

VICISSITUDES OF EDO STATE COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND  
CULTURE PERFORMING TROUPE (1996-2016)

\*Daniel OMORUAN

Abstract

The ding-dong charade of Edo State Council for Arts and Culture Performing Troupe (ESCFAACPT) cannot be divorced from the vacillating condition the establishment had been experiencing since its establishment. This condition is fore-grounded, first, on the cacophony of nomenclature that the council had been associated with, and second, on the mindset of the various governors that have ruled the state since its inception. Another aspect of this discourse would be the achievements of the troupe, and the calibre of artists it had bred and accommodated over the years. Deploying historical-analytic and interview methods, this study is anchored on performance studies and historicity as proposed by Richard Schechner (2013). It advocates that successive governments since the middle of the nineteen nineties had suppressed performance and creativity in the ESCFAACPT through neglect and disinterestedness. This has made the troupe to become ineffective, ineffectual, and incapable of adapting to modern techniques in arts and cultural administration, management and performance, which are vital for its survival and success in contemporary performance.

Keywords: ESCFAACPT, Cultural administration, ACFN, FESTAC, ESAC, Edo State, Nigeria

Introduction

The metamorphosis of the Arts Councils of Federation in Nigeria (ACFN) is hinged on political exigencies triggered by regional and ethnic sentiments, and the desire to explore and exploit their diverse cultural heritage. The department of performing arts became the foremost department in the various regional/state councils for arts and culture to drive this new agenda for integration after the Nigerian

---

\*Daniel OMORUAN is of the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State  
Email: [omoruandan@yahoo.com](mailto:omoruandan@yahoo.com)

civil war. At inception, there was enthusiasm towards funding and investment in this sector. The vibrancy and upsurge recorded in cultural performances in the first decade of the establishment of the ACFN, and the need to showcase Nigeria's rich cultural heritage to the world culminated in the hosting of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in nineteen seventy-seven (1977). Aikpitanyi Iyekoretin, a versatile artiste who started his career in dance in 1955, in his book entitled, 'Our Culture: A Survey of Drama and Cultural Development in Edo Kingdom,' observes that: "in 1969, the group took part in Pan African Festival of Arts in Algiers. In 1972, it took part in late Emperor Haile Selassie's 80th birthday celebration in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In 1973, it took part in the preparatory tour of overseas countries for 1977 African Festival of Arts and Culture which took the group to places like London, Paris, Italy, Bonn, Bulgaria, Hungary, Budapest, etc".

The euphoria generated by this landmark celebration had not died down when the great economic depression and military incursions into Nigerian politics in the nineteen-eighties and nineteen-nineties began to have negative impact on arts and cultural activities and development. Dugga (2002) posits that "a natural consequence from the political instability was the downturn in the economy that forced people to prioritize their needs to basic existence. Entertainment to which the art and theatre belongs was not one of such priorities." The performing arts departments of the arts councils that had attracted the presence of renowned and gifted artists began to witness their egress to the more thriving and profitable private performance ventures, which the awareness and successes brought about by initial government support and patronage of arts and culture had stimulated. Speaking further on the active involvement of government in the arts Iyekoretin affirms that "I will personally trace the era of cultural innovation to the military. The military saw it as a fertile soil to breed unity and co-existence of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria" (N.D). This situation was also encouraged by the proliferation of state owned television stations accompanied with the glamour generated. This development began to indent decline in the performance standards of the performing arts departments of the various Arts Councils of the Federation in Nigeria (ACFN), including ESCFAACPT.

### Early History of Edo Arts Council

The then Midwest Arts Council (MAC) was provisionally established on April, 1972 by the then Midwestern State Military Government with Colonel S.O. Ogbemudia as governor. Its inaugural meeting was held on 27 September 1972 under the pro tem headship of the then

Honourable Commissioner for Home Affairs and Information, Mr. L.L. Bohra. The Council gained autonomy in 1973 and was gazetted and reconstituted with the appointment of board members. Its inaugural meeting was held on 16 July, 1973. At inception, the council comprised the administrative and cultural branches. The cultural branch was made up of the following sections; dance, research and antiquities, arts, crafts, music, drama and field. These sections existed independent of each other until a further reorganization saw the merger of some of these sections to form departments. Dance, music and drama were combined some years later to form the department of performing arts. It was headed by a head of department assisted by sub-heads of the various units. The department of performing arts became the most viable and vibrant department in the council, and at a time a reference point for the establishment of subsequent units in the country. By the 1990s, the department had lost its glamour and grandeur arising from a decline in government support of the sector. The situation is getting worse by the day. The popular government of the present administration of Comrade Adams Aliyu Oshionhole had not been able to restore the troupe to its former position in spite of major interventions in the council since the inauguration of his administration. These areas will be discussed in the course of this paper.

At independence, Benin and all the territories administered by it before colonial rule, came under western region dominated by the Yorubas. There were series of activities throughout the country aimed towards independence, and the Benins started to nurse the idea of a separate region free from Yoruba domination. They embarked on several activities to establish a separate political entity for themselves within the Nigerian political space. Edehiri (2005) notes that one of these attempts by the Benins towards achieving a separate region:

In 1953, Omo N' Oba Akenzua II wrote a public circular to all Benin people indicating his intention to contest one of the two seats allotted to Benin in the Federal Legislature. The intention was well received in some circles while others questioned the rationale for a king to subject himself to the rigours and crucibles of partisan elections. But to the Oba, that was the best possible way he could pursue his pet idea of a separate region for his people.

Arising from the heat generated by ethnic and regional initiatives, Midwest Region was created in 1964 with Jereton Marierie as its first

governor. He ruled from 1964 to 1966. The first military coup that took place in 1966 brought Lieutenant Colonel David Ejoor as military governor. He was succeeded by Major Albert Okonkwo in August 1967 until a month later when Colonel Samuel Osaigbovo Ogbemudia took over. Between 1964 and 1972, the Arts Council was not in existence, so nothing significant can be attributed to the first three governors of the newly created region. Colonel Ogbemudia, who was appointed the military Governor of the region at the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war, stirred the State through the war period and the next five years after the war which was designated as a period of reconciliation and reconstruction. The governor embarked on large-scale infrastructural development of roads, hospitals, electricity, pipe-borne water, schools, colleges and establishment of a virile civil service. The University of Benin was established as part of these initiatives. The construction of Oba Akenzua II Cultural Centre was conceived in a bid to boost social and cultural activities in the state. The centre was to house the newly established arts council and be under the supervision of the University of Benin. The university was expected to provide the technical and manpower support. A Bendel Arts Council publication, *Window on Bendel Arts Council* (1991) notes that:

The idea of constructing a Cultural Complex was mooted in 1972 by the State Government. The intention of Government then was to build a Cultural Centre estimated to cost N369, 000,000 to serve as a link between the State Government and the University of Benin as it was to form a nucleus of the Department of Theatre Arts of the University.

#### Performance by the Troupe

Performance in the Edo State Arts Council (ESAC) involves the showcasing or presentation on stage or screen performances derived from the rich cultural milieus of the state for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Performance is a means by which the cultural heritage of any given society is transmitted, showcased and given contemporary identity and relevance. In the working script of ESAC, performance is coded into four 'P's, i.e., presentation, promotion, propagation and preservation of the cultural endowments of the people. The performing troupe and the creative arts department are the two units responsible for the implementation of the four Ps. The other two departments; administration and maintenance are service the former.

Since the establishment of the ESAC, the four Ps have been the guide of the performing troupe but their implementation and realization have had a chequered history. It is in this connection that we consider the vicissitudes that the ESCFAACPT has encountered within the periods of the various regimes and governments, which are characterized by military and civilian rules. The contributions of these governors towards positioning the troupe and enhancing its capacity to undertake its statutory functions will also be examined. This is so because as an organ of government vested with the responsibility of undertaking a specialized social function, its capacity to carry out these functions effectively, depends largely on the capacity of funds and other forms of support provided by the government through approved budgetary allocations, cash approvals and releases to ministries, agencies and parastatals, whose processes had become commercialized.

The periods of Colonel George Agbazika Innih (July 1975-March 1976); when the state was renamed Bendel State; Commodore Husseni Abdulahi (March 1976-July 1978) Abubakr Waziri (July 1978-October 1979) witnessed great inputs in terms of finance and manpower allocation to the then newly established ESAC. With this support, the troupe's dancers, actors and actresses played lead roles in the events of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) held in Lagos in 1977 and other important activities the years after. In the play entitled *Langbodo* by Wale Ogunyemi, staged by Nigeria as its major entry for the drama competition in FESTAC, Bendel State produced nine actors and actresses in a total cast of twenty-one with spoken roles. They were Matt Imerion, Ben Okoeguale, Ogie Odia, Sam Loco Efe, Ifoghale Amata, Helen Aghedo, Emmanuel Oni, David Oteri and Omo Elegon (Ogunyemi, 1979). This, to an extent, accounted for the level of government's support in the ESAC at that time. It laid the foundation of excellence attained by the state's performing troupe that led to the winning of several trophies in various competitions of the national festivals of arts and culture held in the country till about the mid 1990s. In this regard, Edosomwan (2010) opines that:

In 1988 and 1989, the Council featured prominently in the National Festival of Arts and Culture and won in two successive years, the President's gold gong which was the overall prize for the festival. Another remarkable achievement of the Arts Council at that period was the carving of the mask of Queen Idia, the symbol of FESTAC, in replacement of the original one stolen by Britain from the Kingdom during the invasion in 1897.

He further stated that the then ESAC represented the state creditably in the festival and won many prizes. It is on record that through the efforts of one of its employees, Mr. Joseph Alufa Igboinovia Obayagbona, a fine replica of the ivory mask of Queen Idia was produced to commemorate the global festival" (2010). During this long period (1972-1996) of unimpaired growth, development and achievement by the ESCFAACPT, there were ten military rulers in the state. The performing troupe was divided into three units. They were the drama unit, dance unit and the dance band. The drama unit produced plays on stage such as Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods* and Neville Ukoli's *Home to the River* and Ola Rotimi's *Ovonramwen 'Nogbaisi*, while the dance unit choreographed, restructured and performed a variety of cultural kinetics and dances replete in the kingdom and surrounding areas. The dance band evolved a complete orchestra equipped with various musical instruments and it became a delight at that time, featuring prominently in social functions including the entertainment of high profile government guests. The band was headed by Speedy Glade. It was, however, disbanded during the regime of Brigadier J.T. Husseni (1884-1985) when at a concert in government house; its members were requested to play Ivon Chaka Chaka's "Nkoboti." The failure resulting from the performance of this 'special request' of an unrehearsed music in a show raises the question of the independence of the theatre and the place of the dictum, 'he who pays the piper calls the tune.' Eager to meet the request of the first lady; whose request was occasioned by her young daughter, the band obliged. The result was a fiasco on stage. This led to the immediate disbandment of the troupe.

There were, however, three civilian governments between these military governors. They were Professor Ambrose Folorunso Alli (October, 1979-October, 1983), Dr. S.O. Ogbemudia (October, 1983-December, 1983) and Mr. John Odigie Oyegun (January, 1992-November, 1993). We cannot effectively assess the contributions of Dr. S.O. Ogbemudia and John O. Oyegun towards the growth of the performing troupe due to the brief state of their rule, having been terminated by military coups in 1983 and 1993 respectively. Nonetheless, during the period of Professor Ambrose Alli's rule as governor, the performing troupe continued to enjoy greater funding and support from the government. He re-equipped the troupe by approving funds for the repair of broken down vehicles of the then ESAC, purchase of costumes and state of the art musical equipment, which was acclaimed as the best in the country at that time. It was better than any other musical instrument owned by any high calibre musician in the around, including Sir Victor Uwaifo's, who incidentally

was the council's board chairman. The ensemble included bass, rhythm and solo guitars.

There was a variety of high quality snare and traditional drums, amplifiers, microphones and generator. There was also a variety of gold plated wind instruments such as trumpets, tenor saxophones and bass saxophones, trombones and other musical accessories. Sadly, during the period of the exit of professionals from the troupe due to retirement and lack of incentive, the management of the council shifted into the hands of non-professionals who could not appreciate the importance of the equipment nor had the expertise to engage them. They were locked up and abandoned for several years. By the time they were accessed, they had become rusted and obsolete. There were attempts later to refurbish them but this desire was truncated by lack of funds. Moreover, the constitution of a band was out of the reach of the council as subsequent governments became lukewarm to matters relating to arts and culture, especially in the area of staff training and employment.

When the construction of the cultural complex was contemplated in 1972, it was estimated to cost three hundred and sixty-nine thousand naira (N369, 000,000) as noted earlier on in this discussion. Between 1986 and 1990 nearly nine million (N9, 000,000.00) was estimated to complete the building. According to the Windows on Bendel Arts Council (1990), a "feasibility study by the Nigerian Economic Welfare Services in 1986 indicated that about seven million five hundred and fifty-three thousand, six hundred and eighty (N7, 553,680.00) was required then to complete the centre. As at today (that is, as at 1991), about eight million, seven hundred thousand (N8, 700,000.00) is required by the state government to complete the entire project due to escalating cost of building materials" (1991). The credit of breaking the jinx that had delayed the completion of the cultural centre went to Colonel Bassey Asuquo, who in spite of lean resources as well as myths surrounding the complex went ahead to complete the project. Daniel Aruna, a retired staff of the ESAC, in an interview with the researcher noted that "during the commissioning of the cultural complex, Colonel Bassey Asuquo said that there had been rumour that any governor who completed the centre would die. Today, I have completed it and commissioned it, let me die".

The completion of the cultural complex brought a gleam of hope to the staff that had been experiencing a decline in the affairs of the ESCFAACPT since the mid nineteen nineties due to a down turn in the Nigerian economy arising from massive looting of the nation's wealth by both military and civilian rulers coupled with oil glut in the world market. The value of the naira dropped drastically against major world

currencies (Dugga, 2002) and the ray of hope brought about by Colonel Basse Asuquo, with the completion of the cultural centre was extinguished by Group Captain Baba Adamu Iyam who replaced him in August, 1996. Iyam served as governor in the state precisely for two years. During this period, he introduced self-sustenance policy into the ESCFAACPT. This policy required the staff to generate funds needed for their salaries, remunerations and other needs. His argument was that as artists, they should go out there and perform. According to Daniel Aruna a staff of ESAC, he was noted to have opined that every Friday is Christmas in Benin.

This spurious notion was based on the fact that after observing the frequency of burial ceremonies every Friday in Benin City, he came up with the notion that Benins love to party alot. What he did not understand was that he had resumed office as governor towards the end of the year when the Ague festival was celebrated. As a result, burial ceremonies were halted in Benin until the end of the festival in the New Year. The implication was that since it usually took between two to three months to prepare for the burials of one's adult parents, not all those that died between October and December could be buried until January. Between September 1994 when he arrived in the state and December, there were no burials. In the early months of 1995, there was a sudden explosion in burial ceremonies. He misconstrued this for party time and decreed that the troupe should go out and draw clientele from the numerous social ceremonies. The troupe that had earlier on witnessed the exit of professional musicians from its company could not put together a band. The council was left without fund. Staff salaries could not be paid, electricity bill soared and light was disconnected by the Nigerian Electric Power Authority (NEPA). Staff could no longer afford to meet their domestic responsibilities as their children were sent away from schools. Many housewives were forced to relocate to the homes of their parents or sought other alternative accommodation when landlords ejected their husbands. Some families moved into the premises of the council. The self-sustenance policy lasted for twenty-one months. He also carried out mass retrenchment and retirement of civil servants in order to reduce the wage bill. In August 1998, Navy Captain Anthony Onyearchulem succeeded him as governor of the state ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)).

Navy Captain Onyearchulem repealed the self-sustenance policy imposed on some sectors of the civil service, including the ESAC, and paid initial salary arrears of six months to the affected workers. His presence in government brought relief to the ESCFAACPT members and the troupe was once again repositioned for performances. He served for only ten months as governor before the transition to civil

rule on May 1999 following the demise of General Sani Abacha, the year before and the coming into power of General Abdusalam Abubakir. The Performing Troupe and the Millennium Governors

The millennium governors are the three democratic governors that have governed the state since the beginning of the new millennium. We have used the term 'three democratic governors' to differentiate them from their military counterparts. Apart from being a system of government by majority rule, the aim of democracy is to ensure that developments are equitably spread around all sectors of the economy. The lack of equity in appropriating the resources of the state under the civilian governors has affected the performance capacity of the troupe since the inception of the present democratic experience. To buttress this, we will like to foreground the following assumptions:

1. the resources of the government are insufficient
2. budgetary provisions are not implemented judiciously
3. political office holders live in exhibited affluence and wealth
4. corruption and misappropriation of public funds is rampant

We have noted above that before the time of temporal reprieve for the troupe engendered by Navy Captain Anthony Onyearegbulem, there had been a period of mass retrenchment and retirement that had greatly depleted the number of artistes in the ESCFAACPT. From about sixty staff in the troupe in the 1980s, it sank to a paltry less than ten in 1999, which included Sikira Aruna, Ernest Aghama, Bridget Idele, Felicia Anifowose, Daniel Uwadiae, Felix Idehen and Brown Atiemwen (Edo State Council for Arts and Culture Establishment Proposals for 2006 Fiscal Year). When Lucky Igbinedion came to power, this worrisome situation was brought to his attention by the then Director of the Council, Anthony Edosomwan who in a memo requested for the employment of a number of professionals into the troupe. The governor heeded this request and job vacancies were advertised in the Nigerian Observer in the last quarter of 1999. Interviews were conducted in November and letters of appointments were despatched at the end of January, 2000. Three graduates of theatre arts and a number of dancers, singers and drummers were brought into the troupe.

#### The Troupe and Chief Lucky Igbinedion's Government

This coming into office by Lucky Igbinedion as governor of the state was perceived with enthusiasm by members of the troupe going by his youthfulness and pedigree. Having solved the problem of inadequate staff, the next problem was to equip the troupe with costumes, musical instruments and other performance paraphernalia. Although, the troupe could do with the old equipment in its ensemble,

newer ones would boost the profile of the troupe. Beyond this, the need for a vehicle (bus) for the troupe was paramount. Memoranda were written to the government and the governor who was often a guest of the council at the cultural centre where he attended several state functions made verbal promises. The governor often reiterated these promises until his tenures elapsed in 2007.

The implication of absence of a bus or vehicle for the ESCFAACTP was that during rehearsals or engagements that lasted into the night, members of the troupe were often stranded or go through great inconveniences and risks to get home. Amaechi Obi, one of the female members of the troupe was attacked by vandals along Adesogbe Street on her way home in 2009 after a late night performance, while Blessing Iyekekolor narrowly escaped a group of thieves one night along Textile mill road on her way home from an engagement. Another disgusting situation was that the troupe had to rely on hiring of buses from public commuters to convey equipment and personnel each time they had engagements within the city or outside. This placed the troupe at the mercy of the drivers who it had no control over. Another problem encountered by the troupe during this period was that of insufficient funding at national festivals of arts and culture and the Abuja carnival that took place every year. The troupe was usually ill-prepared for such keenly contested festivals and carnivals where trophies were presented to the best participants in the various events such as indigenous music and dance, traditional moonlight games, traditional wrestling, traditional circus, drama, video documentary, cultural market/food fair, art and crafts exhibition, etc. During the period of Lucky Igbinedion's administration, only a fixed amount was approved annually irrespective of the inflationary trend or peculiar performance requirements. In most cases, release of approved funds was commercialized.

Due to delay in the approvals and releases of funds for events, costumes, props and other materials needed to be procured in advance were often procured late, and in some cases were hurriedly assembled through borrowing from private and institutional troupes. This kind of situation could not have promoted excellence or professionalism in the arts and it accounted for the troupe's dwindling performances since the new millennium. In the memorandum raised for the state's participation in the Abuja Carnival of two thousand and five (2005), and addressed to the Deputy Governor of the state, Mike Oghiadomhe ( as the governor was on leave), the total amount requested was twenty-one million, four hundred and six thousand Naira (N24,406,000.00). The approved amount was five (N5,000,000.00) million Naira. Despite the drawbacks arising from reduced government

funding during Igboinedion's administration, his contribution towards the improvement and sustenance of the troupe outweighs that of any other governor in this era. During his tenure as governor, the ESCFAACPT received several invitations to perform abroad. He approved two of these invitations. In two thousand and four (2004), he approved a three week cultural exchange programme with Constantin Schule in Bochum Germany where members of the troupe featured in a joint cast of Germans, Americans, Belgians and Dutch citizens in Ames Cesear's adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Tempest*. The other approved programme was a trip to Japan. These were during the tenure of Omorede Osifo as Commissioner for Arts and Culture and Tourism.

#### The Troupe and Prof. Osariemen Osunbor's Government

During this period, the troupe witnessed a marginal improvement as funds for costumes and equipment were continued to be released. However, in terms of participation in national events, the status quo remained as the governor took a queue from previous approvals and approved the same amount of fund for the troupe especially at national events. The troupe's performances at these events did not improve as approvals continued to come late. Like his predecessor, he approved an international cultural exhibition programme for the troupe to attend the world Trade Fair in Zaragoza, Spain in two thousand and eight (2008). The invitation to attend this event came from the Federal Ministry of Commerce and it was extended to other troupes from other geo-political zones in the country. Due to delay in the issuance of visas, only Edo State's troupe represented the country. Osunbor's administration was short-lived so it may be proper to assess him on the same platform with other Governors of that era.

#### The Troupe and Comrade Adams Oshiomhole's Government

The coming into power of Comrade Adams Oshiomhole as governor of Edo State was a welcome development considering his record as president of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the fact that he belonged to the same constituency as the civil servants. Since the first Abuja Carnival which was held in 2005, Edo State had always featured in subsequent ones. When Adams Oshiomhole came into power in November, 2008, the time was too short for the governor to accent to the memoranda for the state's participation in the National Festival of Arts and Culture and Abuja Carnival held in October and December respectively. Approvals did not come and the troupe that had been engaged in half-hearted rehearsals in preparation suspended all activities. The next year, the troupe waited anxiously for the approval

of the required memoranda to facilitate its participation in the events. In response to a robust memo despatched months earlier to the governor's office, only five million (N5, 000,000.00) was approved and cash was not released until a day to departure. Some borrowed moneys were hurriedly assembled and used to despatch a fore-runner. The state participated in the festival without winning a trophy in any of the events. It, however, came home with a trophy and certificate awarded to it for attendance.

Two months later, at the Abuja Carnival with Sir Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, the Esama of Benin as Chairman of the carnival, amidst shoddy preparation, the state came second in the "Queen and King" parade making it the first trophy to be won in about twenty years. The situation has not improved since then. The government has not given adequate attention to the needs of the ESCFAACPT such as the employment of artistes into the troupe, replacement of worn out musical instruments and training of staff to reflect the realities of globalization. The council (or more specifically, the troupe) has no vehicle or bus. Its performances have continued to recede by the day with the exit of some members due to transfer, ill-health, retirement or death. In spite of the foregoing, the governor had embarked on an infrastructural refurbishment of Oba Akenzua II Cultural Complex in his first tenure in office which included painting of the entire complex, tiling of the floor, replacement of the seats in the hall, restoration of the mal-functioning conveniences and sinking of a bore-hole. In the first year of his second tenure in office, the governor replaced the asbestos roof that was over thirty-five years old with modern green long span roofing sheets. He had also recently embarked on the reconstruction of the front wall of the complex fence that was knocked down due to the expansion and reconstruction of Airport Road where the complex is located.

## Conclusion

The ESCFAACPT is a unit of Edo State Council for Arts and Culture. In the 1980s and early 1990s, it comprised three ribs; dance, music and drama. Notable Nigerian artistes that had been associated with the troupe are Jimi Solanke, Ben Okoeguale, Okafor Azikiwe, Gladys Nwadianor, Casman Suleiman and Sam Loco Efeimwenokiekie. Others include Liz Carew, Sheddy Agbagbara, Brown Atiemwen, Charles Agbonlahor and Lady Caulet. By mid 1990s, the troupe had shrunk drastically in terms of manpower and materials. The few members remaining came together to form a loose troupe that engaged in occasional cultural performances. This condition was occasioned by a gradual withdrawal of government support and funding which climaxed in its being delisted from the government payroll

between 1996 and 1998 under the administration of Group Captain Baba Adamu Iyam. Navy Captain Anthony Onyeregbulem restored the troupe to the government's pay roll in 1998. The troupe continued to function under the shadow of the status attained in the 1980s, which climaxed with the winning of the Presidential Gold gong in the National Festival of Arts and Culture held in Lagos and Bauchi in 1988 and 1989 respectively. The down ward trend experienced by the troupe since then had not changed even after sixteen years of uninterrupted democratic governance in the state. The troupe today remains one of the most ill-equipped and ill-motivated state owned troupes in the country.

### References

- Aruna, D. (2013). Personal interview. Benin City.
- Dugga, V.S. (2002). *Creolisation in Nigerian drama*. Bayreuth: Eckhard Breitingger.
- Edeboiri, D.U. (2005). *Benin historical essays*. Benin City: Allen.
- Edosomwan, A. (2010). Art and culture administration: The Edo State experience. *EJOTMAS: Ekpoma Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, 3 (1&2), 77-85.
- Edo Arts Council. (2006). *Edo State council for arts and culture establishment proposal*. Benin City: Edo Arts Council.
- Edo Arts Council. (2008). *A brief on the cultural centre complex*. Benin City: Edo Arts Council.
- Midwestern State of Nigeria report: A report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April - 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1974. (N.D). Benin: Ethiopie Publication.
- Iyekoretin, A. (N.D). *Our culture: A survey of drama and cultural development in Edo Kingdom*. Benin: Iyekoretin Aikpitanyi.
- Edo State council for arts and culture (staff list). (2005). Benin City: Edo Arts Council.
- Edo State arts council organizational chart. (1999). Benin City: Edo Arts Council.
- Ogunyemi, W. (1979). *Langbodo*. Lagos: Nelson.
- Okoeguale, B. (2014). Personal interview. Benin City.
- Schechner, R. *Performance studies: An introduction* 3rd edition. New York: Routledge
- Report on the Edo State arts council's troupe engagement in Lagos. (2007). Benin City: Edo Arts Council.
- Window on Bendel arts council (Vol. Two). (1991). Benin City: Bendel Arts Council.