

# Revitalisation of Indigenous Food in Africa through Print and Electronic Media

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**Abstract**—Language and culture are interwoven that they cannot be separated, for the knowledge of a language cannot be complete without having the culture of the language. Indigenous food is a cultural aspect of any language that is expected to be acquired by all the speakers of the language. Indigenous food is known to be vital right from early years, which is also attributed to the healthy living of the ancient people. However it is discovered that the indigenous food is almost being replaced by fast food products such as Indomie noodles, Spaghetti and Macaroni to the extent that majority of the young folks prefer the eating of the fast foods and cannot prepare the indigenous foods which are good for growth and healthy living of people. Therefore, there is need to revitalize and re-educate people on the indigenous food which is an aspect of inter-cultural education of any language to prevent it from being forgotten or neglected.

African foods are many, but this study focused on Nigerian food using some Yoruba dishes as a case study. Examples of Yoruba dishes are pounded yam and melon with vegetable and dried fish soup, beans pudding (moin moin) and pap (eko), water yam pudding with fish and meat (ikokore) and many more. The ingredients needed for the preparation of these indigenous foods contain some basic food nutrients which will be analyzed and their nutritional importance to human bodies will also be discussed.

The process of re-awakening the education of indigenous food to the present and up-coming generation should be via print and electronic media in form of advertisements on posters, billboards, calendars and in rhymes on television programs, radio presentations, video tapes and CD-ROM apart from classroom teaching and learning. Indigenous food is a panacea to healthy living and longevity, a prevention of diseases and a means of accelerated healing of the body through natural foods.

**Keywords**—Indigenous food, print and electronic media, nutritional values, re-awakening education.

## I. INTRODUCTION

INDIGENOUS foods have played and will continue to play a significant role in ensuring good health for the people right from ancient days till today. Despite the importance of indigenous foods, they are continually sidelined by the importance placed on fast foods which are believed to be very easy and fast in their preparations, such fast foods are; indomie noodles, spaghetti, macaroni, and many more. The preparation and consumption of indigenous foods rather than been embraced and appreciated is declining due to children and young adults paying attention to the eating of fast foods thus replacing them with indigenous foods.

Reference [1] stated that in the past, natural vegetables, herbs, and natural spices were prepared and consumed, but in recent times, most of these indigenous foods and seasonings,

have disappeared from most cooking pots. In its place, processed or synthetic foods, spices and cubes with little or no nutritional value have taken over, thereby disregarding the medicinal and nutritive properties that these natural and indigenous foods can provide.

Indigenous foods are also known as traditional foods and those foods that people have access to locally or within the natural environment. In African context, indigenous foods include items that have been naturalized and adapted to local conditions [2]. Indigenous foods in Africa belong to the culture of some ethnic groups and should be for daily consumption of people. But it has been confirmed that production and utilization of indigenous food is declining due to lack of documentation and knowledge sharing which brings about negative attitude of people towards the preparation and consumption of the foods and the shift of attention to the fast food especially among the youths. This shift of attention has almost pushed the indigenous foods into the state of disregard and neglect.

Reference [3] declared that since the last four or five decades, the world continues to witness the domineering influence of western culture across the globe. From politic to language, cuisine, dance, art, and fashion. Western culture continues to make inroads into cultures in other parts of the world at varying degrees. It is thus imperative for every group of people to protect their culture in order to prevent cultural extinction.

Indigenous foods in Africa are many but the study focused on Yoruba dishes/ foods. Yoruba people are habitants of city and towns in south western part of Nigeria, they are Yoruba language speakers; one of the indigenous languages in Nigeria. Since language and culture are interwoven and inseparable and the cultural aspect of the language is at risk of been neglected and forgotten by the young folks, there is therefore need for re-awakening education of the people which its outcome will not only be beneficial to the owner of the indigenous foods but for the whole world in term of varieties, it's been natural and their nutritional values.

There are various types of indigenous foods (Yoruba dishes) which are highlighted in this table.

TABLE I  
EXAMPLES OF SOME YORUBA DISHES

	Main Menu	Accompaniment
1	Pounded yam (iyan)	Melon soup, vegetables, dried fish, snails.
2	Steamed beans pudding (moin moin)	Pap (eko)
3	Steamed water yam pudding (ikokore)	Fresh fish stew, vegetables (efirinrin leaves)
4	Yam flour (amala isu)	Viscous vegetable (ewedu), meat stew
5	Plantain flour (amala ogede)	Okra soup and goat stew.
6	Corn flour (tuwo)	Beans stew (gbegiri) and stalked fish and offal meat
7	Steamed cocoyam pudding (ebiripo)	Meat soup with efinrin leaves or with vegetables.
8	Yam pottage (asaro)	Vegetables, crayfish, crab soup.
9	Local rice (local rice)	Fried stew with meat, vegetable and locust beans (iru)

Reference [4], [5] stated that all these indigenous foods contain nutrients from all the classes of food such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats and oil, vitamins, water and mineral salt.

Some of the indigenous foods and their ingredients used for preparations and the nutritional values are analyzed in this table.

TABLE II  
INGREDIENTS AND NUTRITIONAL VALUES OF SOME SELECTED YORUBA DISHES

	Dishes	Ingredients	Nutritional Values
1	<b>Pounded yam (iyan) and melon soup.</b>	Yam, vegetables, smoke fish, snails, crabs, crayfish,	Energy. Vitamins. Calcium. Calcium. Calcium. Calcium.
	<b>Pounded yam (iyan) and melon soup.</b>	dried fish, palm oil, onion, pepper, melon, locust beans	Digestion. Good for eyes, helps in curing asthma, hypertension, contains vitamins also.
2	<b>Steamed water yam pudding (ikokore).</b>	Water yam, Kidney, Shrimps, Smoked fish, Crayfish (grounded), Dried pepper, Palm oil, Salt, Onion, Garlic	Energy. Growth., Calcium, Calcium. Digestion. Smoothness of skin. Mineral. Taste. [6]



Fig. 1 Pounded yam (iyan) and melon soupa Yoruba dishe [7]



Fig. 2 Steamed water yam pudding (ikokore) [8]

As shown in these pictures, it is obvious that Yoruba/ indigenous foods contain natural nutrients that are very important for the development of the body. Comparing the foods to the fast foods such as indomie noodles, spaghetti and macaroni, it is revealed that emphasis is laid on spices and cubes with high quantity of starch which is one way focused. Although some of the fast foods contain some ingredients which are good for the body but they are processed and synthetic foods.



Fig. 3 Examples of a fast food (indomie)



Fig. 4 Indomie adverts [9]

## II. PROCEDURE

Indigenous foods are very important to human life because they contain all the nutrients that are responsible for human health, accelerated healing, which may eventually lead to longevity in life. There is need for re-awakening education and this can be done effectively through the use of print and electronic media such as advertisement on posters, bill boards, calendars and through rhymes on television programs, radio presentation, and video tapes aside classroom teaching and learning.

According to [10] Skinner theory states that behaviour is more likely to reoccur if reinforcement can be used to strengthen existing behaviour. This can be buttressed with MAGGI (cooking spices) and GLO (telecommunication product) using posters on billboards to promote the sales of their products. This can be applicable to the revitalization of indigenous foods through posters on billboards, calendars and on television, video and CD-ROM, internet.

The Nigerian Government has tried to encourage people including the learning of skills into Nigerian curriculum. [11]. reported the decision of the Federal Government on the introduction of the 9-years basic education programme and the need to attain the millennium development goals (MDGS) by 2015 which centred on re-orientation and using cultural education tagged: Entrepreneurial Education to Empower People in terms of economy and healthy living of people. The Government has also been creating awareness on media for people to see the need to learn entrepreneurial skills, but that of indigenous foods has not been adequately promoted in schools.

Reference [12] stated that radio and television are not only to inform, educate and entertain people but they also serve other purposes which include civic development and cultural awareness and preservation. The Radio also plays an important role in cultural revitalization.

As indomie products and other noodles are being promoted through advertisements on billboards, posters, calendars and through rhymes on the radio and television serving as pacesetters for indigenous foods to follow in term of publicity.

Mama do good ooo.....*she do good*  
 Mama wey cook for us.....*she do good*  
 She gave us indomine..... *indomie*  
 No mama be like that.....*indomie*  
 Indomine good well well.....*indomie*  
 Indomine sweet well well.....*indomie*

.....*written in*

*Pidgin English*

Fig. 4 Examples of the rhymes to promote indomie noodles

The indigenous rhyme is also applicable for advertisement in Yoruba language.

E bawakiiya ewe.....*iya ewe*  
 Iya to dara.....*to dara*  
 Iyati o legbe.....*kolegbe*  
 O fun waniindomie..... *indomie*  
 Indomine to ladun..... *indomie*  
 E pe indomie..... *indomie*

Grin gringrin grin..... *indomie*

.....*Written in Yoruba*

*language*

Fig. 5 Indomie noodles advert [9]

It is also pertinent that the indigenous foods should be displayed on billboards, posters, and as rhymes in the television, radio and CD-ROMs even on internet for the promotion and preservation of the targeted culture.

TABLE III  
SUGGESTED RHYMES ON PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA TO REVITALISE  
INDIGENOUS FOOD

<b>Rhyme 1</b>	<b>Yoruba</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Panlapelueba</i>		Stock fish with steamed cassava flour
<i>Teremebateremebatere</i>		How delicious
<b>Rhyme 2</b>	<b>Yoruba</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Iyan, iyan, iyan</i>		Pounded yam, pounded yam, pounded yam
<i>Iyan to funfunlele</i>		Very white pounded yam
<i>Iyan to wewuegusi</i>		Wrapped with delicious melon
<i>To de filaisapa</i>		Capped with okra
<i>Ajererin muse</i>		Eating and smiling
<i>Ajetakitipon-un</i>		Eat and be healthy
<b>Rhyme 3</b>	<b>Yoruba</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Isapalaisi iyan atiegusi</i>		Okra without pounded yam and melon soup
<i>Koi pe o, koi pe o</i>		Not complete
<i>Iyan at'ebalounjeilewa</i>		Our indigenous foods are pounded yam and steamed cassava flour
<i>Enikojejan</i>		He who does not eat pounded yam
<i>A jeba to tutu</i>		Will eat cold steamed cassava flour.
<b>Rhyme 4</b>	<b>Yoruba</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Oni moin moingbewagbewa</i>		Come steamed beans pudding seller
<i>Moin moinepo</i>		Beans pudding steamed with Palmoil
<i>O m'epo, o m'eposinsin</i>		Palmoil is very adequate
<i>Moin moinepo</i>		Beans pudding steamed with Palmoil
<i>O f'edesipelualubosa</i>		Garnished with crayfish and onions
<i>Moin moinepo</i>		Beans pudding steamed with Palmoil

These efforts are major to educate people especially the youth that indigenous foods are better than any fast food one might think of because they contain all the necessary nutrients the body will need on daily basis.

Although, some individuals or food companies have been able to synthesize some indigenous foods with preservation like dried beans, poudo yam but they cannot be compared to indigenous foods which are natural and which contain active ingredients that are good for human health.

Yoruba in diaspora, realizing the importance of indigenous foods still prefer the exporting the foods abroad unpreserved, indigenous foods is beneficial to all and sundry both at home and abroad. All over the world, they are recommended by medical practioners to the pregnant women, children, convalescents and aged, and the entire populace to go into the use of herbs and natural foods. Indigenous foods are reliable and serve as panacea to healthy living

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