Original Article

Maintenance survey of cultural properties in Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT This paper examined the state of major cultural properties in Ile-Ife – a traditional settlement known in history as the cradle of the Yoruba civilisation. This was to unfold the level of deterioration, identify the causes of decay and suggest appropriate maintenance solutions. In order to carry out this assessment, selected cultural properties such as the Museum, Ooni's palace and shrines such as Ile-Oduduwa, Ifa Temple, Oke-Mogun and Opa Oranmiyan were examined through physical surveys. The analysis was carried out on data procured through the administration of a set of questionnaires. Findings revealed that these cultural properties were in a state of neglect and had no source of funds for their maintenance. The paper concluded that the nonchalant attitude of the custodians of these cultural properties to maintenance contributed to their inability to source for funds, thus allowing the observed decay.
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INTRODUCTION

The Yoruba forms one of the dominant races in West Africa whose ancestral origin is traced to Ile-Ife. Geographically, Yoruba land lies on the south west part of Nigeria, bounded on the North roughly by the River Niger, on the South by the Bight of Benin, on

the West by the Republic of Benin and on the East by Edo state. Ile-Ife, which lies between longitude 4° 32^{1}E and 4° 34^{1}E and between latitude 7° 29^{1}N and 7° 30^1 N of the equator (Ojo, 1978) not only acclaimed Ile-Ife to be the cradle of the Yoruba, but the spiritual seat of the Yoruba. Ife refers to the people whereas the city is called Ile-Ife.

In Ile-Ife, cultural properties are mainly places devoted to traditional worship of deities personified as Obatala, Yemoo among others (Eluyemi, 1986). However, due to civilisation and urbanisation, coupled with the advent of Christianity and Islamisation, these traditional sites and monuments have been abandoned and dilapidated. The decay of these sites tends to erode the traditional religion and culture, thus making historical sites to loose their cultural and religious importance.

These cultural properties, which are important components of the environment, may be viewed in two perspectives. These are religious, and natural topographical landscape sites in form of relief features (hills, mountains, valleys, rock outcrops, streams and rivers) that have been accorded significant historical and cultural relevance.

Religious sites could be grouped into two categories. The first are those associated with the traditional beliefs of the people. The second group consists of those properties that have been associated with individuals who have distinguished themselves in history. These are past political leaders that were recognised to have contributed to the development of the society. These individuals have become deities and are worshipped perhaps because of the circumstances surrounding their deaths. The places where they were buried or worshipped have become in most cases important cultural sites and tourist centres. In some cases, these sites are perceived with awe and often held with myths and sacredness. Some of these sites include the tomb of Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Late Dr Nnamidi Azikwe and Late Sir Tafawa Balewa.

Cultural properties encompass excavated and monumental archaeological landmarks. These pre-historic and historic structures and materials such as monuments, town halls and tombs of important persons who have contributed to the development of their societies while alive are now used for recreation, tourism, leisure and religious activities. By definition, a property executed heritage record comprised of measured drawings and photographs provide a lasting and objective image of the heritage building. Such permanent records are crucial to the planning of effective maintenance, restoration and renovation programmes. In the event of unplanned intervention such as fire, the archival record will provide evidence for the planning of the building restoration, thus reducing the potential for conjectural alteration (Blumenson and Taylor, 1990). These uses are extremely significant to any contemporary dynamic society and should not be subject to decay or noticeable level of deterioration. However, some of these properties in the study area have been observed to be in poor state.

This paper examined the state of the major cultural properties in Ile-Ife to ascertain if deterioration was gradually sending these sites to oblivion. The study also identified the causes of decay and suggested ways to maintain them.

Cultural properties and deterioration

The society is a reflection of its cultural heritage. The built environment epitomises this in form of cultural properties which tell the story behind the cultural heritage. The temporal stratification of the built milieu and the national symbolic buildings help in the understanding of societal changes and the processes of change (Niskala, 2007). Taylor (2000) defined culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as members of the society. Kroeber (2000) put it as the mass of learned and transmitted motor reactions,

habits, techniques, ideas and values and the behaviour they induce. Leach (2000) defined culture as the component of accumulated resources which could be immaterial as well as material, which the people inherit, employ, transmute or add to and transmit.

According to Edokpolo (2007), ancient monuments are highly valuable and informative in terms of sociocultural, sociopolitical, socioeconomic and even technological activities of a particular society or group of people. The royal palaces are examples of such monuments. He went further to state that the palaces of the Oba and his chiefs are of historical importance and have faced a lot of devaluation through physical and biological degradation.

There is a saying that today's culture is tomorrow's heritage (Chatteryee, 1997). Cultural heritage provokes the thought that mankind came from somewhere and this provides the people with confidence and security to face the future (Landry, 1997). Thus, the need for preservation and re-invigoration of cultural resources is a key environmental consideration that may be ranked next in importance to the conservation of agricultural land.

Cultural properties, which form an integral part of the environment, are severely exposed to agencies such as moisture, intense solar radiation and prevailing winds, which directly change their physical attributes (Ikpo, 2006). The prime effects of these environmental agencies include discoloration, abrasion, cracks, stains and fungal growth. Regular or periodic maintenance is required to preserve the physical form of severely exposed artefacts, buildings (Museum), and landforms among others. Apart from exposure to weather, biochemical agencies also accelerate decay of cultured properties.

It has become factual that these physical and social changes have affected sites of cultural and historical importance. In the process, potential tourist sites of local and national interest comprising historical and peculiar architectural buildings, archaeological excavations, palaces, shrines, groves, monuments, open spaces and town squares are lost while some are wasting away. The issue is not that of causation of deterioration but of poor response to maintenance demands.

Causes of lack of maintenance of cultural properties

There are so many problems being faced by attempts to maintain cultural heritage sites. Aradeon (1996) listed some of these problems to include inadequate professionals and the closeness of these sites to urban centres thereby making the land occupied by them to attract high value for alternative investment. The major problems confronting the maintenance of cultural properties revealed by the study are related to religion and finance.

Repair cost of a heritage home is usually higher than a modern home. Some common conditions seen in a home of 'AGE' are

– maintenance problems such as peeling paints and foundation cracks;
– minor structural problems such as crack plaster to small movement in the foundation;
– drainage and grading problems due to the installation of new roof gutter;
– insufficient electrical system;
– poorly installed plumbing;
– older leaking roof;
– older heating and cooling system;
– poor ventilation: excessive moisture from un-vented bathrooms and cooking areas causing damaged plaster and deteriorated windows; and
– excessive air leakage (http/www.altechconsultinggroup.com).

Religion

One of the numerous problems confronting the maintenance of cultural heritage sites is the advent of modern religions such as Islam and Christianity. This made a lot of people to denounce traditional religion. The change of attitude to religion made many people abandon the worship of some of these deities for the new religion. For whatever reasons, people are still changing from the traditional religion to either Christianity or Islam. It has been assumed that the new orientation in religion has made people to show little or no interest in properties and monuments in their local areas, but regard them as irrelevant objects that are not in conformity with their new religious belief or not in line with modern civilisation (Edet, 1990).

Maintenance finance

Maintenance is essential for the conservation of cultural properties. Those who participate in the maintenance of cultural properties include individuals, non-governmental organisations, religious bodies and all the three tiers of government.

Heritage clients and users increasingly need to know their likely financial commitment before work commences. This early-stage cost advice can establish realistic budget for decision making (Smith, 2005). The cost of maintenance of a heritage building is high. The private owners have merger resources and in many cases belong to old families having no steady source of income. It is therefore difficult for them to maintain these properties (Mandal, 2004).The increasing abandonment of these properties by those who were originally responsible for them informed the need for government, NGOs and religious bodies' participation in their maintenance. Most of these groups maintain the sites through contributions made by their members.

Finance is the major factor that inhibits the conservation of properties. The maintenance of cultural properties requires a lot of money that cannot be provided by a single body. The cost of maintenance varies from one to the other.

Known historical sites in Ile-Ife

These include Oranfe, Oduduwa, Olokun, Obatala Yemoo, Yeyemoolu, Babasigidi, Ogun Ladin, Orunmila, Oranmiyan, Moremi and Esinmirin stream, Osupa Ijio site, Oluorogbo shrine, Obalufon, Ile-Nla (old palace hall) and the Museum.

The cultural properties in Ile-Ife that were studied included

– The Ooni's palace
– The National Museum
– The Shrines namely:
– Ile-Oduduwa
– Opa Oranmiyan
– Oke-Mogun
– Ifa temple

The Ooni's palace

Ooni's palace (King's palace) is located at the heart of the city called Enuwa in Ile-Ife. The palace comprises of buildings for the wives (Olori's), the children (prince and princess), meeting hall for important chiefs like the Iya lode, Otunba and other messengers, the spokesman and the workers. This palace has been in existence for centuries and the incumbent Oba Okunade Sijuwade (Olubuse II) is the 50th in the string.

With the demolition of the old palace that was constructed with mud wall, all the existing buildings with the palace wall are now constructed with cement – sand blocks. All the buildings are painted and the environment beautifully landscaped.

National Museum (Ile-Ife)

The National Museum, which was the first in south-western Nigeria, was established in 1954. The Museum was donated by the late Oba Adesoji Aderemi. It was designed to cater for two categories of objects. These are archaeological and ethnographical objects. Archaeological objects refer to those objects dug out of the ground such as human remains and metal objects. Ethnographical objects are objects like leather bags, traditional weavings like clothes and wood. There are four structures within the premises of the Museum, which are constructed with burnt bricks, wooden doors and louver windows. Figures 1 and 2 show the existing state of the National Museum.

Ile Oduduwa

The Oduduwa shrine is located along Oduduwa Street, and is owned by the community. The shrine has been in existence for centuries. It is a very popular shrine especially in the south west of Nigeria. The site contains the burial grounds of the legendry Oduduwa and his wife. The premises has only one building with two sheds. The building was constructed with laterite mud wall with timber doors. There are no windows.

Opa Oranmiyan

The Opa Oranmiyan is located along the busy commercial Arubidi Street. Opa Oranmiyan has been in existence for centuries. This shrine is very popular among the Yoruba in the entire south west of Nigeria as it marks the spot where tradition holds sway. Apart from

Figure 1: Front view of the National Museum, Ile- Ife.

Figure 2: Deterioration – Cracks and moss growth on National Museum wall.

the staff, there is also a small building housing the shrine that serves as the place of worship of deity of Oranmiyan.

The Ifa temple (Ifa Agbaye)

The Ifa temple is located at Oke Itase, Oke Agboniregun, Ile-Ife. The place is not occupied by anybody. Ifa temple has also been in existence for centuries till date. Ifa temple is also very popular in south west part of Nigeria. The building is constructed with burnt mud, made of wooden panel doors and small wooden windows. It has a pit toilet constructed with corrugated iron sheets. Figure 3 shows the state of the Ifa temple and surrounding elements.

The Oke-Mogun shrine

Oke-Mogun shrine is located at Oke-Mogun in Ile-Ife. This shrine has also been in existence for centuries and is very popular in Yoruba land. It is owned by the Ife community. The shrine is fenced with a gate and has no building within but marked by two trees located at the centre of the compound. Figure 4 shows the Oke-Mogun shrine compound and its inner courts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To assess the state of major cultural properties in Ile-Ife, the listed cultural properties were examined through a field survey. This provided primary data on their level of deterioration. In addition, 68 out of the 85 sets of questionnaires administered on respondents in properties with formal setting were received. The questionnaires were structured to obtain information on the condition of the properties, purpose of the properties, usage, category of users, design detail and the frequency of human traffic.

Figure 3: World Ifa temple – Deteriorating external works.

Figure 4: The Adjoung Oke-Mogun shrine.

Failure and maintenance frequencies were also obtained. For other cultural properties, employees were interviewed. Simple descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyse, present and interpret the data collected.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The properties were mostly located in the core of the city which naturally supports slum formation. Table 1 shows the location of cultural properties surveyed in Ile-Ife. Most of the cultural properties (66.67 per cent) were located in the central business district (high-density area) whereas 33.33 per cent were in the medium density area.

This obviously would explain why maintenance may not be of prime concern to those associated with the properties as these properties blend with the general environmental decay. With highly competitive land values in this zone in the face of increasing economic activities, cultural properties that are unattended to may stand no chance.

Though they were all classified as cultural properties, they served specific uses. One of the uses such as tourism, which expected to be self-sustaining, turned out to exhibit the same level of deterioration.

Table 2 shows the use of cultural properties. 44.12 per cent of the respondents say that cultural properties are for tourism, 33.36 per cent for cultural heritage whereas 11.76 as place of worship and recreational purposes respectively.

Table 3 explains this by showing that tourism actually accounts for about 28 per cent of the total patronage of cultural properties. The other 72 per cent patronage fell under the non-income yielding groups. Table 3 shows the categories of people using the cultural

Table 1: Location of cultural properties

Description	Frequency	Percentage
High density	4	66.67
Medium density	2	33.33
Low density	0	0.00
Total	6	100

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 2: Use of cultural properties

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Tourism	30	44.12
Recreation	8	11.76
Cultural heritage	22	33.36
Place of worship	8	11.76
Total	68	100

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 3: Category of users of cultural properties

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Tourist	19	27.94
Community members	19	35.30
Students	6	8.82
Worshipers	19	27.94
Total	68	100

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

properties. Community members had the highest percentage of 35.30 per cent, followed by tourist and worshippers with 27.94 per cent each and students with the lowest percentage of 8.82 per cent.

Table 4 shows the design details of the cultural properties surveyed whereas Tables 5 and 6 show the physical defects of the National Museum building and the Ifa temple, respectively.

Table 7 shows that no income is realised from all cultural properties surveyed except the National Museum, which realised merger annual sum of ₦25 000.00 per annum. The implication is that the income from the properties is not enough to carry out their maintenance (Table 8). The total income of ₦125 000.00 over the past 5 years was far below what was used for re-roofing. Worse still, Table 9 shows that no part of the income was allocated for maintenance.

Table 10 shows the source of water available in the cultural properties. Only the palace had a good source of water supply.

Table 11 shows that none of the cultural properties had materials in stock to respond to maintenance requests.

Table 12 shows the mode of maintenance work carried out on the cultural properties. 16.18 per cent represent periodic planned maintenance whereas 83.82 per cent represent

Table 4: Design details of cultural properties

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Framed structure	31	45.59
Mud structure	14	20.59
Open ground	23	33.82
Total	68	100

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 5: Physical defects observed in the National Museum building, Ile-Ife

Elemental/components	Observed defects	Possible causes of defects	Proposed remedial actions
Walls	Cracking Termite attract Discolorations	Environmental factors Biological factors Environmental factors	Patching and repairs Fumigation of the building Renovation works
Concrete ceiling	Cracking Spalling Reduced strength Dampness	Poor construction Environmental factors Moisture movement	Renovation of the building Renovation of the building Renovation of the building
Floors	Cracking Collapse of floor Dampness Screed failure Terrazzo failure	Environmental factor Consolidation of sub-soil Moisture movement High traffic intensity	Renovation of the building Re-flooring of affected parts Re-screeding and re-lay of terrazzo finish
Beams and columns	Cracking	Environmental factor	Patching and repairs
Roof	Termite attack on fascia board	Biological factor	Fumigation/replacement
Landscape	Plant growth	Environmental factor	Flooring of the surrounding with concrete or laying of interlocking tiles
Finishes	Discoloration and flaking of paint	Environmental factor Solar radiation.	Re-painting and decoration of the buildings

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 6: Physical defects observed in Ifa temple building Ile-Ife

Elemental/components	Observed defects	Possible causes of defects	Proposed remedial actions
Walls	Cracking	Environmental factor	Patching and repairs
	Dampness	Moisture movement	Renovation of the building.
	Discoloration	Environmental factor	
Roof	Sagging	Failure of timber trusses	Complete renovation
	Leaking	Environmental factor	
Doors and windows	Warping	Environmental factor	Complete renovation
	Rots	Environmental factor	Complete renovation
External floor	Collapse of floor	Consolidation of hardcore	Complete renovation
	Cracks	Environmental factors	Complete renovation
	Dampness	Moisture movement	Complete renovation
	Plant growth	Environmental factor	Complete renovation
Finishes	Discoloration and flaking	Environmental factor	Complete renovation
		Solar radiation.	Complete renovation

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 7: Average annual income realised from the cultural properties

Type of property	Amount (₦) annum
Museum	₦ 25 000
Ooni's palace	₦ Nil
Shrine	₦ Nil

Source: Fieldwork 2006. (US$1.00 ≈ 130.00).

Table 8: Maintenance work in the past 5 years and the average cost

Type of property	Type of maintenance	Amount
Museum	Re-roofing	₦ 200 000
Palace	Re-painting	Unavailable
Shrines	—	—
Oke-Mogun shrine	Re-painting of entrance	—
Ile Oduduwa	No maintenance	—
Oranmiyan	Clearing bushes and under growth	—

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 9: Amount of money allocated for building maintenance annually

Type of property	Amount
Museum	Nil
Palace	Unavailable
Shrines	Nil

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 10: Types of basic infrastructural facilities available in the cultural properties

Type of property	Fittings	Water supply
Museum	Water closet W.C	Well
Palace	Water closet W.C	Borehole
Shrines	None	None

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

corrective maintenance. The implication is that 83.82 per cent of the elements/component in the cultural properties has to be defective before maintenance work is attempted.

Table 13 shows maintenance work responsibility on the cultural properties surveyed. Government is 17.65 per cent whereas 82.35 per cent for individual owners. The implication is that the cultural properties are left to the individual owners to maintain without support from any level of government and non-governmental organisations.

Table 14 shows the degree of response to maintenance work after failure of components in the building have occurred. Response under 2 weeks is 16.18 per cent; between 2–3 weeks is 17.64 per cent; between 3 weeks–1 month is 25.00 per cent; whereas until when fund is available has the highest percentage of 41.18 per cent. The implication of this is that 83.82 per cent of the cultural properties are left to deteriorate further, which will go a long way to affect the life span of the properties.

Table 15 shows the age of the buildings sampled. 16.67 per cent of the cultural properties are under 60 years whereas 83.33 per cent were over 60 years. This shows that the cultural properties surveyed are fit for this research work.

Table 11: Stock of materials in store for maintenance work

Type of property	Stock
Museum	None
Palace	None
Shrines	None

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 12: Frequency of maintenance

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Periodic planned maintenance	11	16.18
Corrective	57	83.82
Total	68	100

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 13: Maintenance work responsibility

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Government	12	17.65
Individual owners	56	82.35
Non governmental organisation	0	0.00
Total	68	100

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 14: Degree of response to maintenance work after defect/failure of element/component have occurred

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Under 2 weeks	11	16.18
Between 2–3 weeks	12	17.64
3 weeks–1 month	17	25.00
When fund is available	28	41.18
Total	68	100

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 15: Age of the cultural properties surveyed

Description	Frequency	Percentage
30–60 years	1	16.67
Over 60 years	5	83.33
Total	6	100

Source: Fieldwork 2006.

Table 16: Correlation values for the hypothesis tasted

Description	R-values
Hypothesis 1	0.20
Hypothesis 2	0.29
Hypothesis 3	0.37

Source: Data analysis.

Research questions

– Is there a linear relationship between the age of building and the frequency of maintenance activities carried out in the building?
– What relationship exists between the age of buildings and the amount allocated for maintenance work?
– What relationship exists between the age of buildings and the types of maintenance work carried out on the building?

Research hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

H0: There is no linear relationship between the age of buildings and the frequency of maintenance activities.

H1: There is a linear relationship between the age of buildings and the frequency of maintenance activities.

Hypothesis 2

H0: There exists no significant relationship between the age of buildings and the amount of money allocated for maintenance work.

H1: There exists a significant relationship between the age of buildings and the amount of money allocated for maintenance work.

Hypothesis 3

H0: There exists no significant relationship between the age of buildings and the types of maintenance work carried out on the buildings.

H1: There exists a significant relationship between the age of building and the types of maintenance work carried out on the buildings.

Bivariate correlation analysis was used to test for Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. It is used to measure association (strength) of relationship between two variables,

when $r = 0$, no relationship between variables
when $r = 1$, perfect positive relationship
when $r = -1$, perfect negative relationship

Table 16 shows that in the three hypotheses tested for this research work, there is an association (relationship) between the age of the buildings and the frequency of maintenance activities, amount of money allocated for maintenance and also the types of maintenance carried out in the buildings. But the strength of the relationship was weak. This weakness may be explained in relationship to the nonchalant attitude to high maintenance from older buildings.

CONCLUSION

The research revealed that about 67 per cent of the cultural properties were located in the high-density area of Ile-Ife. The purpose of maintaining the cultural properties is for tourism, recreation, cultural heritage and places of worship. And that the users of the cultural properties include tourists, community members, students and worshippers. The physical defects observed in cultural properties are high and there is actually no fund allocated for maintenance work. The research also revealed that most of the cultural properties do not have sanitary fitting available for visitors to such properties.

Also, most of the properties do not give a good source of water supply. None of the cultural properties have stocks available to respond to maintenance work. About 84 per cent of the cultural properties carry out corrective maintenance whereas maintenance work responsibility fall on the individual owners of such properties and the responses to maintenance when defects of elements/components occur is very poor.

The research shows that there is an association (positive relationship) between the age of buildings and the frequency of maintenance, amount of money allocated and also the types of maintenance carried out. However, the strength of the relationships is weak. The weakness may be explained in relation to the nonchalant attitude to high maintenance request from these cultural buildings and changing attitude (values) of owners towards the cultural properties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Both the Federal and State governments should make funds available for the regular maintenance of these cultural properties.

There should be regular or periodic planned maintenance of these cultural properties instead of the corrective maintenance that is currently the practice.

That the Federal government should partner with private owners of cultural properties in order to have enough funds make available for effectively maintenance.

The users of these cultural properties include tourists, community members, students and worshippers. Therefore, support services facilities such as toilet and other sanitary fittings be built in the premises of these properties to enable the users enjoy the use of these properties. Public enlightenment campaigns should be carried out in schools (primary, secondary and institutions of higher learning) to promote the significance of these cultural properties in order to improve their patronage and values.

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