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**PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF EXPRESSIONS OF FOLKLORE:
THE EXPERIENCE OF AFRICA**

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Like several academic concerns there is no single definition of folklore that enjoys universal acceptance. Areas of controversy involve the materials that should count as folklore, as well as the people or sociological units whose cultural products should be so regarded. Folklore as a term has often provoked derogatory, and even hostile reactions among certain sections of the academic community.

On the more positive side, folklore was and is still held to be of great value to society. At the time the term emerged in Europe, concern had been expressed about the need to collect, document and preserve aspects of "folkways" that stood the risk of being lost to an increasingly industrialized and urbanized modern life style. There was a strong belief that the very soul of the people was enshrined in those old ways of life, those aspects of culture that had survived the ravages of time, like traditionally transmitted manners, customs, superstition, proverbs, tales, songs, etc. should not be lost.

The term Folklore, then, referred to a combination of custom, superstition, artifacts, as well as verbal art forms such as tales, legends, proverbs, songs, etc., and these were understood to be the products of marginalized, tradition-oriented people within the society, especially in Europe. This perception of Folklore was roughly equivalent to culture, especially the so-called "sub-culture" of the lower classes, a perception that was soon to be challenged¹.

At the beginning of the 20th century, however when the discipline of anthropology emerged, anthropologists, particularly cultural anthropologists, attempted to differentiate their field of investigation from that of Folklore, by equating Folklore with verbal art, that aspect of artistic culture that was expressed or handed down orally, or by word of mouth, such as tales, proverbs, legends, songs. Thus to the anthropologist, Folklore was equivalent to verbal art or oral literature. When Folklore eventually emerged as an autonomous academic discipline, especially in the United States in the 1960s, not only was the content of Folklore redefined; the folklorists began applying highly specialized skills and modes of analysis to the materials of Folklore.

Currently the term folklore and the materials relevant to it range in scope from tradition-oriented items associated with old folks and old ways of life, to modern day artistic interaction and expressions of various types, such as jokes told at factories and other work places, student pranks and initiation rites, extending even to the expressive culture of drug addicts, and several other modern day phenomena.

We may observe for a start that at least some of these conceptions of folklore and the attitudes they imply, would little serve our purpose here in Africa. In any case, the concept of folklore in Africa has not been wholly accepted by some conservative Euro-American scholars. Presuming that Africa is still almost wholly rural or traditional, they argue that one cannot conceive of a meaningful study of folklore in an African context where the emergence of a plurality of cultures, or more specifically, the emergence of a so-called "high culture", is only just beginning.

¹ Dr. Yankah, Dr. Asiamah, Dr. Owusu-Bempong & Prof. Anyidoho - Unpublished Report - National Folklore Board Ghana - 1992

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Such arguments notwithstanding, not only are there trained African and other folklorists who are currently collecting, documenting, and analyzing materials of folklore, there is a major Folklore Department in at least one African University, Khartoum in the Sudan. The Nigerian Folklore Society, which was founded in 1980, is now a well-established organization of professional folklorists, and has recently launched an ambitious nation-wide project "to sponsor research and publication of a multi-volume Nigerian Folklore Directory of all the genres and expressions of folklore in the 374 languages in the country"²

The materials which trained folklorists collect and study have also been documented by several other interested persons, scholars, missionaries, broadcasters, cultural workers and other individuals especially in the colonial era, who are not necessarily trained folklorists, but to whom we owe much of the pioneering work in the field.

It is not possible therefore in the light of the controversy and differing opinions to attempt a cut-and-dried definition of folklore. It should be recognized that the primary concern of folklore in Africa should be with a specific set of cultural traditions in oral circulation. However, it must be noted that there are many folklorists working in Africa and elsewhere who focus mostly on oral or verbal acts and traditions. Folklore in Africa should be understood as covering the complex total of cultural heritage.

Defined in this way, we would recognize that the field covers not just some simple forms of cultural expression, but many of the most complex and classic forms of our cultural legacy. The Ghanaian Copyright Law of 1985 actually defined folklore as thus:

"Folklore means all literary, artistic and scientific work belonging to the cultural heritage of Ghana which were created preserved and developed by ethnic communities of Ghana or by unidentified Ghanaian authors and any such works designated under the Copyright law to be works of Ghanaian Folklore"

The Expert Committees of the UNESCO General Assembly of Technical and Legal Experts on the safe guarding of folklore defines folklore as follows:-

"Folklore (in a broader sense, traditional and popular folk culture) is a group oriented and tradition based creation of group or individuals reflecting the expectations of the community as an adequate expression of its cultural and social identity, its standards and values are transmitted orally by imitation or by other means. Its forms includes among others language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals customs, handicrafts, architecture and arts"³.

If folklore is socially based and communally owned, as suggested by the UNESCO definition, then it appears to be a legitimate exercise to go about the safeguarding of folklore through such measures as specific legislation to protect works of folklore such as is being done in several African countries.

² Nigerian Folklore News No. 2 [March 1991]

³ UNESCO Report 1982

It is important that any African regional attempt at a folklore documentation program be sensitive to the question of national authorship of various expressions of folklore. Many earlier definitions of folklore insist that all folklore is necessarily the creation of the community at large, thus it becomes a problem even nationally to determine ownership. This position seems to have been adopted by PNDC Law 110 the Copyright Law of Ghana. The fact, however, is that such a view of folklore is now out of date. Individual authorship and creativity is a recognized fact in current approaches to folklore. The examples of such figures as Vinoko Akpalu of the Ewe tradition of funeral songs and Maame Afua Abasaa of the Akan Nnwonkoro tradition, should leave us in no doubt about the role of individual creativity in certain forms of folklore. This point is clearly acknowledged in the now widely-publicized document of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), "Protection of Expressions of Folklore".

It is presently recognized that works of folklore were created by individuals. Works of folklore were however communally used and enjoyed. Such communal use over a long period of time took over the recognition or the role of individuals in the creation of works of folklore.

The definition in these Model Provisions embraces the results of both collective and individual development of the traditional artistic heritage, since the generally applied criterion of "impersonal" creativity does not always correspond to reality in the evolution of folklore. The personality of the artist is often an important factor in folklore expression and individual contributions to the development and maintenance of such expressions may represent a creative source of enrichment of inherited folklore if they are recognized and adopted by the community as expressions corresponding to its traditional artistic expectations.⁴

We are all aware that the varied problems and the complexity inherent in attempting to document and preserve expressions of folklore lies at the very root of the community based nature of the subject. African folklore knows no boundaries, does not recognize the principle of nationality and national borders. It must be remembered that Africa was only partitioned by the superpowers in the nineteenth century. The scramble for a "slice" of Africa did not take into consideration ethnicity, language, color, religion or common traditions and culture. In the case of Ghana for example, our neighboring country, Togo, was carved away from us merely in order to satisfy the demand of Germany after World War I to have a share of the African Continent. Later in some other imperialist wranglings, Togo was then handed over to France. Yet, the tribes in the southern part of Ghana and those now in present day Togo, are one and the same tribe - the Ewes; some of the Ewe Tribe even spreads as far as present day Benin. The borders are often completely artificial and in the words of Dr. Julius K. Nyerere, completely "balkanization"⁵ houses straddle two countries, common languages, traditions and indeed families share life on both sides of the border, yet some are Ghanaian and others Togolese. Some speak English and come from an Anglo-Saxon jurisprudential background and others French with the Civil Law doctrine.

⁴ WIPO/GIC/CNR/B/88DU17, p.5

⁵ Speech delivered by Dr. Julius Nyerere on 6th March 1997 - International Conference Centre, Accra, Ghana

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This same problem is multiplied all over the African continent, especially when one takes the situation in East Africa, specifically, Rwanda, Zaire and the resultant genocide between Tutsi and Hutu tribes who straddle the border of several countries in Southern Africa.

The major obstacle associated with the preservation of African expressions of folklore has always been in its documentation and preservation on a nation by nation basis. Take the example of the Ghanaian "Kente" which is the unique technique of weaving cloth. In West Africa, there are three countries who make and use various forms of "Kente" and its weaving traditions - Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo.

"Kente" is one of the most exploited forms of African folklore tradition that can be found world-wide, especially in the United States of America, yet, it is an acknowledged fact that in Ghana there is a tiny village in the largest Ghanaian Kingdom, the Ashanti, which has become associated with Kente, by name of Bonwire. There, one finds the most unique forms of weaving cloth - the weavers there are those who weave the cloth or tartans for the "Ashantehene" or King of the Ashanti and other principal and sub-chiefs. In fact, in the olden days there could be found one of the earliest forms of copyright.

It is trite to note that any attempt to document folklore on an African Regional basis must involve a concerted national effort in the first instance and the political will power at the regional basis. Nationally, most African countries have neither specific legislation protecting expressions of folklore nor a national register of folklore. It takes an enormous amount of political goodwill for states to cede part of their traditions and culture which is what would inevitably have to happen. It has been observed that, in some instances, folklore and its documentation may thus actually hinder national consolidation and evolve with a troublesome or even dangerous degree of political jingoism. This is particularly true of countries constituted of several ethnic groups, language groups, or populations of different national background⁶ - this observation would hold true of the greater part of Africa.

In a program for documentation of folklore in Ghana, commissioned by the National Folklore Board of Trustees, the Technical Committee broke down four major areas of expressions of folklore in its attempt to document them. The experts contended that, especially for African culture, there is a considerable overlapping among the four divisions:-⁷

- A. **Material Culture**:- representing the various manifestations of what is sometimes called "physical folklife". Material culture involves processes and products of our traditional techniques, skills, recipes, formulas, etc. such as were manifested in traditional architecture, crafts, costumes, cooking utensils, tools, furniture, etc., in short, basic folk or traditional technology. In the Ghanaian cultural context, one can immediately cite some well-known traditions of pottery, beads, linguist staffs, stools and other royal paraphernalia, adinkra, Kente, fugu, masks and other sculpture, etc. In Uganda, the same traditions and adornments of their kings persist also form part of their material culture which can be found in the palaces of their kings.

⁶ Nationalism and Identity Workshop and Conference of National & Regional Audio-visual Archives - 1988 Oslo

⁷ Dr. Yankah, Dr. Asiamah, Dr. Owusu-Bempong & Prof. Anyidoho - Unpublished Report - National Folklore Board Ghana - 1992

It must be noted here that the interest lies in the tools and implements of the past, the present, and the future. For folklorists some questions to be answered would be how these traditional materials were made, and the skills with which they were used to solve some of the fundamental problems of survival. What are the technical skills of the people who made these tools and implements? How, for instance, the people make and keep their farms, build their homes, make their clothes, prepare their food, design their furniture, often relying mostly on materials available in their natural environment. Ultimately, how the accumulated knowledge in this aspect of life was transmitted from one generation to another, and what changes or adaptations may have become necessary in response to changing life styles and to changes in ecology and the general material conditions of life.

- B. ***Social Folk Custom:*** In this aspect of folklore, often, the "emphasis is on group interaction rather than individual skills and performance."⁸ In this regard, for the African cultural region, festivals represent probably the richest, and certainly the most complex expression of social folk custom. These are recurring moments of special significance during which small or large social units participate in celebrations, often with both secular and religious significance. Other manifestations of social folk custom are linked with traditional medicine, traditional religion, recreation and games.
- C. ***Performing Folk Arts:-*** The performing arts in folk tradition include music, dance, drama, and mime. In the African context, one finds considerable interface between one performing art form and another, and also between the performing arts on the one hand, and other aspects of folklore, such as social folk custom (e.g. festivals) and especially oral literature or verbal art. African dance has often been described as poetry in motion. Such terms as festival drama, ritual drama, or drum poetry, alert one to the fact that some of the analytical categories are more theoretical than practically valid. Often one is reminded of the "integrative principle" in African performing arts tradition.
- D. ***Oral Literature / Verbal Art:-*** This broad area covers what is sometimes called "expressive literature", described by one folklorist as "spoken, sung, and voiced forms of traditional utterance that show repetitive patterns";⁹ and they are generally transmitted through time and space by word of mouth. There are, however, certain specialized forms in Africa that may not necessarily be verbal, though they may have a verbal basis. The poetry of horns and drums are probably the best example. Under Oral Literature or Verbal Art, one may distinguish certain large subdivisions, some of which are identified below;

Folklore Narratives:-

- Folktales: e.g. Anansesem (Akan) or Gli (Ewe).
- Dilemma Tales: e.g. Alobalo (Ewe).
- Myths
- Legends

⁸ Dr. Yankah, Dr. Asiamah, Dr. Owusu-Bempong & Prof. Anyidoho - Unpublished Report - National Folklore Board Ghana - 1992

⁹ Nketia African Tradition of Folklore INTERGU - Jahrbuch 1979

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- Epics
- Divination Narratives
- Oral Historical Narratives: e.g. family, town, clan/lineage narratives.
- Jokes & Rumors.
- Etiological Tales: Tales of origin / explanation
- Special Personal Experience Narratives: e.g. in Concert Party Drama.

Folksongs / (Poetry):

In ethnomusicology, three broad categories of song are sometimes identified:

1. *Occasional Songs*:-

- Life Cycle Songs: songs often identified with specific occasions in the life cycle, such as birth, naming/outdooring, puberty, death .
- Occupational Songs: songs often identified with specific occupations, e.g. hunting, fishing, weaving.
- Worship/Religious: songs of deities.
- Songs of the Court/Palace.
- War Songs.
- Songs of Abuse.

2. *Recreational*: Songs performed mainly for leisure, though they may sometimes be performed on special occasions: e.g. borborbor (Ewe), ayabomo maiden songs (Nzoma), kpanlogo (Ga). kinka (Ewe), gome, game songs, note these forms have been influenced by popular music - "highlife"

3. *Incidental*: Performed mostly as incidental to some other act", e.g. lullabies, work songs.

To these three main types a special category may be added for such forms as mboguo, the sung story, etc. It is important to note that the classification of folksongs may be approached differently, and that most of the forms identified above are indeed not only songs in the general sense of the word, but are often highly specific forms of poetry.

Recited / Spoken Forms:

- Proverbs
- Riddles
- Appellations / Praise or Poetic Names
- Poetic Insults
- Praise Poetry, e.g. apae, amoma, etc.
- Libation Poetry
- Magical Formulas and Incantations, e.g. gbesa,

Special Forms:

- Drum/Horn Poetry & related forms, e.g. the poetry of atumpan, dondon, xylophone.

When a survey is conducted amongst various African countries who have attempted documentation and preservation of their experiences of folklore, we find the same or similar problems running through their attempts.

However, if individual countries are unable to do this as has been the experience in Africa, until recently, can we then meaningfully ask the international community to compensate us for their economic exploitation?

An increasing number of countries have over the past ten years initiated documentation projects in respect of one or more of the subdivisions mentioned by Anyidoho in the Ghanaian Technical Committee's Report.

One finds the preservation of expressions of material or physical culture undertaken by national museums and in the palaces of the traditional rulers, shrines and homes of the community dotted all over Africa.

African experiences at Archives in the formal sense of the word, have generally not proved that successful because the National Archives is primarily set up in order to document and chronicle the government's affairs and not to preserve expressions of folklore which may be found as an ancillary activity of Archives.

The maintenance of an archival Centre may be an extremely expensive and hazardous affair as the attempt at the computerization of the Information Centre of the International Centre for Bantu Civilization (CICABA) based in Gabon proved.

Amongst several objectives of the Centre were to establish a regional information system in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa, that would help disseminate information and data on Bantu civilization.¹⁰ Among its top priorities were the promotion of information exchange and assistance to member states in the strengthening of the capacity for the collection, storage, and dissemination of cultural data.

The Centre initially employed eleven people, its material resources ranged from micro-computers to micro-filming equipment, including audio-visual equipment and international telecommunication facilities. Automation and the use of the of the latest technologies of data processing were decreed to be "basic" to the successful functioning of the Information Centre setup at CICIBA. Thus, international cooperation was forthcoming initially in the acquisition of appropriate materials. However, this cooperation-operation only envisaged sending the most sophisticated French technology and equipment to Gabon. The fact that the Centre lacked human resources in computerization data processing, the pioneering features of the project and sophisticated equipment not always compatible with the existing technology in Gabon were acquired. It was a fact that , equipment came at random and could not fit into most of the preliminary needs. A few examples: a microbase from the USA never worked, because its use was never been defined, and it was damaged after a thunderbolt!

The terminals for Minitel use which were acquired, could not be installed, since at the time of installation the appropriate Videotex equipment did not operate in Gabon.

¹⁰ The Computerization of the Information Centre of CICIBA - Sagbo P. Dandjinou 1988 - Oslo.

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To give more detail as to the malfunctioning basis of the Centre, the three Apple microcomputers, proved to be a reasonable choice, but no maintenance service existed in Libreville for this equipment. After three years when specially qualified personnel had to be recruited due to French cooperation-operation, it was discerned that the Apple microcomputers were obsolete as the volume of data to be processed could not be stored on such equipment. 2 IBM personal computers XT then had to be acquired, offering an increased storage capacity of 10 megabytes each. Five years after the Centre was established, the Centre's data bank was able to offer on-line retrieval services, with the installation of two bimodal terminals. Questions could then be treated both by questioning the local files developed within CICIBA, and external databases hosted by on-line service dealers.

The audio-visual unit presently lacks qualified personnel and its relationship with the department of ethnomusicology, which also possesses equipment for sound recording, is still to be defined. With the envisaged establishment of micro stations within member states, a program of sensing existing recordings on Bantu oral tradition an ethnomuseology is planned with a view to publish catalogues on Bantu audio-visual archives. I am unable to say categorically whether this laudable idea ever saw the light of day!

The above has only highlighted one attempt at archiving and the resultant the problems, in first the establishment, and then maintenance of such a system. You will find that many African folklorists in almost all their writings are optimistic about the impact that modern technology may have on their work. I would contend that this situation may rather work in the reverse, especially in Africa. The problems enumerated above in the use of technology, often chosen by so called "experts" from developed countries are classic and widespread. These people, more often than not, hardly know anything about the environment that the technology is going to be used in Africa; additionally, African nations have to develop a "culture of maintenance". We have all been witness to fancy state of the art equipment standing unused or broken down merely for lack of regular maintenance or a small part which has to be obtained from abroad. I am not going further into why we continue to choose the wrong things or accept projects which are unsuitable, as African experts one must be able to now face the future with more optimism and know-how to avoid falling into such pitfalls.

There are many ways of preserving African expressions of folklore such as music today. The traditional ways of preserving music for example, in Africa have been through its practice and the traditional teaching of it. Generations hand down these expressions to other generations and the system and tradition are perpetuated and renewed over the years. It is in a way the same system by which our languages and life styles are preserved. Every new generation learns to speak as the generation before it did, learns to cook and eat the same kind of food their ancestors ate, and sing, dance and worship in the same way. But it is a fact that lifestyles alter with time: a language grows as new generations are born and add their own inventions to the store and use of words, even new methods of cooking the same foods emerge, just as some dance steps and musical styles get altered slightly, if not significantly. Preservation does not and should not, therefore mean stagnation. It does not necessarily negate continued growth and expansion. It is indeed this system of preservation that keeps African traditional forms alive and continuously growing and developing.

Western civilization has brought some new ways of preserving music. Recorded samples of African music abound on tapes, phonograph records and now compact disc and CD ROM

in the sound tape and record libraries of Broadcasting/Radio and Television Corporations, research and educational institutions and documentation Centres all over the world. Also, attempts have been made to document African music in print - in books, monographs, and sheet music and of course the 20th Century marvel, the film. I have already pointed out that in spite of their immense usefulness, some of those new ways are not without their drawbacks. However, when there is written evidence of a work of art, its preservation for posterity is ensured, in that one who reads can always go to the records to find out what they contain. Stories that are written down, for example, may be said to be subject to a lesser possibility of distortion than those handed down by oral tradition. So thus, a lot can be said for literary documentation as a process of preserving traditions.

In Africa today there are various formats of traditional music (the indigenous music of the people), popular music, 'learned' or art music, both African and Western. Many young people are however growing up in Africa today in the tradition of the popular music which is widely disseminated by video/ television, radio, gramophone discs, night clubs, dance halls, and touring music bands rather than in traditional music environment. The new African art or "learned" music which is the composed instrumental and vocal music by Western-educated African musicians grow in popularity especially during colonialism and post independence through its association with churches, educational institutions and organizations.

In spite of this, traditional music is still very alive, particularly in the rural areas, for there is a large section of the population for whom it has never lost its meaning. Nationalism during the post independence era began to foster a new pride and interest in traditional music. The other performing arts, popular music/dance bands and groups, as well as composers of art, music, dance experts and dramatists have all constantly turned to the traditional arts for source material.

The measures for preserving and ensuring continuity of musical life in traditional and contemporary societies in Africa should therefore include:

- a) Programs of music education which will ensure continuity of the African arts traditions, as well as the creation and propagation of new musical knowledge and artistic values, and
- b) Performance programs which will promote traditional music and the other arts, as well as the new artistic idioms in the communities.

Any discussion of folklore and dance preservation in Africa and elsewhere, inevitably touches on education since it is this that ensures the continuity of the line of musicians, dancers and other performing artists through whom the performing arts can be preserved as living culture. The inclusion in the curriculum and the serious teaching of traditional music and other performing arts in educational institutions is, therefore, a measure for ensuring the continuity of musical life in Africa. The performing arts will survive, particularly in the urban Centres, if the teaching, practice and performances of them become an essential part of the school curriculum.

In the past, the materials and techniques of these arts were passed on by oral tradition or learned through participation in performances. Although this has been maintained in some areas where the impact of acculturation on the arts is minimal, there are areas where this has

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broken down either because of the low prestige of the traditional arts or because of the lack of emphasis on the arts of Africa in formal education, as indicated above.

Creativity and performance are perhaps the prime factors of folklore preservation and the surest means of perpetuating music and other performing arts traditions in Africa and elsewhere. The preservation of the continuity of musical life and that of the related arts from a developmental point of view requires not only planning with clearly defined objectives in view but also finding effective and adequate means of achieving these objectives within the resources - human and otherwise - available at any given period.

I would like to provide a brief synopsis of the steps some African countries have taken in the preservation of some of aspects of the non physical expressions of folklore. It appears that over the past two decades governments have taken a more sustained and determined approach to folklore conservation in the light of the impact of emergent technologies.

Zimbabwe

The study of oral materials such as folklore, riddles, proverbs, songs, praises, folktales etc. has been conducted by the Department of African Languages and Literature at the University of Zimbabwe with some degree of success. Dr. Dembetembe of the University of Zimbabwe stated these efforts were born out of the urgent need to preserve the oral art forms since "most of these are to be found among the old folks who are our archives"¹¹. The Oral Traditions Association of Zimbabwe (OTAZ) was formed in March 1988 in order to co-ordinate research in oral material and keep an inventory of researchers and document the materials collected.

Kenya

The Music Department at the Kenyatta University in Nairobi has had in place, over the past thirty years, a program for the collecting of traditional music and dance from the field. Additionally, the Institute of African Studies, the Kenya Institute of Education and all Training Colleges in Kenya, have undertaken collections and recording of traditional music and dance. However, even though the institutions and several collections are inundated with these field recordings there are only limited facilities available in Kenya for their storage, analysis and study. The Kenya Arts Cooperative Society (ART-CO) established a small regional based archive in Kisumu, a region of Kenya. The collected materials were to be copied to the University of Kenya to form the basis of National music archive. It has been felt that the establishment of small regional archives could assist the community in the central role of the preservation of their cultural heritage and ultimately form the basis of a National Music Archive¹².

¹¹ Dembetembe - Research Problems in Oral Material: Case of African Languages - Zimbabwe.

¹² Dr. Paul Kaoyu - Organization and functions of a small Sound Archive - 1988

Zambia

Zambia also has a strong non physical heritage consisting of music, dance, story telling and oral literature. Several of the art and dance associations became instrumental in storing and disseminating oral traditions. In fact, the Nayama Music Archive in Zambia was set up in pursuance of this¹³. However, the Archive has had a rather chequered history and faced the usual constraints of equipment and expertise which is endemic in Africa and thus it has been unable to function in an optimum manner.

Tanzania

Research in Tanzania in the area of oral traditions began in pre-colonial times. For obvious reasons most of the early research was done orally, preserved orally and passed orally. However at least nine institutions dealing with oral traditions were created during the post colonial era. They include the National Research Council, the Ministry of Culture, the Bagaungo College of Arts. These were in addition to pre-existing institutions such as Radio Tanzania, the national museum, and the Zanzibar broadcasting station. In spite of this proliferation of institutions, research remained ad hoc; there was no coherent research policy or program defining clearly the objectives and priorities, and how they were to be achieved. Moreover, the funds provided by the government for research were inadequate. In spite of these shortcomings, a number of important field trips were undertaken, usually by scholars based at the University of Dar es Salaam. The research was mostly in the following areas:

- a) Oral area histories
- b) Sociology and anthropology
- c) Oral literature

In the areas of preservation of traditional dance, the post colonial Tanzania government's experiment with institutional approach to the preservation proved unsuccessful. A populist approach to the cultural question emerged as a result of the changing political and economic relations between Tanzania and the Western Countries. This led to the commercialization of the traditional dance forms and it has helped considerably in the preservation albeit, in a rather mutilated and distorted way, (as some critics have alleged) of these forms.

Ghana

In Ghana, of course there have been various attempts at the documentation of all the sub-divisions of the expressions of folklore. These attempts have been made by the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana. Various museums and archives have also played a role since Ghana's independence 40 years ago; there are also large collections in the hands of private collectors which is even most disturbing since they are in danger of being lost or

¹³ P.K. Likukela - Cultural Implications of the Collecting, storing and Disseminating of Non-Physical Heritage in Zambia.

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decayed because the preservation is not being undertaken under optimum conditions. Yet still, it is known that there are works outside the country, illegally, in the hands of foreigners.

It was in the light of this, and also to pre-empt the alarming exploitation of Ghanaian expressions of folklore abroad by foreigners that in 1985, the attempt was made to render the administration of folklore more holistic by bringing it under the umbrella of the Copyright Law. Due to the complexity of the issues concerned and because of the living nature of our oral tradition there is a constant interaction between folklore and popular performing arts. There is no clear demarcation between them as in the West. In Africa, where folklore permeates institutional life one finds survival of traditions that were once extensive still abundant in some localities.

The National Folklore Board of Trustees was established in Ghana in 1992 to facilitate the working of the Copyright Law to administer all expressions of folklore, maintain a register of such expressions and actually collect, preserve and conserve same. The fundamental recognized principle adopted by the Board was the overriding need to put into place a systematic and comprehensive program making use of the technical resources and experts professionals. Obviously, the Technical Committee established to draw up the blue print for the program had, as its primary goal, that there should be meaningful access to what has been documented since without such an approach, "documented information would not only be difficult to retrieve; it would serve more to confuse than to clarify or illustrate"¹⁴.

A systematic approach to documentation of folklore in Ghana should involve, among other things, the establishment of well-defined procedures and mechanisms for identifying the various forms and expressions of folklore; it will involve putting in place efficient and reliable mechanisms for physical recording and preservation, retrieval and reproduction of expressions of folklore; compilation of indexes, registers, directories, bibliographies, and biographies (of major authors and performers) etc.¹⁵

Modes of documentation takes various forms like tape recording; direct note taking; transcription, translation and annotation; graphic representation; photographic representation; phonographic recording and scholarly monographs

In the area of preservation, some of the modes observed are archival, library storage and retrieval;- museums;- publications;- specially sponsored productions, performances, re-enactments; a comprehensive cultural program for the public at large, and for schools and colleges, through the Curriculum Enrichment Program.

The last two modes of preservation draw attention to the fact that for our society, folklore is not, need not, and should not be a carefully preserved fossil, but an integral part of the life-blood of society and individuals, alive, current, invigorating and very refreshing.

¹⁴ Dr. Yankah, Dr. Asiamah, Dr. Owusu-Bempong & Prof. Anyidoho - Unpublished Report - National Folklore Board Ghana - 1992

¹⁵ Dr. Yankah, Dr. Asiamah, Dr. Owusu-Bempong & Prof. Anyidoho - Unpublished Report - National Folklore Board Ghana - 1992

Ten recommendations were made by the Ghanaian Technical Committee mentioned above which deserves close attention:

1. Immediate steps to be taken towards designing and eventual construction of a modern and well-equipped archive-library building.
2. Basic technical equipment identified above must be acquired to enable initial acquisition and preservation to proceed.
3. A core staff of administrative and technical personnel and also research assistants should be employed with the guidance of a small technical committee of experts/research scholars.
4. The establishment and retention of a small technical committee of experts is highly recommended in order to;
 - a. to work out a detailed master-plan or blue-print for the entire documentation program.
 - b. to provide general technical advice on detailed planning and implementation of various phases of the program and of specific projects.
 - c. to help plan and conduct training workshops for various personnel to be involved in the program.
 - d. to personally undertake certain specific projects requiring high level expertise, such as the coordination and/or compilation of a series of indexes, registers, directories of Ghanaian folklore.
5. A broad pool of scholars, teachers, students, and others with skills and projects relevant to folklore should be identified to contribute to various aspects of a general documentation program.
6. The acquisition of original documentation or copies of folklore materials currently being held by various organizations and individuals.
7. Research Vehicles should be acquired.
8. Formal and informal links should be established with various bodies in and outside Ghana whose programs and objectives coincide with those of the National Folklore Board of Trustees, e.g. The Nigerian Folklore Society, The Folklore Institute and Archives of Traditional Music--Indiana University, Bloomington.
9. Basic journals and other publications relevant to folklore, should be obtained to serve as the basis of a future Folklore Library Collection.
10. A comprehensive grant proposal should be developed soon to enable the Board seek funding from both national and international sources to fulfill its program.

However, despite this excellent report, which was adopted by the Board, one is yet to see the concretization of the recommendations.

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Funding, is of course, the primary cause behind this inertia. It is impossible now to tout around the entire countryside with microphones and video cassette recorders and just document as President Kenyatta advocated in the 1960s during Kenya's post independence era.

It is important therefore to recognize the problems associated with this exercise otherwise with the best of intentions states and public organizations can flounder along making little or no headway in the eternal quest of answering questions of the past.

Folklore in Africa is a vibrant and living work of intellectual creativity which has reached an opportune time for it to be documented and preserved. Some efforts are being made in Africa to preserve such a world-wide heritage which is enjoyed by all.

It is the responsibility of all of us here present to resolve to assist to get this precious and rare intellectual heritage preserved for the benefit of posterity, we dare not fail to discharge this responsibility. It is my hope and am certain that as we have done in other international fora to protect other forms of intellectual creativity we will do the same for works of folklore .

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