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## The Socio-Cultural Implications of Odezuruigbo Cultural Dance Music in Awka, Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State

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### Abstract

Music is an integral part of everyday life in Awka traditional community. It is a very important aspect of their culture. Music accompanies every socio-cultural activity of the people. Consequently, there are varieties of musical types practiced by various categories of people in Awka. This paper is concerned with activities of *Odezuruigbo* Cultural Dance Music, an outstanding women music group in Awka. It discussed amongst other things the organization and the socio-cultural implications of *odezuruigbo* cultural dance music. Data for this study were drawn from fieldwork, oral interview and review of related literature. The findings of this study revealed that the impact of *odezuruigbo* dance group in the life of Awka community is indispensable. It also revealed that some gender dichotomies in the use of some local musical instruments are gradually becoming insignificant. This study recommended that the practice of those socio-cultural festivals which promote the traditional music and dance of the people be encouraged.

**Key Words:** activity, culture, cultural dance, dance music, and odezuruigbo

### Introduction

Music is part and parcel of everyday life in Igbo culture. It is an important agent of culture that cannot be ignored as a result of its effect on the social, emotional, moral, physical and economic life of an individual. The importance of music in the life of Igbo is innumerable. There are musical activities for every phase of the developmental stage of man on earth, ranging from birth to death. Every activity going on whether cultural, traditional, religious or social in Igbo communities are punctuated with one music type or the other. No wonder Okafor (2005) pointed out that “no festival can go on without music” (p. 17). In Igbo culture, music making is not just for recreational activities, it is the pivot on which all cultural, religious and social activities rotate. It plays important role in preserving the culture of the people. Blacking in Okpala (2006) opined that “music playing is not simply an exercise in the organization of sound; it is a symbolic expression of sound, and the cultural organization which reflects the values and the past and present ways of life of the human beings who create it” (p. 2).

The above assertion is in line with Onwuka (2011) who stated that: “it does not only accompany many events of the life cycle but also helps to preserve and transmit societal norms values and much of its cultural aspiration” (p.1). Consequently, there are various music genres performed by different categories of individuals who have some kind of blood tie or associative bond. These music genres are studied to investigate their usefulness in the society.

There are diverse music groups for the many social, traditional and religious ceremonies which are observed by the people. There is no culture in the world which does not have different kinds of music, because most events that have to do with human are graced with one musical type or the other. There are music types that serve precise purpose and there are others that are used for entertainment and are therefore performed in several other activities. This study is hinged on the functionalism theory propounded by Adedeji (1999) as stated in Adedeji (2014). It holds that no music is without a function; music possesses both anabolic and catabolic functions. Omosilade (2018) explained that “the anabolic role of music is geared towards creative or constructive mind-set functionality, while the catabolic role is aimed at negative or destructive functionality” (p. 345). This means that music plays negative and positive roles. The emphasis of this study is on the anabolic role of the activities of *odezuruigbo* dance music in Awka Community.

Musical activities in Igbo land are not restricted to a particular class of people in the society. There are musical activities for children, adolescents, youth (boys or girls), adults (men and women) and there are yet that that involves both sexes and that whose membership does not have any age barrier. The music group that forms the focal point of this study is designated for the women. Majority of the music types practiced by these categories of people are fast fading away. This is as a result of negligence, flair for foreign music culture, influence of new technologies, religious belief and the likes. Despite the lethal influences of these factors, a good number of traditional music has prevailed, *Odezuruigbo* cultural dance of Awka which form the object of discourse in this research work is among the prevailed music group in Awka community of Anambra State. This research work is necessary so that our musical culture will not be totally defunct. Traditional music genres should be studied and recorded so that the future generations will have something to lay hands on.

## Definition of Concepts

### Culture

Culture is defined in a layman's language as a people's way of life. However, it has been explained in various ways by different scholars. Taylor in Okafor and Emeka (2013, p. 17) and Okonkwo in Oguoma (2012, p. 23) viewed it respectively as "the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief and morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society." Affirming this, Offor (2014, p. 1) further elaborated that culture is "the sum total of the attainments and activities of specific period, race or people, including their implements, handicrafts, agriculture, economics, music arts, religious beliefs, traditions, language and study. *Odezurugbo* cultural dance qualify as musical type that reflects the life and values of the owners. Their dance structure depicts African tradition. Dance music is a human activity performed by people to reflect their social and cultural experiences. This is in conformity with Oguoma (2012) which views culture as "a distinctive and transmissible network of symbols which characterizes a designated aggregate of people (p. 23). Such symbols may include man-made artifacts, activities that people perform and ideas and feelings." Agbanusi (2015) added that the culture of a people is what gives them their identity as a people (p. 79). The statement above is true. Communities are differentiated by their cultural activities – their language, occupation, music, etc. In Igbo tribe, music is so much a part of their local identity that even those that live outside their communities form organizations like town unions under which they learn a cultural music type with which they are identified. Agbanusi further opined that culture lives just like those who harbour it. When a people's culture dies, the people no longer exists (p.79). In other words, the culture of a people is their life without which they will not exist. "Culture is central to life in the society" (Okafor & Emeka 2013, p. 27).

It is important to note that culture is not static. It changes with time. Agbanusi affirms this statement when he said that "since culture lives, it can also change. The changing of culture is what is referred to as cultural dynamism" (p. 81). This is not out of place in Igbo culture whose music is the focal point of this research work. Western colonialism left a big landmark in every aspect of culture in Nigeria, globalization also left its mark. Cultural dynamism is significant in the musical tradition of the Igbo.

In the past, in most Igbo communities some musical instruments are regarded as sacred, women were forbidden from touching such instruments let alone playing them. Today, such acts do not hold water any more in some communities. For instance, in the performance of *Odezurugbo* cultural dance, women play the membrane drums. In some other music ensemble, women play instruments such as (*ekwe*) wooden drum, xylophone and a host of others which the culture forbade them from playing in the past. In the past, women do not watch *mmonwu* (spirit manifest) openly but these days, they mingle freely with girls some even posed boldly with women on social media.

### Dance Music

Dance was defined by Aristotle in Onwuka (2012) as "an imitation of actions, character and passions by means of gestures and rhythmical movements. Onyekwelu (2011) sees dance as a "response of physical body to the stimulus of organized sounds" (p. 11). Hanna (1982) viewed it as:

Human behavior composed from dancer's perspective as (1) purposeful (2) intentionally rhythmical, and (3) culturally patterned sequences of 4a) non – verbal

body movements 4b) other than ordinary motor activities, 4c) the motion having inherent and aesthetic value (p. 57).

The definition above buttresses the fact that dance has to do with the movement of the body. Dance is therefore the rhythmic movement of the body in response to music. It involves series of formations which must conform to the rhythmic pattern of the music that accompany the dance. Okoye (2012) in Okpala (2015) observed two dimensions of dance which are the free medley and the stylized dance. She further explains that:

The free medley dance is seen as a required powerful impulse that requires individual's freedom in its composition and movements. The stylized dance is a skillfully choreographed art practiced largely by a professional. It requires fixed choreographically patterns and sequences with varying signs of aesthetic communication (p.98).

The music group under discourse displays both the free medley and the stylized dance style in their dance performance.

Nigerian societies and Igbo people in particular have created and performed varieties of music forms among which are the dance music. This music genre has gained wide popularity in Igbo culture. Okpala (2016, p. 92) viewed dance music as “the most captivating and most widely practiced of all the music genres.” Music and dance are so interwoven that sometimes it seems difficult to have a clear-cut distinction between the two. Time is a common factor between music and dance. They both exist in time. In line with this, Hanna (1982) observed that “they use accent, the significant stress with which energy is released: duration; the relative length of time of actions: meter, the underlying consistent patterns of beats and accents: and tempo, the rate or speed at which action follow one another” (p. 58) However, there are some distinctions between the elements of music and dance, music is somehow independent of dance. This means that there could always be music without dance while it is rear to have dance without music. The aesthetic value of music lies in the sound while that of dance lies in physical body movement. Nketia (1975) buttressed that “although purely contemplative music, which is not designed for dance drama is practiced in African societies in restricted context, the cultivation of music that is integrated with dance or music that stimulates affective motor response is much more prevalent” (p. 206). That is to say that music type which does not involve or stimulate the body movement is rarely performed in African traditional societies. Even when the ensemble group per say do not have dancers, the audience in the performance arena form the dancers as is the case with some ensemble groups like *igba-eze*. Okpala (2016) also added that “dance music could be viewed in three categories which are instrumental dance music, vocal dance music and a combination of both, that is vocal instrumental dance music” (p. 98) In other words, the movements of dancers are regulated by rhythmic patterns provided by the voice or musical instruments. “Rhythm and movement are more closely knit” (Nketia 1975, p. 211). Buttressing this fact, he further stated that “the dancer derives his motor feeling form the rhythmic structure whose elements he articulates in his basic movement.” The accompanying music establishes the dancer's motor beat and movement speed. From the foregoing, one can easily say that without music – intrinsic or extrinsic, there will not be dance. Onwuka (2012) affirmed this when he stated that “dance cannot be meaningfully performed without music.” Writing on the relationship between African music and dance, Onwuekwe (2005) observed that “music and dance are conceived as interwoven. This is evidenced by the use of one word in some African cultures for music and dance” (p. 181). Among the Igbo of Nigeria, the word “*egwu*” means many things such as song, music, dance, play etc.” The distinction is only observed by the prefix –

*igba/ite*, *Iku/Ikpo*, *igu egwu* such as *igba/ite egwu* means to dance, *iku egwu* – to play an instrument/music, *igu/ikwe egwu* – to sing while *igwu egwu* means to play. This is not just peculiar to Igbo tribe as she further noted that some words from some other Nigerian tribes represent both music and dance. They are:

1. *Ráwá* – Hausa
2. *Fate* – Kanuri
3. *Raye* – Berom (Plateau)
4. *Egwo* – Igala.

It is important to note at this point that since the movements of dancers are determined by the rhythmic structure of the accompanying music; dancers must be conversant with the music. This is necessary as it will aid them in responding appropriately to the signals for change in the dance movement. Rigidity is never associated with dancers in any way even in their stylized dance performance. Onwuka (2012) and Olaniyan (2014) pointed out that in dancing; the dancers combine both spontaneous and rehearsed movements during performances. This quality is displayed by dancers of *Odezuruigbo*. Though some segments of their dances are stylized, they established the same basic patterns of movement, yet the dancers also display some spontaneous movements.

### **Awka Community**

Awka is the capital of Anambra State and the Headquarter of Awka South Local Government Area. It is located at latitude 6.21°N and longitude 7.077°E. Its elevation above sea level is 99meters. In another instance the researcher gathered through an oral interview that it is 136m above sea level. However, Dike (2013) submits that Awka is situated on a height of about 154.5 meters (515) feet above sea level on Awka-Orlu escarpment. He further states that:

Awka is enclosed approximately by latitudes 6°10'N and 6°15'N and longitudes 7°1.4'E and 7°8.4'E. It lies about forty kilometres (25 miles) northeast of Onitsha and seventy-two kilometres (45 miles) southwest of Enugu and covers an area of twenty-five square kilometres (P.I)

Awka is situated on a table land, not hilly or stony. The land is very good for farming. Some areas of the land are composed of red soil which is good for road work and building of houses. These provide job for some of the indigenous and other people residing in Awka. Dike (2013) states that:

The town dwells on a predominantly plain country with arable land composed of a little mixture of loose sandstones and clay soils as well as red laterite formation in scattered areas. Its vegetative cover consisted of patched forests and the entire area was drained or watered by a number of perennial streams and springs (27).

There is no traceable origin of the indigenous people of Awka, the history of the origin of Awka falls within the history in Igbo land which are said to be out of memory. Awka people are said to have been grown out of the soil and the people believed it. This gave rise to the popular saying recorded in Okafor (2002:1) which says “ *Oka ful efu, Enwere vbe nna nna, Onwere ika e shi vbe bia* (Oka grew out of the soil of Oka, they have not one father, there is no history that they came from somewhere).” However, there are other settlers that joined Awka in their present location. These are part of the present Awka people and they have traceable origins.

### Membership and Organisation of *Odezuruigbo* Cultural Dance Music

In Nigerian ethnic societies, music making is mostly organized as a communal activity. Confirming this fact, Agu in a lecture note states that “among the Igbo, all music groups, in principle, are communal. That is to say that they belong to the community in which they are performed, despite the fact each music group has stipulated membership criteria.” Buttrressing this fact, Nzewi (2007) posited that “any and all music produced in an indigenous culture was by convention the property of the community collective” (p.137). Any individual music group is therefore expected to abide by the established guidelines for music creativity and performance in their community.

There must be some kind of associative relationship that exists between the members of the group. Gender is also a factor to be considered in the organization of a music performance group. The principles of organization could prescribe the following, age-gender qualifications for membership: adult men, adult women, male youth, maidens, children, mixed adults, mixed youth, all ages and gender.

The organization of *Odezuruigbo* is based on gender distinction and it is not spontaneous. It was established under a well-planned arrangement. In some communities, the initiative to organize a dance group is normally conceived by a number of persons. Onyekwelu (2012, p.122) observed that “a group of people or a community must resolve to have a dance of their own, most often with the objective of creating a special identity and to provide entertainment at social occasions.” that is to say that the establishment of a dance music group requires adequate planning. The people will bear in mind the type of music they want and scout for it. In most cases, a constituted committee is given the assignment of looking for befitting dance music for the group or community. This lends credibility to Onwuka (2012) who asserted that “every cultural dance has a traceable source or point from where it started” (p. 17.). He adds that “it could be sourced by copying and blending of some prevalent dance patterns from another community (culture) or adopting in its entirety, an exciting dance that exists in another culture/community. This act of copying and adopting music from another culture or community is what Nzewi (2007) referred to as musical art borrowing. Buttrressing this further, he wrote:

Musical arts borrowing in the indigenous setting bonded individuals and communities/societies, and had prescribed procedures, which implicated vast societal and human issues. It generated human-cultural interest, values and relationship far beyond musical arts matters. Musical arts borrowing as such occur when an organization or group in one community sets out to acquire a favoured musical arts style practiced by a group in another community or society (p.139).

The researcher totally agrees with the submission above, really the act of music borrowing has encouraged healthy and friendly relationships between individuals and communities. There are records of marriages being contracted as a result of the friendly relationship that exists through musical arts borrowing.

The organization of *Odezuruigbo* cultural dance somehow drifted from what seems as the conventional way of music borrowing. In most music ensemble, a committee is constructed to scout for a befitting music group. In the case of *Odezuruigbo*, Mrs. Lucy Enujioko popularly known as *Agbe-Oyibo* from Amudo village, Awka was the brain behind the establishment of the music group. According to her, a group she belonged to attended a funeral ceremony at Abatete, a town in Anambra State. Amongst the music groups that attended the funeral was the *Igba* Ifeanyi Okafor from Umuolum in Anyamelum Local Government Area of Anambra

State. It was a male group. Of all the music groups that performed at the funeral ceremony, that of Ifeanyi Okafor captured her interest the most. She said within her “*egwua ga-adikwa mma maka umu nwanyĩ*” meaning “this music will be good for women.” She met and told Ifeanyi, the leader of the group her intention to borrow the music from them. The negotiation took place immediately. She came back and told her age-grade about the group. They unanimously accepted her proposal. The date they agreed on for the training to take place was communicated to Ifeanyi.

On the said date, the two groups met, the demands of the owners of the music were met and the training session commenced. Membrane drums which were the major instruments of the ensemble took the women time to learn. The training period lasted for months. Each time, the group came from their town and went back same day after the training. Because Ezinwanne age grade is an already established social group, membership into the dance ensemble was based strictly on membership of the Ezinwanne Age grade. *Egbe-Oyibo*, being a very talented person in music became the leader and soloist of the dance ensemble. The original music featured membrane drum, metal bell nouted flute. She added the wooden block (*Okpokolo*), gourd rattle (*ichaka*), the big metal bell (*alo*), musical pot (*udu*) and the recorder. According to her, she added the above instruments to make the music sound like women’s music. The instruments added to the ensemble were among the those listed by Ibekwe (2012, p. 109), “the commonest instruments used by women during performances include pot drums, *Udu* of various sizes; wood block, *okpokoro*, *nkwo-nkwo*; gourd, *ichaka*; basket rattle, *nsak*, *oyo*, small slit wooden drums, *obele-ekwe*, bamboo clapper-*mpachi* and so on.” It is apt to note that among the instruments of the original music was the membrane drum which women were forbidden from playing in the past. The women of *Odezuruigbo* learned to play the two membrane drums used in their dance music.



Plate 1: Cross section of the instrumentalists of *Odezuruigbo*, showing the female drummers

The vocal part was modified to suit the performance context of *odezuruigbo*. The original ensemble does not have specified dancers. During performances, the spectators dance spontaneously to the music. This group is among those recognised by Nzewi (2007) as music types that are not intended for organised dance but could welcome spontaneous dancing. *Odezuruigbo* added stylised dance to their music to make it more dignified. This is a common characteristic of almost all women music performance group. They always feature dancing.

Having learnt the basic instruments, the group embarked on intensive training and rehearsals. The new instruments were integrated into the ensemble. The group formulated the choreography of the dance in line with the instrumental part. Inputs were made by some creative members of the group to create well stylized dance steps. It took them over eight months to perfect their various parts. At the end of their training and rehearsals period, competent and creative members were assigned different roles, dancers and instrumentalists alike. This agrees with Nzewi (2007) who stated that “dance music groups recruit only competent musicians who must know, and can interpret, the choreographic feature of the dance... Proficient dancers are selected to present the group’s final product” (p. 130). The dance belongs to an age-grade, but not every members of the age-grade participate in it.

The group appointed patrons (*nna egwu na nne egwu*). The lead dancers and instrumentalists were also appointed based on proficiency. The leader, Madam Lucy Enujioke is the soloist. She composed the group’s songs. Agu (2002) in a lecture rightly pointed out that “the choice of a good song leader/cantor or soloist is never campaigned for in any way. People who are talented are easily identified and appointed.” He went on to list the qualities of a potential soloist thus:

- The possession of clear resonant voice.
- The possession of a good musical ear and the ability to intone songs accurately and in the correct pitch or vocal range of the group.
- The ability to improvise and extemporize
- The ability to compose or learn new songs fast.
- Possession of good memory which is expected to serve as a reservoir for the group’s songs.
- The ability to coordinate and control all aspects of the performance, including instrumental and dance movements.

The soloist of *Odezuruigbo* did not assume the position because she founded the dance group rather because of her inestimable musical qualities. She composes and sings the group’s songs, plays the instruments (drums).

The first public performance of *Odezuruigbo* was a memorable one. It took place in 1974. The age-grade invited people in and outside the town. Ifeanyi and his group were also invited. They provided enough food and drinks for their guests. The occasion also featured fund raising for the group. After the launching, the dance ensemble continued to attend functions in Awka and neighbouring communities. With time, their invitation for performance exceeded Awka and its environs. They performed in towns around the state and beyond.

It got to the point where there were no able members of Ezinwanne age-grade to continue with the dance ensemble. Ageing and death of members crippled the activities of the dance group. Mrs. Enujioke, though aged, still filled with the zeal of carrying on with the dance ensemble. She had to invite young women from other villages to participate in the dance. During this period, membership was open to any woman endowed with some musical skills. It extended to women from other South Eastern states in Nigeria residing in Awka. This was the time the group was renamed *Odezuruigbo Cultural Dance*. Their slogan – *Nwanne di namba* indicates that people from different states/background could come together for a common purpose. Thus, the group encourages unity among women.

The new group were taught how to play the instruments by Mrs. Enujioke. She also taught them the dance steps. It was necessary for the new group to organise and perform their first public performance (*I pafuta Egwu*). This was done to create awareness and to formally

present the group to the town. Officers were elected. The launching of the dance group under the new name which took place in 2003 seemed to be more exciting and greater than the former/initial launching. This may be as a result of the mode of admission which encompassed every woman with musical attribute irrespective of where she comes from. In order to checkmate the activities of the group, rules and regulations were made. One striking content of their rules and regulations was that any woman who is rude to her husband, if found guilty after investigation is expelled from the group. It is a taboo for a member of this group to engage in a fight with anyone both at home and in the market place. This no doubt instils discipline into the members.

### **Socio-Cultural Impact of *Odezuruigbo* Cultural Dance Music in Awka Community**

The theoretical framework of this research clearly points out that no music is performed for nothing. Every music performance has a role to play in the life of both the performers and the spectators.

It has been established that dance music is an integral part of culture in Nigeria and in Igbo culture in particular. Music plays an inestimable role in the life of the Igbo as in most other African cultures, Vidal (2016) observed that before the colonial period that:

Music played an important role in regulating, sustaining and preserving the various institutions of their societies. As an instrument of discipline and social control, their music is the medium through which curfews may be composed while judicial executions of condemned criminals were being carried out. Ethical and moral standards were prescribed through music (p.10)

It is a known fact that most of the music types practiced in the past are no more in existence. Buttressing this fact, Onyenemuchara (2013) asserted that “majority of these dances are waning and or moribund both in content and in form” (p. 248). This notwithstanding, some trending music ensembles are still very much alive and functional in various Igbo communities. They still perform most if not all of the roles mentioned by Vidal. *Odezuruigbo* dance is among the dance music groups which still play prominent roles in Awka community. Music plays an important role in the social stability and cultural identity of the community that owns it. This was rightly captured by Esimone and Umezina (2013, p. 36) as they wrote: “music therefore, is no doubt one major factor through which identities are constructed and sustained and social and social stability achieved, hence it is a vehicle capable of communicating and creating understanding.”

*Odezuruigbo* music and dance has many positive influences on Awka people. It is one of the outstanding music groups in Awka. It has always been chosen as one of the performance groups in many occasions in the town and the state at large. *Odezuruigbo* was among the music groups invited to perform at the Anambra State New Yam Festival of 2018. The Impact of this group is felt both by the members of the group and their spectators. *Odezuruigbo* group’s musical activities have made and are still making significant impact in various aspects of life in Awka traditional community. These are evident in their social, cultural, religious, educational, physical, economic and political lives.

- **Social impact**

Music and dance are performed as a social event. One outstanding feature of music and dance is that they bring people together. In accordance with the above Enekwe cited in Onwuekwe (2005) stated that:

Dance serves a vital function in human society to achieve social cohesion or togetherness causing them to feel a sense of communion with each other. As a result, people are liberated from the bonds of individuality ... societies whose traditional value are still intact tend to value the cohesive or unifying effects of the dance (p.128).

The performance of *Odezuruigbo* cultural dance on social functions always create avenue for people from the different backgrounds both old and young to come together. Apart from being entertained, the lyrics of the songs pass useful information to the spectator. The interaction between the spectators most often lead to good relationship. During burial ceremonies, the dance music serves to console the bereaved heart is lightened. In line with the above, Onwuka (2011) stated that “in times of grief and despair, it offers soothing relief to the aggrieved and comfort to the broken hearted” (p. 184).

Traditional music plays a very important role in shaping the life of the people. “The lyrics of folk songs are so powerful that they can penetrate the heart of both the performers and the spectators resulting in a change of attitude towards positive issue” (Okpala 2015, p. 203). She added “that through folk music, the conventional rules of behaviour are maintained. This is achieved when the right conduct is encouraged through praise and appreciation, and ill behaviours discourage through caution and ridicule.”

Through the lyrics of songs of *Odezuruigbo*, good behaviours are encouraged. During functions, Mrs. Enujiokwe through the text of her songs extols commendable characters and debases ill characters. The song text below is a good example.

*E burum egwum oma o dezuruigbo bja*

I have come with my music Odezuruigbo

*Udo na ifunanya na ofu obi k'anyi ji aga*

We move with peace, love and unity.

*Nke onye na-eme ya kwuba aka ya otu n'obu ya k'ayi ji agaa*

Be straight forward in your actions that is what we preach

*Nwanne m wepu aka n'alulu ani I nugo*

My brother desist from evil

*Alulu ani n'obu ya na-egbu obodo anyi e*

Evil kills our land

*I gburu nwanne gi nara ya ani ya*

You killed your brother and took his land

*I ga-epu ero n'uwa?*

Will you remain immortal?

*i nalu nwanne gi nwunye ya, i chelu n'oga dirị gi mma*

You took your brother's wife, do you think it will be well with you

*i bu ani-adi mma n'obodo biko wepu aka na njo*

You are a disaster to the land, please abstain from evil.

Francis, *onye oma m ji eme onu e*

Francis, good man that am proud of

*Jidekwa ka iji nwoke oma, na chukwu du gi eje*

Keep on with your good deeds for God is with you

*Eke kere ụwa chebe gi, i nugo*

May the creator of the earth protect you

*Onye na-echere gi echiche ojọ ya welu anị zelu mmiri*

Anyone that has evil thought against you should not live

*Onye oma anyị ji eme ọnụ*

We are proud of you.

The performance of this song in any social function normally induces the people to have a sober reflection of their life, to know what position they occupy in the development of their community, whether they are building or destroying it. Most times, she does not mention names of the evil perpetrators but through her expressions, the culprit is exposed. Through such songs people are made to be conscious of their actions, so that they will not be ridiculed. This and other attributes have led to the acknowledgment and acceptance of *Odezuruigbo* Cultural Dance as one of the socio-cultural activities in Awka community. Alor (2002) validated this impact of music and wrote:

In communal administration the priceless role of music cannot be overestimated. It is a medium through which the citizens are castigated in satirical songs and cultural ethos of a people is also reflected in their folk music. Folk music in this circumstance serves the purpose of social organization and reformation (p.126).

It makes bold to say that traditional music plays a role in the socio-political life of the people. When the behaviors of the people are checked through music performance, governance becomes easier for the rulers. Even the rulers are meant to be conscious of their actions as they are not left out. Good leadership is always extolled through music while bad leadership is ridiculed.

This was rightly captured by Nzewi cited by Alor (2003) when he observed that:

Folk music assists the folk governmental system in collecting dues and fines, in prompting and marshalling community and group labor. It celebrates communal accomplishments, officiates in the administration and execution of justice; exposes and popularizes good, progressive government while it warns, exposes and heckles as well as being instrumental in correcting and throwing unpopular government (p. 127).

- **Cultural impact**

One of the anabolic roles of traditional music is educating the people about their culture. The culture of a people is fully embedded in their music. It was noted earlier that the acceptable patterns of behaviour of a people are rooted in their music and dance. Onyeji and Onyeji (2011) buttressed that:

African music is rationalized as a platform for social; and cultural education as well as for moral negotiation, construction and training for all members of the society. Its subtle and penetrating quality makes it well adapted to all forms of humanizing education. To the African therefore, music must provide some education as its essential value (p. 24).

Going by the above submission, traditional music is a viable means of inculcating the right behavioural patterns of life of a community into the people. Stressing this, Iyimoga in Onwuka (2011, p. 189) stated that “music, like other aspects of cultural education, is capable

of moulding the individual in several ways; and that through music one is exposed to variety of things.” The above assertion is achievable owing to the varieties of songs observed by Okafor and Emeka (2013, p.153) which stated that “Igbos sing a whole spectrum of songs e.g. Social songs, songs of praise, love songs, religious song and songs of derision.” This makes to say that there is appropriate song for every aspect of life. Song texts carry messages that educate the people about various issues of life. Their lives are moulded so that they will become very relevant in their communities.

From the foregoing, *Odezuruigbo* performs this function very well. Their performance at every social event educates the people on one issue or the other. In traditional marriage ceremony for instance, Mrs. Enujioko through her songs educates the couple and indeed everyone present about what marriage is all about. Below is an example of such songs:

*Odezuruigbo ndi nwe egwu, Odezuruigbo abia*

*Odezuruigbo* owners of music, *Odezuruigbo* has come

*Egwu nwanne di na mba, egwu m ji eje mba abia*

*Nwanne di na mba* music, which I have journeyed through many towns with has come.

*Olulu di na nwunye ka anyi ji bia*

We came for marriage ceremony

*Olulu di nwunye na-ejiko mba na mba*

Marriage unites two towns

*O bu ihe na-atọ uto, ma enukwa inu*

It is a sweet thing though sometimes bitter

*Udo na ihunanya bu ogwu di na nwunye*

Peace and love is what sustains marriage

*Ifeoma nwannem hukwa di gi n'anya i nugo*

Ifeoma my sister love your husband

*Were obi ume anị rubere di gi isi*

Respect your husband with humble heart.

*Ikechukwu nwannem, nezie nwunye gi anya*

Ikechukwu my brother take good care of your wife.

*Egkwana ndi asiri nti, ndi ntisa ha juru ebe nile*

Do not listen to home breakers; they are all over the place.

*Chukwu Okike chebe ma duzie unu nke oma*

May God the creator keep and guide you.

Through the song above, the newly married are made to understand the roles expected of them as they live as man and wife. Even the older ones are reminded of what marriage is all about. Igbo traditional music is indeed a rich cultural heritage that should not be allowed to be subdued. It communicates and teaches a lot about different situations of life to the people.

- **Economic Impact**

Traditional music does not only affect the social, moral, spiritual and physical lives of the people. It also plays a role in their economic life communally and individually. The group makes money through their performance charges and other monetary gifts given to them during performance. They also raise fund through the charges from new members.

Individually, members of the group, through the groups' activities make some money to cater for their personal and family needs. *Odezuruigbo* has also lived up to its socio-economic obligations in the community. At one time or the other, they have contributed their quota in their community development. They have also funded the rebuilding and repair of houses for some of their displaced members.

### Summary/Conclusion

This study reveals that music is an indispensable part of life in Awka and in Igbo culture in general. The role it plays in shaping the life of the people from cradle to old age is very commendable. Through the lyrics of songs in *Odezuruigbo*, the people are reminded of their civic responsibilities, ill behaviours are condemned while good ones are commended. This no wonder must have been the reason for its sustainability and the patronage it receives from Awka and Anambra State at large. It also reveals that there is always a well-planned procedure for the establishment of any organized music performing group such as *Odezuruigbo*. It is normally organized as a communal event; however, this does not prelude individual music making. Traditional dance music is a potent means through which the culture of a people is preserved. The admission of none Awka indigenes into *Odezuruigbo* cultural dance is an indication that the group believes in the spirit of oneness. It also goes a long way to justify the general notion held by the people that Awka people are very accommodating and hospitable. Owing to the socio-cultural roles of *Odezuruigbo* and some other traditional music types observed in this study, the performance of traditional music and dance should be greatly encouraged.

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