

SONGS AND IMPLICATIONS ON THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY: YORÙBÁ SONGS IN FOCUS

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Abstract

Singing has become part of Yorùbá culture and indeed, the human race as a whole. It is as old as man's existence. This implies that no society in the world does not sing. Singing is an art and it forms part of the people's literature. The importance of song in the political, social, economic and religious life of the human race in general cannot be underestimated. The love people have for singing is so great that we can relate it to the Yorùbá saying: "etí were ni tèkúté ile, abiyamo kii gbó e kún o mo rẹ kó má tatiwẹ". This is to say that no one hears a song and will not "react". The Yorùbá people for instance, sing all the time. It is however worth mentioning that in as much as songs promote and enhance people's lives, its use calls for serious caution because it may have negative effects also as we shall see in this study. It is within this context that this article uses Yorùbá songs to critically examine the role of songs in people's lives.

Keywords: Yorùbá songs, Singing, National development, Nigerian society

Introduction

The issue of national development has been a subject of discussion for a very long time now. Nigeria at fifty-two has passed through different systems of government such as parliamentary, military and presidential with a number of constitutional conferences held where the country's constitution was reviewed and is still being reviewed. It is disheartening however, to note that with the abundant resources at her disposal, Nigeria is still in the group of developing nations of the world and the need to address the situation is highly desired. This paper examines the role of the people's literature (song/music) in life of the Yorùbá society in particular and the Nigerian society in general using the Yorùbá song as basis for our discussion.

Since October 1st 1960, the country Nigeria has passed through different stages of life as an independent nation under four different republics, yet the country cannot be described as developed despite being one of the most naturally blessed nations of the world.

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Unfortunately Nigerians still wallow in an unstable political system, poor health facilities, lack of qualitative education, religious intolerance, insecurity of lives and properties and the like. The spate of tribal and religious crisis is alarming. Examples include the Ife/Modákéke crisis, tribal and boundary clashes, restiveness in the Niger Delta, the Boko Haram sect believed to have killed several innocent citizens in the last one year. They engage in burning of churches, attack on military and police posts and facilities, kidnapping and murdering of innocent citizens, and so on. This is due to the insensitivity of people at the corridor of power, to the people's yearnings. This situation calls for urgent attention as it is no doubt a bane for national development.

Because of these problems, the country could not celebrate her 52nd independence anniversary with funfair. People in authority are daily accused of unprecedented attacks and unwarranted destruction of lives and properties. We experience religious intolerance through religious violence, culminating in hatred, enmity, discrimination, arson, oppression and the likes, despite efforts of inter-religious dialogue experts and peace makers. It has been religious violence. This paper is not aimed at discussing the uprisings per-se, rather, to discuss how Yorùbá oral literature (Yorùbá songs), can be used as a way out of the mess.

Yorùbá, one of the Major ethnic groups in Nigeria has a high regard for national development in all its ramifications. One of the veritable tools for achieving this objective is through their oral literature, song (music) being one of them. This implies that the role of songs (music) in the maintenance of peace, unity, safety, consequent national development cannot be underestimated.

The paper discusses the roles of song in solving the ageing problem of hatred, insecurity of life and properties, unwarranted killing of innocent citizens in order to ensure political, economic, religious and social stability, using the Yorùbá song as our yardstick. Our findings reveal that there are two sides of the coin. This implies that no matter how good the intention behind rendering a song, if not carefully rendered, it may turn sour.

What is a Song?

Literature has important roles to play in the life of the people that owns it. This paper examines the impact of Yorùba oral literature (Yorùbá songs) on the political, social, religious and economic development of the Nigerian society as a whole.

The Macmillan Encyclopedia (1990) defines song as: "A short composition for one or more singers with or without accompaniment. Song is usually regarded as the foundation of music and is certainly the oldest form of musical expression."

The World Book Encyclopedia Vol. 18 (1990) defines song as: "A musical composition usually sang by a solo voice. It may be performed with or without accompaniment. Most songs have a simple lyrical style."

Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2002/2009) defines song as: "A piece of music with words that you sing." When the Yorùbá talk about music, they refer to the combination of singing, drum beating and dancing. Wherever the three are present, the Yorùbá will say "wó n s eré", literally meaning "they are playing". It is however noteworthy to say that "aré" does not best interpret "song" or "music".

Speaking on song, Olúkòjù (1994) asserts that song is a vital instrument in human life in general. "Song" is interpreted as "orin" in Yorùbá language. Song (Orin) is self-creative. It is melodious but the melody may not be glaringly noticed if music is not added. This implies that music gives melody to song. This notwithstanding, there are Yorùbá songs that do not require music. They include: the twins mother song (orin iyá ìbeji), the co-wife song (orin olórogún), the child pacifying song (orin arẹmọ), the lullaby song (orin erémọdẹ/iwéré de) to mention just a few. This is to say that Yorùbá songs can be classified into two broad groups namely the musical and non-musical songs.

Song affords practitioners the opportunity to air their minds on political, religious, social and economic issues. It also serves as a source of entertainment and enjoyment. It is an aspect of the Yorùbá oral literature. The place of song in the life of the people in general cannot be underestimated and this is appreciated the world over. Testifying to this claim, Beier (1950) asserts that:

There is no occasion in Yorùbá life that is
not accompanied by songs ... everyday
life is accompanied by a great deal of
impromptu singing.

This opinion is in line with Adeqşun (1995) who opines that: "Most literary scholars agree that song is very important in making peoples' views known." He mentions among others, names such as Lomer, Finnegan, Deny, Olájubù, Gbàdàmósí, Qlátúnjì and Ilesanmi. This is to further affirm our claim that singing is a global issue and the importance of song is recognized globally too.

The words we utter are the beginning of the song we sing. For this reason, we can group song as an aspect of the Yorùbá oral literature. There is no difficulty in mastering songs. It is also easy to spread and very easy to remember. Singing is an art that manifests in all daily activities. It is already a part of the people. Singing has become part of Yorùbá culture and indeed, the human race as a whole. It is as old as man's existence. This implies that every society in the world recognize the importance of song. Singing is an art

and it forms part of the people's literature. The importance of song in the political, social, economic and religious life of the human race in general cannot be underestimated.

It is music that gives melody to a song. This implies that not all songs require music. The role of music however, is to create rhythmical, harmonious and meaningful expressions aimed at addressing specific themes.

The love people have for singing is so great that we can relate it to the Yorùbá saying that: *%ati were ni tèkúté ilé. Abiyamo kíí gbó ẹkún omo rẹ kó màà tati were+*. This implies that no one hears a song and will not react. The Yorùbá people for instance, sing all the time. In the same vein, all events have their songs. This is to say that song has its relevance in all situations in the life of man. When one is in distress, you sing to alleviate it. When you are happy, you sing to express and appreciate it. It is however worth mentioning that in as much as songs promote and enhance people's lives, its use calls for serious caution. This implies that there are some factors that determine when to sing, where to sing and what kind of song to sing. This is because singing may have negative effects as we shall see later.

Song is interpreted as *orin* in Yorùbá language. Song affords practitioners the opportunity to air their minds on political, religious, social, cultural and economic issues. It also serves as a source of entertainment and enjoyment. It is an aspect of the Yorùbá oral literature. The place of song in the life of the people of the society in general cannot be underestimated and this is appreciated the world over. Testifying to this claim, Beier (1950) asserts that *%There is no occasion in Yorùbá life that is not accompanied by songs*. Everyday life is accompanied by a great deal of impromptu singing.

This opinion is in line with Adéò s un (1995) who opines that *%most literary scholars agree that song is very important in making people's views known+*. He mentions a few of them such as Lomer, Finnegan, Framius Deny, Olàjubù, Gbàdàmósí, Olàtúnjí and Ilesanmi. Singing is a global issue and the importance of song is globally recognized. David sang with the piano to relieve King Saul of his illness. (1st Samuel, 16:23). The Holy Bible also confirms that we have no other assignment when we get to the world beyond than to sing.

Song is an aspect of the Yorùbá oral literature. There is no difficulty in mastering songs. It is also easy to spread and very easy to remember. It is hereditary and we come across it in all our daily activities. It is already a part of the people.

Speaking on song, Olúkòjú (1994) asserts that *%song is a vital instrument in human life in general+*. Song (Orin) is self-creative. It is melodious especially when music is added. This implies that music gives

melody to song. This notwithstanding, there are Yorùbá songs that do not require music. They include: the twins mother song (orin iyá ìbeji), the co-wife song (orin olórogún), the child pacifying song (orin arẹmọ), the lullaby song (orin erémọdẹ/iwéré de) to mention just a few. This is to say that Yorùbá songs can be classified into two broad groups namely the musical and non-musical songs.

After knowing what a song is, we shall proceed further to discuss the implications of songs on the life of the entire Nigeria society. We would examine the economic, political, religious and social implications of Yorùbá songs.

(i). Yorùbá Songs and Politics

In politics, songs are used in various ways. During installation or crowning of a new Ọba(king), conferment of chieftaincy titles, songs are used to show the peoples support for the crowned head (Oriádẹ). On the other hand, the people can also sing to show their opposition to any form of oppressive rule. During wars, songs are used to encourage warriors, to show support for the ruler and to ridicule the actions of their opponent in war. A typical example is the one sang by the Ìbàdàn people to show their support for Látòòṣà as their only recognized political and economic leader, and to show their hatred for Ẹfúnṣetán, the then Ìyálóde of Ìbàdàn. They sang:

Kó tó bẹrẹ, kó tó wọ búkà . before he bends down and enter the Cafeteria Jàn án
ní kó dó - hit him with the baton

Ẹ báni sọrọ náà kó yé wa - explain the issue for us to understand

Bíkún ló loko, bí pàkúté ni - if the farm belongs to the rat or the trap

Ẹ sọ rọ náà kó yé wa - explain the issue for us to understand.

(Isẹ ọ lá 1973:70-71)

In *Lísàbí Àgbòngbò Àkàlà*, the Ẹ̀arọ́drummer beat his drum to ask the poor masses to wake from their slumber thus:

Ẹ ẹ́ gírí, ẹ́ dídẹ - do quickly and rise
up

Ẹ ẹ́ sàsà, ẹ́ dídẹ - be fast and rise up

The song was asking the poor workers to cooperate and help themselves to survive. The song makes their work easy to endure and to be able to continue for a longer time. Secondly, the song forms the beginning of the discussion on how the workers would have their freedom. This actually materialized because they all cooperate to fight for their freedom from the Ọ̀yó political dominance. (pp 51).

In like manner, the song sung by workers in *Rẹ́rẹ́ Rún* was also calling on the workers to cooperate and free themselves from the oppressions of Onímògún and his council of chiefs. They sang:

Èrò tí n ròjéje	- people going to Òjéje
Èjé wí fún iyáà mi	- tell my mother
Èyin tó fi sílè	- the eggs she left for mi
Lorogún şe fómọ rẹ	- her co-wife gave to her own child
Ewùrà to kan bóbó	- the rotten water yam
Lorogún şe fún mi jẹ	- her co-wife gave me to eat.

This song points to the fact that the workers were in a strange land. These kinds of song are many and cannot be exhausted here. Although they look like war songs, probably because they were politically motivated, they were sung to oppose any form of oppression which is one of the vices the Yorùbá frown at. Among the Yorùbá, if a king is tyrant in his rulings, people can call for his remover through songs.

Another form of political songs are songs sung by politicians and their followers during political rallies/campaigns. The content of these songs are such that intimidate political opponents. In most cases, the songs are proverbially rendered, however, there are times when singers are too direct by mentioning the name of the political opponents they intend to attack. For instance, at a political rally in Lagos in 2003, the supporters of an opposing party to the Action Congress of Nigeria Party which had Babatúnde Rájí Fás o lá (SAN) as its gubernatorial candidate, sang a song thus?

Ó lárùn ọpọ lọ	- he is mentally ill
Ó n fẹ ̀ ito jù lá	- he needs serious treatment
Èjé ni bá ̀ şe e lọ yà tẹ lẹ	- a practicing lawyer
Tó tún wá ̀ sagbálẹ ̀ ọ jà	-who now sweeps the marketplace
Ó lárùn ọ pọ ̀ ọ	- he is mentally ill.

A critical examination of this song shows that it is directed to the governorship aspirant of the Action Congress of Nigeria Party who is a lawyer by profession and the broom which represents his party's symbol is an instrument used for sweeping the market place. This is proverbial. Political songs as we have earlier pointed out are war songs. They are sung to provoke rival political groups. This song is not different from the one sung by the women of Israel in the Holy Bible to applaud David's victory over Goliath, the dreadful Philistine who always threaten the peaceful co-existence of the entire Israelite nation. The book of 1st Samuel, 18:6-9 reads in part:

ō the women came out of all the cities of Israel,
Singing and dancing to meet King Saul with tumbrels,
with song of joy and with instruments of music, and
The women sang to one another as they make merry.
⊘ Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten
thousands. And Saul was very angry, and this saying
displeased him; he said, they have ascribed to David,
ten thousands, and to me, they have ascribed thousands,
and what more can they have but the kingdom and Saul
eyed David from that day on.

This song further ignited the hatred King Saul had for David. Such songs are rebellious and can be used to incite passion for uncommon desires and more serious feats which are ordinarily considered impossible for others. This implies that song (music) is an effective tool for inciting serious actions in the individuals. These kinds of songs pose security threat to the nation as a whole. Conversely however, when a song is positively motivated, it is a powerful weapon in controlling the individual mind towards the direction of normal behaviour.

In the same vein, co-wife songs are sung to intimidate and to provoke a rival co-wife. It may be intended to win the love and confidence of the husband or to show displeasure to rival co-wife. This is borne out of the Yorùbá belief that no woman wants a rival (òrìṣà jẹ n pé méjì obìnrin kò dénú). The moment a woman gets a rival, the probable result is chaos, envy, backbiting and backsliding which is believed to be more dangerous than magic and medicine, hence they result into singing proverbial songs (orin òwe) such as this:

Ilé lo bá mi pè mí ní iyálé - you meet me here. See me as your senior

Ò báà lè fi mótò kẹrù délé ọkọ - even if you bring your load in a lorry

Ilé lo bá mi pè mí níyálé - you met me here. See me as your senior

This kind of song is antagonistic and can cause disaffection and rivalry between two people no matter how closely related they are. The language use is abusive, intimidating, provocative and capable of brewing crisis.

On the other hand, musicians also sing to advise politicians to play the game according to the rule. For example, Kollington Ayínlá, during the second republic political era in Nigeria (1983), appealed to politicians through his album saying:

Èbẹ̀ la bè yín ẹ̀yin òṣẹ̀lú o	- we appeal to you politicians
Chief Awolọ́ wọ́ ó dọ́ wọ́ yín	- chief Awolo wo , we look up unto you
Ş ehú Şagàrí, ẹ́ mama jẹ́ ó bàjẹ́ o	- Ş ehú Şagari should not allow things to spoil
Azikwe, ó dọ́ wọ́ yín	- Azikwe, we look unto you
Ibrahim o mọ́ Waziri	- Ibrahim, Waziri son
O látúnjì, o mọ́ Braithwait	- O latunjì, Braithwait son
È jẹ́ ká ṣowọ́ pọ́ kó lè dára	- let us cooperate for success.

(ii). Yorùbá Songs and Nigerian Economy

Before the coming of the Europeans, the method of trading employed by the Yorùbá people was referred to as trade by barter. It was a system whereby goods were exchanged for goods; items for items. If I need Gari, but I have Rice, I have to look for somebody who needed Rice but lacked Gari to exchange with.

With the coming of the Europeans, the use of money in trading was introduced. The use of cowries was replaced with pounds, shillings and pence, now naira and kobo, so also was the establishment of radio and television stations and the newspapers in the country. The economy of the country changed. This led to the need to advertise goods and services because there was competition in the market. The Yorùbá will say polowó oja ni agunmu owò (advertisement of goods is the medicine for business). There and then, government, companies, corporate bodies and individuals begin to advertise their goods and services on radio and television networks the newspapers. One of the most effective means of doing this is by the use of songs in form of jingles.

Musicians such as Alhaji Jáyégbadé Àlàó (dadakúàdà), Síkirù Àyìndé Barrister and Àyìnlá Kollington (fúji), King Sunny Ade and Chief Commander, Ebenezer Obey (jùjú), Dáúdà Epo Àkàrà (àwùrèbe), Bátùlì Àlàkẹ́ and Sàláwà Àbẹ̀nì (wákà), Ògúnye mí Elémùre Èkìtì who sings in Èkìtì dialect and poets such as Àlàbí Ògúndépò (ijálá chanter), Yẹ́mí Èlébúbọ́n (iyẹ̀rẹ́ chanter) and the likes are employed to advertise goods and services through their songs. Their songs have been used to promote peoples' business. For instance, Chief Ebenezer Obey in one of his albums affirms he has made a remarkable impact into the success of some prominent Nigerian businessmen and women alike. He sings:

Lead Vocal:	Mo ti pèniyàn tíí	- I have sang for many people
	Mo pe Rẹ̀mọ́ Carpet	- I sang for Ré mo Carpet
Chorus:	kaka kọ́wọ́ ẹ́ lọ̀lẹ́	- instead of liquidating

Pipele ló pele si - he becomes more prosperous
 Lead Vocal: Mo ti pèniyàn títí - I have sang for many people
 Mo pe Olóládé, aya Èjìòserè - I sang for Olóláde,

Èjìòserè's wife

Chorus: %Cash Madam%, - cash Madam
 pipele ló pele si - she becomes more prosperous.

What Ebenezer Obey is saying here is that none of his mentors he has sung for ever regret it. Rather than fallen they have their businesses boomed.

Àlàbí Ògúndépò on the then Radio OYO used Ìjálá chant to preach safety on the road. It goes thus:

Má gbe wò ó , kài má gbe wò ó yéé s agídí
 Ìwo nìkàn kò o níbiirè gbogbo o kò tóó bá níwájú ló níbíí lo
 S e bóó lójú lágbarí àwé, s e bóó ró kò tó bò
 O ò yé kánjú wa mó tò ní pópó kóo mába à kánjú rò rún alákejì .

Onímó tò ro ra sáré o/è è méjì

E mí ò láàrò , oonímó tò ro ra sáré

È sò pè lé oonímó tò ro ra sáré.

(Do not overtake. Stop playing strong head

You are not the only one, all other vehicles have places to go

After all you have your eyes and can see the vehicle coming

You better stop hurrying on high way, in order not to hurry to heaven

Mr. Driver, limit your speed/2times

Life has no duplicate

Mr. Driver, limit your speed.

In like manner, products are advertised through songs and this of course has made such products very popular. This invariably results in increase in the sales of the products involved and invariably the peoples economy also improves. A few examples are given below:

(a). Tàánú Bread

- Lead vocal: búrédì yí dún o - this bread is sweat
- Chorus: fẹ̀rì, fẹ̀rì gudù - it is very good
- Lead Vocal: Tàánú, Tàánú - Tàánú, Tàánú
- Chorus: fẹ̀rì, fẹ̀rì gudù - it is very good
- Lead vocal: àjẹlówólówó/kólémólé/ - you eat it and become richer/build house
Bímọ̀lémọ̀ upon house/have children after children
- Chorus: fẹ̀rì, fẹ̀rì gudù - it is very good.

(b). S.T. Soap

- Oşẹ S.T. mà ré o - this is S.T. soap
- Ọ̀kan dára fún iwẹ̀ lásán - one is good for taking bath
- Ọ̀kan dára fáşọ̀ fífò - one is good for washing cloth
- È ọ̀ S.T. kẹ̀ rídì ọ̀rọ̀ wá - use S.T. and confirm our words
- Gbogbo kokorò ara, ẹ̀ kan jàngbọ̀n - all body infections are in trouble
- Gbogbo ìdòtí ẹ̀ o lè ráyè - all dirt has no place
- Èélá, ìsáká, ẹ̀ wabi gbà lọ - all rashes find a place to go
- Ó fọşọ̀ mọ̀ kí jàşọ̀ ó şá - it washes clean and does not fade clothes
- Ó le koko kí jẹwó ojàre - it is hard and does not affect the hand
- Oşẹ S.T. mà re o - this is S.T. soap.

We have thousands of such jingles on radio and television networks. Individuals such as business men and women, companies and corporate bodies alike also advertise their services through songs. A few examples are these:

(c). Kwara Radio

- Redió kuarà mi gboro ti ti - kwara radio shakes the town
- Ètò wa dùn ó lárínrin - our programmes are sweet and interesting
- Ìròyìn wa dùn ún gbó jọ jọ - our news is sweet interesting
- Ìkéde wá dùn, ó báramu - our announcements are sweet and befitting

or this:

- Ètò alárinrin kó ? - for interesting programmes
- Redió kúará ni baba - kwara radio is the master
- Ìpolówó ojà reṣeṣe - unlimited business adverts
- Redió kúará ni baba - kwara radio is the master.

The songs are composed and rendered in such a way that they attract customers to the products so advertised. The sweet language, hyperbolic statements, the structure and the content of the songs, the wordings that are pregnant with meanings, are the kind that arouse the interest of listeners, changes the peoples opinion, and attract customers to the advertised products and services. Would-be customers are made to believe that the products advertised have no equal. They would want to have a taste of the products and services to confirm what is said about such products..

Not only this, government programmes are advertised on radio and television stations through songs. This is to bring awareness to people in rural and very remote areas. A few examples are the following:

- È tètí ẹ gbọ mọrán yí - listen to this advise
- Ti kéré ti kèrè o nípinlẹ yí - young and old in this town
- Ìjọba kúará ló ké, kẹlé ran - kwara government is asking everyone to take care of his goat
- Ìjọbá gbin òdòdó sójú pópó o - government plant flowers on the streets in this state
- Nípinlẹ yí
- Ení bá gbabè kojá, ẹ jòwó - passer-by should please avoid stepping on it
- e má ṣe tẹ ẹ
- Kílú wa le dùn ún rí nijobá ṣe - government plant them to beautify our town
- gbìn ín
- Ìlú kúará o, ó sì máa dùn ni - kwara state shall continue to be

interesting.

Or this one by MAMSER on immunization:

Wá gbabéré àjẹsára - come and be immunized

Kárùnkárùn kó má wọlé wá - to prevent the outbreak of

dangerous diseases

Wá gbabéré àjẹsára - come and be immunized.

This kind of song no doubt changes people attitude towards the government immunization programme especially the illiterates most of who reside in rural and remote areas. The resultant effect is a reduction in the rate of infant mortality.

In the Yorùbá traditional society, the community head (Qba or Baálè) announces the community environmental sanitation programmes by the use of songs. Songs are used to announce the clearing of roads to the stream, renovation of the town market to encourage traders from far and near to patronize the market and so on.

(iii). The Role of Song in the People's Religion

Songs play vital roles in the people's religious worships. First, it serves as unifying force among worshippers. They praise God (the Creator) and the deities in their songs. They also express their joys/sorrows, requests through songs. Even in churches today singing dominates most part of their worships. This is borne out of the fact that worshippers believe that God derive joy in praising Him through songs. Some church denominations that were not known for singing before have now see reason why they should sing to praise and express their feelings to the Almighty. A good example is the Catholic Church Mission who, probably have now realized that failure to introduce singing into their worships can make them to lose their members to other denominations who use songs in their worships. More so, it is evident that songs are more sermonical than anything else.

In their worships, the Yorùbá speak to the Creator and the divinities through songs. The contents of the songs reveal a lot about their belief in the efficacy of the powers of God and the divinities over man. The songs also contain their heart desires from the Creator and the deities. A few examples are given below:

(a). The Òṣun Worshippers

Òsun is believed to be a mother physician (iyá àbíyè). Barren women and children with any form of ailment visit Òṣun shrine always to appropriate her and make their requests. They believe that through the Òsun goddess, the Creator will listen and honor their requests. An example of songs usually sang during the Òṣun festival is this:

Ṣẹ̀lẹ̀rú àgbò, àgbàrá àgbò	-	ṣé lè rúqherb, àgbàráqherb
Lòṣún fi wẹ̀ṣṣṣṣ	-	ò s un used to birth her child
Kí dókítà ó tó dé	-	before the era of the medical doctor.

(b). The Sàngó Woshippers

The Sàngó worshippers sing to praise the power and might of Sàngó as one of the powerful Yorùbá divinities. They sing:

Olúkòso, Àlàdé	-	ᏉOlúkòsoqÀlàdé
Arúkúta lài sósùkà	-	one who carries a stone without a guard
Olúkòso Àlàdé	-	ᏉOlúkòsoqÀlàdé.

(c). The Ògún Worshippers

The worshippers of ògún sing either to commit their hunting expedition into ògún's hands, to praise ògún for success recorded in their hunting expeditions, or during annual ògún festival. The content of the song most times explains the reason for rendering such song. The following songs come to mind.

Ògún mama jẹ̀ n bímọ̀ olè	-	ᏉÒgúnqdo not give me a thief for a child
Kí jéèyèn ó níláárí	-	it prevents one from being prosperous
Ògún mama jẹ̀ n bímọ̀ olè	-	ògún, do not give me a thief for a child.

Or this:

Olódẹ̀ to règbé o, tí ò mèran bọ̀ .	-	a hunter who goes to the bush and brings no meet/animal
Yóó jòrúnlá, panságà ọ̀bẹ̀	-	will eat ripe okro, a tasteless soup

(iv). Yorùbá Songs and Socialization

A song can be referred to as a social agent. It plays vital roles in the peoples' socialization process. Most of the songs rendered by Yorùbá musicians can be grouped under social songs. The Yorùbá call them *Ꮙarin* *ìgbáfé q* Although, it is possible to view such songs from another perspective, yet the fact remains that they are rendered on occasions such as child naming, burial/outings ceremonies, wedding programmes and so on.

Singers use their songs to entertain, to advice and even teach good moral values. Here is an example by Ebenezer Obey.

Ètò ìgbéyàwo láyé,
Tóba Olúwa mi fi lélé , pè lú às e ni
⚡What God has joined together,
Let no man put asunder⚡

What the musician was saying here is the marriage is an ordinance by God. It is therefore forbidden for anybody to tamper with it

At outing ceremonies, songs are rendered to express peoples minds and expectations about the hereafter. The Yorùbá believe that the dead (the aged ones) still come back as a new baby in the family, hence the names Babatúndé, Babájídé given to a male child born sooner than the aged father dies, and Yétúndé, Yéjídé or Ìyábòde, given to a female child born sooner than the aged mother dies.

Because of this belief, they sing songs praying the aged father or mother to come back to the family through them. Example is the following:

Lówọ́ mi ní ó ti yà bó dé - he/she will come through me
Níjọ́ Àsọlá ọmọ tuntun - the day Àsòlá turns a new child
Lówọ́ mi ní ó ti yà - he/she will come through me.

We can also group consolatory songs under the social songs. There are occasions when people as a result of one happening or the other (death, illness, or any other calamity that may befall them) are dejected. To pacify and appeal to such people, songs can be of immense value. For instance, people sing to congratulate the child of the deceased because everybody prays that they survive their parents. An example is the following:

A bá ọ dúpé - we rejoice with you
Ẹni ẹlẹni kò sin baba/iyá re - another person does not bury your
father/mother on your behalf
A bá ọ dúpé - we rejoice with you

(v). Songs and Moral Philosophy

The Yorùbá teach good morals through songs. Most social songs teach one moral lesson or the other. The most prominent song under this category is the Yorùbá folksongs usually found in Yorùbá folktales (the

tortoise and the co-wife tales). Apart from allowing for audience participation, the content of the songs lead us to the moral lesson(s) intended to teach.

In a co-wife tale, where the husband went on a journey and he did not arrive at his appointed time. After exhausting the food he left for the wives and their children, one of the wives decided to live at the mercy of a concubine. On arrival, the secret leaked to the husband, but the erring wife failed to confess. The wives were taken to the family shrine because the offence was against the family myth. After all processes were completed, both wives were given a leaf each. They were to sing and appeal to the sheep to take their leave and eat. This determines their innocence or otherwise. The song goes thus:

Gbewé mi, gbewé mi jẹ	-	take my leaf and eat
Àgbò gbewé mi jẹ	-	sheep take my leaf and eat
Qdún méta ọkọ tí lọ	-	three years my husband had left
Èmi ò tẹní fọkúnrin sùn rí	-	I never lay mat for a man to sleep
Èmi ò ròbà fọkúnrin jẹfọ	-	I never prepare Gàrí with vegetable for any man to eat
Gbewé mi, gbewé mi jẹ	-	take my leaf and eat
Àgbò gbewé mi jẹ	-	sheep take my leaf and eat.

At the end of the exercise the culprit was exposed and she was sent out of the home. From this, we have learnt one lesson or the other.

As earlier said, most of the social songs also teach one moral lessons or the other. The Yorùbá musicians sing against societal vices. The Yorùbá masquerades also sing to condemn the society's moral bankruptcy. For example, to a man who steals another man's goat, they sing:

Qba agbèran/2times	-	the king/head of goat thieves
Ò ó lẹwọ n olọs ù méfà	-	you will go to jail for six months.
Qba a gbèran	-	the king/head of goat thieves

To a fornicator, they sing:

Àgbà ni tara má şe şinà o - you are old don't fornicate

Tójú ẹmìl rẹ kó o ba à lẹ pẹ láyé - take care of your life to live long

Àgbà ni tara, má şe şinà o - you are old, don't fornicate.

Sir Şinà Adéwálé, in one of his albums warns the society against evil acts such as oppression. He sings:

Dákun màmà şe,	-	Please don't do it,
Ìkà ò da ọrẹ mi	-	Evil is not good my friend
Dákun màmà şe o	-	Please don't do it.
Aláya méfà gba toníkan	-	a man with six wives snatch yet another man's only wife.

Ó ní kinni yóó jẹ yàtò sówó - saying it costs nothing but money

Dákun màmà şe, - Please don't do it.

Ìkà ò da òrẹ̀ mi - Evil is not good my friend

Dákun mama şe o - Please don't do it.

In like manner, the Aṣùnyèrè (ifá reciter) will say:

Ẹ má ṣìkà láye - do not do evil on earth

Torí a rọrun - because we are going to heaven

Bá a bá dé bode, a ó rojọ - when we get to the boarder, we

shall give account.

Conclusion

In this study, we have tried to examine the roles of Yorùbá songs in the development of the nation (Nigeria) as a whole. We have established the fact that songs have vital roles to play in the life of the generality of the people. In fact, the most disappointing situation in one's life is consoled through singing. In all situations, songs are used to talk to God (manṣ Creator) and the belief is that God hears and answers even when supplications are rendered in song.

Through songs, a lot of happenings which would have resulted in chaos are being resolved amicably through songs. Couples and families alike do resolve their differences through song. In worships, songs play vital roles. The Yorùbá masquerades (egúngún) sing not only as an interlude to their dirge or for audience participation during their performances, rather, most of their songs are to condemn and correct anti-societal behaviours. O lájubù (1978:685) opines that:

Yorùbá verbal artists occupy a unique position in the society. They serve as the moral police and are therefore free from arrest and punishment for offences committed during the course of their performance. They are at liberty to say whatever they pleased in favour of or against anybody in the community. O bas, chiefs and nobles inclusive.

He goes further to say:

A counterpart of members of the press of the

modern society. They are also free from molestation during wars and public disorder. some of them are referred to as representatives of the gods on earth.

This implies that poets, musicians or even anybody within the society are free to sing. It is however disheartening today that the situation has changed. People at the corridor of power want to enjoy immunity. They have turned sacred cows and so they perpetrate several anti-*o mo lúábí* acts that brings the society backward. Yorùbá poets and singers are no more faithful to their professions. Today, the situation on ground determines when and where to sing what.

This notwithstanding, we would not lose sight of the fact that songs, if not carefully and tactically used, can ruin a family, a community or even a nation. This is to say that most times, occasion and even the existing situation determines the song to sing at a particular time. For instance, there are songs which are meant to console one, yet it cannot be sung in a place where there is hatred enmity and disaffection. Where these situations exist, consolatory songs may turn to be *ṣwarq* songs.

Not only this, there are songs that corrupt the society. This is common among the so-called *ṣmodernq* musicians of today. Such songs, instead of discouraging, they encourage social vices such as fornication, adultery and so on.

In the same vein, Yorùbá songs, such as the political and co-wife songs are not peace-loving songs, rather, they brew trouble. What we are saying in conclusion therefore is that in as much as the society cannot avoid singing for reasons enumerated above, its use calls for caution.

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