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Abstract

Over the years, Nigerian society has the belief that given the potency of kánàkò (collision of time and space) and egbé (teleportation), it can only be applied by men while neglecting the role of women in its application for national safety. The study examines egbé and kánàkò and implications for community policing and women's involvement in socio-economic sustainability in South West Nigeria. Three research questions were raised and answered to guide this study. The study adopts the qualitative research approach anchored on ethnographic research design. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 36 participants from six (6) communities in Ógun, Oyo, and Osun states. Recordings, observations, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions were used to gather qualitative data. Findings from the study revealed that egbé and kánàkò could be useful for military and paramilitary agencies if appropriately implemented to ensure community policing and national safety, amongst others. The study recommends, amongst

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others, that the hunters' association and government should properly sensitize women in the hunting profession on their role to enhance the preservation of these traditional means of fortifications and not become weapons that will render these fortifications irrelevant.

Keywords

community policing, egbé, kánàkò, women's involvement, Yoruba culture

Introduction

Until recently, when facts have proven some animals are endangered due to some human activities, hunting had remained a lucrative age-long profession among the Yorubás of southwest Nigeria. Like many other professions among the Yorubás, one could easily identify a hunter, or at least, a person born into a lineage of hunters through some personal features, among which, and most obvious, is their names. Names such as Ọ̀ḍẹ̀biyí (The Hunter - a worshipper of the deity of hunter, has given birth to this one), Ọ̀ḍẹ̀bunmí (The deity of hunter has gifted me), Ọ̀ḍẹ̀yẹm (Hunter deity benefitted me), Ọ̀ḍẹ̀fúnkẹ (Hunter deity has given me to look after tenderly), Ọ̀ḍẹ̀rindé (The child from the deity of hunter has arrived home from his journey), and other names involving the word "ọ̀ḍẹ̀" (hunter) signal the family origin of the bearer. Among the Yorubás, the strongest among the hunters are referred to as "Ọ̀ḍẹ̀-aperin" (one who hunts elephants) or "ọ̀ḍẹ̀ aperin-peḥon" (one who hunt elephants and buffaloes). In recent years, the federal government has made policies to ensure the safety and continuum of wildlife in Nigeria ([National Strategy to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime in Nigeria, 2022–2026](#)). This resulted in the demarcation of a vast portion of land as forest reserves, prohibiting traditional hunters from hunting inside the demarcated reserves. This policy posed a great threat to the hunting profession among the Yorubás. However, the opinion of hunters on the policy remained divided. Some hunters view the government policy as a block to their daily survival. In contrast, others agree that the animals were already becoming scanty and scarce in the forest. Further, they explained that if care was not taken, their grandchildren might never have the opportunity to see some of the animals, except on television and book pages.

Hunting generally is not a job for the faint-hearted. It takes several days, which may span weeks and months, in the forest, playing hide and seek with wild animals and being as vigilant as one can be to avoid getting killed. These Yorùbá proverbs emphasized the danger of hunting:

‘Ááyá gbọn, Ọ̀gúngbè gbọn’

(As the monkey is smart, so also is Ọ̀gúngbè).

Ikún dẹ Dẹdẹ, Dẹdẹ n dẹ ikún.

(As the stone-deaf squirrel hunts Dẹdẹ, so also is Dẹdẹ hunting the stone-deaf squirrel).

In these proverbs, Ògúngbè and Dẹẹ are skillful hunters, but the animals were also up in the hunting activity. This shows that the hunting expenditure is dangerous as the hunter could end up becoming prey in the mouth of the wild animals. Knowing that hunters protect themselves from angry or wounded wild animals will be interesting. Also, considering the nature of the difficulty faced by hunters, how women or the girl child born into a lineage of hunters is conceived in the face of wildlife hunting. The first question is already hinted at in the title of this study (the concept of fortifications such as kánako and egbé). These are age-long traditional teleportation systems of the Yorubá that have somehow and unexplainably escaped scientific research or empirical analysis. Egbé simply teleports the user from the danger zone to a more secure place that must have been fixed at the point of fortification, while kánako is a psyche experience that has to do with an individual covering a long distance within a short space of time. However, research has shown that there are different kinds of teleportation systems. Their differences are mostly noticed in their strength. For example, the popular egbé aláparo can only teleport the user just a few meters away from the danger zone and not completely out of sight. Secondly, this study will examine the role of the girl child in the traditional hunting profession of the Yorubá. Considering the fact that the Yorubá culture protects the girl child from danger, it will be interesting to know if tradition permits them to hunt and, if there are restrictions, what level of hunting is expected of the girl child. Also, their role(s) in hunting rites, especially in the making and fortification processes of egbé and kánako, will be examined.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study was to appraise kánàkò and egbé traditional hunting methods and draw out implications for community policing and women's involvement in socio-economic sustainability in South West Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed to;

- (i) Find out the ingredients hunters require in preparing these fortifications;
- (ii) Explore how egbé and kánàkò can be useful for fortifying community police through military and paramilitary agencies;
- (iii) Determine the extent to which women's involvement in hunting can lead to socio-economic sustainability in South West Nigeria.

Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- (i) What are the ingredients hunters require in preparing these tools?
- (ii) How can egbé and kánàkò be useful for fortifying community policing through military and paramilitary agencies?
- (iii) To what extent is the role of women hunters in the socio-economic sustainability of the use of egbé and kánàkò?

Literature review

Works on community policing and the role of women in Yorùbá land are reviewed. Works on the *egbé* and *kánàkò* are not within our reach. This was not surprising given the experience of the researchers in the field and that the resource persons were very reluctant to disclose important parts of the information required.

Community policing and the role of women in Yorùbá land

Several scholars perceived community policing differently. Believes that when the community has security challenges, community policing must emit problem-solving, community collaborations, and commitment to policing. Casey (2010) views community policing as a philosophy and strategy that develops closer police-community collaborations to restructure police establishments as well as transform police practice. Kappeler and Gaines (2009) see community policing as the establishment of community-initiated policing mechanisms in most cases as a result of the failure of the state to provide security and protection in the face of growing crime rates among communities. According to Olubade and Ogunnoiki (2020), the latest common policing outfit in Nigeria is *Amọ̀tẹ̀kun*, a new traditional community policing outfit by the six South Western States (Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, and Ekiti in Nigeria). Operation *Amọ̀tẹ̀kun* was established by governors to check the increase of insecurity in the South West in June 2019 in Ibadan, Oyo state, and it was launched with legislative backings in 2020 by the House of Assembly. If a government is perceived as a failure to provide security for the community, the community can provide solutions to insecurity. Oluṣṣe of Ikirun, Jagun Raimi Ogunperi, the head hunter of Ikirun downtown, warrior of Oyewo says:

Our parents started the hunter's group. Then, whenever they go to Irágbiji market, they will be attacked by thieves who will collect all the money from the women who sold goods at Oke on their way back home. The king of Irá came to our parents lamenting. They summoned all the hunters and apprehended the thieves on the next market day. It was after that that they decided to start holding meetings from Iré, Irágbijí, Iriṣa, Ọ̀bagun up to Ilá and Oyo.

In the past, when vehicles were not available, people walked day and night without encountering much danger. Some merchants moved with hunters or paramilitary agents for protection. These hunters used *egbé*, *kánako*, *aḩẹ̀ri*, *ọ̀fẹ̀*, *ajabo*, and so forth in those days to curb insecurity. For example, Oluṣṣe of Ikirun, Jagun Raimi Ogunperi, the head hunter of Ikirun downtown, warrior of Oyewo states that:

When Tafá Agánrán was alive, I lived with him for a year and 3 months. Nowadays, if you prepare *egbé* for somebody, such a person will start a search for a wealthy person to kill and abscond with the properties. We were four men at Tafá Agánrán's place. Myself, Lawani, Alaó and Ayánladé. There was no police force at that time, just guards. They made hints to us that there was a house in Ibadan filled with money and that we should burgle the house since we were neither paid salaries nor wages. Haaaa! I said we can't be hunters and thieves, never.

Lawani, Alaó, Ayánladé, it is time to go home. That was why we left Tafá Agánrán's place.
No matter the oath, you will still be betrayed.

This indicates that some paramilitary and military agents who are supposed to project security for the citizens connive with criminals, or some of them are criminals.

Ajikobi (1999) states that "African societies promote equality and in real sense avoid unnecessary injury, especially on womenfolk." He further explained that women of high achievement are prominent in Yorubáland. A few of them are Iyá Ọfa Ọmọsá of Ibadan, Orosen of Ọwọ, Denti of Ilú-titun, Ẹniabiire of Ikoya (these two are in Ikále), Elsie Femi Pearls of Lagos, Alamoye of Aramoko who was a great warrior, Rabi Aláṣo-Oke who was the first Iyálóde of Lagos in 1917; Lady Ọbasa (who was the first female public transport magnate in Lagos, Ajigbeda of Lagos (an outstanding merchant), Efundununke of Idi-Oro in Ibadan; Chief (Mrs) Olúremí Ọnọsanya, Yeyebokun of Iléṣa, Erelu Aasi, a powerful Princess of Lagos, Ẹfunróye Tinúubú, Ẹfunṣetan Aníwúra, etc. Aside from that, a woman may own land inherited from her parents, and when she marries, her husband can never be the land owner. Men and women have equals as the Yorubá axiom confirms thus: "Bó o róbínrin, bẹ ẹ lẹbu. Bó o rokunrin, bẹ ẹ lẹbu, a o mẹni baba rẹ ẹ ku, tí í fiṣu sébe." (If you come across a woman, ask her if she has some yam cuttings. If you come across a man, ask him if he has some yam cuttings. Since one cannot know whose deceased father must have left some yam cuttings in his yam heaps for his children to inherit). According to Ajikobi, this maxim indicates that both sexes have equal consideration in inheriting the vital means of life. Ajikobi (1999). This is also the case in the hunting profession, whereby a female child is trained as a hunter along with a male child without discrimination. Regarding women's involvement in socio-economic sustainability in the South West, African women work in trade, music, pottery, mat weaving, fishing, farming, palm oil manufacturing, fabric weaving, herb experts, and other fields. All markets are led by women. Women are not underrated in the hunting and security professions; they are involved in military and paramilitary agents. The position of women whose family profession is hunting can be justified with the proverb that says: "ọmọ àjànàkú kì í yàrà, ọmọ tí ẹyá bá bí ẹyá ní í jọ" (the progeny of an elephant will never be little in stature, just as the offspring of the knife will always resemble their parents). Women whose family profession is hunting do have some traits like boldness, which is one of the most important traits each hunter must have. Also, looking at the animal kingdom, the lioness is a skillful hunter, even more skillful than the lion.

Methodology

The study used a qualitative research method that adopts an ethnographic research design to understand the socio-cultural phenomena. The target population of the study comprised all hunters in South West Nigeria. Research has shown that this target population is knowledgeable in the preparation and application of kánàkò and egbé, the traditional methods of fortifications. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants of the study. Three states in the South West of Nigeria were selected as the target population, and two communities where predominant hunters reside were targeted in each

state; Ogun (Ifẹ/Ota, and Şagámu), Ọyọ (Igboho and Işeyin) and Ọşun (Ejigbo and Ikirun). In each community, the Key Informant Interview (KII) guide and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were employed as instruments for data collection. The selection of the participants (hunters) was based on the recommendation of the Ọba (Kings), Baále (Mayor), and Olú-ọdẹ (Head of Hunters Association of the community). The members of the KII/FGD include Ọba or Baále, Olú-ọdẹ, the oldest and youngest hunters in the communities, and two other hunters, preferably female. The hunters were observed in their natural state as they discussed their experiences of how egbé and kánako operate, and these were well recorded using audio/video recorders and documented. The distributions per state and community are as follows: In Ejigbo, six participants and three cooperation partners, and six participants with one cooperation partner in Ikirun, Ọşun state, six participants with one cooperation partner in Işeyin and six participants with one cooperation partner in Igboho, Ọyọ state. In Ogun state, three participants in Sagamu with one cooperation partner, one participant in Ilogbo Ọta and one in Ifẹ, respectively. This gives a total of thirty-six (36) participants selected from six (6) communities in Ogun, Oyó, and Osun states. A letter of introduction and consent forms were designed to properly recognize researchers and participants. Four trained research assistants were employed to cover the communities for data collection. The language used for data collection is Yorubá through oral interviews; experts in the field were employed to produce detailed transcription and translation for data analysis. A natural language processing analysis by computational data analysts followed this.

It should be noted that for this study, women hunters were not available to participate because they are scarce to see even in the predominant hunting communities. It was noted by the participants that a few women hunters who happened to be their colleagues were no longer alive at the time of this study. They were training some women hunters who evolved from the real hunting family and were interested in the hunting profession. While few of them were present during the FGD, they were not allowed to talk in the midst of Olú-ọdẹ, Aşipa ọdẹ, and other senior hunters. They were just meant to observe. Hence, the reason their voices were not heard.

Findings

Ingredients required by hunters in preparing egbé and kánako

Both egbé and kánako have become very scarce as the traditional hunting profession itself is struggling to survive the challenge of modernity. When queried, hunters responded by telling us that egbé and kánako are no longer in demand by hunters. This is because most forests where wild animals require such a degree of fortification from hunters have become reserves through government policies, and hunters have been barred from hunting through them. A respondent from Işeyin has this to say:

There are no wild animals anymore; young hunters no longer request such fortifications... We only have a few left around us, only elephants and buffaloes. The government has refused to allow us into the forest reserve. (Ọláwé Ogúndiran)

This response is uniform across all locations. However, this doesn't rule out the fact that *egbé* and *kánako* still exist, but it is scarce and can only be found with aged hunters, who barely agree to possess such charms. The most difficult aspect of this research was getting participants to give a complete list of herbs and other materials necessary for *egbé* and *kánako* fortifications. It is considered a trade secret among hunters, and they believe that no one, without an ulterior motive, will want to know what is involved in making *egbé* and *kánako*. However, in the interrogation process, we got some hints. Although none is complete in its entirety, few participants made mention of important herbs and how they relate to the functionality of *egbé* in particular.

A respondent, the *Olú-òde* of *Ọla* town, mentions Whirlwind as an important composition. Also, the *Aşípa òḡe* of *Işeyin*, when trying to paint a picture of how long it may take to make *egbé* due to the stress that one of the most important materials is a leaf that a whirlwind has lifted, so one must wait until he can lay his hands on such a leaf before proceeding. The *Olu-òḡe* of *Ọla* stressed:

It can be done for trusted people if one can provide the ingredients, such as leaves lifted by the whirlwind, water, etc.

The specific type of leaf was withheld, but with the forgoing, it becomes obvious that *egbé* is a product of the belief of ancient Yorubá in the power of herbs and leaves. In *Igboho*, Mr. *Ojelabí* also, by chance, mentioned the importance of a bush fowl as part of the material for a certain form of fortification. However, this fortification does not teleport its subjects too far away from their current spot, just as bush fowls are believed not to fly too far away from their comfort zone.

Use of egbé and kánàkò for fortifying community police through military and paramilitary agencies

Since *egbé* and *kánako* are charms found among hunters and warriors, we then queried our participants on the possibilities of using *egbé* and *kánako* in modern combats. The concerns raised by our participants from different locations were uniform. At *Işeyin* and *Igboho* in *Oyo* state and *Ibogun* in *Ogun* state, the first question raised by the hunters was to ask us whether operatives of the military and paramilitary agencies can keep to the dos and don'ts of these highly constrained fortifications. Pa *Ọláewé* *Ogúndiran*, a sexagenarian hunter who had hunted from childhood in the forest of *Oke-Ogun*, *Ondó*, and *Ekiti* states raised serious concerns about letting out such powers to the military. He further explained that *egbé* and *kánako* are reserved for hunters alone. This will make it difficult for them to allow any military member who is not from a lineage of hunters to possess such powers. He emphasized that *egbé* and *kánako* are not the only forms of fortification that hunters must possess to hunt deep in the forest, but they are the most sacred. They are hardly given without an oath between the hunter and the person fortifying them. He opined:

... such a person must be a hunter. If not, he must take an oath...

This shows how difficult it is to maintain possessing *egbé* and *kánako* fortifications. Mr. Qjẹlabi, one of our participants in Igboho, also clarified that the reason why we can rarely see these kinds of teleportation powers among the youth is the same reason why it may be difficult for operatives of military and paramilitary agencies to make use of them. It becomes very difficult to control.

The hunters believed that operatives of the military and paramilitary agencies in which community police can be fortified may not be as disciplined as the hunters. Alhaji Yakubu, one of our participants from Ogun state, who specializes in hunting elephants and buffaloes, stated some rules governing the hunters' association and maintenance of their hunting powers. He opined:

... Hunters do not steal, they do not betray, they are not covetous, and they respect one another by not snatching women from their colleagues. All the commandments of God to humans are the abominations of the hunting profession.

These are some of the preliminary concerns raised by some of our participants when the use of *egbé* and *kánako* by the military and paramilitary operatives was raised. The other part of their reaction was, as stated earlier, that if operatives of military and paramilitary agencies can refrain from misusing *egbé* and *kánako* for tempting but evil acts such as stealing and other social vices, can they also maintain the lifestyle baggage that comes with the possession of such fortification? For example, in Işeyin, Igboho, Ikirun, and Ibogun, participants reacted that traditional fortifications such as *egbé* and *kánako* require some level of personal discipline, one of such is that it may dictate what you eat, how you eat or even how you relate with the opposite sex.

In Igboho, for example, hunters raised concerns that they do not eat *ewédú* (jute leaves) because it has been traditionally proven that it weakens the fortifications of hunters and the hunter may not be aware that their personal protection is weakened until they are in dire need of it and it fails them. Some hunters do not share eggs, while others don't eat. They wonder how military men will be able to remember all of these and consistently abide by them. One Ogúndayọ in Işeyin also explained that this is the reason why the educated class/people always belittle the traditional powers given to them. He explained that most of them easily forget taboos, the dos and don'ts rolled out at the point of fortification. When the powers fail them, they say, "*Those things are not real.*" They have forgotten to ask themselves if they have been able to abide by rules.

Going by the above descriptions given by hunters from different locations about the constraints in the use of *egbé* and *kánako*, they, however, affirmed that both could be useful to the military, but most importantly is that such a person must be from the lineage of hunters, and is ready to take an oath before such fortifications can be released to him/her. However, in a KII session with a traditional leader, who doubles as a priest of Ifá at the Ajigbotifá temple in Ibogun, viewing the question from a different angle from that of the hunters, believed that *egbé* and *kánako* are not just useful to military men, but also for community policing to everyone in the society considering the present security situation. He, however, reaffirms the fears of the hunters about gross misconduct and misuse of powers whenever such is released to people without any restriction. He opines:

... from the situation of things and how the country is headed, everyone can use egbé. But it is mainly used by hunters during hunting. But in this present day, with the way things are going, everyone needs such fortification.

Only one of our participants agreed easily that egbé and kánako can be used by everyone, including military and paramilitary persons. However, the disparities in their conclusions are tailored toward their profession and age-long traditional practices. One may conclude that the military and paramilitary personnel can use egbé and kánako but with caution and stern warnings. This corroborates the conclusion of Pa Ọláewé Ogúndiran when asked that if men of the Nigeria Army agree to take the oath, will they be fortified with egbé and kánako? His response was, “Yes, they will.”

Women’s involvement in hunting and socio-economic sustainability in South West Nigeria

The questions in this category can be divided into three parts. The first confirms the existence of women hunters, the second confirms if they are allowed to use egbé and kánako, and the third is how their involvement can lead to socio-economic sustainability. And if not, what are the reasons for such a restriction? If women hunters exist and are allowed to use egbé and kánako, to what extent can natural occurrences like the menstrual cycle affect such?

The title of Erelú ọḍẹ is particularly reserved for women hunters in Orilemo. This is the case because it is believed that some women may be more courageous than some men in certain situations. As explained by participants, in assembling and making egbé and kánako, women play important roles but refused to tell us their roles in particular. Generically, there is hardly anything achievable when women are not considered. From this, one may decode that deep forest hunting with guns and other highly reserved weapons is still reserved for male hunters. When asked about the use of guns by women hunters, Pa Ọḍẹind in Ikirun could only remember one, the daughter of Ogunjobi who is now late. This proves that wild hunting, such as killing elephants, buffaloes, and other wild animals, is strictly a duty of male hunters and a few females in rare situations. The points made by Ọḍẹinde stand at par with that of Ọláewé in Iṣeyin.

This also indicates that very few female hunters can hunt large-sized animals in the wild. Ọláewé couldn’t point to any female hunter that is capable of such in the Iṣeyin district, which houses about twelve different units of hunters’ associations. He made it known that the two highly ranked titles in the hunting profession are reserved for male hunters (The Olúḍẹ “chief hunter” and Aṣipa ọḍẹ). However, the title of Iyámḍẹ (iyá ọmḍẹ - “mother of young hunters”) is reserved for women hunters. In Igbẹsa, however, in a rare case, a woman was allowed to replace her father as leader of hunters in the vicinity after her father’s demise because she was very active even before her father’s passing. Chief Yakubu Ajayí, The Balógun Ọḍẹ of Awóri kingdom confirms this as follows:

....Very well, we have female hunters who rose to become a leader. For example, there is a woman in the Igbesa area... That lady's father was the former leader, but when he died, she was made the leader because she was a very active member of the hunters' group. She is a sound hunter in her fifties.

Some participants made it known that the use of egbé among women is restricted. This birthed the discussion that the different modes in which the egbé charm may appear also play a role. As for women, the best form of egbé fortification for them when they are yet to attain the age of menopause is the detachable ones, such as in the form of a ring or an amulet. This will enable them to stay far from the charm during their menstrual period. On the percentage of women hunters to men hunters, in Igboho, it was concluded that in a group of thirty men hunters, there is every possibility that no woman hunter is present. However, in Işeyin, the percentage is also low but not completely absent. This can also be attributed to the fear of hunters that the risk of wounded wild animals may consume their daughters if allowed to hunt alone or go too deep into the forest. To Pa Atíjerun Ootoo, women hunters should not bear guns, and they may, however, share other responsibilities such as hunters' poetry (Ijálá). He explained:

...Male hunters can carry a gun, but female hunters cannot; she might speak the hunters' way and chant ijálá...

All of these point to the fact that women hunters are scarce in Igboho and Işeyin in Oyo state, and in most cases, hardly hunt deep into the forest where fortifications such as egbé and kánako are required. But in rare cases where a female child born into a hunter's lineage summons the courage to hunt deep into the forest, no rule in the hunting profession stops them from using all necessary fortifications such as egbé, kánako, ajabo, afèrì, and others.

After establishing that women hunters exist in Igboho and Işeyin in Oyo state, even if in rare situations, we may now answer the question of the involvement women play in getting the fortification of egbé and kánako ready. In answering this question, participants were reluctant to tell us how women are involved in collating and incantation during combinations of different materials to make the fortification charms as they believe that it would be a form of letting out too many secrets to us. However, in Işeyin, it was stated that some of these charms cannot even be made without the presence of women. A respondent opined thus:

...they have roles to play. There is a particular one that requires a woman to fetch water in the dead of the night. (Qlâwé Ogúndiran)

Other participants will not let us into insights into what role a woman hunter can play in the fortification rituals of another hunter. They, however, agreed in uniformity that women play an important role in general. This captures other aspects of hunting and not just egbé and kánako. For example, a respondent also painted a picture of how some women take

care of the inner room of their husbands who are in the forest hunting and how such a woman must remain focused unless it spells evil for the husband.

The aforementioned statement exemplifies and emphasized the socio-economic contributions of women in the sustenance of the hunting profession and the preparation and application of *egbé* and *kánako* for the protection and safety of hunters. Women help ensure that the materials required in the preparation of *egbé* and *kánako* are collated and successfully completed. The social sustainability aspect of women's contributions has to do with the collation of *egbé* and *kánako* preparatory materials and their presence when these charms are made, while the economic sustainability aspect of the contributions is their ability to remain resolute and focused while their husbands go hunting and also assist in the successful application of the charms. This system is well established among the hunters' households and lineage.

On the contrary, this is not the case in Ejigbo and Ikirun in Oşun state. When a 70 year man, Chief Ojetáyọ Bello (Olú-ọdẹ of Ọla town) at Ejigbo was asked if women hunters can rise to be leaders, he responded:

Yes, women are doing it. You can see them in Amọtekun. Women take part in military agencies. In the past, Ifá divination was limited to men, but women now perform divination in modern times. The woman who was their Olú-ọdẹ (head of the association of hunters) at Aátọ village died recently, and another one has not been appointed. We used to hunt together. There is an old female hunter at Iwó town, one is at Ilọrin town, and there is another one at Ejigbo town; they usually carry the hunter's lamp.

Chief Ojetáyọ Bello (Olú-ọdẹ of Ọla town) further explained that there are no differences between male and female hunters. He states that:

... when they could not conquer an armed robber that was operating at Ogbómọşọ, the robber would ascend to the sky and start urinating on hunters after his operation. The female hunters told male hunters to stay indoors. The female hunters caught the thief on the first night patrol. An aged woman saw him in the sky and commanded him to descend. There is nothing women cannot do. Some young ones are more knowledgeable in charms than old people. A woman can go hunting during her monthly period, but she is forbidden from entering the house of charms. She depends only on the charms inside her because no charm must be tied to her body. Menstruation can spoil the charms tied to the body, but it cannot spoil the charms we have swallowed. It will destroy many charms and reduce the power of some charms if it's taken to a powerful house (charms).

He also confirms that women do prepare and use *egbé* and *kánako* if they are well-trained in herbal medicine. Most of our participants in Ejigbo and Ikirun, Oşun state and Chief Yakubu Ajayí, Balógun Ọdẹ of Awóri kingdom, Ogun explained that anybody either male or female hunter can prepare or use *egbé* and *kánako*. Women can use *egbé* when they are free from menstruation. Some women have become men, especially women who have stopped monthly periods. Balógun Aláásan in Ejigbo, Chief Mustapha Saheed declared that:

When we engaged in a battle between Ifon and Erin a few years ago, they involved a professional warrior from Erin-Illé. A female warrior conquered him after he had conquered 17 wars, which was the 18th war. He was shot to death by a woman at Ilobuú.

Pa Nojeem Olátóye confirmed at Aláásan, Ejigbo that female hunters are about 40% in the village. They are born female hunters.

There are many female members of the Amotekun group, and there is no age limit, as it is hereditary for most women. The children are often fortified from childhood.

Jagun Raimi Ogúnperí, head hunter of Ikirun downtown and warrior of Oyewo, explains that his children, both male and female, are hunters.

Chief Jacob Adémolá Shonibarẹ (Baba-ọdẹ Okeeba, Ikirun) in Oşun state maintained there are female fervent hunters. The female chanters of the hunters' chant are also hunters. There are about 20% female elephant and deer hunters. The only difference between male and female hunters is that when a female hunter is on her monthly period, she will not be able to sit with other hunters because of the different charms that they attach to their bodies.

From the above, emerging facts prove that the primary role of female hunters is not to hunt deep in the wild, except in rare cases. However, fortifications such as egbé and kánako serve the same purpose as they do for male hunters. The fortifications serve as a form of protection for female hunters who may be required to walk some kilometers into the forest in a bid to carry out their duty of conveying the games from the forest back home and finally to the market.

According to some of our participants in Işeyin and Igboho, egbé and kánako remain important in the sustainability of the hunter (both male and female), and more importantly the business of hunting in the wild. Pa Oşunpaimọ describes the socio-economic impact of these fortifications in two branches. The first is the intention of the hunter to feed his family, which constitutes the major boost for his presence in the forest. Secondly, the hunter is concerned about his safety and the safety of those who will join him in conveying the games to the market. To achieve the first, he needs to be very sure about the second. Hence, the need for these fortifications.

The Aşipa Ọdẹ at Işeyin also corroborated these points by stating that the process of hunting is not at par with the energy it consumes; hence, to all hunters, it is safety first. Although he stated clearly that hunters are not expected to sell their games, he also questions the socio-economic status of the hunter and his family if they refuse to sell. When queried about the social-economic impact of these fortifications and how it affects female hunters, he responded thus:

As I have said earlier, it is difficult for me to leave my daughters out alone in the wild; it is highly risky. Until I need their help, whenever I have a large kill, I may need them to meet me up in the wild for processing so that the game will not get spoilt. They are also at risk of attacks by wounded animals on their way. Hence, I must also ensure their safety.

From the foregoing, egbé and kánako are peculiar to male hunters or to be used by hunters that hunt deep in the wild alone. It has also helped in sustaining the socio-economic values involved in the business of hunting. Women hunters serve as the intermediary between the male hunters who risk facing wild animals and their consumers.

Also, egbé and kánako were discussed in the context of community policing, especially the recently formed Amoṭẹkun regional force. Community policing has served as another important reason why egbé and kánako can be found in the possession of women. However, their use is in secrecy as most hunters have denied using such fortification for any other purpose except hunting.

Discussion of findings

Like many other forms of protective charms among different ethnic groups of the world, egbé, a self-triggered teleportation charm, and kánako, a journey-shortening charm, stands out among the Yorubá ethnic of South West Nigeria. The hunters and warlords require these two fortifications for safety and protection. There is not much in the pieces of literature that have extensively worked on egbé and kánako in relation to the hunting profession, not to talk of appraising these two traditional fortifications for gender involvement use and as a means for national safety. There are lots of misconception among the people and the Western world about what constitute these two fortifications, their use, and their application as they are notably deemed as magic and fetish. However, the findings of this study have shared more insight into this finding.

The findings of research question one reveal that the materials for preparing egbé and kánako are not released or shown to anybody, especially to those outside the hunting profession. In consonance with the findings of the study, [Fagunwa \(2005\)](#) opined that the materials for preparing egbé and kánako are top secrets that are not revealed to anyone except those who are long-serving members of the hunting profession and are vastly experienced. Furthermore, [Fagunwa \(2005\)](#) in Ogbójú Ode nínú Igbó Irúnmole averred that despite the popularity egbé and kánako have received in the hunting profession and craved for by every hunter, its detailed materials and preparation are not revealed to anyone outside the hunting profession. The author stated that even these ingredients are not released to inchoate hunters except the person who has been practicing the profession for a long time and is richly experienced.

The second finding of the study reveals that egbé and kánako can be very useful for community policing through military and paramilitary agencies. The intention behind hunters' production of these powerful fortifications is for protection and safety. Hence, military and paramilitary agencies can use it for the protection and safety of the nation with caution and stern warnings. [Carstens and Roberts \(2009\)](#) confirm the finding of the study, stating that egbé and kánako can be very useful for military and paramilitary agencies if properly implemented. The implementation here is for military and paramilitary personnel to adhere strictly to the dos and don'ts of applying these fortifications and ensure that it is solemnly used for community policing and safety purposes for which they were created ([Audu, 2016](#)).

The last finding of the study reveals that female hunters also prepare and use *egbé* and *kánako*. Women do hunt, and they also have their titles among the hunters' association, such as *Erelú ọḍẹ* and *Iyámọḍẹ*. It has been argued in the literature as well as by the participants of the study that, generically, there is hardly anything achievable when women are not put into consideration. For instance, part of the don'ts of using *egbé* is for a man who uses it not to sit on a chair where a woman sat immediately she stands up. This points to the fact that women can render the *egbé* fortification on a man useless.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that *egbé* and *kánako* are very significant for the hunting profession, wherein women play a major role in preserving and sustaining the potency of the fortifications. The general assumption of people of Nigeria, especially among the Yorubas, is that *egbé* and *kánako* having being labeled as powerful is outside the reach of women. However, the study has established that women can also use these powerful charms, albeit to an extent. More so, women have a critical role to play in assembling and preparing these two fortifications. Hence, the involvement of women in the use and application of *egbé* and *kánako* cannot be relegated to the background. The study did not establish that *egbé* and *kánako* cannot be prepared without the involvement of women; rather that as much as men prepare and use these fortifications, women can also. Furthermore, the study established that *egbé* and *kánako* are good resources that can be deployed for the protection of lives, not just for the use of hunters in the hunting profession alone but for community policing through the military and paramilitary agencies. This can be useful in the face of wars and in protecting the country against terrorism, thereby ensuring national safety. However, concerns were raised by participants in the application of *egbé* and *kánako* regarding the peculiarities and personalities of people who use these fortifications. One of the concerns raised was that because of its potency, it can be used for nefarious activities if the wrong people get hold of it. But it was clarified that *egbé* and *kánako* if appropriately applied, regulated, and implemented by the government in synergy with the hunters of the nation, can be of high value and national benefit.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusion of the study, it is recommended that;

- Given the potency of *egbé* and *kánako* and the nature of human beings, the ingredients for preparing these traditional fortifications should not be released outside the hunting profession.
- Professional hunters' association should advise and work in synergy with the government to appropriately deploy *egbé* and *kánako* for the general safety of lives, military and paramilitary agents, and the nation.

- More so, just like the enactment of the policy against illegal bush hunting and poaching, policies should be established to regulate the application and implementation of these fortifications to prevent them from public abuse.
- Necessary cautions and rules guiding the application of egbé and kánako must be obliged if it must be used for community policing through military and paramilitary personnel.
- Women in the hunting profession should be properly sensitized by the hunters' association and government on their involvement so as to enhance the preservation of these traditional means of fortifications and not become weapons that will render these fortifications irrelevant.

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