

Impact of Traditional Music in the Life Cycle of the People of Motokurodua in the Ashanti Region of Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Music is the joy of the soul and calls for satisfaction in a lot of events; Music communicates at all levels of life and can therefore not be dealt away with completely in the lives of people. Over years, there has been much interest in the way that representations of the rural communities contribute to the discourses of everyday life in the countryside (Maclaren, & Andrew 2019) Traditional Music has impacted lives before other inventions of music, traditional music comes from the indigenes of the of the community in their own language and artistic delivery The main research design considered for this study was qualitative; and for that matter made use of descriptive and survey techniques to undertake the study. The study targeted Chiefs, community workers and other traditional leaders, who are experts in the usage of traditional events and appreciate the use of music during life cycle events and others. The sampling methods adopted for these target population included Purposive, Convenience as well as Random whilst the data collection instruments consisted of Participant observation and Interview. The study identified some life events that cannot exist without music such as birth/Naming ceremony, Marriage and Funeral rites that are associated with music.

Keywords: Traditional, Birth, Puberty, Marriage, Death/Funeral rites, Music

INTRODUCTION

Over recent years, there has been much interest in the way that representations of the rural communities contribute to the discourses of everyday life in the countryside (Maclaren, Andrew 2019). Music, as an art, is a very significant aspect of life of every society in the world. In Africa and other parts of the world, music is regarded not only as a medium of artistic expression but also as providing an avenue for individual and corporate expression of experience. In religious rituals, sacrifices and worship in general, music is used to praise chiefs, wealthy people and other important personalities in the community as well as in contact between man and man, a means of object of worship, music forms a means of communication Mbiti, (2015).

Weber (2017) adds that, also underway in Europe in the nineteenth century was the development of traditional music collection and analysis, while Traditional music studies had already known several centuries of activity, the growth of nationalism in the 1800s had served to intensify efforts for musicians and folklorists to spread into the countryside in Germany, France, Italy, or elsewhere, to seek out the music that was at the heart of a nation's expressive self. Until at least 1910, traditional music was as historically ancient, rich, and diverse as the continent itself. Traditional music is passed down orally (or aurally). It is not written, and it also relies heavily on percussion instruments of every variety, including xylophones, drums, and tone-producing instruments such as the *mbira*, *atenteben* or "thumb piano." Traditional music is generally performed with functional intent in celebrations such as birth ceremony, festivals, games, funerals, marriage, story-telling,

puberty rite and many more Martin, A. R., & Mihalka,. (2020) says that, listening has been an important skill that has been perfected by oral traditional practices. A number of African musical songs and dances were and are still transmitted from one generation to another by word of mouth. It is unfortunate that less attention has been given to music and musical performance in the representation of rural dwellers.

In fact, Western cultures took little notice of African music until the middle of the nineteenth century. The recording and reproduction of African music only started in the late 1920's when Europeans realized that there were profits to be made from the commercialization of this music.

Finnegan (2018) has the opinion that previous studies have concentrated on Asia, Europe and Northern African music with little emphasis on West African traditional music. Specifically in Ghana, there is therefore a dearth of research on the impact of traditional music on various societies and ethnic groups. For the reasons above, this study has been conducted to sensitize the general public about the impact of traditional music on a selected community in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Motorkrodua, is a community in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The people in the area hold cultural activities including music and dance in highest esteem. These activities are seen during the life cycle events that are observed in the community.

Many scholars have carried out studies in Ashanti Region on effects of music on the people. But empirical observation and consultation have shown that no such study has been focused on the Motorkrodua community in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. It is as a result of this that this study is done with the community in focus.

Specifically, this study has identify some types of traditional music in Effiduase a suburb of Motorkrodua in the Asante Region of Ghana and point out their roles in the social, economic, religious, recreational and political activities of the people.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of traditional African music

Reybrouck and Eerola (2017) in their article the definitions and expressions of Music as “The art that expresses feelings and meanings through the qualities of sound and the relationship between sounds”. In this view the expression of feelings and meanings is realized through the quality of sound production. A combination of musical elements such as rhythm, tonality, dynamics and so forth are also involved in an effort of understanding musical sound. In other words, this view can be summarized and define as organized sound and noise. Benenti and Meini (2018). also has the opinion that Music is said to be the language of emotions, following this view, music is regarded as an art that is difficult to understand. The researchers considering these definitions of music also define Music as the calculated combination of sounds that pleases the listener at a particular era.

Terry (2017) defines traditional African music as that music which is associated with traditional African institutions of the pre-colonial era. This kind of Music has survived the impact of the forces of western and other forms of acculturation. It is therefore distinct in idiom and orientation from the music belonging to the second category, namely contemporary, popular and art music. This definition can be stretched to include traditional recreational music. In traditional music different kinds of scale patterns are used by different African people some build theirs on varieties of pentatonic (5notes) scale while others build it on hexatonic (8notes) and heptatonic 7(notes) scale.

Goldschmidt (2019) as well opines that the Columbia College Centre for Black Music Research also documented that traditional African music is as historically ancient, rich, and diverse as the continent itself. Traditional African music is passed down orally (or aurally) and is not written, and it also relies heavily on percussion instruments of every variety, including xylophones, drums, and tone-producing instruments such as the *mbira* or "thumb piano." Traditional African music is generally performed with functional intent in celebrations, festivals, and story-telling.

In support of this assertion, Ozah (2015) also adds that traditional music, dance and songs are cherished treasure and a source of pride for African people which help to identify the true African. Traditional music appears to encompass folk music, at least according to the International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM) whose charter states that: “The aims of the ICTM are to further the study, practice, documentation, preservation and dissemination of traditional music, including folk, popular, classical and urban music, and dance of all countries. No definition as yet, but the scope seems pretty wide.”

Traditional Music is defined by the ICTM as songs and tunes which have been performed, by custom, over a long period (usually several generations). They are most often folk songs, country dance or similar types of folk music but they can also be pieces from known early composers and may have been the "pop music" of their time. Traditional music (or public domain) is also used as a copyright status covering music which is out of copyright. In Europe (EEC) music copyright does not expire till 70 years after the death of the composer. Drawing upon these definitions, the researcher defines traditional music as the kind that is accepted by community members mostly unchanged between generations of easygoing troupes, typically without notation, and played according to what one hears.

Traditional music of events of the life cycle (Social Impact)

Anderson and Foley (2019) explain that, Occasions in the life of individual events from birth rites through to death rites are marked with particular types of music. It must also be noted that such events are not uniformly musical events in all African societies. Among some African countries like Zambia, traditional recreational music is used to mark the phases of life of which naming ceremony of a new born baby is not an exception. The Bemba of Zambia also sings appropriate songs to welcome new born babies and to mark the birth of twins. In the Himalayas, the Lepcha of Sikkim, continue to refer to the newborn as a “rat child” as if it were still inside the mother’s womb. After three days and a thorough cleansing, the infant is welcomed into the community with a feast Lancy and Grove. (2015). In the Fon area of Dahomey in Nigeria, a child is taught a song to be sung when he/she loses the first tooth. Among the Akans of Ghana, children sing a special song of insult at a special ritual organized for a regular bed wetter as well as songs to put children to sleep (lullaby) or during their naming ceremonies. Example

WATWA NE KETE MU

ALLEGRO Arranged by;
Desmond asare

Twoo - lo - bia wa - twa ne kee - tem. Twoo -

lo - bia wa - twa ne kee - tem. Twoo - lo - bia wa - twa ne

kee - tem. Twoo - lo - bia wa - twa ne kee - tem

Bed wetter (Dwosokurobo)

Song lyrics

Kyoolobia

Wattwa ne kete mu

Dwonsokurobo

Watwa ne kete mu

Literal meaning

Bed wetter

has wet the bed

bed wetter

has wet the bed

Lullaby

Song lyrics

Literal meaning

Meba ei Oforiwaa meba ei

My child Oforiwaa my child

Mewoo no maamer3

I suffered in giving birth

MebaeiiiOforiwaamebaeiii

My child Oforiwaa my child

Mewoo no maanidi

I lost appetite in giving birth

MebaeiiiOforiwaamebaeiii

My child Oforiwaa my child

Marriage

Doggu (2015) introduces that among the Dagarti of Northwestern Ghana, the first visit of a bridegroom to the house of his bride is marked by the chanting of a dialogue between his party and the brothers-in-law. Other societies who celebrate their marriages with music making include the Dagomba of Ghana, the Yoruba and the Hausa of Nigeria.

Puberty rite

Adolescence comes from the Latin word “adolescere” that means “to grow into maturity”. It is a transitional stage marked at the beginning by puberty and at the end by attainment of adult status Kaczmarek, et al (2015). Puberty comes from the Latin “Pubertas” that refers to “age of manhood”. The stage implies the period at which the body is capable of sexual reproduction through fertilization Leelavathi and Padmaja (2019)

Wood et al (2018) define adolescence as, a period of the life course between the time puberty begins and the time adult status is approached, when young people are in the process of preparing to take on the roles and responsibilities of adulthood in their culture.

Similarly, Dictionary of Psychology defines adolescence as the period in human growth and development that is marked at the beginning by the onset of puberty and at the end by the attainment of physiological and psychological maturity. The “attainment of physiological and psychological maturity” is a vague marker of the end of adolescence. According to Njuguna (2016), the phenomenon of adolescence is complex, delicate and poorly defined. The concept continues to be more elusive with the changing societies and times.

Leonard (2020) has it that two Kikuyu women, “Njeri” and “Lucy” both age 52, discussed their maturation. Njeri was from a polygamous family with her mother being the youngest of 4 wives. Her stepmothers organized a ceremony for her and her 4 step sisters to be circumcised on the same day when they were 16. She was eager to participate and happy to become an adult. Following circumcision, the young women no longer played games or joined activities of younger siblings who now had to respect them. She said “*if one refused to be circumcised [you would remain a child forever]*” (translated from Kikuyu).

What is striking about this interview compared with those of the Mere men is that the change in status from child to adult is the only aspect of the transition that is mentioned on celebration, no gender solidarity, and no new skills. Compare her sense of transition then to that of her Kikuyu age mate, Lucy, who experienced puberty while in boarding school but had no ceremonies to mark the changes as her parents were staunch Christians and viewed Kikuyu ceremonies as “*satanic.*”

Lucy thought of herself as lucky because her secondary school had teachers, a social worker, and clergy who gave her all the information she needed about the physical changes she could expect. The social worker “was keen in teaching her sex education” and emphasized that if Lucy protected and safeguarded her virginity, then her marriage would last till death. If not, her marriage would break somewhere along the way. When the

pubertal changes came her friends noticed and they shared discussions of the changes happily. Her status in the school community changed and adult women welcomed her to “the world of women.”

Ohene-Amoako et al (2021) clarify that, Puberty is another important event during which special songs may be performed. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, the first day of the six-day long puberty celebration of a girl is marked with special ceremonial music which signifies a way of welcoming the child into the community.

Example of tune: Appellations

Yedawase

Lyrics	Literal Translation
<i>Otwediamponeeei</i>	God of the heavens
<i>Yedawaseooo</i>	we thank you
<i>Yen na yenieoo</i>	hear we are
Ama Owusuaa aye bra ooo	Ama Owusuwaa has menstruated
<i>Yedawase ahenewa o!</i>	We thank God greatly

Death/Funeral rite

According to Agordoh (2005), on the occasion of death, the Bemba of Zambia, the Akan, the Ewe, the Dagarti, and several other peoples of Ghana and in other countries, as well sing mourning songs. These mourning songs are usually distinguished by their characteristic singing style as well as by the text and body movements that accompany the singing. These dirges are usually unaccompanied with any musical instrument like the *Atenteben* made by Ephraim Amu. Example of a funeral song. Source unknown

This tune can be sung verbally or blown on the *atenteben* instrument

<i>Song Lyrics</i>	Literal meaning
<i>Baamo owuo</i>	
<i>Owuo eei</i>	Death
<i>Bamoa wuo ei</i>	Oh death
<i>Onenam me dan mu oo</i>	is hovering in my room
<i>Me da aanna oo</i>	I cannot sleep
<i>Owuo baamoa wuo yi</i>	Death, O death
<i>Me kokaa a</i>	if I say it
<i>Ode ahyia me</i>	He meets me with death
<i>Onenam me dan mu oo</i>	He is hovering in my room
<i>Me da aannaoo</i>	I cannot sleep

OWUO BAAMOAWUO

Arranged by:
Desmond Asare

Grave



O - wuo - e - baa - moa wu - oe - wo - ne - nam
me - danmu ho me da - nna - o. O - wuo baa - mo - a
wu - oe me - ko - kaa wo - dea - hyi - a me. O - wuo baa - mo - a
wu - oe me - ko - kaa wo - dea - hyia - me.

METHODOLOGY

The methods adopted for the preparation of this section are mainly narrative, descriptive and interpretative. Formal interviews were conducted with some traditional elders of the community and other categories of people. Observations were equally made at puberty rites, naming ceremony and funeral celebration tells to allow the researchers have first-hand information on how music impact on such.

PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This section identifies the different types of traditional music found in the Motokurodua traditional area. These include the traditional music of life cycle activities. The findings are based on outcome of formal interviews conducted with some traditional elders of the community and other categories of people, observations made at puberty rites, naming ceremony and funeral celebration tells it all.

The life of the people of these traditional areas and the traditional music performed in the society are hardly inseparable. Music making in Motokurodua culture starts from birth to death, thus, as soon as one is born, music-making starts until the person dies. This indicates that music adds to the growth of man which also implies the sustenance of music in the community is assured as far as people still live.

In identifying the various types of traditional music in Motokurodua community the findings indicate that there are so many types of traditional music within the Asante community and the area of study, but for the sake of this study, music within the life cycle of man is considered.

Transitional Groupings

1. Birth rites
2. Puberty rites
3. Marriage
4. Funeral rites

The social system and the traditional music

The social system involves the rites of passage which features traditional music in its activities. The rites of passage are performed when an individual is or group of people are being ushered from one phase of life to another. Also it could even be from one position to another position. These rites may possibly be referred to as transitional rites and they consist of birth (Child Naming Ceremony), puberty rite, marriage and death (funeral

rite). This narration was given by the researchers’ attendant from Effiduase so as to have a clear picture of the social system of the traditional music.

Child Naming Ceremony (Birth Rite)

Naming and outdoor ceremonies are done for the child to be recognized in the Motokrodua community. This was a narration given on previous naming ceremony which went on in the Motokrodua community, it is done for the born child to have a name “*Abadinto*” is the name given to the ceremony in *Asante twi* , per the narration, the ceremony takes place in the father’s house on the 8th day, the reason for waiting for the 8 days is to determine whether the new born baby came to stay or to observe, because it is believed that some children do not like the weather and so may go back to wherever it came from, the items used in the ceremony are schnapps, two(2) glasses, a bottle of water, ring, broom if a girl and a cutlass if a boy, because of the spirit of togetherness and also the bond of friendship, community members are invited to witness the ceremony. On the said day, the mother and the baby dress in white cloth and stay indoors till the ceremony starts. Around 8:00am when all invitees arrive the baby’s auntie from the father’s side take and put the child on her laps. Both the schnapps and the water are poured in different glasses, but because of the child, the Schnapp Dry Gin is diluted with water, the performer then dips her forefinger in the Schnapp Dry Gin and then mentions the child’s name three (3) times and put it on the child’s tongue, (for instance if the baby is a girl born on Saturday she is Ama) so the auntie says Ama if it is Schnapp Dry Gin say its Schnapp Dry Gin and if its water say its water. This signifies that the child should grow up to be truthful in all she does, even though if the truth is unpopular it must be said.

Interview with Ms Hannah Kodua “*alias Eeshe*” discovered that broom, cutlass and mat are also used as part of the ceremony, the mat is spread on the floor for the baby, and the broom is now spread in the baby’s palms if a female, and if a male a cutlass is used. This signifies that he/she should not grow to be lazy but work very hard as a real African man/woman. After all these, there is a special celebration for all the people present, at the ceremony songs of joy are sung with dances accompanied to welcome the new born baby.

It was also realized that songs to praise the mother who carried the baby and the father who supported and to motivate the family to continue taking good care of the baby. Nursing mothers also sing some traditional lullabies or cradle songs to their babies. These songs are to entertain the baby when feeding or putting the baby to sleep.

Example of the Lullaby (borrowed from Volta Region and used nationwide)

TUU TUU GBOVI

Arranged by
Desmond Asare

lively

Tu-u tu-u gbo-vi Tu-u tu-u gbo-vi Da-da me-lea-fra meo Ta-ta me-lea-fea meo

A - o De-de vi - nya bo - nu bo - nu kpoo Me-ka fo wo? Nyo-nu vi a?

Tu - ta - ve ne ma -foe na wo A - o vi - nya me - ga - fa vi 0

A - o De - de vi - nye bo - nu bo - nu kpoo

Lyrics

translation

Tuu tuu gbovi

dearest child

Tuu tuu gbovi

dearest child

Dada mele afea meo	Mom is not at home
Tata mele afea meo	Dad is not at home
Ao dede vinye bonu bonu kpoo	my dearest child cry not
Meka fo wo? Nyonu vi a Tutave ne mafoe na wo	Who has beaten you tell me let me beat the for you
Ao vinye megafavi o	My child cry not
Ao dede vinye bonu bonu kpoo	My dearest child cry not and be still

Puberty Rites

An account on an interview based on the puberty rites is detailed below.

This is one of the glorious moments for mothers in the community, which is very prestigious for the celebrants. This rite is done to move the young girl from childhood to adolescent, the puberty rite among the Ashanti's is known as *Bragoro*, during a period of *bragro* in the Motokurodua community, the girl is taken to the queen mother of Motokurodua so she examines her to make sure she is not pregnant and has never seen a man, that means she is a virgin, if the girl passes the virginity test, she is celebrated with the *Bragoro* but if not she is then celebrated the other to depict that the Motokurodua community does not support young girls who do not wait for the right time for marriage, this one is called *Kyiribra*.

When everything is set for the puberty rite the queen mother with her elders set a convenient date for the celebration as the parents also prepare to crown the glory the girl has brought to the family. The ceremony was done early in the morning where the elderly women of the land moved through the town announcing before the ceremony takes place.

The elderly women did all the necessary cleansing of the celebrant, thus, cutting of nails, shaving of hair in a dancing crown way which is now called *dansinkran*, she was taken for a bath at a stream (*AfiEFI*), cover her waist with a white cloth, wear the royal beautiful slipper (*Kyawkyawfeefe*) and put her on a stool at the grounds of the ceremony. During all these the celebrant's breast is exposed with sheabutter smeared on the breast to brighten it and also make it attractive, she is then surrounded with the things bought for her by the parents to signify victory,

Marriage

In Asante, a woman without a husband is not really recognized as such, marriage is seen as very important in Asante just like any other African community. Asante's marriage is one of the areas where a major transition takes place in one's life to establish his or her family. However, the researcher's concentration shall be where traditional songs are displayed. After the traditional processes have gone on successfully they sing songs of joy for merry making. There are some

Funeral and dirges /appellations

Dirges are said to be songs or hymns of grief or lamentation; *especially*; one intended to accompany funeral or memorial rites, a slow, solemn, and mournful piece of music. It is often sung when the body is laid in state or not yet buried as shown above. Dirges are sung according to the caliber of person dead, these dirges vary depending on the age or achievement of the deceased. Some dirges were selected for the purpose of this research, the dirges bellow are played for all categories.

Akokosakyi, spoken words (Appellations)

Akan words

Mayeakokosakyi

Literal Translation

I am like the mother hen

<i>Meyebiribiaraaesnyekromafe o</i>	The hawk does not appreciate anything I do
<i>Baabidehyeako ye donkowo obi man so</i>	A royal is now a slave in some one's town
<i>Bebrebeyi ye mmusuo</i>	All these are curses
<i>Amparanaonnim me mmehwe me</i>	Who ever doesn't know me should see me
<i>Mesumeferennaneagyaawerehoniiba</i>	I cry for help from my mother and father
<i>Agyanakabameye den nni</i>	what do I do as an orphan
<i>Enne de mawieyenieoo</i>	This is my end today
<i>Ebooennaa</i>	Oh mother
<i>EnnaAboagyewaaenne de</i>	Mother Aboagyewaa today
<i>mahunuAmaneeo</i>	I am suffering

These spoken words renders the hatred man has for death. Not only does it portray hatred, but it also expresses the kind of person the deceased was, when alive and what might have taken the deceased to the grave.

CONCLUSIONS

This study identified the various categories of traditional music found in the study area. These include the traditional music of life cycle activities. The findings are based on outcome of formal interviews conducted with some traditional elders of the community and other categories of people, observations made at puberty rites, naming ceremony and funeral celebration tells it all.

The methods adopted for the preparation of this section are mainly narrative, descriptive and interpretative.

Traditional music within the communities under study has played a vital role which cannot be overlooked, and these have helped in putting to shape the life cycle activities of man. The major objective of this study was to identify the life cycle traditional music types in the Motokurodua traditional area.

There is again the need to record the identified life cycle traditional songs in the form of media and print documentation.

Furthermore, it was discovered that nursing mothers also use music to entertain their babies when crying or they are feeding them, a typical example was at Motokurodua where a nursing mother was singing for her when eating and sleeping afterwards.

The study has also brought out the fact that music form part of the life cycle of the people from the point of birth to the point of death.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made to improve impact of traditional music in the life cycle activities of the Motokrodua culture.

- a) Motokrodua traditional music has played a major part in a mother-baby relationship in which case such music has been used to entertain babies and to calm them whenever they are crying; therefore the old folk should teach the youth these types of songs and that will help future mothers and their babies bond at an intimate level.
- b. Traditional cultural festivals should be established in the area where the traditional musical types and

asserts could be display

- c. The myths that surround the traditional musical assets in the area should be removed so that, a lot of people would be encourage to take active part in their performance.

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