

## FACTS ABOUT THE NEW ELEYELE WATER FRONT ADVENTURE PARK AT ELEYELE LAKE, IBADAN

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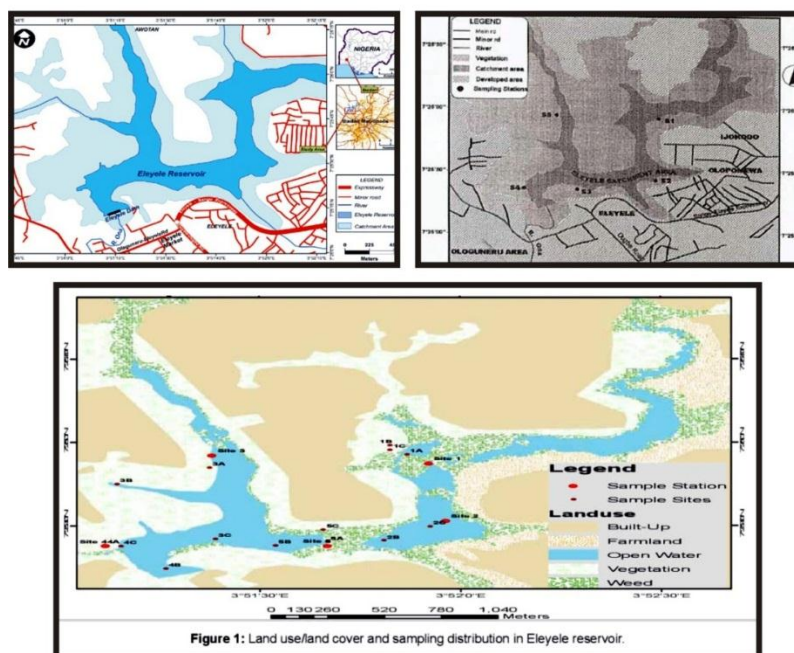
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### (a) History and Data Analysis of Eleyele Lake:

Eleyele is situated in North West of Ibadan City, Oyo State, Nigeria at an altitude of 125metre above sea level and between 7°25'00' and 7°26'30'N latitude and 3°51'00' and 3°52'123E longitudes. The **lake** is man-made and was formed in **1939** by damming of the **Ona River** (part of dense network of inland waterways that flow southwards in the Lagos Lagoon); and the **Otaru**, **Awba**, **Yemeja** and **Alapo** streams also empty into the **lake**.

- (i) Construction of Eleyele Reservoir was in **1942**
- (ii) The catchment area is **323.8sq.metre**
- (iii) Impoundment of 156.2 hectares and storage capacity of 29.5 million litres of water and pumped at the rate of about 13.6 million litres per day

### ELEYELE LAKE GEOGRAPHIC MAPS



### ELEYELE LAKE



*Oke-Badan at Eleyele Reservoir*

#### **(b) Water Front Adventure Park at Eleyele Lake:**

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world and although Nigeria is reaping some the benefits of this trend, the sector still remains a minor player in the national economy. In terms of absolute figures, international tourist arrivals rose marginally in 2001 from **850,000** to **1,550,000** in **2010** and fell to **486,000** in 2012 (Fig1). This reduction was attributed to the **Boko Haram** insurgency in the northern part of Nigeria. However tourism activities picked up in **2013** with **23** per cent increase over the previous year arrivals.

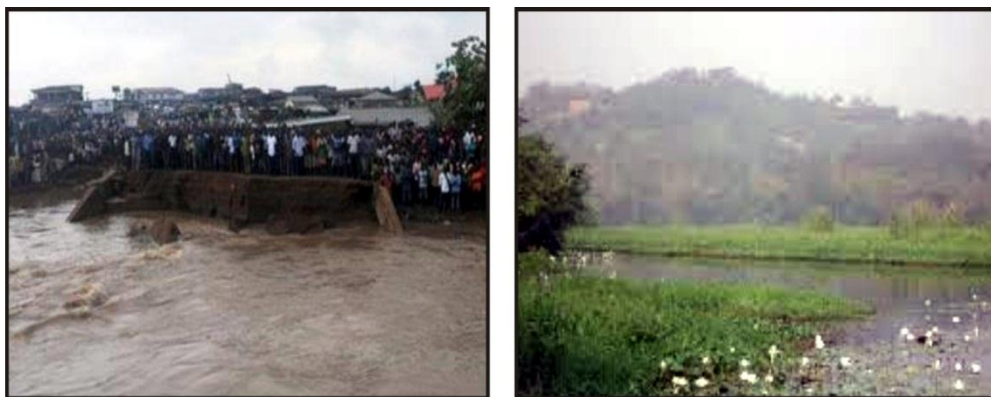
For instance, a private public partnership (PPP) between the Oyo state governments, and Geo Meridian International Limited and Consortium partners will construct a **Waterfront Adventure Park** along the Ona River at Eleyele Dam in Ibadan. *It will boost the touristic capabilities and also the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of the State in general.*



*Note: Boats on Eleyele Lake and the Surrounding Forest Reserve*

**Features at the Water Front Park:**

- Boat Cruise
- Jungle Areola
- Artificial Beach
- Canopy Walkway
- Cable Cars
- Animal Planet Areas
- Outdoor Cinema
- Forest Hotels
- River View Lodges
- Wooden Chalets
- Floating Restaurants, and
- Eco-village and Many other offerings.



*Note: Satellite Image Map of Eleyele Lake and the surrounding Hills, called “Okebadan” – Ibadan Hills*

The Water Front Adventure and Eco-Park will be the first and biggest in Nigeria. It is expected to be the alternate ultimate destination for international Tourist, a location for events, school trips, individuals, families, friends churches and corporate team building. It will be a place where people come to relax, rejuvenate, and have fun-filled day out and also lodge in the hotel, and other various unique accommodation provided.

The Awotan community in Ibadan in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Culture of Oyo State should preserve and protect the two historical sites of Ayoku Cave and Okebadan/Lagelu Grove at Awotan which is being encroached upon now.

### **(c) OKE'BADAN: A HILL OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCES**

#### **Hill of Historical Significances**

There are various accounts of the origin of ‘‘Oke'badan’’ but there is a common agreement among them with the resolution that Lagelu, Oro Apata-Maja who was the founder of Ibadan was also the one that established Oke'badan.

The first account according to Femi Osofisan in the prologue he wrote for a book Ibadan Mesigbo says that dissident soldiers from Oyo, Ife and Ijebu all came to the place called Ebaqdan to settle after the sacking of Owu which was as a result of the disintegration of the old Oyo Empire.

This new settlement was a savannah land backing the forest of the Egba. Among these dissident was a great warrior called Lagelu from Ile Ife who became their leader as a result of his war expertise. He consulted an oracle on-behalf of the new settlers to enable them to know the future of their new settlement, and he was told that they should adopt Eleyele Hill as their guardian deity. This Eleyele hill then became Oke'badan Hill.

Another account By Late Oba Akinyele in his book- Iwe Itan Ibadan Ati Die Ninu Awon Ilu Agbegbe re bi; Iwo, Osoybo Ati Ikirun says that Lagelu left Ile-Ife to set up his own community as was the order of the day then.

Professor Bọlanle Awe was of the opinion that Lagelu consulted Ifa Oracle for guidance as the custom of the Yoruba people demand and was told to settle where there were many hills which he did, hence the founding of Ibadan. After he had settled along with those that left with him, their neighboring communities waged war against them. As an integral part of war tactics of the Ibadan people, they receded and went on to the top of the mountain to plan a counterattack against their enemies.

During this period, the people believe that the hill provided them with security, food, shelter, and spiritual backing in order to subdue their enemies. As a result, they decided to commemorate the event annually.

This happened at about 1820, and the Odu-Ifa- Ifa divination verse that was given them was ‘‘Ọṣẹ Meji, which later became ‘‘Ọṣẹ Olubadan’’.

Another account has it that, Lagelu left Ile-Ife to settle in the present Ibadan, that on arrival he met others but being a great warrior, he settle with them but farther away to the Savannah part which prompted the name ‘‘Eba Ọdan’’ beside the Savannah which later metamorphosed to Ibadan. Within a very short period, the new settlement started witnessing progress and prosperity as an answer to four things that Lagelu requested from Olodumare before settling in Ibadan, viz; prosperity, blessing upon the traders, responsible partners for his children and for himself, good health and long-life. The answer to these requests instigated great influxes of people from different parts of Yorubaland to Ibadan.

As a result of the size of the new community, Ibadan, the Alafin of Oyo; Sango, decided to make Lagelu the Generalissimo of the Yoruba army. The Aare Ọna Kakanfo of Yoruba land.

With the new status of Lagelu and that of his town, they decided to practice some aspects of Yoruba traditional belief, which included the Egungun Festival. It was during the course of the Egungun Festival in a certain year that the costume of a masquerade fell off, thereby revealing the identity of the masquerade to the glaring of the children and women that were present.

The news got to Sango, the then Alaafin of Oyo who became very furious at the deriding and desecration of the tradition of which he was a custodian.

He therefore sent for other Ọba like Ọrangun of Ila, Ọwa of Ijesaland, Alake of Egbaland and other important Ọba, they deliberated on the issue and decided to wage war

against Ibadan, to kill their people including women and children as a punishment for their abomination act.

Lagelu got wind of the planned invasion and summoned his warriors and civilians alike to be prepared for the impending “World War” as it was tagged. When the battle began, Lagelu people fought gallantly and made it difficult for the allied forces to dislodge them. The war lasted about three years, contrary to the expectation of the allied forces, many people were killed, and the new settlement was scattered and destroyed.

The remnants, which included Lagelu, his children, and few supporters, were driven to the top of Eḷẹyẹle hill where they dwelt for years. They lived on the top of this hill for years without food, cloth, or shelter. They fed on the fruits of “Oro” trees *Iryingia Gabonensis*, which they found on top of the hill and also snails that were in abundance there.

This is why part of Ibadan’s praise song says: Ibadan, Oṃọ ajoro sun, Oṃọ ajẹgbin jẹ ikarahun, Oṃọ afi Ikarahun fọ’ ri mu,” translated to mean: Ibadan indigenes/offspring of those who ate oro for supper, offspring of those who ate oro for support, offspring of those who ate snails to satisfaction, offspring of those who took hot pap in the snails shell. All these point to the fact that the hill provided them with Oro fruits and snails for food. When they had little peace, they started cultivating the land to plant maize which they used for making pap and because there was no bowl with which to drink the pap, they drank from the snail’s shells.

They were on top of the hill for a long time, and from there, the children of Lagelu were invading their neighboring villages at night, setting their huts ablaze and carted away their properties. As a result of these acts of Lagelu’s children, they could not get married because people were afraid of them.

This prompted Lagelu to give his consent to his children, marrying one another so as to continue the generation. It was on top of this mountain that their number started to increase and when they discovered that the place could not accommodate them again and the condition of the place not conducive for their children, they decided to come down to settle on the flat surface.

The place where they settled was called “Ori Yangi”. There, they built new houses and established new markets, which people patronized. Within a short period,

the new settlement began to witness the influx of people from far and near, and there was progress and peace. Upon the observation of the progress recorded within a short period, Lagelu's children decided to worship Eḷẹyẹ hill where they dwelt for years.

This later became 'Oke'badan' Ibadan hill' and a festival organized for its commemoration. Their belief was that Oke'badan was the factor behind the success and progress recorded in the new community, coupled with the belief that the mountain protected and fed them when they were dwelling on its top.

Not quite long after they had settled at 'Ori Yangi'. Lagelu died at an advanced old age. His children buried his corpse on top of the hill. Oke'badan. With this, their zeal to worship Oke'badan became high because the tomb of their ancestor is there. It was also alleged that the hunchback herbalist that consulted the oracle for them when they came to Ibadan and who later 'yielded' himself as the sacrificial material had his remain buried on top of the hill. As a result of this, it is claimed that the Abọke, Oke'badan priest during Okebadan festival will have to go to the tomb of the hunchback to offer sacrifice, this was before the shrine was moved to Oja Oba an area in central Ibadan metropolis.

### **OKEBADAN FESTIVAL**

The Abọke the priest of Oke's badan, is the one that chooses and suggests the day for the celebration of the festival to Olubadan and his chiefs. The day chosen is usually Thursday and it is always in the month of March because it falls within the rainy season, so as to appease the spirit of the hill to give them abundant rain for their crops. Also, Thursday is chosen as it is regarded as the day that Yoruba people worship their deities as denoted by the name of the day 'Ojọbọ' Thursday, the day Oriṣa is worshipped.

After the Olubadan and the council of chiefs had approved the day, an announcement is made to the people for necessary preparations. Olubadan provides all the sacrifice materials such as cows, snails, fish, tortoise, dogs, etc. as required by the Abọke.



On the day of celebration, which used to be a work-free day, the people commenced the day by thanking their ancestors for keeping them alive to witness the day. Also, they used to take cold meal on the day as a reminder of the period their ancestors were on top of the mountain without food.

Later in the day, the Abọke performs the necessary rituals at the shrine, which has been removed from Okebadan hill to ‘Oja Oba market in central Ibadan city. The Abọke, though a man dresses like a woman depicting the presumed feminine nature of the spirit of Oke'badan while performing the rites and the people move about rejoicing.

After the rituals, the Abọke headed for the house of Yade, one of Lagelu's daughters who led a group of woman warrior and subdued the enemies of Ibadan upon which a crown was taken from one of the communities and torn by her which gave her the ‘Yade’ tear the crown. From her house, the Abọke visits all other chiefs.

During the festival, ‘embarrassing’ songs are sang, but they portray the history of Ibadan people. Most of these songs point at the time Lagelu and his people moved about half-naked while others point at war expertise of Ibadan people. A few of the songs are given below;

Baba to nlọ Hey, old man going

Jawajawa ẹpon you are with dangling scrotum

Okoo tisa Teachers pennies

Kiki sọọki Full of chalk

Osobo dandawī She opened her virginal wide

Qmọde yii sobo dandawī This girl opened her virginal wide

#### SIGNIFICANCES OF OKE'BADAN

One of the significances of Oke'badan festival is to pave the way for peace and the smooth organization of Ibadanland.

After the performance of the rituals by the Abọke, he moves around the paramount chiefs' palaces to pay homage and pray for prosperity and survival.

The festival brings peace and harmony among the Ibadan people from far and near. The occasion is used to foster peace, improve sanitation and mutual cooperation among the people to get ready for a healthy reunion, and pray for further blessings upon the community.



Also, the festival is believed to increase fertility and paves the way for bumper harvest as deduced from Oke'badan songs. This fact was corroborated by the submission of Mrs Kemi Morgan in a paper she presented at the same seminar when she tried to explain reasons for vulgar songs and language used during the festival. She said some of the songs are reminders of the period that Lagelu and his people were going about half naked. She further stated that other songs came about as a result of experience they had when the children born during that period in Ibadan died prematurely, while some pregnant women died during labor.

This situation was said to have caused frigidity among the men, making them temporarily impotent. When they could no longer impregnate their women, the oracle was consulted, and were told to be signing songs that will satiate their sexual appetite during the festival and this justifies the significance of Oke'badan as an avenue to increase the number of children.

The celebration of Oke'badan Festival has elicited a lot of criticism as it is being regarded as idol worshipping. This insinuation has been debunked by the Ibadan people, saying that they are only observing the tradition of their forebears. They further argued that it is a means of commemorating the critical period in the history when they were living on top of the hill without food and shelter, the provision and protection they got from the hill during the period.

Irrespective of the opinion of critics, the purpose of the festival has not been defeated as the festival is still being celebrated every year by the people with pomp and pageantry.