



## Divinities as Reservoirs of Supernatural Resources: African Perspective

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**Abstract.** This paper focuses on divinities as reservoir of Supernatural resources African perspective. In African religious thoughts the divinities are believed to be imbued with inherent supernatural benefits often described as supernatural resources such as rain, bountiful harvest, fertility of soil and reproduction, wealth, etc. This, however, for the Africans described the divinities as reservoirs of supernatural resources. Therefore, for the Africans, these supernatural benefits are often sought for in every aspect of life (before planting, for fruit of womb and success in commercial activities). For the Africans, not everybody is qualified to approach the divinities to tap these benefits rather there are specialists (priests, diviners, medicine men) who are professionally trained or set aside to approach the divinities with rituals, sacrifices, offerings, prayers to access these resources in such places as shrines, grooves, caves often believed to be sacred. The study adopted methodology adopted was phenomenological approach to interpret and describe the roles of divinities as reservoirs of supernatural resources.

**Keywords:** Divinities, Supernatural Resources and Reservoirs.

### 1. Introduction

Generally, the divinities represent an important aspect in the traditional religion across African societies. In the hierarchy of power, the divinities stand next to the Supreme Being. Thus, they are believed to be emanations from the Supreme Being, meaning that they are His offspring. They receive sacrifices on daily basis hence; they have shrines and temples dedicated to them. According to African traditional belief, the Africans approach and worship God through the divinities. That is why Anyacho (1994) describe the divinities as intermediaries (p. 245).

Two factors motivated the researcher's interests in pursuing this research. The first was to examine who the divinities are according to African traditional belief and the second was to examine the role of

divinities as reservoirs of Supernatural resources according to African religious thought.

### 1.1 Methodology

The study relied majorly on secondary sources (published materials) for its data gathering, while phenomenological approach was adopted to interpret and described the role of divinities as reservoirs of supernatural resources.

## 2. Conceptual Definitions

### 2.1 Divinities

Divinities, according to Awolalua and Dopamu (1979) are gods with small letter "g", believed to possess divine attributes since they are emanations from the Supreme Deity. They are said to be brought into being by the Supreme Being, hence they have no separate existence, but their existence is as permitted by the Supreme Deity, who cause them into being. As for their position and duties, the divinities were brought into being for a definite purpose, and the purpose of which is to serve the will of God in the theocratic government of the universe. In other words, the divinities serve as intermediaries between God and man. The divinities, therefore, become channels through which sacrifices, prayers, and offerings are presented to the Supreme Being. They have temples, shrines and devotees with priests and priestesses. So, they are means to an end and not an end in themselves (Awolalua and Dopamu, 1979).

As for their census and names, the divinities are many and their numbers vary from locality to locality. Among the Yoruba, for instance, the number varies between 201, 401, 601 and 1700. With regards to their names, each divinity has a name, sometimes, the names are descriptive in the sense that they describe the true nature, character and functions of the divinities. For instance, in Yoruba, Jakuta, the divinity responsible for wrath, i.e. one who fights with stones

is known in Nape as Sokogba, meaning God's axe (Awolalu and Dopamu, 1979).

As Imasogie (1981), pointed out, The Supreme Being having created the universe, appointed the divinities to the various departments of nature to carry out its purpose; hence there are, for instance, a divinity in charge of human procreation, a divinity responsible for death, another in charge of food production, yet another charged with the responsibility for bodies of waters, etc. According to him, these divinities have full authority over their respective areas of influence, subject only to the power of the Supreme Being (p. 34):

George Tasia and Chisa Ofuru (2013), observe that the divinities are highly personalized. Some as they noted, are conceived in gender terms as male or female. According to Tasia and Ofuru, the Ashanti, for instance, not only consider the earth to be a female divinity and second to God, but also observe Thursday as her day. Also, the Igbo, as they remarked also regard the earth to be God's daughter who protects people and helps with crops. Some of the divinities according to them are further conceived as having spouses as humans do. For Tasia and Ofuru, a telling example among the Yoruba are the goddess Osun and Oya both of whom are believed to be the wives of Sango, the divinity of thunder and lightning. They further noted that there are other divinities that are believed to be androgynous, possessing male and female characteristics. They pointed to the Egba and the Ewe who conceive Buruku in this manner (p. 43).

## 2.2 Some Notable Divinities in West Africa

Among the Yoruba Orisa-nla, also known as Obatala, the creator divinity is the most prominent divinity. This divinity, in the words of Mbiti (1969, p. 76) is the supreme divinity in Yoruba land, and one who acts as God's earthly deputy in creative and executive functions. In much the same vein, Idowu (1973, p. 169) also described him as Deity's son or deputy, vested with the power and authority of royal sonship. According to Booth, (1977) "Orisa-nla is believed among the Yoruba to have been the first creation of Olodumare or even his image or symbol on earth" (p. 63).

In the word of Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) Orisa-nla is the creator divinity in that he was commissioned by the Supreme Deity to create the solid earth, to equip it, and mould the physical form of man. Although his role in the creation of man as they noted, is limited to moulding alone, it is believed among the Yoruba that it is Orisa-nla's prerogative to make the human form

shapely or ugly as he wishes. As they further asserted, despite the fact that he is often described as the vicegerent of Olodumare, his role, position and authority are derived from and delegated by God. In consequence of this, Orisa-nla has no absolute power or authority of his own.

They pointed out that, Orisa-nla has certain attributes which tell of his nature and character. For instance, his name Obatela suggests that he is the "King of whiteness" or the "lord of the white cloth", in fact, everything associated with Orisa-nla is usually white, his temple is whitewashed, his emblems are white chalk and white containers, his priests and priestesses are usually clad in white with white ornaments, his sacrifice consists of bloodless snail, and shea-butter, the water in his shrine must be changed every day to retain a degree of absolute cleanness.

In this sense, Orisa-nla is regarded as the god of purity. He therefore, represents the holiness of God. Orisa-nla, as the god of purity and holiness, demands a high sense of morality. As a result, the lives of all his worshippers should be as pure, clean and clear as water drawn early in the morning from undisturbed, unpolluted spring.

According to Awolalu and Dopamu, another attribute of Orisa-nla is *Alabalase*, meaning "He who proposes and also disposes". This title for them only referred to Orisa-nla's great power as the proposer who wields the scepter. For them, the scepter, according to Yoruba belief was passed on to him by God Himself. Despite this, he could not be regarded as the absolute proposer and disposer of things.

Since he received the scepter from God. The human king then becomes derivatively a divine ruler when Orisa-nla passes the scepter on to him. As they further argued Orisa-nla is worshipped in Yoruba land. In many places, one can see his temple, priests and priestesses are dedicated to him. Barren women usually take their petition to him so that they may be blessed with children. In the same way, water taken from his shrine is given to pregnant women so that their children may be shapely molded. Invalids are also treated with such water from his shrine. The water is usually drawn very early in the morning. Awolalu and Dopamu noted that, the drawer must not talk to anybody from the time she rises from her bed until she fetches the water from the spring. Sunday is set aside as his day (p.78).

According to Ajayi (1981) discussion on Yoruba divinities without a remarkable reference to Orisa-nla remains incomplete. This creator divinity, he noted

possessed in him multi-dimensional attributes that sets him apart from other divinities among the Yoruba. For Ajayi, Orisa-nla is regarded among the Yoruba as the father of all the divinities of Yoruba land and one who named them after himself. He is of the view that Orisa-nla represents to the Yoruba, the idea of ritual and ethical purity. In his words, Orisa-nla enjoys monogamy in the sense that it is absolutely, impossible for peace to reign when there is multiplicity of wives (pp. 68- 69).

Another prominent divinity of the Yoruba is Sango, the god of thunder and lightning. Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) observed that there are various legends about Sango as an historical figure. He is believed to be the fourth King (Alafin) of Oyo. He was deified after death as the Yoruba god of thunder and lightning and replaced by Jakuta, one who hurls or fights with stone, the original thunder divinity of the Yoruba. As they noted, Sango represents the divine wrath of the Supreme Being upon which recalcitrants in the society are punished. He is more dreaded than any other divinity. Its presence is manifested in thunder booms and lightning. For them, Sango forbids and punishes lying, stealing and poisoning. Thus, for them, it is believed among the Yoruba that in the flashing of the lightning and in the roaring of the thunder, the Yoruba are constantly reminded of the presence of the God of Judgment. They further remarked that, those who have committed any crime or are not sure of their character usually tremble with emotion of dread or terror when there is lightning or thunder. The victims of Sango, according to them, do not receive normal burial. They can only be buried by priests of Sango. Rituals are also performed on the fateful spot.

Furthermore, they noted that punishments by Sango are regarded as royal punishment, and the victim must not be mourned. It is believed that the victim has been rewarded for his evil deeds since the descent of Sango never occurs except to show his displeasure against those guilty of perjury and misconduct. Also, they noted that when a house is struck by lightning important ceremonies are performed by the priests of Sango. Until the thunder bolt, called *EdunAra*, is dug up and removed from the spot, the inmates of the struck house must not sleep in the affected house but must find temporary accommodation in a smithy or under booths.

Sango as Awolalu and Dopamu further observed is a tutelary divinity having his priests and priestesses. His worshippers wear necklaces of red and white beads. The priest of Sango (Magba) does not usually cut his hair but plaits it in the fashion of women. It is believed

that he can carry fire on his head without suffering harm when he is possessed. There are shrines dedicated to Sango throughout Yoruba land. Each shrine, according to them, consists of a three-pronged stick, in the fork of which is a bowl containing axes and stone celts or the so-called thunder bolts are regarded as Sango's instruments of punishment. The worshippers of Sango offer him sacrifices of cowries, goats, sheep, oxen and fowl. People pray for Sango for peace, long life, prosperity, material well-being and protection against dangers and unseen evils (p.83). According to George Tasie (2013), Sango as the god of thunder and lightning, is by association, the symbol of light (p.63). In description of the structure of the temple of this great god of thunder and lightning, George (1980) noted that:

“The modern temple is crushed in between shops and a shoemaker's room. When dances are held, the dancers jostle around in the cramped space between the vendor stalls. The altar is beyond the screen. It is low and black; made of a carved base bearing a large bowl wherein are celts or so-called ‘thunder-stones’, which are popularly thought to be meteorites, but mostly are ancient implements. Other small figurines stand by the altar, brightly painted or spotted. Above hang leather wallets and calabashes of charms, very dusty. In front may be the offerings of kolos, meal, and oil, according to the day and wealth of offerings. Far from being ‘gorgeous’ the sanctuary is squalid” (p.65).

Also prominent among the Yoruba divinities is Ogun. Ogun according to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) is the god of iron and of war. He is pre-eminently the patron god of blacksmiths, hunters, warriors and all who deal in iron and steel. They noted that the Yoruba believed that in as much as iron and steel belong to him all surgical operations and all forms of bodily makings like circumcision and tattooing belong to him. According to them, tradition has it that Ogun himself was a hunter who used to come from heaven on a spider's web for hunting activities. And when all the divinities were coming into the world and they could not find the way, it was Ogun who cleared a way in the bush with his magical machetes. In consequences of this, he was hailed by all. This is why he is aptly described today as *Osinmale* meaning chief among the divinities.

Ogun as they further noted, is believed to be very ferocious and bellicose. In this regard, he is an instrument of God's wrath and judgment. Any covenant or oath sealed before him as the presiding judge must be fulfilled. In the court of law, adherents of traditional religion, they noted, take their oaths by kissing a piece of iron. This signifies that they have spoken the truth. For them, people suspected of evil

intentions are made to swear before Ogun, and false swearing is believed to have calamitous consequences because Ogun demands justice, fair play and rectitude.

In addition to this, Ogun they further reported is also worshipped for his benevolence. For them hunters believe that he protects them in their dangerous hunting expeditions. In modern times, drivers and cyclists Awolalu and Dopamu remarked look forward towards him for protection against accidents. His shrine is found in front of houses and at the smithy. The most important symbol of Ogun is iron. Other emblems of his include a rock, the tusk or tail of an elephant, porogun plant, dracaena fragrans and metal-scrap. Dogs are the special food of Ogun while palm wine is his favorite drink. But a fowl, tortoise, ram, kola-nut, bitter kola, yam and palm-oil can also be offered to him (p.81). Explaining further, Idowu, (1962), adds that the shrines of Ogun are also at the approaches to the shrines of other divinities in some parts of the Yoruba land. For Idowu, this is because Ogun is described as the “way”, to and from all the divinities (p. 127).

Mbiti (1969) described Ogun as “chief among the divinities”. According to him, this is as a result of multiplicity of activities associated with him (p.76). According to Booth (1977, p. 170), Ogun is also known as possessor of two machetes. With one he prepares the farm, with the other he clears the road. This for him, explains why offerings are made to him in connection with any sacrifice in that he is responsible for the knife that is used. As he further reports, Ogun is also associated with justice in the sense that oaths are taken in his name over piece of iron.

Ogun, Booth also observed is a rather fierce and unbending deity. He maintains that as a god of iron one is expected to meet him:

In the place of battle, in the place of wrangling, in the place where torrents of blood fills with longing as a cup of water does the thirsty.

He further pointed out that Ogun among the Fon, Gwa, is believed to be not only the child of Mawu and Lisa, but also closely associated with them in the “sky pantheon”.

As regards his festival, Benjamin (1976, pp. 79-80) reports that among the Yoruba, the annual Ogun festival usually takes place in the dry season when there is good hunting. For him, since Ogun is the patron deity of hunters, fresh bush meat is required for his festival.

Although the festival as he further observed is sometimes the affairs of the whole town; it is more often celebrated by individual family compounds whose members are devotees of Ogun. According to him, the festival date is determined through divination in accordance with Ogun’s wishes. Prior to the event the Ogun priest known as *Olade* in conjunction with the officiating family head prepares themselves morally and physically, so that they may be acceptable servants of Ogun.

Benjamin is of the view that in, order to achieve this, they must abstain from cursing, fighting, sexual intercourse and eating certain foods. The day before the festival, Ray noted that men undertake a hunting expedition in the surrounding bush to gather fresh game. In the evening of the next day, an all-night vigil is observed in the shrine of Ogun with some items such as palm-wine and beer to be presented and consumed by the people. Also, Ogun’s special praise chants are sung in the honour of the iron divinity. Significantly, the songs as Ray rightly pointed out not only entertain the people, but also attract Ogun’s attention and induce him to shower his blessings upon the assembled congregation.

This is closely followed by offering of kola nuts to Ogun by each family head on behalf of his households. The kola as he remarked also signify friendship and reconciliation among the people; with this, the devotees of Ogun through the instrumentality of *Olade* (Ogun’s priest) asks for Ogun’s blessings and protection during the year. Since Ogun is the god of iron and steel, he also asks for Ogun’s protection from things made of metal, for instance, from automobiles, bicycles, axes, knives, guns, etc.

The high point of the festival, he noted is marked by formal presentation of sacrificial items before the Ogun shrine by the priest which usually consists of snails, palm wine, pigeons, and dogs. Symbolically, these items, he maintains, not only mediate and control Ogun’s relations with mankind, but also help to establish a bond between the worshippers and the divinity.

Ogun by his nature is fierce, violent and aggressive. In consequence of this, he is considered by the Yoruba as agent of God in the execution of His wrath and judgment. Despite this, people also approach him for his kindness especially, drivers, hunters and all whose profession is associated with iron for protection. Ogun is symbolized by iron. Among his numerous taboos include, palm kernel oil and snake Thursday is observed as his day.

Orunmila is also another remarkable divinity of Yoruba. This divinity, in the words of Mbiti (1969) is reputed to be an Omni linguist divinity who understands every language spoken on earth; and one who represents God's Omniscience and Knowledge. For him, this divinity manifests itself among men through the oracle of divination. He also describes him as the "Word", or "Writing" of God. An essential attribute associated with Orunmila is that he represents the element of order and predictability (p. 76).

For Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) Orunmila or Ifa is the Oracle divinity of Yoruba land. They noted that while Orisa-nia is the deputy of Olodumare with reference to the creation and ordering of the universe, Orunmila is His deputy in matters of wisdom and knowledge. For them, it is believed among the Yomba that Orunmila was present when human destiny was sealed. In consequence of this, he is called *Eleriyipin* that is "the witness or advocate of human destiny". According to them, people say that he was sent into the world together with Orisa-nla in order to protect man. It is also believed that he knows everything about man and can give advice as to any event, be it past, present or future.

Another essential attribute of this divinity they observed, is that people consult him on all occasions, and before any action is taken. Man therefore, seeks his guidance when there is problem, when he is embarking on any project, when choosing the time of marriage, when performing marriage ceremony, when a new baby is born, when laying the foundation of villages, markets or houses, when entering into a covenant, when going to war or making peace, and throughout the passage of life. For them, it is believed among the Yoruba that it is Orunmila who can probe into the dark bosom of the future, and give advice on how to change an unhappy destiny into a happy one.

The priest of Orunmila, as they further noted, is called *Babalawo* "the diviner". Literally, *Babalawo* means "the father who has the secret." *Babalawo* as they inform us is believed to be endowed with the power of esoteric knowledge, with this he can pry into the future and learn the wish of Orunmila. More often than not, he wears white clothes and shaves his head. In consulting Orunmila, the diviner makes use of the geomantic form of divination known as Ifa. The word Ifa according to them is at times referred to as Orunmila.

Orunmila, they further pointed out, is worshipped everywhere in Yoruba land. His shrine is usually situated in the house of the worshippers or priests. His emblems include, palm kernels, cowries, and some graven pieces of elephant tusk. These are held in a

bowl or white plate with a lid. The priest of Orunmila offers sacrifice to him from time to time. Any person can be asked to offer a sacrifice. A simple sacrifice, according to them, may involve pouring of palm-oil and breaking of kola nut and bitter-kola, while an elaborate one may involve killing of a fowl or a pig or he goat depending on the prescription of Orunmila.

In the same order of prominence among the Yoruba divinities is Esu also known as Elegba. As Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) opined, this divinity has been misconceived by Christian missionaries as the same with the Judeo-Christian devil. They noted that Esu, for the Yoruba is regarded as a divinity of mischief and one who makes things difficult for people. But at the same time, he is also regarded as a benevolent divinity who is prepared to answer the call of his devotees who give him his due. According to them, Esu among the Yoruba is believed to be one of the divinities who were closest to Olodumare, the Supreme Deity. For them, just as Orisa-nla was made the deputy of god in matters of creation and government, wisdom and fore knowledge, so also Esu is made God's deputy in matters of ritual and human conduct.

In consequence of this, he is described as the "inspector general" of rituals. Apart from this, it is also his duty to look into the behaviors and conducts of both divinities and men and make a report to Olodumare. Thus, it is believed that Esu can approve or disapprove of any ritual he inspected and it is the recommendation that he makes to Olodumare that will be accepted. As a result, people attribute all their difficulties to the failure of Esu to perform his work. As they further observed, people can invoke him to harm their enemies; they can also invoke him to offer them protection against mischief and mishap. They see him as the go between heaven and earth, and accusing or defending divinities or people before Olodumare. But if he is well fed and respected as they remarked, he becomes protective and benevolent.

An interesting aspect of Esu, which they pointed out is the belief that Esu is both difficult to predict and to placate. According to them, when you think you have given him his due, he might have felt grudgingly unsatisfied and might descend on you maliciously that is why he is held in constant dread, and people at all times seek to be friendly with him. Other divinities, they report, also fear him. As they further explain, it was said that once Sango, the thunder divinity, boasted that there was no divinity he could not subdue. But when Esu confronted him to know whether he included him, Sango in response immediately replied apologetically that he could not have been included. This for them, shows unmistakably that there is an

indisputable element of evil in Esu. In this sense, he is capable of mischief, making havoc of personal relationship, and causing confusion.

Rightly, they further maintain that Esu is not worshipped only out of fear or in order to avoid his malevolence, but he is also approached as a tutelary divinity in many places, just as people approach other divinities. People have believed in his protective and benevolent capabilities, while prayers and gifts are offered to him to secure his favour. His name appears in the names given to children in consequence of the faith reposed on him as a benevolent divinity. Such names as they observed are *Esubiyii* (Esu gives birth to this) and *Esubayii* (Esu accepts or saves life).

The shrine of Esu, according to them, is usually made outside the town or village. It can also be found in the compound or at cross roads. He is symbolized by a stone slab or a piece of rough laterite stuck into the ground slantingly. Sometimes, they are of the view that Esu is represented by an image made of mud or wood. He is worshipped and propitiated throughout Yoruba land as people offer him cowries, cocks, he goat and dogs. Thus, the blood of the animal victim is usually sprinkled on the image or emblem of Esu.

Finally, they pointed out that Esu, not only frequently receives a portion of the sacrifices offered to other divinities; but also in some areas, annual festivals are held in his honor, and people on such occasions ask for his blessing on farming and protection against evil. Esu's sacrifices consist of red palm-oil, red roosters, and he-goats. And Saturday is observed as his day. In spite of his tricky, unpredictability, and sometimes negative character, it is believed that in Yoruba the dominant attitude towards Esu is one of affection rather than of fear.

Sopono is another influential and dreaded divinity of Yoruba in the sense that it is the manifestation of the wrath of God on erring members of the society. Among the Yoruba, it is believed that Sopono is endowed with the powers to inspire terror in all people. He is a divinity responsible for chicken pox. As a god of chicken pox, he punishes offenders with the disease. Because the divinity is terror to people, he is not usually called Sopono but they call him by any of his appellations. For instance, *Olode*, "the lord of open space" or "the owner of the open space". *Obaluwaye*, "the king who is the lord of the earth". *Ile-gbona* the hot earth and *Baba* "The father". Like Sango, Sopono forbids lying, poisoning and bad magic. His punishment is royal punishment which must be accepted with cheerfulness, joy, gratitude without complaint. Thus, when anybody is killed by chicken

pox, people must not mourn the victim, his property is confiscated by the priests, and his body is buried in the bad bush (Awolalu and Dopamu, 1979, p. 85).

Awolalu and Dopamu further observed that, that is why Sopono is called *Alapadupe*, "one who kills and is thanked for the killing". According to them, People believe that he wears red apparel and wanders about when the sun is very hot. This is why people are warned to desist from wearing red apparel and wandering about in the sun lest they incur his displeasure. Finally, they noted that the shrine of Sopono is usually found outside the village. At the shrine can be found mound of earth over which is placed a wide-mouthed clay pot called *agbada*. By the side of the *agbada* can also be found a special broom made from *Ose potu (sida Carpinifolia)* which is smeared with Osun (cam wood).

Also remarkable among the Yoruba divinities is Oya, the goddess of the River Niger believed to be the wife of Sango. According to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979, p. 87) Oya wept bitterly when her husband committed suicide that the tears from her eyes formed certain rivers of which River Niger is one. Oya as they further report is worshipped mostly by women who usually carry fire in bowl and parade the street during the festival. For them, wherever Oya is worshipped, a river or lake is dedicated to her.

Moreover, the river goddess is also associated with the winds and tempests. Among the Yoruba, it is believed that Oya in most cases accompany her husband during his thunder storms; ripping up trees, and destroying the erring members of the society. Apart from this, she is also known as a fierce warrior and protectress of women especially those who throng her shrine for help. Also, at her disposal are lightning, tornadoes, and winds. Finally, other names associated with her include, *Oya-ajere* "carrier of the container of fire", *Ayaba mikua* "Queen of death". Among her numerous emblems are sword or matchet, and flywhisk. Her sacrifices consist of egg-plant, red wine, tobacco, purple grape, etc. Her taboos include, palm kernel oil, ram, and pork.

Among the Edo speaking peoples, the most prominent divinity and second only to Osanobwa, the Supreme Being, is Olokun. According to Awolalu and Dopamu, the name literally means "the owner of the sea". Olokun, the divinity of the ocean and the waters, is also believed to be the son of Osanobwa. They further report that like the Yoruba Orisa-nla, Olokun is the arch-divinity of Edo land, and he is vested with His father's royal power and authority. Some people, as they noted, consider Olokun to be feminine, whereas

in some of his temples, he is represented as a woman, usually with a clay image of a woman. But many people also believed that he is male, although he may be symbolized in feminine terms. His worshippers, according to them are mainly women especially among the Urhobo. This is a truism because even when a man is instructed to offer sacrifice to Olokun, his daughters usually perform the sacrifice on his behalf Olokun is regarded as a benevolent divinity. For them he has the entire material well-being at his disposal and can distribute this to men according to his will. He sends the rain, and the fertility of the soil is attributed to him. As a result, people pray to him for riches, success in trade and total well-being. According to him, his emblems include, pots containing water, pieces of white chalk, and white cloth.

Also, his special offerings are white fowl, white pigeon, and white cloth. Like Yoruba Orisa-nla, he represents God's holiness. They also described him as a divinity of inspiration and idealism hence those who come under his tutelage are believed to have powerful, magnetizing mind, over whelming charm, and magnificent accuracy in all things. The priest of Olokun as they finally report is called ohen Olokun, and he serves as a link between the people and the divinity. There are other Edo priests of Olokun, but Ohen Olokun is the head of them all.

Among prominent divinities of Edo is Ogiuwu, the thunder divinity. This divinity, in the words of Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) through thunder and lightning brings punishment on the erring members of the society. He, in this regard, is an expression of divine judgment. As they further observed, like Olokun, Ogiuwu among the Edo people are believed not only to be son of Osanobwa, but also conceived to be very wise and powerful such that he is free to violate the orders of Osanobwa, especially in matters concerning human beings, since he owns the blood with which Osanobwa makes man, and without which it is impossible for man to be made. Also, people according to Awolalu and Dopamu, therefore believe that it was Ogiuwu who brought them into the world. Finally, they pointed out that those who fear his anger and do not want to be summoned prematurely from the world usually pray to Olokun and Ogiuwu. In the past, sacrifice to him included one man, one woman, one cow and one goat. But the items increased when there was pestilence. Today, animal sacrifices are made.

Notable divinity among the Igbo is Agwu. According to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979, p. 94) Agwu is a patron divinity of diviners among the Igbo who seek to discover secrets and give advice on spiritual matters. Remarkable attributes associated with Agwu

as they noted is that people are usually possessed by Agwu. When this occurs, the person so possessed is called to be a devotee or a diviner hence refusal might be greeted with calamitous consequences.

Explaining further Ejizu, (1986, p. 122) described Agwu as "a highly ambivalent and dynamic deity; a spirit force. For Ejizu, it is the patron spirit of diviners and medicine men. As he further noted, specialists excel in harnessing the positive features of Agwu to enhance their practice.

### 3. Divinities as Reservoirs of Supernatural Resources

In African religious thought, the divinities are believed to be imbued with inherent benefits such as rain, wealth, health, bountiful harvest, fertility of soil and reproduction and even protection for the crops. This, however, explains why the divinities are described as reservoirs of Supernatural resources. Since these resources or benefits are neither artificial nor emanations from man, but emanations from the supersensible world; for the Africans apparently portend the far-reaching differences or gap (powers) in the ontological relationship that exist between this world and the other world. The obvious fact that the Africans strongly believe in the existential reality of two worlds. The physical tangible world and the spiritual invisible world affirm the above assertion.

According to African traditional belief, not everybody is qualified or due to approach these spiritual entities to harness or tap these resources, rather, there are those who are set aside with the responsibility to do so. They are the priest, divines and medicine-men; often regarded as religious specialists, believed to have sound religious, and by extension understand the language and nature of these beings.

Although, there are several ways of approaching these spiritual entities. Some of which are in libation form, rituals, sacrifices, prayers while places such as road junctions, streams, sea shores, groves, shrines, caves, rivers bank are sacred places where the religious specialists are delivered to interface with these spirit beings to harness these resources for daily living Egbucha and Onu, 2010, p. 57.

For instance, among the Yoruba, Osun, the goddess of River Osun is known for her benevolence. She is believed to be goddess of fertility. This means that she is believed to give children to the barren; both men and women. That is why she is called the mother of children. Similarly, among the Akan and Ga of Ghana, Asase yaa, the earth deity is believed to be the guarantor

of good harvest. It is believed that before planting, sacrifices of fowl mixed with cooked plantain or yam are made to the earth deity for abundant harvest. In much the same vein, in Kono, the divinity, Kwigbe is also regarded as the god of fertility especially for barren women. That is why sterile women approach him for the gift of children. In the shrine the sacred stone of Kwigbe is been tied on a woman's back as if she is carrying a baby and this symbolizes his benevolence among the Kono. Among the Igbo, Ala or Ani (the Earth-goddess) is believed to be the spirit of fecundity. This means that she is believed to give children to the barren. In her statue, the Earth-goddess is been carrying a child on her arms or knees and this symbolizes her generosity and benevolence in Igbo traditional religion (Agbo, 1993, p. 8).

Further, among the Igbo, Amadioha, variously called *Kamalu*, *Igwe*, and *Ofufe*, in different parts of the Igbo Land is regarded not only as the god of thunder and lightning but also be lived to be the sender of rain (Awolalu and Dopamu, 1979, p. 93). Another remarkable divinity in this regard among the Igbo is Ahanjioku (the yam divinity). Among the people, it is variously referred to as Ahajioku, Ifejioku, Ahanjoku. Among the people, the yam deity is regarded as the guarantor and custodian of fertility land good harvest. It is believed that at the beginning of every agricultural beason, prayers and sacrifices are offered to him to enhance rich harvest (Ugwu and Ugwueye, 2004, p. 45)

#### 4. Conclusion

This essay examined the place of divinities as the reservoirs of supernatural resources according to African traditional belief. For the Africans, the divinities, as earlier noted, are believed to be imbued with inherent resources or benefits often described as supernatural resources such as rain, good harvest, fertility of soil and reproduction, etc. For the Africans, these resources are so significant and that is why the African peoples sought for these resources on daily basis even annually through rituals via the religious specialists (priests, diviners, medicine men) for daily sustenance.

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