CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   MUSIC AND CULTURE

Music as an art has been a vital and functional part of the Oshimili South communities and their environs. It serves as both recreational medium and in other activities which these communities participates in. Music therefore is an integral part of culture which is seen as "the people's way of life". Culture, as the people's way of life includes their total shared common behavioral patterns that make up their tradition. These traditions also follow set down rules that include their social, religious, and cultural practices. Music is therefore a part of people's culture; hence to study the music of a particular society is to study its culture. Music occurs in almost every social, cultural and religious activities organized among societies in Nigeria.

Traditional music among societies is used in various activities and for different occasions. It was orally transmitted and owned by the communities where the music exists, not by individuals. Traditional music was therefore a communal collection of the societies; hence every member of the society participates actively in musical activities which reflect the people's cultural heritage. Hickok (1993) remarks that, "nowhere in the world is music more a part of the very process of living than in Africa. Almost all communal activities are accompanied by singing, dancing and drumming. These three are rarely separated; they are interdependent." (62).

Nzewi, (2007) reiterates that "in indigenous Africa, music is closely interwoven with how the society or community conducts its political, religious, health, economic, educational and social affairs"(6). He further stresses that "everybody in an indigenous African community grows up with basic musicality acquired through obligatory participation, in any capacity, in appropriate

musical arts performance sites from childhood" (6). He concludes that 'exceptional expertise is recognized even at a tender age." Traditional music is therefore a collective effort of a community and every activity that is organized in an indigenous society is heralded with music either vocal, instrumental or a combination. These performances are usually accompanied with musical instruments and clapping.

Traditional music among societies is a bonding force that serves as a medium for entertainment, social relationships and religious practices. It serves as a tool to learning their languages, proverbs, habits, histories etc, and these are learnt through their folk songs. Onyeji (2012) also notes that, " as an art form, indigenous music of Africa reflects the culture of Africa as well as it is a cultural form in its own right"(48), while Hornbostel (1928) stresses that, "it (indigenous music) is the life of a living spirit working within those who dance and sing"(59). Everything that makes up a society is therefore reflected in their traditional music which acts as one of the medium of communication among them and the outside world. It gives a view about what that community is engaged in, what they believe in and how they portray their culture, using their indigenous music.

Merriam (1964) notes that "music is clearly indispensable to the promulgation of activities that constitute a society…" (227). Every cultural activity (ranging from birth to death) is portrayed with music; music as you work, music for children games, for lullaby, music for festivals and music for burial ceremonies, there is also music for marriages, music when a child is born, music for naming, music for circumcision, etc.

The aforementioned music types are part of the society's cultural heritage since they mirror the cultural beliefs and practices. This musical activities and practices are also socially controlled; hence, it will be out of place to see members of the community singing dirges while they work. Every society in Africa therefore have a patterned activity which is distinct and unique and almost all of these are heralded or reflected in their folk songs, and dances which are most often accompanied with traditional instruments. Udoh, (2012) also contends that "traditional music is a communal property with spiritual qualities that are shared and experienced by all" (119). Traditional music is therefore a communal heritage that belongs to the people which they guide, develop, create and celebrate to portray their culture. Udoh (2012) notes that, "it is a product of the society and fundamentally, a collection art….an embodiment of a people's culture- their way of life" (119). Music is therefore inter woven with the culture of societies since it gives a clear picture of the existence of a society and what constitutes that society as regards their norms and values, their dos and don'ts. Music also has a communicative potency that keeps members of the society abreast of everything that occurs within them and how to react to such occurrences, either negatively or positively. This however brings the people together as one and leads them to a state of wholeness where their norms and customs are upheld and truly maintained.

Traditional African music and culture are therefore inseparable since music follows the African in the stages of life, reflecting through both the events that occur at each stage and even the differences that also occur in the life of the African. Nzewi, (2005) points out that "music makes human; it supervises, explains and illuminates the human society" (VII). Nzewi here is pointing out the inseparable nature of culture and music since culture also does the same. It makes the human in a society, it molds them, hence, these are reflected in the knowledgeable

practices of norms and values that govern them and when these norms and values are practiced and adhered to, that society is identified and recognized through its cultural practices.

Music forms part of the cultural practices – it portrays the society's way of life in an aesthetic and artistic form. This is reflected in their songs, dances and traditional religious worship. Music is therefore, not an isolated art, but a performing art form which a society uses as an explanatory forum of who they are, what they do, what they believe in and how they live. Music and culture therefore explain and illuminate the society. Blacking (1976) contends that music is not an isolated art but described it as "a humanly organized sound" (26). Okafor, (2005) further explains that:

"the implication here (i.e. on Blackings statements) is that, though there are many sounds in creation, some natured, others made by living things; only sounds which have been deliberately organized by man to specific ends – expressions of emotion, communication of ideas, touching the senses and the emotions, calming the nerves or turning the minds to certain plains of communication and worship – only these sounds deliberately organized by man qualify to be called music."1

Driving home his point that music is humanly organized sound, Blacking (1976), further points out that "music is too deeply concerned with human feelings and experiences in society and its patterns are too often generated by surprising outbursts of unconscious celebration for it to be subject to arbitrary rules like rules of games"(vi). This does not mean that all music types are patterned in the same form. There is religious/ritual music which is usually subjected to arbitrary rules and these rules are followed strictly and stylistically. Man also makes use of sounds of animals and other material things of nature in their organization of musical sounds.

Creating sounds from men, animals and other means are seen as humanly organized sound because they are musically finished products of the Homo sapiens. Man therefore makes music, and music on the other hand makes man, bringing out the hidden creative nature in man, portraying the aesthetic and artistic qualities that man possesses and finally reflecting the society that man lives in as well as the norms and values of that society that shapes and forms the character of man. Agu (1990) summarizes this by pointing out that "music serves not only as a medium for entertainment and social relationships but as an intricate part of development of the mind, body and soul…"(49).To further buttress the above, Onyeji, (2012) gives a general philosophy of indigenous music where he states that, "indigenous music in Nigeria and Africa is a human-centered art"(51), and concludes his view where he quotes Nzewi, (1999), who maintained that, "indigenous music is feeling and communal therapy, a humanizing communion, a sharing in human-being-ness"(23). Onyeji, (2012) concludes that,

"Although indigenous music is enjoyed as a creative art in its own right, the philosophy behind its creation and practice is that it is not detached from human social life or produced exclusively for contemplation, unrelated to the social and cultural needs of the people. It is an art meant to integrate more than it disintegrates people. It is conceived as an art through which people's emotions, values, beliefs and world views are 'laced' together with its melodies and in its harmonic structures"(51).

Traditional music of the Oshimili South communities is a total reflection of their culture. It contains their cultural practices. Their songs embody on past historical events, folk tales, love stories etc. Music making therefore is a part of their cultural tradition. Bebey, (1975) opines that "authentic African music is the traditional music of the black peoples of Africa" (1). In order to identify an authentic African music, one has to familiarize oneself with his environment and

patiently study the music of that society." An in-depth study of the traditional music of a society exposes one to various aspects of their culture, hence traditional music is said to be the product of man in his culture and environment and its artistic content includes man's common beliefs, ways, ideas, thoughts, religion etc. All these are reflected in their musical experiences and performances, thereby projecting and presenting the music of a community or society.

Okafor (2005) points out that "in Nigeria, most of the traditional music is found in the rural areas as well as in such situations where the traditional culture operates" (3). Culture therefore is of man and has grown with man from birth to death; hence it is in culture that man moves, operates and exists. Culture is an obligation of man's contribution to the development of his society. It is a complex and multi-dimensional reality; hence there is no one definition of culture that can be said to be all inclusive.

Ruth Benedict as reported by Oludare, (2005) describes culture as "a pattern of thinking and doing things that runs through the activities of a people and distinguishes them from all other people" (4). Culture is also seen as the way or manner a group of people living together behave. This involves an acceptable way of living as members of a community, sharing things together, having a common interest which is guided by set down rules and regulation. Culture is therefore described as that "complex whole" involving the religious belief, way of dressing, agricultural interest, musical interest, etc. of a community.

Every society has its own culture and practices it obligatorily. This therefore distinguishes them from each other. In this vein, man has therefore made systematic attempt to accommodate himself in his environment as well as master that environment in order to produce the totality of a way of life, which can generally be described as the culture of a people. Man here means

members of a community who have come together to live in the same environment, develop the environment and engage in the same occupation, developing their environment which they have inherited from their fore-fathers. Rules and regulations therefore abound among communities in order to make them identifiable and distinguishable to other communities outside theirs. These rules and regulations are adhered to as they engage in their communal activities that enhance the development of their society.

Adedeji, and Omosilade (2012), reports Vidal (1986), who notes that, "musicians in African societies are the custodians of their culture. The history of a particular people is kept intact from generation to generation through the oral medium by professional musicians. The history of important events in the society, and the personalities involved in these events are recorded for posterity through songs"(69). Music performances are not just for entertainment purposes but are also functional in the enactment of socio-cultural and political events that occur in the society. Music therefore functions alongside these activities in other to show its importance as an entertaining force and as culture indicator. The musicians in the society contribute to the development of the community through their songs which are meant to supply information about the community and the activities going on in the community, about the culture of the people and the behavioral attitudes of the people, about the history of the community and the political state of the community etc. singing during musical activities is therefore very vital since this medium not only helps in giving information and entertaining, it encourages social integration among members and their neighbours.

Songs meant for musical performances are composed by individuals and the texts of the songs are always entertaining, informative and sometimes historical. Every folk song consists of words that makes meaning and drive home the point of what the singers intend the audience to

hear. Song texts therefore depend on the singer's intended message, which maybe direct or indirect, depending also on the activity in which the songs are performed. Songs for ritual/religious performances are however restricted to certain groups and the texts are sometimes understood by designated individuals who are the main performers. The restriction on these music genres is to prevent outside influences and to keep their historical and religious practices intact.

Udoh, (2012) contends that "the cultural values and norms of a society are embedded in their traditional music" (119). He stresses that "traditional music is the society's cultural matrix/culture indicator and a common identity". Traditional music explains the belief as well as the behavioral attitudes of a community in a clearly defined way that is not unfamiliar to other societies. Therefore the traditional music of societies in Nigeria is their identity. Agu, (1989), reports that "traditional music is rooted and perpetuated by the people. It is the spontaneous music of a people, race, region, or nation. It is more directly associated with traditional, religious, and political system"

Okafor et al (1998) points out that "the arts may be a manifestation of culture and so will traditions, beliefs, customs and practices" (15). Bearing in mind that culture is dynamic, not static; culture is also classified into material and non-material culture. Music is thus classified under non-material culture among others. Culture is therefore an identity of a group, portraying everything that shows the existence of such group or society. Music as an aspect of culture portrays the beliefs, practices, identities, interests, an artistic nature, and occupation etc. of a society. All these are reflected in their music which comprises their songs, dances and instrumental performances. Udoh, (2012) also notes that, "the general process of learning culture is called socialization" (126). Through musical socialization therefore, culture of a people is

imbibed, upheld, portrayed and practiced. Musical socialization creates a forum for individuals to also have authentic information about their community and the cultural practices they indulge in. music, through socialization encourages active participation and creativity.

Music of a community has relationship with its culture since traditional music has to do with the culture of traditional groups. Music therefore is an aspect of culture. It came as a means of pastime and entertainment after the day's works. Music also serves the purpose of religious/ritual performances which have been a part of the culture of societies in Nigeria. The various societies and groups in Nigeria have their different traditions which they practice, and music plays its various functions since every society has its traditional music. One may find societies that share common boundaries or similar languages such as the Oshimili South communities, having almost the same cultural traditions and beliefs; hence sharing the same traditional music which may be performed in different contexts. It is also important to note that music function in all cultural activities that exist among societies in Nigeria. This is because music acts as a vehicle of cultural expression and these expressions exist in their song texts, dances and instrumental performances. The aforementioned can be viewed as verbal and non-verbal means of expressing and communicating culture as well as other thoughts through musical performances. Onyeji, (2012) however, reiterates that "music is distinguished as one of the creative arts of indigenous African societies by which the people express themselves and their cultures through sound"(48). This sound comprises vocal sounds through songs, traditional instruments and dances and these are interpreted and the message coded by those it is meant for. Okafor, (2005) points out that,

"In the African culture, music is an entity rather than a mere mental creation or conception. It reflects and interprets the man in a specific environment and is often key which opens the gates to spiritual, mental, emotional, psychological, social and mystic realms" (68).

Every society also has their organizational methods or habits of performing their music. It is not all kinds of music that follow a particular set down rules. Music as you work, for example, is purely performed by an individual or group of individuals to accompany them as they indulge in their chores and the intention here is for self entertainment as well as to ease boredom. The types of songs rendered here range from folktale songs to common and simple recreational songs. There are simple work songs used to accompany works both domestically and outside the home. These work songs are rendered by individuals or in groups and they serve as medium of entertainment as well as to ease boredom. Children and adults in the communities also have their work songs as they indulge in the different domestic activities.

Music making among communities therefore encourages social cohesion and is usually organized as a social event, where every member come together for different performances that involve music – leisure, recreational activities, festivals, rites de passage etc. Nketia, (1982) maintains that "on the whole, intimate indoor settings for musical performances are not as prevalent as outdoor settings…" he concludes that "whatever the setting; the focus is on music making as a social activity, one that emphasizes artistic, as well as social, political and religious value" (34). The setting of traditional music performances may also be private or public avenues, depending on the music and its event. In most musical performances among the Oshimili South communities, music for private avenues are usually religious/ritual inclined and are not meant for every member of the community and larger audiences but for initiated members only, while the music for public avenues is a social performance that involves every member of the community

to indulge and share in their common goals and interests. Nketia, (1982) throws more light on this, where he states that "the physical setting for performances can be any spot suitable for collective activity. It may be a public place or a private area to which only those intimately concerned with the events are admitted; a regular place of worship, such as a shrine, a sacred spot, a grove, a mausoleum…" (31). Music performed in the aforementioned settings may not involve all members of the community but the song texts portray the context of the kind of performance that is going on.

Onyeji, (2012) posits that "there is always a social cum human reason for any indigenous music practice". He stresses that "functionality of music is a common phenomenon in Africa, where music is an integral part of culture" (53). Music that occurs in any activity not only explores and portrays the culture of the performers but functions to present the cultural heritage of that community. Music among communities in Africa is a functional art as well as a communal art and the songs, through their texts, are used to portray the kind of music being performed.

1.2   Aims and Objectives of the Research

The aims and objectives of the research are:

> to investigate the culture of the Oshimili south communities through their music.

> identify the socio-cultural implications of their songs texts.

> explore the past cultural practices of these communities through their song texts.

> document and analyse some of the songs of these communities in other to prevent their extinction

> collate the songs and categorise them according to their roles in the communities' e.g work songs, social/entertainment songs, burial songs, etc. for the future generation to have an insight.

> Provide more data for further research and documentation of the song texts of the Oshimili South, point out their effects and socio-cultural implications.

1.3 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The focus of this research is based on the effects and socio-cultural implications of the indigenous music of *Oshimili* South communities of Delta State. It looked into the various song texts that form the major part of every society's indigenous music. As a form of communication, an investigation into the cultural practices of these communities through the knowledge of their various songs helped to highlight their cultural behaviors, beliefs and practices as well as, trace their musical origin and history.

Studying the history and origin of the towns in Oshimili South communities helped in discovering the cultural traits they possess and the aesthetic values that are contained in their indigenous folk songs. Studying these histories through oral interviews and authored literatures also helped in the proper presentation and documentation of some of the folk songs that was translated and transcribed in one of the chapters in this project.

Eliciting the literatures related to this study encouraged the writer to delve more into the musical traditions of the communities under study. It further guided the efforts made to categorise the folk songs, translate, transcribe and further, document them for further studies and understanding.

The study of the translated songs and the transcribed ones are however meant to understand the language of the communities, their musical styles, mode of performances and to

understand the socio cultural implications of these songs texts, thereby bringing out the findings as regards the role the song texts play on the performers and the members of the community at large during its performances,in the past and in the present, the changes in melody, structure and style as well as the socio- cultural implications of the song texts in the past and in the present. This also helped in giving proper recommendations for further studies and understanding of the musical arts tradition of the present Oshimili South communities.

1.4   Significance of the Study

Since the world has gone 'global' with all that exists, it is very important to do an in-depth study of the past history and behavior of a community in order to keep that community alive for the future generations who seem to be carried along and away from their root by the euphoric air of modernization and globalization.

The songs texts in the music of every community are the voice of the people 'speaking' with one mind and in agreement. Therefore the study of this aspect of indigenous music will keep the present and future generations abreast on the cultural practices of their people as well as their traditional music practices. It will also enhance their knowledge in their native dialect with all the proverbs and wise sayings that speak of morality and other knowledgeable virtues that the present generation need to know to enhance good living.

A study of this nature will help to document the music types of the communities under study as well as preserve their contextual usages in their socio-cultural practices, thereby encouraging the implementation of traditional music practices in a contemporary society. In other words, the research study and documentation of this work will help to retain the history of

a music type, enrich its cultural heritage, preserve knowledge of its origin and history, preserve its native dialect and language and finally act as a source of information to the future generation.

A collation, categorization, transcription, translation and analysis of the song texts will assist the younger generation in further research on the history, origin and culture of their community. More so, it will help in curbing the extinction of their traditional songs and enhance the preservation of the language and culture of these communities which seem to be fading due to integration with other outside cultures that seem to have upper hand.

The in-depth research on the song texts will portray the socio-cultural implications, and these will be of knowledgeable value to those who do not know or understand the musical traditions and practices of their society and the rules guiding the usages and performance organizations as well.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

As an avenue of expression and communication, music has closely been linked to themes of social, cultural and political issues. These have also been part and parcel of interests, beliefs and attitudes regarding everyday life. It is a known fact that music cannot be separated from the society that generates it or the society from the music that portrays it; hence to fully understand a contemporary community, one must study its music through its indigenous knowledge system, which gives a concise knowledge of that community. Although the Oshimili communities share a similarity in their music, culture and language, there are differences that need to be identified and known for the benefit of the younger generation and for proper documentation.

During the research work which involved a lot of oral interviews, the researcher discovered that most of the folk songs have changed in their proper language. This is because the young ones who are mainly the singers cannot speak their dialect properly; hence they speak what they call modernized Ibo. Words like ashia, is now called afia (i.e. market). The absences give a clear belief that the indigenous folk song texts are fast going into extinction and need to be recovered and documented.

Another problem was trying to trace the origin of a song type; some of the songs that were based on true life stories; from the texts of the songs, questions were asked, but no one could answer them, because most of the singers of these folk songs have either died or could not be reached. The younger generations have no in-depth knowledge about the social/cultural implications of some of these song texts; hence they use some as repertoires in the context where the songs do not function properly.

The older members of the communities were met in order to get the correct information regarding certain modes of celebration and even the correct meaning of some songs. These helped the researcher in the translation of the songs and even in writing the histories and origin of the communities.

Despite the aforementioned problems, the researcher was able to get the correct meaning of the songs that posed problems through the elderly people who helped in giving the correct pronunciation and meaning of the texts during translation. Through the efforts and assistance of these elderly ones, it was easier for the researcher to comprehend the cultural values and to also have a glimpse of the historical background of the communities and further make comparisms to other literatures which was used in getting data on the histories and origin of the communities.

The active participation in the various musical activities also helped in solving the problems that were encountered. Active participation not only made the researcher feel like one of them but it created a forum for further investigations and collation of data study and proper documentation.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The locations where this research was carried out are Asaba, Okwe and Oko Communities, in Oshimili South Local Government Areas of Delta State and the materials used in this work included recorded traditional folk songs from various dance groups such as, *Aguba* Dance Group of *Asaba, Ofuobi* Dance Group, songs from *Okwulagwe* group that comprises their burial songs, burial songs from *Umuada* groups, literatures on *Oshimili* communities especially *Oshimili* South, books on the origin of *Asaba, Oko, Okwe* and other communities. These materials were elucidated and discussed in other chapters. Oral interviews were also conducted from people from *Oko*, *okwe* and *Asaba* communities regarding their history and origin as well as their musical traditions and folk songs

1.7 **Research Methodology**

The nature of this work need various research approaches that will at the end help in getting relevant accurate facts that are reliable and concrete in collecting data. In the collation of data, the researcher relied on oral interviews to help aid the documented facts about the cultural heritage of the Oshimili South communities. The oral interview method gave room for a lot of questioning. This created an amicable environment for the researcher to get enough answers and facts as well as more information in regards to the topic. In the collation of folk songs, the

researcher not only relied on the songs already recorded but invited some group of performers who were paid to sing and perform; the songs were recorded for translations and this method helped for further questioning in getting facts on their historical background and also helped in the translation of some of the songs. The researcher also participated actively and through this, had the opportunity to observe and understand their mode of performance, the socio cultural implications of the song texts, their singing methods and styles.

The communities visited were *okwe, Oko* and *Asaba.* In *Oko*, hon. Anthony N Ogwu assisted the researcher in getting data on the musical traditions of the community which also portrays the cultural heritage of the community. Beside the oral interviews conducted, books were also given which helped to enrich the data. In *Okwe*, the *Onowu* of the community and his cabinet members were visited, oral interviews were conducted which also provided data for the researcher. The researcher also had the opportunity to witness, observe and participate in the *igba-nkpisi* festival which usually takes place every twenty years. This festival was celebrated in August, 2013. The active participation during this festival helped the researcher to observe the modes of performance, singing styles, and record songs used for the festival celebration. Pictures were not taken because the festival begins after dawn, at 8pm.

The *Okwulagwe* group of *Asaba* provided information on the musical culture and the songs used for various cultural activities which are celebrated in the community. The repertoires of their songs are mostly burial songs and are only sung during burial ceremonies. In other to get a clearer recording of these songs they were paid to go to a neutral ground (*Anwai*) to perform. Their songs were recorded and the necessary questions were asked for proper documentation. The songs of the *Umuada* group were also recorded. Other persons interviewed include, Mrs. Ashikordi Ogosi, Mr. Nicholas N Ezzeh, Mrs M.C Ogosi, and Mrs N Okonkwo.

Finally, libraries were visited to collect books on the origin, histories and culture of the Oshimili communities. Through this method, persons who have authored books and written articles on these communities were contacted through their relations or publishers in other to buy their books and also be interviewed. Every visit was done several times and each time different questions were asked and on occasion when these people are indisposed, they were reached through phone calls either to fix date or to conduct interviews.

1.8 The Plan of the Thesis

The research is planned to accommodate the traditional song texts of Oshimili South communities and their socio cultural implications. The Thesis is discussed under five chapters. The first chapter discussed music and culture genrally among societies in West Africa, Nigeria, delta stae and Oshimili South communities taken into cognizance of the musical culture of the communities that are the focus of this study. The reason for this is because the music of societies are understood and studied in line with their cultural heritage in order to have a concise grip and an in depth knowledge of the peoples way of life and their habits too.

In chapter two, literatures that were sought for the study were presented as facts to compare, discuss and agree with issues that are needed to be supported with ideas made by these researchers which are related to the topic of discussion. Literature review therefore helped the researcher to agree or disagree with other researchers whose ideas are quoted by the researcher to support her own ideas.

The historical background appears in chapter three to discuss the history and origin of the community. Their cultural and musical practices are pointed out in this chapter. The

geographical locations were given and their occupational activities as well as their languages are part of the discussion in this chapter also. It was also important to cite the different authors who gave their knowledge on the histories and origin of the communities, backing their facts from the oral histories that they were told by their fore fathers. The chapter three also looked into the different types of folk songs that exist in the communities and under which categories these songs fall into. It portrayed the categories in which the folk songs would appear and the need to properly document these songs for the future generation. The categories include; work songs, recreational/ social songs, etc.

The main forms and the basic structural features of the songs of the communities are discussed in chapter four, taking into cognizance, those songs that are solo, the ones that are in call and response style, solo and chorus refrain, to mention but a few. It also saw to the translation and textual analysis of the songs of the *Oshimili* South communities. Fifty songs were translated from each categories and the analysis were carried out. This chapter also presented the transcription of some of the songs. Thirty songs were transcriped and analysed.

The chapter five discussed the findings of the study, made recommendations for further study and gave a summary on the musical culture of societies and the need to observe the changes and understand the factors that have contributed to these changes in today's global world. The chapter five is followed by the appendixes which comprise the Translation of fifty folk songs of the Oshimili South Communities of Delta State. The translated songs range from social songs to religious/ ritual songs. The appendixes also have the pictures which were taken while on field work. The last on the list of appendixes is the transcribed songs. The songs transcribed are thirty. The folk songs transcribed consist of social, children game songs, dirges/

burial songs, festival songs, songs for initiation, marriage/ escort songs. The transcribed songs are also analysed for proper understanding of the folksongs of the Communities under study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Folk songs are commonly seen as songs that express something about a way of life that exists now or in the past. It is a song that originated among a group of people, reflecting their cultural practices and traditions. Apart from instrumental music which forms part of traditional music, much traditional music is vocal music and hence contains meaningful lyrics which are in narrative verses that reflect on things happening in the society.

The origin of a folk song is rarely known to its community. It is therefore believed that folk songs and other pieces are results of individual creation, either by a community or by a group of professional musicians, whose work is taken up in the folk culture. Folk songs are also speech utterances that have been put into music with its texts reflecting on things happening in the community and its environs. These words may be put into songs directly or indirectly. The major fact is that a folk song is musically performed to express and communicate the intentions behind the usage of the words/texts. Nketia, (1982) infers that:

> "the treatment of the song as a form of speech utterance arises not only from stylistic considerations or from consciousness of the analogous features of speech and music; it is also inspired by the importance of the song as an avenue of verbal communication, a medium for creative verbal expressions which can reflect both personal and social experiences"(189).   Nketia, (1982), also stressed that "the theme of songs tend to center around events and matters of common interest and concern to the members of a

community or the social groups within it.they may deal with everyday life or with traditions, beliefs and customs of the society" (189). The focuses of folk songs are therefore on the community, individuals, and the groups and generally for entertainment.

Folk songs are therefore said to have sprung out of man's primal need to give personal expression to his feelings, devotion to his society and country, rapture in love, sadness at parting, and awe at death. It also addresses itself straight to the heart in a language that all mankind understands. Folk songs embody all that man indulges in his society from birth to death. It manifests the physical, spiritual, musical and intellectual being of man and portrays the contextual musical activities that are organized in various societies; hence you can find occupational songs, war songs, burial songs, love songs, etc. The texts of these songs to an extent portray the context in which the songs are rendered. These songs may be found in neighbouring communities but they also may not be used in same context. The usages of folk songs depend to a large extent on the cultural norms guiding the community.

Song texts are therefore, words which are sung, recited or even chanted. There are speculations about which is first, music or words. Menon (1982) argues that words came first and contends that:

"The human species must have spent several years trying to communicate with one another; crying, grunting, gesticulating, laughing, rearing, and out of these sounds, in slow measures, emerged sound identified with objects and animals and trees and actions of all kinds, the thoughts and deeds and feelings; and when spoken words came into being, it must have been the noblest sound, the most valuable he created" (1).

Menon here, tries to point out the fact that words are arranged creatively to form music, hence words came into existence before music. From the above words by Menon, one can carefully accept that all of mankind seeks beauty in the arts as instinctively and persistently as if they are searching for truth, happiness, justice, love, faith etc. These qualities which have much in common and are indispensible facets of a good life are expressed through songs in music and in other arts.

In song texts as a verbal means of communication, Avorgbedor (1990) postulates that "it does not only prescribe polite ways for saying impolite things but provides ways for expressing the inexpressible and provides license for saying the abnormal and irritant truth with fear or favour" (210). This unreserved way of musical expression through songs is very paramount in 'slay songs' and satirical songs which are usually sung during festival celebrations, children's game and other performances. Nzewi, (1997) stresses on these facts by quoting Anyahuru who declared thus: "May any person who feel personal or aggrieved about what we have sung not take offence because what we are performing is music" (79). This points out the expressive nature of a music piece through song text; Songs are not only used to entertain but also to send messages across, directly or indirectly, serving as corrective measures as well as reprimands to all concerned. Ibekwe, (2008), maintains that, "song texts communicate direct information to those that understand its language and idioms" (40). Songs therefore appear clearly in the native dialect of the community where it exists or it is sung in idiomatic expressions and those who are conversant with it understand its meaning. Ibekwe, (2008), also stresses that, "African songs are full of meaning, idioms and proverbs. There are songs which help to redress people's excesses. There are songs of criticisms and satires. The societies do love these songs because of the messages they carry along which would have not been sent through direct means…"(36).

Merriam, (1964) also contends that " songs of social control play an important part in the substantial number of cultures; both through direct warning to erring members of the society, and through indirect establishment of what is considered to be proper behaviour" (224). It is the texts in the songs that communicate its messages to the proper channel and spurs the action of those the song is meant for. Song texts are actually expected to communicate clearly to its audience for proper understanding and total acceptance by the community since its popularity and acceptance depends on the community. Ibekwe, (2008) notes that, "song texts normally speak the language of the society that owns. It is usually interspersed with proverbs, myths, valour and legendary of the people"(36). Agu, (1990) also sees folksongs as "a medium through which idioms and proverbs are learnt" (50). The function of song texts in the society is not only to entertain and communicate to its audience and the society that owns it, it is also a media for learning and understanding proverbs which are used to educate the younger generations on things that matter in the society. Agu, (2000), further stresses that,

"All musical creations serve specific purposes and all performances are carefully chosen to suit specific functions and activities appropriately. For example, ceremonies and actions like birth rites, marriages, title taking, initiation into cults and societies or organizations, religious worship, funeral rites and so on have specially designed and well chosen songs, music and dance to enrich and glorify them"(*79).*

The above statement does not mean that every folk song or music type are identified or tied to a particular activity. Every activity is often heralded with music and there are special songs meant for most of these activities which are either social or ritual. Music therefore performs a functional role in these activities.

Agu, (1990) states that "music serves not only as a medium for entertainment and social relationship, but as an intricate part of development of the mind, body and soul." He stresses that "it is assumed that the laws of the land are learnt through songs…" (49). Song texts are the basic medium of a music performance that clearly expresses the thematic structure of a piece of music. Song texts clearly expresses the inner feelings of the singer; they also serve as a tool for learning language (their native dialect, historical events, passing and getting information, learning proverbs and other important things worth knowing about people, the community and the nation. Through songs, children learn customs and practices of their people. In so doing, virtues, like truthfulness, obedience and honesty, are instilled in them. Even young men and women receive instructions on family living through the medium of traditional songs which are rendered during social performances.

Walter in Okwilagwe (2002) remarks that, "Vocal music has been an important accompaniment to worship, work, recreation and a broad spectrum of other activities" (105). Every activity therefore, has its song of accompaniment to entertain, ease boredom, encourage, etc. Echezona, (1965) asserts that "Songs act as stimulant to co-operative work; any type of work, whether it can be performed in a rhythmic manner or not, is accompanied by singing" (45). It is not the act of singing during work that eases boredom but the soothing words of the song that act as stimulants; the power therefore lies in the words first.

Echezona (1965) explains further that "another way in which songs are put into use as an aid to remembering historical deeds especially in telling a tale containing an account of a chronological list, for instance, a storyteller at a point, may forget an important name in an event he is narrating; he stops and begins to sing a song, when he remembers all the names, he picks up his story where he left off" (45). This may be so but in other cases, the song may be used as a

basis for entertainment wherein the texts are meant to communicate something to the audience and not merely for the storyteller to remember his/her story. Telling and singing folk tales have been a common practice in many societies, although this practice seems to have been disappearing in homes where children spend time watching television programs that most times show un-educative things. Ekwueme, (2004), cites The Oxford Companion to music (1956) which states that:

> "No song-less people has ever been discovered. The Stone Age still exists in parts of the Australian continent and tribes without musical instruments are said to exist amongst the aborigines, but they have well developed songs. Songs then seem to be instinctive among humans as it is amongst many species of birds…, that song is a natural and instinctive means of universality amongst the most primitive people, but also from its universality amongst children" (16).

Echezona, (1965) reveals that "the Ibos have no absolute music as such". He contends that "music is always connected with words and therefore an expression of different moods and situation" (45). Folk songs are therefore primarily communal composition, that is, they are anonymous expressions of the society or culture that produces them, although the melody and words of a specific song may have had their origin in a single unknown individual.

There are individual musical expressions which may have enfolded out of the need to ease boredom, express inner thoughts. Song texts for these may be found in recreational activities, in work situations or even in the context of worship. Nketia (1982) notes here that "an instrumentalist may play for his own enjoyment, he may perform in the open without addressing himself to a special audience or he may perform in seclusion" (190). Among the Ibo-speaking

Delta, songs are often used to express feelings during almost all activities. The women at home use songs to ease boredom as they engage theirselves in domestic work. Songs are also used during work to send coded and encoded messages to a nearby rival or neighbor.

Nketia (1982) sees songs "as an avenue for verbal communication, a medium for creating verbal expression which can reflect both personal and social experience" (189). An individual or group therefore, uses songs to communicate verbally to an audience, events, feelings and experiences. The verbal (text) messages in a song are meant to have effect on the emotions of the audience. Nketia contends that "the themes of songs tend to centre on events and matters of common interests and concerns to the members of a community or the social groups within it."(189) He further stressed that "song texts may deal with everyday life or with traditions, beliefs and customs of the society." (189). These include not only serious songs of the court and the ones associated with ceremonies and rites, but songs with simple tunes like cradle songs, work songs, war songs, satirical songs, etc.

Song texts are conceived through various occasions either during a musical situation or other non-musical activities; it may be in an organized musical situation or in a gathering that requires music to function as a medium for entertainment. Nzewi, (1991) observed that "apart from the psycho-suggestive compartment appropriate to the psychological connotations about an occasion, the emotive effects of music types are conceived and organized to generate and enhance the conceptualized moods of contexts." (51). He stressed that "the mood of Igbo music items could be associated with psycho-active stages of being, that is mood essence." He confirmed that "when the mood is pervasive as a communal experience, pre-supposes an even mood which would be interpreted or generated by an event music type." He notes that" the structural and phonic character of the music should then communicate and inspire the prescribed

communal mood of the event." It is important to note here that any song-type, no matter the category, has some innate musical rationalism it communicates. Nzewi (1991) declares that "its affect (sic) would be determined by the cognitive perception as well as the emphatic commitment of the listeners and performers alike" (52).

Among the Delta Igbos generally, singing is a natural means of self expression. It is also the principal means of music making since it plays more significant role than instruments in most activities that occur in the communities which call for music accompaniment. Ekwueme, (2004) points out that "the most natural method of music making is the employment of the natural instrument; that which every person owns or carries with him wherever he goes – the human voice" (15). He contends that, "singing has been known to be with man as long as can be traced". The Ibo communities in Delta have therefore been known to use songs to express not only their feelings, thoughts and moods, but also to air their views on issues concerning them personally and the community in general.

Folklore theatre in traditional societies comprises songs, dances and drama. Songs are sung and learnt in folklore theatre and these songs have been the basis for informal education training for the young ones. During this session, children learn and improve on their civic and moral education which is taught them through songs as well as others. All these are learnt through participation. Nzewi, (2006) points out that:

"These are three main genre of folktales: Narratives without any music that normally are gripping, dramatic tales, spoken with song refrains, which either link sections of the scenario or punctuate the action sequences; and folktales that are recounted in song only

and are as such more fixed in form and content, because the texts are structured to music"

(36).

Although folk tale education does not coerce participation, children are encouraged through this means (especially in the singing session) to learn that what makes the story more interesting is the existing manner in which the storyteller stimulates the peculiar intonations or elocutions of various character types in the folktale song. The text of the song helps to bring to life a character type or dramaturgy without the storyteller standing up or moving about.

Nzewi, (2006) states that, "folktale music is vital because it is normally scheduled at night as contemplative music when families are indoors."(31). Musical instruments are therefore not used during folktale singing sessions as this will attract visitors; the songs can be accompanied by hand clapping though. Nzewi (2006), explains further that the "basic structure of folktale tune is usually responsorial"(36). Everyone present is therefore involved in the theatrical activity either as a storyteller, soloist or chorusing audience. Communication during folktale sessions create avenue to learn different songs and stories. The young ones who are talented musically can, through participation, develop individualistic charm of vocal mimicry and artistry especially in the folktales with song interjections in which the protagonist is virtually projected in the tale. This creative flair is portrayed during children games where the creatively talented child displays a lot of artistic prowess.

Ekwueme, (2004) explains that, "music folklore performs dual functions: "first, it provides a break in the narrative for reflection, dialogue or monologue; this is always in verse, performing the function of an aria in European opera. Secondly, it calls for participation of the audience, thus helping to keep the interest and attention of children to whom the story is

primarily aimed." He concludes that "music and group singing consequently play no small role in the early education of (Igbo) children" (5).

Folktale songs among the Delta Igbo societies have helped in educating the children in the area of moral values, folk stories, their cultural practices as regards important and serious ceremonies like burial ceremonies, title taking, festival celebrations etc. Nzewi, (2006) describes the presence of song in traditional activities that relates to the breaking of kola nut when visitors come to the home of an Igbo man. He observed that "the prayer has a structured liturgical format and is uttered with rhythmical stylized elocution." He stressed that "the text is extemporized to suit or facilitate the reason or objective of the gathering."(18). This is done in a recitative manner but not in the song per se.

When a child is born in any Ibo speaking community, there is always a joyful musical declaration, followed by common birth songs that are rendered with appropriate extemporizations. These songs are actually meant to announce the birth of a child in the community and to also send messages to other members of the community to join in the impromptu musical celebration. Nzewi, (2006) declares that "a safe childbirth is musically validated and proclaimed." (19).This is done by singing common birth songs which is known by every member of that society.

Ekwueme, (2004) also states that "this is especially true of traditional Igbo music. In the rural (traditional) society, music is employed in every facet of life amongst the Igbo, from the birth of a child to funeral ceremonies." (2). He declares that "the birth of a child, for example, maybe heralded with singing". He explains further that "female relations come in singing and dancing as they hear the news of the birth.

In Igbo society as it is the same in the Delta-Ibo society, men do not customarily make an over-zealous exhibition of emotions, pleasant or otherwise. Ekwueme, (2004) stresses that:

"After the day's work, they individually stroll in to congratulate the parents and welcome the new child. By the close of the day, however, a gathering of men has been formed and saturated with palm wine offered by the new father and his relatives, they sit around not merely to talk shop and crack jokes, but also to make music. Empty wine bottles, benches, odd drums and other instruments become accompaniments to the gleeful singing of lighthearted, often humorous songs"(3).

Nzewi, reiterates that "naming a child could call for a minor ritual ceremony," which involves the father, mother and other close relatives. Ekwueme, (2004) explains that "the baby is brought out in the open to the public and in the presence of all, is named. This is, of course, a joyous occasion which calls for merry-making with music and dance in addition to feasting…"(4). He explains that "this is the first occasion in the life of a child when professional musicians may be hired to provide entertainment". Hiring a professional musician here is not compulsory and customary among the Ibo-speaking Delta. Songs are rendered during and after the naming ceremony by the women who have come to witness the naming of the baby. There are therefore special traditional songs for this occasion in which the texts are centered on God, being the giver of children as well as songs of encouragement to those that are married but have not given birth.

In bringing up children, music and group singing, play no small role. They have been used as a medium of passing on knowledge in the education of children. At infancy, songs are used to pet children when they cry; mothers sing lullabies to the crying child either to pet

him/her to sleep when the baby is crying for food etc. Nzewi, (2006) notes that, "child-soothing songs are accompanied by regularly pulsed rocking or shuffling movements, which emphatically instills the sense of pulse and rhythm in a child."(20). Among the Oshimili south communities, there are categories of songs for soothing a baby. The singing and movements are also meant to calm the baby to quietness or lull him/her to sleep. In some cases also, these soothing songs and lullabies are accompanied by rocking dance motions especially when the baby is carried on the back or is cradled in front of the carrier's body with two hands. Ekwueme, (2004) seem to share the same view but adds that "children… are sometimes deliberately frightened in songs" he explains that "similarly, a child can be 'coaxed' into keeping quiet by the terrifying or intimidating words of a song"(5).

Some societies have songs which are used to encourage a child trying to stand. When a crawling child is about to stand, the child is applauded with much vocal and practical musical encouragement which comes in the form of clapping and chanting in rhythm and sometimes songs to encourage the child. This type of song gives the children at that stage, confidence since they are the focus of attention in a musical performance.

Because music has always been part of every activity that goes on among the Oshimili South communities, they seem to have music (songs) attached to virtually all their performances. Every growing stage of a child has music to mark it; oftentimes, this music (songs) may be performed by children only or by the adult and children. However, traditional music plays an important role in every community since it is the main source of communication among members.

In religious worship/performances, serious music is performed to appease and thank the gods. Because of the strong belief that the gods/goddesses are music loving, societies communicate to their gods with music. Agu shares the same view, when he postulates that "music is unquestionably the dominant feature of Igbo traditional worship." Mbiti (in Agu, 1990) in line with Agu adds that "through music, singing and dancing, people are able to participate emotionally and physically in the act of worship. The music and dancing penetrates into the very being of worshipping individuals."(51). This is a clear practice in *Ulo* Festival of the Oshimili South communities, where the worshippers communicate with their gods through their chants and special songs sung in prayers. Echezona (1965) concludes these facts by pointing out that:

> "Dances and songs of a religious or ceremonious nature play a large part in religion when they constitute acts of worship or accompaniments to such acts. The extemporized words of the songs, the swell of the music, rhythmic motions of the dance and the gregarious feeling that everybody is taking part in the same action, heightened the religious sentiment." (46).

On the effect of songs during worship, Agu (1990) points out that songs have a strong control of power during worship; he gives the different types of songs during worship, noting that "in the traditional society, there is still strong belief in the use of songs in achieving control of power; songs of supplication, invocations, magic songs, songs for curing and, in fact, songs for every aspect of life."(51). In *Ulo* festival for example, it is believed that the songs (chants) which the believers use to accompany their movements to the river as they carry their logs of firewood, has a powerful effect when chanted to drive away evil spirits. This song '*Agbakuro*', meaning 'get out' is chanted as a weapon of warfare against evil spirits in the land. There is also

a special song of victory as the worshippers return from the river after throwing away their logs of firewood.

Beside songs as a powerful means of worship, Agu (1984) stresses on the role of some musical instruments that are used for religious worship. These instruments include *okpokolo* (wood block) *Ogene* (gong), *Ekpili* (rattle); these entirely he referred to as "symbolic instruments"(45). Beside these mentioned instruments, Oshimili South communities also use the *Akpele* during worship especially in festival celebrations, and during the *egwugwu* festival, the *Oja* is also used. Asaba community uses the *Oja* in praising the *Egwugwu* (spirit-manifest) that has come to mourn the dead. Among the *Egwugwu* that will come out during that period, the one that remains in the *Okwule* (shrine) throughout the night is believed to be the spirit of the deceased. In the *Okwule* (shrine), the *Egwugwu* cries in a mournful manner, calling the names of all his children, relations, wife, praising those that have been of good character; reprimanding the bad ones. This is done in chants, recitations and songs. These songs are never sung outside their context; this is forbidden. In invoking the spirits, songs of invocations are used to invoke the spirits to appease them, and to appeal for something, depending on the needs of the people or the context of the religious worship. There are also songs which are played for an oracle in other to find out a problem and the solutions to such problems. These are called oracular songs. They are specially sung by priests/priestesses who are assigned to such shrines. They act as representatives of these deities

Among the *Aguba* Dance Group interviewed by the researcher at Asaba, the instrumentalists maintained that the drums must be 'fed' with hot drink and kola nut (which shall be poured on the membrane) before they can play the instruments. This special ceremony was performed with song-like melodies and recitations. The researcher was told that if the ceremony

was not performed, they cannot play. It was further learnt that no woman is allowed to touch the instruments (membrane drums, bass drum and medium sized metal gong). It is only women who have reached menopause that can even touch the instruments, but women are forbidden to play the instruments.

In Oshimili South communities, songs are always associated with life events; births, mourning, games, prayers, work, wars, love etc, music is present in all key moments in a person's social life. Besides entertainment, music acts as a source of information on the nature of the gathering. When there is mourning for example, music also announces the steps to follow in all the funerary ceremony, starting with the announcement of the death, to the burial, including the other expressions that will follow through the burial and to the end of the mourning period.

Although it is said that music transmitted by word of mouth through a community will in time develop many variants because this kind of transmission cannot produce word-for-word and note-for-note accuracy, some of the music for religious worship and performances seem not to be faced with these changes since they perform special functions. In festival celebrations, the ritual aspect is accompanied with special songs which are either in a narrative form or sung. The words/texts of the songs remain the same as well as its melodic line. They are also never performed outside their original context. Nzewi, (1991) classifies this type of music as Event – stating that they are "music types and presentations originated as well as organized for non-music specific event."(26). He concludes that this type of music "could therefore be grouped as a 'closed' genius", since they are for exclusive use within their various ideational sources.

Nzewi, (1991) explains further that under the Event-music, there are other events that demand 'Event Exclusive' which is further sub-divided into Event-Exclusive' and 'Event-

Particular'. Most ritual music is classified under these Event-Music types. He concludes that "the performance of the music (Ritual) may be for occult observances, for spirit possession, for spirit invocation, for religious worship".(49). Most festival celebrations among the Oshimili South communities are in two phases; for religious worship and for social/entertainment performances while the *Egwugwu* music, which is performed during burial ceremonies for an initiated member is for spirit invocation and for religious worship; although it has its social implications where the *Egwugwu* masquerade will have to come out in the open to dance for the last time before it is led away by its initiates. This dance which is performed is 'symbolic'. It is believed that the deceased is giving a final performance and saying goodbye to his members who are still alive. The dance is actually the climax of the ceremony and as soon as the dance ends, the main actor (the *Egwugwu* that represents the spirit of the deceased) is led into the *Okwule* (shrine) by other *Egwugwu* that is believed to have come with him from the spirit world. Other members who are elderly also join the *Egwugwu* in the '*Okwule*'.

There are other occasions for music making where songs are used for communication as well as for entertainment. These occasions include ceremonies, chieftaincy titles, political rallies, marriages, etc. Songs are rendered during these occasions to entertain as well as communicate important messages to the audience. Music therefore, is an important means for verbal communication. Music for political rallies in Oshimili communities has songs that are for entertainment and sometimes for protests against rival political groups. In Asaba, the *Okanga* drum which is actually meant for burial ceremonies maybe used (with permission) during political rallies and protests, to portray the seriousness of the event. The drum and its songs actually stand for solemn moments and are therefore symbolically used for such moments in the community.

Nzewi, (1991) contends that "*Egwu* is a term which telescopes the practice of Igbo music in its five artistic dimensions."(24). Among the Oshimili South communities of Delta State, *Egwu* is the Ibo word for Dance, Music, Play, while '*Abu'* is an Ibo word for songs. Music generally is called '*Egwu'*; in a situation where song is emphasized in other to differentiate it from a musical performance that includes instruments and dance, '*Abu'* is mentioned specifically. Music communicates in two ways – verbally and non-verbally. Communication therefore is a vital process in human development.

Communication enhances progress and encourages group cohesion among societies. There are several definitions of communication, different means or aspects of communication. A group of Deans in Maine at Orson and Iowa Universities define communication as "A public act and an interrelated set of analytical and motor skills that advance the individual or collective interest of a society." They went further to elaborate that "the prefix, com (from the Latin word 'cum' meaning 'with') and 'muumuus' (referring to a service performed for culture) are combined in one word – Communication, a word that in its broadest sense means sharing experiences, publicity for the common good", (Ehninger, et al, 1986:4). Uyenga,(1995) defines Communication as "the process of conveying or transmitting messages, information or ideas from one person to another in the manner that both parties (the sender and the receiver) understand the message succinctly"(108). Communication therefore provides the necessary medium between members of the society since they require close and continuous interaction with one another through communication to get things done and people understood. Communication should therefore be clear and distinct for it to be effective.

An effective communication occurs when the sender and receiver are involved; the message is sent from the sender through the medium to the receiver, then sometimes back to the

sender. Jayeweera, (1991) also defines communication as "an interaction process which persons or groups relate to each other and share information, experiences and culture."(1). When information is merely transmitted from sender to receiver, it is seen as a linear one-way flow of information and it does not constitute communication in the real sense of the word. The communication process here, is incomplete and one sided.

Okunna, (1994) affirms that "communication must be a two way process in which the receiver of the original message responds or reacts to the message"(1). This is to make the communication process more effective and to appreciate the effectiveness of communication. Sometimes, and in some cases, a response by the audience is an appropriate way to determine whether the intended message has been received and understood by the audience. Here there is an action performed by the sender who sends the message and in response to the message, the receiver also performs an action which portrays that the message is received and comprehended.

The basic form of communication process therefore involves a sender, a message and the receiver. If one element is missing among the three, then no communication process can take place effectively. However, there are other elements involved in a communication process, which makes it complete. Peretomode, (1991) asserts that "these are the sender, encoding the message, the medium, the receiver, feedback and noise."(1). Communication can also come in different ways, either through verbal and non-verbal. The verbal communication is the use of the spoken words in a face-to-face setting or through telephone calls, while the non-verbal involves actions like dance steps and movements, gestures etc. There are also written communication like letter writing, newsletters, notes, manuals, books, journals, music transcriptions etc. The electronic media is said to be the most popular means used for communication today. This is because it is more popular and widely used than the other means of communication such as

music and other arts. Music is central to communication in Africa and the society in various ways. It is undoubtedly old in nature and primeval in the story of man. Oftentimes, music interprets itself and this interpretation cannot be complete and appreciated without any human awareness. As an art form, music describes itself in a universal tongue – the ways it communicates ideas, thoughts, and feelings, with all mankind. Blacking, (1979) contends that

"Music cannot communicate anything to unprepared and unreceptive minds except unfamiliar patterns of sounds which may not even be heard as patterns in spite of what some writers have suggested to the contrary. Its sound elicits emotions solely on the basis of perceived and rhythmic contrast but habits of perception and the associations of emotions with patterns of sounds are learned through social experience" (5).

Music therefore, depends on human awareness of it for it to elicit and meaningfully communicate to humans the way it should be. Communication through music can also be successful and effective when people give it a chance or agree to let it communicate with most mankind. Although, all arts communicate, music has a special way of appealing to emotions than any of the other arts, thereby becoming the supreme communication system used by man for man. Music also has the power to communicate because; it begins as an idea, and lives as an expressed idea. Okafor, (1991) asserts that "as a vehicle for expression, human communities find it convenient and useful to express social statements in music to which they add as time roll by. These are folk songs of the world whose most common themes are love, hope and worship."(6).

In social organizational performances as well as private ones, music communicates directly or indirectly, verbally and non-verbally, consciously and even unconsciously. All these will of course depend on the ideas conceived by the performers. Because music acts as a vehicle

for expression of multitude of ideas, the communication in it is more explicit than in any other art.

In the world of technology today, music has played a vital role as a medium of communication. Okafor, (1991) opines that "mankind has, in every culture, engaged music in the processes of creation, production and distribution."(7). In some communities (if not all), people interpret different musical sounds in their different rhythmic patterns, and in all these expressed patterns, attitude and emotions respond appropriately. Music therefore communicates in all spheres of human life. Alvin, (1979) reports that:

"Music affects the whole man and gives him the opportunity to discover himself, to be aware of his body, mind and emotions that can be associated with the treatment of mental and physical disorders in active way.It can therefore bring major changes in his behavior" (30).

The use of the voice and instruments develop perceptual processes or helps towards their rehabilitation. Every disorder affecting motor control can be remedied by musical activities involving breathing process and movement. Musical instruments can be adapted to any deficiency. In case of emotional disturbances, music can act as an element of order and harmony, which gives a sense of security and stability. Music can take men to a world of dreams and fantasy, but it is also a positive and concrete experience. It can make a bridge between the unreal world of a mental patient and the real world around him and possibly help him to find his own identity. In short, music can create many kinds of awareness without which there can be no fruitful communication.

The need therefore, to transmit information to individuals and societies or groups, necessitates an appropriate medium which may include communication and entertainment. As a medium for transmitting messages in various ways, music was used in the past. Nzewi, (1984) infers that "the concept and principles of mass communication are therefore, not modern, but as old as the organization of society."(319). There are factors (social, cultural and religious) which determine the degree of effectiveness of preferred and available mass media in a given human situation. He further stresses that, "in a traditional, societal organization, these factors include the cultural homogeneity of the audience" (23). It will therefore be of utmost importance to delve into the traditional music of societies taking into cognizance, its medium as mass media."

2.2 Traditional Music as Mass Media

In traditional music performances, there are various ways members of a society organize their performances to suit their various occasions and make their communication easy and effective. Information is therefore sent and received through song texts, dances and instrumental displays. These sources of information may be presented directly or indirectly. Nzewi, (1984) opines that:

"In traditional strategy for mass communication, the various musical processes used can be categorized as direct when the intention of musical sounds of mass communication is exclusive and direct, when music-making and presentations are intended as the entertainment based for a mass-communication objective."(32).

Direct communications in traditional music performance usually occur in traditional festivals where the audiences are allowed to air their views, praise and even expose individuals freely. When traditional festivals are organized and designed for public presentation as mass

media, the intention is to inform the community about its policy, social events, local gossips; and the medium utilized is a verbal mode of communication. But for more sensitive issues, metaphors and allusions are usually preferred depending on the person or the closeness of the community. There are factors that determine the effectiveness of communication among communities; language is an important factor that determines the effectiveness of communication among communities; this is because the traditional mass media relies principally on the speech media (verbal and instrument), hence everybody within the community need to understand the language. Language is a method of expressing thoughts with words. Menon, 1982) reports Max Mueller as arguing that "words without thoughts are dead sounds, thoughts without words are nothing; to think is to speak low, to speak is to think loud. The word is the thought incarnate."(1). Max Mueller here tries to point out the importance of communication, noting the fact that verbal communication is the principal medium of displaying music performances. Therefore, understanding language creates avenues for proper communication and most times, good results eventually. Nzewi, (1984) opines that "the nature of traditional music as a unique system of communication is enhanced by its rallying potential, as an entertainment medium", he concludes that, "traditional music as a non-verbal medium, achieved socio-political neutrality, as a specialized medium for communicating intentions, whether through verbal-vocal technique or instrumental contrived technique."

Bebey, (1975) contends that in Africa traditional music, "the aim is simply to express life in all of its aspects through the medium of sound"(3). This may be verbal or non-verbal. The performance structure, mode and mood of a traditional music performance can also enhance communication among members of a community. It may be a social performance which is meant to bring all members of the community together to share their cultural heritage and interests. In

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this regard the communication process is understood and assimilated because it concerns a common interest which is a part of the community's culture and tradition. Social activities and organized performances also encourage communication and make it effective. Active participation in musical activities helps the individual member to understand the various cultural practices involve that are part of the community's cultural heritage and how these practices are organized. The active individual member becomes a participant in this regard and the communication gap is not experienced.

2.3 Song Texts as a Means of Communication

A Folk song is a song traditionally sung by the common people of a region and forms part of their culture. It is therefore a collective effort of a community which portrays their beliefs and practices as well as their creatively and artistic potentials. It is a medium of expressing the state of being of an individual or group of persons in an artistic manner through speech and language.

In Oshimili South communities, song texts function as transmitters within the community. They can also be used to ridicule other communities who are neighbors and rivals. Song texts as transmitters can also recall past events and happenings which the present can learn from. The songs may be sung directly with the meaning of the words clear or in coded words meant for those who are part of the performance.

Song texts as culture indicators have played important roles as means of expression and communication. Among societies, they have been used as elements of historical activities from the past to the present. This is where language as a cultural trait is used in song texts to describe the history of a community starting from its origin, rulers, fortunes and misfortunes, to its present

state. Song texts therefore were used to pass information from one generation to the other; for example, the *Oriki* Music of the Yorubas which is a form of historical commentary. Among the Deltans and other societies of Nigeria, there are expressions of general cultural values revealed in their song texts. In Asaba community also, the *Egwugwu* Masquerade (spirit manifest) during mourning, chants out texts, which are only decoded by the initiate members of the cult and it is only the voice of the masquerade that tells the members of the community of its presence in the *'Okwule'* (shrine), where the *Egwugwu* stay to mourn the deceased. The song texts sung by the initiate members of the cult are also sometimes interspersed with proverbs and mythical inferences to the valor and legendary powers of the past heroes and warriors. The texts are of course decoded by the initiate members.

Akpabot, (1986) notes that, "song texts incorporate proverbs which are in many cases culture indicators."(97). Music, by its nature is a unique system of communication. It cuts across different areas of human existence as a communication device from birth unto death. Music as a communication system also creates thoughts and if need be, find solutions and solve whatever that requires attention where necessary and possible. Song texts among the Oshimili South communities are meant to communicate messages to the people. Every song is important once the song is functional and accepted by the community.

Songs are composed by gifted individuals to suit the various occasions of their usages and once the song texts are meaningful, they are accepted but maybe changed since they are not documented and contain a lot of improvisations. Only few musical groups come together to sing and record some folk songs which have been in existence and must have changed in their texts and melodies. However song texts are still used to give information, directly and indirectly. The words of any song are very important because of the effect it might have on an individual, a

community and group. When songs are presented satirically, the intention of the singer or the group is to limit its communication, hence you find some folk songs which are sung satirically, having different effects on the audience.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

3.1 The Igbo of Oshimili South Communities

The Oshimili Communities of Delta State have always in the past, shared common beliefs in their practices hence it is not surprising to see the exchange in folk songs where one can hardly trace its origin. This is not only because of the cultural boundaries that they share but also because of their close contact through trade, marriages, and even musical performances, where in the past, traditional musicians were invited from their communities to perform in other communities during burial ceremonies and other activities that require traditional music performances. This practice has not only strengthened relationships, it has brought about interchange of musical ideas, which also includes exchange of cultural ideas and practices, exchange of traditional instruments and even exchange of folk songs. It has also helped in popularizing accepted folk songs and encouraged/enhanced continuity and change of these songs.

The cultures of these societies therefore seem to be almost the same, although there are few differences here and there. Although their language is also Igbo language, they are slightly different and this is because of the cultural boundaries/contacts among the neighboring villages and clans. The close contact between these communities is so strong that in talking about the music of the Oshimili community, one may also be talking about the music of all the clans/villages in Oshimili community because there have also been exchange of folk music songs, although the songs may not be used in the same context nor for the same purpose. These songs were learnt orally which necessitated the change in texts and sometimes melody. There are

cases when the melody is retained but the text is totally changed to suit the context in which the song is performed. It is not all songs/music that are popular or performed by all. Some communities have their indigenous songs/music types which are contextual and can only be performed during that particular event. If this song/music is performed outside its contexts, defaulters may be fined or ostracized, depending on that community.

Indigenous music in the pre-colonial era was purely owned by the communities – professional singers and composers were only identified, respected and appreciated for their contributions in the musical traditions of their community. These professionals were always invited to nearby communities to perform as guest musicians, even to teach nearby communities how to play musical instruments, dance and sing; they are however, paid for their services. These professionals are picked based on their talents and expertise in the music genre where they display their prowess. This is usually as a result of the social activities where every member of the community is expected to participate in the cultural performances that bind them as one. This socialization brings about exchange of artistic talents inherent in them.

The music of these communities is a reflection of their cultural practices and behaviour, since culture is a people's way. Music is used to portray every aspect that make up that community, with their language as a major tool for communication. Due to non-documentation of these folk songs, the origin of some song texts cannot be traced except for those topical and special songs used during burial ceremonies where these songs may have been specially composed and sung in honor of a deceased person. Others may include those songs that have true stories behind them where names may have also been mentioned; these are common during festival celebrations. There are also historical songs which are used to reflect particular events etc. The composers of these may be known and the origin of the songs can be traced from the

song texts of the songs where the names of persons are mentioned and the place of occurrence are sometimes mentioned too.

One of the features of the traditional practices among societies, is the fact that no event occurs without music to accompany it, nor is there any occurrence in a society that is not told to the larger community through songs. Music was therefore a medium of documentary, for social cohesion, entertainment, worship, education, physical education, communication, philosophical thoughts and even preservation of the people's history and culture.

The fact that culture is an important phenomenon in discussing the history of a people cannot be overemphasized. It forms the basis of what makes up a community, society and even a nation. Okafor, (1988) sums up this fact by quoting a cultural policy for Nigeria that defines culture as "the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempt to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to the social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization, thus distinguishing a people from their neighbors."(5). Musical traditions and cultural traditions are intermeshed to portray the character of a society, as well as their behavioral patterns, their uniqueness etc. Despite the close contact between the communities in Oshimili South local government areas, there are certain musical qualities that distinguishe them from each other, although there are elements of uniformity in some of their cultural performances and practices. These differences and similarities will be discussed under musical traditions of these communities.

In other to delve into the musical traditions of the Oshimili communities, it will be of utmost importance to first discuss the history and origin of these communities. These will

highlight the cultural differences and similarities shared by them as well as help in tracing the origin of some songs.

3.2 History and origin of selected towns in Oshimili South communities.

Oshimili communities as a whole include, Asaba, Ibusa, Akwu-kwu-Igbo, *illah*, Oko and Okwe clans. Their language differ since those of them who live close to the Easterners and share a common boundary with them speak almost the same language as the Igbo people across the Niger. Oshimili communities are divided into two local government areas; Oshimili South and Oshimili North. The South includes Asaba, Okwe and Oko clans, while the northern parts are Akwukwu-Igbo, Ibusa, and Okpanam. The focus of this work is however, on the communities of Oshimili South local government areas. They have their origins and histories which are distinct and should be discussed. Most of the data on the origin and history of these communities are basically on oral traditions, since there was no earlier written document on their history. Recent documents written by Okpuno as reported by Ogbobine, (1981) quotes Okpuno as saying that, "it has not been an easy task writing this short history, its pocket size notwithstanding." He concluded by saying; "that is why I offer no apology to any people who may find portions of this work unpalatable, I did not write to annoy anyone nor did I intend to please anyone. Any mistakes which may appear are unintentional; for I put down facts, having regard to what I have seen and heard and believed honestly to be true."(vii)

With the above words, it is very clear that the origin and histories of communities are basically derived from heresies, oral literatures, oral traditions, art works and designs, folk songs, etc. The discussion on the histories and origin of Oshimili communities will therefore be based on data collected by the researcher orally and from other literatures.

After going through the literature written on Oshimili communities by Ogbobine, R A I (1981) who is an Urhobo by tribe, I seem to agree to some of what he wrote concerning the write-up on Oshimili communities which I quote:

1. It will appear audacious for anyone, especially a non-indigene to write on the traditional history of the different communities in Oshimili (and Aniocha) local government areas of Bendel State

2. It is an exercise which should really be undertaken by a neutral person. The main reason that as a result of the uninhabited suspicion and jealousy which seem to exist among them no matter how honest an indigene may be in the manner in which he expresses his views as the other communities, this may not go well and may not be taken in good faith by some of the other communities outside his own community.

3. It is this timid fear of criticism and absence of faith in oneself that have been largely responsible for the complete absence of any classic readable materials about them, not even by the several eminent scholars from these two local government areas.

The above quoted statements are totally based on the writer's imagination and are viewed by the researcher as imagined observation. Suspicion and jealousy is not the right word to be used but rivalry, which may have stemmed from land boundaries that have led to several feuds. Despite these, the Oshimili communities have not only inter-married but have in the past shared musical ideas which have so far made it impossible to separate the musical traditions of one community from the other. I therefore feel that the writer's assessment of these communities may have come of the boundary and land feuds witnessed in the community where the writer has worked.

Traditional music which is popularly called Egwu Odinani by these communities have from the past been a unifying force that has broken through the barriers of rivalries, tribal wars etc. to bring these communities together in fellowship for musical performances.

In order to portray the differences and similarities that these communities share, it will be of utmost importance to write on the history, origin and culture of these clans that are under the Oshimili South communities, beginning with Asaba.

ASABA

There are different versions to the origin of Asaba. According to history, the earliest ancestor and founder of Asaba was NNEBISI. Nnebisi was the father of Oneh and Ezeumune. Oneh was the father of EZENEI, ALIBUOCHA and ALIBUOKE and their mother was called Obowa. Obowa also had a daughter who was called Ojife. Some histories in Asaba although accepted the existence of Ojife but contended that she was the direct daughter of Oneh.

Another version to the origin of Asaba states that Nnebisi had three sons; Oneh, Agu and Ugbomanta. Oneh had three children Ezenei, Onaje, and Ajaji (Alibuocha).

The most common story on the history of Asaba was that the first person to set foot on Asaba soil was EZEANYANWU. The story portrays that Ezeanyanwu landed in Asaba with a pregnant wife called DIABA. DIABA returned to her home Nteje in the Northern part of Awka Division, Anambra State and this was where she gave birth to her son NNEBISI. Ezeanyanwu was said to have come from Idah (Benue State) to settle in Asaba. Nnebisi grew up to become a very industrious and powerful farmer and hunter. On two occasions, he caught bush cows with his bare hands and, according to Nteje custom, any hunter who caught and killed any wild bush cow should, in addition to some other part of the animal, be given the tail of the animal as a mark

of honor and respect. But Nnebisi was not given the tail of the bush cows he caught. Seeing this as a slight to him and an act of injustice also, Nnebisi started making enquiries as to the reason for the injustice meted on him. It was then revealed to him that he was not accepted as a native hence he has no claim to anything at Nteje. It was then his mother told him that his father had a settlement across the River Niger.

Before Nnebisi embarked on his journey to look for his father, his mother gave him a stick (some claim it was a stone) called *AHABAM NGBUJI*. On getting to the other side of the River Niger, Nnebisi planted the stone/stick on the spot that is now known as *ANI-AHABA*, before he went in search of his father. When he met his father, Ezeanyanwu asked him to go back to where he first landed to establish his own settlement as he was matured enough to live independently. It is therefore believed that it was from the word Ahabam that the settlement which later sprung up expanded and today became known as Asaba (a name given to it by the early European explorers on the River Niger and the British Merchants of the Royal Niger Company that was succeeded by the early British Administrations in Asaba in 1899).

Nobody seems to know why Ezeanyanwu left Idah, but it seems he was one of the rich traders on the River Niger who refused to return home hence settled down in Asaba after finding the area congenial to his style of living. There seems to be nothing however which shows any similarity in culture and tradition between the people of Asaba and Idah, apart from the use of Egwugwu Masquerade (called Egwugwu Igala) by a section (Umuaji Quarters) that trace their origin to Igala community where women are also initiate members of the Egwugwu.

Asaba culture has been greatly influenced by Ibo tradition. This may be due to their close contact with the Ibo speaking communities across the Niger. However, the one aspect of this

tradition that readily comes to mind may also have arose from the main reason why Nnebisi left Nteje, which has as its root, the complete denial of basic fundamental rights of any female child to property in Asaba and this has become part of the traditional practice in Asaba; this has become part of the tradition of the people in refusing a daughter to inherit any landed property of her father and even of her mother.

Another historian also accounts that Ezeanyanwu had an adopted son by name Odikpe who came from Idah with him. Odikpe married an Ibuzor (Ibusa) woman and founded his own village called Idumu-Odikpe. Odikpe's land holding seems to have been limited to the area of the village.

There are basically five main quarters in Asaba and they are:

1. Umuezei

2. Umuagu

3. Umuonaje

4. Umuaji

5. Agunugboma (a.k.a Ugbomanta)

From the above named quarters, Oneh's children constitute Ezenei, Umuaji and Onaje Quarters, while Oneh's other two brothers, Agu and Ugbomanta, who were also children of Nnebisi, founded the other two quarters. Each quarter has several sub-quarters or villages which are occupied by the sub-families and this constitutes a Quarter in Asaba. Each Village or Quarter is also headed by a *Diokpa* who is the oldest descendant on the male line according to the number of generations in the family; not necessarily the oldest surviving member of the family. They (the *Diokpa's)* are called *Okpala-Isi.*

Chief John Iloba, the Olikeze of Asaba and Secretary Asagba – in – Council reports that "the first documented history of Asaba people and their traditions were written in 1879 by Isaac B. Spencer, a Sierra Leonean, CMS Catechist who spoke broken Ibo and lived in Asaba for five years; the next was in 1901 by another CMS Missionary called Julius Spencer who came to Asaba in 1891, was ordained a pastor at Asaba in 1894, followed by a British government anthropologist, north cots Thomas, who made a detailed research into the traditions of Asaba district of southern Nigeria. Another was Mrs. Elizabeth Isichie (a foreigner) who published her book titled "Historical Change in Ibo Policy in Asaba up to 1885".

In 1978, A D A (Asaba Development Association) published another account of the history and development of Asaba followed by a non-indigene Justice R A I Ogbomine (an Urhobo) who dealt on the book titled "Oshimili and Aniocha, Their People and Land Tenure" published in 1981. There are other authors such as H. Vaux Intelligence Report (1934) D.B Partridge Report of 1974, "Asaba Historical Origin, Custom and Tradition by John Freeman Ogosi; Asaba, 1875 – 2006; Reflections on Her Growth and Development.

Despite the various versions on the origin of Asaba and even other communities in Oshimili L G A, I intend to narrate these versions (both gathered orally and those read from other research summary).

Asaba or indeed Ahaba (as originally called was founded by Nnebisi, son of Diabah, who hailed from Nteze. History also had it that there were some settlers in Ahaba before Nnebisi. These settlers (Eze Anyanwun) had been properly integrated within the scheme of things in Ahaba. Ezeayanwun and his household, therefore was the first settler in Asaba. The second settler was Onajobo from Igalla, who was said to be a strong medicine man. He was admitted

into Ezeayanwun's household and there he met and impregnated Diabah who gave birth to Nnebisi, the acclaimed founder of Asaba. Diabah (mother of Nnebisi) was sent back to her home town, Nteje, when her master Ezeayanwun discovered she was pregnant. She had Nnebisi at nteje and he grew up into a strong warrior which he may have inherited from his father- Onajoba (fondly called Ikenga because of his spiritual powers*).* Nnebisi discovered he was not from Nteje when certain rights were denied him. He therefore insisted the mother should show him his father. Diabah prepared him with charms and gave him other necessary instructions which he followed until he arrived the spot where he uttered – *Ahabam,* meaning – I have found a place of abode, hence the name ahaba*.*

Nnebisi is recognized as the founder of Asaba for so many reasons:

a. He gave the name – Ahaba

b. He had so many children hence his descendants occupied a larger part of the land which also made them popular.

c. His arrival and settlement in Asaba was seen as something spiritual (Nwokolo J.I 2008: 4, No. 9)

However, it was also believed that the first king and the first settler in Asaba was Ezeanyanwu who came from Edo State. Sources further maintained that Diabah and Ikenga, the parents of Nnebisi were in the household of Ezeanyanwu. It was due to the pregnancy that Diabah left for her place, Nteje.

Nnebisi also took the *Eze* Title (see Odogwu 2006: 5) making him the second to take the title in Asaba.

Oral histories were mainly gathered as sources on the origin of Asaba which one of the writers used as a basis to also get information that may be the truth about Asaba. One of the writers, Ndili states that he had to rely on oral history in places with the consoling belief that a good father does not tell stories which he knows to be false to his child, when the child is seeking for the truth. Then another further stressed that where the source of information is oral history, there is likely to be a variation. In all the above, I agree with the author's view on oral history being one of the medium of getting information about the early existence or origin of towns, villages and clans.

Location

Asaba is located on the western bank of the River Niger. It lies approximately 600^0 North of the Equator, has terrestrial co-ordinates 6.12^0 North and 6.38^0 East, overlooking the focal point where the Anambra River flows into it, depositing both silt and sharp sands.

On the other side, Onitsha stands on a higher ground with co-ordinates 6.6^0 North and 6.42^0 East. Asaba therefore overlooks Onitsha, standing strategically on the proposed Trans-Africa highway. The two towns can here be likened to the 'Twin Cities' of Minneapolis and St Paul or River Mississippi in the United States or the Twin Cities of the Kinshasa and Brazzaville on Congo River in Africa (Ndili A, 2008: 1)

On the Northern part of Asaba lies Ebu, Illah and Ugbolu, while on the western side are Okwe, Oko-Anala, Oko-Ogbeli, Olodu, Ewulu, Ishiagu, Umute, Abba, Adonta and Ejeme-Uno. Most of these afore-mentioned communities in the western part could be described as living in the Riverian Area (i.e. Aniolu), while Asaba is located within a low lying and swampy belt, hence by land and water, Asaba is accessible from other parts of Delta State.

Musical Traditions

Traditional and cultural practices are common among the Oshimili communities and its environs in Nigeria and it is commonly known and called '*Omenani*'. Every traditional practice is almost often heralded by indigenous music and dance which acts as a medium for entertainment, celebration, religious worship and communication both within the societies or outside for entertainment and cultural display.

Abu Odinani or *Egwu Odinani* (traditional song/music) has been part of the traditional practices among the Oshimili communities. It forms part of the cultural traits and behaviors of the communities in different traditional occurrences hence music is apparent, not only for entertainment but to portray the cultural practices as well as the aesthetic features of the societies musical traditions which include their songs, dances, festivals, traditional musical instruments etc.

Discussing the musical traditions of societies in Oshimili Local Government Area will give room for a detailed discussion of their cultural practices starting from birth to death. Music play very important role in their celebrations. It functions in the activities that occur among individuals and groups in the community and brings every cultural interests and organization to limelight. Music is used as a forum for love, maintenance of law and order, political rallies, festival celebrations and worship by these communities hence, their indigenous songs form part of their history, portraying every aspect of the communities' cultural heritage which is documented in their musical traditions. It also entertains them and encourages their social obligations as members of the community.

Traditional music therefore is very apparent in every activity that exists among the Asaba community since it is their major source of communication, either directly or indirectly. Farming and fishing used to be their major trade which they largely indulge in but music is used as past time for religious worship. Among the Oshimili communities, the people of Asaba seem to possess more musical repertoires in the past. They created more time to musical performances and had more professional musicians then, who were hired to perform in other neighbouring communities. These made them more popular. Every aspect of their activity as a community is heralded with music, and these have their socio-cultural implications. Traditional activities are therefore organized by the community as regards their norms and values which are generally acceptable to them as a community.

Moonlight Plays

Moonlight plays have formed the basis for children to come together after every meal to entertain themselves with music, dance and drama. Songs commonly used during this occasion are children game songs, folk tale songs, as well as other simple traditional dance dramas that may have emerged from the folk tales that are narrated often by the elderly people; therefore adults are also part of the participants/audience during moonlight plays. Children during these ceremonies exhibit their musical talents in folktale songs, dances and drama. Songs are learnt, taught and performed. The songs are derived from true life stories to fairy tales but the main reason for such musical display is purely for entertainment and social integration, where every one involve learns about their culture and their past.

During moonlight plays, children exchange a lot of musical ideas which they may have learnt/heard from their adult relatives. They also engage in traditional dances as well as dramas.

The girls engage in dramas that portray what they have learnt from their mothers while the boys showcase masquerade and warrior dances which they have witnessed among the elderly men in the society. Songs rendered during this occasion, therefore ranges from folktale songs, war songs, masquerade songs etc. These songs are meant purely for entertainment. During moonlight plays, musical performances may be organized by girls only, while the boys engage in their own; but at other times both sexes come together to exhibit their musical talents and entertain each other. It is therefore only when the boys engage in masquerade dances that the girls are prohibited to be part of that performance since women are not allowed to engage in masquerade dances. In the past, moonlight plays form the forum for the talented to show their talents in singing, dancing and instrumental performance. This prepares them to be part of a particular music group in the community and gifted and creative musicians are also discovered.

Moonlight plays among the Oshimili South communities are hardly organized these days due to the change and interest in other cultural practices and organizations which have become of utmost interest to the present generation. Moonlight play is seen as out dated and archaic, although few parts of the country still showcase something similar on television and radio station but the aesthetic nature is lost in the sense that, moonlight plays are usually organized, celebrated and enjoyed at night, after the day's work and evening meal, when the children and adults are relaxing. The mood that follows the performance of moonlight is not felt when aired on television. Furthermore, there is restriction on space and time as well as creativity.

Burial Ceremony

Burial ceremonies in Asaba community portray their culture and tradition. It is marked with all seriousness and every aspect of the ceremony has its special music and sometimes its

song. The burial of a male member is celebrated slightly differently from that of the female especially if the man has title and if the man is an initiate member of the Egwugwu cult. A man that took the *Eze* and *Ogbu* title is buried sitting down. The *Ogbu* titled man is buried by his initiate members and they have their special songs which they use to mourn their dead member. These songs were not revealed to the researcher, not only because she is a woman but also for the fact that it is only initiate members who are men only that know the songs.

Burial ceremonies are actually performed and celebrated in stages, starting from the movement to the mortuary where the *Okwulagwe* (Young men) in the quarter where the deceased is from go for the corpse. This first stage or movement is called *Ibunete Ozu* (I.E to bring back the corpse). This ceremony is performed with music accompanied with the wood block and performed by the *Okwulagwe* whose duty is to carry the corpse of dead members of the community. Every quarter therefore have their *Okwulagwe.* There are songs that accompany the *ibunete ozu* and as soon as that ritual is performed and the corpse is carried for lying in state, the *Okwulagwe* adds the *okanga* drum to the woodblock as they play their *okanga* music (egwu *okanga*) to the ancestral home of the deceased, carrying the corpse for lying in state at the ancestral home. *Egwu Okanga* also has its songs called *Abu Okanga* and these dirges and songs are for mourning the dead. The *Okanga* drum is therefore specially used for mourning and for other solemn activities such as during inter-tribal wars and protests in the community and during *Inneh* festival. The drum is therefore a symbolic instrument that cannot be used, nor played outside its cultural context. The end of the *Okanga* music heralds the shooting of the canon and the ritual tying of the traditional scarf or ribbon round the heads of the first daughter *(*ADA*)* and the first son, Diokpa). This ceremony is performed by the Ada Isi (oldest daughter of the family). After these ceremonies, the womenfolk keep vigil round the corpse throughout the night. They are the *Umuada Ikwunne*

(women from the deceased mother's family) and the *Umuada Ogbe* (women from the deceased quarter). Before the vigil, the mentioned *Umuadas* perform a ritual procession through the major thoroughfares of the village. This is called *Usolo IMA OKWA*. Special burial songs accompany the processing, with the *Agogo* (gong) as the accompanying instrument. During the vigil also, ritual songs, dances are apparent and these are accompanied with the gong and hand clapping. They sing usually in lyrics which express the history of the family of the deceased and tribe. The *Okwulagwe Ikwunne* (the young male family members of the deceased's mother) also keep vigil and stage a drum dance called the *Egwu Okanga*, which has its songs too. The *Okanga* music and songs are meant for burial ceremonies and the repertoires of the songs are centered on death and its mysteries as well as the effect of death. The mode of performance is culturally centered and controlled and cannot be performed without the cultural laws guiding its performance mode. The *Okanga* drum is used to assist the movement of the corpse from where it is kept to the ancestral home, for the lying in state. It is a belief therefore that the *Okanga* does not go out without coming back with the corpse it went out to bring. It is therefore an important and symbolic instrument for burial performances among Asaba and Okwe Communities especially. The songs that accompany the *Okanga* are dirges, songs for mourning the dead, songs to honor the death, praise songs for past dead relatives etc. *Okanga* drum is NOT heard outside its context. It is mainly heard only when someone dies, which is during burial and during political crisis, it is used for protests. In *Okanga* music genre, the *Okanga* drum is the principal instrument with two other drums as accompanying instrument. The instruments used in *Okanga* music are two drums.

FESTIVALS:

Asaba community celebrates different traditional festivals to mark the various activities that are culturally upheld and celebrated. To the Asaba people, these activities are ways of portraying and maintaining their culture and also upholding the cultural heritage handed to them by their fore-fathers. Music and dance has always been a means of celebration these activities which are culturally and socially bound.

The first festival marks the New Year and heralds the others. It is the *Ulo* festival which is meant to cleanse the land of all evil and atrocities and further bring in good tidings and harvest for the new yam festival *(Eze-ugbo)*. Music and Dance are the basic means of celebrating these festivals besides the ritual ceremonies that occur therein. *Ulo* festival begins with the chant, *Agbakwuro*! Which oral literatures confirm that it means to "get out". The music genres that perform during the festival are professional groups such as the *Idegbani* cultural group, the *Ofu-obi* and some other popular musical group. These groups perform after the first stage which is the ritual aspect that follows the procession.

The main songs used for the festival which are linked to its celebration and are event oriented are either chanted or recited. These songs are important in the performance and celebration of *Ulo* festival. They form part of the social and cultural celebration of the festival; hence their usage is very important. Iyeh, et al (2005), mentioned that "the events marking the first day, is the *Agbakwuro!* Ritual cleansing is characterized by the waving of the glowing faggots and the procession to and fro the river"(89). The music here are the basic songs for the festival and at this stage, they are chanted or recited and the accompaniments are empty tins and cans used to awaken neighbours and inform them that the ceremony is about to begin. The songs at this stage

are actually songs of supplication. They are however entertaining despite the solemnity that follows it. They also serve as a communicative medium to the performers and members of the community who identify the festival through these chants, the procession and the logs of fire wood the performers carry while they make their procession through designated thoroughfares to the river where the firewood is thrown into. Same procession follows the coming back with another song of thanksgiving.

The end of the *Ulor* festival marks the beginning of *Aja* for the community. The *aja* is a period of ritual performance that leads to the Iwaji festival, which is the new yam festival. The Iwaji is also called the *Eze- Ugbo* festival because the person that declares the *Iwaji* is the *Ayuwe*, who is the king of the festival. He decides and chooses the day for the celebration before people can eat their harvested new yam. Traditionally, no one, especially the titled men will eat any new yam until the festival is celebrated. This was a taboo in the past but today, Christianity has erased such. Only the titled men still adhere to the rules. The ones who follow tradition have to perform the *Ichu-Aja* before *Iwaji* commences and the date for the *Iwaji* is announced by the *Ayuwe*.

The *Inneh* is another festival celebrated in Asaba community. This is to showcase their acknowledged culture and Musical traditions. The *Inneh* is performed by every member of the community and the dances that accompany its celebration are presented and performed by the five quarters that make up that community. Tradition and culture are not only portrayed here but the expertise of individuals and quarters are displayed, musically. *Inneh* is also called *Ekwensu* festival. This is because it is celebrated to drive away evil spirits from the land and this is dramatized with swords, music and dance. The five quarters on each day stipulated and according to seniority, performs their *Inneh* with *Okanga* music and while they are doing this, there will be crossing of swords between the young men of that quarter to show their expertise.

This action signifies that the evil spirits are being driven away. The *Okanga* music is played by four quarters during *Inneh*, except *Umuaji* quarter, which plays *Uje* music. The aim of *Inneh* then is to celebrate the defeat and destruction of the evil spirit, *Ekwensu.*

On each day of the performance by the different quarters, the performers must visit and pay homage to the *Iyase* and *Odogwu,* who are the Warriors of the land. *Inneh* is therefore a warrior dance with music meant for burial performance. It is a festival that unites every member of the community in a socio- cultural performance.

Festivals are meant to show the cultural traits which communities imbibe and how they are practiced, celebrated and adhered to. Every cultural performance is organized and celebrated to suit the activities they indulge in, hence these celebrations are socially and culturally controlled. Organization and celebration of festivals therefore bring members together to enjoy common interest and belief, it unites everyone within a positive atmosphere of celebration and entertainment and also creates opportunity for the musically talented to show their artistic prowess in their traditional music.

OKO

The settlement known as Oko, which is also on the River Niger is classified under the same clan with Okwe people. Oko people unlike the Okwe claimed to have come from Igala in Benue State. They stated that their ancestors migrated from Igala in ancient times and settled at Oko and by so doing became the owners in possession of the entire land which is made up of smaller parcels known as *Akpi*, *Onukpo*, *Odukpo-Kpa*, *Nkiti libungo*, *Amilimocha, Agbondun, Ani-Iyi-Ogore, Ulu-Ikwu, Udekun* and *Unu-Iyi Awulu*. They claimed that the towns of Ossomari and

Odekpe were established about the same as Ili-Amakon of Ossomari and that the people of Asaba left Ossomari to settle in the area of land now known as Asaba.

The members of *Umuezei* family however maintained that the people of Oko are their customary tenants and that the entire land occupied by Oko community belongs to them. In 1928 (as stated in suit No. 5 1928, Obiako Vs Obi Nwokolo of *Umuezei* provincial court) Oko *Amakom* people instituted as action claiming a declaration of title against *Umuezei* family of Asaba and lost. There were several other cases between the two communities as stated by Agbomine, (1981), who reports that "in 1932, *Umuezei* sued Oko Amakom for rent and won" (37). The result of the cases between *Umuezei* and members of Oko community and others was that they should pay Umuezei family tribute of about four thousand (4,000) yams, failing which they were to quit the land for *Umuezei* family. Although some of them did quit but some remained. Those that remained can however enjoy rights which are recognized by customary law in the land and any attempt to challenge the title of the landlord may entail forfeiture of the land.

Origin and History

According to Hon. Anthony Ogwu, an indigene of Oko community (2010), Oko was founded by a man called-ODEAJA. He was an Igala prince who was denied his right to the thrown by some of his people because of his disability- he had one eye, from an accident he got when he was young. The people insisted on not crowning Odeaja king after his father's death and instead, crowned the younger brother. This action angered Odeaja ,hence his migration from Igala ,with his two wives, two sons and faithful subjects to the first place he settled, which is called Onihe(presently called *ONISHE*). Odeaja settled at Onihe with his people and continued with their occupation which is farming and fishing. They however discovered that the present

Oko settlement had more fish than at *Onihe* and feeling that the distance from *Onihe* to the area where they fish more was long, they moved to their present place of settlement today, which is close to *Onitsha*, on the bank of the river Niger. *Odeaja's* wives also had more children and they today formed the present *Oko* clan namely; Idoko , Oko-Amakom, Oko-Anala, Oko-Ogbele,Umu-Oko. Idoko is the first son of Odeaja. The names of the two wives were OSEDE AND EKEANYA. Today the clans of *Oko* are known and recognized by their mother's names; hence *Idoko, Amakom* and *Anala* are called by their mother's name-OSEDE, while Ogbele and Umu-oko are called EKEANYA, after their mother. Osede is the first wife, while EKeanya is the second. They all share the same cultural trait, same practices and belief and they indulge in same occupation.

Musical Tradition

The Oko communities have their traditional music which they believe was from Igala where their founders migrated from. However, from the interviews carried out and from my personal observation, they seem to share most of their musical interests and practices with their neighboring communities, Asaba and Okwe and other neighboring clans. This is not surprising because they share same place of origin with Asaba community and they also share boundaries and same occupation with the Okwe community. The traditional music practice and songs which they have and which makes them distinct is apparent in their traditional burial ceremony which is organised only when they celebrate first burial of a deceased member. The traditional music is called the *Egwu-olu* and this dance showcases their main occupation and culture which was handed over to them by their fore-father- ODEAJA. The song of the *Egwu-Olu* dance is historical and it identifies them as direct descendants of *Odeaja-* the *Igalla* prince. It is also a song in praise of Odeaja. The Okwe community also play the *Egwu-olu* traditional music but it

seem to have been borrowed and adopted since it reflects the occupational practices among them which is farming and fishing.

Among the Oko community, the *Egwu-olu* traditional music and dance is performed during first burial for men who have taken the *Nni-Nsele* title, which is the first title that men take in Oko. However, if a man dies without taking the title, the family can take a post-humus title in order for their brother to be buried with *Egwu-olu* music. The *Egwu- olu* music therefore is an important music genre which is, performed at oko community for the dead (men only). It is only a woman that has taken the *AMALA* title that *Egwu- olu* music can be played for. The *Egwu-Olu* traditional music is also performed during *Ji-Onye*, which is the highest title taken by men who are acclaimed great farmers in OKO community.

The musical tradition of the Oko community centre more on their occupational practice which are fishing and farming, which they claimed, was an occupation which they inherited from their fore-fathers and has been their basic means of livelihood. The songs in *Egwu-Olu* music are meant to educate people on the cultural practices of the Oko community and their occupational interests which they inherited from their ancestors. The repertoires also reflect the way they indulge in farming, how they clear the land, plant their yams, harvest, tie the yams in the barn and etc. these processes are dramatized with music and dance to showcase their cultural heritage. Renowned farmers are acclaimed and highly respected and when they die, every member of the community participate in the burial ceremony, either as a member of the deceased family or as a farmer who must have taken the title of *Ji-Onye*, which is the biggest title taken in *Oko* community by the men, and those who have taken this title are known as *Eze-Ji*. This title is only taken by well known and great farmers. The *Eze-ji* is mourned only by his members, while other invitees perform their other duties as spectators and watch the performance of the title holders

who also have their special music which is exclusively performed for their dead member. The *Egwu-Olu* music genre is therefore, a traditional music which is played when a member dies, when a new member is taking the title and during their new yam festival. Outside these three ceremonies, this music genre is never performed.

The women do not take the *Eze-ji* title but the title *Amala* which is the biggest title that the women of *Oko* community take. This is meant for the renowned women farmers, though the women mainly indulge in fishing and you must be a successful fisher woman to go for the *Amala title* since it cost a lot to get the title. The music and song of the *Egwu Amala* group- is purely traditional and it portrays and dramatizes the processes of fishing on the river. When an *Amala* title member dies, it is purely the affair of the members of the group to mourn their member with their music and all the traditional ceremonies concerning the burial will take place on the bank of the river. The day the members will perform their mourning ceremony, they will present a fare well dance using the items that are used in fishing as their props. These items include, paddle, fishing net, baskets and etc. They will dramatize every character their deceased member displayed when alive, especially during their fishing expeditions. After this musical performance, every prop used in this burial performance in honor of a dead member, is thrown into the river Niger.

This is a symbol of ending every connection between them, the living and their dead member. The implication of this burial ceremony is not only to exhibit their connection and relationship with a dead member, it is also to show their belief in the super natural powers that exist and how these super natural powers can be appeased, reached and communicated to with music and to an extent, dance. This performance is not only entertaining but also ritualistic and religious since it is a special and compulsory performance meant for certain initiate members of

the community. It is also believed that if a member is not mourned this way, the dead member will always appear to them and will disturb them while in the river, fishing. Their songs are mainly to mourn and bade a member fare well to the great beyond. There are however, other social songs which they sing during the burial but their special songs for mourning are their main repertoire.

In the burial of the men, a similar performance to that of the women is the *Ogbu* and *Dibia* music which share almost the same mode of performance. The *Dibia* and *Ogbu* group appear mainly when an initiate member dies and they come together to mourn and also during the initiation ceremony of a new member. They have their special kind of music and performance structure which distinguishes them from other music groups. They also have their musical instruments, costumes, time of performance etc. Every special group has their identifiable costume and music which distinguishes them from other musical groups. They also have their songs which are composed by them and are specially rendered by them for their members. Songs used for mourning are however different from that for social activities such as initiation and others.

Every music group has their songs which are composed by members or borrowed from nearby communities that share same musical name. They may however differ in language, mode of performance, and instrumental ensemble. Where two communities have same type of music, their songs are usually same but their mode of performance differs. An example is the *Egwu dibia*; among the *Okwe* community, people are restricted from watching the performance of the group but in *Oko* community, the members perform openly but no one is allowed into their arena to dance, sing with them, except an initiate member.

Festivals are celebrated and marked with music and dance which are meant to entertain both the celebrants and their invited audience. The *Oko* community shares some festivals with their neighbours and these include the *Ulo* festival, which are a ritual/ social festival to mark the traditional New Year. However, the celebration and mode of performance differ from that of Asaba community. In *Oko* the celebration of *Ulo* seem to portray an acceptable borrowed cultural practice of a neighbouring community. The community members agree that the celebration of *Ulo* was passed on from their ancestors from *Igalla*, whereas the Asaba community gives a vivid origin and history of *Ulo* and its mode of performance. The *Oko* community also sees the activities performed by the *Egwugwu* spirit manifest as a festival celebration, although there are ritual performances to mark these activities. The *Egwugwu* festival is therefore not only specially set aside for burial performances of men who are initiate members. It is also used as a ritual festival in line with burial ceremonies, which comes up at a particular time of the month (July). This means that burial ceremonies are performed from the months of July, no one is allowed to have a second burial (whether Christian or traditional) before the month of July.

Festivals:

The *OFFOR* festival is the biggest festival celebrated in *Oko* community. It is a traditional festival that brings every member of the community together and also showcases their cultural practices which has also formed part of their occupational activities. It is a festival of art and culture in *Oko* community hence every member of the community and their well wishers are partakers in this celebration that is equipped with a lot of musical presentations. Traditional

musicians from neighboring communities are also invited to perform. It is therefore, a festival that also encourages musical expertise, ideas and creativity; cultural norms and values are shared, new songs are learnt and sung.

Other festivals celebrated in *Oko* community are the *Egwugwu* festival, which is a traditional and ritual festival that portrays the belief and practice in the super natural. Every member of the community have their various roles to play; the women perform their roles by cooking special food for the men who will go to the shrine to be with the *Egwugwu* throughout the night. At the shrine, ritual songs are sung in honor of *Odeaja* and in praise of dead ancestors. At midnight, the *Egwugwu* is paraded round the community while the initiate members sing their special ritual songs. No one is allowed to come except the initiate members of the community. Women and children are culturally bound from seeing the *Egwugwu*. The songs of the *Egwugwu* are meant only for such occasion hence it can not be sang during any other activity. The second day of the festival is marked with music and dance by the initiate members. Women and children may watch from afar but the women must be half naked on their upper torso as a mark of respect to the *Egwugwu* as the culture demands also. It is also a taboo for visitors to be present during this activity. The visitors allowed to join in this festival are those from communities, where the *Egwugwu* is worshipped and they must be initiate members who have knowledge of the secrets of the *Egwugwu* spirit manifest. They are people from *Asaba*, *Awka* and etc

Every festival celebrated in *Oko* community is marked with traditional music performed by different music genres both within and from outside the community hence festival celebration among them is a social activity meant to portray the cultural practices of the people.

Okwe

The Okwe Clans are of Oshimili South Local Government Area. Okwe is situated on the other side of the River. Okwe village has in all purposes, formed part of Asaba, although with Oko, *Achalla* and *Agwotti* which are neighboring clans to Okwe.The Okwe land is made up of people of *Ani-olu* and *Ani-ocha*. According to sources (i.e. members of *Umuezei* Quarter in Asaba) the Okwe land belongs to *Umuezei* quarter. They claimed that the settlers were their customary tenants.

To further buttress these facts, the *Umuezei* family (who are the lineage of the first son of *Nnebisi*) asserts that the conditions attached to their customary tenancy included the payment of 500 yams which was given them by the Okwe and Oko clans as annual tributes for living and farming on Okwe land. They were also to be limited within the area of land granted to them. The *Umuezei* family claimed that the area originally granted to Okwe people was *Ani-olu* (swamp land) and later, about 1952, the *Ani-ocha* (dry land) was given to them.

Okwe people however, denied the afore-mentioned account, stating that the settlement was founded by a man called Okwe who had five male children (*Mgbugbu*, *Ofo*, *Onu*, *Apa* and *Akpa*) who grew up and extended their land holdings which made up the five quarters or villages at Okwe. The sixth quarter, *Agbanu*, later came into existence in the settlement.

The man Okwe was said to be a warrior who was dispatched to Asaba by the Oba of Benin to check the invasion of the Muslims from *Idah*. It was further stressed by the people of Okwe that Okwe is a distant town from *Umuezei* quarter, which is part of *Asaba* and that *Nnebisi*, who was the ancestor of Asaba people settled at Asaba by the grace of Okwe who provided him *(Nnebisi)* shelter against Benin warriors. They (the *Okwe* people) maintained that

it is on these grounds that the ancestors of *Asaba* styled themselves Asaba Okwe or Asaba Ibokwe – in order to afford them protection from early invaders.

Being great farmers and fishermen, they claim absolute ownership of *Ani-olu* swamp land which contains ponds where they fish and the *Aniocha* land where they exclusively exercise their farming rights; they therefore concluded that the people of Okwe own the land and is communally and authorized to deal with the land vested on the *Okpala* who is accountable to the people.

From the several cases which have been contested by the people of Okwe, *Oko-uno* and the other villages against *Umuezei* family, some of the facts portrayed that when they first came to their present settlements, they accepted over lordship rights of *Umuezei* family of Asaba, paid customary tributes and rendered services to them. This conclusion is drawn from the several cases that had been contested by the Okwe people against *Umuezei* family. Ogbobine (1981) explained that "once the status of customary tenancy has been declared, it is impossible to wriggle out of it and claim exclusive ownership to the land." He further states that *"Okwe is one of several communities in the then *Bendel* State where the people, after a good number of years, intensely dislike the way they are described as 'customary tenants' of another community to whom they should pay customary tributes in cash or kind"(35). These resentments usually come up when these claims or settlements have a good number of educated children who feel that the status which their fore-fathers provided previously is obnoxious to their concept of freedom and right of ownership. They cannot understand why the land in their permanent possession which they have enjoyed every right of ownership should also belong to some other people. They do not understand how such rights as enjoyed by them on their acquired land are subject to the over-riding title of the landlords.

Oral tradition/ history also have it that between ,1427 and 1428, the *Attah* of *Igalla* and the *oba* of Benin then, *Oba Esigie* were at war at a location between the present Asaba and Onitsha. During this ongoing war, the *oba* dispatched some soldiers from his kingdom under the leadership of a man called ASIJE. Asije hailed from *Ogbe* quarters in Benin and their mission was to prevent the incursion of *Igalla* soldiers into Benin territory. At the end of the war, *ASIJE*, returned home to Benin, got married to a Benin woman named *AKHUA* and they left benin and settled at the west bank of the niger river which is present day,Okwe. The union produced a son whose name is Ogbe and Ogbe had a son named Okwe. It is said that Okwe had five sons and they make up the five quarters that are in okwe today. They are, *Ngbugbu*, *Ofor*, *Unu*, *Apa* and *Akpu*.

Musical Tradition:

Okwe community does not share same origin with the Oko and Asaba communities but there are a lot of similarities in their musical tradition. This is because there have been links between the three communities, through inter tribal wars and other contacts. It is not surprising therefore to see these three communities having the same kind of festivals, and sharing same folk songs. Among the three communities, Oko and Okwe seem to share same cultural traits and same occupational interests. There must have then been exchange of musical ideas as well as borrowing of musical ideas and adoption of musical ideas also. It is only the *Egwugwu* spirit manifest that the Okwe community does not have in common with the other communities and despite that they trace their origin to Benin kingdom, their cultural performances and traditions have no relationship with the culture and music of the Benin kingdom. From research carried out, Okwe community seems to have borrowed and adopted most of the traditional musical performances from their neighboring communities. They share some festivals with both the Oko

and Asaba communities and these two communities are usually invited to perform during these ceremonies. In the *Igba- nkpisi* ceremony, the Oko communities are always part of the social performances that go on during the *igba- nkpisi*, which is also celebrated in Asaba. The *Igba Nkpisi,* a rite de passage is celebrated once in twenty years to welcome the boys and men into the community. This activity, which begins as a ritual performance is performed by every member of the community. Music and dance are the medium of entertainment. Traditional music is featured by various groups and these gives room for talent and creative display by professional musicians. It is purely a ritual/ social performance meant to welcome the male members of the community into their fold and further place them into the age grade status.

3.3. Historical Songs:

Historical songs among the Oshimili South are presented in some of their performances and activities. These songs which serve as a medium for members of the community to know learn and understand their history is not only meant for entertainment but also for oral literature. The texts in some of these songs are therefore not just mere words for entertainment and amusements but for remembrance and to keep records of past events that may be of benefit to the community and for the future generations. Although songs are said to be the property of a community, gifted singers and composers are also remembered in some historical songs which are sung during festivals, initiation ceremonies and even burial ceremonies and these activities act as medium for heralding such important events and personalities.

Historical songs have their texts full of proverbs, wise-sayings, folktales, love stories, past happenings and these are used by professionals and gifted singers fluently either in a solemn mood (e.g.during burial ceremonies) or in a light mood, (i.e.during festivals and other entertainment ceremonies). The song-texts therefore provide a basis for members to learn the

past histories of events that may have occurred. These songs come in different forms or ways depending on the occasion.

In performances for social gathering, some of the songs are historical and therefore the texts of the songs portray the message of the singer which may be in praise of a member of the household where the performances are being held. It narrates the achievements of the dead ancestors' of the hosts and further enacts the important roles played by the host/families to the achievements of the community. Hence the songs are meant to console the family of the deceased during burial ceremonies as well as give information or account on the life of the deceased e.g, the song "*okolo-ocha*" which the *'Okwulagwe'* (youth) usually sing during the first burial ceremony in Asaba. The songs not only tell the story of a renowned dead warrior, but liken it to the person being mourned at that particular time. The deceased name maybe used to replace the original name in the song. The '*itu-afa'* which is recited is also used as medium to praise and recount the deeds of a deceased member during the burial ceremony and the chronology of the family. It therefore can serve as a historical song, though it is in recitation form.

In other contexts, historical songs appear as a vehicle for protest against evil practices. Some of the songs may be rendered with allusions or directly as a 'slay song'. They are mostly sung during burial ceremonies and festival celebrations. Although they are meant for entertainment, they also serve as songs for criticism and condemnation e.g. *Obi kadi*, which is a very popular song which dance groups sing during social occasions such as *Igba-Ilo*, for burial ceremonies, festivals and other social gatherings.

Obi kadi is a song that exposes an evil herbalist, who according to history, tormented and killed people, he was later ambushed, exposed and later killed for his evil acts but before then, he had killed a lot of young men in his community. The herbalist name was used to sing the song to expose his evil deeds and to also serve as a warning to others. It is only during *Ulo* festivals and the second burials that the song is sung as an entertainment song. There is therefore no restriction to the time and period the song,' *obi kadi'* is sung in Asaba community. The same songs are found to be outside the communities it originally sprung from and where one finds this, other names are used to replace the original name. There may be slight changes in the form and melody of some of these folk songs too.

In *Ulo* festivals of Asaba and Oko, the song *'AGBAKURO'* is seen as a historical song which portrays the origin of the festival and highlights the belief in the ritual procession and the throwing of the burning logs of fire wood by the celebrants and the believers. The belief is shown in the song/recitation that accompanies the coming back from the bank of the river, where the fire wood is thrown into. The song is a song of victory. The historical connotation to the song is related to the origin where the first performer was asked to give thanksgiving after the ritual is performed at the bank of the river. In Oko community, the coming back from the river is different from that of Asaba community. The Oko continues their recitation/ chants, asking the *Ulo* to deal with their enemies who have in one way or the other caused any havoc in their lives. The social celebration comes up later in the day when every family come together to share in the food prepared, which is called '*nni ebo'*, meaning family food. Among the Asaba community, the *Ulo* seem to have its origin well defined. It will not be therefore wrong for one to conclude that the other communities may have borrowed or adopted the *Ulo* festival.

Historical songs are sometimes not really sung but either chanted or recited. They may be presented allusively and with proverbs in order to make the texts meaningful to certain designated audience; hence the song may be presented with a lot of proverbs and the meaning is therefore decoded by those who understand. This may be to protect certain important histories about the community and to preserve their cultural heritage. One may also feel that it is to hide a past event that occurred that if exposed will put the community to shame, hence some of the historical songs maybe sung satirically.

In burial ceremonies for men, the dirges sung by the youths (male) for the dead are chanted and recited and the texts portray a lot of stories about past events and persons. These are presented with a list of proverbs, folktales to portray the character of the deceased and all his achievements. In this case the name of the deceased may be replaced or compared in songs to past heroes whose names may have been originally used to compose the song; hence, historical songs among these communities are full of improvisations. The *Okanga* music of the burial ceremony in Asaba community is a traditional music genre which must be performed as a mark of respect for the dead and as a traditional practice in the community. It is an epic which reflects on the historical culture of the people as well as their cultural practices which has been handed over to them by their fore-fathers. The *Okanga* drum is never played except for solemn events in the community. It can however be played outside the community for a member who may have married outside the community too. The *Okanga* is mainly used to mourn the dead. The Okwe community also uses the *Okanga* for their traditional burial and from research carried out, they seem to have adopted this from the Asaba community, who may have either taught them how to play the instrument or they have learnt it on their own, through constant contact in trades, and marriages. *Okanga* as a music genre in Asaba community has its song, with its texts full of

proverbs ,allusions, praises, metaphors, *Onomatopaei* and etc. it concludes with the song that says 'lets see, if he is actually dead' and as the singers come out from where the deceased is placed, they sing ' oh yes, he is actually dead', with the realization that the deceased is actually dead and it is the duty of his loved ones to send him home to meet his ancestors and this gives room for the *EGWU-OTA* which is historical but purely an instrumental traditional music genre performed for the dead.

One of the basis of musical performances in Oshimili community and its environs is to entertain and to express love for their culture and its values. This is portrayed in their folk songs which are packed full with texts that contain wise sayings of the old, which is put into songs and used, not only to expose but to advice, educate and these are passed on orally from one generation to another.

Among the communities in Oshimili South and even its environs, there exist folk songs which are historical but are used in other musical contexts and viewed as songs for entertainment. Tracing the origin of these folk songs is not easy because of the melodic changes and change in the song texts. It is only when the texts of the song potray the story of a recent happening that the song can be traced to where it originated from, although the melody may be from an old song. No wonder Merriam (1964), states that "expression of cultural values revealed in song texts can be carried further to a study of the underlined psychological set of ethos of a particular culture"(76). However, the histories of these communities may not always be found in the accompanying words but in the patterns of sound (e.g. the *Egwu-Ota* music genre in Asaba community). Another example is in the performance of the spirit-manifest *(Egwugwu* of Asaba and Oko communities), the sounds that emanates from the vocal expressions of the masquerade gives a clue to the historical relationship of the *Egwugwu* and the *Igalla* community of kogi state

where it is said the *Egwugwu* originated from. This mode of performance by the *Egwugwu* and its followers are performed in both Oko and Asaba, and other communities outside Oshimili South local government areas that share same historical origin.

Historical songs are not commonly sung by larger members of the community but by a few gifted singers and composers who have knowledge of the history of the community, and the cultural practices and events that occur in the community. These songs are therefore meant to educate members of the community on their histories and to keep records of facts about events. It is also important to study the music of a community in order to learn something about the social and cultural history. This does not mean that one should rely totally on the folk music of his or her community in other to get the history of the community. Beside music, patterns of sounds, artistic and creative design on instruments, even costumes can be used to trace the history of the community. An example is seen in the performance mode of the *Egwugwu* spirit manifest, the costume worn by the *Egwugwu*, its songs and mournful sounds which are understood by only the initiate members and etc, these are historical representations of the *Egwugwu* and its performance activities.

Another reason why music (song-texts) should not be relied on as evidence of historical data is because of transmission of folk songs among these homogenous communities. Due to these transmissions, it is difficult to know the origin of some of these songs. There are musical styles found among these communities but they seem accidentally or deliberately distorted either because the borrowers have adapted the music to their own taste or inadequacies in the learning situation have inhibited the free adaption of the song; in this case, the historical data in the song may not be authentic, example is the *Ulo* festival celebration which shares almost the same celebration method, but have different historical origin. The Oko community maintains that it

was from *Igalla*, while the Asaba community has different opinion, claiming it originated from Yoruba land' *AGBAKURO*', meaning 'GET OUT'. The period of celebration also differs; the Oko celebrate their *Ulo* every April, while the Asaba community celebrates *Ulo* bi- annually, in July. In Okwe community, the *Ulo* festival is celebrated but the community seems to have borrowed it from their neighbors also.

There are songs that are also thought to be historical whereas the texts are actually folk tales which have been composed by professional singers out of their own imaginations and experiences. These maybe used satirically to relate to a historical event that are bounded from being exposed; these songs, although appear to be historical in nature but are added repertoire to a musical performance for entertainment. Historical songs of the Oshimili communities are however packed with texts that are allusive, didactic, topical, poetical and philosophical. Some are sung to reflect past events if the current event shares the same story with a past occurrence, while some are in remembrance of a past event.

In the celebration of *Ulo* festival in Asaba, the songs used for the ritual aspect of the festival which is the first phase of the celebration portrays the origin of the festival. It is historical because the texts and mode of performance reflects the historical origin of the festival. The history of the *Ulo* festival is however tied to its first phase of performance which is the ritual and the mode as well; this portrays the ritual music performances that contain historical songs that are authentic. This does not mean that these songs nor their performance style were not adopted nor transmitted as the historical songs in the musical performance of the *Egwugwu* (spirit-manifest) is hermetic and known only to certain initiate members; so those that are in other performances (burials and festivals) of the Asaba and Oko communities and these share almost the same historical origin. It is therefore not surprising to discover that these two

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communities celebrate the *Ulo* festival and the *Egwugwu* (spirit-manifest). Their mode of performance is however not the same since in the Oko community, the *Egwugwu*, although comes out to mourn during the second burial only, but performs during the *Offor* festival, which is also called their *Egwugwu* festival. In Asaba community, the *Egwugwu* comes out only to mourn a male initiate member and the mood is quiet, solemn and ritualistic; the women folk are not also allowed to come near but can watch from afar. In *Oko*, the women can watch (from afar) but must be naked from the upper part of their bodies. In these two communities however, strangers cannot go near nor even see the *Egwugwu*, it is a taboo. The song of the *Egwugwu* is the same and according to the people interviewed, the language is *Igala* language but the meaning and the lyrics will not be sung to a woman; it is a taboo too.

Furthermore, the Oko communities perform their burial rites from the month of July. What this means is that once somebody dies the person is laid to mother earth and that is called first burial, the second burial takes place after two years and the date is from the month of July; hence there can be more than one burial ceremony going from that month; that is the tradition in Oko community. In Asaba and Okwe, the second burial can begin immediately if the family of the deceased is buoyant enough to celebrate the ceremony.

The burial ceremonies in Asaba community are conducted in stages depending on the sex of the deceased. In the burial ceremony of a male member of the community, the first performance is when the corpse is to be brought from the mortuary. This is called *'izobe ozu'* (to carry or hide the corpse). It is only the male members who are the youth (*okwulagwe)* that take part here. Their songs which are accompanied with only the *'okpokolo'* (wood block) are usually in recitative form and are packed full with proverbs and wise sayings that range from historical dirges meant strictly for burial ceremonies; they are not sung or performed outside the ceremony

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it is meant for. The second stage is called *'ikwa ozu'* (to mourn). There are also dirges which are sung to mourn the deceased. The music used here is called '*Okanga'*, derived from the principal instrument used which is the *Okanga* drum. It is said that the *okanga* does not go out without returning with a corpse, *"okanga adia pu ilo, na obute ho ozu."* The songs here are purely dirges that are packed full with a lot of proverbs, wise sayings and are also full of recitations. The *okanga* is played when a male and female member of the community dies, that is, a male that has taken the '*Alo'* title and a woman whose husband has taken the same title; it is only *Egwu-ji* that is not played for the womenfolk. The texts in the songs used in *'ikwulu ozu'* and *'ikwa ozu'* are not only full of proverbs and allusions but the language is mostly to be the real (old dialect) language of the community, which is fast going into extinction. Most of the texts that exist in the songs are gone into extinction that one needs to ask elderly ones what some of the words meant.

Despite that the Asaba and Oko communities share a similarity in their origins, their mode of burial ceremonies is totally different. This may be because of the contact with other communities; hence there must have been inter-cultural contact with other communities which they have come in contact with through trades, marriages and other means. The songs used during the burial ceremonies of the two communities (Oko and Asaba) are not the same since their mode of performances are also different. The Oko community performs their dirges in a procession – with the first daughter of the deceased carrying a white basin on her head, chanting praises to her dead mother or father. As the procession moves, people throw in items into the basin, items such as salt, pepper, soap etc. This is borne out of the belief that the deceased is going to another place and needs these items to continue life afterwards. The next stage of the burial ceremony is called *'itu afa'*, which is to sing or recite praises to the dead. This is

performed twice and is preceded by the social ceremony where every member is invited and every musical band is also invited for the burial ceremony. In Asaba community, it is only the *Umu- Ada* (women) that perform the *'itu afa'* before and after they have sung their dirges. The *'itu afa'* in these communities can be compared to the *'Oriki'* praise chants of the *Yorubas*. The words are chanted or recited, not sung; the words used during the *'itu afa'* ranges from the names of the ancestors of the deceased, their historic contributions, the Quarters in which the deceased is from and their pet names and their contributions to the development of the community, their achievements etc. In Oko community, *'itu-afa'* occurs twice on the day of the second burial of a man and the day he is buried also. The burial ceremony ends on the day also; whereas in Asaba community, the *itu-afa* occurs first during the lying-in-state, when the *'umu-Ada'* (women folk) from the deceased mother's family, who it is their duty to sit with the corpse, gathers to sing their dirges which come before the *'itu-afa'*. Only one person can take the *'itu-afa'* and the rest of the womenfolk responds with the words '*eh!*' at the end of the *'itu-afa'*, all answer 'oh!' and clap their hands.

Itu-afa is not meant only for burial ceremonies. During title taking, like the *'nkpa alo'* title, a day is set aside for the *'itu-afa'*, and it is as explained earlier on, performed by women only. 'itu-afa' can also occur during other chieftaincy title taking in Asaba community. *Itu- afa*, however comes in a recitative form, with the first person reciting the praises and the others responding- *hei or ho*. The praise texts range from the pet names and popular names of the person being praised to all the achievements of his/her ancestors and most times, it is done chronological by a gifted member of the community who has a concise knowledge of the family. The *itu-afa* also occurs during *'iya-ego'*, which is another important aspect of the burial ceremonies in Asaba community. *Iya- ego* comes up at the end of a burial ceremony for a

deceased female member. The *iya-ego* is performed by the female family members, both children and adult and all are dressed in their native costume. It is a ritual performance which is celebrated with different items, including money which the celebrants are to throw to the crowd at the *Ogbe-eke* square which is the final place of the ritual performance. The *iya-ego* is a symbolic performance which is part of a burial performance in Asaba. It is performed on *Eke* market day in a procession with the ADA, first daughter carrying a clay pot with cowries and coins inside. The *umuada* sings as the procession moves through designated thoroughfares which are traditionally mapped out. The songs during the *iya-ego* are social songs which are also used during other activities. It is only after the calabash is broken that the Ada performs her special role in a chant and the others respond:

TEXT

Ada-------- *Onye   nwe?*

Response-------*Oko*

Ada-----------*Onye nwe?*

Response-----*Oko*

Ada------------*Nnem/Nnam lusi olu oma bia lie ya nwe-o*

RESPONSE-----ooh!

ADA---*Kwenu ayoo*!

RESPONSE-----Ayooh!

The above chant by the Ada is symbolic in that the money thrown by the Ada, the family members and the ones in the calabash are believed to be debts which the dead family member may have been oweing and should be paid in order to rest peacefully with his /her ancestors. The message is therefore presented by the first daughter, *Ada* who in this performance stands as the family representative at the *Ogbe-eke* square where the ceremony is usually held. The songs that precede the *iya-ego* as they process back home for entertainment are songs of thanksgiving and praise to the gods and goddesses of the land.

3.4.   Recreational/ social Songs/Game Songs.

Generally speaking, recreational music/songs are important performance activities among societies and has created forum for music genres, both for lovers of music and professionals. Recreational music is organized for relaxation, entertainment and for leisure among communities both for the young and the old. Recreational music performances therefore occur anytime among communities either between children and adults, same sex groups or mixed sex groups. it is a time of enjoyment; a time to ease boredom, a time of solidarity among communities, a time to portray the beliefs and practices of communal interest. There are various songs meant for recreational activities and the texts of the songs sometimes depict the kind of activity. Under recreational music performances, there are children game songs, lullaby songs, folktale songs etc. Dic – Duvwarovwo, (2011) affirms that "recreational music involves every member of the community"(101), he quotes Ikorok (2002) who points out that "the word recreation is a latin derivative from the word 'recreate', meaning to create 'anew' or to 'refresh', after toil". Music for recreation is therefore organized by communities to encourage enjoyable off-job activities which are self motivating and will enhance self expression among members of the community. Dic – Duvwarovwo, (2011) stresses that "recreational music includes folk tales and folk songs

by elders to children, to educate young ones in the values and norms that govern their societies. The game songs of the children as well as the dance music of the adults are also inclusive".(101). …he also quotes Keke (2001) and Agu (1984) who affirmed that "folk tales and folk songs serve for relaxation, as entertainment, as a medium through which idioms and proverbs were learnt; as a channel through which noble ideas and vices were acknowledged"(101).

Recreational music provided forum for individual members to learn the culture and norms of their community, to learn their folk songs, their language and dialect, their cultural beliefs as well as the taboos. Relaxation, not only encourages learning of customs of the people, it brings about a spirit of solidarity among members of the community where ideas are exchanged, disagreements are settled and moral values are learnt and upheld. Proverbs and wise sayings of the old are learnt during this event, thereby preparing the younger generation to take over and continue in the ways and practices of the norms and values of the community. Recreation music may sometimes be organized and upheld by the group of people (men only, or women only, or both sexes) who may either share common interests and ideas; it may be age grades that belong to the same music or dance group. In this forum or gathering, new songs/dances are learnt and even composed for future performances. Recreational music forum may not only therefore serve for entertainment but also for creative learning in songs, dances and instrumental performances. It is therefore a 'school' for both children and adults in the community.

Among the Oshimili South communities, this forum for recreational musical activities are not as practical as it used to be but performances such as festival ceremonies, initiation and rite de passage *(igba nkpisi)* are still organized today. The *'igba nkpisi'* which comes up every twenty (20) years in Okwe and Asaba communities are organized to initiate the younger men

into the community as members of their age grades. It is an exercise that is both ritual and recreational in nature; the ritual aspect is performed in solitary, while the social aspect is purely entertainment and involves the entire community; even a pregnant woman in the community who participates in the ceremony has initiated her unborn child if he happens to be a boy, the child will not perform in the next *'igba-nkpisi'* as an initiate member. However the song-texts are not the same when religious/ritual performances are organized among these communities. This is because their practices are not the same. It is only where they share the same beliefs (in ogbu initiation, *igba-nkpisi* among the Okwe, Oko and Asaba and in *Egwugwu* ceremony) among the Oko and Asaba) that one can find the similarities, yet differences still exists; either in the mode, mood and even organizational techniques in the performances. Recreational music therefore may be organized or sometimes motivated, hence in children's games; songs are composed and formed on the spur of the moment to suit the mood. These songs may reflect on things happening in and around the community, they may be songs learnt from other neighboring communities. All these songs are meant for the same purpose which is to entertain, cheer-up and educate children. Some of the texts in children game songs are usually nonsensical texts meant to make the children laugh and entertain one another.

Among children, the game songs are just to amuse and entertain themselves; most often, the meaning of the song texts are not thought of and sometimes the words are not even understood, all they know at that point in time is that they are having fun; hence most children's game songs are full of nonsensical syllables which are either imagined and used for amusement or miss-pronounced words from songs learnt or heard from other sources, improvisation is therefore very common and apparent during this ceremony. Game songs are also used to learn about past events and cultural practices of the people, even folktale songs used by adults to

accompany their folk tale stories are also sung by these children during games; hence stories learnt are exchanged among them and the songs are learnt and even dramatized. Game songs for children also create a forum for informal learning among them. Here children discover their talents as composers, singers, instrumentalists and dancers; they also share their knowledge and skills in other fields such as hunting, farming and other occupational jobs.

3.5. Folk- Tale Songs:

Folk tale songs are songs used in telling stories or to accompany stories. These songs which are composed by individuals are meant for entertainment and relaxation. Folk tales are part of every community's recreational activity which occurs usually in the evenings, during moonlight plays. This does not mean that there must be a moon to appear for these activities to hold. In the past, some communities actually see the telling of folk tales in the day time as a taboo. This is actually to silence children who may insist that their parents or adult relatives should tell them folk stories. This way of life is simply to give one another a feeling of one-ness and a sense of solidarity among individuals, families and groups who share same interest and culture.

Although this was the scenario of the pre-colonial African community, their folk music compositions and other performances emanated from these activities. Some of these folk tale songs are apparent in songs used as dirges in Asaba community. They are used as proverbs to portray the mood of the event and the essence of mourning the dead among them. They are also sung to encourage the community to always come together as one for the burial of their dead. Participation during burial ceremony is a compulsory thing among communities of Oshimili

South. It has its implication hence anyone who absents himself during the ceremony without reason is ostracized and will be made to pay fine before he/she can be re- absorbed.

3.6   WORK SONGS

Work songs among the Oshimili South communities are very common media of entertainment both among individuals who indulge in domestic work at home and group of persons that share same interests in their occupational activities. Work songs can also be used as occupational songs since the songs are seen as 'music while you work'. These songs range from songs which they learnt during moonlight plays to short folk tunes which have been passed on to them from their ancestors. Work songs are actually meant to use as accompaniment as they engage in their work activities at home and in their farms or whenever they engage themselves in any occupational activity. Work songs are usually short in form and can be sung in other social ceremonies that are not ritual. They serve as medium to ease boredom and lighten the mood of the worker/ workers while they work. People can also learn new songs and even compose songs through this activity. Most of the work songs in Oshimili South communities are full of improvisations and can be sung outside its context. Most work sngs are sung and accompanied with rhythmic sound that emanates from the materials which the individuals use while working. The movements give the rhythmic effect and moves in time while the song is being rendered by the soloist or group of persons engaged in the work activity.

Most work songs are already existing folk songs which may be used in other recreational activities. Although an individual who is gifted in composition may compose songs while working and these songs may sometimes be used in other social ceremonies. The general use of work songs is actually to ease boredom and serve as accompaniment while work is going on. The

individual here relies on these songs to ease their mind off the tedious work they are doing and /or entertain themselves in other to lighten the work. Sometimes folk tale songs and other songs used for social activities are used as work songs and the song gives a rhythmical effect or accompaniment to the movement that the individual is doing and this quickens the work. Most often, work songs are sung without instrumental accompaniment; however the items used during work can act as accompanying instrument which follows the song rhythmically.

3.7. **Ceremonial songs.**

These include songs used for various ceremonies such as marriages, burials, naming,title taking and etc. the Oshimili South communities engage in the aforementioned ceremonies and have various traditional songs to herald the occasion. Among the Oko community, every title taking is organized by the members who have already taken such title in the past. It is therefore the members that give the music for the occasion and hence have their repertoires which are their group's composition. Other music groups are however invited to perform but their performance is controlled by the host performers. In *ikpa- alor* ceremony in Asaba, there are special songs which are rendered by the *nkpalor* titled members, who have already taken the *alor* title. The songs are meant to welcome the new member. It is after this special ceremony that other invited dancing groups can showcase their performance.

Ceremonial songs are therefore found to be social and ritualistic in nature depending on the community and the ceremony that is being celebrated. Some however are combination of both and are performed or presented at the appropriate time of that ceremony and they are culturally controlled by the community.

Marriage ceremonies are social celebrations of the communities under study. Although the ceremonies are part of their culture which are organized and controlled by the community, the social performances create room for the gifted to showcase their musical talents in songs, instrumental performances and in dance as well. Traditional marriages and their ceremonial performances are very important activities that bring people together to share their traditional and cultural beliefs and to also project their musical art tradition also. There are special songs used when a bride is being escorted by her age grade to her husband's house and also special songs to welcome a new bride home, when she arrives at her husband's family compound. All these activities depend on the cultural practices of the communities. These songs however, may range from love songs to songs of advice to the couple involve. There are also songs of supplication.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

The main forms and the basic structural features of the folk songs

4.1 FORMS

4.1.1 Solo

Solo singing is found among the Oshimili South communities where individual members sing in Solos to accompany their domestic chores and other activities such as farming, fishing, and etc. Solo singing is therefore a part of the communities' way of showing their love for music, their artistic talents. Solo singing plays vital role among the members of the community as well as the community in general. It helps to ease boredom and tension for individuals engaged in work activities both indoors and outdoors.

Solo songs are often sung with or without instrumental accompaniment depending on the performer/performers who are engaged in the activity. Agu, (1999) explains that, "funeral dirges are in the form of solos in many African tribes"(16). This is very common among the Oshimili South communities who have special funeral dirges sung by women and the young men. These dirges are often accompanied by hand clapping and are called, *Abu- ozu*.

Solo singing among the Oshimili South communities are more rampant in their work songs. These are common among farmers, palm wine tappers, goldsmiths, and at home when they engage in house chores and other domestic activities.

Minstrels also engage in Solo singing as they entertain people, whether invited or not. They often sing with or without instrumental accompaniments, which maybe musical bows, maracas,

bells, thumb pianos and etc. These minstrels were in the past, often invited to perform during marriage ceremonies, burial ceremonies and also during title taking. The gifted and creative ones were also invited to perform in other communities and are paid for their services. They are recognized as professional musicians and performers. Their songs always centre on love stories, things that happen in the communities and their environs and the historical activities of the communities. Minstrels were story tellers, news vendors and they are often seen as the encyclopaedias of their community since they are often relied on to give the accurate information on the cultural, historical and true stories that concern individuals as well as the community at large. They employ proverbs, metaphors and similes in their songs texts.

4.1.2 Solo and Chorused Refrain

This form of singing is very apparent in various activities that music is present. Solo and Chorused refrain is where the soloist sings and the chorus responds exactly in the same manner. This form of singing shares almost the same similarity with the call and response form. In Asaba community, this form of singing is very common in the funeral dirges of the women. The funeral dirges of the women are quite distinct from that of the men and their form is simpler than that of the men. The same form of singing is apparent in the funeral dirges of the women in Oko community.

4.1.3 Call and Response

A large number of folk songs, ranging from children game songs, folk tale songs are categorized under call and response form of singing. This is because most of the folk songs among societies in Africa fall under this category. In call and response style, the soloist sings a song phrase which is, call, while the other members chorus in their response. The response,

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differ in text and sometimes in melody from the call. The call and response pattern come in different variations hence one can find a soloist part with melodic variations, improvisations and extemporizations but the response of the chorus still remain the same from the beginning. However, the choir is sometimes cued in by the soloists, either in songs texts or in other methods like exclamations.

4.1.4 Overlapping

This has been one of the features of most traditional African songs. Among the Oshimili South communities, overlapping in their songs occur when the soloist takes the cue while the chorus is still on (see *onye Ayana*, song 4). It may also appear at the middle of a long section whereby the choir enters just before or on the last note of the solo section (song 13, *Mbe*).

4.2 STRUCTURE

4.2.1 The scale and Tonal organization of the songs.

Some African tribes have gone further than others towards the acceptance of scales. Some move within the five- note scale (pentatonic), while others use six (heptatonic) scales and different variations of them. In this work, such is the application of scales without restrictions. Oshimili folk songs are characterized by diverse scales which are determined by the mood of the song presented at a particular event or occasion.

Song 1: *Agbogo lu ani* (call and Response) form.

'*Agbogo lu ani*' is a short folk children game song of the Oshimili which features two voices, one as call and the other, response. Its scale is pentatonic with variance in the succession of the notes, '*d r m l*' (see appendix: song 1). This song which is transcribed in the key of G major has

on its first five systems the call: bar1*; d m r m d*; bar two*; d m r m d*; bar 3*: m m d r d;*bar 4; *'d m r d m d';* and bar 5; *'d d l r d'*, which can further be seen as a short ABC form, where the first two systems maintain the same melody (A), the third and fourth, a variance of the first, second and third degree of the scale (B) and the fifth system makes use of the first, second and sixth degree of the scale (C). Also, the response is constantly repeating the notes *'r r r d'* all through the five systems of the song.

Song 2: *Aiye Enuwa Le* (call and response) form.

This song is a folk song that makes use of hexatonic scale with d r m s l t as the notes (see song ,appendix: song 2). The song has two sections, A and B which makes it a Binary form. The A section is the call while the B section is the response. The first four systems present the entire song. The song is transcribed in the key of E major.

4.2.2 The rhythmic analysis of the songs.

Rhythm is the most distinquishing characteristic of African music tradition. Four basic elements characterize African rhythmic structures.They are an equal pulse base, a metric arrangement, a specific organizing principle unifying a diversity of simultaneous rhythmic

patterns together, and an exact point for rhythmic groupings. The entire compilation displays a regular metric pattern of rhythm which is guided by metronome. As a basic feature of the African music, the Oshimili folk songs are often characterized by the same rhythmic ornaments. There are exceptional cases of 4/4 time displaying the element of 12/8 time. The most frequent metric pattern is that of 12/8.

Song 1: *Agbogo lu ani.*

The song makes use of compound time in a regular pattern with an underlying bell (*Agogo*) serving as a metronome. The melody revolves round four tones of the scale,'d r m l' with an overlapping harmony repeating the melody pick up by another voice not as another part.

APPENDIX: Song 2: *AIYE ENUWA.*

The song makes use of compound time in a constant beat with an underlying bell (Agogo) serving as a metronome. The melody of the song is built on heptatonic scale (seven) tone scale. The harmony is regular third of the main melodic voice where the melody sings'm', the harmony takes the third of 'm' which is's'. This could be seen in the second bar after the short melodic phrase.

APPENDIX: Song 3: *AJA MBENE!*

The third song 'Aja Mbene' is purely melodic without any harmonic effect. The second voice depends on the first voice which is the call. It is strictly polyphonic in texture.

uwa   sia   nwelogbe   one   sia   nweleofu ogbe

4.3 Translations and textual analysis.

Generally speaking, African vocal music is tonal. Hence the melodies adhere to the speech tone patterns in order to communicate audibly to the audiences or listeners. All texts or words put into song are expected to convey messages and/ or to entertain its audience. Agu, (1990) contends that "the important features which give musical tradition its intrinsic characters are the broad principle of tonality and the relationship of people's music to other aspects of their cultural and social life" (1). African traditional vocal music appear in various forms, from simple structure to complex structure patterns, depending on the stylistic feature of the music genre, the talent of the vocalists in improvisations and extemporizations and the cultural life of the people. With a view of the traditional folk songs of the Oshimili communities, one, will not but agree with Agu, (1990), who contends that, "the commonest forms of African vocal music includes solo and chorus alternations with ostinato accompaniment"(1). He notes the vocal techniques which he itemized to be among the following; Refrain, repetition and response repetition.

The commonest form of the folk songs of Oshimili communities is in Call and Response form as well as Solo and Chorus. The songs are not only short but are full of repetitions. Some of the songs that possess these features are sung during the first burial ceremonies and these are mainly songs which are sung without instrumental accompaniment since they are mainly accompanied by hand clapping. These songs are in solo and chorus form, where the solo calls and the chorus repeats exactly the solo's call. This continues until another another song is raised

by another member of the group. The dirge (song 5) by the women, '*onwu bulu eze, onye ge chie*' and '*oyenye*' (song 6), are in solo and chorus form, where the soloist sings and the chorus repeats exactly what the soloist sings. There are also songs that depend on melodic phrases whereby the leader sings first and the group repeats the phrase in a slightly different way and though these phrases are short, they lend themselves to too many forms of rhythmic and melodic variations. An example of this is the *'egwu okanga'* (song 1) and '*egwu ji'*.the *okanga* songs are dirges sung by the men (*okwulagwe* youths) to mourn a dead male member of the community, while the second one '*egwu ji'* is to honour the dead during burial. The songs for this music genre come in different melodic phrases, with lots of recitations which are raised by different soloists who display their expertise in proverbs, metaphors, and native dialects. The recitations that come before any song or chorus response may either change the melody slightly, thereby producing rhythmic and melodic variations as the songs are raised. The chorus response is sometimes in nonsensical syllables or short phrases that are slightly different from the solo. One song follows the other during this ceremony and each new song raised seems to come before every recitation as if it is the recitation that introduces the new song. The 'okanga' music genre is performed with various songs and with different soloists taking each song , and this continues until the group has exhausted their repertoires and that session of the burial ceremony ends with the song, '*kai ne n'ekwe n'obu ezie'*, which means, ley us check if our brother/ sister is actually dead. The mentioned term gives a clue to the audience that the '*okanga*' music is about to end, hence other musical group can begin their performance slated for that day.

Among the 'okwe' community, the 'okanga' music feature in their burial ceremony but in a different mode and a slight difference in melody. The 'okanga' music genre also features principal singers, which includes the lead singer or soloist, the receiver soloist, the response

soloist and the lower part singers, then chorus in this singing style, the principal soloist takes a turn singing a solo section and the next ones takes over the next. Idamoyibo, (2012), confirms that, "the combination of these voices or voice part makes a length of music in different forms" (130). Other forms include the response repetition where the soloist calls and the chorus responds with a short phrase. This is shown in the folk tale song-'*aja mbene*' (song 13). Here, the narrator, who is the soloist, narrates the story as he/ she puts it into song, while the chorus responds with the phrase,*'aja mbene'*. The phrase is meant to make the song interesting and to capture the attention of the audience as well as involve them in the story. It however does not have any dictionary meaning. In the song, '*onye ayana',* (song 4), the soloist begins the song with a call which is a short phrase and the chorus responds or refrain in a longer phrase that completes the sentence made by the soloist. When the soloist in tones the statements in a call form, the chorus responds as soon as the soloist is ending her phrsase so that there is an over lapping between the soloist end phrase and where the chorus begins its response (see song 4).

The dirges of the male singers contain short songs in call and response form that seem to come one after the other without pause. Every new song is introduced after recitations by the soloists. The recitations are mostly proverbs and wise sayings and they are also satirical and allusive. Often times one finds this series of combined songs in different rhythmic patterns depending on the recitations presented by the soloist in the group. Agu, (1999) notes that, "melodic variations may occur in the soloists' part as the words of the text dictate" (17). He stresses that, "melodic variations also depend on the capabilities of the soloists in the act of improvisations and extemporizations". This statement by Agu gives a clear example of what occurs in the burial songs of the *okwulagwe* group in Asaba. There are lots of improvisations and extemporizations. It is often those gifted in words and songs that are the soloists because they

possess qualities in the usage of proverbs, wise sayings which they employ in their recitations which form part of the music genre in their dirges and also serve as interludes before another song is introduced.

In the song '*ife onye meli nwanne e'*, which is in solo and chorus refrain, the soloist calls and the chorus responds, repeating exactly what the soloist has sung. Here, the soloist sings the entire verse of the song and the chorus responds exactly same. Agu,(1999) gives a clear description of such songs when he notes that, "during the performance of such songs, the soloists sings the entire verse of the song and the chorus or choir repeats it after him"(23). He further intones that "the basic variation in this form is the introduction or the use of Short Leading Phrase (SLP) which in most cases, is sung by the soloist at the end of his solo. Agu, (1999) states that, "it (SLP) sort of serve as a connecting link used for cuing in the chorus or choir after the solo part. In the process of repeating songs, the soloist simply uses the SLP by avoiding singing the whole verse as he did at the beginning. All he does this time is to simply cue the chorus in by repeating only the SLP at the end of the chorus. As long as he does this, the chorus is repeated over and over again until he stops"(22). This is clearly shown in the songs,'*ife onye meli nwanne e'* and '*onwu bulu'* (song5).

The melodic pattern of every song depends on the singer. Same goes to the pitch of a song. This is because these songs are not scored and documented. They are learnt through oral transmission and the effect is that the texts are not always the same since they experience a lot of improvisations. The range of songs therefore depend on the pitch in which the soloists begins the song. The songs of the Oshimili South communities are usually high pitched and sonorous, the soloists seem to employ a lot of tremolo in their burial songs especially the dirges, by both the *'okwulagwe'* (men), and the *'umuada'*(women) groups. Agu, (1999) also notes that, "….no

African traditional or folk song has a fixed pitch since they are not scored. Each group largely depends on their soloist, who always pitches all their songs correctly. They are of course, occasional shifts, but most soloists never move far away from their constant tones with regard to songs based on the same scale and melodic framework"(34).

Structurally, the songs maintain a melodic range of seconds, thirds, and fifths interval. This is because the tonal senses are put into consideration in order to make the songs meaningful and sensible, most of the songs therefore move within the range of the octave in the keys which they are built. There are also constant repetitions due to the shortness of the songs which is one of the features of traditional folk songs of societies in Africa and Nigeria in particular. There are though some folk songs that contain interjections, interludes and preludes which maybe in recitations or chants. The presence of these elements sometimes changes the rhythm (e.g *onwu bulu alo, onye ga kpa da wa'*) and even the form of the songs.

Abiodun, (2012), defines melody as, "a succession of notes, varying in pitch, which has an organized and recognizable shape. It is the series of musical notes which make tunes"(40). It is not surprising to see that most folk songs which are found among the Oshimili South communities are melodic in that they consist of merely one line of notes. Because the tunes of these songs are sung in almost all parts of the Ibo speaking Delta, the originality in melody cannot be defined. They are closely related and the sounds, somehow alike.

4.3.1. **Textual Analysis**

Through investigation carried out, it is discovered that the Oshimili South communities use some of their traditional songs to correct the ills and regulate the irregular conducts in the society. The texts of their traditional songs embody a lot of educative words and information for

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the people, their neigbouring communities and the society at large. These texts range from love stories, historical events, cultural beliefs and practices which are not only entertaining, but are informative. In their festival songs, (*ulo* festival for example), the songs texts are not only sung to cleanse the land of all ills committed by the members of the communities and the inhabitants in the ritual aspect but also to expose the ills and atrocities committed by persons whose names are mentioned (slay songs), hence this serves as a warning to others and as a corrective measure to the others. These songs are usually songs with polite and impolite flavor and these are socially controlled to avoid further problems among individuals in the community. *'igba- abu'* (slay song), is therefore a common and special occurrence among these communities and it is allowed only during festival celebrations. It is actually meant to give a distinct and true account of an offence committed by an individual or group of persons and to further condemn such act, while correcting the offenders.

The texts of the songs sometimes depict the festival that is being celebrated. This is portrayed in *'eze ugbo'* festival which is the new yam festival. The singers call on the *'ayuwe'*, who is the priest of the festival to lead them as they dance round the town singing songs of praise and other songs which are obscene but are allowed only during the celebration. There is no restriction to the usage of obscene words used during this festival which exposes the rate and height of immorality going on in the society. These texts are actually meant for and directed to those who have committed crimes that need to be exposed. The texts sometimes may not be direct but the offenders know themselves.

There are other songs which serve as a unifying factor in the festival celebration among the Oshimili South communities and these are the *'igba nkpisi'* a rite de passage and the *'Egwugwu'* festival of the Oko and Asaba communities. The song texts of the *'igba nkpisi'* is meant to

portray the cultural practices of the people and to encourage the male members of the community to identify with their community and join in the development of the community as well as preserving the cultural heritage of the community. The' *igba nkpisi'* is also meant to prepare the male members of the community to join in every cultural activity that involves every male member in the community hence it is a ceremony that portray the cultural habits and beliefs of the community. The ceremony involves all members of the community, while others welcome the new initiates into the fold, some display their superiority of having passed through the same ceremony years back, the pregnant mothers join the new initiates to initiate their unborn children who may turn out to be male species and these give the new male babies authomatic initiation. No wonder Agordoh, (1994) points out that, "songs in Africa, it must be admitted, draw on kinds of themes related the people's way of life, as records of their histories, beliefs and values"(48).

Burial songs of the Oshimili South communities give a clear picture of the culture of the society, their religious beliefs and practices and their total way of life. The songs here are poetic, filled with a lot of proverbs, allusions, satire and etc. through some of the songs one can get an idea of the origin of the people and the history of their culture and belief. Traditional burial songs are organisd to reflect their belief system in the supernatural and in re-incarnation of the dead. Where the songs do not portray the cultural practice, the mode of performance as well as the instrumental ensemble performs this role. The dirges are used to praise the dead, defy death, and mourn the dead, even entertain the dead ancestors, and these are reflected in their song texts. There is therefore that belief that there is a communication between the living and the dead.

Every aspect of the burial ceremony is symbolic and has its special songs and time of occurrence. The texts of the songs and the musical performances reflect the mood and mode of the burial. In burial songs, the community has songs to mourn the dead (*abu-ozu*), song to

honour the dead (*egwu-ji* and *egwu ota*) and others. The songs are not the same under the performance structure but they seem to play the same role, and that is, they are meant for the dead and cannot be performed outside their designated contexts. The difference is also shown in the ' *abu ozu'* (dirge) which does not require any dance at all. The song of the *'abu ozu'* is mainly for mourning. The men (*okwulagwe*) have theirs and the women who sit with the corpse have theirs too, hence the *'abu ozu'* of the men is different from that of the women.

The song texts of the men is sung for both men and women members of the community, and the texts in the songs reflect on the pain that death causes in human life, the good deeds of the deceased which will be missed, the heroic things the deceased may have done when alive; all these are remembered in songs and are praised. The *'abu ozu'* by the men are mostly recitative and narrative and are also backed up with a lot of proverbs. The accompanying instrument in the dirges of the women is clapping. Their songs reflect pains that the death of a loved one leaves on the family members, especially the children. Some of the songs are satirical and seem to ask rhetorical questions. In one of the dirges, the rhetoric question *'onwu bulu akwa,onye ge jee'*? Which they asked is meant to show the pain that death leaves behind and the power death has over humanity. The singer not only portrays the pain death causes but also gives an insight into the powers that death has over Homo sapiens since no one decides when he or she will die.

In ritual songs the text of the songs reflect the belief in the super natural, hence the gods and goddesses are praised through their songs. The ritual songs are therefore meant for the praise and worship of the gods and goddesses which the people serve. The texts of the songs reflect their belief in the gods, recognizes the roles these gods and goddesses play in their lives. There are therefore songs of praise, worship songs, songs to appeal and appease to the gods. Some of these songs are recited (*'agbakwuro! Kwuro!kwuroooo!),*while some are sung. Most of the songs are

improvised also, especially those songs that have recitations and are full of proverbs and allusions. Those who are gifted in songs and proverbs are usually sought to perform and sing during these occasions, whether during ritual or social occasion. In burial and festival celebrations, gifted and professional singers are sought and invited to be part of the performing group.

There are also songs that are actually meant to entertain and these songs are composed with texts that will suit the occasion of performance. The songs used to accompany stories during moonlight plays may contain texts that are meant for corrective measures but they are also for entertainment. Some maybe danceable and require instrumental accompaniment. The folk tale song, '*mbe!'* is an old epic that has been passed on from one generation to another. The song gives a clear picture of what greed can cause to a stubborn and greedy fellow and how the person is judged when greed leads one to an untimely death. Songs are therefore understood and appreciated when they give a clear meaning to their story line and when the language is understood. Songs that do not have meaning and are not in consonance with the norms and values of the community will definitely fade and become non existent.

The popularity of songs in communities is not based on the melodic pattern only but on the textual meaning of the song and its effect on the people who the songs are meant for. The songs for every activity are therefore meant to identify with that activity since most cultural activities have their guiding roles and performance structure. While some song texts reflect on what is happening in the community, others depict the occasion in which the activity is going on thereby act as a source of cultural display and an avenue for cultural disposition. The songs here range from social songs to topical songs. There are songs which are sung during burials that are also

folk tale songs. These songs are used to communicate a related story which may have been narrated as a folk tale.

The impact of song texts on individuals among the Oshimili South communities are today not as effective as it used to be. In the past, slay songs are popularly used to correct and expose the ills of persons of questionable characters but today, they are seen to amuse people hence slay songs are not as common as they used to be.

4.3.2. Translations:

The songs that are going to be translated here are those folk songs that have been in existence for a long time among the Oshimili South communities. Some of these songs which were collected by the researcher will be categorized under special songs that are sung and meant especially for a particular ceremony and are not allowed to be performed outside its original context. Here the researcher tried to get the actual and original text of the songs but succeeded in getting a few. These songs are some of the burial songs of Asaba and Oko communities, which include the dirges and the mourning songs. The reason why it was difficult to get the actual words of these songs is because there is a change in the dialect due to civilization, which was as a result of different contacts through trades, marriages, and other means of socialization. Language happens to be the main factor that led to the change in the texts of most folk songs. Some of the members of these communities claim that the present dialect is the modern one as against the old one, which they claim is archaic and belong to their fore-fathers. However, this does not mean that the songs were rejected nor were no longer in use. Most of the burial songs are still in existence because of the historical data attached to these songs, while some are ritual songs used for worship and other ritual ceremonies that are part of the culture of the

communities. These songs are therefore viewed as special songs meant for special events and are not performed outside their original contexts. Note that some of these songs cannot be documented here because it is a taboo. Examples are the songs of *Egwugwu* (spirit manifest), songs of the *Ogbu* cult, and songs of the *Egwu-Dibia*. Outside the afore-mentioned, there are other event songs that can be documented and discussed.

4.3.3. Accompanied and Unaccompanied Songs

Traditional songs among the Oshimili South Communities have both songs that are accompanied and unaccompanied. Songs that are accompanied are either determined by the community or by the group/individual, depending on the cultural disposition, the mode of performance, the mood and sometimes maybe as a result of the texts of the song. The song may contain a lot of recitations and this may distort the melody and affect the melodic pattern, if accompanied with an instrument while singing. There are songs that are meant for ritual performances and do not require instrumental accompaniment.

There are songs that are accompanied only by hand clapping as the culture demands or as it suits the performers. There are also solo epics or medleys that are lengthy wth a lot of recitations and have more than one soloist. These may not need any instrumental accompaniment or there may be sessions that instruments are included to accompany the chorus section. Most dirges are however sung without instrumental accompaniment. This is apparent in the women dirges which are usually accompanied with handclapping only. In the burial ceremonies among the Oshimili communities, women indulge more in the mourning session and have a lot of repertoires to accompany their dirges. Sometimes, they make use of any available instrument such as empty tin or sticks to accompany their songs too.

Burial songs performed by the men are accompanied by traditional musical instruments. The performing groups have their special instrument to accompany their songs. The solemn time of a burial performance is usually when dirges are sung and these periods rarely have songs which are accompanied with musical instruments. Being a session for mourning, (especially if the dead person is young), instruments are not really needed to accompany dirges during this period. Clapping is mostly used for these activities.

In the songs for children game and other recreational activities, any sound producing objects are used as accompanying instrument with clapping too. This musical activity creates a forum for the young to discover their talents as singers, instrumentalists, dancers and even, composers. Instrumentalists are discovered and later sought for. The younger children are not left out as they use empty can or tins to accompany songs and at the same time, learn how to accompany songs. Children (especially boys) make small drums which they used to accompany songs and dances during games and folk tale sessions. These activities are rarely done these days but it was a recreational activity that creates forum for informal education for the young and exposes them to learn and understand the culture of their societies and its implications.

Socio- musical performances among the Oshimili South communities are usually group performances which involve professional musicians and instrumentalists. Musical instruments are used to accompany songs in most social gathering. Every performing group therefore has their instrumentalists and where they do not have, professional instrumentalists are hired to accompany them. During social part of burial activities, those who can play instruments seek for job as instrumentalists and at the end of the day; they are paid for their services. Most women dance groups do not have instrumentalists attach to them. They often rely on instrumentalists that they hire to play for them and while they are dancing round the community, the women

accompany their songs with the maracas and hand clapping. The men-folk do not join in the traditional procession that is performed during burial activities, where the female members are escorted while they dance round as a mark of respect for their dead relative. During this procession, songs are accompanied with clapping and Maracas and sometimes, the bell (*Agogo*).

Dancing groups in social performances accompany their songs with instruments and props, some groups are identified with the kind of instruments and props which they use during performances, while some are from the sound of the instruments they play and their costumes too, for example, the *Idegbani* groups. Some songs are accompanied with instruments that give rhythmic and percussive effects, while some are combination of rhythmic and melo-rhythmic instruments. All these depend on the music group. There are however, songs that require special musical instruments. Among the Asaba community, the *Okanga* songs are accompanied with the *Okanga* drums. The songs for *Ikwulu Ozu* are accompanied with the *Okpokolo* and the songs of *Uje* music genre are said to have an instrument called the *Uje*. The *Uje* songs are similar to that of *Okanga* and their modes of performances are similar. Where other quarters in Asaba play the *Okanga*, the Umuaji quarters (not all of them) play the *Uje*.

4.4.0. Analysis

In a bid to have a comprehensive analysis of these transcriptions, we shall have a random selection of songs that fall under the categories of our illustrations. This will further help us to have ageneral over view of the transcribed songs in our catalogue of Appendixes. Thirty songs are in our catalogue but few songs are used as samples for this illustrations and analysis.

African music is mostly characterized by melodic repitition rather than solo which is aimed at emphasis most times, unconsciously displayed by singers and music performers. This concept has aforetime, restricted African music to a formation which may be presumed by artistic responses. *'Ewo ije'*, song 15 is a song of the Oshimili which feature in the first fifteen bars , the call and response form and was later, accompanied by another male voice with musical instrument such as drum and gong.

The compilation of these transcriptions suggests the category of call and response form and this is to further buttress the characteristics of African music. The emphasis is placed on rhythms, melody and hrmony. Repetition is used as an organizing principle on top of which improvisation is built. The most common form in the music of the Oshimili consists of the use of ostinato or repeated short musical phrases with the accompaniment of melo-rhythmic patterns. For example, in the Call and Response method in song 8" *cholu onye gabu oyim'*, song 17 '*ife onye meli nwanne'*, song 20,*'iyele bi'*and song 26*'onye ayana'*, where a leader usually sings a phrase with a chorus singing back a response. Two or more melodies may be added to form a larger section.

4.4.1. The melodic Analysis of the Songs

Melodies are repeated throughout the piece but there are many internal variations. Primarily, as is fitting, this appears in the song, in which the musician can give full scope to his mood and his emotions. There are ornamentations of many types: extensions and abbreviations. In the same vein, there are songs without instrumental accompaniment which comprise only one line of melody and are sung either by one person or by a group in unison; their structure is particularly

variable. A large group of melodies, perhaps the great majority of them start from a high note and fall towards the tonal centre; they may then raise a little, after which they continue to fall to the next rest point. The melodies of the songs are typical reflection of the language of the Oshimili, which has the identity of African texture. These are collections of children game songs, women dirges and burial songs by the men. The melodies have many different forms: on the one hand there is the short phrase, consisting of a single little motive of two or three notes within a range which is less than a fourth; as illustrated in '*Agbogo lu ani*' (song 1), which has on the first and second bars short phrases of melody. On the other hand, there occur more richly constructed melodies with phrase- and period- structure as illustrated in '*Aja mbene*' (song 13) which has melodic phrases that are different from the first bar to the last bar (bar 1-18) bearing melodic distinction. This only occurs on the call melody but has a constant melody at response section which is featured as another part. One meets with such short melodies everywhere and they are considered to be a genuine expression of African folk music.

Music mirrors the soul of the African, and is an essential part of his inmost being; it has the power to liberate, and it is in music and dance that the African can best be himself, and such is the case of the Oshimili South communities and their folk songs which spans from dirges, lullaby, children game songs and men burial songs. The Oshimili communities use whole –tone and semi-tone intervals and have a remarkable capacity for melodic form. This does not imply, though, that their power of expression necessarily increases as they take the step from pentatonic through hexatonic to heptatonic scales. It would probably be true to say that a certain connection exists in all centres of musical culture between scales and the creation of melody. As mentioned above, the melodies are repeated throughout the pieces but there are many internal variations.

Primarily, as is fitting, this appears in songs, in which the singers give full scope to their mood and emotions.

4.4. 2. The Harmony of the songs:

It appears to follow that a number of singers intoning a given verbal phrase simultaneously must sing in parallel, whatever the interval between the voices may be, in order that the sense of the words may be preserved. From this we may conclude that the primary function of such parallelism is not a musical one. It is therefore, perhaps, natural to imagine that a feeling for the harmonic context developed gradually through the influence of the lower sounds of the harmonic series. The parallel movement of parts is probably most accurately comprehended as being a factor in the sound of the music, without really being polyphony in the modern sense. We encounter conscious parallel motion in our transcriptions according to some songs in our catalogue.

4.4.3. Traditional Instruments:

Traditional instruments abound in Oshimili South communities. They form part of the musical traditions of the people, playing their musical roles and other identifiable specific roles that showcase the cultural heritage of the community. They enhance the musical and the socio-cultural activities that go on in the community. Traditional instruments play symbolic roles both in the musical arts tradition and in other aspects that enhance the culture of the people. They are used to accompany musical activities, to draw attention, and to perform other necessary activities that may not be connected to musical events such as, for public announcements, warning signals, and other symbolic usages.

In the various traditional activities, musical instruments perform important and subsidiary roles. There are musical groups that derive their names from traditional instruments which maybe used as a principal instrument or the instrument may have symbolic roles it plays. The *Okanga* musical instrument performs an important role in the music and cultural performance that is meant for burial ceremonies in both Asaba and Okwe communities. It is not only meant to accompany the corpse of a dead member of the community to where it will lie in state, it is further used for the music genre which is performed alongside the movement. The *Okanga* makes its presence and sounds only for serious and solemn periods in the community. It is a taboo to play it outside its designated event, as this will attract serious punishment.

There are other instruments that are used symbolically to warn and attract attention. The *Oja* (flute) used during mourning by the initiate members of the *Egwugwu* spirit manifest serve multiple purposes and they are, to accompany their songs, to mourn the dead, to warn people of its presence in the *Okwule*(shrine) and to praise past and present dignitaries in the community. The *Akpele* is another important musical instrument that is used to accompany songs during burial ceremonies, and when someone is taking title. The *AKPELE* is an instrument used also for royalty, for royal dances (e.g the idegbani dance) and to announce the presence of dignitaries in a social gathering also. It is also used to praise dignitaries during special occasions.

There is an instrumental ensemble that requires special instruments for socio-cultural performance which has to do with the burial ceremonies among the Asaba community. This aspect of the burial is a ritual as well as music performance meant for only the male and female members of the community who are married and has the alo title. It is called the *EGWU-OTA* music. It is an instrumental music performance that is not only for entertainment but for ritual

and historical purpose. The Egwu-ota is performed only in Asaba and has its origin and oral history narrated.

History has it that there was a big bird called, *Okolo – Osile*. The bird descended from the sky and sat on a big tree in the place called *AHABA*. Sitting on that tree, *Okolo-Osile* sang and beat its wings in a wonderful melodious and rhythmic sound. It danced for days, producing the sounds with its wings and the melody in its song. When finally the bird got tired, the music and dance stopped but the bird fell down and died due to exhaustion from the dance. It is believed that the *Egwu-ota* originated from the music and dance of *okolo-osile*, the bird. The dance marks the climax of the musical performance in the burial ceremony among the Asaba people and it performed only for a member who is mature, that is one who is of marriageable age but a titled man and the wife. It is not performed for children.

The *AKAJA* (a big gong) and the *OZI* (a big drum), are the principal instruments used. They are played by professional instrumentalists who are gifted and are trained. Not every male member of the community can therefore play these instruments. The music of the *Egwu-ota* is special and interesting. It motivates one to dance hence draw people into the arena in a magical way. No-one is restricted from joining in the dance once the music starts.

Maduemezie, D N, states that, " the main instrument for the dance, akaja and ozi, signify that there are two principles involved-one male, positive,vivifying the other female, passive, producing forms, coverings and vehicles for expression of the vivifying principle". Maduemezie here is trying to describe the effect of the musical instrument on the performers and its magical sound that seem to draw people to the arena to dance. He is also describing the mode of performance during the dance which portrays the connection and communication between the

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living and the dead. The symbolic mode of performance describes the belief in the super natural which explains an aspect of the cultural beliefs of the people. The instruments represent the music and dance of *Okolo-osile* and this is dramatized by the people in their dance. The dance is performed with the dancer raising his /her hands up and down, either at the same time or one after the other. The movement of the hands symbolically depicts the flapping of the wings by Okolo-osile the bird. The dance is performed in STANZAS as described by Maduemezie, D. N, and each sanza has its symbolic representations. The first stanza of the Egwu-ota music is performed without any one entering into the arena to dance; hence it is called *Egwu Ndi Nmuo*, i.e dance of the spirits. After the first dance, the first daughter, the ADA enters the arena for her dance. As the Ada dances, she chants praise to her dead father/ mother and people can go in and spray her. The special dance by the Ada is to accord her the respect as the first daughter and uphold the special roles she plays in the family. If the dead person does not have an Ada or if the Ada is a Christian and refuses to partake in the traditional burial rites, another daughter from among the relatives can play the role of the Ada as long as she is not a first daughter to her own father.

The third and subsequent stanzas are dances meant for every member of the family present and their invitees. No one is restricted from joining in the dance, even in the *Egwu diokpa* which comes last and which terminates the *Egwu-ota. Egwu-ota* is therefore a socio-cultural dance and also an important instrumental music genre for burial ceremonies in asaba community.

4.5. Socio-Cultural Implications of the Song- Texts

What identifies group of people in a society is their culture and their cultural activities which they put into practice. Every community therefore have their cultural identity,

habit,practices, ideas, do's and don'ts which they must adhere to in other to portray their relevance as members of that community and to show outsiders the importance and relevance of their cultural beliefs and practices.

It is not surprising therefore for any community to have set down rules and taboos which are used as guidelines in other to aid community development, and portray cultural traits which are sometimes identified by those from other communities. These traits are accepted and respected by outsiders and May sometimes be adopted if found impressive and meaningful; hence you find uniformity in the musical performances of the communities in Oshimili South and their neighboring communities. The musical cultures of these communities may be uniform; there are also differences in their cultural practices which distinguishes them from one another. Traditional musical performances among these communities are celebrated for a purpose and every performance portrays the community's cultural beliefs, hence every member of the community has their roles to play, either as performer or spectator.

Every social celebration involves every member of the community among the Oshimili South communities, whether Christian or Pagan. This is because the social performances give and create a feeling of oneness and euphoria that they are part of the community. It therefore encourages social integration and an acceptance of the people's culture which they do not hesitate to show to the outside world. There is no inhibition in the social celebration among these communities, since it involves what they share in common and want to show as a group. Every song meant for social ceremonies among these communities are composed from among them, though some may be songs learnt from neighboring communities. Some of the special songs for social ceremonies are performed specially in other to showcase what that ceremony is and what it is meant for. These special ceremonial songs are actually meant for that ceremony and

therefore, they are rendered at a particular time and in some cases by special groups who have special roles to play during that ceremony. An example is the song which is meant for *Ayugba*, this is a special song meant for the bride when she is being escorted from her father's house to her husband's family compound. The '*ayugba*' song is specially sung by the youth of the bride's quarter. They are mainly songs of advice, praise and encouragement bestowed on the bride. The chorus,' ohh, oh, ayugba' informs everyone that a bride is being led by her family, friends, age grade and well- wishers to her husband's house. Everyone is invited to join in the procession, which are a joyful celebration and a social event. The *'Ayugba'* song is not only meant for entertainment, but portrays the importance of traditional marriage in Oshimili community. Even when a bride marries somebody from outside her community, the *ayugba* is still performed; hence the bride is led to the waiting car that will take her to her husband's house, where she will be received. Traditional marriage ceremony in Oshimili community is not complete without the *Ayugba* and this is usually done at night. The young ones also get to meet suitors during this ceremony, new songs are composed and learnt and good singers are discovered and maybe invited to lead in songs of the *Ayugba* in future. These singers are however paid for services rendered. It is compulsory however for every youth in the community to participate in *Ayugba* dance since defaulters will not be given such honor when it gets to their turn.

Social ceremonies and performances in Oshimili South have special songs which maybe sung by special group or certain prescribed groups who are direct participants. The songs for that ceremony are however rendered by every member of the community since it is a communal effort and celebration, almost every social celebration have their socio-cultural implications and the adherence to these practices give a clear understanding of the organization, celebration and cultural practices of these communities, hence every social performance is socially and culturally

controlled to ensure orderliness and portray the aesthetics in their culture and celebrations. Among the Oko and Asaba communities, the *Igba-nkpisi* festival is a communal effort organized to welcome and absorb the male members into the community. It is a ritual as well as social ceremony that is celebrated every twenty years, hence every member of the community form part of the celebration, each playing their individual and collective roles depending on what is expected of that individual. The songs that accompany the celebration of the festival are the traditional songs of the people which are folk songs used also during other social activities that are organized in the community. The songs range from songs of allusion to satirical songs. Musicians from the neighboring communities are invited to either perform for them or perform with them and through this forum; there is exchange of folk songs, display of talents and creativity in songs, instrumental performances and dance. Generally, the *igba- nkpisi* celebration is also socially organized to create a forum for members of the community to come together for interaction, share in their common belief, portray their cultural heritage, learn their dialect and even seek for marriage partners. Every male member of the community who has not performed the *igba- nkpisi* ritual is expected to participate since this prepares them to join in other activities or title- taking. In Okwe community for example, a man who did not perform the *Igba-Nkpisi* is not recognized as a man in the community and such individual cannot take any title either. Most of the songs of the ceremony range from war songs to other social songs which are mainly used for social entertainment.

In burial ceremonies, burial rites are organized depending on the sex of the deceased. This is because the men and the women take different titles hence their burial is not entirely the same. If a titled man dies, he must be mourned by the initiate members of his group. This is the custom of the people which must be carried out accordingly. However, if the children of the

deceased insist on Christian burial as is practiced today, there are certain fees to pay to conduct the traditional burial rites 'silently'. It is only if the deceased has left the group that no punishment is meted on the family. Burial ceremonies also have their dirges which are song by the men and that of the women. There are dirges which are specially sung for the dead (*Abu Akwa M'ozu*) and these are first sung with other ceremonial rites before the social aspect comes up when every invited guest is present to pay their last homage. These songs rendered by the men and women are performed separately, with the men's own coming up first. The men's dirges are sung with musical instruments while the women sing theirs with hand clapping. It is the role of the women to keep vigil where the body of the deceased is lying in state*, Umuada Ikwunne* stay inside with the corpse, keeping vigil, while *Umuada Ogbe* keeps their vigil outside. This is after the men have brought the corpse from the mortuary and perform their own rites with their own songs. Burial songs are meant to send the deceased to join the ancestors, console the family members and create that awareness that death of a member is not a final departure from them since the community believes in re-incarnation. In traditional burial rites, every expected performance is carried out and these are not done, the bereaved families are meant to either perform the expected rites or face the consequences. Christian burials performed today among these communities have become a new culture which seems to relegate the traditional burial ceremonies to the background. Most Christian burials among these ommunities are intermeshed with traditional burials; hence one can take place before the other, depending on the family.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1.1 Findings

Agu, (2010) shares this view by Blacking (1976) which states that "the chief function of music is to involve people in shared experiences within the framework of their cultural experiences"(10). This implies that experiences shared within the framework of cultural activities and which includes music as well as other arts, should have common or related ideas, knowledge, interests, etc, which will enhance the use of common language for effective communication."Common language" here is not restricted to the dialect of the people only, but the musical language which may involve aesthetics or elements in performances, songs, dances and instrumental music as well.

The researcher discovered that the traditional folk songs of the Oshimili South communities are undergoing changes which in some way affected the usage of some songs being performed in their original contexts, where they usually appear. This stems from the lack of interest most of the youths have given to the music and songs of their community. This loss of interest may be because of the love for western music genre which has totally captured the interest of our younger generation. Some of these youth cannot speak their dialect hence see no need to learn their indigenous songs. Some who can are shy of indulging in their traditional performances when they are in their community. This was clearly observed during the field work. Most of the youth in the communities could not sing their folk songs because they are not fully grounded in their native dialect. This today, has resulted to a lot of changes in the songs and the songs texts where the present generation put in their own formed language / words; although the original

melodies are mostly maintained. One of the reasons happen to be that they find the songs that contain a lot of proverbs very difficult to sing and also very boring since they do not understand the meaning of most of the words used in the proverbs. It was also observed that the removal of certain modes of performances in some of the cultural activities also affected the usage of some songs. In the festivals and even burial ceremonies, a lot of changes where made to suit the current changes in the society due to influences from outside cultures and civilizations occurring here and there, and these also has affected not only the singing styles of the people, it has also affected the songs in their contextual states as well. Traditional performance of the *egwugwu* spirit manifest is today curtailed due to non- indigenes who live in these communities; the *igba– ilo*, which is a traditional burial procession that is accompanied with music and indigenous songs is also curtailed. Some folk songs where even banned due to the textual meaning which are today not acceptable to the communities; in situations where they are not bound, the texts are changed but the melodies retained.

Civilization has taken over the cultural practices of these communities and gradually, the cultural practices are being replaced by new elements that are a combination of more western and less African or indigenous tradition. In burial ceremonies for example, families that are against the traditional way of celebrating the burial will perform their Christian burial but are made to pay certain amount of money to settle the traditional burial and this is done silently. Those that insist on not paying for the traditional burial are told the implications which is, that the deceased's male children can not in future take any title unless the traditional burial is done. The wife (if it's a male) will not partake in nor join in any traditional burial ceremony either as a mourner or sympathizer. The fact still remains that traditional music is dynamic and cannot be erased but the changes have been affected, not only the cultural practices and musical traditions

of these communities, they have also been replaced by other interests outside their cultural boundaries, thereby making the present generation to loose interest in their cultural practices.

Today, the songtexts of the Oshimili South communities experience changes in their texts, melody, and performance mode; this is as a result of the changes that occur in our global world. Movements from rural to urban areas, the love for western and new kinds of music which the youths have accepted, the presence and usage of electronic medias use in musical performances, all these seem to distract the present generation from fully accepting to be active participants in their cultural performances. Despite the introduction of local language in schools, many cannot speak their native dialect. This is not an advantage to the learning and understanding of traditional folk songs which is sung in the native dialect of these communities.

The documentations of the indigenous songs of the people has helped the present generation to have access to their folk songs, learn and enjoy the songs and possibly learn their language.

Although most communities share common boundaries and have been in constant contact with one another, there are certain musical performances that exist among them that are solely based on the community's cultural beliefs and practices and despite the constant existence of acculturation and enculturation among our societies, these musical genres are still guarded from outside influences. These are very apparent in the burial ceremonies among the Oshimili South communities. The burial ceremonies of Asaba community are quite different from that of the Oko, although they trace their origin from same source-*Igalla*. Among the oko people, the first stage of their traditional burial is in praising their ancestor-*Odeaja*, recognizing his importance as the founder of their community and their ancestor. Whereas the Asaba community mourn their dead and in their songs (*abu-ozu*) , recognize the need to bade fare well to a dead member with

songs of praise and other dirges that portray their cultural and religious beliefs in re-incarnation. Every stage of the burial ceremony in Asaba community has its special song/music to accompany it, and most of these songs are actually meant for burial ceremonies only, especially the *okanga* songs. The texts of the songs portray that they are specially meant for mourning the dead and the melody is not left out too, they are solemn. In this activity, the researcher discovered also that the moods of the performers reflect in their songs and the texts.

Today, most traditional folk songs are used as songs for worship and for entertainment in Churches and for Christian religious worship. Songs meant for traditional activities are now used to suit other purposes outside their original contexts. The present generation however does not understand nor recognize the meaning and importance of some of these songs in the promotion and preservation of their cultural heritage. And because of these ignorances, the songs do not have the required effect on the present generation. Taboos are seen as archaic and barbaric and Christian religious activities are more popular than traditional activities so that very few members of the community hold on to their cultural activities. Most folk songs now find their way into churches.

Although traditional activities still hold in these communities, there are noticeable changes in the responses of the members of the community to their indigenous activities which are supposed to be a communal activity. These cultural activities are fast loosing their grip to the current cultural evolution which is a combination of western and African culture where some ritual/religious activities are seen as barbaric and unethical, they are either reformed or scraped to make way for the ones that suit the needs, and ideas of the present generation. These changes affected the indigenous songs, the songs texts and their modes of performance.

5.1.2 Recommendation

Indigenous songs of the Oshimili South communities play very vital role in the communication system within the communities. This is because some song texts function as sources of information, while some act as warning media and others for entertainment purpose as well as for ritual/ religious worship. Members of the community who are actively involved in the social and cultural activities understand every performance activity and adhere to the rules and regulations of every performance. This portrays the importance of performing and participating actively in the musical performances of the community in order to reckon with the norms and values of the cultural perpectives of the community and also help in promoting these cultural norms as well as having the authentic knowledge of these norms and values so as to pass it on to the next generation for proper documentation.

This portrays Oehrle (1993) assertion, that "music making in traditional society is a group activity" (163). These facts are further strengthened by Chernof, (1979), who points out that "music exquisites purpose; in the various ways it might be defined by Africans, is essentially, Socialisation…within the complex balances of community activities. Africans retain focus on the individual just as they encourage a musician's confidence in order to enhance creativity, so do they encourage participation in order to enhance possibilities for personal happiness and community realization"(154&162). Emeka,(1974) maintains that, "Nigerians are musical and at night or day, somewhere in traditional African societies, some music is sounding-not as a mere abstraction, not as sonic object, not only as entertainment, but a way of life"(1). Indigenous music and dance have therefore been 'a way of life' of the people of Oshimili communities as well as Africans as a whole. Every activity is portrayed or accompanied with music which is meaningful to the performers and audience. The more active an individual gets into the

performances and celebrations of the musical heritage of his/her community, the more knowledgeable the person becomes in the cultural practices of the community.

Socialization in the cultural practices of a people gives room to an effective learning of the cultural heritage of one's society. The individual will not only be a partaker but an effective contributor to the growth of his/her community's cultural and social heritage which makes them distinct from other neighbouring communities. it will assist the individual in the community in getting an indepth knowledge of the historical origin of his/her community, encourage the gifted in his/her creative area and finally, check the cultural in flow of other neighbouring and outside influences which may affect the community's own, negatively. Socialization will furher create room for adequate learning in the culture and musical tradition of the people.it will assist the younger generation in understanding their way of life and urge them to have a documentation of all that concern them in order to also pass it on to the next generation.

Folk songs are accepted based on how meaningful the text is to members of the community. If a particular song is meaningless and does not fit the contexts of it performance, the song is dropped because it is not acceptable. Songs and their texts must have an effect on individuals and the community for it to be accepted. This is because songs serve as not only an entertainment media; they are also used as moral booster. They are also culture indicators since they carry messages that portray the cultural beliefs and practices of the communities. Songs are meant to shapen and re-shapen the behaviours and characters of individuals in the community. It is also used as an effective mechanism in upholding the norms in the community and projecting the socio-cultural values that guide the community. Song texts serve various purposes as functioning elements and if properly utilized, every society's norms and values will be maintained and protected.

5.1.3. Conclusion

One of the easiest ways of having common musical experiences and exchange of ideas among communities that share common boundaries is the similarities in their spoken languages. Language, as portrayed by Agu (2010), is 'a vehicle of communication and a means through which signs and symbols are understandably shared within a given universe of usage" (10). It is not surprising to find neigbouring communities having or sharing the same musical traits which may be performed under the same contexts or on the other hand, under different contexts. Similarity in language is one of the medium of learning musical arts and sharing them among communities that share and have common cultural beliefs and boundaries. These practices are therefore not uncommon among the people of Oshimili South communities of Delta State. Their spoken languages are similar, their historical background differ in certain areas but they share some musical ideas due to the shared contacts and communication among them. It is not surprising to see the Asaba, Okwe and Oko communities sharing same festivals such as *iwaji* (new yam), which, although is celebrated on different days but share other similarities in their performance structure.

Music is an instrument for information, communication, entertainment; understanding the meaning of a musical piece depends on the audience and individual as well as their socio-cultural dispositions. A piece of music (song) will therefore convey its meaning to its listener or audience in different ways. An audience, who is familiar with the language, understands by interpreting the language (texts). Those that do not understand the language, interprets the melody, others the mood, performance situations, cultural background of the performers, etc. Agu, (2010) points out that, "the linguistic elements possessed by a piece of music depend on its association with the culture which on the other hand, depends on the society or the individual" (11). He further

explains that "a piece of music could generate different reactions in several listeners as a result of the differences in their socio-cultural background and language". That is why one can find folk songs which have the same melody and textual meaning performed in different contexts by neighbouring communities and for different reasons.

The texts of some songs can therefore dictate the occasions in which the song maybe used for a musical performance. This may be very common in social performances. In ritual activities, the songs are specially composed and used to portray the activities and usages, and the usages are usually, culturally guided and organized since it reflects the community's cultural beliefs and practices. Anything against these practices has their implications. In the performance of the *egwugwu* spirit manifest, the musical sounds from the songs rendered by the initiate members communicate more to the members of the community but to the outsider, it is the sight of the masquerade that warns them of the presence. The difference in the performance of the spirit manifest is that in Asaba, it is only men that can follow and watch the masquerade within a close range, but in Oko community, the spirit manifest appear only during its festival and this appearance is celebrated with both sexes in the community watching but the women, from a distance, except non indigenes who are not allowed to come out when the egwugwu is being led round the village. The initiate members can go close to the egwugwu and even converse with it. They understand its language. The symbolic thing about this performance is that the followers of the spirit manifest must be half naked; the reason for this was not revealed but the researcher believes it is because the egwugwu is not human. In Oko community, both sexes watch half naked too.

Folk music shared among the Oshimili South communities are also exchanged due to their contextual performances.These musical arts are common in their social performances, work

songs, children game songs and the social aspect of festival celebration. Where they have cultural differences, especially in the aspect of ritual/religious inclinations, there exists special music/songs strictly composed and sung by that community. An example of this is also in the music of the *egwugwu* (spirit manifest), which is only performed and celebrated in Asaba and Oko communities, who trace their origin from Igalla in kogi state. The historical songs as well as special dirges rendered are strictly sung by the initiate members. The textual language/ dialect is in Igalla and it is also understood by these initiate members only. In Asaba community, the music of the *egwugwu* spirit manifest is performed for a dead male initiate member of the community and also during severe crisis that require the presence of the *egwugwu* as regards maintenance of law and order in the community, while the Oko community celebrate theirs as a festival of worship for the living and the dead.

The ritual songs by the *Ogbu* initiates are also understood by the members only and can be sung by them when initiating new members and during the burial of a dead member too. The music of these ritual performances are identified and recognized by members of the community who are familiar with the musical sounds and songs of the *ogbu* and *egwugwu* music. The *egwugwu* members employ guttural vocal sounds which make no meaning to un-initiate members but are identifiable only to those who are familiar with the sounds. The songs and musical sounds which emanate from the performers generate different reactions to the listeners- to the initiate members who are part of the performance, it is symbolically their call (as they decode and respond), while to the other listeners, it is for their entertainment consumption and as warning signals. The initiate members therefore respond to the musical performances based on the motifs while on the other hand, the audience respond to only the musical sounds.

In their religious / ritual performances, the Oshimili South communities have a belief system that is based on the spiritual world- that the only way to communicate to the spirits is through sacrifices, songs and dances. They maintain the belief system which is based on the spiritual realities and belief that an effective way to link or communicate with the spirit is through music and dance; hence they strongly believe that their traditional songs commune, heal, educate, entertain and invoke. To these communities, music is life and should be used to welcome and send every member of the community to his/her ancestors. Just as the functionalist attributes the meaning and value of a link of art to its relationship with the activities of the society's involvement with and in it and consequently, the role or function that it performs in that society's existence, so the folk songs of the Oshimili South communities are upheld and used to enact every activity that they indulge in, which forms a part of their cultural beliefs and practices.

The traditional songs of the Oshimili South communities reflect the heart of their culture and tradition and, further give a true picture of their cultural practices and belief systems. The songs uphold the values and norms of the society and tell of their existence in Africa and the world, where emphasis is given to cultural values such as relationship with ancestors, rite de passage and traditional healing services. Every song performs its function where necessary and leaves its message which is decoded and sometimes acted on by those the message in the song is meant for.

Some of the folk songs among these Communities go all out to check societal excesses and these include immorality, social injustices, some of the songs also encourage good behaviours and these are found in the songs texts. All these portray traditional song texts as informative. In the past also and even to the present, traditional oral poetry perform same role as the press and the radio, not only to inform, educate and entertain, but also to express public opinion. Nzewi,

(1980) contends that "folk music (song)…in all its element and application has latent psychological, psychical and spiritualizing essence; it is a bond, the unbilical cord that links the ultra-terrestial forces whose potencies are made manifest in various awe-inspiring phenomenal and unpredictable ways in their lives" (12). Every aspect of activity that has to do with the community's development is accompanied with music and exhibited in the songs; hence there are songs specially meant for every organized performance and these songs are not just meant for entertainment only.

Musicians (singers) are highly regarded and respected in Oshimili South communities. They are also feared because of what they can do with information received, which they do not hesitate to put into songs for record purposes and for historical purposes too. Traditional musicians are still highly regarded and admired for the expertise they employ in their words in songs, especially their knowledge in proverbs and wise sayings. The traditional musicians in Oshimili South communities play very important roles as singers, composers, news vendors and record keepers. For a musician to be highly accepted and sought for, he or she must possess good voice quality, have a concise knowledge of the history of the community, and be very good and versed in proverbs and in their native dialect. These qualities show that the musician is involved and active in the socio –cultural activities that occur within the community. It portrays the rate at which the traditional musicians are active in the traditional musical arts of the community. Although, there are few traditional musicians and performers in these communities, but they are still highly sought for to perform in traditional performances. The communities go as far as inviting musicians from neighbouring communities to perform for them. These also show that traditional musical arts still play very important role in the life of members of these communities, as entertainment media. Through the traditional songs too, everything about the culture, the

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history of the land are learnt from these professional African musicians who strive to keep the cultural heritage of the land through their songs.

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Mrs Ashikordi Ogosi-----------July 2013

Mrs N Okonkwo-------------- September 2013.

APPENDIX 1(PICTURES)

Interview With Okwulagwe Group

Egwu-Ota Dance Performance

Ndi-Ishi Okwute

Okwulagwe **performance**

Egwu-ji burial performance

***Egwu-Ota* Ensemble**

Stanza 1: *Egwu Ndi Nmuo*

Stanza 2: *Egwu Ada*

Stanza 3: *Egwu-Ota*

Stanza 4: *Egwu-Ota*

Egwu Diokpa

Stanza 6: *Egwu Ada na Diokpa*

Egwu Diokpa

Igba-ilo

Ndi-enyi

Ndi-Eze

Ayuwe: Eze Ugbo

Traditional burial performance in Okwe Community

***Idu Egwu* (Burial Escorts)**

SECOND STANZA OF *EGWU-OTA* BURIAL DANCE(PERFORMED BY THE *ADA* ALONE)

Burial ceremony in Oko community.

Okwulagwe **Group Performing**

Instrument for *Okanga* Music

Instrument for *Egwu-ji*

Okwulagwe **Performing** *Egwu-ji*

APPENDIX 2

SONG 1.

Song   **Translation**

Oh, oh! Ewo! Oh, oh! ----------------lamentation!(thrice)

Onye kote ogu ……..if one starts a fight

Ya gba n'oso-o………one should not run

Omeka nne adi anwu anwu-o……..one who imitates the mother lives long

Ome ka nne adi anwu anwu-o---------one who imitates the mother lives long

Ewo! Ewa-o-o

Yadi-o kele kele adi nma-o-------- it is well

Yadi-o kele kele adi nma-o----------it is so

Kele kele alusi-olu-o------------------*kele kele* has finished working

Na nwa nnu nu-ebulu-e li-o---------- the bird will eat it up

Agbogo ebulu oku---------------- The maiden who carries the light

Ya bulu anwulu nwanne-o----------let her take the smoke as well

Ogad'igon ma--------------------will it be right?

Na onye nkem ge bulu ozu-o------for one to bear the corpse of a relative?

J'ebe-o, n'achala esi ke nni-o---- the elephant grass is strong

Achala esi ke nni-------------- the grass is strong

Na nwa mu ge bu-e nue-o----- but it can be swallowed up

Chorus;

e-w-o-o-o!

oyonyo-o-o-o

oyonyo-o-o-o

ije nwuje-jie gi-o

nmadu nwu-a--------- when one dies

n'obu zi ofor nmu-o------ he/she joins the ancestors

oko n'ogwa, orko n'ogwa------------things maybe scarce in a palace

n'aji ewu adi-akor n'ogwa ezie-----the hair of a goat is never scarce in a palace

ewo! Ewo-ah!---------------

Yadi-o!-------------- it is well!

N'onye oma ka onwu n'eli-o------------it is the good ones that death eats

Chimu-o! ------------------------ My God!

N'onye oma ka onwu n'eli-o----- it is the good ones that die!

Onye oma k'onwu n'eli----------it is the good ones that death eats

N'ife mee nabhe anyi-o--------- something has happened to us!

Agbogo ebulu-oku------ the maiden carries the fire

Ya bulu anwulu nwanne-o------ let her take the smoke as well

Yadi ba-o--------------------   it is well

Ukor elili-ako n'uga-o---------the rope is always left in the barn

Ewo de-o n'ukor elili-a kor n'uga-------it is true!the rope is always in the barn

Ukor elili-akor n'uga--------------------the rope is always in the barn

SONG 2. Abu ozu (men)

Ewo! Ewo-o-o-o

Ewo! O-o-o

Yadi ba-o

Ewo!ewo!o-o-o

Isi kete ogu ya gba n'oso-o------ one that starts a fight should not run

Omeka nne adi-anwu anwu-o------- one that acts like the mother lives long

Omeka nne adi-anwu anwu-o------ one that acts like the mother lives log

Call:

Oga di go nma na nweze---------will it be right

Nweze na kpali-be we---------- for brothers to fight each other?

Response:

Odi go nma nweze, odigo nma nweze ana-o---- it is not right to fight one another

Solo Recitation:

Nweze-o!

Aka kote ogu--------- the hand that spoils for a fight

Ya gba n'oso-o---------- should not run

Ije fulu onye na nwanne-o-------it is wise to live at peace with one another

Agbogo bulu oku---------- the maiden carries the fire

Ya bulu anwulu nwanne-o----let her take the smoke also

Yadi ba-o! -------------------------may it be so!

Uga elili-akor n'uga-o--------------the rope is never absent in the barn

Nnem-o! uga elili-akor n'uga------my mother! The rope is never absent in the barn.

SONG 3. *Ife onye meli nwanne,ka anya mili akwa ji agba.*

    Song   **Translation**

Call*: Ife onye meli nwanne-o*----- whatever you do to your brother/ sister

Ka anya nmili akwa ji-agba-o------ the tears will flow

Response: *Ife onye meli nwanne*---- what ever you do to your brother

Ka anya nmili akwa ji-agba-------- the tears will flow

Call: *Ife onye meli-ofu afu-a*------- whatever you do to your sibling

Ka anya nmili akwa ji-agba-o----- the tears will flow

Response: *Ife onye meli nwanne-o*---- whatever you do to your brother

Ka anya nmili akwa ji-agba-o----- the tears will flow

Call: *Nwanne-o! nwanne!*--------- your siblings! Your siblings!

Onye ayakwana nwanne-o----------- do not neglect your brother/ sister

Response: *Ife onye meli nwanne*----- the deeds meted on your brother/ sister

Ka anya nmili akwa ji-agba-o--------- that is why the tears flow

Solo*: Onye ayakwana nwanne*-----do not neglect your brother/sister

Onye ayakwana ofu-a fua-o----- do not neglect your sibling

Response: *Ife onye meli nwanne* ---- an offence towards your brother/ sister

Ka anya nmili akwa ji agba-o------ will make the tears flow

SONG 4   *Onye Ayana!*

          Song   **Translation**

Call: *Onye ayana-o*------ let no one forget…

Response*: Onye ayana nu nwanne-o*-----let no one forget his sibling

    Nu ya dor-o-------- it is a taboo

Call: *Ayana nu ofu-afo*--------- do not turn your back on your sibling

Response: *Onye ayana nu ofu afo-o*------- do not turn your back

    Nu ya dor-o (twice)------- it is a taboo

Call: *Aya bao-lu-o*------   if one keeps arguing

Response: *Ayaba olu-o ayabao-lu*------- if one keep arguing

    N'akuku-eheli-o-------   the side will be cut off

Call: *Weli Oso-o*-------   make haste

Response: *Weli oso, Weli –je-o*------- run, make haste

    Shi-e nwanne-o----------   -keep a cordial relationship

Call: *Debe ugbo-o*---------   keep the canoe

Response: *Debe ugbo-o, debe amala-o*-------- keep the canoe, keep the paddle

    Shi-e nwanne-o-----------   keep a cordial relationship

Call*: Debe iwe-o*-----------   forget anger

Response*: Debe iwe-o, debe onuma-o*--------- forget anger, forget bitterness

    Shi-e nwanne-o----------   keep a cordial relationship

Call: *Togbo iwe-o*-----------   shelve every anger

Response: *Togbo iwe-o, togbo onuma*------- -shelve your anger, shelve your bitterness

Shi- e nwanne-o----------------   keep a cordial relationship

SONG 5. *Onwu bulu aku, onye ga hali onwu.*

    song   **Translation**

Call: *Onwu bulu aku*-------if death is wealth

    Onye ga hali onwu-o---who will choose death?

Response: *Onwu bulu aku* ----- if death is wealth

    Onye ga hali onwu-o------- who will choose death?

Call: *Onwu bulu nni*-------- if death is food

    Onye ge li de we-o----- who will eat it

'

Respnse: *Onwu bulu nni*------- if death is food?

    Onye ge li de we-o----- who will eat it?

Call*: Onwu bulu akwa*---- if death is cloth

    Onye ge je de we-o---   who will tie it?

Response: *Onwu bulu akwa*------ if death is cloth

    Onye ge je de we-o------ who will tie it?

Call: *Onwu bulu eze*------- if death is eze title

    Onye ge chi de we-o----   who will take it?

Response: *Onwu bulu eze*-------   if death is eze title?

    Onye ge chi de we-o---   who will take it?

Call: *Onwu bulu alo*-----   if death is a title

    Onye ga kpa da wa-o------------ Who will take it?

Response: *Onwu bulu alo*----   if death is a title?

    Onye ga kpa da wa-o---   -who will take ir?

Call: *Onwu bulu uno*---   if death is a home

    Onye Ge bi de we-o---   who will live in it?

 Response: *Onwu bulu uno*----   if death is a home?

> *Onye Ge bi de we-o-----*   who will live in it?

Call: *umu adaba, Ife me Na b'enyi-o---umu adaba*, something happened to us

Response: *Umu adaba Ife mee Na b' enyi-o----- umu adaba*! Something happened to us!

SONG 6: *Oyenye*

| **Song** | **Translation.** |

Call*: Oyenye! nwa agueze ana-o……..*(oyenye)!agueze's chid is gone!

     Nwa-agueze naba olima……… .agueze's child has gone to the world beyond

     Ya n' onye ge bi-o...? who will he/she live with?

     Ona be we-o…………………… .He/she has gone home!

     Response--------- same as the call.

SONG 7. *Ahum adagbue muo.*

 Song   **Translation**

Ahum adagbue muo e-ahumu-o(thrice)----------   my body excites me!

Ife ahum ji asom uso--------------though my body excites me

Na ahu nmadu bu aja-o-------------but the body is still made from dust.

  SONG 8: *Onwu ikolobia na onwu agbogo.*

 Song   **Translation**

Ewo! Ewo! Ewo! Ewo!

Onwu ikolobia onwu nwagbogo ---   the death of a young man and that of a young lady

Jo gbu onwe-o---------------------- is very bad/ painful

Onwu ikolobia------------the death of a young man

Onwu nwa agbogo--------the death of a maiden

Jogbu onwe-o---------------- is very sad

Adaku nwa agueze------------ Adaku, daughter of Agueze

Onwu ajor onwu------------- died a bad death

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Oni hor ne-o--------------- she did not burial her mother!

Alili dhor----------------------- it is a misery

SONG 9. *Abu uje*.

Song   **Translation**

E! E! E!Eeeeeeee!

Onye emene nwata ife uya----------do not put a child in misery

Ebe osi bia eteke-o-------------- the child is sorrowful

Nwata wali ugboko, wa aku--------the child has searched through forests and thick

Oji-a chor nne-o----------- searching for the mother

Nne n'ofu azia!----------- the mother he/she is yet to be found!

2ND Soloist---

E! E! E! E!Eeeeeeeeeee

Obodo biko bia nu-------------------please come!

N'egwu atu gbue muo------------- I am scared!

Onye emene nwa ifu ya---------- do not put the child in misery

Ebe osi bia eteke-o------------------ because you don't know where he/she came from

Nwa ta wali ugboko wa aku--------the child passed through forests and trees

Oji achor nne-o---------------------- searching for the mother

Nne nor ofu azia-o--------------------the mother, yet to be found.

Solo call: *oh! o!oh! o!*

Chorus resp: oh! O!oh!o!ooo!

Call---*Ajaji Ogene-o!*------------------ Ajaji, I greet1

Resp.---oh o, oh o, ooo!

Call-----*Onaje Omogwu*-o!---------------Onaje, I greet!

Resp.----oh o,oh o,oooo!

Call---- *Ugbome Anyanwu*!------------ugbome, greetings!

Resp.---oh o,oh o,ooooo!

Call----*Agu Ajie-o*!---------------- Agu, greetings!

Resp.—oh o,oh o, oooo!

Call-----*Ogene Pencil-oo*!---------------Ogene, pencil!

Resp.----oh o,oh o, oooo!

Chorus--- *Ayaga ya, ayaga ya iyo* (twice)

Solo-----*Owelle lie nni owelle aju*--------- Owelle come and eat, Owelle refused

Resp.---*Ayaga ya, ayaga ya iyo*!

Solo----*Owelle je afia owelle aju*-------Owelle,go to market, Owelle refused

RESP----*Ayaga ya!ayaga ya iyo*

Solo—*Owelle je ugbo owelle aju*--------Owelle, go to the farm, Owelle refused

Resp----*ayaga ya ayaga ya iyo!*

Solo-----*Owelle lie nni owelle kweli*-o!---------Owelle, come and eat, Owelle agreed

Resp.---*Iyoo ko koooo iyoo*

Solo------ *Owelle ko koooo*!------------

Resp.---------*Iyooo! Ko kooo! Iyooo*!

SONG 10. *Agbogo lu ani*

Song	**Translation**
(agbogo lu-ani)…………..	Maidens should bend down
Call*: Agbogo lu-ani-o*…………….	Maidens bend down
Response: *Ala nkita* …………….	Like the breast of a dog
Call*: Agbogo lu-ani-i*…………….	Maidens, bend down
Response: *Ala nkita*…………….	like a dog's breast
Call: *onye kunie-otor*………….	whoever stands!
Response*: Ala nkita*………….	like a dog's breast
Call*: iyi enu gbue ya*………….	curses from heaven will kill her

Response: *Ala nkita*………… like a dog's breast

Cal: *iyi ani gbue ya*………….. curses from earth will kill her

Response: *Ala nkita*………… like a dog's breast.

SONG 11   *Ndi Nkuzi*

Song	**Translation**
Call: *Ndi nkuzi*!	Teachers!
Biko! a-pia zi-n'anyi –itali (twice)…………	Please! Stop the flogging
N'ihi na itali …………………..	Because, it is the flogging.
Na ebute nkpotu………………	.Brings about the noise-making
Response: *Umu akwukwo*...	Pupils!
Biko emezi ne nu nkpotu (twice)………	Please, stop the noise-making
Nihi na nkpotu na ebute itali…………	because, the noise leads to flogging

SONG 12.   ***Cholu onye gabu oyi muo.***

Song	Translation
Cholu onye gabu,oyimo!(thrice)………	Am searching for who will be my friend
Onye gabu oyimo!	Who will be my friend?
Afu go-mu, oyimo! (Thrice).................................	I have found my friend
Onye gabu oyimo…………………………….	who will be my friend?

SONG 13. ***Mbe!***

Song	TRANSLATION
Narrator-- *Mbe agaba*--------------------------	The Tortoise moved on
Chorus Response---*Aja Mbene*--------------------	Aja mbene (twice)
Narrator—*kwudo nkwu nu-wa*---------------------	walked up to a palm tree
Chorus Response---- *aja mbene*--------------------	Aja Mbene
Narrator----- *Osi ya icha l'ogbe one*? ---------	how many ripe bunches have you?

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Chorus Response.------ *Aja Mbene*!----------==   Aja Mbene!

Narrator—*Osi n'ocha l'ofu ogbe*---------   he replied, one bunch

Chorus Response----

Narrator----*Tufiani!*------   what a shame!

Chorus Response----

Narrator---*Maka ibu ho nku*!------   you are not a palm tree!

Chorus Response-----

Narrator----------*ka nke ya ga ta?* -----   Which one will he eat?

--------*ka nke onu nwa tu nwa mbe*? —   Which one will the children eat?

----- -*ka nke onu ji eme kicho*?------   -which one will be kept for another meal?

Chorus Response---- *Aja Mbene*!

Narrator---*Mbe agaba*---- ---   Tortoise move on

Chorus Response..*Aja Mbene* (twice)

Narrator------- *Okwudo nkwu nu wa*--------came to another palm tree

Chorus Response----*Aja mbene*!

Narrator------*Osia ichali ogbe one?* ------   And asked, how many palm do you have?

Chorus-----

Narrator-----*Osi na ochali ogbe abua*-----   -two, replied the palm tree

Chorus response-----

Narrator----*Tufiani*!

Chorus response—*Aja Mbene!*--

Narrator-----*maka ibuho nku!* -------   You are useless!

Chorus response-----

Narrator----- *ka nke ya ga ta?* --------   Which one will it eat?

   Ka nke onu wa so nwa mgbei? -----   -which one will the children eat?

   Ka nke onu na atu ki cho? -------- Which, will the baby eat?

Chorus response----- *Aja Mbene*

Narrator----*Mbe agaba*----------   Tortoise moved on (twice)

AJA MBENE!

Narrator---- okwudo *nkwu nu wa*---------   met the palm tree

Aja Mbene!

Osia ichali ogbe one?-----   -how many ripe fruits have you?

Aja Mbene!

Narrator-----*Osi ya cha ka ahua ha*-----   says it's ripe in all the bunches

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----------*ka igua ha*--------   -ripe as many as it's number of palmfronts

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*mbe aligua*-----   Tortoise climbed up

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*gbue kpoi kpoi*----   started cutting

Aja Mbene!

Narrator--- *gbue kpoi kpoi*----   started cutting

Aja Mbene!

Narrator--*ARUM! Maka obu osukwu*! ----   My wife, it's sweet and fleshy!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*owolu tin ye na akpa*---   -he plucked and put in the bag

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*ofu adaba nya na nmili*----one nut fell into the river

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*osi nmilie nuwa*-------   -it said, 'this river'

Aja Mbene!

Narrator------- *obu nig e li ya*-----   -if you will swallow me

Aja Mbene!

Narrator*-----ilie ray a------* - *swallow* me!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator-----*obu ni ma li ya---* -if you will not swallow me

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*ili ray a-----* - don't swallow me!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator-----*mbe adaba----* -tortoise dived into the river

Aja Mbene!

Narrator-----*gwue!gwue!gwue!-----* swum!swum!swum!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*okwudo okpo---* - it met cat fish

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*osi ya kpom kpom---* he called, kpom!kpom!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*osi ya kpom kpom—* he called, kpom kpom

Aja Mbene!

Narrator-----*osi ya itali- akwua? ---* -he asked, did you eat my palm nut?

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*osi ya ntana akwu----* he replied, if I ate your palm nut

Narrator-----*ndi isi wa ba nu kodo ofe---* I swear with all the dead fishes

Narrator-- --*ikenga nwulu okpa gbulie! ----* let me be cursed!

 Aja Mbene!

 Narrator----*Mbe echi pu----* tortoise moved on

 Aja Mbene!

 Narrator----*okwudo Asia---* - met another fish (ASIA)

 Aja Mbene!

 Narrator—*osi ya siam siam--* -he greeted, siam!siam!(twice)

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Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*osi ya itala akwu--*   -he asked if he ate his palm nut

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*osi ya ntana akwu--*   -   it said, if I ate your palm nut

   Ndi isi wa ba nu ukodo ofe----   I swear with all the dead fishes

  Ikenga nwulu okpa gbulie--   -   let me be cursed!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*mbe echi pu---*   -tortoise moved on

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*gwue! Gwue! Gwue*! ---   -   swum! Swum! Swum!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*okwudo omelo okwe----*   met another fish (OMELO OKWE)

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*okwudo omeho okwe---*   met another fish (OMEHO OKWE)

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*os*i *ya itala akwu*?----   it asked, did you eat my palm nut?

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*osi ya ntala akwui--*   -it said yes, I ate your palm nut

    Imali ife ge me ya ki ime---   what you want to do, do it let me see!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator-----*mbe ahapu, kadoi nisi--*   -tortoise struck it on the head

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*okwu ahapu kadoi n'obi---*   *okwu* (fish) struck tortoise on the chest

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*olu ho izu nabo anyi anu na mbe anwuhu--* -two weeks later tortoise   died

Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*oga be chukwu---*   -it went to God's house (heaven)

Aja Mbene!

Narrator------ *okwu aka nu uzo*----   it knocked on the door

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*onye kuli aka nu uzo*! ---   Whoever is knocking on the door!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*aka tokwai nu uzo*---   -let your hand gum to the door!

 Aja Mbene!

Narrator---*ikwulu okwu nu uzo!* ----   you talking at the door!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator----*onu tokwai nu uzo*----   -let your mouth gum to the door!

Aja Mbene!

Narrator—*ofu nkpulu akwu*---   -because of one palm nut

          Ka iwe jili gbulu mbe---   anger sent the tortoise to its death

          Onye bokata mbo----   Those that are petty

          Ya hapu nata mbo-----   should stop being petty

           Na mbo adi ho nma!-----pettiness is not a virtue

SONG 14.   *Ogiso gbue nwa efi kai lie.*

   Song   **Translation**

   Call: *Ogiso gbue nwaefi ni kai lie*----   ogiso kill the cow let us eat

   Response*: Dumi yo mi yo dumi yo*! ------------ Dumi yo mi yo dumi yo!

    Call: *Na efi tali oka nu me adiho zia*--   -   the cow ate corn and its weak

    Response: *Dumi yo mi yo dumi yo!*------------------ *dumi yo miyo dumi yo!*

   Call: *Kpokololom! Kpokololom*!

    Response: *Dumi yo miyo dumi yo!* (Twice).

SONG 15. *Ku aka nnei na aka nnai*

Song   Translation

Ku aka nne-i--------   clap for your mother

Ku aka nna-i-------   clap for your father

Ku aka ngi na nne-I ji eli nni---   -clap the hand you and your mother eat with

Ku aka ngi na nna-I ji eli nni---   clap the hand you and your father eat with

*Ku aka ngi na umu nwanne-I ji eli nni---*clap the hand you and your siblings eat with

SONG 16.   *Onye mulu nwa ne be akwa*

Song   Translation.

Onye mulu nwa ne be akwa? ----   -who has the baby that is crying?

Egbe mulu nwa ne be akwa------- the eagle has the baby that is crying

Wete uziza wete ose-------   bring uziza (spice), bring pepper

Wete omuma wa ge ji gwe---   -bring the grinding stone to gring them

Ka umu nnunu lacha aka----   -let the birds lick their hands

Oh wa yi-o! Oo- wa yi-o!

SONG 17.   *Abu ayugba.*

O-naba be di-e----o o ayugba-----   she is going to her husbnd's house
Ada naba be di-e o-o ayugba----   -Ada is going to her husband's house (*Ayugba!*)
Agbogo ana ba bhe di-e-o----   o o ayugba

Call--*Ocho kwa------*   -whenever he wants
Reponse----*Inye ye-----*   always give him
Call---*Ocho nu ututu---*   -if he wants it in the morning
Response----*Inye ye------*   you give him
Call-----*Ocho na efifie---*   -if he wants it in the day
Response-----*Inye ye------*   you give him
Call----------*Ocho na anyasi-------* if he wants it in the evening
Reponse-----*Inye ye---------------*you give him
Call---------*Ocho nu uchichi----*if he wants it at night
Rsponse-------*Inye ye--------* you give him

SONG 18.   *Eze Ugbo*

Ezigbo o o o o o o!-
Oh o!oh!
O! O! O! O! O! O!
Ka onye isobo la gbu nnei------ when the Urhobo man raped your mother
Ikwu go okwu-o? ---------------- did you protest?
Ikpu wig-o! o o o o o oh!-------- ikpu wig-o!

SONG 19   *Olokoto Ipo!*

    Song   Translation
 Call---- *Olokoto!*   Olokoto!

Response--- *IPO*!

Call----*olokoto*!
Response--- *IPO!*
Call----- *ipo nwa*! -------- Plenty children!
Response-----*IPO*! -----Ipo!
Call------ *IPO EGO*! ---- Plenty money!
Response----- *IPO!* ------- Ipo!
Call---- *AHU DINMA*!
Response---- *IPO*! ---------- Ipo!
Call----- *OGONOGO NDU*! ------- long life!
Response—*IPO!* -------- Ipo!
  (ipo here literarily means ' plenty")

Zolu! *Zolu*!
Call--- *Zolu! Zolu*
Response--- *Zolu Nwa* N'okpa! ------- STEP ON A CHILD.
Call---- *Zolu! Zolu!*---------- STEP! STEP!
Response----- *Zolu Ego N'Okpa*! ------- Step on wealth
(Zolu here literarily means those asking for wealth will become wealthy and those praying for children will bear children)

SONG 20.   *Okwu Ngwali Nwunye Dim-o.*

  Song   Transation

Okwu ngwali nwunye dim-o   the secret I made known to a rival

Ka obulu gwa dim-o   she revealed it!

Dim ewelie n'etim-o   I was beaten because of my rival

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Alili-e gbue we-o   misery will befall them!

SONG 21.   *Imali Oba*

Song   Translation

*Imali oba ga mali oba-*o------   if you want to know/meet the king

Onye ni maho oba   any one that does not know the king

Ya ga mali oba   let that one come to know the king

Na malim oba-o   I have known the king.

SONG 22.   *Asia Di Na Oshimili Biko Kunie.*

   Song   Translation

Asia din a Oshimili biko kunie-o   Asia in the river(Oshimili) rise up!

Asia dina Oshimili biko kunie-o   Asia in Oshimili,please arise!

Onu din a uwa ge kwu kwe ife di nmao   the world will speak in truth

Onye n'osia n'uwa na oga na-o   after our sojourn on earth,we will go

Aiyo!   Aiyo!

  SONG 23:   *Dim-o*!*Dim-o* !*Dim-o* !

 Song   Translation

*Dim-o!dim-o!dim-o!dim-*o(twice)   my husband!

Nsi dim go nyem-u akwa-o   I asked my husband for a wrapper

Dim aju-o   my husband refused

Nsi dim go nyem-u akwa-o   I asked my husband to buy me a wrapper

Dim aju-o   my husband refused

Mana ofu onye yi lesi-o   but if he sees someone tying lace

Ona na anya   he gets attracted

Mana ofu onye yi georgi   if he sees someone tying George (wrapper)

On*a na anya*   he gets attracted

Oh! Dim-o, dim-o dim-o dim-o dim-o   oh! My husband, my husband

SONG 24:   *Ka nje ga gwa nne muo*

Song   Translation

Ka nje ga gwa nnem-uo   let me go and tell my mother

Na anam Oshimili-o   the beauty in Oshimili

Ka nje ga gwa nnemu-o   let me go and tell my mother

Na anam Oshimili-o   that I won't leave Oshimili

Ebe nje li je asogbue mu-o   the land I live is beautiful

Ahaba amaka-o   Ahaba is beautiful!

Ebe nje li je asogbue mu-o   the place I sojourned is beautiful

Umu ahaba ewe ni' iwe-o   Ahaba people, please do not take offence

SONG 25:   *Umu Ahaba Okokokoo!*

  Song   Translation

Call: *Umu ahaba oko KO Koo!*   Ahaba people! Oko KO Koo!

Rsponse: *Ya dili wa-o*   let it be!

Call: *Ahaba Ibo okwe oko KO Koo*!   Ahaba Ibo Okwe, oko KO Koo!

Resonse: *Ya dili wa-o*   let it be!

Chorus: *Ya dili wa-o*   let it be!

  Nor di holu ngbada   if it is not meant for the Antelope

  Odili efie-o   it is for the cattle

  Ya dili wa-o   let it be!

SONG 26:   *Ewo! Ewo Ije-o! Ewo!*

Call- *Ife ju na Asaba n'ilo*------every good thing dwells in Asaba and its environ.

Ma n-uno, Ma n'ofia-o------------both within and without

*Umu Asaba na nwuli-o----------*asaba people are always happy

Ani Asaba bali uba----------- asaba land is rich

Nnukwu obodo-o! ------- a great town!

 1ST Solo- *alili-o, alili-o n'egwu n'eje-o-----*pleadings also go with laughter

*Ife solu onye mee-o-----------*no matter what people may say

Na adinwa ka nga anu-o ------- I will marry Adinwa

Ya dib a-o! ---------------------- may it be so!

2ND *Solo-*

*Alili-o, Alili igba anyi ge ti-o-----*pleadings go with music

*Azubuike agu nwa-o------*Azubuike, the great warrior!

*Onye nne tili igba no n'ana-*o------my audience are waiting

Kai je egwu-o---------------------- let us go and perform

Chorus-

Ewo! Ewo ije-o, ewo!------- let us go!

Ewo! Ewo ije, Ewo-oo.-----let us go!

1ST Solo-

Nmu bu egwu-o------- I am music!

*Nmu bu egwu n'egwu n'eti-o-----*I am music, the drum is playing!

*Ife solu onye mee-o---------*no matter what people say

Na adinwa ka nga anu-o awele-o!------ I will marry Adinwa, lucky!

2nd solo-

Atu ka NNE si aso-o---------- if one considers how good mothers are

Na nne nmadu aka anwu-o------- no mother will die

Atu ka nne si aso-o------------- considering how kind mothers are

Na nne nmadu aka anwu------- no mother will die

Kai je egwu-o------------- let us go and dance/ perform

Chorus-

Ewo! Ewo ije-o, Ewo-o

Ewo! Ewo ije-o, Ewo-o.

Recitation-

SONG 27: *Dune muo! Dune muo! Na ng na-o!*

   Song   Translation

Solo-

Dune muo, dune muo na nga na-o------- take me home

Dune muo, dune muo na nga na-o-------take me home, I want to go

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o------------the wicked wife kills her husband

Ka ofuzor ga n'ilo----------- so that she can flirt about town

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o-------the wicked wife kills her husband

Ka ofuzo ga n'ilo----------so that she can flirt about town

Ah! Ah1 oyenye wo!

Chorus-

Ewo, ewo my dear-o----*ewo*!, ewo! My dear

Ewo, ewo my dear-o

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o-----the wicked wife kills her husband

Ka ofuzo ga n'ilo---------- in order to flirt about town

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o--------the wicked wife kills her husband

Ka ofuzo ga n'ilo----------- in other to flirt abou town

Ah! Ah! Onyenye wo

Solo-

Dune muo, Dune muo na nga na-o-------take me home, take me home, I want to go

Dune muo, dune muo na nga na-o------ take me home, take me home, I want to go

Adim adi alu-orlu-o---------- I know I do not have a job

Ego nni adi ako muo---------but I am not hungry

Adim adi alu-orlu-o---------I know I do not have a means of livelihood

Ego nni adi ako muo------- I am not in want

Ah! Ah! Oyenye-o yadi ba-o

Recitation.

Solo.

Kwali ibu yo, Kwali ibu naba-o---- pack your things, pack and leave

Kwali ibu yo, kwali ibu yo naba-o---pack your things, pack and go

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o-------- the wicked wwife kills her husband

Ka ofuzo tor n'ilo------ in other to flirt around town

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o-----the bad wife kills her husband

Ka ofuzo tor n'ilo---------in ither to flirt around town

Ah! Ah! Oyenye wo!

Chorus.

Ewo!ewo my dear-o-------ewo! Ewo1 my dear

Ewo!, ewo my dear-o----ewo! ewo! my dear

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o----the bad wife kills her husband

Ka ofuzo tor n'ilo------ to flirt about town

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o-----the bad wife kills her husband

Ka ofuzo tor n'ilo------- in other to flirt about town

Ah1 ah! Oyenye wo

Solo.

Dune muo, dune muo, na nga na-o-----take me home, take me home, I want to go

Dune muo, dune muo na nga na-o-----take me home, take me home, I want to go

Obu ni ga nu muo--------if you want to marry me

Kai igwa kwam na gboo-----tell me on time

Obu ni ima nu muo------if you do not want to marry me

Kai gwa kwam na gboo-----tell me on time

Ka nweli nwayo cholu onye dinma-o------ So that I can quietly look for a better person.

Chorus.

Ewo! Ewo! My dear-o-----Ewo! Ewo! My dear

Ewo! Ewo my dear-o------ewo! Ewo my dear

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o------the wicked wife kills her husband

Ka ofuzo tor n'ilo------ in other to flirt about town

Ajor ogoli egbue nu di-o---the wicked wife kills her husband

Ka ofuzo tor n'ilo-----------in other to flirt about town

Ah! Ah! Oyenye wo!

SONG 28:   *Omeli ife uku nwa Okobi.*

Song   Translation

Solo.

A-ye!

Omeli ifuku nwa okobi-o!-------son of Okobi! Trouble maker!

Nwa okobi-o! ana muo!--------son of Okobi!

Ola nwunye nmadu ifele emee-o-----a man that sleeps with peoples wives, shame!

Ifele emee-o, weli naba-o------shamefull act! Take her home!

Chorus.

Omeli ife uku nwa okobi-o---------son of Okobi! Trouble maker!

Nwa okobi-o, ana muo!-------------- son of Okobi!

Ola nwunye nmadu ifele emee-o-----man that sleeps with peoples wives

Ifele emee-o! weli-e naba-o----------shamefull act! Take her home!

Call:

Oba si wa je be-o-------the king said they should go where?

Response:

Oba si wa je Akure------ the king said they should go to Akure!

Solo.

Omeli ife uku nwa okobi-o-------Okobi's son!Trouble shooter!

Nwa okobi-o, na ana muo---------Okobi's son

Ola nwunye nmadu ifele emee-o------ man that sleeps with peoples wives

Ifele emee-o, ifele eme, weli ga naba-o----shame on you! Take her home!

Chorus

Omeli ife uku nwa okobi-o--------okobi's son!trouble maker!

Nwa okobi-o, a na muo---------okobi's son!

Ola nwunye nmadu ifele eme-o-----the man that sleeps with peoples wives,shame!

Ifele eme-o, ifele eme weli naba-o.------it is a shame! Take her home

SONG 29:   *Atam Afufu na zu nwa.*

Song   Translation

Solo:

Atam afufu nazu nwa--------I suffered to bring up a child

Onye nyelim aka-o----who assisted me?

Atam afufu nazu nwa--- I suffered to bring up my child

Onye nyelim-o------no one assisted me

Olili abia-o------- now there is plenty to eat

Iwe eju-o--------- anger emanates!

Olili abia-o---------there is plenty!

Iwe abia-o------jealousy emanates

Atama fufu nazu nwa onye nyelim aka -I sufferd to bring up my child,who assisted me?

Chorus-

Atam afufu nazu nwa------ I struggled to bring up my child

Onye nyelim aka-o---------- no-one assisted me

Atam afufu nazu nwa--------- I struggled to bring up my child

Onye nyeli aka-o------------- who assisted me?

Olili abia-o-------------------- there is plenty!

Iwe abia-o---------------- jealousy emanates

*Olili abia-o-------------*I am enjoying the fruits of my labour

Iwe abia-o------------ jealousy emanates

Atam afufu nazu nwa--------- I struggled to bring up my child

Onye nyelim aka-o.----------- no-one assisted me.

SONG 30:   *Onye gbue nwanne so ya ebili-o*

   Song   Translation

Solo.

Onye gbue nwanne-o -------if any one kills his/her brother

So ya ebhili-o----------- he/she will live alone

*Onye gbue nwanne-o--------*if anyone kills his/her brother

*So ya ebhili-o------------*he/she will live alone

*Amosu gbue nwanne-o-----*if a witch kills her brother

Ajor nmadu ga na-o-------- the evil one will go

*Onye gbue nwanne-o so ya ebhili-o------*if anyone kills his/her brother,he/she will live alone.

Chorus.

*Onye gbue nwanne-----------*if one kills his brother

*So ya ebhili-o------------*he/ she will live alone

*Onye gbue nwanne-o---------*if one kills the sister

*So ya ebhili-o----------------*he/ she will live alone

*Amosu gbue nwanne-o-----------*if a witch kills her brother

Ajor nmadu ga na-o---------------the evil ones will go

Onye gbue nwanne-o----------if one kills her brother

So ya ebhili-o--------------- you will live alone

SONG 31:   *Kai yoba Chukwu-o, Kai di ogo-o*

Song   Translation

Solo:

Kai yo ba chukwu kai di ogo-o-----------let us pray to be good

Onye di ogo onweli nwanne-o----------if one is good, he/she is accepted

Kai yo ba olise-o-------------------------let us beg God

Kai di ogo-o---------------------------------------to make us good

Onye di kwa ogo onweli nwanne-o--------it is the good ones that are accepted

Chorus.

*Kai yo ba Chukwu-o kai di ogo-*o----------let us beg God to make us good

Onye di ogo------------------------------if we are good

Onweli nwanne-o-----------------------------we will be accepted

Kai yo ba olise-o-------------------------------let us beg God

Kai di ogo-o--------------------------------------to make us good

Onye di kwa ogo--------------------------if one is good

Onweli nwanne-o----------------------one will be accepted

Refrain:

Call:

Onye di ogo-o, onye di ogo---------if one is good

Response:

Onye di ogo onweli nwanne-o-------the good one is accepted

SONG 32:   *Onye ife mee n'ekwu ife ofuna.*

Song   Translation

Solo.

Ewo! Ewo! Ewo! Ewo!

Ewo! Ewo! Ewo! Ewo!

Onye di-e nwu ne kwu ife ofu na-o-----the widow can say anything

Chorus.

Ewo! Ewo!

Ewo! Ewo! Ewo! Ewo!

Onye ife mee ne kwu ife ofu na-o.------ the bereaved can say anything

SONG 33:   *Ele! Ele nwa ngwo~ Ele!*

Song   Translation

Call.

Ele-o! ele nwa ngwo

Response.

Ele! Ele nwa ngwo ele!

Call.

Ele! Ele nwa ngwo!

.RESPONSE: *Ele! Ele*!*nwa* ngwo ele

Call-*Ututu ele nwa ngwo*!----------in the morning

Response.—*ele! Ele nwa ngwo, ele!*

Call--- *Efifie ele nwa ngwo!*-----in the day

Response.--- *Ele! Ele nwa ngwo, ele*!

Call.--- *anyasi ele nwa ngwo*!---------in the evening

Response.---- *Ele! Ele nwa ngwo, ele*!

Call.---*onye ga tu nya sia kai gbabu lia*?------who wil bring the food for us to eat?

Response.— *onye gat u nya sia kai gbabu lia*----who will bring the food for us to eat.

Call—*ele! Ele nwa ngwo*!

Response.—*ele!ele nwa ngwo, ele!*

SONG 34:   *Imeli me meli-ime-o*

  Song   Translation

Call—*imeli ime meli ime*

        Ebe onye medebe ogba bu lia----------after all the struggle

RESP.---*Oh!oh!oh! ebe onye medebe*---------when it is time

       Ogba bu lia oh! Oh!-------------one goes to rest

CALL---*Onwu Ni nodu nma*---------let death stay put

        N'ebe onye medebe ogbabu lia-------when the time comes

RESP. ---*oh! Oh! Oh! Ebe onye medebe*----------after all the struggle

       Ogba bu lia oh! Oh!---------------------- one will surely find rest

SONG 35: *Onunu!*

  Song   Translation

Call—*onunu-o*! ------ The pit!

Response----*onunu anwu-a dike*! ---the pit has swallowed the warrior

Call---*Onunu nu-o*! ---the pit!

Response.—*Onunu anwu-a dike*! ----the pit has swallowed the warrior

Call---*Oh! Nwa Ada-o*! ----oh! Our daughter!

Response.—*onunu anwu-a dike*! ----the pit has swallowed the warrior

Call---*oh! Nwa Ada-o*! -----oh! Our daughter!

Response.—*onunu anwu-a dike*! ----the pit has swallowed the warrior

Call--- *ebe onye sili nwu onwu*-o---where ever one dies

Response. ---*onunu anwu-a dike*---- the pit has swallowed the warrior

All---*Wa nye ndudu! Nye ute-o*! ----let them give him pillow and mat

Response. ---*Onunu anwu-a dike-o*. -----the pit has swallowed the warrior

SONG 36: *Anyi ncha bu ofu nne*

  Song   Translation

Call: *Anyi ncha bu kwa ofunne*----------we are all one

     Anyi ncha bukwa of afo------------we all are of the same breed

Response*:   Osa-o*

Call: *Anyi ncha bu kwa ofuune*-----------we are all one

    Anyi ncha bu kwa ofu afo--------------we all are of the same breed

Response: *Osa-o*

Call: *iye wo-o*

Response: *Oma li nma ya bu osa-o*---------it is good, it is our effort

Call: *iye wo-o*

Response: *oma li nma nay a bu osa-o*---------if it is good, it is our collective effort

Call: *iye wo-o*

Response: *na olili di n'obodo ekwe hom ga na-o*—the good things in the world are irresistible.

All:----*iye wo-o*.

Song 37:   ***ogbo muo***

Song   Translation

Ogbom mu-o yali mu ka nkwa enum--------my neighbor,please let me be

Ogbom mu-o yali mu ka nkwa enum-------my rival,please let me be

Ogbom mu-o yali mu ka nkwa enum-------my rival, please let me be

Nmulu ofu,na imulu ibua------------------I gave birth to one,you gave birth to many

Ina ewe iwem-----------------------------yet you envy me.

SONG 38: *EYELEBI YELI UKPO*

 Song   Translation

Call: *Eyelebi yeli ukpo*

Response: *iye yelebi!*

Call: *nne-I eliho ujuju o-lie nsala*-------if your mother rejects ujuju,she will eat nsala soup

Response: *iye iyele bi*

Call: *nna-I eliho ujuju o-lie nsala*-------if your father rejects ujuju he will eat nsala soup

Response*: iye iyele bi*

SONG 39: *NNE ZUSIA NWA*

Song   Translation

Egwu mu egwu mu-o umu ibe muo------this is my song my friends!

Nne zusia nwa na nwa azuba nu nne-o---a mother trains the child, the child does same

Nne aju na nwa-------------------------mothers should not neglect their children

Nwa ama ju nu nne-o--------------a child will not neglect the mother

Ife onye mee nwa nmadu----------whatever you do to another person's child

Na oga-elu nwa-o-------------------your own will get same treatment

Obodo aga n'ihu-o------------------the community will progress.

SONG 40: *ODI IWE*

 Song   Translation

Odiyi iwe! Odiyi iwe! Odiyi iwe-o!---------are you angry?

o-nee wee yi-o-------------------------------are you angry?

Na bum oyoyo!--------------------------------------that am beautiful

Iwe biko ewe kwene-i---------------------------- do not be angry

Na oso n'akalaka!------------------------------------it is my destiny

Akalaka chukwu nyelim-o----------------------the destiny given by God

Onye je ga nail ma-o?--------------------who will take it away?

SONG 41:   *Ebu nwa ike ule*

Song   Translation

Call: *Ebu nwa ike ule-o*

Response: *mbene kpo*!

Call: *Ebu nwa ike ule*

Response: *nbene kpo*!

Call: *ndi bialu ga la utu*-------------------people that came to eat

Response: *Mbene kpo*!

Call: *wa-ebulu abuba n'isi*---------------they carried fat on their head

Response: *Mbene kpo*

Call: *wa-ebulu abuba n'isi*--------------------they carried fat on their head

Response: *mbene kpo*

Call: *inweli ku uye wee*-------------------if you have, give them

　　　Ni inwe hor yali wa-----------------if you don't have, ignore them

　　　　Na wa mulu nwa yi---------------when your child was born

　　　　　Nwa-I enwe ho abuba-o--------there was no fat

Call: *ewo! Ewo*!

Response: *mbene kpo*!

SONG 42: *Ugo nwa mali obim-o*

 Song   Translation

Ugo nwa mali obim-------------ugo, the child after my heart

Ugo cheli muo---------------------ugo, wait for me

Na ngbala abu ho lia----------------------thinness is not sickness

N'obu onye na chi nne muo-------------it is between one and the creator

Ugo cheli muo, ayana muo-------------ugo wait, do not leave me

SONG 43. *OYENYE UGO*

Song   Translation

Call: *oyenye ugo*--------------*0yenye ugo*!

Kai sekpulu ani yoba ndi new ego--------let us bow and salute our patrons

N'egwu anyi amaka, ugo----------------------our music is fine

Response: *oyenye ugo*-----------------------oyenye ugo

Kai sekpulu aniyoba ndi new egwu-------------let us bow and salute our patrons

N'egwu anyi amaka, ugo----------------------our music is fine

Call: *egwu anyi amaka*-------------------------our music is fine

Response: *ugo*

Call:*egwu anyi amaka*-------------------------our music is fine

Response: *ugo*!

SONG 44: *Echum iyi okwulu*

   Song   Translation

Call: *echum iyi okwulu*-----------------------I went to harvest Okro

Response: *iyomili iy'okwulu iyi*!----------

Call: *Ejem get e okwulu*---------------------I want to cook okro

Response: *iyomili iy'okwulu iyo*!

Call: *okwulu akpajili-o*---------------------okro fell

Response: *iyomilimiy'okwulu iyi*!

Call: *onye ge weli-e*-----------------------------who will pick it?

Response: *iyomili iy'okwulu iyo*

Call: *Ada ne fu-o*---------------------------------Ada, pick it.

SONG 45: *Igiligi agwu ho n'igwe na nmili ama gwu-o*

Song   Translation

Igiligi agwuro n'igwe-----------------------the dew did not dry up in the sky

Na nmili ama gwu-o----------------------water will not dry up

Igiligi agwuro n'igwe--------------------the dew did not dry up in the sky

Na nmili ama gwu-o----------------------water will not dry up

Igiligi agwuro n'igwe---------------------the dew did not dry up in the sky

Na nmili ama gwu-o---------------------water will not dry up

Oku nwa nmadu je enu-gwu--------------if you take someone's child up the hill

Na oputa ndida ocheli nne----------------when the child gets down, he/she will ask for the mother

SONG 46: *Agbala debe di ogo*

Song   Translation

Agbala debe di ogo o---------------------women,show love and care to your husbands

Onye di-e debe ogo----------------------those that are shown love and by their husbands

Ya debe di-o--------------------------------should show love and care to one's husband

Dim debe mu ngi debe di ogo-----------my husband takes and in also take care of him

Refrain

Call: *Ejem ga kwu dim ugwo ogo*---------am going to thank my husband for his care

Response: *ejem ga kwu dim ugwo ogo*-----am going to repay my husband's kindness

Call: *ka nmuta nwa we kwua dim ugwo ogo*----I will bear a son in order to thank my husband

Response: *ejem ga kwu dim ugwo ogo*---------am going to thank my husband

Call: *nwete ego ka nkwua dim ugwo ogo*------wen I have money,I will thank my husband with it

Response: *ejem ga kwu dim ugwo ogo*-------am going to thank my husband for his care.

SONG 47: *Ugo nwa mali obim-o*

Song   Translation

Ugo nwa mali obim-o----------------------ugo, the child that knows my heart

Ugo cheli muo------------------------------please wait for me

Na ngbala abu h'olia------------------------thinness is not sickness

N'obu onye na chie nne muo-------------------it is nature my mother!

Ugo chelim ayana muo--------------------------ugo, wait for me, do not leave me

SONG 48: *Ekpukpu mkpuleke*

Song   Translation

Call: *ekpukpu nkpuleke*----------------ekpukpu nkpuleke

Response: *kpuleke*!---------------------kpuleke

Call: *ekpukpu nkpuleke*----------------ekpukpu nkpuleke

Response: *kpuleke*---------------------kpuleke!

Call: *ewu na gaga a*--------------------the goat is passing

Response: *kpuleke*--------------------kpuleke!

Call: okuku aga fe go----------------------the cock has already passed

Response: *kpuleke*---------------kpuleke!

SONG 49: *Iwe adi ewe ogoli na bhe di-e*

Song   Translation

Call*: iwe adi ewe ogoli na bhe di-e*---------------a maiden should not display anger in her home

Response: *iwe, iwe adi nma*-------------------anger is not good

Call: *iwe adi ewe ogoli na bhe di-o*-----------a maiden should not displsy anger in her home

Response: *iwe iwe adi nma*--------------------anger is nit good

Call: *ogoli we iwe onaa*------------------------if a woman gets angry, she leaves.

Response: *iwe iwe adi nma*---------------anger is not good

Call:*ogoli we iwe onaa*------------------a woman that gets angry will leave

Response: *iwe iwe adi nma*---------------anger is not good

Call: *iwe nwa-o, iwe ego*-------------------anger because of barreness or poverty

Response: *iwe iwe adi nma*-----------------------anger is not good

SONG 50: *ANYI ADI ACHO NMADU-O*

Song   Translation

Call: *anyi adi acho nmadu-o*--------------------we do not look for trouble

Response: *kai le le!*-----------------------------let us watch!

Call: *anyi adi acho nmadu-o*------------------we do not look for trouble

Response: *kai le le!*------------------------------let us watch!

Onye chokwa anyi---------------------------------if one looks for our trouble

Anyi azo jie ya n'okpa----------------------------we will march on him/her

Weli n'aba-o---------------------------------------and walk away