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PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

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PROJECT TITLE: DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 75
HECTARES OF OSOGBO FOREST GROVES

Executive Summary

This study was undertaken to investigate

- the history of Osun groves
- the importance attached to the groves
- perceptions of the groves
- threats to the existence of the groves and
- the aspirations for the groves.

To achieve these objectives, relevant information and data were obtained from 23 stakeholder-groups identified in Osogbo community using two Participatory Rural Appraisal tools-focus group discussions and in-depth individual interviews.

The results indicate that stakeholder-groups have very limited knowledge of Osun groves. However, most stakeholder-groups identified religious importance as one of the 5 criteria of importance they ascribed to Osun groves. Similarly, they considered it as a major perception and major threat to the existence of the groves. These perceptions have resulted in community and police-related crisis and attack on people and the forest. It is important to note that stakeholders also perceived that poaching (fishing, hunting and farming) activities are also threats to the continued existence of the groves. As regards aspirations for the groves, most stakeholder-groups, identified socio-economic activities (eco-tourism) as the future direction for the groves.

Based on the lack of information and misconception of Osun groves a multi-media enlightenment programme was suggested

1.0: Introduction

The Osun Groves Support Group, (OGSG), a non-governmental organisation, commissioned this study. The Support Group established in 1996 has as its mission, the "conservation of Osun forest groves and its resources by the people themselves, through building their capacity and those of other stake holders, and also to help them sustain their rich tradition, religion and culture which attract global visitors" (OGSG Bulletin, undated).

The interest of the Group in the stated mission is borne out of the fact that contemporary Nigerian values are being eroded by foreign culture and values. This is especially the case with the Osun groves which are "reservoirs" of a rain forest containing rare flora and fauna. There is, therefore, the need to conserve the rain forest through community generated development efforts taking into cognisance the culture and values of the local people.

2.0: Study Objectives.

Consequent upon the problems identified by the Support Group, this study investigated the following:

- the history of the groves
- the importance and uses of the groves to various stakeholders
- stakeholders perception of the groves
- threats to the continued existence of the groves
- stakeholders perception of the road in the grove and
- stakeholders aspirations for the groves.

3.0: Methodology

To achieve these objectives, 23 relevant stakeholders of the groves in Osogbo community were identified and Participatory Rural Appraisal tools-Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-Depth Individual Interviews (IDIs)-were employed to collect appropriate information and data.

Specifically, Focus Group Discussions were held with 18 stakeholder-groups each consisting of 3 to 13 discussants while 5 In-Depth Individual Interviews were conducted usually with one or two stakeholders. A 3 person-team conducted the discussions. Discussions which were free-flowing, though based on prepared Focus Group Discussion Guide (Appendix 1), were taped with radio cassette recorder. Recorded discussions were later transcribed (see Appendix 1 to Appendix 24). The transcribed reports were later analysed according to the study objectives.

The groups, their composition and type of discussions conducted are in Table 1.

Table 1
Selected Relevant Stakeholder-Groups in Osogbo Community

S/N	Name of Group	Type of Group	Number in a Group
1	African Heritage Gallery	IDI	2
2	Environmental Protection Commission	FGD	2
3	Federal Department of Forestry	IDI	1
4	Heritage Council	FGD	2
5	Ife-Oluwa Grammar School Osogbo, Students	FGD	11
6.	Ife-Oluwa Grammar School Osogbo, Staff	FGD	9
7	Ataoja of Osogbo	IDI	1
8	Osun Devotees	FGD	3
9	Osogbo Market Women	FGD	12
10	Osun State Ministry of Culture	FGD	3
11	Muslim Grammar School, Osogbo, Staff	FGD	13
12	Muslim Grammar School Osogbo, Students.	FGD	10
13	Muslim Group	FGD	10
14	National Commission for Museums and Monuments	FGD	4
15	Nike Gallery	FGD	2
16	Omo-Osorun Botanical Garden	IDI	1
17.	Osun Groves Support Group, Ibadan	FGD	3
18.	Osun State Council for Art and Culture	IDI	1
19	Osun State Department of Forestry	FGD	6
20	Timehin Grammar School Osogbo, Staff	FGD	11
21	Timehin Grammar School Osogbo, Students	FGD	11
22	Unity School Osogbo, Staff	FGD	3
23	Unity School Osogbo, Students	FGD	12

4.0: Results and Discussion

The information collected were content analysed and are presented based on the following themes:

- history of the groves

- importance and uses of the groves
- perceptions of the groves
- threats to the existence of the groves/ prevention of these threats
- existence of the road in the grove
- aspirations for the grove
- management of the groves and
- educational strategies

4.1: History of the groves

Analysis of the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews indicated that most stakeholder-discussants did not know the history of the groves. Indeed, the history of Osogbo town which is based on mythology of a two founding hunters-Larooye and Timehin- was often rendered as the history of Osun groves.

Some typical responses in this regard include

"The issue of the history is beyond our perception because we came and met it. And it has even never occurred to me to ask about how the groves were established"

"I do not know much about the history. You can refer to the ministry".

"Really the date when it was established can not be known. Because I think it is as old as Osogbo itself. Because if we go by what actually brought the groves, we have to refer to Osun river. And Osun river was there, it was met there by the very person Laro who was said to be the founder of Osogbo"

However, as regards the size, a few stakeholder-discussants were of the opinion that Osun groves occupy 75 hectares of land and were acquired from Oba Adenle in 1962 and also gazetted that same year. Similarly, the groves were declared a national monument in 1962.

4.2: Importance of the groves

The importance of the groves to stakeholder-discussants can be delineated into five broad categories. The categories are:

- Religious
- Socio-cultural
- Educational
- Conservation/preservation and

- Political Importance

While each of these categories will be discussed separately, it must be added that they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. An overview of specific stakeholder's importance and uses of the groves is given in Section 6.0. as Stakeholders association with groves

4.2.1: Religious Importance

Majority of stakeholder-discussants generally attributed sacredness to the groves in terms of worship of a deity as well the power of divination and provision of protection. These dimensions are reflected in some stakeholder-discussants quotations given below:

" the importance of the grove is that it contains all the shrines that are worshipped by my people because as a result of the covenant signed between the co-founders and the deity herself".

"The benefits are numerous and unending.

No shooting must be done in the forest. The benefit there is that we the devotees intercede for people at the river. People can also go there. All people that are given children by Osun go there to do Osun for the children and bath them there

"Benefit there is that, whoever is seeking for a child goes there and make a vow that if you Osun give me a child I will do this and that and before the next Osun festival the person will have child by the Grace of God and whatever she vowed she will bring the following year and till tomorrow it is still happening. All barren women whose pleas were granted go there to fulfil their vows/pacts with Osun."

These quotations again reflect the association of Osun groves with Osun festival, Osun shrines and traditional worship.

While stakeholders are free to practise their chosen religions, emphasis on the religious importance may be counter productive to the mission of conserving and preserving the groves as other stakeholders of alternative religions but of greater numerical strength in followership, may distant themselves from Osun groves.

4.2.2: Socio-cultural Importance

The socio-cultural importance of Osun groves have such attributes as economic benefits and cultural heritage. Most of the stakeholder-discussants who identified this importance, mentioned mostly the generation of income and the provision of job opportunities. Some excerpts are:

"...and as far as that shrine is concerned, it tells a lot about the past of the people of Osogbo or let me say Osun in general..."

"Osun groves is very important to the ministry, to the state and to Nigerians as a whole because it is a tourist attraction"

"It is useful for it-drama. Each time we want to act play for television, we normally use Osun grove. Because there are old buildings there. If we want to use bush, rivers or play of olden days we normally use Osun groves".

While cultural heritage may have a grey area with religious importance, most often, cultural heritage was associated more with Osun groves than the shrine.

4.2.3: Conservation/preservation importance

This attribute of Osun groves importance, focuses on the preservation and conservation of plants and animals. Some stakeholder-discussants quotations that reflect this are:

"The preservation of the forest, that is the primary forest untouched, is virgin land, undisturbed, so the vegetation as it was at the beginning so it is now and that is perhaps that it will be forever".

" we perceive Osun grove as a sanctuary of medicinal plants. Apart from that it serves as a sanctuary of animals of different species".

4.2.4: Educational Importance

A few stakeholder-discussants identified the educational importance of the groves. This particular benefit was derived by stakeholders participating in excursions to Osun groves. An example of a quotation from one of such stakeholder-discussant is as follows:

"Yes they use to take us because there are certain things about the river and science that we do not

understand. They use to take us there to see it and understand. Some of the things are stones that suddenly appear from the river., also fishes like Ikoro, sardine, tilapia fish. Those are things we normally see each time they take us there. It is not only our school alone. Students from other cities and towns also come there to learn".

4.2.5: Political Importance

While a couple of stakeholder-discussants alluded to this, it is a variant of the religious importance but emphasised Osun groves as a symbol of freedom of expression. An excerpt of one of such stakeholder-discussant is given below:

"There is a kind of tranquillity in the groves. And also it is a kind of symbol of freedom... in a secular state, there, all religious groups should have rights, provided those rights don't impinge upon the rights of others and so that is one of the places where the indigenous traditional religion is manifest".

4.3: Perceptions of Osun Groves;

Parallel to the importance of Osun groves, stakeholder-discussants perceptions are grouped into three, namely:

- Religious perception
- Socio-cultural perception and
- Conservation and preservation perception

4.3.1: Religious perception.

Religious perception is quite similarly to the importance attributed to Osun groves. Just as in importance, Osun groves was closely associated with Osun shrine and Osun festival. This association was further linked to divination, worshipping of a deity and divine intervention. Some typical quotations are given below:

"You see you are referring to the groves, I am referring to the shrine. So that what makes the difference now. I think you get the point"

"The general perception is that people going to worship, then secondary things may come in. But primarily, worshipping is the major thing".

"It is a period-festival, when all sons and daughters of Osogbo come home. And when they

come home, they offer prayers which are answered. For barren women they pray to Osun to grant them children before the next festival. And to the Glory of God, these prayers are heard".

There was great similarity between the importance of Osun groves and the perception of Osun groves. However, while five categories were identified for the former, three were isolated for the latter. Both political and educational values as identified for importance did not materialise in perceptions. Again, a majority of the stakeholder-discussants mentioned the religious perception. Suffice to add that, some discussants disagreed with the perception of the majority of stakeholder-discussants. This is exemplified by the quote of a discussant below:

" You see what many people think about it is like that. Most people think that the place is for idol worshipping which is not true..."

4.3.2: Socio-cultural perception.

Like its importance variant, the sociocultural perceptions were centred on preservation of cultural practices and economic activities. Some excerpts that point out these views are given below:

"Well in those days when they mention groves or no groves I normally have to sort of idol worshipping. But nowadays I am putting up a new thought concerning it because actually when you go there, you will find out that, there is sort of cultural preservation. So that one will not forget the historical origin of a particular place".

" Personally, I do perceive a lot of good things any time the name Osun is mentioned. My brother is a good promoter of these things... so the moment they announce that Osun festival is coming I believe that time we get a lot of money..."

While stakeholder-groups still associated Osun groves with Osun festival, they perceived it as an economic activity.

4.3.3: Conservation and preservation.

This perception emphasised the conservation of trees and animals on their own merit. These stakeholder-groups did not make any direct or indirect linkages with financial gains or social gains. Excerpts that depict this position are as follows:

"As teacher, my own perception is that there is the preservation of the originality of that forest. No matter what, you can still see the naturalness of that forest. The air of serenity is there. That when you get there is a sort of peace, the quietness of that forest..."

When you say what comes to mind, first and foremost is the forest, the religion and others I see later. But the first thing I see the trees. I love the trees, I love the serenity you know and I think that can be preserved.

4.4: Threats to the existence of Osun groves.

Stakeholder-groups identified several factors that may lead to the non-existence of Osun groves. These factors could be classified as:

- Religious threats
- Physical development and
- Poaching

4.4.1: Religious threats

Factors in this category of threats included the presence of religious scholars in the grove, acceptance of Christianity and Islam and lack of continuity of traditional religion. Indeed, religious fanaticism and intolerance was seen as a major threat.

4.4.2: Physical development.

Physical development included the building of houses, schools, mosques and churches in the grove. Others identified included electrification of the grove. Electrification of the grove was identified as a development not acceptable within the grove based on traditional religious beliefs.

4.4.3: Poaching

Poaching which ranged from illegal fishing, illegal hunting and tree felling were activities a majority of the stakeholder-discussants pointed out as been detrimental to the continued existence of the groves.

4.5: Prevention of Threats

As regards measures that should be taken to prevent these threats to the existence of Osun groves, the following were recommended:

- development of different network of by-pass roads
- fencing of the grove and provision of gates
- use of underground cables to electrify the groves
- provision of groves monitoring guards
- blocking of existing road and provision of gate
- enactment of decree prohibiting cutting of trees and
- replanting of trees

4.6: Existence of the road in the grove

With specific reference to the existence of the road in the grove, most of the stakeholder-groups opined that the road was not a threat to the existence of the groves. Some typical examples of responses that favour this position on the issue are:

"Ha, it's no threat. Because it is leading to other adjacent development. So there is no way there would not be any traffic or road passing through unless the other side will be totally cut off from the developed area. It is no threat. The road should be left there because it is the only link to the other areas there".

"The road should be there. We have to pass the road to the place. If there is no road they will not be able to reach there".

However, the few that were in favour of the road been totally closed or closed at one end based their argument on the utilitarian value of any entry into the grove. An example of such a perspective is this:

" I would like personally to sees a situation in which a road does not pass through the grove. A road should go into the grove but not pass through the grove. I would like to see any body entering the grove as somebody going into the grove for whatever reason to enjoy the scenery, to enjoy peace, to do anything he likes but not just casual passers-by passing into the grove".

4.7: Aspirations for the groves

The stakeholder-groups aspirations for Osun grove can be factored into three groups, namely:

- Development of socio-economic activities
- Preservation of cultural heritage and
- Preservation of the groves habitats

As mentioned in Section 4.2 these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

4.7.1: Development of socio-economic activities.

Majority of the stakeholder-groups wished that the groves served as income generating venture through consolidated participation in eco-tourism. This eco-tourism should be based on the provision of modern facilities such as hotels, information centres, sculptures, amusement park and dredging of Osun river. Included in this category was the establishment of tertiary institutions in the grove. Some typical quotations reflecting this thinking are given below:

"You see personally, the common view and yearning of the Osogbo community, that the place should be a gold mine. Osun has been internationalised. It attracts people from all works of life. The federal government should assist the Osogbo indigenes to transform that area into a tourist centre".

"Yes, for the tourists, the government can even get money from there. Some areas can be made like zoo and different animals kept there. The other side should be fenced off and restaurants established or any other investment.

It is glaring that this thinking is basically commercialisation of the groves.

4.7.2: Preservation of cultural heritage

While a majority of stakeholder-groups gave prominence to socio-economic aspirations, preservation of cultural heritage was closely identified by them as well. Preservation here focused on sculptures, art works, medicinal values of herbs and sacredness of the groves. A few quotations taking this perspective are:

"What I think is that the place should be preserved, so that the place will still be useful. The place should be a sacred place and a place of protection"

"The facilities like Mama Adunni is doing because there are some sculptures within the groves and that should be more permanent than what it used to be".

4.7.3: Preservation of the groves habitats.

A few stakeholder-groups basically wished that the flora and fauna of the groves are preserved for naturalistic purposes. Their position is reflected by quotes such as this:

"One of the very important things we want to assist the people to do is to preserve the character of the groves. Because once you allow people to just commercialise the whole thing, you have destroyed the character of these groves which is what attract people from all over the world".

4.8: Management of the groves

With regards to management of Osun groves, stakeholder-groups have varied perceptions of organisations that are involved in the management. Generally, they identified the three tiers of government-federal, state and local governments-as been involved one way or the other. Specific organisations perceived as currently running the affairs of the groves include

- Ministry of Agriculture-Osun State Agricultural Development Programme
- Ministry of Arts and Culture
- National Commission for Museums and Monuments
- Heritage Council
- Ministry of Commerce and Industries
- Osun Groves Support Group
- Osun Devotees (Yeye Osun) and
- Ataoja of Osogbo

In terms of organisations and individuals that should manage the affairs of Osun groves in the future, the following were identified:

- Local government
- Federal government
- Osogbo Community
- Ataoja of Osogbo
- Department of Cultural Affairs
- Heritage Council
- Department of Wild Life
- Federal Environmental Protection Agency
- Ministry of Commerce and Industries
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Land and Physical Planning
- Federal Ministry of Tourism
- Osun Groves Support Group and
- Private Tourism practitioners

4.9: Educational Strategies

A three-pronged approach could be employed to inform and educate groves stakeholders and the general public about the uses and potential benefits as well as preservation and conservation of the groves. The approaches are:

4.9.1: Mass mediated

This approach will explore the advantages of the mass media through

- Public announcements
- Public enlightenment on radio, television, newspapers
- Documentaries-films/drama
- Advertisements in mass media

4.9.2: Group Approach.

This will focus on group based activities such as

- Excursions to the groves
- Symposia
- Lectures
- Quiz
- School curriculum development through the infusion method
- Workshops
- Short talks
- Open days
- Story telling/ ora media

4.9.3: Individual Approach

- Liaising with tourists correspondence
- Liaising with the Federal Ministry of Information
- Liaising with the Ministry of Education
- Personalised mails

The bottom line of this strategy is an integrated multi-media enlightenment campaign

5.0: Conclusions

From the findings of this study the following conclusions are made:

- Stakeholder-groups have very limited knowledge of the history of Osun groves. Indeed very little is known about the history of the groves.
- Stakeholder-groups associate 5 importance to Osun groves with the religious importance been predominant.
- Osun groves are also perceived from 3 perspectives. Again the religious perception linked with divination and worshipping of deity been identified by most stakeholder-groups.
- Three threats were identified to the existence of the groves-religious, physical development and poaching-with the religious threat identified as a major one. However, cases of destruction of cassava and maize farms and the resultant community and police-related crisis have been reported.
- The existence of the road in the grove was not seen as a threat to the existence of the groves.
- Development of socio-economic activities (eco-tourism) is the main aspiration of most stakeholders for the groves.
- Stakeholders prefer organisations at the three levels of government to be involved in the management of the groves. The degree of involvement of the three levels and individual initiative can only be ascertained at the workshops to be held with stakeholders in the next phase of the study.

As a result of the lack of information on the importance of the groves and the attendant misconception, a multi-media based approach for enlightenment campaign is suggested.

6.0: Stakeholders Association With Osun Groves

Stakeholders	Association With Groves
6.1: African Heritage Gallery These are artists who basically shoot films, organize dramas/plays as well as make sculptures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The artists collaborate with Susan Wegner in making and maintaining sculptures in the groves. These sculptures add to beautification of the groves.• Additionally, these artists shoot films in the groves.
6.2: Environmental Protection Commission The Environmental Protection Commission is a governmental parastatal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Commission assists with the protection of the biodiversity of the groves.• Erosion control• Refuse management• Gaming
6.3: Federal Department of Forestry The Department operates within the ambit of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources. Its presence in Osun State is less than 5 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Department is required to collaborate with the groves in issues related to developmental programmes.• The Department assists with identification of rare species found in the groves.• Also since the grove is a reserve, the Department provides a patrol team to prevent illegal entry into the grove and• It also uses the grove for training purposes.
6.4: Osogbo Cultural Heritage Council The Osogbo Cultural Heritage Council was set up by the Ataoja of Osogbo as the representatives of Osogbo people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council is the custodian of the shrines and the groves.• The Council is involved in cultural management of the groves on behalf of the Ataoja of Osogbo and the indigenes• The Council also collaborates with the National Commission for Museums and Monuments and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the management of the Groves.

<p>6.5: Ife-Oluwa Grammar School Students These are students under going Junior and Senior Secondary Education. It is a co-educational school located in the outskirts of Osogbo.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students undertake excursions to the groves mainly for educational purposes.
<p>6.6: Ife-Oluwa Grammar School Staff:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monuments and other relevant artefacts in the groves are used to teach students in subjects such as geography, history, agriculture and Yoruba culture.
<p>6.7: Ataoja of Osogbo The Ataoja of Osogbo is the chief custodian and the traditional owner of the groves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ataoja participates in the preservation and conservation of the biodiversity of the groves through the Osun Heritage Cultural Council • The groves contain the 16 shrines that are worshipped. • The Ataoja visits the shrine annually during the Osun Festival and • Performance of traditional rites and worship periodically throughout the year
<p>6.8: Osun Devotees These are the worshippers of the goddess of Osun River</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They worship and perform rituals in the shrines in the groves • They intercede for others through the goddess of River Osun at request.
<p>6.9: Osogbo Market Women The market women sell medicinal herbs and animal products along with other food items.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They participate in the annual Osun festival.

<p>6.10: Osun State Ministry of Culture The Ministry promotes tourism and culture of the state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry has assisted in the provision of alternate path ways leading to farms • Collaborates with the Heritage Council in the preservation of the Groves (joint meetings) • Assists in advertising the Osun annual festival • Built a pavilion in the grove • Constructing a gate and gate house in the grove • Will construct a building that will house art and craft exhibitions manned by tourist guards and • Provision of funds for Osun festival.
<p>6.11: Muslim Grammar School Staff This school is located in one of the settlements close to the Groves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers use the grove to educate students on concepts related to geography with particular reference to the Ox-Bow Lake, Suspension bridge and the vegetation
<p>6.12: Muslim Grammar School Students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excursion trips to the groves to see sculptures, fishes, animals and other artefacts.
<p>6.13: Muslim Group These are individuals of the Muslim faith.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They don't appear to use the grove nor visit it.
<p>6.14: National Commission for Museums and Monuments The Commission is a Federal establishment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Commission is responsible for preserving and conserving the groves. • The Commission also curates all fauna, flora and artefacts in the groves • Prevented development of school/public buildings in the grove • Destroyed 15 acres of cassava and maize farm and • Resultant communal and police crisis

<p>6.15: Nike Gallery These are professional artists who promote tourism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These professional shoot films and record documentaries in the groves and • They also serve as tour guides to visitors
<p>6.16: Omo-Osorun Botanical Garden The Botanical Garden is managed by a herbalist and dramatist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He uses the trees and the river of the groves for acting and recording of plays for television programmes • Organizes a guided tour of the groves for students and • worships (divination) goddess of Osun River
<p>6.17: Osun Groves Support Group Non-governmental organization based in Ibadan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation and conservation of the groves through community initiative • Sourcing of funds for executing such projects. • Construction of walls round the grove • Commissioned flora and fauna as well as sociocultural studies of the grove and • Will develop a community based management plan
<p>6.18: Osun State Council for Arts and Culture A state parastatal that promotes art and culture in the state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoots films in the groves and • Partakes in the Annual Osun Festival and other cultural matters relating to the groves.
<p>6.19: Osun State Department of Forestry This is a state department.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps the NCMM with reforestation of the groves when there is any edaphic problem. • Subsidises seedlings supplied to NCMM • Assist NCMM with patrolling of the grove
<p>6.20: Timehin Grammar School Staff: This school is located in one of the communities close to the grove.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers organize excursions for students to the grove as a means of educating them about Osogbo tradition, biology, geography and agricultural vegetation.

6.21: Timehin Grammar School Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake excursions to the groves for educational purposes.
6.22: Unity School Staff. This is a federal government secondary school in Osogbo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized an excursion to the grove in 1998 for visiting members of Science Teachers Association.
6.23: Unity School Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a conservation club that is involved in tree planting.

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Appendix 1 Focus Group Discussion Guide

History

- When were the groves established?
- Who established them?
- Why were they established?
- How many groves are there?

Importance:

- Of what uses are the groves to you?
- What do you get from the Groves?
- How often do you get these materials from the Groves?
- Uses about 25 years ago?
- Uses in the 90s?

Perception:

- What is your view of the Groves?
- Sacred? Pleasure? Beautification? etc. Don't ask these.

Educational Strategies

- To increase awareness of Osun groves

Threats:

- What are the likely factors that may negate the the continued existence of the Groves?

Road:

- The road through the grove, is it a threat?
- If a threat, how? Why?

Aspirations:

- What are your dreams for the grove?
- What are your desires/ wishes?

Management

- What organizations should run the affairs of the groves?
- Who should provide funds for running the groves?

Attendance

- Record names and designation of all present at the FGD/IDI

This is only a Guide. You dont have to follow this sequence strictly.
Just ensure that you cover all the issues identified on the Guide.

Dr. Terry A. Olowu

Q refers to questions or comments made by the investigating team.

R refers to comments or questions made by the discussants

Appendix 2

African Heritage Gallery

In-Depth Individual Interview Transcribed Report

Perception

Q). What is your view or what comes to your mind about Osun groves?

R). The inspiration aspect of it comes to my mind. Like I told you, it has helped in so many ways to preventing troubles or war from entering Osogbo. So it is a sort of protection.

Q). Now let's get to the issue of threats. We want to preserve the place. But we know that one way or the other, activities, human activities or otherwise, if care is not taken could lead to the destruction of the place or extinction of the grove. What are some of the activities you have observed that may make this occur?

R). Presently, there is a discussion between myself and mama (ie Susan Wenger) on how we are going to reach the administrator, for to keep him informed of the encroachment within the grove. There is an Islamic scholar within the grove, which I think does not relate well with the grove.

Q). Does he stay in the grove?

R). Yes, if you go there now, you will see the building, an Islamic school building which has nothing to do with the grove at all. And which might cause war in the future between, a kind of religious war, because it is directly in the shrine. and unless that place is demolished and some other minor, minor houses. or they can buy one of them or demolish all of them. Because about three buildings were built there which are not supposed to be there and it has been causing a lot of trouble or a kind of confusion for a long time and the king too is aware of it and it is kind of an issue which must be tackled now, otherwise.

Q) Is it a kind of development?

R) Development within the grove already.

Q). What else would you...

R). Eh, In terms of road network, maybe they can have another by pass of road. Because a lot of things, they want to be passing through that place to the other side. If there is any other way, fine, that will be very good but if there is none well that is another thing that, I think, could be another bottleneck there.

Q). So what you are you are saying therefore is that the road is a threat?

R). Yes, it is a threat.

Q). The other one is development?

R). Yes development is more the ...The road, I mean actually, one has to pass through, only may be, if there is a kind of system of making the road different from normal road, sort of. You know.

Q) How else can we prevent the threat for the continual existence of the grove?What can be done to prevent the threat?

R). Presently they are fencing it. I think they should fence it up properly and after the fencing, there should be a gate there.

Q). Gate at which end?

R). Both ends, you know so that they will know whenever, it is going to be a boundary. In those days we have kind of walls found around cities and that kind of wall and gate will show them that they are entering into a kind of place where they have to be very careful. This boundary and the gate will signify to people that they are entering an area where they must be very careful.

Q). The road then, from what you are saying, is it a threat?. Is the road a threat?

R). There is a road there now. They want to, according to what I heard, they want to illuminate the place with electricity . Unless there is underground cable, if not this visible ones, it is underground cable that it might not shock monkeys or animals. Because there are lots of animals there. And it is because they did not let any body hunt there otherwise most of the animals would have absconded to the other side of the city. But they still have monkeys there and that is still part of the beauty of the place. Having the animals and the underground will be suggested if they can do that or eventual illumination of the place.

Q). So the place should be illuminated?

R). They want to.

Q). Oh they want to illuminate?.

R). They want to pass, there are some places there. And they want to put light from the town to the other side of the city. And if they want to do that and they expose the cable that might shock the animals. But I am suggesting underground cable system.

Q). So eventually the road is a threat?

R). It is a threat sort of but if there is other place where they can pass because if you look at both sides of the grove it is water. It is kind of illusion sort of. If you want to say they should build another road linking the other side you are going to have about 3 or 4 bridges before they can get to the other side of the city. For now, I

think they should just leave the road then if they want to illuminate, if they don't wish to illuminate it, they can do underground within the grove to the other side.

Q). You talked about gates?

R). Yes, illumination and if they want underground system will be better.

Aspirations

Q). What are your aspirations? What are your dreams for Osun groves?

R). My dream is beyond the present day.

Q). What should it be?

R). I want it to be like a Mecca where people can come from different countries and different places to worship, for tourism and relax. That is my dream about it.

Q). So what are the facilities that should be provided?

R). The facilities like what mama Adoni (Susan Wenger) is doing because there are some sculptures within the groves and that should be improved upon and they should be more permanent than what it used to be.

Q). So we are talking about your dreams?

R). My dreams for that place is so enormous that I think it is going to serve like a place where they do theatre programmes and in future is well kept. There should be more sculptures and more permanent. Because we observed that what mama Adoni did some years back, some of them are getting broken away and we have advised mama to start using something that is more stronger, permanent that might be of longer duration-maybe one hundred years and so on. And I think she agreed to that. There is going to be more construction according to her, but due to lack of funds she could not do much now because she is old and need some person to work with her in the shrine. She has few but she still need more to help her in the shrine. So that will keep that place glorious. And we need more sculptures more locations. Locations in the sense that there are some areas where there is something like rock. On top of that we are thinking that there should be sculptures, like the market, to make it like a market place. Infact when I went to the palace with the curator of the museum, the Ataoja was thinking of maybe about 4-5 projects. Even dredging, to dredge it to have more water during the dry season. So dredging it will have enough water and at the tail end of it there are going to be boats or something of that nature...groves during the dry. That is his own idea of the place. To

make it a sacred thing, that may not be necessary but I buy the idea of dredging, so that we have enough water, you know, to come where they are doing the sacrifice and there will be more water during the dry season. It is good to go there when it is dry now and view what we are saying so that you understand how things are now. You will discover that there is little or no water at where they want to do the sacrifice. You can see the rock, and even the sand of the river itself, which is not supposed to be so and there should be more water by now if it is not dredged and is flowing maybe that place can be preserved and have more water around that area.

Q). You say you want to preserve, will it be advisable...

R). It is just for that area. If you trace the water, it is like a snake. The other side there is water coming, getting to the grove itself. You know, the actually, grove is in front of that small tent or whatever.

Q). What I was thinking instead of dredging, if we go into the lower part of it and we try to dam it. That one will keep water to the upper part of the something so that we can regulate from the dam if we want to...

R). So that the water flow will not be too fast and then it will retain water. Whatever way, which ever way you think, will be good.

Q). Ma, we are just talking about aspirations, the dreams of Osun groves. I do not know what you want to say?

R). I am very happy that people are just thinking about that place. I told Ataoja, one year, that he should provide, provision for culture in this Osogbo because this is the place of culture that people know very well around the world not in Africa alone. So that, I told them but I didn't know they are thinking of today. They did not think of tomorrow which is very important. Because, I told him that, of your children coming behind, you do not know many of them could be divert attention to this thing you did not appreciate now and this Osun is very important. You see people do not cherish what they have. They don't cherish it at all. So, it is you people that can work on this thing, so that they will know. This people have travelled round the world will know what we are talking about. But people at home which can provide all these things did not know anything about it. So if they talking, they are them just like they are wasting money, wasting sense which is not important. That it has been there since our fore fathers. So you do not need to tell us what to do, that is very important. You see, if they say they are doing Osun festival today you will see many European people that will turn up to come and see what is happening and we do not have anything to show them. We didn't have anything to show them.

Q). So madam that is what we are talking about, what do you want us to show them? Specifically, what do you want there?

R). Yes, what I wish we can show them is to make this Osun a tourist attraction. You see, there are many things that we can do to that place. As he has said, we have to create something there, there is land there, a lot of land. We can make something, even we can build a house, build hotels, everything there that we can put something, so that if those people come they will have a place to stay. And that Osun we have, if we want to do this thing, we have to let people, I mean the Europeans to come and use their brain to do something. I do not know how I can express myself...

Q). Is it in terms of management?

R). Not the management. The construction. This is what I am saying.

Q). But we agreed we want to preserve the place. We want to conserve the place. Will the construction of buildings in the groves still make it natural as we are talking of preservation and conservation of the place?

R). Okay. okay. eh, the land is so big we can look at some areas. You see if you go, that is why I am The Oju Osun, we can't touch the place. You see animals there, oh you see them there. They will be displaying for you and the trees there just to keep them. But we can find a place. It may be the nearer to the place we can use, that you, so...

Q). Tourism?

R). Yes, yes. There should be a small place, at least after people go round, they need to relax a little bit, it might not be a big place but in most places there use to be a place where they can relax and eat their snacks or whatever and go back to wherever they come from. Even the people taking care of the shrine need a place to stay, sort of. They need a place to stock things. You know, they do not need to be running helter skelter to get things kept there. Some of these developmental structures you are thinking of it could be around the upper stream. May be towards the...

R). Like she is saying, you know the suspension bridge, after the suspension bridge far away it can be there. Somewhere there. Not along the main road here. But to put people to task. To let them work. After the suspension bridge, some beautiful things can be there under the trees not to cut any trees. Under, they can build with the trees included. Because I have seen some designs in Europe that they were, they built with the trees. They are trees and they tried to build within it. Even with what we have, even with the bamboo we have, we have bamboo, we can use it, not in a modern something.

Q). Something that will be in consonance with culture?

R). Yes, with culture, what I am saying...They did not need to be going out from the grove before they can get their materials. You know, I think it will be ideal, it might not be a place that is so open to the public. It might be a walk way to where they can relax. They will prefer it. They will like it.

Q). You made mention of some groves. You said if we are going along the path, we could come across, if we believe that the strength of the forest and other things like that are part of the grove, I believe in Kenya, they use bark part of the tress to make to make the walls inside. And beautiful walls. There is banana, bark of banana trees, fibre and they use it for walls. You see, if you see it they are so beautiful. In some rich peoples house. Not in the bush. But that is part of what they use there beautifying. But before they can embark on that I will suggest to look for where we can find such a thing. Not just plan tradition for tradition without decency, without bringing out what will be there for ever. You know, because if we can even wax or tanish the bark of the tree sa they did in Nairobi. So I think before we go into all this, it is not just how, may be one section of it. Before they embark on building, they look for a place where such has been done and then they incorporate it into a tree along the shrine far away where people can just walk and there is no stopping there, if the place is habitable enough, people will stay there.

Management

Q). Sir, let us talk briefly about the management of the grove. I do not know if you know of any organisations involved in managing the groves?

R). I only know of the National Museum. Only National museum.

Q). From your perspective do you have any organisations you think should be part of the management?

R). As it is, we may want to involve Tourism. There might be a kind of clash of interest, I would say.

Q). When you say involve tourism, you mean Ministry of

R). Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Tourism. They usually think in terms of money, money, what they can take from it. They do not think of what they can pour into that...

Q). But you have to pour in something before you get some money.

R). And that is the problem. There is about another 500 acres of land given to Tourism, since about 10 years. Now nothing has been done. That is after the shrine. So which..

Q). Is it the one on the left?

R). After the shrine. After you get out of the shrine towards Agric. So I won't say we involve Tourism.

Q). You think National Museum?

R). National Museum in conjunction with Osun Support Group. They should come in to assist physically, they should, their presence should be felt together with that of the National Museum because their interest is quite different from that of the Trade and if they come in together with the National Museum perhaps financially, that may help the groves sort of. Because if we leave it to the hands of the Museum alone, and you know the bureaucratic system of government.

R). What are you talking about? Because I heard that they are ready to do something but this people did not give them the allowance then.

Q). You mean Ministry of Trade and Commerce where ready to do it?

R). Ready to do it, I mean the Tourist Board. Over 10 years now they promised us over one million but it was even becoming kind of chaos, sometime ago that the King has taken, even we the committee of Osogbo took one million which was not brought to Osogbo uptil now.

Q). Don't you want to be part of the management to the groves? As an artist, won't you want your ideas to be incorporated?

R). I do not want to be solely involved.

Q). No, I mean shouldn't artist, not just...

R). Yes, the artist organizations can be involved but it depends on our involvement. Because mama is still there, Susan, and she has is own people working there and so there will be kind of clash of interest. So what I want to suggest is something that will not relate to what mama is doing now. Mama is actually involved in it. And we want to pray for her to have long life. Until when she is no more before we can come in. We are not praying for her to die now but we still want her to continue with her own idea. And eventually we can join hands with her own people. We can not do.

Q). Who are her own people?

R). She has some people working directly with her.

Q). Not the Commission?

R). No not the Commission. She has one group like Sacred Group and they are the people doing the sculptures and so on within the grove. And her own art is quite different from what they are doing now. You understand. What we can do is to liaise with them on everything they want to do. So we don't look different from what they have been working on. We can be in partners in progress in improving it through their own system.

Q). So collaboration?

R). Collaboration! So that is my own view.

Q). So her group is the Sacred Group?

R). Yeah.

Q). Yours is modern?

R). Modern art. So it is quite different from each other. But we can liaise together, work together with the man. They have about 4-5 people working there. We can do a collaboration project.

Q). Who should be providing money to run the groves?

R). That is what I think the Osun Support Group, that is why they are vital in coming in. So that they will know where the money is going. Because they can not be disbursing money without knowing what project you want to do. There should be a blue print of what they think can be done within the grove. To bring things together like Iya Yemoja or maybe they look like what we are talking about. To have a small place or storage or whatever. And at the same time they try to look for different locations where things can be done. Wall sculpture can be done here, soft stone sculpture here or concrete sculpture there. And how big is it going to be? What is the name? How do we get there? Do we make the road the same thing or we create the road a different formula? Or this one, the other one. So that they do not see the same thing all along. Eventually, they get bored seeing the same thing.

Q). So Osun Support Group should seek for funds and disburse funds according to projects.

R). Yes, according to projects.

Q). So essentially you are recommending that Osun Support Group should be at the top of management?

R). Yes, I am think so.

Q). But the groves are under the National, they are now a kind of monument acquired by the federal government?

R). Yes, the interesting thing about is that the kind of law that is used to protect the groves otherwise the committee too will not be able to see anything to embark upon. There is no law to acquire that place, to secure the place, that is their own job. If there is going to be anything to be done within the grove, we can't do it in isolation of the Museum. They should aware of it and that is why it is going to be a joint effort. Okay, this is what we are going to do and the museum people and that is why mama Adoni too is employed in the Museum. So that as a staff she has a right to do anything in the grove and do it and pass the information through whoever the helm of affairs in Abuja. That is the way I see it. We can't do anything in isolation of the museum and the museum has little or no money. But they have law to preserve the land which is the basic material or raw material.

And that means which ever any money brought from any where and spent there is not lost. Because the law can't be repelled or whatever. Because it is still protecting the land and forever. It is not for temporary something. That is why the museum was brought from Lagos to Oshogbo.

Q). You have anything to say ma in terms of how we get funds to run the groves?

A). Very serious. Is very seriuos. We shall continue to pray so that the nation will change so that we can know what to do. But presently, things are very difficult.

Q). Will you be willing to contribute ?

R). I will. Why not. Yes. Yes. Ah!.

Q). You think individuals can also be approached?

R). Yes, I will. Thank you.

Q). Any other thing sir. ?

R). Well we just have to thank the Osun Committee or Osun Groves Support Group for their initiation of the ideas of getting money from foreign place for the preservation of this place. It is a big project and a good venture that will eventually immortalize their own name. That is my own view.

Educational Strategies

Q). Let me back up before we round up. It appears from going round, that religious perceptions and so on have created a big problem in the utilization of Osun groves. What types of educational programmes do you think we should put in place so that to get people aware, to make people use the place to the benefit of the place itself and the community?. What can we do to remove this wrong perception of the grove?

R). The educational aspects of it we have to liaise with the Ministry of Education to bring out an idea. Though we can sell an idea to them which can be disseminated to the students, which can be incorporated into their syllabus and especially cultural activities. At least since Osogbo is one of the cultural centres, towns, in Nigeria we could even give them more information about Osogbo itself. Apart from the grove and the grove can become, it should not be a place of where they will be afraid of. You know, they feel free to go there. Though during festivals all the children are there. They always go there during the festival.

Q). Then why do people have this perception that keeps them away?

R). If people could be going there regularly. I think it will be a good idea if can incorporate this into their syllabus.

Q). What aspects should be incorporated?

R). It could be called eh..

Q). No, what aspect of Osun groves?

R). Oh! Okay, like I was saying, they did not make the Osun groves for, they make it as a close circuit something. They did not open it to the public. If it is announced that the people can be going there and find a place they can be relaxing then people will be going there.

Q). So it should be announced?

R). Yes, it should be announced.

Q). Public announcement.?

R). Public announcement, awareness are done even for visitors coming from Lagos, those are the people going there.

Q). It appears the international tourists know about it more than..

R). Yes, more than the people here. There should be a kind of awareness. Awareness on the use of the place. That they can go there. May be we look for an area where they can be stone, where they can sit, can relax. Like he was saying.. I think what we are saying they can be going there as an, as going to excursion. Like excursion. Because they can't open that place for Dick and Harry. to be coming there. They will spoil the place. You see, you will see some people, even if they can cut the tress, if there is chance for them they will cut the tree. And the houses and sculpture there, they can damage them. So that is why there are some people caring for... Excursion will be adequate people to be doing, the children..

Q). This awareness to remove secrecy, the secrecy means myth created around the grove.

R). Without removing that you will find it difficult for excursion too.

Q). Let us clear one issue. When you say a place is sacred, what does it mean? Because when you say sacred maybe that is why the people are...

R). Sacred, the people feel it is those who are worshipping the shrine only can go there. That is the belief. And you know there is religious awareness all over Nigeria now. especially in the western part. Either you are a Muslim or Christain, a few of our people is eh, traditionalists. We find very few now. And those who are traditionalists can go there. Even they know the use of..

Q). Our traditional leaves?

R). They go there often but it should be exposed to other people too that this place is not for only.. You can come there at your leisure and there should be excursion. And if that one is done, a lot of students can be going there with their teachers for excursion and they will know more about the shrine and that is how they will know more about the artists living in Osogbo today because sometime they come here for excursion. They go to Nike for excursion. They go to mama for excursion. That is how they know about artists. And whenever

there is examination on who are the artists in Osogdo within a twinkle of an eye, they just put it down.

Q). So you are essentially saying that the secondary school students should be a target? A primary target?

R). Yes, primary target. To have excursion from time to time to that place. So that at least, they are growing up adults, adults to be in future whatever they have now will continue lingering in their memory forever.

Q). That is not to say we should forget the adults?

R). The adults, we are thinking of the younger ones that will come of age and those who are already of age are not left out.

Q). So what should we do?

R). May be periodical programme can be done. To invite them to the shrine.

Q). Something called an open day?

R). Yes, not just when there is August.

A). Again, they should let the people keeping the place know that because they use to drive people away. They should keep somebody who is learned to tell story about the place to the people, to the children coming to the place, so that because all these children do not know anything about this thing we are saying. They will tell them the why the stream, they come to life. How Osun is a woman but what she used to do in the olden days she used to pour water so that they will get pregnant and after..

Q). They still get pregnant?

R) If you go there..

R). Okay.

R) Who is looking for this girl now.

R), Infact we went there on Saturday. As we got there they said they knew what our problem was.

R). I want to clarify what you said earlier. Sacredness does not connote worshipping alone. Or that is meant for devotees alone. It is a multi-purpose thing. Secondary schools.

Q). Any other strategies?

R). Infact..

Q). General awareness?

R). We should have a place where we can be thinking of forever. Because it is a gigantic project that will not end now. It will be a continuity, a continous project. I won't want us to rush it so that we won't jump into another area. I think we should leave it to this generation of Year 2000. Maybe middle of the century before we get to the end of the century things must have become much different. I think we have to start from now getting the blue print like I told

you. Map out the strategy of where things can be done, sculpture here, road here or may be stone wood, another area, some area where we can build huts like tents. You know what, projects that made people coming from far places can stay there, if it is habitable. You know, all those things should be thought of now and put it in black and white, work towards it because if there is no project you don't work on anything. You will continue talking, talking if there is nothing to be done. When the money the money, they won't know where to spend the money on. And the more we have projects lined up the more they can ask for money since the other people know what we want to spend the money on. If the grove is not there people who give them money will not respond anytime. And they were here, I think, Leventis were here too and they did a lot of projects before this thing can be done.

Q) Please sorry to take you back to creation of awareness about the grove. What do you think the adult population can be, either population in terms of experience. Because once in a while they should tell their children their background, their history but these adults most of them that have being overtaken by these religious whatever, the type of ideas the younger ones are having now have been put there by their parents. Can't the parents be appealed to, to tell them stories, like we read stories about different places in children's books. Can't they do it like that too?

Q). They should appeal to the parents the adult population, whatever ideas they are having..?

R). I don't think the parents can do that. Are you not talking about the groves? They can't do that. To reach the children about that place..

Q). No, not to talk to them in terms of religion. At least the place where I come from..

Q). How the place was created, what are the uses..

Where I come from, I should be able to know my background

R). What I am saying that adult ones who are now making religion as SU have become like a roasted fish.

Q). Talking about Osun groves, is like talking about religion?

R). Real Christainity has open mind to any religion. It is not supposed to be... When you, have you, go to the shrine it does not mean that you are worshipping it. If you are talking with devotees does not mean you are part of Osun devotees.

Q). Apparently you can even take pictures

R). Yes.

R). There is this Islamic school we went to, one small boy said the place does not mean anything to Muslims, you can destroy it. In

another school, a teacher, not a small boy, said well it is serving no purpose, they can .. Then I asked, are you a Muslim,. He said no. Are you a traditionalist, he said no. Are you a Christain. He said , Yes. I asked him don't you think you are making this suggestion from your Christain perspective? Again he couldn't say anything.

R) That is why there should be educational..and that is why there should be a place for sort of, place where people can just sit down and talk. There is going to be sort of library where they can be educated about it. To let them know it is not secret.

Attendance

Mr. Jimoh Braimoh

Mrs. Duro Ladipo (Oya).

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Appendix 3
Environmental Protection Commission
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History

Q). When were the groves established?

Who established them?

Why were the groves established?

How many groves are there?

R). I am not sure when it was established. All I know is that majority of the groves are traditional groves like that, with exclusion of the groves along the Osun area after one must have left the king's palace. Okay, that one was established not actually by the government but the government is seeing to the management of the area so that there will no encroachment whatever. So as for others no one can actually say when they were established.

Q). Sir, do you have any thing to add?

R). No.

Importance

Q). Alright, now what will you consider as the importance of Osun groves?

R). I think, the major purpose of having the groves is for the protection of our traditional heritage.

Q). Traditional heritage.?

R). Yes, because and they are more or less things that elevate the image of a particular state because you find out that majority of the things that were being used in those days are preserved there. So it is a sort of socio-cultural development.

Perception

Q). So, most often when they mention Osun groves what comes to your mind immediately? What is your perception of Osun groves?

R). Well, in those days when they mention Osun grove I normally leave it to sort of idol worshipping. But now a days I am putting up a new thought concerning it because actually when you go there you will find out that there is a sort of cultural preservation. So that one will not forget about the history of a particular place.

Q) So your perception has changed?

R). Right, right, it has changed.

Q) What changed it?

R). As a result of my academic background.

Q) Do you think the groves should be preserved?

R) Yes, sure they should be preserved so that that the coming generation now, so that we don't allow them to be destroyed. They should be preserved so that the coming generation too will have something.

Q). What do you say sir?

R). In addition these groves over time have served as a lot of traffic generation i.e. tourist attraction centre. During the annual celebration something of Osun, a large number of people from far and near even outside the country troupe to Osogbo to come and watch the celebration. Sometimes it takes about a week. You see different kinds of people. As a result of this, during this period, the economy is boosted because volume of transactions is usually raised during this period. And part of our cultural heritage-some people fancy some of those things that were sold to them which depict our culture and they carry it away to show that when they were in Nigeria and in Osun they were able to get this, and one replicates part of the belief or the handiwork of the people of Osun State. So in short, it encourages....it is one of the major tourist centre we have in Osun state.

Threats

Q). So, you said earlier on that we should preserve or conserve the groves. What are some likely activities that may lead to non-existence/or continued existence of the groves?

R). Well, if the entry of people from all works of life is not controlled, there can be encroachment. Encroachment can be in terms of even physical development. Some people may like to develop very near the groves may be because of the coolness or something.

Q). Develop what?

R). Through physical development like structures or buildings people can say they want to built school, primary school or market or what so ever. So they could be encroachment if the place is not controlled.

Q) So, one, is encroachment, two, physical development, what else?

R) Also there could be deforestation now, people cutting tree. Also there could be looting-all these groves or some other things artefacts. Because we learnt recently that people abroad are demanding for them and they are making money out of them, so if they are not well preserved, people can loot them away and make money out of the things meant for the, for the common benefit of everyone in the area.

Q) Do you have anything to add?

R) Yes, it is very necessary that the things are controlled. if not properly controlled in the sense that if it is not properly controlled, the place will not be worthy of the people coming to visit the place.

The kind of development that would be seeing there. Like he has mentioned the issue looting of properties there. And even the tradition of passing from one people to the other. If young ones are not encouraged to move nearer to study those that are carrying the action now, it may be difficult to sustain the tradition in the long run. So there is need to encourage the new generation to the activities of the place.

Q) You mentioned earlier three activities encroachment, deforestation and looting as activities that lead to the non-existence of the place. How do we prevent these threats?

R) Well, I think the first thing which I think they can do is to fence the groves round. And then there could be guards that will be patrolling the place, (the monitoring crew), who will be moving about to see if there is any invaders., they can easily chase them out of the place.

Q) Have you been to the grove before?

R) Yes, I have been.

Q) Sir, have you been there?

A) No I have not been there.

Road

Q) If you have been there, you will notice that there is a road passing through the grove. Do you think the road is a threat to the existence of the groves?

R) Ha! It's no threat. Because it is leading to other adjacent development. So there is no way there would not be any traffic road passing through the groves unless the other side is totally, will be totally cut off from the developed area. It is no threat, the road should be left there because it is the only link to other areas there.

Aspirations

Q) What are your desires, your wishes or aspirations, for Osun groves? What do you think it should be?

R) In my own opinion, the Osun groves should be modified to meet up with the modern agitation. There are some trees, some of the artefacts are wearing away little by little. So this can be beautified, they can add colour or whatever to them, because if you say you want to leave them in their existing state they will no longer be attractive. So, we can put some modern touches, so that they will look more attractive to people coming for visitation. In addition, there could be some small guest houses around the area so that people visiting can stay.

Q) Guest houses so that visiting can eh?

R) Parks, yes.

Q) Parks? Where would you want parks located there?

R) In plots adjacent.

Q) Not in the grove?

R) Eh...if its located in the groves there is nothing bad in that but after people must have gone around they can come and relax.

Q) So avenue for relaxation?

R) Yes. And perhaps things like games, fishing can be introduced. if there are some boats around, those people that come, they can just hire some of these boats may be in the evening, early in the morning. Sir, the gate, the gate should be, you know, re modified. So that it will depict that we are really entering the grove. When you are entering. Then there could be a real gate, when you are really entering the grove proper. There could be one along the main road that will show that one is entering the grove, then the inner one will be closed. Then we can introduce ticket buying. Then the Ministry of Commerce and Industry should take further interest in the development of the groves like it can even have vehicles that could be taking some people in and out. Transport vehicles can be maintained by the ministry so that people can use it. People who do not know the place. Especially during the festival, people coming from Lagos to Osogbo. Then the vehicles could be maintained by the management of the groves.

Management

Q) Now that you have talked about management, what organisations do you think are involved in the management of the groves as of now?

R) Is it not the government?. It is the national....the federal government. All groves, all natural or artefacts are under the National Commission for Museum and Monument(NCMM). National Commission for Monument. So that is the management body.

Q) Do you think other organisations should be involved or NCMM is enough?

R) I do not think it is enough, because for proper maintenance, all the arms of governments should be involved.

Q) What are the arms?

R) The state, local government should be involved because the groves are located at the local government. The state and local government. should have roles to play. Because the thing, that is the groves, is located at the grassroots. It is located at the local government with the assistance from state and federal government.

Q) Who should provide, as of the funding?

R) The federal government should provide the fund while the others can provide the manpower.

Q) So that you will employ your people?

R) Yes it is true now..

Q) So what do you have to say about who should be involved in the management?

R) Well like he said it should be done by the three tiers of government. And part of the funding can still be taken care of by all the levels except those that require the payment of staff salary and other big capital facilities but the state and local government should still pump some money to the place to go along better. Because we discover that a lot of money is required to maintained about 24 groves that have just mention which is in Osogbo. So many groves in Nigeria alone require a lot of money from NCMM and they will not be able to carry it out alone that is why I said state and local government should also invest money in that place.

Q) What about your commission?-FEPA

R) Environmental protection is at the state level and this should still be in position to monitor the issues of refuse management, control federal erosion around the place and the issues of gaming around the place i.e. killing around the groves should be properly controlled by the environmental protection agency. This is where the Ministry of Agriculture-especially the Wild Life Department and the FEPA would have to come in. The general beautification of the environment there.

Educational Strategies

Q) The major perception is that the groves are synonymous with the paganism. Now what strategies should be employed to change wrong perception of the groves by students and adults?

R) Like the use of public enlightenment programme. It could be programmes on the radio and television. It could even be live programmes just trying to change the perception of people concerning the groves. Like somebody climbing the rostrum and lecture the people. And then some school curriculum, it can be introduced into the students/pupils curriculum so that students and pupils alike there will be a sort of orientation for them.

Q) Can you explain that, curriculum aspect? What do you mean?

R) You see there are some study, like nature study and including some aspects of the grove may be environmental education. The curriculum which is new in primary education and secondary education. Formal and non-formal education should be used. So the awareness on groves management should be put in the curriculum i.e. environmental education curriculum for primary school and junior/senior secondary schools for formal and non-formal education. So there should be a way of bringing elements of groves management and awareness into these curriculum.

Q) How do people get your environmental aspects into the school curriculum?

R) Actually what we are doing is through infusion method. We understand that in developing curriculum for any subject there can be one or two approaches, one of such approaches is that it should be a subject on its own, so that it will fit in the time table. The other way is to use infusion method such that you have a comprehensive curriculum on its own and then you start infusing these elements into some identified subjects. So these subjects like the issue environmental education curriculum going on now the curriculum has been fully developed, what we have done is to start infusing it into the existing subject. Because we already have more than enough subjects because we already have more than enough subjects in the schools time-table. So that instead of making it to be over loaded. Some subjects were identified like English language in lexis and structures, composition and comprehension passages, this will enable students to use the appropriate language. In science, some of the subject identified are: biology, chemistry, physics and even agric. Some elements relevant to the groves can be infused into these subjects.

Q) What else do you want to say. How to change peoples perception. They think anybody, even those of us interviewing, they think we are Ogun worshippers/Sango worshippers.

R). It is through market women, or call people to seminars or short workshop, symposia and regular using of media to propagate idea of managing the groves. Clubs and associations too, like this Rotary Lions, Lioness e.t.c. They can even be called to go and do somethings, all these non-governmental organisations like the Rotary e.t.c if such short talks are given to them, they can even identify some of the things they can do to beautify that place or to add colour to the place. So some of these organisation have the wherewithal to do these things

Q). Dr. Fawole any question? Mr. Adebisi-no.

Alright sir, we thank you very much sir, for granting us this discussion period. We really hope that when we finish our analysis, we get back and provide you the information. Thank you very much sir.

Attendance

Engineer M. E.. Ibraheem (General Manager)

Mr. H.O. Ogunsanya (Town Planner)

Appendix 4

Federal Department of Forestry In-Depth Individual Interview Transcribed Report

History

Q) What is your knowledge of the history of the Osun groves: when it was established, who established?

R)) I do not know much about the history. You can refer to the ministry.

Importance

Q) You said you do not know much about the history, what about the importance to the viewers of Osun? Let's say to you as a forester?

R)) Generally, now when you talk about forestry activities. Our operations are important to conservation, there are some species that may be there but belong to some where else. So the forester need to locate this, may be for training purpose.

Q) So you said from your own point of view, one is training and the other one is conservation. Do you have anything to add. If you say training, that is, you take some of your trainees there. Giving this awareness, have you used the place before as a person or as a staff of federal department?

R). Because we are still young in the state so we have not being able but I believe that the state and probably the Forestry Resource Department of the University of Ibadan should have being making use of that place.

Q). What I am trying to ask you is that if it is two years ago you used the place, compare it to the year 1998?

R). We have not being using the place because people that are sent to us for industrial attachment, their level of training is not up to that. We have not used the place.

Perception

Q). So you have never used Osun groves? It is only the state department, so what is your perception of the place, what do you think about the existence of the groves? May be your perception ?

R). Well what I think as that en. You mean as regards what?

Q). Just what you think. Some people look at it and may think is for pleasure. Some may think it's something else.

R). When I look at it as a forester, there are many things we need to look into. Like I said before we need to conserve the place, to conserve the environment.

Q) So you think it is basically for conservation?

R). It should be one of it. One of it, is that you conserve the existing species of trees that are there. Then another thing is that probably in the future it may be used as a games reserve or rescue centre where by the animals that are going into extinction can be kept and observed, so that the young generation can know them. As you know that many of the animals are now going into extinction, like we have the rescue centres in Ondo state.

Q) What is a rescue centre?

R). I think all those animals that are no more common, may be they have gone into extinction can be captured there and kept there for people to see.

Threats

Q). So you have mentioned conservation, rescue and all of that. So for us to attain this kind of objectives you have stated, what are some of the threats to the existence of Osun groves. You don't use the place, but as a forester, you have an idea of what can make the place go out of existence or...

R). Human activities are so much on it, like search for wood, like hunting, because once you look for wood, you eliminate some of the trees and you are changing environment, and you are hunting you are reducing the population. And all those ones, once you start to remove the wood, then probably the animal and things that are there will escape and look for a better environment. And when we exploit the wood there unnecessarily, then such a place can become a problem, and the environment can result to erosion. Other places can be erosion alone. Then what we are expecting there, we may not see them again. Those are the threats, usually human activities.

Q) Are there some more specific human activities that can be threats?

R). The farmers, then the hunters, those are the major threats.

Aspirations

Q) You see atimes the perception of an object can be totally different from what you aspire that object to be. Earlier on, you mentioned that the-your perception of the place is conservation, training as well as capturing of almost extinct animals and keeping them there. What will be your aspirations, your desire for Osun groves?

R) The only thing is that when you look at the place, and I think what we need to do is to make the place more suitable for other activities, that's what they are thinking. I believe that the place can become a tourist centre if the government actually wants to come in. But the problem is that the various governments differ. Like you are seeing now Osogbo is changing. So it depends on the interest of the individual people that govern at that particular time.

Q) So, it should be a tourist centre, what does it entail?.

R). The government can make money. There can be a small park, where by after finishing walking can come and relax. Then, there are lot of things. Infact like developing such a park like the one in Abuja. Such a park can be developed. This will make a lot of people go there and know the existing of that particular location.

Q) So it should be a revenue generating centre?

R). Exactly., yes.

Q) Is that contradictory to the conservation of the forest?

R). Its not contradictory, it is still part of the conservation. When you create a park, it is not destructive. We want people to come to that environment and see what is existing there. When you say you are conserving a species and many people do not know those species are still existing in. When you talk of masonica tree , now people think they are no more existing. But in some forest they are existing. So such is now turned into a park, such a species can even be deliberately planted there. So people can see what a masonia tree is. So the only continue to see it in the market, but they have not seen it in existence. So those are the things that can be done there. So if the inventory of the place is been taken and you will see that there are some important species, that we can still introduce, so that people may know. People like you and myself will know that this is how this tree looks like.

Q) Well I must say I am not a forester, but it appears you are saying about bringing in exogenous species rather than them leaving those species that are within the groves to naturally conserve themselves.

R). You will still leave it there, not that you are removing them.

Q). No, you are bringing new species?

R). Bringing in non-existing indigenous species to join the ones there. Not that you are taking those away. But there are some, but there are some that many of us that are not foresters, we don't even know. We know the plant, but we do not know the tree.

Q) But they are not already in the habitat of Osun groves?

R). Yes.

Q) That's why you want to introduce them to the place?

R). Yes, so that we will increase the population there and will let us to know more about the existing ones. What exactly we have been seeing, you see and at the same time be able to know that if you see this one in my farm you will be able to know this tree, this is iroko tree. Many of us, we didn't know more than iroko tree.

Q) Sir, as eh, lets say you are a member of this community which you are

of course, you are staying in Osogbo. Don't members of the community have a right to at least go to the Osun groves from time to time to take leaves or pluck a few herbs for their own medicinal purpose?

R). As far as forestry is concerned, any reserved area like that, is not for the public. The public can't enter without permission.

Q) Who gives that permission?

R). Is the government. Once a place is earmarked as reserved, that is you have nothing to do there unless the government gives you approval to enter

Q) So even though it is prohibited? So before you can take any leaf, you still need to take permission from the government.

R). Yes, so that if you want to take it, the government will now monitor not that you are taking something destructive. If we allow people to enter any how, to them they can get rid of those things and they will no more exist. Then why is the place being reserved. It is reserved for nothing. When they now see that you are going to the limit and you now take to destruction. They will say okay you can take no more. Let them multiply before you take.

Management

Q) Now, talking about management of the place, what organisation do you think should be involved in the management of the Osun groves?

Q) Which government?

R). If the government should be there. All the arms of the government, want it properly managed .

Q) Can you be more specific?

R). I mean from the local government, the state government, the federal government, then those NGOs that are interested should come in to manage the place for a better look. Because if you put in the arm of government alone it may not be as you want because the government may be looking at it as not profit oriented as such, but when you bring NGO, probably such organisation can have influence, may be, outside the country to get some interested NGO outside the country to give them money for the management of the place.

Q) Yes what specific organisations at the federal level, do you think should come in?

R). We have the Federal Department of Forestry and FEPA. Those two major organisations can come in. Apart from that the museum people can come in because they are interested in some herbs, and some medicinal plants. So they can come in.

Q) Is the Federal Department of Forestry involved in the management of the Osun groves?

R). No, if they are involved then they should pass the normal office. So we don't have anything to do with them.

Q) Do you have reasons why you think you are not involved?

R). There because the government, either local, the state or federal have not made it known to the department that this is what they want to do there. If they had made it known to the federal government, and the federal government sees that it is related to the activities of the Federal Department of Forestry, federal government will invite the department.

Q). Is it because, may be, the State Department of Forestry is involved?

R). No, it is the state that makes their problem or their need known to the federal government and the federal government sends to the related department and the state department comes in and what they can do.

Q). Mr Adebisi, is the State Department of Forestry not involved somehow?.

R). Indirectly they are involved because I learnt that the National Museum invited them sometimes ago when they noticed poaching activities and this illegal felling. So they asked the Department of Forestry to send their men there for patrolling.

Q). Okay, thank you.

R). I don't know what he is explaining.

Q). That may not appeal the Federal Department of Forestry?

R). That one is still within their...the federal government can only come in when a developmental programme is on. But at the local level, the state forestry are supposed to maintain, protect, but when a developmental programme is on, they can now contact the Federal Forestry Department. Okay this is what we intend doing, how do you come to our aid. I don't think it has gotten to that level. So, the FG will be waiting when it gets to that level. Because one thing I know is that one of the offices in the state sometimes discussed the possibility of bringing it. I am still trying to know what to present to my director so it is when the developmental programme comes up, that the FG can come in if they make request.

Q) What about the issue of funding for this management? You recommended FG should be involved, Federal Department of Forestry, the state, FEPA and NGOs. How do we provide funds?

R). Now like I have said, if they want to embark on a programme and the department looked into its own proposal like for the year 1999 and happened to fall in line with what they want to do, then we can sit down at the state level with the state forestry, with who so ever draws a proposal along the line of my departmental guideline

or programme and then I can submit it to my director and then my director looks into it and sees that a good programme that can increase the interest of the public in the departmental programme. If the programme will not increase or influence the interest of the people, he may not approve. Like bee keeping is part of the departmental programme, which we have proposed to the head of unit. If such a thing want to come up there, we can write a proposal, we take it to the director and say look at it. This state say they want, what can we do. So they look at it, if the programme is approved, then they look for money. So it becomes a project of the department in the state. So they will send the money.

Q) So through collaborative effort partial funding can be provided by the Federal Department of Forestry?

R). Yes, because like in all we are doing, it is the Federal Department of Forestry assisted projects. All we are doing in the state, is for assisted projects. The FG will send its own people then it will go to the state to map these programmes, then they execute the programmes. Not that FG is doing any project in the state without the knowledge of the state. The state has to come in. Because one, we are tenants we don't have land. They have to come in and they are the owner of the reserves. This is a reserve. So we developed the reserve for them. We developed the reserve together.

Q) For the state?

R). Yes for the state and the federal.

Q) You have made a very emphatic point that this is a reserve-Osun groves.

R). It is a reserve, that is why we have our patrolling team stationed there and nobody has a right to enter. Anyone entering becomes an illegal alien.

Q) Apart from federal, state and local governments what other parastatal do you recommend can provide funds. Can the community be involved?

R). When it comes to such purpose, the community will not get interested. That is problem the forestry is involved in now. The community is interested in what they will see there and get money with it. Now the only community that can contribute towards the development is through the local government. I think that falls within their area of operation. You can call an individual to come and donate towards the development of the place they will first of all ask what is their gain. Actually there is no immediate benefit for the people.

Q) So you are saying that apart from the federal and state levels, what other organisation can you recommend should provide funds? Can't the community be involved?

R). You know the problem when it comes to such, the community may not get interest. That is the problem forestry has now, because it is a long term project. The community is interested in what they will see this year and get the money this year. Now if, the only community that can contribute to that development is through their local government. I think that place falls into their area of operation. So individuals, you cannot just call individual to come and contribute to the development of Osogbo. He will first of all ask what is my gain. So when you don't have a good response to that question, you cannot see them. So why we gain their support in any local area we are using is that when we are doing our operation, they are the ones that we use, we pay them. So they are always ready. But when it comes to gaining nothing, because they know that at the end of the whole programme, the whole thing becomes government property they will take their land. So they prefer to gain at the level of establishment, development and other things. So if you call on them I don't think they will answer, because there is no immediate benefits.

Q) But, they should be involved. Can they be involved in the management?

R). They have to be involved. If you don't involve them, they will destroy it.

Q) Is better you will involve them...

R). In the management, employ them, you make use of them as patrol officer, e.t.c. if not they will destroy it.

Road

Q) You have been talking about this patrol, patrol, I know you have not taken people to the groves like you said earlier on, but there is a road that passes through, do you see that road as a threat?

R). No, it depends on the road you are talking about.

Q) The road from Asubino junction to the farm settlement.

R). Yes, that is the normal road, then when you are going to the shrine is on the left. There are communities beyond, schools, farm settlements and zonal office of OSADEP.

Q) So you don't see it as a threat?

R). The illegal roads cannot be as good as that, because you know that if they see you..., the illegal roads are just like foot paths. There are many inside. Then another is that the problem that place has, is people using that place as praying ground, because you cannot check, when you see somebody going with Bible, you cannot say that person is going in to hunt or something.

Q) So how are they threats, because they are not taking animals?

R). If the government comes in and animals are there with all those their noise it is a threat.

Q) But, you said the road is not a threat, vehicles go fast through the road and they make noise how about that?

R). No most of them are nocturnal. For example now you cannot see any of the monkeys, unless early in the morning or late in the night when the area is silent then they can come there to drink water and do some other things.

Q). So therefore, the road, there is no need to even em...

R). Whether you like it or not there must be a road. When you go to any of those games reserves, there are always field roads. Because where you can see the animals, there are roads. But the roads of the illegal ones...

Q) Well Mr. Adebisi do you have some question or issues you want to raise?

Q) You made mention of most of the things which are of inventory interest because its a professional and then the one where we can come in and then one can form the interest of the forestry. Where I could have asked him questions. I think he delved into it about the management and where they can come in. I think you get it now. So I think with that now, most of the things he said are practicable and to certain extent it will serve as a technical piece of advice.

Q). Dr. Fawole any question?. No. I think we will thank you very much for granting us this interview.

R). Before we conclude, because usually in this country when a programme is initiated, within a short time; you, the programme will be no more. Because it will be of a great achievement even for the state in particular, if that place could be developed. Then I want to ask because I always believe that in this country we should look forward. We should look ahead more than putting down this because the outside world know that Nigeria get good information but we don't see the information being made use of in this country. So this issue of the groves, may be after collecting your information here and there, I will like to know what is going to be the next step.

Whether this information will end up in the library for the young ones to read and read alone or whether we are going to use this information on the ground, that is, see the grove in a different form. Let's look beyond the people worshipping Osun shrine ever year. There are better things than this. So I will like to know.

R). Thank you very much. I think is just a fair question. We are commissioned to do this study by an NGO based in Ibadan and its a local organisation. There are six phases to this study. Infact, we are

doing the first three which involves collecting of information. We will go back and collate the information and do the preliminary write up. After that, hoping that we are giving the next three phases which involves coming back to Osogbo organising a workshop in which all the stake holders-they are 23 groups, again and present the findings. And based on the findings, what is the way forward to develop a management plan which should be grass roots oriented-initiated by the people, involving most of the people. So that it becomes their own project rather than depending on external people. So the idea is to get information from the various stake holders. Your department never been involved, now that we know this, we will now come together at the workshop. How do we come together to make Osun groves a good place, in terms of conserving the place in its natural phenomenon. So that is the idea. We are hoping that the NGO, when we submit this preliminary report will still let us carry out the remaining three parts. Outside of this, I am aware that there is another project dealing with the flora and fauna which of course I think-that is not my area of specialisation-anyway to know whatever they have there. Which also I suspect, we are independent commissions but guess the report will also guide them in terms of what to put across. So we are contacting all the stake holders that we can identify within Osogbo community. So that is the idea. We, definitely will come back to you once we are given the next phase to implement and invite you. This was what you said from the forester point of view, as a federal man this is what the state forestry people said. And of course, we know that there is a lot similarity, without even going further now. But what the people in schools will say is different. They may not talk about generating income, but how do we marry all of these ideas together. So that Osun groves can go beyond, like you said, beyond worshipping and all of that. So thank you for the question and we sincerely will try our best to at least give you a feedback from the little we have gotten from members.

Thanks a lot.

Forestry officer: Thank you very much.

Attendance

Mr. O. A. Anjorin

Appendix 5 Heritage Council Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History

Q) Who established them, when and why were they established.

R) The founder of present Osogbo immigrated from Ipole Omu about six kilometres from here. Oba Laroye and Olutimehin settled at Osun river bank very early 16th Century..... Their purpose of coming here was as a result of search of water. Drought was ravaging Ipole Omu. So Olutimehin hunter came here on hunting expedition and discovered River Osun. He knew very well that the river will never dry. He went to inform the Owarokin, Oba Laroye that he was fortunate to discover a river that will never dry through out the year. So Laroye and his family moved down to the river bank. During a farming activity along the river bank, they fell trees into the river. Then there was a cry "*Laroye, Olutimehin gbogbo koku aro mi le fo tan*" which translates as "Laroye, Timehin you have destroyed all my dyeing pots". They were worried there were some other cries from other spirits saying "*Osogbo pelo, Osogbo rora o*". That is the other spirits were sympathising with the goddess Osun for her broken pots. That's how we derived the name of Osogbo. The other spirits called the goddess Aso-Igbo meaning the "spirit in the wilderness". The goddess was controlling about 16 spirits at that time. We then turn to the deeps.

Q) Do you mean the groves were already in existence?

R) Exactly, before the arrival of Laroye and Olutimehin. Since then these groves have been preserved. So after they have pacified the river goddess, she appealed to Laroye and Timehin to move away from the river bank and settle at Ohuntoto-i.e. the second place where they settled. We still have some thing there, we call it Iledé-Ohuntoto. They established a flourishing market and the second place Ohuntoto meaning that anytime there is problem, if they call her, she will hear their voices.

When the population could not accommodate them, then they moved down to where we are now-the third place.

During that period, before they left the river bank, Olutimehin snatched the point lamp from the spirit. When the spirits are celebrating their festival they have to light the 16-point lamp. Then with incantations, he snatched it -the 16-point lamp-we celebrate it every year. So when that lamp was seized by Olutimehin, the river goddess said I did not say you should not seize the lamp from these spirits, if only you can celebrate every year, when the grand finale of Osun festival is about 9 days away. That is why we celebrate the 16-point lamp yearly when the grand finale of Osun festival is 9 days away.

Q) How many groves are there?

R) There is only one grove.

Q) Can you tell us the day and time when these lamps are lit?

R) Every Thursday in the night from 7 p.m. till dawn.

Q) What is the significance of this?

R) I told you earlier on that the spirits were celebrating before the lamp was seized from them. So the river goddess advised them that they should, because of peace. etc. when the grand finale of Osun festival is about nine days away.

Importance

Q) As members of Heritage Council, of what importance is the grove to the council.

R) We should have derived maximum benefits from the groves, but because of our financial constraints we are unable to do so. Now we have advised the state and federal governments to fence the grove round. If we had money to do so and provide gates at the entrances, we should have revenue that will be enough to pay the state government workers. But because of neglect, be...

Q) Excuse me, don't you get trees animals there?

R) Yes, the trees are there, so also are the animals. We conserve them.

Q) What other benefits do you get from the groves?

R) The tourist used to come there. The Osun priestess used to collect money from these people and we have some of our heritage there, which Kabiyesi should observe yearly. There is one stone there that the incumbent Oba must sit yearly as long as he lives.

Q) Has that stone got anything to do with the establishment of the groves?

R) Yes, because during the festival the incumbent Oba will sit on that stone. The Iya Osun will go into divination and carry message to the Oba from the Osun goddess. Then Kabiyesi donations e.g. money. Then she will pray for his royal highness and the royal highness will pray for her. Anything that the goddess of the river reveals through the divination will be carried to the Oba and surely the Oba will observe it.

Q) What about the stone?

R) It is on the stone that the incumbent Oba must sit.

Q) When Olutimehin and Laroye came, did they at anytime sit on the stone or something like that?

R) Yes, the stone was established.

R) With due respect, you see they have a shrine, inside the Osun court yard which is called Agola-Osun. That shrine was first established by Oba Gbadebo Laroye. The first place of the first Ataoja of Osogbo. So inside that shrine we have a stone we call the stool of

authority. That spot, was the first spot the Ataoja of Osogbo sat, and it is now mandatory for the incumbent Ataoja to sit on that stool. So the number of times the Ataoja sits on the stool represents the number of years he reigned. And when he sits on the rock, we commune with his ancestors. After communing with his ancestors, that will be the in the mist of the Osun priestess, priest, devotees and other traditionalists. Before he leaves the shrine, it is also compulsory for the Ataoja to give, to offer some devotees, some gifts and that is money. So, the devotees will then also commune in this their ancestor and the Osun goddess through divination. The Iya Osun will then spread multi-valve kolanuts on the floor, and the information she received, she translates it to the Ataoja. Because the Iya Osun understands the language of the spirits. She can invoke the spirits to be present and translates what her spirits say. The Ataoja gives them gifts. So that spot is an important spot, because it was the first spot on which the first Ataoja of Osogbo sat when he entered that grove. It is mandatory for the incumbent Ataoja of Osogbo to sit on the rock. Which means sitting on the rock is a remembrance of what his ancestors did, and not only remembrance but that is the spot he can commune with ancestors.

Q) So back to the issue of importance, you mentioned Osun priestess. Is there a spiritual benefits derived from the shrine?

R) Exactly, we have a spot there we call Oju-gbo. In those days the river goddess will send a messenger which we call Iko during the festival to pour holy water on that area, and any barren woman who takes out of that river, even up till today will get a child or children before the coming festival.

Q) So, it has both spiritual and medicinal benefits.

R) Exactly.

Q) Don't people also collect herbs animals from the groves?

R) No, it is forbidden that anybody should collect any animal from that grove.

R) With due respect sir, the grove has been protected with Decree 77. So the federal government has decided that there shouldn't be any hunting, no fishing, no deformation of any structure what so ever. Apart from being forbidden by the Osogbo indigenes that we should not tamper with some wild lifes there, with the fishes and trees, federal government has been taking interest in the groves. So they protect the grove with Decree 77. That Decree 77 stipulates that there shouldn't be hunting, within the grove no fishing, no cutting of trees and no refurbishing of structures what so ever.

Perception

Q) You as members of the Heritage council, what is your perception of the groves?

R) Ha, well what I think about the grove is that it is well protected, it could generate a lot of revenue for the council, for the state and the federal government.

Q) What does the grove represent to you? What type of image does it cut out to you as the Heritage Council?

R) The image that it cuts out is that we remember when Osogbo was founded. And we remember the time that Olutimehin and Laroye established the first palace there. As Prince Adenle told you we have the stool of authority, where the incumbent Ataoja must sit yearly.

Q) So it is more of ancestral linkage?

R) Exactly.

Q) So your perception has nothing to do with the spiritual aspect of the grove?

R) Exactly.

Threats

Q) What are the threats to the existence of the groves as you see it?

R) Since the place has been declared as national monuments, no threats are envisaged though some people made attempts to do a sort of hunting.

Q) So there is some hunting?

R) No there is an attempt. This is prevented because we have guards there, provided by Susan Wenger. So nobody starts hunting.

Q) Sir, we are talking about hunting, you are talking about the ideal. But there are threats.

R) Well, if anybody attempts to hunt, he will be caught and will be prosecuted in the court.

Q) So in essence, you are saying that some hunting may be going on.

R) Illegally.

Q) So illegal hunting is a threat?

R) Exactly.

Q) So what else?

R) Fishing, illegal cutting of trees because we have quite a lot of aged trees there which are protected by the government. E.g. the Mimosa tree-it is a tree which emits sweet fragrance. The federal government knows these are natural trees. Even the aged trees alone are worth talking about. Some of the trees are 600 years old. Infact the Department of Forestry were invited to attest the ages of the trees and the federal government was impressed that this grove can still accommodate aged tree like that. Hence the federal government enacted the Decree 77 to protect the grove. Also the removal of some important moments there, which are relics e.g. inside the Oja Laro

itself we have the sculpture of Laroye himself, man made sculptures like Sango Oya and some interested people might remove them. These are things we treasure which we can point to in future, and which also tells about the history of the groves.

Q) As members of Osogbo community, I think you are entitled to some products of the grove. Don't you think so?

R) The Osogbo community regards there as a fearful/sacred place. They don't go there to take anything. Going there is forbidden. The place is protected and it has been declared as a natural monument since 1964. And yearly during the festival, the Kabiyesi re-iterates it that nobody from Osogbo should transfer from the place without permission from the NMMC or the Osun council.

Q) So if with permission, one can get products from the forest?

R) We can only grant permission for sight seeing. Perhaps some playwrights display their works.

Q) How do we prevent the threats we identified?

R) There are guards day and night to keep watch our place. The Osun Support Group are fencing around the group.

Road

Q) The road is a threat?

R) Yes, we too we don't want it . We have written to the state government to divert the road to another way. But the state says it lacks funds. I don't want it, I don't like it.

Q) So it is a threat?

R) Yes.

Q) How is it a threat.

R) You know somebody passing through could go into the forest and wreck havoc. And the guard might not be around to stop it. There was an occasion when somebody went there to take one of the monkeys though he was caught.

Q) So what is the solution?

R) Unless the state or federal government can divert the road. It should be blocked and provide gates. So anybody going there can come to us or the NMMC to collect the keys before given permission and his mission will be known.

R) The president is quite in order. We have written to the Olorundu and Osogbo. Local Government to divert the road so that the scandal nature of the grove can be maintained. The passers-by especially the farms when people are not around, they pass through the grove and cut trees, get herbs important to them and other havoc. Thank the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Co-operation here come to our our aid. We approached them and very soon the road will be diverted.

- Q) You know there are schools beyond the groves, how do you get there?
- R) How I wish that one day you go and see the area yourself, there is another alternative route. If the road is diverted the problem will be solved.

Aspirations

- Q) What are your aspirations for the groves?
- R) Well, we want it to be expanded yearly, new trees to replace the age long trees. There should be conservation.
- R) You see, personally and the common views and yearning of the Osogbo community, that the place should be a gold mine. Osun has been internationalised. It attracts people from all work of life. Federal government should assist the Osogbo indigene to transform that area into a tourist centre.
- Q) What are the specifics you want in a tourist centre.
- R) Like amusement park.
- Q) Don't you think that will destroy the forest?
- R) Even presently now, the Ataoja-in Council has allocated acres of land to the government to be developed. This area is outside the grove and can be developed into a tourist centre. If the federal government helps to develop the place, it will become a gold mine. We know this but unfortunately the Heritage Council lack funds. Whatever funds we acquire we spend on priority programmes and organising some other activities. So it will be a Mecca not only in Osogbo but in Yorubaland.

Management

- Q) Who manages Osun groves now?
- R) The management is not quite enough. The NMMC is supposed to manage the place effectively. But it is not so effective. The NMMC has taken over the protection of that place. Susan Wenger is doing a lot to attract the tourist to that place. The Heritage Council established in 1986 has been with federal government and Susan Wenger. We do thing there collectively. Commerce and industry are doing a lot.
- Q) How do you get funds?
- R) Before now the LG. (local government) gave us money during the festival.
- Q) What types of organisations should be involved in the management of the groves?
- R) In 1988, the FG said that 6 states to be developed as tourist centre and Osun Osogbo is one. It was announced that 2.8 million was ear marked for Osogbo. When Osun state was created, we couldn't get

this money anymore. The then governor of Oyo state said we should forget everything about that.

Q) Sir, you mentioned earlier on that the NNMC, Heritage Council and Commerce and Industry are involved in the management. Are you satisfied with this arrangement or you want other organisations included?

R) No one should be dropped. We are not sure of other organisations that want to be involved. Is it just now the Osun Support Group has come up. They have attracted funds which they now use in fencing the groves.

R) Osun Grove Support Group are now recently involved. A substantial amount of money was put down by this Group and they have done something reasonable e.g. the fence. The only contribution by the FG is the gate house where we intend to collect fees. The pavilion in the Osun court yard was provided by the state government. The suspension bridge is about to collapse. We have appealed the FG, state government and FG to come to our aid, but nothing has been done. It is an important monument. Other important monuments within the groves also need attention. The Oja have the first market of the first ancestor is now in ruins-it is not developed. it needs attention. The Iya Mapo court yard within the grove need attention. She was the woman, an important one too, in the olden days. Susan Wenger together with other artists in Osogbo has refurbished the sculpture which depicts Iya Mapo. Other important sculpture that needs attention are the Sanpona, Ela. Unfortunately it is only Adoni Oritsa-(Susan Wenger) that has been spending her resources to give the place a face lift.

Q) It is obvious you need funds, where should it come from?

R) From the FG, state government and interested individuals.

R) The gate house was provided directly by the FG through the state government.

Q) Can't individuals or members of the community contribute money towards the management of the groves?

R) It is not possible. Religiously Osogbo is predominantly a Muslim community. If anything Osun is mentioned, they wouldn't want to leave anything to do it. They want it abolished. The rich people in Osogbo are Alelaju. The Christians alike do not want anything to do with the Osun groves. It is only the Ifa priest who make contribution, unfortunately they are not as rich.

Q) The general perception of Osun groves is spiritual?

R) Exactly, where as it is not .

Attendance

Chief Okparanti JP (Prseident)

Prince Adenle (Secretary)

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Appendix 6

IFE-OLUWA GRAMMAR SCHOOL (STUDENTS)

Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History

Q). What do you think about the history of Osun groves?

R). According to history, it was established in 1461. Three hunters Laro, Timehin and one other, came from Ijesha and established the shrines.

R). They came from Ijesha and settled there. After some of them departed. In order not to forget what they have done, they made there as a shrine to be worshipped.

R). They settled there and they put hands together. When they were going, they allowed the people to worship that particular god. They believed that anything they want that this particular river will do anything for them.

Importance

Q). We as students of, what is Osun groves to us? What do we get there?

R). Tourist-visitors from other countries or other states come and take photographs.

R). It generates revenue to the government. When visitors come, they pay fee to allow them to enter there.

R). It is a place of worship there, particularly during the Osun festival.

R) For those who believe in Osun, Osun provides them with children.

Q). So there are some people who don't believe?

R). Yes.

Perception

Q). What comes to your mind when people talk about Osun groves?

R). It is a land of worship, to those who believe in it.

Q). What type of worship?

R). Traditional worship.

R). It is always a thing of joy to me whenever Osun is mentioned. The reason is that it is a thing of pride to Osogbo. Indeed both Osogbo town and the state derived their names from Osun. During the festival, visitors from within and outside the country. These people are usually very happy especially "Oyinbos" who come from oversea countries. During the festival, there are several activities. Our King the Ataoja and all indigenes participate in the activities, It is

accompanied with pomp and pageantry and it makes the indigenes very proud. If during this period the 16-point lamp is lit. We dance till dawn.

R) I have a brother who lived in Onitsha. He told me that in Onitsha, people never ask about any other thing except Osun festival. It is a festival that is very popular and which promotes the culture and awareness of Osun.

It is a period (festival), when all sons and daughters of Osogbo come home. And when they come home, they offer prayers which are answered. For barren women they pray to Osun to grant them children before the next festival. And to the glory of God, these prayers are heard.

Threats

Q). You have said that, it is a place of worship, a place that promotes Osogbo town and a place where barrenness is cured. Do you think there are activities that could lead to the extinction of Osun groves and these benefits that are derived?

R). When people no longer believe in the spiritual powers of Osun-as a result of the acceptance of other religions such as Christianity and Islam When people no longer want to follow what our forefathers laid down for us-like the traditional religion.

R). People also consider the Osun worship as ignorance and this may lead to non-existence of the place.

Q). Apart from religion, what are the other things that may lead to the non-existence of the place?

R). If there is fracas during the festival for instance when people are killed as a result of the fracas.

R). If there are accidental deaths from drowning when people take their children to the Osun river during the festival.

R). The people may consider it as worshipping of idols.

R). If a reigning king do not believe in Osun worship.

R). If the devotees/indigenes refrain from worshipping the Osun like she used to be worshipped.

Q) Don you think that the removal of the forest may interfere with the Ojubo of the Osun, the animals and plants there?

R)It may stop the worship of Osun.

R) Something may happen to the place.

Q) You as students, what do you think can be done there that you can benefit from?

R). The place should be preserved for the perpetuation of our culture and tradition for the generation yet unborn.

R). The government should put the place into alternative use. They are so many things that we should have in Osun state that we lack e.g. like a university.

Q). Is the university more important than the preservation of the place?

R). To preserve our culture is more important but they can find other areas to build a university,

Q). Do you agree with him?

R) No.

Q) Why?

R) The place is just lying waste, and that is not good enough. I do not believe that they should continue with the Osun worship. The place should be used for more important things-e.g.. siting a school there is better than worshipping Osun.

Q) What then will happen to the traditionalist?

R). They do not have any other option, is it not the government that owns the place?

R). No, if the place is destroyed, the herbalists and the traditionalists will not be happy. And if the community experience any mishap, it may be attributed to the destruction of the groves.

R). I do not believe that traditional worship should continue, I do not believe in the yearly rituals they go to perform. They are of no relevance.

R). The Osun is the pride of Osogbo. People come from far and wide to visit during the festival. So it should be preserved and conserved.

R). Recreational and relaxation facilities should be provided in the place e.g. hotels etc.

R). I think the place should be preserved. If there is available land around there, then it should be used for provision of recreational facilities. I am always happy to be called an indigene of Osun state.

Q). Are there any benefits you can derive from the Osun groves as students?

R). Excursion for sight seeing and relaxation purposes alone. Because there is a legislation prohibiting the removal of anything form the groves.

Q) Are you entitled to products of the forest?

R) Well yes. Like the animals one is not allowed to use powerful weapons like guns to kill them, but is entitled to the animals.

Q) Do you all agree to what he has said?

R) We are not allowed to take anything from the forest and must not kill any animal

Management

Q) Who should manage the Groves?

R) The government, the traditionalists who know what should be preserved.

R). The whole community.

R). The artists.

Q). Currently who are the people managing the place?

R). The government-Federal

-The community

-The state government

-The Oba.

Q). Who should provide funds for the management of the Groves?

R). The community e.g. the devotees and forest guards.

R) The government should because the revenue from the groves goes to the government.

R). Interested individuals who know the worth of Osun.

Q). Is the road that passes through the Grove a threat to the existence of the Groves?

R) It may and may not be a threat to the groves. As a threat, people passing through may be tempted to kill the animal. On the other hand, it is an access road through which farm products are conveyed to the town, because there are farms beyond the groves.

Road

Q). Now, should the road be blocked or allowed to exist?

R). It should exist

Educational Strategies

Q) What strategies can we adopt to correct the common perception that the major purpose of the groves is the worshipping of Osun?

R) I believe that the groves should still be regarded as sacred because it is the legacy that our forefathers left behind.

Q). As students there are benefits you get from there. There is the Ox-bow lake, suspension bridge which can provide required practical as a follow up to what is taught in class. But the general perception is that paganism is practised there. How can we encourage students to go there and make use of the potential benefits?

R). By excursion

R). To match practical experience with what one has read in books about Osun groves/historical studies.

R). Government should sponsor artist who go there to shoot films/Drama.

R) Establishment of a market or shopping complex on the groves.

R) Establishment of film houses, cultural centres and theatre around there. This will encourage people to visit the place.

R) Advertising activities associated with the groves in mass media such as TV, radio, newspapers.

Attendance:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Odunade Koyode Alaba | 2. Oyedotun Akeem |
| 3. Oguntayo Said | 4. Christopher Paul |
| 5. Odeyemi Fatai | 6. Oyero Abiodun |
| 7. Adebayo Obasanjo | 8. Tijani Ismaila |
| 9. Popoola Nike | 10. Lasisi Rukiyat |
| 11. Odeyemi Adewale | |

Appendix 7

Ife-Oluwa Grammar School (Staff)
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History

Q). When were the groves established?

-Who established them?

-Why were they established and how many groves are there?

R) By the time we have the Irunmoles, Osun was one of the Irunmoles and it happened that place was where the woman stayed. We learnt that there were some hunters who came from Ife. They were three in number-Laro, Timehin and Ogidan. While they were doing the game of hunting, it happened that they managed to break one of the pots they use in dyeing unknowingly. It was then the woman shouted, Oso-Igbo come and rescue me, some people have broken my pot of dye. It was then they discovered that certain Irunmole was there. Irunmole means gods. And that was the beginning of...In order to appease that Osun for the broken pots, he started giving sacrifice to the woman and that was how the place started.

Q) Any addition?

R) Those involved are three in number like he has said, but the only contradictory area is that, these hunters settled at that place because they were finding animals around to catch and two because the place is even very close to the water. So they tried to settle around that area and that is what led to the shrine.

Q) Sir, you said they left Ilesa.

R) When they were going on the game of hunting, some can leave here and go as far as Ila Orungun. Just to have big big animals. So you can travel far and wide.

R) The contradiction is that, if you ask any indigene of this place we are partly related to this Ijesha people. It was said by my father that we are from Ilesa area and not from Ife. That is why Ijesha people used to say that they are part owners of this place.

R). I believe strongly that the hunters come right away from Ilesa and not Ife in search of big animals and some other thing.

Incidentally they broke some pots of the woman known as Osun who is the goddess of Osun river then. She was engaged in dyeing and tie those days and she used big pots for her dye and tie work. And these hunters broke up her dyeing tools and then she shouted who are those people that have broken my pot of dyes. And to appease the goddess of the river they started worshipping and sacrificing.

Q). How many groves are there?

R). I think there about three.

Q). Can you name them?

R). I don't know their names. But there is the central. There you have the age long tree.

Importance

Q). We as teachers, of what importance is Osun groves to us? First of all lets look at it from that perspective

R). For the fact that we are teachers, there is hardly anything we can do successfully without making a touch of the past. And as far as that shrine is concerned, it tells a lot about the past of the people of Osogbo or let us say Osun as general, because, as a matter of fact, it has enabled us to know how our forefathers lived. And what even they accepted as divinity before the advent of the white men who brought Christianity as a religion. That particular aspect has shown that our people believed that something is greater than human beings And they worshipped that particular thing through the gods we had then. So it is really helping us as teachers to let us have a type of connection between the past and the present. It is very very historical.

Q). Be more specific? In what way is it historical?

R). It makes us to know the history of Osogbo, even say Osogbo alone because many people from various works of life in the Yoruba area come here annually during the celebrations. And that thing has been in existence right from the time the thing started. So it is still very historical.

Q). So coming here annually, what does that mean to us as teachers in Ife Oluwa Grammar School?

R). It is also a tourist centre, a resort centre. Because there are somethings and some other materials and monuments there that are significant in our curriculum.

Q). How do you use that?

R). We can use that in form of excursions.

Q). No, no, no. You said historical, what do you use them for?

R). In terms of teaching the students.

Q). In what subjects?

R). In history, in geography, in agriculture, even in biology and Yoruba

Q). So how do you use it in Yoruba?

R). You see it tells us about our tradition, our culture. So these are part of the curriculum in Yoruba. In history, who are the ancient people, what are tradition, culture, how do they dress, what are their occupations and some other things like that.

Q). Will that be also a part of social studies.?

R). Yes.

Q). Any other importance to us as teachers?

R). Again it gives us a kind of exposure. Because when the foreigners come from the overseas countries to come and see what is happening here, some of our people also travel down to oversea country and take along some of the materials that we produce here-exchange of ideas and culture.

Q). What are some of the other importance of Osun groves as members of the society?

R). Even the annual celebration of the tradition, has enabled our people to come in contact with people of different cultures, because during the period, especially people who are non-literate, they have the opportunity of seeing different kinds of people. It has made them to understand that not only black people exist, for the fact that they have not had the opportunity of travelling out.

Q). Are there other things ?

R) In terms of religion, you know that Christianity is widely spread throughout the nation and Islam also. There are some ancient people, they still believe in worshipping Osun. They believe that whatever they want can be given to them.

Q). Like what? Be specific. What do they get?

R). Children, money, health, wealth. Whatever, whatever.

R). It is also for commercial purpose of this area, especially in the area of art work. Osogbo is known as a centre for art, for art work. So every year during the celebration of Osun river, people from all over the world will come and that serves as a good market for those

people who engage in art work. Also the petty traders are engaged in real business for 3-5 days. And their business more like hot cake. Again, especially teachers in my own area-sports, a lot of traditional sports, you know our African traditional worshipping and ceremonies go along with traditional activities that we sportsmen regard as traditional sports. Like the day, Osun from early in the morning we engage in lot of physical activities, such as acrobatic displays.

Perception

Q). As a teacher what is your perception of Osun groves? When they mention Osun groves, what comes straight to your mind? What do you think about the place? Frank talk.

R). It makes me to remember the past-how the people who were before me lived. And how they believed. It makes me to know the pattern of life-in terms of beliefs-what they feel and through which means they can get what they need.

Q). What is this their belief?

R). To me it is a kind of faith in the worshipping of the gods.

R). Personally, I do perceive a lot of good things any time the name Osun is mentioned. One, my brother is the good promoter of these things. So the moment they announce the Osun festival is coming, I believe that time, we get a lot of money. Because many people will come from within and outside to come and rock that festival period here. Bring any musician or film, you will make a lot of money. Two, I derive a lot of satisfaction from it because when you get to the place, *Olojo-merindilogun day*, that is the first day, like my partner just said, a lot of activities like dancing, the king will even come out around in the night and dance round. People will be clapping and we derive a lot of joy-(entertainment).

R). Worshipping of gods-idolation comes to my mind. Traditional religion comes to my mind.

R). I see it from the perspective of a physical educationist. All the activities are recreational.

Q). But as a group what do you think is the number one perception.

R) Idolation, entertainment.

R) I do not agree it is idolation. A lot of the people who attend are not there to worship. Only few of them are concerned about the worshipping there.

R). What I mean is that, that's the way I see it. Because there was a time I was at the market place, I saw women carrying bucket of water on their heads. They were coming from the shrine. They said that day was, I do not know what they really meant.

R). Why I am against that statement is that on the day of Osun, like the Milad of this state-Bamigboye he is a good Christian. He was

there not to worship but because he was invited to grace the occasion. Like myself, I was there I did not go there to worship, but to go and see the kind of punishment these people are receiving over there. Personally, I derive a lot of joy there. Not that I go to the shrine to say "Osun gbami o".

Q). It is not only worshipping taking place but other things are taking place.

R). Worshipping is the major thing.

R). Yes if there is no worshipping then why can't they go in ordinary day without worshipping.

Q). Even those people concerned have never educated the masses on the actual benefits of those things.

R). That's very true.

R). The general perception is that people going to worship, then secondary things may come in. But primarily, worshipping is the major thing.

Q) Do we want the groves to continue?

Do we still want the grove there or not?

R)It should continue

It should be modernized.

Threats

Q)What are some of the likely activities or threats that may negate the existence of those groves?

R). Possibly, deforestation, and religion.

If the forest there are cut away or bulldozed, by government or anybody that feels not comfortable with the worshipping going on in the place.

Q). Do you say people there cut trees?

R). Yes.

R). They don't allow that

R) Christianity and Islamic religions are threats to the existence of the grove.

Q) How?

R). Because people are more going Christainly and Muslim way.

Q). How?

R). They see those traditional worshippers as second rated citizens, people who do not believe in God or people who engage in unwholesome things and people do not want to associate themselves with those people.

Q). Does that mean the groves should disappear?

R). If people do not go there, the forest will not remain there. It is because people are going there, that the forest is there

Q). Really?

R). Yes, if people do not have interest in that area, the government will not leave the forest like that. It is because people have interest in it, that the government is encouraging people to have interest in it. Otherwise, the government will clear the place and put it to other uses.

R). I don't foresee the groves being destroyed any moment. The reason is that, the place is regarded by the indigenes as a sacred place. If you can't do any cutting there. In fact one should even be very careful. It is a taboo to go there and cut anything. Bulldozing the place can never be done.

R). Aged people are performing the rituals now. So there may be a time when these old people will pass away. If the young ones are not involved in the ritual activities, there may be a lack of continuity of the tradition.

R). The worshipping can never die down because, children of the aged people are mastering the process everytime. And now they have even graduated. So the thing can never die.

Aspirations

Q). Now what are our dreams, our aspiration for Osun groves? What do we want the place to be like?

R). It should be modernised. The government can come in and even make a lot of things to improve the place. Especially those who come in from other country to visit. A kind of hostel to accommodate them.

Q). Where will they site the hostel?

R). Very close to the grove. We have areas near the groves where the government can use.

Q). You mean in the grove itself?

R). No! Around. This will even generate money for the government. So if the government can do that it will help.

R). A fence should be built round the grove, so that people will not encroach on the area.

R). Also the government can also provide recreational facilities, like the one we have at Trans Amusement Park in Ibadan. This will encourage who do not have interest in the worshipping to go there.

Q). What else can we do to ensure that Osun groves remain in existence?

R). Afforestation.

R). The government should enact a decree prohibiting from exploiting the animals or everything on the land.

R). Then in some areas where the old trees are dying away, they should plant new ones.

Q). You talked about modernising the place what are the facilities and activities you actually want?.

- R). We want electricity in that grove, yes.
- R). It is forbidden.
- R). It is a taboo.
- R). The Osun do not want to see anything like electricity.
- R). For recreational activities, assuming they build hotels there, now, the people will need air-con, etc.
- R). That will be a distance to the place.
- R). Not within the place.
- Q). But you said electricity is a taboo to the goddess?
- R). Yes.
- R). That is what they say. That is why they cannot even, except on the day, festival, they only allow generating plant to be taken there because of the microphone, they cannot switch on the light.
- R). But we have street light across there during the time of Adeleke.
- R). *Iro ko de be. (No it is not there)*
- R). There is no electricity at Muslin Grammar School,
- R) The street light there has been vandalised.
- R). No, there is no light there.
- R). There is street light there, it has been vandalised.
- Q). So what we are saying is that electricity is a taboo?
- R). It is not a taboo.
- R). It is a taboo.
- R). It is not
- R). It is only in the shrine that it is a taboo, not in all the land surrounding the shrine. The area around it, is what we want developed by erecting recreational structures, building hotels and renovating all the antiquities there.

Management

- Q). Currently which organisation is managing Osun Groves?
- R). It is the traditional people who have been trained by their forefathers. Some families are in charge.
- R). I have a different view. There are about 3 people. You see that area has been taken over by National Museum and Monument Commission, the Obas in Council and the Osun devotees.
- R). The state government and federal government. Because I would remember when some millions of naira was given to the Ataoja for the maintenance of the place.
- Q). Are there other organisations outside of these four that we think should be involved In the management of the groves, not just Osun Osogbo festival?
- R). Philanthropists or international organisations that are interested in culture.

Road

Q). There is a road passing through the groves leading to Muslin Grammar etc., Is the road a threat to the existence of the Osun groves.

R). No, it has been in existence. It is an old road and it leads to other villages and hinterland.

R). The farmers settle around there. It is the road through which food is brought to the town. There is the agric settlement along the road too. The road is not a threat.

R). The road is an access to the grove. Because I remember one year when the celebration was about to take place, the road was repaired and widened.

Management

Q). Who should provide money for managing the groves?

R). Federal government in conjunction with the state government.

R) Ministry of Information & Culture.

Q). Shouldn't your school be involved?.

R). NO, may be schools should pay a token fee before taking their students there, interested schools.

Q). So you are willing to pay to enter there?

R). Yes, of course.

Educational Strategies

Q). Because of the general perception of Osun grove, it is been under utilised by students etc. What can we do to change the perception?.

R). Enlightenment campaign, focusing on the use of the place and categories of people-the people must be educated about the potentialities of that grove. What they benefit and how the people can enjoy or have access to that place.

Q). Please be more specific.

R). The use of radio, television, film show, sign post and hand bills.

R) Erection of sign post, telling people where they can reach and areas where they cannot reach. And at the entrance there should be a very big fence there with somebody giving people permission to enter, that is tour guides should be provided.

Q). How can we enlighten your students about what to do?

R). The Ministry of Education should realise the importance cultural background of students and their own existence. There is nothing we can do by not linking it, makes the students to know something about that place. And for us to make it easier, it should be incorporated into the scheme/school curriculum.

Q). What type of curriculum?

R). It can come in the Yoruba or Social Studies. These will provide the solution. Currently students lack interest in the place because of the perception they have already regarding the place as an idolatry

place. When they are through they will know the importance. This will enable people have interest

Q). Have you visited the place before?

R). I am always there.

Q). Not a worshipper?.

R). No, not as a worshipper. May be if I have been made to know the importance in the school, may be I may have become one.

R). Some how we know that different people go there for different reasons, I think that the government should improve that place. If it is only idolatry worship is going on there, they won't get 2% of the people/visitors going there.

R). Apart from that, the schools or subject teachers in various fields can also organise excursion to that place, to dis-abuse students' mind and enable them know that there are some features there that can be used in teaching process.

Q). Suppose their parents object?

R). If there is enlightenment campaign, the minds of parents will be dis-abused. They must have known the usefulness and potentialities in that grove and they will not object, if they know that the students are going for learning and not for religious purpose.

R). The parents can easily be educated.

Q). How?

R). Taking the students to the shrine does not mean that they should become idol worshipper, but to compare the past and the present. For example, when you get there, you will see a very big calabash the type that Arugba used to carry. They are student who do not know what is called Igba. But where they see it they can easily understand.

Q). How can we educate the students again?

R). Through the mass media for example, radio, television etc. Different medium of communication.

Q). What do we do about this issue of electricity?

R). It is only in the shrine that electricity is forbidden, not in areas surrounding the groves.

Attendance Ife Oluwa Grammar School Staff

1. Mr. Adeyemo
2. Mr. Aluko
3. Mr. Raji
4. Mr Ajala
5. Mr. Adejobi
6. Mr. Abiona
7. Mr. Ajiwe

8. Mrs Adesanya
9. Mrs Odulana

Appendix 8
Ataoja of Osogbo
In-Depth Individual Interview Transcribed Report

History

Q). When were the Osun groves established?

-Who established them?

-Why were they established?

-How many groves are there?

R). Actually the groves which contain Osun shrines itself, the shrines are still as it is, apart from other shrines which are there, have been there lots of years because one won't actually know. Because the handing over history we have, and in my capacity as the chief custodian of all the shrines which it contains-the grove was eh-God established it. The first occupants could be regarded as the deity itself, that is, the Osun herself which by that time was the Queen of the grove-which was like an empire-a kingdom which was really own and controlled by the Queen Osun-which must have been thousands of years ago. Other deities and fairies which are supernatural beings were there. And this Osun, there are so many meanings to it. People say that when the gods came from heaven they landed in Ife at Ita-Osun. After sojourn in different places for example, Ilésa, Ekiti, she came back to Osun, which she found most suitable to make her own domain kingdom Osogbo. It is blessed, and has not done any other place before. See it making lakes, highland and making different type of thing around that area and different kinds of features, meandering, doing this and that here around this Osogbo. So she found this place suitable for her. It is sacred, is peaceful, harmless because she is regarded as a woman and a mother of children.

History had it that she was at a time married to Orunmila, a very beautiful woman. And as a very beautiful woman many men wanted to marry her. Ogun was also making eyes to her. In anycase they stayed put there during the first generation. They were all coming to her there. That was the first history we heard.

Then later another generation Ogidan, Ohuntoto came to settle there and other supernatural power came there. So also they were not able to stay long. The third generation came. This included Oba Laroye, my own ancestor on my father's side and Ode Aperin and the famous

Olutimehin that's my mother's side again. I am the first Ataoja of Osogbo who is from the two families. That's very important. First Ataoja of Osogbo who hailed from the two co-founder.

Olutimehin has been coming here over the years, an Oyo man and he stayed at Ipole where my own ancestors first sojourned. The Laroye sojourned there. There have been 8 Obas-8th king at Ipole Omu. And they lived there for so many years. The 8th king was Laro.

Olutimehin was just a general hunter and he found that River Osun. They had problem of water in Opole. Then over the years they have been trying to get water. Timehin went back to Oba Laroye the 8th Owa of Ipole. Oba Laro who was the Oworokin of Ipole, physically moved together with Timehin to this place. They have affinity with Ilesa.

Q). So they are actually from Ilesa?

R). No not Ilesa but from Ipole Omu. You see what actually happened is that the Owa of Ijeshaland, they all came from Ife. They settled at Emere called Ibokun. Then our own ancestor moved to Ipole Omu. The Ijesha people moved to Ikete and then back to Ilesa and back to Ibokun. And from Ipole, Timehin on hunting expenditure found the river called on Oba Laro and they moved and settled at Osogbo.

Where they settled, there were a lot of spirits, devils and supernaturals. It was full of wizards witches etc. But there was a covenant that if you want to settle down here, you should do this and should not do that. And that is the basis of the celebration of the Osun festival. This covenant was reached that time. So that one is about 500 years ago. But the other one must have been 2000 years and it has gotten to the third generation. We are the 3rd generation.

Q). So the groves were there before anybody came?

R). God created that one-but the gods (Osun) occupied it.

Q). You said thousands of years ago?

R). Thousands.

Q). You established that there are 16 major shrines. Is it possible that we know some of their names?

-1). Osogbo-is the principal, now we are bearing the name.

-2). *Lokan-Lakankan* which means first to be reached. When Timehin came, er crossed to the other side of the river.

-3). *Ohuntoto*

-4). *Busanyin*

-5). *Igbo-Aje*

-6). *Ajanboro*

-7). *Diakin*

-8). *Asato*

_10). Eleyele

-11). Elegbaregba.

Importance

Q). What is the importance of Osun groves?

R). As I told you, because Osun is the owner, before and then my ancestors-that the two ancestral fathers Oba Laro and Timehin are linked to my father and mother's sides. So I now told you that the forefathers gave the two ancestors. The importance of the grove is that it contains all the shrines that are worshipped by my people, because as a result of the covenant signed between the co-founders and the deity herself. She allowed them to stay there, told to pay her homage. They first stayed there but told to move up here, then later on they moved the open space-*Ode Osogbo* and that place is Osogbo-the grove.

The reason because their goddess assisted my ancestors to settle there and allowed them first as tenants. I will allow to stay with me after making necessary rituals etc. Then fish came out, then my ancestor stretched his hands to receive the fish according to the instruction I have given you, if your rituals are accepted by the goddess we know just stretch your hand like this beside the water you will see something. Then strangely enough a shark, a big a big fish, came out called Iko and put its mouth on the palm of Oba Laroye and vomited some liquid there. The people regarded that one as the acceptance of the spiritual homage. Then people gave Oba Laroye a cognomen that the king that received the fish on the palm. Atewogba, that is, acceptance, so then people said you are lucky o!. So the people said the goddess has sent a message. The fish represent the message-the royal messenger from the Iko and this is a mystery a real mystery. We call the fish Iko and Iko in Yoruba means messenger. That is why the Oba should not eat fish from the Osun River. So they said mama your prayers have been heard, so that king could have been Owaroki that is, the wise Owaroki means a philosopher. Then the Ataoja is called the wise king. Orokin are people who are very intelligent, wise, very quiet and these are the characteristics of the Ataoja of Osogbo-very quiet, calm, cool. And there is another story, when very big gather together in those days, they never turn the Ataoja back. They will say he is too young but call him in, he is very wise. Thus the Ataoja is regarded as a wise man and this has been from the beginning.

Q). So the issue of importance, the very first one is?

R). One, worship by the people because she was the one that allowed them to stay down there, is instrumental to getting them settle down. Two, Goddess of fertility-helping women to get pregnant.

Three, the goddess of virtues-these and associated with the shrines. Each of the shrine in those days had a specific function like *Igbo-Aje*-make people rich. *Busanyin*-is for protection.

Q). Are there other things the community benefit from the groves?

R). Healing.

Protection from war-in fact all the people of Osogbo worshipped Osun in the early stages as the owner of the land originally irrespective of their faith or belief.

Q). What about tourism?

R). Yes, that is in the modern time. The modern time we now see the tourist section/attraction very useful. It is now seen as Hollywood in America, because of sacredness of the place, no fishing, no hunting, it is very natural in its form. So you now see artist coming to practice, to draw. Singers come to compose their songs because the place is so quiet.

Q). What about the plants, the animals?

R). Because they are all natural, there are. That is why many people consider it as a natural zoo. It is only because the river has not been well treated by dredging it properly. It use to have fish, bigger than human being before but now dirt fill up the river allowing fish to flow away with the water. The river used to be very deep but now nobody is cleaning the river again. Nobody takes care of the place.

Perception

Q). So sir the issue of perception. What essentially is the perception of the groves?

R). The perception is what we believe. Up till today, even though people are now mostly Muslims and Christians. Even then, now they regard there as their cultural heritage. When there will be war they go to the place in the olden days, when there will be any trouble and when there is complaints they go the place. There is a song that they used to sing in those days-it says that whenever there is a problem and you tell the *Ataoja*, the *Oba* will complain to Osun goddess.

Q). The perception then is that of a protector?

R). Protector

-provider

-is everything. But now that religion has taken over, this has reduced. But still extol the virtues of Osun. that is, any true indigene of Osogbo should behave very well, quiet like Osun, meek, fair, good morals because Osun is the mother of children. That is why we say that a child that will stay in Osogbo must be gentle in his behaviour. *Olajide o gbe oroki tori obo ni ile Osogbo*-they call Osogbo abo-femine or female. You have to behave like a mother. When you say somebody is a mother, that is, the virtues are there.-you are caring.

That is why you see people living very close to the river-no problem, because she is the mother of children, So when we are doing the festival-no ugly incidence. The mother normally takes care of the children. That is why throughout the length and breath, there is no place where people cannot enter or forbidden not to enter, not even in the groves.

Q). The size of the grove?

R). It is about 200 acres.

Threats

Q). What are some of the threats to the groves?

R). It is natural, there are developments. If not because of the federal government-that some of the good things the governments have done for us(museum and monuments), who make use of the place now.?. Nobody would be making use of the place. Human beings are going, they are having children they have to...

Q). Will you say is as a result of development?

R). Yes, yes. The saving ground is only just because we have this protection.

Q). Aren't there some other threats?

R) No, except that there is an Islamic school. All I told them is that they should cordon the thing out and allow them to continue and then should not enter my shrines anyway.

Q). Sir as members of the community, do they have right to take some products from the groves? For instance plants or animals?

R). No, actually you will say the Ataoja owns the groves. There are two ways to it, but we should be very frank about this. Legally now, in light of civilisation. You will say the Ataoja owns in trust. But the truth is that the Ataoja owns the groves, all the shrines. He is the only person who can, who knows the history of the groves, the different kinds of things each shrine requires, who appoints the priest and priestess absolutely. Who can dismiss anyone of them absolutely without referring to anybody. Who can go there, anything and can decree on anything there with the consultation of the Omo Obas and chiefs. He has the total power. But because of civilisation and the need to carry people along may have to.... For example what you are doing, the money you spend, you don't commit yourself to contribute. Right from Adam, not that the community will come and say anything. No. And people say when they are singing songs during Ifa period they say-"*Olu Ode logun, Ataofa lo lo Osun*". Because Oba Laroye had a covenant with the goddess.

Q). In effect, that means that members of the community cannot go there without approval?

R). No!. No, no, never never. It is an abomination. She shouldn't do it at all. If they do it they will be punished. There is nothing the Oba can do about that.

Q). So there have not been cases of pouching, felling of tress?

R). Well, there have been cases like that because you know civilisation. I wouldn't know whether the people are ignorant of that. You see its civilisation and you have to pull people along. I am saying in an ideal situation. But because there is civilisation and the Obas - since the third Oba, but one, the Obas have been Christian, Christian, Muslim. So that has caused some other inroads to the sanctity of the place. The mind is no longer addressed to that kind of thing. It is now heritage. It is not question of real things that used to be in the olden days - they were really worshipping. For example as a Muslim now I cannot now, worship anymore. I can only give them money to go and do what they should do. I do go there, occasionally for certain reasons. Apart from the festival periods it is mandatory for me to go there. That's personal to me.

Q). Sir, you are talking about pouching which came with development, we cannot prevent some of these?

R). Yes, that's why the government has gone, studying all these things and then taking effects.

Road

Q). The road that passes through the groves sir, do you see it as a threat to the existence of the groves?

R). No, no, no, it is a nice thing. No problem. The suspension bridge was built in 1937-38. There is not much of these fearful things.

Q). Will it not expose the groves to passers-by? Who can pouch?

R). There must be an access to the place. You see I told it is not all the groves that have shrines. I have separated the areas that have shrines. There should be road in existence. There must be development.

Q). But that may expose the groves to people taking plants etc.?

R). Then it should be checked, they are naturally there. They can only be checked. In the whole of Yorubaland hardly can you get that kind of thing. Even in Ife which is the real homestead of all of us, you hardly get something like that in the middle of the town. You know the town because you cannot penetrate much.

Q). So you will not be in support that the road should be closed?

R). No, the road must be there. How can I get to the groves?

Q). But, there must a way of checking the threats.

R). You are right. That's why we are making the gates and doors. We must maintain the access. Otherwise the children will not go there. You see we have the support of the young people. If you take it as

heritage. What type of heritage is that when they cannot reach the place? When you make the place very fearful to them. And the religious organisations will say what kind of a place is that. Especially when the people who are supposed to be owners of the place have embraced Christianity or Islam.

Aspiration

Q). Sir what is your aspiration for Osun groves?

R). Thank you very much. You see I want it to become a real tourist centre. That's the only area it can be of service to the people. Otherwise the younger ones will just spoil the place.

Q). Are there specifics that you would want?

R) I have in mind-One, the river itself will be dredged and widened. Without any prejudice to those who have been worshipping there, there are three types of people using the place-the devotees (within and outside Nigeria e.g., the Cubans, Brazilians, two, the tourists three, those who want to do their business there e.g. dramatists, song writers, professionals.

Q). It means that professionals who want to use there should be encouraged.

R). Yes, they should be encouraged because that is the utilitarian value. At this stage, people are no more idol worshippers, why should we be retaining the place.

Q). Sir, there will be a conflict in terms of perception and aspiration.

R). Yes-because the perception is One, protector-that is the original. Right now things are changing even even my daughter or son will not be able to explain the protector value of the groves. But when it is made into a tourist centre, they will find the place suitable. Where can you get a river and nobody fish there? Where there is animal and they are not hunting there? Where can you get that kind of place. So we need to dredge the river and make it very clean and maintain its natural look. We need to have some modern zoo, man made zoo to complement the natural zoo. We cannot control the natural zoo. We need to have some other tourist attraction there e.g. regatta, a space called park. The area for shrine aside. Those who are interested in the ancient will see the ancient and those who want to see the modern things will see them. It should serve multipurpose interest. The old should be preserved but the modern should be allowed to emerge/develop. You see films like *Orumoru*, *Olokun*, *Asoro Days* were shot there-and that is why we cannot destroy the ancient. The researchers also like you people, will also find the place useful.

Management

Q) Who actually should manage the groves?

R) You see, naturally, I prefer to manage my thing myself. Unfortunately, I do not have the resources neither do I have the way procuring that kind of thing that can be used. So it is suppose to be between me, my local government, my community and any other organisation.

You see, the problem is this. This, shoddy way, is half and half measures way of doing things. Where people want to control something, they don't know the rituals, they don't know anything. There was a time Susan Wenger wanted to do something, I said no. And when I say no, no government in this world can put anything there. You don't know anything about this. I use different things for the different shrines and I spend a lot of money for all these things. When somebody wants to boss himself on me, I leave him to go and do it and you see the results. When she got the result, she prostrated and begged me.

The management, for the purpose of procuring funds, the government should assist. Ideally, I would love my local governments to be involved. Right now I have instituted the Osogbo Cultural Heritage Council (OCHC), should be the ideal organisation to handle the place. But because of the interest of the Federal Government, may be under the auspices of National Museum and Monuments. This is very important because the government can project to the outside world. If the place belongs to he Federal Government as it is now, no religious activities can bastardise the place. That is the key advantage.

You cannot remove the hand of NMMC, Arts and Culture because they have a lot to contribute. But it's not the name now. It should be actualised. The suspension bridge is falling now and nothing is been done to it. So the NMMC should be seen as effectively taking care of the place and not in the haphazard manner.

Q). Sir, if I understand rightly sir, you have identified two areas. One the Ataoja and his local government, the ideal management....

R). The LGs are not stable, that is why I instituted the Heritage Council. The Heritage Council is purely my community, because I should be shielded off a little bit. I am the father, the owner of the groves. I am not just a grand patron. I can dismiss the whole thing. You see its coming back to me again. I can dismiss the whole thing. I want to retain that power. Whoever is going to control the place should make me be the authority. Because that is the real Ataoja, that is the real Osogbo. You don't joke with the groves. Help will be welcomed. That's why I want to shield my self. If the Osogbo Heritage Council plus NMMC can be doing it. Returns from it can be shared. But without proframing the place because I don't want the

sanctity of the place to be disturbed. It must be maintained. The government has been helping me through NMMC. Ministry of Tourism and Information. The state has also been helping through Arts and Culture. That's why I cannot wish them off.

Q). But the grove as a professional area may need some expert advice so people in Forestry, either at the state.

R). Yes, they can come. That is why we are allowing all these governmental agencies. The university could use it as a research place. It should be allowed. It should not be a closed something. We are not practising cultism there. It is an open place. Women go there often than men. People live on the land and river. That is why we called Ako lodo.

Q). What about getting the community involved in terms of funding, participation and running of the place?

R). They have not been used to this kind of thing. They are used to the celebrations. This is a modern thought and it will not be easy for us to start collecting money.

Appendix 9

Osun Devotees

Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History

Q). When were the groves established?

Who established them?

Why were they established?

How many groves are there?

R). The Osun River was created when God created the world. Osun Osogbo was a woman-a real woman. It was God who sent her to do what she is doing in this world. She used the authority that we too are using. When Osun was coming to this world, God put a calabash of children in her hands. God told her to walk over all towns and settle in a feminine city. This was the instruction given to her by Olodumare (God), from heaven. She moved from one city to another until she got to Osogbo. She found Osogbo good and cool she concluded that Osogbo is a feminine city and settled there. She came from Ekiti through Ilesa to Osogbo where she settled. Hitherto barren women who come and drink the water from her river through the intercession of devotees are blessed with children. Such women show appreciation to Osun by giving thanks to her through the devotees.

Orunmila was Osun's husband. When Osun got to the world, the world became good, corn, yams, cassava produced good yield. People had children and multiplied and Osogbo town expanded and flourished. In return they celebrated Osun festival.

There came a time, when there were wars all over the world. With time the invaders moved towards Osogbo. When they got to the frontiers of Osogbo, Osun ordered them not to invade Osogbo. In the interim, Osun prepared a pot of *Gbegiri, efo iyanrin* to give to the invading warriors. Among the warriors were some white people, so she also prepared rice and bread. She gave gin, palm wine, a pot of cold water, aha in a basin, pounded yam, amala rice, e.t.c. She offered all these things to the invaders who were hungry and thirsty. But before they were offered these things, she ordered them to lay down their weapons, because a woman, wars are never fought in her domain.

Shortly after they finished eating, they all died. Later she summoned all the indigenes in her domain and said my children no war will ever come to their community, suffice the festivals that will be done yearly in her honour. Fifteen days before the onset of the festival, greetings should be sent to all indigenes of Osogbo. And four days to the ground finale all indigenes should dance through the streets of Osogbo. They should be merry and gay.

On the 9th day of the festival, which is usually a Friday night, it is dancing all night, even the Oba must not sleep. The highlight of the festival is when all and sundry go to meet Osun at the river. All these activities carried out during the festival are in return for the good deeds Osun did for Osogbo town and her indigenes. Drumming is usually what is done in Osogbo and it goes like this "*no more war, no treachery life is now abundant and flourishing*"

Q). Mama; is Osun the only one in the Ojubo (the main shrine) or are others there with her?

R). No, there is no other person, it is just her (Osun) alone. No other person.

Q). Did any other person ever live there?

R). Never. Nobody could ever live with her. *Oso-igbo* is what Osogbo is called. *Oso nu igbo*. Nobody can live with her.

Importance

Q). What are the benefits that can be derived from the Osun forest?

R). The benefits are numerous and unending. No shooting must be done in the forest. The benefits there is that we the devotees intercede for people at the river. People can also go there. All people that are given children by Osun, go there to do Osun for their children and bath them in the river.

- Q). In a nutshell, are you saying that people get children from there?
 R). Exactly, this is what I am saying.
 Q). Right, can you mention other benefits derived from there?
 R). Victory over enemies both within and outside one's family.
 -cures barrenness
 -healing of various ailments. The forest is *igbo owo* (Holy forest), *igbo ase* (divine forest). Osun is a very powerful person.
 -offers protection
 -If a person is fighting for the ascension to a throne, going there will enable the person achieve this.
 Q). Considering the numerous benefits that can be derived there, would you say that these benefits have diminished compared to 20 yrs ago?
 R). The benefits are getting better and increasing.
 Q). Apart from its healing powers, do you consider the animals and plants as benefits that can be derived from the forest?
 R). They are benefits. All the things there in the forest have divine powers. It is *igbo-oro* (a potent forest)
 Q). What is your perception of Osun forest?
 R). *igbo owo ni* (it is a sacred/holy forest)
 -It offers protection to Osogbo town and her indigenes.

Threats

- Q). Do you think that are certain threats to the existence of the forest?
 R). Yes-removal of the vegetation (deforestation)
 -farming.
 Q). What are your aspirations for the Osun forest ?
 R). Establishment of an amusement park, hotels and development of the place into a tourist centre.

Road

- Q). Is the road a threat to the existence of the forest?
 R). We have told you earlier on that the forest is a sacred place. The Osun shrine/forest has defined boundaries. The road is not a threat to the existence of the groves.
 Q). What do you think is responsible for the refusal to allow electricity pass through the forest to the settlements beyond e.g the school, agric. settlement e.t.c?
 R). The animals, particularly the monkeys, can be electrocuted.
 Q). How can the threats you have mentioned earlier be forestalled?
 R). Farmers and people going beyond the groves to the farm settlement e.t.c should use the suspension bridge.

Management

Q). In your opinion, which people do you think should be responsible for the management of the Osun forest?

R). National Museum and Monuments (Government)

-Susan Wenger (Aduni Orisa) she has been there before the government came in

-Interested Osogbo indigenes -because they own the place

-the Osun devotees.

Q). Who do you think should provided money for the management of the forest?

-Government

-Osogbo indigenes.

Attendance

1. Iya Osun

2. Yeye Osun

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Appendix 10
Osogbo Market Women Group
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History.

Q). When was it established and who established it?

R). From what we know, the was they do it. Anyone that is on the theme will do all the necessary things there. Osun is there, the husband is the one standing, Timehin, he met her there. Anyone that would be king will be asked about all these things, that would you be able to do Osun sacrifice, Oya sacrifice, Ogun sacrifice and so on.

Q). Mama, what we are asking is that Osun groves/forest, when was it established and who established it?

R). The person who established is Timehin. Osun was there before. Timehin came to meet Osun there, before he established the Osun groves. And he is the one standing in the painting on the wall there.

Q). Was it only Timehin that met Osun in the grove, was no other person there?.

R). Yes, it was only Timehin, but he also had some small, small gods. He was the only one.

Q). Is there any person, who wants to add to what mama has said?

R). Based on what we heard from history, Osun was right there, from the beginning and they met Osun in this Osogbo. Olutimehin was on hunting expedition before he got to that shrine. When he got to that shrine and settled there. The Osun told him that Oso-Igbo don't break my dyeing pots, that was the voice that Timehin heard. And that was the place, the first Ataoja Laro built his palace. With time they increased in number, and then Osun told them that their noise will be disturbing her in the Osun River. Therefore they should move to Oke-Ojo right here. That was why they moved to where the new king makers under Ataoja are living up to today. And they called the palace the second palace where Laro lived. And that was how the town is expanded up till the time the palace the king-Ataoja Matanmi built and where he is currently residing. And that is where all the kings before the present Ataoja lived. And that is where we are now today in the middle of Osogbo market which is the palace of Ataoja today.

Q). Can we know why they came here, and where they came from. The place you call the Ojubo Osun (the main shrine), how did they get there and where did they come from?

R). We heard that our father Laro came from Ipole and became the king of Osogbo. They were in Ipole. Timehin was at the river bank.

Timehin was at Epo-Ile before he came down to Osogbo. He came with a baby elephant and he tied the baby elephant round the Ogun shrine. Laro was in Ipole and Timehin went to meet Laro in Ipole and Laro said he cannot get water to drink in Ipole. Timehin then said that where he is carrying out hunting activities there is water. So Laro followed him to the place. Later Timehin told Laro to sit at the place they settled and be collecting tax while he will carry on with his hunting exercise. Timehin was married to Osun and Osun married Timehin. He couldn't sit down, that is why he couldn't be part of the royal lineage.

Importance.

Q). Thank you mama, what are the benefits inside that Osun forest?

R). Benefits? There is, that whoever is seeking for a child goes there and makes a vow that if Osun gives them a child, they would do this and that and the next Osun festival the person will have a child by the grace of God and what ever he/she vowed she will bring it the following year and up till tomorrow it still happens. All barren women whose pleas are granted, go there to fulfil their vows/pact with Osun.

Q). What are the other benefits there?

R). Different, different benefits for the king. Before they install the king they will ask him will you worship Osun? That Osun is what your forefathers worshipped? He has to do it. The place is owned by the king. Whatever Osun wants the king gives to her.

Q). As a market woman, what are the benefits we can get there?

R). As a market woman, Osun is really trying seriously for the woman. As we heard in history, Osun fought wars for Osogbo. If there is a problem in the town, may be concerning child bearing or any type of problem facing the town or the market, Osun normally helps us out. When we call upon her and go there to pray and she helps us over our problems. When those who worship her appease her through sacrifices, when the town is going through difficult times, things will start moving on well and smoothly for the community again.

R). You see the history of Osogbo is a benefit for us in Osogbo, for all families in Osogbo who go there. She is good. Osogbo has benefited from Osun. This Osun Osogbo, there is no where we are, that we call her that she will not answer us. If there is any problem for any one of us where ever in the country, may be people rise against that person and we call on Osun Osogbo that she should come and save that person, that person will be released by the people and the person will come home. Anywhere you call her she will answer. She is particularly for the town of Osogbo and from us too. And now that

problems are happening in different towns, Osun Osogbo did not allow that here, if we call her, *Ore. Ye Ye O*, she will rise and not allow problems in Osogbo town.

Q). As a market woman, what benefits are you seeing there? All these herbs you are selling, do you get them there?

R). Yes, we get them there.

R). No, all the herbs are not from there. What they are asking us is that which benefit are we getting there. We are not getting any benefit there apart from what Osun Osogbo is doing for the whole town by gathering all the people of Osogbo together and also visitors. As we can see in some other countries that people go to Mecca, Jerusalem. So Osun is another place for such a thing.

Q). Hold on, O.C we are here, there is no right answer, there is no wrong answer alright. You are a member of this community. Are you not entitled to go there and take some leaves, some animals?

R). They do not allow anybody to go there and pluck any leaves or root. They want to turn the place to a reserve so that the things there can be saved and of good quality.

Q). But what do you people want. Do you want to be plucking leaves there?

R). Yes, we want to be plucking leaves there and we want to be taking things that are valuable and to the benefit of the people here. But there is a law, that people should not enter, they should not kill animals, they should not shoot guns there. There are guards there, watching the place. If not for the benefit of the king, how can the owner of a thing be taking permission before taking his/her thing? There was a time they put a gate there. That gate even did not allow us to pass if not for the king that said it should not be like that, that the Osun belongs to him. How can he now start taking permission before entering the groves? That is what gave us the benefit of passing these areas. So if it is when we take something there, it will not reduce the place, we the people of the town will like to take something there but if it is something there, but if it is something that can reduce the place and will not make it good for the people coming to visit from abroad we will leave the place for that benefit. Because as it is, it makes big people from overseas come down to know Osogbo when ever they hear about Osun Osogbo.

Q). So you don't take leaves there?

R). No, we don't take leaves from there because there are leaves every where in other forest. Leaves and roots that we sell in the market are normally brought from other towns to our town here.

Q). So in one word a sacred land?.

R). Yes a sacred land that they turn the place into, that is why we left the place for them, so that it will be the way they want it.

Perception

Q). Now that we agree the land is sacred. Now what do you as head of market think about the place?

R). You see what many people think about it is not like that. Most people think that the place is for idol worshipping which is not true. If the Osun is developed to standard, and that it fits the modern civilisation. It should be useful for the Muslim, the Christians and those traditional worshippers. That is what we are thinking, because among those going in there now, the moment you say you are going there they will think you are an idol worshipper which is not suppose to be so. We heard that they wanted to build a hotel there, that will benefit everybody. The stone and sand have been there right from Shagari regime. We do not hear anything about it. Especially when they want to celebrate the Osun festival if they prepare the place very well all the three tiers of governments suppose to benefits. For instance that Osun Osogbo should be developed in a modern way, that rivers should be enlarged from the Ilesha road to Ojubo and to the road leading to Ibadan. If they put small boats there during the Osun festival, people will like to enter it and government will be collecting money there.

Q). With all the rock there?. Please wait, you know that place is a sacred place, they want it to be natural and preserved for every one for ever.

R). What we are saying right now is that Osun should be modernised according to current trend not that they should destroy something. Even that river has a source. Then the main source should be dug and dredged.

Q). There are rocks there. Do you know that if they modernise it those that will come to modernise it can not allow us to carry our tradition down to their place?

R). That main source that he is saying they should be enlarged, cannot be enlarged, because the river comes from Ekiti. But as for making this place to be good that people will continue to love and like it, we support that like that. They cannot enlarge it right from Ekiti because the water comes out from a place that looks like a pot. Enlargement can never be done.

R). Concerning the Osun Osogbo shrine. Our father Ataoja Iyiola Matanmi is really trying so that Osun will be something all the world will come to see. He has advised the federal government and the state government, that they come and make the place a place that all the people will come to see. That they should make it a tourism

centre. The federal government came and made a survey of the whole Osun in which the federal government spent a lot of money there. Infact we like it that they make it a tourism centre. So that the whole world will come to see it. If they do that it will be good for the Osun groves rather than leaving it the way it is right now.

Threats

Q). What do you think can be a threat to the existence of the place?

R). What we think may hinder the progress of the place is money. We advise the federal government to set aside money for tourism centres in Osun state and they should use the money for the tourism centre that it is meant for and at the right time. Because if the federal government allocates money for a project they will not do it for many years and they will continue to refer to the money allocated for the project.

Q). What are the kinds of activities that may lead to us not seeing the trees or the animals? Activities which people are doing or that they may do later?

R). If they can help do the Osun groves by taking care of the place. Recruit people that will be taking care of the place that will not allow people to be going there, to kill animals which contribute to the beauty of Osun forest. Then we appeal to your organisations to help us take care of the Osun groves so that nobody will be killing animals in Osun groves.

Q). What you saying now is that people go there to kill animals. Are the animals there increasing or decreasing?.

R). The animals are increasing, not reducing.

Q). What about the herbs there?

R). They are increasing, people do not like going there again.

Q). What are the things we can do to remove the threats?

R). Number one, the people worshipping the Osun should release the place that they want to do development and once they give the go ahead we do not want them to destroy all the things there because the grove is adding beauty to all the state not to Osogbo alone. They should help us preserve the place. They should keep the heritage there.

Q). Mama, what do you say to what has just being said?

R). All what we are saying concerning the Osun groves. It is better to visit those worshipping the Osun groves who is the Ye Ye Osun. They see it in better light than what we are saying.

Q). We have been there.

R). They will explain to you because the grove is a sacred place.

Road.

Q). How do you see the road? Whether it will bring progress to the grove or backwardness to the groves?.

R). That road is useful for the people of Osun. They should not block the road because the road leads to Ede and so many places. If they say they want to block it, it will cause trouble. People cannot go to the groves and do something wrong there. That suspension bridge there is a footpath farmers take to the farm. They have never spoilt anything there before.

Management

Q). Right now, do we know the people managing the place?

R). The people I see taking care of the Osun groves is the Heritage Council, that is under the king and the Yeye Osun. Because any visitor that comes from outside that wants to visit the groves will ask for the committee that is under the Ataoja, the king. And then people go to meet the Yeye Osun. If they want to worship or make sacrifice to Osun.

Q). Who are the people you still think manage the place?

R). The people I know still take care of the place is the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Ministry of Commerce and Industry that constructed the pavilion there. The pavilion that is in beside the Ojubo. They are the one that constructed the modern pavilion.

Q). Do you hear about the National Museum?

R). Yes, national museum too is also part of the people taking care of the Osun groves. Really they are the people taking care of it under the king and the Heritage Council.

Q). Who are the people you think can be part of the managers?

R). Well if they are too many, there will be no control and we will not know the people we should go and meet. The federal government is also taking care of it in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Heritage Council and the National Museum.

Q). You as the market leader what if they said you should be part of those managing it?

R). Yes we will support it. If they set up committees and they give us a seat as market leader in Osun and Osogbo state we will do it. We appeal to you that you allow us market women to be part of the people managing it. During the Osun festival we market women use to go there to sell our wares.

Educational Strategies

Q). What do you think you can do to make people see the benefits of Osun groves?

R). What we can do is that we may have radio programmes, programmes in newspapers, television programmes and possibly

hand bills that we can give to those that will not have the opportunity to hear the radio or watch television. Or whatever ways we can carry information to the grassroots, the town criers can use that.

Q). What type of information will you give them?

R). That we can be telling people that this Osun is not for sacrifice, it is for upliftment of our tradition in that we uplift our tradition and in case we see people uplifting our tradition we should not look at the person as an idol worshipper or person that carries out sacrifice. That we should take it as our tradition. Because, it is not peculiar to us alone, Hausa, Ibo e.t.c have theirs as well.

Q). For the school children, what can we do?

R). For the school children it looks like we should allow them study Yoruba language as a subject because nowadays, it suppose to be because it is only in Yoruba language that tradition and culture comes in. It is only through this, we can appreciate tradition and culture.

Q). What about the adult?

R). We should be educated too. But given the present situation, poverty is rampant, if nobody would want to neglect his/her culture. But it currently difficult to think about culture with the prevailing poverty level in Nigeria today. This has caused a set back in promoting our culture. We adults need to be educated. For example in our universities, those who speak Yoruba are regarded as primitive and not in tune with current trends. This is very wrong. They should not destroy our culture, because we must be proud of our culture.

Q). Do you want to add more to what she has said?

R). She has spoken well. They should help us take care of this-and may God help us.

R). You have hit the nail on the head. Like what the president of the market women said in a parable-that what is baba looking up, he is not looking down. What is it that our elders are looking at, both Muslim and Christian religions? Why can't we promote ours? So, those led by the spirit to promote our tradition, should let people know that it is not idol worshipping. For example if one is vast in herbal issues for instance I am vast in paediatric, herbal issues, but most people would regard it as voodoo, but it is not. It is by the Grace of God. For example, those who go to Mecca, the Arabs are trading with us, yes. Those going to Jerusalem, are taking economical advantage too. Let's consider that an individual requires about ₦100,000 to go to Jerusalem. and what is all this in need off? It is all intermediary. For instance, if we promote Osun and say Osun please

tell God that these are the things I want, it is just like asking for things through Mohammed and Jesus Christ. But these are foreign culture. Why can't we promote ours?. So those coming behind, God will give them the enabling grace Amen. God himself will re-direct our children back, because the damage already done is enormous. Amen. First and foremost we should let our children know that this thing we call our own, is not something bad. Something we can see and can talk to and by the Grace of God we are getting results but our people are condemning it based on Christianity. But God himself will turn things around for us.

R). Why it is even better now, (our father Kabieyiesi, may God grant him prosperity, may he live long), because it is him that is promoting it now. Every family now buys Odo Osun fabric. Before it was different. Any one who goes to watch Odo Osun is regarded as a devotee/idol worshipper. Presently, it will be advisable for our father, Kabieyiesi, should decree that in every family. Should have a chieftaincy title tied to Odo Osun. Children from such family must buy special fabric during the festival, and dancers from such family will accompany them. But for our father, Kabieyiesi, notwithstanding his high academic level, still promotes Osun. He also still encourages people to participate in the festival activities. May God grant him long life. Amen. One reason for the lack of promotion of Osun is the death of Duro Ladipo. If he were still alive, the esteem of Osun would have been higher than what it is now. He used to bring people from abroad to visit the groves. So, God will enable people like him to come up again. With such people, things will improve. As for our father, Kabieyiesi, God will continue to replenish his strength. The festival is more grand than the other religious festivals. All families that help to make the festival grand, may God abide with them. But for our father, we would have forgotten Osun. Because any one who buys Osun fabric is a devotee/idol worshipper.

R). I want to narrate an incident to enable you know that in our culture Osun is good. And if you believe in it, it will continue to protect and prosper. In those days, my grandmother told me that there was a day she was also carried away by the Osun river. All she did was to cry out '*Ore yeye Osun*' she was immediately thrown onto the river bank. This shows that she believed in Osun and if one believes in it, that individual will always overcome difficulties. Our mothers who believed in Osun always found favours. For instance, my mother Efunyaju, until she died, she never ate yams until after Osun festival, because of the experience she had at the Osun river when she almost got drowned. So we believe in our tradition and culture. The people of old believed and they were blessed.

R). Our father a devotee in iley a dudu went to work in Ondo. He was kidnapped there by those who use human beings for rituals. The day he was to be killed, he called upon Osun Osogbo to have mercy on him. One of the kidnappers asked him what the matter was. He then realised that he was an Osogbo indigene. She then squeezed a leaf and dropped the liquid in his eyes. He immediately found himself in Osogbo town. He became an Osun devotee until his death. His children have all gone abroad on account of this Osun. All his children are good and prosperous. So we don't want it to die down. We want it promoted.

Q). Do you think that your parents, have a part to play in educating your children that Osun is not the same as idol worshipping?

R). With respect to what you have just said, if you are around in Osogbo on the day of Iyopopo (street procession), it is the beginning of the Osun festival. We the Iyalodes, the Kabieyiesi wives from all the royal families come to Oja oba (the king's market). Baba will dance and we too will sing and dance. Kid's come out to watch us sing and dance. On the 11th day before the grand finale, members of all families sing and participate in the dance during the Iyopopo. All our children participate in all the activities both Christians and Muslims. There is no one of our children that you will ask about Osun festival that cannot tell you about it.

The spot where we are is now called Aruwagbalawo Oke, Olutimehin whom we told you was the first to see the Ojubo, who came on hunting expedition here, when we call Omo a merin wa mo lu Osogbo. We appreciate everything and we thank you all for you co-operation.

Attendance

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Mrs Deborah
Omoale | Balo | 7. Mrs Modinat |
| 2. Mrs Kudirat Ganiyu | 8. Mrs Alimut Taiwo | |
| 3. Mrs Suwebat Olatunji
Owolabi | 9. Mrs Munirat | |
| 4. Mrs Rafat Alabi | 10. Mrs Sariyu Lasisi | |
| 5. Mrs Bilikisu Yinusa | 11. Mrs Rasidat Yinusa | |
| 6. Mrs Pinpinlade Babatunde | 12. Alhaja Alayo | |

Appendix 11

Osun State Ministry of Culture Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report History

Q). When were the groves established?

Who established them?

Why were they established?

How many groves are there?

R).. Osun shrine and groves is a baby of National Commission of Museums and Monuments (NCMM). The parcel of land that was acquired by NCMM though it was formally owned by Osun people the indigenes. Historically, it is the second settlement of the people of Osogbo because they first settled at the Ipole. Then from Ipole, Laro and Timehin, the founders. They were source of water, the two of them were hunters on getting to the site of Osun river, they discovered that there was a big river there. So they moved back to their people at Ipo-ile, that they should follow them there that is to the present place. Now that they discovered a stream there, where they could settle and live comfortably. When they settled there they discovered that during the raining season the river normally overflows its bank. Where they have the shrine today was the first settlement of Laro and Timehin.

Q). Has it been moved?

R).. As at now the groves itself was the first settlement, very close to the River Osun. So during raining season the river normally over flows its bank, then they decided to move to a safer place which they are now at today. That first settlement was the first place where he first had its administrative city and it is now today called the shrine where you have a sort of old palace. Then inside the shrine, there is a stone there, where the Ataoja first sat and preside over his people. And it is the place where he usually sits every year when the Osun festival comes up. The Ataoja will go there and offer prayers and then from there he will move to the river and then do the offering by the worshippers. So that was the first settlement of the Osogbo people.

Now the name Osogbo was derived from *Oso-ogbo* meaning wizard of the forest. We were told that when they were trying to build the palace, there was a sort of tree felling exercise, part of the trees fell into. other river and they said that the goddess was shouting that "you the oso-ogbo you sill come to disturb me and destroy most of my pots". So it was from that *oso-ogbo* that the name of Osogbo was derived. So I think that will be a short history of that place.

The number of groves.

Q). How many groves are there? Do you know the number of groves or the size of the groves?

R).. Infact, no, it is nowadays that the worshippers, are opened up to we government officials because we are not worshippers, ours is to promote tourism and then the culture. So they hide most of the things from us. But there are 16 places, where they worship Osun within Osogbo.

Q). Do you know any of their names?

R).. I do not know their names off head. But I was told we have Ojubo and Oju-Osun, we have Lafenwa, Ohuntoto, Oke, Agbala-Osun.

Importance.

Q). Thank you very much. You said, there are 16. Let's just go on to the next issue. What is the importance of Osun groves? Let's say to the Ministry of Commerce and Tourism for instance?

R).. Osun groves is very important to the ministry, to the state and to Nigeria as a whole, because it is a tourist destination. It is one of our traditional places where we believe that our culture and tradition is been observed and practised by our people, because we do not want children, yet unborn to forget our culture.

Q). Culture is being preserved there?

R).. Culture is been seen preserved and nowadays tourism seems to be the largest employer of people throughout the world. When we talk of America, Germany, then Austria where their own tourism is throughout the year, because the government in Austria rely mainly on tourism for their economy. Is a very small and a small country, country of 7 million people. And then you compare other African countries like Kenya, Uganda, Egypt, where they take tourism seriously than we do in Nigeria. In Nigeria. We do not take tourism as an aspect that can boost our economy. So in Osun state we believe we have little or no resources and then we are so tourist minded. We have all those God made tourism centres.

Q). So the Osun groves generates/provides employment through tourism?.

R).. Yes, it generates, provides employment. For example during the festival that comes up once in a year. If you are within the town you will see the number of visitors coming in and then the amount of money generated by the individual people, people like selling rice, bread baking and all aspects of marketing and then the number of foreign tourists coming to the city and it is during the festival that we have the highest number of occupants in the hotels in the states and other hotels surrounding the states. So that within that two weeks programme a lot of revenue comes into the purse of individual and the state government.

Q). Are there no other importance?

R).. It is very important to the indigenes more than the visitors because to the indigenes it more or less a remembrance day to their past ancestors. Most of the indigenes usually come home to spend the days. Even we government officials try to advertise the products and what is the product? It is the festival itself. Because you will see the international tourists coming in, and then with the help of the Nigerian Tourist Development Corporation (NTDC), which is the apex body for tourism in Nigeria. So they also play prominent part in advertisement both locally and internationally. So they bring in tourists into the country through messages being sent to all our embassies, that the festival is coming up at so so time and most of our tour operators in the country.

Individual Importance.

Q). Do you have some other importance as an individual?

R).. During the festival each year, one has a lot to learn and gain, because if you follow the programme from the beginning towards the end you will see the beauty of our cultural heritage in it. Especially when it comes to the stage where the Arugba comes with the beautiful white attire, carrying the Igba, as discussed, on the head. The Arugba who must be a virgin has to perform this aspect of the ceremony and the way the people welcome the Arugba and the kind of respect they give to the Arugba is something that is very important in our cultural heritage. Until the whole thing gets to that stage, one would not know the beauty of it and its very important.

Q). Do you want to add anything?

R).. Em. Since the creation of the state, the state government has been participating fully in the annual festival since 1992, and they committed a lot of money for this festival to boost both locally and internationally. And the state government is planning to do a lot of renovation to improve the standard of the place. When you enter the grove there is a path leading to the farm, maybe you have come across some farmers coming in and out of their farms. The state government is trying to close that place. When I say close to farmers. They are trying to have another path for the farmers for the preservation of that place, because we do not allow hunting within that grove itself.

Q). So you want to make sure that place is preserved?

R).. Preserved so that people can not just enter the groves anyhow, unless you are a tourist. And when you enter the groves you see by your right hand side a building under construction, very close to the main road. Now they are trying to complete the project. The tourist guard will be stationed there, there will be an art and craft

exhibition in that place, and then the people after coming to the groves will go there and relax.

Perception.

Q). When you say Osun groves what perception of the Osun groves comes to your mind? What is the imagery?

R).. As a tourism practitioner, my mind comes to the area of our forefathers, their knowledge and how they tried to preserve their culture and religion. Once you get to the groves you will be able to know the religion of our people without telling you. It is part of this thing we preserve. We do not want this thing to pass away like that, so that our children yet unborn will know what is history, our culture and our ways of life. When we talk of tourism we talk of other relaxation but what of the culture?.

Threats.

Q). What are some of the threats to the conservation and preservation of Osun groves?.

R).. Generally you know, it is believed that people in tourism are idol worshippers. It is this we are trying to educate our people, that with the religion we have, Christianity and Mohammedanism, it does not prevent us from forgetting our past. So we are trying to educate the people that this place should be preserved.

Q). So religion is a threat?

R).. Yes, it is a threat to the continued existence of that place. In the past there were occasions when we saw the religious practitioners attacking this tourists, threatening their lives. There was a time they tried to burn that place. I think it was 1997. So religion is a threat. Religion is the main thing.

Q). Now do you see some other threats.

R).. The main thing is that religion something.

Road.

Q). That road that passes through the grove, is it a threat to the existence of the groves?

R).. It is not a threat. No it is more or less a threat because it is only the access road that leads to the farmers settlement at the other end. That is why they are trying to create another path outside the groves. So that once you enter the grove they will know you are a tourist and you have something to do in the groves.

Q). So you are saying the road should not be closed?

R).. We are going to close it to the public no to the tourists. You as a tourist you have something to do with the groves, not for you but to the farmers. You see some farmers when ever they go there, some of them do a lot of hunting, that is why we have some guards hanging around the groves to prevent hunting by the farmers. This guards are part of officials of the National Museum. The guards are always there throughout the day to prevent hunting.

Q). So some people go there to hunt?

R). Yes.

Q). Is that all

R). Yes and the farmers do hunting there and they do fish there and so we want to prevent all these.

Q). So an alternate road should be provided?

R). That is an alternative road should be provided and the main one should be left for tourists -not blocked.

Q). Is that what you are saying.

R). Oh, yes.

Aspirations.

Q). What are your aspirations, dreams for the Osun groves?

R). We have a lot of programmes for the groves, because we want to make it look like an international place. We want to dredge that river bank. Already there is a pavilion inside the groves where people can sit during the festival. Then that suspended bridge is about to collapse and we want to repair that bridge. Then we want the customs to look traditional, cap shows to look traditional i.e. the structures there, then we have the intention of repairing the big Ohuntoto that is in the hall there. Because part of the palace is already falling out, we want to repair it. Then I told you of the construction of the gate and the gate house, which is on. Then the fencing of the groves is already on by the Osun Concern Group. These are private organisations that are ready to assist in the development of the grove itself. Look at the right , you know there is a fencing going on. State government is trying to rehabilitate that road which you pass through, because we have some other buildings outside this place. Then the state government has acquired a parcel of land outside the groves after the bridge, on the way going to Timehin on the right hand side. So the state government has a plan on them having a recreational centre there. Then they want to have student hostels and chalets and tourist hostels. This is to make it an international tourist centre.

Q). So there are aspirations?

R). Yes.

Management of the groves.

Q). How do you intend to involve the community-the indigenes apart from the festival.

R). The Heritage Council which is the recognised organisation by the Ataoja in-Council, we hold meetings with them usually for the defence of the place. We have held a series of meetings with them on how to collect revenue from the place. And the National Museum because it was initially the National Museum that acquired that place. But since they are not ready to develop it to any amicable standard, the state government now came in. It is our belief that the state government will do its own part while the National Museum will do its own part. But for the Heritage Council who are the custodians of the shrine and the groves will have little or no part to play. Except that you will agree with them that eventually when we start generating revenue from that grove. The three of them, both the state government, the National Museum and the Heritage Council which represent the Osogbo people will sit down and discuss the modality of sharing revenue generated. i.e. sharing the revenue. Because that is only what they can do. They only depend on the state government, even the annual festival, the bulk of the job is from the state government.

So the three of them have to work hand in hand for the management of the place.

Q). Now three organisations are involved, the Heritage Council, the state ministry and the National Museum. In future are there some organisations not involved now, that you think should be involved either because of the expertise or otherwise?

R). Actually, when we talk of tourism development, there is little the government can do. When I say the government, I am talking of the federal government, the state government and local government. So it is the belief of the state that we should try to co-opt private practitioners into the development of tourism in Osun state, not stand alone. All our tourism centre. The community, the private tourism practitioners join hands to the development of all our tourist centres in the state.

Q). Sir, will you be specific about Osun groves, what other ministry or parastatals do you think you may need?

R). When you look at the setting up of the Tourism Board, there are some ministries who are fully involved, like the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Land and Physical Planning. Those people are fully involved because when you talk of land scaping and other aspects of land, the state needs their assistance. Those two ministries are fully involved in the development of tourism, we cannot do without them.

Fund

Q). Who should provide funds?

R). The state government is supposed to provide the fund but when you look at it in Nigeria now the government is not ready to shoulder everything, they want people to come in and join hands with the government to develop all this things. It is policy of the federal government that tourism should be developed both by the government and then private entrepreneur.

Perception

Q). The state government provides funds for the place now. You mentioned National Museum and the Heritage Council. They do not provide funds?.

R). Yes, as at now, the state government by our record since 1992. The festival itself they have been providing funds for it. And in the course of my speech I said there is a pavilion there built since 1996 by the state government which is still very good and commissioned 1997 August by the state. It is the effort of the state government to make that place look more attractive to the visitors. And that is why we are also creating, constructing a gate and gate house at the entrance of the groves. It is part of the government financing it. Now to the National Museum-it is a federal institution-the owners of the land only develop the place for themselves by acquiring the land. It is through their efforts that they have the Osun Group of Concerned Citizens who are doing the fencing now. It is now the state government. Those people are private organisations, that is why I say private organisations should join hands with the state government to develop the place. -So they should provide funds too?-Yes

Q). There is a general perception that when you mention Osun groves it is a place where you go and practice paganism.

R). Yes, we move in to reverend, move in to pastors and try to book appointment for something like this. We were not given any appointment. So there is this wrong perception so to say and therefore the potentialities have not been actualise.

Educational Strategies

Q). There is this wrong vision, how can we change this wrong perception?, what strategies can we use?

R). That is the problem we are encountering in the state. For example today somebody has called me Baba-Osa, I am a practising Muslim. I said look I am preserving and conserving the culture. Yes, the director of culture, Mr. Raji said yes, you people suffer that thing that once you are in the mission of culture and art. They just say all of you practise. So you are the chief. So you are the chief

worshipper?-I am not been called the chief worshipper. Even I as a Christian. You will see that most of the fellowship will attend, you will see they will say they have to pray so that, that Osun Osogbo should be cursed and ban it. I just look, because it appears we are taking a wrong step because this is the peoples culture. We can't do much about it. All we need to do at this junction is to educate them. It is the education they need.

Q). What types of education are you talking about?

R). You see we have to educate the Christians, the Muslims that it is not everybody that works there that are idol worshippers, we are not idol worshippers, even these people who are mainly involved in Osun festivals are Christians and Muslims. It does not mean they are idol worshippers, they are just doing what they have to do. So they need education. They have to be educated. When we talk of tourism in Nigeria. The government is not doing it well. Because all this education should be from the government. Education should be added by the government. The advertisement of tourism development is so low, the awareness is not there. If they know that they are going there for leisure.

Q). So we should educate them?

R). Yes, it is meant for leisure. It is for relaxation. In Austria every December 24, there is a festival. They call it scramble, and if you go there you will see them dressing like any of their followers. Then you have to ask them, what is the meaning of this scramble? Why do you do this, because it is more or less their own festival here. Then they tell you, we only use it to drive devils out of the town. When you talk of that, they are so surprised that this type of things is happening here but in our own case they are worshippers and you will not believe today I have got about twenty foreigners within Osogbo coming to these Ifa oracle, the babalawo coming to learn it and when they get there now they make money a lot from it. We have to educate our people.

Q). Let us be more specific, what type of education?

R). Okay, they should always do remembrance day for their fore fore fathers, first settlers and let them know it is not worshipping gods. It is just a remembrance day. So that they will be able to know history. Is like hanging the picture of my forefather at home, would I say it is an idol. If I do not hang it how would my children know him. The festival is just a remembrance day not worshipping idols. Then also we have to get both radio and television to educate our people. Most of our dailies nowadays because of their ANJETS? their writers we call them ANJETS Association of Tourism Writers. Most of the write ups you see no tourism are been produced by them and all the

papers in Nigeria have columns for tourism, so they write on tourism in their own column. Sketch, Tribune and Guardian all now have column on tourism, because they have taking tourism as most serious. So we need to advertise and educate our people that we are just trying to retain our culture not to destroy it.

Q). What else do you think we can do, to let people know its not just juju, juju there?

R). When it is time we can include it in hand-bills because that one will reach many people who can read it.

Attendance

1. Mrs G.A. Ogungbeje (Director)
2. Mr. I. O. Oludiran (Principal Tourism Officer1)
3. Mr. Yemi Segilola (Senior Tourism Officer)

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Appendix 12
Muslim Grammar School Staff
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report
History.

Q). What is the history of Osun groves like? Somebody may know who established it and when it was established?

R). I may likely talk a little about that. The Osun groves came into existence as far back as the reign of the first oba here. The groves itself housed the first palace and the first settlers of Osogbo. So where you have the Osun shrine right inside the grove by the side of the river, that was the first palace and that is where all the rituals were performed annually during the Osun festival. Then it shifted after some time according to history or mythology, that the spirit of Osun were inconvenienced as a result of the settlements of human beings at that particular spot. So because of that disturbance they were ordered by the spirit to push forward and they moved to Ohuntoto which is the second palace of the second settlement of Osogbo. That one is by our left hand side. When we are going to town now. There the artists, the dramatists came there to shoot films. Now after some time again they were pushed out of the second palace, the second settlement to where we have Oja Oba now (the king's market) and that small palace is directly opposite the old Osogbo local government council and that is the third palace. Then the fourth palace is now opposite it and from there we have the colonial settlement coming in and so many wars were fought and yet Osogbo maintained the grove and preserved it up till today.

Thank you very much sir,-That is the short history.

Q). Where did the first oba come from and what is the name?

R). The first Oba, I can't really remember the name now but we have Laro and Timehin. They are two brothers. So Laro according to history and mythology were hunters. They were driven to the place in search of water during the dry season. So they finally settled by the bank of Osun where we had the first place, which I talked about earlier.

Q). But you did not talk of where they came from?

R). They came from Igbo Ipole and they are Ijesha origins. Their father was king of Ijesha, Owa-Obokin. From him they get their own crown too. And each year there is Osun festival, the Owa-Obokun of Ijesha land, must come here to sacrifice. So in recognition of his own child.

Q). Sir, if I may ask, I know may be its tradition. Should it not be the other way round, that normally if you descended from somewhere you should go there.

R). Well it depends on culture and tradition of every settlement. In ijsha dynasty, you see the Owa-Obokin recognises the bravery and courage of his own son, for him to venture out and now found settlement by himself, is a kind of the expansion of his own empire. As a result he recognises that and encourages others coming forward to celebrate with him and to rejoice with him for actually preserving and expanding.

Q). Please any contribution or addition or something he may have left out unknowingly?

R). Please, excuse me, the Osogbo Heritage Council has just published a book on that it will confirm what I am saying.

Importance.

Q). We as teachers of schools and all of that, what are the benefits we derive from Osun groves? As teachers or as members of the community? I think we should focus more on the issue that as teachers. What do we benefit or what is the importance?

R). When you want to talk in terms of geography, when you want to express an idea of climax vegetal, you can take the children to the spot and you will be able to explain, what is climax vegetal. These are woods that have not been cultivated for years and they have not been able to go to that eh e.t.c.

Q). So this is one specific area of educational purpose.

R). Yes, yes.

R). It has another usefulness like he rightly said, the preservation of that forest, that is the primary forest, untouched, is a virgin place, undisturbed, so the vegetation as it was at the beginning so it is now and that is, and perhaps that it will be forever. So except for bush burning and so on. So the forest dwellers there ! mean the animals are preserved. You can find different types of reptiles there, you can find mammals, herbivores and carnivores. They are there. Even in the river you can find them, you can stay there for a long time, you see them, monkeys, different types of monkeys. That preservation is enough. So it is a place we can preserve forever. It is a place for tourism. Then the meandering of the rivers. Ox-bow lake is there which you can find and that ox-bow lake, that is where the actual sacrifice goes on. Before it meanders out and crosses the road to the farm settlement there.

Q). So there is an ox-bow lake there?

R). Yes, ox-bow lake

Q). So it will serve a geographical purpose. Are there other importance that we have found as teachers?. Apart for those specific areas?

R). Yes we have the suspension bridge. The suspension bridge is the only bridge that links Oke-Osun here with the town , not only with the town, even with the northern part of the country in the olden days. So and in the country there are two suspension bridges. One at Osun here and one at a village near Onitsha. These are the two suspension bridges we have in the country.

Q). Okay sir, lets move, there is this issue, the use to demonstrate to students the educational purposes, assuming you are here ten years ago or even more than ten years ago, have you noticed changes in terms of the forest itself? Is it the same as it were 10 years ago as it is today?

R). No, I think there have been some changes in the sense that those monument you now have there now were not there before. As you know the attempt to build cultural things in the bush, were not there before. They are now using that area to shoot films so there is a sort of interference of human beings into the bush. The bush is now given way little by little because of the buildings you have there. There has been some reduction in the trees. A reduction of about 5%.

Q). We all think it is about 5%.

R). Yes.

Perception

Q). What is our perception of the groves. What is your thinking about what the groves is?. Some people may think it is for sacred whatever, for beautification. We as teachers we may have alluded to it. But what is our perception of the place?.

R). Well, my own perception of the groves is divided into two. We have the spiritual perception and then we have the social-economic perception. You see the government of today is interested in the groves, not only because of the spiritual perception or gain, but because of the social economic gains, they will derive from it and that is why the government is investing in it.

Q). We as teachers, what is our perception of the place?

R). As teachers my own perception is that there is the preservation of the originality of that forest. No matter what, you can still see the naturalness of that forest. The air of serenity is there. That when you get there, there is a sort of peace, the quietness of that forest. Then cool air that is coming, the breeze there, so is a place where you can go and muse and commune with yourself and re-discover yourself because it is far from the maddening crowd. It is a kind of inspiration. Spiritually people go there to seek acceptance, a kind of

purification, if you want to purify yourself and let the goddess of the river accept you, if you so believe in that spirit. That is why I said it is divided into two.

Q). Is there any contribution. I am sure he can't be speaking your mind all the time? I am sure you've been wanting to say something.

Threats.

Q). What are the threats that you have observed to the existence of the groves?

R). Infact, people coming from the town to cut most especially the bamboos is one of the most important threat, because on many occasions while passing through the place I use to see the guards harassing the boys and the people cutting the bamboo so the most important harassment is cutting of the bamboos and other trees which they are not permitted to do.

Q). So you think that is number one-the most important threat?

R). To me, because if that continues the something will be giving way.

Q). Others, threats to the existence, to make sure that the forest remains the way it is.

R). The threats I am trying to look at is that, you know the government is trying to make the place a tourist centre, and in essence they may be forced to build some buildings and therefore giving way for a bare land.

Q). Are you saying they may or there are buildings?

R). There are buildings, there are monuments there now, but they are still proposing to get.

Q). So for now people are not building houses there, so that is a future threat. ?

R). No.

Q). Is it only cutting of bamboos that you have observed there?

R). Another of the threat I suppose is that, the area is been taken care of by some organisations by fencing round the groves. I think if that continued I do not know how far that will be done but if it continued and there is a fence round the whole area it will be sort of a way to make sure there is no infiltration.

Q). So that is one way of preventing the threats?

R). Bush burning is another threat because like last year nearly all the trees and the something around there got burnt and the small ones there died off. If that should continue all the elephant grass will be growing there will given way to desert something.

R). Another thing, is threat to animal life. You see poking every year, illegal poaching. At night people go there to fish. Where they should not, they fish and then they remove all the species. And then the

snails, the bigger ones have been murdered, let me use that word by animal burning, so monkeys died, and so they are facing extinction.

Q). But we as members of the community don't we have a right to go there and take some products of the forest? May be leaves for medicinal purposes or just go there and take a few fishes and so on? Don't we have the right?

R). We have the right but the right is limited, at times our people use a type of Gammalin 20 or something which will be a total destruction.

Q). Lets get something, do we have a right?

R). Yes, we have a right but there is a way we have to do it in order to preserve it.

R). Actually the place is out of bounds. Being prohibited by the federal government. When coming you will see it. You can't go inside to do anything.

Q). So we have the right but we should not.

R). The right we have is limited that is what I mean by being limited. You have to take clearance before you go there. But through illegal poaching people enter that place at odd times. For example in the night people go there and hunt down animals. They do whatever they like. And as a result many things that are of cultural importance are now disappearing there.

Q). Like what?

R). Like animals, like the snails. The images are not kept there. There are some cultural materials kept in the old palace that have been removed like carved props some of them have been removed. Then people go there with clearance from cultural curators who are there, with their permission they go there to take leaves for herbs, root for herbs.

Q). Is that a proper practice?

R). Yes, it is normal. Yes with permission and then they are given. Nowadays people even pay before they enter. They pay to enter, before they go into the grove to take whatever they want to take.

Aspirations.

Q). You want the grove to remain the way it is?

R). Yes, it is good. Look at the Winsor Forest in England. It is preserved, so people are able to refer to the history. Why did they preserve that forest. It has its own history. So we should have history. If we have no history, we are no more human beings.

Management.

Q). So now, how do we carry out this preservation? How do we manage?

R). Through legislation. So the federal government has taken over the groves. Its an extensive land. So it has taken it over. So it has legislated, so all the illegal structures that are there have been served summons to quit.

Q). Are you saying only the federal government should be involved in the management of the groves? Or we should have several other bodies or if there are other several bodies, what are these bodies that should be involved?

R). There should be other bodies like the state government and the local government.

Q). Do you have specific organs of local and state government that should be involved?

R). The cultural department of both the state and the local governments. Even the traditional council. We have the Osogbo Cultural Heritage Council under his royal highness the Ataoja of Osogbo. So he has a stake there, so whatever happens they are acting on behalf of the federal government, through the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism, so this is how they come in. So no organisation can come in freely and say I want to establish this here, I want to take control of this without permission from Federal Ministry of Tourism.

Q). What about the involvement of the community?

R). The community is involved. Spiritually they are involved, culturally they are involved. You see the community is under the headship of his royal highness, the Ataoja of Osogbo and annually the community celebrates the Osun festival and they visit the place from morning till afternoon where they offer prayers, they eat, wine and dance and entertain themselves. That is one kind of spiritual involvement. So it involves everybody, like in the old Greek days when they celebrate the feast of Dinosaurs.

Q). Sir, so the school benefits?

R). Yes they benefit.

Q). Will the school be involved in the management of the groves as well?

R). No, not directly.

Q). Why not?

R). If the school is allowed to get involved the view of the owner of the school will be thinking in terms of worshipping the something. They will be thinking we are taking the students to worship the something, you know this is a mission school. That is the reason it will be difficult for the school to be involved directly.

Q). So because of the religious aspect?

R). eh ehen.

Funding

Q). What about funding?. Who should provide funding for running the management of there?

R). I think the federal government is supposed to take care of everything.

Q). Everything, even though you've identified that other organisations should be involved?

R). No. Economically, the economic aspect should be taken care off by the federal government but the community can be checking the intrusion of the people. By controlling their wards that they should not go there. But as far as maintenance in terms of money is concerned, the FG should be responsible.

Q). Others, do we share that view?

R). In addition to what we said earlier, the traditional rulers there, they too through their subjects they also maintain the area. As we have said that the place is used as a tourist centre, the community as well. They brought images to the place, they used mud, bricks to make different images there, that is one of the ways of maintaining it, they spent money on it, but just for the beautification of the place, they do all sorts of things.

R). If I may add more, the funding of the groves is done by the three tiers of governments. The federal government has its own annual budgets for that place, whether the money comes down here or not is what I do not know. The state government has her own funding too. There is a kind of snack house there under construction. It has not been completed. That one is sponsored by the state government so that when they have Osun festival they bring in snacks for the people to buy and they buy and by that they make money. Osun state government is also planning in conjunction with the federal government. Planning a five star hotel in the forest reserve there outside the grove just on the border of the grove. So with that they will generate revenue. The local government has its own funding. Annually, there is a budget from the local government for the Osun festival. Similarly the cultural head, the Ataoja of Osogbo had his own budget too annually because they have to take care of the curators, they have to take care of the priest and priestesses in that grove because that is their own contribution to the spiritual growth of Osogbo. They perform rituals. They have so many types of celebrations day and night, so as a result the three tiers of government now contribute to the funding.

Q). So there is a sort of collaboration and co-ordination?

R). Yes, even we have private agencies like Susan Wenger. Susan Wenger comes in there to have her own contribution and this is

closely monitored because they do not want devaluation of the spiritual culture of that place.

Q). Thank you very much. Oh I think there is another?

R). I think that as they have rightly said that it is an international tourist centre people call over from America and Britain to come and watch the grove and they also donate some token amount for the maintenance of the area. Is not only the local government. So when they come on their visitation, they make some donation.

Road,

Q). Do we see the road passing through the groves as a threat to the attainment of that aspiration to maintain the groves in their natural form?

R). In my own belief, I do not think it is a threat because where you have games reserve you still have roads been constructed there. You can't say you will not construct another one again because of the damaged one.

Q). Do we share his own view?

R). On the other way sir, I can say it is a threat because the noise of the vehicles going up and down can have effect on quality of the games on the bush because when the animals hear the noise they can escape into the other side.

Q). What is the majority view? Do we see it as a threat or not?

R). And then people passing by, they make noise and talk and when the animals hear, they run because they see them as enemies.

R). Personally I see it as a mild form, because if the road is not there it will be very difficult for the people to visit the grove, so if we look at it from that perspective it is not a threat. And actually it is not a threat because we have the curators, because anybody passing by and wants to steal something, will not be able to do it easily.

Q). But there are no gates?

R). Yes, there are no gates yet? The road is only one, is either you come in through it and you go out through it.

Q). Are there no foot paths?

R). No foot paths inside it.

Q). There are gates?

R). No, there is only one gate. There are openings. But if you say you want to enter from another source you can only take the suspension bridge or you swim across the river.

Q). You said it is a threat. If it were a threat do you think closing the road will be appropriate thing to do?

R). As I look at it, the road passing through the middle. If the road can pass maybe behind, it will be better, but in between the bush, there can be a threat because animals are...

Q). So your suggestion will be to close the road and construct another one?

R). Yes. If you've ever gone through the forest, one it is a vast land following the River Osun like that on both banks. Two, the alternative road is Osogbo-Gbogon road. Yes through government secretariats. The nearest access road to it again is Baptist Girls School and you have to pass through the forest reserve again before you come to it. So that is just it. At Oke Osun we have settlements. So what we need is surveillance. There is temptation for everybody to steal if you have the opportunity.

Q). What about the walls, some walls are being constructed. Are they at the right direction?

R). Which walls?

R). That is just the cultural beautification of the area, for protection, for demarcation.

Q). The NGO that commissioned us actually is the one that putting on the construction because of the encroachment.

R). Okay that is true.

Q). When the issue of ownership was raised, everybody agreed that the FG owns the place. Does it mean that the Ataoja does not have the right ownership of the place?

R). He has. What we are saying is that the federal government is holding that grove in trust for the Ataoja, not that it is the property of the government. Because of the funding, protection and for the federal government to generate revenue that is why the Ataoja put the grove under the federal government because there is a decree to that effect through out the grove and all these must be under the Federal Ministry of Tourism and Culture and the ministry is owned by the federal government. As a result whether Ataoja likes it or not, he must put it under the ministry and the ministry can't do anything without taking into consideration the cultural interest of Ataoja who is the head of Osogbo community.

Q). I was thinking it will look like usurping the traditional right of Ataoja? You don't think so?

R). No, there is no conflict between the Ataoja and the federal government. There is no conflict at all.

Q). No one said anything about the department of forestry either at the federal or state level. Are they relevant or not relevant in the aspiration of conserving the forest?

R). If the Ministry of Agriculture will want to come in there, they will want to look at what interest they are protecting. Is it going to be of use to them in the future? Are they going to have financial gain in the future? Because this is more or less for tourists attraction. And

the forestry will want to preserve trees, to even make use of it either for exportation or for internal use so they are not coming from that perspective.

Q). So they are not relevant?

R). Yes, they are not relevant.

R). No, they are relevant. Every department of agriculture is relevant but they are mainly interested in revenue generation that is their principal interest. They are not interested in the spiritual or the religious aspect. They want to see, they put in money, is a kind of investment. What will they take out, like my friend said. They are interested in what they will take out not what they will put in. Once what they take out can not justify what they put in they lose interest. That is one thing. Secondly, today as at today, do the Ministry of Agriculture or even the universities or the agencies of institutions, do they really know that we have this type of assets here? Do they feel concerned for the animals there? So if they have these focus they can change this place into another games reserve like the Agungun Games Reserves, like Yankari Games Reserves and like Agungun Games Reserves. So they can change it into that and like that they will be making more money. There could be some amusement parks by the periphery of the groves where people can go and relax after the days labour. So in this way they will be making money.

Q). Other contributions there. So what you are saying is that the Forestry may be tangentially relevant?

R). Yes, they could be relevant.

R). Before you close on, I have a question to ask. Now, we are the guinea pigs, the students and the staff in short, the Ministry of Education because they have a say in this research. What are we going to do, to ensure that the community at Oke-Osun here, particularly the schools here, how can they benefit from these kinds of researches, because if you are developing the groves through the teachers and the students, are you really developing the school itself? So that they will feel belonged. So that the school will now work hand in hand with the agencies so that we can achieve a common goal for the benefit of mankind.

Q). Thank you sir, I know as former chairman of a local government, you know how to ask questions without saying it directly. Now why are you here? Why are you doing all this? I guess that is what...but it is very well said. Like I said earlier on, we are commissioned by an NGO-Osun Groves Support Group. They are based in Ibadan, a local organisation. They are very much interested in conserving the forest the way it is for the benefit of everyone. But they think it should be

done by the community. Now go out there, find out what people think about this place, how do they want this place to be managed? Come together. After we've done all of this. We have 23 groups we are going to be talking to like this. So when we have gone through, we would analyse our findings and see the commonalties based on your interest. We shall then come back and organise a workshop in which all the stakeholders and present our findings to them. Now, these people are interested from their perspective and others are interested from this perspective. We present the data. Do you agree with what we have presented? Then we will come up with a common management plan which we hope will be put in place for the betterment and conservation of the forest. And if that is achieved, one of the aspirations of making sure the forest both flora and fauna are maintained and tourism will be in shape and that will be to the benefit of the school. It may not be a direct benefit but you will have the indirect benefit. The management plan is to be a grassroots based management plan which everybody has some stake to provide their point of view. So that is what we are doing. I hope that has answered your question.

Q). The whole idea is to preserve the place on local initiatives and the local initiative will come from the different groups. As a school now you derive some educational purposes from the groves-taking your students there. There is an aspect of that too you would want to be preserved. Because if you take the students this year and next year what you are taking them to see is no longer there, then your own interest is not protected. That is why every group will have a way or initiative on how that place can be preserved.

Q). Thank you very much sir.

Attendance

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Allhaji G. O. Salamu | 8. Mr. O. O. Owolabi |
| 2. Mr. Ojetunde | 9. Alhaji Afolabi |
| 3. Mrs. Adeleye | 10. Mr. Adetoye |
| 4. Mr. J. O. Fadojimu | 11. Alhaji B. A. Adeniji |
| 5. Mr. Onunlade | 12. Mr. F. A. Fafiyebi |
| 6. Mr. J. Akinpelu | 13. Mrs. A. I. Olawale |
| 7. Mrs. V. O. Agboola | |

Appendix 13
Muslim Grammar School Students
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

The History.

Q). When were the groves established?

Who established them?

Why were they established?

How many groves are there?

R). This was how they started moving backwards. When they got to a point and asked if it was enough, they were told it wasn't enough. Eventually they got to the river. They dug the ground and water started coming out of the ground. This was how water got there. It was inside this forest, they grew up and lived until their death.

Q). You know that there are many shrines in the groves. How were these shrines established?

R). That place is the Osun shrine (Ojubo). That mama talking to those three hunters. That mama herself is Osun. In order that she will not be forgotten on the earth that is why they decided to be using the place as a sacrifice because she is an important person in Yoruba kingdom. Because it is the place where people ask i.e. pray for child blessing. The mama is being worshipped because she was an important person in Yoruba race.

Q). The remaining people do you agree in all what he said or are there are some short comings or there's anything you want to add? Do not be shy or afraid. We are all learning.

R). Do we all agree to what he said? Yes.

Importance

Q). What are the things you derive there and why is the place so important to us as students? Can any lady answer? Yes, what is your name?

R). Asijah Olalere

Q). Anybody can speak.

R). My name is Adeoli Teniola. They used to take us there to see different kinds of images (sculptures) and things that are related to our culture and tradition.

Q). You want to say something? Speak. Don't be shy speak up.

R). I am not shy. The explanation I have to make is related to the fine art she mentioned. It is craft work-handiwork.

Q). What about the learning that are related to natural things, what do you call that? Social studies or cultural studies. Do they take you there as well?

R). Yes, they use to take us because there are certain things about river and science that we do not understand, they use to take us there to see it and understand. Some of the things are stones that suddenly appear from the river, Also fishes like ikoro, sardine, tilapia fish, those are the things we normally see each time they take us there. It is not only our school alone, students from other cities and towns also come there to learn.

Q). What are things related to tradition? Are they not shown to you too?

R). Is it idol worship or what?

Q). Not idol worship alone, things that cannot be brought physically to the classroom.?

R). Idol worship? Those are the things that I have said like animals such as monkeys. Infact there are different monkeys in this Yoruba land. There are some with brown colour while some are with black colour and even some with white colour. They use to take us there so as to see the differences and learn from it.

Q). You, what do you want to say?

R). What my partner said is just like that.

Q). What about you? What is your name?

R). My name is Jamiu Semiu, what I can say is that about the monkey as I heard. They said we should not kill the monkeys and that we should not cut trees in the groves.

Q). So they teach you all these in geography?

R). Yes and that we should not kill the monkeys in the grove and not to enter the groves unknowingly and there are some guards that are keeping watch over the groves. Those are the things I can say.

Q). As this forest is, is it different compared to what it was past 20 years ago?

R). Yes

Q). What are the changes?

R). Part of the changes are that since I was born I never heard that one can build houses in the groves but now I can now see people building houses in the groves and this is different to houses that one can live in. I have never entered the place before because I am a Muslim. I am not a traditional worshipper. Houses where they keep things, they use for sacrificing to the gods are there.

Q). Were these houses there before or they've just being built?

R). They have just been built. They were not there before.

Q). What are the things there that make the place look different? Or responsible for the changes you have observed?

R). Things that are there that make the place look different is that, the clay moulded clay images that are there right from the shrine to

the main road that we pass to the school were not there before. They just brought it. Just between 4 years ago and now.

Q). About the trees.

R). I want to talk about the changes there. The gate leading to the main shrine from the main road is also new.

Q). About the trees, are they different from what they were 20 years ago?

R). There are changes, because in fact, it is not up to 20 years. Just about two years ago, there were some trees called king trees and we found out that the trees were being cut off and what we heard from the elders is that the trees are needed for something and that the land where the trees are located are needed for a company.

Q). Why are you not participating? What about the animals? Are the animals there, the same as 20 years ago?

R). They are not the same, because of all the houses built there, all the trees there have been felled and the animals ran away.

Q). What about farming? Were people farming there in those days? Were you told by your parents, that people used to farm there in those days?

R). From what we heard from history, we were told they do not farm there. In fact according to what our forefathers told us, we were told they never farmed there and they can never farm there.

Q). Would you say that the farming done now, is as a result of modernisation?

R). We may say it is civilisation because there are some things that are not clear to us the youths of nowadays because when we were taken there to see things, our knowledge base were broadened about the groves and that is the reason why we can say something about the groves.

Q). What would you say is responsible for the major change there, from all you've mentioned?

R). One obvious change, that I know since they have been worshipping Osun, no king has even built a house where he sits there but nowadays, there is civilisation whereby a house has been built for the king inside the grove, where he stays during the festival to offer sacrifice to Osun and pray for the indigenes. The king will stay in the house and start offering prayers for the people and when it is the day of the sacrifice the king will sit there.

Q). You girls, what can you say? What do you have to say about the observed changes in the groves? Do you agree with all they have said?

R). The main changes is moulded structure along the road beside the bush. That is the difference I can say.

- Q). What is the main change?
- R). What brought the major changes is that the road leads to the farms where farmers use to bring food to the town. It is a road that leads to many farms.
- Q). That is not it. What is the major change that you have observed in the groves?
- R). It is because some Fulanis are there in the groves who built houses there.
- Q). Right in the grove?
- R). Yes.
- R). No, it is because some white people use to come.
- Q). No, let's take it one by one. You have agreed that there are changes in the groves and you mentioned some. Which can you say is the most important change in the groves?
- R). It is because of the hospital built there.
- Q). You mean here. No, we are talking about the groves, and not where your school is.
- R). What brought the difference is that they use to make the sacrifice every year.
- Q). No, but they do the sacrifice every year or what you are saying is not clear to you
- R). It is because of the house they built beside the road. They built one house beside the road there.
- Q). In your opinion what do you think about the groves ?
- R). What I think about the groves, the groves is like a museum because people used to come to visit there and see the sculptures there.
- Q). You as a student, how do you see the groves? Is it a place of beauty or a place of leisure?.
- R). What I know is that the main point of sacrifice is the sacred place. Ordinary people cannot go there except during the festival.
- Q). Any other things about how you see the place?
- R). As many people come there both black and white. As the Yoruba use to come there and act theatre i.e. act plays there. Also the grove is a place one can do something that many people will not know.
- Q). Any one with information. Let's move forward. You said there are changes there, in your opinion. What do you think can bring about extinction of the place?
- R). There are things that can cause it. If they stop worshipping there. In case there is nothing that can lead to the extinction of the groves. Because at a time some people went to tell the king, that they are not interested in activities concerning worship in the groves. He agreed to stop Osun worship. But by the next day, the Oba's place was

flooded with water. Sacrifices were offered to appease Osun and he was pardoned.

Q). But you said, they cut trees, built houses, if they continue like that and nobody stops it don't you think in the future there will not be any grove again? Who wants to talk?

R). What I can say is that there is no way the Osun sacrifice can go into extinction. Because the house built there is meant for Osun.

Q). What about the houses beside?

R). They do not allow building of houses there. An ordinary person can not build a house beside there except he is a member of the king's family.

R). We may say there could be something that may cause the grove not to exist again there. because as civilisation is coming in, knowledge is coming in, right now as we are in Osogbo which is the capital of Osun state, they may say that they want to bring a higher institution to the place and if it is only in the bush that they can build the institution this can change the grove into a higher institution.

Q). What about tree felling there everyday? Don't you think it may bring about extinction of Osun groves?

R). This can bring extinction because as they are felling the trees because they want to use the land for something to build houses or hospitals. We do not know what these changes can cause to the groves?

Q). Lets leave it like that. In your opinion who do you think should take care of the place?

R). We want the place to be good.

Q). Good how?

R). Like bringing a very big company there.

Q). Right inside the grove?

R). Yes,

Q). Do you all agree to that?

R). Yes, we like it that way.

Q). What about the traditional things there, do you want it to go into extinction?

R). The land there is big. As I said earlier on, there is one idol there they worship. They should leave the point of worshipping the idol alone. Then the remaining land can be used to build higher institutions or mighty companies.

Q). Do you all agree to it?

R). As he said the land is big. There is no way they will cut the trees and cut everything off like that. No way. They cannot cut the point of worshipping the idol, that is the shrine

Q). Do you have anything to say?

R). Changes can take place there because as the land is a land of idol. Only one part agreed that the land is a land of idol while the other part did not agree. As I am a Muslim, as I have said, I heard it in history that something that can give people children. I do not believe in that. Because of this, that land can change for a better land.

Q). Who are the people you think should be taking care of the groves?

R). The government.

Q). How many of you are Muslims? All of you?

R). Yes.

Q). Now concerning what you said, you said you can't believe because both Muslims and Christians are not traditional religions, they are brought for us. You know they use to say before maize came to the fowls, they had been eating something. What if that is what has been helping our forefathers?

R). There are some people now that are worshipping the place. They can agree that you spoil the place by using the place for another thing because you do not believe in it.

R). They will agree because those worshipping it are not many compared to those that are not worshipping it.

Q). Because you know, the world we are now, you should not take anybody by force. We all do what we like and we know right from the beginning that the traditional have been there for long. How many of you agree the place be spoilt?

R). I do not agree because if they spoil the place it will not add beauty to Osogbo again.

Q). How many agree to what the lady said?

R). I agree.

R). Also what I can say is that as you were told before that when the king said he was no longer doing the sacrifice water flooded his palace because of this. If they spoil the place I do not to think bad things will begin to happen.

Q). Who are the people to take care of the place.

R). People like the king, the king makers and the guards.

Funds.

Q). Concerning the money to take care of the place, who do you think should do that?

R). The government.

Q). What about the indigenes?

R). The indigenes that are traditional worshippers.

Q). Don't you know the groves add dignity to the town?

R). As I said earlier on, the land is big. enough for other things.

- Q). What we are saying is who should bring money?
R). The government.
- Q). The road leading to the place, should the road be blocked or left like that?
R). They should leave it like that because the road is useful for us. They should not block it.
- Q). It is useful to you, what if they block it and constructed another road for you?
R). Yes, we are satisfied with the construction of another road.
- Q). So you agree that the road be blocked?
R). No, we do not agree.
- Q). Why?
R). Because the road is the one that farmers pass to their farms to transport food to the town.
- Q). Don't you think the road can be a threat to the groves?
R). If they block the road it will not be good because of the people coming to watch the Osun sacrifice.
- Q). No, they are talking about the road. Do you agree that the road is a threat to the groves?
R). Yes, the road.
- Q). Should the road be blocked or not?
R). What I can say is that the road is good like that because if they said they want to construct another place it may be too far.

Attendance Muslim Grammar School Stusents

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Adeoti Teniola | 2. Kasali Morufat |
| 3. Olaniyi Adijat | 4. Olasankanmi Wasiru |
| 5. Olaosun Sulaiman | 6. Tijani Ganiyat |
| 7. Dauda Adewale | 8. Kareem Saheed |
| 9. Sanni Jamiu | 10. Salawudeen Rasaki |

Appendix 14
Muslim Group
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

Q). When were the groves established? Who established them and why were they established?

R). The then Ataoja, in 1947 gave the then government to plant teak trees for the benefits of the town and for the development of Osogbo.

Q). Do you know why the groves were established?

R). Laroye and Timehim were the people who established the groves. There, Osun gave them fish. Hence, the king is known as Atewogbeja.

Q). Do you know why Laroye and Timehim stayed there?

R). They were in search of water. Timehim was a hunter. They left Ipole in search of water. When they got there they found water and settled there. It was Timehim who brought an elephant to the market here. Hence he was known as "Amerin wa mo ni Osogbo"

Q) Any addition?

R) No

Importance

Q). What are the benefits derived from the forest?

R). There are many benefits we derive from the forest. It is because of these benefits that we arrived here. The forest is a peaceful forest. It has many things that can be obtained there that can't be found elsewhere.

Q). What are these benefits?

R). One, it gives protection to Osogbo town.

Two, it serves educational purpose that can't be found in other towns.

Three, it is this forest that is responsible for the fame of Osogbo as a result of which visitors from far and wide to visit Osogbo yearly.

Q). As Muslim faithfuls, what benefits can we derive from the forests?

R). As Mushims, what ever development that will benefit the community are the benefits we shall derive. Things that will benefit and develop Osogbo are things we want.

Perception

Q). As Muslim faithfuls what are your perceptions of the groves?

R). It is a traditional forest to the Osogbo community. We all know that it houses the shrine where Osun is worshipped for which Osogbo is famous for. It is a traditional place and the whole community knows it as such-cultural centres for us in Osogbo.

R). From oral history, we were told that the forest affords protection to either against foreign invasion such as stealing. So that they can attack the enemies.

It is a place where all wicked people are dumped.

Q). What are the threats to all the benefits you claim to derive from the forest?

R). There are no threats to the forests and we shall continue to derive these benefits.

Q). Don't you think development can pose a threat to the existence of the forest?

R). No. Development cannot be a threat to the forest. For example in Iraq, in a place called Bagdad, there is a place called Babylon. Babylon has been in existence for a long time. They invited the Italian to help them develop it into a tourist centre. The land surrounding the place called Babylon has been well developed and it is still expanding. But the original Babylon is still in its original form untouched. The culture of the place is still maintained and preserved. The issue now is to refurbish the groves and develop the surrounding land in such a way that it can compare to natural parks in East Africa, Istanbul.

Aspiration.

Q). What are your aspirations for the groves?

R). Tourist hotels should be built around there. It should be developed into a zoo. All these will bring revenue to Osogbo town.

R). In addition, we want amusement park to be developed there. So that during the Osun festival, Ileya etc. adult and children alike can go there. The place is not only for traditional worship anymore. It is now a tourist centre.

R). Please we want these words/suggestion to be matched with actions. If there is any development that will bring prosperity to Osogbo, that is what we want.

Q). Please we want your general comments.

R). The place should not be allowed to die down. A time will come when Osun will no longer be a symbol of traditional worship but a symbol of entertainment but on cultural heritage. I have seen a film of how Osun is done in Brazil. It was very beautiful. It was more of entertainment like our Ataoja normally tells us.

In Mecca the home of Islam they like natural things. In Saudi Arabia if one succeeds in growing a green plant, they are usually very pleased. So if the place is developed into a tourist centre it would boost the economy of Osogbo.

For instance, the Babylon I mentioned earlier, the King's place is still there. Monuments, are made there to depict lions that was used to eat human beings in those days. These things are not used but are

used as tourist attraction. Spoon, beans excavated are on display in their museum. This can be done in the Osun groves also.

Q). Who are the managers and who should manage the groves?

R). Like we heard, the NMMC are there.

The Devotees and Susan Wenger, Adoni Orisa. She buys things there, combs e.t.c. she puts them there. Restoring places of old, are maintained and preserved by her. People pay to see these things. I too have been there. And Ataoja.

Q) Who should manage?

R) Yes, the indigenes should be allowed to manage their affair. We cannot say because the Federal Government has taken over the place. Even in the oil producing area, the indigenes are fighting for their rights. Apart from the NMMC, there should be a body at the state level that should be involved in the management. The indigenes should be involved. For example, the current problem with the Islamic scholar would not have arisen. The Muslim community and the Osogbo community are aware of this problem. If they have been involved the problem would not have happened because we all know the boundary of the groves. But certain people just came claiming that they acquired the land. Things like this will never make for peace and when there is no peace we will not be encouraged to come. So I advocate that the federal and state governments and the indigenes should be involved in the management. Then we will know what we want to do. But for some one to make laws and others going against the laws, there will always be problems.

Q). Do you want the Muslim society to be represented?

R). Yes, the Christians, and the Devotees

The Road

Q). Is the road that passes through a threat to the groves?

R). No, an overhead bridge can be provided.

Q). So the road is okay, the way it is now?

R) Yes, the road is okay.

Attendance

1. Alhaji Mustapha Ajisofe (Chief Imam)
2. Alhaji Masind A. Iawal (Otun Motasin Osogbo)
3. Alhaji Sadiu Monilade (Olori Ratibi Osogbo).
4. Alhaji Salawu Otokuta
5. Alhaji Sande
6. Alhaji Olorunlowu (Imam Oja).
7. Alhaji Tajudeen Arikdawu
8. Alhaji Mogaji aka
9. Alhaji Owode Olori Alasaro

Appendix 15
National Commission for Museums and Monuments
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History

Q). The history of Osun Groves? Who established it, when was it established?

R). In the past every town had sacred groves. That is what we call them now. That is why it was forest. As I talk now, it was only a joke. The religion, the use of the forest. It was a virgin forest and the priest had events, ritual identity, the animals, the animals they were very close to the gods and the gods were animal dimensions of that identity-epiphany in the fauna and the flora. As you know development has grown very fast at the end of colonial times. At the beginning of self government. With changes very fast because there are so many things to be done to guide the former colonists through the roads, human and science everything has over developed and grown to be a joint purpose of all nations and all gracious. So the changes the growth has been very fast. So then I came to Nigeria there was no town which people have a sacred grove. But the Osun groves were important even then. Next to Ife was as important at least. Ife was most important because Osun is the epiphany of the purpose of life without which no nation or religious aspect of life can exist. Water in liquid form they have not discovered any of the planet or somewhere in the universe of existing research here. That explains the importance of Osun groves. Even before the other towns lost their groves. Osun groves already outstanding in the philosophy of life. As an expression of the philosophy of life.

Q). So you are saying that Osun groves was already in existence?

R). It was in existence as a forest but as a sacred forest.

Q). As a sacred forest?

R). Then the towns were established you know before over there nigra city but encourage their orisa and their oritse and they will never destroy sacred forces or their symbols. That is why sometime ago not too long ago, the priest in the village occupy a position in the social placement. The Osun groves they are not in every town, every part of the religion as in many orisa. The gods are in themselves like

one village inter linked in the coexistence of each of each other. So when they established themselves they have their important rituals. There is the religious life most dependent on the natural surrounding. But as I say there is no town which people have groves. That is what I found out. Osogbo is not just Osogbo It is because of my coming here. My attachment. It is true the grove have grown without me. But at the other hand it was already what I found that the Osun groves together with Ife, Itayemo for Ogbatala and Oke in Ife for Ifa. Osogbo groves that is why I talk about it. Osogbo groves are not finding out to serve our own purposes, good or bad, but as something outstanding There are outstanding sacred trees. Because they are more or less intact. But the destruction is growing so fast that if we do have no intense help now all our efforts will have become just one and half page in history.

Q). Mr. Areo you want to contribute to the history of the groves.

R). Yeah! A lot has been said by mama-Susan Wenger. And succinctly she has told you about how she came, how she met the forest, you know, intact and at the point of destruction people were trying to Christianise the people around. The Muslims were trying to Islamize. So everybody was trying to destroy the forest. At her instance and other people, the federal government came in and saw with her and other people and decided to preserve that place for posterity. And by 1962 the place was acquired from the late Oni, Oba Adenle. By 1962 it was gazetted and declared a national monument.

Importance

Q). Now can we talk a little bit of the importance of the groves? Maybe as a curator or as somebody who has worked here. Of what importance is the grove to you and the grove to the community generally?

R). It is multidimensional. In the sense that it has cultural value attached to it. We have the grove that is almost 75 hectares, where every year, Osogbo people go and perform rituals to thank their fore fathers of what benefit Osun as a goddess of river has done to them. Osogbo people migrated from Ipole in Ilesha area. They moved from that place in search of a refuge. There was famine and they came in here looking for water, looking for a fertile land because that place has been devastated by draught. They got here and found that the place is looking fertile. They were trying to hew down trees to make their sheds and in the process they got in trouble with the pots that were made for Aro and that was how the woman, the fairy, I mean, the water spirit, cried out and said "*people what are you doing ? You have broken all my pots*". And that was how it brought about "*Oso Igbo, gbo gbo koto mi nihi ti fo-o*". So, "oso igbo" is Osogbo. And

Ataoja which is the title of Osogbo is borne out of the fact that the water spirit brought out a big fish, handed it over to Laroye or whoever was the then Oba and that has some attachment. The Osogbo name was derived from the Osun and the Ataoja title also from the same place. Now if you go to the other side, it has the naturalistic beauty because it has both flora and fauna. In there we have varieties of animals ranging from dikes, antelopes, pythons and different species of birds, like..

Q). What type of importance do you want to call that? Is that beautification?

R). Beautification, aesthetic let's say aesthetic.

R). Let me say the second part of what I explained before. That Osogbo groves there is one situation which all towns hate but of outstanding importance because of vitality of water which is worshipped in Osogbo. But the second point is why Osogbo groves are now of a special importance. Unfortunately, it is true the Nigeria is a bit late in establishing natural reservations. But if we say the Osun grove have the help of the government mainly for research of the planned natural reservation which all over the world the government have decreed that if they do not work together towards natural reservations in preventing whole trees or forests to be cut down the earth, the planet inhabited by human beings is doomed. If you say that is common sense that Nigeria will have to contribute towards that effort to have natural conservation, we of the cultural field who are aware of what is going on in the evolution of earth all over the world. The second point to it, if humanity cannot live without nature so humanity cannot live without culture in any of its aspects. And if the stature of spiritual communication within the whole of humanity, we who are in what we see that what is going at the moment as this aesthetic exchange of very expensive works of art which became a really like a fever is an era. a cultural era on its way out. The spiritually important white people in Europe and America particularly in America the white race who has a negative way, prompted evolution which they emphanity of colonialists. They are the ones in their best element are now intensely nervous to change the situation again. This is why we have very very nice white people from Europe and America and other elements. They are now very very interested looking for help. They are coming to look to look for help in the centre of the Yoruba religion which got famous through our god. So Osun groves are now an attraction. What you ask about altruistic. Altruistic is a very bad word. But some of the tourists will be , some people who look for new values. Osogbo is getting the centre of aspiration for new values in a safe humanity.

The importance of Osun groves: Rocks in the river which came out now. Osun groves are getting a central symbol of saving humanity from just tapping over in two wide for false values. It is a religious aspect of Osun groves. It is an actuality. It is true that in other states there maybe forests, groves, founding foundation for the preservation of nature. You may say, Yes, they have found in Ghana, there are sacred forest and so on but Osun festival, the annual festival of Osun, is the most powerful traditional religious festival in Africa. It is a point that we have to point out.

Q). What I have gotten from our discussion so far, is that it has cultural values , it has spiritual values.

R). It has natural value and spiritual value. That is one and the same dimension in all the traditions of all religions. Nature, so to say, is the representative of the sacred search. You know, in all religions there is an early face, a cat face. These they got a new representative of an animal. That is why, it is a timeless, a time to the importance of nature. The people who have destroyed too much of nature now have to be very sorry. They have killed not five, most sacred for life and they stand on and the air which they breadth.

Perception

Q). So ma, when we look at Osun groves as they are, what is your perception of Osun groves? What does it represent?

A). Yeah! You know I am leaving in Osun grove since 45 years. I stand for them. I am, so to say, part of the river. Part of the water.

Q). So what does Osun grove represent to you?

R). The living symbol of the survival of the world. It is the symbol, so where if one addresses oneself, the humanity is the totality addresses itself to the divine, with the regress of survival.

Christianity, Islam has Koran, Osun groves is humanitarian symbol of survival in the spirit. Because the spirit of humanity cannot go on in making more and more things, depending on computer because we are computer on water here-combine with the rocks, symbolise in the river. This is how my father and myself step in. Some greedy people who wanted to make money out of it wanted to break the rocks in the river. In a few days we had established the foundation of the survival the gods for the stature. Every spiritual movement needs material symbols. You know, that of every village. You may be a Christian, you may be a Muslim. You hold something in your hand and address yourself to that object like if it is your teacher. That is the same. That is the equivalent of Osun grove. The Osogbo Osogbo is for aspiration the relational of survival in the spirit is the rock in the Osun groves. That is Ojobo, Ojobo.

Q). Mr. Areo you want to say something?

R). Yes, as regards perception. Yes, mama has said so many things. In addition to what she has said, we perceive Osun groves as a sanctuary of medicinal plants. Having gone through the flora and fauna survey, we discover there are more than 1000 species of medicinal plants used by Yoruba in Nigeria in Diaspora. Apart from that it serves as a sanctuary for animals of different species and they are well protected. We discover during the dry season most animals find a good sanctuary there because they know the grove is well protected and we don't allow hunting, farming, cutting down of trees. So as mama said, both cultural, ritualistic and naturalistic values which to a large extent is the major sign post of Osun groves for now.

Threats

Q) We are all interested in conserving the groves. Maybe there are some threats to the continued existence of the groves. What are some of the threats to the existence of the groves?

R). Sometimes, life lacks essential things for survival itself. You know when animals attack you make the right movement. And one cannot rationalise everything of that sort. All the chants my fathers and myself are living so to say right our own intensity back into nature just holding everything together through our devotion. Then suddenly it came that the wild life conservation fund came in and that is the Yank woman from that side. They saw the growth and they were very enthusiastic and the man Tunde Morakinyo asked me what would you need to help. I did not know he is in a position to do something. I said we need responsible people to help us protect the boundaries against hunting and fishing.

Q). So hunting and fishing are threats?

R). Yeah! Everything we are still trying now. Somehow generally. We need responsible people to help us preserve it. Then nothing happened till suddenly, I heard rumours. The group which you mentioned. Osun Groves Support Group. They call themselves "Friends of the groves" accepted. They are now the ones who started to build the road round the groves. The idea first Tunde and myself started with stone or some materials which we used spiritually. But as we pressed for time we accepted the idea the roads, the cement block was round the groves. The prices of cement some bags of cement it is stored you now it tempers things we are not visible in the contract was done. From what we ask at the moment, it is not a new arrangement. We ask for help that what is started is fast completed. There are critical sites the township is growing. One time we hear the teak plantation which is a very handy neighbour is to be abolished. No doubt Osogbo is growing fast. And the walls round the groves are vital. Everything that we did nothing is fully understand

and honestly and spiritually correct. But to preserve Osun groves whether it is for the reasons which we understand or whether it is for reasons that the Tourist Board understand, we have no scientific order. The walls which we have started have to fastly completed. Is that not so? That is just the bone of contention.

Q). You have mentioned 3, 4 areas that are threats to the existence of the groves. You said hunting and fishing, township is growing fast (development), teak plantation...

R). Teak plantation is not our concern. That is only our neighbour. A nice neighbour.

R). Let me add to what mama has said. Having mentioned hunting as one of the threats, we have felling of economic trees which attracts this timber contractors which we have gone into serious battle with. Then with the petrol and kerosene scarcity, people try to hew down shrubs for cooking. That has been a fierce battle in recent times. Fishing because of the protected river there. A lot of different species of fish abound in the grove. As such we often catch many people trying to fish. We have seized so many times, fishing nets and hooks and what have you. Then lastly, erection of public buildings, such as schools and private buildings. In an attempt to destroy them, we are still on, we think we get rid of those things any moment from now especially before the military hands over to the civilian regime. You see the Muslim school has been the major threat. Because if we are able to get off the Muslim school, off the way, others are ready to leave. They are now saying if the Muslim school is there, they can as well convert their own public building to a Christian, church or whatever. So, that is, to allow them to stay either pari parsu with the school. So our effort now is to get rid of that school which we have stopped the development for some time. Yes with the farm. We have done destruction of farms shortly after the Osun festival. We destroyed at least about 15 acres of cassava and maize. We got into trouble with police and community. We have a way of wriggling out of this thing. We have a decree backing up this things. Both 65 decree, 62 decree and 92 decree backing up the protection of that area. So, whatever we do, we do not do it, outside the ambit of the law of the land.

Q). Thank you very much. You have mentioned already one of the measures taken to prevent these threats, the placing of wall. What are the other things or activities we can put in place to prevent these threats apart from the walls?

R). We have laid out the organisation of protection. Quite really, the difficulty is to stick to it.

Q). Mama, can you tell us a little of the organisation?

R). They take out of ritual interest and love for the forest in the name of traditional gods. For example, what you mentioned now, what the head of station mentioned, the school, the man was extensively farming, destroying the forest, having cheap labour with school children. Now as we discuss our own intensity we got in touch with Forestry. I always refer to him because he is first assistant and first brother. So, they were very co-operative, to commemorate other things with money with money 3650 forest trees from them. We had the aim of planting them. And they will put up sign board that is a joint effort between Commission for Monument and Forestry Dept. Forestry is state and Commission is federal. They approved our signboard, the government sign board and throw it into the river. And while the area, where we plant the trees, with police protection and help labour from Forestry. Mr. Owner of the school has destroyed all that again. That is the cassava which the head of station mentioned that we had to strike. It is not so that he was there establishing his farm. I am used to walk along the groves there when I came there some time before the annual festival which was followed by. I met there the solitude of the guards like I say. I met a sea of cassava with a road, straight road leading to the river. That made us mad. That is what I reported to the head of station and what led to the destruction, did they destroy anything, they did not destroy anything, they heap the bag, the owner, the , mallam, mukadem, put sanely said, he came to harvest. But the result was a religious war. They attacked the people going into the forest. The damage done is still in preparation to go to court. It is already in the hands of the lawyer. Abuja is very awful. What I did with my money. I am living very simple bit I scratch money from every where for the not so expensive cement that to support filling the road. We do not stop. We have now maintenance to do. What we do in the groves-the shrines enclose within a spiritual way context nature which attracts tourists. What attracts by the same people who attack Mr. Areo and my brothers after we speak with the male image. Horrible way to murder because you can't trace a murder. The damage is done. Their photographs you can see there, the id and economic repair. This religious war is still going on. It is very serious.

Q) How can we prevent these threats?

R). Yes, essentially in the past we have written to the federal government to give us night and day guards to patrol the 75 hectares of the groves. But it has been very difficult because of dwindling revenue of the federal government. But of late, we are proud and grateful to the Osun Groves Support Group for providing 4 guards ; 2 for night and 2 for day to patrol the groves. Initially, they started

very well. They were doing nice job. We were catching culprits, people hewing down trees, people catching fish, people hunting. we find carbide.

Q). When you apprehend them, what do you do ?

R). We take them to the police and seize their guns. In fact, most of them are in our store right now-cutlasses, what have you. Essentially the 4 guards are not enough because of the largeness of the groves. If we divide 2 people in the day into 2 into 75 hectares you will find out that while they are operating somewhere, they know where they will find them at any given time. And those who are watching us or watching the guards know where to get them and do their devastation elsewhere. So apart from that, we are asking that if there could be more of these day and night guards it will go a long way in the protection of the threats of those things. Then because the fencing is not going as fast as we thought, maybe again or due to funding or because of the hike of cement price, the Support Group equally gave us 5 monument protectors. We call them monument protectors because they cut round the boundary so that when there is bush burning during the dry season it does not cross into Osun Groves. So they cut about 1 metre from the boundary such that except in most cases fire flies over.

Q). We call them fire traces?

R). Exactly. Mama did a very nice job by providing tanks and pots in those areas prone to fire burning. So that immediately we hear, got wind of fire any where in the grove, we rush there and with the help of the tanks and pots we quickly use water to quench those things. In essence we have monument protectors, night guards and like I said, inter alia, our major problem is the edaphic problem.

Q). So what other things can we do to prevent these threats?

Poaching, hunting..

R). Serious education. If we can enlighten people once in a while over the print and electronic media, symposium, you know to arouse local people's interest about the Osun groves because they only see it in the ritualistic value which is once a year. But we don't see it that way. We see it in all ramifications both ritual, cultural, natural, what have you which we have mentioned inter alia. As a matter of fact we would think that symposium, symposia from time to time, public enlightenment in print and electronic media will go a long way. Jingles that do not cost much will enlighten people and it will help us in doing our own job.

Road

Q). Actually, we are going to talk more about that. But before we leave this, there is a road that goes through the groves. Since we are talking about threats, is it a threat to the groves?

R). Certainly.

Q) How is it?

R). It leads to a major farm settlement. The farm settlement is fast developing into another village. So we have over the years except for the non-availability of funds, we would have wanted the road diverted. So who ever goes through the road, we know, is essentially going into the grove, into the sacred forest.

Q). So you are saying that the road should be closed?

R). The road should. It should be diverted. An alternative provided for those people going to the other side of the groves.

R). One more about the road. I heard at least three times. Thrice. I know it because they came here and we talked a lot of times. Very senior people from UNESCO. They wanted to use the Osun groves as inter humanitarian spot of spiritual development. You know UNESCO is educational. They wanted Osun Groves in a very central role for enlightening humanity. They have in their stature such an area as not to have a through road, a road going through. It was some other times. It was Babatunde or John that I was having the position as to differ affair. How it can be done before things are getting more difficult and more and more expensive. It is the beginning of the grove, is there now. It is the beginning of the area that is getting too close to the township.

There is an area where already there is a road of the Support Group leading to the river. And I spoke to Engineer Morakinyo. Where are the electricity poles? The poles of NEPA. This people of colonial times have enormous experience. Over the road there are columns. These NEPA posts are now accomonized by our works. The road is comparatively narrow and has strong enough in the side of the river- the river ground is rocky. So that is an ideal place for a bridge. It is most interesting what I see. The first meeting with the Support Group. That the aim of the whole exercise should be to build that bridge which is necessary to reach the road to the supplementary community. There is no doubt it is very lucky the place where they have the part now to make a natural road to Osogbo. That is very close to that place is the best place for the bridge so that Osogbo itself with the bridge can somehow reach outside like here. Osogbo itself is developing the necessary roads automatically.

Q). I do not know where you are talking about?

R). When you enter the grove, you will see 2 pillars which is the dream of the Support Group. They wanted to place a door. It is the

door that is now supported by the governor. The door is meant to be constructed there so that the road can be used for the annual festival-that is the open day. The day that traffic does not go through the grove. Now you have the groves, the road, the hunters, labourers but you have open road that people can go in and out. That is really the major problem.

Q). So it should be closed?

R). Very expensive. Charity is the best. And the other one at the cost approach. You know what the Group cost. It is comparatively small cost because it is just like making charity. Very necessary means of survival.

R). One other thing to mention is electricity. It is an attempt to electrify Osun for the festival. We discovered that an overhead cable to provide electricity will electrocute most of our monkeys. So we wrote against that. We had problems. Invariably it does not affect the animal life in the grove.

Q). I am glad you brought up this. We have been going round. We have heard about this electricity. In fact when we spoke with another group they said this same thing about animals getting electrocuted. I felt a little worried about that explanation. But I hear there is also a spiritual explanation.

R). Yes. With modern science, keeps us a sort of relaxed within a short time. Science is helping us in all lines. The work of electricity does to the atmosphere, it does it to the animals and the spiritual vibrations.

R). We are strictly against electrical line in the grove. We have our tradition that Osun is opposed to light in the night. And as such no light or artificial one for that matter, electricity should be within the precinct of the Osun groves. And that is essentially the most important part for the animals. You know everything within the grove is owned by Osun. If you pick a stone, it is owned by Osun. You have to plead with Osun if you need it before you pick it up. If you pick a fish it belongs to Osun as long as it is within the 75 acres. So and as such, Osun dictates what she wants.

Q). So electricity should not be provided?

R). No way.

Aspirations

Q). Now let us talk about this area of aspirations. What are your dreams or what do you wish for Osun groves? What do you actually want to see Osun Grove look like?

R). What we want is that like looking after some very important personality. You will have to look to him with critical existence.

Q). Critical existence?

R). If you trust that personality, priest or something, you will tend to love him and you will make him feel secure and then you trust his own spiritual efficiency.

Q). Can you be more specific? So that we know exactly where you are going?

R). Yeah! You know when you bring the gift to the goddess of the river, then you feed food into the river because we know and science starts to know again, that the division between the spiritual life and the physical life is really not correct. If we feed spiritually with our love and devotion so we have to feed suddenly the river and the fish we eat it and maintain them, we can add. This is not childish. It is keeping the bridge between the physical and the spiritual life strong. So what we need on earth is physical survival of both lives. Let God, the spirit, let do its own work without our observation.

Q). So it should conserve itself naturally?

R). Yeah! You can, you can not cut into evolution. The spiritual life can't improve on the culture. The gods which created by the same God, who created Islam- very sorry I failed to say that God has not created Osun Groves. No! God has even helped the Osun groves to survive. What I mean is, some people call it major religion. Natural religion is becoming world wide expansion because extinction of forest is creating enormous problems. You know in the north of Nigeria they have the best of this growing close to Kano and. They should know that here. And that the climate is getting more and more complicated. Is already just more ours. We have to support God's work, so support the creator. If we support creation but for us the most important aspect is what we are doing all our life because the religion as such is understood by us. Christianity is understood by other spiritual centres. Islam is understood ritual like I say most in Mecca and in the single human heart. We are doing our job in the context of human beings. If we go to the church, the mosque, we are going there to teach the creator what he has to do. We give him strength to our commitment.

Q). So ma, what you are saying, therefore, is that, it is both leaving it in its natural form as well as spiritual?

R). Yeah! Essentially, in addition to what mama said, we envisioned that one day it will turn to a Mecca not in the Muslim context but for the protection and revival of our traditional beliefs and religion. People this day are returning back to the roots. If you go out now, people do not believe in all these panadol and what have you. They now return back to the roots-drinking "Agbo", drinking this. So Osun provides such scenario for the future and people from all over the

world are now coming into Osun to take water because the water is highly medicinal.

Q), So they take water from there?

R). Yes! If not in commercial quantity. If not billed you can take drink because it offers prayers on its own.

Q). Who do you get permission from?

R). From the devotees. So they take and they use as they want because Osun as she is been referred to is "Oloyoyo"-she is mother of children. People who are barren believe when they take the water they get children as when, I mean, shortly after they might have taken the water. And as such we think over time and with the full protection we are giving it, people will turn in here and in no time people will start asking that we export such water for the medicinal values.

Q). That is a very good dream.

R). Then essentially for researchers, like I said inter alia, we have so many species of medicinal plants. They are there in situ. They are well protected. Unlike in other places where they are either hewed down or the barks are cut down or chopped off for medicinal purposes. But these ones they can be found there, the way they are and can be studied. Then when you think about the ecological aspect-people can come and see what a real mature forest is, ecologically.

Management

Q). Well we have two more areas. The very first one is: Let us talk about management of the groves. What is the management of the grove like now? What organisations are involved?

R). Eh-essentially for now we will say the federal government in the sense that she provides the staff which manages the crew of which I am, by the Grace of God, the head. The curator. We curate everything that is in there.

Q). Does the federal government-using what organisation?

R). The federal government is the major partner in this business of protecting the groves or managing it. And in the past we have not had this kind of help coming from Support Group. And I heard that the Support Group are deriving their own support too from IUCN and Ford Foundation. So we want more. There are other areas that people can come in to help by way of protecting and preserving or managing. Because we are cash ...

Q). But you have only mentioned federal government?

R). Yeah! At the top you have the federal government without which, you know, others can not come in. Others coming in are just support groups.

Q). Like what?

R). Like Osun Groves Support Group. They are also depending on IUCN in Netherlands and Ford Foundation.

Q). There are no other organisations in Nigeria, here either in Osogbo, also involved?

R). Let me be very straight forward. Federal government meaning National Commission for Museums and Monuments in particular and since they are being funded by the federal government that's why we are trying to mention..

Q). State government is not involved?

R). No. They are interested in the financial values. I am sorry to say. They wanted the, their-they are specifically interested in the touristic aspect which will attract money. I have just written a letter in which they are asking me to come and have a meeting so that we can develop the place into a tourist attraction area.

Q). And that is not your own vision?

R). That is not our own vision. It is at abeyance with what we have in mind. But none the less in the management of the National Museum and Monument also known as the Osun Groves, we need money. Mama Susan Wenger has been spending tons and tons of money, personal money to develop that place. Mama is growing old. She is not getting enough money and as such there are places that require funding. And that is why we are not strictly against their coming in.

Q). Because of tourism?

R). Yes, in terms of tourism. Because it will generate some fund from which we can plough back to manage the Osun Groves.

Q). We will still carry on with this issue of management. You have identified only the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, do you think there are other organisations that should be involved in management?

R). Sure! At the state level, we think, like in my proposal, if the Osun Tourism, or whatever, Osun Commerce, Industry, Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Osun government as a, in its entirety wish to derive revenue they should take proper interest in the management of the grove. Not just coming in when we have suffered so many problems of beating, harassment and are been locked up by the police. They are now coming in when everything is now in position. So if they intend to participate in the collection of funds they should equally be a co-manager or co-founder of the management of the groves. And in any case, we also know these days that the local government are being provided with enough funds.

Q). So they can also come in?.

R). They can also come in . And whatever proceeds will be shared with the federal government being the superior and others coming in as subordinates.

Q). You mentioned the issue of fauna and flora. The issue of expertise in this area, is it not important in management?

R). It is and that is why we feel, in the past, mama, Susan Wenger has been crying that she needs 1 or 2 people to come and fully understudy the grove properly. But good enough! I mean bad enough, at that time there was no money to sponsor somebody. But as God will have it or as nature, let me say because some people will not want to call God or whatever, as nature will have it, all people there are growing interest by various groups intending to know what is in there both floristically or fauna materials there.

Q). Ain't there ministries that handle expertise in such areas? Maybe should be part of management?

R). Yes! The Forestry Department in the last couple of years have been of tremendous help. When we have, State Ministry of Forestry. We have always cried to them for assistance.

Q). Not that they are part of management?

R). No they are not part of management. When we feel we want to re-afforestate where there has been edaphic problems, we go to them . They subsidise seedlings we plant even though seedlings are often uprooted again. We go back to them and they are never tired. So they have been part of. We pay a kind of subsidised because they know we are not commercialising it. So in essence the Forestry Dept can be part of the management.

Q). One last aspect. From the discussion, you made mention that mama (Susan Wenger) has been spending. Can we consider her as part of the co-managers?

R). In fact, as far as we are concerned, in principle, not in theory, I mean let say in theory, mama is a major sponsor of the management of that place. But because she is an embodiment of the federal government.

Q). What is her relationship with the federal government?

R). She is a staff of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments. R). One thing I should I should say, I am certainly very old but not being pensioned. But I am still considered as an important person in the management but nothing the head of station and myself, do not discuss together. He is very naturally keen on getting my opinion according to my experience. And I think, I mean, I run around. I may see the one oversees practically, we can say practically, I could not complain that I am neglected. R). To add more to what she is saying. By Nigerian civil service rules and

regulations, at 60 you are no more in service. But because of the specific and important nature, federal government attaches to Susan Wenger, they allowed her even at 83 to continue as a staff. So because we recognise her management role in the groves we have decided to keep her until she feels she does not want to do it again.

Q). Where does the Sacred Art Group come in?

R). I do not think I have to say. I have to have the ideas. Then I represent them. Then give it to group. On the Sacred Art, the idea was that the Orugba religion, the traditional religion is alive. There is no need to have a repetition. If we want to stay alive, we have to breath the air of today. And we are all artists. But in the beginning I was the artist. I was actually in charge of important rituals. It started not in the Osun groves. But in the other side. In the Idibaba. And we have important rituals in the shrine was more or less falling down. That was our first shrine. And that gave us the inspiration.

Q). Where was the first shrine?

R). That is the other side of the town. Idibaba. Then we, Idibaba, Iya Osun of the town then was my close friend already. She prophesied that we travel to Osogbo. When I said no, then she told us that because of the termites invaded first time in history of Osun major shrine which is much older than the town is the beginning of the town. And so we got our inspiration, myself, the orisa, we got our inspiration to be more and more shrines. The last district officer, who you know, there were four, I think four, still in the area after independence. They still had four district officers. I think four. And the last one called me and said he would help me to hold official survey. The whole thing developed very naturally. It was a very good set of people. The first one to meet government. The man helped us a lot. And he arranged for the official survey. done. Federal government paid for the official survey done in Osogbo. When we already worked there, there was a district officer, Mac Coy, who was an only serving son living together with the high judge of Osogbo, a woman of that time we used to go to the river together. When this Awolowo school was the circle because parents were afraid to killing me or get lost. He gave that that which is now a lady Ontoto. I tell you all that because it is really that is the symbol of whatever site of your understanding. The gods and myself work together like that. When I was still in Ede, I being so to sat, with my guru, the Ogbatala priest "Ajajemin", we use to sing I believe in the principal orisa. Therefore, we use to cast off ideas, playful. There everything is. This house has become the principal orisa. It was not being my self. But I feel in it. What I have to say this. It came ever since more or less by the rays of orisa.

R). All this discussion, what is important is that I want to preserve Osun Groves. All this that you are saying, why we want Osun forest to remain for ever, is because Osogbo town. When we can still find people who want to help Osun. Our elders indicated where houses could be built, beyond which houses could not be built. Such areas were said to belong to Osun. The reigning Oba usually hold this in trust for Osogbo town and indigenes. This area actually belongs to the Oba. This is the reason why we want Osun forest to remain the same and preserved.

Q). What do you have to say about the Sacred Group?

R). Our objective is to take care of the Osun Forest in such a way that when mama eventually retires, there will be people to take over from her and eventually also hand over to a younger generation. Our objective is also to assist Ibo (sacrifices) in Osogbo town.

R). A group of artists like the Imbari Bayo. It is a group of artists. It is even now our programme to get together. One of them is Imbari Bayo has come back to Osogbo and has founded a professional artists association in which we like brothers are together. We are planning an exhibition together with the government coming to help us with that. The newspapers have fast developed to be a cave out of the first people we gave to exhibit is the Baba and the Reverend Diya, Osun. He told us he was the first one who got the land there at 3, 4, already dismissed. This is how we, Osun gave the order to Iya Osun to test the wood to preserve the shrine. To get rid of the termite. Then Osun asked for a law or whatever. For me it was horrible idea like church who are making the law. Then she asked through the oracle through Iya Osun-which in our plan has not to suggest that Osun priest are very tough part. So it came that the gods asked us to do this and that. Actually, it is my idea that art is the language which preaches and provides the most idea. This is how we express our religious feeling to all. And this happen together as a group under various application-really in the house. We are one group of artists. Imbarim Bayo is another group of artists. But we working together.

Educational Strategies

Q). The last aspect, I want us to look at, there is this perception of Osun Groves . I don't know how to put it. But as we have being going round, they see the place as something to practise traditional religion. We are just being euphemistic even using that word. Therefore the potentialities of Osun groves have not actually been used to the maximum. How can we change this perception in Osogbo community so that they can use the place, all the features that are there for the betterment of the community?

R). Thinking about how to survive and thinking the groves to survive, as Mr. Arco mentioned, the media have to help in particularly intelligent way. It has to be really a way of spirituality, because which is understandable of value to the whole world. There are people like Abimbola and so on. I just came across where he was talking about the importance of tertiary nature in Ifa. He mentioned Osun groves. He talked how one can materialise to put into living the wisdom of Ifa. In this way, we put into reality the wisdom of the traditions of Osun. The sixteen cowry shells. The oracle of the people.

Q). So you think we should use the spiritual aspects of Osun?

R). Yes! That is what I am teaching with you. If I find out at first that if the traditional every town head of sacred grove is a part of necessity. So in the future the Osun groves have now what one own "Itse akoko" Nearly fifty years to find out that what is established her in the Osun groves by our art by the works of Osun priests and by the fauna and flora points a light into the future of humanity spiritual survival.

Q). I like that phrase " points a light into the future of spiritual survival".

Q). Putting it bluntly, our general perception from the people we have spoken to, once you hear Osun groves, some of them will not want to talk to us. They see it purely as idolatry. What can be done to change this perception?

R). I said, inter alia, that we need a lot of education for the people. Essentially in a Muslim society we find the level of education to be rather low. And without slighting Osogbo, because it is a major Muslim town, you don't have, you know, the illiteracy level is rather high. And as such we need symposium, workshops and this should be organised in Yoruba because the better people that will serve the symposium or the workshops will only be able to communicate in Yoruba. We can then transcribe it if we so wish and publish. We could make folklore in the evenings about 8:00 clock when most farmers, when most people would have retired home. We have a lot of folk lore about Osun that could be relayed at cheap rate over the radio and television.

Q). Like drama and dram sketches.

R). Exactly. Yes. Even stories. We have proposed that but we don't have the fund to do that. But if people are coming in now they are having this little money we can maximise the little amount they have to project what Osun is, in the real perspective not in the ritualistic approach they are looking at it. And any case you find most of this clergy men not wanting to talk to you because that has been the way. But these days we have been trying over the radio, though mama,

has been the major sponsor, to tell people that, look, this place is not only the way you see it. That is a narrow viewing of Osun. Any moment from now, we are glad, Osun will be listed in the World Heritage property. And that makes it even more popular than what it is now. So if it is going to be listed..

Q). Who does the listing?

R). It is the World Heritage Organisation. A non-governmental organisation like UNESCO and what have you. They have written a lot of papers on this place and it has been cited as one of the best places in Nigeria. So that what we are saying in essence, is that we should educate the people. And how do we do it? We should have local seminars in local languages. Go to the radio and have jingles once in a while. on what Osun stands for. Not just rituals. They could go there for relaxation. Of late Kabiyesi and myself were discussing on having some slabs, sitting slabs where people could sit down and relax. You know, but again we do not want to deface that place unnecessarily. We can use wood and what have you. When he was mentioning things like slabs I said well, it won't make it look natural again. But we could cut wood, trees outside or bamboo, palms' get something natural and people can come there and sit. Researchers can come relax. People can come for leisure and so many things. So if by the time we do that for one or two years, not necessarily running through the year, but once in a while maybe once in a quarter. A lot of people will have a different perception of that place.

Q). Do you have any other thing to tell us about the groves?

R). What I want to say is that it is interesting, an interesting talk. Everyday can bring us blessings. Whatever new can begin to pass. Action! Action! Action! We have our crisis. There is trouble and this and that. And nothing goes in our head. What I feel is that we need action. Our discussion today was very good but I will like you to see breeeee. But not in process destroy things. Action. Action in the right direction.

Q). The final word from you.

R). What ever be the case, I believe it is the level of enlightenment that caused the negative reactions of the people. Because I still believe that we have young Muslims and Christians that see the place as a place of pride to we indigenes. And but some old men and other things like that because of the acquired knowledge before either because of their religious inclination or other things that they give wrong impression to them. And that is why those people are behaving in that line. But as curator said they will embark on the programme of educating the people, carrying out workshops and

things like that. I believe people will have brighter ideas about the conservation and proper use of the place.

Q). You don't see any conflict between tourism and your interest in terms of conservation and preservation of the place?

R). No! We don't They go pari parsu without one disturbing the other. There is usually a catch-up point. And that, the extent of getting close to the shrine area, the devotees don't really want, they don't want what should be shrouded in secrecy to be known. And as such tourists are to be guided to those areas and not just any body doing it.

Q). To be guided to which area?

R). To the shrine by the devotees only. And we are employed to do that. And that is where there is conflict.

R). Like any other religion, potentially every born human being is a potential worshipper. In having walked they are now drinking water and so and on. It is only that it is more intense, the consecration of the priest. The more responsible the priest hood for the atmosphere. This is where there exist some taboos. They swore that they secretly. It is for the sake of the intensity of the atmosphere that the priest needs privacy for certain aspects of the religion. Outside that the priest goes to the river to sit there. whether the visitor is black or white. And they would have informed them before how they have to behave. Hopefully, they behave well. But it is traditionally the priest has no other income more than what the worshipper brings. So we have to transform the aspect of tourist into a pilgrim. That was my problem for the first ten years. I was somehow very frustrated to come and keep for production role. But we have seen them that the orisa. There is some much trauma in a few people who may come from Lagos or somewhere like that. It does not contradict the religion which is using nature as its first priesthood. The visitors who come now, they will understand and as potential pilgrims. And they are so happy. When they go again. That is nothing wrong. A few photographs. A few snapshots. The visitor is normally in the groves not more than half an hour.

R). What I want to say is that the help I would want to ask for from the government or any person/individual that can do it, is the help from police concerning cultural matters, it is not satisfactory. It is giving the officials serious problems. This is because when cases are reported to the police, it is usually trivialised. No matter what, before a case is taken to the police it must have some element of importance. The second help has to do with forestry where you come from. We need them. We want the file of Osun shrine to remain permanently with them. Like the governor of Osun State, he should

also have a file on us, so that if there is any matter pertaining to us so that there will be continuity of work done. There was an instance when a soldier was caught fishing, permission must be sought from Ede to effect his arrest. If we were not courageous we would have ran away. So we need help from the government, the media houses so that our activities would not be trivialised.

Attendance

1. Susan Wenger
2. Debo Areo-Curator
3. Adebisi Akanji
4. Kasali Akangbe Ogun

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Appendix 16

Nike Gallery

Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History

Q). Our discussion is focused on Osun groves. On its preservation and conservation. Our very first issue we want to tackle is the issue of the establishment of the groves. The history of the grove itself. When was the grove established? Who established them and Why were they established? How many groves are there?

R). The issue of the history is beyond our perception for now because we came and met it and it has never occurred to me to even ask about how the groves were established.

Importance

Q). Now we want to talk about the importance of the groves. You as a member of I don't know the right description for your profession. What would you call it?

R). We are purely professional artists. We are equally involved in the promotion of the tourism industry.

Q). So being a professional artist and a promoter of tourism what do you see as the importance of the grove to you?

R). The importance is in two dimensions, one, sacred, two, social. Sacred in the sense that, you may not be aware but every second week of August there is a great Osun festival in which people from all works of life come to worship, to give thanks to what they have received from previous worship and two to ask for more blessings. Social in the sense that like Kenya and East African countries where you have the forest reserves as their main source of foreign exchange this grove also suppose to serve as a source of foreign exchange earning for the country. People come from all works of life come to see the work of the legendary Susan Wenger who has most of statures in the groves.

Q). Can you be more specific, in terms of what do you as a person derive, let's say for instance in a grove they have animals, structures e.t.c. You as a promoter what specifically do you use that place for?

R). Like I said promotion of art and tourism is our own area of specialisation. It is very very interesting for instance to see that ambassadors, heads of nations in Nigeria come here to ask us about the groves. And you see us, any one of us here in this centre is capable of taking such people to the groves.

Q). So you serve as a guide?

R). Okay as a guide.

Q). What about plays, or going to take pictures. Do you do that gentlemen?

R). Yes, we do that.

Q). What do you do?

R). We go there to take pictures and to record

Q). Record what?

R). Cultural events. For instance if, you want to, the Nike centre for art and culture is doing documentation and I do not have part of the groves there, is not complete because at the end of the day you only talk about yourself there as an artist but what about the other aspect of being a tourist promoter? The grove comes in handy there.

Q). Has there be any decline or increase in terms of the activities you have enumerated, compared to 10 years ago and now? Has there been an increase or decrease?

R). Definitely there has been some slight changes. Because if you look at even the human existence as a Nigerian you will note that what life use to be 10 years ago is not what life is now. Because everything seems to almost go beyond what the average man can get. Take for instance, 10 years ago that you mentioned, the cost of fuelling a vehicle from Lagos to Osogbo cost less than N500 to and fro, but now when you think of getting N10,000 to fill your tank to and fro, accommodation is there, you will think twice. Why can't I use this N10,000 to go to places like the whistling palms where you can spend less. Generally, the economy of the country has drastically affected this thing on the negative side

Q). In what way?

R). The activities have decreased drastically. Not too many tourists come nowadays and when they come, when we ask them this question it is this same answer they give.

Q). Do you have some contributions?

R). Well as my partners have said Osun groves serve as tourism centres for our visitors. Apart from that, we use that place as a place where our people can see the way we preserve our own forest. For example now in one part of Germany we have a church there where they embalmed about ten bodies for people to see. So if you travelled to Germany to that area they will take you to the place to see the type of things they have there. Likewise here we must let our visitors, the foreigners know the beauty of our areas in the side of culture.

Q). So it is the preservation of culture?

R). Yes, it is the preservation of culture, for example here we preserve our culture and our, how could I put it, culture...

Q). What about the animals and plants there, are they of interest to you?

R). Yes, of course. Because even if this people did not see this thing they will ask of it.

Q). See what?

R). Animals, because we have monkeys there, we have antelopes and different types of animals like that.

Q). So you also agree with Mr Peter that the activities have decreased?. In terms of tourists coming in?.

R). Yes, because of the situation of the country.

Perception

Q). Now let us talk about this issue of perception?. What is your perception of the groves? What do you think about it? What is it for?

R). The grove as far as I am concerned is a marvellous contribution to the development of not only art and culture but the tourism industry, tourism and recreation in Nigeria. Here for instance. This woman comes to mind Susan Wenger. For a white to have being around in an environment that does not belong to her and she is consistently and conscientiously, I mean seeing to the development of that place to that extent. Now she is 83 years going to 84 years. She still goes to the grove to work and anywhere she sees any damage on any of the structures, she quickly calls the attention of the people there to do it. In fact that place to me is a great place to behold.

Q) To behold? To be more precise, that means it must not die? Are you saying it is a sacred place?

R). Yes, it is a sacred place.

Q). You said earlier on when we were talking about the importance, you said sacred and social: and maybe social to be specific you said tourism. If you were to compare the sacredness and tourism perspectives, in terms of perception, which is the most important to you?

R). Definitely, the sacredness.

Q). The sacredness?

R). Yes, sacredness. Sacredness is the number one perception.

Q) What about you sir?

R). It is the same thing.

Q). Why do you say it is the same?

R). Okay, you know due to the belief of we Africans. You know we have our gods before the arrival of the white people. And we have so much belief in it even though this Koran or biblical something they are with us, but still our own traditional belief is there and for those people that believe in them, that thing will be working with them. For example now there is impact of traditional belief in the people that believe in them. For example now in the past, for a hunter, if

you see the wife of your partner and if the wife of your partner stood up from her seat, you as a partner or friend of that hunter should not sit on that seat. And those things were guiding us until the arrival of this people.

Q). So it is sacredness?

R). Yes, so you see this belief in this Christianity and Islamic something created many things that are affecting us because once we have lost interest in the belief of our tradition, that foreign religion, they are foreign, that one is due to the custom of the areas they come.

Q). Thank you very much, you said sacredness is number one, as a professional you have to live on money, what about tourism?

R). As far as tourism is concerned it is a new innovation into the cultural life of our people. You know in those days for you to go to the groves you must either belong to that grove or believe in it, or you have problems you want to go and solve there. This tourism aspect has now opened it up to everybody. Before it is not easy or common for a Muslim, for instance, to go into the Church to pray and vice-versa. So I will tell you that as far as the grove is concerned, the grove is the heart beat of this town, and this stands from the Kabiyesi down to the least person, believe so much in that grove.

Threats

Q). Now you so much talked about the sacredness of the groves. Now what are the likely threats. From what you have said, you want the groves to remain the way its been. What are the likely threats?

R). Very good question. Good question in the sense that from your own research I want you to emphasise this and you should note it. Well people of other religions believe that place should not be left fallow just like that. And there is a threat of the man, I don't know. They call him Mulkadah. He is a Mohammedian who decided to build a school, an Islamic school on the land acquired by the federal government as a preserved area. This caused a lot of havoc some three months ago to the extent that cudgels were freely used. Physical assault and so on, on the people worshipping in the groves. I want, apart from a legislation banning all sort of physical development that are not cultural. Let me use my oga's, that is anathema to the development of cultural development in the grove. The use of that groves. The legislation is there but it is old. Old in the sense that it was acquired during the old western region. And even though the National Commission for Museum and Monuments are doing a lot but you know protocol, it takes time. For instance orders have been given for destruction of that school since about 3-4 months ago, it cannot be carried out.

Q). You have identified one threat, development.

R). Yes.

Q). What is the other threat?

R). Can I call it desert encroachment now? When you cut a tree.

Q). Felling of trees?

R). Felling of trees.

Q). That is the second one.

R). And this too is tied to bush burning.

Q). Bush burning.

R). For instance if you go to the grove now, you will see that there is a fence being started by Osun Support Group headed by Susan Wenger to bring the area into an enclosure whereby fire and what have you can't have access, then hunters. Hunters should be warned not to go. I mean the law banning poaching in any where there is forest reserve should be strictly adhered to. Then we need government forest guards, to be brought in so that at least for once people will know there is serious attempt at preservation of that grove.

Q). Thank you very much. I think you have actually been reading my thoughts. Because I was going to say what are the ways of preventing these threats?. But I will just summarise what you said, legislation, wall fencing, make sure that hunters are warned, how do you want to warn them?

R). You see, they know that killing an animal in that grove is prohibited for the hunters. Poaching should be illegal. And when you are doing that type of thing, you do not do it in the English way. You have to let them realise. Public enlightenment, in Yoruba should be used basically and here, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments comes in there because they are the sole custodian of the groves.

Q). Do you have any contribution in terms of how to preserve, to make sure the threats are taken care of?

R). Yes, in addition, the road leading to that grove you know it also leads to another town. The government should make a diversion of that road. They should make another for people going to the other town. They should divert the road for people going to the town.

Road

Q). Why are you saying this? Why should that road be diverted?

R). So that the road from the palace will lead to the grove only in order to stop people from disturbing the grove.

Q). Are you saying the road is a threat to the continual existence of the groves?

R). Yes.

Q). In what way?

R). You know at times when the ritual sacrifice is going on, at times the time falls into the time of the market day, so people going to the market to buy and sell, their vehicle going to the other town may be disturbing people that come to the grove.

Q). Mr Peter what is your own contribution?

R). Yes, in as much as I will support that there could be an alternative too.

Q). Is it a threat?

R). Definitely yes. In as much development requires good roads and infrastructures, but then when you look at the cultural importance of that place I would have loved a situation where that road is not even tarred at all. Not tarred but not that it would not be maintained.

Q). So would you say the road should be closed totally?

R) No, but we can put a gate across. Something like, there are different ways of saying this road is not for you to just pass. When you use to pass this road free of charge and next day you get there, they tell you, you have to pay this amount, when you have to look at the cost of petrol, cost of this and that, then toll gate again, you will think twice. You will look for an alternative road. So naturally people will find their own way and they will not disturb worshippers when they are worshipping.

Q). So let me just take you through one area, we are members of Osogbo community and the grove belongs to Osogbo community. Are we not entitled to take some products from the groves. Let's say some herbs or some animals?

R). No, you got it totally wrong. The groves are sacred, everything there is sacred. The plants, the animals. Only the water that is medicinal can be taken out of that place.

Q). So people can go there and take water.

R). Oh yes and people actually come there to take water.

Q). You share the same view?

R). Yes, in fact that is one of the headache mama is having. Anytime she hears bamm (sound) toward the groves. She feels, she becomes feverish because she will say another monkey is gone again and I think it is better for you to know the impact of what I am saying. You should go and see her.

Aspirations

Q). So what is your dream/aspiration for Osun groves?

R). My aspiration is that it will come to a time where the mere mentioning of Osun groves, will ring a bell like, one will like to compare it, in fact the National theatre is child's play from what I want that place to be.

Q). Be more specific. What do you have in mind?

R). Like that place, the preservation of that place for posterity.

Q). So preservation has to be there? What next?

R). People should not just read from the books, they should come and see and contribute their own quota so that their own children too and their children's generation yet unborn will come and see it.

Q). To you sir?

R). Well I think government should put more efforts into the development of the groves so that, for example, now Mecca is now becoming a place where Muslims get to visit for a pilgrimage, so likewise the same thing being a sacred place where people use to ask for things, like for their children, prosperity and other things. So that place must be preserved and maintained very well.

Management

Q). Now lets talk a bit about the management of the place. Now are you aware of how the place is managed?

R). That question is trickish. If I say I do not know I'm telling lies. And if I say I know is another way of saying...

Q). Okay sir, what organisations are involved in managing the groves?

R). The National Commission for Museums and Monuments is suppose to be the sole custodian. Then I'm hearing of one Osun Support Group. From my discussion with mama, that thing is just on paper.

Q). What is just on paper?

R). The Osun Support Group. Mama is another person in the management.

Q). Which mama?

R). Susan Wenger. Even though the National Commission for Museums and Monuments are trying to play her role very lightly. But I'm aware that when ever they have problems it is her they run to i.e. when ever the museum people have problems with the Mohammedians. In fact, their main problem is with the Mohammedians. They ran to mama going to Abuja, to and fro. It is mama that provided the funds. Even some of the support group members are being paid by mama and it is unfortunate that at this age when she should be thinking of looking back at her achievements, she is still running around to get money to maintain that place.

Q). So from your perspective, National Commission for Museums and Monuments and Susan Wenger are the two people you are aware of that run the grove.

R). Yes, they are run but I'm also hearing of the Osun Support. I do not know their function.

Q). Now from your own perspective what are the organisations you think should be running the groves?

R). I want the Ministry of Commerce and Tourism to take over the running of that place. Because National Commission for Museums and Monuments is under Information and Culture and Information and Culture is too big and their main concern is government propaganda. So the information aspect is what they concentrate on leaving aspects, culture and tourism to suffer. So if they can move our monumental areas like the Osun groves, the Oyo national park, Olumo rock and what have you under the Ministry of Commerce and Tourism, it will be marvellous.

Q). Don't you think professional like you should be part this management?

R). Of course when you talk of the Osun Support Group for instance, it suppose to encompass every other person around and the little we can do we are doing it. We take tourists there and frankly speaking, these people give their widow's mite to the prince and princess there, and the guards. And of recent National Commission for Museums and Monuments are now saying that for us to take tourists to that place, this how much we are going to pay and we are trying our possible best to see that if that money will be used judiciously we have no option but to get them that money for them to use.

Q). What about funding of the groves? Who should provide funds for running the place?

R). Of course the government should do that. That is why I am saying that putting the groves under Commission of Museums and Monuments and the Ministry of Information and Culture is a misplaced priority because if that place is under Tourism and Commerce, and tourism means buying and selling in a lay man's this thing, because any commerce they know must bring money, so if few are expecting money from the groves they will do something to entice people to improve the grove.

Educational Strategies

Q). So those are the organisations you think should run the groves. Let us talk about, you alluded to the fact earlier that apparently the groves are not been used to the best of its potentials. What are some of the educational strategies that may be used to create awareness or enlighten people about the potentials of the people.

R). Initially I said sacredness is number one. But this thing should not be the main focus of the promoters of that place because when you start talking about sacredness the Muslims for instance will

draw back and Christians the same thing and if you look at the number of traditional worshippers compared to this thing, it is very minimal. What I'm saying in essence is that even sacredness should be used as an advantage.

Q). How?

R). That is using it as an educational programme not training centre. As educational programme for instance if you are doing or reading Islamic law or even the conventional law you will have to come to Osogbo, for instance what are the things this place can provide viz. a viz, the traditional law. Are you getting me now?. Like traditional law in those days it was very unsafe for someone who knows he has stolen something to swear by Sango for instance, because he knows that he will get the judgement instantly. Plainly. No go come. It is computer this thing. But now this thing is being underplayed. Do not talk about Ogun, Sango or Osun. It is a bush man's idea. It is this or that. Civilisation should be de-emphasised viz. a viz. the traditional religion.

Q). So what you are saying is that it can be used for educational purposes but linking it to the tradition.

R). So that at the end of the day when people are reading about it they will not say this bush people and that bush people.

Q). So it should be documented?

R). Yes, it should be documented fully even though we have a lot of researchers working on the groves here and there but it is like I'm writing a thesis, you know the scope the thesis can go. It is a library thing. For instance, Susan herself has been able to write a book on the Osogbo sacred groves. I think when you get to her. I have a copy but somebody is using it.

Q). What you are saying essentially is that there should be publicity, enlightenment

R). and using Festac model.

Q). What is Festac model?

R). Festac will say we want to see our culture in the Diaspora i.e. black culture, black awareness, everywhere there are black people, we want to tell them that Ogun even though originated from the Yoruba land could be practised in this and that and when you go to places like Brazil, Cuba, the Caribbean .(Arabians) you will find out that Osun worshippers, Ogun worshippers or what have you. We are not even doing anything here.

Q). So what are the other strategies you can use to enlighten people about the goodness of the groves?

R). There the Federal Ministry of Information can come in here. Not as a manager but as a promoter and again the organised private sectors should come in.

Q). What about schools? How can schools come in?

R) Schools like resource centre, African Studies and what have you can come in.

Q). Or secondary schools for instance?

R). There is a limit to which they can, they should be used rather than them using us. Rather than them using the place. It is them that the focus should be on. So that they will know from that age that there is nothing forbidden in the grove.

Q). So it is like catch them young.?

R). Yes, it is catch them young.

Q). Do you have anything to say?

R). I do not have anything to say. Only what I have in mind is that if we can make documentary films and if they can assemble those that know about Osun grove very well and gather the story together and make the documentary films of the Osun grove. May be, they can during the time of the festival, they can select a day and show that film to the people. If they can do that it will attract people. So from that one they will know the value of that thing. Those that did not know the value before will know the value and they will now listen to what ever instruction given by anybody on the radio or television about the groves.

Q). One thing that comes out of our discussion so far is that people of other faith seem, to resist the place. How can we reach out to them?

R). That is what I'm telling you now. That the whole lot of us are pretenders. Yes, we hide under Islamic religion and under Christianity to do a lot of havoc to ourselves viz.-a-viz....killing the goose that lay the golden egg. What about the religion? Was there no religion before? There was religion. A Christian can go to court and take the bible, and say I swear by the Almighty God that the evidence I am going to give in the court shall be the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help me God. But when they say this is Sigidi take Sigidi and swear. He will pick race (run away) because he knows that there is going to be a repercussion. There is going to be repercussion. So it is only when we say do this and to get result that they will hide but if you say, you will be surprised by the traffic of people going there in the night. People go there secretly, some of them pack their white garment under the armpit to pray. Go to the Osun shrine in the palace.

Q). We were there yesterday, sorry on Saturday.

R). People go there. Don't they tell you that ?.

R),. We saw some of the people there.

R). So what are we saying. When you ask them-in fact there is this case in my village, the masqueraders were beating everybody and the Church came out and called the man in charge and said look why are your masquerades doing this to people. Please warn them, the man laughed and laughed again and said what is the problem. He said it is unfortunate that you don't know what you talking about. He said what do you mean, how many sons does he have and as a matter of fact that man has just one son. All others are female and of course when you talk of the masquerade, is the men. He said go and talk to your children at home and by the time you do that you will solve the problem.

Q). So what are you saying in essence? We should talk to ourselves?.

R). Yes we should talk to our selves. Saint Paul said that there is no food that is actually given to an idol because idols do not exist. It is only faith, by faith that you say this thing given to an idol and he says if you eat, eat but if you know your eating will lead your partner whose faith is not as strong as yours into destruction don't do it in his presence. So actually when you talk of idol or what have you there is nothing like that.

Take for instance I was talking to Sangodare, one of the people you will meet in Susan Wenger's place, he said he was living close to one of the Pentecostal guys. He always talks to him that my friend why are you worshipping idols? Why are you doing this? He will tell him, look my friend 'what is idol' this thing you see, this carving is not the means itself, is a way of getting to where you want to get to. He now continues pestering him. He now calls him, "my friend I will become a Christian today if you bring your bible and talk to your bible and let your bible answer you". The man now said is not possible how can a book talk. We are all doing the same things but we using different means.

Q). So essentially there should be a lot of education, enlightenment?.

Q). You have not mentioned any specific media? What do you think? :

R), I do not know. This day if you think you know communication- before you say Jack Robinson another means is out. Somebody comes from US and he saw my name in the computer, in the internet, I said for what? How did my name get there, no somebody sent a message on my behalf from Lagos. I did not see it myself. He is in US. and he saw it. If you can use internet. I'm distance and get the reply. The television, the radio. Radio is one of the most important because it has the largest audience and an average villager even if it is not more than two-three in a village, you will see them gathered around it at one time or the other of the day to listen to what is happening.

Q). What about professionals like you?

R). Professionals too can do it if you want your market to move without putting it on radio and television. Tell your partner, from your partner to another partner, before you know it the whole town is aware.

Q). Interpersonal?

R). Yes

Q). General experience as a professional regarding the groves.

R) I will thank you very much so far so good. You are the first set of people that will come and actually take concern, even though, yours is to work on, you are on research. I want you to carry the zeal, anxiety to the end and see that what comes out with and your recommendation for upliftment and preservation of the place is strictly adhere to.

Q) And you sir?

R). I want to advise you as you have planned to do this thing don't let it be a dog on the paper that can not bite. What you came for, let this thing, government act on it and make use of your research.

Attendance

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Mr. Peter Eniolorunda | Curator |
| 2. Mr. Mufu Ahmed | Co-ordinator |

Appendix 17
Omo-Osorun Botanical Centre
In-Depth Individual Interview Transcribed Report
History

Q). When, who and why where the groves established and how many groves are there?

R). When the tree fell, the tree fell into the river. So that trees won't fall and destroy their dwelling. The river spirit started complaining you have broken all my dyeing pots. Then Olutimehin a hunter and a brave man put on his war attire and went to see the spirit inside the bottom of the river and met Osun there. And the goddess told him that spirit and human beings cannot live together. That their staying in the river bank was not beneficial to her, that they have broken all the dyeing pots. Olutimehin then narrated their experience at Ipole during the dry season, that they drank water with mud and many people died during the dry season and that is the reason they changed location to Osun bank. Osun now said it was alright if that is the case they should leave the edge of the river here that they climb up three times that anywhere they got to, they should settle there. When they started climbing, the first one that got was Ohuntoto, the second one was Jamiegbon and the third one is what is now called the market where the king's place is now. Timehin built his house beside Idi-Osun. Laro himself built his palace opposite Timehin's. And they built the palace facing each other. When Fulani warriors wanted to enter the town Osun fought and did not allow war to enter the town. She cooked gbegiri soup for the warriors at the border of the town where they were. That is where they died. The barren looking for children, anytime they went there to collect concoction, she gave them blessings of children based on the vows they made that year. They will always come to give her something every year. That is how they established the shrine. We can't say the exact time. It was a long time ago.

Q). What are the benefits since they established this Osun groves?

R). The benefits are many because for once the Osun groves protects all the leaves all the leaves for we herbalists that normally use traditional things. The groves protect the herbs, the trees and it also protects the shrines. Sacrifices are offered, not only to Osun but other spirits as well. It also protects ornamentals that we met in the world and they are useful.

Aspirations.

Q). You as a herbalist and who knows the benefits that are there, what do you think about the groves?.

R). What I think is that the place should be preserved so that the place will still be useful. The place should be a sacred place and a place of protection for life.

Threats.

Q) What do you think, can stop the benefits derived from the place?

R). When we start felling trees or bush burning. If they turn the place to a bare land, it will not be sacred again.

Q) Do you still have anything there, that are of benefit?

R). There are so many things right inside there especially at the Ojubo (Main shrine). For example the shrine of Ohuntoto is where the chain of Ohuntoto is, where he entered into the ground there which is still there since inception. And Ohuntoto told them that whenever there is war, the people drag/pull the chain and he will appear to them at the spot.

Q) What do you want the place to be in the future?-that is your aspirations?

R). It should be for preservation. From my own knowledge there is a place in Rio-Brazil which is just an ordinary mountain and anyone that travelled to Brazil will be taken there to see the mountain. Let it be a tourist centre.

Q). Is there any other thing you want to see there in the future?

R). Another thing I can say is that all the primitive items that are there related to Osun, should be preserved. Like the groundnut bush which is meant for the hunters where they perform certain ceremony. The Onya bush which is there and should be preserved.

Q) Apart from being a herbalist and a dramatist, can the grove be used for drama. production.

R). It is useful for it. Each time we want to act plays for the television, we normally use the Osun grove. Because there are old buildings there. If we want to use bush, rivers or plays of olden days, we normally use the Osun groves.

Management

Q). Who are the people you think should take care of Osun groves? Who are the people currently managing the groves?

R). I think the National Museum are the people taking care of it in collaboration with Susan Wenger and her people are the people managing the place. If there is uprightness I do not think there is any need for another organisation. But at times the support received from National Museum representative is not always good enough. So the support of the representative of National Museum and that of our people can bring success.

Q). Concerning the management, can the Ataoja or the Cultural Heritage and other organisations or people like you be part of the management?

R). Ataoja formed the Cultural Heritage and we are the pioneers. I was among the people that established the Cultural Heritage. We are the pioneers. I think what Ataoja wants, is that he will not want the Osun festival to go without any appreciable support from the people of the community. Osogbo Cultural Heritage is doing what they can do in terms of promoting it during the Osun festival. Ataoja as a father, who owns all the masquerades and all other gods in the town has done a lot to promote and project the festival.

Q). You as a person, if you are asked to be part of the management team, would you like that?

R). Ha, I will like that. I will support it. It will be my joy to support the progress of the place

Funding

Q). Who are the people you think should be providing money for the management of the groves?

R). The people that can give money is the government. If they develop the place like the one we see overseas the money realised will be enough to fund the place. The place that is the grove can start funding itself. Like the government given money for investments and later the place will start funding itself. In the Osun groves there should be a place called information centre so that what ever the visitors want to know about the town, or about Yemi Elebubon, or about Jimoh Buraimoh. There should be a corner for each activity concerning a particular personality, gallery in the town. There should be a brochure concerning shrines in the town, hotels in the town and so on. All the place must be preserved. It is not only the visitors place that will be at the shrine. It will be polluted and it will spoil the environment. Hotels must not be at the shrine. Only the information on where they will get hotels in the town that will be at the shrine.

Road.

Q). What do you think about the gate that passes the groves to the agriculture farms and the bridges there.?

R). The road should be there. We have to pass the road to the place. If there is no road they will not be able to reach there.

Q). What are other things that you want to say concerning the groves.?

R). That is what I have in mind.

Educational Strategies

Q). There will always be a negative reaction and this have reduced the usage of the place. What do you think are some of the strategies that can be used to remove the negative perception of the place?

R). What kind of negative reaction?

Q). I can give you a typical example when we came in here you received us. There are some places we went to they did not let us in.

R). That has to do with the ignorance of some people. Usually any visitor that comes in, in fact, if you meet me at home there are botanical plants and the temple that we open to the visitors to see. I always welcome people to my temple. I do not accept the concept of negativity and the same people treat visitors or foreigners. We need more work to do to enlighten the devotees of Osun and the people around the place, to make themselves available and allow people to be free. I understand what you mean.

Q). Do you have specific strategies for the people, like for the students?

R). There use to be a programme that we organised for the students. we take them around the groves and all the shrines and temples around Osogbo. We give them historical background of each stream. As you see the Osun, there are a lot of other streams that are connected with the Osun. There is Igbo-Aje, like Busanyin, like Ohuntoto e.t.c. There was a time I co-ordinated the programme and taking them around and make them familiar with the river. That kind of thing is going to be useful.

Q). Now the parents of the children, were they favourably disposed to this type of programme, when you took the children to the grove.

R). We did not contact the parents, we went through their school teachers. Because at home, parents might object to it. They may say they are Muslims or Christians you know our people. But irrespective of religion, this is our cultural heritage and this is what we need to preserve. I don't think it has to do with religion, because we need to be familiar with our own, instead of looking up to other peoples culture. If we can know much about the British and American culture like Shakespeare and we do not know much about Ogun, Sango it is going to be a shame.

Q). Any other questions?

R). No.

We want to thank you sincerely sir, for attending to us at very short notice. Thank you sir.

Attendance

1. Chief-Priest Ifayemi Eleboibun

Appendix 18
Osun Groves Support Group
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History.

Q). When were the groves established? Who established them? Why were they established? How many groves are there?

R). This Osun groves are natural phenomenon which have been for centuries and which have been protected because of traditional indigenous sanctions. You know the origin of the city (Osogbo) was a kind of a sort of a pact between the Osun and the Ataoja. She promised that she would protect the town as long as he protected the groves and including the inhabitants of the groves i.e. the fauna whatever. And the town of Osogbo flourished and people believed, you know, it was a result of the pact with the goddess. But as I said, the exact date is not known. But what is unique about these groves is they have been protected because of traditional religious sanctions. It wasn't the question of some foreign body that came and said look you have got something unique here, you should do this, you should do that. No. These groves have existed because of indigenous sanction which have lasted over the centuries. Unfortunately in the recent past, various individuals in Osogbo have had their eyes on the groves as well, valuable land or resources they could exploit for their own kind of profit. And so we were, mean this group was anxious to try and preserve what has been preserved traditionally over the centuries by the people of Osogbo. It's the people of Osogbo who realise the value of the indigenous culture, ecological value of the groves themselves preserve them. Like I said, because they have been under threat recently, the Osun Group Support Group(OGSG) would try and do something to preserve these groves.

Q). When did you get to know about the groves?

R). Well, I was first aware of the groves in a kind of cultural and religious aspect for 30 years. And it was really because the socio-cultural aspect of Osogbo. I think you know there was a kind of cultural renaissance in the 60's. And it was really the cultural aspect that first brought me in contact with the groves, okay. Then later the ecological and conservational dimensions have come to the fore. But originally it was the sort of Osogbo culture and the groves that attracted my attention. And in 1977 at the time of FESTAC, I wrote a book called "Guide to Nigerian Art" which dealt with traditional and modern arts. And part of it dealt with the Osogbo artists and the groves. My own particular interest was cultural but it later expanded into the conservation and the ecology.

Q). Do you have an idea of the size of the groves?

R). It is 75 hectares. That is the main groves. There are other groves which we have. This is the one that is 75 hectares. The others are located away from that place. But they are located around Osogbo. We haven't been to them.

Q). Do you know the number of groves?

R). I would like to add to the last speaker about the history of the groves. Nobody can know the history of the groves and the real one except the Ataoja. About the number of shrines in Osogbo I am not very sure, but I understand that there are about 23.

Importance

Q). The Osun groves, I mean the set of groves, what would you consider as their importance. We can look at the importance from two dimensions, one as an individual and secondly as a support group?

R). Well, to me, the incident between the Ataoja and this voice. The Osogbo town now surrounds this forest. Now we have such an old forest inside such a large town and is not common. The preservation of the forest mean the preservation of everything in it. Infact the agreement as we were told was that all life-flora, fauna, inside this place, and so to me the religion aspect is not heavy with me, as it is with the devotees. The age of the groves the history behind it and the belief of the people make Osun groves unique and as an African and a Yoruba man, it should be preserved.

Q). Is there any other issue?

R). I just want to add that first of all you will not know the forest is at the edge of the savannah. Yes, it is usual to have ah em a rain forest type of ah you know, forest located in that place, apart from the fact that it is surrounded by a town, you don't have... If you look at say the delta-that is how, that is at the bottom, as you go to the north, you have savannah. Yes that is right. But you have this rain forest type of thing there which is unique. It has been preserved as Eng.Oyelola said through traditional sanctions and beliefs. But from our point of view, if you look at the economic interest that has arisen within the last few years and which has generated a pressure on the grove, give another five-ten years, it will disappear.

Q). Now the question is, is the forest really that big for us to take interest in it?

R). I don't think it is the size we are really interested but the uniqueness of it you know. And I might just say here as a digression when we went to, you know talk to DG of NCMM on our interest to preserve that place, because as you know it is now a monument of NCMM. He wondered if we came from Osogbo. We said no. Then what

is our interest? You know, we told him that this is a heritage of Nigeria and it didn't matter whether the forest existed in Maiduguri or wherever, we would still have the same interest. So to support what Eng. Oyelola said it is in our interest to preserve that forest for ever, you know. And we believe it is something that can be done but not by us but by Osogbo people themselves with our support.

Q). Do you have any issue to raise in terms of the importance again?

R). Yes, we mentioned the stream, we've mentioned the religion in that grove being done by the Osogbo artists, whose sculpture works in that groves attract a lot of visitors attention. And they are extraordinary works. And again they should be preserved. Some of them have been victim of attack by religious fundamentalists, one or two of them, were actually being destroyed. You know, I mean it is a unique place from so many angles and it is like a sculptural museum. And so those works are intrinsically valuable. And also they are valuable as the real interpretation of Yoruba philosophical ideas by somebody who in fact is not Yoruba but who is in sympathy with or in tune to these beliefs. And so it has a very important example of a kind of cross-cultural communication understanding. So from that cultural aspect, the groves are also very important.

Q). The groves has flora, has fauna, ain't the people of that community entitled to some of the flora or fauna?

R). By local tradition-by indigenous tradition, the people are not allowed to kill any animals in that grove. They are not allowed to hunt in the forest. No, they are not entitled and that is an indigenous belief not that somebody is coming from outside to say look, no hunting. But it has been the traditional belief from time, you may not kill animals in that forest. The clause I don't, I am not sure, probably they can't.

R). They sometimes collect herbs of medicinal value but in such a way as not to destroy them. But what we now have is logging which would destroy the forest. And this we have managed to stop or to least to reduce and well I'm told it is now stopped, you know, which is in fact our objective. But as Pat said, they are not allowed to kill the animals which they have been doing. But we are told now the animal population is increasing since we started our activities there.

R). There are many ways to benefit from the place. What we are saying is that whatever benefit that the people in that area may get should be a benefit that will last for their children as they have met. If we are saying that I don't think it is right for any body's immediate benefit to the detriment of the coming generation. That my own. If they can find a way benefiting, destroying and leaving to posterity.

Perception.

Q). Well it is really tied to the issue of perception. You've almost said it. What issues first and foremost come to your mind when Osun groves is mentioned?

R). There is a great tranquillity in those groves. And also it is a kind of symbol or a freedom in Nigeria. Because the Osun worshippers have a place which is their own where they can practice their rituals or whatever. And it is a place that attracts Africans in Diaspora from all over, who share these beliefs according to works who carry the works overseas and are still surviving there. And they in fact do come there as a kind of strengthening and re-inforcement of their cultural identify that kind of thing. I mean if we say there is a secular state, there all religious groups should, right, provided those rights, don't impinge upon the rights of others and so that is one of the places where the indigenous traditional religion is manifest. And this is where it is still existing and people have freedom there to practice. And this is important in the context of Nigeria where there is supposed to be religious freedom, no matter what you believe, you may practice that belief without hindrance. That's one of the few places where this is still been done and I think it is important culturally and politically. It is a symbol of the strength of the Yoruba culture. Because, through the ages, Islam came, Christianity came, and the practitioners, the missionaries, tried to devalue what they found here and suppress it. So to me it is very important that the Osun groves still continue to exist.

R). Large forest in Nigeria over years usually these forests have disappeared right across West Africa and down to Central Africa. It is going. In another few years you know most of it will be gone. Because of that personally I hate to see trees being cut down. Okay Osun grove is not a primary forest, you know, at best it is a secondary forest. But then it has value as a forest and it has resources as a forest. It has been preserved thank goodness because of the tradition and the culture attached to it. When you say what comes to mind-first and foremost, is the forest, the religion and other things I see later. But first thing are the trees. I love the trees, I love the serenity, you know, and I think that can be preserved. You don't have many places like this. It is a resource, a forest resource. This is the first thing that comes to my mind, just like Agodi garden. We live in society where good and bad exist. It is like saying because of accidents you don't want to take your car out of the garage. That is not what cars are designed for. So you won't say because people can be smuggled in there for bad moods then you destroy the forest. No. Like many people say because of snakes cut down all trees. You.

know, it is like having a tick on a dog then you kill the dog, and I think that we preserve its benefits.

Q). She also mentioned the religious and cultural values.

R). I think it is positive, it has a lot of potentials, not only for the Osogbo community, but nationally and internationally. I think it should be preserved.

R). Personally I respect tradition. I tend to get angry when people take in new ideas and therefore write off our old revered age. I mean tradition. If you go out of Nigeria you see people proudly showing you their history. You see people taking you to places where something happened or a piece of stone, ugly looking but the stone has been there for so long. I do not know why we have turned our feelings or ideas in such a way with the tendency to pull down what our father built so that we can build something else. I don't like that. One of the reasons that the preservation of a place like this is important to me. Just because it is there. I want it to be there. That simply is the importance to me. And the fact that people come and look and go is important. The Osun Osogbo festival itself is now a cultural thing that has spilled over Nigeria, people come from overseas to take part in the hullabaloo that it is. I want it to still be there. I want to be able to tell my grandchildren that 70 years hence, 30-40 years hence, you can still go to Osun groves. That is the importance to me.

Sorry you made a reference to kidnapping.

Q). No, I am sorry I really got it wrong. I thought you meant the igbo agala. I was talking about the area boys syndrome and they will not actually let you do what you want to do.

R). Like I said earlier, you cannot because of that destroy valuable things, you know. What you can do is to prevent them.

R). My first interest is to the Osun groves, which they now call the main grove. It was after we started poking our noses into Osun groves that people told us that there are others, other groves, other shrines, other smaller pockets of places where if we can, we should stop people from cleaning them. I don't know where they are but I suppose....

Q). When we went to the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, the man told us there are other places like that in the state as well.

Threats

Q). There is in all what we have said about perception, importance, is that it should be preserved. But if I go back to what Eng. Morakinyo has said, there are some economic threats, economic pressure, interest which may become threats to the existence of the groves. Could you please elaborate on that and may be you may want to

discuss some other threats that you are aware of, that may lead to the non-existence of the place in the nearest future.

R). First of all, causiqua hold may be killing the animal-pouching and this can.....

Q). But before you.....

R). Is all part of the economic threat.

Q). No, because we were told about the traditional sanctions. Are the traditional sanctions no longer there?

R). There are there.

R). The reason why people like me feel worried is because the traditional sanctions that has held sway for so long, seems to be declining. If the traditional sanction is still there as it has been, there will be no reason for anybody to be alarmed. And the traditional sanctions is declining for so many reasons. First and foremost that really worries me in religious, unfortunately some people who have taken over foreign religions especially Christianity and Islam who may feel, because we are talking about fundamentalism, who may feel that anything that is not Islam or Christianity should be destroyed. Not even because they want to gain anything but because they feel that God has sent them to do that. Forgetting that where Christianity and Islam came, there are places of heritage which they keep and they don't destroy them. Now I would like this newly acquired religious fanatics to realise that this grove should not be seen as their enemy but as something of their heritage. Then the economic part of it, of course Eng. Morakinyo will talk about it. But the religion aspect that is been the greatest unfortunate motive or unfortunate force that is destroying this place.

Now the pact was between Osun and Ataoja, well I am saying this and my name is Oyelola and you can put it down and therefore before anybody else, the Ataoja is the one who is personally responsible to keep that place intact. Because he is the one whose grandfather/forefathers went to this personal pact. But it doesn't seem to me as if the Ataoja is willing to or capable of warding off the forces of destruction in that place and he should. I would like him to be reminded that this is his duty.

Q). So we are back to the economic issue.

R). I think your question about the sanction has been answered. I was going to go into that, you know. So because the things, the traditional sanctions have been whittled down. People are now bold enough to go into the forest and pouch. With time of course the animals will disappear. People now start logging, they see the value of the big trees there, with time they will disappear. People see the land as being useful. And as you can see plots are already allocated

and houses have been built there. Now if these are not stopped, the whole forest will go and it will just become, well, a concrete forest. will replace the green forest, you know, and so no and so forth. There is a school, there now which I am not sure if the objectives of the school is just education and not addition for profit as well, you know. So these are all the economic interests that are now putting pressure on the.....If, if the economic interest is to develop eco-tourism which will help in preserving the forest, that is fine, but not the type of economic interest that destroys the forest, that is the type that we want to discourage. But we would certainly encourage eco-tourism which of economic and its preserving the forest.

Q). You've identified three major threats viz. development, pouncing felling of trees. Are there others, may be foreseen, may be not practised already that you have not mentioned?

R). Not at the moment, when it comes to mind later.

Q). Any other threats to the existence of the groves?

R). I think those are the threats.

R). You do mention the effect of the land.

Educational Strategies

Q). There is this issue you mentioned earlier on. You didn't say about perception, it came up in our discussion. You said that the grove is at times seen as an enemy which to me in quote sounds like a wrong perception of the grove. If that wrong perception is there, what are some of the strategies that can be employed to change these perceptions that you alluded to. Are there strategies we can use to...?

R). Well would you say, information., education....It is very hard to talk to these religious fanatics that is the problem. You may want to appeal to let them, that history in history, religion is religion. That is the truth.

R). I also, education. I think that a lot of these religious group loose sight of the fact that God is God. There is only one God, there is only one creator. He created everybody and hence should also accept that there are many ways to God. I mean I am a Christian, you are a Muslim whatever, but never-the-less, if even though you have your own religious beliefs, I think you must realise if you look at the world, everybody is striving towards this design, but there are many ways. I mean Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, whatever. So I think one has to try by information and education which is to open peoples mind and to try to make them more tolerant. The essence of fanaticism is intolerance which of course is very dangerous. It is dangerous

socially, politically and all kinds of ways. So one has to try to open ones mind and say look, we are not saying that everybody should worship Osun. But never-the-less, it must be religious tolerance in Nigeria. There is religious freedom in Nigeria. You must accept that there are some people who do this. They have a right to do this. You must not destroy their sculptures or whatever because if somebody tries to come and smash your mosque, that would cause real trouble. The thing is that traditional worshippers are in a position of a kind of weakness really because I mean the people who are in power, who have got the power, whether political, economic or whatever, tend to be people who are converted to Christianity, Islam or whatever. And so the indigenous are again under threat from pressures from these much more powerful groups.

R). May I come just to make a comment here. I don't think the Oyelolas know this. At the beginning of the formation of this group, there were friends, who felt that by us doing what we are now doing, we are encouraging idol worshipping. Yes that was their view. Instead of us as Christians trying to convert these people and as it is in the Bible destroy what the, who should, I mean the moleks and the goddess of Ashera and all those things we have in the Bible, destroy them so as to please the Lord Almighty, we are actually forming this group to aid them. I have had to talk to them about the value of the forest you know which we talked about earlier. About the value of the preservation of the tradition and culture you know which we talked about earlier. And you don't say that because people are worshipping idols, so Eng. Oyelola said, you destroy something that is old. We go abroad to many countries you know and visit sights and all that sort of thing, you know. We don't go there because of their religious values you know. So why destroy ours you know. So just to support what...

Q). So what specifically can we do? You talked about information, education and also a religious strategy that will emphasise that there is one creator, because apparently it is this issue of the path to the Creator that has brought about this wrong perception.

R). Well, personally I think we will be getting to deep waters if we took that approach. You know and I think we shouldn't, you know what we should do is for you to know, you remember that I was talking about environmental education and these many thing many strategies that we are looking at along this line you know-for children, for various groups of people for various fields. Because I suppose that you have noticed already that there is general ignorance you know. Unless we educate these people about the value

of the forest to the community and therefore they keep what is there for everyone forever, it means nothing to them.

Road

Q). We talked about the threats. This road that passes through the groves, do we consider it as a threat? Is it something that should remain there or something that should be closed? If so why?

R). I think personally, the greatest mistake that was made is building that road. I know it was built by a political man to open up areas beyond the groves. I would like personally to see a situation in which a road does not pass through the grove. A road should go into the grove but not pass through the grove. I would like to see anybody entering the grove as somebody going into the grove for whatever reason to enjoy the scenery, to enjoy the peace, to do anything he like but not just causal passer-by passing into the grove. That is my own.

Q). Should the road be closed?

R). I think the road definitely should be closed at the end.

Q). Which of the ends?

R). You enter, if you come through the Ataoja's place, there is a road leading there. That cannot be closed because that's the place where you could enter the grove from. The other end should be closed. The one beyond, there is a bridge, beyond that bridge should be closed.

Q). How do workers get to Timehin Grammar School, ADP and the farm settlement?

R). By providing alternative road outside the grove.

Q). The secondary school students and primary school students are already used to passing that road to their schools.

R). If there was no road in the first place, they will still get to their schools. And what we are saying is that provide alternative route to those other areas outside the groves and people will get used to it. It may be longer but they will get used to it. There is need if you want to preserve something, then take all necessary measures to preserve it. At the moment, the road is part of a threat to the groves and it should be closed.

R). My contribution....

R). I think agree, but one has to be very careful that one does not inconvenience the local community. I mean, there must be consultations with the local community. The actions of the group obviously must not be seen to be in opposition, to be inconvenience the needs of the people. One must have to be very careful.

R). I am saying we one, we must agree to the definition of the grove area, because that seem to be some eh... Once agreement has been

reached, this is the area of the grove which the Federal Government of Nigeria has declared as a national heritage. The monument of Nigeria. That area should be protected. They don't let people pass through that area. It will cost money but it is possible to provide alternate access to area beyond the groves. I mean as an engineer we talk about ring roads, that's a quick way to go about it. If you have road sketch of the area, you can go round the grove, and then that place may be as a sort of island where you get a road round it and from that road can radiate to other parts of the town.

Q). You raised this issue of the grove area, its been defined by whom?

R). Federal government, there is a map and there are pillars which are all numbered.

Aspirations

Q). What are your wishes as individuals or as a group for Osun groves?

R). In a nutshell, we would like to see the Osogbo community playing an active role in preserving the forest for themselves for eternity. This cost money, but we intend to set up a trust fund such that the trust fund will finance its preservation you know by the people themselves. We are only as the name implies a support group. We cannot do it from here, even if we are in Osogbo we are only a small group. It is better to let the owners themselves.

Q). But they are very aware of your group

R). Yes that is right.

Q). Including the Cultural Heritage.

R). That is good. But our objective is to support them in the preservation.

Q). So the community must play an active role?

R). Infact they will do it, we will only support.

Q). How?

R). Now, this is part of the exercise.

R). One of the very basic things we have done is to employ more forest guards, these are Osogbo people performing the task. We are simply enabling you know, whatever but as Eng. Morakinyo said, the real initiative must come from the Osogbo people. It is their grove not ours. We are only supporting their efforts. We are only doing the little we can to help them. They don't belong to us. They belong to the Osogbo people and to the nation because it is now designated a national monument. One of the very important things we want to assist the people to do, is to preserve the character of the groves. Because once you allow people to just commercialise the whole thing, you have destroyed the character of these groves which is what

attract people from all over the world. So the character of the groves has to be preserved. That the groves itself must not be over-commercialised. I mean as Susan Wenger said, we do not want the Coca Cola mentality in the groves themselves. Because if you do that, you have destroyed their attraction. The attraction is that they are as they have been for hundreds of years. That is why people are going there. They don't want Coca Cola over the place. That has to be outside beyond the entrance of the groves. But like I have said it's the, this place belongs to Osogbo people not to us.

Q). Will this be contrary to the issue of eco-tourism? or is it one and the same thing?

R). You see in developing or in designing the strategy for eco-tourism and in developing it, it has to embody what Pat has just said. It must preserve what has been there for centuries and into the future you know that can be done. We don't want the type of eco-tourism that changes the whole thing, changes the whole concept you know, nullifies what people come there for, you know.

Q). Hotels, roads etc.?

R). No, but not within the groves. You can have hotels outside. But what has been there must be preserved and continue to be preserved and this I am sure can be designed and developed.

Q). Sir what are your dreams or wishes?

R). My dream, I have said it several times. My dream is to preserve Osun grove as it is and as it has always been. Now when you are talking of eco-tourism if you are talking about tourist from outside and want to go to Osun groves, you don't want to build big buildings inside the groves, because they have seen bigger buildings from where they came from. You don't want to put up anything. Tourist want to see what they have not seen where they come from. And so there is no need making a second rate sculpture or monuments in a place which they have seen better ones where they come from. So I am saying this because in talking to people in Osogbo, somebody did mention that his own dream is to open up the grove, to dredge to boat etc. This person claimed to have seen the Serpentine with people rowing boat etc. My dream is opposite to that. Somebody from London who has rowed in this Serpentine wouldn't want to come and row on boat here. He wants the tranquillity of the place. So eco-tourism is preserving a place, so that it remains what it is, so that people want to see it, not to change into something that is second rate to what is somewhere else.

Q). In all of these wouldn't the Osun festival be part of the dream?

R). Of course, it is an annual event and an international annual event which is part of the eco-tourism but during that festival people are

told, don't come out of the Osun groves with anything you didn't take there. The only thing you come out with is the blessing of Osun. That is all I mean.

Q). That's a very effective way. I mean, a slogan for preserving or conserving.

Management

Q). So let's talk about the issue of dream for the Osun groves. Lets focus on the indigenous whatever characteristics of the place. How do we want to manage the groves. What organisations currently are involved in managing it. Is the management adequate or should it be modified?

R). If the management is adequate they won't need a support group. Traditionally the grove should be the property of Osogbo people. More importantly, the Ataoja should know himself. That he is throne, where he is sitting depends on the fact he has a portion, that traditionally. But politically the grove now is a protected area by the FGN and therefore if the FGN cannot protect what they have said they want to protect, I don't know what they are doing, so the FG should make laws to ensure that the place is preserved. The people themselves should be reminded that they should be proud of the place and want to keep it. That's all:

Q). What are the organisations that should be involved, the management of the groves.

R). Just before we go to that, you were asking about is if being managed at the moment? Yes and as Eng. Oyelola said if it was being managed then you won't need a support group. There's evidence that shows decline in the preservation of the grove. I mean it is quite evident and some need to be done by somebody or some people to halt that decline, and set up preservation system in motion. We understand from our discussion with Ataoja that the Cultural Heritage Council(CHC) was set up to manage the grove. So we are told. What their functions are I do not know. But from our discussion with the Ataoja he would like us to carry along the Osogbo people in whatever we do, which infact is our primary objective as well. Infact it is not just a question of carrying them along. We are infact supporting them, so they are going to do it. And I think that as time goes on this understanding will be clarified you know better understood. But I think that whatever management strategy is set up, it must be one that will be implemented by the Osogbo people themselves. That is important. It mustn't be done by outsiders, otherwise I mean it has no value. It must be done by the Osogbo people and it must have a long term value such that the plan does

not end in the year 2010 and then we wonder what we want to do after that. There must be continuity.

Q). Sir, do you have any comment? How it should be run? Can we be more specific in terms of organisation. Let me just say that you identified the Ataoja through the CHC, the Osogbo people. Ain't there some other organisations that, may be should be part of the management team?

R). It has to come out of a study.

Q). It has to come out of a study and it is only by...you are a stakeholder now.

R). No, what I meant is that, why I say that it has to come out of a study is that you have diverse interest groups and paramount among the interest groups are the priests themselves and the worshippers and I think they have great role to play there. But perhaps, their empowerment and their understanding is limited. I see them as playing good role in the management part of a team that may be set up with the community which will involve the worshippers and Eng. Oyelola said the custodian themselves because there was a pact between his great grand fathers and Osun you know. So the people who will manage the grove will consist of the priest and the custodian and other interest groups who positively will take interest in the conservation. But there is need of education before then. There is need for preparation of minds and all that sort of thing. But to constitute the group I feel these are the....

Q). I'm glad you raised this issue of pact again which gives the Ataoja a very major role I mean, can I use the word as the owner so to say of the place. But the federal government has also acquired the grove as a national monument. Is there any conflict in that type of arrangement?

R). I don't see the conflict. When it comes to defining who owns this piece of land, it is the government. It is on lease to me, but they can't come to my house and say-hey you there go to, we own this place, go to the backyard. Is that sort of thing. The FG owns the land, but they can't say the Osun business is FG's you know. I think the FG themselves have conceded that to the...I think there is any problem there you know, unless there is political conflict you know and I think they have a way of sorting it out themselves.

R). Infact that, that land is now a national monument has shown to the Osogbo people, the importance which is beyond just being important to Osogbo. It is important to the nation. So I think that, that fact that NCM has acquired that land should reinforce the idea of the importance of that site. And so should give the people of Osogbo a greater incentive to be involved in its active protection. I

am wondering if NCF, the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, should not be involved in the management of the grove since this is an organisation concerned with the conservation of Nigeria's flora and fauna.

R). I think a world map is being drawn by UNESCO called World Heritage Sites. I would like to see it in the World Heritage Map.

R). I don't know whether you are aware of UNESCO activities on this Q). Well based on our discussion with Susan Wenger, she mentioned something like UNESCO has visited the place three times to discuss about...well a particular strategy, but I can't remember clearly.

R). The UNESCO identified certain areas as World Heritage Sites. The Osun grove was identified as a place that could be nominated as world heritage site, provided certain conditions are met. We infact wanted to add to our objective meeting those conditions and work with the FG along that but the DG of NCMM said leave that to us. There is a committee working on that. But we are aware of some of the conditions, one of which is that road, the school and those buildings. There are condition UNESCO says must be removed. That road must be closed, the schools etc. must be removed. But for religious, political and economic reasons, people are pussy footing about getting those things done. I believe that they will still be done eventually depending on how much importance is put on it by which government. But it is on record and there is a committee working on it. Infact late Prof. Ander was on that committee. I think it is still on.

Q). So let me just recap the organisation or the people who should be involved in the management The Ataoja, the Osun people themselves, the FG, even though we have not been quite specific in what organisations of the FG should be involved (the NCMM) Okay the NCMM, the Cultural Heritage Council, the Priest/Devotees and the NCF.

R). I have my reservation about the NCF. NCF okay is a conservation organisation but my impression of their activities just like another civil service were, well they achieve results but because of the way they do things it takes time you know. And I don't think we can afford that sort of thing you know. So I have query against involving NCF. They can be consulted for ideas but not involve them in the management proper.

Q). We have covered most of the issues, Mr. Adebisi do you have any observations?

Q). Infact to help in completing the management plan, if the map is provided it can still serve as a tool.

Q). Whatever we require we would ask from them.

Thank you very much Sirs and Ma.

Attendance

Eng. N. O. Oyelola (Chairman)
Eng. J. A. Morakinyo (Secretary)
Dr. P. Oyelola (Member)

Appendix 19

Osun State Council for Arts and Culture In-depth Individual Interview Transcribed Report

History.

Q). When were the groves established?

Who established them?

Why were they established?

How many groves are they?

R). Really the very date...When it was established cannot be known. Because I think it is as old as Osogbo itself. Because if we go by what actually brought the groves, we have to refer to Osun river. As Osun river was there. It was met there by the very person Laro, who was said to be the founder of Osogbo. And like history told us, I think he left Ipole on hunting expedition. And on getting to that place he saw River Osun and that made him to actually stay around there. That's what we are told. He is a hunter and going from one place to another. And a distance from the river itself, we have the grove there. If we want to say when it was established, one would say, that was the time Laro himself was there. So the history of Osogbo may have be true which of cause we established. But may be because you are seeing new things there, that's why people are thinking the new dimension make people feel it was established by one woman- Adunni Orisa, Susan Wenger. She really contributed immensely to the development of that place. So I feel that if one says, I feel that is my finding and I think that is authentic. If they say this is the time it was established, I mean it is wrong. It has been a long time ago. And I want to talk about the present situation there. There was a sort of distortion.

The present state of the groves is not the original something, you understand. I do not know whether you have being there?

Q). We have been there.

R). You see new things, new creation of arts, cultural design done by Susan Wenger. So to say, I am saying that to say this is the specific

time it was established, one may be wrong. I don't know whether I have...

Q). No it is fine

Q). Now as a ministry, which is your ministry right?

R). It is not a ministry but a parastatal under a ministry.

Q). You are essentially dealing with culture and arts. From that perspective what would you consider as the importance of the Osun groves?

R). The importance of the Osun groves cannot be over emphasised. In the first instance, Osun groves is now serving the whole country as a sort of place where one can come and relax. In other words it is a sort of tourist centre today. Because if one has been to the place, the composition and structure shows that if one comes to this place where there is eco-tourism. One can sleep there for days or weeks enjoying oneself. Apart from that, one can use the place for research and cultural matter. Let's talk about the structural dimension, so many structures are there. The gate we built there called Ohuntoto, that actual spot was said to have been the place, the first place, the second voice was heard from the river. History has it that when people are on that spot, Laro etc., when they were felling some trees as we were told, some of trees fell into water and we were told that Osun the goddess of the river shouted that some people are spoiling some of her cooking appliances-with very loud something and when people in that particular spot heard the voice, you know those people settled there, heard the first voice that why they used the word Ohuntoto. Ohun means voice. I am saying if you get to that place, there, there are some erections there. Apart from that, if you get to another place where Susan Wenger moulded a sort of ... a man, there are some entrances inside.

Q). Is it very close to the gate?

R). No, inside, it is very close to Ohuntoto, it is another place entirely. I understand, that if you enter into that place, there are exits and entrances. Today people, the artists, do come to that place as a sort of a place where they rehearse, they shoot films and that is another importance into promoting culture in Nigeria. You see we come to theatre activities, we can tell people the culture of a particular place, through the enacting of an action. And in that particular place, series of activities are going on and are still going on there. So if you come either from Igbo land, Hausa land, I think, they are making efforts.

Q). Through this drama?

R). Yes, through drama, dance action whatever, or song and like you know culture is inclusive. So when people bring in some of their

cultural aspect, there is the tendency for any Yoruba man in this area to imbibe or to even borrow the culture of another place.

Q). So it brings about integration of culture?

R). Yes integration of culture-that is another importance. And I think I have mentioned something like relaxation research in cultural matters, drama, integration of culture etc..

Another thing, I think that particular grove is another area, where there is any practical thing plaguing the state. Let's state, is a place they can go and do certain sacrifices, I know, and we know too that Africans actually believe this sacrifice. We actually pray to God. They communicate to God through prayer and in many occasions this prayer is not devoid of sacrifice. So if you know that something is actually then think of many places, make sacrifice, especially to the Ojubo there.

Q). Should we say that is to worship?

R). To worship.

Q). Will that be a better word?

R). Yes, you can use that one.

Q). Divination?

R). Divination, and that leads to exorcise.

Q). Of the five you have mentioned, if you were to rank in terms of importance, which would we say is number one?

R). I think I have to think more in the terms of the cultural.

Q). Cultural education is your number one.

R). Yes.

Q). It is not unexpected since you are from.....

R). If I mention cultural education I have to mention the social aspect because we believe, social aspect of it is just a way by which all the indigenes of Osun or say Osogbo meet once in a year.

Q). When is that usually?

R). And that's during the Osun festival.

Q). When does that hold?

R). Usually in August.

Q). August?

R). But I can not be specific of the particular date. But sometimes in August?

Q). Sir, these importance, that you have listed-5 of them have-if you look back...

R). I don't know if you want us to add this economic eh...? No please go ahead. That is really very important. We all know the importance of tourism in fund generation in this country today. Even though the rate at which they embrace it, is quite different from the olden days. I have not been there anyway, but people have said so many thing

about how they use tourism to generate funds. But today like I said hardly can there be a day people will not go to that place either to shoot film or whatever, through that, eh, a lot of money is being generated and I think...within the system not necessarily for only Osun grove.

R). Not only for...whenever you come, like somebody will be coming on Thursday to go and shoot there.

Q). Is a visitor or..?

R). Is a Nigerian. When you go there to shoot, I think certain amount of money will be paid.

Q). Paid to whom?

R). To, right now, to eh Susan Wenger? No, there is National Commission for Museum and Monuments? No, that is another one, they pay to them. Eh..this National Commission for Museum I think they generate money from that place to coffers of the ... This one- anyway Heritage? Heritage, yes Heritage Council. But there is a new dimension right now, some people are coming to this place, they came to tell me that they want to be using that place and I told them that they will pay certain amount of money. This is a new dimension. So if they come...

Q). Has that amount been stipulated?

R). No, if...we are just deliberating on it. It is just a question of last week, this started and I said I will go and talk to Heritage chairman- Chief Oparanti. When that man came to me, eh, he came to this place, he will pay certain amount of money. I think it will be advisable to pay certain percentage to the government coffers.

Q). Is it for all kinds of comers?

R). For whatever, any kind.

Q). You mean people like us, if we go there we would pay?

R). You are lucky if they didn't take money from you.

Q). What of for education? People who are just going there for sight seeing?

R). For education, it is free. For whatever, for anybody hoping to use for commercial.

Q). So you're given us six or so importance. Now would you say there be any change in your ranking let's say 10-25 years ago and today. You said integration of culture through drama is the most important. Twenty five years would that still have been the number one.

R). Twenty five years if it was the more important? Yes, it is still culture. Because that time, the awareness was not there-you know, exclusively for cultural purposes, which many people misinterpreted to mean paganism, you understand what I am saying. So if it is now that we are into this new thing about using it to be a sort of

relaxation eh-by that time it was purely for traditional religious worship.

Q). So 25 years back, you would say traditional worship was the number one?

R). Purely.

Q). Now as a personnel of Culture and Arts, what type of perception do you have of Osun groves? What is your perception of Osun groves, what would you say?

R). I don't know what you want me to say about this Osun. May be you can just eh...

Q). For instance they say Super Eagles. I say don't mind them, they are a bunch of unpatriotic Nigerians. What would you say about Osun groves?

R). Osun to me, I think is not something you can just dump. Something you have to make sure that you support to achieve what should be achieved for making Nigeria good. In the first instance I mentioned something about...is a place through which all the indigenes of Osun come once in a year and probably be able to discuss something of interest as it affects Osun.

Q). So that's the unifying factor?

R). That's my own perception. Such that you cannot find in any other religion because anything you are doing this Osun festival...

Q). You mentioned religion, so any time you look at Osun, religion comes to the front.

R). Yes, you know we have three major religions and traditional religions is part of it. But it now transcends more than religious something this time around. Because, whenever there is an Osun festival both Muslims, Christians and every one of them celebrate because they have to remember their ancestors. You understand and that is like I said unifying factor. It brings all of them together and it makes them speak with one voice. Every representative of every compound is involved in the celebration of Osun which makes it more than...Because people feel that we are doing something to bring back the memories of the activities of our forefathers. I think you understand what I am saying. I am not a native of Osogbo. My grandmother was born in Osogbo.

Q). That makes you a native of Osogbo?

R). When I was schooling, St...a secondary school here, we used to do meridilogun. I think they mentioned the lamp with sixteen points. I used to carry the Epo, the palm oil, to that place to Okanla to our fathers who are our fathers then. It used to be me to carry this thing and any time we went there it was a joy you know.

Q) You carried the lamp.

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R). No the epo-the palm oil from my own Okanla. That was 1956-7. Our father Raji Okanlomon. So what I am trying to bring out is that I did that with joy and so also every other person. I know there is another aspect of Osun which broken into so many segments whenever they want to celebrate Osun in form of drama. A particular aspect is the Iyopopo. When they are going from one place to another. Iyopopo is a way of actually cleansing the gifts of those things-can I call it the blemish-things that cause problem. So we cleanse the town and by the time it involves everybody in Osun. Now Osun festival is coming, you find every town in the whole Nigeria, preparing to come to Osogbo for one reason or the other. Is either those people want to bear children, some would want to...

Q). What does giving birth have to do with this issue now?

R). The eh, some people who are barren would have gone to herbalist and they may tell him go to Osun. Now, according to history if they come they take water, if he is lucky or she is lucky, the following year she may have a child.

Q). Could that be one of the importance?

R). One of the importance of that particular Osun. People believe you cannot rule out this because the amount you believe, that belief will make you pregnant-so that another aspect. That's the reason why many people usually come. Aside from that throughout the world the Oyibos all in all, they accept this thing more than we Africans. They come during the festival, you see them...so its a human factor. And you know aside from all the things I have mentioned, if on that day you are in Osogbo, you make friendship with them, you try to become a friend of them, this Oyibos another way....Yes. These are some of the importance.

Threats

Q). So your major perception is the unifying factor. Now you mentioned some of the importance earlier on, are these any threats that you think may lead to the extinction or non-continuation of Osun groves? Do you know of any threats? Or do you perceive some threats?

R). Right now, I would say no threats. The only fear and this is very very important. There is a problem of this religious awareness. Many people tend to feel that this type of festival is nothing but paganism. I think I have mentioned this earlier on. That is the main, think is a real threat. But I think the awareness this time around goes beyond that. So let us believe that there is no threats what so ever. Because like I said both Muslims and Christians celebrate this particular something. If we do not watch out, that may be religious disagreement.

Aspirations

Q). So what are your aspirations? What are your dreams or wishes for Osun groves?

R). Hum-my wish, let me say this, to make Osun grove an international tourism. Because it is the only place today in the whole Osun state that you can regard that is the most acceptable area for tourism, the most sacred though there are others. It is the most important than any other place.

Q). Sir you have used the word sacted for the first time since we have been talking. So Osun groves is actually a sacred place?

R).It is a sacred place. And that is why we have been talking of people going there for worship. To make a tourism, the federal government(FG) should do this, and make it realisable. The question of you want to do this and shelve it tomorrow I think am not for that. You make it a national/international tourism centre.

Q). Can you be more specific, when you say international tourist centre. What are the specific things or activities or structures that you would want in the place such as the groves?

R). I think that place, like I told you there is a move right now, we want to make it an international tourist centre. A place which yet to be given all these structures and yet people have been coming from works of life. I think, that particular place will be transformed like I said by making available all necessary things that make people like to come to this place. For instance, we want that place to be accepted as an international tourist centre. Residential areas-hotels to be built there. Do that there, I am sure a lot of money will be generated there for the state government as well as the federal government. Other facilities that may make somebody to be at ease whenever one goes to that place should be available.

Q). Like what, sir?

R). Aside from the hotel, there is a traditional like eh...amusement parks that's why we want to make something like a games-especially international games to be made available though on a milder something may be this European something...but if you have like amusement parks, that will invite so many people to go to that place form time to time.

Q). Sir, will that eh you know we talked about threats to the existence of Osun groves, which of course implies conservation and preservation of the groves. Establishment of where to place games will that not destroy the...

R). Excuse me, you know we have the groves, like you said is sacred, one would not want any body to tamper with that. But there are other areas you know that are very close to the groves, which, where

you can build hotels and other things like that so that if these people are there in the evenings or wherever they want to go into the groves, they can just stay in the hotel. They can't be in the grove itself because the grove will be distorted. You know if you go to that place now there is a suspension bridge, even the fauna that has been a source of entertainment. Many people they just....

Q). I don't like the feel of it I must say some people derive...

Q). But erosion is almost spoiling the bridge.

R). That is another thing, I think the erosion is causing a sort of anxiety. It is normal too. I think something happened they have some...

Q). It is still there.

R). It used to be at.....

Q). No, no we didn't see it.

Q). What are the other features there that people can really be shown, you mention suspension bridge.

R) Se right now-Yes, except the twine, there are some other structures there in the groves.

Management

Q). Sir, lets talk a little both about the management of Osun groves. I am sure this is your beat. What are the organisations involved currently in the management of the groves?

R). Unless that Heritage Council-purposely constituted by the Oba. And that people ownership of the place.

Q). Who were those claiming the place.

R). The people who wanted to make money and that's why we did not allow them to go in just any how. So right now it is the Heritage Council. Except just of recent another group rang us to say they are in charge of that grove. That is yet to be resolved.

Q). Which group is that?

R) It's yet to be resolved.

Q). Those in Ibadan? I am sorry those in Osogbo?

R). So when we heard of this, we called this people to this place. We thwarted their effort, because they wrote to Abuja claiming ownership. But as it is being addressed, after it has been addressed, if they are given that opportunity I can still go to ...Right now that is not yet...

Q). From your perspective, we've been on this for a while, director, what organisations do you think ideally should be involved in the management of Osun groves.

R). That council-the Heritage Council itself should be the overseer. And of course this tourism, NMMC. I think these are three main bodies.

Q). You don't think, there are some parastatals or ministries that have the expertise that should be involved.

R). Except the commerce. Commerce is more or less tourism something because they are actually directing the affairs of the place.

Q) So, tourism is related to commerce.

R). Yes it is part of them.

Q). But you did not mention tourism?

R). I mentioned tourism.

Q). So these are...any where heritage is under these...

R). And that particular something can not be but be there. Because anytime Osun festival is to be organised Kabieyesi must spend a lot of money and he has to help a committee to organise this festival. From our own end we are just a government something, we need them to refer to us for the purpose. They used to write through their Art Council and the...So whenever we want to have this festival, we have to permanent one member in the council. Now, this Heritage cannot but be put in place, because it is that particular Heritage that will see to the well organisation of the festival, see to how funds will be obtained from the government and individuals. And you know, the Kabieyesi will believe more than any other external and they will be more faithful to him.

Q). Is Osun grove eh synonymous with the festival?

R). Eh it is quite different. You know when we talk about this grove, is the grove that houses all those things we are talking about.

Q). Because every time we talk of the groves, the Osun Osogbo...

R). What about the groves, its the Osun itself. It is because we are worshipping Osun, that's why we have the shrine. And when we have the shrine. The place-you have been to the place? Ehen so the grove is the one that houses all those things I have mentioned. Whether the structures, the shrines-the whatever, the river itself.

Q). But the festival, it only comes once a year.

R). Once in a year, there are other things they do.

Q). Like what?

R). Ehen, there are many of them. I can just stop there. At least the forefathers day, the Oba or those people worshipping Osun will go to enter to the shrine or Oba's something for sacrifice or prayer or whatever. Not only when Osun comes, that they go there. Even there are many things that the Oba should do, which whatever affects the town, if they have defeat...so there is no way, you can mention the groves without reference to the festival. The festival is once in a year

and the grand finale is what we are talking about. When we talk of the real worship, it is more than only one day. It is either seven-ten days. It is during the grand finale that the Oba and many people come here.

Q). Thank you sir, you recognise some organisations that should be involved in the management of the Osun groves, what about funding? Who should provide funds?

R). Funds of which one?

Q). Funding of money to run the affairs of the Osun groves.

R). You see right now, the FG has indirectly taken over. Eh you know they call it, this monuments something and its affairs of the FG. And realistically, you want to talk of how to fund that place, it is going to be the duty of the FG. They should. Because, the FG is taking everything that is good from all the states. Talk of good stadia in the whole country, the FG has taken over. Talk of personnel that is very resourceful, he is either appointed as a minister. Talk of any tourism in this country they've taken it over. So I think they are the one serving that kind of responsibility. State cannot assist. But the only, this festival that, I come back to festival, the state should surely do something.

Road

Q). There is a road that passes through Osun grove. I know you're concerned about conserving the place the way it was and it is now and even may be better off. Is that road a threat to the existence of the groves.

R). Is not that main road? Yes. You can't call it a threat. And if you call it a threat, there is nothing you can do about it.

Q). So it should remain.

R). It should because one, that one leads to one or two schools Timehin and Muslim Grammar schools and you cannot because of the grove, you scrap the schools. That is one. Like I said since the inception of the farm settlement, that particular road used to be there. And I think the fact its being divided into two, one section houses the groves-the shrine, the suspension bridge, while the other one houses...so I think it is still in place. The one that actually leads to the shrine is gated. And I think they are designed in such a way that one can fence the whole lot.

Q). Excuse me sir, are you saying that-has divided the grove into two?

R). I mean the road.

Q). Do you mean that each area can be fenced round?

R). Eh you cannot fence the two together.

Q). Separately?

R). That is the normal thing. That is why this side fenced with gate and the other fenced with gate.

Q). So, we should have fences?

R). Yes that's the normal thing since you cannot block the road and I believe nobody can say that.

Educational Strategies

Q). You mentioned this issue of the festival, there is a perception that it is paganism and that is one serious perception where no one wants to use the grove. As a member of this parastatal, Culture and Arts, what strategies can we use to change this perception. Or do you think this perception is right first of all?

R). The perception is very very wrong and that is why we are having problem. There was a day I was watching video from Pakistan, all things we do in festival are beings shown. You see them, they organise them-this craft something. Okay you are saying everything is paganism. How can we progress. We have been talking about this place being transformed into tourism something. Your are saying is paganism or whatever, how do we progress. I want to say not only that place, even people who are working here are called pagans. This is because of the word culture. I think it is awareness that is very slow here. If they know what culture really means, they will not be saying culture. They now make a mistake of saying they are working in a cultural centre. Now I think like I have said, we are trying by all means to make sure that whenever we have any public outing, first thing I would say, I would introduce myself, I go to church.

Therefore, we should let them realise that, that is a traditional thing/religion-the word pagan should be removed. That is very important. And there is nowhere, you don't have traditional something-any where-traditional dress. And realistically, let's face it, those people called traditionalists are better off. There is no religion that says there are two Gods. You can talk of lesser gods. And you cannot be...if you are a Christian you pray to God through Christ and a Muslim through Mohammed. Why are you blaming them if they have a lesser god? They have decided to pray through an intermediary and what is wrong with that? Because we believe that God is important too big and you cannot face him-that is the belief of every African. That is why we are praying through Jesus Christ.

Q). So we have to let them know that it is not paganism.

R). It is not paganism. They are contributing a lot to the development of this place. A traditionalist cannot go to his brother's wife and do something with her. If my wife sits in a place if you come you won't sit there, because you have respect for my wife. What I am saying is

that this people, traditionalist, are more loyal to themselves than the Muslims or Christians.

Q). So what else can we do?

R). Let everybody do his own something accordingly.

Q). You are talking about strategies.

R). Strategies, education, enlightenment something and film may be through a sort of drama sketch, through some saying, even the universities. Let them realise, I think they are being thought in African studies even Language Arts and Philosophy.

Q). Students and parents, what can we do to enlighten them?

R). The students are better than....

Q). Why?

R). They understand more than-em I'm sorry. I'm not a student.

R). They are better. They are better, because if you try to spoon feed them with all this rubbish they will tell you that they want to break the tables because we discussed with them.

Q). Secondary school?

R). You are talking of secondary school Let's say the principal of the school should introduce this, ministry of education, if they too won't follow this pattern.

Q). Let them introduce traditional.

R). They should and let them understand that, the education...even we are talking about paganism those aspects that are backward looking should be left out. Aside from that, I don't see anything that is wrong with them.

Q). So what else can be done again for them?

R). I said enlightenment through radio jingles and so on.

Q). What can we do to the parents who think the Osun is synonymous with paganism.

R). The parents too, they are to be enlightened. But they are just saying, even about 77% of the parents adopt the celebration of the festival.

Q). Why do they accept the claim?

R). I said it now, it is tied to their ancestry.

Q). So one strategy you have said is to tie down Osun groves to their existence?

R). Ha that's good.

Sir, we thank you for the time you have given to us.

Attendance

Chief N. H. Raji-Director of Culture.

Appendix 20
Osun State Department of Forestry
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History

Q). When were the groves established? Who established them? Why were they established? How many groves are there?

R). No idea.

Importance

Q). Of what uses are the groves to you? Uses about 25 years ago? Uses in the 90's?

R). As to that of forestry, it looks like a sort of natural botanical garden. Some of the trees are still there. It serves educational and research purposes. There are still some animals there. Go there very early in the morning, you see monkeys jumping here and there. And if you observe carefully you will see antelopes just passing close to the river. Snakes of various types.

Q). Uses 25 years ago.

R). We have not done enumeration. With increase in population and increase in awareness, it seems as if the population of animals there are decreasing with regards to people around and them with the area being surrounded by houses and development. So there is no doubt that the animals are decreasing. This can be attributed to population and also the activities of poachers. The number of trees have also reduced in size.

Perception

Q). What is your perception of Osun groves?

R). As a department of forestry, we see the grove as an area where the animals are protected sort of. Because under normal condition, if all things are being put in place, where we have normal patrol and protection of the animals, it should be a good place, a pure natural forest which means its well protected because its an area, where we can go and see beautiful trees, see trees in their real habitats. So the area could have been a very good place for sight viewing and then for educational purposes, for people to know and see how natural forest or undisturbed forest looks. And traditionally it should not be

disturbed by any one if somebody does not want the wrath of people, Ataoja and his people.

Q). The wrath of gods.

R). Yes.

Q). Sir, when you said traditionally, that traditionally it should not be destroyed?

R). Yes, it should not be destroyed at all, as a Yoruba man Even, Ataoja will not want it destroyed. Beni O! Ah Igbo oro-Yes.

The forest serves as an area that protects the shrines. The forest there protects the shrines and protects eh.....the water.

People believe if they get there, they get their spiritual healing.

Threats

Q). What are the likely causes to the continued existence of the groves? What are some of the threats to the existence of the groves generally?

R)..Development. Population increase. Awareness in terms of the illegal structures. Illegal felling of trees. And then, the erection of various types even at part of the grove, you see people building houses. Churches and em? Schools, the Islamic school. So you have been there?

Road

Q). What do you think about the road that goes through the grove? Is that a threat as well?

R). Ah no

R). It is.

R). It is a threat, because people pass from there to the farm settlement. The noise of the vehicles and people going here and there. Even people can go inside the groves.

R). Yes. The road is a threat. If the road had not been there, people will not have access to the forest. The destruction and then the collection of firewood and all these things will not be there.

Encroachment would have been limited.

Q). What is the solution to that, sir?

R). At present, the solution could be if the government can divert the road.

R). If you can put a big gate at both ends.

Q). What will be the advantage of having those gates?

R). The advantage is that it will reduce vehicular movement.

Q). Are you going to search vehicles passing or.....?

R). They have to take another route.

Q). Okay, what about people passing Osogbo to that school after the bridge?

R). They take the other end sir.

Q). Which other end? It means you have to go to side before coming to your school?

R). Eh sir, that's why we say that there is no limit, there is nothing you can do about that.

R). There is nothing anybody can do about that.

R). Eh sir, they are asking for what possible solution that can be done to that place.

R). I think one of the solution measures is the fencing of the left hand side separate from the right hand side.

R). Watching of the grove.

R). Wall fence, yes wall fence.

R). Concrete fence.

R). As a matter of fact, the Osun Grove Support Group (OGSG). They are the ones that commissioned you. Yes, they have already started the fencing of the grove. So the issue of closing the road is not possible. That is exactly what we are saying. Because there are farms. You cannot close that road. We have a farm settlement along that road. Apart from that we have hospital. Infact, we still have villages there.

Q). Sir, we realise that we have other products in the groves, as members of this community are they not entitled to some products of the groves at all, whether fish or grass cutter or what ever depending on maturity and all of that?

R). No permission has been given to anybody to fish, to hunt, to do anything there. There is no permission given to anybody to do anything there.

R). He is talking of the right.

Q). Yes, I am saying that to crop, no what's the right word crop or harvest?

R). They are not allowed there. But excuse me sir, you can only crop only if you know the population of the animals there and if they are too many, what do you do? But we have told you that poaching is already going on there, illegal farming, fishing and felling of trees.

Q). So as of now, nobody should even go there for any other purpose just leave it the way it is naturally?

R). Yes, that is the rule. Because there was a time when Mr. Olufajo made a suggestion that rearing of bees should be encouraged.....establishing the place in order to conserve that area, that is putting bee hives there. But the community felt that will be dangerous. That was their perception.

Management

Q). What about the issue of funding and general management of the groves? Who should actually be funding, providing finance?

R). The groves belong to the federal National Museum (NMMC) and its the sole authority of the grove. So its the NMMC that send people, the personnel and take care of everything over there. So that area has since belonged to the NMMC. So its them who do the funding and taking care of the groves.

R). But the National Tourism Board (NTB) have their own land there after that bridge.

Q). They have their own land?

R). Yes, separate from the groves. Then there is Tourist Board in the state, working hand in hand with the NTB at least in the area of funding, conservation and maintenance.

Q). So we are talking about this issue of different areas belonging to different institutions/organisations because I heard the director mention earlier that, the grove is the property of the Ataoja, so is the Ataoja working with the NMMC or the other way round?

R). When you get to him, he will be able to tell you further on that.

Q). Are there any other NGOs interested or that should be interested?

R). Only this Mama Wenger, no other NGO.

R). There is this Osun Shrine Support Group we learnt that is taking care of the grove. It is this support group that is fencing the grove. We learnt that through the head of station in the Museum. Because no NGO comes to us to ask anything about or do ask for permission about the grove. So we do not know of any NGO working there but at least because we are familiar with, close to the head of station there. He was the one who told us that its the NGO that is building the fence there.

Q). But as a Department of Forestry don't you think you should have an input in the management of the groves?

R). Yea, if funds are made available to the Forestry Department, there is nothing bad in being involved in the management. But if there is no provision we are not involve l.

Q). But sir, there are two aspects to that, outside of just having funds, you also may have the interest to want to.....

R). Everybody is interested, but we are incapacitated by the limiting factor which is fund. Even going to that place and coming back alone with the present cost of things

Q). To, approach it nicely or commission, the NMMC or the Commission not bringing you into management of the place....?

R). We are not involved in the management.

Q). SO you actually would like, want to participate, apart from funding limitations?

R). Yes?

Q). In what ways would you want to assist management of the groves?

R). Well, at least, part of the grove could be developed in such a way to have ornamental, different flowers that we will not be seeing tress alone inside. And people may even like to relax after going inside the grove and then come under umbrella of trees or anything. Things like that are not allowed now, because we are not involved.

R). One aspect is the protection, conservation.

R). And then right construction.

R). Infact cases of illegal cases of poaching, illegal felling have been banned.

R). We can handle the place and patrol.

Q). So you can be involved?

R). We have been doing that.

R). They have requested infact. Letters have been written to the director from the National Museum, requesting him to assist in patrolling and conserving the area, protection of that area. We have been doing that using our officers working in the adjacent plantation to help in overlooking the area with regards to poaching and illegal felling.

Q). This issue of funding , what are the likely sources from your experience sir; that funds can be obtained? Do you think members of the community would like to provide some?

R). I don't think anybody is interested in things like that. And then when you talk of governmental funding too, the funding may be practicable. The headship may not be given to Forestry. Because if somebody is sourcing for fund, immediately the fund is available, then he wants a member of the group who cause the fund to be available to head the place.

R). Who may not have the expertise.

R). Yes, for example if you take FEPA now, it continues to advertise that they want forestry people, to be on the board, but at the said time they do not want who is above level 10. Whereas we have forestry people on level 16,15. They don't want somebody to boss their people. They want to relegate our own people. That is why in most cases we don't show interest. It is absurd for a senior to be subordinate to a junior person. So when they advertise, they ask for people with level 10 and below so that we cannot head the place.

Q). What organisation would you recommend to nominate people to the management board?

R). Any capable organisation.

Q). No sir, I think you have identified one, Forestry, FEPA, which other ones and who should be at the top?

R). Federal Department of Forestry, probably some re-organisation could occur. Any other thing to Forestry will be solved.

Q). It will be advisable, apart from the protection aspect of Forestry, can you tell us any form of improvement about the state of the ecosystem in form of traditionally planting and other things like that, or collection seeds from that place, planting stock from that place for conservation?

R). The place is a good source of seeds and seedling collection. Species are limited. but the seeds that can be collected there, I presume may be Brectisia and Azalea. But I believe that by the time we go in there to start collecting such things, we are going against the management of that particular area or for which the area is being set up. Replenishment should be strictly through natural means.

Q). So actually what are the sanctions for poachers so far?

R). There is the forestry law that stipulates penalty for any poacher found or any illegal tree feller, the Forestry Law Cap 40. Eh forestry as you will see before, the surrounding has been disturbed. When this was pointed out, I was given 24 hours to remove all the trees we planted. And I was reminded that all lands belong to government and our attention was drawn to the Land User Decree/Act of 1978.

Q). So the land use decree is actually working against forestry activities?

R). Yes.

Threats.

Q). What are the threats to the continued existence of the groves?

-Poaching

-Illegal felling of trees.

-exposure of the soil to erosion.

-Using the area for alternative use e.g. siting of hospital, market in the area adjacent to the grove.

Attendance.

Names	Designation
1. O. Adeleke	Director
2. J. A Awogbile	Deputy Director
3. N. O. Dunsin	Deputy Director
4. O. O. Olufajo	Deputy Director
5. A. O. Oyetoro	Asst. Director
6. G. A. Fayenuwo	Asst. Director

Appendix 21
Timehin Grainmar School Staff
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report
History.

- Q). We will really be glad if somebody can tell us when Osun groves were established?
- R). We can not say exactly when the groves was established.
- Q). So really, how were the groves established?
- R). Established as a result of the founder of Osogbo you know, he was a hunter, during that stage. It got to a time when he was thirsty and at the same time he was called Laroye. By the time he was cutting the fire wood he heard a voice from far off, *oso-igbo* don't demolish the pot used for dyeing that is how the groves came into existence.
- Q). So you said Laroye. Where Laroye, where was he coming from, where was he located before?
- R). He was coming from Ipole, the village very close to Ilesha. So he came to hunt and broke this pot.
- Q). What happened after the pot?
- R). As he attempted not to break the pot when he was cutting the fire wood, may be the fire wood fell near the direction of the pot. In order to avert the owner of the place that is the real Osun goddess shouted that *oso-igbo* do not tamper with my pots and when this happened and her request was obeyed then the Osun goddess made some promises, that what are his needs and then Laroye makes some requests to Osun goddess. After that request now....
- Q). What was the request?
- R). The request was that he wanted a woman to help her in his hunting expedition and at the same time the man was thirsty, then the Osun goddess provided him with the cold water and from then on he had carried it upon himself as a yearly obligation to come and say thank you.
- Q). Any other contribution to this aspect? So Osun groves started from Laroye and after what he started showing gratitude annually. So that is how the history goes?
- R). There are two of them Laroye and Timehin. They are hunters, as they hunted about, they got to the river side. They preferred settling at the river side. We heard that they were coming from Igbo- Ipole. That Igbo- Ipole, I think the village is still existing. It is an Ijesha land.
- R). They were coming from there, but when they discovered the river bank here they preferred there and they started settling there.

So that was how they started making settlement and as time went, we heard that there was a development.

Q). They settled where? What did they call where they settled?

R). They gave the place a name, but I do not know.

Q). Does anybody know? Okay.

R). As time went on and as they were carrying out their daily activities, they fell down a tree, we learnt the tree destroyed some properties of the goddess.

Q). What properties?

R). Pots, the dyeing pots the pot broke and there was a voice that *oso-igbo* you have destroyed my pots, you should move from here. We learnt that, that was why they moved it from where the goddess gave them.

Q). Ma you said, you only mentioned one person and you are using plural 'they'.

R). No. I said they were two, they talked about Laroye, now I have added Timehin.

Q). Okay.

R). They moved away from there, Laroye and Timehin, according to the instruction of the Osun goddess. The instruction was specific on how they will discover where they will stop. As they moved on we learnt they stopped at a place called, there is a house, an old house where the chief-in-council meet at Oja Oba now, we learnt that, that was the place they first settled after leaving the river bank. The first market was there and it serves as evidence of the settlement.

Q). Is there any addition in terms of history of the grove? Madam say say, you have something, go ahead.

R). No, I am asking them about the old market.

Q). How is that related to the history? That's what you want to tell us.

R). Yes, it is a confirmation of the settlement of the founders of Osogbo at the bank. Yes, so there used to be a market. The place is demarcated. People used to visit it inside the grove itself. It is an evidence that people settled.

Importance.

Q). We as teachers, what do you see or what do we use the groves for? What importance are the groves to us?

R). Yes ma, it serves as a tourist centre. We use to take students there to see those ancient things.

Q). Like what?

R). Like this old market, we have many images there. We have grinding stones there, then the shrine itself. The student will know a lot of the tradition.

Q). What type of tradition?

R). Traditional religion.

Q). So tourist attraction, also educational purposes, what else?

R). Those people who believed in traditional religion, they usually go there with their problems especially barren women and they believe that whenever they go especially during the festival, when these people go there through the real worshippers. Certain concoctions are prepared later given water to them straight from the river.

Concoction coupled with some ingredients. I don't know the name.

Then if they continue taking this thing from time to time.

Q). Do you agree with what he is saying, coupled with some other? What do you think, ma?

R). Just the water. I think they use the water, they give it to people that are barren.

Q). They do not add any other things?

R). No, they just give them the water and the Osun will give them the children they want. I do not think they add any other thing.

Q). Okay, thank you very much. Are they any other?

R). I see it as a link with the past, the groves link us with the past. The people of olden days could not write nor read but the structures they made there. When the structures were discovered by the people, people asking them questions, then the people who are still there that know about the past would be able to explain the significance about those structures. Like the monument that are there presently, there are masquerades, some of the masquerades no longer exist, but when we meet these old men, when they explain the time these masquerades were existing, their functions then we will understand the past.

Q). So you can recreate the past?

R). Yes, I also see it as a sort of aesthetic appreciation. Because when we see this beautiful sets, we are close to our natural environment, so and when one appreciates the environment, one will see that to be natural is even better than this modern day. One can compare the natural environment with the present day environment which is influenced by scientific technology.

Q). Are there any other importance or uses you can think of?

R). As a result of this, many white men or the English, that also come to visit the place. Again it also creates jobs for so many other people. There are some guards and other people there that look up or take care of monuments and other things kept there. Then also because these Europeans when they are coming they bring many things for this people and many of our people also they travel abroad as a result of invitations from these Europeans and again it serves as a

research centre for many people for example one woman called Adunni Orisa, Susan Wenger, she was sent here, she is still living with us. I think she did much of these decorations and monuments there. Then also the government, they are using it indirectly or directly to proclaim our cultures in overseas.

Q). Yes, you were going to say something?

R). Yes what I want to say is that it serves as a natural habitat to many creatures. We realise that because of this naturality, the tree climber give so much of opportunity to these animals and they feel more at home despite the small nature of the forest.

R). Many of the actors and actresses usually come there to act their plays. Native doctors look for leaves and roots for herbal mixtures to cure many diseases.

Perception

Q). What do you think the groves actually is, your perception? Some people may think its a sacred place. We as teachers, what is your perception of the groves?

R). Apart from the physical shrine where they do the normal sacrifice I do not think other parts to the forest is sacred as such because people go there to act plays.

Q). So what do you think the place is?

R). It is a tourist centre.

Q). So it is a tourist centre that is what you think it is. Do we all believe that, that actually is a tourist centre?

R). Yes.

Q). That is our perception?.

R). Although there are certain areas where you can not go alone, those women can take you there, and if you are a lady, you have to remove the head tie.

Q). So the general perception therefore is that the place is a tourist centre but also a sacred place. ?

R). I also see it as a place of cultural preservation.

Threats

Q). We know of Osun groves, are there threats to the continued existence of the groves?

R). Some people want to be using the forests as farm land though those worshipping it do not like it. Then the building of houses and hunting.

Q). What are some other threats, are those all?

R). The loggers will take to cut logs but they do not allow it.

Q). So they like to cut logs?

R). Yes.

Q). Alright.

R). Fire encroachment, once there is fire outbreak in some areas like this, it burns some of the areas it suppose not to burn.

Q). Now sir, let me summarise what you have mentioned: fire, farmland, lumbering, building, hunting etc. Which would you say is the most important threat?

R). Again it is a source of restriction for the expansion of the Osogbo itself. Maybe because houses were not built towards the grove area. The land we told you belongs to Osun. Even, there was a case of one person having an Islamic school over there. They used to come there to destroy.

Q). Okay ma, I think that is contrary to what we are saying therefore, the first one is how do we make sure, the groves remain the way they are?

R). May be sooner or later, we may have a government asking people to use the place for building etc.

Q). Yes sir, lets talk about the threats to the groves itself. Now to the threats you have talked about which one is the most rampant?

R). Threats?

R). To me I think building is one of the most important threats to the place, as I have observed.

Q). Madam do you agree with him or you think may be there is another one very important?

R). My suggestion now is this, now the town right from the entrance, already there are buildings. Now from the river here, you see buildings springing up, but there is a sort of set back, because of the forest, sooner or later those around this place may likely drift towards the forest.

Q). So what you are saying, in essence, is that population.

R). Yes, population is a threat.

Q). Now development is the most threat, what will you call the least threat of the ones you have mentioned?

R). Lumbering.

Aspirations.

Q). We as teachers what are the aspirations for the groves?. What do we think the groves should be? Or what it ought to be?

R). It should be a recreation centre. A tourist centre like that of Borgun or any games reserve. They can modernise the whole place.

Q). When you say modernise, what do you mean?

R). They can erect buildings.

Q). But you said earlier on that buildings will be a threat.

R). Not buildings, not residential buildings. I mean like the one in Ikogusi. We need chalets there. Where people can stay when they can come.

Q). Essentially the tourist?

R). Yes, for the tourist, the government can even get money from there. Some areas can be made like zoo and different animals kept there. The other side should be fenced off and restaurants established or any other investments.

Q). So any other aspirations or what you want the place to be. Now, let me just add to this. You talked about what can serve as a threat but how can we prevent those issues you have identified as threats? Yes sir.

R). The government should assign some people, may be, as day guards keeping vigil of the place. also the government should erect government logo so as to show that this area is a reserved area for federal government and at least for federal ministry activities. So that anyone that sees it will know that nothing should not be done on the land.

Q). Can you expatiate on that? What do you mean?

R). In terms of farming, nobody should be allowed to farm there, nobody should be allowed to construct any building and government should be discouraged. Hunting should be discouraged.

Q). So she should be conserved the way it is?

R). So that it should be a natural habitat.

Q). As a member of community, don't you think you have a right to the product of the forest, for instance you said some people take herbs, leaves, they take animals. Do you think you as a member of the community, you should not be taking materials from the forest?.

R). What I believe is that any activity in the grove should be controlled.

Q). Controlled by who?

R). By the established authority. So if the authority has got every necessary thing to acquire the land then they should be so preserved. So anyone that wants to do anything in the grove should take due permission.

Q). So if you just want to get two or three leaves from the grove you must go to the board to get permission?

R). Even if the grove is well preserved no one will get access to the grove without passing through those people.

Q). So it should remain as it is? No we agreed to what he is saying. You don't seem to agree with him.

R). Sometimes ago people from National Museum, they accused some men of cutting bamboo tree along that area, they said that it is

government land, that is one of the duties of the federal government to preserve the area.

Q). Yes ma.

R). I think the fencing of the area should be made very very important.

Q). So we can fence?

R). We can fence with two or three outlets or gates, which they would put a watchman or a gate man there.

Q). And they should be searching for people fetching or taking forest products?

R). When the place is fenced nobody can enter there. And when they want to go to the place they will pass through the gate. The gate man will be there to check them.

Q). You were going to say something?

R). I, the government should look into it so that it can generate fund for the government, even for the development of the town.

Road.

Q). The road that passes through the groves, is it a threat or not a threat ?

R). Yes, the road is a threat. There should be a development on the road. They should construct a good road that people will be passing to the groves.

Q). They should re-construct this one or they should close this one?

R). They should close it.

Q). Lets agree on one thing. Is it a threat to the existence of the groves?

R). Yes, because of the people passing through it to farms and this farming and all those things passing there. But if the road is just a by-pass and not through the groves, there will be improvement and no threats.

Q). So you are saying it is a threat and in other words if the road could be diverted and this one blocked and another one constructed?

R). Yes, because people will not pass through it and there will be development outside and it will encourage people to go there.

Management.

Q). What about the management of the grove? Who should be the set of people managing the grove and who should provide money for the management of the place? Should your school be involved?

R). I think is the responsibility of the local government with the assistance of the federal government.

Q). Madam, you said something, the worshippers, how do you get the worshippers to contribute in terms of managing the place? What will be their actual activities?

- R). They are the people who use to take goods to the place, so they should be involved. I think the community generally.
- Q). The community generally, how do you get the community involved in such activities?
- R). I think that will be through the Oba. They can tell the Oba.
- Q). You are saying therefore that the Oba should be involved in the management of the place?
- R). Yes.
- Q). Right?
- R). The federal government, the management staff of the federal government because of the importance of the place as a tourist centre. So the federal, the state and the local government should be involved.
- Q). Okay three tiers of governments should be involved?
- R). Then there use to be the Heritage Council.
- Q). The Heritage Council?
- R). The Heritage Council is responsible for all these culture affairs. Even the Cultural Affairs Department. I think these too can work together with Heritage Council and with the finance being championed by the federal, state and local governments.
- Q). Was this forest like this twenty or thirty years ago from your own perspective or since you joined this school. In terms of the number of trees and so on?
- R). I was there since 1980. I realised that not all the trees that were there at that time definitely are still existing. As some have died some are taken away. i.e. there is a sort of succession.
- Q). Are you saying there is reduction in the number of trees?
- R). Reduction in the little one because of the activities of the children . Some are getting big thereby shading the floor. The small ones are getting bigger, so that the whole thing is becoming a big force.
- Q). You mentioned hunting, building of houses there and farming in the groves, there is fire encroachment, which implies that the number of trees may be less?
- R). That encroachment you are talking of could be seen through the major road. You see that there are some buildings right from the river here, so since they are stopped, the farm is becoming another miniature.
- Q). Before it started getting to what it was before, how would you rate the reduction, 5%,10%,27%. Just make a guess, estimate?.
- R). Lets say just about 10%
- Q). Mr Adebisi, do you have questions?
- Q). Can you mention some of the plants you've seen here before and that are no more and the ones that are just coming up.

R). Now that is not true but maybe he will be specific, the type of plant. May be when I was here in 1950 as I have said I was here something like camping and I was not here on scientific something but may be the way to classify the plant. But I realise that some climbers are becoming bigger i.e. those ropes, but some shrubs are now almost extinct. Now because of the farming aspects we have some other plants like Euphatorium and so on developing, growing up but I know within two or three place definitely with farming is stopped, other things will over take it.

Q). From our discussion so far you think your group should not be involved in the management of the groves?

R). What types of activities. The school is part of the community. If the king thinks we should be put in the management because it is very close to the groves, there is nothing bad about it. But it is not the school that should bid for it because its an added responsibility.

Q). Are you buying that opinion?

R). No, it will not be possible for the school to share in the maintenance of the grove. Even I will not suggest the community as he has said because there may be a sort of restriction because old people, those old women do not allow outsiders to know what they are doing there just because of the money collected and that is restricting the improvement of that place. In my own opinion I will suggest that anyone that has gone through the university education concerning the department, should handle the management of the place very well.

Q). Which department?

R). May be Arts and Culture Department. If you say he school, the school has got a lot of problems which it can't even solve. When do you expect the school to go there? Is it during school hours or after school hours? We have eight periods per week. Even many teachers are asking for more periods to teach their subject and its not part of our curriculum. What will you call that one? If those people employed there are salary earners, they will work for the money they earn.

Q). Do you know the number or size of the groves? Have you ever visited or used the place before?

R). Only once with the students.

Q). How many times?

R). Just once and we are ever planing another one. Students go there to see cultural things. And cultural physical environments.

Q). What do you teach?

R). Social studies.

R). I have visited the place.

Q). Severally? Are you a worshipper?

Q). Dr.Fawole, you want to say something?

Q). As a school, not the history. The uses as a school. What are the main uses or the main thing you use it for. Because you talked about tourism, creation of jobs, medicinal purposes etc. These are not things that the school will use the groves for, because we are talking to you now as a school to find out what you use the groves for, for the purpose of this school? What would you call your major uses as a school?

R). We used to visit the place for the subject of the teacher concerned.

Q). Please, we would want to know the specifics. To be specific, for which subjects?

R). Biology, geography, agric vegetation.

Q). What of history?. Could that be cultural.

R). Yes.

Q). Like you said, you used the place mainly for educational purposes e.g. the vegetation, biology etc.. With the disturbance going on, do you think you can still find some of the specimens/things you go there to show the students. Don't you think as specialists in your right, you should be involved in the preservation for those things? So that when ever you want to take your students, these things should be there?

Q). Any response to that? Which is part of the issue of aspiration. Are you interested in conservation of this place at all?

R). Like I said earlier on I didn't say that we should be directly involved in the management. But definitely partially we shall be involved since the community we belong to. We cannot tell an external body to come and manage it in the presence of the community not being involved. And as long

Q). So, are you interested in conserving this forest at all? As a school are you interested in conserving it? ?

R). Yes, what the school can do is that anytime they see anybody there tampering with things, they can go and report to the police or law enforcement agents. That's what I think we can do. So we can go and report to the law enforcement agents that some people are trespassing, they are doing this or that in there.

Attendance

1. S. F. Dunsin (Mrs)

3. J. E. Ukpokpo

5. R. A. Jimoh

7. J. O. Oladipo

2. B. R. Oyewale (Mrs)

4. M. O. Igien (Mrs)

6. R. Y. Oladejo

8. O. A. Omotora

9. H. A. Adeniyi
11. R. A. Esho (Mrs)¹¹

10. J. O. Jayeda

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Appendix 12
Timehin Grammar School Students
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report

History

Q). When were the groves established? Who established them? Why were they established? How many groves are there?

R). According to the stories we heard from our forefathers, they that came from Ilesa. The king of Ilesa had one son, who said he wants to go to war. The king then said that who will represent him if the son left for a conquest expedition, after his death. The king's son then replied saying that if he refused, he will leave the town (Ilesa). The king's son together with his wives and children left Ilesa with him. The name of the king's son is Ajibogun. Timehin and Laroye were the friends of the king's son who left Ilesa with him. They settled in a place called Ipole. Later Ajibogun died where they settled. Ipole means a place near where they came from (Ilesa). They said that since the person who brought them is dead, they won't leave the place again. They left the place and came to a place that is near Osogbo-may Ipo-pole. The king of Ilesa then sent Ogidan to go and tell them to come back to Ilesa. They refused because the person who took them there had died. So the messenger joined them and did not go back to Ilesa again, and they were three in number again. Timehin, one of the three, was a hunter and the most senior. One day he set out on a hunting expedition together with Ogidan. Laroye told them to search for drinking water. They found water in a certain place and were excited. They decided to move and settle in the place where they found water to solve their water problem. They fell trees to build huts where they settled. One of the trees fell into the river. Immediately the mammy water (goddess of the river) cried out saying that Oso-igbo you have broken my pots and I also heard all you said. Timehin replied that they are human beings and not Oso-igbo. The goddess went on to say that nothing in the forest can live with her, and as such she will not allow them to stay there. You have broken my pots, but I will forgive you. So start running away as I shout Oso-igbo and settle in a place you cannot hear my voice again. You can always come and fetch water and go back. Both Timehin and Ogidan ran as far as the present Oja-Oba and settled there. Both men then went to their previous settlement and told Laroye about this discovery of water and the encounter with the river goddess. Laroye also told them his encounter with some children. He said the children gathered around a 16 point-lit lamp.

He said he took the lamp and the children scattered in different direction and disappeared.

Q). So far, do you agree with everything he has said?

R). Yes-As Laroye counted the number of children around the lit lamp, they fell down and he took the lamp to the place (Oja Oba) where Osun, the river goddess said they should stay. During the night the river goddess came to visit them. She told them, that she was the one they met at the river the previous day. She gave them a calabash and told them that whenever they needed water, they should make a female carry the calabash to the river. But they should put some materials inside it. These materials-Efo-yanri, Ado, Asaro, Ewa, Eko, Obi, Orogbo, Atare should be thrown into the river. Then she (the goddess) will come out and give them the powers, that would heal all ailments and grant them whatever they desired. The female who carries the calabash must be a virgin. Prior to this, the 16-point lamp must be lit. The place of this encounter with the goddess was called Osogbo. Laroye was made the king because he was the one always at home.

Q). Of what importance is the grove to us as student or children?

R). They are many:-

- It has spiritual powers
- It enables dull students to become brilliant
- It cures barrenness
- Artist come there to shoot films and plays
- It is a tourist centre, people come from Lagos and other places to see the shrine and the river.

Q). You as a student, what is the importance to you?

R). -There are animals there

- We geographers go there for excursion to look at the trees, the water pertaining to school work.
- The trees are good for rearing the animals
- It is also good for medicine.
- The Osun shrine is for the beautification of Osogbo.

Q). But you as a student of what particular use are the Osun groves to you?

R).It is just for excursion purpose, there is no other thing except the Osun festival day.

-It prevented the construction of bridge by the state government. If anything bad wants to happen, it protects the Osogbo community from impending danger.

-The government can get trees from the forest for construction of lockers and chairs for students.

Threats

Q). You all claim that the place should be preserved because of the spiritual powers it has, what are the likely events that can make this place non-existent? Are there some activities that may lead to the destruction of the groves?

R). I don't believe that they can destroy that place because houses built in that place have been seized and destroyed by the government.

Q). If they keep building houses, are you likely to still have the forest?

R). No

Q). So let's assume that building houses can lead to the destruction of the place, what are the other activities?

R). Cutting of the trees

-Snatching of animals

-Electrification of the place

Q). Which of these activities is the most important threat?

R). Electrification of the groves

Cutting of the trees.

Aspiration

Q). What do you think you should get from the grove? How should this place be, developed, for instance?

R). It should be used for higher institution

It can be used for markets.

Q). How do you think this place can be preserved

R). To encourage farmer to use some land for farming

-Leaving the trees like that

Q). Do you as members of Osogbo community have a right to enter the forest to take plants or animals from time to time?

R). It is not allowed.

-It is not a personal property, it is for the government, the federal government.

Q). Who are the people managing the place?

R). The federal government

Q). Who do you think should manage the groves?

R). It should be government. The Osogbo people.

Q). Do you think your school should be involved in the management of the Osun groves?

R). Those people that will be involved, may be they should go to the palace, may be the Kabiyesi and the Oloyes would have a meeting with the government and finalise everything

-they can then use it for anything e.g. university, hospital.

-They cannot use it for such, it is a private place.

-They can seek for the face of the-mammy water before putting it into any use.

Q). So who should be providing money to manage the place?

R). Only government

Q). What about the community?

R). They can still do something

Q). What about the Ataoja and the Oloyes?

R). He cannot but the Oloye's should be contributing something.

Q). When should they be contributing money? Monthly or yearly?

R). Every year when we are doing Orokin-Asala Day.

Q). What does that mean?

R). The indigenes of Osogbo come together yearly to celebrate the Orokin-Asala Day,

Q). So you can get money from them during that festival through fund raising activities.

Q). Now this road that passes through the groves, is it a threat to the existence of the groves?

R). It is not a threat. It cannot lead to the destruction of the groves

-It is the only access road to our school.

Q). What if the road is closed and an alternative road is provided?

Will it be okay?

R). An alternative road will not be appropriate. Even along the Ilesa road there are other small shrines.

Attendance

Names	Class
1 Adeoye Olawale Kazeem	SS3A
2. Sulaiman Wasiu	SS2C
3. Adedapo Musiliu	SS3B
4. Adebayo Busayo	SS2C
5. Okunade Sadia	SS2C
6. Adegbite Moradeke	SS3B
7. Sunmbola Julius	SS3A
8. Busari Jelili	SS3C
9. Agbaje Bolaji	SS3B
10. Ojo Adeola	SS3A
11. Oyewale Gbonjubola	SS3B

Appendix 23
Unity School Osogbo Staff
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report
History.

Q). Do you know anything about the history of the groves? Have you heard anything about how it came into existence?

R). Not really.

Q). So you've some, a little bit?

R). I can say not at all.

Q). Not at all and you are in Osogbo here? How long have you been here?

R). 1997, towards the end of 1997.

Importance.

Q). Do you know anything about the importance of Osun groves?

R). Since you've planned to find out such things, you try to make the information known so that we can get people among our staff who know about the groves.

Q). They would come, it's okay.

R). Continued: because personally I do not know about the Osun groves.

Q). You don't know either? If you don't know, it doesn't matter.

Perception.

Q). But when they talk about Osun groves what comes to your mind?

R). Well, usually you know I have to ask now, what do you mean by Osun groves? In fact what you are calling Osun groves?

Q). So when you hear of Osun groves what comes to your mind really?

R). I have not been hearing about Osun groves until you mentioned it.

Q). What else have you heard about Osun groves?

R). Well, we normally call Osun shrine, Osun river.

Q). Okay when you hear Osun shrine what comes to your mind?

R). Of course, there is a shrine in Osun that people go to visit. In fact they held the STAN programme here during the last long vacation. So people went to Osun to go and look at the shrine, but I didn't go anyway.

Q). What is STAN?

R). Science Teachers Association of Nigeria/

Q). So you are a member?

R). Not really.

Q). So what comes to your mind is

R). Osun shrine, is a place of history. You have some traditional statues there and people go to visit there and there is always celebrations to worship their god there.

Q). They go to worship?

R). Yes.

Q). So is worshipping that comes straight to your mind?

R). But of course we know that there is Osun river too and they don't worship Osun river, but we know that there is a river there.

Q). Do you think that place should be preserved, the forest and including the shrine? Do you think they should be preserved at all?

R). I have never thought about it before but if you are asking me now, I can say, well for the purpose, this state named after Osun so there should be a place, if they are asked, where do you derive the name, there should be a history that would refer to that Osun. I don't have any interest in it and I have never been there before but as you are asking now if they want to preserve for that purpose I think is worth it

Q). Because of the name?

R). Not only the name anyway, because the name would have had an history for the historical aspect.

Even to Osogbo as a town. The place has had an historical background to Osogbo. So they have to preserve some... There are some statues there. May be they linked with the ancestors of this town. So they have to preserve it, so that if we want to trace the history back, they will know where they originated from.

Q). Now that you have agreed that they should preserve the place, what are some of the threats or some activities that may lead to the non-existence of let's say the forest in the shrines?

R). Can you take that your question again?

Q). Alright we asked earlier do you think we should preserve Osun groves? You said yes, for historical reasons. I am just saying, what are the likely activities that may destroy the place or that may not make it be in existence again/

R). Activities performed by?

Q). Any activity, either by you or by some other person?

R). Well, before I go to answer your question, when you are asking whether they should preserve the shrine, well you know we said that for historical reason it should be preserved but I don't think we should preserve it for that fact that some people may go to worship. Personally I don't want to support the fact that it should be preserved because ...

Q). Because of worship?

R). Because I don't think they should still be holding to such things. Because there is nobody that doesn't have any background like that. If some people are still holding to it, that it is still tangible, they should be referring to or be worshipping, I don't think it should be preserved for that purpose.

Q). And you?

R). It is religious e.g the Muslims or the Christians, it has come from the Osun. I don't think we should preserve that thing that shrine, but for the historical background. But I have not been to that shrine before so I don't know that part of it.

Q). So what are the likely activities that can make the forest, lets say for instance, no longer in existence?

R). The activities whether agricultural....

Q). You , it is up to you, you know, it could be agricultural anything.

R). Well, the reason why I am not going to answer that question precisely is that, I have not been there, I don't know the type of activities around that can take over the place. So really I don't think I can answer that question.

Q). And you ?

R). The same thing.

Q). In any grove or any forest, there are some benefits in the grove here, actually I think there are some benefits, do you think there is anyway, I take that back. You say you have not been there, since you say for historical reasons, they could preserve or conserve that place. What are your dreams for a place like this. What else do you think should be done there? Be conserved, what are your aspirations for the place? What do you think should be done to the place?

R). Nothing

Q). It should just remain like that?

R). Yes.

Q). And you?

R). There is nothing.

Q). Apparently people like you heard a lot about Osun groves. How can you be educated. In what ways do you think you can be educated and your students can be educated about Osun groves?

R). How can I be educated and my students?

Q). Yes.

R). That will depend on if I have interest in knowing about it. If I don't have interest, I don't think I will like the long way out to find out about it.

Q). Which subject do you teach?

R). Geography.

Q). Do you ever think you can take your students there on an excursion?

R). I may have cause to do that but I have not done that.

Q). What subject?

R). Geography. Most of our teachers are in the classrooms. You should have sent a letter earlier.

Q). We did. This is the only place. Mr Olabode wrote to all schools. This is the only school claiming not to receive any letter. And you occupy the same premises. I am really surprised. Timehin, Ife-Oluwa, Muslim Grammar Schools, all got the letter.

Q). You are teaching geography have you seen an ox-bow lake before?

R). Ox-bow? No

Q). Do you know there is one in Osun groves there?

R). Well, I don't know because I have never been there I am not familiar.

Q). I am now telling you.

Q). What of the suspension bridge, tropical rain forest?

R). You see you are referring to the groves, I am referring to the shrine. So that what makes the difference now. I think you get the point.

Q). Because that is the general perception. It is not the shrine alone that is there.

R). If it is the grove, of course it could be of importance.

Q). So now, how can we educate teachers, students about the potentials of the groves apart from the shrine? It contains more than the shrine.

R). The students can be educated by organising excursion by taking them to the place explaining those things for them so that they will be able to see what is there. I think is the common way of educating the students.

Q). Sir, we are talking about people who don't know the potentials of Osun groves. For instance, the ox-bow lake, the suspension bridge, the vegetation, the flora, fauna and all of that. As a teacher, sir, how can we educate other teachers and students about the potentials of such a place?

R). Well, I think, there is a confusion, many people cannot distinguish between grove and shrine. Because to an average person, they feel that place is mainly for rituals etc.

I mean the generality of Nigerians are either Christians or Muslims. They feel it may pollute rather affect their religious beliefs. Hence they feel others there is for a type of belief. If not for example in my school like last session, we moved round the state on excursions, we

went to Water Corporation, the cocoa industry, geographical something before Ide. That mix up is there.

Q). How can we correct this perception?

R). They should be educated.

Q). How? What can we do.

R). I think, I believe I suggest you have to release us here, give us time so that there will be a forum where, even I read geography up to NCE level. I was thinking that that place was a mere shrine.

Q). You should have been there?

R). I have been there but only to see the shrine . So I think people should be educated. It is only when they are convinced that they can influence the students. You see this is a misconception and this is what is really happening. And in addition to that, if you go there you think you are going to the shrine, but if you think you are going to look at the shrine don't go there. That's what I tell some people.

Q). But, does it mean as a Christian anywhere there is a shrine nobody should go there?

R). No, not that you should not go, but we think that what are they going to gain from going there? If you feel you don't have anything to gain you don't bother yourself to go. That's why. Not that you are going to lose anything per say.

Q). So we need to change peoples perception that it is not only a shrine

R). Yes.

Q). As a teacher do you think that your religion as a Christian should not affect the discharge of our duties negatively?

R). To answer that, I can say that is not the only place, if that is the point you want to bring out, I can choose another and show them those features. It is not only in that place I can see those features, you know. Like the STAN programme I told you, they go on excursion to the Steel Rolling Company and the shrine. But I heard somebody say, you go and bring a spirit. So I don't want such for my students.

Q). Who said that?

R). One of the participants-an adult, some students may refuse to go and I can choose a better place.

Thank you all for your cooperation.

Attendance

1. Miss Olanrewaju O.A
- 2: Mr. Adepoju. M.A (Vice Principal)
3. Ayandokun. D.O

Appendix 24
Unity School Osogbo Students
Focus Group Discussion Transcribed Report
History.

Q). Do you know anything about the history of Osun groves? When it was established? Who established it, the size, why were they established?

R). According to what I read about Osun history, I read in a novel that Osun river was founded by two wives of the name I have forgotten I am sorry. That they have a misunderstanding between them, that is why they parted ways. That was the reason Osun river was founded apart and Oya. That is all I read about Osun history.

Q). What is the importance of the Osun groves? What have you heard or what have you read? What is the usefulness of the Osun grove?

R). From the Osun forest we can get somethings and like trees and from the river we can get the fish.

R). Osun forest or river enables us to remeber our long cultural heritage. It enables to know that Osun state is our fatherland and by the forest or river we can never forget the cultural and our past forefathers cultures.

R). As far as the Osun river is concerned, it was believed in the olden days and is still reigning, now that Osun river is believed to give children to barren women. And that is why the Yoruba women will call it *Osun olomo yoyo*(a person with so many children)

Perception.

Q). When Osun groves are mentioned what comes to your mind, what is the image, what type....., what really comes to your mind. What comes to you readily, what is you impression, what does it represent?

R). As far as I am conccrned, I don't like the grove, because I used to ask myself that who are the Osun something, I believe they are local something.

Q). What else? You don't like them because you think they are local?

R). Yes.

R). They used to do medicine-worship the shrine.

R). Osun used to go from one husband's house to another. That's why they used to call Osun *Afidi pote mole*.

Q). The impression that comes to you is what?

R). That Osun is *Afidi pote mole*.

Q). What does that mean?

R). She is not a stable house wife.

Q). Any other perception,impression?

R). Mermaids come out of the Osun river.

Q). First of all, do you think Osun forest groves should be preserved?

R). Yes.

Q). Why should it be preserved?

R). Osun forest should be preserved so that at the end of the day generation yet unborn will realize our cultural heritage.

R). It should be preserved because it serves like a recreational centre. And also when we went for conservation club meeting, they told us that we should plant teak trees in order to have a good shade in Osun and also for the new coming generation and the remembrance of those who planted the teak trees.

Q). So you have a conservation club?

R). Yes.

Q). How old is the conservation club?

R). Three years.

Q). Has the conservation club ever gone there for excursion? What exactly were you told about the forest?

R). They told us to the ADP and they gave us paw-paw plants to grow in our compound.

Q). What are some of the activities you think can lead to the non-existence of the groves, forest?

R). Some of the activities are deforestation-felling of trees.

Q). Have you observed that in the forest or you are just thinking is one of the activities?

R). I was just thinking.

Q). What else?

R). Human activities like the building of houses can also cause deforestation. Because to acquire land, you have to cut down the trees to build our houses.

R). Also for the making of wood pulp.

R). Bush burning.

R). Natural disasters like earthquakes.

Aspiration.

Q). What do you think the forest should look like? What are your aspirations, wishes for Osun groves?

R). Its supposed to be a centre of attraction.

Q). How?

R). By putting things that will attract tourist to come, to be like game of wild life reserve. Also the act of worshipping in the shrine should be stopped.

R). We can build some houses there so that some people can go there on holidays to know more about the culture and what goes on in that area.

- Q). Do you also think that they should not worship there?
 R). They can continue worshipping there, because some people really believe in that shrine and it will not be good to stop their belief.
 Q). Are you a Muslim or a Christian?
 R). I am a Christian.
 R). Some people should be allocated to the place to be able to take care of forest area, so that when some trees have fallen down, they will be able to plant more trees.
 Q). Any other suggestions?
 Q). If you pass by you will notice a road pass through the grove, forest.
 R). We don't know anything about the road.
 Q). Do you know of organisations that are involved in the management of Osun groves?
 R). Ministry of Agriculture.
 -Ministry of Arts and Culture.
 -OSADEP.

Educational Strategies.

- Q). Do you think that Osun forest is associated with paganism? Is it a right perception?
 R). No.
 Q). Okay if its not a correct perception. You as students, what ways can we come about educating you about the potentials of Osun groves?
 R). There are lots of mountains and Esa-Oke is located here in Osun state, so British can explore petroleum there or other natural resources e.g plant, animals.
 Q). What ways can we encourage people like you to use the potentials e.g. suspension bridge, ox-bow lake, the vegetation, historical artifacts etc.
 R). By organising lectures and symposium that can educate us and also by excursion. You know if you go on an excursion there, all these things we will be able to see them and learn.
 R). By educating us on the mass media like the radio and television, magazines.
 R). Proper management and development, the government should properly manage, develop the place so that at the end of the day, it leads to a job well done.
 Q). Who should provide money to run Osun groves?
 R). The government.
 Q). What level of government?
 R). State government and federal.

Q). Do you think the study of the grove should be incorporated into your school curriculum?

R). Yes.

Q). How? Which aspect should be incorporated into your school curriculum? and what subjects?

R). Like Agric and Geography, for geography the physical aspect, social studies, history.

Q). Any other thing, issue, question etc. you want to say?

Q). I so hear that mermaids come out of the Osun river during the festival is that true?

R). We are researcher and we do not have answers to that.

Thank you all

Attendance

1. Olomo Damilola.

3. Kemi Fatobumi.

5. Nike Amosan.

7. Bisola Afilakes.

9. Babatunde Omolola.

11. Adeyeye Fatimo.

2. Bidemi Bolade.

4. Tolulope Singerr.

6. Lawal Mariam.

8. Gloria Amadasu.

10. Adegbulugbe Omotola

12. Gbadamosi Tosin.