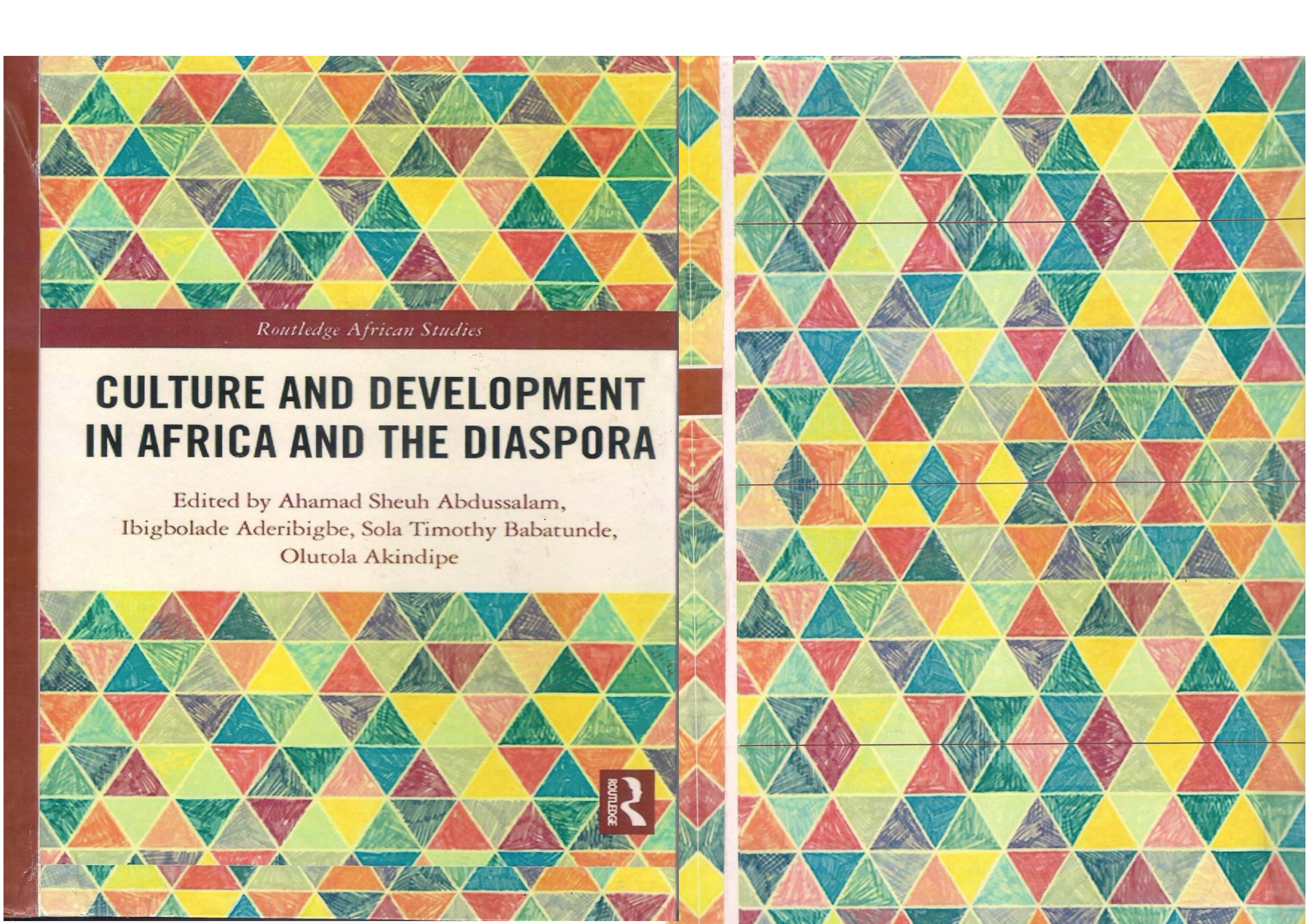


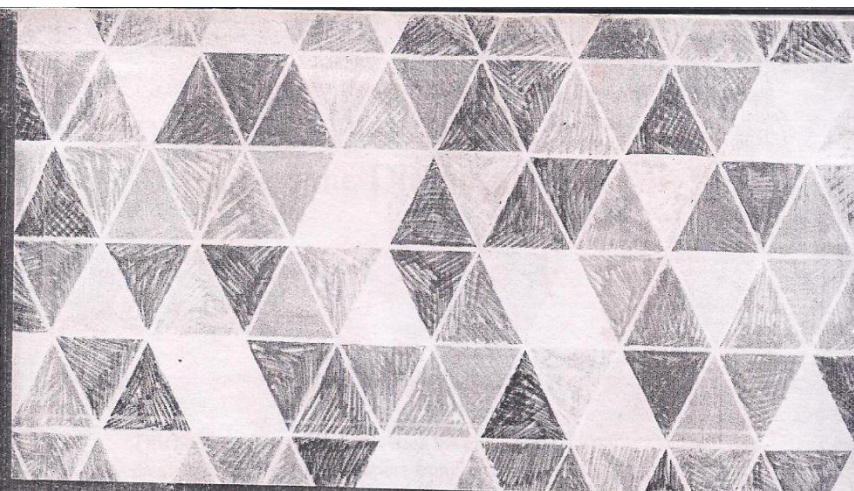


Routledge African Studies

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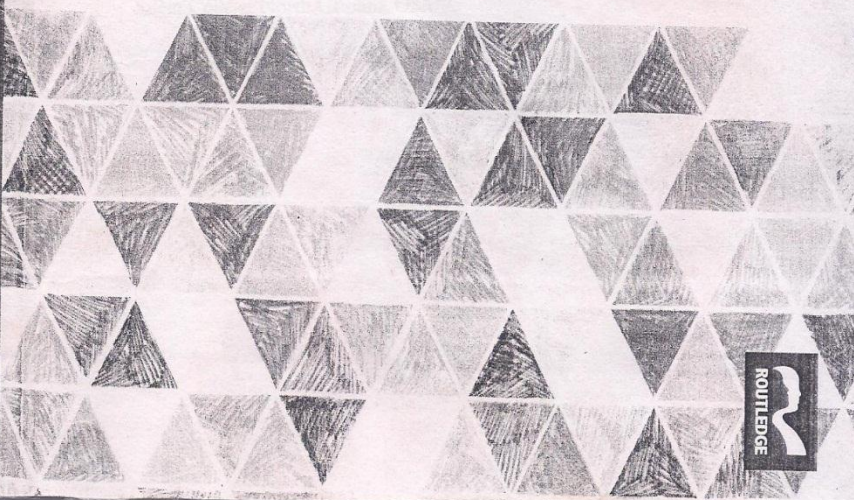




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Culture and Development in Africa and the Diaspora

This book examines the intersection between cultural identities and development in African and the Diaspora from multidisciplinary perspectives.

Starting with the premise that culture is one of the most significant factors in development, the book examines diverse topics such as the migrations of musical forms, social media, bilingualism and religion. Foregrounding the work of Africa based scholars, the book presents strategies for identifying solutions to the challenges facing African culture and development.

This book will be of interest to students and scholars of African Studies and African Culture and Society.

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Culture and Development in Africa and the Diaspora

**Edited by Ahamad Sheuh Abdussalam,
Ibigbolade Aderibigbe, Sola Timothy
Babatunde, Olutola Akindipe**

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Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	viii
<i>Bios of Contributors</i>	ix
Introduction: Culture and development in Africa and its diaspora	1
SOLA TIMOTHY BABATUNDE	
1. Socioeconomic and political issues in Helon Habila's <i>Oil on Water</i>: An ecocritical study	6
ABDULLAHI S. ABUBAKAR & FLORENCE A. ELEGBA	
2. The impact of globalization on the economic security of African countries	19
SHITTU RAJI & RUTH A. ADIMULA	
3. Bilingualism and education in Nigeria: A model-based approach	33
ADEBOLA AYOOLA ISALAH	
4. Brain drain: The relationship between strikes, educational funding and educational migration in Nigeria	50
OLUTOLA OPEYEMI AKINDIPE	
5. Exploring the Igbomina trade-medical and pharmaceutical values	59
JUSTUS ABOYEJI ADENIYI	
6. Forced migration: A cause to syncretism of African musical forms, identities and cultural meanings	76
EVERLINE KWAMBOKA OGARI	

7. **Intersections of popular culture and Nigerian gospel music**
ADEOLA TAIYE SHOLA
8. **Trans-sociological hybridity: Conceptualizing African contemporary dance identity**
OLUWATOYIN OLOKODANA-JAMES
9. **Originality of concepts of reincarnation and immortality of soul with Yorùbá beliefs: Insights from Ifá and Ère-Ìbejì paraphernalia**
OKÉWÁNDÉ OLÚWOLÉ TÈWÓGBOYÈ
10. **The paradox of religions and governance in contemporary Nigeria's political experience**
NOAH YUSUF
11. **Religion, politics and state: Implications of religiosity and leadership in governance for African political leaders**
IBIGBOLADE ADERIBIGBE
12. **Social media as a tool for conflict resolution: A review of the "Ghana Must Go" conflict**
EMMANUEL AYOTUNDE ALAO
13. **Religious impact on character and morality: Its implications for good governance in Nigeria**
SEKENWA MOSES BRISKA
14. **The practice of Yoruba religion in the diaspora: Some emerging challenges**
OYERONKE OLADEMO
15. **The Yoruba language as a catalyst for the early development of Christianity in Yorubaland, Nigeria**
ROTIMI WILLIAMS OMOTOYE
16. **Translation feat underexploited: Appraising Yoruba-English bilinguals' utilization of Yoruba version of Google Search Engine**
SAMSON OLUSOLA OLATUNJI

17. **Schematic structure and pragmatic texture of humorous metaphors in Nigerian stand-up comedies: An example from Lagos @50**
TAOFIQ A. ALABI & OLUWADAMILARE D. ATOLAGBE 206
18. **Negative aspects of bargaining as identity indicator of Africans in America**
DAINESS MAGANDA 219
- Index* 238

Illustrations

Illustrations

- 8.1 Image showing the breakdown and components of Trans-Sociological Hybridity
- 9.1 Photograph image of *OPÓN-IFÁ*
- 9.2 Photograph of the image of *TÁYÉWÒ*
- 9.3 Photographs of *ÈRE-ÌBEJÌ (THE NATION)* October 6, 2012)

Tables

- 4.1 Data on strike, educational funding and educational migration in Nigeria from 2001 to 2013
- 5.1 Plants, scientific names and health/medicinal values
- 5.2 Selected ailments and herbal solutions
- 9.1 Table showing the visitations of *ODÙ-IFÁ*
- 16.1 Demographic distribution of the respondents by gender, class of education and age
- 16.2 The rate of awareness of Yoruba google search engine among the English-Yoruba bilinguals
- 16.3a Respondents' self-expressed disposition to the Yoruba google search engine and other Yoruba-medium Internet materials
- 16.3b The English-Yoruba bilinguals' rate of disseminating the news of the presence of Yoruba google search engine
- 16.4 The English-Yoruba bilinguals' patronage of Yoruba-medium web pages
- 18.1 Data analysis – codes and source

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5 Exploring the Igbomina trado-medic and pharmaceutical values

Justus Aboyeji Adeniyi

Introduction

The recent outcry of doctors, in public and private hospitals, vis-à-vis patients who have resorted to trooping to herbalists whose services are confirmed to be 'cheaper' but condemned as 'deadly' deserves some attention (Ojoye, 2016). Doctors, who recently and suddenly observed the poor attendance recorded at clinics, have raised an alarm that patients no longer patronise them. They decried how patients instead have turned to what they described as 'unconventional but cheaper alternatives' for their health needs (Ojoye, 2016). Indeed, the intensity of the multiplier effect of the reality of the economic quagmire Nigeria is entangled in may not be fully determined so easily. Reacting to the harrowing economic recession being witnessed by the country while addressing 68 Nigerians who participated in the Senior Executive Course 38 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, and the Institute's management staff at the Presidential villa, Abuja, President Muhammadu Buhari confessed that he felt like abdicating after he took over the reins of power in May 2015. This sharp contrast, in view of his obsession for power and hard-earned victory after contesting election for Presidency three consecutive times, is not unconnected with his realisation of the myriads of economic liabilities and problems his administration had inherited (Olalekan, 2016).

The pharmaceutical industry is not spared of the travails as they recently bemoaned, among other things, the country's state of healthcare system, the avalanche of fake and counterfeit drugs, increasingly hostile operating environment and the non-prolific industrial sub-sector in terms of job creation (Ibrahim, 2016). The need to boost the pharmaceutical industry for job creation, export and, most importantly, a revitalised healthcare system, thus saving the scarce foreign exchange is compelling. The demand for malaria drugs, for instance, only reveals that a domestic economic industry is so crucial. Statistics have revealed that although about 100 million cases are reported annually and a 71% prevalence rate is actually tracked by the Federal Ministry of Health, a whopping 97% of Nigeria's population is reportedly at risk of malaria, while over 300,000 deaths linked to malaria are annually recorded—the largest in the world (Ibrahim, 2016).

A country that is heavily reliant on imports like Nigeria should be forced, now than ever before, to look inward by exploring our immediate environment for survival, like the men of old. PwC, a global consultancy estimated Nigeria's pharmaceutical imports in 2013 to about \$707 million, and a predicted 10.4% rise to the tune of \$789 million by 2018. That figure is said to have excluded the millions more in smuggled drugs (Ibrahim, 2016). Although Traditional Medicine (TM) is not without its own limitations too, the need to fall back to it is particularly apt in view of these identified advantages of TM over the Orthodox Medicine (OM) in Nigeria: little or no pathogenic resistance to polyherbal and trado-medic formulations, expensive orthodox drugs compared with the TM, non-responsiveness of OM to several illnesses, easy accessibility and increasing acceptability of TM, the menace of fake and adulterated drugs, the inadequacy of OM practitioners and bioprospecting—TM being a potential source of new drugs or a cheap source of known drugs, and/or effective alternative drugs (Borokini, 2014). Besides its blending readily into the socio-cultural life of the people from whose culture it evolved and is deeply rooted, TM also goes beyond the biological attention, which OM pays to patients to addressing the spiritual aspects of ailments, to which OM of largely incapacitated but simply dismisses as unscientific, illusory and superstitious.

Indeed, WHO recognises TM as the sum total of all knowledge and practices, whether explicable or not, used in diagnosis, prevention and elimination of physical, mental and social imbalance and relying exclusively on practical experience and observations handed down from generation to generation, whether verbally or in writing (Adesina, 2005). Trado-medicare (traditional medicine) essentially stems out of our indigenous knowledge.

Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

Man has been endowed with everything he needs to survive, by taming or conquering both his social and physical environments. Man therefore needs to explore into the indigenous knowledge of his environment in this regard. The concept of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) has increasingly been conceived by anthropologists, philosophers, educationists and theorists as distinct and separate from western knowledge. IK is frequently used interchangeably with traditional knowledge (TK). A definition adopted largely by the United Nations and UNESCO, views IK as:

...local knowledge—knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. It contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms. It is the basis for local-level decision-making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities.

(Russel, 2015)

This paper draws our attention to the indigenous trado-medic and pharmaceutical potentials of Igbominaland which can be tapped, developed and modernised for the health needs of the people. This study is particularly appealing because the trado-medic and pharmaceutical values explored into do not have to toe the path of the Modern High Technology (MHT) of Europe, America and the other developed countries of the world. They are however indigenous to Igbomina; indigenous in the sense that the raw materials, the skills, expertise and techniques required are locally sourced and therefore, readily available (Olaoye, 2009).

Meanwhile, while the science and existentialist endowment and actions behind our indigenous healing system are not branded in formulae, they are, however, made manifest in traditional folk medicine, mystical powers, witchcraft, etc. (Lasisi, 2009) affirmed that these all have elements of observation, calculation, preservation, mathematics, astronomy and astrology all of which are characteristic of modern science. In the same vein, the IK system stemming from primordial or indigenous science is also exemplified in different ways. Particular attention would be paid to the traditional or indigenous medical and pharmaceutical endowments of Igbominaland.

Olaoye distinguished indigenous science from indigenous technology. The former underlines the native wisdom and supernatural forces situated within the vortex of black power known as *ogun* or *juju* in Yoruba. The latter refers to the proper application of the indigenous science, which is identified in TM, extra-terrestrial matters, information system and warfare (Olaoye, 2009).

The indigenous medical science exists in herbal (powdered or liquid—concoction) either for preventive or curative, for good or for bad. In its concoction form, indigenous medical science can be applied to address such issues as family planning, pregnancy, child birth, ill health and infant mortality.

Igbominaland is replete with evidences of trado-medic and pharmaceutical endowments. However, with the deliberate and destabilising effects of colonialism on the indigenous medical practices on the colonised society generally. Western OM was glorified above the indigenous system often condemned and derided as superstitious, unhygienic, sentimental and immeasurable (Onobhayedo & Nwaokocha, 2009). Aboyeji revealed the two components of the *Universalist* and *Environmentalist* nature of technology. That is to say that technology has a universal as well as environmental application. In a further exposition, he reveals that

In the area of Environmentalism, every technological invention has its dialectical relationship with the environment in which it was invented. Accordingly, American technological inventions such as the aeroplanes, military hardware and software; and hardware computers share a close affinity with the American environment. Mechanical equipment such as the tractor or plough were also designed to cope with the environment where it exists. In Igbominaland, as elsewhere in Africa, the traditional skills of blacksmithing, soap production, weaving, pottery, etc. were

essentially responsive to the African environment in which they existed. Therefore, the application and use of high cost technologies in this context in Igbominaland, and Africa at large, has never been known to function well. As far as the issue of tractor is concerned, for example, it is not known to have improved food production in African in general, because African soil chemistry is not friendly to foreign technologies and so, they break down often than imagined. In this case, the traditional application of hoes, and cutlasses still remain the major medium through which the bulk of food is produced in Igbominaland.

(Aboyeji, 2004)

Hence, while the western medical science system may be responsive to their environment, the indigenous trado-medic and pharmaceutical content of African medical system is perfectly responsive to the African environment. This explains why there are several illnesses that OM has no pharmaceutical remedy or clue on, but which TM effectively cures (Borokini & Lawal, 2014). Some orthopaedic (bones or muscles related) cases which orthodox orthopaedicians have condemned for amputation had been effectively cured by traditional bone setters (Aboyeji, 2010), for instance. Citing the case of pile which OM is still a beggar for remedy on, Borokini and Lawal have identified this as one of the advantages of African TM over the OM (Borokini & Lawal, 2014). Efforts would be made to narrow down this study to a major ethnic subgroup of the Yorubas, the Igbomina.

Igbomina: A people and land

The term, 'Igbomina' (or alternatively 'Igboona') refers to a distinct dialectical unit of the Yoruba, the land they occupy and the language they speak. They are located within longitudes 8° and 9°N, and latitudes 4° and 6°E. They are made up of many sub-units such as the Ila, Ipo, Oro, Aran, Iyanga, Isin, Irese, Esisa, Ile-Ire, Oke-Ode and Share. All Igbomina apart from the Ila sub-unit are presently located in Kwara State of Nigeria. They are particularly found in the whole of Isin, Ifelodun and Irepodun LGAs of Kwara State and Ila and Ifedayo LGAs of Osun State. Igbominaland is bounded in the West by Ilorin; north east by Yagba; southeast by Ekiti; north by the Nupe; southwest by the Ibolo, and south by the Yoruba of present day Oyo state. To the north of the Ijesa and the Ekiti, and east from Oyo live the Igbomina (Aboyeji, 2015). They are pure Yoruba (Daily Times, 1949). Ila is the most southerly town of this area. Temple, O. noted that the southeast of Ilorin province was extremely hilly, with precipitous rocks while tin had also been found in the extreme southeast of the province (Temple, 1965). The Igbomina who were said to have formed at least three-quarters of the inhabitants of Ilorin province, occupying a large area extending as far as Ila-Orangun in Oyo province, predominate in the area to the south and east of Ilorin town (Hogben & Kirk-Greene, 1966). The Igbomina area was said to have included Illofa,

Ekan, Odo-Owa, Osi, Osin, and Obo whose peoples are no more particularly keen in joining their Igbomina brethren.

Igbomina is one of the major ethnic groupings found in Eastern Yorubaland, the Yorubas being the largest ethnic group in the forest belt of West Africa, though geography-wise, monolithically positioned (Ayandele, 1983). The geography of Eastern Yorubaland has been conducive to human habitation (Aboyeji, 2004). The possibility of the cultivation of a variety of crops made the region attractive to many ambitious immigrants apart from the rugged topography, and marshy section, which provided adequate places of refuge for those fleeing from enemies. As with the Ekiti and other Yoruba groups too, Igbominaland straddles the forest and the savannah (Smith, 1988) with arrays of plants and grasses.

The mixed vegetation type and level of rainfall, a geographical factor that provided a sound base for the growth of the trado-medic sector in Igbominaland, allowed for luxuriant grasses that favoured the growth of trees, grasses and plants, including the so-called weeds said to be unwanted plants all of which provide Igbominaland with its trado-medic and pharmaceutical richness. This also provided created favourable conditions for nomadic and plant agriculture. On his east journey from Ijesa to Ila, Clark gave this geographical description:

...I entered a beautiful wooded level... exceedingly rich. It was a wooded country, well-watered and sufficiently broken to render it healthy when brought into a state of cultivation. The soil of the more elevated regions is mixture of clay and sands quite common in forests of this country, and well adopted to agriculture. Ten or twelve miles from Ila, our road led us through a low, marshy, black-looking country, and an open field of uninviting and almost impenetrable forests. The red ironstone was very abundant. (Clark, 1972)

The savannah area of Igbomina is characterised by extensive grassland, with tall grasses and scattered trees, favourable for the production of legumes, tubers and grains. Some part of Igbominaland also extend through the tropical rain forest region like Arandun, Omido, Agbonda, Isanlu, Olla, Omu, Aran-Orin and Ora, sharing a similar soil type with that of the Ibolu and Erin-Ile people (Aboyeji, 2004). Naturally, the tropical rain forest favours the growth of trees and in this case, economic trees like cocoa, kola-nuts, cotton, oil palm, etc., in these areas, although coffee may not have been well domesticated in Igbominaland as the soil does not seem to favour its growth (Aboyeji, 2004). These plants trado-medically provide the herbs, leaves, roots, flowers, barks, latex, resin and seeds, which grinded either singly or in mixture with other items is administered in solid (edible form), liquid (to be drunk as concoction, used for bathing or washing), semi-liquid (resins, latex, balsams) or gaseous (e.g. fumigations like incense or steam inhalation formulations) form (Borokini & Lawal, 2014). This provides a source of living to different categories of traditional healers many such as the herbalists

(*babaláwo*), traditional birth attendants (TBAs) or paediatricians (*eléwé omo*), traditional surgeons, bone setters (*tegun tegun/topá-tosè*), traditional medicinal ingredient dealers or local traditional pharmacists (*lékuléja*), traditional psychiatrists, general practitioners (*gbogbonise*) and the practitioners of therapeutic occultism (Borokini & Lawal, 2014) who understand the chemical composition and requisite combination of those roots, leaves and tree barks, plus some other items for the prevention and cure of different ailments. The Igbomina like other Africans believe that all inanimate objects such as rivers, groves, crossroads, mountains have their spirits that could inflict evil or danger of ill-health on man. Every herb, tree and plant, they also believe has spirits living in them, which empower these herbs for medicinal purposes. A few examples have been discussed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Plants, scientific names and health/medicinal values

S/No.	Plant	Scientific name	Health/medicinal values
1	Àgànwó/ Ògànwó or Ògún Awó in Ekiti (Mahogany)	<i>Khaya ivorensis</i>	Drinking and bathing with the boiled bark cures <i>Narun/Janajana/Kuruna</i> (skin problem). Add the bark of mango tree + <i>obuotoyo</i> (salt substitute) for irregular menstruation.
2	Èké/Dogoyaro	<i>Acacia spp.</i>	Good for making concoctions or decoctions for treating malaria.
3	Mangoro (Mango)	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Drink boiled (plenty of) mango leaves + its inner bark + asunwon root + little potash for Gonorrhoea.
4	Kòkó (Cocoa)	<i>Theobroma cacao</i>	Black-soap, common in practically all the Igbomina communities, is made from local materials such as cocoa-pods, ashes, palm-kernel oil and water. When mixed with appropriate herbal ingredients, it was used to cure ailments of skin diseases such as body rashes, measles, sores, smallpox and chickenpox, as well as fever. Again, the soap was used in warding-off evils by sprinkling the foam of the soap around living places (Aboyeji, 2014).
5	Obì (Kola Nut)	<i>Cola acuminata</i>	Used for divinations.
6	Coffee	<i>Coffea spp.</i>	Useful for blood clotting.
7	Sòkoyòkòtò	<i>Celosia argentea</i>	Squeeze <i>Sòkoyòkòtò</i> + <i>ugu</i> + <i>ewé abíwéré</i> + 4 spoons of pure honey in H ₂ O for pregnancy pain.
8	Ewe Ìyeyè	<i>Spondias mombin</i>	Curing <i>atosi</i> (Gonorrhoea).
9	Ahùn	<i>Alstonia boonei/congensis</i>	Soaked in Palm wine is good for typhoid.
10	Igi+Ewe Afàrà	<i>Terminalia superba</i>	Used as Kaun (potash).

(Continued)

Table 5.1 Plants, scientific names and health/medicinal values (Continued)

S/No.	Plant	Scientific name	Health/medicinal values
11	Idí	<i>Terminalia avicennioides</i>	The soft leaves (omundun) of <i>Idí</i> leaves used as potash.
12	Ewe Okà bàbà (Sorghum)	<i>Sorghum caudatum/bicolor</i>	Blood tonic or blood booster.
13	Igi Emi (Shea Butter)	<i>Vitellaria paradoxa adoxum</i>	<i>Òrí</i> is produced from the seed and is used for mixture of other medicinal items for dermatological purposes.
14	Ewe Abíwéré/ Ewédú/ Qóyó (Chickweed)	<i>Corchorus olitorius</i>	• Blood booster. Add plenty of <i>Irí</i> • Drink squeezed <i>ewedu</i> very well + 2 spoons of pure honey from 8th month of pregnancy for safe delivery.
15	Ipín/Epín (Sand paper tree)	<i>Ficus exasperata</i>	<i>Ipín</i> + <i>Ako Kaun</i> (<i>Kaun Blala</i>) used to cure <i>Atosi</i> (Gonorrhoea).
16	Ìbépé (esp male) (Pawpaw)	<i>Carica papaya</i>	Malaria cure.
17	Ìrà	<i>Bridelia ferruginea/micrantha</i>	Throat clearing.
18	Òromóbó (Lime)	<i>Citrus aurantifolia</i>	When <i>ori</i> (shea butter) + <i>Iyere</i> + <i>Kannafuru</i> + <i>booni</i> seed are soaked in lime (for male), lime water (for female) or water (for children), it is used to treat back and waste pain.
19	Gaingain (Lemon)	<i>Citrus lemoni</i>	Boil lemon grass + 10 lime orange + acacia leaves in water and drink for curing worms (<i>Aran inu</i>).
20	Tangerine	<i>Citrus reticulata</i>	Compounds in tangerine is said to benefit everything from vision to heart health. It is loaded with compounds called flavonoids, which boost certain anti-cancer properties, stops the proliferation of tumours, promote better flow of blood in the coronary arteries, prevents arteries from blood clots and stop the oxidation of bad cholesterol in the body, a risk for many dangerous heart conditions (Olusesan, 2016).
21	Ajànrèrè	<i>Trichilia monadelpha</i>	Dry and powder its yellow flower. Drink a little content to flush your stomach. Its leaf extracts applied on the skin treats eczema (Bamidele, 2006).
22	Ewúro (Bitter Leaf)	<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i>	Well-ground bitter leaves + pure honey or dry gin treats measles. Rub on the body and take a spoon twice daily.
23	Kórópòó	<i>Physalis angulata</i>	Its boiled water used for bathing babies helps to ensure smooth skin.

(Continued)

Table 5.1 Plants, scientific names and health/medicinal values (Continued)

S/No.	Plant	Scientific name	Health/medicinal values
24	Eso àgbálùmò	<i>Chrysophyllum albidum</i>	Excellent for treating diseases such as heart diseases, diabetes, sore throat, tooth-ache, constipation, cholesterol, lowering blood sugar. The bark is used for the treatment of yellow fever and malaria, while the leaf is used as an emollient and for the treatment of skin eruption, stomach ache and diarrhoea. The cotyledons from the seeds are used as ointments in the treatment of vaginal and dermatological infections.
25	Làálì	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i>	Dry grinded <i>làálì</i> leaves + leafed onion; add to hair cream for dandruff.
26	Lápàálápàá	<i>Jathropa gossypifolia/curcas</i>	Grind red <i>lápàálápàá</i> leaf with black soap and mix with <i>osun</i> for minor back flow control.
27	Ìyèré	<i>Piper guineense</i>	Grind premature <i>Ìyèré</i> leaf very well, mix with <i>Ori amo</i> and use the solution to take hot pap every morning for 2 weeks for <i>Atogbe</i> (Gonococcus).
28	Tàbà (Tobacco)	<i>Nicotiana tobacum</i>	Squeezed with scent leaf and soaked in local dry gin or lime water for 1 day for migraine/severe headache (<i>èfori túúlú</i>).
29	Ìràwò-ìlè	<i>Spermocoe ocymoides</i>	Applying its extracts to affected skin surface treats eczema.
30	Efinrin (sweet basil)	<i>Ocimum gratissimum/basilicum</i>	Put extract of squeezed <i>efinrin</i> in the nostrils with cotton wool for nose bleeding.
31	Ògàn	<i>Combretum platypterum/micranthum</i>	Use the fluid inside eye treatment (Aboyeji, 2016).
32	Òmístnmisìn	<i>Abrus canescens</i>	Chew to treat cough.
33	Ìrèké odò	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>	Chew to treat cough.
34	Awùsá (Walnut)	<i>Plukenetia conophora</i>	Walnuts consumption supports brain health, including increasing inferential reasoning in young adults. It contains a number of neuroprotective compounds, including vitamin E, folate, melatonin, omega-3 fats and antioxidants. It is also used to tonify kidneys, stop asthma, used for elderly ones to cure constipation, among others.
35	Atare	<i>Aframomum melegueta</i>	Chew 7 seeds of <i>Atare</i> + male pawpaw roots during labour for immediate delivery of a baby.
36	Isin	<i>Blighia sapida</i>	Its bark ground and mixed with local black soap if used for bathing throughout the period of pregnancy ensures an easy labour for a pregnant woman (Borokini & Lawal, 2014).

(Continued)

Table 5.1 Plants, scientific names and health/medicinal values(Continued)

S/No.	Plant	Scientific name	Health/medicinal values
37	Ègé/Pákí (Cassava)	<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	Extracts of cassava leaf or basil (<i>efirin</i>) or the giant snail's body fluid is commonly applied to curtail bleeding (Adesina, 2014).
38	Ògèdè wéwé (Banana)	<i>Musa spp.</i>	Its fresh or dry stem fibre helps in bandaging. Contains Tryptophan and vitamin B6, which help the body produce serotonin which is source of potassium. It lowers risk of heart disease and promotes healthy bones. It can prevent anaemia. Wooden splints made from bamboo plants for treating fractured legs (Adesina, 2014).
39	Ànamó/ Kúkúndùkú/ Òdùkú (Sweet potatoes)	<i>Ipomea batatas</i>	The vitamin B6 in sweet potato helps to reduce the chemical homocysteine in the body which causes heart attacks. Eating it also helps ward off cancer cells, controls the activities of the kidneys producing red and white blood cells, strengthens the eyesight, boosts the immune system, regulates heartbeats and nerve signals and reduces swelling, etc. (Babarisa, 2016).
40	Ògèdè Àgbagbà (Plantain)	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Unripe plantain is good for the treatment of ulcer.
41	Àgbàdò (Maize)	<i>Zea mays</i>	Use boiled corn chaff + the silk + half a bottle of honey for swollen legs in pregnancy.
42	Moringa	<i>Moringa oleifera</i>	Daily consistent use of its dried leaf (not sun-dried) powder is a miraculous healing substance. It prevents and cures ailment; a natural super multivitamin and antioxidant, a balanced meal with all essential body needed nutrients, contains all the essential amino acids the body needs which the body needs to function well. The body manufactures 12 units while the remaining 8 is present in the moringa leaf. It has 9times protein in yoghurt, 10times vitamin A in carrots, 15times potassium in bananas, 17times calcium in milk and 25times iron in spinach (Oyedepo, 2016).
43	Òpòn-Òyìnbó (Pineapples)	<i>Ananas comosus</i>	A popular tropical fruit, not only delicious and juicy but more importantly nutritious and healthy, with many health benefits such as: prevents cough and cold, strengthens bones, keeps gums healthy, lowers risk of macular degeneration, alleviates arthritis, improves digestion, etc. (Olusesan, 2016).

(Continued)

Table 5.1 Plants, scientific names and health/medicinal values (Continued)

S/No.	Plant	Scientific name	Health/medicinal values
44	Esunsun (Mushrooms)	<i>Agaricus spp</i>	The health benefits of these edible fungi range from curtailing high cholesterol levels, breast and prostate cancer, diabetes and anaemia. It also helps in weight loss & boosts the strength of the immune system (Ojoye, 2016).
45	Òsàn didun (Sweet Orange)	<i>Citrus sinensis</i>	Drink juice of squeezed 3 sweet oranges + 6 tangerines + 2 grapes + drink half a litre of H ₂ O as natural antibiotics.
46	Cashew	<i>Anacardium occidentalis</i>	Take a shot of extracts of squeezed cashew and pawpaw leaves as pains relief.
47	Akintola-taku	<i>Chromolaena odorata</i>	A local iodine used for blood clotting.
48	Àfómó (Mistletoe plant)	<i>Crudia klainei</i>	Make a tea infusion of mistletoe to curtail high or low blood and diabetes.
49	Tàgùrì	<i>Adenopus breviflorus</i>	Kept in the house to ward off measles or smallpox for a nursing baby.
50	Tomatoes	<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	Take tomatoes + fluids like fruits as grape orange + oranges + pawpaw for hindered blood circulation-Arteriosclerosis.

A person, however, needs to discover the esoteric or original name (like *oriki*) given to specific plant or animal at the time of creation by the Supreme Being. Such plants or animals become very happy and do the biddings of the person when called by such esoteric names. As such, their therapeutic effectiveness is released. The vegetable commonly called *òyó* or *ewédú* by the Igbomina/Yoruba, for instance (chickweed—*Corchorus olitorius*) if called *Ewé Abíwéré* or *Gbamoyo* when making herbal preparations for child delivery become very effective for that purpose (Aboyeji, 2016).

The application of saliva is needed to activate the potency of some of such formulations or potent words (incantations) known as *ofo*, *ogede*, *ayajo* or *ase*. The Supreme God has hidden his authority in man's saliva to seal certain pronouncements. For instance, saliva, used in combination of alligator pepper, activates the potency of charms or incantations. A little drop of saliva with alligator pepper would be chewed together before being spewed thrice to make the charm or incantation potent. Saliva is used as an anti-pruritic antidote to curtail itching. Hence, when a scorpion, bee or wasp stings also, its application to the affected area brings immediate relief. Saliva, being part of the owner's life, when spit out, however, must not be stepped upon if not the person who spits it out would develop instant sore-throat (Borokini & Lawal, 2014). The Table 5.2 shows examples of selected ailments and herbal solutions.

Table 5.2 Selected ailments and herbal solutions

S/No.	Ailment	Herbal solution
1	Measles	• Squeeze bitter leaf (Ewuro) <i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> , mix with local gin (Ogogoro) and palm oil (Adeniyi, 2016). • Rub natural honey on the part of the body. It extracts pathogens from rashes of measles, smallpox and chickenpox. Then rashes soon dry up.
2	Jaundice in children	Slice and soak unripe pawpaw (<i>Carica papaya</i>) in cold water for 3 hrs; 1 pawpaw to 3 litres of H ₂ O. 1 teaspoon thrice daily.
3	Acne and other skin diseases	Pawpaw seed purifies the blood. Chew a handful after meal for 3 days.
4	Burns: Hot water, fire, oil, iron, etc.	Apply pure natural honey on the surface immediately and at intervals.
5	Skin infections: Ringworm, itching, rashes, eczema	Apply the pure undiluted extract of bitter leaf (<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i>) daily.
6	Diabetes	Squeeze fresh concentrated bitter leaves in H ₂ O and take 2 glass or cups thrice daily for 1 month. Bitter leaf not only reduces the sugar level drastically, it also helps to repair the pancreas.
7	Prostate cancer (Common among men 40 yrs above with symptoms of difficult and painful urination, among others)	Simply squeeze fresh bitter leaves in H ₂ O. Take a glass or cup full four times daily. It increases the flow of urine and reduces the pain as well as regulates the speed of the cell. It's part of the cleansing and healing process.
8	Diarrhoea	1 spoon of salt + 14 lime (<i>Citrus aurantifolia</i>) juice. 2 spoons daily.
9	Insomnia/ Sleeplessness	Take 2 glass or cups of bitter leaf solution every night. You may add a little honey. Honey blended in Aloe vera juice.
10	Heart-related diseases (Cardiac arrest)	Grind 10 bulbs of garlic + 10 bulbs of onion + 3 litres of pure natural honey. Adult should take 3 spoons thrice daily.
11	Haemorrhage in women	Water melon root can be used to arrest heavy bleeding in women.
12	Hypertension	Water melon root.
13	Arthritis/ Rheumatism	2 glass cups of bitter leaf solution + a little honey every night will help to soothe inflamed joints and eradicate the pains.
14	Low sperm count & Infertility in men	Squeeze guava leaves in H ₂ O. Take 1 cup daily for 3 days. After 3 days, eat sufficient carrots in mixture with 1 cucumber. After 5 days, sperm count will increase rapidly. Repeat if necessary.
15	Pile (<i>Jedijedi</i>)	Squeeze and mix some quantity of bitter leaves and sweet basil leaves (<i>Efinrin</i>) + lime orange extracts. Drink for 14 days.

(Continued)

Table 5.2 Selected ailments and herbal solutions (Continued)

S/No.	Ailment	Herbal solution
16	Paralysis	Boil honey with plenty garlic. Drink half tumbler twice after meal.
17	Rashes in the pubic region	Squeeze bitter and scent leaves into juice. Rub hard on the affected part. Also drink 4 glass cups of the juice 4ce daily.
18	Severe cough	Grind 10 bitter kola into 35ml bottle of honey + lime extract. Adult: 3 teaspoons thrice daily. Children: 1 teaspoon thrice daily.
19	Stomach ulcer	Peel and grind 8 pieces of unripe plantain, put in 4 litres of H ₂ O. Allow to ferment for 3 days. Shake well the 4th day. Take half glass or cup twice daily 1 hr before eating. Avoid pepper, coke, lime (<i>Citrus aurantifolia</i>), guava (<i>Psidium guajava</i>), and strong food.
20	Snake poison	Grind 7 bitter kolas and fill with half bottle of palm kernel oil (Adin) + 5 spoons of pure natural honey, all mixed with 1 tin of milk; Drink and you will vomit the poison.
21	Typhoid fever	Cut thick bark of mango tree into pieces and boil for 30–40 minutes along with 25 sliced lime oranges, 2 unripe pawpaw, 2 unripe pineapple, 6 sachets of Lipton Tea with 4 litres of H ₂ O. Add 3 Alabukun powder, 5 minutes before it is done. Do not add Alabukun for a pregnant woman or children below 10 years.
22	Tuberculosis (TB)	Chew a handful of ripe pawpaw seed and swallow. Eat plenty of fruits like orange, grape and pawpaw before meal. Chew 1 bulb of garlic before going to bed. Grind ginger and garlic + bitter kola in a bottle of 100% pure honey. An Adult should take 2 table spoons thrice daily for 2 months.
23	Stomach disorder	Squeeze sweet basil (<i>Efinrin</i>) in water and drink at interval.
24	Children convulsion	Drink grinded onions + ginger + garlic + palm oil for instant calm.
25	Pimples	Use lemon juice to wash your face every morning; take one lime orange every morning to burn excessive fat in the body system.

It has been argued that some of these traditional claims of the healing power of certain plants may not be scientifically proven. The need to understand the secret of certain esoteric laws therefore becomes pertinent. African ancestors had understood many of the laws of nature long before the scientific age. African traditional *scientists*, like their later Western counterparts jealously guard such secrets (Abioje, 2006). Although the effect and function of 'potent words' (often called incantations) for traditional medicare cannot be experimentally or scientifically proven, there is the belief that some TM can only be effective when certain 'potent words' are recited either during their preparation or administration or both. Thus, both the portion and incantation combine to form the treatment, as neither can on its own elicit the anticipated response without the other (Borokini & Lawal, 2014).

Sources of trado-medic and pharmaceutical knowledge

But where and how did the Igbomina get in contact with the trado-medic knowledge? Although Yoruba legends hold that *Orunmila* was the first man to practise herbal medicine, having been endowed with this knowledge by *Olodumare*, herbalism as a gift was conferred on his brother, *Osanyin* who had gained the knowledge of medicinal herbs through assisting his brother in making herbal formulations, concoctions and decoctions (Borokini & Lawal, 2014). Borokini and Lawal identified these six sources of knowledge in Yoruba TM:

- i **God Almighty** is identified as the source of medicinal knowledge. Drawing from Scriptures, God gave all plants to man for herbs:

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; ... I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

(The Holy Bible)

A Biblical reference to herbal usage was when in those days King Hezekiah, dying of an ailment was instructed divinely by Prophet Isaiah to 'take a lump of figs', lay it on the boil for recovery, and he was healed (The Holy Bible). Indeed, every plant, including 'weeds' has its medicinal value (Oyedepo, 2016).

- ii God however communicates this knowledge through His **Angel** and special messengers. These angels and special messengers known as *Irunmole* in Yorubaland are believed to be intermediaries between God the Supreme Being, the Creator and mortal man. Many of the herbalists who have the ability to commune with them are believed to receive charms, conjurations and medicinal plant knowledge for diverse purposes.
- iii **Visions and Dreams**, including Trance: Healers often engage in divination, which include vision, dream or trance, for proper diagnosis of the cause and cure of an ailment. This is especially so because the general belief among the Yoruba is that every sickness is caused by enemies who are considered to manifest in evil supernatural forces such as familiar spirits, wizards, witches, sorcerers, oriental spirits, etc.
- iv **Animals**: Observant men learn from animals such as dogs and goats. For instance, animals do not just eat any plant. Dogs and goats with stomach disorder are often observed closely. Plants they eat at that time are observed and tried for possible medicinal importance (Aboyeji, 2016). The knowledge of the use of coffee leaves (*Coffee spp.*) for blood clotting was said to have been derived from monkeys that were shot by hunters but ran to eat and rub coffee leaves on the wounds and the blood wound and blood loss ceased (Borokini & Lawal, 2014).

72 Justus Aboyeji Adeniyi

- v **Signatures**: Following keen observations, certain things have been adjudged and treated as God's clear autographs for man to infer from. The *Gbagodo* plant i.e. *Commenila benghalensis* for instance is used for treating eye ailments just because of its big blue flowers that remind us of the eye.
- vi **Supernatural contact** with the spirit/occultic world.

Traditional medicare was an important aspect of the indigenous production techniques in pre-colonial Igbominaland. It served the people in the areas of cure such as madness, mental disorder, bone setting, psychotherapy, smallpox and chickenpox, etc. Some of these ailments that cannot be easily and perfectly cured with modern medicine were effectively and perfectly cured with the use of traditional herbal medication. Even today, most cases rejected from the orthodox hospitals were treated with efficacy by the use of local medicine (Adeyemi, 2016). It is therefore, plausible to note that Igbomina has a rich past which could be harnessed technologically and trado-medically. In Arandun, for instance, as it is all over Igbominaland, oral evidence shows that there are certain families that specialise in trado-medical healings like fire-burns, bone setting, snake-bites, scorpion and insect bites/poison extraction (Oyelowo, 2004), etc. The researcher had a JSS female student (Afusat) from Iwo Odu-Ore, an Igbomina village in Isin LGA who was always sought after whenever there was an incident of scorpion sting in her school. Below are the simple 'potent words' to recite as learned from her:

*Pupayemi omọ oju igbo,
Osukuku omọ ẹba odan,
Suki ọọ gbodo taa, ọọ gbodo roo
ọọ gbodo pon on... (Spit saliva thrice thereafter)*

(Oyerinde, 1998)

The story of Jayeoba Oluwakemi, a young female student of Christian Commercial College, Oro-Ago in Ifelodun LGA, is particularly fascinating. In fact, her story provided the urge for this paper. She hails from the Okedaba community of Oro-Ago. Driving towards Oro Ago town, I met this small girl, in school uniform, trekking alone on a lonely road. I obliged her a ride when she asked for assistance and I engaged her in a discussion about her ambition, especially as she was writing her JSS exams to cross to the Senior Secondary class.

From my inquiry, I was particularly surprised about the sharpness of this small girl who said she wanted to be a Medical Doctor in the near future. Probing the rationale further, it was intriguing to hear that she would like to adapt the trado-medic IK of her family pedigree with OM so as to improve on the traditional. Her father, who may not necessarily be a professional herbalist has taught or inducted her and others in the family into what it takes for the treatment of snake bite, fire burns, scorpion sting, infertility,

etc. Particularly interesting is the fact that their service is *gratis*—they do not charge for their services. They do this, not for money, but for posterity. However, whatever that comes by way of appreciation could be freely taken. Young Oluwakemi was very passionate with her dream. She was ready to demonstrate and share her knowledge unreservedly with a total stranger by giving the ‘potent words’ below to curtail the following situations:

Snake Bite:

Scorpion Sting:

Oro Olufe, Oro Olufe,
Kekere lẹ kere ni wọn fi ọ jọba nile Olu
Didagba lẹ dagba ni wọn fi ọ jọba nile Olu
Olufe ni ki n gba tita ẹ wa, kin gba riro ẹ wa
Ki n gba te te te ẹ wa

Fire Burns:

Abẹroro, Abẹroro, lorukọ ta n pe na;
Alaroro, Alaroro lorukọ ta n pesi;
Olasumọkẹ, Olasumọkẹ loruko ta n pegi ta fin dana;
To ba so, too ba taa, maa fi ejọ ẹ sun Olufe!

Conclusion

With the recent worry expressed over the sudden surge in the prices of common but essential drugs such as analgesics, antibiotics, etc. at an alarming rate to the tune of 150% across the country (Olusesan, 2016), we may as well redirect our attention to TM, which offers a ready and effective alternative medicare. One of Ebenezer Obey's Classic songs raised an unanswered question of the proliferation of premature deaths and/or rationale for reduction in lifespan compared with men of old. To this, our present eating habit, poor unregulated diets and departure from TM to OM, among others are quick answers that readily come to mind.

This paper essentially directs our attention to the wealth of the physical and human geography that could be explored throughout Igbominaland for the trado-medic and pharmacological advantage of the land and its environment. It is particularly disheartening that TM in Nigeria appears to face its greatest challenge from the residues of neo-colonialism who see nothing good in anything African or Black and who therefore brandish TM as fetish, witchcraft, unhygienic and unregulated, without any recipe for its improvement.

One fundamental finding of this research is that contrary to the common view regarding the holocaust of African indigenous traditional values in modernity, it is incredibly fascinating to realise that much has been preserved in the institution of young minds who, if given the enabling environment, are ready and zealous about taking the African IK system to enviable heights in our own generation. The indigenous ethno-medicine that was once feared

as being on the verge of extinction considering its clash with western values is fast regaining its lost place as an important aspect of our cultural heritage as there appears to be a sort of herbal revolution across Nigeria (Borokini & Lawal, 2014).

It is marvellous that the beautiful ones are already born in this generation, although the ugly ones (who do not want the young to grow) are not yet dead. We only need to discover them and create the enabling environments for them to survive and rule the world with natural, probably unchemicalised therapeutic, curative and healing methods. The Oluwakemi Jayeolas of Igbomina and Yorubaland must be vigorously sought and found and provided with the necessary wherewithals, encouragement and support so that our society will not be guilty of pushing them to be enlisted among those whom Williams Shakespeare referred to as the “wasted generation” (Aboyeji, 2013). Such must not be allowed to waste away.

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