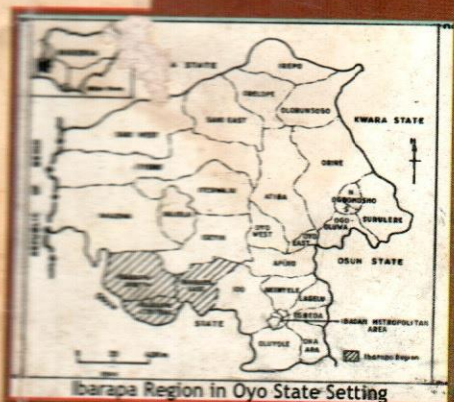
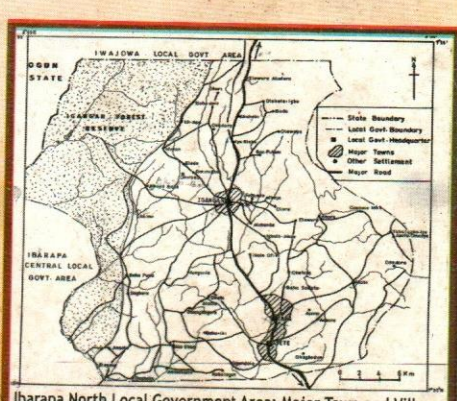
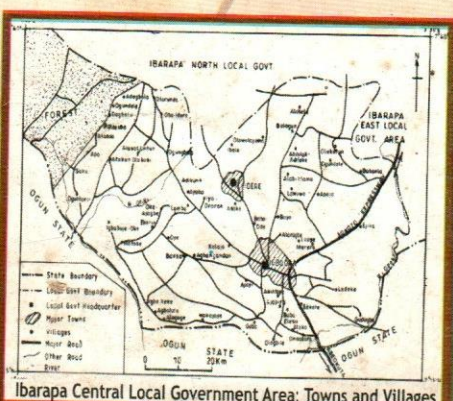
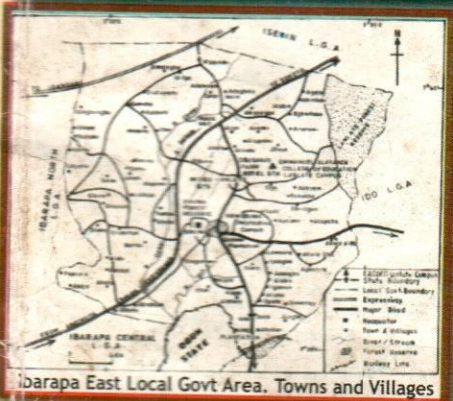
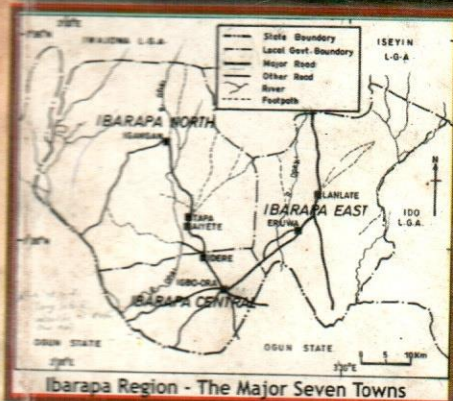


Ibarapa Region



- Geographical Setting
- Historical Background
- Socio-Economic-Political Characteristics
- Health Related Issues



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Chapter Eight

THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF IGBOORA AND IDERE FROM EARLIEST TIME TO 1900

By

**Kola-Aderoju, S. A. (Mrs) and
Ogunbunmi, O. A. (MRS)**

8.1 IGBOORA

Introduction

Igbo-ora is situated right outside the belt of tropical rainforest in the savannah country. It presents an attractive landscape of slightly undulating country. The town is situated 70° 27' North Longitude 3021' East. It is about 24km to east of Abeokuta and 60km to west of Ibadan. Its plain ground makes for easy expansion of the town, the vegetation is grass and savannah parkland favours the growth of crops like melon, cassava, yam, maize and vegetables. The vicinity is graced by two major rivers, to the west is River Ofiki and west is River Opeki. The minor rivers are Ayayin, Ofisha and Abojuku. The town also has access to the facilities at Ogun-Oshun River basin along Abeokuta road where fishes are bought at cheaper rates.

Each of the communities has its own traditions of origin. The origins of these five communities can be traced to series of immigration caused by social and political disputes. So complex are some of the issues involved in these various origins that they tend to be controversial at a times. In fact the name Igbo-ora is the name of the one of five communities. The

town assumed the name because it was the largest community among them and more importantly after the Dahomean war others suffered defeat and it catapulted Igbo-ora to be a *primus inter pares*.

Historically, there are three different meanings given by our chief informant. He said the most acceptable is 'Igbo' which means forest while 'Iwera' means the fertile land. Berber (1966) in his works, *Igbo-ora A Town in transition*, blindly and blatantly declared that Igbo-ora is reputed to have been founded by nomadic hunter from Ekiti who later joined by people from neighboring districts but there.... Bale of Igbo-ora Pa Adeoye opposed the view.

From the oral interview conducted it was confirmed that Igbo-ora was founded by a group of seven people who emerged from different places like Oyo town, Abeokuta and later settled in this forest. They came at different times but today the different places they settled to become a town under the flag name Igbo-Iwera as earlier mentioned. From the facts collected and according to history of Igbo-ora written by late Chief J. A. Akinleye, it could a conglomeration of different autochthonous people who came from different locations to settle in Igbo-ora.

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Of recent it has been established through Internet that Igbo-ora is the largest producer of twins, hence the name town of multiple birth. At the entrance to the town is a big round- about where a statue of a twin mother was erected with an inscription “ **You are welcome to Igbo-ora, the home of twins**” It is undisputed fact that Igbo-ora housed largest number of foreigners either from neighbouring countries or states, with periodic markets observed every five days.

An attempt at studying the history of Igboora no doubt presents the historian with a myriad of problems the chief of which appears to be that of nomenclature. The town is variously called Igboora, Igbole, Pako, Idofin, Sagan-un and Ilupeju. The reason for this is not far fetched. Though the first five are seemingly neighbours, they have different theories of origin and the last Ilupeju being a name recently suggested reflecting the federal structure of the town. Given the nature of the name, Ilupeju, as stated above, readers may be wondering why the authors of this chapter adopted the name Igboora and not Ilupeju or even any of the other names for the communities being studied. Igboora is the official name of the town and as long as the government recognizes this name as the common name for the communities being studied, we have no option other than to follow suit.

The second controversy has to do with the very origins of the communities. While some claim descent to Abeokuta, others trace their origins to Oyo. It is however interesting to note that their historical antecedents are closely interwoven and would be presently demonstrated, difficult to separate.

Finally, to whom would the historian ascribe overall political authority in a political system as clearly fragmented as that of Igboora? The historian, however, in his onerous task of re-constructing events of the past needs not ascribe overall political authority to any quarter if such does not actually exist! And in this lies the very beauty of history! Particular communities must be studied only on the strength of its own peculiarities not that because some events took place somewhere else they must take place everywhere. Each of the communities would now be studied on the basis of its peculiarities.

8.1.1 Igboora

Lajorun was a hunter who undertook hunting expeditions from Ibara Orile in Abeokuta. On one of his hunting expeditions he did not return on time having left his new bride at Abeokuta. His bride, princess Olupeeti, was getting restless when her husband did not return on time, which was quite un-usual. This then prompted Olupeeti to decide to look for her husband but in the course of doing this, she grew tired and made a place in a big forest her temporary abode. It was at this new settlement that one Lasogba who had previously established Idofin met Olupeeti and having expressed his surprise at finding only a woman in the thick forest decided to assist in trying to locate Lajorun. Their combined efforts apparently yielded fruits as Lajorun was found and the couple reunited after a long period of separation.

Lajorun being a hunter and farmer, who was only returning to Ibara, Abeokuta

periodically because of his wife, and quickly estimating the potentials of the forest where Olupeeti had previously resided for farming, hunting and trading decided to make the new place his permanent place of abode. Indeed, the name of the community became known as Igbo (forest) and Ora (fertile), which means a fertile forest from where Igboora was eventually coined for linguistic convenience.

Though Law (1977) states that Iseyin was made a base for the Jihadists about 1821 from where offensives were launched into Ibarapaland, these places still enjoyed relative peace and this is one of the apparent reasons why there was an influx of immigrants into Ibarapaland in general and Igboora in particular. The resultant effect of this was the rapid upsurge in the populations of these towns. Thus it was that Igboora and the neighbouring communities found themselves playing hosts to waves of migrants from Oyo, Abeokuta, Iganna, etc.

One major concomitant effect of the foregoing was the necessity to evolve a type of leadership to harness the socio-political and economic challenges that had arisen as a direct consequence of the upsurge in population. A solution to this would appear to be in the emergence of Baale of Igboora who now provided socio-political leadership and Lajorun became the first Baale of Igboora.

8.1.2 Igbole

One Ajade a migrant from Abeokuta founded Igbole. Ajade was in fact said to

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be the father of Olupeeti whose departure from Abeokuta had been discussed earlier. Ajade having waited in vain for his daughter decided to take the gauntlet by searching for his daughter. Though he did not know the exact destination of Olupeeti, his daughter, he knew the general direction she took.

After several weeks or months, nobody seems to know exactly how long, of trekking in the bush, Ajade made up his mind to take a rest. Incidentally the place where he pitched his tent was very close to where his daughter and son-in-law, Lajorun, were already turning into a nascent settlement. Before long, father and daughter discovered themselves but the account did not end there.

Naturally, having met his daughter and seeing that she and her husband were not only alive and healthy but also successful, Ajade after taking a fitful rest for his hazardous journey would have been expected to go back to Ibara from where he came. However, circumstances are not always natural and normal. Though Ajade ostensibly came in search of his daughter, other factors could have engineered his leaving home for he also decided to stay within the neighbourhood to farm and also probably engage in hunting and trading. The Yoruba customs and traditions, however, forbid a father-in-law to live with his son-in-law consequently Ajade had to pitch his tent somewhere else thus the establishment of Igbole as the gateway to the other communities.

Because Igbole was and still a nodal settlement, it attracted many settlers among whom were war refugees and

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eventually traders who all helped to swell the population of the town and shape its administrative apparatus.

8.1.3 Pako

The founder of Pako was Princess Ogboja Abedo a daughter of Alaaafin Oluaso of Oyo Traditions has it that Ogboja Abedo was barren and as it was common to folks in Yorubaland during this period, she was an object of ridicule and scorn, which culminated in her leaving town. But before she went on self-exile, the Ifa oracle was consulted and it was predicted that her journey would not only be successful, it would also be very memorable.

After a long journey, Ogboja became weary and in need of rest and the account maintains that it was at this vulnerable moment that a parrot sang and this conformed to what the Ifa priest instructed that she was to stay at the place where a parrot sang. The tree on which the parrot perched happened to be an Ako tree and Ogboja had to cut some branches of the Ako tree (sometimes in the Yoruba language, cutting is used loosely to mean 'pa' or kill) to make her tent hence the name Pako. It was from this that the Pako community blossomed.

8.1.4 Idofin

The account of origin of the Idofin community is not as straight forward as that of the other Communities. Though there is no doubt that Lasogba was the founder of Idofin, there are however conflicting accounts as to his place of

origin. While some accounts maintain that he came from Oyo Oro, others have it that he came from Ofin. Now the exact location of Ofin is not certain and it could either be a fictitious place or name but which had influence on the establishment of the settlement but the nature of this influence is not certain. It would be recalled that it has been said elsewhere in this chapter that the place of origin of founders of communities or settlements is not as important as their actions in their new place and it is on this premise that we shall examine other issues pertinent to the growth of Idofin.

The earliest evidence of human habitation in the Igboora area was said to be C.17th century and it is widely believed that the earliest settlement was indeed Idofin. Whatever polemics arise about the date of establishment of Idofin does not affect the fact that Idofin had been founded before the other communities in Igboora. All the other progenitors were said to have met Lasogba in Idofin as exemplified by the accounts of Igboora, Igbole, Pako and Sagan un. He therefore played the role of a chief host to all the other migrants.

The foregoing however does not imply that the other migrants were at one time or the other tenants of Lasogba. This happened in many places in Yorubaland where population dislocations occasioned by war forced many people including erstwhile overloads to seek refuge in the abodes of their former subjects and a new pattern of inter-group relations had to be forged. Examples of these abound in Oyo, Ogbomoso, Abeokuta, and Igangban, which were discussed in this chapter previously to mention but a few.

Evidences on ground prove that the various communities in Igboora had been established independent of the other and that it was after initial establishment that geographical proximity and other exigencies of the time made the people to relate meaningfully with each other though admittedly some of the founders of some of the communities were said to be related.

3.1.5 Saganun

Lasogba's exploits in and around his Idofin settlement had been discussed previously and it had taken a very long time indeed since he left his Oyo Oro or Ofin town. His people at home were worried stiff about his absence and or lack of news about him hence the decision of Lagaye his brother to go in search of him.

Today, it is difficult to ascertain how Lagaye was able to decipher the general direction his brother took but all we know is that Lagaye after sometime found himself in a place from where he noticed smoke from a distance indicating people's presence. He approached the place and there met Lajorun and Olupeeti the founders of Igboora. On inquiry, Lagaye was informed about Lasogba's well being. May we remind readers that Lasogba had played a significant role in uniting Lajorun and Olupeeti, he was thus not a stranger to the couple and so Lasogba and Lagaye eventually met with the assistance of Lajorun and his wife.

Before meeting Lajorun, his brother, however, Lagaye was said to have established a settlement in a forest, which is named after him. Lagaye after fulfilling

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his mission moved back to his new abode and thus started the development of Sagan-un.

In conclusion, it is necessary to discuss certain pertinent issues. One of the reasons for this is readily found in the utility of history. History as a discipline sheds light on the human past with a view to adopting their strengths and avoiding their weaknesses. It is our humble opinion that a closer examination of the evolution of a political system in Igboora will assist in shaping political integration in the town.

We have submitted previously that the different communities in Igboora had emerged independently. Each community thus evolved a political system that best suited it. The general norm then was that each founder became the first community head or Baale with a retinue of palace chiefs and members of the royal families assisting in the day-to-day governance of each community. The chieftains existing at the beginning of the 20th century included Olora of Igboora, Onigbole of Igbole, Onipako of Pako, Onidofin of Idofin and Onilado of Sagan un.

Though, it had been said that each community sprang up independent of the others, this did not mean that they existed in isolation as no community can exist as an Island. The communities had to co-operate from time-to-time on issues affecting the general well being of the citizens. With time, however, it became incumbent on the Baales to have a *numero uno* or *primus inter pares* to represent them at meetings, with the Alaafin-in-Council, the colonial authorities and to generally give leadership directions.

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The solution to this challenge came through the peaceful institution of the Olori omolebi or Oloriomo – head of the family, title, which was being rotated among the Baales. With the demise of a reigning Oloriomo, the title would go to probably the most senior Baale in the town. The relationship between the Oloriomo and the other Baales was not that of a master-subject but of equals who's only major function was ceremonial. Suffice it to add here that the idea of rotational leadership is not strange even in modern times. The suggestion that Nigeria should have a rotational presidency to solve its myriad of problems is a good case in point.

Though, this is beyond the scope of this chapter, we shall discuss briefly on recent developments in Igboora. The suggestion that the name, Ilupeju, should be adopted for the town has its roots in the foregoing discussions. Federalists in the town went on to advocate a rotational kingship to reflect the practice of old where the Oloriomo title was rotational.

Permit us at this juncture to conclude this piece by saying that permanent problems deserve permanent solutions. Stakeholders in Igboora should always remember the federal antecedents of the town and any solution that falls short of a federal solution, we are afraid may once again be postponing the evil day as they say.

8.2 IDERE

There are conflicting accounts on the origin of Idere as it is common to most towns in Yorubaland. This could be due

in part to the absence of writing in pre-literate societies and the attendant shortcomings of oral traditions. One of the accounts had it that the town, or at least its nucleus, was founded by one Osikola who was a hunter from a place widely believed to be Oyo and this hunter who was also accompanied by others eventually founded the town of Idere. Other traditions have it that Osikola who was a senior brother to the then Alaafin of Oyo established Idere. He was said to have left Oyo as a direct consequence of a succession dispute, which necessitated his leaving town with his wife called Aye and some other sympathizers.

Before any other consideration, it is pertinent to reconcile these seemingly conflicting accounts from the foregoing, there is no doubt that Osikola was the central figure in the establishment of Idere and that he in the company of some people, came from a place which could be Oyo. The only area of divergence would appear to be the *cansus belli* for their migration, which, as a matter of fact, is not as important to us here as what they did while in their new area of settlement.

Be that as it may, Osikola and members of his entourage first settled at a place called Igbonla or Ibona very close to Igboora. It is instructive to note at this juncture that Osikola was said to have left Oyo with a beaded crown having been a prince before the succession dispute, which occasioned his departure. It is therefore pertinent to suggest here without fear of self-contradictions that Osikola would appear to have possessed the potentials of becoming a leader, which according to traditions, he eventually

became having in his possession one of the important paraphernalia of authority namely; a beaded crown.

The period of settlement of Idere is not certain but it would appear to have coincided with the period of internecine warfare in Yorubaland and Idere was also adversely affected as the new settlement at Igbonla was abandoned for Igbole Oko Oba. It was before the establishment of this new settlement that Osikola died and Ogbonnu succeeded him. It would be recalled that the first place of settlement of the Idere people was variously called Igbonla or Ibona. It is pertinent to shed more light on this. In the course of investigation, the author sum out that, a school of thought opined that Igbonla was the actual name of the settlement while another suggested Ibona but when Osikola died, the two schools agreed that he died at Ibona from where he instructed his descendants never to forsake Ibona and that is why Idere kings are still buried at Ibona till today. From the above it can safely be argued that Igbonla could be an earlier settlement, which preceded the establishment of Ibona or that, the names referred to the same settlement and were being used interchangeably.

The hostilities in Yorubaland continued and Igbole Oko Oba was again abandoned for a safer place simply known

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as Ori Oke where till today there are remains of human habitation. After the cessation of hostilities however, expansion became a problem and Olunloye the Onidere, Ogbonnu having died at the Ori-Oke settlement, had to seek a new settlement at the bottom of the hill. The choice of the new settlement was made for the people by the Ifa oracle who instructed that they should settle at Idi Ere – it was said that a python – ere in the Yoruba language – had previously been killed and kept in a place and the oracle directed them to the spot where the killed ere was kept and this gave the town its present name; Idi Ere which was eventually corrupted to Idere.

Idere is divided into four quarters namely; Onigbio, Koso, Oke Oba and Apa. It should be noted that Koso is also the name of a quarter in Oyo and Iseyin. There are also Alapinni and Ara Oyo area in Idere. These names are also in Oyo which lends credence to the claim that Idere's origins could be traced to Oyo and this assertion is what Law (1977) confirms when he observes that Idere is an Oyo town in the West at the height of her apogee.

The table below summarizes the history of Ibarapaland from earliest times to 1900.

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S/N	Name of Town	Founders	Former Place of Origin	Host Communities	Probable Year of Establishment
1.	Ayete	Asawo Egbegi	Oyo		C. 19 th century
2.	Eruwa	Obaseeku	Oyo/Igboho/Irawo		C./610
3.	Idere	Osikola	Oyo		C.-9 th Century
4.	Igangan	Arowo Ogunbuna Adegun Asake	Oyo Apamatako	Apamatako, Ilogbo, Ayegun, Oyalaku e.t.c.	C-1835
5.	Igboora	Lajorun, Ajade, Ogboja, Abedo, Lasogba, and Lagaye	Oyo and Abeokuta		C- 19 th century
6.	Lanlateltabo	Bioku Onitabo	Oyo Efon Alaaye Ladodo		C-1842C- 19 th century
7.	Tapa	Nupe Immigrants	Nupeland and Oyo	Ayete	C- 19 th century

8.3 Conclusion

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight attempted to trace the history of Ibarapaland from earliest times to 1900. The choice of 1900 is deliberate – it was meant to coincide with the period of the establishment of colonial rule in Nigeria. The crises that rocked Yorubaland in the 19th century, which witnessed the collapse of central authority in the Old Oyo Empire and which culminated in the Yoruba Civil Wars, came to be paradoxical for the Ibarapa towns. On the one hand, C.1831-1833, Law (1977) notes that the Fulanis attacked Ibarapa towns and some were actually sacked. On the other hand, the refugee problem, which arose out of the population dislocations of the time were solved as some Ibarapa towns, not only absorbed the dis-lodged populations but also expanded therefrom.

Ibarapaland as a Region would appear to be a confederal state, as each of the

towns believe firmly in a common ancestry though this is always used loosely to mean Oyo. In cases where descent is traced to places outside Oyo, those places in turn trace their descent back to Oyo. The only exception here would appear to be Tapa whose descent is traced to Nupeland outside the Yoruba speaking areas. But even then, the original Tapa migrants had a form of sojourn in Oyo either as prisoners of war or as Alaafin's subjects. This in turn means that even Tapa derived its legitimacy from Oyo either directly or indirectly.

Coupled with the foregoing factor of common descent is geographical contiguity. Throughout the length and breadth of Ibarapaland, there are no natural barriers like mountains, hills, rivers, valleys or deep gullies that hinder or make communication and consequently inter-group relations impossible. Though in traditional times a single government did

not evolve to cover the whole of Ibarapaland, the potentates did things in common and they saw each other as brothers, which also rubbed off on their subject. In order to buttress this point is the fact that before the establishment of colonial rule, the Asigangan of Igangan was said to be a very brave warrior who was coming to the aid of his brother rulers to defend their towns against the Jihadists.

In each of the Ibarapa towns, a federal constitution would appear to have been established. This became a *sine qua non* for peaceful co-existence and development. All the towns had diverse groups, which were said to have migrated into the areas from different backgrounds. In order to properly integrate these groups,

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each was settled into separate quarters to preserve their self-identities but each quarter was made to depend on the others to forestall centrifugal and secessionist tendencies. Each town had an overall sovereign under whose authority all the quarter chiefs operated and the quarter chefs also had subordinate chiefs under them to reflect their status in their respective communities.

The political atmosphere was peaceful and the balance of power established appeared to be acceptable to all and sundry until the British came and started dabbling into local politics to the detriment of a long established system. This interference and the people's reactions shall be the focus of another paper.

References

(Applicable to Chapters Six, Seven and Eight)

A number of people were interviewed across Ibarapaland. Their details are as shown hereunder.

Name	Age	Address	Date
Abraham Aderibigbe	112	Idi-ope Compound, Lanlate	11/04/08
Adebiyi Adetunji	62	Osi Compound, Itabo	10/04/08
Adefemi Taiwo	40	Maku Grammar School, Tapa	05/02/08
Adegboyega Adedigba	50	Asawo Compound, Ayete	06/02/08
Adejumo J. Adewale	54	Adegun Asake Grammar School, Igangan	10/02/08
Ahmed Makanjuola (Alh)	67	Olopele Compound, Lanlate	08/04/08
Akinlabi Akuda	95	"	"
Alawode M.A.	44	Amulegbola Compound, Ayete	06/02/08
Ayandoke Gbadamsi	120	Onilu Gbadamosi Compound, Lanlate.	06/02/08

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Name	Age	Address	Date
Ayantade Ayanteju	90	"	"
Babalola Emmanuel	48	St. Anne's Catholic School, Igangan	10/02/08
Egunbambi Jimoh	55	Adegun Asake Grammar School, Igangan	10/02/08
Kareem M.A.	34	Tapa Community High School, Tapa	05/02/08
Majaro Olajiire	88	Oba Olufiji Compound, Idere	17/03/08
Motolase Amos (Prince)	68	Asawo Compound, Ayete	06/02/08
Oba (Dr.) E.A. Afolabi	72	Onitabo Palace, Itabo	11/04/08
Oba Abdul Lateef	60	Onilanla Palace, Lanlate	03/04/08
Oguntowo Moshood (Alh)	55	Adegun Asake, Igangan	10/02/08
Oke Samson B.	57	Onitabo Palace, Itabo	11/04/08
Olabiyi David	102	Oba Olufiji Compd, Idere	17/03/08
Olabiyi Simeon	55	"	"
Olabiyi R.O. (Mrs)	42	"	"
Olalere Olagoke	60	Onitabo Palace, Itabo	11/04/08
Olatunde D.R.	50	Baale Agbe Compd. Tapa	05/02/08
Ojelere A.O. (Deaconess)	50	Oniwafin Compd. Tapa	"
Ojenike A.	34	Tapa Community High School, Tapa	'
Sulymon J.A.	45	Oba Olaleye Compd, Idere	"
Rasheed Ojebola Oniyiku (Ikolaba of Lanlate)	50	Otun Agba Compd., Lanlate	26/03/08
Yahaya Junaid	42	Oba Olufiji Compd. Idere	17/03/08
Yomi Salako	40	Adiomewa Compound, Idere	06/02/08

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SOCIAL-ECONOMIC POLITICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IBARAPA REGION