

# Examining the Significance of Inikpi Festival Celebration in Igala Kingdom of Cuba

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**Abstract:** The aim of this work was to study the importance of Inikpi festival celebration among the indigenous Igala people of Cuba. This work looks at the history of Igala people of Cuba, their traditional structures and rulers as well as the history of Princess Inikpi of Igala kingdom and her role in the Igala – Benin war. The analysis shows the brief history of Igala people of Cuba; Olukumi people of Delta state, Nigeria; Princess Inikpi, and Inikpi festival, in addition to the differences and similarities between Igala and Benin languages, and some factors responsible for some similar vocabularies and culture between Igala and Yoruba. It was concluded that Inikpi festival is very important to the Igala people of Cuba as it reminds them of how the sacrifice by Inikpi made their Igala kingdom home in Nigeria not to be defeated by the Benin and Portugues mercenaries during the Igala-Benin war of 1515 -1516. It was also concluded that the price paid by Inikpi helped the enslaved Igala people outside Nigeria, including Cuba, to be who they are today despite the numerous challenges faced by their Igala ancestors during their forceful journey from Igala lands in Africa to their locations, and the sustainability of their Igala identity till this day in Cuba.

**Keywords:** Benin, Cuba, Festival Igala, Inikpi, Yoruba.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Festival is defined as a special day or period of celebration which involves social activities, foods, drinks, music and other merriments. It is also defined as a celebration in memory of a past event, person or a being. Some importance of cultural festivals are; it brings people together, it entertains, it bring development to an area, it promotes the culture and the people themselves, it preserves the people's culture, it showcases the identity of a people, it promotes peace in the society, etc.

Igala ethnic groups has many cultural festivals, though some are mostly done by Attah Igala and they are referred to as the royal festivals or Igala core festivals. These festivals of Attah Igala are Ocho, Ogaganyi, Iyalo, Egwu and Ogbadu/Inikpi festivals. Though these festivals are done majorly Attah Igala in Kogi state, many indigenous Igala towns and people outside Kogi state celebrate the festivals including the Igala kingdom of USA and Brazil. Other festivals of Igala people of Kogi state are Otegwu, Okwula, Eka, Uchokwo or Kwulo, Ane, etc.

Inikpi festival is a festival in honour of Princess Inikpi, daughter of Attah Ayegba; the Attah Igala who ruled from late 15th century to early 16th century. Inikpi festival is also called Ogbadu which denotes that the war ended on its own without the Igala defeating the Benin or the Benin defeating the Igala as the Benin people turned back while at the across the river Niger on Edo side and observed the “fire in Idah”, and went back home.

The descendants of the enslaved people from Nigeria in Cuba are referred to as Olukumi or Lucumi. But they are mostly called Yoruba as stated by Abimbola below. The community of

Yoruba speakers and their Creole descendants in Cuba are referred to in the literature as the Lucumí or Anagó speech community (Abimbola, 1997). The term Lucumí has a broad and confusing usage in some literature. It was first used to describe the group of Africans who originated in West Africa and shared the common language of Yoruba, but later used in Cuba to refer to not only these Africans but also their Creole descendants. Over time Lucumí became a term that no longer had an ethnic component as its dominant characteristic (Concordia, 2012). Though the Olukumi people of Cuba are classified as Yoruba though over time became a term that no longer had an ethnic component, there are Igala people among them but wrongly classified as Yoruba because of the false history written by Samuel Ajayi Crowther in 1850s describing Igala as Yoruba. The transmission of the false record to the colonial masters led to the spread of the false history of Igala people worldwide including in Cuba. The aim of this work is to study the history of the indigenous Igala people of Cuba as well as to understand the importance of the celebration of Inikpi festival in Cuba.

## II. HISTORY OF IGALA PEOPLE OF CUBA

Igala people of Cuba are descendants of Igala people forcefully taken from the present-day Nigeria during trans-Atlantic trade. Slave raiders invaded various Igala settlements along the river Niger around Idah, raided farms, farmsteads, fishing camps and kidnapped our people for the slave buyers or dealers already waiting in Benin Kingdom all the way from Portugal. These Portuguese originally came for commodity trading with Benin but later discovered that they needed such strong African men on their rice and plantation farms. That was the Genesis of the changing of trading from goods such as pepper, ivory, raw materials to humans. This kidnapping of Igala people for the Benin trading partners was the cause of the Igala-Benin war of 1515. The war stemmed from the role of Portuguese as they did all they could to persuade Benin people to get them people to enslave. Benin would not give them anyone from Benin as a slave since they are Benin bloodlines. Hence, they had to look for neighbouring people. The war occurred in 1515 and 1516. That of 1516 resulted in the kidnapping or enslaving of more Igala people across the river Niger on the side of Benin or under the present-day Edo state. While the war became tensed and the Igala warriors who had already gone to Benin were already running for safety due to sophisticated weapons with Benin warriors and Portugues mercenaries, the Igala warriors at checkpoints on the Idah-Benin road were not spared because the Benin warriors were already coming to Idah.

The difficulty of the war for Igala warriors was mostly due to the fact that the Portuguese slave traders brought mercenaries and sophisticated fighting equipment for the Benin to fight Igala kingdom.

In fact, as reported by Egbarevba's (1968) *Short History of Benin*, of the letter written in Benin City by Duarte Pires to Dom

Manual, the king of Portugal on the 20th October, 1516 soon after the Idah war ended, this alliance was confirmed.

The letter said that:

“Peace had returned to the kingdom; the European, even though Priest of God, had been away with Esigie to Idah for a whole year, and had helped Benin to defeat the Igalas...”

“it is true I am a friend of the king of Benin. We eat with his son...when the missionaries arrived,

the king of Benin was very delighted, the missionaries went with the king to the [Idah] war and remained a whole year” Bradbury, 1937.

As a result of this upper hand of Benin side because of the modern weapons compared to local ones by Igala, many Igala warriors were captured from among those in Benin, and those at various check points on the road who surrendered to the superior weapons or power. Some of the soldiers also escaped to other parts like Delta State, Anambra state and Ibaji areas of Kogi State where they settled or founded their settlements. These captured and kidnapped Igala warriors, women and children were taken to the Americas for enslavement, and some of them are in Cuba today mostly regarded as Lucumi people. Calorta Lukumi was possibly one of them captured from Igala (Olukumi) settlement in Edo then. Igala people from Owo in Ondo state were in Benin under the name of Olukumi at a particular point before emigration too. Cuba was under the control of Spain, and they were in charge of importation of slaves to the place though they do not do it directly by themselves. “The Spanish Empire rarely engaged in the trans-Atlantic slave trade directly from Africa itself, choosing instead to contract out the importation to foreign merchants from nations more prominent in that part of the world; mostly Portuguese and Genoese, but later Dutch, French and British. The Spanish relied on Portuguese slave traders to fill their requirements (Hring, 1947). Lukumi or Lucumi is from Igala word, Onukumi/Olukumi which means "my friend". In Igala culture, it is not right to call people by their names directly, hence some use Okolibiayi meaning this young man, Onukumi meaning my friend, Oja used for woman, etc. The Onukumi is used more frequently by Igala people.

Indigenous Igala people of Cuba are found in various towns such as Cotorro, Havana, Artemisa, Remedios, Guanabacoa,.. but the concentration of Igala people is in Remedios and Havana. It will interest you to know that just like in Igala Kingdom of the United States of America, most of the indigenous Igala people of Cuba are dark in complexion like their Igala brothers and sisters in Nigeria, though we have many light skinned brothers and sisters among them due to intermarriages.

### III. HISTORY OF INIKPI AND INIKPI FESTIVAL

Inikpi was one of the daughters of the king of Igala kingdom called Ayegba. HRM Attah Ayegba was the son of Idoko who was also one of the past Attah Igala. Ayegba was/is normally called Ayegba Oma Idoko, meaning Ayegba son of Idoko. Other siblings of Ayegba or other known children of HRM Idoko are Aguba, founder of Idaka in Dekina; Atiyele, founder of Ankpa; Egwu, founder/father of Ochai Attah clan Idah; Aba, father of Ogodumokwo town in Adoka, Benue state; Eja, father of Ai-Odo Otukpo, Benue state.

Inikpi had many other brothers and sisters but she was said to be very close to their father, Attah Ayegba Oma Idoko. Attah Ayegba ruled Igala kingdom from around the late or Middle 15<sup>th</sup> to early 16th century. He fought Jukun war of 1449 (Emmy Unuja Idegu, 2000) and Igala-Benin war of 1515-1516. Inikpi

Oma Ufedo baba meaning "Inikpi, the beloved child of the father" paid the ultimate price during Igala-Benin war of 1516. As a result of the difficulties in winning the war, or difficulty in stopping the fight by Igala warriors, there was a great tension in Igala Kingdom especially in the palace, Idah. The traditional councils, priests, scribes and even warriors became unsettled. The worst news was that the Benin warriors and Portuguese mercenaries were already heading Idah from Benin. Automatically, the weapons (cannon, rockets...) will burn Igala kingdom down when fired from a certain range. This was what was left on the minds of all Igala people. Many of the Igala warriors who earlier invaded Benin town had escaped already due to their inability to withstand the modern weapons on the side of Benin, and many captured while trying to escape. Many warriors already captured from the various check points too, and some ran for safety. The bad news kept coming to Attah in the palace, that Benin warriors and Portuguese mercenaries were coming closer to Idah already though the River Niger between Idah and the Benin side. So, as the physical or weapons mode could not win or end the war, a traditional or spiritual approach was resorted to. The Ifa priests of Attah Igala were assembled under the chief Priest titled Ohloga Attah. They were asked to enquire from the ancestors and the gods of the land how Igala kingdom will do to win the war or not to be consumed by the war. After repeated enquiries by the Ifa priests, the ancestors said the same thing as the only solution to end the war, and that Igala kingdom will not be defeated. And that solution was that Princess Inikpi, the beloved daughter of the father be buried alive. This report by the Ifa Priests "killed" the palace and Igala Kingdom the more. In fact, it was like Igala kingdom had been defeated by the war already. Everywhere became quiet. But the Priest could not refuse to give the reports to the Attah. They told Attah Ayegba what the Ifa said as the only solution. But Attah rejected that immediately. He said they should look for other ways. Unfortunately, the ancestors were holding up to that only solution of Inikpi to be buried alive. There was no time. Benin warriors were getting closer and closer to Idah. Attah's spirit was dampening more and more. His mood changed completely. He could not eat foods given to him. Princess Inikpi noticed this sudden change in mood and appearance of her father, Agabaidu Ayegba. She asked the father, but the father didn't tell her. Inikpi would have to go to meet other traditional rulers to ask, and one brave chief was able to tell her what the Ifa said as the solution. She was even happy that the solution had been provided by the ancestors. She quickly ran to the father, and told him that it was good she was buried quickly to save the palace and the Igala Kingdom. Adding that, if she doesn't sacrifice herself as said, herself, the entire Kingdom and Attah himself may be consumed by the war. She went prepared and came back to the father that she was ready. Though with deep sadness, the father could not refuse to do as the ancestors have said. With some maids beautifully dressed and some gifts for her, she was followed from the palace to the side of River Niger which is the way from Benin to Idah. There, she was buried alive as stated by the Ifa, with her been the last at the top after the nine maids under. As soon as the burial was completed, the Benin people on the other side of River Niger across Idah saw that Idah town which is Igala kingdom headquarters was already in a great inferno or completely burning. They saw no need to take the war to Idah again since it was already burning down probably due to some fired shots from Benin side. The inferno became very much and took a very long duration to convince them that Igala Kingdom had already been destroyed. They went back to Benin, and the war ended. The people in Idah didn't know what was happening regarding the “fire” or what was observed from Benin side. There was no fire in Idah. It was an illusion or imaginary fire



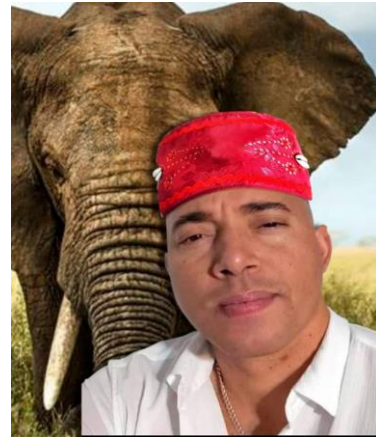
from the blood of Inikpi. Inikpi was alive for 14 days in her grave as the father was coming there every morning to communicate with her until there was no response from the grave on the fourteenth day. Fourteen is one of the special numbers in Igala tradition. After the war ended through Inikpi's sacrifice, the victory of Igala kingdom was attributed to her love, braveness and kind-hearted. A festival to celebrate her began after some years. It is sometimes called Ogbadu, which literally means to be in equilibrium. No winner no loser. That was the origin of Inikpi festival in Igala Kingdom. Today, Inikpi festival is being celebrated in Igala Kingdoms of USA and Cuba as well as by some resident Igala people across some states in Nigeria and beyond. Igala kingdom of Cuba celebrated Inikpi festival in Havana on August in 2022 and September in 2023.

#### IV. TRADITIONAL RULERSHIP STRUCTURE OF IGALA KINGDOM OF CUBA

The traditional rulership structure of Igala kingdom of Cuba began from the Onu at the topmost. The Onu is the traditional ruler and overall head of the indigenous Igala people of Cuba. He works with the palace of Attah Igala Kingdom to relate the messages to and from the Igala Kingdom of Nigeria and Igala Kingdom of Cuba. The present Onu Igala kingdom is Chief Ajogu Alberto Stephenson Rodriguez. Next in the hierarchy are the Omachi who are the assistants Onu, and who act when the Onu is not around. Omachi also are regional heads, and they lead some people or communities for the Onu. The Omachi Onu Igala Kingdom of Cuba is Chief Marino Skeritt. Another traditional ruler is the Queen mother. The queen mother is the mother of the Kingdom or the entire Igala people of Cuba. As a mother, she has many roles to play. She is responsible for the maintenance of peace especially through quick intervention in case of conflicts. She supports the Onu to make plans regarding the Kingdom. She is the head of all the mothers and women. She educates the women on some things. She sometimes host Igala people during events or for special gathering. The present Queen mother (Iye Igala) is Iye Ofelia Isalgue. Other Igala traditional rulers are Omaonyete, Ogah, Atama. Omaonyete is the princess of the Igala Kingdom. She works with the Onu's office and delivers some messages or makes some announcements regarding the activities of the Kingdom on behalf of Onu. The present Omaonyete Igala kingdom of Cuba is Omaonyete (Princess) Dimarys Aguila. The Ogah Onu is a regional head too. He coordinates and controls a particular Igala community. He takes messages from the central or Onu to the region. He also takes messages regarding the region to the Onu. The present Ogah Onu Igala Kingdom of Cuba is Chief Pedro Skeritt. The Atama Onu Igala is an important figure in the Kingdom. The Atama is the priest of the Kingdom. He teaches and educate the people about the religious practices and cultures of the people. He is in charge of the worship of Igala gods and goddesses in Cuba. When the date for the celebration of Igala religious festival is fixed in Kingdom, the Atama is the one who mostly in charge of the activities on that day especially regarding the prayers to the gods as well as the making of sacrifices to them. The present Atama Onu Igala Kingdom is Atama Silvio Linares.



Statue of Princess Inikpi at her burial spot in Idah, Kogi state, Nigeria.



Chief (Onu) Alberto Stephenson Rodriguez; The Onu Igala kingdom of Cuba



Iye Ofelia Isalgue, Iye (Queen mother) Igala Kingdom, Cuba



Chief Marino Skeritt, Omachi Onu Igala Kingdom, Cuba



Omaonyete Dimarys Aguila (Princess) Igala Kingdom, Cuba



Chief Pedro Skerritt, Ogah Onu Igala Kingdom, Cuba, for Remedios.



Atama Silvio, Atama (Priest) Onu Igala Kingdom Cuba

## V. COMPARISONS BETWEEN IGALA AND YORUBA

### (a) Differences between Igala and Yoruba

Although Igala and some parts of Yoruba today are related in a way, Igala ethnic group is different from Yoruba ethnic group. Some of these differences are:

1. Igala people originated from ancient Egypt and settled in Attagara community Borno state under then Kanem empire in 700 BC (Anatole et al., 2017). The origin of Yoruba varies from Mecca, Saudi, Ile Ife, Benin, etc.

2. The traces of Igala people can be found from ancient Egypt Al-Garah and Qau (Tjebu) to Gara in Sudan to Azanda AbonGara in South Sudan to Igara Kingdom in Uganda and Kenya to Gara in Central African republic to Gara in Chad to Gara, Ngara, Attagara in Borno to Tangara/Attagara in Ibi in Kwararafa then but now Taraba State to Attagara/Idah in 500BC (Jacob, 2018). Yoruba do not a trace along the route from the root like this based on my investigation.

3. The name, Igala is from the ancient Egypt word, Galla, and it means freemen (Jaenen, 1956), owners of land. It existed before the first dynasty era of ancient Egypt which is around 3150 BC. "The primitive population of the Nubia Nile valley from predynastic period and up to the first dynasty belonged to a race consisting of Bejas, Galla, Somalians and Nubians (UNESCO, 1978). The name Yoruba came into existence in the 19th century as it was given to Oyo people by Fulani Hausa people (Vanguard news, October 2019).

4. Igala is not an amalgam of various tribes. Yoruba of today has some parts from Nupe such as Tapa people of Oyo, Lagos, Kwara state; some from Benin such as Okitipupa side of Ondo, Eko Lagos State; some are Itsekiri now in Ondo, Lagos; some are Igala in Igila Osun State, Ondo, Ekiti, Oyo and Ogun waterside; some from Sudan like the Ijebu of Ogun state, some are descendants of Oduduwa, etc. As a result of the combination, the population of Yoruba is higher than that of Igala. According to the Ethnic analysis of Lagos population in 1891 as reported Payne in 1893, the people of Lagos was made up of Eko, Popo, Oyo, Ijebu, Egba, Ijesha, Egbado, Nupe, Hausa, Kroomen (Liberians), Ekiti (Efons), Ilorin (Population census of 1891). Today, these different ethnic groups in Lagos in 1891 are presently counted as one Yoruba tribe including the Nupe and Hausa.

5. Igala Kingdom has a king, and he beads all traditional rulers of Igala kingdom. Yoruba doesn't have one supreme ruler. Hence, each Oba is named after a town or domain and not the tribe like Attah Igala. Examples are Ooni of Ife, Alaafin of Oyo, Oluogbo of Ugbo, Oba of Lagos, etc.

### (b) Similarities between Igala and Yoruba

1. Both Kingdoms have some related vocabularies and some related cultural practices including goddess and gods.

2. A section of Yoruba, the Ijebu people are from the same Nile valley area origin with Igala. Igala are from ancient Egypt while Ijebu are from Jebu in Egypt to Wadai in South Sudan.

3. Both Igala and Yoruba languages are classified under Yoruboid language even though Yoruba which Yoruboid got its root from came into existence in the 19th century.

4. There is Ife in Igala land of Kogi State. There is Ife in Yoruba land of Osun State.

5. There is Ibadan (Ibadan) in both Igala land of Kogi State and Yoruba land of Oyo state.



### Some reasons for some similarities between Igala and Yoruba languages and cultures

1. Some parts of Yoruba today are from same origin with Igala, hence the same culture and vocabularies.
2. Some people in Southwest are from Igala, hence those Yoruba towns have too close vocabularies and even town's names with Igala compared to other parts.
3. Oduduwa was the father of majority of Yoruba people; as some history sources said, he met some people already in Ile Ife when he arrived there. According to Igala tradition, Oduduwa was from Benin, crossed the river Niger to Idah on exile. She married Igala wife. Stayed in Idah, later moved to Ife in Omala which is far from Benin. Lived there for years and later moved to Ile Ife. The children understood Igala language more than Benin language, their father's language. This Igala language of their mother made Yoruba language to be very close to Igala when spoken. This was the reason why Oranmiyan could not understand the Benin language when he was sent to Benin to rule as the King in place of his father due to the old age of his father, Oduduwa. Oranmiyan came back to establish Oyo around 13th century and became the first King, Alaafin. Though Oranmiyan left Benin, someone already carried his baby, and the first statement made by the son was in Igala language, Owomiko meaning "my hand struck it". The Owomiko later metamorphosized to Eweka. In summary, the descendants of Oduduwa had Igala mother which made their language to be the combination of Igala and Benin.
4. Some Igala and Yoruba towns have facial marks that look alike.

### VI. WRONG CLASSIFICATION OF IGALA UNDER YORUBA BY SAMUEL AJAYI CROWTHER

The classification of Igala under Yoruba, or as Yoruba was a wrong move made by Samuel Ajayi Crowther but since it was an assignment given to him, irrespective of the protests by people lumped together under the new tribe, the British reserved the record. This made many Igala people at home in Nigeria and outside Nigeria to be wrongly classified and identified as Yoruba. Ajayi Crowther went to the extent of twisting Igala History in order to "suppress" them under the new identity. In his book titled A comparative word-List of Yoruba, Igala, and English languages in 1854, Ajayi said that "Igala was a Yoruba sovereign who lost his territory to Fulani Invaders and ran to sultan of Nupe Kingdom for assistance to enable him have a new habitat. The sultan had journeyed down the River Niger from his capital, Rabbah, and finally arrived at Idah, which the Akpoto had inhabited then. The Akpoto were driven away and sultan bought the land and later installed the Yoruba man as king, with the title of Attah". This was the Attah Igala who gave a piece of land in Lokoja to Ajayi Crowther to build his church and school, the first Primary school (Holy Trinity Primary school, Lokoja) in northern Nigeria. This was the Attah whom the British met in 1830, requested for Lokoja land from Attah Igala, the owner of the land, for model farming, and the agreement concluded in 1840 with some amount of money paid to Attah, and the land to be given back to Attah Igala after 100 years lease period. Saamuel Ajayi was even with the white people in Attah's palace throughout all these processes of the lease. But after over 13 (1840 to 1854) years that Attah leased the land to the British without any of them going to Yoruba King, Sultan of Nupe or Fulani, Attah suddenly became a Yoruba person installed by Nupe Sultan. Everyone including Ajayi was aware that Igala migrated from Kwararafa which is northern side of Nigeria to Idah especially as there was a war between Igala and Jukun in

those days which occurred years after Igala migrated from Kwararafa, and through which many people learnt about the relationship between Igala and Jukun, especially Igala migration or root. Ajayi Crowther also named other tribes like Itsekiri and even Benin as Yoruba. This wrong classification led many people astray including publishing companies who would define Igala as "Yoruba speaking people". This made the people of Cuba to see Igala as Yoruba speakers too, and would call them descendants of Oduduwa. All stemmed from the original wrong histories written in the 19th century and handed down to the colonial masters, the British, by Samuel Ajayi Crowther.

### VII. BRIEF HISTORY OF OLUKUMI PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

Although some people are described by some authors as Olukumi people, there are some towns or people in Nigeria whose tribe is called Olukumi. This people are not in Yoruba land or Southwest zone of Nigeria. Olukumi people are in Delta State which is Southsouth Nigeria. They are made up of towns namely; Ubulubu, Ugbodu, Ugboba, Ogodo, Ukwu Nzu, and Idumuogo. Historically, the Olukumi people are said to have migrated from Owo in Ondo State to Benin Kingdom, and after sometime, migrated from Benin to the present-day Delta State. With this migration from Southwest or Yoruba part, they were classified as Yoruba people. Owo, on its own is just in Southwest Nigeria, it is not made up of only Yoruba people.

"But although the people of this Kingdom (Owo) are Yoruba, there has been some marked Benin influence, an influence revealed in the cultural activities, designation of titles, the Royal regalia, art and culture of Owo... It is sufficient to note that the people of Owo in general is a conglomeration of diverse ethnic groups; Benin, Igala, Yagba, Yoruba who have come to settle together and been made by the circumstances of frequent wars, succession disputes, trade, and sheer adventure to share a common destiny" (Awe, 1977, page 3, and Oloye 1991, Okajare, 2016). In other words, Owo is made of different tribes. But as usual, since the adoption or spread of Yoruba identity in the 19th century which was just for Oyo people to all the tribes in Southwest irrespective of their origin, everyone in Southwest is identified as Yoruba. For instance, according to the population census records of 1891 of Lagos titled "Ethnic Analysis of Lagos population 1891, the various ethnic groups in Lagos and their number are....

Lagos (or Eko tribe); 20,221 people, Popo (Ogu-Badagry axis); 13,577, Oyo are 9,963, Ijebu are 9,432, Awori is 7,930, Egba is 5183, Ijesha are 3703, Egbado are 3110, Nupe (Tapa) is 1598, Hausa are 1599, Krio (Liberian) is 1180, Ekiti (Efons) is 1510, Ilorin (other Yorubas) are 1228.

Today, all these tribes including the Hausa, Nupe, Krio from Liberia, Eko from Benin, etc. are all Yoruba. But are they truly Yoruba? That is a question. Back to the case of Owo, they have their various components. Even the traditional rulers of Owo dress in Benin traditional ways. Some traditional titles and items are from Benin Kingdom even till date. This various components of Owo are also reflected in Olukumi people of Delta State. This is seen in the names of the various communities. Idumuogo is one of the towns. Idumu is a Benin word, meaning, village OR quarter. Idumuogo means the village or quarter of Ogo, and this is the Benin component of Owo. Ubulubu, Ugboba, Ogodo and Ukwu nzu people have Igala egwu afia masquerade culture. This masquerade is limited to only Igala people irrespective of the location across Nigeria. The masquerade speaks and understands Igala language only. The similar Egwu afia masquerade is in Ebu, Illah, Aika, Asaba, Onitsha, Odekpe, Ossamala, Oko, Aika, Okpanam, etc which

are all Igala towns in Delta State and Anambra State. Further investigation reveals that Ogodo people are from Ogodo of Ankpa to Ogodo in Ajokuta before moving to Owo. Ukwu nzu people are from Idah like Ogodo people to Okenyi in Ankpa, and from there to Owo. The name Ugboodu means stranger. It was as a result of the new location they found themselves after running from Benin Kingdom due to certain circumstances, though the percentage of Igala in Ugboodu may not be much as they are ruled by Yoruba traditional ruler, hence they are from the Yoruba component of Owo. Ugbooba and Ubulubu are from Egwu afia clans in Igala land.

Olukumi is a variant of the Igala word, Onukumi, and it means "my friend". They use of "Olukumi" for my friend in Southwest or Yoruba land is extremely little. It is said to be the dialect of Igala and Owe. But Owe people are in Kabba, Kogi State not in any of the six "Yoruba" states. In addition, the people using Olukumi as my friend are in some communities in Ekiti and Ondo only and in Ijebu, but Ijebu people are from the same origin with Igala which is Egypt/Sudan. That is, the people using Olukumi instead of Oremi in Southwest may not be Yoruba but Igala or Ijebu but classified as Yoruba politically by the colonial masters. In summary, the Olukumi people of Delta State are not completely Yoruba but the combination of Igala, Benin and Yoruba, the same combination making up the Owo, their origin, and this is manifested in their various towns' names and Cultural practices, but the name Olukumi itself is more of Igala root than Yoruba root.

### CONCLUSION

This work has been able to analyse the history of Igala people of Cuba, their traditional structures and rulers as well as the history of Princess Inikpi of Igala kingdom and her role in the Igala – Benin war. It can be concluded that Inikpi festival is very important to the Igala people of Cuba as it reminds them of how the sacrifice by Inikpi made their Igala kingdom origin not to be defeated by the Benin and Portugues mercenaries, as well as making them who they are today despite the numerous challenges faced by their Igala ancestors during their forceful journey from Igala lands in Africa to their locations, and the sustainability of their Igala identity through their culture till this day in Cuba.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that other Igala festivals be revitalized or reintroduced in Igala kingdom of Cuba as done in the Igala Kingdom of the United States of America which has its headquarters in Charleston, South Carolina.

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