

## A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF FEMALE-BASED CULTURAL EXPEDITIONS AMONG ÒTÀ ÀWÓRÌ PEOPLE IN ÌJAMÌDÓ DEITY

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### **Abstract**

Despite the plethora of research on Yorùbá deities, there exists a significant knowledge gap regarding the specific roles of female deities in Òtá Àwòrì Kingdom, particularly in the context of traditional religion. This study aims to investigate the functional aspects of Yorùbá women in traditional religion, with a focus on the Ìjamìdó deity worship. This research employs a qualitative approach, relying on oral interviews with female devotees of the Ìjamìdó deity, supplemented by a few male participants who provide financial support. The oral data collected, including songs and chants associated with the Ìjamìdó deity, will be subjected to critical analysis using the Gender theory of literature and culture as the analytical framework. The findings of this study reveal that the Ìjamìdó deity worship has a profound impact on promoting family cohesion and national development, particularly in regards to mitigating the excesses of men in regards to infidelity. The oral songs and chants associated with the deity worship condemn men's infidelity and emphasize the importance of fidelity and commitment in relationships. The study suggests that the deity worship may influence men's behavior and attitudes towards infidelity through various mechanisms, including reinforcing social norms and expectations, spiritual or mystical consequences, female empowerment and agency, and cultural and community influence. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on Yorùbá traditional religion, highlighting the significance of the Ìjamìdó deity worship in promoting family cohesion and national development. The findings of this study have implications for promoting healthier relationship dynamics, reducing the prevalence of infidelity, and empowering women to assert their agency and autonomy in relationships.

### **Keywords:**

Female Deity, Ìjamìdó Festival, gender balances, Òtá Àwòrì Kingdom, traditions and socio-cultural

## Introduction

Ìjamìdó is a festival celebrated in Òtà Àwórì Kingdom in Ògùn State, with a ritual performed by female devotees to appease, appreciate, and make requests from a river goddess. The festival is celebrated yearly in September, with female dominance in the celebrations. The Priestesses of Ìjamìdó perform all the ritual rites during the festival. In Yorùbá culture, traditional religion assigns significant roles to women, particularly in the context of deity worship. This study explores the significance of Ìjamìdó deity worship, focusing on the roles and experiences of female devotees in Òtà Àwórì Kingdom. The festival's oral songs and chants provide valuable insights into the cultural significance of female deity worship and its impact on family cohesion and national development.

The concept of female dominance in the festival refers to the leading roles played by women in the ritual performances, decision-making processes, and spiritual leadership. This dominance is reflected in the festival's organization, where the Ìyá Ìjamìdó (Mother of Ìjamìdó) plays a central role. While men provide financial support for the festival, the ritual performances and spiritual leadership are exclusively managed by women. This unique dynamic underscores the significance of female agency and authority in Yorùbá traditional religion. The songs used during the worship of the deity by the devotees reflect the roles of females and their experiences in family affairs, highlighting their marginalization by men and the neglect they suffer due to promiscuity and other unnecessary things. These songs serve as a means of expression, empowerment, and social commentary, providing a unique perspective on the lives of women in Òtà Àwórì Kingdom.

The study of Ìjamìdó deity worship offers a valuable perspective on the roles of women in Yorùbá culture and their impact on family cohesion and national development. By examining the oral songs and chants associated with the deity worship, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural significance of female deity worship in Yorùbá traditional religion. Yorùbá women play pivotal roles as priestesses, diviners, and healers, serving as intermediaries between the divine and human realms. The example is Ìyá Ọba (Queen Mother) who serves as spiritual advisor to the Ọ̀nì (King) of Ifè. This is also equivalent to the role played by the wife of the King of Òtà during the festivities of Ìjamìdó. The transatlantic dimensions of Yorùbá female spirituality also highlights the significance of female deities like Ọ̀sun, Yemoja, and Ọya, whose worship was carried to the Americas through the slave trade, (Olupona, 2005:78). In the ritual performances of Ìjamìdó by the devotees, one sees how the deity is attached to all activities in the life of the worshipers. This is why the women in Òtà display their celestial prowess to encompass all the female physical and spiritual powers. Òtà in Àwórì Kingdom is known as the abode of the Ìyàmi (Witches), which is seen in the ritual performance of Ìjamìdó festival. Olupona emphasizes the importance of female energy, Àjé, in Yorùbá cosmology. He notes that Àjé represents the creative and nurturing aspects of the divine, embodied in female deities and ancestral spirits, (Olupona, 2005:78). Women by virtue of their physiological constitution and biological functions, possess certain celestial powers over men. And, that the naturally divine, endowed powers are complemented by the terrestrial powers acquired through the social, economic and ritualistic, suggest that they would have preferred matriarchy. But tradition dies hard. Women's alternative resignation to men's headship therefore, is insincere. Consequently, they decide to utilize their uniquely endowed, naturally physiological powers to complement temporal and spiritual prerogatives in neutralizing and/or subduing the effects of male's mastership over them. In short, Yorùbá women's power is partly a defensive mechanism against the authority of men as sanctioned by societal norm of patriarchy, (Opefeyitimi, 2010:57).

The above opinion of Opefeyitimi does not depict Ìjamìdó women of Òtà in totality, yet, it does to some extents. Paradoxically, it is a belief in Òtà cosmology if not in Yorùbá or Africans in general that, a mysterious power exist in the female reproductive organs, mostly during their menstrual circles and any blood that issues out of it. This blood from females during their menstrual circles is capable

of rendering whatever and wherever it touches unwholesome, ritually. Apart from the power seen in women's menstrual blood, there are other powers endowed in them naturally and physiologically with which men around them see them as mother for the land. This is so in the traditions of the people of Òtà Àwóri Kingdom. Òtà people never jokes with any female gender from younger age to the adulthoods or motherhood. The respect bestowed on females by the people of Òtà Àwóri Kingdom hinges in the ritual performance of the female deity known as Ìjamídó. The King, the Chiefs and all men; rich and poor subscribed to the power of Ìjamídó in Òtà Àwóri Kingdom through the devotees who are mainly females. This is so, because, all sorts of lively-hood in Òtà Àwóri Kingdom centers on their religion and Ìjamídó deity is seen as the head of all the traditional religion in Òtà. This implies that, they see Ìjamídó deity as the symbol of their economic, political, health and other societal sustenance. Also, it served as pivotal point for their spiritual empowerment and human sustainable living. The strong belief of Òtà people in the worship of Ìjamídó as a female deity in their community increasingly showed by their great achievements and social development. These among others apparently discovered by the researcher in the analysis of their songs and other Orature used in the worships of Ìjamídó in this work.

### Theoretical Frameworks

For the purpose of this research, gender theory is used to serve as phenomena which exposes the role of female in the traditional religion of one the Yorùbá town; Òtà Àwóri Kingdom in Ògùn State. Ìjamídó deity as one of the female goddesses in Òtà Àwóri Kingdom is targeted to be foregrounded through the ideologies of scholars of gender theory. This is best done by given a foresight into the concepts of the theory before its applicability to the data collected from the worshippers of Ìjamídó deity. The Orature used in the worships of the deity is critically analyzed through the approach of gender theorist to oral literatures.

Gender theory is a broad field of study that examines the social, cultural, and psychological constructions of gender. It challenges traditional notions of gender as biologically determined and explores the complex relationships between gender, power, and identity, (Ishola, 2021:76). Butler, an American philosopher and gender theorist with her groundbreaking work, "Gender Trouble", challenged traditional notions of gender identity, (Butler, 1990:213). Butler introduced the concept of "performativity," arguing that gender is a performance enacted in social contexts. This is in line with the argument that 'there is a wide segregation between the concept of gender theory and feminism', (Ishola, 2021:15). Gender is not fixed, but rather a fluid and dynamic construct, (Butler 1993:78 and 2004:30-67). This gender theory in its discourse would enhance our vast analysis on the contents of female features embedded in the Orature of Ìjamídó deity among the Òtà Àwóri people where gender roles is determined by the social gathering one belonged. This corroborate an opinion that "Some cultures have specific gender related social roles that can be considered distinct from male and female .....The social sciences have a branch devoted to gender studies....the social construct and gender studies particularly do, research in the natural sciences investigates whether biological differences in males and females influences the development of gender in humans, both inform how far biological differences influence the formation of gender identity, (Aṣíwájú, 1975:32)".

Research reveals that religion plays a pivotal role in shaping the cosmology and worldview of the Òtà Àwóri people, influencing every aspect of their lifestyle, cultural practices, and traditional beliefs. Ìjamídó is seen as the head of all the Òrìsà worshipped in the religion of the Òtà people. The Òtà Àwóri people's religious and cultural landscape is characterized by ancestral reverence and veneration, divination, oracular traditions, rituals, ceremonies marking life cycles, seasonal changes, sacred storytelling, mythological narratives, communal worship and collective spiritual practices. These elements intertwine to form a rich tapestry that guides their gender roles in their society. Western

binary dichotomies of gender are not adequate to understand the everyday lived realities on the content of Africa. Most traditional African societies have distinct gender roles which was socially defined, (Gerhart, 1992:72). One can therefore say that, through biological facts, gender remains social construct built on cultural, religious, political, and economic beliefs regarding sexually acceptable identities and behavior. In many African societies like Ọ̀tà Àwòrì that which this research is carried out, the binary perception of gender has become a solidified norm in their society.

### **Social Organization and Kinship Ties in the Context of Ìjamìdó Worship**

Social organization refers to the structured and patterned relationships within a society, shaping individual behavior and collective identity. It encompasses various aspects, including family structures, social hierarchies, economic systems, and political institutions. In the context of Ìjamìdó deity worship, social organization influences the dynamics of devotees' interactions, roles, and expectations. For instance, some of their worship songs used at the shrine of Ìjamìdó deity always reference to marriage and polygyny which reflects the societal norms governing family relationships and power dynamics in Ọ̀tà Àwòrì Kingdom. Kinship ties, on the other hand, denote the bonds between individuals based on blood, marriage, or adoption. These ties form the foundation of social relationships, influencing identity, loyalty, and cooperation. In traditional societies like the Ọ̀tà Àwòrì Kingdom, kinship ties play a vital role in shaping social organization, as they determine inheritance, succession, and community membership. The Ìjamìdó orature do emphasize on marriage and family relationship to underscore the significance of kinship ties in reinforcing social cohesion and hierarchy.

The interplay between social organization and kinship ties profoundly impacts individual agency, particularly for women. In patriarchal societies, women's roles and expectations are often defined by their relationships with men, whether as wives, mothers, or daughters. The Ìjamìdó song's narratives, chants and other genre used in the worship of the deity usually focus on competition for male-female kinship ties and how it reinforces patriarchal norms. Understanding the complex dynamics of social organization and kinship ties provides valuable insights into the cultural context of Ìjamìdó deity worship and its implications for social change and gender equality. The orature of Ìjamìdó deity are those songs, eulogies and chants used by the devotees of the òrìṣà during their worships. In the text of Ìjamìdó deity orature, there are fascinating contents or themes through which the intricate dynamics of gender, social organization, and kinship ties within the Ọ̀tà Àwòrì Kingdom could be examined. Some of the examples of Ìjamìdó song goes thus:

**Lílé:** Bọkọ̀ọ̀ mí la fẹ́ Yóyò

**Ègbè:** Oogẹ nń mee u pa á

**Lílé:** Bọkọ̀ọ̀ mí la fẹ́ Yóyò oo

**Ègbè:** Oogẹ nń mee u pa á oo

Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀ wẹ́ẹ́wẹ́ mí bẹ lojà ọba

Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀ wẹ́ẹ́wẹ́ mí bẹ lojà ọba oo

Bọkọ̀ọ̀ mí la fẹ́ Yóyò oo

Oogẹ nń mee u pa á oo

**Lílé:** Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀ mí wẹ́ẹ́wẹ́ ló mee jù ú kòtò o

Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀ mí wẹ́ẹ́wẹ́ ló mee jù ú kòtò o

**Ègbè:** Bọkọ̀ọ̀ la fẹ́ Yóyò oo

Oogẹ nń mee u pa á

**(Lead:** If my husband marries Yóyò,

**Chorus:** I shall kill her with fashion

**Lead:** If my husband marries Yóyò,

**Chorus:** I shall kill her with fashion

I will get small shining beads from the King's market  
I will get small shining beads from the King's market  
If my husband marries Yóyò,  
I shall kill her with fashion  
**Lead:** My shining beads shall send her to grave  
My shining beads shall send her to grave  
**Chorus:** If my husband marries Yóyò,  
I shall kill her with fashion)

In the above excerpt, the Ìjamìdó worshipers bullied their husbands who go out with concubines that, they have everything to debunk both the husbands and their concubines. This in sociological sense simply condemned the act of the males who abandoned their wives on their primary domestic functions, attending to other women outside their homes. The narrative voice in the song exudes a sense of possessiveness and competition for male attention, underscoring the pervasive influence of patriarchal norms. The lines with threat to "kill...with fashion" if her husband marries another woman, Yóyò, lays bare the tension and rivalry inherent in polygynous relationships. This lyrical phraseology reinforces the notion that women are commodities in a societal structure where men wield significant agency.

Furthermore, the objectification of Yóyò reduces her to a mere catalyst for jealousy and aggression, rather than acknowledging her agency or autonomy. This dynamic perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes, solidifying the notion that women are natural adversaries in the pursuit of male validation. These Ìjamìdó worshiper reliance on "shinning beads" from the "King's market" to assert dominance over Yóyò highlights the cultural significance of beauty standards as a tool for social mobility. This emphasis on physical appearance reinforces rigid gender expectations, where women's value is often tied to their aesthetic appeal.

The song also offers insights into the complex web of kinship ties and social organization within the Òtá Àwórì Kingdom. Marriage is portrayed as a strategic alliance, underscoring the societal importance of familial connections and hierarchical structures. The reference to the "King's market" underscores the monarchical influence on social dynamics. From a feminist perspective, the Ìjamìdó worshipers' internalized misogyny is evident in their aggression towards Yóyò, reflecting the insidious effects of patriarchal socialization. The Ìjamìdó worshipers' bold language and assertive posture can be seen as a veiled challenge to the existing social order. The Ìjamìdó Orature presents a nuanced exploration of gender, power, and culture, inviting further analysis and reflection on the complex intersections of tradition, social organization, and kinship ties in the Òtá Àwórì Kingdom. Another song goes thus:

**Lílé:** Omu Ìjamìdó oo  
**Ègbè:** Ìjamìdó ín bẹ lẹyìi wa oo  
**Lílé:** Ọbẹ li ò líyò  
**Ègbè:** Ọbu láà ooo  
**Lílé:** Ọbẹ li ò líyò lí kánwún  
**Ègbè:** Ọbu láà wẹ  
**Lílé:** Ilé yẹẹ kọ lẹìsírúu waaa  
È gberiii  
**Ègbè:** Ilé yẹẹ kọ lẹìsóbìriiii  
Èkúrẹ ilé  
**Lílé:** È mée fọrọ obìrì sàwàdà layé



E mée fòrò obìrì sàwàdà layé  
 Àwa ló jíyò inóbèè yí oo  
**Ègbè:** Àwa ló jíyò inóíjẹ yí oo  
 E mée fòrò obìrì sàwàdà layé  
 E mée fòrò obìrì sàwàdà layé  
**(Lead:** Children of Ìjamídó oo  
**Chorus:** Ìjamídó is fully behind us  
**Lead:** If there is no salt in the soup,  
**Chorus:** It is tasteless  
**Lead:** If there is no salt in the soup,  
**Chorus:** It is tasteless  
**Lead:** Building houses without us,  
 Sing aloud  
**Chorus:** Building houses without women,  
 Devalued your home  
**Lead:** Never neglect our values on earth  
 Never neglect our values on earth  
 We are the salt in your soup  
**Chorus:** We are the salt in your food  
 Never neglect our values on earth  
 Never neglect our values on earth)

The song, as appears in lines 1-2 above from the song employs the metaphor to show that they are representing the image of Ìjamídó Deity and being the “salt” (iyò), convey the essential value of women's contributions to society. The repetition of "If there is no salt in the soup, it is tasteless" emphasizes the importance of women's presence and participation and therefore depicting how they really represented Ìjamídó Deity in their society. The lyrics "Building houses without us... Devalued your home" illustrate the consequences of excluding women from societal structures, challenging patriarchal norms that marginalize women's agency. The refrain "We are the salt in your soup... We are the salt in your food" drives home the central message that women are indispensable to societal well-being. This assertion challenges traditional gender roles that relegate women to secondary status.

The final lines "Never neglect our values on earth" constitute a clarion call to recognize and respect women's contributions, underscoring the need for societal acknowledgment of women's worth and agency. From a gender theory perspective, this song subverts patriarchal norms by asserting women's essential value. By positioning women as the vital ingredient that adds flavor and meaning to society, the song challenges the dominant narratives that often erase women's contributions. The lyrics also challenge traditional gender roles and expectations, emphasizing women's agency and contributions to societal well-being. The metaphor of salt underscores the transformative power of women's presence, highlighting their ability to enhance and enrich society.

Furthermore, the song employs metaphor and analogy to convey women's significance, creating a powerful and relatable narrative. This literary device enables the listener to grasp the importance of women's roles in a way that transcends literal interpretation. In the context of Ìjamídó Festival in Òtá Àwòrì Kingdom, this Orature reflects the significance of women in social organization and kinship ties. It highlights women's roles in maintaining social cohesion and harmony, underscoring the importance of recognizing and respecting women's values. In the analysis of the contents of the above excerpt from Ìjamídó songs demonstrates that the Ìjamídó Orature serves as a powerful tool for

promoting gender equality and social justice. By celebrating women's agency and contributions, this song challenges patriarchal dominance and fosters a more inclusive understanding of society.

The song's themes resonate deeply within the cultural context, offering insights into the intricate web of relationships and societal norms. By examining this Orature, we gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which women's agency is asserted, negotiated, and valued within traditional societies like that of the Àwòrì people in Òtà.

### **Moral Values and Ethical Conducts in the Orature of Ìjamídó Deity**

Moral values and ethical conducts play a vital role in promoting environmental stewardship and responsible management of natural resources. At its core, environmental ethics emphasizes the moral obligation to protect the natural world for future generations. This requires adopting a long-term perspective, considering the consequences of human actions on the environment, and recognizing the intrinsic value of non-human entities. Moral values such as respect, reciprocity, and responsibility guide human behavior towards the environment, fostering a culture of sustainability. One of the fundamental moral values underlying environmental stewardship is the principle of intergenerational justice. This principle asserts that current generations have a moral obligation to ensure that their actions do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This requires careful management of natural resources, such as water, land, and minerals, to prevent depletion and degradation. Ethical conducts, such as transparency, accountability, and participation, are essential in promoting sustainable resource management, (Oládémọ (2009:78).

Apart from the opinion of Oládémọ, another crucial aspect of environmental ethics is the recognition of human-nature interdependence. Moral values such as empathy, compassion, and humility encourage humans to acknowledge their place within the natural world and appreciate the intrinsic value of non-human entities. This perspective challenges the dominant anthropocentric view that prioritizes human interests above all else. Instead, it advocates for a more holistic approach that considers the well-being of all living beings and the ecosystem as a whole. Ethical conducts, such as reducing consumption, reusing, and recycling, demonstrate a commitment to minimizing humanity's ecological footprint.

Effective environmental stewardship also relies on moral values such as fairness, equity, and justice. The distribution of environmental costs and benefits often disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, including low-income communities and indigenous peoples. Ethical conducts, such as environmental impact assessments and community engagement, help identify and mitigate potential injustices. Furthermore, recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands and resources is essential in promoting environmental justice, (Gerhart, 1992).

Ultimately, cultivating moral values and ethical conducts for environmental stewardship requires a fundamental shift in human consciousness. This involves recognizing the intrinsic value of nature, acknowledging human-nature interdependence, and embracing a long-term perspective. Education, community engagement, and policy frameworks can foster a culture of sustainability, encouraging individuals and organizations to adopt environmentally responsible practices. By integrating moral values and ethical conducts into daily decision-making, humanity can ensure the preservation of natural resources and the well-being of the planet for generations to come.

In the Ìjamídó Deity worship songs in Òtà Àwòrì Kingdom, through a gender theory lens, reveal the interconnectedness of patriarchal power structures and environmental degradation. Feminist environmentalism emphasizes that women's experiences and knowledge are crucial in addressing ecological injustices. The songs, by honoring women's agency and spiritual practices, challenge dominant masculinist approaches to environmental management. This perspective promotes a feminist

ethics of care, reciprocity, and responsibility towards the natural world. Gender theory highlights the gendered dynamics of environmental degradation, where women bear disproportionate costs and responsibilities. The Ìjamídó worship songs acknowledge these dynamics, emphasizing women's vital role in maintaining ecological balance. By centering women's voices and experiences, the songs subvert patriarchal norms that marginalize women's agency. This feminist framework encourages policymakers to consider the intersections of gender, class, and environmental justice, developing strategies that prioritize social and ecological well-being.

In the perspectives of the gender theorist, it further illuminates the Ìjamídó worship songs' themes of social justice and equity. The songs underscore the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on marginalized communities, including women and indigenous peoples. By emphasizing the importance of recognizing and respecting women's values and contributions, the songs promote a more inclusive and equitable approach to environmental decision-making. This moral framework encourages adherents to adopt environmentally conscious practices, challenge dominant power structures, and prioritize social and ecological well-being.

Additionally, it also underscores the parallels between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature. The Ìjamídó worship songs, by honoring the sacred and spiritual dimensions of nature, challenge this exploitation. By recognizing the intrinsic value of non-human entities, the songs foster a deep sense of reverence and responsibility towards the natural world. This perspective encourages policymakers to adopt holistic approaches to environmental sustainability. The intersection of Ìjamídó Deity worship songs, gender theory, and environmental ethics offers valuable lessons for contemporary environmental challenges, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive and socially just approaches to sustainability. Let us consider some of the following songs extracted from the data collected from the devotees of the òrìṣà Ìjamídó in Òtá thus:

- Lílé:** Ìyáàwa ò fẹ oo  
Ìjamídó ò gbà ò ò ò  
Ìyáàwa ò fẹ oo  
Ìjamídó ò gbà ò ò ò  
Ìyàwó ọbùn  
Lì mí jí ká ò reyí
- Ègbè:** Ìyáàwa ò fẹ oo  
Ìjamídó ò gbà ò ò ò  
Ìyáàwa ò fẹ oo  
Ìjamídó ò gbà ò ò ò  
Ìyàwó ọbùn  
Lì mí jí ká ò reyí
- Lílé:** Ẹ mée dá wàhálà sílẹ fú waaa  
Bó jí kò gbálẹ
- Ègbè:** Bó jí kò gbálẹ  
Ilẹ ọkọ oo.
- Lílé:** Ọkọ mí dalé rú  
Ìyàwó mí dọdẹdẹ rú
- Ègbè:** Ọkọ mí dalé rú  
Ìyàwó mí dọdẹdẹ rú
- Lílé:** Ìyàwó mí dọdẹdẹ rú  
Ẹ mée dàlú wíí rú fú wa
- Ègbè:** Ẹ mée bèdúgbò jẹ fú wa  
Gbogbo wun mí dagbó rú



**(Lead:** Our mother do not want it  
Ìjamìdó condemned the acts  
Our mother do not want it  
Ìjamìdó condemned the acts  
Dirty woman  
Who woke up without shewing sticks (washing mouths)

**Chorus:** Our mother do not want it  
Ìjamìdó condemned the acts  
Our mother do not want it  
Ìjamìdó condemned the acts  
Dirty woman  
Who woke up without shewing sticks (washing mouths)

**Lead:** You are going to cause problems for us  
When she woke up, she won't sweep surroundings

**Chorus:** When she woke up, she won't sweep  
Her husband's surroundings

**Lead:** Her husband too spoiled the whole house  
The wife spoiled the home

**Chorus:** The husband too spoiled the whole house  
The wife spoiled the home

**Lead:** The wife spoiled the home  
You are going to spoil this community for us

**Chorus:** You are going to spoil this environment for us  
They all spoil the bushes around us)

It shows in the first four lines of the song that, the Deity which solely believes in does not want such acts in their ways of life. Through a gender theory lens, this song reinforces traditional gender roles, assigning domestic responsibilities to women, such as cleaning and sweeping, while also critiquing the husband's role in spoiling the home. This indicates a need for shared responsibilities and challenges patriarchal norms. The song emphasizes environmental accountability, linking individual actions to community well-being and underscoring the moral value of responsibility towards the natural world. This reflects a feminist ethics of care and reciprocity, highlighting the intersections of gender, class, and environmental justice. By assigning moral agency to women, the song recognizes their critical role in maintaining ecological balance. The lyrics encourage collective action in maintaining environmental sustainability, emphasizing community engagement and shared responsibility.

The song embodies gender theorist perspectives, paralleling the bad attitudes of some genders in their society towards the roles assigned to female genders. It underscores the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation and highlights the importance of social norms and values surrounding cleanliness, order, and environmental responsibility. Through its emphasis on reciprocity and interdependence, the song promotes holistic approaches to sustainability. The Ìjamìdó Deity songs serves as a cultural tool for transmitting moral values and ethical conducts related to environmental stewardship. The lyrics illustrate the consequences of individual actions on the community and environment, emphasizing the need for collective accountability. This challenges individualistic approaches to environmental management and prioritizes social and ecological well-being.

By centering women's agency and experiences, the song subverts patriarchal norms and promotes a feminist ethics of care. This perspective encourages policymakers to consider the

intersections of gender, class, and environmental justice. The song's themes resonate with feminist environmentalism, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and respecting women's values and contributions to environmental sustainability.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has demonstrated the significance of female-based cultural expeditions in understanding the intricate dynamics of social organization, kinship ties, and environmental stewardship among the Ọ̀tà Àwọ̀rì people, particularly in the context of the Ìjamìdó deity worship. Through a gender theory lens, the analysis of Orature extracted from female worshipers' songs has revealed the vital role women play in maintaining ecological balance, challenging patriarchal norms, and promoting sustainable practices. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing and respecting women's agency, values, and contributions to societal well-being and environmental sustainability. The Ìjamìdó deity songs highlight women's essential role in maintaining social cohesion, harmony, and environmental responsibility, emphasizing the need for collective action and shared responsibilities.

The research has also shown that the Ìjamìdó deity worship serves as a cultural tool for transmitting moral values and ethical conducts related to environmental stewardship. The songs emphasize the interconnectedness of human and non-human entities, illustrating reciprocal relationships between humans, nature, and the divine. Furthermore, this study has illuminated the intersections of gender, class, and environmental justice, underscoring the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on vulnerable populations, including women and marginalized communities. By centering women's voices and experiences, this research promotes a feminist ethics of care, reciprocity, and responsibility towards the natural world. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between gender, culture, and environmental sustainability. It underscores the need for gender-sensitive and socially just approaches to environmental management, recognizing the critical role women play in maintaining ecological balance and promoting sustainable practices.

The findings of this research have implications for policymakers, environmental practitioners, and community leaders. By acknowledging the value of female-based cultural expeditions and the significance of women's agency in environmental stewardship, we can foster more inclusive and effective strategies for sustainable development. Moreover, this study highlights the importance of preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge and cultural practices that prioritize environmental sustainability and social justice. By embracing the wisdom of traditional societies like the Ọ̀tà Àwọ̀rì people, we can develop more holistic approaches to environmental management.

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