuable contributions, there is limited empirical literature specifically addressing the socio-cultural significance of the indigenous songs, praise poetry of the Ketu people as a distinct cultural group. This gap justifies the present study which seeks to provide a focused examination of the socio-cultural significance of the songs, praise poetry and proverbs of the Ketu people of Ogun State and contribute to existing scholarship on indigenous cultural preservation, communal history, moral instruction and communal development in Yoruba society.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

This sub-section focuses on examining and evaluating the core concepts of this study, namely: songs, praise poems, proverbs and their types or examples, the Ketu people and their dialect.

2.2.1 Indigenous Songs of the Ketu People

Indigenous songs of Ketu communities are so identical to them because of the dances attached. The dances and special songs are *Gèlèdè*, *Ìwé*, *Bòlòjò*, and *Kete*. Omosule et al (2013) submits that oral performances are unique to indigenous folk and within such performances are the values of the milieu subsumed in dance, gestures, movements, postures and constellations (203).

i. *Gèlèdè*

Gèlèdè is a prominent Yoruba masquerade tradition widely practiced among the Ketu-Yoruba communities of southwestern Nigeria and parts of Benin Republic. It is a complex socio-religious performance that combines masquerade, music, dance, satire and ritual communication. Recent scholarship consistently describes *Gèlèdè* as a living cultural institution that honours the spiritual and social power of women, particularly mothers, elderly women and female ancestors, while also reinforcing communal ethics and social harmony (Olaniyan, 2025; Lawal et al., 2022).

At its core, *Gèlèdè* is a performative festival where masked dancers, drummers, singers and spectators participate in a highly structured artistic event. Although the masqueraders are male, the masks and performances represent female spiritual forces and archetypes. The use of masks falls within the artistic and religious quest of the people for entertainment and the depiction of the aura of the sacred as masks may be considered a form of language which may be denotative and connotative at the same time (Omosule et al, 2013:8). In this sense, the beauty of masks lies in

both contextual apprehensions as well as the aesthetic appeal they harbour, especially as songs and dance achievable through colourful costumes accompany the performance (Omosule, 2009:132). Recent studies note that this embodiment reflects Yoruba cosmology, where womanhood is associated with generative, moral and spiritual authority (Lawal et al., 2022).

The structure of Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ performance is generally divided into two major segments, viz. the nocturnal *Ẹ̀fẹ̀* performance and the daytime masquerade display. The *Ẹ̀fẹ̀* segment is characterised by satirical songs, verbal commentary and social criticism. It is often used to address misconduct, correct deviant behaviour and comment on community affairs in a humorous but instructive manner. As collected from Chief Atanda Faleru (Lisa of Ilara-Yewa & Balogun of Ayekotoyan), *Ẹ̀fẹ̀* is called by that name at night, but referred to as *Akogi* during the day. Their acclaimed forerunner is *Tètèdẹ* who opens the stage and calls them in with his leg-chain sound. Olaniyan (2025:52) observes that this satirical dimension functions as a corrective social tool, where humour becomes a vehicle for moral instruction and communal discipline.

The daytime performance is more visually elaborate, featuring masked dancers dressed in richly decorated costumes that represent different symbolic meanings. The dances are accompanied by drumming ensembles, chants and call-and-response singing. According to Lawal et al. (2022:37), the rhythmic coordination between drums, songs and dance movements reflects a cosmological order in which sound and movement are believed to sustain harmony between the physical and spiritual worlds.

One of the central objects of Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ performance is “the Mothers” (*Ìyá Nla*), a spiritual category that includes female ancestors, deities and elderly women considered to possess mystical and moral authority. Recent scholarship explains that the festival is essentially a public acknowledgment of female spiritual power and its role in maintaining societal balance (Olaniyan,

2025). In this regard, women are not merely honoured but are considered essential regulators of social order capable of blessing or sanctioning communal life.

Gèlèdè also functions as a mechanism of social regulation. Through song texts and satirical performances, the festival addresses issues such as greed, dishonesty, sexual misconduct and disrespect for elders. Olaniyan (2025:56) submits that this makes Gèlèdè a form of indigenous performance where moral correction is achieved through performance rather than formal legal structures. The community, therefore, constitutes both the audience and participants in the process of moral evaluation.

Another important function of Gèlèdè is cultural education and historical preservation. The songs performed during the festival often contain references to lineage histories, mythological narratives and communal values. These performances serve as oral archives that transmit knowledge across generations. Lawal, Irhue and Aliu (2022:42) argue that Gèlèdè operates as a “living archive” of Yoruba cosmology by ensuring continuity of cultural memory in the absence of written documentation.

The festival also plays a strong role in social cohesion and identity formation. Participation in Gèlèdè strengthens communal bonds by bringing together individuals from different age groups, religious backgrounds and social classes. The collective nature of singing, dancing and audience engagement reinforces a shared sense of belonging. Recent studies highlight that such festivals are crucial in maintaining cultural identity in contemporary Yoruba societies facing modernisation and religious pluralism (Olaniyan, 2025).

From a philosophical perspective, Gèlèdè reflects Yoruba beliefs about balance, morality and social order. The underlying worldview is that the world is fragile and must be carefully managed through respect, restraint and communal responsibility. Olaniyan (2025:53) notes that

the festival is grounded in the idea that moral disorder can disrupt both human society and spiritual equilibrium by making ritual performance necessary for restoration and balance.

In contemporary times, *Gèlèdè* has also adapted to modern realities. It now functions not only as a ritual event but also as a cultural performance in tourism, media representation and academic discourse. Despite these changes, its core functions remain intact; particularly its emphasis on honouring women, correcting social behaviour and preserving cultural memory. Olaniyan (2025:58) argues that this adaptability demonstrates the resilience of Yoruba indigenous institutions in the face of globalisation.

Gèlèdè is best understood as a multifunctional cultural system that integrates religion, performance, morality and social regulation. It honours female spiritual authority, promotes social ethics through satire, preserves cultural history and strengthens communal identity. Recent scholarship consistently positions it as a dynamic institution that continues to shape Yoruba cultural life in both traditional and contemporary contexts (Lawal et al., 2022; Olaniyan, 2025).

ii. *Ìwé*

Ìwé is a form of indigenous Ketu-Yoruba performance that combines song, dance and theatrical display within communal entertainment settings. Unlike *Ìwé* that is “writing”, in standard Yoruba usage, this particular usage refers to a cultural performance genre in which movement, rhythm and vocal expression are integrated into a coordinated dance sequence. It is commonly performed during social gatherings, festival and social occasions where it functions primarily as entertainment while still carrying cultural meaning.

In performance structure, *Ìwé* is characterised by rhythmic forward and backward movements executed in synchrony with traditional drumming patterns. Performers typically hold

horsetail whisks (*irùkèrè*) with both hands by using them as extensions of gesture and rhythm. The motion of fanning the body with the horsetails creates a visual rhythm that complements the musical beat and producing a coordinated interplay between sound and movement. Recent studies on Yoruba performance aesthetics note that such objects used in dance are not merely decorative, but function as symbolic extensions of identity, authority and expressive control (Soyinka-Ajayi, 2022; Olaniyan, 2025).

The dance component of *Ìwé* is highly structured. Movements are generally repetitive yet stylised, involving forward and backward steps that reflect balance and coordination. The use of horsetail whisks adds another layer of meaning, as they are traditionally associated with prestige, ritual authority and ceremonial purity in Yoruba culture. In performance contexts, these objects elevate the dancer's status and reinforce the ceremonial nature of the dance (Lawal et al., 2022).

The musical aspect of *Ìwé* is equally significant. The songs are usually composed and led by a traditional composer known as *Alaworo*. The *Alaworo* serves as both a musical arranger and lead vocalist responsible for initiating songs and guiding the call-and-response structure typical of Yoruba performance traditions. According to recent ethnomusicological studies, this leadership role is central to maintaining rhythm, narrative coherence and audience participation in indigenous Yoruba performances (Lecci 2022:17).

Ìwé often contain short poetic lines that are repetitive and rhythm-driven. They are designed to match the tempo of dance movements. These songs may celebrate individuals, social events or communal achievements but their primary function is to sustain the energy of the performance. The repetitive lyrical structure ensures easy participation by the audience; thereby, transforming the performance into a collective experience rather than a solo act.

In terms of social function, *Ìwé* serves as a medium of communal entertainment and identity reinforcement. It provides a space where members of the community come together to share joy, celebrate cultural continuity and strengthen social bonds. Recent studies on Yoruba recreational dances argue that such performances function as tools for social cohesion where collective participation reinforces shared identity and belonging (Soyinka-Ajayi, 2022). *Ìwé* also performs an aesthetic function by showcasing bodily discipline, coordination and expressive creativity. The coordinated use of movement and object manipulation reflects Yoruba aesthetic values of balance, rhythm and elegance. Olaniyan (2025:44) observes that indigenous Yoruba dances often encode cultural ideals of beauty and order through structured bodily movement by making dance both an artistic and moral expression.

Of late, *Ìwé* has begun to experience adaptation beyond traditional spaces. It is now sometimes performed in cultural festivals, school programmes and staged artistic presentations. Despite these changes, its core features which include but not limited to call-and-response singing, rhythmic movement and the use of horsetail whisks, remain central to its identity as a traditional Ketu-Yoruba dance form. *Ìwé* is an indigenous Ketu-Yoruba song-dance performance characterised by coordinated movement, symbolic use of horsetail whisks and leadership by a traditional composer known as the *Alaworo*. It functions primarily as entertainment while also reinforcing cultural identity, aesthetic values and communal unity within Yoruba society.

iii. *Bòlòjò*

Bòlòjò is a traditional Yoruba cultural performance closely associated with costume display, communal celebration and festive dance expression. It involves the use of common traditional attire often carefully arranged to reflect cultural identity, beauty and social dignity.

Unlike strictly ritual masquerades, *Bòlòjò* is generally more open in participation and is performed across a wide range of social events, including festivals, weddings, naming ceremonies and community celebrations.

In performance, *Bòlòjò* combines song, dance and coordinated movement within a socially engaging environment. Participants move in groups and in circular or processional formations, while responding to drum rhythms and lead vocalists. The dance style is typically lively but controlled. This emphasises elegance, synchrony and communal participation. Recent studies on Yoruba festive performance traditions describe such group dances as central to the reinforcement of social cohesion and shared cultural identity particularly in rural Yoruba communities where communal festivals remain important (Soyinka-Ajayi, 2022; Lawal et al., 2022).

A defining feature of *Bòlòjò* is its emphasis on attire. The use of traditional clothing is not incidental but symbolic. The garments worn during the performance reflect Yoruba aesthetic values of modesty, beauty and cultural pride. Participants often wear coordinated fabrics, head ties and accessories that highlight unity within the group. In Yoruba cultural studies, clothing in performance contexts is understood as a semiotic system that communicates identity, status and belonging (Olaniyan, 2025).

Bòlòjò is also similar in certain respects to *Gèlèdè*, particularly in its communal and performative dimensions. While *Gèlèdè* is more ritualised and spiritually grounded in the veneration of female powers, *Bòlòjò* shares its emphasis on collective participation, musical coordination and symbolic display. However, *Bòlòjò* is less restricted by ritual requirements and is more flexible in its social application making it accessible across different community events. The musical component of *Bòlòjò* is driven by drumming and call-and-response singing. Songs performed during the dance are often short, repetitive and rhythmic, designed to sustain movement

and encourage audience participation. Lecci (2022:12) emphasises on Yoruba performance traditions that such musical structures are essential in maintaining energy, unity and emotional engagement during communal dances.

In the traditional society, *Bòlòjò* functions as a medium of entertainment, cultural expression and communal bonding. It provides an avenue for individuals to come together in celebration while reinforcing shared cultural values. The performance space becomes a site of interaction where age, status and gender differences are temporarily suspended in favour of collective enjoyment. Lawal et al. (2022:33) observe that Yoruba communal dances such as this strengthen social solidarity by creating shared emotional experiences. *Bòlòjò* also plays an important role in cultural preservation. Through repeated performance at social gatherings, it sustains indigenous knowledge systems related to dress, movement, music and communal etiquette. In this sense, the dance serves as a living archive of Yoruba cultural aesthetics, passed orally and physically across generations.

In contemporary times, *Bòlòjò* continues to adapt to modern influences. It is now performed in cultural festivals, school cultural days and public exhibitions where it serves both educational and entertainment purposes. Despite these adaptations, its core features, namely: traditional attire, group movement and rhythmic coordination remain unchanged by ensuring its continuity as a recognisable Yoruba performance form. *Bòlòjò* is a traditional Yoruba song-dance performance distinguished by its emphasis on attire, communal participation and rhythmic movement. While similar to *Gèlèdè* in its collective and expressive nature, it is more flexible and widely applicable across social events. It functions as entertainment, cultural expression and a mechanism for reinforcing Yoruba identity and social cohesion.

iv. *Kete*

Kete is a youthful indigenous Ketu-Yoruba song-dance form that is widely performed among communities in Yewa North Local Government Area of Ogun State, particularly in Aworo, Ijoun and Ijaka. It is recognised as a highly energetic performance genre that requires physical agility, rhythm and coordinated bodily movement. Because of its demanding dance steps, it is traditionally associated with younger performers who possess the stamina and agility needed for continuous movement and fast-paced choreography.

In its performance, *Kete* combines rhythmic drumming, call-and-response singing and vigorous dance sequences. The dance is typically fast-paced and involves jumping, bending, rapid footwork and coordinated group formations. Recent studies on Yoruba recreational performance forms highlight that youth-oriented dances often function as spaces for energy expression, identity formation and social integration among younger members of the community (Soyinka-Ajayi, 2022; Lawal et al., 2022).

A notable feature of *Kete* performance is its costume style. Performers often wear armless or sleeveless shirts paired with skirts or short wrappers allowing ease of movement during energetic dance routines. The simplicity of the attire is functional having been designed to accommodate flexibility and physical expression rather than elaborate decoration. In Yoruba performance aesthetics, clothing in dance contexts is often shaped by the demands of movement with practicality and visual clarity taking precedence in physically intensive genres (Olaniyan, 2025). *Kete* is performed during a wide range of social events, including festivals, communal celebrations, weddings and cultural gatherings. Its flexibility of use makes it a common feature of public entertainment within Ketu-Yoruba communities. Unlike more ritualised performances,

Kète is primarily recreational, though it still carries cultural meaning through its lyrics, rhythms and communal participation.

Among some Ketu people in Aworo, Ijoun and Ijaka, *Kete* is also referred to as *pọnṣẹ* or *kúlúmbú*. These variations in naming reflect local dialectical differences and the fluid nature of oral performance traditions. Lecci (2022:17) observes that Yoruba-derived performance genres often exist in multiple local forms, with variations in naming, rhythm and dance style shaped by community-specific histories and cultural practices. The musical component of *Kete* is central to its appeal and function. Songs are typically short, repetitive and rhythm-driven allowing for easy memorisation and active audience participation. The call-and-response structure ensures that both performers and spectators are engaged in the performance process. Recent studies note that such participatory structures are essential in Yoruba song-dance traditions as they transform performance into a collective social experience rather than a staged act (Lecci, 2022).

In Ketu communities, *Kete* functions as a medium of entertainment, youth engagement and communal bonding. It provides a structured space for young people to express vitality, creativity and social identity within acceptable cultural boundaries. Lawal et al. (2022:36) submit that youth-oriented performance forms in Yoruba society play a significant role in social integration allowing younger generations to participate in cultural continuity while developing interpersonal and communal relationships.

Kete also contributes to cultural preservation. Through repeated performance at social events, it transmits indigenous musical knowledge, dance patterns and communal values. Although it is primarily recreational, it reinforces cultural identity by embedding traditional rhythms and Yoruba linguistic expressions within its songs. *Kete* continues to adapt while maintaining its core identity. It is now performed in school cultural displays, local festivals and community celebrations

where it serves both educational and entertainment purposes. Despite modernisation and external cultural influences, its emphasis on energy, group coordination and rhythmic movement remains unchanged. *Kete* is a youthful Ketu-Yoruba song-dance form identified with energetic movement, simple functional attire and participatory musical structure. It is widely performed across social events and serves functions of entertainment, youth engagement and cultural preservation.

2.2.2 Praise Poetry of the Ketu People

Omosule et al. (2013) opines that art is a transcendental display and has the capability of elevating the individual to lofty attainments (7). Praise poetry of Ketu people provides avenues for families and communities to foster community identity, ancestral identity, lineage orientation, social cohesion and intergenerational relationships. Praise poetry occupies a central position in the oral tradition of the Ketu people of Ogun State. Commonly referred to as *oríkì*, it is a highly valued form of verbal art through which the history, identity, achievements and cultural values of individuals, families and communities are preserved and transmitted across generations. Among the Ketu people, praise poetry extends beyond mere expressions of admiration. It serves as a repository of collective memory. It links the present generation with its ancestors while reinforcing the unique identity and heritage of the community. Through carefully crafted expressions, symbolic language and historical references, *oríkì* preserves the experiences. This poetry exploits the moral values that define the Ketu people and distinguish them from neighbouring communities.

The performance of praise poetry among the Ketu people is deeply embedded in everyday social and cultural life. It is commonly rendered during traditional festivals, coronation ceremonies, marriage rites, funerals, chieftaincy installations, naming ceremonies and other important communal gatherings. Skilled praise singers, elders, traditional rulers and family

members perform these poems to honour individuals or communities and to recall their ancestral lineage and historical accomplishments. The recitation of praise poetry is usually accompanied by expressive voice modulation, gestures and in some instances, indigenous musical instruments that enhance its aesthetic appeal and emotional impact. Through repeated performance, the poems remain alive in the collective consciousness of the people and continue to transmit indigenous knowledge from one generation to another.

One of the major characteristics of Ketu praise poetry is its emphasis on ancestry and lineage. Every family and every community possesses distinctive praise names that recount their origin, migration, notable ancestors and remarkable achievements. These expressions serve as historical records that preserve information about the founding of settlements, military exploits, occupational specialisation and significant cultural events. Communities such as Ìmèkò, Ìwòyè-Kétu and Ilara possess communal praise poems that celebrate their courage, industrious nature, generosity and social values. Through these poems, members of the community are constantly reminded of the virtues inherited from their forebears and the responsibility to preserve the good reputation of their lineage.

The language of Ketu praise poetry is highly figurative and symbolic. Metaphors, imagery, hyperbole, epithets and symbolic references to animals, rivers, forests and other natural elements are frequently employed to magnify the qualities of the subject being praised. Brave individuals may be likened to lions, leopards or bees, while communities are identified with rivers, hills or historical landmarks that symbolise their strength and personality. Such figurative expressions enrich the poetic quality of the performance and enable listeners to appreciate the deeper meanings embedded in the oral tradition. These stylistic devices also contribute to the memorability of the poems and facilitate their transmission through oral performance.

Beyond celebrating identity and ancestry, praise poetry among the Ketu people performs important educational and moral functions. It serves as an instrument for teaching communal values such as honesty, courage, diligence, hospitality, unity, generosity and respect for elders. By praising individuals who embody these virtues, praise poetry encourages younger generations to emulate acceptable patterns of behaviour. It equally discourages laziness, dishonesty, betrayal and other forms of misconduct by presenting worthy allusions to ancestors and respected community members as models of exemplary conduct. In this way, praise poetry functions as an informal means of moral education and socialisation.

Praise poetry also promotes communal cohesion and collective identity. Through repeated references to common ancestry, historical experiences and shared cultural values, members of the community develop a strong sense of belonging and solidarity. The poems reinforce the belief that the welfare of the individual is inseparable from that of the wider community. Expressions that celebrate communal generosity, mutual assistance and peaceful coexistence strengthen social bonds and encourage collective responsibility. This explains why communal praise poetry frequently invokes the names of villages, rivers, deities, family compounds and notable ancestors, all of which serve as symbols of shared heritage and cultural continuity.

Furthermore, praise poetry functions as a means of preserving indigenous history in the absence of extensive written records. Many historical events relating to migration, settlement, inter-community relations, warfare and leadership have been transmitted through *oríki*. The oral nature of these poems has enabled the Ketu people to retain valuable information about their past despite changing social conditions. Consequently, praise poetry remains an important historical source for understanding the origin, cultural development and worldview of the Ketu people. It

provides insights into their traditional institutions, social organisation, religious beliefs and interactions with neighbouring communities.

Recent scholarship has continued to affirm the cultural significance of Yorùbá praise poetry. Carter-Enyi (2021) argues that *oríkì* publicly affirms identity, lineage and communal recognition; thereby, strengthening both individual worth and collective belonging. Similarly, Oloko, Yusuff and Fatuase (2025) observe that Yorùbá praise poetry preserves cultural memory, ancestry and socio-cultural values while reinforcing communal identity. These studies support the view that Ketu praise poetry is more than an artistic performance. It is a dynamic cultural institution that sustains historical consciousness, strengthens communal solidarity and preserves the moral and cultural heritage of the people.

In contemporary Ketu society, praise poetry continues to maintain its relevance despite increasing urbanisation and the influence of modern communication technologies. It remains an indispensable feature of festivals, traditional ceremonies and cultural celebrations, where it reinforces ethnic identity and promotes pride in indigenous heritage. Traditional rulers, community leaders and cultural performers continue to employ praise poetry to celebrate achievements, preserve history and inspire communal unity. As an enduring component of Ketu oral tradition, praise poetry remains a powerful medium through which the identity, values and collective memory of the Ketu people of Ogun State are preserved for future generations.

2.2.3 Proverbs among the Ketu People

Proverbs are short witty sayings used in expressing philosophical truth in correcting people, community or groups regarding their actions. They often express universal truths. Proverb is also a vital component of African oral tradition which helps to simplify complex philosophical ideas into simpler forms, creates memorable expressions, and serve as tools for teaching and reflection (Ojo, 2025:143). To Ketu people, proverbs provide avenues for persons, families and communities to be warned, advised and educated on poor decision and judgment that may hinder personal and community development.

Proverbs constitute one of the most significant forms of oral literature among the Ketu people of Ogun State. Known in Yorùbá as *òwe*, proverbs are concise, metaphorical and culturally grounded expressions through which the people communicate wisdom, moral instruction and practical knowledge. They embody the accumulated experiences of successive generations and serve as a reservoir of indigenous knowledge. They reflect the worldview, philosophy and socio-cultural values of the Ketu people. Proverbs are deeply woven into everyday communication and are employed to express ideas with precision, persuasion and aesthetic appeal. Their continued use demonstrates the enduring importance of oral tradition in preserving the cultural heritage of the Ketu community.

Among the Ketu people, proverbs are regarded as indispensable tools of communication because they convey complex ideas in simple but profound language. Speakers employ proverbs to advise, caution, encourage, persuade, reconcile conflicting parties and settle disputes without causing unnecessary offence. Rather than confronting individuals directly, elders often employ proverbs to communicate sensitive issues tactfully, allowing listeners to reflect upon the intended message. This indirect style of communication promotes respect, emotional restraint and peaceful

interaction within the community. Consequently, the effective use of proverbs is widely regarded as a mark of wisdom, maturity and eloquence among the Ketu people.

The content of Ketu proverbs reflects the people's close relationship with their environment, history and occupations. Many proverbs draw imagery from farming, hunting, domestic animals, forests, rivers and everyday activities that are familiar within the community. Such imagery enables listeners to understand moral lessons through experiences that are common to their daily lives. References to animals such as elephants, ants, shrews, hawks, chickens and dogs as well as agricultural practices and household activities, provide symbolic representations of human behaviour and social relationships. These metaphors enrich the communicative power of proverbs while preserving indigenous ecological knowledge and cultural memory.

Proverbs among the Ketu people perform important educational functions by transmitting ethical principles and acceptable patterns of behaviour from one generation to another. They encourage virtues such as honesty, hard work, patience, humility, courage, generosity, self-discipline and respect for elders, while condemning greed, laziness, envy, dishonesty, arrogance and betrayal. Through repeated use in family life, traditional ceremonies and communal gatherings, proverbs shape the moral consciousness of young people and reinforce the behavioural standards expected within the society. In this regard, proverbs function as informal educational tools that complement the socialisation process and contribute to character formation.

Beyond moral instruction, proverbs also serve as instruments of social criticism and communal regulation. The Ketu people frequently employ proverbs to expose social vices, ridicule irresponsible conduct and criticise individuals whose actions threaten communal harmony. Through satire, irony and symbolic expressions, proverbs condemn behaviours such as corruption, oppression, infidelity, selfishness, irresponsibility and abuse of authority without resorting to

direct personal attacks. Their indirect nature enables speakers to address sensitive social issues while preserving social relationships and mutual respect. As a result, proverbs function as effective mechanisms of social control, encouraging conformity to accepted cultural norms and discouraging conduct that undermines communal peace.

Another important function of Ketu proverbs is their role in conflict resolution and the administration of justice. During family meetings, community deliberations and traditional dispute settlement processes, elders employ proverbs to clarify issues, persuade opposing parties and promote reconciliation. Because proverbs are generally regarded as expressions of ancestral wisdom rather than personal opinion, they possess considerable authority and are often accepted as impartial guides in decision-making. Their use encourages thoughtful reflection, fairness and consensus, thereby contributing to peaceful coexistence within the community. In this way, proverbs support the maintenance of social order and strengthen the traditional institutions through which communal disputes are resolved.

Proverbs equally preserve the historical experiences, beliefs and worldview of the Ketu people. Embedded within many proverbial expressions are references to ancestral practices, migration experiences, religious beliefs, social institutions and historical events that have shaped the identity of the community. Although brief in form, proverbs encapsulate centuries of accumulated knowledge and continue to preserve aspects of Ketu history that may not exist in written records. Their transmission from one generation to another ensures the continuity of indigenous knowledge and strengthens the community's collective memory.

Recent studies continue to affirm the enduring relevance of Yorùbá proverbs in contemporary African societies. Scholars have observed that proverbs remain effective instruments for moral education, cultural preservation, conflict resolution and social criticism

despite rapid social change and increasing urbanisation. They continue to provide insight into indigenous systems of knowledge while promoting communal values and responsible citizenship. Within the Ketu community, proverbs remain widely employed in everyday conversations, traditional festivals, religious activities, family gatherings and public ceremonies, demonstrating their continuing vitality as an important aspect of the people's oral heritage.

In contemporary Ketu society, proverbs continue to serve as bridges between the past and the present. They preserve ancestral wisdom while adapting to new social realities, enabling the community to address emerging challenges without abandoning its cultural foundations. As repositories of indigenous philosophy, ethical principles and historical memory, proverbs remain indispensable to the cultural identity of the Ketu people of Ogun State. Their continued transmission through oral performance ensures the preservation of communal values and reinforces the collective identity that binds members of the community across generations.

2.2.4 The Ketu People of Ogun State

The Ketu people are one of the major subgroups of the Yoruba ethnic nationality found in the western part of Ogun State, notably within Imeko/Afon and Yewa North Local Government Areas. They form an important part of the wider Yewa population of Ogun State and are historically connected to the ancient Ketu Kingdom situated in present-day the Republic of Benin. According to Akinjogbin (1967) and Falola (2001), the Ketu people possess a rich cultural heritage reflected in their language oral traditions, religious beliefs, festivals, praise poetry, proverbs and indigenous performances which have continued to define their communal identity over the centuries.

According to Yoruba historical traditions, the Ketu people trace their ancestry to Oduduwa who is widely regarded as the progenitor of the Yoruba race. Oral accounts and historical records maintain that the founder of the ancient Ketu Kingdom was one of the descendants of Oduduwa who is Alákétu. The ruler of the kingdom ever since bears the title *Alákétu* which means the King or Owner of Ketu. Historical narratives, for example Ajayi (1983) and Law (1977), explain that the Alákétu dynasty originated from Ile-Ife before establishing the Ketu Kingdom in the present-day Republic of Benin during the early dispersal of Yoruba groups across West Africa. Through migration and expansion, sections of the Ketu people later moved eastward into present-day Ogun State where they established several settlements across Yewa land.

The migration of the Ketu people into present-day Ogun State occurred in phases and was influenced by factors, such as: warfare, search for fertile agricultural land, political instability, population expansion and trade opportunities. These movements led to the establishment of several Ketu communities including Iwoye-Ketu, Idofa, Imeko, Ilara-Yewa, Oke-Agbede and Moriwi in Imeko/Afon Local Government Area and Owode-Ketu, Ijale-Ketu, Oja-Odan, Ebute-Igbooro,

Eggua, Tata, Igan Alade, Ijoun, Igboḱofin, Itẹku, Aworo and Imoto in Yewa North Local Governemnt Area (Akinjogbin 1967; Olatunji 2016). Despite geographical dispersal, the people have maintained strong historical and cultural ties with the ancient Ketu Kingdom in the Republic of Benin. The Ketu people speak a dialectal variation of Yoruba commonly associated with the Ketu or Kena speech form. In Bamgbose's *Fonology and Yoruba Dialects* (1990), he maintains that Ketu dialect reflects certain phonological and lexical peculiarities that distinguish them from other Yoruba subgroups while still maintaining mutual intelligibility within the Yoruba language family. The language serves as a major vehicle for the preservation of oral traditions, indigenous philosophy, praise poetry, songs and proverbs among the people.

The term “Yewa” or “Yewa land” refers to one of the major cultural divisions in Ogun State alongside Egba, Ijebu and Remo. Historically, the area was formerly referred to as Egbado before the adoption of the name “Yewa” in the late twentieth century as part of cultural and political identity reconstruction among the people (Aremu 2011:48). The name “Yewa” is derived from Yewa River which is a prominent river that flows across many communities occupied by the Yewa and Ketu people in Ogun State. The river has historically served economic, social and geographical functions within the region and gradually became a cultural symbol of collective identity for the people inhabiting the area (Ogun State Government Records 2020). Yewa land occupies a strategic border position between Nigeria and the Republic of Benin. This geographical location has contributed significantly to the historical experiences of the Ketu people through trans-border migration, commerce and cultural interaction. The people are predominantly farmers, traders, hunters and government workers. Agricultural activities common to them are cultivation of cassava, melon, maize, yam, potatoes, cocoa, cashew, trees, cucumber, pepper and tomatoes (National Population Commission 2006).

2.2.5 The Kétu/Kénà Dialect

The Ketu people speak a dialectal variety of the Yoruba language commonly identified as “Kétu/Kénà” dialect. This dialect is predominantly spoken among Ketu communities located in parts of Imeko/Afon and Yewa North Local Government Areas of Ogun State, as well as among related populations in the Republic of Benin. Like other Yoruba dialects, as Bamgbose (1990) opines, the Ketu dialect belongs to the Yoruboid branch of the Niger-Congo language family and shares a high level of mutual intelligibility with standard Yoruba despite possessing certain phonological, lexical and tonal peculiarities.

Scholars of Yoruba dialectology have consistently identified the Kétu speech form as one of the recognised dialectal variations within the Yoruba language continuum. Ayo Bamgbose, in *Fonology and Yoruba Dialects* (1990), explains that Yoruba dialects differ in pronunciation, tonal pattern, vocabulary and consonantal distribution. According to his study, dialects spoken within the Yewa and Kétu axis preserve distinctive phonological features that differentiate them from central Yoruba speech forms such as Oyo and Ibadan Yoruba. Bamgbose particularly notes that consonantal substitutions and sound variations remain important markers of identity within Yoruba dialects.

One of the notable linguistic features associated with the Ketu dialect is the strong use and embellishment of consonant sounds such as /k/, /m/ and /n/. These consonants frequently occur in lexical items, pronunciation patterns and sentence constructions within the dialect. The prominence of nasal and plosive consonants contributes to the distinct auditory quality of Kétu speech and often serves as an identifying marker among speakers of other Yoruba dialects. For examples, their interrogative sentences are filled with ‘ké’, namely:

Kétu Dialect	English translation
Ké ọ fẹ?	What do you want?
Ké na?	What is that?
Ké o mu ẹ?	What is wrong with you?
Ké kin sọ?	What should I say?
Ba i jẹ?	What is your name?
Ke i jẹ?	What is your name?
Básí maa sẹ?	How will I do it?
Básí kí n sẹ?	How should I do it?
Ké ni?	What is it?
Ké n se ẹ?	What is wrong with you?
Ké n mu ẹ?	What's wrong with you?
Básí?	How are you?
Ilé fe?	How is family?
Ọmu ẹ fe?	How are your children?
Aya ẹ fe?	How is your wife?
Leena?	Who is that?

Similarly, their declarative sentences used to express opinions and thoughts are filled with dialectical variations which make them unique and identical. Examples are:

Kétu Dialect	English translation
N ko le sọ.	I cannot really say.
N ko mu.	I do not know.

Mo sọ fí ẹ	I told you
Lọ, kí i bọ.	Go and come back.
N ko bí ẹ.	I do not ask you.
N ko jẹ.	I am not eating.
N ko fẹ.	I do not want it.
Mo sọ fú ẹ	I told you

On individual words or phrases, Ketu people use their unique vocabularies to mean some words and expressions not generally known and used by other Yoruba speakers. Of such lexical items are:

Kétu Dialect	English translation
Ekuku	bone
Èké	neck (means ‘cheek’ commonly)
Elékú (ewedu)	jute leaves soup
Ọbọ	buttocks
Ìdòdò	bedroom
Ọmu/ọmudé/ọmukékeré	child
Lákú	big
Bádé	equal
Bádé-n-bádé	equally
Sọ kata	to lose something or throw something away

Póndoró

plastic materials

T'ajọ

to gather together

Ìbà ẹja

tail of fish

Apparently, it is pertinent to agree with Owolabi (2012) who argues that dialectal variations within Yoruba should not be regarded as signs of linguistic weakness but rather as evidence of the richness and diversity of Yoruba language and culture. In Kétu communities, the dialect serves not only as a means of communication but also as a marker of ethnic identity, communal belonging and historical continuity.

The Kétu dialect is therefore an important aspect of the socio-cultural identity of the people. Its phonological features, lexical variations, tonal structures and oral expressive patterns contribute significantly to the preservation of indigenous heritage within Kétu communities of Ogun State. The dialect also provides the linguistic foundation upon which oral art forms such as songs, praise poetry, proverbs and chants are constructed and performed.

2.2.6 Change, Continuity, Transmission and Threats to Ketu Oral Art Forms

Oral traditions are ever changing cultural expressions that constantly negotiate between continuity and change. Although indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs are inherited from generations to generations, they are continually re-created, modified and adapted to suit changing social, political, economic and religious realities. Scholars generally agree that the vitality of oral traditions lies in their ability to maintain their essential cultural identity while responding to contemporary circumstances. Finnegan (2012) argues that oral literature should not be viewed as a fixed body of texts but as a living tradition that evolves through repeated performances and changing social contexts. Similarly, Barber (2007) observes that African oral traditions continuously accommodate new experiences and nuances while preserving their historical and

cultural foundations. This suggests that change is not a threat to oral literature in itself but an indication of its vitality and adaptability nature.

A recurring pattern in the literature is that continuity depends largely on effective cultural transmission. Oral traditions survive because knowledge is deliberately and consciously passed from one generation to another through observation, participation, imitation, apprenticeship and repeated performance. Furniss (2018) maintains that oral literature exists only where communities actively preserve and transmit it through social interaction. Likewise, Okpewho (1992) explains that the continuity of oral traditions depends on the commitment of performers, custodians, elders and audiences who ensure that oral texts remain relevant within their communal life. These scholars emphasise that transmission is both a cultural responsibility and a communal process.

Studies further reveal that transmission occurs within complex cultural settings. Indigenous songs are commonly learnt during festivals, marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies, funeral rites, agricultural activities, religious worship and communal celebrations. Praise poetry is transmitted through family lineages, royal families, professional praise singers, traditional rulers and community elders. Proverbs are acquired gradually through everyday interpersonal conversations, storytelling moments, family interactions and conflict resolution processes. Bamgbose (2015) notes that Yoruba language and culture are inseparable. This makes oral traditions one of the principal channels through which indigenous linguistic expressions and cultural values are preserved. This shows that the transmission of oral literature also facilitates the transmission of language, worldview, ethics and communal philosophy.

Recent scholarship increasingly recognises that oral traditions are experiencing significant transformations due to social change. Researchers, which include Shittu-Adeleke in her *Performing Orality on Social Media: A Study of Indigenous Storytelling on YouTube and TikTok*

published in July, 2026, observe that urbanisation, formal education, migration, technological advancement and religious change have altered the contexts in which oral performances occur, by maintaining that the advent of technology [has] shifted oral traditions from the fireside or moonlight to the screen of mobile devices by enabling respective audience to access indigenous knowledge from anywhere and at anytime and sharing same with the global online communities. Chitando (2019) argues that while indigenous oral traditions remain relevant, many of their traditional performance environments have diminished considerably. Similarly, Kolawole (2023) observes that contemporary performances often adapt traditional forms to suit modern audiences without entirely abandoning their indigenous characteristics. These findings indicate that oral traditions continue to evolve in response to changing social realities.

Another prominent theme in the literature is the growing threats confronting indigenous oral traditions. Scholars consistently identify modernisation as one of the major factors affecting the survival of oral heritage. The increasing influence of Western education, global media and digital entertainment has reduced young people's participation in traditional performances. Odeh (2021) argues that indigenous oral performances now compete with numerous modern forms of entertainment, thereby limiting opportunities for intergenerational transmission. Ekpe (2024) similarly observes that many indigenous songs and oral performances are disappearing because elderly custodians pass away without adequately transmitting their knowledge to younger generations.

Language shift constitutes another significant threat identified by scholars. The increasing dominance of English and urban varieties of Yoruba has contributed to the gradual decline of many local dialects. Since songs, praise poetry and proverbs derive much of their artistic beauty and cultural significance from indigenous language, the decline of dialects inevitably affects the

survival of oral traditions. Bamgbose (2015) argues that the preservation of Yoruba dialects is essential for safeguarding the cultural knowledge embedded within them. This concern is particularly relevant to the Ketu dialect, whose distinctive phonological, lexical and stylistic features constitute an important aspect of Ketu-Yoruba identity.

Religious transformation has also received considerable scholarly attention. Several researchers observe that the spread of Christianity and Islam has influenced public attitudes toward certain indigenous performances, especially those associated with traditional religion, ancestral worship and ritual ceremonies. While some oral traditions have successfully adapted to changing religious contexts, others have become less frequently performed due to perceptions that they conflict with contemporary religious beliefs. Nevertheless, scholars such as Barber (2007) and Chitando (2019) argue that many oral art forms continue to survive by emphasising their cultural, historical and artistic significance rather than their ritual functions.

Migration and urbanisation further contribute to the transformation of oral traditions. As younger generations relocate to urban areas for education and employment, opportunities to participate in communal performances diminish. Consequently, the regular occasions during which songs, praise poetry and proverbs were traditionally performed become less frequent. Despite these challenges, recent studies indicate that digital technology has also created new opportunities for documenting and preserving oral heritage. Audio recordings, video documentation, digital archives and social media platforms increasingly serve as alternative means of preserving indigenous performances for future generations.

The literature, therefore, demonstrates that change, continuity, transmission and threat are interconnected aspects of oral traditions. While oral literature naturally evolves with changing societies, its continued existence depends solely upon effective cultural transmission and

deliberate documentation. Existing scholarship further suggests that communities that actively preserve their oral heritage are better positioned to sustain their cultural identity and historical memory.

This observation is particularly relevant to the Ketu people of Ogun State. Indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs continue to occupy important positions within festivals, traditional institutions, family ceremonies and communal life. However, these oral traditions are increasingly confronted by challenges associated with modernisation, urban migration, declining use of the Ketu dialect, changing religious practices and reduced interest among younger generations. The present study, therefore, contributes not only to literary scholarship but also to the documentation and preservation of Ketu oral art forms by recording and analysing selected indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs before further aspects of this rich tradition become endangered.

2.3 THEORETICAL REVIEW

This sub-section examines and evaluates existing literatures on the adopted theories for analysis in this study by focusing on their origins, major components, historical development, scholarly interpretations, areas of convergence and divergence and recent development and relevance to the study of oral art forms.

2.3.1 Functionalist Theory

Functionalist Theory is one of the most influential approaches in the study of literature, culture and society. The theory is rooted in the broader sociological tradition associated with scholars such as Émile Durkheim, Bronisław Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown who viewed society as a system whose various institutions and practices contribute to social stability and

continuity. Onyejekwe and Ikeokwu (2013:67) states that functionalist theory with its approach is used to press the point that literature is and ought to be relevant to the society that has given birth to it as well as nurtures it. Within literary and folklore studies, functionalism examines the purposes served by cultural products and seeks to understand how they contribute to the maintenance, regulation and development of society. The theory assumes that every enduring cultural phenomenon exists because it performs specific functions that are beneficial to the community. Consequently, oral literature is regarded not merely as an artistic creation but as a social institution that contributes to the preservation of cultural values, communal identity, social order and collective memory.

The central proposition of Functionalist Theory is that literature emerges from society and remains relevant because it serves identifiable social purposes. Scholars working within the functionalist tradition contend that oral and written literary forms perform educational, moral, political, religious and cultural functions. Finnegan (1977:27) argues that oral literature is deeply embedded within the social life of the communities that produce it and cannot be adequately understood outside its functional context. According to her, songs, praise poetry, proverbs, folktales and other oral genres are often performed during specific social occasions where they contribute to communal interaction, social regulation and cultural transmission. This position suggests that oral art forms endure because they satisfy particular communal needs. And she believes, in Onyejekwe and Ikeokwu (2013:67), that the role of literature can either reflect the society or uphold its status quo.

A dominant trend in contemporary scholarship is the understanding of oral literature as a mechanism for preserving social values and maintaining cultural continuity. Adebayo contends that indigenous oral performances function as repositories of communal norms and collective

experiences that guide social behaviour and reinforce cultural identity (Adebayo 2021:49). Similarly, Chitando (2019:35) argues that oral traditions continue to perform important functions in contemporary African societies by preserving indigenous knowledge systems and facilitating intergenerational communication. These scholars emphasise that oral art forms survive because they remain useful to the communities that sustain them. Their studies reflect a broader functionalist assumption that cultural practices are retained when they continue to serve meaningful social purposes.

Another recurring theme in literature is the educational function of oral literature. Scholars consistently maintain that songs, proverbs and praise poetry act as informal educational tools through which societies transmit knowledge, values and acceptable patterns of behaviour. Nwosu, Ibezim and Ugochukwu (2021:86) observe that indigenous songs often communicate moral lessons and social expectations in forms that are memorable and easily understood by community members. Likewise, Odebunmi (2022:19) argues that Yoruba proverbs perform instructional functions by providing guidance for decision-making, conflict resolution and social interaction. These studies collectively suggest that oral literature contributes significantly to socialisation and character formation.

The literature also reveals a strong scholarly consensus regarding the role of oral art forms in fostering social cohesion. Functionalist scholars view oral performances as activities that strengthen solidarity and reinforce shared values among members of society. Barber (2007) notes that oral performances create spaces where communities collectively remember their histories, celebrate achievements and reaffirm social bonds. Similarly, Kolawole (2023) argues that performance-based oral genres derive their significance from communal participation and audience engagement, both of which contribute to social integration and collective consciousness.

Such perspectives support the functionalist view that oral literature serves important integrative functions within society.

Scholars have also emphasised the capacity of oral literature to regulate social conduct through praise and criticism. Within many African societies, songs and praise poetry are used to commend desirable behaviour while satirical songs and proverbs often condemn actions that threaten communal harmony. Asigbo and Lotachukwu (2022:122) observe that oral performers frequently act as social commentators whose performances encourage conformity to communal expectations and challenge undesirable practices. This function of social control aligns closely with the functionalist belief that cultural expressions contribute to the maintenance of social order.

Another significant pattern in recent studies concerns the role of oral literature in preserving historical consciousness and collective memory. Researchers increasingly argue that oral traditions function as indigenous archives through which communities record historical events, migration experiences, genealogies and cultural achievements. Okpewho (1992:31) maintains that oral forms preserve communal knowledge and historical experiences that might otherwise disappear in the absence of written documentation. Recent studies by Akinmade (2020) and Ogunleye (2023) similarly demonstrate that oral performances remain important sources of historical information among many Yoruba communities. From a functionalist perspective, this historical role explains why oral traditions continue to occupy central positions within communal life.

Contemporary scholarship further highlights the resilience of oral traditions in the face of modernisation and globalisation. Earlier scholars often predicted that literacy, urbanisation and technological advancement would diminish the relevance of oral literature. However, recent studies indicate that oral genres continue to adapt to changing circumstances while retaining their

social functions. Odeh (2021), in his “Mediatisation of Indigenous Oral Performance” argues that indigenous oral performances have successfully incorporated modern media without losing their cultural significance. Ekpe (2024:272) likewise notes that oral literature remains relevant because communities continue to find value in its educational, cultural and social functions. These observations reinforce the functionalist argument that cultural practices endure when they remain useful to society.

Despite its wide acceptance, Functionalist Theory has attracted criticism from some scholars. Critics argue that the theory sometimes overemphasises social harmony and may overlook conflict, resistance and individual creativity within cultural production. Others contend that not every literary work serves a direct social function and that aesthetic considerations can sometimes be as important as social utility. Nevertheless, scholars such as Chitando (2019), Kolawole (2023) and Odebunmi (2022) maintain that the theory remains highly relevant to the study of oral literature because many oral genres are closely connected to communal needs, cultural values and social institutions.

The relevance of Functionalist Theory to this study lies in its ability to explain the socio-cultural roles performed by indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs among the Ketu people of Ogun State. The theory provides a useful framework for examining how these oral art forms contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, transmission of indigenous knowledge, reinforcement of communal identity, promotion of moral values and maintenance of social cohesion. Indigenous songs among the Ketu people serve educational, historical and entertainment functions. Praise poetry preserves genealogical information, celebrates communal achievements and reinforces identity. Proverbs communicate wisdom, regulate behaviour and provide guidance in everyday social interaction. Songs are used to celebrate and rejuvenate communal memory.

Their continued existence within Ketu communities suggests that they remain functional and relevant to the socio-cultural realities of the people.

This study, therefore, adopts Functionalist Theory because it offers an effective means of understanding oral literature as a living cultural institution that performs important roles within the society. By focusing on the functions performed by indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs, the theory provides valuable insight into the ways these oral art forms contribute to the preservation and transmission of Ketu cultural heritage. Through this framework, the study seeks to demonstrate that the enduring significance of Ketu oral traditions lies not only in their artistic qualities but also in their capacity to sustain communal values, collective memory and cultural continuity across generations.

2.3.2 Aesthetic Theory

Aesthetic Theory is one of the major literary theories employed in the study of literature, art and cultural productions. The theory is primarily concerned with beauty, artistic value, creativity, form, style and the pleasurable experience derived from artistic expression. Although aesthetic inquiry can be traced to classical philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, modern aesthetic theory developed through the contributions of scholars such as Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and later literary critics who examined the nature of artistic beauty and the qualities that make literary works aesthetically significant. The theory assumes that literary and artistic creations possess intrinsic artistic qualities that deserve appreciation independent of their social, political or moral functions. Consequently, aesthetic criticism focuses on how artistic elements contribute to the beauty, effectiveness and emotional impact of a work.

The central proposition of Aesthetic Theory is that literature should be appreciated not only for what it says but also for how it says it. Scholars working within this tradition emphasise artistic

craftsmanship, imagery, symbolism, rhythm, structure, language, performance and stylistic innovation. In oral literature studies, aesthetic theorists argue that the value of oral performances extends beyond their social functions to include the beauty of expression, creativity of performers and artistic techniques employed during performance. Finnegan (1977:15) observes that oral literature possesses complex artistic structures that deserve the same critical attention often given to written literature. According to her, oral performances employ sophisticated linguistic and performative devices that contribute significantly to their aesthetic appeal.

A major pattern emerging from contemporary scholarship is the recognition of oral literature as a highly artistic form of expression. Earlier studies often focused primarily on the social functions of oral traditions but recent scholars increasingly emphasise their aesthetic dimensions. Furniss (2018) argues that African oral performances should be appreciated as artistic creations because they display remarkable creativity in language use, imagery, rhythm and performance techniques. Similarly, Barber (2007) maintains that oral texts derive much of their significance from their artistic organisation and performative richness rather than solely from their informational content. These studies collectively demonstrate that oral literature is both functional and artistic.

Another recurring theme in the literature concerns the relationship between aesthetics and performance. Scholars consistently argue that the beauty of oral literature emerges most fully during live performance. Kolawole (2023) notes that oral performances derive their artistic force from the interaction of language, music, gesture, audience participation and dramatic presentation. Likewise, Ohia (2024:15) observes that the aesthetic quality of oral songs and chants is often enhanced by vocal modulation, tonal variation, rhythm, repetition and performance context. These

studies suggest that aesthetics in oral literature cannot be separated from performance because meaning and beauty are simultaneously produced during the act of presentation.

Recent scholarship also emphasises the role of language as a source of aesthetic pleasure. Researchers observe that oral performers employ poetic devices such as metaphor, imagery, symbolism, alliteration, repetition, parallelism and figurative language to create artistic effects. Odebunmi (2021:56) argues that Yoruba oral traditions exhibit remarkable linguistic creativity through the strategic use of figurative expressions and culturally embedded meanings. Similarly, Carter-Ényì (2021:12) demonstrates that Yoruba praise poetry achieves aesthetic beauty through carefully selected language, tonal manipulation and performance techniques that evoke emotional responses from audiences. Such findings reveal that aesthetic value is deeply connected to verbal artistry.

Another significant trend within the literature is the understanding of aesthetics as a vehicle for emotional engagement. Scholars increasingly contend that artistic beauty enhances the ability of oral literature to influence audience. Nwosu (2024:86), in “Creative Dynamism and Religious Syncretism in Igbo Oral Funeral Songs,” observes that oral performances often employ rhythm, melody, repetition and dramatic expression to evoke emotions and sustain audience attention. In a similar vein, Chitando (2019) argues that aesthetic pleasure encourages audience participation and facilitates deeper engagement with the messages embedded within oral performances. These observations suggest that aesthetic qualities contribute significantly to the effectiveness and longevity of oral traditions.

The literature further highlights the importance of audience participation in the aesthetic experience. Unlike written texts that are often consumed individually, oral performances are usually experienced collectively. Schechner (2020) argues that performance is a collaborative

event involving performers and audiences whose interactions contribute to the production of meaning and artistic value. Scholars of oral performance similarly maintain that audience responses such as singing, chanting, clapping, dancing and verbal affirmations enhance the aesthetic experience and transform oral literature into a communal artistic event. This perspective reinforces the view that aesthetics in oral traditions extends beyond textual beauty to encompass the entire performance environment.

A growing body of recent studies also examines aesthetics as a marker of cultural identity. Researchers argue that artistic forms often reflect the worldview, values and cultural experiences of the communities that produce them. Akinmade (2020) contends that indigenous oral performances preserve unique cultural aesthetics expressed through language, symbolism, music and performance conventions. Similarly, Ogunleye (2023) observes that Yoruba oral traditions embody culturally specific notions of beauty that distinguish them from other literary traditions. These findings suggest that aesthetics contributes not only to artistic appreciation but also to cultural preservation and identity formation.

Within praise poetry, that constitutes one of the focal points of this study, scholars identify numerous aesthetic features that contribute to artistic excellence. Barber (1991) notes that Yoruba *oríkì* employs vivid imagery, metaphorical expressions, hyperbole, repetition and rhythmic patterns that create both beauty and emotional impact. Carter-Ényì (2021) similarly argues that the effectiveness of praise poetry lies in its ability to combine artistic language with dynamic performance techniques that engage audiences and celebrate communal identity. These observations demonstrate that aesthetic considerations are central to the appreciation and interpretation of praise poetry.

The literature also reveals that proverbs possess important aesthetic qualities. Although proverbs are often studied for their wisdom and moral content, scholars increasingly recognise their artistic dimensions. Odebunmi (2021) explains that Yoruba proverbs derive much of their effectiveness from metaphorical richness, brevity, imagery and stylistic elegance. Their beauty often lies in their ability to communicate complex ideas through concise and memorable expressions. This aesthetic economy contributes to their popularity and enduring relevance within oral cultures.

Despite its contributions, Aesthetic Theory has been criticised by some scholars for focusing excessively on beauty and artistic form while paying insufficient attention to social and historical contexts. Critics argue that literature cannot be completely separated from the social realities that shape its production and reception. However, contemporary scholars increasingly adopt a balanced approach that recognises both the aesthetic and functional dimensions of oral literature. Rather than viewing beauty and function as opposing concerns, recent studies demonstrate that they often complement one another within oral traditions.

The relevance of Aesthetic Theory to this study lies in its capacity to illuminate the artistic qualities embedded in indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs among the Ketu people of Ogun State. While these oral forms undoubtedly perform important social and cultural functions, they also possess remarkable aesthetic characteristics that contribute to their appeal and durability. Indigenous songs employ rhythm, melody, repetition, tonal variation and poetic language. Praise poetry utilises imagery, symbolism, metaphor and dramatic performance. Proverbs exhibit brevity, figurative expression and linguistic elegance. These artistic features enhance audience engagement and contribute to the preservation of oral traditions across generations.

The theory is particularly useful because this study does not only seek to identify the socio-cultural significance of Ketu oral art forms but also to appreciate their artistic richness. The beauty of expression, creativity of performers and aesthetic organisation of oral texts constitute important aspects of their significance within Ketu society. By drawing attention to these artistic dimensions, Aesthetic Theory provides a framework for understanding how songs, praise poetry and proverbs function simultaneously as cultural artefacts and artistic creations.

This study therefore adopts Aesthetic Theory because it offers valuable insight into the artistic structures, performative qualities and creative expressions that characterise Ketu oral traditions. Through this framework, indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs can be examined not merely as vehicles of communication but also as aesthetically crafted forms of oral artistry that embody the cultural imagination, creativity and worldview of the Ketu people.

2.4 Appraisal of Literature

The review of relevant literature for this study reveals a growing scholarly interest in African oral literature and its role in preserving cultural heritage, transmitting indigenous knowledge and sustaining communal identity. Scholars such as Finnegan, Okpewho, Akporobaro, Yusuf and Olajubu have extensively examined the nature, functions, performance and aesthetics of oral traditions within African societies. Similarly, studies on Yoruba oral literature have explored various oral genres including songs, praise poetry, proverbs, folktales, chants and ritual performances. These studies have significantly contributed to the understanding of oral traditions as important repositories of history, philosophy, social values and cultural memory.

A major pattern emerging from the reviewed literature is the tendency of scholars to examine Yoruba oral literature from a broad and general perspective. Most studies focus on the Yoruba people as a homogeneous cultural group without paying sufficient attention to the

peculiarities of individual subgroups and their unique oral traditions. While such studies provide valuable insights into the richness of Yoruba oral culture, they often overlook the distinctive oral forms, linguistic variations and cultural experiences of smaller communities such as the Ketu people of Ogun State. Consequently, the specific characteristics of Ketu oral traditions remain largely undocumented within existing scholarship.

The review indicates that indigenous songs have attracted scholarly attention across various African societies. Researchers have examined their educational, religious, political and social functions by emphasising their importance in preserving collective memory and cultural identity. However, much of this scholarship focused on oral songs among other Yoruba subgroups or non-Yoruba communities. Consequently, the unique reservoir of indigenous songs among the Ketu people, together with their thematic concerns, performance contexts and cultural significance, remains insufficiently explored.

The reviewed literature further reveals considerable scholarly attention to Yoruba praise poetry, particularly *oríki*. Scholars such as Barber, Carter-Ényì, Olatunji and other researchers have examined the structure, performance, aesthetics and cultural significance of praise poetry within different Yoruba communities. These studies have demonstrated the importance of praise poetry in identity formation, historical preservation and social recognition. However, most of these investigations concentrate on broader Yoruba traditions or on communities outside the Ketu cultural area. As a result, there remains limited scholarly understanding of the forms, themes, performance styles and socio-cultural functions of praise poetry among the Ketu people specifically.

A similar trend is evident in the reviewed studies on proverbs. Existing scholarship has extensively explored Yoruba proverbs as vehicles of wisdom, morality, communication and

indigenous philosophy. Researchers have highlighted their role in conflict resolution, social regulation and the transmission of communal values. Despite these contributions, few studies have examined how proverbs function within contemporary Ketu communities or how they reflect the historical experiences, worldview and socio-cultural realities of the Ketu people. The absence of detailed documentation and studies on Ketu proverbs creates a significant research gap in the documentation and interpretation of Ketu oral heritage.

Another important gap identified in the reviewed literature relates to the tendency of previous studies to investigate songs, praise poetry and proverbs as separate and independent genres. While these studies have enriched knowledge within their respective areas, they often fail to acknowledge the interconnected nature of oral traditions within indigenous societies. In practice, songs, praise poetry and proverbs frequently interact within performance contexts, cultural ceremonies, festivals and communal events. Their meanings and functions are often mutually reinforcing. Yet, there is a noticeable scarcity of studies that examine these three oral forms collectively within a single analytical framework.

The reviewed literature further reveals a geographical imbalance in existing research. Many studies on Yoruba oral literature focus on prominent Yoruba subgroups such as the Oyo, Ijebu, Egba, Ife, Eko, Ekiti among others. Comparatively, little attention has been devoted to the Ketu people despite their rich oral heritage and historical significance within the wider Yoruba cultural milieu. This imbalance has contributed to the limited documentation of Ketu oral traditions and the underrepresentation of Ketu voices within Yoruba literary scholarship.

Furthermore, existing studies often emphasise either the functional or the aesthetic dimensions of oral literature without integrating both perspectives in a comprehensive manner. Given that songs, praise poetry and proverbs among the Ketu people serve important social

functions while simultaneously exhibiting artistic and performative qualities, there is a need for a study that examines both dimensions concurrently. Such an approach would provide a more holistic understanding of the role of oral traditions within Ketu society.

It is on these identified gaps that this study is considered significant. The study contributes to the existing literature by documenting and analysing indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs among selected Ketu communities of Ogun State. Unlike previous studies that focus on a single oral genre or on other Yoruba subgroups, this research examines the three oral forms as interconnected expressions of Ketu culture. By investigating their socio-cultural significance, artistic features and roles in cultural transmission, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Ketu oral traditions. In doing so, it contributes to the preservation of an underrepresented aspect of Yoruba cultural heritage and expands existing knowledge on African oral literature.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 DIDACTIC INDIGENOUS SONGS AMONG THE KÉTU PEOPLE

Osundare (1986) submits that oral songs function as instruments of cultural education through which communities teach acceptable behaviour, communal values, religious values and social responsibilities.

SONG 1: *Şe Na'ga, Şe N Wo?*

Line 1:	Ere ɔmudé	It is Child's play
Line 2:	Ke on'igba yii ma n ta?	What is this hawker selling?
Line 3:	Ere ɔmudé	It is a Child's play
Line 4:	Se na'ga?	should I peek into the tray?
Line 5:	Se n wo e e?	should I look into it e e?

This song is embellished with lessons on the ideals of Kétu community. The recurring theme in it is respect for boundaries and consent. It is a traditional song that reminds one of childhood plays in the village where hawkers are mocked and mimicked. However, in representing the childhood play, there lies a lesson to be imbibed. As collected from Chief Folasade Adeyemi, it is generally believed among Kétu people that boundaries must be set and respected. Also, permission is expected to be sought always. In the song, to teach the lesson, it is portrayed that when hawkers are stopped, they should drop their trays of goods on the ground or chair, as the case may be, for buyers to see and buy. However, it is wrong and not ideal for buyers to “peak into the tray” (Line 4) while it is on the head of the hawker. She maintains that the song stresses that ill-act with the use of rhetorical questions in Lines 2, 4-5. Rhetorical questions are literary devices in form of interrogative sentences asked in literary work but not meant to be answered. The use of such questions, which are not meant to be answered, can be regarded as a way of telling the voice in the

song “no” to peeking into the tray of the hawker. This song reiterates respect for boundaries in the society and this aligns with the codes of conduct of the society especially of conformity.

SONG 2: *Onikaluku Ko’mu Ipo E*

Line 1: Itan eyi mo li ki n gba	This is the advice I want to give to
Line 2: F’oni iyi o ti ni eti inu ko gbọ:	those who can be much attentive that:
Line 3: Ọmukekere ko o wa l’aye ọmudé,	young ones should know their status,
Line 4: Agbalagba ko ma k’ọja ago ẹ o,	adults should know their place o,
Line 5: Iwọfa k’osa mu ra ẹ li’tiwọfa!	servants should respect their place also!
Line 6: Imọran eyi mo ni kin gba fọ’ni yi	This is the advice I want to give to those
Line 7: O ti l’eti inu, ko gbọ	who can be so attentive to heed that:
Line 8: Ọmukekere ko wa l’aye ọmudé	youth should know their status,
Line 9: Agbalagba ko ma k’ọja ago ẹ o	adults should know their place o,
Line 10: Iwọfa ko sa mu ra’rẹ li ti’wọfa	servants should respect their place also,
Line 11: Gbogbo oloye ko ma gbagbe ido ẹ	all chiefs shouldn’t forget their titles!
Line 12: Ariwisi n ni yii, ẹyin oniyani!	This is my take, everyone!

Yèyé Àsà of Ìmèkọ, Chief Folasade Adeyemi, together with her Ọbádàrà Bòlòjò/Ìwé Group, wishes to “advise/who can be much attentive” (Lines 1-2) and this sets the nature of this indigenous song to be didactic. The goal of such song is to instruct and teach. The preoccupation of the song is to propagate the codes guiding every society, that is, participation, interaction and cooperation. This song stresses the need for individuals and groups to act accordingly and in mutual cooperation in order to achieve a common goal. Openly, it is maintained that the youths should know and respect their place; also, they should respect others’ (Line 2 and 8). Furthermore, older members of the society should also maintain their roles in the society as this often fosters cooperation (Lines 4 and 9). The servants or foreigners are another group in the society that is instructed to act accordingly (Line 5 and 10). All the chiefs helping the head of the community are equally instructed to always be mindful of their titles, positions and roles in furthering the goals of the community (Line 11). The use of repeated lines of instructing the young ones, adults and the

servants in the song is intentional as it helps to resound the core message of the song. The call for these groups to work accordingly in the poem fosters the need for equal participation, collective interaction and full cooperation amongst members of the society. It is so because collective and individual participation of members is necessary for the survival of the society. For this reason, the song is believed to be thoughtful, educative and instructive.

SONG 3: *Mo R'éyẹ̀ Ọpẹ̀rẹ̀*

Line 1:	Igba iyi n lọ l'ọju ọna	When I was going by the road-path,
Line 2:	Mo r'éyẹ̀ Ọpẹ̀rẹ̀	I saw an edible bird
Line 3:	N lo l'eri egi	perching on the tree.
Line 4:	E mi ko mu ọgbún	But I possess no knowledge
Line 5:	Eyi maa fi pa a	to catch it.
Line 6:	Mo fẹ n paa t'ori	I wish to kill it because
Line 7:	Mo fẹ n rẹ'ka	I would like to eat it with ọkà
Line 8:	Mo fẹ n rẹ'ka tẹki-tẹki	I wish to make ọkà so smooth and soft.
Line 9:	Ero e! Ero ya!	Hello passersby, please come!
Line 10:	Ero ya wa k'ajọ	Please come and let us
Line 11:	Pa l'oni, ka jọ pin bade-n-bade.	Kill it today and share it equally

Individual and collective participation of members of the society cannot be overlooked. It helps in attaining a better society if not a utopian society. According to Ogunrinde Florence who provided this popular Ketu song, she maintains that the song celebrates collaborative problem-solving mechanism. The song shifts from one person's voice to more than one person with use of *mo fẹ n paa* (I wish to kill it) and *ero ya wa k'ajọ/pa l'oni* (please come and let us/kill it today), in Lines 6 and 10-11. Obviously, the killing of the edible bird is the common goal to be achieved by the

characters in the song. To achieve this, the poet knows that individual effort cannot only help but a collective and equal effort is necessary. The ultimate goal is to kill the bird and prepare *òkà* (*amala*) to eat it enjoyably (Lines 6-8). This song stresses the need to always seek help when resolving matters considered out of one's individual capacity (Lines 2-5 and 9-11). As the song promotes teamwork, it also mandates equal distribution of communal resource (Line 11). The song shows that the gains of teamwork should not be shared by a few in the team but among all team members. This appreciates collaborative problem-solving over personal greed. It celebrates social cohesion and unity.

3.2 SOCIO-CULTURAL INDIGENOUS SONGS AMONG THE KÉTU PEOPLE

Yoruba and Kétu songs reflect the people's philosophy, social organisation, customs and worldview, thereby serving important socio-cultural functions within the community (Abimbola 1975:12).

SONG 4: *Ọba Alaanu*

Line 1: Omi n bẹ ẹ o, Ọba Alaanu	I am begging you o, the Merciful God
Line 2: Jẹ n r'ówó fu'se gomini l'áyé	to let me be rich enough to enjoy myself here
Line 3: Mo sẹ n bẹ ẹ o, Ọba Alaanu	I am really begging you o, the Merciful God:
Line 4: Jẹ n r'ówó fu'se gomini l'áyé	to let me be rich enough to enjoy myself here
Line 5: Ki n r'ówó sẹ faari o	to let me be rich to pose around o
Line 6: Ki n ma rìn ni wọ̀ṣi-wọ̀ṣi koko ri e	to not walk and dress around shabbily
Line 7: Eledumare aterẹrẹ kari Aye	God Almighty
Line 8: Ki n r'ówó sẹ faari o	to let me be rich to pose around o

Line 9: Ki n ma rìn ni wọ̀ṣi-wọ̀ṣi koko ri e	to not walk and dress around shabbily
Line 10: Eledumare aterere kari Aye	God Almighty
Line 11: Awa-iiri kọ pada l'eyin mi, Baba	to search-in-vain won't be my portion, God
Line 12: Aṣe-iiri kọ pada l'eyin mi, Àwòrò	to work-in-vain won't be my portion, Poet
Line 13: Mo fẹ n t'ẹgbẹ, n t'ogba	I wish to: be equal with my mates & friends,
Line 14: N r'ówó ki n fi ja'yé ọmu!	be rich to enjoy my labour on children!

Ọtun Iyalode of Ilara, Chief Cecilia Ọṣundunke, maintains that this *Iwe* song is an indigenous song of the Kétu people usually sung by all. It celebrates the merciful nature of God Almighty. It is a supplication to God to provide riches and wealth for everyone in the community (Lines 1-4). In same way, God is addressed as the sole provider in the song (Line 11). Riches and wealth, by Yoruba people are not only realised with good businesses and being dedicated to one's work, Kétu people believe that God is the ultimate provider of all riches and wealth including better job and good health. That is the reason the poet asks "God Almighty/to" let him or her "be rich enough to enjoy" and "to pose around" (Lines 7, 4-5). Dressing neatly is also attributed to being rich and wealthy; so the song continues pleading for more riches (Line 9). Equally, the song remains a socio-cultural song because it aligns with the common supplications of the people to God for better work and bountiful fruitfulness. Kétu people celebrate being successful in life. The song shows this in the earnest pleas to God that *awa-iri* (to search-in-vain) and *aṣe-iri* (to work-in-vain) should not befall anyone in Lines 11-12. The song views God as the only one to provide for humans. In this light, this song puts this expectation to the fore by pleading to God Almighty to provide riches for everyone.

SONG 5: *Ire Lẹ Kari Àwa*

Line 1: Ire gbogbo lẹ kari àwa o	All goodness shall be for us all o
Line 2: Gbogbo ire lẹ kari àwa o	All goodness shall be for us all o
Line 3: Gbogbo ara l'òpẹ̀ i fu ì so o	Oil palm tree produces fruits abundantly o
Line 4: Aye wa a toro o	May our lives be peaceful o
Line 5: Omi eyan ji pọ̀n l'aarọ̀ lẹ ba'ni ka'lẹ	Water got early will suffice for one's lifetime
Line 6: Gbogbo ire lẹ kari àwa o	All goodness shall be for us all o
Line 7: N bere,	I am asking...
Line 8: Owo lo wu ẹ, I sọ	If it is money you want, ask
Line 9: N bere,	I am asking...
Line 10: Omu l'owu ẹ, I sọ	If it is child you want, ask
Line 11: Ke e li ti ẹ e e?	What is your choice e e?
Line 12: Ire gbogbo li t'emi o	All goodness shall be for me o
Line 13: Ihun o wu kowa li ko t'orọ̀ lẹ'ẹda ẹ	Anyone should ask his Creator what he wants
Line 14: Ko pin ire fu'ni, ko kari!	To share goodness to us, without exemption!

The song resounds the message in Song 4 which is a communal plea to God to provide all riches and wealth for everyone. This song similarly pleads to the creator to provide all goodness to everyone (Lines 1-2). According to Olanrewaju Bankole who provided this common Ketu song, “all goodness” (Line 1) is repeated throughout the song and it includes good health, long life, peace of mind, good character, children, a good spouse, family harmony, respect, honour, wisdom, divine favour, success in one’s work, good reputation, contentment, good friends, community support, joy, happiness and spiritual well-being. These are the images being depicted in the song by alluding that *gbogbo ara l'òpẹ̀ i fu ì so o* (oil palm tree produces fruits abundantly) in Line 3. It is generally believed that oil palm tree usually bears enormous fruits year-in-year-out through which palm oil,

palm wine, ethanol, palm kernel, palm cabbage, palm kernel cake, palm fronds, palm fibers, palm bunch ash, palm seedlings and others are generated. With these imageries, no doubt, the song stresses that “all goodness shall be for me” and “for us all” (Lines 12 and 6). The song is cultural as it is interactional with the poet instructing everyone to “ask” his or her “creator what” he or she “wants” who is capable “to share all goodness to” everyone “without exemption” (Lines 13-14). This is evident in the use of rhetorical question in Line 11 that *ke e li ti e e e?* (what is your choice e e?). The song celebrates the magnanimity and durability of God’s blessings and gifts by maintaining in Lines 5 that *omi eyan ji pon l'aarọ lẹ ba'ni ka'lẹ* (water-fetched early will suffice for one’s lifetime). The figure of speech in that line is hyperbole which stresses the durability of God’s given blessing to be enough till one’s lifetime.

SONG 6: *Ka Gbagbe Ibi-Abini*

Line 1: Mo tori ijó	Cause of dancing,
Line 2: Mo f'àbúrò mi f'ólómele.	I dashed my younger one out to the drummer.
Line 3: Mo tori àgbàjà	Cause of being stubborn,
Line 4: Mo f'omu f'olọpa Èkó	I gave the child to a Lagos Police Officer
Line 5: Mo gba - siga funfun nẹ-nẹ	who gave me - a white cigarette in return.
Line 6: Èkó n bere mi! Ìbàdàn n bere mi!	Lagos is on to me! Ibadan is on to me!
Line 7: Mo de l'aafin Ọba Ìlášà	So I went to the palace of King Ìlášà
Line 8: N fun m l'ówó lákú.	That gave me excess money!
Line 9: Ìlú Ìmàgá la a de, la o le e lọ	It's Ìmàgá we got to, that we insisted on not leaving
Line 10: Ọmude n yi e mẹ rántí Ilé	so don't forget your homeland, these children
Line 11: Ajo ki n dun	Foreign land isn't that sweet
Line 12: ka gbàgbe ibi-abini	For anyone to forget his/her homeland
Line 13: Ọlamide, e de'le o	May you get home safely, Ọlamide o
Line 14: “Ori Oyé i sun ta” o e	“Title holders don't die on foreign land” o e
Line 15: Òwe agbagba!	is our elders’ saying!

Shina Arije is a teacher of Yoruba in Iwoye-Ketu Community High School (Senior), Iwoye-Ketu and provided this song being a socio-cultural song that aims at reminding one of his or her ancestral

home or homeland. This is an acceptable belief among the Ketu people. No matter how much the foreign land is fruitful and supportive, Yoruba people, including the Ketu people, believe that one's homeland cannot and should not be neglected (Lines 11-12). To sojourn is a common act of Yoruba people as they are found everywhere in businesses, education and security across all towns and countries. This is depicted in Line 6 that *Èkó n bere mi! Ibàdàn n bere mi!* (Lagos is on to me! Ibadan is on to me!). To remind one of ancestral home, *Ìmàgá* is deployed in the song which is the part of Iwoye-Ketu where the people stayed, fought and resisted their invaders who came to kill, maim and claim their ancestral land. That resistance gave rise to the full establishment of Iwoye-Ketu of today. Hence, *Ìmàgá* remains a place of ancestral symbol, resistant independence and communal belonging. To show that culturally that ancestral homes should not be ignored, the song concludes by the witty saying that “title holders don't die on foreign land”. This song is a clarion call on the people of Ketu not to neglect their homeland against the ever-increasing rural-urban migrations. The song shows that one's homeland is where the truest identity lies.

3.3 ANCESTRY, LINEAGE AND REPUTATION IN KÉTU FAMILY PRAISE POETRY (ORIKI)

Olatunji (1984) observes that Yoruba oriki (praise poetry) preserves historical memories, genealogical information and the distinguished qualities of individual, ancestors and lineages.

Praise Poem 1: Praise Poetry of *Ológusò* Family (Ìjòùn)

Line 1: Ègbèliká,	Groups in Ìkà,
Line 2: Ọmu adáralíka,	Good descendants of Ìkà
Line 3: Ọmu arẹ̀wà lí'jòùn,	Good-looking descendants in Ìjòùn,
Line 4: Ọmu pẹ̀pẹ̀látẹ̀ l'ónà Ìkà,	Descendants with erected altar along Ìkà Road,
Line 5: Pẹ̀pẹ̀ là tẹ̀, la kó ẹ̀kú sí!	It was altar we erected that we kept deities!
Line 6: Ọmu abẹ̀ré mẹ́ta:	Descendants with three needles:

Line 7: Ìkán ké,	One is broken,
Line 8: Ìkán nù,	One is missing,
Line 9: Ìkan tó kù rán igba aṣọ!	The last one is enough to sew two hundred clothes!
Line 10: Omu òkìtì méfà:	Descendants of six mounds of earth:
Line 11: Méta n'lé, méta l'óko.	Three of them at home, three of them on the farm.
Line 12: Olú kan,	Always together,
Line 13: Èrín kan,	With same laughter,
Line 14: Ìwà lólótòtò!	With distinct behaviour!

It is seen in the poem that the ancestors of this *Ológusò* family are identified with the community, Ìkà. Overtime, they have spread and migrated across Ogun State to Ilara, Idofa, Imeko and Igan Alade. Olanrewaju Bankole and Odunayo Akinwunmi, being members of this family, they provided that they are often in groups and are better identified as good and good-looking descendants. They both established that Ìkà is around Ijoun which is a Ketu community in Yewa North Local Government Area which is their ancestral home. The poem traces the movement and presence of the family across the local landscape. Ika represents settlement near Ijoun. The poem established the physical appeal and high social standing of the family members in all locations (Lines 1-3). In Ilara, many of the grandparents of *Ológusò* are tailors and sewing mistresses. Such reputation and identity is evident in the poem (Lines 6 – 9). Through praise poem, a family's heritage common identity and values can be realised. Furthermore, the descendants of *Ológusò* are presented in the poem to be highly cooperative and united. *Pepe* (altar), in Lines 4-5, is an elevated platform that is structured along the major path to Ìkà to house scared objects points to historical religious authority. The family served as spiritual gatekeepers for the community. The reference to “needles” in Lines 6-9 is a powerful and classic Yoruba poetic metaphor for resilience and exceptional abilities. The lines imply that even if misfortune reduces the numbers or resources of the family, the surviving members retain immense power and efficiency. The poem concludes by praising the social harmony of the compound. While they maintain deep communal unity, shared

joy and single-minded purpose, each individual displays unique dignity and moral responsibility (Lines 12-14).

Praise Poem 2: Praise Poetry of *Olúmu* Family (Òkúta)

Line 1: Ọmu Babá 'Lúmu	Descendants of <i>Babá 'Lúmu</i> ,
Line 2: Ọmu Bàbá Atàpáráwàsà	Descendants of <i>Bàbá Atàpáráwàsà</i> ,
Line 3: Eyi ñjẹ ní gbùngbùn òkúta!	That is dwelling at the very heart of the stone!
Line 4: Ọmu Baba ko ẹ e ba'gbe	Descendants of a Father that isn't accommodating,
Line 5: Ko ẹ kọ ọ n nẹ	That cannot be avoided;
Line 6: Bi ñ bá baa gbe, ara ẹ níí	When being lived with, he'll be restless,
Line 7: Bi ñ ba kọ ọ n nẹ, ẹ ẹ d'ìjà	When being avoided, it is a big problem.
Line 8: Ọmu Baba af'apó r'orí,	Descendants of a Father sleeping on a quiver-pillow
Line 9: Ọmu Baba amú'dà ẹ tìmùtìmù	Descendants of a father that keeps his swords tightly
Line 10: Nítorí ojú ogun!	Because of warfront!

African traditional societies have many ancestors who are powerful hunters and warriors. Many of them established towns and many family dynasties. This is depicted in this praise poem and referred to the ancestor of this family to be *Baba 'Lúmu* or *Atàpáráwàsà* (Lines 1-2). Usman Sulaimon maintained that these lines trace the lineage back to the foundational patriarch of the compound which helps to establish the family name and ancestral authority. *Olúmu* family spreads across Okuta, Oke-Agbede and Iwoye-Ketu. The family is believed to have a strong lineage of strong hunters and warriors. It is seen that their ancestor was living at the bottom of the rock. Akanbi Edun opined that this oriki shows the values of their ancestors. The ancestor of this family is presented to be strong warriors who was always ready for war (Lines 8-10). Line 3 ties directly to the name of the town, *Òkúta* and the ancestors of this family are depicted in the poem to be “dwelling at the very heart of the stone”. Poetically, it indicates a family that lives in a naturally, fortified, rocky terrain and symbolising that they are physically and metaphorically unshakeable. The family is portrayed to be of intense nature and having inescapable influence with the

community. They possess a formidable temperament that makes them difficult to accommodate simple neighbours; yet they are too powerful and important to ever be ignored (Line 4-7). These lines show the complex social dynamics of a warrior lineage. Their high energy and restless nature mean they demand constant action but attempting to by-pass them completely insults their honour. The last three lines of the poem show the explicit military image of their ancestors and the family at large. This is shown in Lines 8-10 that the family ancestors did not sleep in luxury; instead, they used their “quiver” (*apó*) and “swords” (*idà*) as headrests and pillows. This indicates a historic vanguard family responsible for defending the town through constant vigilance and permanent readiness for battle.

Praise Poem 3: Praise Poetry of *Ìlọmu* Family (Ìgán Aládé)

Line 1: Ọmu Olúpé à ń bè	Descendants of Olúpé that are being pacified,
Line 2: À ń bè kée ẹ'okọ oge	Being pacified to be the husband of a fashionable woman.
Line 3: Ọmu ọpó kò rú'wé	Descendants of a wooden pole that will never sprout,
Line 4: Ọmu ọgiri ọ ta gbòngbò!	Descendants of a wall that cannot grow into a tree-root!

Many ancestors of Ketu people and families were strong warriors and famers. In every of their families' praise poems, such strong character is usually deployed and praised. Ajani Bankole informed the researcher that the ancestor of *Ìlọmu* family is Olúpé. Their family insistence nature is depicted in Lines 1-2 as the descendants are “being pacified/to be the husband of a fashionable woman.” Their strong nature is exemplified in the symbols of the poem to be that of “a wooden pole” and “a wall”. Although, the pole is a wood, it cannot grow into a tree anymore but strong enough to brace the pillars of the house. Also, *Ìlọmu*'s descendants are strong-willed like “wall” (Lines 3-4). Like other families, they have spread to many other communities in Ogun State, outside Igan Alade. Furthermore, the act of being pacified (*à ń bè*) in Lines 1-2 indicates a lineage of individuals who possess a proud, highly sensitive or royal temperament requiring deliberate

reverence and diplomacy from outsiders. Line 2 shows the elite social status of the family as they do not desperately seek alliances; rather, they must be courted, coaxed and pleaded with to enter into marriage. It portrays the men of the family as highly desirable and elegant who know their worth. The metaphors – “a wooden pole” and “a wall” – where the former represents unyielding firmness, absolute dependability and a family that stands resolute without shifting over time; while the latter signifies a lineage built on solid and unchanging foundations. The poem shows that they are strong, predictable and impervious to others trying to disturb (uproot) them. These metaphors in Lines 3-4 are deliberate poetic devices praising stability. The poem highlights a family that functions as a permanent anchor within the community.

Praise Poem 4: Praise Poetry of Ìgbáká Family (Ilara)

Line 1: Ọmu adára ní'gbaka	Pleasing descendants in Ìgbáká,
Line 2: Asun-un má ẹ̀àna ìyàwó	The pleasant one that doesn't regard his in-laws.
Line 3: Ọmu ewé ẹ̀sín, ọmu ìràwò òjò	Descendants of old leaves, of starry rain,
Line 4: Aho ìgbóná, omi ọ̀run kii jó'ni!	Of striking hotness, rainwater does not scald anyone!

This family praise poem belongs to a lineage from Ilara that is a border town in the Ketu region of Ogun State which is the family of the informant, Adeboye Kugbakin. The poem utilises Ketu dialectical features and metaphors to preserve the identity, history and reputation of the family. Ìgbáká denotes the specific ancestral compound or quarter within Ilara. This line establishes family pride and social standing (Line 1). Line 2 contains a fascinating cultural nuance. In standard Yoruba, *àna* means in-laws. The Line hints at a historical narrative or characteristic of the family lineage. It could suggest a fierce independence and wealth that made them unyielding even to marriage alliances. *Ewé ẹ̀sín* (old leaves), according to him, in Line 3 is metaphor that denotes survival and longevity. This suggests the family stems from deep and ancient roots. And “starry rain” (Line 3) is a poetic reference to abundance. Generally, rain is a blessing and comparing the

descendants to the countless rain with stars signifies large, prosperous and unstoppable family line. The poem shows the family fiery disposition and intense presence (Line 4). It covers the lineage's temper and quest for protection. However, the poem balances this intensity with the metaphor, "rainwater" (Line 4). Rainwater is pure and naturally soothing. The phrase, *kii jó'ni* (does not scald anyone), in Line 4, means that despite their power, wealth or fierce reputation, the family is ultimately benevolent, protective and refreshing to those around them. This poem shows that the family is powerful enough to be feared but noble enough to be trusted.

Praise Poem 5: Praise Poetry of Ògùdú Family (Ìwòyè-Kétu)

Line 1: Ọmu Ògùdú kà'ká ọwọ	Descendants of Ògùdú filled with social grades,
Line 2: Ọmu ọkunrin gbòngbògbòn l'èsè ọkè	Strong descendants by the foot of the hill,
Line 3: Ọmu ojú owó	Descendants of prosperity,
Line 4: Ọmu Agolo k'òjẹ yánrin	Descendants of Agolo that don't eat wild-lettuce!

This family praise poem is from a lineage from Iwoye-Ketu which is an ancient border town in the Ketu cultural area of Ogun State. Ògùdú, according to Chief Abọlaji Idowu, refers to their family's ancestral patriarch and the original compound name. The phrase *kà'ká ọwọ* (social grades), in Line 1, indicates a family whose members hold numerous traditional titles, honorary ranks and district social responsibilities within the community hierarchy. The poem, in Line 2, intensifies the description of strength. This indicates a lineage that settled near or defended the hillside and the community which equally signifies physical endurance and tactical geographical placement. The financial success and economic influence of the lineage is depicted in Line 3 and 4. To be called *ọmu ojú owó* (descendants of prosperity) means the lineage possessed significant wealth, trading power and financial capacity within the area.

Praise Poem 6: Praise Poetry of *Ìkan-Jàre* Family

Line 1: Ọmu adì onímira	Descendants of titled grades
Line 2: Ímira pàṣò	Grades that are lengthy
Line 3: Ọmu ẹkẹ'lé, ọmu okùdà	Descendants of the house, of the goodness
Line 4: Ọmu okùdà, ọmu àjẹtán	Descendants of goodness, of witchcraft
Line 5: Ọmu àjẹkù, àjẹkù sí awo!	Descendants of witchcraft, of a known one!

This family *oriki* belongs to the *Ìkan-Jàre* lineage in Iwoye-Ketu where Shina Arije and Wale Fadipe hail from. It centres on societal heritage, family prestige, hidden spiritual power and longevity. Lines 1-2 refer to individuals who hold high social status, hereditary titles or distinct organisational ranks within the community. This means that the family did not recently acquire their influence; their titles are ancient, enduring, deserving and passed down through generations. The poem highlights the family as pillars of the household and central to the foundation of the town (Line 3). Pairing this with *okùdà* (of goodness) shows a compound known for hospitality, moral uprightness and structural permanence. They both maintained that their *oriki* depicts a spiritual element that is profound in Yoruba land, *àjẹ* (witchcraft) in Line 4 to 5. In Yoruba philosophy, witchcraft does not merely carry the negative connotations of Western thoughts. Instead, it represents potent, esoteric spiritual energy, cosmic enforcement and deep wisdom often associated with the notion that *àjẹtán* and *àjẹkù* which suggest that these unseen spiritual realms and powers are in abundance. This poem emphasises on long-standing reputation of this family.

Praise Poem 7: Praise Poetry of *Ìdí-Ìrókò* Family (*Ìwòyè-Kétu*)

Line 1: Ìdí-Ìrókò,	Ìdí-Ìrókò,
Line 2: Ọmu on'lẹ kò rìn	Descendants of land-owners that don't trek,
Line 3: Kò rìn kó to l'órúnkún	That do not trek satisfactorily,
Line 4: Ọmu Ọba kan tó ń ẹ'ojú pále-pále	Descendants of a king watching, watching!
Line 5: Ọmu ọlá ójó:	Descendants of essential-rain:

Line 6: Ọmu ọjó ń rọ, a ti l'ẹkùn	Descendants of falling rain, doors are locked,
Line 7: Ilé ń jó, à ń la ọgbàrá!	House is on fire, erosion-path is being made.
Line 8: Ọmu Ọba kan tó d'orí kodò lámúsu	Descendants of a king lost in thoughts,
Line 9: Tó ní t'owó t'omọ máa r'ọjò se èho tò-un	that wealth & children be showered on him
Line 10: Ọmu Ọba kan tó ń s'ojú pále-pále	Descendants of a king watching, watching!

This praise poem belongs to a lineage from Iwoye-Ketu and sharing the town as the Ogudu family. This poem focuses on royal ancestry, landlord status, immense wealth and powerful imagery. *Idi-Iroko*, according to the poem and interview, is a specific compound, quarter or seat of the family in Iwoye-Ketu filled with *Iroko* trees. The name itself, as gathered from Chief Abọlaji Idowu, means “the base of the Iroko tree” (Line 1). It is a massive tree that is sacred and valued in Yoruba culture because it symbolises entrance and majesty. He said that the family can be marked as part of the original settlers of the town as they are portrayed to be *on'ile* (descendants of land-owners). In old Yoruba society, it is the elite families’ chiefs and royalty did not travel on foot over long distances; they were carried in hammocks or rode horses. This line emphasises that the family members are aristocratic or wealthy to engage in manual labour or exhaustive trekking (Line 2-3). The middle of the poem reveals a direct royal pedigree. In traditional societies of Yoruba, rain represents prosperity, agricultural life and divine blessings (Line 5-6). The metaphor, *ọlá ọjó* (essential rain) being a downpour that forced people to lock their doors shows that the family’s wealth, influence and population are massive and overwhelming in the community. The paradoxical poetic image painted in Lines 6-7 that as rain is “falling...doors are locked/house is on fire, erosion path is being made” shows a chaotic or highly intense situation where the heavy rainwater creates strong channels to quench the fire. Metaphorically, this implies that the family possesses the sheer volume of resources and power necessary to handle major crises. The poem reiterates the royalty ancestry of the lineage as a king is mentioned to sitting and “in thoughts” praying to God to shower on him “wealth & children” (Lines 8-9). The imagery of wealth and

children raining down like a torrential downpour reinforces the theme of immense prosperity (wealth) and generational continuity (children). The poem establishes the family as both owners of lands and descendants of a king which give them a historical authority in Iwoye-Ketu.

3.4 ADVISORY, EDUCATIONAL AND MOTIVATIONAL PROVERBS AMONG THE KETU PEOPLE

Yoruba proverbs perform socio-pragmatic functions, particularly educational and rhetorical roles, through which they instruct, advise and guide members of society in their daily interactions (Osoba, 2014:44).

Proverb 1:

<i>Oni-an ẹ ga, ẹsẹ ẹ ẹ tírín</i>	<i>(Anyone wishing to be tall person must have elongated legs)</i>
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Being “tall” in the proverb, according to Biobaku Gideon, means wishing to achieve great things. And one of the attributes of tallness in human is long legs that make the height evident and realisable. So, having long legs or tiny legs can be regarded as the sacrifice and effort that must be done for anyone to be regarded as being tall. This proverb, obviously, reiterates the fact that anyone who wishes to achieve great things must be prepared to pay its attendant sacrifices. This can be said of a student who desires to pass well in exam; and to achieve this, he or she must be ready to prepare well.

Proverb 2:

<i>Kó le san fǹ'òkunun ní ún lí kó fun ikun imú ẹ</i>	<i>(For the sick to be better, for that reason he is being encouraged to take care of himself)</i>
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Encouragement remains one of the core values inherent in Ketu proverbs. In this proverb, it is encouraged that anyone faced with any difficulty must be ready to abide by the rules guiding its

solution. This proverb encourages the members of the society to be forward-thinking and solution-driven.

Proverb 3:

<i>Ihun a ko le jẹ, a ki fún ni'yàn kan jẹ</i>	<i>(What one cannot eat, one does not offer other person)</i>
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This proverb advises anyone to be thoughtful and mindful of their actions. This is so because one's actions usually have effects on others and the society at large. By this, one should be careful of what one does to others and which can be replicated to one without any complaint or regret. It is simply anchored on popular saying that “do unto others as you want them to do to you”.

Proverb 4:

<i>Èbìtì bí kò p'eku ẹ ẹ m'ẹyín f'ẹlẹyìn</i>	<i>(The trap that does not catch its prey should at least retain its bait)</i>
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In every society, a “trap” is believed to be used to catch “preys” or “rodents”. This, apparently, is the sole aim of the trap. To ensnare the prey, a “bait”, usually “kernel”, “dried or fried fish/meat”, “cassava” and etc., is commonly placed on it. And when the trap doesn't catch the prey, the farmer expects that the bait should still be on the trap in order to catch another prey. According to Biobaku Gideon, this expectation symbolises the idea of achieving a desirable goal. The “prey” is the goal while the “bait” is the effort geared towards achieving the goal. The proverb, thus, means that when a person fails to achieve a goal, he or she should ensure that his or her efforts do not result in a complete loss by learning from mistakes and such failure.

Proverb 5:

<i>Ab'ómude l'óna, ó lí òun kò bà'ni s'aré; kó tò d'áyé lati s'aré é ní</i>	<i>(A little child that refuses to play with an adult forgets that such an adult had been playing somehow before he was even born)</i>
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Adebisi Obagbo maintained that the proverb is used to educate a younger person to take interpersonal relationship seriously because all the members of the society, across all grades and classes, are expected to interact in order to achieve a common goal. This proverb upholds the canon of socialisation which every Ketu community celebrates so much. The use of “ómude” (a child) shows that the saying is often said by an adult who witnessed the birth and upbringing of such child into the values of the society.

Proverb 6:

<i>A ki i ní ewé n nẹ ká f'owó kó'mí</i>	<i>(One does not have leaves; yet packing faeces barehanded)</i>
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Also, this proverb is used to inculcate the habit of always finding the best solutions to problems. It is unhealthy to use “barehands” to clean up faeces on the floor, especially when one has broad leaves around, therefore, the use of such broad leaves is suitable for that task. Thus, the proverb, like Proverb 2, encourages members of the society to be proactive and solution-oriented.

Proverb 7:

<i>Ajá eyí o rorò, ko le e i sọ ilé méjì</i>	<i>(A fierce dog cannot safeguard two households)</i>
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This proverb educates one on the principle of shared responsibilities. This is the ultimate goal of the Ketu people and other Yoruba people by maintaining that “Igi kan ke I d'agbo se” (a tree cannot make a forest). No matter how fierce and wild a dog is, such a dog, for effective purpose, should not be used to safeguard multiple households. This is so because the stress of moving around the different compounds can lead to exertion and possible death. This shows that responsibilities should be shared, as in the concept of trade term – division of labour and

governance term – separation of power. Ketu people believe so much in competence and achievement of a common goal with the equal participation of every member of the community.

Proverb 8:

<i>Bọ'wọ ọmudé kò tó pepẹ, ọwọ àgbàlagbà kẹ kò le e wọ kèngbè</i>
<i>(The hand of the child cannot reach the cabinet and the hand of the old cannot enter the mouth of a gourd)</i>

Like Proverb 7, this proverb reiterates that the contributions of both the old and the young are equally valuable in attaining a goal in the society. This shows that every member of the society is optimally recognised according to their roles and respected – regardless of their age, gender and class.

Proverb 9:

<i>Ìgbàdò ké i d'áyé, òkàn kẹ l'ediẹ nje</i>	<i>(Before corn, chickens did peck on other things)</i>
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It is generally believed that chickens, hens and cocks habitually feed on corns and practically live on it. This proverb shows that maize alone cannot and is not the only feed the chickens are feeding on. This reiterates and preaches diversification in any means of survival in the society. In fewer words, the proverb educates that there are many ways to survive and one must be ready to explore.

Proverb 10:

<i>Bí n daa, ọnikàn kí d'ifá</i>	<i>(One does not consult the Oracle when one is prospering)</i>
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This proverb reminds one to be careful in time of prosperity because of the crowd, expectation and disappointment attached to it. To “consult the Oracle”, according to Kayode Rebecca, is to seek solutions and guidance on matters. And it is usually believed that when one is “prospering” and having enough to live on, one usually forgets to seek divine guidance so that the prosperity can meet posterity. This is an educational proverb.

Proverb 11:

<i>Kòkòrò ìyí n jẹ'gbá, idí ìgbá lí n wà</i>
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<i>(The pest-insect destroying the garden egg is dwelling around it)</i>
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Troubles through betrayals cannot be overlooked in societies. For this reason, this proverb is commonly used among Ketu people in order to educate one to be careful of people around as “enemies are sometimes people around us and familiar with us”. This supports the common Yoruba saying that “*eyin ku’le l’òta wa, inu ile laseeni n gbe*” (the enemies are at the back of the house but core wrong doers are right inside the house).

Proverb 12:

<i>Ìgbà àgbún ke i d’òjà l’olibaara ti n j’èja</i>
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<i>(Before mudfish/catfish is sold in the market, people had been eating other fish)</i>
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This proverb also supports the teaching of Proverb 9 by maintaining that people always have “alternatives” when taking decisions on any matter. “Mudfish/catfish” in the proverb shows one option or type of fish that can be eaten. However, there are other species of fish that can be consumed, e.g. croaker, electric fish, gold fish, sardine and etc. This shows that there are always alternatives and one must be ready to explore.

Proverb 13:

<i>Ẹdiẹ gbẹṣẹ ki i w’ájà l’ásán</i>

<i>(A big hen is never at the market without a cogent reason)</i>

Metaphorical, “a big hen” represents “a good habit”. As gathered, “a big hen” is traditionally expected to be eaten by the farmer rearing it; but because such hen could either have been breaking its eggs without hatching them accordingly or be bad in guarding its chickens against the ravaging hawks, Ketu people believe that such a hen should be sold and not eaten not minding how big it

is. This proverb educates that when a good habit is cultivated, it would always be appreciated and not disregarded or ignored.

Proverb 14:

<i>Ka i dá'ko ní igbó abiligaun-gaun, nkan dandan l'òbọ ibè nje</i>

(Before a thick forest was cultivated, there is something that its monkeys were eating)

This proverb is an inspirational proverb as it is used to motivate members of the society to always be ready to explore in terms of surviving and living well. “Monkeys” as used in the proverb are animals that love consuming bananas but bananas are not usually found in thick forest that is not cultivated by farmers; yet it is believed that there are monkeys living in such forest and are definitely feeding on other things. This proverb reflects the teaching of Proverbs 9 and 12.

Proverb 15:

<i>Pai ení tere, èjì tere, l'ọjà òkún</i>	(Little by little, the market is usually crowded)
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This proverb is used to inspire and motivate members of the society who wish to achieve a goal. It supports the common English witty sayings that “Rome was not built in a day but they were laying bricks every hour” and “little drops of water make a mighty ocean” meaning that, to achieve a goal requires persistent and consistent efforts.

Proverb 16:

<i>Pépèpé ki i hán nlé alágbèdẹ</i>	(Minor tasks are not wanting in a blacksmith workshop)
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This proverb shows that a blacksmith is usually busy in the workshop and yet, all the tasks are always given equal attention. This proverb inspires members to be hardworking and dedicated to their daily works as no task is too complex or insignificant for hardworking persons.

3.5 CAUTIONARY PROVERBS AMONG THE KETU PEOPLE

Ehineni (2016:72) observes that Yoruba proverbs (across all dialects) are used to achieve communicative goals such as cautioning, informing, warning and other discourse acts within interaction.

Proverb 17:

<i>A pa ejò k'alẹ̀, ọmu lí ého ẹ l'on ẹ jẹ</i>	(A snake is killed but the child said its head would be his share to eat)
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This proverb is used to warn individuals in the society who are not fully grown in thoughts and less experienced against claiming a share of something dangerous or undesirable because of greed or misinformation. The proverb is used to caution anyone against consequences of poor decision. It is traditionally believed that the head of a snake is not edible; hence, dangerous and harmful for anyone to eat it.

Proverb 18:

<i>Ọmude èyí o li b'ó' d'àgbà, orí ẹyẹlé l'òun ẹ mẹ jẹ, orí ẹyẹlé k'òní jẹ òun kẹ o d'àgbà</i> (A child that seeks to eat the head of a dove when grown up, the head of the bird will not let him grow)
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This proverb cautions the people, as Proverb 17 does, against greed. Dove is said to be a bird that is loyal to its breeder and should not be eaten. Yet, opting to eat its head is against the tradition and customs of Yoruba culture. Hence, greediness or harmful desires can lead to negative consequences that can hinder personal growth and general well-being.

Proverb 19:

<i>A wò'lú má'tẹ, iwùn ara ẹ ló mù</i>	(Anyone who knows his boundaries in the community may not be ridiculed)
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It is often used to warn foreigners or strangers in a new community against misbehaving and working against the conforming rules of the society. If such a person does otherwise, he or she may be subjected to ridicule or public shame. Therefore, a person who understands and respects the limits and acceptable behaviour in a new community is liable to be respected.

Proverb 20:

<i>Oni-an eyi o sòrò púpò, ẹ ẹ sì sọ</i>	(Anyone who talks too much is bound to misspeak)
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The habit of talking too much by neglecting privacy and consequences is often disregarded among the Ketu people. It is generally believed and warned that a person who talks excessively is likely to say something wrong or inappropriate. Hence, the need to be careful when talking.

Proverb 21:

<i>Alásọ àlà kẹ kò le lọ sí'sò elẹpo</i>	(Someone on white attire should not go to a palm oil seller's stall)
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Ketu people respect and regard people with integrity. This is also done by Yoruba people generally. This proverb symbolised “*Alásọ àlà*” (someone on white attire) to be someone with integrity and cautions him or her against situations or actions that may easily damage his or her character. Obviously, to be truthful and trustworthy is much appreciated.

Proverb 22:

A li kí a gba ọmọ ẹdiẹ l'ọwọ ikú, ó li kí oun lọ sí àkítàn lọ jẹ
(A chick is being kept from being crushed to death, it is arguing it is being kept away from the bin)

To warn people in Kena dialect, speakers often use this proverb so as to avoid undesirable consequences. A chick is usually seen to be helpless without its “mother-hen” and when such a chick is being kept away from perching on the dumpsite, it is being warned, corrected or safeguarded from being crushed to death. This is applicable to all individuals in the society considered to be vulnerable and expected to heed the warning.

Proverb 23:

Ajá ìyí ẹ sọ'nù, ke i gbó fèrè ọlódẹ (A dog that is bent on going astray will not heed the hunter's whistle)

This cautionary proverb is usually used by Ketu speakers in order to warn a person who constantly ignores warnings. This kind of defiance is always frowned at in the society. This proverb often helps in cautioning, informing and discouraging the acts of disobedience and defiance in the society.

Proverb 24:

À ti'ra ìbun kò tó a ti ra ẹtù (To buy a gun is easier than to buy its bullets)

Ketu people use cautionary proverbs to warn anyone that to start a harmful venture may be easier than sustaining it. It cautions against ill-acts of causing harms to other people in the society.

Proverb 25:

Kà kà k'ẹku mẹ'jẹ sèsé, á fú sà'wà da'nù (For a rat not to eat beans freely, it will rather destroy it completely)

According to Ajani Bankole, it is used to warn individuals who may not benefit from something but should equally not destroy it. “Sèsé” is a type of beans not eaten by rats but when rats come in

contact with it, they either scatter or destroy it completely. The rats are likened to individuals; hence humans are cautioned against such unacceptable act of wastage and wickedness.

Proverb 26:

<i>Ẹ̀dùn ní ẹ̀dùn ní gbóngbón ńkán sí</i>	(It is when one is prosperous that one has many people be cheering him)
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As Proverb 10 teaches, this warns people to be careful when prospering and being wealthy. It is a warning that people tend to show support and admiration for others mainly when they are successful or prosperous.

Proverb 27:

<i>Ọkánjua ń d'àgbà, ọgbún ń re'wájú</i>	(As one grows older, wisdom abounds)
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This proverb, according to Chief Abolaji Idowu in Ioeye-Ketu, is used to warn adults to act accordingly with their garnered wisdom, foresight and understanding. Wisdom and experience are often attached to age in Yoruba land.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

4.1 INDIGENOUS SATIRICAL SONGS AMONG THE KETU PEOPLE

Osundare (1991) discusses that oral songs of Yoruba have powerful means to comment on social vices, expose greed and corruption, injustice, abuse of power and any form of ill behaviour in the society.

Song 7: *Wolewole ti n fi'le E Wẹ'lọ*

Line 1: A li'ru eleyi n ɕa'lebu si	Who are you abusing especially
Line 2: bayi ni bokoja, <i>Anuweyome?</i>	when passing by, <i>Anuweyome?</i>
Line 3: Le o ran ẹ si m?	Who sent you to me?
Line 4: Ọbun ko wẹ'ra ẹ,	Dirty woman who doesn't bathe herself!
Line 5: o lo'hun n wẹ'su	But claiming to be peeling yam neatly!
Line 6: Abidoti l'ara pọ ọna igbunse	A dirty person like filthy toilet path!
Line 7: Wolewole n ti fi'le ẹ wẹlọ	Sanitation Officer is asking about you,
Line 8: Fọ "l'ibisi o ti wa?"	that "where is she from?"
Line 9: Aji ma run rin,	Dirty woman that doesn't brush her teeth,
Line 10: a d'odo ma le wẹ a ,	who leaves the river without having her bath,
Line 11: Aşansẹ ma ta n ba!	that washes her feet, not washing her butts!
Line 12: Sisi eleja, bo ti jẹ I ko'we ,	Young woman, if you don't take your bath,
Line 13: I kii ko rọ'ju, I ra kongi,	You'd manage and buy a bar of soap
Line 14: I f'osọ o, fi si l'ara.	to wash your clothes and wear them.
Line 15: O kọ ja l'ona wo	As you pass by anytime,
Line 16: Wole-wole fẹ'sun ẹ	Sanitation Officer is always reporting you.
Line 17: I ko yaa gb'oko lọ.	Better you leave for the village!

According to Chief Folasade Adeyemi, the song is a satirical traditional composition that criticises poor personal hygiene and socially unacceptable behaviour within the Ketu community. The singer employs ridicule, sarcasm and exaggerated descriptions to portray the subject as an individual whose unclean habits have become a public concern. By questioning why she insults others while passing by and describing her as someone who neglects proper bathing and personal care (Lines

1-4), the song represents both offensive conduct and poor hygiene as behaviours deserving public disapproval. In Lines 6-8, the vivid comparison of the woman to a “filthy toilet path” intensifies the ridicule and demonstrates how traditions conduct that violates communal standards. Another important feature of the song is its emphasis on communal accountability. The repeated reference to the “Sanitation Officer” searching for the woman symbolises the community’s commitment to maintain public cleanliness and order. Rather than treating hygiene as a private and personal matter, the song reflects the Ketu belief that every individual has a responsibility to protect the public health and welfare of the community. At the same time, the song offers constructive advice by encouraging the offender to obtain soap, wash her clothes and maintain proper personal hygiene (Lines 12-14). That indicates that the purpose of the satire is not merely to shame the individual but to inspire positive change and social reform. Through humour, mockery and criticism, the song reinforces cultural values, viz. cleanliness, self-respect, responsibility and considerate for others.

Song 8: *Onígbèsè Ìyàwó*

Line 1: Eḡerute lo lo l’oja o i a	It is <i>Eḡerute</i> that went to the market
Line 2: Ni’yawo fi de Şanka	That she left for <i>Şanka</i> ,
Line 3: Ajaşoj’ewu O wọ moto Ayeyẹ	dressing anyhow taking <i>Ayeyẹ</i> ’s cab
Line 4: Ni’jole Ayeyẹ ẹ ja ẹ s’ona oja	On the day <i>Ayeyẹ</i> will leave you be at market
Line 5: E f’oju sọ’kun wa’le	You shall cry returning home
Line 6: E re’ru si le’ri ẹ,	carry your luggage on your head
Line 7: E ẹ f’ese rin na wo	and shall trek home helplessly
Line 8: Şe iwọ kẹ lo tẹ ra rẹ	cause you personally disgrace yourself
Line 9: Li i gb’owo w’ale	by taking money from other partners
Line 10: L’oju ẹ ko gbe bi’kan	by not being contented
Line 11: Li i gba paki wa’le	by taking things unexpected home
Line 12: Onigbese iyawo	Disgraceful wife
Line 13: I n tẹ’le p’ori oya	That is catwalking like bushmeat

This satirical song condemns marital infidelity, greed and irresponsible conduct among married women. Through ridicule and criticism, the singer portrays the woman as one who abandons the virtues of fidelity and contentment in pursuit of material gains (Lines 8-11). The references to travelling with another man and accepting money and gifts from different partner expose behaviour that the Ketu community considers disgraceful and harmful to the sanctity of marriage. The song further criticises the woman's lack of self-restraints and contentment. According to Chief Folasade Adeyemi, the imagery of carrying the luggage on her head, trekking home in teams and returning in disgrace symbolises the unavoidable consequences of immoral conduct (Lines 4-8). These descriptions serve as a warning that dishonesty has no place in ketu communities. The song obviously promotes the cultural values of marital faithfulness, modesty, self-discipline and contentment. It also condemns behaviours that threaten family stability and communal harmony. Through mockery, humour and public rebuke, the song encourages married women to preserve their dignity and uphold the values expected of them by the society.

Song 9: *Ọkọ Kaa Bèèrè*

Line 1: Ọkọ ọkọ kọ,	My husband, my husband:
Line 2: Ọkọ eyin mu n fu	the one I am married to,
Line 3: Ọkọ bo lọ l'oko	whenever he goes to farm ,
Line 4: ka mu igbado w'ale	he will not return home with bags of corn.
Line 5: Botokode m ba	But when he returns from farm that,
Line 6: fu lẹ'kọ meji	I serve him two wraps of pap
Line 7: Ọkọ ka a bèèrè, e fẹ jẹ tanke	which he'll eat without asking how I got it.
Line 8: I bẹde sàkì ọdún mẹfa	When he sets trap for six years,
Line 9: I ke gbọ p'óré	you won't hear it catches any animal.
Line 10: Gbogbo ni gbongbo l'owọ ọkọ mi o	Everything is somehow with my husband o
Line 11: Ko fun m l'owo n lọ fi pe e lo	He doesn't give me money to shop!

This satirical song criticises laziness and the failure of a husband to fulfil his responsibilities as the bread-winner of the family. Sung from the perspective of a dissatisfied wife, the song portrays a man (husband) who frequently goes to the farm yet returns empty-handed and leaving his household without the expected harvest (Line 3-4, 8-9). As gathered from Chief Folasade Adeyemi, his depicted attitude highlights his inability to provide for his family despite claiming to be hardworking. This song ridicules idleness, incompetence and neglect of one's domestic responsibilities, all of which are regarded as unacceptable in Ketu society. The satire is intensified through the wife's description of her husband repeated failures. She explains that although she faithfully prepares food for him whenever he returns from the farm, his hunting and farming produce no meaningful results (Line 5-9). In exposing these shortcomings in a humorous and critical manner, the song warns against laziness and encourages diligence, productivity and responsibility within the family. Ketu believes in hard-work and responsible leadership being the core qualities of a good husband. Through satire, the song is expected to preserve these cultural values and reminds members of the community that respect and honour are earned through diligence and faithful fulfilment of one's obligations.

Song 10: *Ẹ Sọko S'eri Ẹni yio Wu'wa Ika*

Line 1: Ẫgbìnrèkòtí	To farm is not pointless:
Line 2: ǎjǐ f'apón yan 'ran	smoker of bushmeat daily,
Line 3: Mo de, ọmu oniku ijo	descendants of real dancers!
Line 4: Mo p'odo ọgbun odo Oşuru	I call on the Deeps of Oşuru River
Line 5: Akaba ọdún da aye li Imẹko	Here to celebrate in Imẹko
Line 6: Agbalugbe o n ro şe k'ọjo pari	Agbalugbe should heed to the end of the day
Line 7: Hun ti ba yin mulẹ ọnikàn ko mu	with the oath taken that's unknown to others
Line 8: Ẹri ẹko wi le n şe gbe niyin aşebi	with all you say by supporting evildoers
Line 9: Şàngó alado arina iná	Şàngó the god of fire
Line 10: Ẹ sọ'ko s'eri ẹni yio wu'wa ika	you should stone all evildoers

This Ketu satirical song specifically condemns wickedness, wrong injustice and the protection of evil doers within the community. Through direct criticism and symbolic expressions, the singer calls attention to the dangers of supporting evil and abandoning truth. The song reminds members of Ketu community, according to Ọbádàrà Bòlòjò/Ìwé Group, that wrong doing should never be tolerated simply because of personal relationships or selfish interests. Instead, individuals are encouraged to uphold justices and integrity in all circumstances. The satirical tone becomes more forceful as the song rebukes those who defend or associate themselves with evil doers despite knowing the truth (Line 8). That Line 8 that shows people supporting wrongdoers exposes the moral failure of those who choose loyalty to individuals over loyalty to justice. The invocation of *Şàngó*, the god or Yoruba deity associated with justice, thunder and divine punishment symbolises the certainty of judgment upon those who engage in or protect acts of wickedness. The concluding call to “stone all evil doers” in Line 10 should be understood figuratively as a strong condemnation of evil and a demand for the community to reject, expose, oppose and punish conduct that threatens peace and social orders.

Song 11: *Ma a Şe Ohun Ire*

Line 1: Ọlọrun laku lo mu kadara mo yan!	It is God Almighty that gave me my destiny
Line 2: L’ọrun wa’le Aye	in heaven to come here.
Line 3: Ẹyin kọ l’ẹda mi, alaropin ẹda	You didn’t create me, you looking down on me
Line 4: Mo l’ọba oke lo mu kadara mo yan	I said “it is God Almighty that gave me my destiny”
Line 5: L’ọrun wa’le Aye!	in heaven to come here.

Line 6: Iwọ kọ lo da mi, alaropin ẹda	You didn’t create me, you looking down on me
Line 7: Kẹ’ni mani n wa nitori lọgba	Ill-wishers cause of us

Line 8: Palọ-Rumu kan ni n gbe.	Rented a room & parlour
Line 9: Òkè-Ọlá n lo'fẹ fi j'oye aronipin	that Òkè-Ọlá to give him a title of being so bad
Line 10: Awo mẹn'nu mẹn ẹn nbe nidi oro	those we should look and let be are under the tree
Line 11: Ke i lagbaja le jẹ n poja ra l'ọja Gèlètè	so that someone can eat together at <i>Gèlètè</i>
Line 12: O da n lo'ju gba ngba maa se	I am very sure that I will
Line 13: N re l'ọju ẹlẹgan aronipin	prosper in the full glare of bad well wishers

Being a satirical song, Ọbádàrà Bọlòjò/Ìwé Group uses it to criticise envy, mockery and the tendency of some members of society to despise others because of their present condition. The singer rejects the ridicule of ill-wishers by affirming that destiny is determined by God rather than by human opinion (Lines 1-6). The repeated declaration that God alone gave the singer his or her destiny emphasises the belief that no individual has the authority to define another person's future. By addressing those who look down on others, the song exposes the futility of judging people on the basis of their current condition forgetting the popular saying that “no condition is permanent”. The song assures listeners that despite the efforts of ill-wishers to discourage or disgrace others, success and honour ultimately come through divine providence and perseverance (Lines 12-13). The song promotes faith in God, patience, contentment and respect for the dignity of every individual regardless of social status. It discourages envy, discrimination and malicious gossip while encouraging members of Ketu community to support rather than undermine one another.

Song 12: *Ẹ Jọ n Gbádùn*

Line 1: Olówó, ẹ jọ n yan	Let me enjoy myself, the rich
Line 2: Ẹ jọ ọ ki gbajumu ko ma a yan	Let the famous also enjoy themselves
Line 3: Ẹyin n ra mọto, Ẹmi n ra kẹkẹ	As you are buying car, I am buying bicycle
Line 4: Ẹ o ko yẹ ki n pa m j'aye?	Is it for you to kill me for you to enjoy?
Line 5: Ipa o kọ pẹṭesi, emi n gun gaja	When you built upstairs, I'm fine with my abode
Line 6: Ẹ o ko yẹ ki n pa m j'aye?	Is it for you to kill me for you to enjoy?
Line 7: Kira-kita ko mẹ ẹ kan m n'aye	May unhealthy competition not be my portion
Line 8: Ẹ jọ ọ n gbádùn o e ee oo!	Let me enjoy myself o e o!
Line 9: Kira-kita ko mẹ ẹ kan m n'aye	May unhealthy competition not be my portion
Line 10: Ẹ jọ ọ n gbádùn omu ar'aye	Let me enjoy myself, everyone
Line 11: Kira-kita ko mẹ ẹ kan m n'aye	May unhealthy competition not be my portion
Line 12: Ẹ jọ ọ n gbádùn n maa yan.	Let me enjoy myself and pose freely

Like Song 11, Chief Folasade Adeyemi together with her Ọbádàrà Bòlòjò/Ìwé Group uses this song to satirise envy, unhealthy competition and the constant desire to compare one's achievements with those of others. The song acknowledges that people possess different levels of wealth and social status, yet insists that everyone has the right to enjoy life according to their means. By contrasting the purchase of a car with the purchases of a bicycle and an upstairs building with a modest home, the song ridicules the belief that happiness depends on possessing the same material wealth as others (Lines 3-7). Instead, it promotes contentment and condemns attitudes that breed resentment and unnecessary rivalry. The satirical message is strengthened through the repeated appeal, "let me enjoy myself" which mocks those who seek to deny others happiness because of jealousy, selfishness and unhealthy competition. The recurring rhetorical questions in

Lines 4 and 6 that another person's enjoyment should not require one's destruction exposes the destructive nature of envy and excessive competition. The song promotes the important Ketu values of contentment, gratitude, humility and mutual respect. It appreciates the attitude of people respecting their achievements and that of others without jealousy.

Song 13: *Ìyàwó iyi o Şişe Kàn*

Line 1: Ìyàwó iyi o şişe kan	A wife that is jobless,
Line 2: lẹ f'ara si'lẹ ọkọ	yet relying on her husband
Line 3: ọmu isalẹ hun ko fẹràn aṣewo	the guys down the street detest prostitutes
Line 4: Ìyàwó iyi ko şişe kàn	A wife that doesn't have a job
Line 5: lẹ f'ara s'ara ọkọ	yet relying on her husband
Line 6: Omu oke l'ọhun ko fẹràn aṣewo	the guys up the street detest prostitutes
Line 7: Gbogbo oniṣe-ọwọ hun lo yan la'le	Yet, having illicit affairs with other artisans
Line 8: Ìyàwó, k'ẹru rẹ I lẹ	Housewife, pack out of the house
Line 9: k'ẹru rẹ I lẹ	You should pack out of the house
Line 10: Nitori hun ko f'ogun ariwo	Because I don't want troubles!
Line 11: Bo di l'ọju alẹ,	By night,
Line 12: atagele, afa jigi l'ọwọ	She will dress up, hold up her mirror,
Line 13: A maa gbaaju le le.	And be posing for customers!
Line 14: Bo di l'ọju alẹ,	By night,
Line 15: atagele afa jigi lowo.	She will dress up, hold up her mirror,
Line 16: A maa f'ọju lu'mu	And be eyeing customers!

This song also satirises, like Song 8, marital infidelity and irresponsible behaviour among married women. It also ridicules idleness. It portrays a wife who neither engages productive occupation nor remains faithful to her marital responsibilities. Although she depends entirely on her accused of seeking illicit relationship with other men for personal gain (Lines 4-7). The satire of her wantonness is portrayed through women's nighty activities. She is depicted as dressing attractively, carrying a mirror and deliberately seeking the attention of other men despite being married (Lines 11-16). These imageries represent vanity, promiscuity and the abandonment of

moral restraint. The husband's clamour for her to leave the house because he does not want conflict shows the shame and disrespect that such conduct brings to the family. Ọbádàrà Bòlòjò/Ìwé Group uses this song to reflect the communal expectation that both husband and wife should contribute positively to the welfare and honour of the family while avoiding conduct that brings disgrace upon themselves and their relative. The song encourages self-respect, productive engagement and commitment to family responsibilities in order to promote peaceful homes.

4.2 SOCIAL AND LEADERSHIP CRITICISM IN INDIGENOUS SONGS OF THE KETU PEOPLE

Gbogi (2021:269) maintains that oral performances constitute important sites for criticising leadership, challenging abuses of power and stimulating public reflection on governance.

Song 14: Àṣà *kan-an De*

Line 1: Àṣà kan-an de,	There is a new trend now:
Line 2: A ko r'omude li'sé,	that we can't send a child on errands,
Line 3: Agba ko pe mēta, mērin,	that adults not in three, not in four,
Line 4: Ko gbodo rin:	should not take a walk!
Line 5: Afo'gun ja'lu,	Enemies of the community,
Line 6: Ọlorun Ẹ ẹ d'ajo fẹ'yin aj'omu gbe!	God shall judge you, kidnappers!
Line 7: Aye r'aju kókó:	Life is now so difficult:
Line 8: Ìgbà àṣà n ma n y'eyin lowo,	As hawks now lay eggs nonstop
Line 9: Ìgbà adie ko ku.	But there are no chickens left.
Line 10: B'awodi i bi'mu tan	If all hawks hatched their laid eggs,
Line 11: Nje ẹ tun k'adie kan l'abule?	Would there be any chicken left in the village?
Line 12: E de, e de...	What has come...
Line 13: Baba, ẹ gba a ye'wo!	Father, think about these!
Line 14: Aṣeje ẹ n gbọ?	<i>Our Blood</i> , are you listening?
Line 15: Oṣuru ngbo!	<i>Oṣuru River</i> is listening!
Line 16: Mo l'odo Ogbun ngbo!	I said, " <i>Ogbun River</i> is listening!"
Line 17: Olajolu ngbo!	<i>Olajolu</i> deity is listening!
Line 18: Kọbejo ẹ d'ajo fẹ'yin aj'omu gbe!	<i>Kọbejo River</i> shall judge you, kidnappers!
Line 19: Npele ẹ pe, mo li:	Although it may be long, I say:
Line 20: Eyi mo wi, ẹ se!	That which I said shall come to pass!

Line 21: <i>Ẹrun ga-na-ga-na, ilẹ ẹ yọ yin:</i>	During harsh dry season: you shall slip
Line 22: <i>Gbogbo aj'omu gbe!</i>	You all kidnapper!

This is a song-dance of the Ketu people that serves as a powerful instrument of social and leadership criticism by condemning the growing menace of kidnapping and the insecurity it has created within their communities. This is a contemporary issue initiating against the polity of Nigeria presently. The opening lines lament the emergence of “a new trend” in which children can no longer be sent “on errands” and “adults” are constantly afraid to move about their businesses freely because of the fear of abduction (Lines 1-4). It describes the situation as an abnormal development. The singer, Felicia Adebukola from *Idófa* but residing in *Ìmèkò* criticises the breakdown of public safety and the social conditions that have allowed criminal activities to blossom. Rather than accepting the situation as unavoidable, the singer publicly denounces the perpetrators and calls for an end to their destructive actions (Lines 5-6, 21-22). The song employs vivid imageries, rhetorical questions and innovations of divine and traditional authorities to strengthen its criticism. The vivid comparison between “hawks” multiplying while “chickens” disappear, in Lines 7-11, illustrates the devastating effects of kidnapping on innocent members of the community. Just as unchecked hawks would habitually eliminate all the chickens in a village, the song suggests that if kidnappers continue unchecked, the peace, security and future of the community will be unattainable (Lines 12 – 13). The invocation of God, *Oşuru* River and *Ogbun* River, *Kobejo* River and *Olajolu* deity (all from and in *Ìmèkò*) to judge the kidnappers reflect the Ketu belief that both divine and ancestral justice will ultimately punish all the perpetrators of these evil acts (Lines 14 -18). The prophetic declaration, in Lines 19-22, that the offenders will eventually fall and “.... slip” during the dry season when least expected shows the certainty of justice. The song demonstrates how traditional oral performance functions as a medium of public advocacy, leadership criticism and social reform. Although, it openly condemns kidnappers, it also

challenges insiders aiding and abetting these crimes by asking that *aṣẹjẹ ẹẹ n gbọ?* (our blood, are you listening?) in Line 14 because it is generally believed that *bí ikú ilé ò bá pa'ni, t'òde ò lè pa'ni* (if the danger at home does not kill a person, the danger outside cannot kill that person). The song, therefore, serves as a collective voice demanding protection or security, justice and responsible governance.

Song 15: *Ìlú Le Koko*

Line 1: Ìlú le koko o,	The country is extremely hard o:
Line 2: Ayé o r'ọju mọ,	Life is no longer normal,
Line 3: Baba wa Tinubu, j'ade i wa gba'ni!	Come to our aid, Our Father, Tinubu!
Line 4: Irẹ̀si di wiwọ̀n o, elubọ ko ẹ̀ ra o!	Rice is now costly o, flour can't be bought o!
Line 5: Gaari di wiwọ̀n o, ẹ̀wà ko ẹ̀ ra l'ọja o! market o!	Gaari is cost o, beans can't be bought in market o!
Line 6: Iṣu di wiwọ̀n o, epo ko wá'jà o!	Yam is cost o, palm oil isn't at the market o!
Line 7: Awa ko r'ówó na,	We are broke:
Line 8: Mẹkunnu n k'igbe,	The masses are clamouring,
Line 9: Olówó fi'gbe ta!	The rich are wailing.
Line 10: Ọkọ i Rẹ̀mí, j'ade rẹ̀wá l'ẹ̀kun!	Come and comfort us, Rẹ̀mí's husband!
Line 11: Aarẹ Tinubu, j'ade i wa gba'ni!	Come to our aid, President Tinubu!
Line 12: Austerity yi de o,	There is austerity/inflation o
Line 13: Baba Tinubu, j'ade i wa gba'ni!	Come to our aid, Tinubu, sir!
Line 14: Naijiria yi d'ọwọ ẹ, Eledua	God, Nigeria is in your hands
Line 15: Ebi n pa wa, awa ko r'ówó na	We are famished, we are broke
Line 16: Ìyà yi ti to gé o,	This suffering is enough o
Line 17: Ọlọrun i wa gba'ni!	God, come to our aid!
Line 18: Naijiria yi d'ọwọ ẹ, Eledua	God, Nigeria is in your hands
Line 19: Ogun ajinigbe,	kidnapping cases
Line 20: eyi ma tun ga gan-an!	These are now escalating!
Line 21: Ijoba APC,	The government of APC,
Line 22: Awa n bẹ'yin o kẹ gba'ni l'ọwọ ebi. hunger!	We are pleading, come to our rescue against hunger!
Line 23: Gbogbo APC,	The entire members of APC
Line 24: Awa n bẹ'yin o kẹ gba'ni l'ọwọ ebi hunger!	We are pleading, come to our rescue against hunger!
Line 25: Apa ko ni kú ẹ, Baba Aṣiwaju	May you not be weary, Aṣiwaju
Line 26: Ohun ẹbẹ la mu wa o	We have come with our pleas o
Line 27: Baba Oluṣeyi, dakun i wa gba'ni!	Kindly come to our aid, Oluṣeyi's Father!

Ilu Le Koko is a traditional oral song of the Ketu people composed by Felicia Adebukola with her Adebukola Afedegbayi Cultural Group. The song serves as a medium of criticising social and leadership conditions by expressing the economic hardships being experienced by the citizens in Nigeria. Through repeated appeals to the incumbent President of the country, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the ruling party – All Progressive Congress (APC), the singer voices public

dissatisfaction with the rising cost of living, inflation and widespread hunger (Lines 1-13). The references to the increasing prices of rice, beans, gaari, yam and other basic necessities, in Lines 4-6, shows the severity of the present economic situation and the inability of many households to meet their daily needs by stating that “we are broke / the masses are clamouring / the rich are wailing”. Rather than complaining merely on these conditions, the song calls on political leaders to fulfill their responsibility of improving the welfare of the people and restoring a genuine hope to the nation. The song depicts the economic condition of the nation in which both the poor and the rich are distressed while kidnapping and other criminal activities continue to increase (Lines 12 – 16). By directly addressing the President who is the husband of *Rẹmí* (the First Lady of the Federation) and the ruling party, the singer from Idofa transforms the song into a public appeal for responsive, responsible and accountable leadership (Lines 21-24). These recurring pleas for intervention demonstrate the traditional role of oral songs as medium through which communities communicate their dissatisfaction, demand better governance and call attention to issues affecting public welfare. Although in a respectful tone, the song criticises the inability of these in authority to alleviate the suffering of the masses; and not just by the purported and debated empowering of vulnerable women to start the business of “roasting corns” and “frying akara” by the road side where cars and trucks can recklessly run into their stalls and kill them. The song reflects the enduring role of indigenous oral performance as an instrument of civic engagement and social change. It demonstrates, to a large extent that, indigenous songs are not limited to entertainment but also function as channels through which communities evaluate leadership and advocate for security and economic well-being. The invocation of God, in Lines 14-17, that “God, Nigeria is in your hands / we are famished / we are broke / the suffering is enough / God, come to our aid” alongside appeals to political leaders in Lines 21-24 reveal the belief of Ketu people that both

divine guidance and responsible human leadership are necessary for societal progress, peace and unity.

4.3 IDENTITY AND COMMUNAL WORTH IN KETU COMMUNAL PRAISE POETRY

Oloko (2025) explains *oriki* is deeply embedded in Yoruba socio-cultural life and functions as a vehicle for preserving communal values, ancestry and cultural identity.

Praise Poem 8: Praise Poetry of Ilara Community

Line 1: Ilara Ògúdó,	<i>Ilara Ògúdó,</i>
Line 2: Ògúdó kò gb'àìlè.	<i>Ògúdó</i> is not scared of stealing-scare-charms.
Line 3: Ilara Ògúdó,	<i>Ilara Ògúdó,</i>
Line 4: Alèwílèṣe.	The ones that act as planned and promised
Line 5: Ilara Ògúdó,	<i>Ilara Ògúdó,</i>
Line 6: Awo'ni gbákogbáko!	The ones that look at one with all seriousness!

This praise poem of Ilara-Yewa which is a border community in Imeko/Afon Local Government Area of Ogun State is a powerful expression of communal identity, courage and collective reputation. Though the repeated invocation of “*Ilara Ògúdó*” the poem establishes a strong sense of belonging and shared identity among members of the community. According to Lisa of Ilara, Chief Atanda Falẹru, the repetition serves not only as a marker of communal pride but also as a means of preserving the community’s historical name. This distinguishes it from neighbouring settlements of Ketu people. By repeatedly celebrating Ilara, the poem shows the people’s attachment to their ancestral homeland and their collective consciousness as a distinct cultural group. The poem further attributes admirable qualities to the people of Ilara by portraying them as

fearless, dependable and resolute. This is evident in Line 2 that “*Ògúdó* is not scared of stealing-scare-charms” which symbolises exceptional and daring bravery with confidence in the face of threats. Rather than yielding to fear or intimidation, the people are depicted as courageous individuals who confront challenges with determination. Similarly, *alèwílèṣe* (the ones that act as planned and promised) in Line 4 depicts the community as one whose members fulfil their promises and act according to their words. This emphasises their honesty, reliability and integrity as defining communal virtues. The final expression, *awo'ni gbákogbáko* (the ones that look at one with all seriousness), in Line 6, portrays the people as serious-minded, disciplined and worthy of respect. This continually enhances their collective reputation. The poem celebrates the qualities that members are expected to uphold while transmitting these ideals from one generation to another. This praise poem strengthens communal identity by reminding both indigenes and outsiders of Ilara’s reputation for courage, integrity and determination. The poem helps to preserve historical memory, promote communal togetherness and affirm the identity of the Ilara people, *awon omu Ògúdó* (descendants of Ogudo).

Praise Poem 9: Praise Poetry of Ìwòyè-Kétu Community

Line 1: Ìwòyè 'Màgá	Ìwòyè 'Màgá
Line 2: Omu a'f'abón ja,	Descendants of fighters with bee-insects,
Line 3: Omu pẹlẹbẹ iwajú kò sé l'ọta, grind pepper,	Descendants with flattened foreheads that can't
Line 4: Omu gbẹngbẹ àyà kò sé lọ àdà! cutlass!	Descendants with broad chests that cannot sharpen

According to Chief Abolaji Idowu, Iwoye-Ketu from time past has been breeding fighters and warriors, namely: Ààrẹ Ọnà Kakanfò Kòkòrògàngàn and Ààrẹ Ọnà Kakanfò Ọyátópé who were the first and second generalissimo of the Yorubaland respectfully hailed from Iwoye-Ketu. Also

the fourth and fifth generalissimo of the Yorubaland, Ààrẹ Ọnà Kakanfò Adeta and Ààrẹ Ọnà Kakanfò Oku hailed from *Jàbàtá*, a town under Iwoye-Ketu which forms the present day Iwoye/*Jàbàtá* Ward politically. As stated in the 2026 Coronation Anniversary Pamphlet of HRM Oba (Sir) Isaac Adegbenro Oyero, the current Ooye of Iwoye-Ketu Kingdom, *Jàbàtá* is one of the twenty-five (25) towns in Iwoye-Ketu Kingdom. The military prowess of this community and its members is herewith celebrated in their communal praise poem. This poem celebrates the community identity, resilience and the distinguish qualities of its people. The opening expression, *Iwoye 'Màgá* proudly identifies the community and serves as a symbol of its historical and cultural identity because as collected from numerous interviews from indigenes of the community, *Ìmàgá* is the part of their community where their forefathers fought and resisted their invaders who sought to kill them and claim their land. That communal and resolute resistance during the ward gave rise to the permanent establishment of Iwoye-Ketu of today having been displaced multiple times. The poem employs metaphors in order to describe the exceptional qualities of the people of Iwoye-Ketu. Referring to them as “descendants of fighters with bee-insects” in Line 2 portrays them as fearless, formidable and calculative. It suggests that they fiercely defended themselves when threatened. Their descriptions of descendants “with foreheads that cannot grind pepper / with broad chests that cannot sharpen a cutlass” in Lines 3-4 are symbolic in usage. These emphasise that the people were not created for ordinary domestic tasks alone but are renowned for bravery, strength and endurance. The expressions celebrate the community’s heritage and portray its members as those always prepared to defend their land and uphold the honour whenever and wherever necessary. This praise poem promotes cultural identity, pride in ancestral heritage and affirms the community’s enduring dignity and reputation.

Praise Poem 10: Praise Poetry of Ìmẹ̀kọ Community

Line 1: Ìmẹ̀kọ Ìgbìnrèkòtí	Ìmẹ̀kọ, to farm is not pointless
Line 2: Ọmu ají f'apón yan 'ran (ẹran)	Lineage smoking bush-meat in the morning
Line 3: Ìgbìnrè má rìn dọtí	Ìgbìnrè does not walk around being untidy
Line 4: Ọmu ajísefiní	Always-tidy descendants
Line 5: Agbe gbé're ti ẹ,	Heron goes with its goodness
Line 6: O tẹ'lú Aró.	To establish Aró community.
Line 7: Àlùkò gbé're ti ẹ,	Purple swamp-hen goes with its goodness
Line 8: O tẹ'lú Ìbosùn.	To establish Ìbosùn community.
Line 9: Lékélèké gbé're ti ẹ,	Egret goes with its goodness
Line 10: O tẹ'lú Ìkefun.	To establish Ìkefun community.
Line 11: Ìgbìnrèkòtí gbé're pàdé	Ìgbìnrèkòtí goes with its goodness and
Line 12: ọmu ti ẹ l'ónà	Met his children on the way
Line 13: Ló fu jẹ wípé	That is why
Line 14: Igun mètẹrin Ìmẹ̀kọ	at the four corners of Ìmẹ̀kọ
Line 15: Bójúmọ ti n mọ	as the day dawns
Line 16: Igbe ire ni wón mú bọ'nu	They come with cry for good things
Line 17: Ọmu ire àjí rí kí	Good descendants pleasing to be greeted
Line 18: Ọmu ire àjí rí sà o	Good descendants pleasing to be praised
Line 19: Gbígbè lo gbe ẹye Àkókó	You supported and helped Àkókó
Line 20: Tó fu rí ti ẹ gbédó	to carve items from timber
Line 21: Bẹ lo gbe Èjìgbà Ìlẹ̀kẹ	Same way, you supported Èjìgbà Ìlẹ̀kẹ
Line 22: Tó fu gba ilẹ̀kẹ iyún sọ'rún	to claim nice neck-beads
Line 23: Ìgbìnrè, wá gbè mí kí n l'wò l'wò	Ìgbìnrè, support me to get more riches
Line 24: Ìgbìnrèkòtí, wá gbè mí kí n l'ẹ'sin léékàn	Ìgbìnrèkòtí, help me to have to spend
Line 25: Ọmu inú're lè'yàn ire	Sincere descendants who are good people
Line 26: Ọmu Ìmẹ̀kọ Òkè-Ọlá	Descendants of Ìmẹ̀kọ Òkè-Ọlá
Line 27: Ọmu Ìmẹ̀kọ Ìsàlẹ	Descendants of Ìmẹ̀kọ Ìsàlẹ
Line 28: Ọmu Ìmẹ̀kọ Gèlètè-Máyẹhùn	Descendants of Ìmẹ̀kọ Gèlètè-Máyẹhùn
Line 29: Ọmu Ìmẹ̀kọ Bātúìgbò	Descendants of Ìmẹ̀kọ Bātúìgbò
Line 30: Kò sẹ'ni Ìmẹ̀kọ kò gbè	There is no one Ìmẹ̀kọ cannot support
Line 31: Kò sẹ'ni Ìgbìnrèkòtí kò fẹ	There is no one Ìgbìnrèkòtí does not love
Line 32: Ìwà ọ̀daràn ati jàgùdà la kò yàn lááyò	Violence and thuggery, we do not permit
Line 33: Ọmu èyàn ire lẹ'yìn ọrẹ	Good descendants always supporting friends
Line 34: Ọmu jíjì tí mo jí	Descendants, at dawn daily:
Line 35: Igbe ire ni mo mú bọ'nu!	They come with cry for good things.

The repeated invocation of *Ìgbìnrèkòtí* in the poem serves as the community's ancestral appellation as it is expected to preserve its historical identity and distinguishing it from neighbouring communities. According to Elder Alamu Oguneletu, the opening lines portray the people as

industrious farmer, disciplined and neat. Lines 1-4 emphasise that farming is a noble occupation and that the descendants of Ìmẹ̀kọ are known for hard work and personal cleanliness. These attributes establish the community's reputation as one whose members value diligence, orderliness and productive living. Through these expressions, the praise poem shows the pride that members derive from their ancestry and the cultural values inherited from their forefathers. According to Arike Olatunde, the poem further strengthens communal identity by recalling the historical expansion and influence of Ìmẹ̀kọ. The symbolic references to *agbe* (heron), *àlùkò* (purple swamp-hen) and *lékélèké* (egret), in Lines 5-10, establishing the communities of *Aró*, *Ìbosùn* and *Ìkẹfun* suggest the migration, settlement and enduring legacy of the ancestors. These birds function as metaphors for the founding fathers whose wisdom and enterprise contributed to the growth of neighbouring settlements. The repeated expression *ìgbé ìrẹ̀ ní wọ̀n mú bó'nu* (they come with cry for good things) portrays the people of Ìmẹ̀kọ as bearers of goodwill, blessings and peaceful intentions. The descriptions of the descendants as people worthy of greeting and praise, in Lines 18-19, affirm their admirable character and social reputation. The requests for the support of *Ìgbìnrèkòtí* further reflect the community's belief in collective responsibility, mutual assistance and the enduring bond between the living and their ancestral heritage. By acknowledging the four constituent divisions of the community, namely: *Òkè-Ọlá*, *Ìsàlẹ̀*, *Gèlètè-Máyẹhùn* and *Bàtúigbò*, the poem also affirms that despite internal landmass distribution, the people share one ancestry and one communal identity. To a large extent, praise poem functions as a repository of the history, values and collective memory of the Ìmẹ̀kọ people. It celebrates generosity, hospitality, peaceful coexistence and communal solidarity, while expressly rejecting violence, criminality and thuggery as behaviours incompatible with the identity of the community (Lines 26, 32-34). The repeated assertion that *kò ẹ̀yẹ̀ ní Ìmẹ̀kọ kò gbè* (there is no one Ìmẹ̀kọ cannot support), in Line 31, portrays

the people as generous and compassionate. This reinforces their reputation for helping others regardless of social status. The poem therefore serves not only as an expression of communal pride but also as a moral guide that encourages successive generations to uphold the virtues of hard work, unity, kindness and social responsibility.

4.4 CULTURAL AND MORAL PROVERBS AMONG THE KETU PEOPLE

Agbo (2021:42) argues that proverbs embody a people's beliefs, values and virtues and serve as tools for education, socialisation and the preservation of cultural identity. Morality relates to the values and beliefs about right and wrong, good and evil, just and unjust as Yoruba people see morality as an aspect of life that is critical to harmonious living in human society which accounts for the Yoruba people's belief in *omolúàbí*, a concept that emphasises the need to uphold moral attitude defining factor of coexistence in the society (Omosule et al, 2025:16-17).

Proverb 28

<i>Ewúré kẹ̀ yì o wọ̀'lé ko k'ágò, àgùntàn kẹ̀ yì o wọ̀'lé ko k'ágò, ó d'ẹ̀ran à mú so</i>
(A goat that intrudes one's property and a sheep that trespasses would be tied down)

This proverb aims to preserve the habit of respecting boundaries and social norms. The 'goat' and 'sheep' referenced means anybody who finds him or herself in a society and/or organisation and being advised to act accordingly to the conforming rules guiding such societies/organization. Any defiance to such rules may attract grave consequences.

Proverb 29

<i>Ìwọ eyí ó fò s'óke bẹ ijó l'órí</i> (One who jumps up unexpectedly disrupts the dancing steps)

It helps to reaffirm of mutual of participation the importance every member of the community in order to achieve a collective goal. “One who jumps up” in the proverb implies one who does not act according to plan and as agreed. That in itself can hinder the interaction and participation of all members in the society. This can lead to rancour and strife in the community. This proverb, thus, adviser one to abide by the rules guiding the community.

Proverb 30:

<i>Pa ijó n lọ li ilù n tọ ọ</i> (As the dancing progresses, the drumming follows suit)

“Dancing and drumming” as used in this proverb to exemplify persons, actions and responses considered to be in tandem with a common goal. To dance in a traditional event requires drumming to make the event entertaining and engaging. This can be likened to people achieving a goal in a community. That a decision is taken for the betterment of the community, it must be respected. This proverb, like Proverb 28 and 29, further distresses the need to respect and adopt collective participation and cooperation in the society.

Proverb 31

<i>Ọmu àjànàkú bí kí i ya ìrá; ọmu ẹyá bí, ẹyá lẹ ẹ jọ</i>
--

(A child born by an elephant does not resemble an ant and child born by a bird behaves like a bird)

This proverb reflects the Ketu belief that children are products of their lineage and upbringing. It conveys the idea that a child’s character, behaviour, abilities and reputation are often shaped by the family into which they are born. This proverb is used to reinforce the importance of ancestry, responsible parenting and continuity of cherished cultural and moral values across generations.

Proverb 32

<i>Oni a ko fẹran li ilẹ n jìn</i> (It is one that is not loved that is seen to be living far away)

This proverb highlights the importance of unity, mutual affection and social inclusion. It reminds members of the family and the community that kindness and acceptance strengthen, relationships while hatred, discrimination and persistent ill treatment create division and alienation. This proverb promotes social harmony and reinforces the cultural and moral value of maintaining cordial and supportive relationships.

Proverb 33

<i>Ìyàwó a fu'jó fẹ iran lẹ ẹ wò lọ</i>

(A wife married through unplanned means would be jilted eventually)

This means that a marriage entered into through unpleasant means, such as beauty, pressure and hardship will not last. It suggests that a union without peace, harmony and genuine happiness is unlikely to endure. This proverb serves as a ringing indictment against a union not based on trust.

4.5 RECONCILIATORY PROVERBS AMONG THE KETU PEOPLE

Bobaufor (2021:195) explains that proverbs are employed in social interaction to advise, persuade, negotiate and settle disagreements.

Proverb 34

<i>Ọrò ní n yọ obí l'ápò, ọrò kẹ ní m fa obí l'ápó</i>
--

(Words are what draw out the kola nut from the bag and words are what draw out the arrow from the quiver)

This is used to teach that the power of speech can produce either peace or conflict depending on how it is used. The proverb shows that gentle, persuasive and respectful words can encourage generosity, hospitality and cooperation as symbolised by the offering of kola nuts. On the other hand, insulting or provocative words can lead to anger hostility and violence as represented by the

drawing of arrows. It, thus, upholds respectful communication as an essential value for maintaining peace and social harmony within the community.

Proverb 35

<i>Pa asín ke i kú li asín n rùn</i> (It is when the shrew is not dead that it's giving a putrid smell)

This conveys the idea that some problems, faults and signs of decline become noticeable long before the final outcome occurs. In Ketu cultural context, the proverb teaches the importance of recognising problems before they become irreversible. It encourages individuals and community leaders to pay attention to early signs of moral decay, conflict and irresponsibility and to take timely corrective actions. The proverb also reminds people that good character should be maintained consistently since undesirable attitudes and behaviour cannot remain hidden for long. By emphasising the need for vigilance, wisdom and prompt intervention, the proverb promotes personal responsibility, sound judgment and the preservation of peace and order within the family and the wider community.

4.6 SATIRICAL PROVERBS AMONG THE KETU PEOPLE

Isola (1997) demonstrates that Yoruba proverbs are often used to rebuke arrogance, greed, foolishness, dishonesty and other forms of misconduct without mentioning the offender directly.

Proverb 36:

<i>Şa le t'orí pe a fẹ ẹ jẹ'ran ka şẹẹ pe maalu ní brọda</i>
--

(Should we say because our intention is to eat meat, we should call a cow one's brother)
--

This proverb condemns hypocrisy, flattery and insecure relationships that are motivated by selfish interests. The proverb teaches that people should not pretend to have affection, kinship or loyalty toward others simply because they hope to gain personal benefits from them. In ketu cultural context, the proverb emphasises the values of honesty, integrity and sincerity in human

relationships. It warns against manipulating others through false friendship, empty praise or deceptive behaviour for personal advantage. It, therefore, promotes uprightness, transparency and ethical conduct as essential virtues for maintain trust and harmony within the family and in the community at large.

Proverb 37:

<i>Gbó'mu wá kí m, owó lí fú ná 'ni</i> (To be involved in everything requires someone spending a lot)
--

In the Ketu cultural context, the proverb reflects the social obligations that accompany kinship and communal relationships. It literally refers to individuals getting involved in every activity of the community may require to spend a lot. It teaches that every member of the community has responsibilities that accompany involvement. Rather than discouraging participation, the proverb reminds people that communal life requires sacrifice and mutual support.

Proverb 38:

<i>Ara bàbà ko yá, ara bàbà ko yá, èkọ n wọ'lé, ewé n já'de</i>
(An elderly is said to be ill, but solid-pap is being served and its wraps are being thrown away)

It emphasises compassion, respect and care for the elderly and the vulnerable. It shows empathy, responsibility and cultural obligation of taking care of the elderly ones. The meaning can be further explained to be of deceit'. When some is ill, it is expected that he or she could not be eating well as in the case of lost appetite. However, the elderly is lampooned in this proverb to be deceiving others as he or she claim to be ill and yet eating voraciously.

Proverb 39:

<i>Agb'ójú l'ógú, o fú ra è f'òsì ta</i> (One who relies on inheritance is bound to be miserable)

It satirises a person who relies or depends solely on inherited wealth or family property is likely to end up being miserable. The proverb encourages self-reliance, hard work and enterprises. It cautions against laziness and excessive dependence on family inheritance reminding people that true success comes through personal effort rather than collectively inherited processions.

Proverb 40:

Ai t'ódò ítòsí la n sọ pé kònkò d'ijú, olódò d'ijú

(It is fear that makes one to claim that the tadpole and mermaid are closing their eyes by the river)

This proverb satirises those who is filled with fear and this often causes people to imagine dangers or obstacles that do not exist it warns against allowing fear and superstition to cloud one's thinking and preventing one from carrying out necessary tasks. The proverb encourages people to face challenges with courage and wisdom instead of being controlled and wisdom instead of being controlled by unfounded threats.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

This study examines the socio-cultural significance of indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs of selected communities of the Ketu people of Ogun State. It does so because the researcher observed that, although, Yoruba oral literature has been receiving considerable scholarly attention, the oral traditions of the Ketu people of Ogun State remain inadequately documented and analysed. The research, therefore, documents the selected oral art forms and investigate their stylistic features, socio-cultural functions and contribute to the preservation of Ketu cultural heritage.

The study adopts qualitative research design based on fieldwork. Primary data are collected through oral interviews, participant observation, live performances and audio recordings from knowledgeable custodians of Ketu oral traditions. Secondary data are also obtained from relevant books, journal articles and other scholarly publications on African oral literature, Yoruba oral traditions and folklore. A total of sixty-five (65) oral texts comprising fifteen (15) indigenous songs, ten (10) praise poems and forty (40) proverbs are purposely selected and analysed using Functionalist Theory and Aesthetic Theory.

The review of related literature establishes that songs, praise poetry and proverbs are among the most important oral art forms of African oral literature because they preserve communal memory, transmit indigenous knowledge, reinforce identity and promote social values. The review also revealed an important research gap, namely: the limited scholarly attention devoted to the oral traditions of the Ketu people of Ogun State and the absence of studies that examine indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs within a unified analytical framework as this.

The analysis of indigenous songs reveals that they perform diverse socio-cultural functions within Ketu society. The songs educate members of the community on acceptable conduct, encourage hard work, promote communal unity, criticise immoral behaviour, challenge injustice, condemn insecurity and advocate responsible leadership. They also preserve indigenous beliefs, communal history and cultural values while serving as instruments of entertainment, social change and public enlightenment.

The analysis of praise poetry demonstrates that family and community *oríkì* preserve ancestral history, genealogy, migration narratives, communal identity and historical reputation. The praise poems celebrate courage, industrious nature of Ketu people, military prowess, integrity, leadership, prosperity and other virtues considered admirable among the Ketu people. They equally promote collective identity and strengthen the relationship between present generations and their ancestors through artistic performance and historical depictions.

The study also further establishes that Ketu proverbs perform advisory, educational, motivational, cautionary, philosophical moral, reconciliatory and regulatory functions. They provide advice and caution against undesirable behaviour. The analysed proverbs also encourage diligence, honesty, patience, courage and self-reliance. They equally promote reconciliation and peaceful coexistence and condemn greed, laziness, hypocrisy, injustice and other social vices. Through concise and metaphorical expressions, the proverbs communicate indigenous wisdom garnered through generations.

These findings also reveal that the selected and analysed sixty-five (65) oral texts possess remarkable artistic qualities. Their effectiveness derives from the creative use of imagery, metaphor, symbolism, repetition, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, dialectical variation, rhythm and

performance techniques. These stylistic features enhance recalling, audience participation and emotional impact while enriching the aesthetic quality of the performances.

The study, finally, establishes that indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs remain important cultural resources despite increasing challenges arising from modernisation, urbanisation, migration, religious transformation and declining use of the Ketu dialect. Their continued documentation, preservation and transmission are, therefore, necessary for sustaining the cultural heritage and historical identity of the Ketu people.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This study has established that indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs remain essential oral art forms of the oral tradition of the Ketu people of Ogun State. Beyond their entertainment value, these oral art forms function as reservoir of history, indigenous philosophy, communal memory, cultural identity and moral instruction. They preserve the historical experiences of families and communities while equally transmitting cherished values, beliefs and traditions from one generation to another.

The findings confirm the stance of Functionalist Theory that oral literature performs significant educational, historical, moral, political and social functions within the society. They also affirm the propositions of Aesthetic Theory by revealing that the beauty, creativity and artistic organisation of Ketu oral performances contribute significantly to their effectiveness, durability and cultural relevance. The sixty-five (65) oral texts analysed in this study, therefore, combine functional significance with artistic excellence.

The study further concludes that the Ketu people possess a rich and distinctive oral heritage deserving greater scholarly attention. Their indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs constitute important expressions of Ketu identity and provide valuable insights into the worldview, values

and historical consciousness of the people. By documenting and analysing these sixty-five (65) oral forms, this study contributes to the preservation of an important aspect of Yoruba cultural heritage while extending existing scholarship on African oral literature.

Therefore, the study concludes that the future survival of Ketu oral traditions depends upon deliberate efforts by communities, educational institutions, researchers and cultural organisations to document, preserve, promote and transmit these valuable oral art forms to younger generations. Without such efforts, many aspects of this rich cultural heritage may gradually disappear with the passing of elderly custodians of indigenous knowledge.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. Indigenous songs, praise poetry and proverbs of the Ketu people should be systematically documented through audio recordings, video recordings, written transcription and translation in order to preserve them for future generations;
2. Traditional rulers, community elders, family heads, praise singers and other custodians of Ketu oral traditions should be encouraged to mentor younger members of the community through organised cultural activities and oral performance sessions;
3. Educational institutions within Ogun State should incorporate indigenous oral literature, particularly Ketu oral traditions, into relevant aspects of language, literature and cultural studies curricula;
4. Primary and secondary schools, together with *Egbé Akómólédè àti Àṣà Yorùbá, Nàìjíríà* (Association of Teachers of the Yoruba Language & Culture in Nigeria), in Yewa Division of Ogun State should encourage the live performances of these oral art forms for the annual Cultural Day celebration in schools every 21 February across the nation;

5. Government agencies, cultural organisations and non-governmental organisations should support research projects, festivals and cultural programmes that promote the preservation, revitalisation and propagation of Ketu oral heritage;
6. Universities and researchers should undertake further studies on other aspects of Ketu oral literature, to include folktales, myths, legends, chants, riddles, rituals and festivals in order to enrich scholarship on the Ketu people;
7. Linguists and literary scholars should intensify research on the Ketu dialect of Yoruba in order to preserve its phonological, lexical and stylistic peculiarities before they become endangered;
8. Indigenes of Ketu should imbibe the habit of covering their indigenous art forms in events and posting such online for the preservation and dissemination of Ketu oral literature so that researchers, students and members of the public may have access to authentic Ketu oral materials; and
9. Further interdisciplinary studies involving literature, linguistics, philosophy, sociology, history, folklore, anthropology and cultural studies should be encouraged to provide broader perspectives on the oral heritage of the Ketu people.

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APPENDIX

I. DATA ANALYSED AND THEIR INFORMANTS

DATA/ORAL ART FORM	NAME OF INFORMANTS	COMMUNITY
Song 1	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko
Song 2	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko
Song 3	MRS FLORENCE OGUNRINDE	Iwoye-Ketu
Song 4	CHIEF (MRS) CECILIA OSUNDUNKE	Ilara-Yewa
Song 5	MR. OLANREWAJU BANKOLE	Ilara-Yewa
Song 6	MR. SHINA ARIJE	Iwoye-Ketu
Song 7	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko
Song 8	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko
Song 9	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko
Song 10	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko
Song 11	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko
Song 12	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko
Song 13	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko
Song 14	MRS. FELICIA ADEBUKOLA	Idofa
Song 15	MRS. FELICIA ADEBUKOLA	Idofa
Praise Poem 1	MR OLANREWAJU BANKOLE & MRS. ODUNAYO AKINWUNMI	Ilara-Yewa & Ijoun
Praise Poem 2	MR. USMAN SULAIMAN & MR. AKANBI EDUN	Okuta & Oke-Agbede
Praise Poem 3	MR. AJANI BANKOLE	Igan Alade
Praise Poem 4	MR. ADEBOYE KUGBAKIN	Ilara-Yewa
Praise Poem 5	CHIEF ABOLAJI E.B. IDOWU	Iwoye-Ketu

Praise Poem 6	MR. SHINA ARIJE & MR 'WALE FADIPE	Iwoye-Ketu
Praise Poem 7	CHIEF ABOLAJI E.B. IDOWU	Iwoye-Ketu
Praise Poem 8	CHIEF ATANDA FALERU	Ilara-Yewa
Praise Poem 9	CHIEF ABOLAJI E.B. IDOWU	Iwoye-Ketu
Praise Poem 10	MISS. ARIKE OLATUNDE & ELDER N. ALAMU OGUNELETU	Imeko
Proverbs 1-4	MR BIOBAKU GIDEON	Iwoye-Ketu
Proverbs 5-9	MR. ADEBISI OBAGBO & MRS. ADENITAN, C.T.	Iwoye-Ketu
Proverbs 10-12	MRS KAYODE REBECCA	Oke-Agbede
Proverbs 13-15	MR. SHINA ARIJE	Iwoye-Ketu
Proverbs 16-20	MR. BIOBAKU A.	Okuta
Proverbs 21-24	MR JOHNSON BELLO	Ilara-Yewa
Proverbs 25-26	MR. AJANI BANKOLE	Igan Alade
Proverbs 27-29	MR. USMAN SULAIMAN	Okuta
Proverbs 30	MR. BABATUNDE SHAFI	Ilara-Yewa
Proverbs 31-33	MR. ADEDOTUN BABATUNDE	Iwoye-Ketu
Proverbs 34-36	MR & MRS K. OLALEYE	Ijoun & Ilara-Yewa
Proverbs 37-39	MRS OMOYAYI DORCAS	Moriwi
Proverbs 40	MRS KAYODE REBECCA	Oke-Agbede

N.B.:

1. CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI is the Yèyè Àsà of Ìmẹ̀kọ and runs Ọ̀bádàrà Bòlòjò/Ìwé Group
2. MRS. FELICIA ADEBUKOLA runs Adebukola Afedegbayi Cultural Group

II. INFORMANTS AND THEIR PROFILES

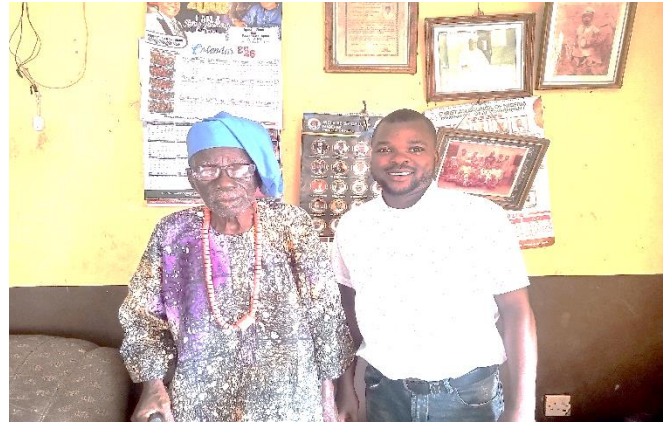
S/N O.	NAME OF INFORMANTS	COM MUNI TY	GEND ER	AG E	OCCUPATI ON	DATA PROVID ED	DATE COLLECT ED
1	MRS. FELICIA ADEBUKOLA	Idofa	Female	43	Teaching & Song Writing	Songs	5 May, 2026
2	CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI	Imeko	Female	52	Song writing	Songs	11 May, 2026
3	CHIEF ABOLAJI E.B. IDOWU	Iwoye-Ketu	Male	92	Traditional Chief	Songs, Praise Poems & Proverbs	14 May, 2026
4	MRS. ADENITAN, C.T.	Iwoye-Ketu	Female	41	Teaching & Song Writing	Song & Proverbs	14 May, 2026
5	MRS OMOYAYI DORCAS	Moriwi	Female	52	Teaching & Song Writing	Song & Proverbs	14 May, 2026
6	MRS FLORENCE OGUNRINDE	Iwoye-Ketu	Female	46	Teaching & Song Writing	Song & Proverbs	14 May, 2026
7	MRS KAYODE REBECCA	Oke-Agbede	Female	42	Teaching & Song Writing	Song & Proverbs	14 May, 2026
8	MR. BIOBAKU A.	Okuta	Male	43	Teaching & Song Writing	Song & Proverbs	14 May, 2026
9	MR. ADEBISI P. OBAGBO	Oke-Agbede	Male	41	Teaching & Song Writing	Song & Proverbs	14 May, 2026
10	MR BIOBAKU GIDEON	Iwoye-Ketu	Male	53	Teaching & Traditional Chief	Song & Proverbs	14 May, 2026
11	MRS. ODUNAYO AKINWUNMI	Ijoun	Female	41	Teaching	Praise poem	19 May, 2026
12	MR. OLANREWaju BANKOLE	Ilara-Yewa	Male	40	Teaching	Song & Praise poems	17 May, 2026
13	MR. AJANI BANKOLE	Igan Alade	Male	45	Teaching	Praise poem	19 May, 2026
14	MR. USMAN SULAIMAN	Okuta	Male	39	Teaching	Praise poem	18 May, 2026

15	MR. AKANBI EDUN	Oke-Agbede	Male	41	Teaching	Praise poem	21 May, 2026
16	MR. ADEDOTUN BABATUNDE	Iwoye-Ketu	Male	41	Teaching & Content Creator	Songs & Praise Poems	26 May, 2026
17	MR. SHINA ARIJE	Iwoye-Ketu	Male	51	Teaching and song writing	Songs, Praise Poems & Proverbs	14 May, 2026
18	MR. WALE FADIPE	Iwoye-Ketu	Male	42	Teaching	Praise poem	14 May, 2026
19	MISS. ARIKE OLATUNDE	Imeko	Female	40	Teaching and song writing	Praise poem	21 May, 2026
20	MR. ADEBOYE KUGBAKIN	Ilara-Yewa	Male	46	Teaching & Historian	Praise poem	17 May, 2026
21	CHIEF ATANDA FALERU	Ilara-Yewa	Male	74	Traditional Chief	Songs, Praise Poems & Proverbs	16 May, 2026
22	MR. KEHINDE OLALEYE	Ijoun	Male	52	Teaching	Proverbs	17 May, 2026
23	MR. CHRISTOPHER FALERU	Ilara-Yewa	Male	35	Teaching & Song Writing	Songs, Praise Poems & Proverbs	16 May, 2026
24	CHIEF (MRS) CECILIA OSUNDUNKE	Ilara-Yewa	Female	71	Traditional Chief	Songs & Praise Poems	16 May, 2026
25	MRS OLALEYE	Ilara-Yewa	Female	51	Trading	Proverbs	17 May, 2026
26	MR. BABATUNDE SHAFI	Ilara-Yewa	Male	34	Teaching	Praise poems	17 May, 2026
27	MR JOHNSON BELLO	Ilara-Yewa	Male	36	Teaching	Proverbs	17 May, 2026
28	ELDER NOAH ALAMU OGUNELETU	Obada	Male	62	Retired School Head	Praise Poem	28 June, 2026

III. PHOTOS TAKEN DURING THE FIELDWORK



THE RESEARCHER WITH ELDER ALAMU OGUNELETU FOR IMEKO PRAISE POEM



THE RESEARCHER WITH PA. ABOLAJI IDOWU IN IWOYE-KETU



THE RESEARCHER WITH MRS OGUNRINDE FLORENCE, C.T. ADENITAN, REBECCA KAYODE, DORCAS OMOYAYI, MR. ADEBISI OBAGBO AT RCM SCHOOL, IWOYE-KETU



THE RESEARCHER WITH CHIEF ATANDA FALERU (LISA OF ILARA & BALOGUN OF AYEKOTOYAN VILLAGE)



THE RESEARCHER BESIDE THE STATUE OF AARE ONA KAKANFO KOKORO-GANGAN IN IWOYE-KETU



THE RESEARCHER WITH MISS OLATUNDE (IMEKO) & MR. SULAIMON (OKE-AGBEDE)



THE RESEARCHER WITH AGBOGI CULTURAL GROUP HAVING PERFORMED TWO OF THE ANALYSED SONGS FOR THEIR PRINCIPAL'S RETIREMENT



IWE GROUP DANCERS ENTERTAINING OLOOLA OF ILARA



GÈLÈDÉ ENTERTAINING OLOOLA OF ILARA



OLOOLA OF ILARA BLESSING IWE DANCERS



MRS. FELICIA ADEBUKOLA AND HER ADEBUKOLA AFEDEGBAYI CULTURAL GROUP



**CHIEF (MRS.) FOLASADE ADEYEMI (YÈYÉ ÀSÀ OF ÌMÈKỌ) AND HER
QBÁDÁRÀ BỌLỌJỌ/ÌWÉ GROUP**