

**Adoption of Ritual and Poetry of Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity in Combating Regional Instability in Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

The paper examines the Adoption of ritual and poetry of Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity in combating regional instability in Nigeria. This was done with a view of projecting deity and its rituals as a means of resolving conflicts and instability in the society. Also, to make society see that Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity among the Àwóri people of Lagos State as a means of finding solutions to communal crisis and regional instability. This study makes use of in-depth interviews with four selected participants from Aláwòrò-Èkùn worshippers (one priests and three followers). These participants were selected from Aráròmí-Ale one of the Àwóri communities in Lagos State where this deity is worshiped. Audio-visual and photographic recordings were used for documentation of symbolic elements and oral performances at the shrines. The findings showed that ritual and poetry is an effective method to combat regional instability in Nigeria. It increases cooperation, trust and foster a sense of solidarity among neighboring communities. Also, it showed this deity as a savior that rescued people of Òjò community 'in Lagos State and its environment from robbers, kidnapers, terrorist and the epidemic of 1935<sup>2</sup>. The poetry becomes the means of communicating with the deity to fish out traitors and the aggrieved ones before sacrifices. The study concluded that Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity had played crucial roles right from the ancestral period by ensuring safety of Òjò and Aráròmí-Ale community. It also pointed to the fact that Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity is the pillar of peaceful co-existence and unity in Aráròmí-Ale and Òjò community. The followers were compelled to settle their grievance and grudges before appearing in Aláwòrò-Èkùn shrine. If this is generally accepted, prolonged grudges or disagreement that may lead to instability in the community will be resolved and instability will be prevented. The findings showed that the adoption of ritual and poetry is an effective method to combat regional instability in Nigeria.

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<sup>2</sup> Aba Ibikunle Ajose (15/1/2020) one of the resource person of this research work reveals this in an interview at Aláwòrò-Èkùn shrine.

**Keywords:** *Aláwòrò-Èkùn Deity, Deities, Poetry, Regional Instability, Traditional Ritual.*

## 1. Introduction

The relevance of deities among Yoruba people, especially among their adherents cannot be underestimated. It is generally believed in Africa that deities wield special powers to meet their aspirations and make the society a better place to live. Deities often depicted as powerful and wise beings in various mythologies and religions which are sometimes associated with peaceful coexistence in the society. Deities, or gods and goddesses, have often been invoked throughout history as a means of resolving instability or addressing challenges in various cultures and religions. The belief in deities and their perceived power can provide comfort, guidance, and a sense of stability during times of uncertainty. The ability of these deities to restore peace and stability in the society is usually held in high esteem among the adherents. Some of the ways in which deities have intervened in resolving instability are through spiritual guidance, faith and hope, protection and intervention, rituals and offerings, moral and ethical guidance and so on.

Instability is the state of being unstable or lack of socio-economic stability while regional instability has been referred to as state of unrest or absence of peace in area or society. The issue of ethno-religious conflict, political and regional instability are traced to the level of frustration arising from getting below expectation. Regional instability can arise from variety of factors like historical conflicts, ethnic's tensions, religious differences, economic disparities, natural disasters, and external interference. It can have negative impacts on people, towns, economy and entire regions. Reducing it goes beyond welfare of the country experiencing political unrest alone, parties not directly involved too will benefit from it. The problems caused by instability needs to be reduced to minimum barest if not totally erased to bring peace harmony to all regions and Nigeria at large. In regions where there is conflict and instability ritual poetry could potentially serve as a means of promoting unity and understanding among different groups. By sharing common themes and experiences through poetry individuals from different backgrounds may be able to build empathy and find common ground.

Political instability in Nigeria owe much of its cause to internal factors. However, the interpenetration of internal and external factors especially geo-political and economic interests of the international community constantly plays a significant role in undermining the very processes and institutions that are expected to nurture democracy and to instill a sense of stability for societal development in Nigeria, Adeyeri (2013). It is obvious that there is instability in the country, and it has affected both the citizen and the country negatively. There has been series of theoretical and

empirical work investing into solutions and how to curb crisis and instability in the country (Nigeria) but no research work has focused on Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity rituals and appertaining poetries as a means of finding lasting solution to instability. This existing gap is the focus of this research work. It intends to enlighten and educate the society on how to use traditional religion Aláwòrò-Èkùn and its poetries teaches rituals and symbols in resolving issues curb regional instability and bring peace and stability into the society.

## **2. Objective of the Study**

This paper examines the poetry and symbols of Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity among the Àwóri people of Lagos State, Nigeria. The poetry and symbols of this deity point at its supernatural prowess to combat incessant instability ravaging our society. This study is carried out to project the deity and its rituals as means to resolving conflicts and instability in the society. Also, to bring it to bear on the society that Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity among the Àwóri people of Lagos State can find a lasting solution to communal crisis and regional instability.

## **3. Review of Related Literature**

Several scholarly write ups are available on regional instability in the society part of these research works is the submission of Agbu, Musa & Zhema (2020) that was based on insurgency, activities of armed herdsmen and general instability in Nigeria. This work concluded by suggesting a robust security network to completely neutralize the activities of the two groups in North-Eastern Nigeria. The work of Bouchat (2013) was based on the causes of instability in Nigeria and implications for the United States. The found that regional and ethnic tension were major factors contributing to conflict. The study suggested that efforts to promote national unity and address regional disparities could help mitigate instability. Halliru (2012) revealed in his study that “there is a social relationship between the level of expectation gap and that of frustration” He explained further that it is the level of frustration arising from getting below expectation that shows the level of ethno-religious conflict and political instability in a society. Nigeria’s political instability and other related problems are basically a consequence of its leadership problem. At domestic level, African governments are run in ways that have been regarded as far from the modern western state systems upon which they are modelled (Osei, 2004). Another study is Annan (1998) who was with the opinion that Nigeria’s political instability is conventionally attributed to the way leaders sustain themselves in power. Leaders across the country hold onto office by purchasing support through the distribution of state resources as such any conflict over their allocation is thought to degenerate into a struggle over control of the state. Violence erupts either because some elites crave a larger

share of the spoils controlled by the leader or because those outside the leader's patronage-based coalition want access to resources to which they have been denied. Alberto and Chua (1997) study was based on the neighbor curse, regional instability and economic growth. This work revealed that the positive effect of reducing regional instability goes beyond welfare of the country experiencing political unrest alone parties not directly involved too will benefit from it.

#### 4. **Regional Instability and Its Effect**

Regional instability is a state of unstable situation in an area, series of things can lead to regional instability. As mild as disputes or conflicts is, if prolonged and left unresolved it can lead to regional instability. The longer the conflicts stays the more it becomes source of regional instability. Unresolved issues can cause boundary crisis, land dispute, unrest, poverty, low educational standards, and absence of a calm atmosphere. Few of these effects are briefly discussed:

***Displacement and Humanitarian Crisis:*** Land disputes and boundary conflicts that stem from regional instability frequently cause communities and populations to flee their homes. People may be forced from their homes, lose their jobs, and experience problems such as lack of food, housing, healthcare, and clean water which might result to humanitarian disasters. Other effects of displacement include a loss of community cohesiveness, social and cultural upheaval and anguish.

***Unrest and Conflict:*** Regional instability can foster a hostile climate that leads to civil conflicts, political violence and ethnic conflict. The populace may become fearful and insecure as a result there may be a loss of life and property tensions and divisions between communities may worsen. Conflict and unrest can also have a negative impact on the economy interrupt essential services like healthcare and education and have long-term social and economic repercussions.

***Economic Inequality and Poverty:*** Regional instability can exacerbate economic inequality and poverty. Economic collapse, job loss, and a lack of chances for investment and development can result in widespread poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Inflation, currency depreciation, and restricted access to financial services are additional consequences of economic instability that can exacerbate poverty and other economic problems.

***Low Educational Standards:*** Unstable regions can have an adverse effect on educational systems, conflicts and a lack of resources have disrupted education. Low standards of education can be caused by a lack of funding, resources, and access to quality education. This may limit

prospects for economic progress, impede the growth of human capital and prolong cycles of poverty and inequality.

**Lack of Peace:** Regional instability can produce an atmosphere of dread, mistrust and insecurity which can affect community trust and social cohesiveness. Lack of tranquility can reduce movement, restrict access to essential services, and impede social and economic relationships. Additionally, it can undermine one's mental health and general wellbeing and destroy social cohesion.

As earlier pointed that regional instability can be caused by series of irregularities, it is important to note that the regional instability caused by boundary conflicts, poverty, low educational standards and an unrestful environment can have significant linked effects on people, communities and the environment regions. To reduce these negative consequences and encourage sustainable and inclusive growth, it is essential to tackle the underlying causes of regional instability and to advance peace, security and development. Dispute and conflicts are resolved within short period among the Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity devotees they were able to prevent instability in Aráròmí-Ale community and its environment. This had made the community to be safe from land disputes, political crisis and the likes since inception.

## 5. Methodology

This study makes use of both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data were in-depth interviews with three purposively selected Aláwòrò-Èkùn worshippers (one priests and three devotees). These participants were selected from Aráròmí-Ale one of the Àwòrì communities in Lagos State where they worship this goddess. There were audio and video recordings of the rituals and poetry of deity. There was photographic documentation of symbolic elements at the shrine or groove and documentation of oral performances related to the deity. Secondary data were sourced from books, journal articles, magazines and the Internet. The collected data were transcribed and analyzed.

## 6. Aláwòrò-Èkùn Deity: An Overview

History confirms that male and female Aláwòrò-Èkùn led the first Ishuku-Alale and his people to Aráròmí-Alé town in Badagry area of Lagos State Nigeria in the 16th Century from Ile-Ife. The first Ishuku-Alále and his men left Adéjùgbè compound Ìtagbõn in Ilé-Ifè to Òyó town Òyó State, Nigeria. They stayed in Òyó-Ilé for a while and later continue with their journey along with the two Aláwòrò-Èkùn (male and female). He left his wife and many other members behind to travel to where they are now in Aráròmí-Ale of Badagry Local Government, Lagos, Nigeria.

After a long journey, they arrived in Òjò town of Lagos State, Nigeria. Prior to their arrival, the town was plagued with epidemics, robberies, kidnappings, terrorist enforcements and so on. History has it that with the arrival of the first Ishuku-Alále, his men and the two Aláwòrò-Èkùn statues evil and evil doers in the community ceased and they began to live in peaceful life and their economy boomed. After a while, the first Ishuku-Alále and his entourage left Òjò and proceeded on their journey to settle in Aráròmí-Ale of Badagry area of Lagos State, Nigeria. Aba Ìbíkúnlé Ajòsẹ revealed that the ugly incidents returned to Òjò town few days after they left<sup>3</sup>. This now makes Òjò town Chiefs to plead with the first Ishuku-Alále to assist and rescue them from the misfortunes. He obliged and sent male Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity statue to them in order to help them keep peace in Òjò town. This is how the two Aláwòrò-Èkùn deities' turnout to be separated the male Aláwòrò-Èkùn was sent to Òjò town in Òjò Local Government Area of Lagos State while the female Aláwòrò-Èkùn stays in Aráròmí-Ale in Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos State. The Ishuku-Alále in Aráròmí-Ale and his people are the ones that have right to lead worships and sacrifices in Aláwòrò-Èkùn shrine be it male or female Aláwòrò-Èkùn till date. Below is the statue of female Aláwòrò-Èkùn at the shrine.



**Aláwòrò-Èkùn Statue**

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<sup>3</sup>Aba Ìbíkúnlé Ajòsẹ the King (current Ishuku-Alále) and the Chief priest of the deity narrated during interview on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

This picture was taken by the author during sacrifice on 15/01/2020

It was revealed that there is Òṣù and Òpá Òrèrè statue at the shrine with Aláwòrò-Èkùn statue. The two are worshiped together with Aláwòrò-Èkùn same time. All prayers and sacrifice items are presented to these statues at the shrine. These items used during sacrifice or spiritual ceremony include “*emu àjáàbalẹ̀*” undiluted and fresh palm wine, bitter kola, kola, alligator pepper, local cock/hen and white clothes. The picture below shows the worshippers during the concluding part of sacrifice and spiritual ceremony.



**The Chief Priest, Researcher and the Devotees**

The picture was taken by the author during sacrifice on 15/01/2020

## 7. Aláwòrò-Èkùn Deity Poetries as a Solution to Regional Instability

Poetry has played a significant role in the worship and veneration of Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity. The Àwòrì people of Aráròmí-Ale have a rich and diverse spiritual tradition and practice. Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity has its unique personality, attributes, functions and mythology which are conveyed through songs, chants and poems. Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity poetries are considered sacred art form in Yoruba culture and they are used to evoke honor, request and appreciate the goddess during religious ceremonies and rituals. The words and rhythm of the poetry are believed to connect the devotees/worshippers with the deity and to facilitate communication between them. This has gone a large way in making Aráròmí-Ale people to leave a peaceful life with one another. Some of the

ways Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity can be used to prevent or solve regional instability in Nigeria is as follows:

### 7.1 Spiritual Guidance

Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity are often believed to be all-knowing and wise, capable of providing guidance and direction in difficult times to the worshippers. They turn to prayers, rituals, or divination practices to seek the guidance of deities in making decisions or resolving conflicts, hoping that the deity's wisdom and insight will bring stability to their lives. It was revealed that prayers are the most commonly used during sacrifice and spiritual festivals. They presented the prayers with the three oral poetry modes – song, chant and poem as cited below:

#### Aláwòrò-Èkùn Poetry (Prayers at the Shrine)

Yoruba	Translation
Ọtá ilé, ọtá òde ni	Enemy from home and outside,
Ọtá ọkùnrin ni, ọtá obìnrin ni	Male enemy or female enemy
Ọmọdé ni, àgbà ni,	Be it young or elderly enemy
Tí ó ro aburú tàbí ẹ aburú síwa,	That think evil or do evil to us
Aláwòrò kó má pokùn so gbogbo wọn ni o	Aláwòrò-Èkùn tie them spiritually
Àşẹşẹ	Amen
Gbogbo ẹni búburú tí kò fẹ kí ilú tàbí àdúgbò warójú...	All evil doers that wants crisis or instability in our town...
Kí Aláwòrò-Àpónikàn lọ pokùn so wọn kíákíá	Aláwòrò-Èkùn tie them spiritually immediately
Àşẹ!	Amen
Agbára ẹ şì wà níbè, agbára ìgbà yẹn	Your origin power is still intact, use it on them
Ó ní bí o ẹ ní ẹ é, bí ẹnikan bá ti ní bọmọ ẹ jà...	Deal with them the way you used to deal with enemies of your followers.

The above are prayers was rendered at the shrine by the Aláwòrò-Èkùn priest while other devotees responded with amen. The prayer request was against instigators of unrest conflicts or instability against the entire community. As earlier pointed that Aláwòrò-Èkùn is a deity that knows-all there is no need of searching for the evil doers the deity already knows them. This type of prayers scares away the evil doers and enemy of the land. It was revealed that Aráròmí-Ale



indigenes and settlers believed so much in Aláwòrò-Èkùn as a deity that is powerful and trust worthy so they don't joke with activities at the shrine. Making this request with or without prayers items have continuously serve as protection for the community as it did in 1935 and they got respite through the deity from their life-threatening epidemic. If the worship of this deity is adopted across Lagos State and in Nigeria generally it will minimize the level of instability in the Country.

**7.2 Moral and Ethical Guidance:** Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity is associated with moral and ethical teachings, which can provide a sense of stability and guidance during times of social or personal instability. It was revealed that members that will join them at the shrine must not have disputes with one another and if there is any, it must be settled before coming to the shrine (ilé-Qwá). The Aláwòrò-Èkùn poetry chanted by female devotees before embarking on rituals rites does not permit the aggrieved worshiper at the shrine. This a very strong stands forced the aggrieved ones to pour out their mind and give room for settlement. This has in one way or the other prevented crisis and instability of any form in the community. Research revealed that Aráròmí-Ale community is one of the peaceful communities in Badagry Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Aside from the above, the poetry chanted as opening of sacrifice served as a kind of warning to non-members to prevent them from committing taboo. This period of stay indoor is a very short period that must be obeyed, and it is for the good of every members of the Aráròmí-Ale community. The rendition goes thus:

**Aláwòrò-Èkùn Chant**

Ìsàré Aláwòrò-Èkùn (Èka-èdè Àwóri)	Chant Translation
Ọta múuu ẹẹẹ, ojú ẹkùn-un-un-un-un aaaawo lẹ̀ẹ̀ ẹ̀	Ọta arrest him/her, be warned.
Ọba muuuu u, ojú ẹkùn un-un-un	Ọba arrest him/her, be warned.
Ojoooo oro, ojú Èkùn unun aaawooo lẹ̀ẹ̀	Ojo-oro, the Lion is warning
Ọgbẹ̀ ọ̀ọ̀ọ̀gburugburu, ooojú Èkùn-un-un	The one that turned with heavy sound
Ọba mu uu oooju ẹkùn-un-un aawo lẹ̀ẹ̀...	Ọba arrest him/her, be warned.
Yèè èè pà à!	Yèè èè pà à!
Ègẹmọ, ooo	Agẹmọ spirit!

Ikú ree Ògbèrè máa wo000	This is death, non-believers do not dear it
Ó wò ó bèrè gbé eeeee	If does, it's a dealt penalty

Female devotees are the position seen in this picture while chanting the above poetry. This is done to prevent and safe people from being a victim. The worshipers give enough warning to avert troubles and any kind of crisis. It was revealed that people take this warning with all seriousness and the community had no record of people doing otherwise. This invocation prevented evil doers from coming close to Aláwòrò-Èkùn shrine nor to Aráròmí-Ale community. This is because they know the calamity await them if they try it. This shows there is religious tolerance in the community and that has help them curb religious crisis and instability. Emulating this by all community around will surely put the country in a stable state. There is ethical teaches as a means of securing peaceful co-existence and prevention of regional instability was categorically pronounced in Aláwòrò-Èkùn panegyric (oríki). If devotees were able to abide this, they will be able to promote ethical behavior and value. Example of teaches that stands as guide for Aláwòrò-Èkùn devotees is available in the table below:



#### Aláwòrò-Èkùn Panegyric

Oríki Aláwòrò-Èkùn	Translation
Ọmọba Aléjùgbè bí ita	The offspring of a king who poeses copiously like moon
Ọmọ Aláwòrò-Èkùn tí ń ọḍe-firù-gbálẹ	The offspring Aláwòrò Èkùn that hunt sweeping the ground with its tail
Ọmọ Alekoko-bí-ọsán (òwú)	The offspring who is as hard as string
Ọmọ A-ti-şaşara-bomi	The offspring he who deep hard brooms into the water

<u>Omo mému mému tèmi nìkan kó, tebí mi ni.</u>	The offspring of though shall not touch, it does not belong to me alone. It belongs to the family lineage.
Ọmọ Ifẹ-Oòyè níbi ojúmọ ti n mọ wálé ayé	The offspring of Ifẹ source where day breaks
Yéèpàà yéèpàà! ...	Yéèpàà yéèpàà!

It was revealed that Aráròmí-Ale people are like other Àwóri in Lagos State that sees selling of land to visitors as a way of developing their land. They believed that is a show of love and being accommodating. Some of the bad eggs among the Awori do resell land that the buyer did not build or used on time. This dubious attitude is a taboo among the Àwóri of Aráròmí-Ale in Badagry. The underline section “*Omo mému-mému tèmi nìkan kó tebí mi ni*” in above panegyric (oríkì) served as watch line for the devotees and the origin of Aráròmí-Ale. This makes keeping whatever put in their custody or family property safe an important attitude/behavior to them. No one sell someone else land or family property/land secretly, it must be agreed on by every member of the family. This has prevented the community from land dispute, boundary conflict and other instability.

If this aspect of Aláwòrò-Èkùn devotees’ practice is emulated by all communities in the country, many of the crises generated from land issues, boundary and the likes would have been prevented and the country would have been stabled. All these teaches are considered divine laws and they provide a moral compass for believers, and adherence to these teachings is believed to bring stability and order to the Aráròmí-Àlè.

#### 8. Aláwòrò-Èkùn Deity Rituals as a Solution to Regional Instability

Offering sacrifices to the deities is not peculiar to Àwóri people of Lagos State alone, it is a general act at the shrine and well recognized by all religion. Chief priest or priestess is the sacred one that offers the sacrifices to the deities or spiritual being. It can be in form of ritual meal or prayers items like kola-nut, alligator paper, bitter kola, palm oil, honey, dry gin and so on. These items are offered in homage to gods as a means of appreciation for what god has done or with expectation of return. Aláwòrò-Èkùn sacrifice plays an important role in Aráròmí-Ale town in Badagry Area of Lagos State. It serves as a means of strengthening social bonds, promoting a sense

of unity and collective purpose and expressing shared values and beliefs. Here are some specific ways in which Aláwòrò-Èkùn sacrifices can be used to curb, prevent or resolve regional instability

**8.1 Promoting Values and Beliefs:** Aláwòrò-Èkùn ritual festival comes up once in every three years and it is mainly for cleansing of sudden death and diseases. A day before the festival day is for prayers from the devotees. Female devotees visit the shrine with hen while male also hold their cock when visiting. The Chief priest and chiefs coordinate stand as coordinator as all devotees prayed sound health, peace and harmony, stability and prosperity with the hen/cock before presenting them to the deity. All the hens/cocks are dropped beside the groove for cooking on festival day.

The devotees and the whole of the community believed that once this is done with plain mind, Aráròmi-Ale town is free from all evil and crises for the next three years that another one will come up. It was revealed that this has never failed them since they have been doing it. This may mean that the sacrifice is accepted by the gods or that they were been conscious of what they believe in whichever way it's working for them. A sacrifice at Aláwòrò-Èkùn shrine is a powerful way to express shared values and beliefs within the community. Promoting this values and beliefs can also work in all other communities in Lagos State and the country at large and remove instability from all regions.

**8.2 Building Solidarity:** When members of a community come together to make sacrifices for a common cause or goal, they can develop a sense of solidarity and shared purpose. Sacrificing personal time, resources, or comfort for the benefit of the community can create a strong sense of connection and commitment among individuals. The connectivity of devotees during Aláwòrò-Èkùn ritual festival bring love among member. Passing round of left offer of sacramental meals at the shrine for members to have a taste served as bond and covenant among them. They have very strong belief in the word “*a ti jọ je lóri ewé*” meaning we have together eating from the same pot with this it is a taboo for them to betray each other. This thus helps keep peace in the society. Gathering where something like this is made possible with this type of beliefs and intentions peace and stability will certainly present in such community.

**8.3 Divine Guidance:** It was revealed that devotees of Aláwòrò-Èkùn turned to their deities for guidance and wisdom in times of conflict. They turn to their deities for guidance to help them navigate conflicts and find peaceful resolutions through prayers, rituals, or meditation. The Aláwòrò-Èkùn statue, the *Òṣù* and the *Òpá Òrèrè* at the shrine are all-knowing and all-seeing, and

their guidance are sought to resolve disputes or conflicts in a fair and just manner. On spiritual day or sacrifice day, the Chief always consult the spiritual being at the Aláwòrò-Èkùn shrine by using a king of 4 faces kola-nut “*obì àbàtá aláwé méré*” to ask about the activity of the day before embarking on it. The spiritual guidance given at the shrine through divinity served as guide on that day by given them instruction on what and what to do away with in order to make their community peaceful. The trust in this and adherent to instruction has been keeping Aráròmí-Ale save from all forms of instability.

**8.4 Rituals and Ceremonies for Divine Intervention:** Aráròmí-Ale deity traditions include rituals and ceremonies that are performed to seek the intervention or blessings of deities in resolving conflicts. These rituals involve full dressing with white color materials, offerings sacrifice and other symbolic acts like the use of fresh palm wine to rinse sacrifices items. These rituals can be performed during times of instability or crisis to seek blessings, forgiveness, or divine intervention. These activities are believed to appease the deities and seek their intervention in resolving the conflict at hand. Purification rituals during times of natural disasters or epidemic to seek the favor of the deities and restore balance are not left out from ritual practices. Aráròmí-Ale rituals and ceremony serve as a way for individuals to express their emotions and seek solace during times of conflict which contribute to their psychological well-being and aid in conflict resolution and prevent instability in the society.

**8.5 Moral Teachings:** Aláwòrò-Èkùn deities belief systems provide moral teachings and principles that devotees adhere to in order to resolve conflicts. These teachings emphasize values such as forgiveness, compassion, empathy, and tolerance which guide them in resolving conflicts in peaceful and constructive ways. It includes teachings on conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence. Aláwòrò-Èkùn deities teaches also offers religious education to devotees and this help them to understand the teachings, beliefs, and practices of other religions. This helps to reduce ignorance and misunderstandings that can lead to the religious conflict and instability. People found at Aláwòrò-Èkùn shrine has Muslim and Christian religion names, yet they join in ritual festival and sacrifices. This shows high level religious tolerance in the community. Aláwòrò-Èkùn Chief priest promote dialogue and understanding between different members and in Aráròmí-Ale. Bringing people together and promoting peaceful solutions to conflicts, had help to reduce tensions and promote stability.

The idea of interfaith dialogue involving open and respectful communication between people of different religions is another teaches of Aláwòrò-Èkùn devotees. This helps them to reduce

tensions between different religious groups and create a greater sense of understanding and tolerance. By promoting interfaith dialogue, other religious leaders help to create an atmosphere of peace and cooperation in their places of worships.

## **Results/Findings**

Findings from the study affirm that Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity is the pillar of peaceful co-existence and unity in Aráròmí-Ale and Òjò community. It was also revealed that poetry used during the rituals serves as a means of communicating with deity to fish out traitors and the aggrieved ones before sacrifices. The study showed that Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity had played crucial roles right from the ancestral period by ensuring safety of Òjò, Aráròmí-Ale community and its environment from rubbers, kidnapers, terrorist and epidemic.

Research also revealed that the poetry chanted as opening of sacrifice served as a kind of warning to non-members and it prevent them from committing taboo. The period of stay indoor is a very short period, obeyed by people in the community and good time for every members of the Aráròmí-Ale community. In addition, it was also revealed that offering sacrifices to Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity had also assisted in keeping Aráròmí-Ale free of conflict and instability through promoting values and beliefs, building solidarity, divine guidance, divine intervention, moral teachings, mediation and arbitration, faith and hope, divine justice deity and so on.

It was revealed in the panegyric of the Aráròmí-Ale people that it's a taboo to mishandle someone else property like family land or house in their custody. No one sell someone else land or family property/land secretly, it must be agreed on by every member of the family. Study also revealed that Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity rituals serve as a solution to regional instability by promoting values and beliefs, building solidarity, divine guidance, rituals and ceremonies for divine intervention moral teachings and so on.

## **9. Conclusion**

This paper is on adoption of ritual and poetry of Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity in combating regional instability in Nigeria. In region where there is conflicts and instability, rituals and poetry of their deity could potentially serve as a means of promoting unity and understanding among different groups. By sharing common themes and experiences through poetry, individual from different backgrounds would be able to build empathy and find common ground.

It is important to recognize that adopting ritual poetry as a means of solving regional instability would not be a one-size-fits-all solution. Different communities and cultures may have different traditions and practices that address their specific challenges effectively. The adoption of ritual poetry to solve regional instability may have some negative feedback if not approach with caution and careful consideration of the cultural and social contexts in which it is being implemented but it's potential benefits as seen in Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity makes it worth considered.

This study has been able to add to the existing body of knowledge in its enlightenment of importance of sacrifices and deity poetries in Yorubaland as against a mere spiritual purpose attached to the Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity. Also, it offers an elucidation on the use of sacrifices and poetry of Aláwòrò-Èkùn as a means of combating regional instability and community crises.

### **Recommendations**

The paper therefore recommends that:

- the practice of using traditional deity that is focused on peacemaking in our society be encouraged and practiced instead of saying “I reject it in Jesus name” or “*Hausubillahi mina Shaitoni Rojeem*” as proudly said by the fanatics Christians and Muslims.
- Also, the poetry of deities like Aláwòrò-Èkùn in our community is learnt and the thematic content is put into consideration for peaceful coexistence in the society.
- People should be encouraged to settle misunderstanding immediately as unresolved misunderstanding will affect our communication will God. Unresolved issues can also lead to communal or regional instability.
- The use of traditional means like black palm wine in Aláwòrò-Èkùn deity to prevent or cure epidemic should be encouraged. If this has been in use, it would have helped during Ebola, Lassa fever and Covid-19 virus outbreak in the Country.

If all the above is put in practice and little quarrels are settled on time, issue of kidnapping, banditry and hired assassin will be a thing of the past because the aggrieved ones would have been appealed to. If other societies accept this idea and use the available similar deities in their communities the way Aláwòrò-Èkùn is being used, Nigeria will be free of all forms of anomalies.

<b>Resource Persons</b>				
<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	

1.	Aba Ibíkúnlé Ajoṣe (Chief Priest)	64	Oshuku Alále Palace, Aráròmí- Ale, Lagos State, Nigeria.	King/ Business Man	15/01/2020
2.	Chief Samuel Ebenezer	73	Oshuku Compound, Aráròmí, Lagos State, Nigeria	Farmer	15/01/2020
3.	Àiná Şàngódínà Ìdèwú (Ìyálóde)	58	Ìdèwú Compound, Aráròmí, Lagos State, Nigeria	Business woman	15/01/2020
4.	Aminat Sadiku (Erelú)	46	Market Road, Badagry, Lagos State, Nigeria.	Fashion Designer	15/01/2020



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