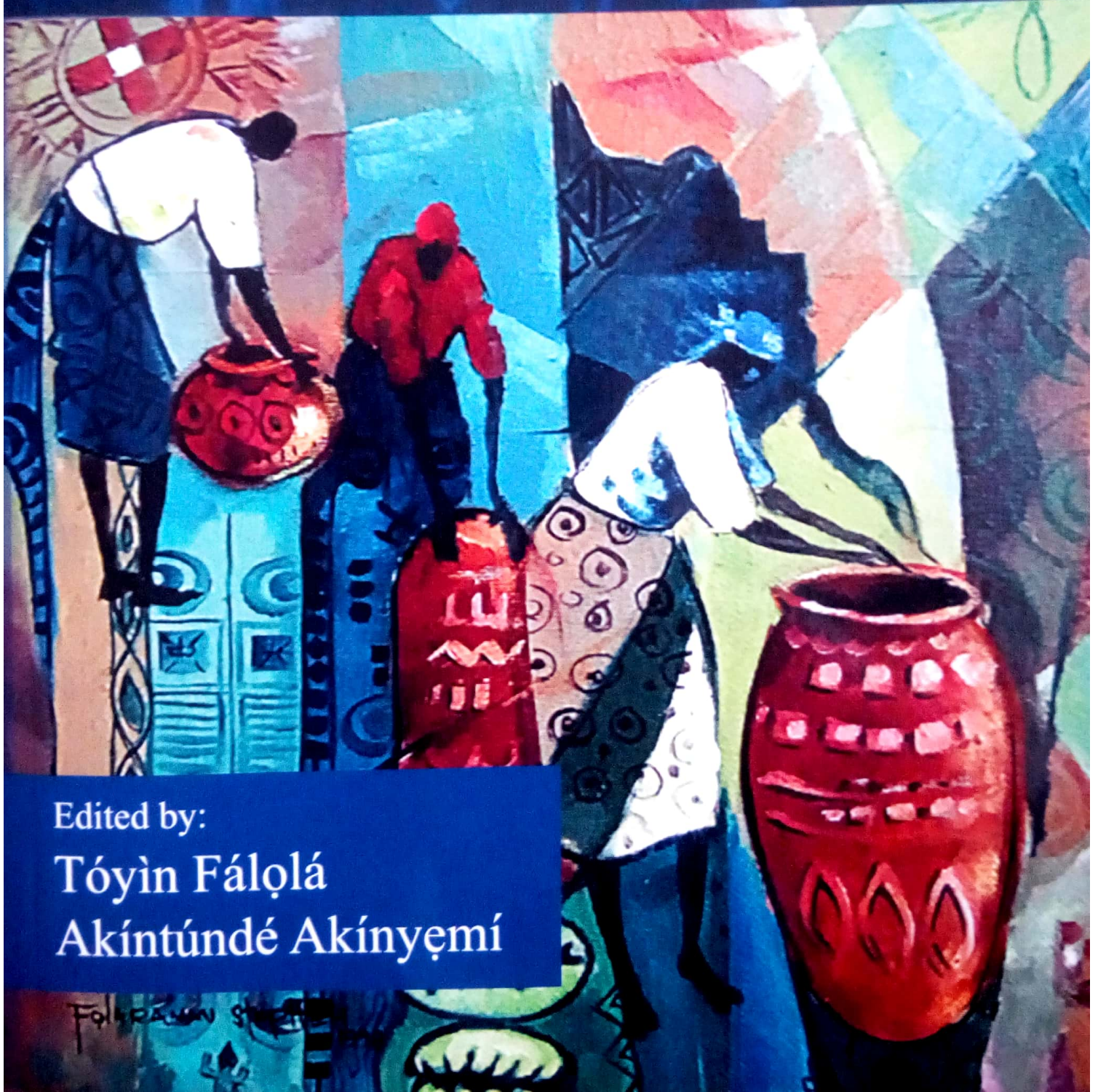


CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF THE YORÙBÁ



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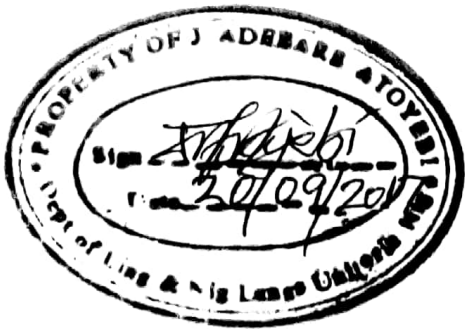
Tóyìn Fálolá

Akíntúndé Akínyemí



CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF THE YORÙBÁ

Tóyìn Fálolá
and
Akintúndé Akínyemí



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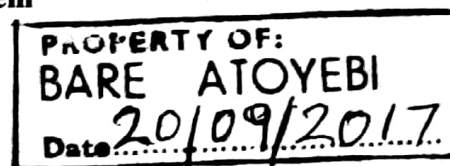
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Chapter 33



Agriculture and Farming

Adébàrè Atóyèbí

Introduction

The Yorùbá people live on the west coast of Africa in Nigeria and can also be found in the Republic of Benin, and Togo. Yorùbá descendants can also be found in Brazil, Cuba, the Caribbean, and the United States. There are also many Yorùbá currently living in Europe, particularly Britain, since Nigeria was once a British colony. The Yorùbá have created a strong economy through farming, trading, and art production. About 75 percent of Yorùbá men are farmers, producing food crops for their domestic needs.

West Africans, such as the Yorùbá, have lived in urban societies and have produced extraordinary art work since at least the 5th century BC. During this time, the Yorùbá began to use iron to create metal tools and weapons such as machetes, axes, and hoes. These tools made it easier for the Yorùbá to farm the land. They planted crops, particularly their staple food, yams. They also harvested the seeds from the palm oil tree. The seeds from this tree produce a vegetable oil that is used for cooking. Kola nuts were also grown and harvested. Soon the Yorùbá began trading with neighboring areas for rice and sorghum.

Due to increased agriculture, the Yorùbá community began to grow in size and large towns were created. They arranged their communities by clan lines, or extended families. Families who had the same ancestors lived next door to each other in large compounds. An elder was put in charge as the head of the compound. Towns became organized by the type of work that people did. For example, farmers lived close by

Culture and Customs of the Yorùbá

blacksmiths who made the tools they needed to farm their land. By 600 AD the Yorùbá were ruled by kings and chiefs. Yams are the most important food for the Yorùbá in their homeland of Nigeria. Grains, plantains, corn, beans, meat, and fish are also eaten. Poultry, goats, sheep, pigs, and cattle are raised as livestock. Large rivers, lagoons and the ocean provide fish and shrimp for the Yorùbá. Fishermen sell fresh and dried fish through traders at the local markets. Around 1900, cocoa became the most important crop that Yorùbá sold to other countries in order to earn money. Cotton and indigo were also grown and sold. Today natural resources like crude oil, coal, palm oil, peanuts, cotton, rubber, wood, corn, rice, millet, cassava, and yams are exported. Many men are employed as farmers. Women are responsible for selling goods at the markets.

Meaning of Agriculture

Originally the term agriculture is derived from two Latin words “Ager” and “Cultura”. Ager means land and cultura means cultivation, i.e., tilling the soil and preparing it for the planting of crops. Putting the two words together i.e. land and cultivation, agriculture could be regarded as land cultivation. In this modern day farming, this definition is no longer acceptable as agriculture means more than land cultivation. Modern agriculture, therefore, could be defined as the production of crops and rearing of animals for the purpose of producing food for human use and raw materials for industries.

Generally speaking, modern agriculture involves the following activities: cultivation of the land for the production of crops, rearing of farm animals for the production of food and raw materials, partial processing of farm products, preservation and storage of farm products, and marketing of agricultural products. Modern agriculture does not end in the production of food for humans alone. In this modern day farming, farmers also cultivate land for the production of crops for feeding livestock and raw materials for manufacturing industries. The farmer's job, therefore, includes the production of large quantities of the farm products, preserving them against wastage and selling them to make profit, to which he adds to his capital or uses in obtaining other necessities of life.

Farming in Yorùbáland

Farming is the most prominent of the professions that we have in Yorùbáland. Since food is the sustainer of life, the profession is regarded as the mother of all professions. As they say, *àgbẹ̀ lẹ́bá* “the farmer is the king” and that *bí ebi bá ti kúrò nínú ìṣẹ̀, ìṣẹ̀* *bùṣe* “as long as one can satisfy hunger, one is not impoverished” The basic implements that are used for farming are cutlasses and hoes. But with modern technology, farmers now make use of tractors, planters, sowers and so on. Farming is categorized according to both the distance and the nature of soil. Hence, we have *oko-ẹgàn*, *oko-etilé*, *àkùrò*, and *ogbà*. For *oko-ẹgàn*, it is normally quite a distance from the house. The farmer may either leave very early in the morning or come back late in the evening or make it weekly or even monthly trip to the house. In this case, he constructs a set of huts where he, along with members of his family and probably his laborers live. In the case of *oko-*

etilé, the farmer goes to the farm early in the morning and go back home to have his lunch; he may go back to the farm later in the evening to work. *Ogbà* is usually located in the outskirt of the town where the farmer can also go and come back home. In most cases, vegetables are the main product. In the case of *àkùrò*, the farm is located near the bank of a river or a water logged area. The farmer can plant any food-crop any time of the year since there is constant supply of water, but this is often used for vegetable farming. Those with large farms enlist the services of their colleagues through *òwẹ* and *àáró*. In this case, other colleagues work for him on certain days and he only provides them with foods and drinks. Farmers may also employ the services of paid workers or *alágbàro*.

This type of farming encourages men to be polygamous. The more wives and children they have, the more hands that will assist the farmers with their work. If the man has male children, they assist him with the farm. However, if he has female children, it is incumbent on their husbands to assist their father in law. There is division of labor between the husband and the wives in the disposal of the farm produce. While the husband produces the farm products, it is the responsibility of the wife/wives to take these products to the market for sale; the husband will then give the wife a certain percentage depending on the sale.

Prospects and Problems of Agriculture

Importance of Agriculture

The importance of agriculture can be measured by the role that agriculture plays in the survival of an individual and the development of the economy of the nation. The following are some of the major roles that agriculture is playing to the economy of the Yorùbá in particular and Nigeria in general:

- i. Provision of food for human use: Agriculture is primarily the most important source of food for all Nigerians and indeed for the whole world. Without food, the nation would be starving and the average life span of an individual is shortened. They are also rendered more susceptible to various diseases. This important function will continue as long as there is life. Through the years, man has sought various ways of perfecting the quality and quantity of food available through experimentation, breeding and improved farming techniques.
- ii. Provision of feed for animals: Agriculture grows crops. Some of these crops are fed to domestic animals, which turn them into animal protein like meat, eggs, fish etc. for human consumption. Protein is a very important component of humanity's food. Apart from the provision of concentrates for farm animals, agriculture now produces pasture and forage crops to prevent ruminant animals trekking for a long distance looking for grasses. With this function, man does not need to depend entirely on wild animals for the supply of animal proteins.
- iii. Employment of Labor: Apart from being the source of food supply, it is generally known all over the world especially among the less developed countries that agriculture is as important source of employment of labor. In

Nigeria and Yorùbáland, in spite of the rapid growth of the other sectors, agriculture still retains its leading position as the largest provider of employment for the working population. It is estimated that about 70 percent of the labor force is employed in the agricultural sector while about 90 percent of the rural population depends largely on agriculture. Women and children are directly or indirectly employed to produce or process groundnut, Palm oil, cocoa, cotton and rubber latex. Many others are employed to work in agro-based industries.

- iv. **Provision of Raw Materials for Industries:** The role of agriculture as a source of raw materials for manufacturing industries cannot be over emphasized. In Nigeria and Yorùbáland in particular efforts have been made over the years to establish and expand our local manufacturing industries. As a matter of fact it is in the interest of our domestic industries that agriculture should be able to meet adequately the needs for our local industries. Examples of agricultural raw material utilized and the products manufactured include: Palm oil is used to manufacture soap, oil seeds used for the manufacturing of oil and oil cake, seeds and oil cakes used for the manufacturing of livestock feeds, sugarcane for refined sugar, tobacco leaf for cigarettes, cotton lint for textile fabrics, cocoa for beverages, ripe fruits for canned fruits, raw rubber for tyres and tubes, and wood pulp for paper manufacturing.
- v. **Foreign Exchanges Earner:** Primary producing countries depend largely on agricultural exports for their foreign exchange earnings that they use to finance their imports. Economic development in most countries has been financed mainly with the earnings from agriculture. Such was the case with Nigeria and Yorùbáland before the impact of petroleum on our economy became so prominent. In 1962 for example, agriculture accounted for about 82% of the total value of the export for the country. In 1976 during the oil boom the contribution of agriculture to the foreign exchange earnings dropped to only about 4 percent. However, with the intensification of various governments and private efforts towards improving agriculture, the figure for 2007 was about 20 percent.
- vi. **Contribution to National Income:** Revenue realized from the sale of agricultural products forms the major source of income for farmers. Other people that are engaged in the processing and marketing of these agricultural products earn their living from them. All of these personal incomes from agriculture form part of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the country. For example at current prices, the share of agriculture in the Gross Domestic Products has varied from 36.5% in 1973/74 to 24.4% in 1977/78. Even though there is decline over the years, it is worth noting that agriculture has made remarkable contributions to the growth of the national income.
- vii. **Rural Development:** Agriculture has contributed immensely to the growth and development of rural areas in Yorùbáland. Agriculture is synonymous with rural development. On the parts of the farmers, through the income generated through farming, they have embarked on community development and self-help

projects. Many rural communities have used their earnings from agriculture to provide amenities like primary school, secondary school, borehole, bridges, hospital, post-offices, etc. On the part of government, in order to evacuate important agricultural products from rural areas, the government embarks upon the construction of roads and railways. Large markets are also established in rural areas with agricultural potentials. Some rural villages are well known because of the location of important markets.

- viii. **Provision of Shelter and Clothing:** Agriculture also contributes substantially to nation's shelter and clothing. The trees from which some of the permanent crops are cultivated can be made into timber used for building and furniture, while crops such as cotton provide lint for the manufacturing of textile fabric for people's clothes.

Problems of Agricultural Development

Erebor (1998) identified seventeen problems facing the development of agriculture in Nigeria including Yorùbáland as follows: land tenure, amenities, finance, transportation, communication facilities, processing and farm machines, government policies, marketing systems, pests and diseases, production uncertainty, farm inputs, attitudes towards farming, and environmental degradation. Other problems that can be added include: customs, poverty and farmer's organization.

- i. **Problem of Land Tenure:** Land tenure is the system of land ownership. In Yorùbáland, the major parts of the land either belong to individuals or communities. This method of the land ownership does not encourage commercial agriculture, as the land is owned through inheritance. This method of land ownership leads to land fragmentation. This method often leads to communal clashes and destruction of life and properties. Farmers who have the capital to make the best use of the land may not belong to the group that owns the land. Even, when such people are given access to land, they are often afraid to put in their best on the land as the landowner can demand it from them at any time. At times, the landowners often dictate what the landless farmers should plant on the land. Increase in population has increased the various alternatives to which land can be put; this puts further pressure on the available land. In the ancient days, the kings in the Yorùbáland were the owners of the land and some of them were greedy in the area of releasing the land to be used by the communal.
- ii. **Lack of Basic Infrastructural Amenities:** Agriculture is synonymous with rural economy especially in Yorùbáland since the major occupation is farming. Most of the rural areas where over 70% of agricultural production is taking place lack social and infrastructural amenities. These basic amenities include; motorable roads, electricity, health facilities, standard schools, telephone services, clean water supply, etc. These social and infrastructural amenities are needed to improve the standard of living of local farmers and thereby increasing

agricultural production. Good roads will ease the movement of workers and transportation of their farm products to urban center, clean water supplies will reduce the rate of infection of water borne diseases and health facilities will ensure prompt treatment of illness in the rural areas. This will ensure that farmers and their family members remain strong and healthy to work on the farm. The lack of basic amenities often leads to rural-urban migration. This will also lead to a reduction in the working population in the villages and eventually to a reduction in farm output. Presently, in Yorùbáland the majority of farmers remaining in the villages are those above 40 years of age. The young ones have gone out in search of job in the cities.

- iii. **Poor Financing of Agriculture:** Most of the agricultural activities in Yorùbáland and in Nigeria as a whole are left in the hands of peasant farmers. One of the major problems confronting rural farmers is lack of finance. Farmers who succeed in getting loans from credit institutions are very few compared to the teeming population of farmers. This is due to the following reasons: the farmers are generally very poor; most of them cannot secure the collateral demanded for loans, and some cannot pay the high interest rates charged on loans by financial institutions. As a result of this situation, most of them still operate at the subsistence level using their children and wives as laborers on their various farms. Farmers need both production and consumption credits to promote them out of poverty.
- iv. **Poor Transportation Facilities:** The major mode of transportation in Yorùbáland, especially in the rural areas, is by road. Transportation facilities in this context refer to the mode and means of transportation, i.e. the condition of the road as well as the condition of the vehicles used for the transportation. We have already discussed the poor condition of basic amenities in the villages. The roads are generally rough and bad. Some of the roads are only motorable during the dry season. With this condition of the roads, it is not surprising that vehicles are inadequate to the task. The vehicles also lack spare parts. Where the spare parts are available, they are not within the reach of the poor farmers because of the high price. All these transportation problems often lead to high cost for bringing farm products from rural areas to urban centers. It also increases the perishability of farm products. Middlemen often take advantage of this transportation problem to increase the price of the products, and at times hoard them to create artificial scarcity.
- v. **Poor Communication:** The means of communication include radio, television, telephone, telex, fax, etc. Communication is essential for agricultural development. They are needed to pass useful information about agriculture and other related matters to farmers. Our communication system in Nigeria, of which the Yorùbá are a part, is still very poor. Television and telephone services are generally not available in the villages and where available most farmers cannot afford to buy them.

- vi. **Lack of Storage Facilities:** Our rural farmers depend largely on local methods of storing their agricultural products. Local methods like barns, cribs, etc. are not very efficient in storing large quantities of agricultural products for a long time. They cannot be used to store fresh products.
- Modern storage facilities like silos, cold rooms, refrigerators, etc. are lacking in the rural farming communities. These poor storage facilities can lead to higher perishability of farm products, and pests and disease. Other problems of poor storage include a reduction in quality and quantity of farm products, glut during harvests and famine outside harvest periods.
- vii. **Lack of Processing Facilities:** Processing of agricultural products is one of the major conditions that must exist for agricultural development to occur. Both the processing machines and the spare parts are presently lacking in the rural areas of Nigeria. Even when available their prices are beyond the reach of local farmers. Some of the machines also require experts to operate because they are highly technical in nature. Maintenance of the existing machines is difficult and expensive. Maintenance is difficult due to non-availability of exports as well as spare parts
- viii. **Illiteracy Level of the Farmers:** Most farmers in Yorùbáland can neither read nor write. Most of the farmers are not educated enough in the technicalities relating to agricultural production. Most of the farmers do not know of new developments in agriculture.
- The results of the illiteracy of farmers according to Erebor (1998) are: reluctance of the farmers to change, farmers are superstitious in their beliefs, suspicious of new innovation, unscientific in mind and in thinking, and generally uncooperative, hostile and unaccommodating.
- ix. **Poor Extension Services:** Extension service is the process through which farmers receive information in modern farming from the relevant government agencies. This is necessary to keep the farmers informed of the latest development in the field of agriculture. The extension services delivery system in Nigeria is very poor. Extension workers are very few compared to the number of farmers. The few available lack the mobility to visit the farmers. Many of them are not ready to live in rural areas where farmers reside. Those that are ready to stay in the rural areas are not adequately remunerated. All these factors combine to bring about poor extension activities in Yorùbáland.
- x. **Poor Farm Tools and Machineries:** Most Nigerian farmers still depend on the use of crude farm implements, and so remain at subsistence level. Some of the available modern farm tools are not adapted to function under our soil condition. Some of the machines are very expensive, some require experts to operate, and most of them cannot be used on fragmented land. As a result of these problems, farmers still depend on their energy and crude implements. This leads to low yield, short life span of farmers, time wasting, and low farmer's income.

- xi. **Unstable Government Policies and Programs:** In order to promote the development of agriculture, government at times established some agricultural programs or announced some policies. This has manifested as land use decrees, operation feed the nation marketing boards, green revolution, farm settlement schemes, directorate of food, and road and rural infrastructure. Many of these programs and policies lack continuity as some of them will cease to exist as soon as the initiator leaves office. Some policies have negative effects on farmers; e.g. importation of rice and other food items will reduce demand for local rice. Inconsistencies in government policies like the granting of subsidies and removal of subsidies on farm inputs have negative effects on agricultural development.
- xii. **Poor Marketing System:** An efficient marketing system is one of the necessary conditions for the development of agriculture. In Yorùbáland, the marketing system for agricultural products is generally poor. Some rural areas are not motorable throughout the year and where motorable, the roads are generally bad. Vehicles for carrying the products are few and the available few are in bad condition, which leads to the breakdown of the vehicles. As a result of this, the volume of trade is generally low for agricultural products. The journey of two hours may take six hours. Due to lack of competition, farmers are forced to sell their farm products at very low prices. The abolition of agricultural marketing boards left farmers at the mercy of middlemen.
- xiii. **Problem of Pests and Diseases:** Pests and diseases have serious effects on agricultural production. Some of the effects of pests and diseases on agricultural development include:

Increase in the cost of production, reduction of the quality of farm produce, reduction of the income of farmers, and reduction of the quantity of farm produce.
- xiv. **Production Uncertainty:** Agricultural production unlike industrial production is subject to the vagaries of the weather; crops depend on rainfall to grow. A shortage of rain leads to drought and excessive rain leads to flooding. High humidity has an effect on the drying process and excessive sunshine can lead to the wilting of crops. Yorùbá farmers depend on natural weather conditions for their operations. As a result, any adverse weather condition will have serious effects on farmers' output.
- xv. **Wrong Attitude to Farming:** Farming is looked upon by many as an occupation for the poor. The youth do not want to belong to this category of people in society. They prefer to take up jobs that would enable them to put on nice cloths and sit in air-conditioned offices. As such, they move out of the villages in large number in search of white-collar jobs in the cities. The youths that venture to remain in the village to farm are being looked upon as low class. This poor attitude of the general society toward farming has a negative impact on farming, as those who remain in farming are old people. Old farmers are known for their reluctances to accept new innovation which implies that rate of agricultural development will remain slow.

- xvi. **Problem of Environmental Degradation:** There are some environmental problems that affect agricultural development. Such problems include pollution, soil erosions, bush burning, deforestation, etc. Environmental pollution is a very serious problem. Erosion menace is another serious environmental problem. Erosion is the gradual wearing away of the soil surface by either rain or wind. This leads to soil depletion, which will increase the cost of farm production. Similarly, bush burning can destroy useful crops on the farm and cause oxidation of some important elements. Deforestation can reduce the activities of microorganisms in the soil.
- xvii. **Customs of the People:** Traditional beliefs and customs affect the development of agriculture in Yorùbáland. For example the consumption and production of certain foodstuff is forbidden in some communities for no reason other than superstitions. Some communities believe that children who eat or demand for eggs will become thieves in the later part of their life. At times customs dictate what crop farmers can plant and what animal he can rear.
- Social customs on the practice of agriculture influences the people's acceptance of any innovation. Some localities are highly sacred and they express a high degree of unwillingness to respond to any change.
- xviii. **Poverty Level of Farmers:** Success in agriculture requires considerable capital investment. The majority of the problems highlighted above are hinged upon the poverty level of farmers. Most farmers operate within the vicious cycle of poverty. Low farm output leading to low income leads to low savings and low savings leading to low investment and low investment in turn leads to low output and the circle continues. There is the need to acquire enough land to make farming an economic venture. The improved planting materials and improved breeds of livestock can only be acquired with money. Modern farming requires power and equipment that are very expensive. Poverty therefore, prevents farmers from going into commercial farming. So farmers will remain poor unless there is government intervention.
- xix. **Poor Farmers Organizations:** Various farmers' organizations are established to assist the farmers in different areas of farming. For example, marketing cooperatives are established to help the farmers solve their marketing problems, thrift and credit society also help the farmers to solve their financial problems. Other organizations include group farming cooperatives, and consumer cooperatives. Due to administrative and financial problems, these organizations are not effective in performing their functions.

Measures of Improving Agriculture in Yorùbáland

The Nigerian government and other developing countries of the world have realized the importance of agriculture in their overall economic development and are taking steps to eliminate these problems. The following are some of the steps:

- i. **Land Use Decree:** The decree was promulgated in 1978 and amended by an Act

in 1990. Land use decree vested all land ownership on the hand of government rather than individuals; the decree was promulgated to assist prospective and genuine landless farmers. With this decree, the problem of land tenure was supposed to be over. What is left to be done now is the enforcement of the law in the rural areas. The law is only effective in the urban centers where land is demanded for building purpose and not for agricultural purposes.

- ii. **Provision of Infrastructural Facilities:** One of the major problems of agricultural development identified was a lack of infrastructural amenities, especially in the rural areas. Government should provide good access roads to the areas of food production to facilitate the transportation of the farm products to the urban areas. The farming communities should have electricity, water, health care facilities, schools and recreational centers to make life more pleasant for the farmers, and hence prevent or reduce drift to the urban centers.
- iii. **Formation of Formidable Cooperative Societies:** A cooperative society is a voluntary organization, formed, owned and organized by farmers for their mutual benefit. Government should therefore encourage the farmers to form themselves into cooperative bodies that can carry out farming on a large scale. By this, they will be better organized, better financed and more credit-worthy to financial institutions than individual farmers. Cooperative departments under the ministry of commerce and industry should be made more functional to assist the farmers. Apart from issuing certificate of registration to farmers, they should be able to supervise and nurture these societies to maturity.
- iv. **Provision of Credit Facilities:** The establishment of the Nigerian Agricultural and Rural Development Bank (NARDB) to cater for farmers credit need is in the right direction. Government should ensure that the rural farmers benefit from the credit facilities of this bank. Government should also ensure that the loan facilities are not diverted to other sectors. Governments should also assist farmers in obtaining loans by ordering the commercial banks and other financial institutions to grant some loans to the farmers without demanding the usual collateral, which the government can guarantee for them. Agricultural credit is essential to increase the investment level of farmers and also to promote them out of poverty level. The amount granted should be substantial enough to make a meaningful impact on the life of farmers.
- v. **Establishment of Efficient Communication System:** We have already discussed the importance of communication on the development of agriculture. Efficient communication systems will combine with extension service in the dissemination of modern agricultural information to farmers. In this regard, government can establish radio stations and television stations. In addition, substantial time should be allotted to agricultural programs. The ministries of agriculture and Agricultural Development Project (ADP) should establish newspapers and magazines. All these measures will ensure efficient dissemination of agricultural information to the grassroots.

- vi. **Efficient Transportation System:** The services of government Transportation Corporation should not be limited to urban centers only. The rural dwellers should also benefit from their services. Government can also assist the farmers to transport their perishable produce such as meat, eggs, vegetables, milk, etc. to the markets by providing them with refrigerated vehicles that are too expensive to be purchased or maintained by individual farmers.
- vii. **Provision of Storage Facilities:** The government should assist farmers in building storage houses for their surplus produce. Government can also buy this surplus produce, store it scientifically and market it during scarcity seasons. The government can also build cold rooms in the rural areas. This will assist in the storage of fresh and perishable produce. The government should also establish processing centers in the villages to take care of agricultural products. They can buy the raw materials from the farmers for processing. Alternatively, government can allow the farmers the use of the machines at a reduced price. If processing machines for crops like cassava and rice are established for farmers, it will encourage them to produce more.
- viii. **Mass Literacy Programs:** In order to minimize the level of illiteracy among farmers, government should establish adult education centers in the villages. The centers should be well equipped to encourage farmers to attend. At the end of the program, certificates should be awarded to those who successfully complete the course. Such programs will afford the farmers the opportunity to go to school without necessarily disrupting their farming activities. Through the program, farmers will now be able to read and write on their own. Education has helped to minimize the effect of some of the customs and the superstitious practices of the local farmers.
- ix. **Promotion of Agricultural Education:** The teaching of agricultural science in all primary and post primary schools all over Yorùbáland and even in the country must be encouraged or even enforced. Agriculture has been made a school subject and many schools such as secondary schools and teacher training colleges now offer it in public examinations. This will create an awareness of the significance of agriculture in the national economy. More faculties of agriculture in the universities and more colleges of agriculture should be established to train people in the different fields of agriculture. Scholarships should be provided for those who want to specialize in the field of agriculture. To attract students into field of agriculture, loans should be approved for them on completion of their courses to establish agricultural enterprises.
- x. **Extension Education:** The government should establish a well-organized and functional agricultural extension service to carry the result of agricultural researches to our farmers. A functional extension service will ensure that farmers are organized, and occasionally films and slides on different aspects of modernized agriculture are shown to them.

Through extension services, farmers are taught to adopt better cultural practices and minimize loss of soil fertility through erosion and leaching.

- xi. Establishment of Demonstration Plots and Film Shows: Government through the ministries of agriculture and natural resources should establish demonstration plots at strategic positions. This is meant to enable the farmers to practical examples.
- xii. Establishment of More Research Institutes: The government should establish more research institutes to cater for all aspects of agricultural production. The existing agricultural research institutes should be expanded so that they can carry out the necessary researches and develop new varieties of seeds and breeds or strains of livestock that will yield better results.
- xiii. Provision of Subsidies on Farm Inputs: Government should assist in the production and introduction of improved seeds and more productive, disease resistant animals for use by farmers. Agricultural subsidies should be given to the farmers by selling the necessary farm inputs such as fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides and animal drug to the farmers at heavily subsidized rates. Subsidies involve selling at much lower rate than the real cost of purchase or production in order to encourage a large number of the farmers who are poor to buy and use them. The same thing applies to farm tools.
- xiv. Establishment of Tractor Hiring Centers: Government should establish a tractor hiring centers that will service the needs of farmers, particularly the large-scale ones. By so doing, farmers can mechanize their farms without buying the tractors and other heavy machineries and equipment. When such tractor-hiring units are in existence, government must ensure that they have in stock a good consignment of spare parts of various types to keep the machines in operation. Personnel that are also technically competent in the maintenances of these machines must be available in reasonable numbers at these centers.
- xv. Improving Veterinary Services: The veterinary division of the Ministry of Agriculture should be made functional and effective to give attention to the farmers' livestock. Veterinary units should be equipped enough to carry out artificial insemination of the various classes of female livestock with the imported semen or semen from improved males of local breed. This will upgrade the local stock without going into the expenses of buying and maintaining these expensive male breeds. Government, through veterinary division must enforce quarantine regulation within the country and at the borders to ensure that disease are not imported carelessly into the country and Yorùbáland.
- xvi. Establishment of Young Farmers Club: A young farmers club is one of the voluntary organizations among the secondary school students. Presently, only a few secondary schools have functional young farmers clubs. The club is necessary to create awareness among the young generations of the importance of agriculture to the economy. The presence of young farmers clubs will help to change the bad impressions that the youth have against farming that will equally help to change the people's bad attitude towards agriculture. Through the club, many youth have embraced agriculture. Government therefore should enforce the establishment of the club among secondary schools. The existing

ones should be assisted to function properly. Government can provide farm inputs and financial assistance to them to establish both crop farm and livestock production in their schools.

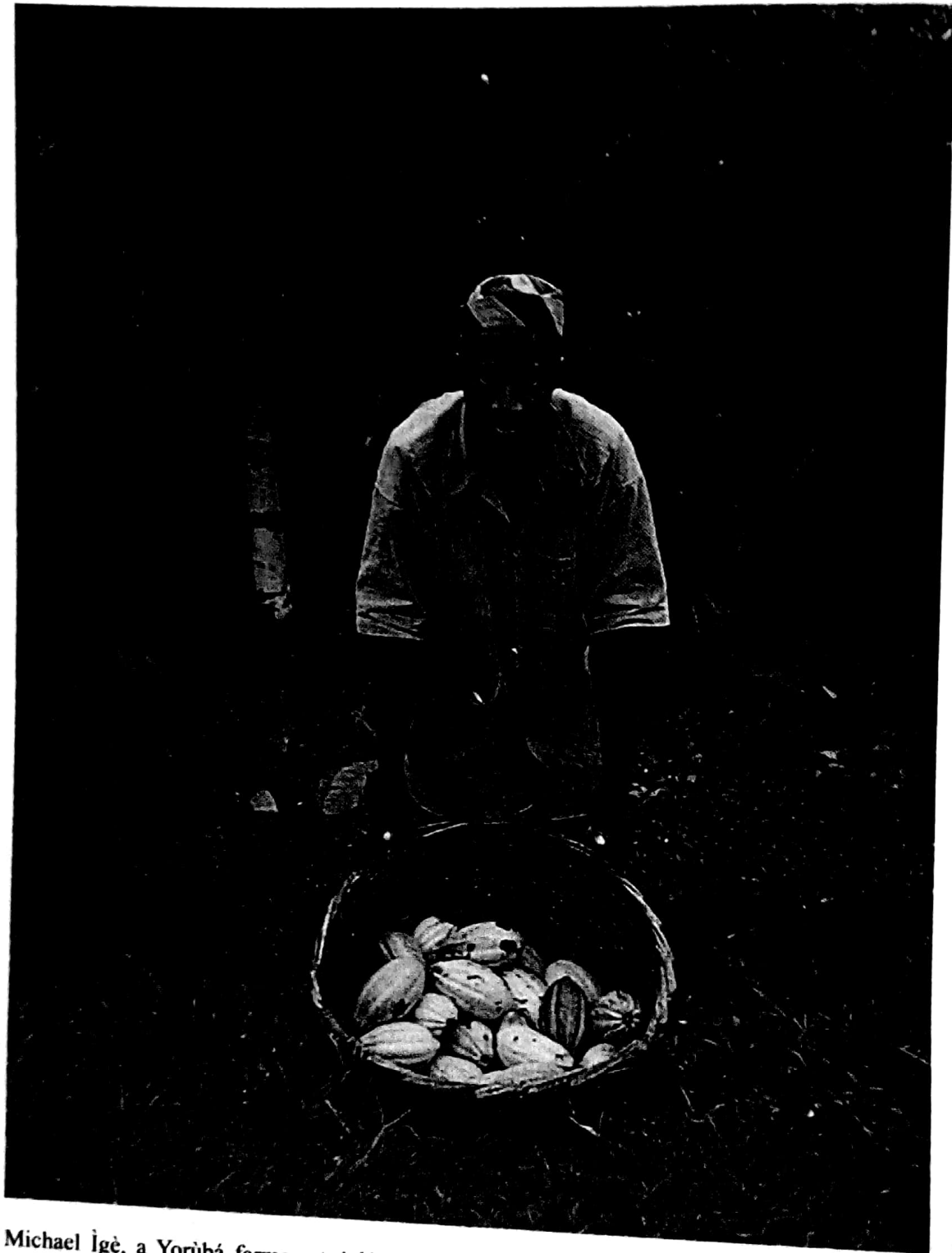
Summary and Conclusion

Farming is one of the major occupations in Yorùbáland in which about 75% of the Yorùbá are engaged. Despite this, it is riddled with many challenges and problems. Some of the prospects, problems and solutions to the problems farmers encounter have been enumerated in this paper. Some of the prospects include: provision of food for human use, provision of feed for animals, employment of labors, provision of raw materials for industries, etc. The alighted problems are: problem of land tenure, lack of basic infrastructural amenities, poor financing of Agriculture, lack of basic processing facilities, etc. The suggested solutions for the highlighted problems circumscribe round the government policy and human impacts in improving the standard of operation and practicing modern agriculture.

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Michael Igè, a Yorùbá farmer at Adámò village, showing his cocoa pods that he had just harvested, 1959. Photo by Eliot Elisofon. In *Eliot Elisofon Field photographs, 1942-1972*.