

# The Relevance of Akan Traditional Folk-Games in the Primary Schools' Curriculum: A Case Study of Asotwe Community

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**Abstract:** This research looked at the relevance of Akan traditional games in the primary school curriculum at Asotwe community. The study was undertaken to identify, and describe the traditional games of Asotwe community on the basis of rules that governed them, facilities used, their significance to the individuals and the community as well as the socio-cultural settings within which they are performed. The researcher selected two primary schools at Asotwe community in the Ejisu Municipality for the study. The researchers used qualitative method approach and implemented the case study. Data were collected and analysed with the help of interviews and observation as research instruments. Seventeen (17) Akan traditional folk-games were collected through qualitative method approach and applied the case study strategy. Participants of ten (10) pupils, six teachers, and four (4) PTA/SMC were identified and interviewed. The games were sampled through purposive sampling techniques. The study revealed that traditional games were vital in encouraging desired skills, attitudes and values, improving physical fitness and health, as sources of fun, recreation and relaxation, traditions and cultures were reinforced and preserved. It was also concluded that children in the selected schools perform most traditional games and they learn them from their peers and from the environment in which they grow up. Arising from these findings, it is recommended that possible efforts need to be made to by the teachers and other agencies in charge of education to document, revive and popularise these traditional to be used in the basic school classroom. The researchers also recommended that some traditional games could be integrated into the formal programs of teaching and learning.

**Key words:** Curriculum, assumptions, transmission, folktales, pedagogy

**Category:** Music Business

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is widely believed and acknowledged that culture defines and lays foundation for any given society. Man is a product of culture as societies have used different cultural elements to address different problems for their survival. Schein (1985) shares ...that; culture is the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation. These assumptions and beliefs are learned responses to a group's problems of survival on its external environment and problems of internal integration. Schein further points out that, these basic assumptions and beliefs are not to be taken for granted because they solve those problems repeatedly and reliably, hence considered valid and, therefore, have to be taught to new

members as the proper way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1985). These learned products of group experience are therefore to be found only where there is a definable group with significant history.

Nketia (1999) opines that the importance of providing learning experience that enables African children to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of traditional music and dance of their own environment and those of their neighbours is now recognised, for without the preparation, they may not be able to participate fully in the life of their communities to which they belong. One of the means of understanding the human social world is through traditional folk-games. Traditional folk-games are important channel of communication that give opportunities to entertain, share emotions, reduce stress, improve self-expression, and strengthen physical development and many more, of the children. Music and dance determine the totality of human beings. Music is a powerful tool to determine conservation, growth and transmission of cultures of various societies and form part in all activities. Music is used for religious rites, recreational activities, political, social and all forms of economic activities. It is not practicable to separate music from the life of the African child and it cannot be separated from human life. Denying children our rich musical cultural values means denying part of the child's total and holistic development, hence this research work is based on the relevance of the Akan traditional folk-games in Ghanaian primary schools.

Traditional folk-games are mainly social activities and therefore one of the primary functions is to entertain both children and adults. Traditional folk-games normally present issues on different levels that include the artistic integration of the components (singing, clapping and dancing), the cultural values, emotions and challenges dealt within the performance of Akan traditional folk-games among the people of Ghana.

Key scholars in the area of traditional games have alluded that research on other elements of culture such as arts and crafts, folktales, language, customs and social etiquette have been done and put on records for reference while very little is known about traditional games in many regions (Wanderi, 2001; Pratibha, 2008). For instance, at the Asotwe community, there are no written records on Traditional games.

This fact might have been necessitated by the presence of alternative mainstream modern games which have taken dominance. Research and records related to traditional games of Asotwe have tended to merge the traditional games with other elements of culture such as rites of passage but have not presented them as an entity on their own. There is therefore an urgent need to draw a line between these different cultural elements and give prominence to traditional folk-games as an important aspect of humanity that has guaranteed survival to the community over the years. It is believed that children's participation in traditional games is essential for their social and intellectual development but one of the confusing issues of our time is the drastic decrease in children's indoor and outdoor play games.

The study focuses on the relevance of Akan traditional folk-games in the primary school curriculum. The study encourages pupils of Asotwe community cluster of schools in the Ejisu Municipal Assembly, to perform Akan traditional folk games to their benefit, thereby allowing them to use their social environment profitably. Every culture has a form of education for its people. It is necessary to make children the importance of these traditional folk-games. The Akan traditional folk-games serve an important role in the educational process of the children in most of the Akan communities. Children are to be prepared by teachers, parents and guardians in their own culture in order not to look strange in their own communities. This helps them (children) to participate traditional folk-games fully when the need arises. There is the need for stakeholders, curriculum developers, educationists, teachers, parents and guardians to recollect the traditional folk-games. This suggests that much attention should be given to our traditional folk-games in Ghana.

Children's participation in traditional games is essential for their social and intellectual development. In this light, one of the challenging issues of our time is the drastic decrease in children's indoor and outdoor play games. Traditional folk-games, which are often integrated with music and dance for the most parts used as a vehicle for bringing solidarity and have some underlying educational aspect. A lot of traditional folk-games are not made easily to the children of today as compared to the western games on computers and phones. Primary school teachers, because of their own poor music experience at school, and because of inadequate teacher training in the performing arts education, lack confidence, skill and competence to teach the art including music. The relegation of traditional folk-games in Ghanaian primary schools' curriculum has been on the ascendancy. Meanwhile, these traditional games serve an important role in the educational process of the children in Ghana.

#### *Research Questions*

1. What is the relevance of Akan traditional folk-games to primary school pupils?
2. What are some of the challenges teachers face in incorporating traditional folk-games in their lessons?

#### *Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical frame work for this study was functional approach. This approach according to Mooney et al (2007) cited in Malobola (2018) is a method of studying the life and culture of a society by examining the functions or roles performed by anything practiced in the society as well as the ways in which these functions help to ensure the survival of the society. Malobola (2018) supports the above scholars when saying the functionalist perspective emphasises the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by the other parts, e.g. if a child is emotionally disturbed, he/she cannot perform well academically and his/her relations with other children will be affected. The mentally challenged child will continuously show signs of aggression, self-pity, or loneliness even if he/she is in the company of other children. Mooney et al, (2007) cited by Malobola (2018) reveals that as children are playing, there are consequences that are intended and commonly recognised, meaning that children benefit from traditional games. Some of the hidden benefits of traditional games are physical, social, and mental development, but children are often not even aware that traditional games are valuable to them.

The functional approach is relevant to this study because it is a way of understanding how children use traditional games for different purposes. Children learn their culture through playing and they learn how to use and appreciate their languages. According to Rundell and Fox (2002), 'functional' means relating to the purpose or way in which something works or to how useful it is. Therefore, traditional games are going to be analysed using the above approach. Play is valuable in the development of children because it encourages exploration, stimulation, imagination, creativity, and work through emotional experience. This theory discourages spoon-feeding learners and encourages teachers to lead and guide learners to construct their own meanings through interaction of what they are taught (Obeng, 2020). The different functions of traditional games such as emotional development, physical development, cognitive development and social development will be released. This theory is used because the traditional games have certain functions in the development of children, and it will be addressed in this study. Hence, the research seeks to promote the use of Akan traditional games to tune the whole body of the children in a given society.

#### *Relevance of Akan traditional folk-games*

Traditional folk-games are in the form of play that provides an environment in which game players can learn a lot about themselves. Traditional folk-games provide an environment in which one can interact with other people and develop certain types of social skills. According to Deh (2018), games have been accepted universally as a form of entertainment; however traditional games offer users learning, reformation, motivation, inspiration and healing. As a source of teaching intervention, games explored for educational purposes are aimed at developing both regular and children with special needs socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically. Deh (2018)

justified that studying and using games help pupils' imagination, relaxation, concentration, observation and alertness. Each game employed in this study with the pupils of Asotwe M/A primary and Asotwe R/C primary is aimed at achieving a unique purpose depending on the interest, strengths and weaknesses of the pupils. Deh further points out those traditional games provide an environment in which one can develop a variety of thinking and problem-solving skills, and are useful in non-game and game environments (Deh, 2018). Traditional folk-games have very long histories, and others that have survived over the years tend to have characteristics that fit well with the needs and interests of children and adults. Deh (2018) opines that traditional folk-games have provided an opportunity for some changes that have the chance to improve children educational systems, and have grown and developed based on the need of the local community. Most traditional games are influenced by the world because these games are always been exciting, entertaining the public in accordance with the conditions of that time. Traditional folk-games increase social ability because they are always played together, soft motor ability and also patience and carefulness. Traditional games can also improve children concentration levels and reaction speed and increase quickness speed and negotiate with one's peers, and help in the development of children's brains to become more adaptive to their surroundings.

Amlor (2016) is of the view that experiences come in abundance but those experiences need to be in the real world for children to learn new concept. Amlor stresses that traditional games teaches children to think quickly, to acquire virtues of alertness, vigilance, self-consciousness, discipline and tolerance in their participations. As children become matured, they internalized societal values and these serves as a foundation for managing and controlling their adult life styles with the sense of purpose and dignity.

One can, therefore, dispute the fact that the traditional folk-games help to strengthen the quickness and smartness of the children, and shape them to be fast and critical thinkers. Amlor and Alidza (2009) sum up the relevance of traditional folk-games by stating that engagement in the activities of folk-games enables children to acquire norms, values and societal skills that offer self-usefulness and help them to be able to perform expected future roles as adults. Amlor (2016) highlighted games as forms of entertainment which constitute part of indigenous knowledge that are directed at satisfying specific needs of traditional societies through agents of socialisation such as learning from the elders, and peers, especially when they take part in communal activities such as listening to folktales and participating in music and dance activities on moonlight nights. All these activities are ways of imparting native education to children in order to shape and mould their formative stages of life.

Zulkardi (2011) also observes the importance of traditional games in children's academic lives in Southeast Asia. Children between three (3) and five (5) years were observed in Indonesia. The findings indicate that playing traditional games can improve a child's arithmetic skills. Traditional games impel

children to develop counting skills in exciting ways that are observably different from well-ordered methods of learning. Mutema (2013) also investigates the role of traditional games among the Shona in Zimbabwe. Through observation, he alleges that different kinds of games provide ways to hand down customs, traditions and cultural norms from one generation to the next. Among other traditional games, he perceives role playing, in which children are encouraged to imitate adults, thus providing an introduction to learning a wide range of skills, e.g. "Robert".

Learning to settle disputes is an additional value that children acquire through traditional games that imitates adult roles. Lyoka (2007) observes that sample of children and traditional games in many countries of Africa, including Tanzania. He continues to say that playing traditional games help children to develop their decision making abilities, since the games require the players to make quick decisions of where to go, when and how, under competitive pressure and in a very short amount of time. For instance, a game like "stay" contains quick decision-making skills. Mutema (2013) asserts that children's traditional games ensure the continued existence of its customs, traditions and culture as a whole. This statement gives credit to what Nketia puts forward that the importance of providing learning experiences that enable African children to acquire knowledge and understanding of their own environment and those of their neighbours must generally be recognized (Nketia, 1999,p.1). Though the western games are on the ascendancy, the traditional folk games still need to be preserved carefully. Deh, (2018, p.6) opines that "games children play which were most often seen as entertainment have been identified in recent times as unique educational strategies to help children in and out of their classroom attain progress." These outstanding approaches to education help to achieve the ultimate purpose and to open pupils' minds, arouse their imagination and language abilities and to shine their interest for continued personal development and discovery. Children, who get involved in these activities, whether regular or in the category of the special needs, are able to overcome challenging experiences they perhaps encounter in and outside the classroom in order to develop holistically (Obeng, 2020).

#### *Contribution of Traditional folk-games to children development*

Traditional folk-games contribute enormously to children both in school and at home. According to Gyadu (2014), traditional folk-games reduce stress, improve self-expression, support emotional development, and strengthen physical development and many more, of the children in Ghana. On the same vein with Lindon (2001), children learn a lot about adult roles both socially and economically. Lindon points out those children can learn social skills like sharing, solving problems, entertainment, preparing and preserving of food, and can improve children's concentration levels and reaction's speed. Experiences come in abundance but those experiences need to be real world for children to really learn something.

Blatchford (2013) is in support of Lindon that traditional games have important implications for children's social and cognitive



development. The games activities are vital to cognitive development because the process of creating imagery situations leads to the development of theoretical thinking. The researcher looks for clear and detailed documents on children traditional folk-games. Traditional games can help increase speed and the ability to negotiate with one's peer, and the development of the child's brain to become more adaptive to one's environment (Kecskes, 2013) classifies the functions of children singing games as getting familiar with their body, getting familiar with the outer world and getting familiar with the community and the society.

#### *Getting familiar with the community and the society*

Although a great deal of children's learning is self-motivated and self-directed, other people play major roles as guides in fostering the development of learning in children. Such guides include other children as well as adults (caretakers, parents, and teachers). But not only people can serve as guides; so, too, can powerful tools and cultural artifacts, notably television, books, videos, and technological devices of many kinds (Wright and Huston, 1995). A great deal of research on such assisted learning has been influenced by Vygotsky's notion of zones of proximal development and the increasing popularity of the concept of communities of learners.

To this process, play serves as an important vehicle to teach children's social skills. Through simple games children learn to entertain themselves and their individual wishes to the goals of the group. Playing activity is important not only from the point of view of preparing for adulthood and secure cultural values but also from the point of view of satisfying childhood needs (Burdett & Whitaker, 2005). Traditional folk-games provide socialisation and make it possible for children to adapt to their normal and communal events.

Nyota & Mapara (2008) cited in Mutema (2013) indicate that children traditional games and play songs provide a chance where children learn by guided participation in social experiences and exploration of their world. The games and songs help children learn a lot about adult roles, socially and economically, social skills like sharing, solving conflicts, practical skills like constructing, preparing and preserving food among others. Traditional folk-games are meant to polish children's intelligence as well as solving real life problems (Mawere, 2000). In games like *ɔware*, "dame" and *koyon*, one needs to be really a fast thinker to be able to exceed others. Masuku & Ndawi (2001) posit that children's traditional games are a way of ensuring the continued existence of its customs, traditions and culture as a whole.

#### *The relevance of song texts in Akan traditional folk-games*

Researching into the relevance of Akan traditional folk-games in the primary schools' curriculum, there is the need to work on the lyrics of the game songs because the lyrics have very important roles to play.

Nketia (1974) cited in Obeng (2020) opines that the treatment of the song as a form of speech utterances arises not only from consciousness of the analogue features of speech and music but

it is also inspired by the significance of the song of verbal communication, a medium for creative verbal expression which can reflect both personal and social experiences.

Nketia discloses how the words use in the various musical games can reflect the children and their social experiences. This means that the themes for songs tend to centre on events and matters of common interest and concern to the members of a community or the social groups within it. They may deal with everyday life or with the traditions, beliefs and customs of the society. This is true not only of serious songs associated with ceremonies and rites, but even on simple tunes like cradle songs sung to children who may not have mastered their mother tongue enough to appreciate the meaning of the texts.

In supporting what Nketia has said, Stenberg & Smith (1988) cited in Brewu (2009) declared that one of the most obvious sources for the understanding of human behaviour in connection with music is song text. Texts as language behaviour, rather than music sounds, are the integral part of music and it is obvious that the language used in connection of music differs from that of normal dialogue. A prominent feature of song texts among the Akan is that, in songs, the individual or the group could express inborn feelings not liberal verbalised in other contexts. Music and language are connected and music is affected by language. If the music text is to be understood by the listener, some patterns of sound must be followed to some extent in music. The texts of the song can easily be pronounced publicly than saying to a man face-to-face, and this is one of the ways African societies take to maintain a spiritually, healthy community" (Tracey, 1954, P.237).

Agordoh (1994) also supported what Nketia (1974) have said that the relevance of songs and texts in African traditional games are sometimes a reflection of the concerns of the culture in which they are part. These songs and texts contribute to the correction of those aspects of behaviorur to which they call for attention. They serve as a direct social control, that is, they are sometimes used through caution, laughter and in some cases even more direct action, to effect actual changes of making a mistake on members of the society. Adams (1974) states that "systematically, games are expressions of personal and collective practical understandings". The close relation between concept, process and product is illustrated by the apparently circular definition of songs as things which are sung or things which are composed by people in most of the societies. Because of the division of labour, there are separate games for girls, boys and those for special occasions or activities (p.170). The Akan traditional folk-games are generally communal in performance and the process of socialisation partly takes place through singing, dancing and the playing of these categories. Through socialisation, the Akan customs and culture are learnt (Obeng, 2020).

The core value of most traditional folk-games is the cultural and traditional principle of cooperation. They are often integrated with music, which are, for the most parts used as a vehicle for bringing about solidarity and have some underlying educational aspect. Though the children themselves perceive their

activities, they regard games to be recreational. These are, in fact, valuable aids in developing skills needed in adult life. An education that promotes the use of African tools such as text and music is seen by Africans as a secure way of regaining what was lost through musical games (Eze, 1998; Muchenje & Goronga, 2013). Song text in the mother tongue can therefore be argued as a means to promote Africa when used in education, since it has conveyed and transmitted cultural values in African societies for many generations.

Children's active participation in musical activities is a phenomenon found in all cultures of the world especially the Akan culture. During their lifetime, children acquire music of their own culture through the process of enculturation and socialisation from family, friends and the larger community (Ilari, Chen-Hafteck and Crawford, 2013). The music that children participate in outside of school settings is often in their mother tongue, which usually is the first language that they speak at home or in a locality (Gauvain & Perez 2005). A variety of roles have been attributed to singing in games including exploring language, allowing acceptable criticism, and to regularise play and other behaviour. Singing in games tends to be cooperative rather than competitive, and communal rather than hierarchical. Music and games are intertwined because many children games that do not involve singing are introduced by songs.

The physical activities and the text in songs serve important roles in educational process of the children. The activities help to strengthen the children's body by providing them with movements which develop their coordination, muscles, endurance, flexibility and skills which they need during their responsibilities (Amponsah, et al 1994). The songs texts express to the children's values of how they should perceive, respond, and interact with their environment. Through these activities the children become accepted members of their culture and society.

#### *Challenges Teachers face in incorporating traditional games in their lessons*

Though children play traditional games, decreasing popularity of these traditional games among the younger generation nowadays is the rapid industrial development. Every parent wants his or her child to be abreast with western computer games.

Although, a number of studies have been carried out and have proven that traditional games provide various benefits such as enhancing common and delicate motor skills as well as improving cardiovascular health, yet it is becoming more and more unpopular and less practiced by the younger generation these days (Mohammed et al., 2017: p.3).

The children are more interested in watching television, playing electronic games i.e. video games and computers, both in school and at home, regardless of considering the time wasted. A study conducted by Ekunsanmi (2012), reported that few people are still practicing it due to lack of exposure to traditional folk-games of the current generation and the

importance of these traditional games, and this has affected the children of being played more traditional games.

Traditional folk-games in the Ghanaian communities are losing their value because communities are not paying attention to these folk-games. Though these traditional games are already in the system, every parent wants his or her child to be abreast with western computer games. Meanwhile, the Akan traditional folk-games played an essential part in the religious, social, cultural, economic and political development of communities, and Ghana before the introduction of western games. Children learned to think faster, act, and to bring components of team work. But today, the upcoming of Western knowledge systems, information communication technology and globalisation have overshadowed Ghanaian traditional knowledge system. Because of the above statement, children no longer have time for Ghanaian traditional folk-games (Asare-Aboagye, 2015).

Anderson and Bushman (2001) state that children who play more violent video games are likely to have increased aggressive thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and decreased ordinary helping. The children always grow with what they have learned and this leads them to practice. And there is a saying that practice always makes man perfect. Apart from children becoming violent when playing with more video games, they may become unfriendly. They are likely to spend less time on other activities such as playing of instruments, creating, drawing, composing, reading, sports and many more. Because of this, the children are losing the educational values in their traditional folk-games in which they used to learn a lot both in school and at home. The societies have forgotten that abandoning traditional folk-games affect the children psychologically and emotionally, the community development and its culture. Meanwhile, educating children through Akan traditional folk-game reduces stress, improves self-expression, supports emotional development, strengthens physical development, and improves lives, and many more.

The child gets new information about himself and his environment with the help of his parents and siblings in the natural atmosphere of the family. Then the first folk games are lap games, for example: stroking the face, finger games, dancing and riding games. This knowledge goes on in children communities. Now this generation has left from the playgrounds or plays destructive games in groups. They used to play counters, ball and skipping. Not forgetting singing games. These are disappearing now. Unfortunately, passive activities such as watching television and ride the wave of the sea on the Internet have taken the place of traditional games. In schools, during the break and after the lessons, there could be a lot of time for singing games in the compound.

The question is what exactly is causing the loss and changing role of these traditional folk-games in Ghana? Anderson and Bushman, (2001) cited in Amlor (2016) that parents' emphasis their children's academic achievement as a dominant obstacle to their playing games because they believe playing traditional folk-games is a waste of time. Amlor emphasises that they are not allowed to play traditional games in school and after school

hours. Instead, they are kept busy doing homework, reading books, and listening to the academic related television programmes that their parents like them to do. Indeed, the bulk of research has shown that parents are influential in the socialisation of their children (Bandura, 1977; Maccoby, 1992 & Binh, 2012). "Apart from influencing behaviour, they influence the intellectual development of their children" (Bempechat, 1991, p.31). Given that traditional games obviously function in the intellectual development of a child, and that some parents view games as a thorough waste of their children's time, there is need for parents to be educated about the connection between cognitive growth and play.

In another study, Amlor (2016) expresses the view that modernisation has changed the mentality of children and this has affected their play. However, some traditional games are not played any more and technology had overshadowed these traditional children's games. Children will turn to technology for entertainment rather than to being creative. Amlor (2016) suggests that though technology had come to stay, we still need to regulate the behaviour of children as it can have negative impact on their learning.

Papalia and Olds (1993) state that some teachers and parents do ask the question about the need for the child to play. Some parents, not aware of the benefits of play, tend to punish their children when they sneak out to play. Papalia and Olds (1993) felt that play and imitation were core and inborn human strategies for cognitive development. With play, a child could rehearse a newly formed concept to make it fit within what they already knew and understood. As a child experiences or encounters new event, activities, ideas, or rituals, imitation is used to build entirely new mental model (accommodation). The child continues in this way to achieve an orderly balanced world while constantly confronting a changing, and shifting environment.

Gyadu (2014) agrees with Papalia and Olds (1993) that as the mental processes of assimilation and accommodation continue through life, so too do play and imitation remain important cognitive tools for people from childhood through adulthood. There are major challenges causing the teaching and learning of traditional folk-games. Among some of these challenges are challenges on the part of the learning process, the challenges between children's moral education and their new innovations and pedagogy.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The researchers adopted qualitative research paradigm and supported by interpretivists point of view. The researchers selected qualitative research paradigm for this study because it is systematic, yet it is a supple way to explore naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.10). The qualitative research paradigm provides the researcher with a narrative investigation and description of the quality of relationships, situations, events, materials and conditions as observed in the natural setting of the school and classroom. The choice of this paradigm to guide the study was based on the idea and explanation of Rug & Petre

as cited in Kusi (2012) that qualitative research permits the researcher to access the experiences and viewpoints of participants and attempts to understand a phenomenon in all its complexity in a particular socio-cultural context through meaningful interaction between the researcher and participants. This paradigm goes with the study being study that is the relevance of Akan traditional folk-games in the natural setting at the selected primary schools in Ejisu Municipality.

### *Research Design*

To investigate the relevance of Akan traditional folk-games in the primary school curriculum, a case study research design was employed, focusing on how events happened and what the events meant to pupils, teachers and P.T.A/S.M.C members of Asotwe community primary schools. The design helped account of the activities, events or problem that contains a real or hypothetical situation, which include the difficulties that were encountered in the study. The research is a case of two schools in the Asotwe community namely Asotwe Municipal Assembly (M/A) primary and Asotwe Roman Catholic (R/C) primary.

The functional approach that was used as theoretical framework is relevant to this study because it is a way of understanding how children use traditional games for different purposes. This study attempts to prove the validity of the statement that traditional games are vital in the development of children and to investigate the functions of games as performed by Ghanaian children in general and Asotwe community children in particular. Harwood (2012) confirms that children learn their culture through playing and they learn how to use and appreciate their languages. Examining case study requires practice and application of knowledge; and thinking skills to a real life situation. Analysis, application of knowledge, reasoning and drawing of conclusion were learned from case study.

### *The population of the Study*

The population for this study involved all primary school pupils, teachers and PTA/SMC members in the Ejisu Municipal Assembly of the Ashanti Region, Ghana. As at the time of collecting the data, the total enrolment of the pupils was one thousand five hundred (1500) and five hundred (500) teachers. Two schools were selected for the study, namely: Asotwe Municipal Assembly (M/A) Primary School and Asotwe Roman Catholic (R/C) Primary School. The Municipal was selected because of its heterogeneous population and their geographical location in an educational setting.

### *Sampling Techniques*

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when selecting members of the population to participate in their study. The deliberate choice of participants was due to the good qualities the participants possessed. In this study, participants were selected based on the study purpose with the expectation that each participant would provide unique and rich information of



value to the study. The researcher selected twenty (20) participants after several observations on children's indoor and outdoor games' activities in the school setting.

The size of the sample is determined judgmentally and depending on the observation done by the researcher during children's playground activities. The researcher used his own judgment to select participants who were most readily available. The researcher used purposive sampling to select twelve (12) pupils and three (4) teachers each from the two selected schools respectively and four (4) PTA/SMC members from the Asotwe community for the study. Lists of all pupils, teachers and parents in the Asotwe community were compiled to form the sampling frame. In all twenty Participants were selected for the study.

There was the need for the researchers to select useful and effective participants and games to grasp the relevance of Akan traditional games in the primary schools' curriculum. This type of sampling allowed the researchers to choose a small group that was likely to be well informed about the event. The researchers decided what needed to be known and set out to find participants who could and were willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. Observations and interviews were used by the researchers. This comprised formal and informal discussions, note taking, pictures and recordings.

By ensuring systematic and careful collection of data, the researchers adopted the following procedures. The interview and observational guide were designed to help the description as thoroughly as accurately as what goes on in the primary schools in connection with the study; permissions were sought from the headteachers and teachers of the selected schools, and carrying out of the interviews and observations to collect data on the study in the selected schools lasted four weeks and six days. Observations were made during children's indoor and outdoor games' activities on the playground without interrupting teaching and learning activities, while interviews were conducted during break time periods. Data were analysed qualitatively and transcribed into written forms to depict the opinions of pupils, teachers and parents on how documentation of traditional folk/musical games can help develop the pupils of Asotwe community primary schools and at large.

Data collected from interviews and observations were qualitatively analysed. Instruments for collecting research data were observations and interviews which were structured to answer the research questions used for the analysis. The choice of the tools for analysing the data was made based on the statement of the problem, objectives and the research questions of the study.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results discussed and analysed in this chapter developed out of the observations and interviews giving their values to the participants and the school community. The purpose of the study was to explore the relevance of Akan traditional folk-games in the primary school curriculum. In line with the

objectives of this study and guided by the research questions, the following observations were made:

Most of the teachers have developed interest in integrating traditional folk-games in their teaching and learning process. However, not all the teachers were familiar with the traditional folk-games most especially seventeen (17) traditional folk-games that were identify in this research. Other teachers also discouraged the pupils who wanted to acquire skills in traditional games to withdraw their decisions and concentrate their academic work since traditional games never contributed to their formal academic achievements. It was also noticed during observation that most of the teachers had no confidence in handling music. Even though some children were eager to get exposed in playing traditional folk-games, a lot of them regarded these games as waste of time and attempted to discourage their friends who wanted to play traditional folk-games, to withdraw. To them, playing traditional games was a waste of time. Some PTA/SMC members backed their wards by preventing them (children) to play traditional folk-games.

#### *The relevance of Akan traditional folk-games to primary school pupils*

In line with the theoretical framework, and guided by the research questions, the traditional games revealed indispensable significance to the children and the entire community. For instance, traditional games were fundamental in equipping the participants with a number of important skills, attitudes and behaviours. These skills and attitudes are important for success in work and allow children to enjoy a fuller, happier in school and community life.

Bailey (1999) asserts that the use of innovative educational games in the classroom can increase enthusiasm and reinforce previously presented didactic information. It is also a positive, interactive alternative method of teaching and information sharing. In addition, team learning and active peer-to-peer instruction are strongly reinforced by educational games. Participants in these games developed a wide range of skills and attitudes including teamwork, leadership, problem solving, decision making, communication, personal management and administrative skills. These games also built character and personal qualities such as courage, integrity and capacity to commit to a goal or purpose as well as values such as a sense of responsibility to others, respect for others, self-discipline, a sense of fair play and fair dealing and honesty. They offered the individual children the opportunity to enhance the values of dedication and commitment. The fact that many skills gained through traditional games were transferable beyond the sporting context was central to their lives and the community as a whole. These transferable skills helped children to play a more positive role in the community and family life.

Calhoun (1987) and Honeybourne (2004) have pointed out to this principle as inevitable in games situations, and having been advanced and exploited in social circles to socialise individual children to fit in their communities. The traditional games were fundamental in cultivating physical development of individual children. These agree with a study by Krasilnikov (2006),

Burnnet and Hollander (2002) that the survival depended on how well children were empowered in terms of general fitness and other life skills related to all children. The participants indicated that the traditional games were not for simple entertainment but a necessity for survival.

These games helped the children learn to acknowledge their emotions, although indirectly. Most of the traditional games demanded that players exercise control and maturity so as to do extremely well, hence developing emotional maturity.

Cooperation and competition made children acquire interpersonal relations. During play, the children learnt to deal with frustration after a loss, with excitement after a win, with anger after getting a “bad turn,” and with anxiety when pride was on the line. By playing traditional games, the children developed moral and social character and learnt how to communicate politely with other participants. The children showed sympathy to players who lost, became confident with those who broke the rules, and learnt to control their temper when others become disorderly.

This agrees with the theoretical framework advanced by Calhoun (1987) that values such as honesty, fairness, sharing, kindness and compassion are often required and negotiated through game rules. Traditional games brought a sense of self-fulfillment through cultivation of confidence, self-actualisation and self-image, leading to personal and social adjustment for successful games participation as well as in a variety of life situations.

Traditional games improved social cohesion. Participants experienced a high degree of interaction with other children, on their own, in association with the teachers and parents. These interactions improved interpersonal relationships, established the basis for trust and built teamwork and skills that fostered social cohesion. This brought children and community cohesion. Again, these brought children closer together, thereby helping to build wider, stronger feelings of Asotwe primary schools. These games provided avenue for children to spend time together, to generate lively and to communicate with one another in the spirit of fun. The time spent played with children was well-spent. At the end of the day, what the children remembered were the happy times spent with their teachers and parents. It would not matter to them who won or lost. They cherished those moments of togetherness, treasure and laughter. The closeness and warmth amongst children were celebrated.

Again, traditional games made clear on how important it was to follow the rules and regulations. This helped in producing much discipline in children, hence, serving the role of preparing the children for life in society as supported by Calhoun (1987) and Honeybourne (2004). They were taught how to cooperate with one another and achieve success. It was at the playground where team spirit, cooperation and endurance could be achieved best. Traditional games taught children how to ignore individual interests for the sake of greater interests of the team. The children were taught fair play and faith in equality and justice. These enabled children to take defeat and victory in a

cheerful spirit. This is a very important dimension in today’s world where peace, equality and justice have been tended to be cooperated. The researcher grouped his explanations from the participants into seven (7) categories. These include: cognitive development, physical development, recreational, development of musical competencies, language development and social development. Merrill (1993) argues that play fosters all aspects of child development, i.e. emotional, social, intellectual, linguistic and physical development. Tomlinson (2004) concurs by saying that play is central to a healthy child’s development. Participants mentioned the benefits of playing traditional games, indicating that traditional games assisted in their total development.

#### *Cognitive Development in Pupils*

Cognitive development has to do with the way information is acquired; how it is represented and transformed into knowledge; and how it is stored, retrieved and used (Meyer, 1998 cited by Malobola, 2018). Cognitive development is active learning where children learn by seeing and touching, allowing their brains to process and keep new information. For instance, as children play indoor games like *ɔware*, *ludu* and *kwasiada frankaa*, they quickly think about how to win their opponent. Cognitive development focuses on the child’s development in terms of language learning and understanding. Therefore, cognitive development refers to the progression of growth and change in intellectual abilities such as reasoning. Some of the traditional games performed by children require deep reasoning before a move is made. In traditional games such as (the board game) a good command of language and reasoning is necessary. As children are playing, they learn to think constructively. Through the interviews, the teachers, PTA/SMC members were able to express their concerns about how traditional games help develop pupils’ cognitive abilities. Some participants added that traditional games assist pupils to think creatively. This was in line with Brown and Vaughan (2009) who contend that, the creative thinking is the most powerful ability of the human mind. Developing the ability to think creatively is much needed in primary schools because most of the teachers teach abstract. Teachers must engage the pupils in adequate traditional games play.

Participants were of the view that playing traditional folk-games develop in pupils’ problem-solving skills. People believe that life itself is full of problem solving. Pupils being able to solve problems are ways of improving their lives in school and the community as a whole. This was supported by Rogers (2010) that playing traditional games produces creativity that prepares fewer generations of citizens for innovative problem solving and new contributions to society. It was revealed during data collection that Akan traditional folk-games have problem solving possibilities that could be conserved for future generations.

The ability to imitate during traditional games is one of the ways the participants raised connecting to the child’s cognitive development. Pupils monitor each other closely during traditional games play with the view of imitating each other’s



skills. These skills give the pupils insight to identify their role models. Traditional games' play and imitation are therefore core and inborn human strategies for cognitive development as was echoed by Gyadu (2014). He believes that learning to imitate helps the children to look for role model for the betterment of future living. The study also saw divergent thinking as benefit to the pupils and these can be acquired from playing traditional games. Divergent thinking is one of the benefits the pupils can obtain whenever they play traditional games.

Susa and Benedict (1994) cited in Gyadu (2014) suggest that divergent thinking is a cognitive ability that involves being able to produce a large number of relatively unique or unusual ideas in response to a given task constraint. In *ɔware* game, a player needs to think before he/she can make a positive move. As pupils play *ɔware* game they learn to acquire different ways to overcome their opponents and this increases their thinking ability. In another development, pupils are made to search all possible areas to find the hidden pieces of sticks during *pilolo* game. They (pupils) depend on their own reasoning skills to make their search successful and think divergently. Traditional games such as *ɔware* played with small stones improved psychomotor and intellectual skills as the participants are involved in counting. The participants improved their eye-hand coordination by passing stones games. These games also assist the participants to think deeply before they make a move.

In traditional games such as the *maati* and *kwasiada frankaa*, children learn to recognise different squares, lines and circles. Creativity is strengthened as children experiment with different shapes and designs on their own. These traditional games were employed to introduce geometrical shapes in mathematics. As children participated in traditional games, they learnt to reason and be creative. In most of the traditional games, the music is accompanied by actions that clearly direct the participants to what they should do. In that way, learning is accompanied by actions that facilitate remembering.

Vygotsky (1978) states that learning awakens in children a variety of internal developmental processes that can operate only when they interact with more competent people in their environment and in cooperation with their peers. This means that when children work together on an activity, they form an equal relationship towards a common goal. Pupils who played *Nana wo ho* game were able to exercise their recall skills. This means that as pupils continue to play such game, they develop the ability to picture things in their minds which enhances their creative thinking.

#### *Physical Development in Pupils*

Tomlinson (2004) concurs that the analysis revealed that children's participation in traditional games is part of their physical development. They become physically fit, have stronger muscles, and increased endurance. Skills associated with physical development are kicking, jumping, balancing on one leg, running, hopping, and leg stretching, and squatting. In most cases, there is no fine line between physical function and skill. Traditional games help children to develop physically,

which includes muscle development in the legs, arms and fingers. Physical development helps children to have more endurance and strength when participating in traditional games. The analysis focused on gross motor skills, fine motor skills and motor skills.

Actions such as running, jumping, hopping and crawling fall under gross motor skills. Participants used various parts of their bodies to perform certain actions, e.g. in games such as *pilolo*, *ampe* and *asiesie*, participants jumped up and down and run. Some participants mentioned that the aim of playing games and game songs is to stay fit and to stretch one's muscles, particularly the muscles of the arms and legs. The games that require strength/energy and endurance were categorised under physical. These games include *ampe*, *pilolo*, *aso*, *kyaskelen*, and *awoda agoro*. Merrill (1993) argues that play fosters all aspects of child development, i.e. emotional, social, intellectual, linguistic and physical development. Tomlinson (2004) agrees by saying that play is central to a healthy child's development. Participants mentioned the benefits of playing games, indicating that traditional games assist in their total development.

Physically, traditional games helped to develop the children's muscles, strengthened the bones, to be active and to always keep fit, to stretch and be ready for physical exercises.

Fine motor skills involve small body movements, e.g. in the fingers, hands, toes, feet and wrist. Yawkey et al (1986) further attest that small motor activities also require other types of fine body movements such as coordinating the hand with the eyes, and hand with the hand. In traditional games, such as passing stone, *koyon*, *ludu* and *ɔware*, the participants used their fingers and hands to strengthen their muscles. When the muscles of the hand, wrist and fingers are well developed, children are able to hold a pen or pencil correctly, which will improve good handwriting. Traditional games stretched and kept the muscles strong, strengthened the muscles and stretched the muscles/physical exercise.

Participants from the two schools believed that pupils grow and develop well through serious and adequate physical activities. Therefore, not getting involved in any physical activities can affect their (pupils) normal process of development. The running, singing and dancing, that involve in the activities make pupils exercise their bodies for healthy living. In his study of the Yoruba oral literature, Akinyemi (2003) makes significant observations on children's traditional games that while children are singing and playing, they will continuously and vigorously swing their arms and the swinging of the arms itself is a form of physical exercise for the children involved in the game.

In the traditional games, children creatively revealed the benefits of exercising bodies; mental alertness, and physical strength. These musical games are good examples of how pupils can create and improvise from what they have heard, seen or even been told. As pupils perform these games, they begin by strengthening their hands and showing how the knees can relax due to lack of exercise. Participants mentioned that traditional musical/folk games lead them to exercise their

bodies. In support of this, two pupils said that, traditional folk-games have helped them to be quick and smart, and to shape them to be critical thinkers. Playing asiesie and ampe keep us fit.

Traditional musical/folk games therefore allow pupils the best opportunities to exercise and to improve their own physical strength. Patrick (1916) and Hughes (1995) are in the same meaning which addresses the pupils' physical strength. Patrick (1916) discloses the purpose of play as renewal of energy while Hughes (1995) claims play is necessary to allow pupils to release excess energy.

Most of the communities in Ghana have a lot of movements in their pupils' traditional games. These help them to become healthy in the performance of any activity. Creating games like keka hyem and koto fam are typical examples. However, playing musical games like pilolo, anhwewoakyiri, ampe, and me mmaei me mmaei entertain the pupils and at the same time make them strong. The running, singing and dancing in the activities of traditional games serve as exercise in their (pupils') bodies for healthy living. In Ghanaian communities most of the traditional games pupils play, help to make them fast in performing activities. Playing traditional folk/musical games involve a lot of movements and manipulation of objects.

#### *Social development in Pupils*

Burnett and Hollander (2004) state that one of the reasons forwarded by children as to why they involve themselves in traditional games is to socialise with friends and to form new networks. Campbell (1998) agrees that children develop social skills by learning to share, cooperate, take turns, play safely, cope and talk kindly to one another. Caplan (1973) concurs that social development helps the child to get along with other people. Children learn to accept authority and deal with losing to their opponents. Children enjoy being together in a group that appeals to them and that play meets their developmental needs. The following examples provided by participants support the findings of the above scholars that children enjoy being together to build friendship, to avoid loneliness and to keep company, to learn how to play with other children and to know their friends better.

Burnett and Hollander (2004) agree that one of the reasons children engage in traditional games is to socialise with friends and to make new friends. As children play together, they learn to know one another better, their relationships improve; they learn to be considerate and to be more accommodating. Social development involves the ability to get along with other children. Mwenda (2014) supports that participation in traditional games provides a forum for socialisation and a child's social growth affects his/her ability to communicate with others. Group games such as ampe and awoda agorɔ (day born game) teach children to communicate with one another, negotiate, and apply rules. The researchers concluded that a child who has developed socially is able to get along with others well. Nyoni (2013) argues that socialisation is the main aim of playing. Traditional games help children to co-operate, share, take turns, work together and obey rules to play a fair game.

Group games help children to socialise, be tolerant, comply, and gain confidence. Yawkey and Pellegrin (1984) find that dramatic play offers children the opportunity to develop social roles and associate relevant behaviour with those roles. In socialisation, children learn to love, care for, and respect each other. A child will make friends with another child who cares, loves, and accept him/her unconditionally. Children do not know that when they participate in traditional games, they are sharpening their thinking skills and learning to socialise.

The researcher was interested in finding out from teachers and PTA/SMC representatives on how traditional folk/musical games can contribute to social development in the pupils they teach. Giving pupils the opportunity to play traditional folk/musical games is the best stage to teach pupils the importance of socialisation.

Participants revealed that they have learned a lot about adult roles like sharing, preparing and preserving of food through traditional games. Pupils playing traditional game like koto fam console and comfort a player who will fall victim during the activities of the games. The boys feel more humiliated when they suffer defeat from girls and less jubilant when they win over girls.

On the other hand, girls feel highly delighted when they win over boys and less shamed when boys defeat them. The difference in sex does not undermine the numerous social attributes inherent in the traditional games. It rather helps to bring out the reality of communal living and how to cope with it. Through traditional folk games, pupils are prepared to face adult life and its realities. At an early age, traditional folk-games expose the pupils to problems, privileges and responsibilities of being created male or female in a communal society. It was revealed that traditional folk-games helped in emotional maturation of pupils in that they build their confidence and a sense of compassion which leads to caring for others and also being cared for. This shows that pupils learn to treat others with care in their traditional games' play. Showing passion, relieving boredom and reducing vagueness were some cases established by some of the participants. This is clearly stated that play is seen as a mechanism to relief boredom and to reduce ambiguity in pupils. Three teachers who were participants also expressed their views that traditional folk/musical games help in building good interpersonal skills, sharing and cooperation among pupils. This goes in line with what Moursund (2007) states that traditional folk-games provide an environment in which game players can learn about themselves and this also increases social skills. When children play traditional folk-games, they interact and learn from each other, develop the skill of reasoning, imaginative skills, skill of problem solving, and develop good interpersonal skills, self-confidence and self-control. Participants also pointed out that most of the traditional folk/musical games have rules and so sticking to the rules taught them (pupils) how to obey rules. The pupils gave examples as kekahye lela, *koyon*, *kyaskelen*, *pilolo*, *ɔware*, and *anhwe woakyiri and dua oo dua*. Traditional folk-games with rules helped pupils to understand and control their

behaviours to conform to the rules as was revealed by the teacher participants.

Children find joy in traditional games and are usually unaware that there are outcomes or benefits attached to their performance. Only adults, teachers and researchers are aware of the functions of traditional games. Traditional games help children to feel good. Ellis (1973) affirms that playing is an activity that is free and amusing. In most of the traditional games, the aim is not winning but to while away time, and to have fun. For example, in day born game, participants have fun and they enjoy dancing and touching each other. Children play with anything that they find in their environment or with their bare hands, e.g. they throw coins or duster up in the air and catch them or keep object in their palm and ask a friend to guess what is inside their palm. Children play for fun and enjoyment. The traditional folk/musical games entertain the pupils, create group unity among them and foremost, cleverly communicate the pupils' understanding of their environments from a pupil's point of view.

Many participants mentioned 'fun' and 'entertainment' as their main reason for playing. Some of the responses were to have fun or entertainment, to love traditional games dearly because it was fun, and to reduce boredom. Fraser (1996) says playing allows children to have fun and Burnett and Hollander (2004) agree that children play mainly to entertain and amuse themselves with games that they find enjoyable, and add that children play with the aim of keeping themselves occupied and running away from chores that adults perform. Burnett and Hollander (2004) share the same sentiments when saying, children engage in traditional games to keep occupied, stay out of trouble, and to be entertained or not to do bad things. One of the participants said 'to keep us away from trouble'. Burnett and Hollander (2004) further say that children play because they want to be seen as children by adults. The participants corroborated the above findings, i.e. that traditional games provide a sense of fun and enjoyment; that traditional games improve their (children) listening and communication skills; that their observational skills and awareness of their environment are improved; and that they participate in traditional games to avoid boredom.

#### *Language development in pupils*

Saayman and Niekerk (1996) assert that usefulness of the lyrics of traditional games improves the language development of the pupils. The pupils find it easy to remember words of traditional musical games. The participants indicated that pupils use the words of the traditional games after learning it. The lyrics also helped the pupils to understand the message that was being carried out in the traditional games.

Adiakpor, (2015: p. 72) submits that "singing enhances the speech development of pupils and enables them to communicate freely with others". The singing and playing of traditional games develop the speech level of the pupils. The games also help them to acquire vocabulary and the proper use of the Akan language. Whenever the pupils sing traditional musical games over and over, they memorise whatever has been

learnt. This is because some of the words in the games are from their environment and is close to the real life experiences of pupils. The more repetition given to pupils, the more likely they will retain the message.

Non-verbal communication in traditional folk/musical games, Traditional folk-games communicate to the pupils by means of performances. Pupils express their opinions by participating, not by talking. They behave with the understanding that what they do is an act of artistic participation. Ebeli (2015) states that one of the means of understanding the human social world is through music communication. Music is an important channel of communication that gives opportunities to share emotions, intentions and meanings. Musical games like koto fam show comfort of pupils' sadness and other set off human emotions. When pupils play traditional folk-games, they are able to develop the skill of communicating effectively with each other. I believed this is shown through verbal and nonverbal actions. Pupils therefore understand peacefully with each other in the school or at home. The songs of the traditional musical games communicate to both participants and non-participants in playground. For instance, in playing koto fam, the non-verbal and verbal actions of the children showed comfort of children's sadness and other set off human emotions.

#### *Development of musical competencies*

Traditional folk-games have certain distinctive traits, and the music forms an integral part of the life of these traits. When the children are playing, they sing and dance to the tunes of the game songs. Performance of music cannot be under-estimated in traditional folk-games. It gives the people the opportunity to express themselves freely in game activities. Singing and playing musical games over and over helps to boost the confidence base of the pupils to enable them to perform in public without any fear. Again, the pupils understand musical concepts in traditional games and learn moral lessons. Musical games are exciting; the number of variations can be overwhelming.

Flolu (1994) posits that the songs which accompany the games are the children's own compositions, often in monophonic singing with varying degrees of rhythmic freedom, contrasts of vocal range and with intense agility. Frequently, the songs are repetitive, sung with precision and articulation, the words covering a limited range and usually related to the intention of a particular game. Outside the context of games, the words can be difficult to translate; sometimes what may sound like mere nonsense words have special meaning for the actors which can only be derived from the actions which accompany their singing. Rhythmically, they are organised on a steady recurring beat; one that is easy to locate and which encourages foot tapping, arm swinging, and, indeed, the movement of the whole body.

#### *Challenges teachers face in incorporating traditional folk-games in their lessons*

The arguments for adopting active learning in the classroom are clear. The child who sits in the classroom, with no interest in



the learning process does not reach the level of motivation required to promote learning effort. Therefore, incorporating traditional games in class encourages active learning as well as collaboration and interactivity. As they play these games, they sharpen their communicative skills. Teachers can learn how children play and use the learning outcomes of play in planning classroom activities. Through observation, teachers can get more information about children's play and themes that interest them. Play observations also provide important understanding about children's social worlds.

On the contrary to the above statements, most teachers have ignored observing their pupils play. It has never occurred to them (teachers) the need to do so. They may see it as waste of time and unnecessary. There have been many challenges for teachers in incorporating traditional folk-games in the classroom. Some of these challenges are as follows: Technical know-how, pedagogical problem, technological problem, time allotted for each subject, and materials and facilities needed for game activities.

Bailey (1999) asserts that traditional games increase children's involvement, motivation, and interest in the material and allow the instructor to be creative and original when presenting topics. Teachers/instructors must have the knowledge and skills required for traditional games. It was indicated that school A and B teachers who are participants have not got enough support since they were posted to the schools. What they know about music is singing.

Participants expressed that:

“The only thing to do is to invite personnel from outside the school to assist me and pay him/her”. And these personnel cannot teach the theory aspect of the subject so why should I waste my time on this subject since I do not have any knowledge about it?” (response from a participant)”

Two (2) of the participants who are also teachers said that though the games exist since time immemorial, they are not familiar with some of these games.

Some participants acknowledged that, they had never heard games called *nana wo ho*, *penpenaa*, *maati*, and *kyaskelen*. No body taught them these games in their educational carrier so they cannot incorporate these games in their lessons. Without having knowledge about the games. Teachers in the study area do not see the importance of using these games. Traditional games familiar to them are ampe and aware and cannot use these games for lessons because they do not have any knowledge about them. The above statement was supported by what Campbell (1998) says that the teacher must have the skills in playing all these games before he/she can incorporate it in his/her lessons in school. Participants stressed that they do not see why traditional folk-games should be incorporated in their lessons because they do not have any documented materials that can guide them (teachers) to use.

Another challenge teachers' encounter in incorporating traditional games in their lessons is the pedagogy. Dzansi

(2004) reveals that teachers and pupils skip their music lessons and seeing music as unappealing and meaningless due to the alienation of structure of the music curriculum. Some of the teachers are not using the curriculum appropriately. Teachers jump over some of the topics in the syllabus because they (teachers) lack understanding of those aspects in music. Teachers ignore some topics in the syllabus due to the absence of in-service training for them (teachers). Again, a teacher and the respondent confirmed that they cannot trace any documentation of these games and their songs to serve as reference materials to use. According to the participants, none of them had enough training in the content and the methodology on how to handle music and dance at the two schools.

According to participants, time allotted for creative arts on the time table is not sufficient; music and dance forms part of the creative arts and the period allotted for the Creative Arts is 30minutes (one period) per week. This indicates that music and dance does not get the full period on the time table. Also, music and dance has only two few units (2) each of the Creative Arts textbooks which does not cover all the aspects of the subject, and the rest of the units are for the Arts. Dzansi (2004) confirms that time for teachers and students' performances in school playground lasts for only 30 minutes, and therefore teachers cannot get enough time for performances. Furthermore, copies of examination questions which were shown to me attest to the fact that music and dance is not examinable both internally and externally in the primary school level. This enables the teachers to look down upon music and dance, and concentrate on the other aspects of the Creative Arts subject.

Again, the Ghana Education Service (GES) are more serious on English, Mathematics and Science (EMS) which is the core subjects. The other subjects like Ghanaian language, creative Arts and environmental studies are elective because the children write exams on these subjects at the end of every term. Due to that most teachers do not take serious about subjects like music and dance which involves activities.

The study pointed out that inadequate music resources constitute one of the challenges they faced in integrating traditional folk-games into other subjects. According to them, the support needed for the enhancement of effective music and dance teaching is not coming. For effective music and dance teaching to be achieved, there is need for the provision of adequate resources that will help to promote effective teaching and learning of the subject. Materials like textbooks, musical instruments and game materials, which should be provided by the school and the government to enhance teaching and learning of music. The schools do not have secure places for play. Places conducive for games activities have been occupied by new classrooms blocks. And the places available are not conducive for game activities. Outdoor games cannot be done properly and for that matter incorporating into lessons becomes a challenge. According to the teachers, they cannot allow the children to play games in which they will fall down. The public playgrounds of play at Asotwe primary school have been under strict safety control and many of these playgrounds are

intention of making new safer ones which can last for longer period.

Nsamenang (2004) observes that gaining unfamiliar knowledge and skills from western education will sink the children we teach into isolation and ignorance of their own culture. Nketia (1999) cited in Obeng (2020) also posits that the importance of providing learning experience that enables African children to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of traditional music and dance of their own environment and those of their neighbours is now generally recognised, for without this preparation, they may not be able to participate fully in the life of their communities to which they belong. For instance, reporting on a study on pupils' motivation and learning, Nemerow (1996) concludes that although playing traditional games in the classroom does not solve the entire problem of the child, it can be useful tool, one of many different methods and techniques used to involve pupils with their learning.

#### *Music making in Asotwe community*

Traditional music plays a vital role in the Asotwe community. There is no occasion in Asotwe community without the use of traditional music. Though western music has overshadowed traditional music, yet it plays an important role in the lives of the people of Asotwe community. The arts (music, dance and drama) serve as an avenue for the development of children's aesthetic sensitivity. In addition, teachers are therefore encouraged to use traditional music as a tool to educate children in Asotwe.

Again, educators have pointed out that education should be delivered in a way that helps children to value their culture. The introduction of traditional music in schools enables children to understand Asotwe traditional music and value it. During cultural festivals, children participate and learn very important events in the education. The teachers and the children learn a lot from their locality during preparation towards cultural festivals. Here, children feel proud of presenting their own culture. Children are exposed to cultural practices that they may not know because cultural activities serve as an important avenue for exposure. Traditional music is performed to entertain, sung during storytelling and the performance of rites of passage. It also helps the pupils to preserve their Culture. Occasions like festivals, durbars, and marriage ceremonies have revealed that traditional music is used to tell the history of Asotwe people.

In the social events, songs associated with children's traditional games, puberty rites and music in festivals have been discussed. It was revealed that songs are very important in children's games such as *dua oo dua*, *anhwe woakyiri*, *ehen kwan nie* and *aso*. Game songs help the children to socialise and also the texts of the songs are educative by training the children morally. In the case of puberty rites, there are singing and dancing which bring about socialisation among the friends of the initiate and other people who come to witness the rite. The texts of the songs sung are educative and also offer advice to the other girls to live a decent life until they also go through such rites.

In the past, the songs in these rites put fear in young girls at Asotwe which made such girls live a worthy life, because a breach of that rite would lead to the banishment of the girl from Asotwe community. This became bitter experience for any girl to go through. Songs in the rites of passage were an asset to the people of Asotwe. Bragorɔ (puberty) songs also express the need for girls to remain virgins until their marriage. Today, such songs are beneficial because they educate the children to be chaste in order to avoid venereal diseases such as AIDS which is very deadly. Festivals are one of such happy moments for the people of Asotwe and cannot be celebrated without traditional games. The evening of the day prior to the day of celebration, the children, youth and old age are gathered to play traditional games to entertain the chiefs and the people of Asotwe. Music played during festivals is believed to be enjoyed by the ancestors. Traditional music is often organised in relation to the activities of everyday life. It is identified with social institutions and communal music making, and as part of traditional way of life. It is regarded as vital to the fullness of living.

A village that has no organized music or neglects community singing, drumming and dancing is said to be dead. Music making is therefore a guide of a living community and a measure of the degree of social cohesion among its respective units.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The children of Asotwe community must be encouraged to participate in traditional games performance so that the social importance of these traditional games can be sustained in the study area. In searching for this, the researchers advises some of the teachers in the study area that they should motivate and observe children on playgrounds occasionally. Teachers should try as much as possible to incorporate traditional musical games in every lesson in the classroom, in order to prepare the children for integrating the games in their lessons. It is recommended that some traditional games could be integrated in the formal programmes of teaching and learning in the basic schools in the study area. It can be argued that teachers need to be resourceful and be opened to varied teaching approaches that can help sustain the interest of children in the teaching and learning process.

The school authorities in the Ejisu Municipal Education Directorate, like circuit supervisors, headteachers and teachers should organise in-service training and workshops for the teachers to be familiar with the approaches they can use in incorporating traditional games in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to make good use of our traditional games in their lessons. This could be used in schools and outdoor activities so that many pupils can enjoy the benefits that accumulate from these traditional games. Teachers are encouraged to select or create proper games that can be used in specific topics in different classes in the school. Teachers need to consider which games to use, when to use them, how to link these games up with the syllabus, materials and facilities, and how, more specifically, different games will benefit children in different ways.

For effective music and dance teaching to be achieved, teachers are encouraged to provide adequate teaching and learning resources that will help to promote effective teaching and learning of the subject. Teachers in Asotwe community revisit their methodology in order to select appropriate teaching methods to help effective teaching and learning of music in the schools.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Traditional folk-games bring out cultural values, spiritual values and the aesthetic values of any society of which Asotwe is not an exception. In Asotwe, traditional folk-games have played a major role in shaping the social, political, religious and economic life of both children and adults. The main objective of this study was to find out the relevance of Akan traditional folk-games in which these games such as *aso*, *ɔware*, *Kyaskelen*, *dua oo dua*, *anhwe woakyiri* since these games have provided an environment in which one can interact with each other and develop certain types of social skills.

Again, traditional games provide an environment in which children in Asotwe in the Ejisu Municipal can develop a variety of thinking and problem-solving skills.

Like in other societies, traditional folk-games are commonly associated with childhood activities at Asotwe community because during their formative stages, pupils' self-knowledge, and gaining understanding of verbal and non-verbal discussions that are linked to the physical and social worlds. The valid conclusion is that pupils for this study would not be able to value most of their own rich traditional games if adequate measures are not taken to document the relevant few to be used in the schools. However, when enough children in the study area choose not to acquire certain aspects of their culture, those characteristics will be weeded out of the culture.

To support the development of creativity through music, the musical activity like traditional musical games needs to be applied in the study area. It is evident from the study that Musical games have the potential to provide the basis for the total well-being of the child in the Asotwe community. When children play traditional musical games, they use various means to express ideas. It helps children develop the artistic vision and provide the appropriate means of self-expression. Almost all children's songs and games, by their nature, have natural training devices. In the situation of the traditional games, a Ghanaian child is introduced to many aspects of his cultural setting. He/she learns some basic skills of work, dance, music, social etiquette, self-defense, morality and comes across tactics through musical games thereby affecting his/her way of thinking, feeling and manipulating things. Musical games depending on the gender type, text and the activity involved can be assessed and used by teachers in the basic schools in Asotwe. Varieties of games help children to feel that they make difference as they can give some effect on the world around them. It is worth stating that each of the games discussed has an instructional potential in one, two or all of the three domains of human learning, the cognitive, psychomotor and affective.

The performances of all the traditional games are governed by a set of rules. These rules help in developing the cognitive and affective domains of the participants. The traditional games which often includes music and dance performances offer the children the chance automatically learn lessons and societal ethics very quickly in a playful manner. Other values acquired from participating in these traditional games are the ability of the pupils to cultivate good behaviour, discipline, and healthy style of living, tolerance, leadership qualities, hard work and competitive spirit. In short, the relevance of Akan traditional games gives children cultural identity that enables them to acquire societal values, norms and skills that promote self-usefulness and help them to perform future roles as adults. Traditional games that involve running, jumping, squatting and other body movements are indirect forms of physical and mental exercises that keep the bodies and minds of the children healthy. The level at which foreign culture is washing away Ghanaian values has awoken the Akan in reviving traditional musical/folk games that can promote teaching and learning, and to acquire indigenous education that can nurture children into maturity. Again, it empowers the children to assume responsible future adult roles in the community.

Once the children see adults doing it, they are forced to copy it. The children once again get an important value which they derive from the use of their mother-tongue as they performed traditional musical games. The introduction of the Akan traditional folk-games to the children in their own language and environment help them to listen, feel and experience, and perform well.

Teachers, however, need more convincing reasons. Teachers need to consider which games to use, when to use them, how to link these games up with the syllabus, materials and facilities, and how, more specifically, different games will benefit children in different ways but all to no avail. Despite the advantages that traditional game playing can contribute to the learning process, there is an important gap for effective integration of traditional games in the educational process due to different barriers for implementation. It can be rather difficult to select or create proper games that can be used in specific topics in different classes due to teacher's poor background in music education. Poor methodology was evident during data collection in among some teachers in the study area. Inadequate space on the school time table is a major challenge teacher's face in teaching music.

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