



Promoting Cultural Identity and Patriotism Among Ghanaian Youth: An Ethnographic Study of Akan Folksongs

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Abstract

The Akan, considered by many as the indigenes of Ghana, constitute about 45% of the country's population. Despite colonization, Christianity and Western influence, they have protected and maintained their culture, which is transmitted to the youth through songs and drums, expressions of thoughts, feelings and beliefs. The Akan use simple instruments, including flute, horns of animals and drums, to compose folksongs that teach the youth and depict their origin, achievements, identity, unity and for worship and festivals. Selfishness and lack of patriotism among many Ghanaians, including some of the Akan people, are destroying the country socially, economically and politically. The destructive behaviours of some Ghanaians motivated this ethnographic study. The study sought to educate citizens, especially the youth, through folksongs, to put their country first, as they have only one Ghana. The data, which were collected through informal interviews and observations during festivals, revealed that the desire to get rich quickly among many citizens, especially the youth of the country, has made them selfish and unpatriotic. The findings have implications for moral education in Ghana as an effort to stem the tide of national destruction and to secure the future of the country through quality education.

Keywords: Akan folksongs, cultural identity, colonialism, patriotism, socio-economic development

1. Introduction

Colonialism started in Ghana (the then Gold Coast) in AD 1482 when the Portuguese adventurers arrived on the soils of the fishing village of Edina on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean (McWilliam Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Before colonialism, which brought in its trail western education and religion, there was an indigenous education which taught the youth cultural practices such as patriotism (love of one's community and nation), courtesy, honesty, morality, responsibility, co-operation, love, and care for others. The youth were taught to appreciate their identity, learn African values and to preserve their cultural heritage. The indigenous education also equipped the youth with practical knowledge and skills for better living. Data (1987) attests that, a major part of the cultural heritage of Ghanaians was transmitted to the youth through organised and informal instruction.

The Western education introduced to the Gold Coast put emphasis on liberal arts and neglected indigenous skills and values [such as practical knowledge, moral uprightness and job-related skills]. It focused on Western religion and European values to ensure that Ghanaians abandoned their culture in favour of the European way of life. The schools established by the colonizers covertly and overtly sought to deschool the colonized from their cultural beliefs, identity and indigenous skills by teaching

them that every African cultural practice was barbaric, heathen, fetish and satanic. The cultural imperialism largely succeeded as it still has some negative impact on modern school graduates. Many of them disassociate themselves from the cultural practices of their families and communities because of the disdain they have for such practices, and this is the result of Western education, religion and influences. There are others, Christians and non-Christians alike, who take on European names or anglicise their Ghanaian names.

2. Culture and Identity in Perspective

In describing the concept '*culture*' the English evolutionist, Edward Tyler (1924) says it is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'. van Meijl (2008) recognises the fact that anthropologists share an idea of the world as made up of 'peoples', each with a coherent way of life i.e., '*culture*'. Such uniqueness identifies them as a particular people. In contributing to the debate, Bhola (2003) posits that culture is a collective knowledge that is created, tested, organised, accumulated and communicated within and across generations. It is all that is human made, - from stone age tools to high-tech machines and from communal living to the creation of complex institutions of religion and governance. Schuster & Copeland (2008) appropriately describe culture as a total way of life held in common by a group of people. Learned similarities in speech, behaviours, ideology, livelihood, technology, value system and society bind people together in a culture.

In the contemporary globalised world, culture is no longer seen as the domain or preserve of the so-called primitive people or societies. van Meijl (2008) affirms that the significance of contemporary culture has enormous implications for everyone's conception of self as without culture there is no identity. This researcher agrees with Otto and Pedersen (2005) that the paradox of globalisation is particularly evident in small-scale societies that believe to be in danger of losing their cultural uniqueness under the impact of global influences, as a consequence of which they have become engaged in a large-scale revival of cultural traditions.

Quan-Baffour (2008) attests that traditions emanate from culture and the two concepts form the basis of identity (i.e., who we are) of any group of people. He contends that culture defines and identifies people and discerns a group of people from others. It is argued that the identity of individuals reflects the identity of their cultural group. People share the same identity because they share the same history. affirms that identity has come to be understood as the historically and culturally rooted self-image of a group of people that was predominantly sketched and sharpened in contact vis-à-vis other groups of peoples (van Meijl 2008). The kind of language people speak, how they speak it, their outfits or dresses, beliefs, names, ceremonies, and other social practices or folkways constitute their uniqueness i.e. culture and identity.

The colonizers and their missionary collaborators did not study the culture of the natives hence out of ignorance [lack of knowledge and understanding] condemned every cultural practice as 'savage' and 'satanic'. Young (2004) contends that far from being 'savage' and illogical, each of the 'peoples' in Africa, South Asia and the Pacific have a distinct, rational and legitimate way of life which should be valued. Culture does not remain static, as people's socio-economic and political practices change so also their culture. van Meijl (2008) agrees with the assertion that culture is no longer regarded as unchanging and identical for all individuals, but as an inherently dynamic process of domination and marginalisation in which individuals are positioned differently.

3. Theoretical Framework

This article stresses the need for Ghanaians to do some introspection and employ folksongs as informal public education to conscientize the people in general and youth in particular to be more patriotic by putting the nation first. Therefore, the article is underpinned by the critical social theory and critical rationalism because of their implications for social interrogation and non-formal public education.

3.1 Critical Social Theory

Critical social theory has its origins in attempts to explore the larger systems in society as they shape adult education (Quan-Baffour, 2011). The main advocates of the theory, Merriam and Caffarella (1999) posit that the theory is deemed critical because it uses non-formal and informal adult education to educate the public to critically question the basic assumptions and crucial issues of their communities and society at large so that they do not become passive victims who might collude with their domination by external forces (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). The theory posits that the learning of an individual is shaped by their society, culture, structure and history. The critical social theory also intimates that society has the responsibility to provide its members with basic support for construction, acquisition and utilisation of knowledge. The responsibility of society therefore is to educate its members, particularly, the young ones, to become socially responsive to societal norms, culture and traditions.

3.2 Critical Rationalism

Ghana attained political freedom from Britain on 6th of March 1957 but despite its endowment of natural and human resources, bad behaviours such as corruption, selfishness, mismanagement and lack of patriotism have retarded the country's socio-economic progress. The apparent downward trend in Ghana's socio-economic development and political decay, due to apathy, corruption, mismanagement and lack of patriotism calls for serious introspection, self-evaluation and self-criticism among all citizens of the country. To reverse this self-destruction, all Ghanaians (including civil servants like the police, border guards, immigration, army, pastors, nurses, teachers, doctors, lawyers, judges, politicians, party activists, students, drivers and businessmen and women, the employed and unemployed) must take a critical look at their behaviours towards the country.

In line with critical rationalism, this article calls on every Ghanaian to do self-evaluation and self-criticism of themselves hence the relevance of Critical Rationalism. The theory is therefore crucial in efforts to stem the tide on the socio-economic and political sabotage which is destroying the country. The theory, Critical Rationalism, was propounded by the Austra-British born philosopher-Karl Popper (1902-1994). Critical rationalism postulates that human beings should learn how to act and react positively in their environment to survive (Zecha, 2002). The theory teaches that self-criticism is education and therefore all citizens of Ghana should not fear to criticise themselves or their fellow citizens for destroying the economy or the physical environment of the country which is the source of their livelihoods. The theory underscores soul searching i.e. self-evaluation because it is premised on the principle that self-criticism leads to action to solve pressing problems. Through self-criticism or self-evaluation all citizens can re-examine their attitude towards the country and take action to save it from stagnation and destruction. It is through the process of education that individuals or groups of people can become responsible, active and concern members of their communities.

The two theories discussed above have implications for this study, in that there is a need for informal public education to improve the political and socio-economic downtrend of Ghana. Society is a basic support for construction, acquisition and utilisation of relevant, information and knowledge, hence public education is necessary to stem the tide of economic and physical destruction the country through illicit and unpatriotic behaviours such as bribery, corruption and the destruction of the physical environment, rivers and forests through illegal mining.

The main goal of informal public education is to conscientize people to re-examine their selfish and unpatriotic behaviours and to take actions to change the appalling condition for the better. Akan folksongs have direct lessons for citizens because through them, as informal public education, Ghanaians can improve the situation of the country by reversing its social, economic and political degradation. Folksongs do not only criticise but also advice people to refrain from unacceptable behaviours. Zecha (2002) aptly intimates that humans can always make mistakes and never know for sure. Through educative folksongs, Ghanaians can acquire information, engage in introspection,

to be sure of themselves and act to save the country from political, social and economic decay and destruction. The intention of education is to equip people with the relevant information and skills to reflect on problems to change their circumstances. Without this intention there is no education (Zecha, 2002).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative study which took the form of an ethnographic investigation. Creswell (2009) and Nieuwenhuis (2012) agree that an ethnographic study is a qualitative research approach in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in their natural setting through the collection of primarily observational and interview data. Ethnography is a holistic approach to the study of cultural systems and process of discovery to uncover and explicate the ways a group of people exhibit their lived experiences (Quan-Baffour, 2020). The researcher used observation and informal interviews as the data collecting tools in this ethnographic study. Observation as a data gathering tool enables a researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon observed (Nieuwenhuis (2012). It is a research technique for collecting descriptive data on behaviour, events and situations as they occur (Brink et al, 2012). The researcher spent nearly two years in visiting and participating in cultural events in several Akan communities in Ashanti and Bono Ahafo regions to observe and hold informal conversations with people involved in cultural activities. He spent much time on data collection to ensure that he understood the people and that the data collected were consistent over time. The researcher recognised the interpretive nature of the data hence he followed the precepts of hermeneutics (the science of interpretation) to get to the bottom of the investigation. The social setting of the study embraced looking at and listening to people drumming, singing and dancing and the messages carried by such activities. Using participant-observation gave the researcher the opportunity to chat with participants informally to understand the songs and the actual meanings conveyed to the audience. At each cultural event, the researcher sought the consent of the interviewees by explaining to them the objective of the study before soliciting information from them. Thus, there was informed consent of all who provided the researcher with information related to the study.

5. Discussion of the Data

The observation of cultural events and informal interviews with participants at various celebrations in Ashanti and Bono Ahafo regions yielded enormous and relevant data which are organized into three main themes and discussed in the paragraphs below.

5.1 Cultural Education

The data emphasised the importance of folksongs as the epitome and transmission of Akan culture in that they teach the youth about their culture, values, heritage and identity. They assist the youth to know their history, the struggle of their forebearers which has emancipated them and the country from the shackles of colonialism.

As the researcher experienced, saw and heard, the Akan live, celebrate and express their culture through various ways- proverbs, songs, clothes, names, ornaments, and jewelleryes they adorn and the rich folksongs they sing to express happiness, sorrows, concerns or dissatisfaction about issues in their communities and the country at large. The cultural practices of the Akan depict the way they live today and in the past. To them, the past is always the reference point in their lives because whatever they are involved in or engaged with at the present is generally influenced by the happenings of yester years (Quan-Baffour, 2008). Thoughts, feelings and beliefs are expressed through folksongs and drums – the embodiment of Akan culture and identity. The Akan are quite conservative about culture hence despite the influence of Christianity and western education and its values, their cultural practices are refined and preserved up to today.

To continue to preserve their uniqueness, the Akan informally use folksongs to provide the youth cultural education by teaching them about their identity, culture and heritage; to know the country's history, the struggle of their forebearers which has emancipated them and the country from the shackles of colonialism. The folksong, *Amoowi*, by the Dansuom Troupe of Akomadan (2024) and *Kranka* (2025), sung during *Akwasidae* and *Brakune Yam* festivals respectively, indicates the origin of the people and seeks to inculcate in the youth unity and the knowledge of their cultural origin. Through such informal education the youth are taught to love the country, (their father and or mother land), avoid corruption, desist from actions that can destroy, tarnish its image or impede its progress and to serve it with dedication.

5.2 Patriotism

The Akan sing some folksongs to advice citizens, especially the youth, to put their nation first. The data obtained from the field indicate that the informal education provided by folksongs, teach the youth to be patriotic [love their country], law abiding, resist bribery and corruption, desist from actions that seek to destroy the physical environment and livelihoods of communities, tarnish the country's image and impede its socio-economic and political progress. Instead of hindering progress, Ghanaians, especially, the youth who are the future leaders, should examine their behaviours and take actions that can move the country forward socially, economically and politically rather than destroying it. As an interviewee told the researcher, "we have only one Ghana which our forebearers bequeathed to us and we should protect it". The country belongs to all of us, those alive and those yet to be born hence no individual or group of people should be allowed to hijack it for their personal gains. A refrain from Ephriam Amu's (2011) patriotic song, – *Yen ara asaase ni* – (this is our own land), says it all. The lesson from this song for all Ghanaians, particularly the youth, is that, it is prudent for Ghanaians to utilize the nation's resources and manage its economy sustainably for the sake of the present and the future generations. Selfishness, disregard for law and the desire to get rich quick should not lead to plundering of the nation's resources and its coffers for the interest of the few.

The data from the informal interviews also revealed that despite the plundering and looting of the country's coffers and resources by some selfish citizens including politicians, civil servants (police, soldiers, health personnel, teachers, customs and immigration officials, border guards, accountants, administrators etc), traditional authorities, the so-called prosperity pastors and businessmen and women, in cahoots with some foreigners, there are Ghanaians who are genuinely patriotic and seek to stop the looting and destruction of the country's economy and the physical environment. These patriotic citizens who are often heard in the various media, point out that every Ghanaian has the duty to protect the country from social, economic and political decay and destruction. These people, on daily basis, call on the government to act on the nation wreckers whose unpatriotic behaviours are hindering the country's progress. The participants in the study are of the view that a clamp down on the nation wreckers by the government can send a right message to others who might think of engaging in actions that seek to sabotage or hinder the country's development.

5.3 Social Critique

The data revealed that patriotic Ghanaians who want to change the situation for the better, use various platforms including folksongs, modern media and the pulpit to educate citizens to be patriotic and contribute to nation building, instead of sabotaging the country. While some nations are experiencing conflicts- civil wars, political turmoil, famine and other conflicts in Africa and elsewhere, Ghana is socially and politically relatively stable and this stability can be sustained through informal education through folksongs that emphasise the need to be good citizens, law abiding and patriotic. A refrain from the *Adaati Apo Troupe* (2023), *Aboro firi fie* (sabotage is from within the family), criticises the bad behaviour of some Ghanaians (including chiefs, politicians, party activists and their collaborators) who, like the squirrel (*amokua*), plunder and destroy the country's resources for self-aggrandisement.

These acts of sabotage affect everyone including the perpetrators themselves who ironically do not care about the consequences of their actions to the country.

6. Analysis of Selected Akan Folksongs

Although there are many folksongs sung during the data collection, the researcher chose to discuss the few pertinent ones that touched on serious social and economic issues in Ghana during the study. Some of the folksongs relate to the origin of the people while others inspire them to remain united or castigate the unpatriotic Ghanaians for their selfishness and bad behaviours that sabotage the country's economy and its development.

6.1 Folksongs promoting cultural identity

There are some folksongs that portray Akan beliefs, heritage and stories about their origin. An Akan cultural narrative story tells generation to generation of where their forebearers originated or came from. The folksong, Amoowi, is one such folksongs that reminds the people of their common ancestry and identity and the need for unity to work towards a common goal. The Akan rely on oral traditions because they have been a predominantly non-literate group. A popular oral tradition has it that the people came from a hole in an area called Amoowi. The folksong titled, Amoowi, which was sung during Akwasidae and Brakune Yam festivals at Akomadan and Kranka respectively, tells the Akan youth about their origin, educates and encourages them to identify with that cultural heritage. A few lines of the song are analysed here.

Amoowi eeh. ee Amoowi ooh Odomankoma! Odomankoma tease fri tete ooh Ee Amoowi ooh Odomankoma Yefri Amoowi ooh, eeh Amoowi ooh Odomankoma Ee Amowi ooh Odomankoma [Amoowi, is where Odomankoma, the giver of life in abundance, created us from the time immemorial. We come from Amoowi. Our origin is Amoowi].

The above folksong tells and educates people, particularly the Akan youth, about their origin and identity. The folksong reminds the people of their origins, common identity and stresses the abundant love of the gracious God (Odomankoma, the giver in abundance) which has protected them since creation. It stresses the importance of knowing their roots and sticking together as people from the same or common origin. The folksong does not only remind people of their common origin, Akan traditions, heritage and aspirations but also the need to uphold the image of the group by desisting from bad behaviour, corruption and all other things that can hinder progress of Ghana or tarnish the image of the Akan ethnic group. Quan-Baffour (2011) attests that folklore in general and folksongs in particular form a rhetorical act of instituting a people. The folksong, Ammowi Odomankoma indicates God's everlasting abundant love and mercy he has shown by protecting the Akan from the time of creation to the present time. Gencearella (2009) intimates that the dominant power in folksongs lies in recalling the reasons a group of people develop a common sense and learn how to identify with their folk.

6.2 Folksongs Promoting Unity

Unity in diversity is how one can describe the Akan ethnic group with about 11 sub-sets. An important folksong which stresses unity among the Akan is Opraye [the broom]. Most modern Akan youth do not seem to know the origin as one broader group and sometimes behave in ways that can bring disunity among them. Few verses of the song which the researcher heard from the Konimase Dansuomu Ensemble during an annual Fofie festival celebration at Krobo Kwapra are discussed here below.

Opraye wo ho yi, se wo yi baako a ebu ooh Se wo kabom a emmu ooh Enti Akanfo mo ye baako a na eye eeh [If you take one stick from the bunch of broom it can easily break, but when put together, it cannot break. Hence unity is strength for the Akan].

The composers of the song might be a social critics who is concerned about the unethical behaviours of some leaders, especially some politicians and traditional leaders, who covertly and overtly encourage their followers or subjects to work against unity for their selfish gains. The song allows people to subtly express their pent-up feelings without ruffling any feathers. This seemingly protest folksong, enables the citizens to be rebuked and advised to retain their humanity without resorting to violence. Ghanaians have experienced oppression throughout history, but the citizens do not react violently. Instead, they protest through folksongs and other quiet civil actions including voting.

6.3 *Folksongs promoting patriotism*

Some folksongs tell or express story of life, fears, struggles and aspirations of people. Some of them are used as peaceful protests against nation wreckers and oppressors of the masses. Makina (2009) attests that in song, a community expresses its hopes, and fears, wishes and problems, thereby consolidating the group. A protest song is a day-to-day commentary of what is taking place in society. It is a living art which is in motion both in content and form to reflect the dynamic nature of life (Makina, 2009). An example is Ephraim Amu's folksong, -Yen Ara Asaase ni, [this is our own land] of which some verses are reproduced and analysed here below.

*Yen ara asaase ni
Eye aboden ma yen
Mogya na Nananom hwie gu nya de too ho maa yen.
Aduru me ne wo so se yebe ye bi atoaso.
Nimde ntraso, nkontonkrane ne ape se menko menya adi yen bra mu dem.
Oman no se ebeye yie a amanfo bra na ekyere.*

*This is our own land
It is very precious for us
It is blood that our forebearers shed to bequeath it to us.
It is our time now to continue with what has been bequeathed to us.
Too 'know', pretence, deceit and selfishness have damaged our character.
Whether the nation will progress depends on our attitude and behaviour towards it.*

Ghana is a multi-ethnic country whose citizens have co-existed peacefully since political independence in 1957. The peaceful co-existence and culture of non-violence is an intangible valuable heritage bequeathed to the citizens by their forebearers. The rate at which some civil servants, political and traditional leaders, entrusted with the leading and managing of the country's affairs, openly loot the it's covers and resources might undermine the peace Ghanaians have taken for granted all these years. The unpatriotic and selfish behaviour of some leaders is a serious concern to most patriotic citizens. One such patriot is Dr. Ephraim Amu, a nationalist, educator and a folklorist who composed the above song to warn fellow Ghanaians about the consequences of their selfish and unpatriotic behaviours and how they impact the country's economy and social cohesion. His song creates awareness among millions of Ghanaians who identify with his thoughts, feelings, concerns and aspirations for Mother Ghana. Quan-Baffour (2009) affirms that folksongs or traditional songs can only be conveyed through a language of those who possess the talent to sing to those who could understand, because language is the vehicle of culture. Through his popular folksong, Ephraim

Amu does not only endear himself to the concerns of patriotic citizens of the nation but inspires and encourages them to wake up from their slumber and protect their common heritage - GHANA.

Makina (2009) affirms that by using songs as a weapon, citizens have stood up against heartlessness of politically repressive climate and economic hardships that people have had to endure. Ghanaians are therefore not mute but protest peacefully; through folksongs and voting patterns they report the thought of the public about what they do not like happening in their world. Thus, the song wants the political, physical, spiritual, aesthetic and moral issues presented by the public to be resolved through peaceful dialogue of an indigenous patriotic song.

Ephraim Amu's patriotic folksong forms the basis for questioning political and traditional leaders, civil servants and ordinary citizens in authority about their stewardship. People in any position whose actions impact negatively on the country should re-examine themselves and correct the situation or be held accountable for their excesses and nefarious activities against the state. *Yen ara asase ni*, speaks for the majority of Ghanaians who are appalled by the unpatriotic behaviours of some citizens and seeks to educate them to be more patriotic, after all, this is the only land, we have, hence we should be committed to its protection and sustainability. The song does not only encourage patriotism but also reprimands Ghanaians for their apathy and moral turpitude which, like cancer, is destroying a great nation with abundant resources. The sad situation of plundering of the nation's resources by few unpatriotic citizens placed in high places is a case in point. The song warns Ghanaians about the long-term effects of apathy, corruption, selfishness and mismanagement of resources on the country and its citizens. The environmental degradation caused by *galamsey* (gather them to sell) could introduce poisonous chemicals into water bodies and food stuff (yam, cocoyam, casava, plantain) and vegetables such as spinach (*kontomire*), garden eggs, tomatoes, onions, pepper, cabbage, carrots etc). The folksong is therefore a warning and a call to patriotism and love for the country by acting on those who plunder, loot and mismanage the nation's resources for self-aggrandisement. Pretence that we know too much, lies, deceit and selfishness [*Nimde ntraso, nkontonkrane ne apese menko menya*] have dominated and destroyed our morality to the extent that we care less about our nation.

We need to protect the country and its resources because freedom was never achieved on a silver platter. Our forebearers paid dearly with their blood and lives in fighting for self-rule before bequeathing it to us (*mogya na nananom hwie gu nya de too ho maa yen*). The nation is very valuable for us (*eye aboo den ma yen*) hence we should not destroy it through selfishness and unsustainable use of resources. It is our turn now to contribute to the legacy of our forefathers (*aduru me ne wo so se yebeye be atoaso*). The song ends on this note; whether the nation will succeed, prosper or disintegrate depends very much on the character, attitude and behaviour of all its citizens.

6.4 Folksong Denouncing Unpatriotic Behaviours

There are Ghanaians whose behaviours and actions are unpatriotic and sabotage the country's advancement. They engage in wicked acts such as destroying farming lands, forests and rivers through illegal mining or destroying the country's economy by engaging in bribery and corruption, under invoicing and directly stealing from the state coffers. An annual Apo song, *Aboro firi fie* (sabotage is from within the family) by Adaati Apo Troupe of Takyiman, castigates the unpatriotic acts of citizens who sabotage Ghana socially, economically and politically. A few lines from the folksong are reproduced and analyse here.

Amokua ee, Agyinamoa ee
Aboro firi fie
Enfiri baabi ara,
Aboro firi fie
(Amokua [squirrel] ee, agyinamoa [cat] ee

*Sabotage is from home/family
It does not come from anywhere outside Sabotage comes from within the family).*

Amokua ee, Agyinamoaa ee Aboro firi fie Enfiri baabi ara, Aboro firi fie (Amokua [squirrel] ee, agyinamoaa [cat] ee

Amokua, a rodent, and *agyinamoaa* [cat] are used in the above folksong metaphorically to refer to community members or citizens (including community leaders, chiefs, politicians, civil servants etc) who overtly and covertly hinder the country's progress through their various acts of sabotage. Just as the rodent (*amokua*) destroys maize and other farm produce and the cat (*agyinamoaa*) devours peanut, so do nation wreckers destroy the lands, forests, rivers and the economy that sustain them, hence the refrain, *aboro firi fie* (sabotage is from citizens). That is, those who are destroying Ghana are Ghanaians, and so we should not look far or outside for the saboteurs. During the annual Apo celebrations people sing this song and dance with gestures in response to drums to denounce all acts of wickedness that sabotage their communities and the nation at large. They use the occasion to rebuke and shame people for their bad behaviours without mentioning names, although they know the culprits and the culprits know themselves and how their unpatriotic behaviours are openly criticised by fellow citizens.

7. Conclusion

The study focused on folksongs as media for educating the public, especially the youth, to know more about their culture and identity and to be more patriotic as citizens of Ghana. The country was the first black nation south of the Sahara to attain political freedom from the colonizers after a long struggle for self-rule. Nearly 70 years after the political independence, many citizens placed in the various sectors of the economy have been selfish, corrupt and unpatriotic. Their actions do not only destroy the physical environment which could soon lead to food insecurity and water shortages but also the country's economy. Data were collected through informal interviews and observations of various cultural events where folksongs featured prominently about pertinent social issues including selfishness and lack of patriotism. The study revealed that folksongs serve as solidarity or social collective and peaceful action by the masses (majority of the citizens) against the plundering of the country's economy and its natural resources. The study concludes that folksongs have lessons for Ghanaians and should be employed extensively in public education to educate citizens, particularly the youth, about their responsibilities as citizens of Ghana to ensure that selfishness and lack of patriotism which is destroying the country is nipped in the bud. The wanton destruction of the country requires citizens, especially the youth, to be patriotic otherwise there would be no future for Ghana.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Based on the findings from the study, the following actionable recommendations are made to the government and policy makers of Ghana to stem the tide of national destruction by few powerful but unscrupulous citizens and their collaborators.

- People who squander, steal public funds or are engaged in destroying the physical environment through illegal mining [*galamzey*] must be arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned to deter others from doing the same.
- Folklore and folksongs, in particular, should be integrated into the school curriculum and all youth programmes to inculcate in the youth selflessness and patriotism.
- Public education on rights and responsibilities of citizens should be instituted and offered through the various media to educate and conscientize Ghanaians about the consequences of unpatriotic behaviour on the country and its citizens.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted in Ashanti and Bono Ahafo Regions (among two sub-sets of the 11 Akan ethnic groups of Ghana) due to time and logistic constraints. The inclusion of many sub-sets of the Akan could have enriched the findings. The findings therefore may lack adequate generalization because of the limited focus of the study.

Discography

Adaati Apo Troupe (March,2023). Performance at Takyiman Annual Apo Festival.

Akosua Tuntum Singing Group (February,2024). Performance at Krobo Kwapra Kwafie Celebrations.

Brakune Singing Group, (August, 2025). Performance at Kranka, Brakune Yam Festival.

Dansuomu Women's Troupe, (October, 2024). Performance at Akomadan Annual Akwasidae celebrations.

Konimase Dansuomu Ensemble, (April, 2024). Performance at Krobo Fofie Yam festival.

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