

**TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN IKON AND MBOPO DANCES OF AKWA
IBOM STATE, NIGERIA.**

BY

IKIKE INIEKE UFFORD

Matric No.: 126132

B. A. (Hons.) Uyo, M. A. Performing Arts (Calabar)

A Thesis in the Department of Theatre Arts
Submitted to the Faculty of Arts
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of the

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

JULY, 2018

CERTIFICATION

I certify that IKIKE INIEKE UFFORD carried out this Thesis, Tradition and Modernity in Ikon and Mbopo dances of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, under my Supervision.

.....
Okoye, C. (Ph.D)
Supervisor

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis first to God Almighty, for giving me the grace to finally conclude the programme, and to dance practitioners across the globe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God almighty for the grace to finally complete this programme. I graciously acknowledge the immense support of my wife, Uduakobong Ikike and my beloved children IkakkeAbasi, IniuforoAbasi and IdaraAbasi gave to me all through my programme. I cannot forget the inspiration and concern I got from my siblings, Dr. Ifure-Ufford Azorbo, Mr. Ifiok Ufford, Pastor Idongesit Ufford, Iniboioke and Maria. I am proud of you all.

To my Supervisor and academic father, Dr Chukwuma Okoye, God will continue to lift you higher with that grace to improve all those that pass through you. Your concern, corrections and vision made this work successful. I also thank all the lecturers in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan for their good works. God will bless you on all sides. I will not forget my General Overseer of Cheering News Christian Church International, Calabar Rev. Dr. Rachel Ukim for her prayers and support.

I am thankful to my friends, especially Femi, who made my stay in Ibadan comfortable. Asukwo Etuk, Dr. Liwhu Betiang, Professor Esekong Essien and other staff of the Department of Theatre, Film and Carnival Studies, University of Calabar, I say a big thank you.

May God's grace be sufficient to you all.

Ufford, I. I.

Abstract

Traditional dances in Nigeria are caught in the gap between change and tradition. Dance as a cultural element constantly changes in form, body movement and patterns. This raises the question of culture erosion and relevance to indigenous tradition. Extant literatures on traditional dance in Nigeria have mostly appraised aesthetic and social functions of dance without addressing changes in performance. This study, therefore, examined the changes in form, body movement and patterns in traditional dances with a view to improving the compositional structure of traditional dances for increased patronage.

This study adopted Child and Williams' theory of transculturation, while a qualitative design was employed. Participant observations enable the researcher gain first-hand experience of changing patterns in the selected dances due to the forces of modernity. Six dance troupes (Progressive Cultural Troupe, Okopedi Cultural Group, New Dawn Theatre, Ikon Afrikana, Akwa Obio Cultural Group, and Akwa Ibom State Council for Arts and Culture Dance Troupe) were purposively selected from Uyo, Eket and Ikot-Ekpen senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State. Structured interviews were also conducted with eight dance teachers, nine dance practitioners and 30 selected audience members. Data were subjected to cultural and performance analyses.

There were evidence of re-structuring movements, form and styles of the selected dances. The body movement in Mbopo dance by Progressive Cultural Troupe, Okopedi Cultural Group and the State Troupe were faster in tempo than the traditional version. The costumes were more colourful in appearance. Certain traditional ethical and religious rites such as virginity and fattening rites are being discountenanced. Performers in these troupes were selected based on their level of skill. The Ikon performance in Ikon Afrikana, Akwa Obio and New Dawn Troupes were more flexible as modern movements such as Jazz, Hip-hop and Salsa have been incorporated. Tradition is still considered by some of them as a thing of past and modernity as an influence from the western culture. Most people attribute the dynamic nature of Ikon and Mbopo dances to creativity since their form, costume, body movements and styles are products of the choreographer's creation and dialogue with the past to bring about aesthetic appeal for increased audience patronage. Changes in costume, movements, patterns and presentational style in both dances are innovations to enhance audience reception. The audiences appreciated the creative and flexible nature in Ikon dance, while a few others viewed the conscious negligence of virginity and seclusion rites as an attempt to jettison the age-long tradition of Mbopo dance.

Tradition and modernity are not mutually exclusive, but interrelated – besides, tradition is receptive to change in Ikon and Mbopo dances of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Therefore, there is the need for activities influenced by modernity to change tradition in order to enhance better standards for social reception.

Keywords: Tradition and modernity, Traditional dance, Ikon and Mbopo dances of Akwa Ibom State.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	-	i
Certification	-	ii
Dedication	-	iii
Acknowledgement	-	iv
Abstract	-	v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION		
1.1 Background to the Study	-	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	-	6
1.3 Purpose of the Study	-	8
1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study	-	8
1.5 Methodology	-	9
1.6 Significance of the Study	-	9
1.6 Scope and Plan of the Study	-	11
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW		
2.1 Tradition and Modernity	-	13
2.2 The Art of Dance	-	25
2.3 Dance and Society	-	36
CHAPTER THREE: AKWA IBOM PEOPLE		
3.1 Brief History of Akwa Ibom People	-	53
3.2 Akwa Ibom State Arts and Crafts	-	53
3.3 Akwa Ibom Traditional Institutions	-	62
3.4 The Musical Culture of Akwa Ibom People	-	74
3.5 Dance Culture of Akwa Ibom People	-	76

**CHAPTER FOUR: TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN MBOPO AND IKON
DANCES OF AKWA IBOM STATE**

4.1	Origin of Ikon Dance	-	89
4.1.2	Performers	-	90
4.1.3	Composition	-	91
4.1.4	Costume	-	92
4.1.5	Make-Up	-	92
4.1.6	Rehearsals	-	92
4.1.7	Venue	-	95
4.1.8	Performances	-	95
4.2.1	Origin of Mbopo Dance	-	103
4.2.2	Performers	-	1025
4.2.3	Composition	-	105
4.2.4	Costume	-	106
4.2.5	Make-up	-	108
4.2.6	Venue	-	108
4.2.7	Rehearsals	-	108
4.2.8	Mbopo Performance	-	111
4.3	Tradition and modernity in Mobopo danc of Akwa Ibom State		116
4.4	Tradition and Modernity in Ikon Dance of Akwa Ibom State		126

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1	Summary	-	149
5.2	Conclusion	-	154
5.3	Recommendation	-	142

Works Cited	-	157
Appendix	-	164

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Dance is an important cultural activity that reflects the sensibilities of the social community. Its dynamic nature across ages has helped to promote cultural values and norms. As a vehicle for the promotion of a people's cultural heritage, its changing patterns in form and composition brings about thoughts of culture erosion and identity. Traditional dances according to some people should always have a direct link with ancient practices and any addition or subtraction from its composition makes it void and unacceptable to the traditional society. However, the truth remains that dance which is culture based changes with the society and cannot be seen as static.

Dance evokes the collective consciousness of an African society through the reproduction of passions and actions in form of movement and gestures. According to Austin Anigala, dance

... expresses a collective emotion which is peculiar to a people in a particular cultural matrix. Such passions and actions displayed on the dance movements enact a story, which is identifiable when considered within its world of origin (2005:27).

Bakary Traore corroborates this point by asserting that "The dance also, by the use of human body, reproduces the passions and actions of men in order to express a collective emotion, to teach a religious rite or simply to entertain, it can also enact a legend or a story" (1972:27). Dance therefore releases feelings that are communal and shared by both the performers and audience as a unified entity. Traditional dances are expressions of the multi-dimensional social institutions and order in an African community. They exude the standards of behaviour and morality within the society. Dance is identified according to its cultural institution and affiliation. Thus, Allan Merian asserts that "dance is culture, and culture is dance" (1964:28).

African dances serve a complex diversity of social activities. Each dance performance usually centers on basic cultural issues which may reflect on values and social structures of the community. Some dances are performed during occasions such as

the new yam festival, naming ceremony, marriage and war. Dance reflects the desires and cultural experiences of its creator. A panoramic review of some selected dances across Nigeria reveals that dance is a reflection of its society. For instance, the mainstay of Ijaw people is fishing around the creeks and river banks hence their dances predominantly centering on jerky footwork and waist gyration as they attempt creating a balance as experienced when paddling across the rivers. When the paddles are used to simulate canoeing, the waist gyrates amidst songs referencing the water spirits or their social life in the creeks. The Hausa people, who live in the Sahel regions of Nigeria, create dances that reflect their nomadic lifestyle. Some of their movements show the characteristics of animals like camel, horses, cattle, and so on. The long sticks used in Koroso dance suggest rearing of animals, while their flowing gowns are manipulated as an extension of gestures.

The Yorubas use gestures and movements that are vigorous and improvisational. These suggest searching through the forest with caution and expectancy. The Bata dance is a great example of this concept, as the dance is filled with a lot of improvisational and body movements controlled by drum signals and tones.

The cultural relevance of dance as seen above is further supported by Ossie Enekwe. He believes that dance must reflect a traditional activity and cannot be presented for its own sake. He sees dance as an art that is "...used to secure an increase in fertility and good luck and to chase away evil influences and power... Dance permeates the social life of Nigerians. It offers young men and women opportunity to show off themselves thus encouraging courtship and provides training for work and combat" (1991:14). Complimenting his view, Omofolabo Ajayi asserts that "Dance is undoubtedly a vital means of communicating with the sacred in African religious practices. It is an expressive form fully integrated within ... the worship system" (1984:184). Ajayi's perception of dance is founded on ritual which to her is the source for dance creation and inspiration. She contends that anything founded on worship cannot be changed by the common man who is a tool in the hands of the gods. This notion may have prompted Sam Akpabot to declare that "choreographers have no place in African dance because African dances need not be choreographed" (1993:43). This is not true because African dances had leaders who were responsible for recruiting and training of members for performances.

Cultural influences in the development and creation of dance styles have consequently been counterbalanced by such historical events as slave trading, wars,

migration and colonization which have changed the people's habitation styles and exposed them to new cultural experiences. The expansion of trade routes brought Islamic and Christian religions which directly affected ritual performances such as Egungun masquerade and the Ekpo dance of the Yoruba and Ibibio ethnic groups of Nigeria respectively.

Changes in traditional dance styles within a society usually occur gradually even from the leaders of this performance. The introduction of formal education, the people's attitude to their dances which they no longer have the time to learn in the inherited manner, colonization and neo-colonization processes stimulate creative individuals to build new expressive patterns in dance. With this, African scholars intensify their admonitions on the need to strengthen our cultural identity.

Sam Akpabot traces the changes in indigenous performance styles to the coming of the Europeans. He submits that "Europeans had arrived the country bringing with them dances like the waltz, foxtrot, quick-steps and tango, and it was long before Nigerians caught on this brand of popular music..." (1989:94).

With the grip of these new forms of performance on the audience, dancers and musicians of indigenous orientation began to form orchestras that could play these strange exciting musical patterns and do the new dance forms. Nicholes (1964:41) laments that modernity has eaten deep into traditional dance and insists that critical social changes are leading to the extinction of traditional dance since they are founded on oral tradition. He opines that "Oral traditions are fragile... Experience and methodology that have sustained African communities for generations could well be lost to future generations". He fears that traditional dances may lose their cultural presence and therefore complicate the issue of cultural rejuvenation and identity for the African. In the same vein Okwori observes that

This change is not in the right direction for several reasons. It encourages a movement away from the collective approach to work by emphasizing the individual approach. It removes the performance from their localities where they make meaning in performance to situations; it removes the direction of the cultural and social values of the society from the hands of the performers... (1998:6).

Okwori's position is that cultural dances should be presented in such a way that they carry along the attributes of their parent societies. However, it is the view of this researcher that Okwori should acknowledge the fact that as a revolutionary art, dance changes as the desire and attitude of the performers and audience change in the society. Peter Badejo supports changing patterns in dance. He believes that the ability of a dance to adapt to changing traditions would help immensely in preserving such a dance in every age of experience. He uses the Bori dance in Nigeria as an example of a dance that has survived foreign influences because of its ability to adapt. Bori dance, according to him is a dance that shows the propagation of the medium through which the Hausa societies relate with the forces that govern their daily existence. He submits that

Despite all political, religious and social pressures imposed on Bori, it has survived as a means of understanding both indigenous and non-Hausa elements of culture in the contemporary Hausa society. This has been achieved through its dynamic elements of dance and music (1986:23).

Badejo believes that dance cannot be static and must change in respect of new social challenges. But there should be a conscious effort to research into traditional dances to avoid a total digression from its form and quality in society. He then recommends that "dance being a vital and loving art that responds to socio-economic and political events should ideally be properly explored through historical research and presentation to enable it perform its functions in the contemporary setting" (1986:23).

Ojo Rasaki Bakare shares the philosophy of the contemporary group. He believes that the choreographer should be given a free hand in his dance creations especially when it has to do with traditional dances. In his views, the choreographer should be interested in the movements and not the ritual processes in a traditional dance ensemble. He declares that

...the contemporary choreographer is engaged in the business of making personal statements in accordance with the social theatrical aesthetics and demands of his contemporary audience. He is not overtly engaged in spiritual efficacy but uses the dances that exist in his cultural background as raw materials and established 'linguistic property' to express his purely creative thoughts (1998:93).

Bakare rather believes that the preservation of traditional dance movements could be made possible by the choreographer's act of selecting dance movements from the pool of traditional performances. He declares that the choreographer's view is purely that of a creative thinker who is conferred with the right freedom and licence to use the traditional dances as his raw materials and make new statements. This view characterizes the contemporary thoughts on changes in traditional dance styles. Corroborating this view, Selma Cohen narrates that

In recent years some choreographers have tried to create dances that depend entirely on interest of movements for its own sake. They have attempted to obliterate the sign, to divorce gestures from any connection with emotion by isolating its customary context, by subjecting movements to artificial, even chance forms of combination and continuity ... (1997:11)

This change may be seen as a normal process in dance creation and presentation. It could be implicit or explicit. In any given dance there could be some elements added or subtracted in order to make a new form. The new form therefore becomes the new tradition of that dance which will also go on to change as the society gets disposed to new experiences. Therefore, there is no remarkable difference between tradition and modernity in traditional dance performances, rather there could be differences in presentational forms.

Cultural performances such as dance and music form an expression of the people's way of life. Though these performance traditions and patterns are changing through historical and social pressures, the contemporary producer or performer can still harness them to articulate societal aesthetic needs and demands. With this, traditional dances will continue to maintain their cultural relevance in the society. For example, the Mbopo dance was used to usher a maiden into her matrimonial home. This dance celebrated virginity and showed the coming of age of a maiden. The maiden in celebration dances round the community half nude. During her stay in the fattening room, the maiden learns morals, house, husband and child care and traditional beliefs through dance practice. At present, Mbopo dance has changed in form and presentation as most youths in Akwa Ibom State detest some traditional practices inherent in the dance presentation. Some of these practices include exposure of the body, circumcision and the fattening process. In their modern views they wonder why a woman would prefer to be fat when women nowadays

want to be slim and fit. Circumcision is considered as female genital mutilation while the maiden who does the dance today evades the rudiments of this institution. Consequently, the dance and institution of Mbopo has lost her potency. Youths go into traditional marriages without going through the laid down rules. However, the Mbopo dance is now prevalent in secondary and primary school performances, which shows that the contemporary society detest the earlier practices in Mbopo and not the aesthetics of the dance movements.

Contrary to the experience of the Mbopo dance, Akwa Ibom people are unconsciously more flexible with changes in the Ikon dance. Ikon dance has grown from its original stage, where its music and dance were those woven around indigenous forms and practices. Its music was basically pentatonic and the dance movements culture specific. But with the growing influence of western music and dances, such as jazz, reggae, pop and so on, the dance has been widely acceptable beyond the state. The Ikon dance integrates these new movement vocabularies with the old ones. The Akwa Ibom man identifies with and embraces these western music and dances with passion. The Ikon dance groups employ these modern patterns in their presentations to suit the new experiences in order to enhance audience patronage. The Ikon (Xylophone) is now predominantly tuned to a diatonic scale, which helps the group to adapt in playing any form of music beyond the culture to accompany the dance. This has enhanced the versatility of the instrument and almost every traditional group in the state is interested in owning the instrument to enhance their performance. Ikon dance is now multi-dimensional and suits all occasions. Again, this has proven to be a serious issue as Ikon groups now feature very little of indigenous dances and music.

Change is inevitable in traditional dance practice. In spite of this, change should be studied and dialogued upon with the aim of expunging the problems associated with it and promoting the treasure and gains that come with the change in the match towards building the performance to meet with the yearnings of our contemporary audience.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Traditional dance play important roles in Nigeria. These include worship, games recreation and even cultural exchange programmes. Despite these related importance, it has not enjoyed enough publicity and research compared to other art forms. Publication and analysis on traditional dances are scanty and has gone a long way to deprive the younger

generation of models of such performance and keep them in the dark on salient traditional values associated with traditional dances in the face of a changing society.

Even when these few publications on traditional dance are made, there seems to be a recurrent problem of definition of the art. Some see traditional dance as ancient practice. They believe that it must be presented the way it was conceived by the ancestors. Others are of the view that traditional dance is not necessarily a dance of the past, but that which identifies with the values and experiences of today. To them, traditional dance may carry some elements of the past but these elements are relatively modified to suit the culture of the time. Chukwuma Okoye argues that

African cultures have a tradition that is at once wholly modern... and traditional in its maintenance of an overarching relatedness to the past. Tradition in African culture is therefore a continuous and processual conversation between the past and the present. (2010).

As the argument that traditional dance replicate the past continues, some traditional dances are no longer existing due to their inability to assimilate the current cultural practices into the performance culture. This is a serious problem since important historical facts in these dances stand the risk of being forgotten or swept away.

Some Western scholars believe that Africans lack what should be classified as dance. They see African dance as ritual meant for worship and should not be classified as art. Sorell's view that African dance are subsumed in ritual and worship is not enough to prove that African dance is and cannot be classified as art. This is because African dances serve a complex diversity of social purposes. Often times, there is no clear distinction between ritual celebration and social recreation in dance performances. There is an interpolation of the two to ignite the total experience of the people. African dances do not only show expression and emotion, as painted by these western scholars, but they primarily make use of movements that are delightful to the audience. The African is interested in the aesthetic appeal of the dance movements and not how these movements tell stories and express emotions. For example, the beauty in Ekpo masquerade dance of the Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria lies on the acrobatic and vibrant waist gyration of the masquerade. The masquerade dances and pursues the spectators at random to create an air of frenzy and the audience inturn shout in ecstasy without considering the ancient stories and relics of the different masquerades in view. The creative manipulation

of movements in Ekpo dance therefore becomes the primary factor in determining aesthetic evaluation of the performance not the myth, worship or ritual. The joy of the dance is only known to the beholder and the performer. Mary Wigman asserts that “how the dance experience manifests itself to the individual may remain his own secret, the artistic achievement alone is the only valid testimony” (Langer, 1953: 197).

Lack of proper sponsorship from the private sectors and government has also delayed the growth of dance in the country. The Art Councils are not properly funded; hence the research department is empty of materials on dance performances. Though there are Festival of Arts and Culture every year, there has been a poor documentation of these and little has been seen on the improvement of the dance tradition in the country. In Akwa Ibom State, Ikon (Xylophone) is a big industry that needs the support of the government. The instrument is made in the form of the western piano and would have easily gone as a general instrument for music studies in schools. But poor funding may lead to the gradual extinction of this versatile instrument in the future.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

There is an attempt to use Mbopo and Ikon dances of Akwa Ibom State as parameters to judge African modernity as opposed to western standards of modernization.

To have a clear dimension of African dance, this study looks into the theories of dance with the purpose of comparing the standard of African dances with those of other countries and cultures. In the process, this thesis interrogates the nature of tradition in African expression and the strategies deployed in resisting European influences in dance practices and techniques.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This thesis will attempt answering such questions as: (i) What is tradition in dance? (ii) What is modernity in dance? (iii) How do they interplay? (iv) How do Ikon and Mbopo dances function in the aesthetic demands and expectations of the Akwa Ibom contemporary society? (v) What are the views of Akwa Ibom people on Tradition and Modernity in dance? (vi) Have these dances developed from what they were in the past?

1.5 METHODOLOGY

Different methods are employed by the researcher in order to achieve the aim of this work. The researcher uses the ethnographic research method as the basic source of collecting data. The method gives the researcher a view into the oral traditions of the Akwa Ibom people with regards to the origin of Ikon and Mbopo dances. It also helps the researcher obtain first hand information from the practitioners of these dances through oral interviews. Those that have passed through the Mbopo institution (fattening rites) and those that dance the Mbopo are interviewed to compare experiences. Those that have also performed Ikon dance are interviewed to know the essence of the performance and the revolution of the dance patterns and styles. This helps the researcher to assess the elements of tradition and modernity in the study. Data were subjected to performance analysis.

Photographs are taken during the field work and recordings of video and audio tapes are also made. Literary method is employed as a guide towards the successful analysis of the problem of the study. This method is invaluable as it gives the researcher ample opportunity to be informed of other views of proven scholars in the field of study. To this end, journal articles and books that are published in the area have been used especially in defining terms and the theoretical base of the performances and the people in focus.

However, the bulk of data comes from field study. Through the descriptive and interpretative method, the researcher is able to verify the challenges of change in traditional performances such as Ikon and Mbopo dances of Akwa Ibom State. Analyses of the dances have been made to show how the cultural perceptions of the people are experienced in them and to what extent they could be termed as social performances of the Akwa Ibom people.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Ideology of tradition and modernity has concrete and perilous consequences in reality, interpreting the world through these concepts should take into account their own limited scope-once they are investigated historically, or applied to everyday life. For example, the fossilization of tradition is always used to denote African culture and development, while modernity is mostly implored to illustrate the advanced stage or values of the European culture. This interpretation comes with its own historical baggage, which, once analyzed, reveals the negative effects of Europe's increasing intrusion into African realities.

The quest to shatter the tight grip of this ideology, especially through practice, opens the possibility for the Eurocentric notions of tradition and modernity breeding in Africa to be treated as inventions. The meanings and identities created by this ideology, which are assumed to have always existed in Africa and continue to float around in discourse on Africa to this day, can be challenged by new interpretations and practice. In this scenario, Africa can no longer sustain its primitive, tribal, lawless character, so necessary for the existence of European Modernity.

Chukwuma Okoye posits that

All African tradition continuously renews itself by responding to both internal and external social encounters while still retaining its fundamental definitive form; ... that Igbo masquerade performance practice adopts expropriatory strategy by which it subjects Euro-American cultural forms to a process of indigenization, stripping them of their original symbolic accoutrement and immersing them in entirely new ones (2010).

With a conscious understanding that inventions in culture are prompted by creativity and desire to contribute positively to the society, the appraisal of traditional performances would be based on present experiences rather than questioning and rejecting new ideas in performances. Dance practitioners and scholar will benefit from this understanding and create more dance vocabularies that are new, which may become receptive and taken as a form in tradition without prejudice.

The need to forge new identities for Ikon and Mbopo dances is stimulated by the emphasis of scholars in the field on the need to substantiate dance as a logical and respected discipline. This study is therefore significant in the sense that it serves as a body of knowledge for dance art and demonstrates its functions in culture. It is carried out in the bid to revive traditional dances and create new forms, which will go with the changes that occur in time.

This study introduces documentation for these authentic and widely revered dance forms of the Akwa Ibom people. It explores the artistic forms of Ikon and Mbopo and gives it recognition as dance theatre. The study also shows that Ikon and Mbopo dances are indigenous dance forms which have contemporary implications not just for the Akwa

Ibom people but also for the entire nation. This study brings to focus the aesthetics and nuances of the Ikon and Mbopo traditional dance forms.

The study also shows that culturally, there is a wide gap between the west and Africa. Theatrical performances are symbolic representations and presentations of every day life. Dance, which is an arm of the theatre, should therefore be evaluated or critiqued according to the norms and values of the environment in which the dance is produced. This study, therefore, highlights the techniques and artistry of African dance as exemplified in the Ikon and Mbopo dances.

This study is also significant because it contributes to the promotion of African dances and cultural renaissance, thus becoming a veritable resource material for theatre scholars and practitioners.

Ikon and Mbopo dances as shown in this study, navigates through the rich cultural heritage of the Akwa Ibom people. It serves as a rediscovery of the declining traditional cultures of the Akwa Ibom people and helps document, interpret, and preserve the aesthetic and functional values of traditional dances.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is tradition and modernity in Ikon and Mbopo dances of Akwa Ibom State. The choice of these dances is based on the fact that the researcher has been involved in these performances and is familiar with their content and form. In addition, the researcher hails from Akwa Ibom State where these dances are practiced.

To aid intensive research, the researcher has covered the three senatorial districts of the state to ascertain the changes in style and mode of presentation of the Ikon and Mbopo dances in order to draw, dependable conclusions, to the aesthetic demands and expectations of the Akwa Ibom people.

This thesis looks into the dance tradition of the Akwa Ibom State as a means of enforcing cultural identity in the face of challenges brought about by alien cultural practices with Ikon and Mbopo dances as case studies. The Mbopo institution is viewed as a body that produces the Mbopo dance, while families with Ikon tradition in the State are interviewed to have the background of the dance practice. This information are used to analyse the selected performances, taking into consideration the mode of performance,

revolutions in costume over time, change in movement patterns, age disparity and the context of presentation and audience receptability.

There poor documentation of the selected dances. Most of their history is stored in oral tradition which is passive. A review of the interviews show that the information received varies from person to person though the central idea about the performances remains the same. There are very poor literatures on these dances but the few publications on relevant theories are employed in the work.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Tradition and modernity are widely conceived as extremes in a linear theory of change. Tradition is seen as concerned with the past while modernity is with the present. This view is rather inapposite and undermines the natural essence of growth and development in a living environment. The relation between these two concepts is congenial. This is because tradition and modernity are not basically in conflict or mutually exclusive. Modernity does not preclude or necessarily undermine tradition.

Jurgen Habermas opines that the word “modern” in the Latin form “modernus” was first used in the late 5th century in order to distinguish the present, which had become officially Christian as it separates its practices from the Roman and Pagan past. With varying content, the term “modern” again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new. He stresses that some writers restrict this concept of “modernity” to the Renaissance, though this view is remarkably narrow. People considered themselves modern during the period of Charles the Great in the 12th Century as well as France of the late 17th Century at the time of the famous “Querelle des Anciens et des modernes”. This, however, means that the term “modern” appeared and reappeared exactly during the periods in Europe when the consciousness of a new epoch formed itself through a renewed relationship to the ancient. The continuous search for knowledge heightened the spate of discoveries in modern science and advancement in moral betterment (1990:25).

Modernity is a term that refers to the modern era. It is distinct from modernism which, in different contexts, refers to the cultural and intellectual movements of the period between 1630 and 1940. The term “modern” can refer to many things. Colloquially, it can refer in a general term to the 20th century. For instance, the early modern period refers to the period roughly from 1500-1800, with the modern era beginning sometime during the 18th Century. In this sense, industrialization during the 19th century marks the first phase of modernity, while the 20th century marks the second. Some schools of thought hold that modernity ended in the late 20th century with the emergence of post modernism. While

others would extend modernity to cover the developments denoted by post-modernism and into the present.

Erick Voegelin asserts that

The common factor is the growing awareness that man is the origin of meaning in the universe, and at the point of convergence arise an image of the universe that owes its meaning to the fact that it has been evoked by the mind of man. This new awareness, which we shall designate by the term modern, constitutes a radical break with the medieval image of closed universe in its dimension of nature and history. The medieval idea of the closed cosmos gives way to the idea of an open, infinitely extending universe evoked as a projection of the human mind and of its infinity into space (1999:136).

Louis Dupre supports the above notion but conceptualizes modernity as an innovative power that is pioneered by western influences. He states that:

Modernity is an event that has transformed the relation between the cosmos, its transcendent source, and its human interpreter. To explain this as out of historical precedents is to ignore its most significant quality - namely, its success in rendering all rival views of the real as obsolete. Its innovative power made modernity, which began as a local western phenomenon, a universal project capable of forcing its theoretical and practical principles on all but the most isolated civilizations (1993:249).

Though Dupre believes in modernity, he seems to be reflective of the post-modernist principles of discarding the past or clearing the psyche of men from history. Hence, man should be free and allowed to explore his new dimensions and reposition himself as the creator of his worldview.

The word "Tradition", from its etymological source, is derived from Latin term "Tradere", which means to transmit or give something to another for safe-keeping. 'Tradere' was originally used in the context of Roman law especially in laws regarding inheritance. The inheritor had the obligation of protecting and nurturing the trust given him by all standards. The term "tradition" as it is deployed today is actually a product of

the last 200 years in Europe. This is true because in medieval times there was no generic notion of tradition and custom.

That does not mean that one should not use it in relation to pre-modern or non-western societies, but the issue of tradition is relative and should be handled with care. In the quest to situate tradition within the same dogmatic principle, Enlightenment faithfuls tried to justify their action with the “new” which qualifies the modern. If one disentangles one’s self from the view that tradition is fossilized and modernity is “new” and legitimate, one would then declare that all traditions are invented. They are made by man who zealously owns up to these rules. It is pertinent to note here that no traditional society was wholly traditional, and tradition and customs have been invented for divergent purposes. This means that no man was born into a society that was truly traditional. Rather, man is responsible for the invention of laws and treads of life which make him hold fast to his ideals and power. With this, the notion that the tradition of the western world was consciously formulated should be disabused. Tradition always involves power in whatever way it is made. This is true of ancestral lineage and history. Giddens Anthony opines that “it is a myth to think of tradition as impervious to change. Traditions evolve overtime, but also can be quite suddenly altered or transformed... They are invented and re-invented” (2008:19). He comments on some traditions of great religions such as Islam and Christianity, citing Islam to have laws and rules which have remained recognizably the same over the years, but yet are not spared conscious revolutionary changes in terms of interpretation and execution in recent times. He declares that “there is no such thing as a completely pure tradition”. Endurance overtime is not the basic way of qualifying traditions. The distinguishing characteristics of tradition are ritual and repetition. Traditions are usually properties of groups, societies who share communal affinity. Individuals may follow traditions and customs, but traditions are never a quality of individual behaviour in the way habits are. Tradition defines truth, though it keeps changing, but it remains the framework for action that can go largely unquestioned. The authenticity of tradition is seen when people respect its guardians who are vested with the power of interpreting and executing the canons of the cultural practice of the people.

Awan D. Amkpa writes that

Tradition has been commonly understood as a relatively inert historicized segment of a social structure: tradition as the surviving past. But this version of tradition is weak at the

very point where the incorporation sense of tradition is strong, where it is seen as active shaping force. For tradition is in practice the most evident expression of dominant hegemonous pressures and counts (2003:82).

He contends that “what we have to see is not just ‘a tradition’ but a selective tradition... of shaping past and present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification” (2003:86).

Irrespective of the influence of modernity across Europe and Africa, conservative philosophers have seen tradition as the pool where wisdom is stored. The traditional ways of doing things were unconsciously retained while modernity was channeled to government and commerce. In most centuries, for example, the family, sexuality and divisions between the sexes remained heavily saturated with tradition and custom. The traditional ways persisted as a means of defending their own identity and truth.

Denis Vidal, an anthropologist, laments that

Tradition that is drained of its content, and commercialized, becomes either heritage or the trinkets bought in the Airport store. As developed by the heritage industry, heritage is tradition repackaged as spectacle. The refurbished buildings at tourist sites may look splendid, and the refurbishment may even be authentic down to the last detail. But the heritage that is thereby protected is severed from the lifeblood of tradition, which is its connection with the experience of everyday life. (Gidden: 2008).

He concludes by declaring that

We should not think that tradition is irrational in the ensuing modernity. Traditions are necessary because they give continuity and form to life. Every field has a tradition that defines its mode of operations. Our foundation should not be eclectic. Without tradition, ideas would have no focus or direction. In tradition, the past structures the present through shared collective beliefs and sentiments. As the influence of traditions and custom shrink on a world-wide level, the very basis of our self-identity and senses change (Gidden 2008).

In more traditional situations, a sense of self esteem and identity is largely sustained through the stability of the social positions of individuals in the community.

Where there is a derailing culture, or when it is outdated, and personal inventions come in as vehicle for sustainability, the identity of the individual changes. Self identity has to be created and recreated on a more active basis than before.

Lyod Thompson simply observes that

When one culture comes into contact with another (for instance, through commerce, or conquest, or missionary activity or the new all pervasive electronic media, or the mass-circulation of written material) reception or rejection of cultural influence always depends on the need felt by a given society, on the suitability or unsuitability of a given cultural item to already existing cultural organism.... (1991:22).

Talal Asad observes that part of the problem in this search is deciding whether “modernity” is a single tradition, a singular structure, or an integrated set of knowledges. He asks:

What criteria are we using when we call a person, a way of life or a society “modern”? Where do these criteria come from? Are they simply descriptive or normative, then on what authority? Such questions need to be worked through before we can decide meaningfully whether there are varieties of modernity and if there is only one kind of modernity, then whether it is separable from westernization or not... (1993: 16).

Asad’s view is based on his belief that modernity is not strange to man and should not be conditioned or imagined to have been instituted by the western society. He frowns at the seeming monopoly of knowledge and inventions by the developed countries and the disparaging abilities and sensibilities of the Third World nations. However, he concludes that every tradition goes through this systematic process of change, and change is propelled by the awareness and necessity for growth and development of any given society. Asad’s notion may have been a fall out from the acclaimed origin of modernity.

Frantz Fanon declares that “The desire to attach oneself to tradition or bring abandoned traditions to life does not only mean going against the current of history but also opposing one’s own people” (1966:180).

Despite all the propositions on modernity and tradition, it is common knowledge that one must know where he is going to, who he is, before devising means of furthering his desires. Creating things from abstraction is an attempt to deprive man of his identity, character and heritage. Modernity is progressive and not destructive. It is a term that qualifies the new and might entertain the future, but it must start from somewhere, and that is tradition. Ime Ikiddeh reviews the whole history of man as

The visible and invisible record of his response to the continuous pull between what has been and what is and is likely to be between tested experience and compulsion of novelty; it is a catalogue of his existential and social struggles to resist or adjust to the flux of changing conditions. At the basic human level, the response to change is an individual matter, but the direction, the quality and value of change in a community manifest at the larger social values, creating new ideas, new values and new conditions of living (2005:448).

Modernity keeps to no definite standards and boundaries; it is an elusive concept. Modernity means change or tradition redefined. Modernity assures that local ties and parochial perspectives give way to universal commitments and cosmopolitan attitudes, that truths of utility, calculation, and science take precedence over those of the emotions, the sacred, and the non-rational; that the associations in which men live and work be based on choice not birth; that mastery rather than fatalism orient their attitude toward the material and human environment; that identity be chosen and achieved, not ascribed and affirmed (Mezzaro, 1992:14).

Richard Hooker sees no difference between the concept of tradition and modernity. Though there may be claim, that modernity is a departure from tradition, through its innovative principles, the fact remains that

The experience of modernity is, in fact to live in traditional ways and to repeat tradition in unrecognizable forms. Modern cultures still perform traditional rituals such as sports (which are originally religious rituals) or sharing rituals, yet the origin and original meaning of these rituals have passed out of culture. Modern cultures still repeat ways of thinking in the past... the bulk of modern culture is based on traditional ways of thinking repeated relatively

unchanged - yet modern cultures tend to view these ways of thinking as innovations... (1994:28).

He finally submits that

The sense that the present is discontinuous with the past is an illusion and this illusion creates modernity itself. What has changed is social memory; we have disconnected most of our practices and ideals from our collective memory of their origin and meaning (1994:37).

Modernity is a cyclic process where the “new” gets overshadowed by another which will make the former obsolete through the novelty of the next style, which in turn will soon be outmoded. Edward Glissant, cited by Paul Gilroy, is furious over the issues of modernity. He asks:

Is not every ‘era modern’ in relation to the proceeding one? It seems that at least one of the components of “our” modernity is the spread of the awareness we have of it. The awareness of our awareness is our source of strength and our torment (1944:82).

Gilroy supports the view that modernity is continuous and grows out of the tradition which sustains and qualifies man’s identity and purpose.

It is a known fact that in the euphoric days of post- colonial rule, African nations and peoples have had all kinds of experiences that have embraced practically all aspects of human life. Some of these experiences, to be sure, predate the era of colonial rule. But the real nature of the problems generated by these experiences come to the fore as African peoples themselves attempt to “modernize” or situate themselves satisfactorily in the social, political and intellectual formation of the contemporary world.

Gyekye Kwame laments the negative impact of western culture on the minds of the African who believes that modernity came with the advent of colonialism. To him,

African colonial and post colonial experience has had enduring effects on the mentality acquired by the African people regarding their perception of the “African way of life” compared with the “European way of life”. That mentality almost invariably leads many Africans to prefer European things - values, practices, institution and so on - even if a closer look might suggest that the equivalent

African “thing” is comparable with. Thus, that mentality - colonial mentality - engenders a prism and so subverts originality and creativity, because it makes people look outside rather than inside for standards of judgment (1997:6).

Gyekeye’s views affirm that the “modern African” should believe on his worth in order to foster his ‘genuine identity’ and progress. This takes us back to Asad’s query on the criteria for judging what should be called modern or ascertaining modernity.

Monika Brodnicka writes on the perilous consequences the ideology of tradition and modernity has had on the common African. She avers that

..the notion of tradition and modernity in West Africa fossilizes tradition as characteristically African and mobilizes modernity as a function of European culture. But this interpretation comes with its own historical baggage, which, once analyzed, reveals the negative effects of Europe’s increasing intrusion into African realities (2003:1).

Some scholars believe that African ancestral fathers derailed and sold their identity by engaging in the slave trade. Rather than engage in “genuine trade” in such items as grains, oil, and so on, they profited from slave trade which portrayed the African as barbaric, unintelligent, and inferior. Yet, unfortunately, this trade has debased the African who now struggles to get this stigma off him and launder his image before his impervious “pay masters”. Bode Osanyin declares that

It appears the black Africans are yet to learn their lessons. The white world has a nauseating patronizing attitude over the black world. They play the role of the big father Xmas. They ditch out aids to their under privileged wards, use the wretched of the earth, we the miserable second half of humanity. He who tell us what to do with the money they give or loan us. They say, for example, our government must not subsidize education... the pump price of our petroleum must submit itself to market forces... (2004:16).

He continues,

...poverty must be endemic among us ...Black and African world must remain dunghill for all their useless goods. Tokunbo, the beloved smoking vehicles of the European world find sanctuary in Africa... And so our life drifts along

the dictates of the super powers... The so called third world is like a spare part to augment and enrich the so-called first world (2004:15).

Despite the deplorable state of the image of the African, some notable writers such as Wole Soyinka, Dapo Adelugba, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Nelson Mandela, Ime Ikiddeh are resolute on the proficiency of the African tradition. Though the struggle for cultural rejuvenation is on-going, the direction is based on defining African culture and practice in the present world view. This is because there is a blend of western and the indigenous cultures in the day to day experience of the African. Lloyd Thompson throws more light on this:

The popular identification of “civilization” with ‘European culture’ or with a distasteful ‘Oyinboism’ leads to much talk of culture-conflict and of alienation from “our culture”, meaning alienation from an indigenous heritage of life and values... In the science of anthropology and in all scientific discourse “civilization” is synonymous with ‘culture’ and ‘culture’ is a system or organism embodying all aspects of life of any given society (1991:2).

Culture contact no doubt leads to cultural development through the act of borrowing and adapting to new practices and ideas. A culture must exist for it to have contact with another culture. Adelugba writes that culture sustainability depends on the flexibility of cultural mechanism. He asserts that “For an existing culture to be self-sustaining, it must have had the socio-cultural mechanism of coping with its peculiarities characterized by its inherent means of self-development” (2003:6).

He adds that

...the people of Nigeria and Africa as a whole had their civilization prior to any form of contact with the west is no longer an issue. In other words, there had been contacts and interactions among various sub-ethnic groups, and cultural developments of some sort before Islamisation, Christianization and colonization (2003:3).

The above quotation debunks the view that African culture reached its deplorable state due to the influence of foreign culture since there was a constant change in cultural practices of the different ethnic groups in Africa. Also, it proves that civilization, which is seen as alien (since it was thought to have emerged due to the cultural imperialism of the West),

was already a feature of African culture. Culture rules man because of its ability to condition his psyche, determine his mode of perception, instigate his action and define his identity. It then follows that, whoever takes your culture away from you and replaces it with his own, will not only rule your life, but you can never grow beyond the limits he has set for you (Bakare, 2005:85).

The concept of tradition and modernity has also eaten deep into the fabrics of traditional performances and art in general. This is because the art of a people is a reflection of their mentality and well-being. Since some Africans who still base their judgement of art on the Eurocentric principles, and those that are determined to appraise and create art according to the aesthetic provisions of culture, the debate on what is modern and traditional continues in an endless discourse. For example, there has been a great evolution in dance practice in Nigeria in particular, and Africa in general. As an art, dance reflects the sensibilities of the parent society and dance can only change based on the mentality and provisions of its contemporary times. Bakare traces the changes in dance practice in the Black world to Western domination.

He submits that

...dance practice in contemporary black world is largely under the control of the big imperial master – France, Germany, Britain and U.S.A who dole out different kinds of aids to dance practitioners of African ancestry in cash, kind and materials but dictate in surreptitious manner the kind of dance these practitioners performed, the dictated time, and seemingly ignorant of the hegemonic and imperialistic agenda of the payer (2003:86)

According to him, the “big imperial master” tested the impact of dance in Africa and saw the passion the people had for it. They decided to use that as avenue to draw slaves into their captivity and also work diligently in their farms, like they are sponsoring sub-troupes to engage in the destruction of traditional dance forms today in Nigeria. They also sponsor Africans to organize dance performances to entice the would-be-slaves into the ship. On this note, Bakare writes that

The African dance was extensively and diversely used in the enslavement of Africans. Many of the occasions where large number of Africans were captured and herded into slavery were occasions during which white slave traders sponsored

their black collaborators to organize dancing events. The unsuspecting participants were later rounded up and enslaved... they were simply enticed by the white dealers into the ships for dance performances. As soon as the dance began, the ship would begin its journey without the black dancers in the ships belly knowing that they have danced their way into slavery (2003:86).

With this slavery, African movements were alienated from indigenous cultural milieu and muddled with other forms of cultural movements to create a different dance form in a new environment.

Hence, according to him,

The African mind and body were desecrated and weakened with anti-African beliefs and philosophies. Against this background, hideous development was the enunciation of the western concept of logic over emotion. As a result, dance, which is the root of all arts, was marginalized. The reason proffered by the colonial power being the instrument of dance, is too sensual and emotional to at times withstand logic (Bakare, 2003:87).

The crave for experimentation in dance practice is traced back to the alien dance traditions in the dance Halls, cinema, and foreign television channels. These experimental dances are consequently choreographed to show aesthetics of movements without necessary reflection of the parent culture. Bakare states that "the recolonization of" the black world by the white imperialists through dance has been possible because of some black entrepreneurs and black dance practitioners, mindless and indiscriminate commodification and commercialization of performance cultures which make them willing tools in the hands of the imperialist" (Bakare, 2003:89).

Citing contemporary dance form as an example of a dance influenced by western ideologies, Bakare claims that, it is a mere collage of mimetic abstractions and geometrical shifts in space instead of the polyrhythmic bodily gyration that communicate Africa. He derides the vague nature of the dance as it abhors décor and costume that are alienated from the body culture of the people.

He observes that

A dance form in which every dancer wears rags, sacks, bags or at best the ballerina's leotard, where a kingly character is denigrated with suggestive cardboard cuttings and ordinary sticks which the audience should imagine are crown and horsetail respectively, where content materials are intentionally made disjointed, extremely obscure, if not outrightly meaningless, where rhythmic and poly rhythmic gyration of the body are subverted and mere geometrical configurations and shifts in motion are exalted, where there is no colour, no richness, no grandeur, no candor which the audience watches and go home asking himself what have I gained from this performance (2003:92).

He laments that this practice for the form and content of performance are alienated from the total sensibilities of the people. He advises that Afro-Caribbean dance practitioners should start to lift dance beyond the status of faddish entertainment and go back to traditional forms as base for their modern and contemporary creations.

Though the issue of cultural relevance is applauded, it appears that Bakare's views tend to see cultural experience in the past. If dancers create dance based on cosmopolitan experience (which is their domain), will one say that they are not cultural or traditional dances? This may have made Ajayi to state that

Those who seek only to revive or preserve the African past; those who categorize cultural into traditional and modern as if there was a sharp line between the two; those who go to the villages to bring cultural groups to town in the mistaken notion that they are thus helping to preserve the past ... the village dance group, though based on traditional styles, is either a living, creative, cultural group fulfilling a continuing function in the village or bogus imitator of yesterdays dressed up for the benefit of tourists... (1977:36-37).

Culture, is capable of creativity. When men and women experience a change in their environmental setting, they are often able to adapt successfully to this new situation by means of cultural innovation, these innovations becoming cultural tradition over the passage of time.

It is important to note here that dance practice should not be seen as a recreation that must portray the relics of a culture. But, a choreographer should be given the opportunity to explore his thoughts, environment, and materials creatively to entertain the

audience aesthetically. The meaning of the dance cannot in all times be known, but there must be element of aesthetic satisfaction and entertainment. The manner in which Bakare portrays practitioners of the “contemporary dance” shows that he believes in the antipodal relationship between what is “modern” and what is “traditional”. Every dance is a reflection of an individual’s or groups spiritual and physical experience in a tradition that changes endlessly.

Bronowski asserts that“... artists as well as scientists should be forward looking, to fly in the face of what is established, and to create not what is acceptable, but what will become acceptable” (1958:64).

Infact, tradition and modernity are not really two mutually exclusive states of a culture or society but different aspects of historicity. Many of the things that are believed to be modern belong to traditions which have roots in western history. A changing tradition is often developing speedily but a tradition nevertheless. Tradition is the foundation that guides human identity and direction, while modernity is the act of shaping tradition.

2.2 THE ART OF DANCE

Dance is the movement of the body in a rhythmic way, usually to music and within a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, and exhibition of delightful movements in performance. As an art, it generates impulses that are skillfully presented before an audience. The manipulation of impulse and skill in choreography form the base of the art of dance. Dance is an ordered art capable of evoking emotion, beauty and entertainment through the impulse associated with body movements presented in a stylized and creative way before an audience.

The different views on dance as art are characterized with controversies. This is born out of the fact that the word “art” is ambiguous. Certain difficulties abound in qualifying the word “art”. For instance, art has been said to be “any manipulation of objects or events for any human purpose whatsoever” (Bronstein, et al. 1996:426). This definition is too wide as everything could be seen as art. Schopenhauer views art as an insight into reality. According to him, reality is the base on which art thrives. The objective world as idea is merely the outward side of the will, only the appearance of the real world. He elucidates on reactions when the mind fixes its attention on platonic ideas and contemplates them for their own sake, that is, as independent of the desires of the will.

For him, it is through this type of contemplation that art comes into being. This is the cognitive aspect of art.

Beyond this so called “cognitive art”, Bronstein observes that art is conceived as the expression of feeling and desire. Hence art and aesthetic experience are primarily concerned with the expression and intensification of human feelings, desires and wishes (1996:432).

However, Paul Ziff, Morris Weitz and William Kennick are of the view that art does not have any formal conditions that must be used to test what is art. They insist that “...members of the class of works of art belong to that class by virtue of the family resemblances that are obtained among the members” (Cooper 1992:18). The problem here is that everything may be regarded as art.

Despite this unending argument majority of art philosophers opine that a work of art is man-made as distinguished from an object of nature. It is not a natural object but something made or transformed by man for aesthetic experience. With this, one can rightly say that dance is art because its movements are ordered by man, presented by man, and appreciated by man. The daily movements of man cannot pass for dance, but the creative use of these movements to either entertain, express emotion, highlight aesthetic value and mood can make dance to be considered as art. Therefore, a truly universal definition of dance must therefore return to the fundamental principle that dance is an art form or activity that uses the body and the range of movement of which the body is capable unlike the movements performed in everyday living. Dance movements are not directly related to work or survival. Dance may be made up of movements associated with cultures and it may even accompany such activities. But even in the most practical dances, movements that make up dance are not reducible to those of straight forward labour; rather they involve some extra qualities such as self-expression, aesthetic pleasure and entertainment. Dance as arts brings to mind a “host of intangibles: creativity, imagination, elegance, power, aesthetics, harmony and fineness of form, it captures something of the human spirit and touches upon the senses, but intellectually elusive meanings in life” (Edwin; 1991, 16). For dance to be properly viewed as art, there is need to sum up the necessary conditions used by different dance critics. This include human_movement that is formalized (being stylized or performed in certain patterns), with such qualities as grace, elegance, and beauty, to the accompaniment of music or other rhythmic sounds, for the

purpose of telling a story and/or for the purpose of communicating or expressing human emotions, themes, or ideas and with the aid of mime, costumes, scenery, and lighting (Camp, 1981:51). Historically, dance has gone through series of transformations based on the practicing choreographers and philosophers across the ages. Aristotle's statement in the Poetics that dance is rhythmic movement whose purpose is "to represent men's character as well as what they do and suffer" (Ufford, 2003:16)) refers to the central role that dance played in the classical Greek theatre, where the chorus, through its movements, re-enacted the themes of the drama during Lyric interludes. Aristotle believes that dance is an ordered art of movement designed to imitate the action and emotion of man in his society. According to him, art is the realization in external form of a true idea and is generated or of the natural pleasure humans take in their minute ability to imitate and imagine as well as the pleasure humans feel in recognizing likeness. Aristotle's notions tend to appraise dance as an externalized action which makes the dancer liken his movement to reality. To him, art is nature and nature is art. Aristotle's expressionistic views are supported by some dance scholars. For instance Hawkins argues that "dance as a work of art may be described as the expression of man's inner feelings transformed by imagination and given form through the medium of movement" (1988:4). Jean-Georges Noverre, the great French choreographer and ballet master deployed this technique. He argues that dance is meaningless unless it has some dramatic and expressive content and that movement should become more natural and accommodate a wider range of expression. He declares that "...this art has remained in its infancy only because its effects have been limited, like those of fireworks designed simply to gratify the eyes...No one has suspected its power of speaking to the heart" (Udo, 2000:16).

Noverre strives to qualify dance movements as expressive and capable of evolving around a given plot and narrative so that it can entertain and also educate. He feels that this will increase the intimacy between the dancer and the audience. Noverre's vision flourished in the first half of the 19th century, as ballet became a completely independent art form with dramatic themes and emotions. Updating Noverre's assertion on dance, Michael Fokine argues that dance movements in ballet should be designed to express dramatic action and not for mere entertainment. He stresses that dramatic action should be developed through movements instead of using pantomime to relate the story with alternate movements without narrative significance. He supports the use of the human body as a primary tool to communicate ideas and feelings and asserts that "...anything

which detracts from human movement, the central expressive vehicle of dance, detracts from the overall goodness of the work” (Camp, 1981:49).

Noverre stresses that anything that is incoherent is not appealing and canvasses for the unity of movements with the central idea of the ballet of his time. The constant reference to the act of movements narrating events leads us to the literal approach in dance practice. Literal approach to dance limits the creativity of the choreography as his movements are only those that can be accommodated in the plot or story-line. The movements are used as replacements for words. Movement is therefore a language understood and perceived through the vision of the human body in motion.

Non-literal dance shows the kinetic sensibilities of the choreographer who is freed from dogmatic or formalized rules and patterns. In his imagination, he creates movements at liberty and also employs other elements of the theatre as an integral part of dance presentation. By this the material of dance speaks for itself, establishing the independent nature of dance as an art form. Turner asserts that non-literal dance

Requires an ordering of movement through a neuromuscular sense of logic. The human body, as the instrument of communication has to transcend its traditional personal limitations....and to become kinetically alive and kinesthetically aware...it must respond sensitively to dancer’s feelings and needs and to the demands of the choreographer. (1971:23).

The choreographer has divergent materials at his disposal to execute his non-literal dance form. These include body relationship, design, feelings, images, shape, movement, structural form, space and time. These valuable materials enrich his vocabulary. The choreographer’s vision is not cut short by any existing rules of dance creation, but he is at liberty to comb out movements and other materials to make his desired form come to pass. His job is to bring all these materials together within a defined frame. With this liberty in expression, the non-literal dance has broader range of subjects and sources than the literal. Despite the prevalent artistic materials such as costumes, props and lighting effects, they are not used as substitutes for movements or as conveyers of meaning in themselves but are used as extensions of movement and motion. The choreographer in this case develops his content intuitively without considering the intellectual logic which may distance him from his vision. Non-literal dance provides ample opportunity for the performance to communicate directly to the senses of the spectators and the dancers in this

feat by transcending their physical limits in the exploration of a new realm of communication.

There are other schools that view dance as art in their own ways. The formalist school upholds the notions that dance is not a representational practice as is suggested by Noverre, Aristotle, Fokine and so on. The import of formalism can best be seen as a revolt against art as representation, art as expression, or art as a vehicle for truth or knowledge or moral betterment or for social improvement. They (formalists) do not deny that art is capable of doing these things but they believe that the true purpose of art is “art for art’s sake”, not “art for life’s sake”. This is the foundation on which formalism is founded. Art therefore is for entertainment, for the perception of the intricate arrangements of lines and movements, colours, music, and combination of these. They savour the need for the audience to be free to experience a new world other than the one they are familiar with. Some critics in dance support this theory since they believe that, it is wrong to place movements side by side with words because it will ruin the fidelity of dance as an art form.

Burt is of the view that dance transcends the “outmoded representational forms of the nineteenth century and earlier European tradition” (1995:31). He draws his expression based on the growing state of dance as an art across the globe. He reiterates that the “greatest dancers somehow transcend the body in a quest for the purely spiritual” (1995:31). By this, a dancer is not restricted in movement creation and composition. He is free to seek for what he has not seen before and transpose same in his dance provided it is actualized through the medium of movement. Andre Levison insists that dance is an aesthetic form, which deals with man’s quest to garnish his movements in order to impress the audience. He regrets that people “pile upon dance mistaken burdens” in their quest to make dance yield story through conscious imitation of actions around their environment. He pleads that dance should be aesthetically appraised as an independent art form which exists for itself. The formalist sees dance as “the art of displaying elegant and correct designs in positions favourable to the building up of patterns in line” (1983:52). In this case the art of dance is based on the skillful execution of movement as something of value to the excitement of the audience.

Though the modernist views on dance are similar to that of the formalist school in terms of giving dance a unique form, they propose that dance should be seen as a projection toward “...that pure essence of dancing which contains no element of anything else” (Kaye 1994:86). This view enhances the utility possessed by the human body.

Modern dance comprises of highly individualized movements based upon personalized, ever-changing artistic standards. It developed against the backdrop of the dogmatic traditions and disciplines and the stiff formality of the ballet of the 19th century. The emergence of the modernist philosophy in dance brought about new dimensions in the art. The first forty years of its existence saw dance evolving around a core of established standards based on principles borrowed from other art forms. There exist the use of variety, contrast, balance, climax, sequence, transition, harmony and unity. Through research, they resolved that some of the above elements could be eliminated without impairing the whole. Modern dances moved from the free form period which was adapted to education as natural dance to the mechanistic phase with its rigidity, lack of imagination and gross muscularity (Ufford 2004:8). The introspective and psychological phases were marked by emphasis on personal anguish, Freudian symbolism and social consciousness. Since the late 1940s, a second cycle of modern dance begun, departing radically from the underlying traditional principles that served the first cycle. This new dance reflects the most recent technological development in space, electronics and the mass media. This dance gives freedom to expression and creation of new dance vocabularies. Modern dance philosophers' argument on dance as art is defined in opposition to the decadence of classical ballet, while transcending the naïve aspects of the Romantic Movement and in so doing, looked towards the fundamental character of dance as an art form and as a discipline. Though choreographers like Rudolf Laban, Kurt Joss and Ted Shawn helped in defining this new role of dance as art; Isadora Duncan is credited as the first person to bring this new dance before an audience. Before her dance performance ballet was the only form of dance performed in concert. In ballet, the feet and legs were emphasized with virtuosity shown by complicated codified positions and movements but Duncan brought in movements that were natural, such as the swaying of the trees and the rolling waves of the sea and in harmony with the movement of the earth. She used her whole body in the freest possible way, discarded corset, ballet shoes and stiff costumes while replacing them with flowing Grecian tunics, bare feet and unbound hair. She also used the symphonies of great masters, including Beethoven and Wagner, which was not the usual custom. She encouraged choreographers to be involved in the course of allowing the body to be free to move and express itself. She freed the body from the "Victorian constrictions, liberated dance from conventional restrictions and recreated it in its oldest form as a means of self-expression" (Sorell; 1979:689). Sorell also wrote that Isadora Duncan gave the dance "its soul" while Mary Wigman provided "its body". Wigman not only added the body but also

direction to an art that has relied so much on inspiration of the moment. The modernists detest stereotyped movement for something genuinely of the soul. The art of dance should be created from within man and not unnecessarily interjected by the presence of nature in man's existence. Martin sought to theorise that Duncan's works should be understood as "a profound overturning, clearing away of ages of accumulation of intellectual restraints and yielding the power of motion to the inner man" (Ufford 2004:10). This justifies Martha Graham's externalization theory in dance as she notes that

Dance is another way of putting things. It isn't a literal or literally thing, but everything that a dancer does; even in the most lyrical thing, has a definite and prescribed meaning, if it could be said in words, it would be; but outside of painting, outside of sculpture, inside of body, is an interior landscape, which is revealed in movement (Mazo, 1977:184).

Merce Cunningham experimented on movement as the sole element in his dance composition. He produced "dance-by-chance procedures where movement and counts were determined by coin tossing. The objective is to achieve greater objectivity and freedom of exploration by eliminating the artiste's personal values and tastes. His dance world is imagination, chance, unconventional subject matter and conspicuous absence of emotional display. He refutes literal materials such as stories or psychological issues. To him, dancing has a continuity of its own that need not be dependent upon music or literal ideas. Its force of feeling lies in the physical image. For him, the subject of dance is dancing and he does it quite casually (Ufford, 2004:13). This is to help dancers create movement without depending on familiar things around them. Hence dance is done for the sake of pleasure and excitement, not to change the world.

Alwin Nikolais contributes to modern dance creation by encouraging the use of props, costumes, films, sound and light as extensions of the bodies of the dancers. His works contain no story. The dancers' bodies are often distorted with the use of costumes and props to emphasize Nikolais' abstract images and suggestions. He is a movement motion purist as he gives all elements of the theatre an integral and dynamic part in his dance theatre productions. He does not settle for the limitation of the human body nor its human condition, rather he works to enlarge the dancer's orientation to the universe as well as to establish that particular dance world. His works rest on the premise that "the province of art is to explore the inner mechanism and extra dimensional areas of life and

out of the exploration to produce its findings translated into the form of the artist's medium" (Turner; 1971:12). This feat may have prompted John Martin, the dance critic of New York Times, to praise Nikolais by crediting him with a fresh and original talent and an awareness of the true substance of dance. He described Nikolais' work as being "the discovery of what we call with great exactness, the modern dance in terms of its own theatre" (Turner; 1971:13).

There is also a more radical school of thought in dance. This is the avant-garde faithful. These philosophers are bent on fighting against the traditional concepts and definitions of dance as art. Some encourage the use of non-formalized movements in "everyday" movements and random movements. Others consider ordinary movements such as walking, skipping and running in dance without elements of stylization. This group does not think there is any difference between intentional movements and real movements in the art of dance. They could consider a person walking in her room with a radio player as a dance performance. But Van Camp while appraising this declares that

The room-walking would be art if the walker did it for the purpose of being observed, appreciated, and evaluated as a performance by the other person, and if the observer also appreciated the movement as a performance, despite the absence of a traditional theatre (1981:32).

She continues by analyzing the standards of appreciating works of art such as dance to include unity, meaningfulness and so forth, rather than non-art standards of say how efficiently the walker crossed the room to answer the doorbell or how carefully he walked to avoid toys on the floor (1981:32).

The avant-gardes have kicked against all concepts of dance as art and have also made it difficult to appraise this art. The avant-gardes have challenged historical views on the role of music in dance such as music as foundation or beat for dance, music complimenting dance, music and dance being integrated with the dance becoming an interpretation of what the music renders. Some experimentalists like Cunningham and John Cage have severally done works in this regard. Van Camp submits that

Cunningham has experimented with dances to the accompaniment of randomly-selected music, with the intention of creating dances which may not even coincide with, let alone express, anything in the music...Examples of dances done in silence exist. Other choreographers are

experimenting with highly orthodox forms of musical and other accompaniment such as typewriters, whistling and electronically tape-recorded music (1981:32).

She continues to point out issues that avant-garde choreographers detest, like emotion in dance presentation, scenery, props, costumes and so on. She cites examples of the use of slide shows, closed circuit television, videotapes and even such unusual props as ranges which are distributed to the audience at intermission. There is also an experimentation with innovations in scenery from silhouettes behind projected screens or no scenery at all, the use of practice outfits in performance, designers and formal dinner wears and above all performing nude.

With the rejection of traditional seating arrangements by the avant-gardists, especially the proscenium stage, Selma Jeanne Cohen summarizes several of such experiments thus:

...Cunningham... (took) his dances into art galleries to find new ways to defocus movements in space. Other tried city squares and parks some of them devising pieces for such specific environments that they could be done nowhere else. Twyla Tharp did *Medley* (1969) on a college campus, where she used a tremendous expanse of lawn...Rudy Perez choreographed a ballet for automobiles (with drivers) performed in a parking lot...James Cunningham's' dancers finished a gymnasium presentation by running up to the bleachers and inviting the audience to join them in social dancing...(Van Camp 1981:35).

The avant-garde conformists may not have rejected the fact that there is an audience and performer but they have virtually turned every other thing down in terms of the convention of the traditional stage. Though some scholars may think that the avant-garde faithfuls have made dance as an art "porous", Robert. J. Pierce observes that "the avant-gardists have not rejected the most basic elements of dance; space, time, energy, human bodies. They hate taking these elements and restructuring them in ways that challenge our principles and aesthetics" (Cited in Van Camp, 1981:35).

The difficulty in defining and appraising dance as art is caused by the rudimentary traditional views of what constitutes dance and the more recent challenge presented by avant-garde experiments. Therefore, the places of performance, costume, light, plot, dialogue, music and so on are only embellishments of this main stay of dance (movement).

Selma Jeanne Cohen observes that the “designing of the movement of the human body is the unique property by dance as an art medium” (1981:42). Dance as art is the skillful impression of the dancer using his body as medium before an audience (whether his movement is made for the sake of it or expressive of emotion).

Julie Van Camp aptly elucidates on the human movements that could be considered as art. She observes that

The artform of dance is distinguished from other movements by, among other things, the complex intellectual, non-sensual dimension. Although some phenomena both art and non-art are quite close on such a continuum, a sharper distinction prevails in the practices for presentation, appreciation and evaluation of the movement. For example, the experiences of the ballet presenters and audiences are shaped by the intent to explore the non-physical dimensions of the movement presentations, while the experiences of circus-goers are not. This distinction thus depends on contemporary assumptions about the role of art generally as a cultural phenomenon, exploring the complexity of the human condition in non-verbal ways (1981:67).

Art is a production of the intellects, abstract or concrete, collective or individual but purposive and essentially pro-social. Art brings reality up against imagination and presses creativity to the ever expanding limits of human potential. This must have informed Brady’s assertion that

There is a basic fear in human beings of losing balance, doubtless related to the fear of falling (as such) a dancer’s trick (is that of) defying, as they do, the natural order of things: like all tricks, once mastered, they give the performer an undeniable exhilaration, a sense of freedom from mundane things, a sheer sensual joy in movement. (1983:136).

This proposition shows that dance is learned because natural movements are taken from their free state, and redefined aesthetically through rehearsals. In the process, the dancer goes through uneasy techniques that are removed from daily routine. Barba states that unease are a means of control, a kind of internal radar, which permits performers to observe themselves while in action of a series of physical perceptions which confirm that extra-daily non-habitual tensions are at work in the body (1991:13).

Dancers are not just performing artists; their bodies are basic tools that aid the execution of the art. The quality of this art therefore depends on the physical qualities and skills that the dancer possesses. The state of a dancer's body determines how strong and flexible he would be during movement presentation. Dancers must undergo training to possess great co-ordination and awareness of kinetic control over weight and balance. With training, the dancer is aware of space, develops strong sense of rhythm (where necessary) and appreciation of music. With these the dancer learns to project his movements with grace, fluidity and harmony. Though the avant-garde choreographers sometimes work with untrained dancers to take advantage of the qualities of natural, untutored movements, most choreographers still believe that training is pivotal to creative and skillful movements.

As an art of movement (dance) it will be unfair to stop elucidating on the phases of dance creation from its professional standpoint. No matter the intent of the choreographer, he must go through a formal process. These are gathering together the movement material, developing movements into dance phrases, and creating the final structure of the art.

The choreographer sets out to gather his movements in diverse ways. He can pick from existing works, previous works, daily human movements, imagination as well as through interactive sessions with his dancers during exercise. The accumulation of these movements is highly dependable on the tradition in which he works. Although each choreographer draws materials from diverse sources and often employs contrasting styles, most dance works of a single choreographer show a characteristic style of movement. Dances, however, are rarely, if ever, a loose collection of isolated movements. One of the most important features of any choreographer's style is the way in which movement material is connected into dance phrases.

Developing movements into phrases is essential in choreography. A phrase is seen as a series of movements bound together by a physical impulse or line of energy and having a discernible beginning and end. There are many factors that inspire the audience to perceive a series of movements as a phrase. There exists the recognition of some kind of logical connection between the movements that prevent them from appearing arbitrary and isolated. It may be that one movement flows easily and naturally into another within the phrase and that there are no awkward transitions or that there is some clearly seen pattern to the movement. Rhythm is very significant in movement execution because of its recognizable pattern of accents. A movement's accent is measured by its pulses or force and duration. A strong accent from the drums may herald strong movements while a weak

accent will inform milder movements. In phrases that have perfectly regular rhythm, the strong and weak accents recur in the same sequence and always over the same duration of time. Dance phrases vary both in length and shape. A phrase begins with a very forceful movement, or maximum output of energy that gradually comes to a pause or it may have its climax somewhere in the middle or at the end. Other dance phrases, in contrast, have an even distribution of energy. These factors determine the way in which the phrase is perceived by, and effect that it reproduces on, the audience. Long, repetitive, evenly paced phrases with strong climaxes appear nervous and dramatic. When a choreographer succeeds in delineating his dance phrases, he can use repetition in which the same phrase is simply repeated or add some other phrase to the one repeated at each point of execution. Patterns can also influence movement phrases. This includes alternating two phrases or transposing these phrases in a canonic form.

In creating new materials within a dance phrase, the choreographer may use straightforward reversal of the sequence of movements in the phrase, but more complex principles of motif and development and of theme and variation are also common. The principle of theme and variation works on the same initial dance phrase being repeated in a number of different ways, for example, with different numbers of people at different speeds, with different styles of movement (jerky or smooth) or with different dramatic qualities (happy or sad). In motif and development, material from within the phrase is developed in new ways such as embellishing it with other movements (the same jump but with different arm movements) or by fragmenting it and repeating only small details.

Creating the final structure is the height of the choreographer's overview of his production. This is the period that the idea, imagination and intention are put to play based on the tradition of the dance he wants to create. He eliminates and creates more movements to intensify and clarify his vision. He considers the patterns of movements and encourages unity amongst his dancers. At this point, he stresses on synchronization and fluency in movements and design. He also considers the deployment of the other embellishing arts (costume, make-up, light, set and so on) and the audience.

The three stages highlighted above go a long way to show that dance is a process; dance is not just any movement, but the manipulation of movements to the delight of a people in a particular space and time. Dance is a recreation of movements (seen or imagined) using the human body as medium. Dance is not a natural object but something made and transformed by man, which functions aesthetically in man's experience, either wholly or in part.

Conclusively, Langer makes an analogous distinction between art and culture. To her, the “work of art is never something the artist finds or to which the spectator gives identity by the act of looking but is something that has been made and which asserts its own identity as art”. It follows that dance is art because, it is never “simple movement but is always movement that has been transformed, imagined, remade and made articulate” (Horst & Russel; 1961:117).

2.3 DANCE AND SOCIETY

Dance, conventionally conceived as a human behaviour composed of purposefully, rhythmically and culturally patterned sequences of non-verbal movement and gesture which elaborate the world view of the society. As such, dance is shaped by the values, attitudes and beliefs of the people who comprise its “host”, society; it depends on their feeling, thinking, and dynamics, in their combination and consequently form and style do not exist apart from the human behaviour process which produces them. It is on this reason that dance, which can be viewed impressionistically, may also be subjected to the same objective, systematic observations, analysis, and reporting as are other forms of human behaviour.

Dance has been used as a pleasurable aid to work, especially in rhythmical team work. Dance has become an adjunct to fighting, hunting, loving and much else. In dancing or movement thinking, man comes into awareness of a certain order in his higher aspirations towards spiritual life. In religious dances, man represents those super human powers which aids him cover directly the happenings of nature to determine his personal and tribal fate. In such persons, personification of efforts man learnt the reconciling trend of events and pictured the power behind it all.

Langer submits that “... the attitude which produces the movement quality is an aspect of behaviour and can be considered a product of learning, metabolism and perception of the environment” (1996:146). Hawkins goes further to assert that the body which is the main tool for movement is the medium “... man senses and perceives the tensions and rhythm of the universe around him ...” (1988:3). However, Kwakwa corroborate that “traditional Africa dances do not occur in isolation. They often play specific roles within an event or a complex of events earmarked for a specific occasion” (1998:285). To Mazzo, “... everything that a dancer does, even in the most lyrical thing,

has a definite and prescribed meaning...” (1977:184), this may have prompted Laban to conclude that dance of all times have had a profound connection with working habits of the periods in which they were created.

African dances express a social organization and relations within the group, in addition to integrating new members into the society and maintaining the cultural pattern and feelings of the people (1984:4). Nicholls stresses that the conscious repetition of movements lead to a perfect learning process. He posits that

...Repetitive dance sequence introduces children to traditional patterns of behaviour. During initiation ceremonies that introduce adolescent to adult society, dance communicates messages about respect for self and others, physical coordination and mental poise, standards of conducts, and cultural integration. Within communal rituals, forms of dance theatre become the medium which the world view is made salient to the community (1996:47).

Dance, like other arts, reflects its society and people. As a people’s art, it operates from the sensibilities of the people and makes use of their own artistic form. The performer rides on the community tide and rhythms. This means that the people can talk about, and analyze issues concerning them through a medium which belongs to them (Abah, 1990:35). Dance succinctly becomes a veritable source or medium of peoples psychological upliftment geared towards evaluation and reactivation of the norms and values of the society (Ebong, 1990:551). The validity and acceptability of dance is in the agreement between the dancer and the community to enhance patronage. Samuel Akpabot comments on the invaluable roles of symbol in dance. He avers that “symbols play a very important part in the understanding of the folk music and dance of Akwa Ibom society” (2001:67). He quotes Victor Turner who opines that “symbols are related to the process of adjusting the individual to the traditional social order on which he was born” (Akwa Ibom compendium, 2000:71). Dance belongs to natural consciousness, it is a common aspect of a people’s culture, it is not bought or sold, and it is just there.

From its earliest days of existence, dance served as a medium through which the people appease or make supplication to their gods. Writing on Gelede dance, Enekwe analysis a significance of dance in this festival. He submits that

In this ceremony; dance is used to ward off evil and secure blessings for mankind. It is designed to sublimate the dangerous powers of Aje (witches), women who Onile, the earth mother has bestowed mystic powers that can be used destructively, such as undermining the fertility of the people and crops, or withholding rainfall or inflicting disease on the people. At every Gelede festival, the Aje (witches) are publicly honoured and entertained by masquerades to attract their goodwill (1991:13).

Omofolabo Ajayi also observes that dance is significant in the ritual process of deification and worship in the Obatala festival of the Yoruba people. She submits thus;

At every stage, dance is performed as a crucial landmark synthesizing the other events and giving form to the totality of the festival. It is especially through the dances that the myth stops being a silent, almost unconnected text and becomes vibrant interlinking context for the festival. There are four main dances performed during the ten-day festival; (1) The invocational, (2) The war dance, (3) The sacrificial dance, (4) The Obatala dance; these are significant movement symbols which, when related to other symbols, gives meaning to the festival and the concept of Obatala in Yoruba religious worship (1998:59).

She sums up that Obatala dance communicates the total essence of the festival. Regarded as personal, and sacred to Obatala, the dance's form and style strongly and vividly projects the features of Obatala which include dignified old age, moral purity, coolness, peacefulness, and the eternity. She analyses the messages of the different dances in the festival. Narrating that the first message communicated by the gentle low posture of Obatala dance is the concept of humility, coolness and non- aggression. Resorting to the slow styled, low-posture dance after the anger expressed in the war dance and the vengeful mood of the sacrifice dance signifies a change of tactics on the part of Obatala.... (1998:69).

Ufford interrogates the myth in masquerade performances in Nigeria as she submits that

The masquerade dance presentation across the country seems to have similar philosophies. The masquerades are the messengers of gods or the ancestors and their performances are always characterized by tension and fear. The different

masquerades are believed to have characteristics of the ancestral spirits the people worship and adore. The audiences see the emergence of these masquerades as the opportunity to commune with the departed spirits and souls. The masquerade dance is possessive and hypnotic. The music serves as the motivational or propelling force for the carrier who dangles his body, sometimes unconsciously based on the intensiveness of the barrage of drum calls and incantations. (2012:46)

Dance becomes an essential element in masking as the audience can read what the spirits say through the wriggles and turns of the masquerades stylized body movements. Robin Horton opines that the “dancing of an important mask demands strong will and a successful performance is one of the most adored achievements in the community” (1997:98).

To the Efiks, Ekpe dance is also seen as a religious performance. Though this dance is largely religious, the elders also harness its powers to institute authority and enforce the laws of the land on defaulters. Lizzy Asuquo speaking on Ekpe dance submits that “the Ekpe dance is a sacred performance of royalty of the Efik kingdom. With the power of the leopard, the masquerade roves the brinks of the spiritual realm to reenact the reunion between the dead and the living” (2005:14). Ojuade also anchors the above notion that there are extramundane elements in dance creation and performance. Irrespective of the genre of dance, there is an engrossed feeling between the two realms of man. So to him, dance has no boundary, it passes through the very essence of human existence (2004:23}. Like the Ekpe dance, the Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom State see Ekpo dance as a demonstration of the will and desires of their ancestors. The Ekpo dance has mystical impact on the beholders. Ebong asserts that “Ekpo” represents incarnated bodies and beings of ancestral heroes to whom these communities culturally make supplication for benevolence and protection (1994:89). It is the general view that spirits of their ancestors are drawn from their abode to help clean the land so that prosperity and fertility in farming, birth, worship and so on can be achieved. With this supernatural attachment, dance becomes a great tool for controlling social attitudes in the community. The grotesque and fiercely looking mask is designed to evoke tension and fear of the spirits and the aura of their domain.

The terrifying mask and the swiftness of the carriers whose identities are not known to the community members apparently for "...some mental and psychological adjustment of members of the society in accordance with established societal norms and values" (1994:89).

Since dance is basically orchestrated through defined movements of the body, Udoko is of the view that movement generally shows the grace of life given freely by God. To him

Dance is a celebration of life and the works of nature. In worship, dance is used to glorify God for His mercies and grace and also showing the beauty of testimonies. Moving the body to defined rhythm of praise is enough in celebrating a new day with a new hope in a new society (2006:21).

Udoko believes that the act of dancing in worship intensifies man's total submission and readiness to approach his God with dignity and grace. Worship is an imperative urge in man. It is a "means of honouring spiritual beings or an act of veneration paid by man to such a spiritual being (Awolalu, 1979:97-98). Worship aid communication and communion between man and the super sensible world, a means of retaining God – man relationship is rectified and restored. Worship expresses the spiritual realities by means of the physical, the medium or channel by which divine power or powers are presented to man (Dopamu, 2005:125). Idowu qualifies all the dance movement in worship as repetitional and précised. He sums this:

...most of the dance are fixed patterns and must be done correctly. Which foot goes forward first, which movement of the hand and body accompanying it, which turns are taken next, and how many times each component of the pattern is to be repeated; all these must be carefully observed. The speech of the musical instrument is often designed to guide the dancers in their movement (1966:116).

Traditional dance displays in Nigeria cut across the different facets of the indigenous social life experiences. Eneke explains this by positing that "it (dance) offers the youths opportunity to showcase their conceptions thus, encouraging courtship and

providing training for work and combat” (1991:14). Kingsley Edem writes on Abinsi as courtship dance of the Efik people of Cross River State. According to him, Abinsi dance is performed by elegant maidens who are arranged in the open field and made to dance seductively to attract men who troupe out to make their choices. The dance movements are such that enhance the beauty of the maidens whose parents are delighted when their children are chosen at the end of the dance galore. Kingsley Edem declares that

Abinsi dance encourages courtship and cautions the maidens on the excesses of their male counterparts. This dance is not encouraging promiscuity but enhances understanding amongst the youths. It is a dance that gives the parents and society ample opportunity to see or watch the youths in their true elements. The songs are used as spice for the movements while the garnishing costumes and adornments help to shape the maidens for the contest (1999:16).

A typical traditional Nigerian dance presentation gives opportunity for individual expression of thoughts and feelings in religion, economic and social norms of the land. Carol Ann Lorenz, in her introduction to Enekwe’s Theories of Dance in Nigeria, submits that one of the most important elements in Nigerian dances is high communicative levels. The dancers communicate with the musicians as the performers with the audience, and ultimately between the community and supernatural being upon whom human welfare and indeed their survival depend. This mutual feeling spurs up the essential responses of the dancers soul and mind with the ineluctable power of music. Thus, Nigerian dance achieves its beauty through active interplay of emotion and design. According to Copeland and Cohen, dance “...is the expression and transference through the medium of bodily movement of mental and emotional experience that the individual cannot express by rational or intellectual means” (1983:3).

Thus dance as a vehicle of communication and an embodiment of a people’s cultural milieu can be utilized effectively in mobilizing the society towards greater heights. Acholonu notes that “...dance is a good vehicle for social satire, which is for criticizing and projecting the ills of society such as ostentation, vulgarity and all forms of indiscipline”(1985:36).

Akpabot writes extensively on the Ebre Satire. Narrating the essence of Ebre dance, he explains that this dance is performed by the Akwa Ibom women who are married and desiring to end the marginalization and oppression of women in the society.

Right from the pre-colonial days, the Ebre society has always been a strong organization whose doctrines were projected through dances and songs. Their songs till date satirize men's follies especially as they concern the deprivation of women's rights in the society. Samuel Akpabot, while eliciting the basic elements of the Ebre dance, stresses that the songs in Ebre dance are composed to express the depressional feelings women have over male domination and to advance the dignity of women. In the process, they abuse their husbands' bad actions which they would not have done openly without paying community fines. Akpabot submits "when the Ebre society women dance, it is not only for entertainment but as a deliberate protest against what they regard as male chauvinism" (2000:74).

The above satiric nature of some dances was rampant in the Ibibio society. The *Ekpri Akata* minstrel dance was sacred and always exposed people who commit taboos in the land. The Akata, who is a sole spiritual performer, sings and entertains the public, and in the process exposes any person that is his target. Akpan, writing on "the rule of secret societies in Ibibio land" in The Nigerian Chronicle asserts that

...the sounds of Ekpri Akata would be heard speaking in mysterious voices. They would parade the village singing and sometimes dancing to entertain ... Apart from this aspect of entertainment, an important role of Ekpri Akata was that of News and Information... (1994:8-9).

Arnold Udoka is of the view that the purpose of dance in the society is to define an ideological focus of the people in understanding and relating movements to the experiences around their environment. By so doing, participants in culture are then predisposed to appreciate their bearing in relation to the provisions of the activities such as dance, music and craft. The dancer excavates the terrain of his cultural boundaries, draws motifs and symbols to enhance proper communication and understanding. Udoka advances this view as he succinctly reiterates that the dancer draws his inspirations from his society. He observes that

...the availability of movement for communicating among individuals in indigenous society were transposed to dance, for socialization and propagation of society... traditional dance was a cultural mode of veneration of society's values...(2005:326).

Dances herald entertainment values as viewed by most people, but it goes beyond such appreciation. These dances are replete with symbolic and highly spiritual extensions of human experiences and express realities of the times. The dancer in his environment is the vehicle and propeller of inspirational issues for community development. Dance in Africa is communal, for it provides the lubrication for the development of traditional institutions for the functional needs of the people. David Kerr in corroborating this view submits that

African dance is highly relevant to society...for example, oral narrative, initiation ceremonies and comic masquerades are explicitly didactic, being instrumental in the socialization of the young by providing role models... like funeral rites, praise songs and comic masquerades can clearly be related to functional needs of the society (1987:4).

The Ese dance of Ibibio in Akwa Ibom State clearly enunciates David Kerr's assertion. This dance is exhibited with compelling instrumentation and elegant movements and songs geared towards the extolation of a fallen hero during his burial or funeral rite. The master player starts by manipulating his drum beats to call the ancestral lineage of the dead or fallen hero and instructs on the necessary ways of attaining a successful burial. The dancers dance with the corpse and finally bury it according to tradition. The ensemble is basically membranophonic, while the songs are eulogistic and alluring with great sympathy. Inieke Ufford observes that Ese dance is a sacred performance only presented at special moments. To him, "Ese dance procures comfort to the bereaved and charts a new course for the edification and sanitation of the historic life of the celebrated. It provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on their lives as the history of the fallen hero is revealed in a performance acceptable to the society (1998:21).

The dancer in the post-colonial period is very relevant to the government of every traditional community. The dancer is led by the views of the community and taken as a great source of happiness and liberation. Despite the illustrious role dance has played since the pre-colonial era and the present society, dance has continued to be under developed. Arnold Udoka is of the view that the present dance practitioners are selfish and arrogant. Udoka's argument stems out of the view that some dance practitioners today detach themselves from being tools that explore the philosophy of the community they come from. He laments that most of them, in their self-interest and influence, help to render dance inconsequential to the community dwellers. Dance has always been a reflection

of the society and should improve with the society even in this dispensation. For dance to re-attain its prime place in the society, the dancer must not alienate himself from the society. Zulu Sofola writes that “the artist occupies a vital place in the life of his community as a mediator between his people and their divine reality, and as a motivator for the well-being of his people” (1994:7).

The place of the dancer is judged based on his relevance to the society. One begins to appreciate Udoka’s seeming fear of marginalization of the dancer and his art. Due to their bid to expunge themselves from the dogmatic rule of tradition which some of them see as an obstacle for self-improvement and creativity, Choreographers create dances that may not relate to their immediate society, thereby reducing patronage and concern over the art. Akorede opines that

The relevance of the dramatist is determined by the influence of the role he plays in the portrayal of the social reality of his time. The committed writer is the conscience of his society and it falls on him to make his people aware of the... economic, and political problems and the causes and possible cure for each problem. (1993:53).

Some scholars ascribe the change of negative attitude towards dance as an effect of colonization; the church came in with various restrictions on traditional practices, especially the dance tradition. This was not a surprise since every Nigerian dance expressed the cosmology of their environment, especially worship. The new doctrine of branding traditional practices as diabolic prompted community members to denounce and discontinue with their indigenous cultures. In worship, dance was forbidden and this alienated them from worshipping God with their body and in truth. Udoka laments why dance became a barrier to human liberation and sanctity in these foreign religions as he opines that

The unfortunate thing is the fear of dance in these religions. Why should dance be excluded from the worship? Is the fact of praying not a continuous shifting of bodily positions in harmony with the mind? Can man really pray without the harmony of the totality of his belief? (2004:342).

As a seeming reply to the rhetorical questions posted by Udoka, Kenedy Enwenma believes that the ordinary Nigerian was deceived and made to see the new God as supreme to the indigenous god he served. Whereas, he would have been made to know that their indigenous religion may not have been barbaric after all. He derides why traditional

musical instruments are thrown out of the church for the foreign ones, when even the Bible approves of man using every instrument at his disposal to worship His Holiness. He therefore submits that the truncated impact of colonial elements have helped throw us into an encircling struggle for soul liberation. For him,

Living in borrowed form can only extend our quest to find an identity. The prohibition of traditional dance in churches and society has surreptitiously lost its grips as members of churches now dance “Awilo” (such an erotic dance) in the church, while other traditional dances flood the praise sessions with musical flow....(2005:17).

These dance movements are borrowed from the society but they now lack depth in terms of cultural values and norms. This mix-up helps to break the cultural bond of the people and confuse the younger generation who would not even know where such movements belong and the symbolic meanings of such performances. The result is the death of the values of these dances since they are broken off their institutional enclaves. The colonialists knew that Nigerians were strong in worship and cultural practices and they pressed to inject a superior culture upon them and create allergic feelings to destroy the true base of their sustainability.

Though the unfortunate contact with the Europeans has resulted in the eclipse of fundamental cultural practices, Nigerians would not have accepted all alien values that came to them. The fear of sanctions and intimidations from the slave masters provided a base for worship of their ways while the indigenous became outdated and fetish. It is the view of the researcher that, if there was culture comparison, people would have retained some good cultural practices while adopting some good ones from their “masters” to enhance their cultural well-being and integration.

It is not a crime to learn from alien culture but, it could be a crime to allow such cultural practices to debase ready made principles of a people without cogent desire. Ikimi talks on cultural understanding and acceptability. He views acculturation as only negative if the parent culture cannot find encouraging factors from the alien culture. He is of the view that a culture stands to gain better heights. He reiterates this point by stating that:

If a culture group knew enough about their background and antecedents of their neighbours, inter-group relations would be advanced, for what would enable one to know the merits

and defects of the other and so they can tolerate one another and interact with minimum friction and conflicts...(1980:3).

Serena Nanda puts it more clearly thus;

...although initial culture contacts may be disastrous for highly integrated societies, such societies may indeed be more flexible than was formerly thought, and can indeed adapt creatively to even drastically changed circumstances (1984:79).

.Arnold Udoka laments that

The popular local performers are not responsible to social needs of the society. Maybe because of the ignorance of the extent of damage caused the body culture by colonialism and the subsequent social changes which demand more of repositioning rather than opposition (2004:227).

Though culture is dynamic, the changes should be done with proper orientation and disposition. Canice Nwosu comments that “changes cannot take place in the society without awareness; it is only when the awareness is created in the individuals or groups that socio-political changes take place” (2004:98). Furthermore, he adds that

...Hence socio-political changes are noted in the collective will of the people to effect positive changes in the machinery that sees to the organizational well-being of the people. It is in this light that theatre of relevance is recommended for mobilization towards self-definition (2004:99).

People must think together and express their universal philosophies in order to foster unity and identity. Though changes in traditional dances are imminent, the change (s) should be made in such a way that it does not polarize and devalue the normative values in the society. Langer asserts that dance.

Is a universal phenomenon that serves a vital function in human society in an effort to achieve cohesion or togetherness, causing them to feel a deep sense of communion with one another. As a result, people are liberated from the bond of individuality... (1975:92).

Dancers should be observant of the dynamics of national building and consciously help chart possible ways of evaluating, influencing and propagating the feelings of the society in an attempt to help create an atmosphere for social development and enhance national integration through their creative compositions. The choreographers in their attempts to infuse new techniques into dance, especially the traditional dances, derail the purpose for which such dances were made. The introduction of abstract movements help digress the real essence of the dance from the society and therefore render the dance empty and only meant for just entertainment. The new flair of performance have become rampant with the growing initiatives and push to meet with dance techniques across the globe, without considering the fact that these techniques have reflections of the different cultures they emanate from.

Dance scholars who teach and inject these new theories should become conscious of their responsibilities due to the fact that they intensely use semiotic movements from the pool of cultural practice compositions. With this derogatory state of traditional dances, there is fear that they might fade away as the basic nutrients of their composition are alienated from the people.

Arnold Udoka sees dance scholars as potential set of individuals who can help turn around the situation, only if they are aided. He enumerates the challenges of these scholars, such as non availability of research grants, overloaded course work and lecture halls, lack of funds for dance conferences, seminars, symposia, community-university dance projects and the total absence of any standard dance studio in the Universities in Nigeria for the proper drilling and training of future dance minds of this country. He declares that the society needs the dance scholar just as well as his academic pursuits. Hence they need to be considerate when academic theories in dance are juggled flagrantly to boost individual egos to the detriment of the society. He submits thus;

...a calculated segregation exists within the highest centers of learning and inhibits the application of research findings and experiments in the area of dance. This suggests the Universities have not served society effectively as expected in the dance aspect because, they are yet to provide the country with a scientific and ideological paradigm for dance as an agency in social engineering and development or contribute in any significant way to resolve the issue of national question through the knowledge of cultural facts and methods of socio-political engineering (2004:226).

Arnold Udoka's view is not totally acceptable. This is because; the University is a place where theories are taught as foundation for the psychological, mental and intellectual upliftment of the students who would in turn serve the society on graduation. The students of dance should know the different dance principles and techniques across the globe in the school for proper understanding. This will help immensely in making them versatile and relevant in the profession globally. The issue of cultural rejuvenation through dance is laudable. The dance teachers can encourage this by asking or giving orientation to choreographers on the need to preserve indigenous norms and values in traditional dances while changing designs and intensifying costumes based on the foundations of these refurbished dances to protect cultural dignity even in the face of changes across the globe. The dance experts have tried but are not encouraged by the poor working condition which Udoka has earlier enumerated. The government even helps to kill the arts even in the academics. The effect of a disproportionate educational policy on the society where admissions and priority is given to science as against the arts studies translates to alienation of the mind, and the eroding of the culture base upon which the favoured science and technology has the potential to generate and communicate geniality and mutuality, which form the basis for the chemistry of human relations (Udoka 2004:227). Nancy Smith agrees with Udoka on poor government patronage but stresses more on the bad dance curriculum in the universities. She asserts that the dance curriculum that purports to train performers and choreographers must be fluid, multidimensional grouping of experiences in which the membrane between theory and practice remains permeable. First and foremost the student must dance; he must be dancing throughout the years spent in the program. He is learning as he dances; he is learning to dance, about dance, and through dance. This in no way deprives him of other domains of experience or knowledge. To the contrary, it becomes his center through which a broad experiential context is channeled and synthesized. It is the matrix by his perceptions through which he both apprehends and comprehends (1970:72). She asks:

And what has usually been the igniting factor in the successful development of an artist? Hasn't it usually been the potent encounter, with a master teacher, with an artist-teacher? Perhaps, then, that is the key problem of dance in higher education: acquiring a dance faculty of such artistic caliber that it serves as a lodestone for aspiring performers

and choreographers. This becomes a more probable possibility, as it has been demonstrated in some instances through out the country, with the growing receptivity and understanding of the nature and value of the arts on the part of university administrations (1970:73).

The apathy with which dances are regarded continues to receive serious positions by dance scholars. The negligence of the arts for science is a display of ignorance by policy makers. This is because science and arts compliment each other. One cannot stay or thrive without the other. For dance to be intensified and clarified, certain technological elements like light, sceneries, textile, props, fliers, and so on are employed. These when well managed, would take dance to another level and enhance the aesthetic qualities of these performances. Chris Ugolo frowns at the use of these technological elements, as it retards cultural rejuvenation and propagation. He posits that

... the use of technical facilities such as computerized lighting, audio-visual effects, slides, projectors, sound effects, and massive set construction and stage design have, to a large extent affected the form of the dance itself even when it is traditional dance (2002:79).

Though Ugolo frowns at the use of technological elements in traditional dances, it is pertinent to note here that dance is as dynamic as culture and should grow with the elements characterizing the period of presentation.

The orientation of the choreographers towards sustainable development of the art of dance and our economy should be taken seriously so as to define the mode of operations and success. Meadowcroft sees sustainable development as “a positive process of social change that proceeds in such a fashion that it avoids generating internal contradictions which would undermine the possibility for further advancement” (1999:15). The study of the old forms of dance compositions would help chart a new phase for dance appreciation and sponsorship. It appears that the poor state of documentation of traditional dances has made the new age choreographers lack the knowledge of what the “old” had for them. They present day choreographers base their ideas and forms on assumptions and personal views which may be detrimental to their culture. When there is a deep knowledge of the cultural past, the changes in dance will only help in breaching the gap between the archaic technological knowledge of the past with the sophisticated advancement in technology to enact dance performance in contemporary times without eroding the basic norms and values that make these dances unique. This mentality or processes would go a

long way in bridging the interest of the dancer and the society in a sensational way. This will upgrade the status-quo of the dancer in the society.

Bakare Ojo Rasaki takes a sweep on the plight of dancers in the society in the face of fierce challenges and depressions. According to him, the dancers across the country are poor and disregarded since their profession is seen as common and practiced by illiterates and dropouts. He laments that if one takes a trip round the National Arts Councils and troupes, one would see that the dancers are dehydrated and dying installmentally (2002:86). He further asserts that

The dance art is appreciated, even loved, but the dancer is evidently one of the least respected mortals in the Nigerian society. He is scorned where important social issues are discussed. He is exploited when contracted as a result of which he remains economically disempowered. If she is a female in a desperate bid for survival, she is abused, and if a male, materially extorted... (2002:82).

Ufford laments on these set backs and admonishes that

The negligence of the dancer in social issues had come to live with us. But it is the place of the dancer to look inwards and force out liberation of his soul and body away from the dungeon the society has dugged for him. No matter the emergence of technocrats and their technological devices in dance arts, the dancer must align himself with the provisions of his environment to be relevant and protected. The dancer lives for the society and the society needs the dancer as their model (2005:4).

In furtherance of his views, Rasaki Bakare proposes that, the dancer must create performances that can live above folk designs, so that he can rightly gain from his copyright dividends. The more folk performances are performed, the more generalized the ownership is and perpetration of monotoneity. He submits that...the general trend in Nigerian dance practice is to stick to the people's culture and tradition, no singular dance troupe can claim to have the copyright of the dances that belong to the heritage of an entire community (2002:86).

Yerima advocates for individual creativities as a key to earn dancers their rightful place in the economic development of the society as he advocates that "...the emerging

dance culture must in reality be that of the creative individuals through whom definition and re-appraisal of the statutory rights and obligations” (Ufford, 2005:12).

This suggestion is definitely going to shoot the dancer above the ordinary human in the society and place him amongst the “wanted” in the society. Dance will no longer be seen as a routine but as an art that must be learned and practiced for a living. If a dancer can create new movements and forms, he has already arrogated to himself an esteem height, since this feat is not common amongst society members. But again, the dancer’s creations should focus on social issues for sake of clarity and understanding. According to Constance Miller;

Any dance artist must be aware of today’s society. That is, he must be well read and well educated. He must have philosophy of art and the life. The knowledge, the dedication, the energy and sensibility of the dance artist when combined produce person of great achievement (1978:304).

Generally, the image of dancers must be laundered conscientiously since they have the ability to carry their cultural heritage to the next level. Through their movements and designs, they can express their norms and values across the globe since their performances cannot be hampered by spoken language. Their communicative prowess is universal. The government, corporate bodies and all members of the society should encourage the dance industry to promote economic, social and political development of the nation.

CHAPTER THREE

AKWA IBOM PEOPLE

3.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF AKWA IBOM STATE

Akwa Ibom state was created out of the then Cross River State on 23rd September, 1987. It has 31 Local Government Areas. These Local Government Areas are divided into three senatorial districts namely; Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District, Eket Senatorial District and Uyo Senatorial District. Geographically, the Ibibio are located in South-South Nigeria between the longitudes 7⁰ 25' and 8⁰ 25' East of the Greenwich Meridian and between latitudes 4⁰ 33' and 5⁰ 33' North of the Equator. The Ibibio is the largest ethnic group. It shares a common border in the North East with the Ekoi; in the West and North West, they are bounded by the Igbo of Abia State. In the East they are bounded by various ethnic groups of the Cameroons while the Bight of Bonny washes the Southern border. The Ibibio have a coastline, which stretches, from Akpayafe River at the Nigeria – Cameroon borders in the East, Andoni River in the West, a distance of about 130 kilometres northwards to Itu Mbonuso, Nkari and Iwerre in Ini Local Government Area. Akwa Ibom state is made up of different ethnic groups such as Ibibio, Annang, Oron, Eket, Ibeno, Ubium and so on.. Despite the various ethnic groups in Akwa Ibom, this thesis focuses on three major ethnic groups which include; Ibibio, Annang and Oron.

3.2 AKWA IBOM ARTS AND CRAFTS:

The arts and crafts of the Akwa Ibom State have a pride of place amongst the better known traditional arts of Africa. It is appreciated in different groups such as those highlighted below:

MASKS

Forms and functions of the mask remain generally consistent across the length and breadth of the state. As early as 1710, it was observed that, there was the prevalence of *Ekpo* in the entire area of the state . It was the need of the pervading *Ekpo* masquerade that stimulated design and production of the legendary masks for use all over the state.

Traditionally, the mask could be grouped into two major classes-the “grotesque”, and the ‘beautiful’. Grotesque masks were reserved for use by the more dangerous

ancestral spirits masquerades, *Ekpo Nyoho*. Beautiful masks were allowed to be worn for a variety of functions. Beautiful masks could be worn by masquerades like the Udo Udo Ekpo Eyen (Ufford, 1998:7). At the right season this spirit masquerade, usually staged by young pre-teenage boys, move around the village from compound to compound bestowing blessings of fertility on the women folk who, in turn, offer gifts to the masquerade. Beautiful masks could also be worn by other play masquerades and clowns. Stilt dancers also often wear the masks.

Traditionally, 'beautiful' masks were painted with white clay and other light earth colours. The styled-hair area was coloured black to simulate natural hair. Facial features, while retaining a close likeness to the human face, bore a distant spiritual and pious countenance. The masks neither smiled nor showed any grimace.

These features contrasted drastically with those of the grotesque masks, which, by their design, were meant to instill fear in the spectator. Grotesque masks were usually finished matt and in lamp-black. Their macabre nature was often intensified by the use of attachments of animal and human skulls, horns, miniature coffins and spirit dolls. On some of these masks traces of sacrificial matter and blood caked up over the years. Some of the *Ekpo* masks bore the *Idiong* ring on the highest rank of the highly revered *Idiong* divination cult.

The forms employed in grotesque masks portray variously, animal-human imagery, flapping jaws, the disease gangosa, bulging eyes, grimacing facial features and a generally aggressive countenance. The forms were unusually bold and exaggerated. This allowed for clear visibility inspite of the usually swift and perpetual motion of the masquerade in action.

Generally, the mask forms portray a wide range of ancestral types. In typical ceremonial parade of *Ekpo* in some parts of the state, grandmothers (*Akpanwaan Ekpo/Eka Ekpo*), *Ekpo first* sons (*Akpan Ekpo*), young maidens (*Oboikpa*) and even the local school teacher (*Titia Ekpo*), complete with this cane, paper and pen are portrayed. While masquerading practices of Akwa Ibom are not the issue of this Chapter, it is note worthy that the mask forms often attempt to reflect the character of the *Ekpo* personified, including even the more obviously recent additions like *Titia Ekpo*.

With the conversion of large segments of the people of the state to Christianity, the strength of 'Ekpo' mask has dwindled. This, in turn, has reduced the demand for traditional masks. Faced by the drop in demand from the traditional market, mask carvers have turned their skills to production for other markets. This has resulted in new forms and new functions.

According to Chief Moses Iko, the new demand for masks was devoid of ancestral belief because most of the masks were either sold or given out as souvenir. Foreign visitors seeking souvenirs often picked up traditional masks. These they dusted up and hung on the walls of offices, homes and galleries thus stimulating a whole new usage for the mask. The mask thus became piece of decoration. Sensitive to the fact that the new function was less demanding in terms of strong forms, the carvers have adjusted to a more decorative approach in tune with the new functions (September, 2010).

Idibeke Amos sums up that the modern decorative mask has been flattened out to the extent that some are now just wall plaques. Decorative motifs have been introduced. Many of the masks are now finished in super glossy enamels. The idea is to imitate finishing of furniture. Although the result of these modern shadows of the original masks could be at times disappointing, the innovations are a good pointer to the potentials of the traditional mask carver in a wider Nigerian and world culture. He is already aware that his future lies in modern architecture and interior decoration. What he needs to learn is to draw from his repertoire of masks motifs to create suitable forms for the enrichment of modern architecture and interior (September, 2010).

EKPU ORON

Among the Oron, and to some extent the Eket peoples of the state, *Ekpu* is a revered ancestral worship found in expression in the carving of spectacular wooden statues to honour the dead. The form was usually developed from a pole and carved into bold rounded rather geometry components. While these statues were not portraits in the sense of the word, they told the life story of the dead. A long braided beard told of age. *Ekere*, traditional war gong is used to represent the fact that the ancestor was a war hero – *ama obio ekong*. If he was shown seated on top of other people, it showed he had slaves. A top hat showed he had wealth, including the good things of Europe, bartered by the early Portuguese traders. A strong phallus told of his many children and wives.

Thus, looking at these statues, one could virtually give a biographical profile of the dead ancestors. Of all the documented traditional arts of the world, the people of Akwa Ibom indeed took the language of sculptural form to heights that are difficult to surpass. This mastery of the language of forms prompted Fagg and Plass to draw comparisons between sculptural form in the *Ekpu Oron* and those employed by the modern master of European sculpture.

‘NWOMMO’ FUNERARY ART

In the traditional culture, death was viewed as a continuation after life, rather than an end. Thus, the expression *ekpo akpa ayin, ikpaha utong* pre-supposes that the dead hears and could, therefore, intervene in matters of the living. It was not unexpected, therefore, for such a belief system to provide for the dead.

The traditional funeral abode *nwommo* was erected as of necessity for the dead. For men, the structure was usually erected with the use of *okono* poles and a frame –work of bamboo, over which roofing mats were decked. The roof was often pitched. Decorated clothed was draped across the open front of the *nwommo*. The female version was often built with earth walls and had a steeply sloping roof. Although, too tiny for any normal living, the symbolic dwelling of the dead was often heavily decorated and decked out with house-hold utensils for the comfortable living of the dead in the after-life. To avoid theft, some of the utensils had to be damaged deliberately to render them useless to normal beings. Transformed by the mystery of death, the dead had become a magical being who could use the pots in the spirit in spite of the holes and tears (Ufford, 1998:36).

The impressive aspect of the *nwommo* hut was the lavish decoration. The walls were often painted using white and coloured clay, charcoal, and green from the **awa** plant. Red, obtained from cam-wood and red oxide, was also used. Similarly, blue from local indigo dye and, later, washerman’s blue were used. The motifs included abstract geometric patterns, semi-abstract figures and symbols.

With the advent of Christianity, the belief systems of people changed, resulting in a decline of the *nwommo* art. The few remnants of the art form were but a shadow of the former *nwommo*. It would appear that the only real way to preserve the art form would be to erect models in the nation’s Museum. This recommendation does not lose sight of

fears of the works becoming fossilized and forgotten in museums but preservation is far better than extinction.

CEMENT FUNERARY STATUES

The change in the belief system seemed to have challenged the artist in our people to invent new acceptable ways of honouring the dead. Firstly, they turned their creative energy to the application of the new “Christian” material-cement. After all, was cement not the new material from Europe, used for the construction of the Christian schools, churches, hospitals and courts? Certainly, such a civilized material could not also be pagan. The Akwa Ibom artist may have reasoned this way when he set himself to the onerous task of producing life statues out of the unplastic material. The example of the realistic pictures and later statues of the early church, brought in from Europe must have fired his imagination. This creativity resulted in the now well documented funerary cement figures that once abounded in the state. These statues formed a very unique and distinctive art form in the state. Some of these funerary cement statues still stand sentry in front of old compounds or at former compound site in parts of the state.

For some unclear reasons, the phase of funerary cement statues did not last. The art form has lingered however in an updated and improved form in the work of Akpan, a popular traditional sculptor, from Ikot Obiofong in Ibesikpo. This highly gifted sculptor, who has never benefited from formal schooling in the Fine Arts, appears to be driven to create by an inner force which he can only contain by creating. In terms of correct representation, he has come a long way from the funerary cement statues. He pays attention to portraiture and drapery and has diversified his theme from the dead to the living. His life studies range from human beings to birds to animals. Seeing the crowd of sculpted figures at his Ikot Obiofong road side display, is indeed, an unforgettable experience.

Today, the funerary arts have settled down to the use of ornamental terrazzo or marble head-stones, which often look very impersonal, but for the name in the rest-in-peace epitaphs (Ufford, 1998:44).

THE CRAFTS

While the masks and funerary statues were spirit-regarding, other aspects of the traditional arts and crafts remained man-regarding. There was scarcely any facet of life

and living that was not touched by the people's arts and craft. In the next few paragraphs, attention will be focused on some of these.

DOLLS, TOYS, RITUAL OBJECTS AND PUPPETS

In its most rudimentary form, bamboo from raffia palm is cut and marked to represent dolls for female children to play with. In the more advanced version, the soft wood *ukpo* is delicately carved into ritual objects used by female fertility cults which are often beautifully painted with white clay, earth colours and enamels. Dolls are used in sacrificial rites for child birth and to appease '*Eka Abasi*' to lay her hands off a sick baby.

Where the dolls are to function in puppetry, they are often larger and are given flexible joints to allow for animation. The versatility of these puppets is indeed amazing. Every imaginable situation could be stimulated. Hunting scenes, including charging dogs, wild beast, dangerous snakes, exploding guns and all have portrayed. Love tangles, including a developing pregnancy ending in labour and child birth, have been stimulated. Animation is obtained by raising the puppets up within the enclosure so as to expose the puppets, while concealing the holding stick. Where puppetry is concerned, the art in the state has a lot to offer the world. The potential for mass communication and education is vast.

CARVED DOORS AND FUNITURE

The people of the state are art lovers. Front doors to the main building in most compounds are often embellished with carved motifs. This craft has lingered and is prospering today. Around the state, it is a common sight to see some of the beautifully carved doors on display. Motifs on the doors range from religious themes to animals and abstract geometric patterns. Properly sensitized, to modern production techniques and with a more aggressive marketing strategy, carved doors from the state could take over the Nigerian market.

BAMBOO FURNITURE

The tropical rain forest vegetation of the state provides a natural habitat for the raffia palm. Local craftsmen in the state are quick to exploit the fronds and bamboo for purposes of producing building accessories and furniture. In the traditional society, the

making of mats for roofing and ceilings is an art. Some of the mats are styled and decorated. The fronds are also used in the production of the traditional umbrella.

Bamboo from the raffia palm provides an easy to use, yet aesthetically satisfactory and strong furniture wood. Bamboo beds, bamboo chairs and stools of assorted designs, bamboo rags and blinds are common fixtures in our traditional homes. These are produced by local craftsmen in most villages across the states. Also, production is formerly entrenched in primary schools under the supervision of hand-work teachers. This has been downplayed over the years considering its usefulness. There is need to revive the craft culture in schools. The modern furniture maker and interior designer could learn from the traditional bamboo craft of the people of the states.

MAT MAKING

These mats are different from the frond mats for roofing discussed earlier. These are the mats used for sleeping upon. Some are specially made to be used as floor mats and ceilings. Often made from *aya* stems these mats are both beautiful and cool to sit or sleep upon. A variety called *itambong* is made from a stiffer material and could be used as ceiling pieces. *Iboto* is similarly used for ceiling.

CANE CRAFTS

The ancient craft has started to enjoy modern patronage. Major show rooms now routinely display cane crafted furniture and accessories.

The craft is indigenous to the state, with the major producers being Ikot Andem Itam in Itu Local Government Area. From this village, cane craftsmen have spread far and wide, dominating the craft from neighboring Cross River State to other parts of the country, where they could be seen in small settler communes, practicing their time-honored craft. At the National Art Festival (NAFEST '90) in Kaduna, the state entry, amongst others, focused attention on the beauty and the potential of the cane in modern furniture design. The range of cane crafted furniture is inexhaustible, including settlers, garden seats, bar stools, room dividers, babies' cots and beds.

RAFFIA CRAFT

This craft is indigenous to the state, where raffia has been put into varied use. Fashion accessories including raffia belts, hats, shoes and hand bags are produced. Other raffia goods include lawyers' wigs, toys and furnishings.

The fibre is extracted from raffia palm fronds. It is then dyed as may be desired. The weaving is done manually by the use of simple loom. The local weavers have demonstrated great skill in the execution of a wide range of woven design motifs.

Ikot Ekpene town, the main centre of the craft, enjoys the pseudonym, "Raffia City". Here, craftsmen cooperative societies have proprietary overt raffia products and they have gained the centre stage amongst Nigerian souvenirs. The potential of raffia in the export market is indeed vast, even though it remains largely untapped.

BASKETRY

This is another craft widely practiced in the state. The baskets come in shapes and sizes depending on the intended function. There are baskets for storage, baskets for the kitchen and baskets for packaging and transportation of goods.

With the introduction of plastic containers and paper cartons, function of the traditional basket appears to have been taken over. Recent economic developments have shown, however, that the dear old basket is cheaper and more resilient than plastic buckets and paper cartons. Properly styled, it can even be more elegant. Innovative use of the basket has also been found in interior decoration as ornamental lamp shades, flower vases et cetera.

POTTERY CRAFTS

Pottery is practiced by women in many parts of the state. The most outstanding centres for pottery include Itak and Mbiafin village in Ini Local Government Area. There are other centres at Etinan, Ikot Ebom Itam, Ekpene Ukim, Etoi and Ikot Uboh in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area. The combined production of the cottage industries, alongside the traditional potters result in a wide range of wares. There are beautiful unglazed earthen-ware pots for storage of water and palm wine, Clay pots for cooking, musical drum pots, and table wares, are also produced. Ornamental flower pots and planters, tea sets, drinking mugs and lamp stands are other products of the craft.

SMITHING AND METAL CRAFTS

Smiths, tinkers and metal workers abound in many parts of the state. Around Ikot Ekpene, brass designers turn out ornamental swords, ceremonial staffs and candle stands. Other metal workers are engaged in the production of metal boxes, pan pots, hoes, machetes and chisels. Others produce beds, metal furniture, gates and designed railing.

A group of the metal workers have now graduated into the production of machinery. Fore-most among these are the Uso Metal Works at Ikot Ekpene and Major's Works Limited at Abak.

WEAVING

Cloth making in the traditional society is limited to the production of strips of *Ekpang*. This is a strip of thick cotton fabric woven on a simple loom. Less common place is the production of knitted crowns, *ntinya*, which is strictly on order, as the crowns could only be worn by very select chiefs.

There are several weaving centres at Uyo, Abak, Eket and Ikot Ekpene. The quality of productions is among the best in the country. Shirting, furniture fabric and high grade wrapper fabric are produced.

BODY DECORATION

Okukin and *Udobaya* body decoration techniques were common in Akwa Ibom traditional society. In the *Okukin* approach, a black indelible ink is used to draw design motifs on the desired parts of the body. In the *Udohaya* type, a deep penetrating brown dye in paste form, made from roots and herbs is used. When eventually the paste is washed of, the dye leaves a dark stain that could last for as long as three years before fading completely.

Tattooing, which produces a permanent effect is also in practice. Until recent times, some very old citizens could still be found with tattooed body design and facial marks.

More temporary body decoration involved the use of white clay, cam-wood and red oxides to mark and draw motifs on the body. Today, traditional dancers, especially the maidens, prefer this form of body decoration.

3.3 AKWA IBOM TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Only a few of the most significant sacred traditional institutions of Akwa Ibom people are treated here. These include: *Idiong, Ekpo, Ekpe, Inam, Ebre, Iban Isong, Mbiam, Ukang, Ekpo Nka Owo, Ukot*, and *Eyeyen* institutions. These and other traditional institutions deal with issues of purification and preservation of life as well as leading the good (moral) life of peace and prosperity.

THE IDIONG INSTITUTION

The *Idiong* institution is a sacred society for divination. The people of Akwa Ibom State believe that there is much sense experience which cannot be perceived or understood through the use of human knowledge and the five physical senses of sight, touch, taste, smell, and hearing. Especially when it comes to what lies in the future and the causes of many inexplicable past and present events, human knowledge and experience come to a mental cul-de-sac. At that point, the average man wants to know what the future holds in store for him or the cause(s) and reason(s) of what has happened to him. In order to satisfy that curiosity, he avails himself of the services of a special group of religious specialists known as diviners (*mbia idiong*) who are believed to be able to foretell the future and uncover the causes and reasons of past and present occurrences; for instance, sickness, death, accident, or some other mishap.

In Akwa Ibom traditional religious culture, as, indeed, in African traditional religious culture in general, an *abia idiong* seeks to interpret the mysteries of life, to convey the message of the gods, to give guidance in daily affairs and settle disputes, to uncover the past and to look into the future. The Akwa Ibom people believe that *mbia idiong* have a special privileged relationship with the Supreme Being, the lesser deities, and the ancestors. Indeed, quite often they are believed to be human representatives of these supernatural beings and even sometimes to serve as mediators between human beings and spiritual beings; hence their spiritual potency and ability to “see” with “supernatural eyes” into the past, present and future.

Thus, in the traditional and contemporary religious culture, the diviner (*abia idiong*) performs important psycho-social and religious functions. When a person wants to know about the exigencies of his circumstances – present, past or future – it is the *abia idiong* that he consults. Moreover, the *abia idiong* may be called upon to “see” why a

certain (usually undesirable) event, such as sudden sickness, death, or accident, has occurred.

Membership in the *Idiong* society is open to both men and women and may be obtained in one of two ways. A person may inherit it from either of his presents who was (is) an *abia idiong* or he may obtain it through apprenticeship under an *abia idiong* outside his family lineage. In either way, knowledge of the art of divination requires a period of training ranging from a few months to a number of years. Each state of the training usually requires specified ritual sacrifices and offerings on the part of the neophyte. The *Idiong* trainer is usually called the Ete Idiong (Father of Idiong) or Eka Idiong (Mother of *Idiong*) as the case may be. The neophyte, male or female, is called simply Eyen Idiong (child of *Idiong*).

Two grades of *Idiong* have been identified. One grade is known as *Idiong Ibok* (literally medical or herbal *Idiong*). Members of this grade combine divination and curative medicine. This is the more common of the two grades. The other grade is known as *Idiong Mfa* (*priestly Idiong*). This is considered to be higher in rank than the first grade. Members of this grade are usually highly respected and reputable elderly persons of the community with tested wealth of knowledge and experience in matters of divination. They concentrate on divination and do not normally engage in curative medicine, although they may prescribe courses of treatment to be carried out by practitioners of *Idiong Ibok* and other traditional medicine men and women.

Members of both grades of the *Idiong* institution are expected to be “holy” and moral people who must not take part in evil doing of any sort, such as poisoning people or conspiring to murder any person. It was (is) believed that any *abia Idiong* involved in such an immoral act would die as a punishment from *Abasi Ibom* and the lesser deities.

EKPO INSTITUTION

The word *Ekpo* may be translated to mean “ghost”, “Spirit”, “ancestral spirit” and so on.. But as a sacred cultural institution, *Ekpo* is an institution symbolized and represented by ugly (usually black) masquerades worn and carried about by members during certain period of the year. The specific periods of the year for *Ekpo* outing, vary from one ethnic community to another. *Ekpo* is exclusively a male society or cult. The membership and many of the activities of the society are characterized by much secrecy;

hence it is being included among the “secret societies” of the state. *The Ekpo* institution is founded on the people’s religious belief that death is not the complete end of life. That is to say, when a person dies, he or she does not really die, for life, it is believed, continues in the spirit world after earthly existence. The *Ekpo* masquerade is, therefore, believed to symbolize the continuing existence of people who had physically departed from this world of sense experience but who “live” on in the spirit world from where they occasionally return to this world, either on their own or as messengers of Abasi Ibom, to influence for good or evil, the course of human plans and activities. John Mbiti refers to ancestral spirits as “the living-dead,” an appellation which succinctly describes simultaneously their “dead” and “living” status” (1969: 25).

The people believe that the spirit world is a world “where strict laws, justice, and severe punishment prevail”. The institution of *Ekpo* society is, therefore, an attempt to re-enact or imitate in this world the condition in the spirit world. In the traditional society, the *Ekpo* institution “was regarded as the highest institution in the traditional government... [and] as the protector and guardian of the human beings on earth” because of its strict rule and regulations which both its members and members of the community must obey. The *Ekpo* society is still seen in Akwa Ibom contemporary society as a symbol and epitome of law and order in the society.

The precise origin of *Ekpo* as a traditional cultural institution is not known. However, it is speculated to have started among the Annang of Ikot Ekpene at a time when the men there, the exclusive members of the society, wanted to prove to the womenfolk that they were superior to women, in male reaction against what the men of that time saw as female stubborn resistance to male sexual advances. In order to compel women to fear and respect them, it is said; men invented and wore ugly *Ekpo* masquerades and masks to terrify them. Wearing the terrifying masks and masquerades the men-become-*Ekpo* moved about from place to place terrifying women and causing them to run away in terror. The *Ekpo*-mask-wearing men even went to women gatherings causing them to disperse in confusion. This fear for *Ekpo* masquerades can still be found in women in many Akwa Ibom communities, however in a drastically reduced degree. Women are not allowed to watch *Ekpo* masquerades. They are not to engage in any noisy quarrels and activities, such as splitting or cutting firewood, pounding food or palm fruits, during the *Ekpo* season. Any woman found to violate this rule is subject to fines in kind and cash by the

local *Ekpo* society. Penalties were (are) always administered by force against recalcitrance.

Other social functions performed by the *Ekpo* society included sanctions against such social offences as murder, theft, prostitution, adultery, willful damage of public property, indiscriminate and out-of-season harvesting of palm-oil fruits, or indiscriminate burning of bushes.

Apart from its traditional political and legal role as the highest law-and order enforcement agency in some traditional Akwa Ibom societies, the *Ekpo* institution has continued to serve as a source of social entertainment and relaxation in modern stressful and tense times. Moreover, because of their fear for *Ekpo* masquerades, disobedient and stubborn children could be compelled to obey and respect their parents and elders, at least during *Ekpo* seasons and outing periods, if they were threatened that they would be subjected to the punitive discipline of *Ekpo* masquerades. Even in contemporary Akwa Ibom State, the members of *Ekpo* cult provide most of the security to the villages at night, protecting life and property.

Finally, the *Ekpo* institution is not without economic advantages for modern Akwa Ibom State. For instance, the art work involved in carving the *Ekpo* masks and masquerades and the drums and other musical instruments used for *Ekpo* dances, not only encourages and aids the development of aesthetics and artistic creativity among the indigenes, but also contributes sizeably to the economic development of the state.

It is worthy of mention here that much of what has been said above about the *Ekpo* institution has, as in the case of other traditional institutions of the people, been touched by the cold hand of change. The principal agents of this change have been Western Christianity and its handmaid, Western education, and the colonial administration. Although the *Ekpo* institution is still in existence, it hardly commands the respect and awe it once commanded in pre-missionary and pre-colonial times. Many of its old rules and regulations may now be flouted, without any compunction, by Christian indigenes and those indigenes of the state that have had the advantages of Western education. For example, many immature young people who have not been ritually initiated into the *Ekpo* society now play around with masquerades during national public holidays and Christian or Muslim religious festivals.

EKPE INSTITUTION

The word *Ekpe* literally means leopard. This traditional institution is so named because its masks and masquerades are fashioned and designed to look like the skin of a leopard. The *Ekpe* institution functions in much the same way as the *Ekpo* institution in those culture areas of the state where the latter institution does not exist – in such places as Uruan and Oron.

Like the *Ekpo* institution, the *Ekpe* institution functions as an instrument for the enforcement of traditional authority, law and order. Its prospective members, as in the case of *Ekpo*, must swear on an oath to keep the rules, regulations and secrecy of the institution.

In pre-modern Akwa Ibom, membership in the *Ekpe* society was a sort of status symbol. It entitled members to hold important public offices such as village or clan headship, membership in village or clan councils or courts, or other political offices of the community. Indeed, in many communities of pre-colonial period, the *Ekpe* council constituted the highest law- and decision-making body. This council also performed the judicial function of settling disputes that regard, it helped to maintain peace and order in the community and to protect the rights of individuals as well as those of the community in general. Moreover, its masked members were occasionally used to perform such social functions as those now taken over by the modern police.

According to Essien, *Ekpe* had a secret writing known as Nsibidi which could be read and interpreted only by the highly – ranked members of the institution. The writing was often inscribed on the ground, on wood or even on the body of *Ekpe* initiates. At times this sacred writing “was represented by signs, dancing, walking or movement of body consciously made by an *Ekpe* member” (1990:97).

THE INAM INSTITUTION

Inam is a sacred institution which “seeks to revitalize the spiritual and physical qualities of aged men and women of known piety and probity of character...” (Abasiattai, 1991:100). Members of this institution are believed to have reached such spiritual and moral height that has enabled them to be in direct and constant contact and communication with the spirit world and the divinities.

The candidate for the *Inam* priesthood could be a man or woman. He or she must not be less than fifty years old, and must undergo a period of confinement in a special *Inam* shrine called *Ekuk Inam*. This period of confinement ranges from three to several months and is intended to educate the neophyte in deeper spiritual and moral principles. During the confinement, the neophyte performs religious rituals aimed at procuring for the community peace and prosperity. In order for these rituals to be efficacious, the *Inam*-in-training must maintain a high standard of spirituality and morality. The death of an *Inam* neophyte during the period of confinement is usually interpreted by the people to be God's punishment on the initiate for his or her moral and spiritual laxity. The confinement may be repeated periodically up to seven times in a single person's life-time.

The initiate who has successfully completed the period of the confinement assumes the honorific title of *Oku Inam* (*Inam* priest), and is henceforth expected to live, and be seen, as god's representative among the people. He (or she) offers prayers in the mornings and evenings in the shrine to Abasi Ibom for his/her and the community's safety, well-fare and prosperity. Whenever the need arises, the *Oku Inam* also performs various rituals to appease Abasi Ibom (Abasiattai, 1991:103).

Thus, because of the high respect accorded to *Oku Inam*, the *Inam* institution serves as a positive incentive for the development of high moral and spiritual qualities which are necessary for social and economic development in contemporary Akwa Ibom State.

THE INSTITUTION OF EBRE AND IBAN ISONG

Traditional institutions in the state which were exclusive to women included *Ebre*, *Ndok Ufok Ebe* (The shame/suffering of women in marital homes), *Nkere Ebe* (Thinking about the husband), *Asian Uboikpa* (The pride of unmarried girls), and *Iban Isong* (Women of the land). Because they are the most important of the lot, the first and last institutions listed here will be discussed briefly.

Ebre Institution: The word *Ebre* means water yam, a special kind of yam planted by women. It appears as if this female institution was established to protect women from male molestation and marginalization. Members of the *Ebre* club are usually married women of proven reputation and integrity. Its main social function in pre-colonial times

was to regulate the conduct of its members and to ensure good discipline and behaviour among them and all women generally.

Members of *Ebre* frowned at any woman who was a thief, especially stealing the *Ebre* food crop. If any of its members stole, such a problem is smeared with charcoal, and paraded through the streets of the village, with the stolen item(s) hung around her neck. Amidst intermittent beating of the thief, dancing and satiric singing by members of the institution, she was led to the village square to face public shame as a deterrent to others against such a shameful and anti-social behaviour. The *Ebre* institution also served the interest of men. For instance, if a husband reported his wife's misbehaviour (such as adultery) or other acts of disobedience or stubbornness to the institution such a wife would be summoned to appear before the *Ebre* supreme council and dealt with accordingly. Thus, the club performed important social and judicial functions in traditional Akwa Ibom society.

The Institution of *Iban Isong*: Literally meaning "Women of the Land", *Iban Isong* still plays an important role in the social development of the state. As in the case of the *Ebre* institution, only women of unquestionable character and proven integrity, especially those past child-bearing age, are admitted to membership of the *Iban Isong* institution. The functions of *Iban Isong* go beyond those of the *Ebre* institution. *Iban Isong* is regarded as the highest organization of women and serves as the "executive council" for women affairs dealing with difficult issues affecting women's welfare which could not be dealt with in other women organizations. The *Iban Isong* society handles all cases involving the maltreatment of women by men. For instance, if a man abused womanhood or said that a woman was dirty and such an insult was reported to *Iban Isong*, the man would be fined heavily, including his buying items to be used in cleansing her "dirt" ritually. Thus, the activities of the institution help to check the abuse of the womenfolk.

THE INSTITUTION OF UTA MBIAM (OATH-TAKING)

Whenever there is need for some kind of pact or covenant to be made between two individuals or between two families or communities, each party is made to swear to an oath (*uta mbiam*) in the name of a feared deity of the family or community, to the effect that each party would respect the terms of the pact, failure to do so would attract punishment from the god of the oath concerned (*Abasi mbiam*).

Mbiam may also be taken by an individual as invocation to a deity to witness that a statement made by the individual on a disputed issue is true. For instance, if an individual denies an accusation against him, he/she is subjected to an oath in order to prove his innocence. If no misfortune befalls him/her during a period specified by the *Mbiam* priest, the accused is declared innocent.

Mbiam itself may consist merely of swearing by the name of some feared dangerous deity believed to be capable of punishing those who swear falsely by it, or, it may consist of some concoction specially prepared by a traditional medicine man or woman into which he/she had invoked the names of one or more dangerous deities. In the case of a concocted *mbiam*, the individual(s) concerned may simply swear by it or drink a portion of it to complete the swearing process.

Other objects which may be used as *mbiam* include the blood from an in-law (*ukot*) or from a grandchild (*eyeyen*) or from a grandfather (*etebom*) or from a grandmother (*eka-eka*). Alternatively, a piece of finger or toe nail, a piece of hair, a piece of cloth belonging to any of this class of persons, or any part of their body, could also be sworn to as *mbiam*. Or, any object or place or time believed to belong to a deity and believed, therefore, to be sacred, could also be used as *mbiam*. The sky, the sun and moon, the stars, stone, the sand on the ground, fire, salt, and oil could also be used as *mbiam*.

Sometimes, the corpse of a person could be used as *mbiam*. This usually happens when the dead person is suspected to have been murdered or poisoned by an enemy. The suspected murderer is asked to prove his innocence by swearing by the corpse. Sometimes, the road may be used as *mbiam*. Here, the accused or suspect of a crime is made to swear that if he/she is guilty, he/she should die by road accident.

In some instances, a prepared concocted *mbiam* may be “poured” (invoked) against a community- that is against someone who has committed some crime but whose identity is unknown and who is unwilling to reveal himself/herself. This kind of *mbiam* may be “poured” on behalf of the entire community by the community leader or his representative or by an individual victim of a criminal or immoral act. In such cases, after the invocation of the appropriate deities of oath into the concoction and the pouring of liberation by the *mbiam* priest, the *mbiam* is asked to expose the criminal by striking him/her with the usual consequences of false oath-taking. Quite often, the desired results are achieved.

Persons known to have sworn falsely to *mbiam* are known to have suffered a number of misfortunes ranging from prolonged serious illness to a swelling of the stomach and eventually death. It is difficult to say empirically at this point whether those who swear falsely to an oath simply suffer from the psychological effect of guilt feelings, resulting in heart failure, a common cause for the swelling of the human body.

THE INSTITUTION OF UKANG (ORDEAL)

Closely related to the institution of *mbiam* is the institution of *ukang* (Ordeal). Like the former institution, the latter is also concerned with deciding a person's guilt or innocence in a matter in which the truth is veiled. As in the case of *mbiam*, the people consult *ukang* to find the truth about, for instance, the fidelity or infidelity of a wife suspected by her husband to have committed adultery, the rightful owner of a plot of land in dispute, the validity or otherwise of witchcraft accusation, who in a community has stolen someone else's property, and so on.

If a person or a group of persons accused of an unjust or wicked act or behaviour denied the accusation, and there was some doubt about the validity of the accusation, the accused would be summoned to appear before the traditional village court or council. There, he/she would be asked to prove his/her innocence by either swearing to *mbiam* or by going through the *ukang* ordeal, which has several forms.

The ordeal may consist of the accused dipping his/her right elbow-deep into a pot of boiling oil on a tripod over burning fire. Over the boiling pot, a traditional *ukang* specialist says a special *ukang* prayer, invoking the powers of the deities of justice, of truth, and of morality. He/she prays that the deities should prove before the waiting community the innocence or guilt of the accused about to be tried, ending the prayer/invocation by pouring the traditional libation. The accused is brought out to stand before the curious and anxious community. He/she is asked to repeat this prayer:

If I am guilty of this thing I am being accused of; if I have told a lie to this noble community; let this boiling oil burn my hand. But if I am not guilty, and if I have told the truth, may nothing happen to my hand (Nya, September, 2010)

After the prayer, the accused dips his/her right hand into the pot of boiling oil. If he/she had told the truth and was not guilty, truly nothing would happen to his/her hand.

But if he/she had lied to the community, every inch of the part of his/her hand that touched the boiling oil is burnt, and he/she will carry the scar for the rest of his/her life. Within a few weeks, the person thus becomes ill, and parts of his body touched by the *ukang* ordeal become pale. Again, some parts of his body (usually the legs, stomach and face) become swollen. Invariably, this person dies shortly thereafter.

Both *mbiam* and *ukang* are still effective means of securing social justice or still serve as a deterrent against social injustice, criminal tendencies and flippant and false accusations even in contemporary Akwa Ibom State.

CELEBRATION OF INNOCENCE AFTER OATH-TAKING AND THE UKANG ORDEAL

The period during which an oath is expected to prove the innocence or guilt of the person who has taken it is usually twelve calendar months. If the person does not die during this period, he/she is believed to have spoken the truth and, therefore, to have been innocent in the matter in dispute. This proof of innocence is usually celebrated with rejoicing, dancing and feasting by the innocent, his/her family and friends. The same kind of celebration marks the vindication of the person who has gone through the *ukang* ordeal. On the other hand, much shame follows the person declared guilty by *mbiam* and *ukang*. Such shame follows the culprit to his/her grave if he/she has been killed by *mbiam*, and remains with members of his family and his friends for as long as they are alive.

There is no doubt among the people of Akwa Ibom State that the institutions of *mbiam* and *ukang* have been an effective means of social control in their ability to aid in the maintenance of good human relationships of trust and fidelity, in establishing the truth or falsehood of what people say, especially on and about disputed issues and in doubtful circumstances, and in maintaining the secrecy of organizations and institutions.

Some people believe that there exist special spirit beings known as *Ekpo nka owo* whose responsibility it is to monitor the sexual behaviour of married women and to punish married women who violate the sexual mores sanctioned by *Abasi Ibom*, the divinities and the ancestors. These spirit beings derive their name as follows: *Ekpo* (spirits) who punish married women who go (*ka*) to make love to men (*owo*) other than their husbands.

Extra-marital sexual intercourse between married women must be confessed publicly by the women concerned. Such confession must be followed immediately by

appropriate sacrifices to the offended spirits. Failure to perform on time these rites of cleansing and propitiation could cost the life of the defaulter or of her young children. If she was pregnant, either as a result of the adultery or from licit coitus with her husband, she could die in labour or give birth to a stillborn child, if she did not confess her adultery soon enough. The confession is considered incomplete and unacceptable to both man and the deities if the name(s) of the man/men involved are not mentioned publicly to members of the husband's family.

In some families, the husband of the adulterous wife may himself become sick if he, ignorant of his wife's adultery, had sexual intercourse with her thereafter or continued to eat food prepared by her. The common sickness for the husband in such families is either temporary impotence or a twisting of his neck in such a way that he can only hold his head sideways, finding it extremely difficult and painful to hold his head straight. In order to set the husband free from this double pain, appropriate rituals of cleansing must be performed on him. Such rituals usually involve animals (e.g. hens or cocks, goats etc.) or other bloodless offerings and libation – all to appease the *ekpo nka owo* and, ultimately, *Abasi Ibom*.

The people believe that adultery is particularly offensive to the ancestral spirits of a given family unit, because it introduces into the family “alien blood” (the “blood” from the adulterous man), thereby polluting the “pure” lineage blood of the family concerned. All the rites of purification performed during an incident of adultery are, therefore, intended to cleanse that pollution.

THE INSTITUTIONS OF UKOT (IN-LAW) AND GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN RELATIONSHIPS

Other traditional institutions are those of *Ukot* (in-law) and grandparent-grandchildren relationships. *Ukot* (in-law) Relations: The institution of *ukot* involves a network of delicate and intricate inter-family and inter-communal relationships. Thus if a man from community A, marries a women from community B, he becomes an *ukot* (in-law) not only to the family of his wife but the whole community becomes in-laws to the man's family, in the first instance, and, by extension, to the entire village A. All parties involved in this network of *ukot* relationships are expected to observe strictly certain rules and relationships. For instance, an *ukot* is not expected to poison, or kill, cheat, fight, harm, or plan any kind of evil against his/her *ukot*. To violate this principle is to incur divine or

ancestral displeasure against the individual violator or against his/her entire family, community or village.

The consequences of this violation could be very serious or even fatal. For example, the individual violator could suffer from a form of elephantiasis or from a swelling of the stomach and could even die from such disorders. Alternatively, the violator's family or community could suffer such misfortunes as bad harvest, ill-luck during hunting ventures, an outbreak of an epidemic, etc. Normalcy cannot return to the individual violator or his family unless reparation is made through peace settlement or through appropriate ritual sacrifices to *Abasi Ibom* through the specific deity called *Abasi Ukot* (god-of-in-laws) who is believed to be in charge of in-law relationships and who, in that capacity, punishes violators.

All persons involved in *ukot* relationships were (are) morally bound to defend and protect one another at all circumstances, even at the risk of one's life. This moral expectation is expressed in a proverb which says: "*Ukot isidahada ise nte ukot akpa*", meaning that "an in-law cannot stand aloof watching his/her in-law die (or suffer)

GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN RELATIONSHIPS:

Very closely related to in-law relationships are grandparents-grandchildren relationships. The word for a grandchild is *Eyeyen*, meaning the child of our child. But the English translation of *Eyeyen* is somewhat misleading in that it gives the impression that the grandparent-grandchild relationship is restricted to grandparents and grandchildren. This, of course, is not so. Even grandparents (*Eka-eka* or *Ete-eka*) themselves are regarded as grandchildren to one family or the other. In other words, the word "child" or "children" in the context of these relationships include adults also.

Thus a person, child or adult, is a grandchild first and foremost to the nuclear family resides in the village. Secondly, that person is also regarded as a grandchild to the entire village or entire community from which his/her mother hails. No member of one's mother's nuclear or extended family (village or community) may poison, kill, cheat, physically or normally harm or plan evil against one. Neither can one (the *Eyeyen*) commit these moral offences against any member of one's mother's nuclear or extended family.

The Akwa Ibom people believe that any party, grandchild (*Eyeyen*) or grandparent (*Eka-eka* or *Ete-eka*) who commits any of these moral offences against one another will be punished by *Abasi Eyeyen* (god of grand-children) or *Abasi Eka-eka* or *Abasi Etebom* (god of grandparents), as the case may be. The punishment may take the form of those connected with the violation of in-law relationships, and the ritual steps taken to resolve the conflict and appease the gods take almost exactly the same form as those prescribed for breaches in in-law relationships. Again, as in the case of in-law relationships, strict adherence to the ethical principles governing grandparent-grandchildren relationships would serve as a positive factor in inter-personal and inter-group social relationships even in contemporary Akwa Ibom State, especially since many individuals and groups have such grandparent-grandchild relationships across the state.

3.4 THE MUSICAL CULTURE OF THE AKWA IBOM PEOPLE

Akwa Ibom music is categorized as folk music lending its lyrics, tone and tune from legends, tales and so on. Thus their music is usually of simple character and the origin is ancestral handed down orally by the people who are representatives of their traditions, beliefs and attitudes. These form the basis for the musical culture of the Akwa Ibom people.

Akwa Ibom musical culture fits exactly into the view of Turner that music carries along the nuances of its environment. He declares that

If music allow emotional expression, gives aesthetic pleasure, entertains, communicates, elicits physical response, enforces conformity to social norms and validates social institutions and religious rituals, it is clear that it contributes to the continuity and stability of culture. (1973:1104).

Briefly speaking, the Akwa Ibom people use music as an important part of mysticism to express the values of their traditional institutions. The Akwa Ibom people encourage mass participation in music but do not discourage solo performances which are only exhibited by experts in various fields of performance.

In ritual sessions, there is heavy presence of music. The songs are rendered to edify the gods and even create enabling environment for the act of worship. It is their belief that

songs lift spirit high and draw man closer to the domain where deliverance is assured. This assertion may be seen as fanatical. But Obot Ikponke supports it by saying that

The Akwa Ibom music is always an assemblage of emotion, with total submission and worship of nature, the giver of all, they desire. Their music is not based on stylizations, but on the purpose for which the composition is created and rendered (2007:6).

For instance, war songs create the spirit of patriotism, loyalty and valour thus putting the community towards a war path. Same is applicable to peace, love, development and so on. Music provides the opportunity for sharing in creative experiences and expression of group sentiments.

There is this general believe that music comes from a goddess, called “*Nyaama*”. “*Nyaama*” has been identified as the origin of Ibibio music. Inieke Ufford in his work “*Ikon music and Ibibio Culture*” expatiates on this sensitive issue. He declares that

“*Nyaama*” loves to sing as a way of blessing her people or subjects. So it was generally believed that her acolytes were great singers, hence any musician that made his mark was thought to have consulted “*Nyaama*” for her favour and blessings (2000:16).

To him, “*Nyaama*” was a goddess of peace not war, and her influence cut across all traditional institutions, hence the prevalence of music in all facets of life of an Akwa Ibomite. Songs are rendered in burial ceremonies, birth, naming ceremonies, marriages, worship and so on.

There are basically two types of music, namely vocal and instrumental. The vocal music is practiced in some institutions especially during meetings and casual discussions. Instrumental music is widely presented during performances, leisure and at initiation grounds. But the prevalent music culture is the combination of the vocal and instrumentation. This one cuts across all the institutions, especially in performance. The music is divided into social and sacred renditions; these songs serve as historical documents and means of communication.

3.5 DANCE CULTURE OF AKWA IBOM PEOPLE

The Akwa Ibom State people have a robust dance tradition. These dances celebrate and articulate diversified themes, beliefs and transcendental purposes. They celebrate myths, rituals, initiations and they cut across all facets of the people's wellbeing and agitation. The tradition of dance displays and compositions is as old as the people and it stands as a potent avenue for cultural strengthening and vibrancy. Inih Ebong opines that

For the people of Akwa Ibom State, the theatre is (and has always been) an affirmative celebration of the union between the earth and cosmos, and the different existential planes of the traditional universe. It is created and designed to provide community education and development through the medium of creative entertainment and recreation; to encourage and promote the socio-communal interaction and cultural transaction of members, The ultimate goal has always been that of amplifying and inculcating traditional norms and values in members of the society, and of celebrating, worshipping and affirming the community's wholeness, aspirations and sensibility (Ebong, 2000:86).

Dance in Akwa Ibom State can be grouped into two broad divisions. This is because life is viewed from its dualistic perspective. The sacred dances are those that explore the spiritual tentacles of the people while the secular or social dances reveal leisure, pure entertainment and relaxation. To this end, sacred dances involve initiations, worship, rituals, sacrifices and so on, and cannot be performed frequently without due consultations. The secular dances are flexible and not rigid in nature and can be performed any day and anytime without penalties or fines.

The sacred dances involve worship and sacrifice. These dances predominantly dwell on the presentational mode of performance. Every movement is believed to be done by the influence of the gods or the spirits behind the dance. In this case, the performer submits his total being to the will of the supernatural. Such dances include, *Inam*, *Idiong* and *Ekpo*. The secular dances give the people an opportunity to express themselves freely. Secular dances are mostly used to express happiness, occupation and entertainment. Movements in this form of dance show the elegance of culture and the well being of the people. They have nothing to do with worship. Such dance includes *Asian* which covers all aspects of the secular life of the people.

Inam dance is institutional and passed through different stages of spiritual manifestations. The dance stems from the *Inam* cult of the Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom State where one is kept in seclusion for years for spiritual growth and sanctity. *Inam* dance is done in stages:

- (i) *Ndungo or Ubip mkpo or Uka idiong*: Consultation of Divinities to confirm whether the proposed initiate is fit to be admitted in the cult.
- (ii) *Ubop ekuk Inam (Building of Inam shrine)*: On confirmation that the proposed was legible to be initiated, a shrine is immediately built where the initiate shall be confined throughout the seclusion period. The shrine would be equipped with all traditional requisites for *Inam* cult some of which are earthen pot, basket, wooden stool, utensils etc to be used for feeding and performance of rituals.
- (iii) *Uka Inam (Confinement Ceremony)*: At a specific ‘Obo’ market day the prospective *Inam* initiate goes to a chosen market and the old *Inam* initiates would go there to take him back home for *Inam* seclusion for not less than three months. An *Inam* year or cycle is seven years. An *Inam* initiate is expected to pass through seven cycles (49) years. One has to be about twenty one years before being initiated into the cult.
- (iv) *Ukpi Enang (Cow Slaughtering)*: The initiate at this stage slaughters a cow in sacrifice to the living and the dead, pleading with Abasi Ibom (Supreme God) to share part of the cow to His deities for protection of the initiates from trouble, sickness, evil powers, and death during the period of his confinement.
- (v) *Usoro Inam (Inam celebration)*: The initiates then hosts all the *Inam* members in grand feast (usoro). Friends and relations were also feted in same feast which was meant for ushering upon members of the initiate’s household perfect peace and hamony, throughout his confinement.
- (vi) *Uduk Inam (Confinement Proper)*: At this stage the initiate settles down for *Inam* lessons and norms. He is subjected to strict dietary conditions. He wears a wrapper to which a special leaf – “ofuo” is constantly fixed.
- (vii) *Uwuo Inam (Inam Outing)*: At successful completion of seclusion the initiate is taken to same market in which initiation was announced, as stated above, in a very

large crowd of the villagers, relations, in-laws, grand children, kith and kins and many other well wishers from far and near. He would therefore offer sacrifices in many perspectives while presenting himself to members of the public. *Ikon Eto*, *Ikon Ikpa* (wooden and membrane xylophones) were used for same celebrations. These orchestras would perform from the market to the initiate's family. The *Inam* veteran is then received with great honour.

The Master Drummer in the *Ikon* Orchestra would maneuver the entire outing ceremony. He instructs his musicians/singers, dancers and members of the audience when to perform or come out into the performing space to dance or prostrate for the fresh blessing of the initiate. He would then call on the initiate, his household, friends and relations to come out for victory dance when gifts would be lavished on the initiate and members of his family.

Unlike the *Inam* dance which is characterized with heavy presence of instruments, the *Idiong* dance is accompanied with tortoise shell. The shell becomes the basic instrument of communication between God and man.

Idiong was and still is "the cult of the wise". The Ibibio believe a lot in mystical forces which he considers being divine and controlled by the gods and divinities who can be communicated with for postulations in aid of solution of the problems of man, thus the need for the services of Diviners was in high demand. In *Ibibio Idiong* provided such Divine services and needs.

According to Abasiattai (1987:181), *Idiong* is "the art (or science) of foretelling the future by various natural, psychological and other techniques, found in all civilizations ancient and modern, primitive and sophisticated stress".

Idiong (sorcery) as the act of foretelling the unknown or future especially by signs or omens. Mbiti (1974:201) sees *Idiong* as an ability to consult the spirits and invisible things. Men and women full of religious knowledge with sterling leadership qualities form membership of *Idiong* cult. They intercede between God and man.

There are three types of *Idiong* namely: *Idiong Ibok*, *Idiong Ifa* and *Idiong Ekpo*. All of them used *Ikon Ikpok* (shell xylophone) for their celebrations. It is considered that the tortoise is the wisest of the animals so the "council of the wise" in Ibibio land (*Idiong*) plays various sizes of tortoise shells during their *Idiong* Festival. This festival is only done

by *Idiong* initiates who appear in their complete regalia each with a tortoise shell. The *Ete Idiong* (*Idiong* Father) would strike each shell and call on his son or daughter to perform one act or the other and that would be done, others would each take a turn. Vocal singing dominates this participation by all initiates present with very exciting and brilliant dramatic enactments. *Idiong* cult prefers to use only the tortoise shell xylophone for their performances which is usually held at the market places, village squares, *Idiong* shrines and any aesthetically fitted spot. This ceremony is usually one of the best in *Ibibio* land when all the clients would turn out for lavishing pleasantries on their divine masters who would saturate the audience present with mystical feasts and magical displays. The dance movements are formal and done according to the spirit of the moment. Most movements are not in harmony. They believe that movement is influenced by the gods they worship especially in devotional celebration like that of the *Idiong* cult.

Amongst the sacred dances, *Ekpo* dance is the most vibrant in the *Akwa Ibom* society. The dance combines great body movements with spiritual connotations. *Ekpo* dance is performed based on the *Akwa Ibom* belief in ancestral guidance. The *Ibibio* adore their gods and ancestors who they consider as motivating factor in the quest to succeed in their existence. *Ekpo* dance therefore becomes a performance simulating the presence of the gods and ancestral spirits in the affairs of man in his universe.

It is believed that around September/October *Eka ekpo*, at midnight is heard bemoaning the ills of her human community. Thereafter, her children, the *Ekpo* initiates parade the streets for about four weeks, performing satire chants intended to caution and regenerate the conscience of the community.

Towards the end of *Ekpo* social sanction enactment, when the various kinds of *Ekpo* are ready to depart the world of the living, there are dramatic displays to usher in communion between the spirit patrons and the human representatives in selected venues, preferably market places, play grounds (*ufed mbre*) or clearing near a groove. Some performances commemorate and reaffirm relational obligations and communal sanctification between the departed souls and the living within *Ibibio* community.

The masquerade dance is a highly spiritualized display of a great magnitude and shows when god becomes man and man becomes god as seen in the intense processional display of movements. *Ekpo* dancers are representatives of the gods and they simulate such responsibilities shouldered by the gods during the performance.

Ekpo dance display is elastic and unique in its nature. It is basically improvisational. Though the instrumentation is rehearsed some days before the actual performances, the dancers are used to their basic – non-verbal cues and movements, besides they are always encapsulated in the stream of possession re enacting the characteristics of the spirits they are representing with the masks. Their treats of the spirits they are representing with the masks. Different masks symbolize different spirits. According to Chief Okon Udo Edet, an *Ekpo* initiate in Ikot Usop in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

...the *Ekpo* dancers exhibit their dance step based on the spirits that lead them. Since they are a semblance of the gods and ancestors, rehearsals exhibit the dance steps that are manipulated by the spirits each of them possess... (August, 2012)

On the other perspective, Obong George Ufford the Village Head of Ikot Obio Oko in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area and a custodian of the *Ekpo* performance by his status in the society argues that

...although the belief behind the *Ekpo* display is the re-enactment of the actions of the dead, their dances are rehearsed. Though the masquerades may display improvised steps at intervals, there is always a defined rhythm for the individual masquerades. That is why the music for *Titia Ekpo* is different from that of the *Eka Ekpo* and others... (August, 2009)

Appraising the above postulations and through participation and observation, it can be submitted that, the defined music of the *Ekpo* ensemble and the characterization of the masquerades determine the mode of the performance. The *Ekpo* dancer lives in a spiritual realm only perceived by him and what he does surpasses human comprehension; though his movements and actions are always recalled to reality by the lead drummer and the *Akwa Ekpo* (cantor) to avoid the dancer being totally consumed in possession or trance. The lead drummer calls them by name and instructs them on what to do while the cantor extols and edifies the masquerades with inspirational words and chanting which are also

controlled. In some cases, he goes along with prepared native eggs and other ritual items meant for the control of the temperament of the masquerades.

The *Ekpo* dance is fashioned in a progressive manner. Music is supplied by a legion of drummers playing assorted membrane instruments with varied sounds and tones. Though there are other instruments such as slit drum and rattle, they only play subordinate roles to the membrane drum ensemble. The music is militant and pragmatic. The pulsating force of the drums ignites the spirit in the masquerade and so launches him into the free flow of action and communion with the underworld. The lead instrument is called “*Nkronk Ekpo*” (Ikon Ikpa) a kind of xylophone in the Ibibio society. These five small elongated drums are mounted on a horizontal bar supported by two vertical poles. All the drummers use two strikers to beat the drum and they do this by standing up throughout the duration of the performance. The music is made up of staccato beats and sustained rhythmic patterns.

In order to give weight to the solo instrumentation of the lead instrumentalist in the ensemble, the other drummers respond with a pulsating strike on the drum to show the mutual understanding inherent in the musical composition. The beauty of *Ekpo* dance is the timely response of all the drummers to the dance steps of the masquerades which may vary as the case may be. The attack from the drumming gives the dance a form and force needed to transform the empathy needed by the audience for a dance of this magnitude. Music becomes the vehicle that sustains the *Ekpo* dance and the lead drummer must be versatile if the performance must be a success.

Obong George Ufford affirms that

The success or failure of an *Ekpo* dance performance lies with the versatility of the lead drummer. The master drummer must use his creative judgment to compose and structure *Ekpo* presentation (movements) is done on the spur of the moment... (August, 2009)

Above quotation emphasizes on the need to have a versatile drummer whose composure and judgment during *Ekpo* performances must be alert to the spontaneity that is prevalent in masquerade displays because of its free and loose nature. The lead drummer

must flow in the same world with the dancers and this made possible with a deep understanding of the improvisational techniques in the dance over the years.

At the beginning of *Ekpo* dance proper, the lead drummer goes into a solo instrumentation showing his mastery of the arts of drumming. He calls the ancestors that were identified with the performance and soliciting for their support. All these are achieved through drum calls.

After this introduction, other vocal and drum responses or signals are heard. The lead drummer then signals for the accompaniments to join. The *Akwa Ekpo* who is responsible for guiding the masquerades comes in first with his chants accompanied by the orchestra of drums. He then uses his *Ekput* (ritual rattle) to invoke the different spirit characters for the performance. The *Ekput* is always shaken to sensitize the spirits for action. These spirit characters include *Eka Ekpo* (mother), *Ayara* (Father or wild), *Akpan Ekpo* (male son) *Aboikpa Ekpo* (maiden), Abia Idiong ekpo (fortune Teller) *Titia Ekpo* (teacher), *Iyion ekpo* (cripple), *Ekpo akpara* (prostitute) and so on. They are all associated with some demonstrable characters traits regarding who or what they represent and these are exhibited in their dance performance. They are called by the *Akwa Ekpo* one after the other into the dance arena.

Titia Ekpo is always exaggerating his actions and most times he is very partial in judgment. During the course of this research, the researcher gathered that, this naughty behaviour of the masquerades is based on believe that man cannot teach perfectly since he can be biased and manipulate things based on his desires. For example, *Titia Ekpo* may score an *Ekpo* dancer who is very impressive in dance 10% and then score the unimpressive ones 100% to the astonishment of the spectators. It therefore means that, there is an error in judgment. He satirizes those that think they can teach while life is the utmost teacher in all ramifications. The maiden *Ekpo* is always shy in action and in most cases keep running away from the male masquerades, while *Akpan* (son) *Ekpo* is arrogant, very wild and dangerous. Sometimes he is restricted with robe tied around his waist. The Cripple *Ekpo* is tilt and ill-tempered and is noted for harassing the audience frequently. While the masquerades are displaying, *Titia Ekpo* keeps on grading them his own way. He really brings comic effects to the performance.

Beside the division of dances into social and sacred in presentation and techniques the Akwa Ibom people also had dances that were totally for male alone while some were

also earmarked for females. This was because the elders wanted the male and female to interact separately and then experience what they were taught separately in some mixed dance grills such as *Asian* (men are specifically drummers), and *Itembe* (dancers are male and female).

An appraisal of *Asian* dance and *Ekpo* dance will go along way to revealing the different elements in Akwa Ibom dance culture. This is because, these dances are central in form, philosophy and approaches in the dance culture and technique of the Akwa Ibom people of Nigeria.

Despite the tradition of dances portraying spirits and their role in the survival of man in the Akwa Ibom society, there exist the secular dances which are designed to create harmony and contention despite his travails in and around him. *Asian* dance is a complete example of the secular feelings of the people because it is rooted in the conscious evaluation of the family system in the society.

Asian Uboikpa dance is mostly performed by young girls from Ibibio tribe of Akwa Ibom State who are certified virgins and have passed through the fattening rites for marriage. According to Madam *Nkoyo Udo Udi*, a veteran *Asian* dancer, during her youthful years, *Asian Uboikpa* dance was handed down from generation to another. She further highlights that '*Asian uboikpa*' means 'proud virgins or maidens'. *Asian Uboikpa* dance therefore is a celebration of the coming of age of the maidens that have successfully passed through the deceits and turbulence associated with youths in the society, hence, the belief that these dancers are gallant maidens who can stand firm despite the rigours of time. As virgins, nothing could be said against them, because virginity was the symbol of purity in the maidens. Every proud mother looked forward to seeing her female children flex their body in an *Asian* ensemble. The shouts of joy and pleasantries from the crowd extol the mother who is taken shoulder high and respected in the society. It also demonstrates that the *Asian* mothers are virtuous women. Consequently, a girl who loses her virginity before marriage is castigated and stigmatized in society. She can never join the *Asian* dance. In some cases, she is banished alongside her family.

Commenting on the origin of *Asian Uboikpa* dance, Obonganwan Atim Ekpo Inyang says that, *Asian* dance came to fruition because of the interest the Ibibio had in the marriage institution. It was a common thought that, a girl who only knows her husband will totally submit to him with all her heart. This strengthens the bond between them and

there will be no basis for comparison which may cause break-ups in matrimonial homes as in the case today. Besides, virginity was a sacred thing and was believed to be the antidote needed to sanctify marriages for a bountiful harvest. This harvest may be seen as in child bearing, peace, fertility and even in the traditional or ancestral worship. It could be recalled that, virgins were normally used as vessels or intercessors for the people during sacrifices, hence the belief that the more virgins we have in the land, the more favour we receive from the gods. This prompted the Akwa Ibom people to institute the *Asian Uboikpa* which sensitizes the young girls on the need to be preserved before marriage. To motivate the ladies, anyone that passed through the system had abundant gifts and respect from the community members. *Asian Uboikpa* dance became a standard that must be met by young maidens for their marriage to be sanctioned by the living and the dead. The compliance to this verdict did not meet with any opposition since a lady must marry legitimately, according to the norms and values of the community. To make this institution lively, songs that educate the members on the need to be virtuous became the pivotal form through which the motifs of the institution were transmitted. Dance movements expressed those experiences that are unique to the women world. Some movements simulate cooking, feeding, cleaning, pampering, nursing and so on.

To Ufford, virginity is identified with innocence in Akwa Ibom culture. The fact remains that, the *Asian* dancers must be virgins, so that they can be susceptible to reformations rooted in the custom of the people. Breaking of virginity signifies adulthood and experience has shown that, adults take more periods to imbibe or correct their behavioural patterns and virginity opens up the channels of learning in a youth (girl) and then galvanizes her into a strong partaker in the collective actualization of the norms and values she came to meet in her community. *Asian* dance is a confirmation of the attainments of these virgins that are stepping into the realm of maturity. The community therefore celebrates, having in mind that, the maidens had gone through the informal school in seclusion and are capable of facing the rigours and turbulences associated with life.

The *Asian Uboikpa* dance is sustained by the use of songs and instrumentation. As earlier expressed, *Asian* songs are reflected on the possible experiences the maidens had before now and also what they expect in their would-be matrimonial homes. Some songs show the overtures of the men towards them and how they resisted. Other compositions predominantly expound on the flexibility and adoration of the beauty associated with

maidenhood. You can only be a maiden once and this dance is the first major climatic level a woman attains and so gives her all to merry with the community.

The maidens are proud looking in their dances as they express the movements imitating some harmless or domestic animals. In some dances, they simulate the movements of hens, as they search for food, cover their chicks or eggs and even fly. All these symbolize motherhood. The flexibility of the dancers sometimes may be equated to that of a maggot. These movements are guided by the songs rendered. When this is done, we experience a synergy of action and the lyrics of the songs which enhance communication and understanding. By so doing, the motifs of the dance become prevalent for people to really understand the foundation through which the dance is presented. Besides, these motifs give the audience the chance to express themselves in a linear progression as they are captured in the web of the familiar songs woven into a complete ensemble that is patterned to accommodate improvised or spontaneous dance modifications.

Asian Uboikpa dance does not have any gender discriminations in the composition of the instruments. There is always a lead drummer who plays ‘obodom’ (slit drum) of different sizes. The ‘Obodom’ is associated with femininity because of the way it is structured. The protruding nature of the ‘Obodom’ simulates the protruding stomach of the woman during pregnancy ‘Obodom;’ has different sounds that are combined to play the melody of the songs rendered and also instruct dancers on what to do and even signal the high points and exit of the dancers. This depends on the mastery of instrument by the lead drummer. Other instruments that serve as accompaniments to the ‘obodom’ include:

1. Ntakrok (wood block), (see Appendix iii figure 1).
2. Nsak (rattle), (see Appendix iii figure 5).
3. Nkwong (gong), (see Appendix iii figure 13, 14).
4. Eka ibid (base drum), (see Appendix iii figure 8).
5. Etok ibid (small drum), (see Appendix iii figure 7).

While the ‘Ntakrok’ maintains the timing of the dance, ‘Eka Ibid’ is combined with ‘Etok Ibid’ to create a steady rhythm for the ensemble ‘Nsak’ and ‘Nkwong’ compliment the rhythm, while the ‘Obodom’ drummer is the marshal of the total ensemble. The lead drummer must be versatile and creative. The instrumentalist may be

composed of only women or men or both depending on the availability of those that are able to give the *Asian* dancers the right music for their dances.

At the beginning of the dance, the drummers start with introductory piece in order to alert the dancers to be ready for the performance. The instrumentation is backed up with songs. The lead drummer then calls on the lead dancer who comes in with her head gear decorated with head ties of various flashy colours. Some lead dancers come in with a carved maiden with a traditional hair-do placed in a basket or container. The lead dancer who is the central figure displays different steps to the delight of the audience and goes back calling the other members to come in. *Asian* dance is done in segments. At times, members come in first as the lead dancer stay at the middle or centre to gyrate her waist. Here the amount of energy applied to the waist of the dancer from the beginning of the movement phrase is constant.

At a signal from the lead dancer, she stops the movement and instructs others with a defined gesture to join her and this takes them into a circular formation to establish their communality and then detach into two lines facing each other with the lead dancer in the middle or detecting the space as she desires signing and displaying great artistry in her dances. At the end of every segment of the song, the lead dancer uses her whistle to indicate high points in the dance. At the end of any session of vigorous dance, there is an introduction of new songs, 'to give room for the dancers to relax and get set for their vigorous movement'.

At different high points in the dance, audience always join in the ecstasy and delight as they mingle with the dancers giving them gifts, money and other incentives. Because of this intimacy, the *Asian* dancer is poised to do more fantastic dances and this session continues until the lead dancer blows her whistle signaling the end of the movement and segment. The audience goes back to their usual role as spectators while the dancers continue with the other sequence of their dance. This high point also had the maidens having their solo opportunities. At this point, the individual *Asian* dancers show their best and their families and friends would give them money while other men steal the chance to spot their would-be-wives. At the end of the *Asian* dance, the community always offers a maiden an opportunity to show her tenderness through the art of dance and music and this goes down to show that dance and music were rooted in *Ibibio* cosmology.

Apart from the waist dance which is dominant in *Asian Uboikpa* dance, there is the trunk, hopping, bending and even tapping movements too. These are seen at intervals. The dance involved in *Asian Uboikpa* is energetic and has wide range of rhythmic movements exhibiting flexibility and beauty. At the end of the dance, the lead drummer or the lead dancer cues with the drum and whistle respectively as the dancers go out with a heavy gyration of the waist, while the lead dancer shows her dexterity with the waist and stops the instrumentation abruptly in a sharp crescendo’.

There is no set time limit for the dance and no set rules as to what movement to take at what time, but the major thing is that the movements are fast and valid. *Asian Uboikpa* dance could be performed during the entry of fattened maiden and other ceremonies.

The dancers are decorated with kaolin (ndom). The kaolin is mixed with water and serpentine or segmented designs are made on the legs and hands using the finger-nails or soft sticks while the design of the face is drawn with a stick also in the same pattern. The dancers use beaded raffia with tiny bells which add to the beauty of the dance. Their costume could be sewn as skirt and blouse which reveal the stomach of the maidens, the arms and legs. The exposed parts are left to show the sparkling beauty associated with the maidens. The use of cow tail and handkerchief enhance the beauty of the dance.

Conclusively, an appraisal of the two dance traditions reveals that the predominant technique in the Akwa Ibom dance culture could be divided into two;

- 1) Those that are presentational
- 2) And those that are representational

The presentational consist of those dances that are believed to reflect the true nature of the spirit of the gods they worship. These dances are ritualistic and created using the performer as a medium for intercession for the atonement of sin or for increase harvest and fertility. These dances may not really need an extensive rehearsal sessions since the movements are not static, but flow with the spirit believed to be controlling the soul of the performer. This is symbolic in the *Inam*, *Idiong* and *Ekpo* dances of the Akwa Ibom People. The representational consist of dances that strive to appreciate nature using their body and instruments to celebrate. Their movements are ordered and rehearsed properly. Their main aim is to artistically make the use of movement for the sake of aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction. Every movement is meant to teach the public basic element is in

the social institutions of the people. An example of this is the *Asian* dance experience. The signifiers and motifs in *Asian* dance show the enormous experience in matrimony. The *Asian* dancers' movements are under the control of the performers. They are free to express themselves without inhibitions. Generally, the Akwa Ibom people dance basically to celebrate their culture. All their dances are reflections of the day to day experiences of the people. The Akwa Ibomite is inseparable with dance and music.

CHAPTER FOUR
TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN MBOPO AND IKON
DANCES OF AKWA IBOM STATE

4.1 ORIGIN OF IKON

Ikon in Ibibio language is an instrument that adapts to all forms of traditional music and dance ensemble. It is an embodiment of a variety of sounds put together in a common structure. *Ikon* is not just a mono-sound instrument. It is made up of multi-dimensional sounds and pattern and, is known as xylophone in the English language while it is a known fact that the word xylophone is coined out of two Greek word “xylo” meaning wood and “phone” meaning sound. The Ibibio refer to Ikon as dimensional sounds that come out of either the skin of animals or wood. This is the main reason way the Ibibio community have two main types of Ikon ensemble. They include: Ikon Ikpa and Ikon eto. From this, it could be deduced that “Ikon” is generally rhythmic instrument made of either the skin or the wood.

(a) IKON IKPA

Ikon ikpa traditionally is said to have originated through the evolutionary festival dances of the hunters who celebrated their hunts of animals. They (hunters) believed that the sonorous rhythm that comes out of the instrument helps to draw the spirit of animals closer to their ambience (Chief Okon, September,2009) In addition, Obong Udom Utang in an oral interview stressed that Ikon Ikpa was not only designed to show man’s dominance over the animals, but also to affirm that they (animals) are co-players in the success story of the mundane. The Ikon Ikpa dance was meant to celebrate the animal Kingdom as a sustainable force in human existence. They (animals) are used for food, clothing, sacrifice and security. Their importance in man’s existence is immeasurable, hence this great device of the Ikon Ikpa ensemble. (September, 2009).

Obong Udo-Udo Eka (2009) does not disagree with the above points, but rather goes deeper in his assertion on the Ikon Ikpa dance tradition. He says that, this dance is done only once a year or during coronation ceremonies. Ikon Ikpa which is the basic instrument in the dance is sacred and it commands the spirits of the ancestors. According to him, it is believed that the skin on the drum is a ready made-sacrifice for the spirits. The skin cannot be worn on drums if the animals are not killed and skinned. The blood that is shed is regarded as a sacred exercise whose acceptance determines the veritable sound that comes out of the Ikon Ikpa. This is why Ikon ikpa is used in sacred dance such as Ekpo

and Ese performances. Ekpo dance is masquerade dance of the Ekpo institution. This is that institution of authority and enforcement of law and order in the traditional Ibibio Society. Ese dance is also sacred. It is a dance of royalty. A dance that eulogizes the fallen Heros and men with impeccable characters in the land, these dances are not just performed at will, they are seasonal. The Ikon Ikpa dance is not social, it is initiational. Its practices are highly secretive and added with spiritual manifestation and designs.

(b) **IKON ETO**

Ikon Eto (xylophone) is a social instrument that embraces all forms of dance patterns and performances in Akwa Ibom State. It cuts across all parts of the state due to its secular nature and value. Its origin is also not certain, but it is believed to have started with the story- telling sessions. There is also no clue for one to know between Ikon Ikpa and Ikon Eto which one comes in first in the order or importance. However, it is generally believed that this instrument is the foundation of the dance and music performance in Akwa Ibom State.

Prince Inieke Ufford (1995:5) avers that Ikon performance started with man's desire to embellish the songs and dance movements rendered in the folk sessions. The participants started by clapping their hands as accompaniment to the songs. As they continued enjoying the sessions they brought in pieces of sticks as innovations to the accompaniments for the songs and dances. With this, it was discovered that these slaps of wood had diverse sounds and quality. The people began to arrange them in ascending manner (that is from deep sounds to the lighter Sounds) by so doing, these arranged slaps showed signs of producing melody, these soothed the songs and dance variations in the folk sessions. As this new phase in folk sessions continued, the instrument was named "Ikon" which was drawn from the sound of the wood (Kon-Kon-kon). So the "I" sound was added to emphasize on the sound perceived.

Ikon has grown to be an instrument that contributes immensely to the traditional dance practice of Akwa Ibom State. It is used to create mood, enhance movements and intensify rhythm in a traditional ensemble. It is tuned both in pentatonic and diatonic scales. (See Appendix IV, figure 2)

4.1.2 PERFORMERS

Ikon dance does not have specific gender stress nor age limit. It is not initiational. Everyone that is creative and persistence in performance can always have a role to play in

the Ikon ensemble. Persistency in this sense is necessary since the dance patterns constantly revolve around the social change in the society. So the performers are not tired of adding value to their movements if that helps to step up the interest of the audience. The dancers must be flexible and creative, while the instrumentalist must be gifted. The lead drummer or the Ikon drummer or player should be a sound and highly versatile person whose focus and creativity is magnified with self esteem and presence of mind during performance. The lead drummer is quick to changes and masters movement techniques and improvisational skills

4.1.3 COMPOSITION

The ikon dance is composed of varied instruments that play peculiar roles in the ensemble. The Ikon ensemble is made up of three (3) Ikon (xylophones). The lead xylophone is called “Unaisong” the “Ayara” consists of 18 to 20 slaps while the Oboro and Unaisong have 12 slaps each. The Ayara plays the melody and instructs the ensemble while the Oboro and *Unaisong* play complimentary roles. The Oboro is the Tenor while the Unaisong is the Bass line. (See Appendix IV Figure 3). The other instruments include the slit drum, (See Appendix IV Figure 11 & 12) twin drum, (See Appendix IV Figure 6) base drum, (See Appendix IV Figure 8) metal gong, (See Appendix IV Figure 13 & 14) rattle, (See Appendix IV Figure 5) woodblock (See Appendix IV Figure 1).and siko drum (See Appendix IV Figure 9). The instrumental ensemble is always heavy. The woodblock provides the timing, the base drum stabilizes the rhythm, the siko drum stresses on the dynamics of movements, while the rattle, twin drum, and slit drum consolidate on the form of instrumentation.

The performers are mostly male in instrumentation and a mix of male and female in the dance proper. The dance steps are drawn from daily experiences and personal initiatives or creativity. There is no limit to movements and no specific form of performance. The main aim is to impress the audience with movements and music renditions. The dance designs are basically made to please the eye. The movement may be dramatic at times, but the mainstay of the dance is the stylized movement patterns in motion.

The songs may be rendered in any language, provided the music patterns are creatively synchronized with the design of movement in space and time. Ikon dance is always action packed and full of grace and quality.

4.1.4 COSTUME

The ikon dance costumes are always good looking. They are made of bright colours. There are no specific colours so far as the colours are bright and delightful. The form of costume is influenced by the movements in the dance. In most cases the female dancers use variety of short skirts and blouses made with diversified designs. Underneath, they wear black light or sew shorts that match with the skirt (see figure 8). Accessories, such as beads and bells are used in some instances while wool is also used to make embroidery design around the neck region. The male dancers have a top and long short (see figure 9). They are also garnished with beads and horse tail. Some Ikon dancers use raffia and it is designed smartly to enhance movement execution. The costumes are made to allow for good movement and balance. The drummer's costumes are different from those of the dancers. They sometime tie wrapper and wear big shorts with raffia cap or native caps to match. They walk barefooted or wear smart raffia slippers. Their outfit is not totally at variance with those of the dancers in term of colour. The radiance that comes with the costume flows amongst all the performers.

However, if the performance is dramatic, the costumes would be made to suit the roles played by the dancers. Ikon dancers are a delight to watch any day and time.

4.1.5 MAKE UP

The make up in Ikon dance is mainly to brighten the look of the performers. Some designs are made with white chalk on the faces of the female dancers ((See Appendix II Figure 10). These designs do not reflect any peculiar symbol or denote meaning. They are creatively made to enhance the frame of the dancers and also compliment the costumes. But in cases of role interpretation, makeup is be done to reveal the state and role of the performers. The makeup is generally made to show beauty, it may not enhance movement, but must compliment the costume of the performers. The drummers do have straight make up or no makeup at all.

4.1.6 REHEARSALS

The rehearsal schedule and technique of Ikon dance vary based on the different outfits in Akwa Ibom State. In the course of this study, the researcher surveyed all the three (3) senatorial districts of the state using one group of Ikon in each district as sample for study. In the process it was discovered that rehearsals are done before performances.

Analysis of rehearsals as practiced by these three (3) groups drawn from the Ikot Ekpene, Eket and Uyo senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State are captured as follows;

a) **NEW DAWN THREATER: IKOT EKPENE SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

The New Dawn Threatre is a popular Ikon group in the Essien Udim Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. This group has grown beyond the level of the other groups like Dukers cultural group, Progressed Cultural Group all situated in this district. They have represented the state in many social functions and are well informed of the contemporary dance culture and experience. This awareness is inspired by the Director Imeh Paul who learnt his trade with the famous Ikon Afrikaana Theatre Uyo, Akwa Ibon State.

The rehearsal session of this group is very organized. They rehearse three times every week. This may change based on the number or importance of upcoming performances. New Dawn rehearse on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays by 4pm. They choice of this time according to the director is because, all the members are students in primary, secondary and tertiary schools.

There is a strict system to ascertain that, members come early for rehearsals. If one is 15 minutes late a certain percentage of his money is taken after performance. The rehearsal starts with an opening prayer. After which they have the keep fit. The keep fit which includes those exercises which make the body flexible and strong. It is a session where many dance movements are tested and the fitness level of the performers sorted out. With the exercises, the body is ready for work (September, 2010). The exercises include spins, squatting, rolling, running, jumping. At the end of the exercise session, the performers are asked to rest for 10 minutes before the main rehearsals. The rehearsal is divided into sessions. The first session deals with movement perfection and technique, the second session is relating these movements to the orchestra while the third and final session deals with the total ensemble. At the end of the rehearsal session, the performers rest and take instructions concerning the next rehearsals and other issues relating to the groups welfare.

(b) **AKWA OBIO CULTURAL GROUP: EKET SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

This group started as a troupe that got involved with the indigenous dances. As they developed, they became an Ikon dance Troupe. Since becoming Ikon dance troupe, they have more gains than when they were performing just traditional movements. The

Ikon ensemble helped to redefine their movements and give them room to express themselves in multi-dimensional ways (Obiousop, November, 2009). Since this group is situated in the Ikot Usop Village of Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, its performers are mostly drawn from the environs, though some key dancers come from Uyo for rehearsals. Because of this, rehearsals are held twice a week, starting from 6pm to 10 pm. The routine during the rehearsals are almost the same with that of the New Dawn Entertainers. They start with keep fit exercises where the basic dance movements are experimented or tried out. The performers begin to get acquainted with these movements before the actual rehearsals of the key dances. At the end of the keep fit session, the performers are asked to sit together and they begin to learn songs and harmony. When the instructor is satisfied, he orders them to start the rehearsal proper. It should be noted that since some experts come from Uyo, to teach them dance movements, they rehearse in phases to hasten perfection. The instructor at some point plays the cue for the dance movement with his mouth as they go on creating movements. The Drummers rehearse separately with the view of creating an understanding amongst them. They are told not to go out of timing and always play the role of an accompaniment especially when they are not called to lead.

However, the session continues until a full composition is achieved. Rehearsal for performances is different from that mainly for creating dances. Those for performance emphasizes on sharpness, timing, aesthetic appeal, audience receptibility and energy. It is not always, rigorous since the performers already know what is expected of them. The rehearsal for dance creation is always tedious and time consuming. The group is made up of students and workers.

(c) IKON AFRIKAANA THEATRE: UYO SENATORIAL DISTRICT

The Ikon Afrikaana theatre is believed to be the troupe that brought about diversity in Ikon ensemble. Whereas Ikon was just an instrument in the traditional Ibibio ensemble, the Ikon Afrikaana theatre made an ensemble founded on Ikon (xylophone).

The founder Prince Inieke G. Ufford who lectured in the Department of Music Department University of Uyo, Uyo stepped up the already known role of the Ikon. The Ikon Afrikaana became a dance band where current music and dance renditions are popularly and masterly performed. This development also brought about intense rehearsal schedules. When he was still alive, all his children were part of the troupe. So the rehearsal schedule was done whenever the family had a chance to do so. The few outsiders that

made up the team were excused to go and not come daily, but the Ufford's family rehearsed everyday, whether there was performance or not. Despite the daily rehearsals, every Friday was kept for general rehearsals with the troupe members.

Prince Inieke Ufford was very creative and disciplined in his rehearsal sessions. Since the troupe was not just meant for dance, but a strong sensation in musical rendition, there was a time given to all departments. The rehearsal started with prayers and then followed by a keep fit session. This keep fit is specially done to strengthen the body and prepare it for the job at hand. This session goes on for 30 minutes. The session is not just for dancers but everybody. After this keep fit session, as they are relaxing the group go into a choral session. In this session, proper attention is given to harmony and synchronization of rhythm in the orchestra. Those singing are made to sit in parts such as treble, alto, tenor and Bass. The songs are tuned by the Ikon (xylophone). Since the xylophone is tuned in one key, it becomes necessary that the sole cantor raises the songs in tune with the desired key of the instrument. In this case other Ikon (xylophone) also attempt to back up the songs with relevant notes from the slabs. This session takes a lot of time, and sometimes the founder who is also the director sets aside, rehearsals for just music and song rendition.

At the end of choral session, the group gets into rehearsing the different dances in segments. Everybody is given the opportunity to rehearse, but the best are chosen for performances. The performers are given opportunity to contribute and ask questions when some aspects of the composition are not clearly understood.

At the end of every rehearsal, there is a session for evaluation of the day's job. Some forms of refreshments are done after rehearsal. In some rehearsal, transportation is provided for the performers.

Whorthy of note is the fact that, the instrumentalists sometimes have separate rehearsals to allow for time to perfect their knowledge on contemporary music. This is due to the fact that, they must attempt to play it as perceived by the audience. For example "if you see mama water" by Victor Uwaifo. The instrumentalist must study the base line, the rhythm from the guitar and backing of the percussions. The aim is to increase versatility in sound combination and improve sense of music composition. This session determines the foundation on which the dance movements are created.

4.1.7 VENUE

The venue here is referred to that of performance. The Ikon dance can be done anywhere. There are no specific Venues for the presentations. The important thing about the venue to the troupe is that, they must have an idea of the performance space so that they can adjust their movement to suit the occasion. Beside movement, the venue also enhances or brings down the standard of the music that comes from the orchestra. If the venue is an open air area, the Ikon (xylophone) may not be heard properly except there are major ways of amplifying the instrument. This experience is different in a theatre or hall where the accustics are well framed and enhanced. The venue is the performance space and it is very instrumental to a successful performance.

4.1.8 PERFORMANCE

The performances of the three selected groups from 3 senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State are as follows:

a) **The New Dawn Entertatners** – Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District.

(i) **Mkpasa:**

Mkpasa is an Ikon dance performance that showcases the brilliant dance movements of the maidens. This dance is another version of Asian dance, a dance by the maidens in the state. The difference is that, while the Asian dancers are ladies of about 18-20years, the mkpasa dancers are children between 10-15years. Their movements are swift, supple and electrifying.

The performance starts with Ikon solo instrumentation. The lead instrument calls, others respond heavily. The lead dancer runs in swiftly with a vibratory movement. She shakes her shoulders while running in, does a spiral movement and courtesys and turns around and bows. She renders a line:

Lead dancer:

Welcome to our show. We are the New Dawn Entertainers
with the new dew of hope and grace. We will make you
jump, smile and Clap for joy. Please be our guest.

There is a roll of instrumentation as the other dancers come on to the stage and freeze.

The Ikon drummer initiates the melody of’ the journey of a new day’ while the total ensemble harmonizes. The song goes thus;

Solo: The journey of a new day, the journey of a new day

Chorus: Victory has come, the journey of a new day

This song is rendered twice and they defreeze and go into exotic waist dance. This waist dance is highlighted by the “Siko” drum. This is a drum that picks the movements and increases the poise of the movement. After the waist dance which takes them through circular and serpentine patterns, they transit into makossa steps. These steps are simulated intensely by the use of trunk and waist sensuously.

At the peak of the dance, there is an introduction of Hip hop dance. These include stunts, jumps, spins, flexing of the arms. This dance is simulated in a diagonal formation. The Ikon drummer signals the end of the session and the dancers get back to the traditional waist dance as they vacate the stage. The instrumentation intensifies and ends in a stylized fashion. (See Appendix V, 1)

It should be noted that the dance is done with the basic melody of the song above. The rhythm is highlife and the movements are framed in this form. That is, the traditional waist dance and the contemporary movements such as hip, hop, makossa and so on are presented in the same flair and melody. The Ikon ensemble is the basic or foundation of the beats while the “siko” drum helps to highlight the steps at intervals.

(ii) **Akop-Umehe**

The Akop-umehe dance is also sensational. But this one is composed mostly of traditional dance steps. The Ikon used here is tuned in pentatonic scale. There is choral rendition, rather controlled by the Ikon instrument.

The performance starts with the Ikon signature tune. The instrument (Ikon) signals the dancers who come on to the performance areas with jumps. They get into a central position and get into a given dance. At the end of this session, the xylophonist instructs them to squat, stand up, lift up their right hand, drop, lift up left hand, drop, turn around, lift up your eyes to the sky, drop, get set, and do your best. The music at this point rises to a crescendo with the intensified back flexing dance movement. All these non-verbal cues are done by the Ikon, and all the dancers respond in unison. At this point, the Ikon instructs them to spread around the performance area. The dancers go to different directions waiting for the final cue to dance. This is the highest point of the performance. The dancers on the orchestration of the ensemble go hay-wire doing individuals best traditional movement. After some minutes, the Ikon drummer instructs the dancers to

return to base. They file out in a two way directional movement. The Ikon orchestra ends with the Ikon signature tune(see Appendix V:2)

(ii) WAVE YOUR FLAG

Wave your flag is coined out of the recent song “wave your flag” composed during the last concluded world cup in South Africa, 2010. This was a popular song that was not built with great dance movements. But the New Dawn Entertainers used the song as the foundation on which their dance movements are created. The sense of social relevance in terms of current events is seen here. The dance is not dramatic, but solely composed to show African flair and grandeur in movement.

The Ikon establishes the song, chorused by the ensemble. The dancers come on stage with Zulu dance step, and smartly transit to tap dance steps. At this stage, the instruments cease to play while the dancers dance with their rattles making the rhythmic a back up for movements. At the peak of this session, the Ikon instrumentation re-surfaces as the dancers swing their hands simulating waving of flag. The song ceases again as the ensemble change to Bata, Atilogwu and Ekombi dances. The costumes remain the same. With the cue from the Ikon instrument, the dancers go into a unity dance and freeze with a pose of unity insignia. (See Appendix V: 3)

(b) AKWA OBIO CULTURAL GROUP: EKET SENATORIAL DISTRICT

(i) IMA OBIO

This performance by Akwa Obio Cultural Group is a narrative dance. The Ikon instrument beats with dexterity. Asanga usung, who is the lead character dazzles into space with great precision. He searches for playmates without seeing them. With element of surprise in his movement, he prances the stage accompanied by the Ikon sound. He makes a sound and his mates come in from different angles of the stage. They come together exchanging pleasantries. The Ikon instrument cues them to go into a unity dance made of spectacular movement which includes Makossa, hip-hop and contemporary dance forms. Their stress is on the maximum use of the body movements irrespective of cultural relevance. They go into a circular formation with sizzling movement, “Ima”, a little girl dances in and they are surprised. This girl represents the future of the society. She calls them and splits them into vocational groups. These groups are farmers and fishermen. These two are the most famous vocations in the community. Ima shows the farmers how to clear, plant and harvest crops, while showing the fishermen how to fish through

constructive body movements. The farmers farm in segments. The first group comes in simulating the machet with their hands swinging directionally as if cutting the bush. At the end of this exercise, they dance out with a traditional waist dance. The second group comes in with another back-flexing dance movement. They pack the rubbish cut down by the former group into their baskets and dance out stylishly. The first group, returns to till the soil, and dance out, while the second group come in pairs to the stage. Those in the first group do the harvest, while those in the second pack them into the baskets. All actions are mimed.

The fishermen come in with their dance. They show the act of paddling the canoe and throwing the net into the imaginary river. They draw showing the weight of their catch and paddle out of the stage. Ima calls both groups in and congratulates them. She says that a resourceful nation cannot lack, they should always come together, to make life meaningful to all. She gets into a frantic dance. The Ikon ensemble role the drums, there is pandemonium, the dancers are scattered and Ima, the small girl escapes. The drums come to normal rhythm and the dancers come back to a uniformed movement. Immediately, they notice that Ima is no longer there, they search for her to no avail. They then come back and console themselves with the feeling that Ima was god sent. They go into a dance of satisfaction and growth. The Ikon signals the end by the performance. (See Appendix V:4)

(ii) NTAMA

Ntama in English means jumps. This dance is composed with movements across the globe that has to do with jumps. This performance is done in any occasion. The show starts with the Ikon solo, followed by the full orchestra response. This technique has become an insignia to the group. With the cry of the xylophone renting the air, the young maiden dancers jump in and shake their shoulders profusely and freeze. They do this after 8 counts. Every movement is done in this sequence and style.

The jump and vibratory movements are drawn specifically from the diversified cultural forms in Nigeria and South Africa. The Hausa Koroso dance steps, Bata and Obitu dance of Ondo, the Atilogwu of the Igbos, as well as the Zulu dance of South Africa. All these segments have specific songs rendered by the Ikon orchestra. For example the Bata dance comes after the serious rendition of a Yoruba song. The melody is sustained by the xylophone. The Bata cues are given by the “Siko” drum but the transition to Atilogwu is done by the Ikon master player. This continues to the end of the performance. The style is eclectic and energy oriented. It is done by agile and energy filled maidens who can roll

and jump, flex and fret their muscles with tender smiles beaming up from their faces.(See Appendix V:5)

(iii) DIVINE PASSION

This performance is strictly religious. It is put together to praise God almighty. The songs are basically African and the dance movements are drawn from inspirations. No boundaries, to the composition of movements. However, the dance movements are done in a manner to show self presence and moral respect for humanity. Though sensuous, the movements are not erotic and the costumes are designed in such a way that it covers the sensitive parts of the body. This by no means takes away the garnishing and aesthetic appeal that always goes with Ikon dance outfits.

The performance opens with Asu-Ekiye's "*Ewe Ewo O*". The choice of this song according to the director is due to its strong introductory pattern which would help establish the Ikon flair and beauty. With the delightful rendition of their introductory song, the melody follows suit.

The dancers come on to the stage with Ijaw waist dance orchestrated by the stylized use of the handkerchief. When the dance movement intensifies, the melody ceases and the emphasis is on the dance steps. The pulses of the dance are accented to by the drums and the session is always powerful and graceful. This continues as the Ikon changes to another gospel song. With the introduction of "man made god", the dancers render the melody with the Ikon backing and providing the key. At the peak of it, instrumentation rises in crescendo as before and goes down with an introduction of another popular praise song. This can go on as long as possible depending on the occasion and time allotted the performance. At some points, the people are allowed to express themselves independently in a dance galore experience. Finally, it is worthy of note that, this performance is lyrical in style, the people sing and enjoy themselves and this elevates their spirits as seen in the dance expressions. At any point in time that the dance draws to an end, the Ikon drummer will signal his orchestra to ensure that the dance ends in a tidy and befitting way.(See Appendix V:6)

(c) IKON AFRIKANA THEATRE: UYO SENATORIAL DISTRICT AMERICANA/AFRICANA

The concept of the above dance is to show the audience the vast cultural boundaries and the possibility to see them merged for the common good of humanity. It

tries to debunk the view that the African movements are inferior to those of the western world.

The performance starts with the signature tune of the Africana Theatre. Immediately after that, the slit drum and “Siko” drum initiate the African beats, the traditional Asian beats is used here. The Ikon backs up with traditional scale (Pentatonic scale), and cues the dancers who come into space with gyration of the waist. At the roling of the “Siko” drum, the dancers of the African steps freeze on a straight vertical line to the left. Immediately, the Ikon establishes a popular modern tune which comes with modern dance steps (hip hop) and the dancers go to the stage and freeze at the straight vertical line – right. At this point, they are opposite each other. The trend continues till the African dancers go into a central line, and the Americans join them and they become one line. All the instruments play the same music and rhythm and they do identical dance steps to show togetherness. They open up and dance out of the stage.

The Ikon orchestra ends the performance in a spectacular manner.(See Appendix V:7)

(ii) UYAI DANCE

Uyai dance performance by the Ikon Africana is a complete traditional Ibibio dance galore. It reflects mostly the Asian dance steps which are gorgeous and graceful. The dance is sustained by the use of melodic songs as initiated by the Ikon ensemble. There are no gender discriminations in the composition of the orchestra. At the beginning of the dance, the Ikon player starts with introductory piece to alert the performers to be ready. This is followed immediately by songs. The dance performance is done in segments. First, the lead dancer dances in to greet the drummers and audience and then signals on the other dancers to come into the dance area. But in other cases, all the dancers dance in together with the star dancer in the middle. They go into a rigorous dance which is dominated by waist and back-flexing movements. Here, the dynamic applied to the waist and back of the dancer from the beginning of the movement phrase is carried throughout without change.

At a cue from the Ikon instrumentalist, she stops the movement and calls on other dances to join her and they dance into the arena, taking a circular formation to establish their communality and then break into two lines facing each other with the star dancer at the middle. At the end of every song, the Ikon player signals for the rigorous dancing to begin. At the end of each vigorous dance, there is a signal for the Ikon to come up with

another melody which is chorused by the group or performers. During the rigorous dance session, singing ceases and dancers concentrate on dance movements, the chorus session could also be the rest period of the dancers. This period is always handled with care because the harmony of the songs helps add value and freshness to the taste of the performance.

The instrumentalist led by the lead Ikon player displays his dexterity on the drum and instructs the dancers. For instance, the dancers may be asked to squat, wave to the audience, adjust their costumes and so on and one would find all the dancers responding in unison which shows a great understanding of the language of the drum.

There are also movements which place much emphasis on the trunk and stamping of feet in unison. These happen at intervals. The dance involved in Uyai falls into the kind of dance which seeks mainly to exhibit movements to show possibilities of the human body in the actualization of diverse dance forms. It shows the theatricalities involved in the skills of the dancers in using their bodies. The Uyai dancers are open to wide range of movements. This shows flexibility. At the end of the dance, the Ikon cues and the dancers dance out while the star dancer goes out last with a vigorous gyration of the waist and kicks the drummers spontaneously with the music stopping abruptly in a sharp crescendo. (Appendix V: 8)

(iii) AI SPECIAL

AI Special is largely made of instrumental sessions spiced up with relevant dance steps. *AI* is a wonder kid who with great sense of creativity and dexterity manipulates the Ikon by playing variety of songs across the globe. The beauty of this performance is that, the *AI* drums and dances too as he is backed up effectively by the other Ikon instrumentalists.

Any song he initiates, the ensemble backs it up, while the dances are creatively designed to suit the rhythm. For example, when he renders a makossa beat such as “Awilo” the dancers go on stage to display Makossa movements in diverse forms. This continues till the end of the dance. The second song rents the air and the dancers follow suit. The high point of this performance is when the audience requests for a popular tune to be played. This song may not have been rehearsed. But since it is the popular demand of the audience, *AI* attempts to play the song while the dancers file out to display movements that are atuned to the chosen music. At the end of the successful session, *AI* comes out to show how good he is in dance. He expresses himself freely to the delight of the audience

and bow before the audience. He makes his way back to his lead instrument, and drums stylishly to end the proceedings, while the performers rush and lift him up high and freeze. This performance is multi-dimensional. It has no bounds. A1 plays all music and gives the audience the opportunity to contribute their quota in the course of the performance. (See Appendix V:9)

4.2.1 ORIGIN OF MBOPO DANCE

The origin of Mbopo dance is not documented properly. This makes it really difficult to know when it started. There is an Akwa Ibom expression which says that legitimate homes produce legitimate marriage, legitimate marriages make legitimate children that will render legitimate services to the community (Ufford 61:68).

This is why the Akwa Ibom marriage institution is regarded sacred and sacrosanct. All females are expected to break their virginities in their respective legitimate marital homes. These maidens were subjected to thorough screening and physical examinations by the aged mother (Preferably Ebre presidents) and accepted, if she was found to be “Virgo intacta”, for the fattening rites. According to Abassattai (1987:16), Mbopo rites were an agency for formal education”. The initiate were given formal instructions in sexual hygiene, body craft marriage and its responsibilities, child birth and care, wife–craft, cookery, and other relevant matters (1980:59). The mbopo rites usually terminate in three stages of ceremonial rituals namely:

(a) Udomo - Examination

Ekong mbopo (masquerader) examines the fitness of the fattened maidens on their last days of seclusion in a particular Ibibio clan. Those found plume and healthy were given kaoline (Ndom) to denote worthiness of public praise, while others would receive charcoal (Nkang) as a sign of disapproval by the masqueraders (Ekong mbopo) who are seen as representatives of the departed ancestors.

Ikon orchestra is normally hired to an open square where members of the public can have free access to watch the udomo (examination) ceremony. The master drummers of the ceremony storm the community on the opening of the ceremony with very hot musical rendition. Age groups of the secluded maidens would dance into the square heralding the certainty of the occasion. Adult female groups are then ushered into their seats with some mellow musical pieces. The male adult dance to a much faster beat into the square and

takes their seats too. The secluded maidens are ushered into the square by their parents and guardians.

The Ikon orchestra then settles down with various types of dance-music which calls for mass participation by the parents and members of the public but not the fattened (maidens). The peak of this scene is the arrival of some comical features like *Udotod* and *Idip_Akpan_Adia_ama*. The Akwa Ibom man is equally “amused by incongruous contrasts and juxtaposition”. He will burst into laughter if an Akwa Ibom man saw a man in an undersized or oversized suit in a bid to appear western, old fashioned and worm-out shoes also evoke laughter.

A figure in an undersized suit with protruded tommy of a considerably large size in worn-out oversized shoes worn on opposite feet adorned a clown called Idip Akpan Adiaama, and a lightly dressed comic figure with heavy male organ made of plastic showing out of very tight torn off pair of trousers caused a serious stir as both of them entered the udomo (Examination) square. It provoked a lot of entertainment and laughter as they bolted into the square to dance with other members of the community. As if that was not sufficient entertainment Ekong mbopo moved into the arena. The mass dance stops with anxiety to witness the result of the fattening rites as handed down by the ancestors’ representative. Those fattened maidens who received kaolin (Ndom) were carried shoulder high back home by their respective guardians while others went back home with shame and remorse.

The second phase of the ritual was:

(b) Anwa Ikon (Ikon ground)

Ikon orchestra of any type from the clan features a week long dancing spice featuring the mbopo on daily basis for gratification and other wise from well wishers. The complete week days were filled with enough food, drinks and merriment.

(iv) **Udua Mbopo**: The successfully secluded maidens presented to the clan were finally presented to the community in a thickly populated market day where Ikon orchestra played amidst excessive lavishing of gifts on the various maidens, guardians, all and sundry. The husbands to-be of these maidens were then publicly presented to the public to avoid any reasonable doubts.

The fattened maidens after went back home being led by large crowd for final deal on the last blow of the long-stressed but worthy Mbopo ceremony. The maidens may

thereafter be initiated into the Asian Uboikpa (proud maidens) club of the society; they would also get set for being sent off to their respective marital homes in another fantastic ceremony which is usually directed by the Ikon Ikpaisong (xylophone of the land).

The Mbopo dance is generally a dance that shows the coming of age of maidens for marriage proper. They are proud maidens who have kept their virginity for their would-be-husbands. Their pride is to remain virgins from birth through fattening to marriage.

4.2.2 PERFORMERS

The main performers are the maidens who are examined and certified virgins. The performers are always fat due to the fattening rites in seclusion. Those that flank them are also virgins but not chosen yet for marriage. They are slimmer since they are not restricted to one place like the Mbopo (Maiden).

The other performers are the Eka mbopo (mother of Bride) and Ete mbopo (father of the Bride). The masquerade is also a personality. Every other person like the would-be-husband, his parents and friends may not necessarily feature. We also have *Utuk_mbopo* (little maids).

The drummers are mostly men while the women help in chorusing the songs and chants. Married women are not permitted to do the dance but could function during the fattening process.

4.2.3 COMPOSITION

The Mbopo dance is basically woven around the customary values and norms that guide the marriage institution. The introduction of the masquerade as the judge shows the social magnitude of the event and the authority that seals the sacred bond. The dance is composed of robust women, who through fat, dance gracefully and gorgeously. The elderly women motivate them by ululating while the social audience appreciates them with gifts.

The dance is made up of songs that talk about good virtues in women as well as those that celebrate the men. The instrumentalists are composed of women and men with great zeal and depth in traditional music and dance. Their rendition sustains the ensemble and determines the success rate of the performance. The instruments used include; Ikon (xylophone), slit drum (Obodom), Bass drum (Eka Ibid), twin drum (Ekomo Iba), metal gong (Akankang) and rattle (Nsak).

The traditional dance steps are drawn from the community and most of them show or simulate the domestic activities like, taking care of children, washing cloth, cooking and so on. All the aspects of the dance are drawn from the rites of the passage and other traits of cultural life of the people of Akwa Ibom State.

4.2.4 COSTUME

(a) Mbopo dance costume is always very beautiful. It is adorned with the intent of attracting the attention of the public and spouse. She ties a short wrapper (Mkpin) around her waist close to the knee level. This wrapper is costly and sparkling. On her waist is jigida (big beads) numbering not less than ten, these “jigida” does not go beyond her waist region level. On her neck are choral beads (Eme). She carries a culture hair style called (mkpin) carefully adorned with beads. In some cases she goes with an open breast and dance around the ceremonial area before wearing her matrimonial gown when led to the husbands house. In other cases, the mbopo ties a tube around her breast, exposing her naval region. On her legs are two rings (Owok) made of Brass and sustained at the ankle by a cloth tied around it. This is to protect the rings from falling off. Some designs are made of kaolin and camwood, with oil rubbed all over her body, to make the skin shinny and blossoming.

(b) EKONG MBOPO

Ekong Mbopo is part of the mbopo dance. This is the masquerade that is saddled with the role of judging the fitness level of the mbopo. This masquerade is always dressed with a pair of socks on his feet. A mask that is colourful, a sarcastic trouser and shirt with a half jacket, he carries charcoal and kaoline or white chalk in his calabash. He may go with a score board or sheet.

(c) UTUK MBOPO

Utuk Mbopo is those little children that stand behind the mbopo. These children are normally two in number and are aged 6-8 years. They wear short skirts, with their body kept bare. They may carry culture hair or not. They are also covered with oil. At the ankle is a pair of rattles that are supportive of their movements. They also carry fan, which is used to fan the mbopo while she dances or sits down. Utuk mbopo are there to help the mbopo free in movement and expression.

(d) EKA MBOPO

This is the mother of the Mbopo. She dresses gorgeously with two pairs of George material. Her blouse is made of beads and she wears beads around her neck. She carries stock fish to strike on the gong as she alerts the people of the beauty and elegance of her daughter.

(e) ETE MBOPO

This is the father of the Mbopo. He wears traditional long-tailed shirt, with a very costly wrapper, with two pairs of shoes. He carries a hat that is traditionally made. He wears chieftaincy beads and carries a staff of authority.

(f) UFAN MBOPO (Asian dancers)

These are the other maidens that flank the Mbopo during the performance. They wear skirt and blouse of bright colours with rattles on their ankles. They also wear bead (jigida) on their waist and are clad in cultural hairdo (Mkpim). They carry designs on their faces and legs to compliment. On their hair are beads of dimensional colours. These beads are also seen on their neck. On their hand are small bundle of raffia which complements the skirt and blouse colours/wears.

(g) EBRE Women

These are married women who are solely responsible for teaching the Mbopo marital skills, social values and norms. They tie wrapper with a big blouse to compliment. They also tie part of wrapper on the head. With beads on their neck.

(h) EBE MBOPO (SPOUSE)

This is the spouse to the Mbopo. He appears on chieftaincy traditional wear with wrapper to match. He wears a raffia pair of sandals and handles a staff with a raffia hat on his head. He also carries beads on his neck.

(i) UFAN EBE (Groom friends)

These ones dress in assorted traditional outfits befitting of the ceremony. No colour is specified, but the outfit must be flashy and good looking.

(i) **DRUMMERS**

The drummers wear chieftaincy top with wrapper. They wear beads on their necks and carry traditional woolen cap on their heads. They also wear raffia sandals. Some groups that may not afford traditional raffia shoes go barefooted and wear white singlets with wrapper. The drummer's costumes must not be totally out of the ensemble in terms of colour and design.

4.2.5 MAKE UP

The make up for the Mbopo is very symbolic. The Mbopo carries a serpentine design on the face, with dotted lines intermittently. During the research, the makeup designer of the council for Art culture Akwa Ibom state Etima Udosen said that

The serpentine showed the intricacies that go with marriage. That marriage is filled with rough edges and it needs a subtle mind to Overcome the temptations abound in it. The dotted design stands for precision and focus. (November, 2011).

The Mbopo is also rubbed with oil mixed with can wood. This makes the body of the Mbopo reddish and sparkling in nature. On her eye lashes, black eye pencil is used to emphasize the eye region while the kaolin is used to make varied designs on the Asian dancers. They carry the serpentine dotted and triangular designs.

The Eka Mbopo's make up is straight. She only makes some touches on her face with eye pencil, powder and lipsticks to brighten her lips. The father carries straight make up. Ebre women also carry straight make up.

4.2.6 VENUE

The venue for the Mbopo dance performance is normally the market square, village square and plays grounds. However, in recent times, Mbopo dance can be performed anywhere, provided, there is space for the dancers and drummers to perform. Mbopo dance comes with crowd and as such, the performance arena must be spacious to allow for the expressional of movements of the dancers and of the masquerade.

4.2.7 REHEARSALS

The rehearsals would be viewed based on the selected troupes in the three senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State.

(a) OKOPEDI CULTURAL GROUP ONNA L. G. A AKWA IBOM STATE-EKET SENATORIAL DISTRICT.

This group was formed in 1969 by Obong Emmanuel Udo Inyang. The group came out as social group of Ikot Nya Onna L. G. A. Akwa Ibom State. They are known for promoting social values in the land. In doing these, they use traditional dances which include, Asian, Uta, Ebre, Ese, and Mbopo to communicate cultural values and norms. The Mbopo became popular since it was “popular demand during marriage ceremonies”.

Since this group is made up of workers, largely traders and students, their rehearsals schedule is done mostly on weekends. Their session is divided into two segments.

1. Choral session
2. Dance session

The choral session creates an opportunity for members to learn new songs and also link up with the traditional orchestra. In the process, the group finds a comfortable voice or key for the cantor and the backups. The session is always exciting as the real traditional voices are heard in choral symphony.

The second segment deals basically with the dance steps. The Mbopo is chosen and others play the Asian dancers. The Mbopo may not be a good dancer, but must have good body composition or structure. She must be fat and with bold legs and wide waist with pointed breast. Her breast must not fall or flappy. Being a virgin was not a criterion for being a dancer. However, the dancer must accept to wear the preferred costume, like the tube and short wrappers which exposes parts of the body during performance. The Asian dancers were slimmer and agile looking girls that dart and sizzle creatively with body movements. At the end of the rehearsals, they take refreshment and get set for performance (if any).

(b) COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE AKWA IBOM STATE-UYO SENATORIAL DISTRICT.

The rehearsal session for the Mbopo dance in council for Arts and culture Akwa Ibom State is a normal routine. Their rehearsal starts by 9.am and closes by 3pm. This is because their work is to dance not just Mbopo but other dances across the nation and beyond. They are the model that dance groups look up to especially when it comes to traditional performances due to their depth in cultural research and practices.

The section is divided into three. The first session is characterized with the opening prayer and keeps fit. This is done to put the body in good shape for performance. Every rehearsal is like a performance. This is because; they have to push their bodies to the limits to create opportunity for direction from the instructors. The exercise session focus on the limbs, legs, lips, back, front, neck and so on. The movements done are not necessarily those of the Mbopo but generally movements that could help tone the body and put it in the right frame for work.

The second session is choral performance. In this session, they select the person who leads in the chants and those that would be back ups. This they do with the help of the Ikon (Xylophone). An attempt is made to sing according to the pentatonic scale of the Ikon for the sake of good harmony with the instrumentation. They also go into some dance movement and attach songs, to them to test the strength and pace the dancers could cope with this method (that is dancing and singing). This is done in some minutes and the final session begins.

The third and final session is the dance proper. All segments of the dance are not created at the same time. The masquerade segment is rehearsed separately with the instrumentalists to atune them to creating that segment between the masqueraders and the drummers. The masqueraders learn the language of the drum (Ikon Ikpa) and how to react to it. And the master drummer gets acquainted with the dance varieties of the masqueraders who at times improvise. When this is done, the maidens (Asian dancers) begin their dance practice. The steps are taken one by one and attempt is made to do it to perfection. The technique and execution are very important and these are the basics of the movement design. The dancers are engaged in fast pace dance movements and slow ones to introduce them into all form of dance steps in Mbopo performance.

The Eka Mbopo works separately to sharpen her gait and movement. She is made to familiarize herself with the performance area and show-man-ship. She holds and sustains tension in the entire performance hence she must be a strong character on stage. She is the only one that constantly draws the attention of the audience to the Mbopo.

The Mbopo has very little to do. She is taught how to carry her ego and move as if there are no bones in her. She is flexible and must learn how to make her smile contagious or effective. Her smiles must be charming and must have strong and lovely eyes that penetrate the hearts of the audience members. At the end, all these segments are brought together. This continues until the date of performance.

The selection of the dancers is also important. In this performance, young ladies were condition and made to rehearse for the mbopo dance, an entry in the NAFEST 2010 IN Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The reason for the audition was to make sure that the dancers fall within the age limits of the Asian group as approved by culture. However, the Mbopo was not fat, but healthy and beautiful fair lady. Their reason was that, Mbopo should not just be fat since women no longer think that such practice is good to health and body dimension. They complain that they do not want to experience obesity. So, it was a crucial attempt to see whether the Mbopo would be adeptable to the crowd or audience members.

**(c) PROGRSSIVE CULTURAL GROUP-IFUHO. IKOT EKPENE.
IKOT EKPENE SENETORIAL DISTRICT**

The rehearsal schedule of this group is not very stable, but they have rehearsals frequently when there is a performance. However, the director sees that they rehearse on week-ends and mid-weeks if there are engagements.

The routine in rehearsals are as follows:

- a.) The member arrived 15 minutes before the opening prayer.
- b.) After the opening prayer, there is a review of the past rehearsals and observations made by instructors, performers and patrons.
- c.) New members are welcomed (if any)
- d.) Exercise begins for just 20 minutes.
- e.) After exercises, songs are taught. Everybody attempts to sing and know the songs.
- f.) These songs are now accompanied with instruments.
- g.) Work out of possible movements for the performance.
- h.) Initial selection of performers made to help the instructors design the patterns and structure of the performance.
- i.) Costumes discussed.
- j.) Final outlook of what is done for the day before the end of the rehearsals.
- k.) Comments and closing prayer.

4.2.8 MBOPO PERFORMANCE

(b) COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE AKWA IBOM STATE, UYO SENATORIAL DISTRICT.

SYNOPSIS

Uyai dance (Mbopo) is an orchestration of the values and norms in matrimonial experiences of a typical Akwa Ibom family. It unveils the basic foundations that make matrimony successful. The Akwa Ibom society celebrates the coming of age for marriage and strives to give basic assistance to qualified indigenes that have passed through scrutiny in traditional institution such as Mbopo, Ekpo, Ekong and so on. Those ones are showered with gifts and empowered economically through the traditional scheme for self employment.

While in seclusion the maidens who are about to be given out in marriage are taught domestic chores and various occupational endeavours. This is to empower them mentally and economically for the responsibilities they owe their matrimony in particular and the society at large. The male (groom) is also trained to be diligent in duties and become a strong cover to his family economically and spiritually. He is taught bravery and vocations. All these help to build a strong and indivisible home cherished by the society. Above all, these maidens are virgins and devoid of social vices, while the grooms are also free from infidelity. The virginity of the virgins is therefore broken in their respective groom homes after a colourful marriage ceremony.

Generally, the Akwa Ibom society believes in the principle that a successful society is measured on the rate of success in the family structural units. So marriage is not a personal affair, it is a collective effort to help solidify the social and religious foundations of the society. The different parents of these celebrities are showered with praises and given revered positions in the society.

UYAI DANCE (MBOPO) THE PLOT

The instrumentalist gives an introductory rhythm to alert everyone of the beginning of the dance. The mother of the maiden rushes in accompanied by an uta (horn) player who sounds the horn in affirmation of the message that the worthy mother is about to deliver a speech. The worthy mother prances the stage delightfully, telling the audience how beautiful and supple her maidens are, and how she has made sure that they are taught domestic chores and trade which will definitely make any man jump at the slightest opportunity of marrying them. At the peak of her rendition, she sings to atone the gods of

the sky and urge them to provide an amiable ambience for her maidens to display. Satisfied with the bright atmosphere, she breaks into an exotic dance movement and renders a song ushering in the maidens.

MOVEMENT TWO

The maidens come in gracefully to showcase their beautiful gait and appeal, with a song obviously eulogizing the apparent nature of their would-be-husband. The songs show how they can adore their husbands whose bravery, productivity and acceptability are magnified. As the instrumentation rises, the movements also intensify to buttress their pride and aesthetic appeal. As they get settled, they go into an orchestrated waist dance to show the fitness level of their waist, considered to be the pride of every woman. A flexible waist is one that is vibrant and productive. The lead dancer at the peak of the waist dance chants a song and it is chorused by the other maidens.

MOVEMENT THREE

The mother dances in to announce the domestic and vocational training session. The maiden amidst vocational songs bring on stage the tool for weaving raffia, sewing machine and materials for processing garri. The maidens are taught all these through dance movements simulating these vocations. At the end, the maidens are in great spirit as they dance out with these training materials

MOVEMENT FOUR

The groom with members of Ekoong and Ekpo traditional institutions come in to train him (groom) on bravery and hunting for his family. The staccato dance movement simulates consistency and persistence which are key to resolving those rough edges in marriage. On satisfaction, they give the groom his attire and certify him fit for marriage. They dance out with great dexterity.

MOVEMENT FIVE

This is the marriage proper. The mother of the maiden comes in announcing the arrival of one of her maidens who have completed her stay in seclusion. She ushers her in with a song proudly exercising her affluence and dignity. The maiden comes in amidst ululation and air of greatness. She (maiden) is graceful in her movements. Amidst the jubilation, there is a sound of the Ekpo masquerade renting the air. The masquerade comes in with charcoal and kaolin. He examines her and rubs kaolin on her, signifying

acceptance. The whole stage is thrown into frenzy with movements simulating happiness. The groom comes in and is joined happily in perfect matrimony by their parents. They are showered with gifts and the groom in happiness lifts his wife shoulder high as they are escorted home by all.

The dance is ended by two maiden dancers in an inviting manner. (See Appendix V: 10)

(B) PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL GROUP – IKOT EKPENE SENATORIAL DISTRICT

NDOKO DANCE (MBOPO)

The Ndoko dance is exemplifications of the respect adorn the maiden in the Annang society. Ndoko (Mbopo) is a dance that reflects the norms and values of Mbopo institution. It is used to prepare a young woman for the coming of age and marriage and only restricted to virgin girls. This dance was also handed down from one generation to another.

At the beginning of the dance, the instrumentalists who are mostly males give an introductory rhythm to establish the pace for the performance with the “Obodom” (slit drum) sounding to usher in the mother of the fattened girl, the other instruments including Ikon, Uta, Ntakrok, Ibid and others go into a perfect musical transition, laying the base for the mother to use her space effectively. She announces the outing of her daughter and praising her beauty. She then urges the audience to wait and watch and dances out with a vigorous waist dance to usher in others. The next group to go on stage is the Asian Uboikpa group who dance in with their leader to set the mood for the ushering in of the “Mbopo” fattened maiden(s). In some cases, they spray money on the Asian Uboikpa dancers who set the pace for the Mbopo to follow.

Immediately after, the Mbopo is brought in shoulder high by some hefty men and are followed by their aids holding umbrella to cover them. The Mbopo’s entry is welcomed with shouts, ululations and acclamations from the members of the audience. It is always the peak of the dance performance. When the girl is dropped, she dances round in turns embracing the Asian dancers and then stays on a line to perform a common dance movement. Her dance movements are graceful. She does not stress herself because she is the one being celebrated.

There comes the period of suspense when the “Ekong Mbopo” a masquerade comes in to examine the maidens to see if she is fat and beautiful. The entry of the masquerade changes the tempo of the music to a faster rhythmic rendition to suit the

aggressiveness of the masquerade. The entrance of the masquerade sends fear into both Mbopo and other dancers. The maiden is detached from their relatives to stand on her own awaiting the verdict from the masquerade that has come in with charcoal and white-chalk. She is decorated with white-chalk signifying that she is fit for marriage. She parades the arena with royal dance steps and showered with gifts. The Asian dancers dance around her to show their solidarity and happiness. After this bit, the Mbopo is carried shoulder high and dances out of the performance arena while the Asian Uboikpa remain to round off the dance presentation with beautiful and graceful dance movements. Finally, they dance out with the lead dancer coming at the rear and stopping the instrumentalists simultaneously.

It is worthy of note that all through the segments of dances, songs are used to communicate to the audience what is happening on stage through the dances. A call and respond technique is used in the performance. (See Appendix V: 11)

**(c) OKOPEDI CULTURAL GROUP ONNA L.G.A –EKET SENATORIAL DISTRICT
OKUT-AMA**

This group calls their Mbopo dance (Oku-ama) meaning irresistible love. This performance starts with series of choral songs, backed up with instrumentation. The key instrument is the slit drum (Obodom). The slit drum player stops the choral session with a master solo display. At the peak of his rolls, he cues the entire ensemble to come in. As the instrumentation rises, the Eka Mbopo (mother) emerges with stockfish and gong alerting the people of the important marriage ceremony of her daughter. She prance the stage with jerky waist dance movements but with smiles. She dances out ushering in the Asian dancers.

The Asian dancers clad in beautiful outfit come on stage with the gyration of the waist. They form several patterns including circle, triangle, creating vertical lines and so on. Their main dances are those of the waist and breaking of back, with flexible swerve of the arms and torso at intervals.

The highpoint of the performance is when the mother (Eka mbopo) ushers in the Mbopo who is flanked by her two aids. She dances in with great dignity and self-presence. She is almost naked. Her breast is exposed but covered with red oil or (Nsang). Her face is also covered with oil and she glitters with every move she makes. The Asian dancers open up and she uses her hand fan to pat their backs one after the other. After that,

she goes into waist dance with all of them and the Ekoong Mbopo comes in to dance with her and give her white chalk.

The audience ululates as the dancers express themselves in personal dance of joy called (Okpok-osio). “Okpok-osio” is a term used for free movements provided it pleases the eyes of the audience. At the peak of this, the Ebe Mbopo (groom) comes in with gifts and carries her shoulder high, while the Asian dancers follow behind as they exit. The instrumentalist carry on while the Ekong Mbopo dances his best movements scattering people and finally going straight to the orchestra and stops them with his leg placed on the lead drum, the “obodom” (shit-drum).(See Appendix V:12)

4.3 TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN MBOPO DANCE OF AKWA IBOM STATE

The analysis on the above subject will cut across the selected dance troupes in Akwa Ibom State. The response from the respondents on the evolutionary state of these performances will form the crux for the evaluation of the findings of the study. In addition, the personal observation and participation of the researcher in these troupes’ performances will help validate issues covering tradition and modernity in our traditional dance routine. We will therefore start with the views of individuals across the senatorial districts on the Mbopo dance.

a) The Okopedi cultural group Onna L.G.A. Akwa Ibom state is a reputable group in traditional dance displays, but our interest in this thesis is on the Okut-ama dance which can also be called Mbopo dance.

The Mbopo (Okut-ama) dance is richly endowed with choral songs with an irresistible orchestration of instrumentation and movements. Chief Etim Ekpo observes that, though the Okut-ama dance is greatly entertaining, it is not worthy of presentation in recent times due to the near naked view of the maiden’s breast and lower region. He claims that nudity is not acceptable in public performance, thoughtless of a bridal dance such as the Okut-ama (Mbopo). He says that no groom will let people see her wife’s nakedness. Her body is sacred and should be unveiled by the groom. Chief Etim Ekpo concludes that cultural practices that could lead us backwards should be screened and modified to suit the present feelings and desires. The near nudity of the maiden should be avoided and a more creative costume given to her for expression and presentation.

In a sharp contrast to the above view, Madam Nkoyo Ekpeyong stressed that cultural practices should be treated with respect. The Mbopo dance cannot change from what her fore-fathers handed down to them. According to her, the Mbopo is a virgin and innocent. Her innocence is seen in her dressing and graceful movement with harmless smiles. This is the more reason why she is dressed especially for her husband and people to examine her spotless skin and healthy breast. She commends the Okopedi cultural group, Onna L.G.A for attempting a cultural renaissance through the Okut-ama (Mbopo) dance. She sums up that, a lady that exposes her breast is still innocent. She is not ashamed because she does not really see the need of covering her breast until she knows her husband. At that point, she realizes that her breast is a vital element to be treasured by her husband and children. From this point upwards, the woman becomes jealous of her breast and can conveniently cover it.

In another response on the Okut-ama (Mbopo) dance at the Okopedi cultural group, Dr Umanah Asuquo, a cultural analyst working with the Local Government Commissions applauded the performance, but feared that some dance movements were borrowed from diversified cultures of the nation. He observed this during the “Okpok-osio” session where performers were given opportunity to express themselves. He posited that the expressional body gyrations should stick to the cultural environment so that the audience can identify with the mode of expression. He also frowned at the costume of the Mbopo, with the view that, it is too revealing and tempting. He advised that a more creative outfit be given to the mbopo, to help draw many ladies into the performance. He observed that the Mbopo dance is gradually dying out due to some cultural practices such as inspection of the female genital organ by the elderly women, stress on virginity and of course the naked view of the Mbopo in performance. If the dance must survive, the audience should look at the performative values of the dance and shun issues may be out of it. Virginity is essential, but it is hard to have real virgins do this dance nowadays since there are diverse ways of dis-virginning women such as sex, sports and so on. He challenged the Okopedi cultural group to prove that the Mbopo in the performance is innocent.(September,2012)

Madam Agness Uko, a cultural officer with the Onna L.G.A. posited that Mbopo dance is not just done for leisure. It is a dance that celebrates womanhood; it is a performance that tells a story about the virtuous woman who is considered as the foundation of a good home. She believes that the performers should live by example, not just being good dancers, but also having good character and charisma. She believes that all

dancers of Okut-ama are virgins until they are proven otherwise. She warned that people should stop differentiating normative values from techniques in performance. We should view all as a composite unit so that the Mbopo dance can help educate our young ladies and make them celebrated by the society. She comments the Okopedi cultural Group for an attempt to give culture life through performance. (September, 2012)

Mr Ekarika Udeng and Mr Udo Akpan Inyang believe that tradition is sacred and the changes therein must be done in such a way that, they do not render the culture useless. Mr Ekarika Udeng posits that the Okut-ama (Mbopo) dance performance is a fair attempt in recent times to replay the Mbopo we always identify with. The qualities of the Mbopo such as smooth skin, a breast that has not fallen, fat body, flexible body, charming smiles and graceful movements are all seen in the performance. Though these qualities are physically seen, the inner attributes of the Mbopo are not known. This is because no provisions have been made for the parents of the performer to say things about their siblings. Ordinarily, it is believed that the Mbopo is a virgin and has not known any man yet. She is celebrated and led back to her husband's home with joy. He does not really see anything wrong with the exposure of the maidens' breast, because they are covered with oil or (Nsang) kaolin. The kaolin or oil becomes the body make-up that is done traditionally to conceal the true nature of the breast. After all, the so called contemporary scenes accept body paintings even in fashion shows. He questions why that of the Mbopo should be different. In the same vein, Mr Udo Akpan congratulates the group for keeping to tradition even in the face of condemnations. He said that the revealed breast by the Mbopo performer is only symbolic and lives only during the performance. He commends the group for a rich knowledge on the Mbopo institution and encouraged them to do more. He identified the white-chalk as a cultural element that signify purity, the Ekong-Mbopo as the messenger of the gods and the ancestors, the parents of the Mbopo as the key element for marriage solemnization as well as the well-wishers who are seen in the Okpok-osio session. Carefully looking at the dynamics of the performance, one would see a conflux of traditional activities designed through the medium of performance. The songs reveal the virtuous stead of the maiden and the mother is extolled and celebrated. This performance is relevant in today's experience. While commenting on the sentiments attached to masquerades and exposure of the body, Mr Udo detests the short-sighted view of people on tradition and contemporary philosophies with the proliferation of different religious sects in the state, the ancient practices of Ekpo masquerade is jettison due to the feeling that it makes people worship idols. This is wrong. He avers that the masquerade in

this Mbopo performance is symbolic; it is not a revelation of an Ekpo ensemble. It justifies the belief that marriage is not just a terminal thing; it is everlasting and sanctioned by the ancestors. However, he was impressed with the performance and adjudges it one of the best in terms of cultural content.

Answering questions on the performance, the founder of the group Obong Emmanuel udo Iyang complained of the Mbopo performance. He said that, most women think that they cannot expose their bodies unnecessarily for the sake of keeping an ailing tradition. They even condemn the use of fat women for the role of Mbopo in the performance. Their reasons are that the contemporary society needs slimmer ladies and not those over-fed with fat and the likes. They consider Mbopo dance as a performance fitted for a woman in the village and not those that are exposed or gone to the city. This has hampered the spirit of participation and there is fear that the dance may not be seen in years to come.

His fears are two dimensional. The first is the strange thoughts of the young ones that they cannot be fat, naked (reveal breast) in performance. The second is that even if the breast is covered, and the Mbopo is slimmer, will the community still accept the performance as representing the Mbopo institution? These issues are thought provoking. He thinks that he will continue to do his best within the provisions of the culture and hope that people will learn to accept their culture the way it is so that our identity may be propagated.

Still on Okut-ama (Mbopo) performance Mrs Regina Ibok, ObongAnwan Arit Nya and Obong James Onah, state that Mbopo performance is a sacred one. Thus, it should be performed by acceptable maidens in character and skill, they view that Mbopo performance should be instructional, a reflection of matrimony in true sense, and a role-model for the women to celebrate. Hence, the dancers must be certified virgins and show sufficient evidence in performance of their knowledge in matrimonial affairs. There should not be a place for the Ekong- Mbopo; she should be tested by the leader of the group. By so doing, ladies would be taught how to celebrate their virginity and preserve their bodies for their would-be-husbands. However, she commended the group on a fair attempt on bringing back old memories of our tradition. (See Appendix 1 fig. 18)

(b) NDOKO (Mbopo) DANCE BY PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL GROUP – IFUHO, IKOT EKPENE (IKOT EKPENE SENATORIAL DISTRICT)

The traditionality in the Ndoko (Mbopo) dance of the progressive cultural group is essentially rich in terms of the musical orchestration and movement patterns. Mr Lawrence Iwoh who is the leader of the group says that the performance was one of its best, whenever it was presented; the community members identified with it and gave the performers gifts. However, this practice has waned due to some reasons. He goes on to say that, the young ladies are no longer interested in the Mbopo performance claiming that there are stringent rules attached to it. These rules include, maintaining ones virginity, being kept in seclusion and fed with fat, genital mutilation and so on. According to him, some community members claim that there are other diabolical practices in the performance. For fear of losing the dance form, the group was forced to select performers at random. This raises the question of harbouring some performers with immoral attributes. This brings down the integrity of the sacred dance (Mbopo). Some parents withdraw their siblings for fear of being corrupted. However, he claims that, they have struggled to maintain the standard of the performance in the wake of modern influence and perceptions of the younger generation. (September, 2012)

Mrs Atim Udokang, a parent of one of the dancers, says she is happy with her two daughters who are part of the Ndoko dance. She enjoys seeing them dance and cautions them generally on the need to keep themselves as much as possible away from the advances of men, so that they will enjoy their matrimony. Though it is almost impossible to monitor them during and after performance, the dance gives them opportunity to showcase their talents. She declares that there is nothing to worry about the Mbopo dance as a whole, but so much to teach especially when the young ladies are about going into matrimony. She said that the Mbopo dance should not be seen as a dance that teaches the maidens how to keep themselves in matrimony through movements because; it is hard to create these things in the dance performance. To her, the Mbopo dance is only a performance that reminds the people of the need to respect womanhood and strengthen matrimony, not a process or one of the things the Mbopo must pass through. The Bride may not be part of the dance during performance, but she may witness it with the view of seeing how best she would be appreciated by her community if she respects her matrimony. Mbopo dance is just a performance, and we should leave it at that if we want it to grow after all the issue of putting the Bride in seclusion is fast fading away due to modernity and our young ladies do not fancy being fat any longer. The things that were

normally done in seclusion are now handled by parents of the Bride and Groom, while the community witnesses the solemnization of the marriage. (November, 2012)

Ete Idung Emmanuel Afong does not agree with Mrs Udokang. He says that tradition is tradition, and should not be shifted. He wonders whether she desires an Mbopo that is not certified virgin to dance and desecrate the land or an Mbopo whose character and personality is acceptable by the living and the dead. He stressed that, if the rudiments of the Mbopo are not fulfilled in the dance, they should call the dance some other name, to save the community from the curses that would come from our ancestors. Our ancestors believe that, we should handle whatever law they kept with care and diligence. He extols the use of kaolin (white chalk) showed acceptability and innocence of the maiden, while the masquerade announced the presence of the gods. He said that, the Ndoko dance has tried to recapture that traditional rites of marriage as it was in the past, but warned that, the issue of virginity and marriage chores should not be taken for granted for the fear of problems from the ancestors.(November,2012)

Mr Udobong Ekpo argues that tradition has been shaken by a lot of issues including religion. He says that, tradition is to be celebrated only when it favours the people. Tradition must be flexible with people's flexibility in thoughts and desires or we stand the chance of losing our identity and personality with our youths embracing the foreign cultures. The foreign cultures seem to give our youths liberty to express themselves and not construed into a corner of regrets. Having said this, the Mbopo dance as performed by the Progressive Group is interesting. It has showed the role of the parents of the Bride, revealed the celebrative atmosphere, the use of white-chalk to show acceptance, the variety of dance movements from the Asian dancers and the beautiful songs in their repertory. He wonders what more was needed to be seen in the performance. He considers the idea of virginity as important but argues that virginity should not be used as parameter for choosing the maidens. After all, so many young maidens lose their virginity at tender ages. The issues on sex education should be encouraged in seminars, community projects, and media programmes, not in a performance like the Ndoko (Mbopo). The Mbopo performance is only a symbolic representation of the celebration of marriage, not the marriage itself. This is easy to understand, because the rites in seclusion have gradually died out. Even when the Mbopo was celebrated in the past, she was not judge in movements but, shape, health and innocence. They were not fantastic in dance movements since all of them were not talented dancers. But the Mbopo of today is chosen based on movement abilities, not shape or integrity. The stress is on making people happy

and not revealing tradition in performance. Besides, it is really difficult to think that all the dance patterns and movements simulate the teachings, in seclusion. They may suggest some level of actions, but mostly these movements are designed to make the crowd happy not to tell stories of womanhood in matrimony. Those arguments continue with some people still bent on holding sway to traditional norms and values. Madam Esther Ekpo thinks that Mbopo dance shows the virtue of the women who are legally married or acceptable in the society. Mbopo according to its name means “cherished woman”, a woman that is treasured. So the performer should fulfil the necessary requirements of the society especially virginity. She should be beautiful and flexible and above all healthy (plume). (November, 2012)

Madam Elizaabeth Udoh agrees with the issue of virginity, but does not fully accept the issue of fattening. She says men like things differently. Some may admire slim ladies, while others fat ones. So the shape of the wife or Bride should be determined by the husband or Groom not the parents. Despite their recurrent arguments there seem to be an understanding that the performance is laudable but more should be done in terms of values such as virginity and personality. These issues contribute to the gradual extinction of the Mbopo dance in the society. (November, 2012)

(C) COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE AKWA-IBOM STATE: (UYO SENATORIAL DISTRICT)

UYAI (MBOPO) DANCE

The Uyai (Mbopo) dance by the council for Arts and Culture Akwa Ibom State was a fair attempt at re-positioning the Mbopo dance in the scheme of things in the society. It became a bold statement on the need to invent new elements in cultural practices as a way of bridging the gap between the past and the present for a better future.

Responding to questions on the nature of Uyai dance and its supposed acceptability to the public, Mrs Abigail Okon, the Head of performing unit of the Council lamented on the poor perception of people on traditional issues citing the Uyai dance as a case study. She said that it was out of a deep argument that the structure of Uyai (Mbopo) was approved for performance. The contentious issues laid on what the dance used to be and what it will be in the entry. These contentious issues included:

- (1) Circumcision of the maiden
- (2) Choice of a fat maiden
- (3) The standing breast of the maiden

- (4) Smooth body of the maiden
- (5) The make up

On the issue of circumcision, the committee argued and finally realized that, it might be impossible to find a young girl who will accept the act of circumcision. The pain that comes with this act, will also affect the health condition or fitness of the maiden within the time frame of preparation for the festival coming up in a weeks time. Finally, the case was ruled out. (October, 2011)

The choice of a fat maiden became the next issue. It was stressed fact that Mbopo in Akwa Ibom State is normally plummy and fat. As a defender of tradition, we should be and recap that in our performance, since the issue of circumcision can be hidden. The committee members deliberated on it. Mr. Ibok Ette reiterated that, we should not in any way take fatness as sign of good health. Though our people's perception of good health was based on a fat body, health science has revealed that this in some cases may be sign of obesity. He submitted that the "fatness" in this sense should be seen as the way our forefathers qualified good health. So our consideration in the modern times should be on a young lady that is plummy and not necessarily fat. He further said that, the maiden in question must be a good performer and not just anyone that moves the body. This is because, other states of the federation will come with strong dances and we cannot afford to play second fiddle to anyone. After some further deliberations, it was decided that we search for a beautiful girl who is healthy and possess qualities of a good performer. (October, 2011)

The issue of the standing breast was knocked off since the make-up team argued that, a man made breast can be created for the performance. The exposure of some parts of the sensitive parts of the maiden was amended. Rather, she was to wear smart outfit richly adorned with beads and other accessories. Her breast was to be richly covered with a blouse while the (Mkpin) skirt remained short but enough to give her an allowance to move and carry her body gracefully. The adornment of the body with oil was sanctioned while the activities in seclusion were selected for dance dramatization during the performance. At the end, the meeting ended and they went straight to start the work proper. Mrs Abigael Okon said that it was important that this background be given so that the researcher will begin to see that from the beginning it was not easy to come up with the Uyai that won accolades from the crowd and even took 2nd position at the festival. She said that she was mostly justified that at last there is that dire need to recap our cultural

performance in the stream of the changing waves of contemporary times. Surprisingly, the crowd still acknowledged the slim but plume Mbopo as a maiden and applauded all through the performance, which shows that, the people are not necessarily tied to practices of the past, but they enjoy the artistry irrespective of the stories behind them. They know that the Mbopo (Uyai) dance was just a demonstration of the love people have for maidens or women when they are about going into marriage solemnization. (October, 2011)

On a related issue, Dr. Akpan Edet a culture analyst applauded the manner of presentation of the Uyai (Mbopo) during the festival. He said that, he was particularly happy that the state council for arts and culture took that bold attempt to re-write a cultural performance that was almost eclipsed in the state. He commended the introduction of the training session where the maidens were taught vocations and applauded the aesthetic direction advanced in the training of the would-be-husband. The Ekpo dance and Ekong movements added value to the dance and showed that we can actually use our cultural dances to suit our contemporary interest. While the songs and dance movements were well structured, he observed that, the dance did not lack anything in terms of traditional elements. But, these elements were transformed into a pleasing routine acceptable by the audience. He pleads that the council should continue to do same to our traditional dances so that they can attract patronage from within and without of the society. (October, 2011)

Mrs Nwedobong Ubeng said she was proud of her state. She said she jumped up and shouted in excitement when she saw the Mbopo coming in with great flow of movement and carriage. She had expected seeing one fat maiden display, but she instead saw a young smart girl with beautiful smiles approaching the stage. She wondered when her people began to see Mbopo as not necessarily being fat, but smart and good looking. She disclosed that it has always been on her mind to write on some ailing traditional dances in the state. She was excited when one aspect of the traditional life and philosophy was re-invented. In truth, “Mbopo” as the word is does not denote fatness. It shows that a thing is cherished and pampered. “Mbopo” was that word used to qualify a woman who is ready to be pampered by her husband. She decried the incessant use of fat women as Mbopo in the state and declared that this must have been one of the reasons the dance got almost eclipsed. Times do change, our grandparent saw every good thing as “big” and this may have informed the Mbopo institution to overfeed the maiden to show how rich the parents were. But in this age, such philosophy does not count. Our young girls prefer being slim than being fat. It is actually sad news today that, the Mbopo dance which would have been a compulsory dance form in marriage ceremonies is not even remembered. This

is because; the people are no longer interested in the provisions of the old and ailing Mbopo form. She is happy that the council has made a strong statement that nothing can stay forever. The perception on traditional dances will surely change if this kind of heart piercing performance is made. Remember that the Mbopo institution is very sacred, and the so called sacredness is polarized by even the people who do not want their children to meddle with what they called vain ritual and practice. With this kind of new touch, there is hope that traditional dances will stand the test of times. Tradition should not be separated from the people. The people make or remake tradition. So traditional practices that are no longer appropriate with the people at a certain time should be replaced or amended for better results. (October, 2011)

Mr. Charlie Ibok Sam said that he was very elated by that performance. He particularly stressed that, he has never seen the representation of the activities in seclusion in Mbopo dance before. He has not also seen the would-be-husband trained by the male-institutions in such a performance before. He declared that the performance was a highly packed piece that in a glance recaptured almost all the essential cultural institution of the Akwa Ibom people. The Ebre women were seen training the maidens on vocations such as cooking and weaving raffia, the Ekpo initiates also taught the man how to be strong, obedient and watchful. In this ensemble, every cultural life of the Akwa Ibom man was portrayed with grace and in a short moment. The highpoint was the physical appearance of the Mbopo. To say that an Mbopo will be slim is the least thing expected of an average Akwa Ibom man. But, it was a grand situation when even these audiences shouted and applauded showing that they are all yearning for change in all their cultural life. My happiness was that, though the foundations and form of the dance changed, it did not take away the necessary ingredients of our traditional life. The masquerade dances, the Ekoong dance, the traditional chants, the strong musical appeal and vast movement qualities of the maidens were all demonstrated. He pleads that the dance should not only be a material for competition, but it should be used as a tool for culture evangelism and practice. People should begin to think in the now and not in the past. We should begin to know that tradition was made by people, the people must make sure that the changes are made provided they do not lead to lost of self identity.(October,2011)

Chief Idung Udosen, a high Chief in Ibesikpo, L.G.A. said;

I have seen the Uyai (Mbopo) dance and I am grateful to God that it was a success. Though, the Mbopo was slim. It

did not cross my mind one bit that she was not one. Her carriage, smile and magnificent body movement drew my mind miles away from history. I was enraptured by the ladies presence of mind and great body artistry. I must confess that there has been no Mbopo that is so versed in performance skill like this one, perhaps she was helped by having less fat than the ones I have always witnessed.(October,2011)

He continues that he was thrilled and entertained and still believed that he saw Mbopo dance.

Dr. Ifure – Ufford Azorbo was also thrilled by the entry of the council for Arts and Culture Akwa Ibom State in the National Arts Festival 2011. She said that:

...her happiness is that we have begun to re-discover that dance is not histories; it is an out of body-movements geared to delight the eyes of the audience. If we are focusing on any traditional dance, much effort should be placed on movement technique, form and execution. Dance must not always tell stories to be appreciated, but that made to leap the mind of the audience through body artistry. She was happy with the performance, especially at the statement made through the use of a slim maiden as Mbopo. She said that in the past, the slim maidens were rejected by the community, but today, our women do not want to be fat, and so the choice of the slim maiden is borne out of a deep and intelligent evaluation of the feelings of our young ladies in our time. If every cultural adventure would be kept for proper analyses and using contemporary experience, there would be improved patronage for cultural performance (October, 2011)

She applauded the dance designs and fast instrumentation and a call for more experimentation in other cultural dances that are fast fading away. She stressed that traditional dance is meant to please the eye not just to tell stories. So stories behind any cultural dance should be a secondary issue.

4.4 TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN IKON DANCE OF AKWA IBOM STATE:

The researcher is representing views of respondents concerning tradition and modernity in Ikon dances performed by the selected groups across the three Senatorial Districts. These groups include:

- (a) The New Dance Entertainers –representing Ikot Ekpene senatorial district.
- (b) Akwa Obio Cultural Group – representing Eket senatorial District.
- (c) Ikon Afrikana Theatre – Representing Uyo Senatorial District.

Each of these groups present three diversified Ikon performances that are considered in this research. Audiences and participants are interviewed and their responses will help us justify the essence of the study.

(a) New Dawn Entertainers

The new Dawn Entertainers are known for good and interesting dance performances. In appraising the Mkpasa dance of the aforementioned troupe, Mr. Donald Ekong Ituen congratulates the performers for their vast knowledge in contemporary body routine and displays. He said the “Mkpasa” dance can be performed any where in the globe, because the creative spark in the orchestrated body movements was capable of inviting patronage. The “Mkpasa” is an Ikon dance that fuses maiden traditional body movements with those of the contemporary, such as, the makossa, hip hop and so on. This fusion is done in such a way that the audience rarely observes the lines demarcating or distinguishing one dance form from another. In his words

Mkpasa is a traditional dance that embraces all delightful body movements enhanced by the musical base propelled by the ikon ensemble. The dance breaks all cultural barriers and limitations. Though indigenous songs and music are used, the movements so displayed show good sense of cultural synergy and integration. This may be one of the reasons the group is growing stronger and stronger by day. (September, 2010)

He was delighted with the way indigenous movements were given form and value in the contemporary structure. This is because the spectators were able to appreciate

indigenous traditional dance movements as well as those from alien cultures. This action according to him shows there is a possibility of cultural tolerance and acceptability in performances. In another response Elder Okpongette Ikpok praise the initiative of the group by equating the local dance movements with the contemporary ones. He observed that

The youths are so carried away with the hip hop, makossa and several foreign dances, thereby having very little time to study or appreciate the indigenous ones. But in this performance, one can notice in a glance that indigenous steps have potentials and in fact possess some qualities of the hip-hop dance. The integration of these movements in a smooth form shows how rich and viable indigenous tradition is. I think, the strength of the performance is on its eclectic nature which suites diversified thoughts, and cultural practices. (September, 2010).

Mrs. Stella Ibeh was impressed with the multi-dimensional technique used in the course of the performance. She hold in strong terms the dramatic entry and effective control of the rising pace throughout the duration of the performance. The expectancy created by sudden frozen actions and dramatic expositions helped to add value to the performance. This according to her shows that the performers are learned, intelligent and can communicate effectively with their audience. The short introductory speeches by the lead dancer helped open the channel for audience interaction and presence of mind.

The gradual rise in tempo to its crescendo once again demonstrated efficiency in performance routine and practice. She also took a critical look at the multi-functional lead instrument. She said that Ikon in the past was only an instrument mounted on banana stems. The slaps where big slices of treated wood. These woods were not more than seven in number. Though this instrument was used to play the ensuing melody of the songs so rendered by the performers, it could only play the traditional tunes. This automatically meant that the instrument was tuned in the pentatonic scale. The pentatonic scale according to her is a sound composition that attunes itself with the inflectionary elements or dynamics of the indigenous languages. But in the “Mkpasa dance”, she saw a mix of the traditional and contemporary flavour in the ikon instrumentation. The lead Ikon now had smaller slaps placed on framed planks of wood with foam to aid the production of good and qualitative sound. These slaps are 17 in number and tuned in the diatonic scale. The diatonic scale helped tremendously in the success of the performance or rather transition

of traditional songs to modern ones. The diatonic scale has the d-r-m-f-s-l-t-d pattern and this is made in 2 Octaves with an extra note to make it seventeen slaps. According to her, this new made Ikon (Xylophone) has the pentatonic build in the diatonic. The pentatonic include d-r-m-s-l. These notes are inclusive of the diatonic Ikon and it helps blend the different dance and music forms irrespective of their cultural affiliation and sentiments. This has made Mkpassa dance unique and delightful and can easily attract public patronage and followership. The Ikon dance has successfully grown beyond the cultural barriers of the state and has gone on to adapt new codes of body movements with salient contemporary music and sound to make the Ikon traditional ensemble more attractive and competitive. She concluded by saying that

The group should be encouraged to do more and help show case our cultural values to the world, while also becoming a tool in reconciling our cultural practices with those of our contemporary times. This may in turn invent a new cultural philosophy that will help stabilize the growth of existing cultural practices and sensibilities. (September, 2010)

The “Akop Umehe” dance of the New Dawn Entertainers got varied criticism. While some applauded their rich cultural elements and designs, others were not too satisfied with the application of these cultural elements especially in terms of body interpretation and rhythm. Obongawan Theresa Udonsek was of the view that

The “Akop umehe” dance performance was unique and strictly tied to the core traditional body movements and provisions. The use of non-verbal cues accentuated by the lead Xylophonist coupled with the lyrical technique in the traditional dance forms made it a perfect example of the Akwa Ibom cultural dance. For once there was not any attempt to bring in varied dance forms as seen in the “mkpassa” dance. The Akop Umehe “truly outlined the basic provisions in maiden dance galore. The waist dance gyration was actually the peak of the performance (September 2010).

She employed the Ikon group to create more dances in this direction to help stay within the cultural experience and sentiments of the people. She asked the New Dawn Entertainers to please desist from borrowed culture and concentrate on building cultural dances to any point they so desire, without eroding the cultural dignity, pride and identity of the people they supposedly represent.

Chief Okokon Udo accepts the facts earlier established by Obongawan Udonsek on issues regarding traditional songs but disagree on the view that the “Akop Umehe” dance is truly reflective of Akwa Ibom State dance form. He cited the example of the deployment of waist dance in the composition. According to him, the traditional waist gyration of our maidens is not done at a static position. The dance goes on in a continuous swerving of the body forwardly or at times backwards. But it has never been that our women would gyrate their waist bending at a given spot. Rather this form is borrowed from our neighbours. The movement is identified with those from Rivers and Bayelsa state of Nigeria. In this case, it cannot be true that the maiden waist dance truly stayed within the confinement of the Akwa Ibom State cultural dance form. Though there are similarities in the waist dances, we should be able to stick to that of the state and not import similar ones to override it. It was observed that the audience shouted at the point the dancers remain static on waist gyration. The audience applauded more leaving the ensuing waist dance from our society as a secondary movement.

But Chief Udo Nsewo does decry the multiple explorations of waist movements as he opines

No matter how varied the waist dances are, provided they are done or woven within the cultural frame of the people, it will always engage the audiences feeling and cheers in a positive dimension. The group has the sole right to bring similar movements from anywhere to enhance the perception of another. The experimentation with varied waist movements has made us to value the said movement and discover how peculiar, frenzy and hilarious our indigenous waist dances are. However, they should try and retain some elements of the indigenous waist dance forms, to avoid total eclipse of the original waist dance style, grace and dignity. (November, 2010)

Mr. Ifiok Gabriel generally appreciates the Akop Umehe performance of the New Dawn Entertainers especially in the area of an attempt to enact the indigenous dance form without unnecessarily choking the performance with borrowed movements across the world culture. At least, they have predominantly executed movements associated with the culture and tradition of the people. But these indigenous movements were done using adulterated musical form. He explains:

Because of the growing interest of Ikon groups in contemporary movements' or rather eclectic form of performance, the Ikon (Xylophone) instrument is hurriedly tuned in diatonic scale or the English scale, which helps them to play contemporary music. This has constituted a problem as the traditional tunes which are supposedly to be played on the pentatonic scale are now ignorantly rendered on the diatonic scale. The result is that, the musical rendition would be noisy and flat. Though this has little or no effects on the dance movements, it constitutes noise in term of music appreciation. (September, 2011)

He then advises that, the Ikon tuned in diatonic scale has all the notes for the pentatonic scale. The Ikon instrumentalist must be conversant with these notes and strike them accordingly. The beauty of the standardized Ikon (Ikon tuned in diatonic scale) is being able to play melodies irrespective of their scale or form. Unfortunately, the modernization of this instrument has brought about new sound patterns due to lack of conscious knowledge in music science and application. Chief Okokon Ita agrees with ifok Gabriel and declares that:

Ikon dance does not have a specific pattern, form, and presentation. Its dance movements are creatively simulated for the sole aim of impressing the audience. The peculiar thing in Ikon dance is the accurate and creative reproduction of the melody of songs rendered by the performer, created, or adopted for the contemporary music world. Where the Ikon cannot play the correct sound pattern or tune of any song, it has failed in its major aesthetic value and strength. In this case the Ikon ensemble has failed to give pleasure to the ear of the beholders of the dance. This trend should be checked in the group. (September, 2010).

The "Akop Umehe" dance piece is entertaining in terms of its artistry, but should be re-designed to be pleasing in term of music harmonization and response. The players or instrumentalist should know the difference between the traditional notes and those of the contemporary.

In the next performance titled "Wave your flag" the issue of harmonization was not prevalent since the Ikon ensemble played mostly on the diatonic scale. Mr. Denilson who in his view saw the production as impressive applauded the group for responding to current issues around the globe. According to him, the production attempts to rejuvenate

the African philosophy of unity and faith. The production showcases the African artistry and essentially flaunting African pride through creative movements. Through the use of the song “Wave your flag”, the group through their production re-echoed those elements that make the African unique. The Zulu dance instantly reminds the people of South Africa, the venue of the 2010 world cup where the song was created and performed. The tap dance, Bata, as well as other traditional African dance steps also showcased our rich cultural base. The joy in the production is that the New Dawn Entertainers are current in events that attract followership. The choice of the song and sub-titling the performance accordingly immediately arrest the interest of the people. The people are already conversant with the song and there is that eagerness to see what the group has in stock. This is possibly the advantage Ikon dance has over other traditional dances in the state. Its relevance to the social issues, developmental projects, changes and emotions of the people always make the dance grow without limits. For example, ‘Wave your flag’ has nothing to do with Bata, Atilogwu and Zulu, but the interest in the performance have already been established by the use of the song which became very popular during and after the world cup 2010 in South- Africa.

Responding to questions on the basics and philosophy of the performance, the proprietor of the group, Mr. Ime Paul declared:

The “wave your flag” was a sharp response to the influence of the world cup on African soil. The song became very popular and we had to bring that influence back home. We try to make people at home to feel the sensational spirit behind the song using our locally made xylophone (Ikon). We always knew that people would love to see more of contemporary movements in the composition, but we intended to create a paradox. Though the song is purely contemporary, we adopt it as a foundation through which our indigenous dances are demonstrated. We succeeded because our aim is to make people happy and we choose popular tunes to arrest the total interest of the society. (September, 2010).

He continued that the use of Bata and other African dances was just to demonstrate the beauty of the indigenous dance steps in a popular tune. It showed that African culture can actually assimilate alien culture if only we have a fair sense of adaptability and selection. We did not pick all Zulu, Bata, Atilogwu and other movement in totality. We

selected those movements that would fit into the popular song so rendered. It should be noted that the tune of the song is not the same with the indigenous ones chosen for the performance. We tried to select steps that can evenly flow with the rhythm and are proud that we achieved that.

Dr. Umanah Ekong, an ethnomusicologist comments on the guts of the group in trying to blend the traditional with the contemporary. He said that he was particularly thrilled with the submersion of two divergent cultural poles in performance. He said that the performance shows that tradition can actually dialogue with changes in time. Though Bata and Zulu steps were identified in the construct, it was not obvious since they were played on a neutral foundation. It is a delight to see our cultural dance movements in new forms, yet still attracting applause and showing acceptability. The performance breaks the cultural barriers and enhances appreciation on performance without going into the semiological indices of these varied selective cultural dances.

(B) These are the responses of those interviewed on the performances of Akwa Obio Cultural Dance Group. Their views and suggestions concerning tradition and modernity will be empirically presented and analysed. We will start with “Ima Obio” one of the three selected Ikon dances of Akwa Obio cultural Group- representing the Eket senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

“Ima Obio’ is an award winning dance drama by the Akwa Obio Cultural Group. The dance preaches peace and unity as great tools for social development and greatness. According to Mr. Morgan Inyang, the dance is unique having made use of traditional activities such as farming and fishing. The group tried to draw some cultural elements of some sort to drive their message home. He declares.

The dance was a great work of art geared towards national emancipation through unity and peaceful co-existence. This performance is relevant and topical now that the nation is facing great problems in security and protection of lives and properties. The attendant strikes, disagreements, ethnic bigotry have crippled the economy, hence the need to promote this kind of performance across the nation. Apart from the representation of local vocations of the people the disappearance of Ima draws inference from the Akwa Ibom people that our gods are messenger of peace and may manifest in any form as demonstrated in the case of Ima. The Akwa Ibom man believes in the guidance and protection from ancestral spirits and they hold this as a great religious

belief. It is interesting to note that, though the performance was built on contemporary style, it still had to use core traditional indices to resolve a seeming flaw from the mortals. (September, 2011).

He continues that it is not surprising then to see this social commentary from an Ikon group. According to him, this has always, been the traditional strength of Ikon performance. Ikon performance traditionally comments on relevant topical issues through performance. This makes people to always have interest in its performance. Though these commentaries were mostly achieved through music and songs, the movements were also selective and made to reflect current dance styles and technique. There is a seeming change in approach apparently due to modernity. The Language barrier must have made this group to demonstrate or drive home their messages through non-verbal cues. This is a new innovation that should be applauded. The Ikon music now serves as a secondary element complimenting the choreographed movements designed to educate the people on the need to live in harmony. The versatile nature of the Ikon dance has made this possible.

Chief Ikemesit William believes that, dance drama is not totally new to the tradition surrounding Ikon performances. To him, these dramatic elements were brought together to unravel a good story that has the beginning and the end. They were done in fragmentations. For example, the dancer may blink her eye, dart like fish to bluff her suitor, become troublesome with uncoordinated movements and so on. But this “Ima Obio” performance has really shown that Ikon performance is catching up with the performance style and developments in contemporary times. “Ima Obio” is not just a performance done to entertain; it also carries some great dramatic skills and potentials. Let it be known that the fragmented beats of drama found in the early Ikon performances, were done with general dance costumes, but “Ima Obio” have gone beyond that by delineating characters in the production and giving them attires to compliment their roles. In the same vein, the dancers play multiple roles. They systematically transform from the characters they played (mere dancers), changing the outfits in the process. This is a modern technique, “Ima Obio” can actually be performed anywhere and will not be seen as a local performance. This sense of commitment to excellence in performance is commendable. He rather feels that the costume and dance movements should have some insignia of traditional ambience they come from. The use of hip-hop, makossa and other dance forms will only help to polarize our indigenous dance form and constitute a very serious element of culture

erosion. He tasked them to predominantly use indigenous movements to help promote their existence and acceptability. (October, 2011)

In what looked like a response chief Williams view on infusion of contemporary steps or movements, Mr. Okon Sampson reiterated that the Ikon traditionally is an instrument that has grown from its crude stage to a more versatile state. The instrument is multi-functional, and this has also informed the eclectic nature of the dance steps associated with the performance. Ikon performance enjoys this wide acceptance because of its open-ended form. It does not just get rooted in tradition, but assimilates other forms of performance that tend to bring joy to the heart and faces of the beholders or audience.

In “Ntama”, the second performance under review is another interesting spectacle to behold. There is a rich reservoir of African dance movements and could be said to be a true reflection of the African cultural experience. Chief Udo-Ekpo Nya had this to say:

The Akwa Obio Group have been trying to explore the African popular performance style. But one thing is sure. They have succeeded taking Ikon dance to a more dependable state. Before now, the Ikon dance traditionally focused on creative elements around the Akwa Ibom society. It used to be a veritable tool for social interaction, protest, satire and worship. But Ntama dance goes beyond the experiences of the group in the state, rather, it shows the depth of research the choreographers do beyond their cultural experience. (September, 2010).

He continues that the performance is entertaining and engages in holding on to the cultural identity of Africa in general, and the Akwa Ibom State in particular. Chief Udo Akpabio though is impressed by the different creative components in the Ntama dance, he thinks that once again, the Ntama dance has shown how far the Akwa Obio Group have diverted from the true essence of the Ikon dance. In an interview after the performance of Ntama dance, he lamented saying that:

The real essence of Ikon dance was to see how Ikon music serve as the foundation for body movements. The body movements were normally done to compliment the Ikon instrumental ensemble. But in Ntama, there is only one Ikon (xylophone) that does not come out with any melody or specific song, but scores of sounds to just back up the performance. Though the Ikon instrument instructs at some

point, it does not take control of the performance. (November, 2010).

He stresses that, for one to call a dance, Ikon performance, there must be evidence that, there is a conscious musical rendition by the Ikon in the instrumental ensemble. He decried the deployment of Ikon as a passive instrument in the performance. He however advised the group to stress on the orchestra making the xylophone the chief instrument, not a passive one as seen in the Ntama performance. In a related view, Mr. Udom Nya responded that

There should be caution in the ways Ikon groups compose their dances. They should understand that the beauty of Ikon dance is in assimilating the pleasing sounds and melody from the orchestra; with little body movements to give it form. The Ntama dance is not carrying along this traditional principle of Ikon dance. The incessant infiltration of more dance movements with little or no melody from the Ikon instrument will only kill the already measured feelings people have for the dance form. (November, 2010)

He warns that, though Ikon dance is not attached to any particular form, it stands the danger of being devalued as many of our traditional dances. The eclectic nature of the performance should be maintained, but with greater attention paid to the music composition using Ikon instrument as the key element and foundation of the performance.

In a separate contribution to the appraisal of Ntama performance, Mr. Hilary Charles believes that the dance got almost everything right. The traditional leading role of Ikon was evident as all the transitions of the body movement were articulated by the Ikon instrument. The underline rhythms was predominantly that of the Ikon, while the Siko drum, spontaneously assisted and complimented the signals and cues given by the Ikon instrument. He continued that, there was nothing wrong in the divergent dance movements drawn across cultures. While it could be understood that Ikon dance should propagate the indigenous dance steps, we should not also refuse to see that there are changes in people's philosophy and culture integration. The contemporary audience tend to appreciable foreign things because, these things are not common. The Ntama dance evolves from this, and utilizes as many movements as possible to capture the interest of the audience. They should be encouraged to do more so that our dance may keep pace with those of other cultures.

However the founder of the group Mr. Obiosop Obio –Usop through an oral interview had this to say:

There is this pressing need for us to know that nothing is permanent. The ways of life keep changing. Our performance also changes because, we must be part of these change if we must be patronized by a changing society. Yes, Ikon dance predominantly had songs, chants and a clear cut structure for music appreciation. Every music has a message, and this message may not be communicated in three minutes. And you are given five minutes to perform. One will attempt putting song rendition and dance movements on scale of preference. Which one attracts the eye and gets applause? Definitely it is the spectacle produced by the body, so we decided to have more concentration on dance movements since, it is called Ikon dance and not Ikon music. This has made us to have more patronage, for there are no limitations to these dance movements. (November, 2010)

So, we have been applauded severally for being able to bring other cultural and contemporary dances into our performances. This in no way has made people or our clients to stop calling us an Ikon group. It is true that, the lead instruments in the ensemble is Ikon and nothing more.

“The Divine Passion” being the third sample for discourse according to Mr. Udom Nya is a more plausible performance, where Ikon dance and music is concerned. The flow of rhythm, emphasis on music style and a blend of harmonization truly unravel the efficiency and potency that comes with Ikon performance. From the early days, Ikon performance was a combination of the choral and instrumental music with spices of dance movements to please the eye. The Akwa Obio Cultural Group in this regard have re-enacted that form and style in the performance using popular religious songs of notable Nigerians. Since it is a performance geared towards praising God almighty, any dance that reveals joy and happiness is therefore acceptable. It is a welcomed idea because in the early days, Ikon played a vital part in initiational ceremony. Example, Ikon ikpa was used in Ekpo ceremony, while Ikon Eto was used in Mbopo, Ese, Inam and Ekong rituals and worship. The Akaw Obio Cultural Group have therefore followed the popular religion (Christianity) using Ikon as a medium of glorifying the name of Jesus Christ, and spreading the gospel. This is definitely as a result of modernity, the ever changing force in our traditional society. (November, 2011)

Pastor Ukim Joseph appreciated the performance. He particularly considered the dance and music art as universal in the sense that the scale used for the music was diatonic. The diatonic scale is English, and almost all the songs we used to praise our God are all rendered in the diatonic scale. It is a thing of joy to see a local instrument that was very important in our sacred societies being transformed to perform a similar role in Christianity. He was so delighted that the songs chosen were popular and became easy for the audience to chorus and participate in the praise. He craved the indulgence of the leader of the group to evangelize even in churches so that people can start using the Ikon (Xylophone) in church especially during praise and worship. (November, 2011)

Mrs. Ofon Gabriel said that the innovation was good but was particularly interested in the dance steps and costume. She was of the view that since the performance is meant to edify Christ, the dancers should cover themselves properly as the tradition of the church demands. The dancers should not wear short skirts which can help breed the feeling of sexual urge or increase the wave of fornication. The dance movements should also be highly selective. Most of the ones displayed in Divine passion were somehow erotic, because the women wriggled their waist and made gestures that were not Christ like. In a sharp reaction to Mrs. Ofon's view, Hon. Uko Jack said that, the love of God or love for God is mostly enhanced by ones decision to submit himself totally to the will of God. Very little effect is seen without man, but the ultimate is your life within. He continues that he saw nothing wrong with "Divine passion". The dancers were not nude and the dance steps were not vulgarous. After all most churches dance makossa during offering time and praise. They engage in variety of movements that are popular in the society. He continues that the most recent dance movements are domociled with the youths and the youths are the live wire of the church of God. It becomes difficult to separate them with what they love but it is easier to nurture them with the principles of God, especially through things having to do with dignity and growth. The dance movements in divine passion were in place. And the choice of music and songs were excellent. God looks at the heart and not what you tie around your body. (December, 2011)

Mrs. Arit Inyang said that the movements influence the type of costume dancers wear. Long gowns and scarf would have been so miserable on those dancers and the aesthetic value of the dances would have been lost. She avers;

As far as the dancers are not nude, they are presentable before the lord. Besides, Churches have different doctrines and dressing code. Some use gowns, some wrapper and blouse while the Pentecostal churches even go with trousers and shirts for both sexes. A performance such as the “Divine passion” is generally made to encourage the beholders and make them happy, or draw them to God. We should be happy that the Ikon instrument has finally been delivered and given a place of honour in the Church of God, not the shrine of our ancestral powers (November, 2010).

Mr. Obiousop Obiousop who is the founder and chief choreographer and composer in the Akwa Obio Cultural Group in response to question field by the researcher on the performance said that “Divine passion was composed to help evangelize the nation for Christ. That was why they selected popular tunes and selected current dance steps, be it traditional or contemporary. We decided to praise God in the African way. Our joy is that, we are not left behind in the praise and worship of our God. We were motivated by the act that Churches use Guitar, keyboard and other foreign instruments to praise God. So we came together and rehearsed with local instruments knowing fully well that the standardized Ikon (xylophone) can play the melody while other instruments would compliment. We have experimented and found out that people are happy with this innovation. Ikon has grown beyond any cultural or social barrier. Thanks to its flexible nature. He concludes by saying that:

All the dances were influenced by the intensity of the musical form. Though the dancers were conscious of what they were doing, there was an added spiritual desire to dance for God and be safe in His presence (November, 2010).

(C) Below are the responses of respondents on the selected performances of the Ikon Afrikana Theatre Uyo. Their responses are on issues concerning tradition and modernity. The three selected performances are:

- (1) American Africana
- (2) Uyai dance
- (3) A1 special

(1) The Americana Africana dance performance is a unique display of the different African dance movements and that of the contemporary world. According to the founder of the Ikon Afrikana Theatre Prince Inieke Ufford:

Americana Africana was created to raise a platform where people would be able to evaluate both the indigenous and alien dance styles or form and come to a compromise that, there are not many differences in them, in terms of aesthetic appeal and audience reception. The performance reiterates that dance does not have boundaries. It is an art that delights the eyes and should be appreciated at that state. (Ufford; 1996:19)

He continued that though dance carries the traditional relics of the people, its main strength is in providing excitement and joy to the beholders. So any choreographer should be allowed to create dance based on his philosophy and not necessarily made to grapple with cultural sentiments and plights. The Americana Africana dance performance shows the resurgence of a unifying train that runs across the different cultures of the world. In the composition, there is a direct comparison between the modern and traditional dance forms. But at the end, the modern and traditional dances merge together to do a unified movement with the traditional musical rendition from the Ikon ensemble. He stressed that the unified movement showed that there is no specific difference between the modern and traditional dances. He insisted that dance practices should be build on the experience and efficiency of style and execution of movement devoid of cultural traits and bias.

Mr. Patrick Idiong, a dance practitioner says that the Americana Africana dance of the Ikon Africana Theatre shows the versatility of the Ikon instrument. It demonstrates the creative use of the standardized xylophone in providing melodies in diatonic and pentatonic scales. It also shows that the Ikon ensemble can favourably fit into any form of culture. In a glance, one is able to appreciate side by side the different cultural movements from diversified societies. He stresses that the content is rich, but his interest was in the creative simulations of contemporary and traditional dance movements by the group members. This shows a high sense and level of adaptability to cultural changes and form. However, this did not take away the applause that normally greeted Ikon dance displays. The merger of the two forms of dances as at the end shows that, we are only different in terms of complexion, but we are one in performance and sensibilities. He also praised the precision that comes with the ensemble and the stylized movements that were delineated appropriately. The ikon ensemble observed everything in terms of melody presentation and

harmonization of sound. The ensemble has three ikon sets which include tenor, bass and treble. This in itself is a conventional way of harmonizing music. This Ikon has grown beyond the locally made ones. The Ikon orchestra in this performance is standardized and can play any music from all parts of the world.

The Ikon Africana Theatres have successfully solved the topical issues surrounding the viability of movements in the art of entertainment, especially in our society. Some people think that indigenous dances are inferior to the western dance movements, while others believe that the integration of modern or western movements would contribute to a total polarization of our culture. This performance has shown that there is no superior dance form or movement, but they share elements of great value. To the audience, Americana Africana reveals the relative joy in movement irrespective of diversified cultural identity. (September, 2010).

He specifically applauded the innovations in improving the sound quality of the Ikon instrument. The use of microphones with sound mixer helped to raise the standard of the performance, as hearing and admiring the dances and songs was not a problem. According to him, the Ikon orchestra is a good ensemble only when played indoors. But the outdoor performance is normally greeted with audio weakness and people strained their ears to hear the rhythm and melody of the songs. The recent development in improving the sound quality is a welcomed one, He urge the group to continue improving with the vast technological devices available now in the sound science.

Mrs. Margaret Edet said that Ikon dance has always developed alongside the society. It has always used relevant songs and dances to entertain the people so, she is not so over whelmed with the Americana Africana performance. She however congratulated the performers for their ability to do contemporary movements in salsa, hip hop, makossa, and break dance. She is really satisfied with the indigenous steps and feels that, the choreographer did a good job by placing the movement at the same pace and quality. No brand of movement surpassed the other in terms of intensity and technique, but in the end there was a mixed of the tradition and modern form of dances.

Obong Udoekong Nya affirms what Mrs. Edet said. He opines that Ikon dance and music deal more with the present, than the past. It grows with the society. This has been the tradition of the performance. People are always ready to see the newest styles in dance and music in the Ikon ensemble. This gives the Ikon group an elastic form that cannot be

checked by traditional principles. Hence the general acceptance and patronage of the Americana Africana dance which plays around with some of the most popular dance steps in the land. Its nature has made this possible. People seem to limit their judgement on the performance basically on dance movements and music varieties rather than care to know the histories and relevance to cultural practices. (September, 2010).

Chief Ibanga Uko captured that

The Americana Africana dance is a composition that places accelerated changes in traditional dances side by side with reality. It shows the total agreement of the indigenous form to willingly merge with the alien ones to have a more artistic flair and precision. In the dance we can see the revelation of a no victor and no vanquish syndrome. This is simulated at the end with all the dances (traditional & modern) coming together to show that time changes and we should follow suit. (September, 2010).

He concluded by saying that those who continue to hold firm to the past are fighting a lost battle for time changes with people and practices. We should not think that what we had yesterday will be totally relevant today. However, the changes should be positively evaluated as seen in the Americana Africana. We are in a cycle of traditional changes within the orbit. It cannot be stagnated or fossilized.

In another performance of the Afrikana theatre titled Uyai dance, the responses from those interviewed were also interesting. Chief Ibanga Udoiwod said that Uyai dance is remarkable and differs from the Americana Africana dance. The difference is that while the Americana Africa dance had a mixed of diatonic and pentatonic scales, the Uyai dance is basically played on the pentatonic scale. He is delighted with the recurrent melodic sessions before dances; stating that this was the true tradition of Ikon ensemble. He was also pleased with the harmonization of the songs and the total pleasing blend of the orchestra with diversified traditional dance movements strictly selected within the culture of Akwa Ibom State. When asked to highlight the traditional elements and the act of modernity in the performance, he said that

Uyai dance is filled with transitional ideas. Transitional in the sense that, we have seen the past, the present and possibly the future of some of our dance movements, for example, the gyration of the waist was done in three diverse

forms or positions. Kneeling to shake the waist, bending and spinning with the waist shaking. This was not so in the past, but we can aptly identify waist dance as our main movement, when we come to dance performance. These other dimensions show a fused of alien stylizations from dances such as Hip hop, Ballet and so on, with the indigenous ones. However, the fusion of style is done in such a way that, you can quickly say, it is from here. That is the beauty of it all. (September, 2010)

Mrs. Nwedobong Ubeng says that she is particularly happy with the orchestra. She declares that

The Uyai ensemble was a matured one. Matured in the sense that, all the songs were rendered on the pentatonic scale. And the notes picked by the Ikon players were also in harmony with the songs rendered. Unlike other Ikon resemble that mix notes due to the fact that the majority of Ikon instrument are made or tuned on the diatonic scale to help in reproducing multiple versions of music played. Some performers do not know how to strike pentatonic notes in the Ikon tuned in diatonic scale. But the Ikon Afrikana gets it right, with the modernized Ikon instrument. (September, 2010).

Another new thing found in Uyai ensemble is the use of long tights beneath the flair skirts. The dancers look like Ballet or Salsa dancers, but their ankles are bedecked with rattles; the hands too are tied with rattles while they wear raffia around their waist to help emphasize the waist movement. The dancers still had make-ups which were traditional designed with koalin, and black eye pencil. Their hair were designed culturally (Mkpum). One begins to see a smart dancer appearing on a mix dressing code. When the choreographer was asked whether the costume will not miss inform people of the cultural relevance of the dance to the society, she responded that

Dance goes beyond staled cultural practices. The tights are only used to help protect the dancers and cover their exposed body parts; it also adds beauty to the outfit. As you see, some dance movements need lifting of the legs and arms and so, the dancers especially the female ones must be protected decently. Besides, what we wear only plays the part of coverage, but the dance movements will inform the audience that, we are doing a traditional dance. (September, 2010).

Sequel to her response, the researcher asked Chief Archibong Nya whether the dancers outfit had in any way made him think that the dance is not traditional, he responded

I was really thrilled with the performance. In fact, it did not occur to me that the dancers were using tights, because they embellish the body with raffia and traditional rattles. The dancers were truly dynamic and showed great flair of our traditional dance movements. I was satisfied that despite their outfit, the dances' still reflected the cultural ambience. This practice should be encouraged. Our designers should embellish our dancers greatly so that, they look inviting and thrilling before any form of audience around the world (September, 2010).

Chief Okon Udo Nsa also responded almost like the former respondent. To him, the Uyai performance was a good one. Uyai according to him is something that is pleasant and good-looking, it does not have limits. He says that he was satisfied with the designer's innovations and declares that the designs can even force youth to long for the Uyai dance at all times. Gone are those days were traditional costumes were made of dirty materials or staled colours, tradition today is vibrant, and we have seen this in the Uyai performance. He states:

Uyai performance by the Ikon Afrikana is giving us hope that our traditional dances will not die, but grow with the taste of times. We should not lose fact of the way our contemporary dressing is. One beautiful thing the group did was to allow the accessories to be core traditional while the body wears got twisted in diverse manners. The cultural accessories have gone a long way to recap to people that, this dance is still theirs, and we can see this in the applause recorded in the course of this performance. (September, 2010).

The Uyai according to Mr. Charls Ekpe was essentially thrilling. He saw a mix of tradition and some elements of alien cultures. He declares:

The dance movements were not totally what we used to see. The traditional waist dance was re-branded with some spinning movements, while the costume was a direct mix with diverse culture of the world. In spite of this, the performance was not far from being acknowledged as one that comes from our state. The waist dance of our people

was used as the cultural movement on which other varied movements were enacted (September, 2010)

Mr. Archibong Inyang also affirmed that the performance was an attempt in rebranding Ikon traditional performances. In the past, Ikon dancers dressed like normal maiden dancers with short skirts and blouses. But in this performance, we saw a high level of design that incorporates the motifs of the contemporary life. The shining tights worn beneath the flaring skirts made to float on top of the tight gave the dancers more room to display varied movements. The new costume was so nice given that some traditional accessories such as rattle and raffia with cowries were used to adorn the outfit. He finally submits. He was particularly carried away by the dazzling movement of the dancers, coupled with the motivational music that came from the Ikon orchestra. The creative designs in the choreography showed an excellent deviation from the normal improvisational dance displays recoded in the past. Besides, the Ikon orchestra was amplified with modern sound equipment. This enabled the chantor and choristers to sing effortlessly and the harmony was felt much more than the past experiences. This clearly shows that the Ikon dance is growing alongside the technological advancements in our contemporary society. (September, 2010)

Mrs. Marian Udo Udo concludes that,

We should not be over emphasizing on the relative changes in Ikon performance over time. Ikon has been designed traditionally to adapt to changes. This is why the most popular songs and dances are experimented by Ikon groups from its earliest beginning till now. The flexible nature of the instrument has made its performance relevant to the people at all times. Ikon performance will never be eclipsed and extinct due to this vital power of absorbing anything that has to do with performance irrespective of cultural barriers and sentiments (September,2010)

In another performance by the Ikon Africana Theatre Uyo, Titled “A1” special, we see a demonstration of the talent of a young lad who is blessed with enormous knowledge in movement and instrumentation. All his musical renditions are popular tunes especially contemporary music. Chief Ikoneto Udo assesses the production and says that:

The performance shows how fast the Ikon culture is growing with the pace of development. The choice of modern songs and dance movements from the little boy is an assurance that the young are also observing daily changes in entertainment values and norms. A1 dances mostly contemporary movements or stylized dance movements that have no traditional sign or link. His movements are creatively executed while the fulcrum of the performance is on the popular tunes, which helps to arrest the audience's interest in the showpiece. (September, 2011).

He continues that though the Ikon instrument is locally made, it has succeeded in bridging the modern and the traditional and come out with an acceptable form of performance by all and sundry. The "A1" performance is loved by all kinds of audience due to the form and style of composition. Everybody wonders how a little boy could be so apt in striking the right notes to reproduce melodious songs known widely by the people. His performance fits into any social gathering.

Mrs Nwedobong Ubeng opines that

The A1 special is a galvanizing drive in the Ikon evolution. A1 special shows that what the men can do, the children can equally do same. This drives into focus the belief that the present generation is growing speedily and we should learn to show great passion in our ways of life. The gap between the men and children are bridged today to advance entertainment and leisure. (September, 2011).

She continues by saying that, A1 special has helped modernized Ikon performance. It has successfully bridged the gap between the old and the young. It is a delight to watch "A1" does special dances that are wholly appealing to the audience. His dances seemed to be constantly stylized, devoid of any traditional flair or form. All the dance movements are creatively designed.

4.5 FINDINGS

- (a) These are the findings in the Mbopo dance during the course of the research.
 - (1) While some people are still feeling that Mbopo dance should still carry old elements such as issues on virginity and exposure of some parts of the body, others feel that these practices are not necessary in this present dispensation.

- (2) All respondents agree that the Mbopo dance is fading away rapidly due to stringent cultural views as mentioned above.
 - (3) Most respondents see the expungement of some cultural practices such as virginity, circumcision, near nudity as key to the rejuvenation of a new spirit in the Mbopo dance culture.
 - (4) It is discovered that the disagreement are basically on cultural practices not the form of music and dance, which are the main foundation of entertainment.
 - (5) If we take away costume and moral disparity, Mbopo dance will grow to any height.
 - (6) Mbopo dance can still attract good patronage with some modifications in costume and dance movements as seen in the Akwa Ibom State council for Arts and culture experience.
 - (7) Mbopo dance is over rated as old fashion due to practices in the institution, not performance.
 - (8) It is discovered that the dance movement in Mbopo dance are not too different from those of Asian and Uyai dance of the Akwa Ibom State.
 - (9) Mbopo dances do not tell stories of the maiden's experiences in seclusion, rather, it shows the level of flexibility, carriage and beauty of the would-be wife in performance.
 - (10) There is a remarkable difference between the fattened Mbopo and those ones played by cultural groups. While the traditionally acclaimed Mbopo(s) are not judged through their effective dance displays, those ones chosen in cultural groups are tested talents in dance art. However, their moral standards concerning virginity and circumcision are not guaranteed.
- (b) These are the findings in Ikon performances
- (1) The Ikon performance has been in ascendency in Akwa Ibom State.
 - (2) Its performance structure does not include stringent elements, design, costume, dance form, musical form and aesthetic values.

- (3) The Ikon dance absorbs everything that is current and appealing to the people.
- (4) It continually adapts to the issues at hand. That is, it always highlights the topical dance and music of the time.
- (5) No specified form is identified in the dance. It is eceletic.
- (6) The dance easily accepts alien movements and music without the problem at acceptability.
- (7) People appreciate the dance movements irrespective of their cultural differences.
- (8) This has been the nature of Ikon from its inception. It has always changed with the attitudinal values of the people.
- (9) The Ikon ensemble has grown from a stag pentatonic instrument to a more diversified diatonic melodic instrument
- (10) The change to the diatonic is key to its success.
- (11) Its resilience in performance is also fostered by the ever changing nature of the performance, which focuses on dance and music, not telling stories behind myth and legends.
- (12) Ikon is founded on entertainment in totality.
- (13) There is no age disparity in the Ikon performance.
- (14) The Ikon performance is not seasonal. It can be performed anytime, anywhere and by anybody.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

Dance is generally believed to be total in the African experience. This is because it reflects the social norms and values of the African society. It cuts across the roots of the cultural relics of the African environment, showing characteristics such as festivals, recreation, education, games, fashion, crafts and so on. It carries along the nuances of the social environment. This notion lends credence to the fact that dance is culture bound and culture is dynamic. The dynamism or change in culture necessitates changes in traditional dances even as these changes have become controversial due to the ideology of tradition and modernity.

Some scholars see modernity and tradition as polar opposites. They posit that modernity denotes the present while tradition represents the past. The past is therefore fossilized while the present comes with development and advancement. This is not acceptable because modernity does not preclude tradition and they are not totally exclusive. Modernity is the invented tradition. It comes out of the desire of man to build a better environment for himself. Modernity is continuous because man's desires are unlimited. Without tradition, there would not be any base on which new ideas are founded. Tradition and modernity are immersed in the socio-cultural experience. The old practice is refined with new ideas which will in turn become obsolete and new ideas keep coming. Tradition is cyclic and the changes in tradition are propelled by the revolving desire of the people to meet with the challenges of time. Therefore, modernity is an aspect of tradition, because no tradition is static or fossilized. Paul Gilroy does not see the possibility of two cultures growing at the same pace. His view is prompted by some assertions that modernity and tradition are different cultures. He submits that every era is modern, every tradition is modern. The changes in tradition are only a natural process and should not be viewed as exclusive from tradition. The people assimilate new forms to improve on the old one to have a new tradition, which will still undergo the process of change. Amkpa supports the view of Paul Gilroy that tradition is that act of shaping the past and pre-shaping the present in the process of cultural socialization (1964:34). Imeh Ikiddeh sums up that modernity is fleeting; it cannot be detached from tradition which is the basis of people living standards. He revalidates the cause of change in Africa to include

colonization, war, marriage, conflicts and so on. The more man gets in contact with other cultures within and outside his domain, there is bound to be that urge to borrow some ideas from these experiences to make his living condition better. To be modern is actually to be traditional (2006:46).

The dialectics of “modernity” and “tradition” affect traditional African dance in the sense that the perception of “modernity” and “tradition” to a common African is deceptive, due to the fact that he was made to believe that civilization which is referred to as modernity, is a product of western culture, while tradition is obviously the culture of the African. This perception places the African in a bad state, and makes him feel inferior to the western people. Monika Brodknitla detests this as she opposes the suppression of the African identity. She says that the western people see African culture as fossilized, not yielding to changes, while modernity is made to be the exclusive power of the western civilization. That is, the African must learn to live like the British if he would be seen as being modern. This mis-conception has made a lot of African scholars to see traditional dances as those dances that were performed in their raw state before the advent of colonization. Ajayi sarcastically made an illustration that if a call for a cultural dance is made, they will certainly go to the village to bring a local troupe with worn-out costumes and instruments denoting the cultural past. Besides this satire, however, Osie Enekwe, Ojo Bakare Rasaki and Sam Akpabot see cultural or traditional dances as a performance exploring the historical past. This is reflected in their quest to criticize the changing forms in traditional dances. Enekwe believes that traditional dances should not be adulterated by the western civilization and considers the process dangerous to the cultural identity of the country or nation. This notion is an attempt to stamp that African dances should resist change. Bakare Rasaki also decries the changing patterns in traditional dance. In his essay titled “Re-colonized Hegemony and the Politics of Dance Patronage”, he condemns in strong terms the patronization of the African dances by the western agencies, which assemble these dancers and teach them contemporary dances. To him, the suppression of the exotic costumes, re-shape of existing traditional dance vocabularies and focus on movements without emotions and passion of culture is an attempt to bastardize the African culture. He believes that traditional dances should show the total apparel of the indigenous culture in the composition of the dance performances. This view is also a misconception on what is traditional and modern. He sees the infiltration of alien movements and forms as a conscious and gradual attempt of the Western world to build a common culture, where

everyone would be seen as one. He strictly warns the west to allow the African to propagate his culture, because every culture has the right to grow at its pace.

This has been the plight of the traditional African dance. The traditional dances are made to be stagnated, and contribute almost nothing to the course of building a vibrant dance tradition as, performances are expected to reproduce what the ancestors did in order to protect culture and identity. This view has also caused the extinction of several dance forms whose practices can no longer be conformable to the standards of the contemporary African. There is no place for the choreographer in traditional African dances because, he is considered to have distorted and recreated history that is only known to him.

The continuous view that the traditional is the historical past of the African will retard the development of dance forms which in context should reflect the life of the African in his time. The contemporary society has a tradition which must be respected. Even in the villages, there are conscious changes in dances as the cultural groups engage in inter-state and community performances. They enter into discourse, review and modify traditional dance revolution and presentation using aesthetic components in other performances. For example, Chukwuma Okoye using the Igbo masquerades as focus evaluates the changes in the masquerade performances of the Igbo people of Nigeria. Masquerade being the traditional dance of the Igbos have adapted to the changing forms amicably. The mask, the dance and instrumentation shows the immersion of contemporary tradition of the Igbo nation. He traced the influx of alien cultural forms in Igbo to the civil war and colonization. These different experiences came into a central pot where the people selected what they needed without letting go totally certain tracts of the older tradition. For example, the Igbo masquerade culture has been able to wrestle meaningfully with the dialectics of tradition and culture. While the mode of presentation (sacredness) is still upheld, the accoutrement of the masquerades tends to change. A certain masquerade that was known to be satiring situations was made to represent the imperial master and display the nuances of this personality, some masks are made by rubber instead of wood that was used and the instrumentation is also affected as tunes of makosa, jazz and so on are intergrated into form to showcase the modern Igbo tradition. The rubber mask and makosa dance and rhythms become acceptable to the people, but the foundation of the performance has not changed. The costumes, props and dance movement may vary, but the root of the performance as a sacred one remains.

In a similar illustration, the Ekpo dance of the Akwa Ibom people have also successfully wrestled with the issues of modernity and tradition. The Titia Ekpo is the masquerade that scores the other masquerades after each performance. It now carries an exercise book with pen, wears a suit with a tie, with a pair of shoes made of different colours and sizes, an oversized trouser, with a rubber mask made to show the long nose of the colonial master and actions. These accoutrements are utilized the masquerade who satires the action of the Whiteman, by showing that he always wants to judge the people and score marks. In the process the Titia Ekpo can even score the worst performer high than those that did very well. This shows the injustice the colonial masters did to the indigenes.

Ekpo as a social satire integrates the modern experiences which have made the performance relevant to the people till date. No matter the changes, the story about Ekpo has not changed, but its make-up, music and dance have been drastically reformed. The highly improved music and dance are still practice while the Ekpo now uses black-tights instead of painting their bodies with charcoal as was the case in the past. The integration of this new idea have even helped shaped the performance and encourage patronage. It would have been unhealthy to see the Ekpo in this century rubb charcoal all over their body, when the real issue is to create illusion of mask. Anything could be used provided in covers and does not uncover the identities of the carriers. This is seen in the changes in mask design, (new masks are created to reveal contemporary tension and experiences), costumes, with particles of cotton materials are bunch together to replace the leaves and so on.

The analysis and evaluation on Tradition and Modernity were done using 6 cultural troupes across the 3 senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State. These include, Okopedi Cultural Group, Onna L.G.A and Akwa Obio Cultural Troupe from Ikot Abasi L.G.A (Eket senatorial district), Progressive Cultural Group, Ikot Ekpene and New dawn Theatre, Essien Idim L.G.A (Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District) and Ikon Afrikana Theatre and Council for Arts and Culture Akwa Ibom State (Uyo Senatorial District).

In considering Mbopo dance from Okopedi Cultural Group, Progressive Cultural Group and Council for Arts and Culture, there exist similar body movements but different pace and timing. While the Okopedi Cultural Group tried to portray the cultural norms and values in the selection and performance of Mbopo dance, the Progressive

Cultural Group and Council for Arts and Culture diversified by using skill acquisition as standard for choosing dancers regardless of what the culture holds.

The audience, professionals and performance personnels when interviewed expressed diverse opinions. Most respondents see the removal of some barbaric practices such as virginity, circumcision, near nudity, fatness as key to the revival of public interest in the dance. Few respondents remain adamant in the bid to keep what culture says or lose the reason for the dance. This statement was however disregarded when most people appreciated the change of costume to brighter colours and adornment, fit dancers that are not fat, dancers who are picked due to skill and not virginity. Movement varieties are designed to improve the sensibilities and dimensions of the performance. This shows the overwhelming desire to change certain elements in the contemporary times for desired goals.

The Ikon performances of Ikon Afrikana, New Dawn Theatre and Akwa Obio Cultural Troupe were also evaluated by the people. It was discovered that, the eclectic nature of Ikon ensemble from the beginning helps it adapt easily to any dance movement, appreciated by the audience. The people were not concerned on the high profile dance routines such as Jazz, Hip-hop, Salsa, and Makossa merging with movements associated with the Akwa Ibom Community. The performance is rated highly with stylized costumes and movements across the globe. The dance receives high patronage due to its flexible nature and composition. The shift from the pentatonic scale to the diatonic scale has made Ikon more flexible as alien songs are played effortlessly. This helps to integrate body movements that come with them. The integration of all of these artistic elements enhances the potency of Ikon performance in Akwa Ibom State.

From the above, it could be seen that tradition and modernity are inclusive, not exclusive. The desires to change certain phases, elements, norms of the cultural dances are seen as act of modernity. Tradition becomes the foundation on which modernity thrives. The people constantly demand for better living standards. Changes in traditional dances are done to improved audience patronage. But, there is need to take into consideration the basic semiotic elements that would help retain personality or ethnic sentiments and bond.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The African dance culture is rich with diverse body movements, harmonized tunes, costume, make up, and so on. These elements keep changing as the choreographer strives to rebrand them to help bring the dance to terms with its contemporary audience. Dance is a product of culture, and culture is not static. It changes based on the association of people within and without the society. Dance changes to suit with contemporary audience or stand a chance of being neglected or rejected.

These changes are influenced by certain factors. The western education has greatly influenced the perception of people towards their traditional dance practices. Education opens a paradigm shift where individuals have the right to question cultural activities when they do not conform to contemporary sentiments. The power to individually assess topical cultural issues has helped break the cultural hegemony and practice. Also, the growing influences of religious bodies such as Christianity and Islamism have made faithfuls turn against their culture. Some dances such as masquerade performances and institutional dances are prohibited for fear of losing devotees to cultural rituals and practice. The contemporary choreographer has positively used these influences to create new forms of dances using tradition as its base. He creatively composes dances to suit his desire and that of the changing society. He designs new outfits, body movements, sounds, patterns and create an enabling space for healthy competition amongst his peers. With the commercialization of dances, there exists robust culture of branding to help enhance audience patronage. Dance which used to be a communal activity has been taken away by vibrant creative youths who use it to make a living.

To help chart a course for successful rebranding of traditional dances, the dancers must be educated on attitudinal change in performance. They should be able to draw a line between tradition and performance if they must satisfy the contemporary audience. Some cultural aesthetics in colour, body movements, costumes, setting and so on may be tampered with in order to achieve a given sensation in composition. The dancer should know that such is done for the sake of performance. Situations determine how far the changes in dance forms could go to satisfy a given audience. The environment determines the rate of changes in traditional dance practice. The audience must also be understudied to help evaluate their sensibilities towards new dance composition. New in the sense that its practice differs from what was obtainable in the society.

The Mbopo and Ikon dance experience has shown that cultural innovations are driven by modernity in order to improve social reception and patronage of traditional dances. The desire to excel creates competition amongst dance troupes, and this in turn sparks up innovations to help each group stand out. The desire to improve on the standard of Mbopo dance led to dropping of cultural practices that are not compatible with contemporary times and Ikon ensemble drawing as many current music and dances to meet up with the growing needs of its teeming audience.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION

The following are suggestions and recommendations to help bolster the growth and plausibility of traditional dances in Akwa Ibom State in particular and Nigeria in general.

- (i) Though the core presentation of traditional dances may be seen as that which does not give enough room for creative expressions, they serve as a launch pad for creative manipulations which in turn enhances the form and enlarges the content value of the performance.
- (ii) Traditional dances in Akwa Ibom State in particular and Nigeria at large should go through a cultural evangelism to re-invigorate the people's culture. Understanding your culture is essential in the inevitable bid to creatively improve on the parent performance. The useful functional influences should be well utilized and imparted in the traditional dance forms to create excitement and continued patronage. In the world of culture, we are all builders, all borrowers and lenders.
- (iii) The government should help create essential avenues community based projects for cultural research especially on dance practices to help rediscover the values and norms in these dances that have been lost due to culture erosion. Publishing of works from numerous national arts festivals will help educate the public on the emergence of popular culture and development.
- (iv) Though there have been different festivals organized by the government, there should be dire need to encourage documentation and design. The participants should be encouraged to attempt creating new dimensions in dance entries with a documentation showing the original form of it. This will help educate people that cultural dances are not static, but changes with the basic motifs highlighted.

- (v) The school curriculum on creative arts should be redesigned to capture traditional dance education in primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This will help create more awareness on the form and practice and encourage participation.
- (vi) There should be a regular organization of symposia to educate the dance artist on professional demands, to restore its dignity, since dancers sometime are seen as rascals, prostitutes and the never –do-well.
- (vii) The dancers should be educated on performance and myth in tradition. The demystification of cultural practices will open up space for creativity and desire to learn. They should judge traditional dances based on the movements, music and other artistic elements, not minding the stories behind them.
- (vii) The choreographer should be allowed to explore his technique in traditional dances provided some strong motifs and values are documented.
- (viii) The more our traditional dances adapt to the present, the more rewarding is the patronage and participation.
- (ix) We should encourage traditional dance tourism. There should be festivals set aside for dance culture in the state.
- (x) Choreographers should learn to represent dances on scale for the sake of documentation.
- (xi) Changes occur in traditional dances based on environment for performance, and the purpose for which the performance is designed.
- (xii) Attention should be paid to internally motivated changes to help create a solid base for dance reforms and development.

WORKS CITED

- Abah, Oga S. 1990. *Popular Theatres Disserts, Community Issues in Rural Africa Reflections*. A Publication of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture, UNESCO 32-35.
- Abasiattai, M.B. 1987. *The Peoples and Cultures of Cross River and Akwa Ibom States*. Calabar: Wulsen Press (Nig). Ltd.
- Abraham, W..E. 1962. *The Mind of Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Achebe, Chinua. 1969. *No Longer At Ease*. New York: Fawcett Premier.
- Acholonu, C.O. 1983. 'Role of Nigerian Dancers in Drama'. *Nigerian Magazine* vol.53, No.1, January – March, 33 – 38.
- Acton H.B. 1953. Tradition and Some other Forms of order. Proceeding of the Aristotlian Society, N.S - 53, 1-28.
- Adelugba, Dapo. 2003. *Theatre Practice in Ngieria*. Ibadan: Atlantis Books.
- Afigbo, A.E. 1965. 'Efik Origin and Migrations Recommended'. *Nigerian Magazine*, No.37, 23-31
- Ahmond, Brenda. 1988. *Philosophy or Sophis: A Philosophical Odyssey*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books,
- Ajayi, J. E. Ade 1977. 'In Search of relevance in the Humanities'. A.U. Iwara and E. Mueng (eds). *Proceedings of the Collogiuum on Black Civilization and Education (Second World Black Festival of Arts and Culture, Lagos vol. 2*.
- Ajayi, O. S. 1996. 'In Contest: The Dynamics of African Religious Dances'. *African dance: an artistic, historical, and philosophical inquiry*. K. W. Asante Ed. Trenton: Africa world press Inc. 183-202.
- Akinfenwa O.B. 2003. Music and Dance as Elements of Worship in Yoruba Religion. *The Performer*. Vol.7, 95-102.
- Akorede, Yetunde. 1963. 'The Playwright as The Conscience of a Nation in Crises'. *Theatre and Politics*. Ibadan: Caltop Publications. 34-46.
- Akpabot, Sam 1993. 'African Musi'. *Guardian Newspapers*. Lagos, 19th October.
- Akpabot, Samuel. 2001. Folk Music and Dance. *Akwa Ibom Compendium*. Uyo. A-Z Press. 240-252.
- Akpan, N.U. 1974. 'The Rule of Secret Societies in Ibibio land'. *The Nigerian Chronicle*. 8-9& 15.

- Allan, Merian. 1964. *The Anthropology of Music*. Evanston: North Western University Press.
- Amankulor, J.N. 1962. 'The Mass Return of the Masked Idea among the Nsukka Igbo'. *The Drama Review*. Vol. 26 No.4. New York. 42-51.
- Amankulor, J.N., 1980. Drama as an element of Artistic Synthesis in Igbo Festival Theatre. *OKIKE*. Vol.7, Enugu.39-52.
- Andrae Tor. 1960. *Muhammed, The Man His Faith*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Anigala, Austine. 2005. *Traditional African Festival Drama in Performance*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Ansah, Paul A.U. 1993. 'Is Africa Accursed or Bewitched?' *The Independent*. Accra, Ghana. February 17-24.
- Anyanwu, K.C. 1987. 'The Idea of Art in African Thought'. Guttorm Floistad, ed, *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*. Vol. 5, Dordrecht, Wetherlands.
- Appiah, Kwame A. 1992. *In my Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Aristotle. 1963. *Poetics and Rhetorics*. London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd.
- Asad Tala, 1993. *Geneologies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP.
- Asante S.K.B. 1975. *Property Law and Social Goals in Ghana, 1844-1966*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Asuquo, Lizzy. 2005. The Role of Dance in Secret Societies: The Ekpe Experience. A Seminar Paper during dance workshop in Cultural Centre Board, Calabar.
- Awolalu, Omosade and Dopamu, Ade P. 2005. *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Macmillan Plc.
- Awolalu, Omosade. 1979. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. Lagos: Longman Nigeria Plc.
- Buah, K. A. 1974. *History of West Africa*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Badejo, Peter. 1986. Dance and Music: Essential Element of Bori Survival. A paper presented at the National Symposium on Dance, Ibadan. 13-14.
- Bakare O.R. 2005. 'Recognised: Hegimony and Politics of Dance Patronage in the Black Nation'. *The Performer*. Vol.7, 82-94. University of Illorin.
- Bakare Traore. 1972. *The Black African Theatre and its Social Functions*. Trans Dapo Adelugba, Ibadan: Up.

- Bakare, Ojo Rasaki. 1998. 'Contemporary Choreographer in Nigeria; A Realistic Culture preserver or A harmful Distortionist'. *CASTALIA Journals*. University of Ibadan. Vol ii, 68-94.
- Bakare, Ojo Rasaki. 2002. WERE DUN WO...: The underdevelopment of the Professional Dancer in Nigeria. *PARNASUSS*. University of Uyo Journal. 34-42. Vol. 2.
- Barba, Eugenio. 1991. *Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer A Dictionary of Theatre Anthology*. London: Rutledge.
- Begho, F.O. 1978. 'The dance in contemporary Nigerian Theatre; A critical Appraisal'. *Nigerian Journal of the Humanities*. University of Benin, No.2, September,, pp 18-33.
- Brady, Joan. 1983. *The Unmaking of a Dancer: An Unconventional Life*. New York: Pocket Books.
- Brodwicks, Monika 2003. 'When Theory Meets Practice: Underlying the Principles of Tradition and Modernity in Africa'. *Journal of African Philosophy*.
- Bronowstti, J. 1950. *The creative process in Scientific American Studies*. Newyork: KC Press
- Burt, Ramsay. 1995. *The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacles, Sexualities*. London: Rutledge.
- Camp, Julie Van. 1996. Non-Verbal Metaphor: A Non-explanation of Meaning in Dance, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 36, 2: (April) 177-187.
- Chukwuma Okoye. 2010. *Cannibalization as Popular Tradition in Igbo Masquerade Performance*.
- Clark, Ebun. 1978. *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, S. J. 1978. A prolegomenon to an aesthetics. *The Dance Experience*.
- Copeland, Roger. 1983. *What is Dance?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Darah, G.G. 1986. 'Dance and Drama in the North'. *Nigerian Magazine*. Vol. 54, No.1 January – March, 26 – 35.
- Darah, G.G. 1986. Dance as An Agent of Social Mobilization in Urhobo. *Nigerian Magazine*. Vol. 54, No.1. 242-248.
- Dupre, Louis. 1993. *Passage to modernity. An Essay*. New havien: Yale University Press.
- Essien, O. E. 1990. 'The Future of Minority Languages'. E. N (ed) *Multilingualism, Minority languages and language policy in Nigeria*. Agbo: Central Books Ltd.
- Ekong, Ekong. 1983. *Sociology of Ibibio*. Calabar: Scholars Press.

- Essien, O. 1986. The Ibibio Language: Classification and Dialects.
Nigeria magazine Vol. 54, 10-18.
- Ebong, Inih A. 1990. Drama and Theatre among Ibibio of South-Eastern Nigeria. a Case Study of Utuekpe or Ekoon Drama. Ph.d Dissertation of the norms and values of the society.
- Edem, Kingsley. 1999. Dance as Satire: an Appraisal of Abinsi Dance of the Efik Society. Seminar Presentation in Introduction to Dance Principle. Theatre Arts Department, University of Calabar, Calabar.
- Emoruwa, Felix D. 2005. 'Modern Dance Trends in Nigeria. A Challenge to Contemporary Choreographers'. *Theatre Journal*.
- Enekwe Ossie. 1991. *Theories of Dance in Nigeria*. Nsukka: Afa Press.
- Erick Voegelin. 1999. *The History of Political Ideas in Religion and The Rise of Modernity*. Colombia Mo: University of Mission Press.
- Fagg, W. (ed) 1971. *The living Arts of Nigeria*. London: Studio Vista.
- FarthMann, N. U. 1999. *Ibibio Jews in Nigeria*. Uyo: Menorah Publishing Commission.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1966. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Gwove Press.
- Foster, Susanne. 1986. *Reading Dancing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gilroy, Paul. 1964. *From Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso Press.
- Gorer, Geoffrey. 1986. *African Dances*. New York: Norton & Company.
- Graham, m. 1978. How I Became a Dancer. *The Dancer Experience: Readings in Dance Appreciation...* 237-239.
- Greenberg, J. 1966. *The Languages of Africa*. Hague; Mouton and Company.
- Gusfied. J.R. 1967. 'Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change'. *The Amuncom Journal of Sociology. Vol. 5 Mexico*.
- Hawkins, Alma. 1988. *Creation Through Dance*. New Jersey: Princeton Books Company Publishers.
- Hooker, Richard 1967. Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered Comparative Studies in Society and History Vol. 9, No.3 April, 292-346.
- Horton, R. 1986. Ikaki-the tortoise masquerade. Drama anf theatre in Nigeria... 481-493.
- Horst and Russell. 1961. *Modern Dance Forms*. San Francisco: Premier Books.
- Humphrey, Doris. 1987. *The Art of Making Dances*. New Jersey: Princeton Book Company.

- Hunwick, Uwa. 1986. Dance Drama. A Musico-Dance. *Nigeria Magazine*. Vol. 54, No4 October – December.
- Ikiddeh, I. 2006. *Historic Essays on African Literature, Language and Culture*. Uyo: Minder International Publishers.
- Ikimi, Obaro (ed). 1980. *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. Ibadan: Heinemann.
- Ima, Inyang 2003. Contemporary Dimensions in Efik Cultural Dances. BA Thesis. Theatre Arts Department, University of Calabar.
- Inieke Ufford 2000. Ikon Music and Ibibio Culture. Unpublished.
- Inyang, Morgan. 2006. Traditional games and dances for social mobilization. Ikot abasi, 26 April. Oral interview.
- Jarzen Habermus. 1990. *Modernity – An Incomplete Project*. London: Pluto Press.
- Jeff, Opland. 1983. ‘Hosa Oral Poetry: *Aspects of a Black South African Tradition*’. *Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literature Culture*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Kaye, Nick. 1994. *Post Modernism and Performance*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Keir, David.1986. An approach to Pre-colonial African Theatre. *African Theatre Review*, Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1-20.
- Kirstein, Lincoln. 1969. *Dance: a Short History of Classic Theatrical*. New York: Dance Horizons.
- Kwakwa, P. A. 1998. Dance in Communal life. The Garland encyclopedia of World Music. Rull m, stne ed. New York: Gerland Pub. Inc. 282:285.
- Kwame, Gyeke. 1997. *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Rejections On The African Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Laban, R. 1976. *Modern Educational Dance (3rd ed.)*. London: Macdonald and Evans Ltd.
- 1985. *The Mastery Of Movement*. L. Ullman (Revised). (4th Edition). Avon: The Bath Press.
- Langer, Roderyk. 1975. *The Nature of Dance: An Anthropological Perspective*. London: Macdonald & Evans.
- Langer, Susan. 1953. New York: Scribners Books.
- Langer, Susanne. 1953. *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*. New York: Scribers.
- Levison, M. 1983. ‘The Idea of Dance from Aristole to Mallarme 1927’. *What is Dance?* Roger Copeland and M. Cohen (ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press 40-55.
- Mbiti, John S. 1969. *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann.
- Martin, John. 1933. *The Modern Dance*. New York: Rutledge.

- Martin, John. 1939. *Introduction of Dance*. New York: Rutledge.
- Mattox, H.E. 1992. 'The American Melting Pot – E Pluribus Unum'. *Nigerian Journal of American Studies*. Vol. 11, 118-126.
- Mezzaro, Daniel. 1992. *African Traditional Religion and Modernity*. New York: Oxford Press.
- Miller, Constance. 1978. *The Dance Experience*. New York: University Books.
- Nanda, Serena. 1984. *Cultural Anthropology*. California: Wards Worth Publishing Company.
- Nichole, R. W. 1996. 'African Dance: Transition and Continuity'. *African Dance... 145-150*.
- Nikolais, A. 1978. A New Method of Dance Notation. *The Dance Experience... 145-150*.
- Nsien, F. U. 1991. *The People called Ibibio's. An annotated biography*. Calabar: De-Rio Press.
- Noah, M.E. 1980. *Old Calabar: The City States and the Europeans 1800 – 1885*. Calabar: Wusen Press.
- Nwosu, Canice C. 2004. The National Question and Theatre of Relevance. *Nigerian Theatre Journal*. 88-106.
- Obot, Ikponke. 2007. *Ibibio Monument*. Uyo: Axis Press.
- Ochigbo, S. Best. 2002. A Critical Review on the use of Contemporary African symbols in the Paintings of Contemporary African Artists. *PARNASSUS*, University of Uyo Journal of cultural Research Volume I Number 1.
- Ojuade, J. O. 2004. 'The Nigerian Dance and the National Question'. *Nigerian Theatre Journal*. 236-247.
- Okwori, Jankeri. 1998. *Ije: Performance Tradition of the Idoma*. Zaria: Bright of printing Press.
- Osanyin, Bode. 2004. 'Cultural Adjustment Programme and the Nigerian Stage'. *SONTA Journal*, June: 1-26.
- Osofisan, Femi. 1986. 'The Place of Theatre in Cultural Development in Nigeria'. S.O. Unoh (ed) *Cultural Development and Nation Building*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Reid, Louis. 1992. Symbolism in Art. *The British Journal of Aesthetics*. (Trans. Douglas Ainslie, 2nd ed). London: Macmillan Company 10:19.
- Snipe, Tracy. 1974. 'African Dance: Bridges to Humanity' *African Dance... 63-78*.
- Sorell, Craltek. 1991. *The Dance Through Ages*. New York: Grosset and Dunko.

- Sofola, Zulu. 1994. *The Artist and the Tragedy of a Nation*. Ibadan: Caltop Publications.
- Styan, J.L. 1975. *Drama, Stage and Audience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, Lyod. 1991. *Culture and Civilization*. Ibadan: Africa-Link Books.
- Turner, V. W. 1973. *The Drums of Affliction*. London: Oxford Claren Don Press.
- Turner, Margary J. 1971. *New Dance: Approaches to Non-literal Choreography*. London: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Udo, Essien Udo. 1993. *The History of the Annang People*. Calabar: APCON Press Ltd.
- Udo, Udoma Egbert. 1987. *The Story of Ibibio Union*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Ufford, Inieke. 1998. Ibibio drama and Philosophy. B. A. Dissertation, Music Department University of Uyo.
- Ukpong, David. 2001. *Ikono: The Cradle of Ibibio Nation (Historical Origin and Cultural Heritage)*. Uyo: Dorand Publishers
- Udo, E.A. 1983. *Who are the Ibibio*. Onitsha: Spectrum.
- Udoka, Arnold 2004. 'Dance in Search of a Nation: Towards A Socio-Political Re-definition of Dance in Nigeria'. *Nigerian Theatre Journal*. 217 – 235.
- Ufford, Ikike. 2002. Changing Patterns in the Motifs of Four Selected Ibibio Traditional Dances. M.A Thesis, Theatre Arts Department, University of Calabar.
- Ufford, Ikike Inieke. 2005. Towards a Better Image of the Dancer in the 21st Century. Seminar presentation. University of Calabar.
- Ufford, Inieke G. 1997. Ikon Music in Ibibio Drama. BA. Thesis. Music department, University of Uyo.
- Ugolo, Chris. 2002. African Dance in Britain: Issues of Racism Discrimination and the Diasporan influence. *PARNASUSS*. University of Uyo. Vol.2.
- Ugolo, Christopher E. 1990. The Place of Dance in Contemporary Nigerian Theatre. *Nigeria Magazine*. Vol. 58 Nos. 3 & 4, July – December, 27-32.
- Wilson, Edwin. 1991. *The Theatre Experience*. U.S.A: McGraw Hill Incorporated.

APPENDIX 1

ORAL INTERVIEWS

1. Chief Moses Iko, Clan Head, Obio Atai Nsit Ubium LGA, AKS, September 9th, 2004.
2. Chief Okokon Edet, Ekpo Initiate in Ikot Uso, Ikot Abasi LGA, October 10th, 2006.
3. Obong George Uffot, Ikot Abasi LGA, August 6th 2009.
4. Obong Udoekong Nya Member of Obong's Council, Ikpa, September 11th, 2010.
5. Etima Udosen, Council for Art and Culture, AKS, November 6th, 2011.
6. Dr Umana Asuquo, Cultural Analyse, Local Govt .Commission, Uyo, September 8th, 2012.
7. Mrs. Oton Gabriel Cultural Officer, Onna LGA, September 10th, 2012.
8. Mr Ekarika Udeng, Nsit Ubium Local Government Secreteriate, September 13th, 2012.
9. Obong Udoekong Nya – audience member, December 4, 2011.
10. Mrs Maria Udo Udo audience member September 12, 2010.
11. Ete Idung Emmanuel Afong, Audience Member, September 13th, 2012.
12. Mr Udobong Ekpo, Audience Member, September 13th, 2012.
13. Madam Elizbeth Udo, Culture Consultant, September 20th, 2012.
14. Mrs Abigail Okon, Head of Performing Unit, Council for Arts and Culture AKS. September 13th, 2011.
15. Dr Akpan Edet, a Culture Analyst, Culture and Tourism AKS, September 15th, 2011.
16. Mrs Nwedobong Ubeng, Presenter, Akwa Ibom State TV, 15th, 2011.
17. Mr Charlie Ibok Sam, Audience Member, 27 October, 2011.
18. Chief Idung Udosen, A High Chief in Ibesikpo LGA, October 24th, 2011.
19. Dr Ifure-Ufford Azorbo, Dance Lecturer, University Of Uyo, October 16th, 2011.
20. Mr Donald Ekong, Audience Member, September 21st, 2011.
21. Elder Okpongette Ikpok, Group Member, September 16th, 2011.
22. Mrs Stella Ibe, Ethnomusicologist, Dance Ville, Uyo, September 14th, 2010.
23. Obonawan Theresa Udosen, Dance Teacher, African Studios, Uyo, September 17th, 2010.
24. Imeobong Paul, CEO of Newdawn Entertainers Group, September 17th, 2010.

25. Obiosop obiosop, The Founder Akwa Obio Cultural Group, November 16th, 2009.
26. Lawrence Iwo, Proprietor Progressive Cultural Group, November 14th 2012.
27. Regina Ibok, Audience Member, September 13th, 2012.
28. Chief Udonsewo, Dance Practitioner, October 13th, 2010.
29. Mr Patrick Idiong, Traditional Dance Practitioner, October 20th, 2011.
30. Chief Okuku Udo, Audience Member, October 15th, 2010.
31. Idibeke Amos audience member, Setpember 12 2010.
32. Mr. Ifioke Gabriel audience member, September 12 2011.
33. Chief Okokon Ita, dance practitioner, September 16 2010.
34. Mr. Charls Ekpe audience member, September 15 2010.
35. Mr. Archibong Inyang audience, September 12 2010.
36. Chief Achibong Nyan, practitioner, September 11 2010.
37. Chief Ibanga Udoiwod, audience member, September 12 2010.
38. Chief Ibanga Uko, audience member, September 18 2010.
39. Magraret Edet, dance teacher UNICAL, November 12, 2012.
40. Mrs. Arit Inyang, audience member, November 6 2010.
41. Pastor Ukim Joseph, audience member November 16 2011
42. Mr. Hilary Charles, audience member September 12 2010.
43. Mr. Udom Nya, audience member, November 11 2010.
44. Chief Inemesit Williams, audience member, October 4 2011.
45. Chief Udoekpo Nya, audience member, September 8 2011.
46. Dr. Umanah Ekong, Dance Teacher , AKSU, September 16 2011.
47. Chief Ikoneto Udo, audience member, September 11 2011.

APPENDIX II
PICTURES OF SELECTED DANCES

Fig. 1



THE NEW DAWN THEATRE INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE IN ACTION
PIC. COURTESY NEW DAWN ENTERTAINERS

Fig. 2



**NEW DAWN THEATRE DANCE PERFORMANCE OF WAVE YOUR FLAG.
PIC. COURTESY THE RESEARCHER**

Fig. 3



**AKWAOBIO CULTURAL GROUP INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE IN ACTION DURING IMAOBIO
PRFORMANCE. PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER**

Fig.4



AKWAOBIO CULTURAL GROUP DANCERS SHOWCASING THEIR RICH COSTUMES IN IMAOBIO PERFORMANCE. PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 5



A1, IKON AFRIKANANA THEATRE IN A SOLO PERFORMANCE

PIC. – COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 6



**IKON AFRIKAANA THEATRE DANCERS PERFORMING
AMERICANA/AFRICANA PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER**

Fig. 7



IKON AFRIKAANA THEATRE INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE DURING AMERICANA /AFRICANA PERFORMANCE

PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 8



OKOPEDI CULTURAL GROUP BEFORE MBOPO PERFORMANCE

PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 9



PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL GROUP ENSEMBLE. PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 10



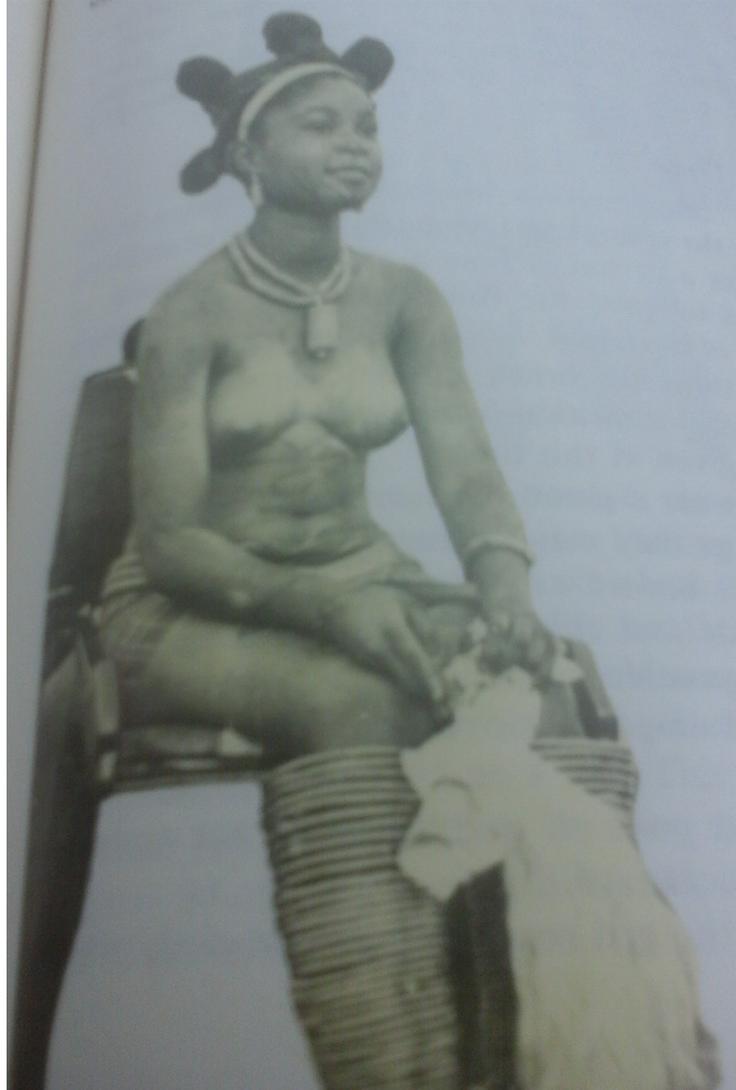
PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL GROUP MAIDEN DANCERS TAKING A POSE BEFORE PERFORMANCE. PIC. COURTESY PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL GROUP

Fig. 11



MBOPO DANCER, COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE AKWA IBOM DOING MAKEUP BEFORE UYAI PERFORMANCE. PIC. COURTESY CAC AKWA IBOM STATE

Fig. 12



MBOPO (THE TRADITIONAL APPEARANCE) PIC. COURTESY RESEARCH MAGAZINE COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE, AKWA IBOM STATE

Fig. 13



UYAI DANCERS IN ACTION DURING NAFEST 2010, UYO, AKWA IBO STATE.

PIC. COURTESY CAC

Fig. 14



COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE AKWA IBOM TAKING A POSE AFTER UYAI PERFORMANCE.

PIC. CAC AKWA IBOM STATE

APPENDIX III

Fig. 1



THE RESEARCHER TAKING PART IN ONE OF THE REHEARSAL SESSIONS OF PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL GROUP.
PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

APPENDIX IV
TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENTS

Fig. 1



NTAKROK (WOOD BLOCK)

PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 2



OBORO IKON (RHYTHM XYLOPHONE) PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 3



SET OF XYLOPHONE. PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 4



CHROMATIC XYLOPHONE. PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 5



NSAK (RATTLE). PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 6



EKOMO IBA (TWO DRUM). PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 7



MKPRI EKOMO (SMALL DRUMS). PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 8



EKA EKOMO (MOTHER DRUM). PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 9



SIKO (TALKING DRUM). PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 10



ATENGTENG (BASS DRUM). PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 11



EKAOBODOM (BIG SLIT DRUM) PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 12



UDIANA OBODOM (COMPLIMENTARY SLIT DRUM). PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

Fig. 13



EKA NKWONG (BIG METAL GONG). PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

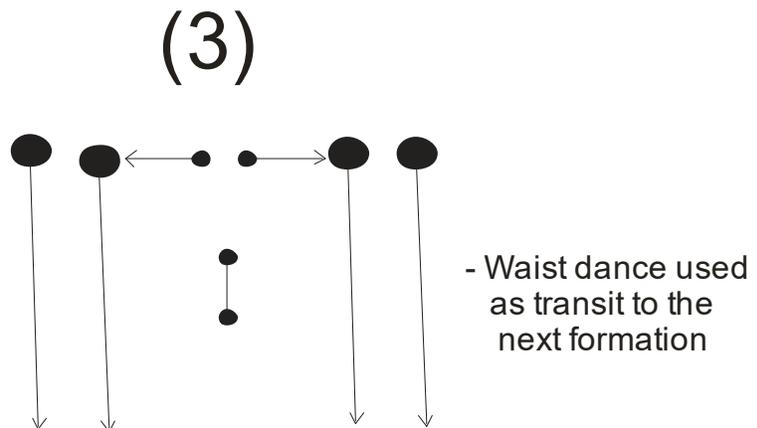
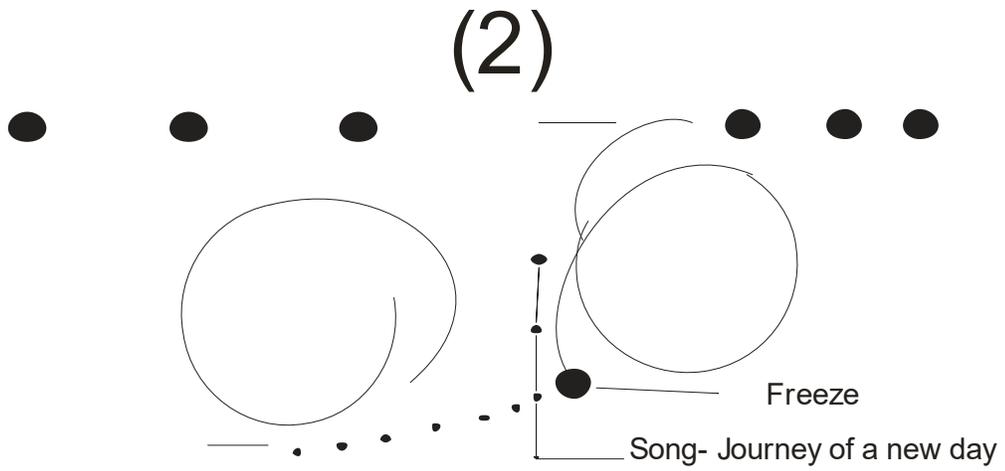
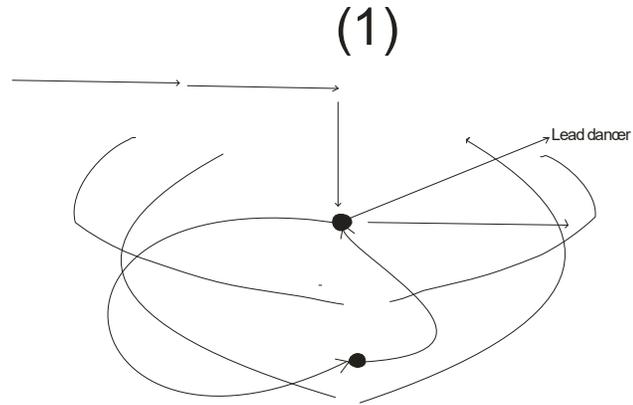
Fig. 14



ETOK NKWONG (SMALLMETAL GONG). PIC. COURTESY RESEARCHER

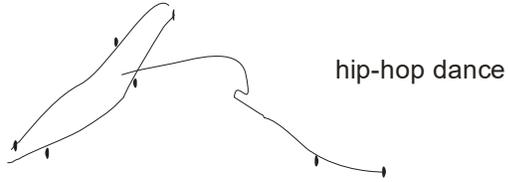
APPENDIX V

(1) MKPASA DANCE



(B)

(4)

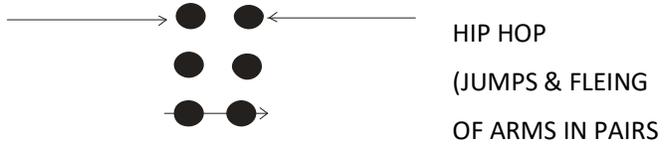


(5)

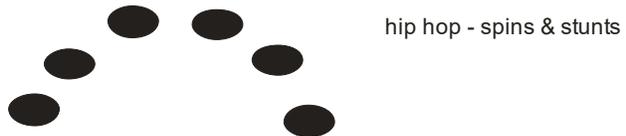
- MAKOSA STEPS



(6)



(7)



©
(8)



(9)



KOP UMEHE

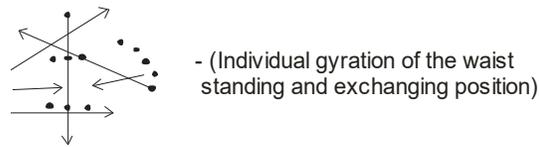
(1)



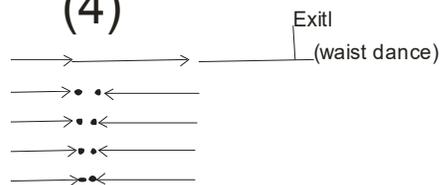
(2)



(3)D

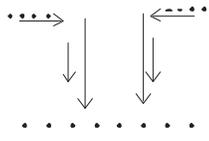


(4)



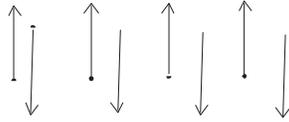
(3) WAVE THE FLAG

(1)



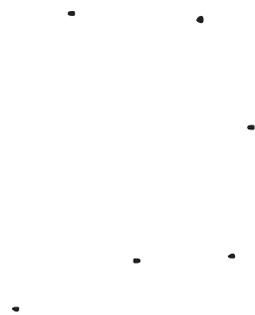
Zulu Movement With
Shield and Spear

(2)



SAME MOVE AS TRANSIT

(3)



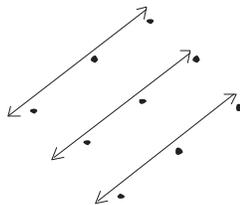
same move
across the
stage area

(4)



Tap dance movement
making sound with the
leg and hand movement
music ceases during
the session

(5)



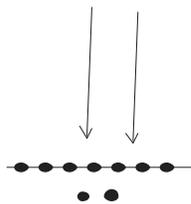
waving the flag
simulation

(6)

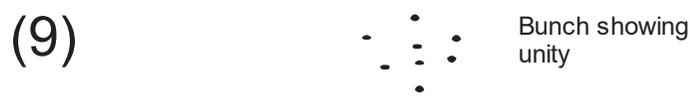


BATA

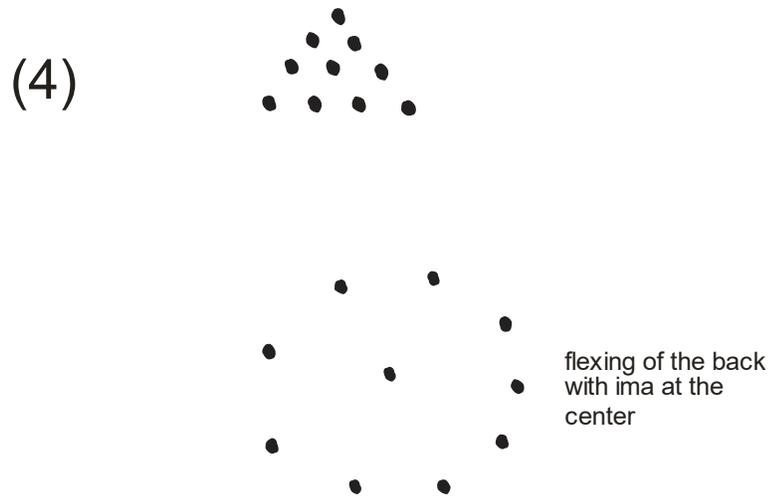
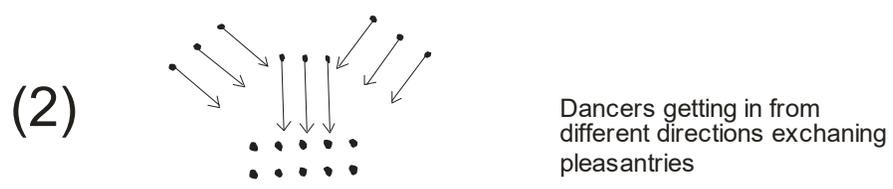
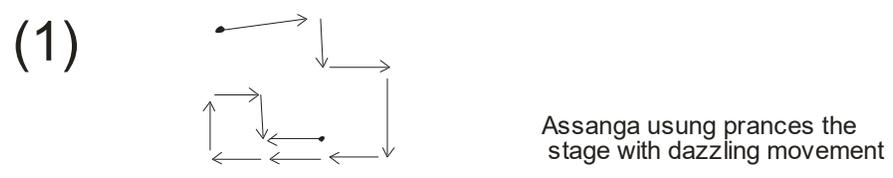
(7)

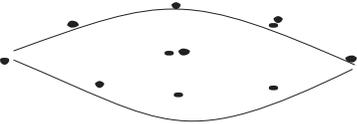


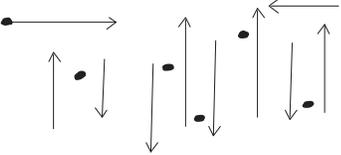
ATILOGWU

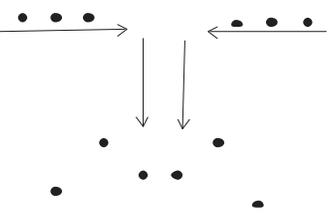


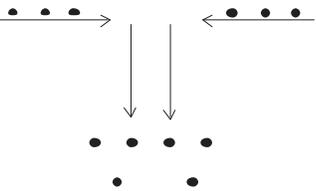
(2) **AKWA OBIO CULTURAL GROUP
IMA-OBIO-FLOOR PATTERN**

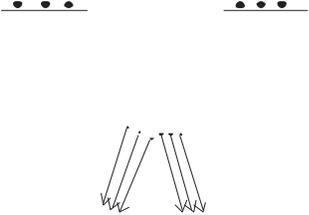


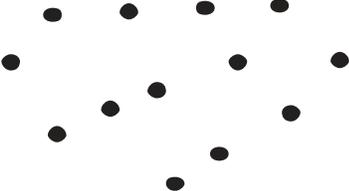
(5)  Fishing demonstration with Ima in the middle of the boat with net

(6)  Farmers clearing the bush, dance out with waist dance

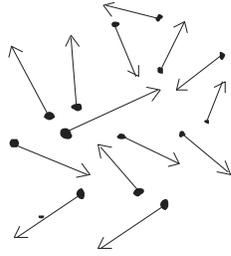
(7)  packing the grasses and going out with the jerky waist dance movement

(8)  PLANTING

(9)  Harvest and exit with the baskets

(10)  Ima happy with the people after vocation. Celebration dance

(11)



Dancers scatter as the drum rolls and Ima escapes

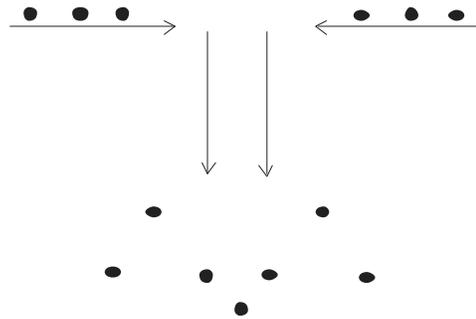
(12)



DANCE OF reconciliation and happiness to celebrate Ima supposedly god sent to help the people

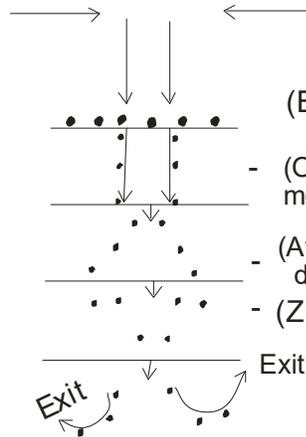
(2) NTAMA

(1)



shaking the shoulders & freezing.
vibratory movement

(2)



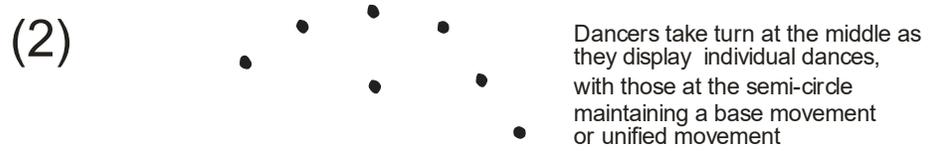
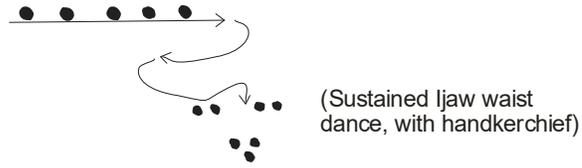
(Bata- Yoruba cultural dance)

- (Obitu- A maiden dance movement from Ondo state)

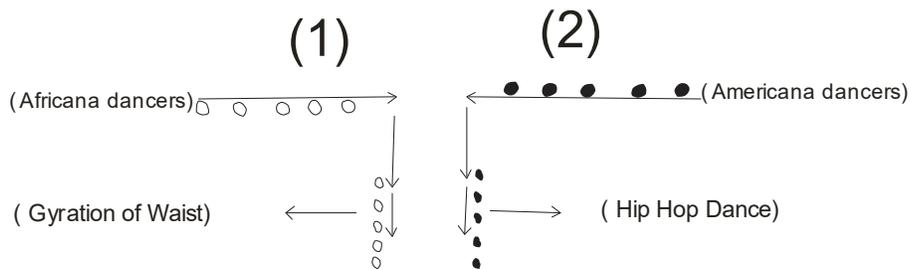
- (Atilogwu- Igbo cultural dance movement)

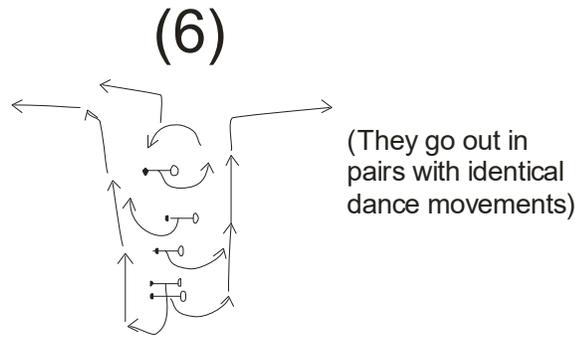
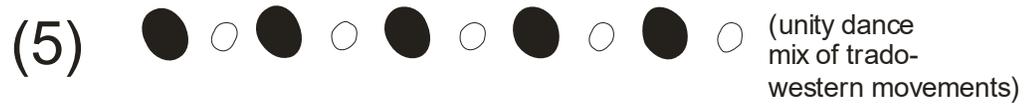
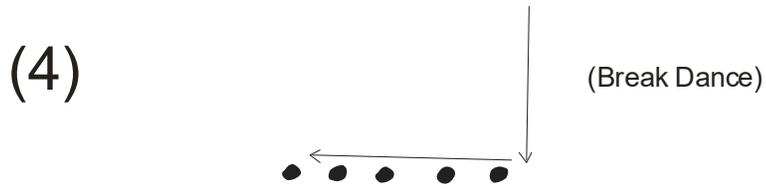
- (Zulu- South African dance movement)

(3) DIVINE PASSION

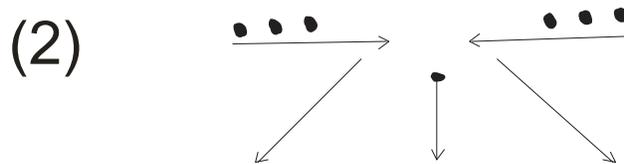
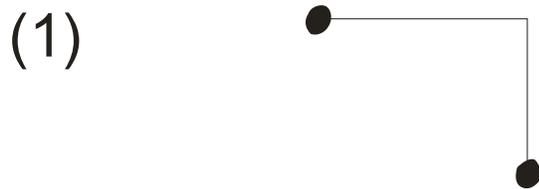


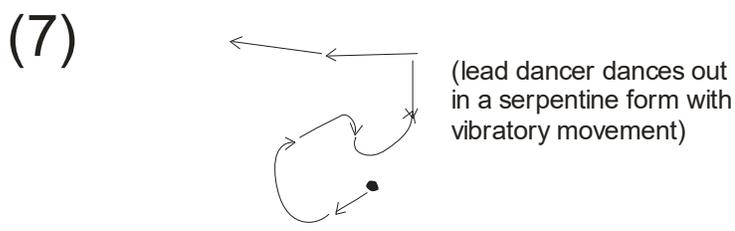
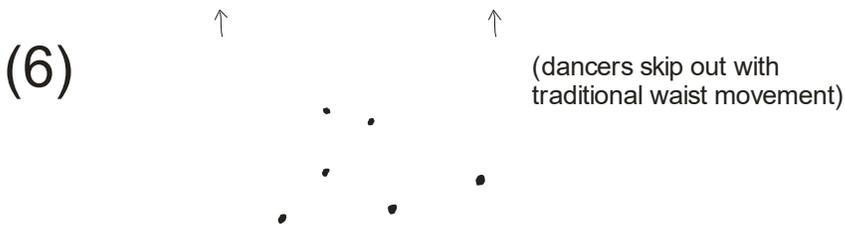
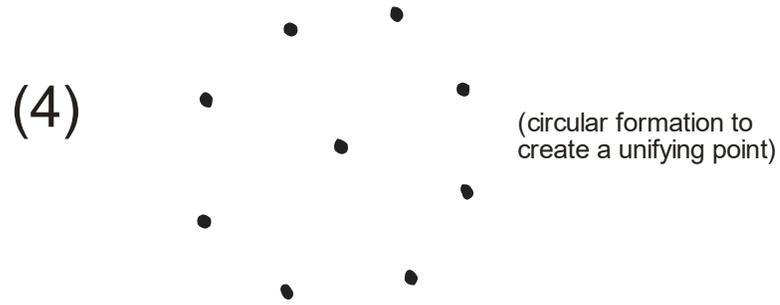
(3) IKON AFRIKANA THEATRE
-AMERICANA/AFRICANA



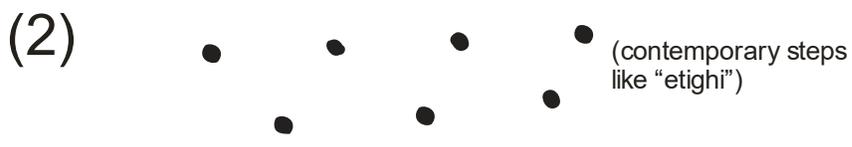
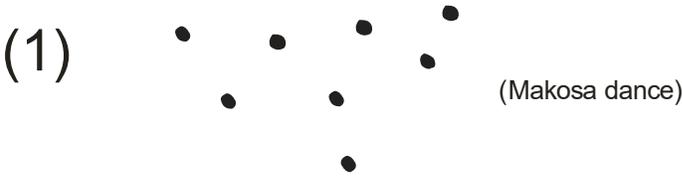


(2) UYAI DANCE

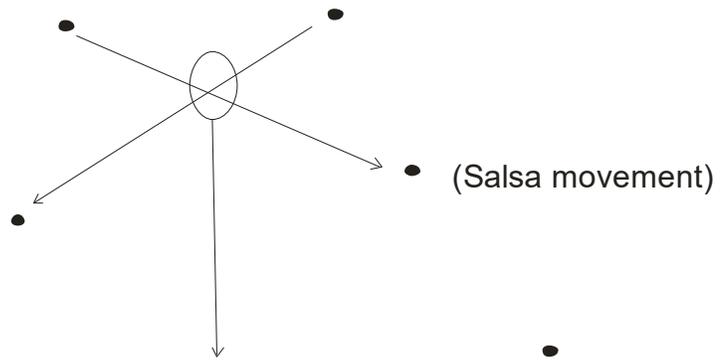




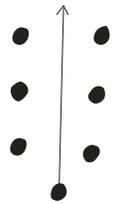
(3) A1 SPECIAL



(3)

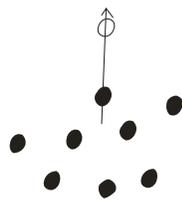


(4)

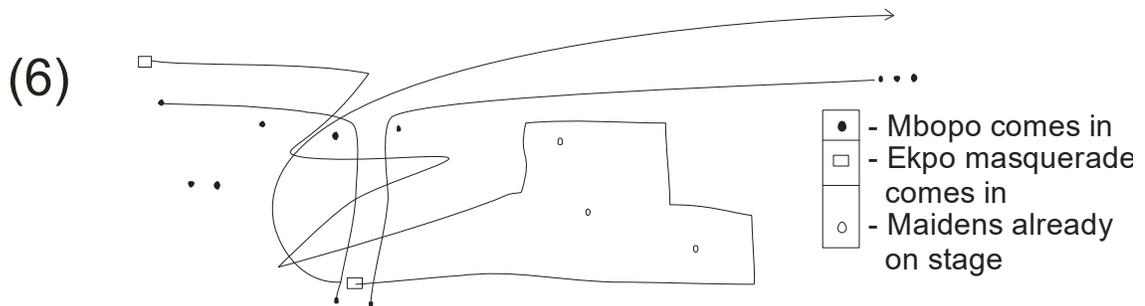
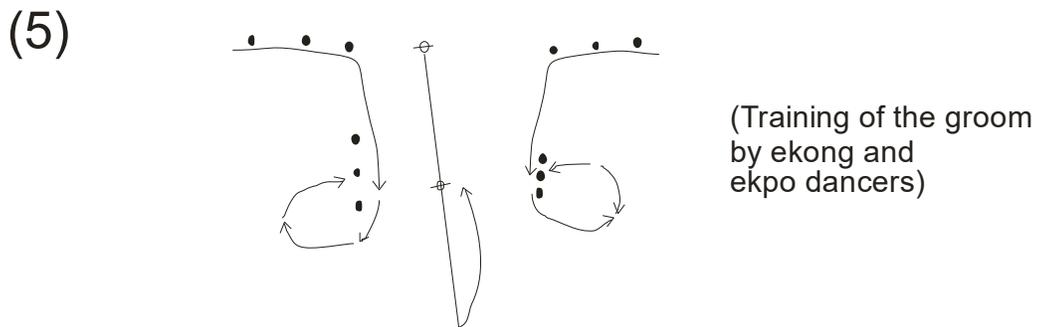
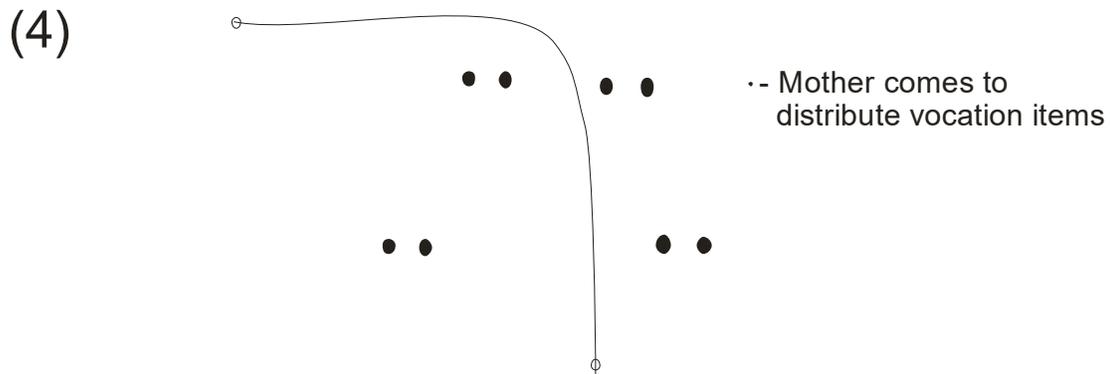
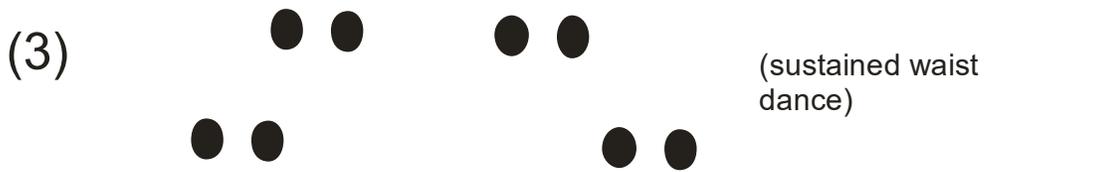


(cycling movement to
exit the stage while A1 dan
back to end the dance)

(5)

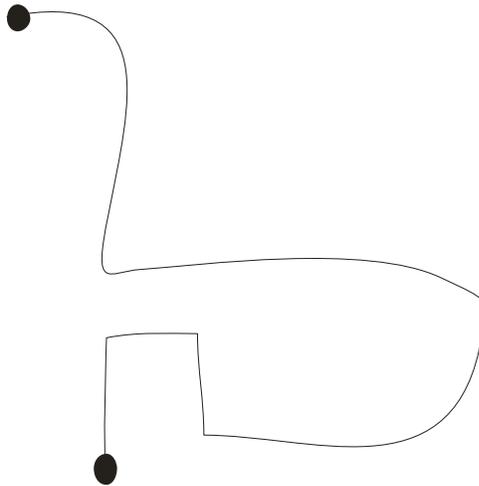


(A1 lifted on high as
he ends the dance)



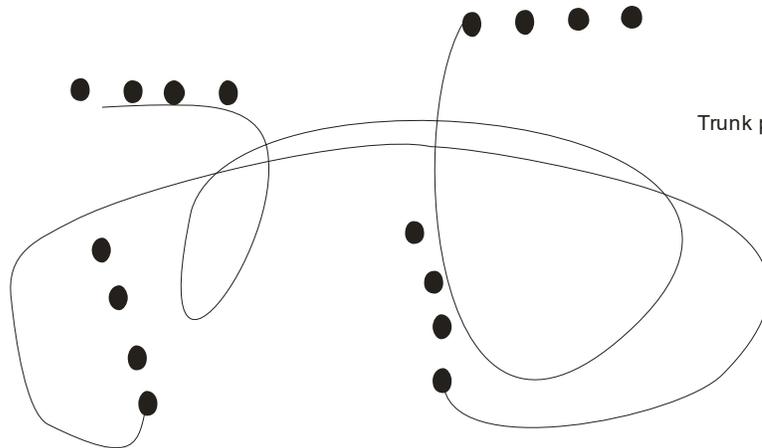
(10) MBOPO PERFORMANCE BY
COUNCIL FOR ARTS & CULTURE,
AKWA IBOM STATE,
UYO SENATORIAL DISTRICT

(1)



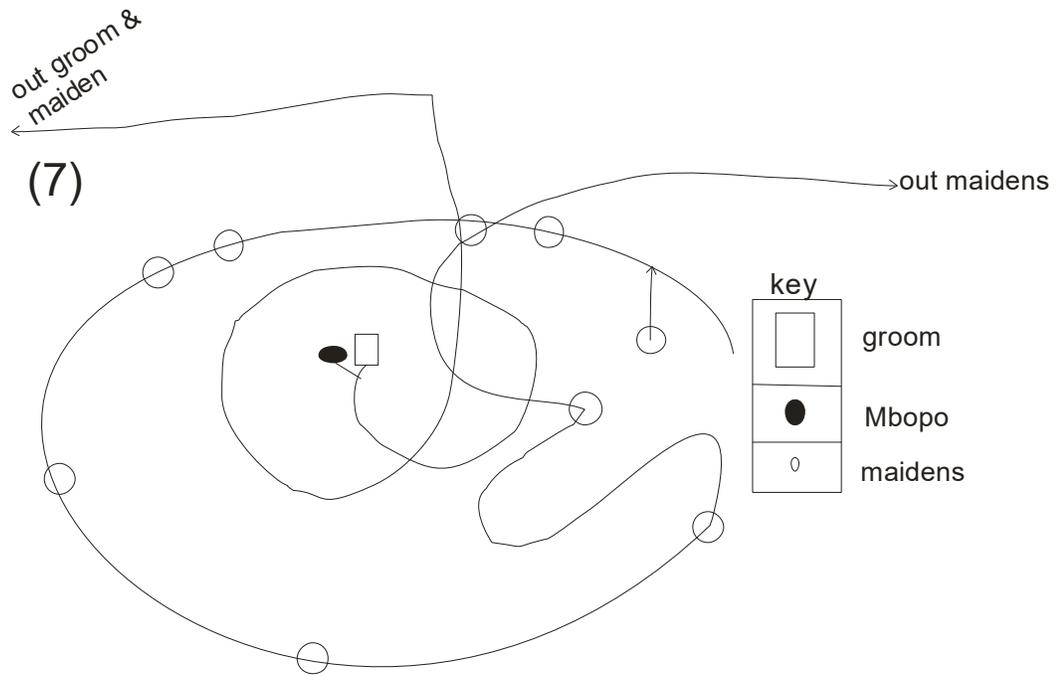
Mbopo's Mother
prancing The Stage

(2)

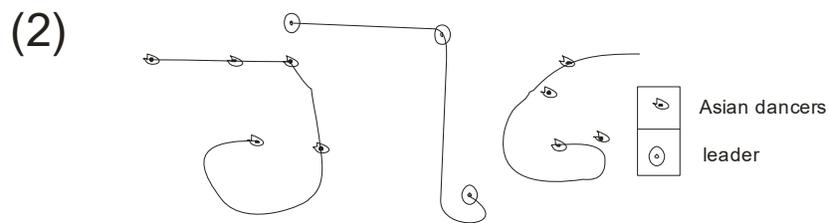
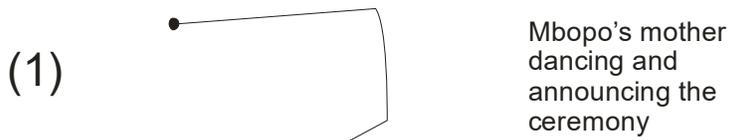


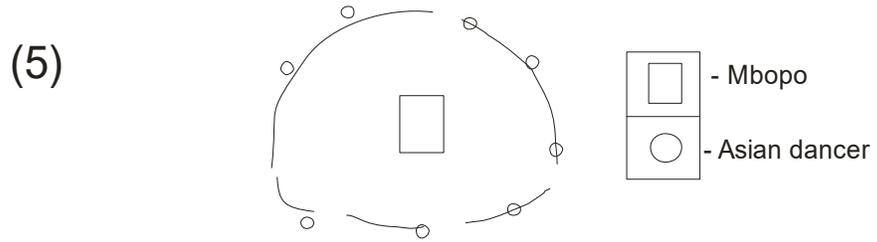
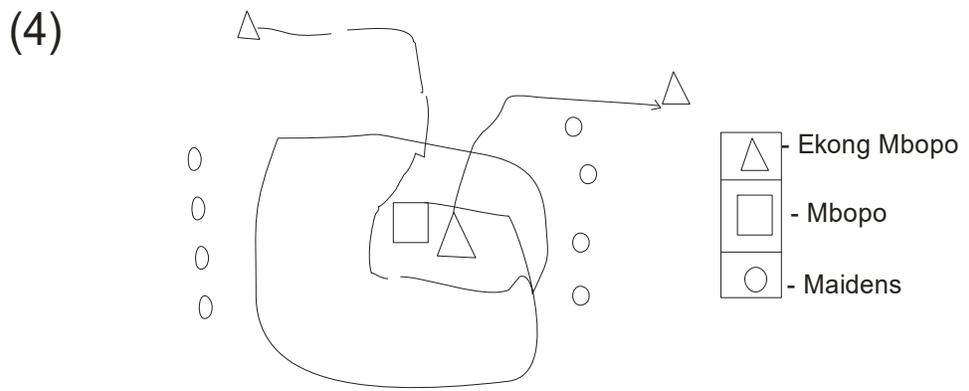
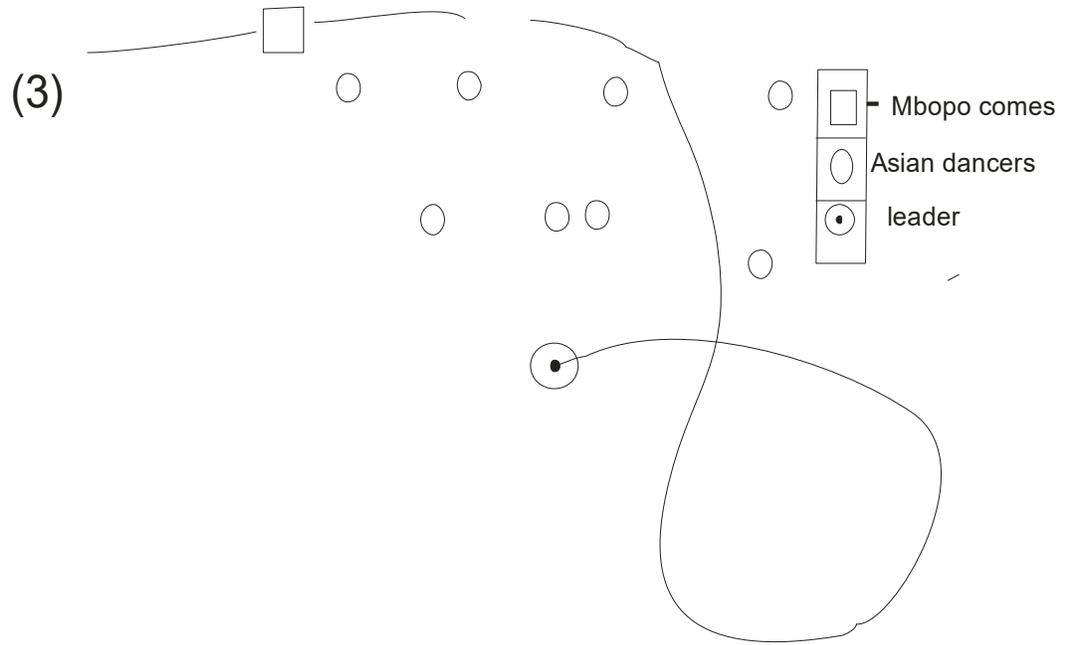
Trunk percussive moun

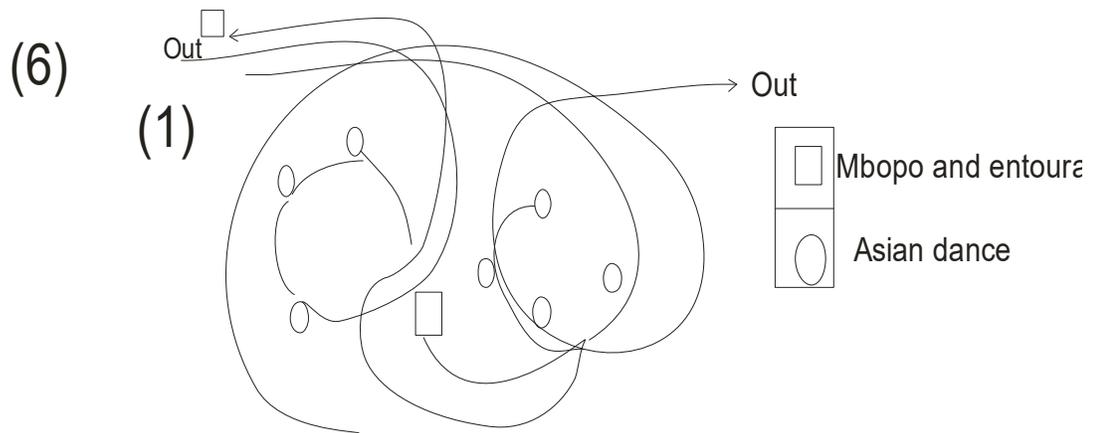
(Back Danc



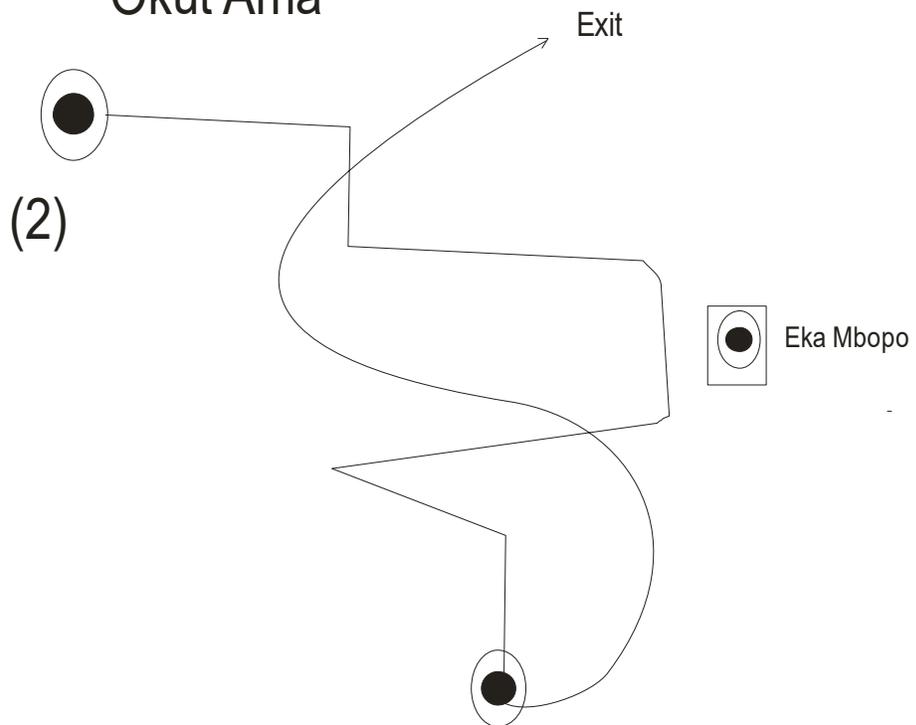
(2) PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL GROUP



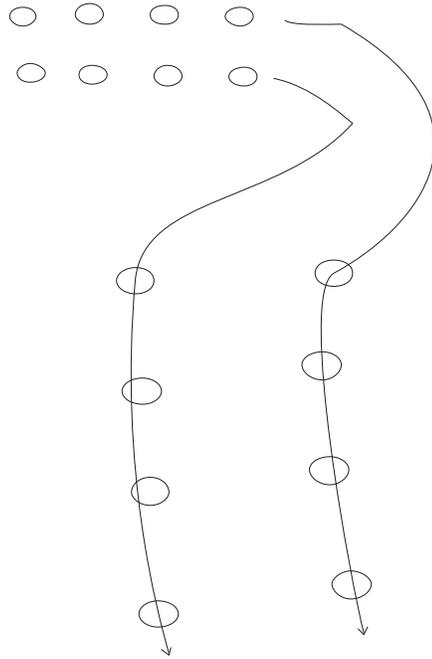




(3) Okopedi Cultural Group, Onna L.G.A
 Eket Senatorial District
 Okut Ama

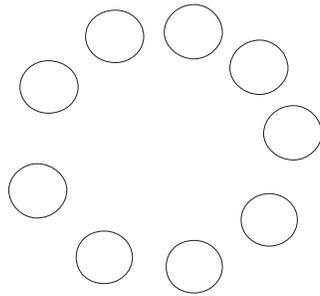


(2)

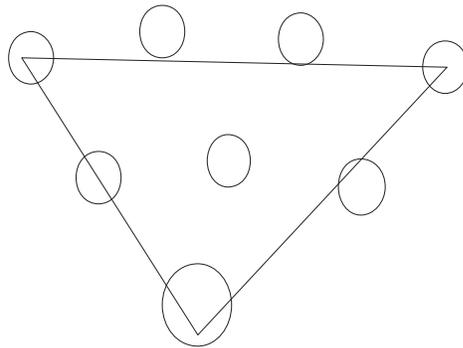


Asian dancers enter
in pairs

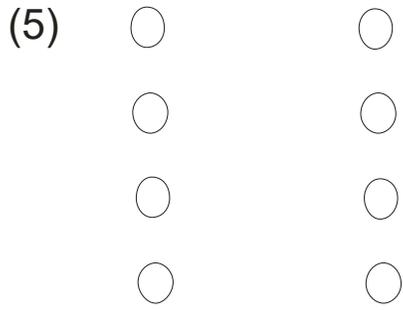
(3)



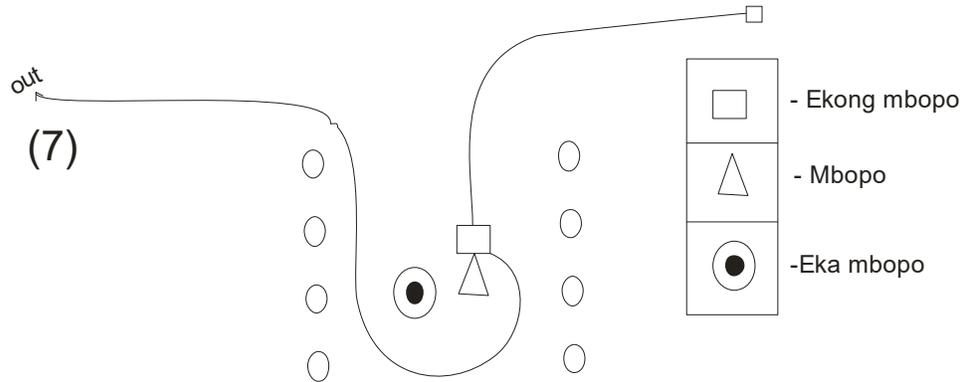
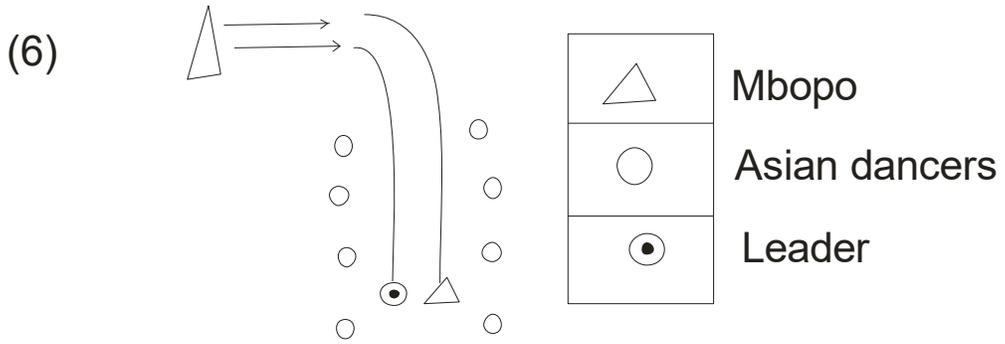
(4)



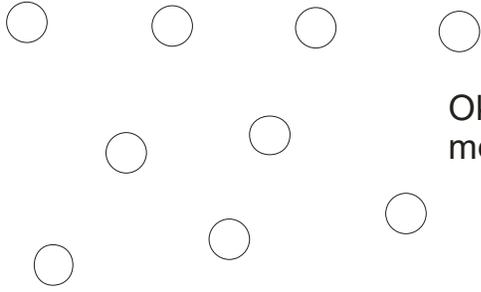
Asian dancer on angle
formation with sustained
waist dance



back breaking with strides
body movements

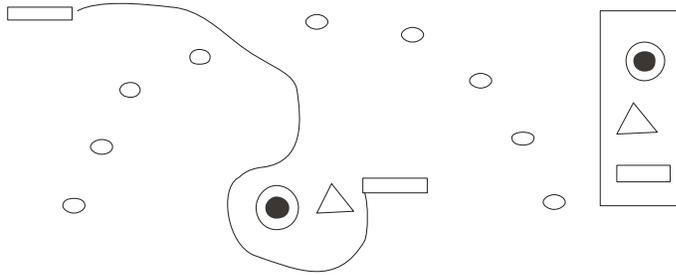


(8)

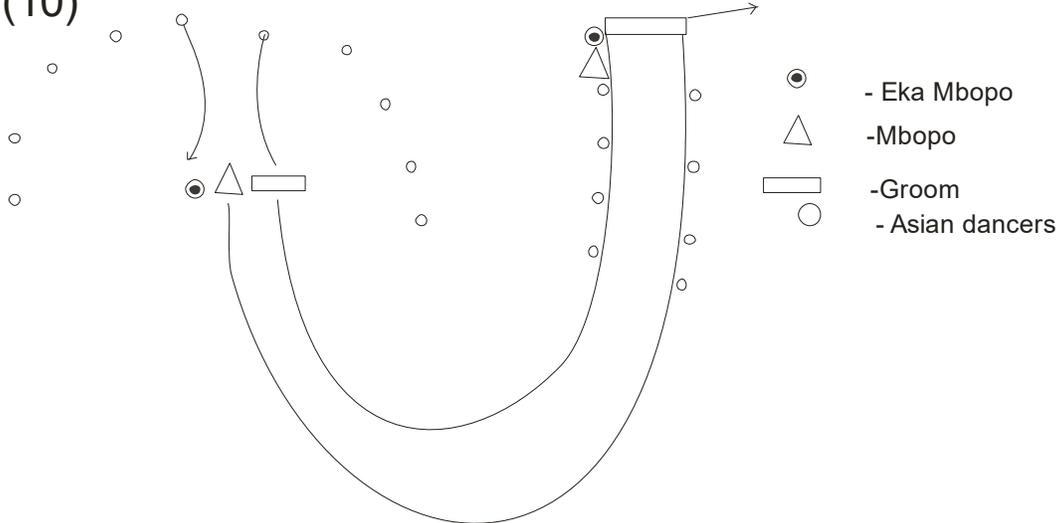


Okpokosio (diverse dance movement from the maidens)

(9)



(10)



APPENDIX V

SCORING OF PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL GROUP

MBOPO MUSIC

(1a) Oyong Mum Edim

Moderate

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. From top to bottom, they are: Xylophone (treble clef, 6/8 time), Bell (treble clef, 6/8 time), Rattle (percussion clef, 6/8 time), Ibid (percussion clef, 6/8 time), and Wood Blocks (percussion clef, 6/8 time). The Xylophone part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Bell part has a single dotted quarter note followed by a whole rest. The Rattle part plays a steady eighth-note pattern. The Ibid part has a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a quarter note, and another dotted quarter note with an eighth note. The Wood Blocks part plays a steady eighth-note pattern.

The second system of the musical score consists of five staves. From top to bottom, they are: Xyl. (treble clef, 6/8 time), Bl. (treble clef, 6/8 time), Rat. (percussion clef, 6/8 time), Ib. (percussion clef, 6/8 time), and W. Bl. (percussion clef, 6/8 time). The Xyl. part has a triplet of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, then a quarter note, and a quarter note. The Bl. part has a dotted quarter note followed by a whole rest. The Rat. part plays a steady eighth-note pattern. The Ib. part has a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a quarter note, and another dotted quarter note with an eighth note. The W. Bl. part plays a steady eighth-note pattern. The system includes first and second endings for the Xyl. part, indicated by '1.' and '2.' above the staff.

SCORING OF COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE AKWA IBOM STATE
MBOPO MUSIC

(1b) Oyong Mum Edim

Fast

The musical score is written for five instruments: Xylophone, Bell, Rattle, Ibid, and Wood Blocks. The time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked 'Fast'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system consists of five staves. The Xylophone staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Bell staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Rattle staff begins with an alto clef and a key signature of one flat. The Ibid staff begins with an alto clef and a key signature of one flat. The Wood Blocks staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The second system also consists of five staves, with the Xylophone staff starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first ending is marked with a '1.' and the second ending with a '2.'. The Xylophone part features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure of the first ending. The Bell part has a whole note rest in the first measure of the first ending. The Rattle part has a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Ibid part has a pattern of eighth notes with accents. The Wood Blocks part has a continuous eighth-note pattern.

SCORING OF OKOPEDI CULTURAL GROUP MBOPO MUSIC

Oyong Mum Edim

Slow

The musical score is written in 6/8 time and is marked "Slow". It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes five staves: Xylophone (treble clef), Bell (treble clef), Rattle (percussion clef), Ibibid (percussion clef), and Wood Blocks (percussion clef). The second system includes five staves: Xyl. (treble clef), Bl. (treble clef), Rat. (percussion clef), Ib. (percussion clef), and W. Bl. (percussion clef). The score features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and triplet markings. The first system is a single measure, while the second system is divided into three measures, with the first two measures marked "1." and the third marked "2.".

IKON AFRIKAANA THEATRE MUSIC PIECE

(2) Mami Water

Xylophone

Wood Blocks

Percussion

This system contains the first three measures of the piece. The Xylophone part (treble clef) plays a sequence of chords: G4-B4-D5, A4-C5-E5, and G4-B4-D5. The Wood Blocks part (soprano clef) plays a steady eighth-note pattern: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The Percussion part (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note pattern: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

Xyl.

W. Bl.

Perc.

This system contains measures 4 through 7. The Xylophone part (treble clef) has a rest in measure 4, then plays chords: G4-B4-D5, A4-C5-E5, and G4-B4-D5. The Wood Blocks part (soprano clef) continues with the eighth-note pattern. The Percussion part (bass clef) continues with the eighth-note pattern.

Xyl.

W. Bl.

Perc.

This system contains measures 8 through 10. The Xylophone part (treble clef) plays chords: G4-B4-D5, A4-C5-E5, and then a sixteenth-note run: G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5-F5-G5. The Wood Blocks part (soprano clef) continues with the eighth-note pattern. The Percussion part (bass clef) continues with the eighth-note pattern.

Xyl.

W. Bl.

Perc.

This system contains measures 11 through 13. The Xylophone part (treble clef) plays chords: G4-B4-D5, A4-C5-E5, and then a rest. The Wood Blocks part (soprano clef) continues with the eighth-note pattern. The Percussion part (bass clef) continues with the eighth-note pattern.

Xyl.

W. Bl.

Perc.

This system contains measures 14 through 16. The Xylophone part (treble clef) has a rest in measure 14, then plays chords: G4-B4-D5, A4-C5-E5, and then a sixteenth-note run: G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5-F5-G5. The Wood Blocks part (soprano clef) continues with the eighth-note pattern. The Percussion part (bass clef) continues with the eighth-note pattern.

NEW DAWN THEATRE MUSIC PIECE

(3) Joromi

Adriel Chiori

Lively $\text{♩} = 90$

Xylophone

Xylophone

Wood Blocks

Rattles

Xyl.

Xyl.

W. Bl.

Perc.

Xyl.

Xyl.

W. Bl.

Perc.

Xyl.

Xyl.

W. Bl.

Perc.