



# **Gelede Masquerade Adherents' Cultural Identity, Acentral Belief System, Dance Costumes and Pre-Festival Performance Preparations in Yorubaland, South-West Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

*Gelede Masquerade festival reflects Yoruba cosmology by presenting a worldview in which visible and invisible forces interact continuously. The dance serves as a reminder that life must be lived in balance; with respect for both earthly relationships and the spiritual realm. The masked figure Gelede Masquerade represents more than the dancer; it embodies ancestral voices and spiritual authority. Hence, the need to examine Gelede Masquerade Adherents' cultural identity, acentral belief system, dance costumes and pre-festival performance preparations in Yorubaland, South-West Nigeria. The study adopted observational research design through, fieldwork carried out in Badagry, a Yoruba-speaking town where Gelede Masquerade festival is still actively performed. An Interview Guide was used to conduct in-depth interviews with key informants; mask/costume makers/artisans, performers/dancers, elderly Gelede masquerade shrine custodians. In-depth interviews were documented via audio and video recordings of the exact behaviors, ritual songs and words used by participants. Also, the visual materials; photos and videos, observational fieldnotes, were transcribed, reviewed and analyzed using thematic technique focusing on mask design, dance performance style, ritual songs composition and ritual elements. Findings revealed that; Gelede Masquerade Adherents are mostly women and men; the theatrical performance represents sacredness cum moral, spiritual, and social Yoruba cosmological institution that reflects the values, tensions, and structures of the society. Gelede Masquerade tradition celebrates the role of women, reinforces social norms and uses satire and symbolism to correct behavior and preserve acceptable norms within the Yoruba social structures. The study recommend that the associated cultural and tourism potentials and should be presented by major stakeholders among the government agencies and the Adherent societies.*

## **Original Research Article**

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## **Introduction**

Egungun Masquerade festival in Yoruba land is a form of cultural practice that gives credence to a family's ancestral spirit and brings to remembrance the lives legendary figures as heroes, especially those who have made an impact, left a mark and exhibited great power such as warriors, great hunters and kings. Yoruba beliefs assert that the Egungun symbolises the physical manifestation and representation of the spirit of dead ancestors who have gone to the next world and periodically visits existing human beings as their relatives and descendants who are still living. The

Egungun Masquerade in Yorubaland moves with energy, often accompanied by drumming, singing, and chanting. The Gelede Masquerade society is one of such Egungun ancestry spirit representation in Yorubaland; the Gelede society strives to maintain good and fair gender relations by advocating respect for motherhood especially within a patrilineal culture (where men dominate the kingship). There are two main reasons for this women-centric advocacy. The first has to do with how women preserve life and how humanity depends on the female because they birth life. The other had to

do with the linking of motherhood with supernatural powers that can be used for good and evil, creation and destruction.

*Gelede* Masquerade isn't like other Egungun cultic societies. While Egungun in Yoruba spirituality is believed to be a physical manifestation of the ancestor spirits, *Gelede* Masquerade festival on the other hand celebrates mothers, female ancestors and deities, as well as the elderly women of the community. *Gelede* Masquerade is also interested in peace and social harmony. The *Gelede* Masquerade society is aware that antisocial practices such as witchcraft may seem as a facade in promoting peace and human happiness. The *Gelede* Masquerade dance is not just for entertainment. It serves spiritual, social, and moral purposes; reminding people of their roots, praising good behavior, and sometimes warning against wrongdoing. It reflects the Yoruba belief that the dead are not gone but remain present and active in the lives of the living.

According to the Yoruba mythological belief corroborated through oral tradition; the birth of *Gelede* Masquerade traditions began with "Yemoja", the mother of all "Orisa" and the living things. She (*Gelede*) couldn't have children after marrying 'Oluweri' who was a native of Ketu (founded by one of the direct descendants of Oduduwa the progenitor of Ile-Ife; beloved to the cradle of the Yorubas). It became a thing of worry because prior to her marriage to Oluweri, she had birthed many children. She resorted to consulting help from the Ifa Oracle. The Oracle advised her to offer sacrifices with mashed corn (Egbo) served in Clay dishes (awo) and dance about with wooden images on her head and anklets on her feet. Soon after this ritual, she became fertile again and gave birth to a son nicknamed Efe (The Humorist). Her new baby boy; Efe grew to become a handsome young man and huge. Efe was famous for his jokes and his mask emphasises songs and jests. Yemoja's second child was nicknamed *Gelede* because of her obese stature and she loved dancing like her mother. This is the reason most *Gelede* masks look bulky. When Efe and *Gelede* were young, they wore anklets on their legs which was fashioned by Ogun, the god of iron. After Efe and *Gelede* got married, they also couldn't have children and they were advised to perform the rituals their mother performed too and soon after, they began giving birth to children. This made the rite gradually develop to the *Gelede* masked dance because of its effectiveness.

Another relatively similar Yoruba oral history linked to *Gelede* Masquerade traditions relates story of a

legendary man called 'Agbegi" who was a wood carver and it was later discovered that he wasn't like other human beings and he possessed spiritual powers. Agbegi wasn't considered a god but people often met him for counselling and help with certain things. Agbegi being a wood carver and he spent his days carving on Iroko trees or the silk cotton tree. When time was drawing near for him to die, he knew the people would still need the spiritual power that he had so he transferred the spirit in him into the iroko tree he had carved. The people of the community began to worship the tree and that's what gave birth to the true *Gelede* worshippers. That is also why the worshippers of *Gelede* are also known as "Agbegijo". However, people don't have direct access to the tree anymore and that's why the masks of the *Gelede* masquerades are carved from wood. This way, it still holds the significance of the iroko tree to them.

Till date, *Gelede* Masquerade traditions continues to evolve, retaining its sacred roots, it is also performed at cultural festivals and public celebrations. Currently, people are more open to *Gelede* practices, as, more patrons including researchers and interested outsiders are becoming interested in it's worship and historical antecedents. An important part of Yoruba cosmology is the role of ancestors and the spiritual power known as "àjé" translated as "Witches" which is most often associated with women. Witches represent a deep, mysterious force capable of nurturing or destroying, and it is believed to reside in elderly women, mothers, and female deities.

*Gelede* Masquerade tradition originates from the need to recognize and honour some of the spiritually powerful women, collectively called "the Mothers." In Yoruba thought, the Mothers are seen as essential to the success or failure of a community. They can bless the land with fertility or cause drought; they can protect families or bring sickness. The acentral women are thought to hold the key to the community's fertility, peace, and prosperity. Therefore, maintaining a respectful and balanced relationship with them is crucial. The *Gelede* traditional dance acknowledges their power and festivals are held to please, praise, and sometimes humor the mothers, ensuring they use their power for the good of the community. These ceremonies may be held annually or in response to specific needs such as poor harvests, disease outbreaks, or social unrest.

Beyond the spiritual, *Gelede* plays a social and moral role; because through the performance, the community

is reminded of values such as honesty, humility, respect for elders, and responsibility. The satire in the Efe night performance acts as a social mirror. Those who act wrongly in private may find themselves indirectly criticized in public song. Rather than shame, this method encourages reflection and correction, preserving harmony. This again reflects the Yoruba cosmological belief that everything is connected—actions in the physical world affect the spiritual, and vice versa. Gelede is not merely a dance or a festival; it is a living expression of Yoruba cosmology. It affirms the importance of spiritual balance, respect for feminine power, and the role of ritual in maintaining cosmic order. Through performance, the Gelede masquerade speaks to the community and to the spirits, reinforcing Yoruba beliefs about life, destiny, morality, and harmony. Its endurance across centuries proves its depth and relevance.

### The Impact of Gender Roles in Gelede

There is the concept of gender roles and its impact on *Gelede* tradition, which is quite complicated and multifaceted, reflecting the intricacies of Yoruba culture and society. While the dance is a celebration of female power and acknowledges the importance of women in Yoruba society, it is performed by men wearing masks that represent female figures or spirits. This dynamic challenges traditional gender roles, as men embody female characters, blurring the lines between masculinity and femininity. By embracing both masculine and feminine principles, *Gelede* Masquerade performances reflect the interconnectedness of male and female energies in Yoruba thought.



Figure 1: The Gelede Mask with Accessories

### Significance of the Gelede Masquerade Dance, Costume and Mask

**The Gelede Masks:** The mask is central to the Yoruba *Gelede* Masquerade, is a profound embodiment of cultural values, spiritual beliefs, and artistic expression. The *Gelede* Masquerade mask is not just merely a decorative artifact but a vital component of a performance that honors the power of the women including female ancestors, deities, and elder women within the community. Each mask represents different characters; humans, spirits, animals, or social types—and is used to pass messages, tell stories, and correct behavior in the community. Birds, for instance, are frequently featured, symbolizing the mystical powers attributed to women, as they are believed to transform into birds at night. Snakes may also appear, representing qualities like patience and vigilance. These elements are not arbitrary; they convey messages and moral lessons pertinent to the community's well-being (Dosumu, 2006).

Hence, the act of wearing the mask is not for entertainment alone; it is a ritual act. The male dancers don these masks along with vibrant costumes, executing choreographed dances accompanied by music and singing. Through dance, song, and movement, masked performers communicate moral lessons, praise good conduct, and criticize wrongdoings. The masks allow performers to take on the voices of ancestors or spirits, giving their messages more weight and authority. Figure 1 and Figure 2 presents the visual appearance of *Gelede* Masquerade masks.



Figure 2: The Gelede Mask

**Costumes:** The *Gelede* Masquerade costumes help to separate the sacred from the ordinary. Once dressed, the *Gelede* Masquerade dancer becomes a different being; one with authority to speak truths, offer blessings, or deliver warnings. The beauty, color, and richness of the costume also show respect for the "Mothers" being honored. (Dosumu, 2006). In essence, the costume is a key part of what makes the *Gelede* dance powerful. It protects the dancer's identity, gives life to the character being portrayed, and helps the audience connect to the spiritual and cultural messages being shared.

**Dance:** The *Gelede* Masquerade performance usually happens during festivals, funerals, or important community events. Before it begins, the community consults an oracle to choose the right time. It often starts with the *Efe* performance on the first night, which involves singing and satire. The *Gelede* masquerades come out the following day, wearing carved masks and full costumes. The dance takes place in an open space, often near the marketplace or shrine. Drummers provide rhythms that guide the movement. Again, *Gelede* Masquerade performances typically feature a variety of drums, but one of the most distinctive and prominent drums used is the "Gangan" or "Gundra" drum. The *Gangan* is a talking drum that plays a crucial role in *Gelede* performances, providing rhythmic accompaniment and communicating messages through its unique sounds. The drumbeats often complement the dancers' movements and help to convey the cultural significance of the performance. Through movement, music, and song, the *Gelede* dance serves as a mirror for the community. It praises those who live well and gently mocks or warns those who do not. In doing so, it keeps traditions alive, teaches younger generations, and helps maintain peace and respect among the people.

## Statement of the Problem

The *Gelede* masquerade festival originates from the Yorubas spiritual and cultural tradition is believed to be rooted in Yoruba mythology of South-western Nigeria, *Gelede* masquerade festival is particularly in honoring women and their spiritual force. Women's involvement has grown stronger, especially in areas of organization, song, and spiritual roles, even though the masked performers are often men. Over time, *Gelede* Masquerade festival evolved as a form of communal communication, addressing issues like social order, moral conduct, and leadership. As Yoruba communities changed, so too did the structure of the *Gelede* Masquerade festival. While the sacred elements have remained central, performance styles, mask design and

community involvement have adapted to suit contemporary needs. Thus the need to examine *Gelede* Masquerade Adherents' cultural identity, acentral belief system, dance costumes and pre-festival performance preparations in Yorubaland, South-West Nigeria.

## Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to examine *Gelede* Masquerade Adherents' cultural identity, acentral belief system, dance costumes and pre-festival performance preparations in Yorubaland, South-West Nigeria. The objectives are to:

1. identity the adherents for *Gelede* Masquerade festival among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria.
2. ascertain the *Gelede* Masquerade adherents' ancestral belief systems about spirituality associated with the festival among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria.
3. ascertain the duration, frequency and the sequence of preparations by the adherents for *Gelede* Masquerade festivals among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria.
4. appraise the costumes requirement and composition of the *Gelede* Masquerade festival performers and their symbiotic appearance among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria.

## Research Questions

The following research questions guides the study:

1. Who are the adherents of *Gelede* Masquerade festival among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria?
2. What are the *Gelede* Masquerade adherents' ancestral belief systems about spirituality associated with the festival among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria?
3. What is the duration, frequency and the sequence of preparations by the adherents for *Gelede* Masquerade festivals among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria?
4. What are the costumes requirement and composition of the *Gelede* Masquerade festival performers and their symbiotic appearance among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria?

## Methodology

**Research Design:** The study adopted observational research design; whereby, fieldwork was carried out by the researchers, who assumed the role of

Participant Observers among the Adherents within a predominantly traditional community in Badagry, a Yoruba-speaking town where *Gelede* Masquerade festival is still actively performed. The researcher was allowed limited participation experience through careful observation of the traditional ritual practices involved in the pre-festival shrine preparatory activities; thereby, receiving firsthand insight into the rituals and spiritual undertones. Thus, the researchers' participant observation experience created opportunity for direct conversations and interactions that played a central role in helping the researcher to attend *Gelede* masquerade pre-festival rituals and rehearsals, observing not only the performances but also the preparations, songs, and interactions among the adherents who are major stakeholders.

**Description of the Research Instrument:** The only instrument used for data collection was the Interview Guide, which was structured in accordance with the aim of the study and tailored to each of the research questions.

**Method of Data Collection:** In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, including; artisans who are mask/costume makers, performers, dancers, elderly shrine custodians of *Gelede* masquerade. The key informants were carefully selected to support the aim of the study for thorough understanding of the *Gelede* masquerade festival and tradition. Thus, the in-depth interviews provided firsthand insights into the meaning, structure, and transmission of the tradition, offering perspectives that might not be captured through observation alone.

Hence, series of interviews with *Gelede* masquerade key stakeholders were documented through audio recording with due consent of the participants. Further, for the researchers to ensure accuracy in preserving the original conversations and interactions through careful taking of field notes, photographs (used for visual documentation of intricate details of the masks, body adornments, and shrine settings) and video footages via video recording of *Gelede* Masquerade pre-festival and live performances, dance movements, facial expressions, rituals, the use of masks and costumes as well as audience interactions during the period of the festival celebrations.

**Method of Data Analysis:** As earlier outlined, the researchers attended and observed *Gelede* Masquerade pre-festival ceremonies which involved;

rituals and rehearsals, as well live performances. Hence, the audio and video recordings preserved the exact behaviors, ritual songs and words used by participants during the interviews, which are important for interpreting meaning and context accurately.

For data analysis, the audio recordings of in-depth interviews and observational fieldnotes, were transcribed, analysed and reviewed. Key themes, patterns, and meanings were identified through thematic analysis, allowing the researchers to group similar responses and cultural expressions under broader concepts such as gender roles, spirituality and social commentary. Also, the visual materials, photos and videos, were analyzed to support and enrich the themes, focusing on mask design, dance performance style, ritual songs composition and ritual elements.

## Results and Analysis of Research Questions

**Research Question One:** Who are the adherents of *Gelede* Masquerade festival among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria?

Traditionally and from inception, both men and women participate in *Gelede* Masquerade worship. Women have always played essential roles in *Gelede* Masquerade; as worshippers, supporters, and in some cases, performers. Women, especially mothers, are held in high esteem in Yoruba cosmology, and the entire performance of *Gelede* Masquerade is, in many ways, a tribute to their power, wisdom and influence. Till date, their involvement continues, not only in ritual but in preserving oral history and passing down traditions. However, the cross-gender performance is not meant to parody or diminish femininity; rather, it is a public gesture of reverence. The society entrusts men to serve as visible vessels for invisible feminine power. This reflects a broader cultural logic in Yoruba society, where gender roles are understood not as rigid binaries but as complementary forces that work together to maintain balance in the universe.

**Research Question Two:** What are the *Gelede* Masquerade adherents' ancestral belief systems about spirituality associated with the festival among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria?

The *Gelede* Masquerade tradition operates within a framework of ethical principles that reflect the cultural and spiritual values of the Yoruba people. *Gelede* Masquerade is more than a masquerade; it is a spiritual and social institution among the Yoruba

people. It is considered a family deity and is revered as a “small god.” This respect is not only symbolic but also practical, as the masquerade seeks to uphold the moral order that women, as caregivers and life-givers, help maintain within the community. The performances honour ancestors and spiritual forces, reinforcing Yoruba beliefs in inter-connectedness between the living, the dead, and the unseen.

**Research Question Three:** What is the duration, frequency and the sequence of preparations by the adherents for *Gelede* Masquerade festivals among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria?

The duration for the celebration of *Gelede* Masquerade festival typically lasts for between five (5) to seven (7) or nine (9) days, depending on the oracle’s guidance. The date is chosen carefully by adherents to avoid clashing with market days and more importantly, the final selection of schedule is determined through oracle consultation and the festival is held every two years. In preparation for the festival, elder women worship in the shrine throughout its duration, eating Akara (bean cakes) fried in red oil, and remaining indoors until the final day. The sequence of preparations *Gelede* Masquerade is always preceded by the Efe night (Ojo Efe) and *Gelede* Masquerade comes out the following day. During this time, the masquerades can speak freely, even mock leaders; highlighting its role in social commentary.

**Research Question Four:** What are the costumes requirement and composition of the *Gelede* Masquerade festival performers and their symbiotic appearance among the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria?

The costumes required of the *Gelede* Masquerade festival performers include a composition of bright fabrics, beads, and ornaments that reflect femininity and power. Head and facial Masks used in *Gelede* Masquerade performance are highly symbolic. At the core of its symbolism is the principle of respect, particularly for women, elders and ancestral forces. The facial masks often represent and appearance of full-grown women with plaited hair, bold features, and facial markings.

The *Gelede* Masquerade performer cum dancer is fully covered to maintain anonymity, symbolizing that the performer speaks not for themselves, but for the community, spirits, or ancestors. Again, most of the *Gelede* Masquerade dancers assume the form or

portrayals of a full-grown woman with magnificent busts and plaited hair. Some are more gaily dressed than the others. Female ornaments such as earrings, bangles, beads, and jingles/rattles worn on the ankles are used in larger quantities. Although they appear scary, there is no attempt to frighten anyone. In summary, the *Gelede* Masquerade festival performance involves elaborate wooden masks, music, costume, and dance, and is used to communicate values.

### **Discussion of Findings**

*Gelede* has been an integral part of their cultural heritage for centuries. This complex and multifaceted performance has not only played a significant role in maintaining social balance and harmony within the community but has also been a vital means of expressing and preserving Yoruba cultural values. **Globalization** has introduced new dynamics to the *Gelede* tradition and has also brought about unprecedented changes in the way cultures interact and influence one another. The increased exposure of Yoruba culture to global audiences has led to a broader appreciation of *Gelede* performances. However, with the advent of globalization, *Gelede*, like many other traditional cultural practices, has faced numerous challenges that threaten its very existence. The adaptation of *Gelede* for international audiences sometimes leads to a dilution of its spiritual and cultural significance.

This shift poses a risk to the transmission of *Gelede*’s intricate knowledge and skills, which are traditionally passed down through generations. One subtle but growing effect of globalization on *Gelede* is the shift in how value is assigned to the tradition—moving from spiritual and communal importance toward economic and performative value. In some communities, *Gelede* performances are now viewed as opportunities for tourism or cultural display, which has introduced financial motives. While this can support local economies, it risks reducing the masquerade to a product or spectacle, undermining the deeper social and spiritual meaning it holds within the community. “Performances tailored for tourists may prioritize entertainment over traditional values, potentially compromising the authenticity of the rituals” (UNESCO, 2008).

The modern preference for speed and convenience modern is changing the way *Gelede* Masquerade is practiced. Traditionally, *Gelede* performances are lengthy and unfold slowly, with music, movement,

and storytelling weaving together to create a rich and immersive experience. However, modern audiences, including the Yoruba people themselves, often prefer shorter and more condensed versions of the performance. This shift towards convenience is leading to a compression of the ritual content, which can alter the way the community engages with the tradition on an emotional and spiritual level. The slow and deliberate pacing of traditional Gelede performances allows for a deeper connection to the culture and community, whereas shorter versions may lack the same depth and resonance.

Community-based programs have been instrumental in sustaining Gelede. Instead of relying solely on academic institutions or external bodies, communities can establish oral recordings, video documentation, and handwritten accounts by elders—to keep the knowledge within the people who live it. This method allows Gelede to be recorded in the voices and languages of those who understand it best, preserving both meaning and intent. Educational workshops and cultural festivals have also been organized to engage youth and foster appreciation for Gelede's cultural significance. Another way to protect Gelede is by supporting local artists and custodians with direct resources. Mask-makers, drummers, singers, and performance leaders often work without formal funding. Offering grants or community-based financial support ensures they can continue their work with quality materials, time, and focus, without having to commercialize their art for survival. Legal protection can also be helpful. Community leaders can advocate for laws or policies that recognize Gelede sites, objects, and practices as protected cultural heritage. This might prevent misuse of sacred items, protect against cultural theft, or give local authorities more control over how performances are organized and recorded (Akintunde, 2008).

The future of Gelede holds both promise and uncertainty, shaped by the intersection of cultural continuity, generational change, and evolving community needs. Its future prospects are complex, depending on sustained community involvement, proactive cultural preservation, and its ability to adapt to the ever-changing modern world. The *Gelede* Masquerade festival and tradition, deeply rooted in Yoruba culture, faces both opportunities and challenges in the 21st century. The *Gelede* Masquerade tradition remains strong when it is actively carried out and supported by the people it

belongs to. This means including everyone—young and old—so that the skills, stories, and values connected to Gelede are handed down over time. It involves making new masks, learning the songs and dances, and keeping the ceremonies alive that give Gelede its full meaning. It also includes the practical side: when local carvers, drummers, and dancers are able to make a living from their work, it gives them a reason to keep the tradition going.

A promising factor is the flexible nature of Gelede itself. It has always been a living tradition—open to change, whether in its musical styles, masks, or the issues it addresses. This means finding ways to integrate the tradition into modern society while maintaining its cultural integrity. This could involve incorporating contemporary themes and issues into the performances, as well as collaborating with artists and scholars from different backgrounds. It also means addressing the challenges posed by globalization, such as the commodification of cultural practices and the erosion of traditional values. By embracing change and innovation, Gelede can remain relevant and vibrant in the years to come. This could involve incorporating contemporary themes and issues into the performances, as well as collaborating with artists and scholars from different backgrounds. This adaptability gives it strength. As communities face new social, political, or environmental issues, Gelede can continue to be a space for expression, satire, and moral instruction.

### **Summary of Findings**

The tradition *Gelede* Masquerade festival among the Yorubas of South-western Nigeria is a unique cultural practice. Though it appears festive, *Gelede* Masquerade festival is more than entertainment; it functions as a moral and religious expression within the community. *Gelede* Masquerade festival blends performance, spirituality and social commentary that is rooted in a long-standing respect for motherhood, female authority, and communal ethics. The *Gelede* Masquerade performance involves elaborate wooden masks, music, costume, and dance, and lyrics and composition that is used to communicate values, correction of anti-social behavior, and honor powerful maternal spirits often referred to as “Awon Iya Wa”. In summary of findings are; *Gelede* Masquerade Adherents are mostly women and men; the theatrical performance represents sacredness cum moral, spiritual, and social Yoruba cosmological institution that reflects the values, tensions, and structures of the

society. Therefore, *Gelede* Masquerade tradition celebrates the role of women, reinforces social norms and uses satire and symbolism to correct behavior and preserve acceptable norms within the Yoruba social structures.

## Conclusion

**In conclusion, this article examined *Gelede* Masquerade Adherents' cultural identity, a central belief system, dance costumes and pre-festival performance preparations in Yorubaland, South-West Nigeria. The study was conducted through observational research design featuring; fieldwork, in-depth interviews and thematic analysis of observational fieldnotes, audio transcription, analysis and reviews. Findings revealed that**

***Gelede* Masquerade Adherents are mostly women and men; the theatrical performance represents sacredness cum moral, spiritual, and social Yoruba cosmological institution that reflects the values, tensions, and structures of the society. *Gelede* Masquerade tradition celebrates the role of women, reinforces social norms and uses satire and symbolism to correct behavior and preserve acceptable norms within the Yoruba social structures.**

## Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are put forward to further support the understanding, continued relevance and preservation of the *Gelede* Masquerade festival and tradition:

1. Strengthening the roles of women in organizing and supporting *Gelede* Masquerade festival and dance performances.
2. Documentation of the artistic processes behind mask-making and production towards economic dimensions of sustaining the *Gelede* Masquerade festival in modern times.
3. Promoting comparative research activities *Gelede* Masquerade festival and other masquerade traditions across tribes, communities and cultures within and outside Nigeria which could offer new insights into how cultural performances function across societies.

Further and continue investigation by cultural

researchers and Anthropologists on modern and contemporary pressures mounted by globalization, urbanization, and technological changes on the survival of the meaning, practice, and reception or acceptance of *Gelede* Masquerade festival.

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## APPENDICES



Figure1: The Front view of the Gelede Shrine in Sasegbon, Badagry



Figure 2: Gbedu Drums used in the Gelede Festivals