

# GLOBALIZATION MOVE TOWARDS IGBO MUSIC INSTRUMENTS CONSTRUCTION AND PERFORMANCE FOR COMMUNICATION UTILITY

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## ABSTRACT

*Music instruments are aspects of the tangible culture with considerable exertion of sound profound in culture. Clearly and definitely emitted, musical sound yields values of utilitarian significance for social development. In Igbo norm for instance, it creates awareness, which abounds in oral traditional, historic and mythological spheres with far-reaching effect for the welfare of the indigenes in their milieu. Conventions and knowledge acquired for responsibility in a given social environment typifies musical communication practice. Message in rhythmic and variety of pitch notation codes are inevitably practically employed during such music performance process. Besides, tempo indications, designations for the character of the piece or its sectional genres, dynamic marks, phrasing, technical instruction and, of course, articulation/elocution (where applicable) are systematically observed in all their ramifications. To enhance globally committed musical instruments construction and performance to serve its purpose, such undertaking necessitates strong conviction and has to be contextually organized and executed to achieve "social action" for public reformation or promotion of a given cause-with the view to busting the citizenries' oneness. Again, social dedication, in a global community via music instruments constructed for performance and utilized for communication, is highly imperative in facilitating neighbourhood association or companionship void of phobia; encouraging societal organizations and demeanor thereby promoting friendly ties. These devotions are concomitant to social development worldwide because musical instruments play prevailing roles in inter-cultural scheme of things. However, this can only be achieved in a dissimulation-suppressed atmosphere. This study therefore gears to justify the means to an end in realizing the itemized situation report. In this case, use of pictorials, data and practical experience to support the theoretical discourse cannot be dispensed with.*

## INTRODUCTION

Since this study thematically dwells on a pupil's musical instruments globalization, it is therefore, imperative to justify the discourse in relation to Idolor's (2004) concept of globalization with focus on the advancement of African music identity.

*"Globalization is the integration of the activities of various people irrespective of distance and national boundaries. Through new information, communication, transportation and technological applications, globalization creates a pool of ideas and opportunities that facilitate understanding, cooperation and interdependence amongst sovereign states".*

As regards the inclusion of 'communication' in the theme of this work, the beneficiaries of this work should understand it in the context of Kolawole and Akinyele's (2002)

definition to justify its relevance in this discourse. "Communication skill is the ability to use means and strategies effectively, and present your message clearly with regard to the needs of those involved. To be very effective, there is need for some kind of organized training". The Ibo musical instruments and the instrumentalists are implied here.

*Communication means verbal and non-verbal symbols and exchange of ideas or transaction of information from sender to receiver. In its cyclical forms, the receiver at another time becomes the sender and vice versa and a feedback is always expected for effective coding and encoding of messages (Ofosu, 2006).*

The manufacture of indigenous Nigerian musical instruments depends entirely upon the local process or absence of the essential raw materials from which to make them and an adequate number of craft-men. The spread of musical instruments is determined largely by the vegetation. This is responsible for why in places where there are big and strong trees musical instruments available are mostly wooden. This can be noticed in Eastern Nigerian and the south where wooden instruments such as 'Ngedegwu' (Xylophone), 'Ubo Aka' (Thumb Piano), 'Oja' (Flute), 'Ekwe' (Slit drum) are common.

In the construction of Yoruba (a tribe in Nigeria) drums for instance, only 'oma' and 'apa' trees are used. Any other type of wood used does not produce the correct tones needed for these instruments... The mythical tradition tells us that wood from these trees are used because they grow near the road side and are able to hear humans passing-by conversing and are able to reproduce human tunes" (Akpabot, 1986b). Adesokan citing in Adeleke (2000) succinctly blames low level of globalization of Igbo musical instruments on "lack of teaching space, music equipment/materials, books/lack of interest on the part of the students, ignorance of parents, high cost of musical instruments, dearth of music teachers, poor attitude of school administrators and principals of schools, lack of music room, non availability of recording rooms and storage facilities". Okonkwo (2007) states that: "This factor in turn influences the position of music in schools. ... There has been an ongoing controversy about the legitimacy of music. Many believe that music is forbidden owing to its negative influences on a person, as such, this belief has led many to object to the teaching of music in schools". In another development,

*while the apostle of the so-called global village preach their gospel of globalization, simultaneously, they are tightening their immigration laws to keep the foreigners at bay ... Nearly every day, one reads horror of migrants perishing in the oceans as they venture to enter Europe on the USA in un-seaworthy boats and other contraptions. From the canary Island, Malta, Morocco, Havana. They launch out. Many of them never to reach their destination or return home after paying thousands of hard earned U.S. dollars to heartless human traffickers (Solanke, 2006).*

Above all, the underprivileged African States lack the technology, funds and ideological will to foster their musical image globally (Idolor, 2004). These situation

reports are prevailing hitches against overseas exportation of most Igbo musical instruments. Onyeji (2006) says, the igbo language being tonal in a way influences the pitch and rhythm elements of a song. ...correlation of speech tone and melodic leaps of tonal languages retains as much as possible for linguistic implication of meaning of the text". Agu (1984) in Onyeji (2006) feels a word could have many meanings depending on its intonation application and its function in a sentence. This situation report guides the music instruments technologists in carefully constructing and tuning Igbo musical instruments with discreet boundaries (key instruments) so that they can be effectively used to accompany the singers harmoniously.

*The Igbo, like its Yoruba and Hausa counterparts, has its music strongly tied to extra-musical events, and also providing a means of expressing group solidarity. Music was generally regarded as an integral part of social events (Aninwene, 2006).*

This study will place the Igbos in a good stead as we globalize it because it is exclusively discussing the abstract sound emitted by Igbo music instruments. It highlights on the technological impacts of the said instruments within the tribal community besides their extra-musical values. "It is a much broader, deeper, and more complex phenomenon, involving new forms of communication and innovation. The flattering of the world is about the creation of a global platform for multiple forms of sharing work, knowledge and entertainment" (Friedman, 2005).

*Igbo customs are basically similar, sometimes with local variations. The colanut custom, music, dance, art, oral literature, ethics, philosophy and ritual avoidance and taboo are basically patterned to reflect an identical conception of Igbo social and ritual systems (Egbule 2006).*

"There is no doubt that the people living within Igbo culture area speak the same Igbo language and constitute what linguistics call a speech community. Although, there are scores of regional dialects, all Igbos derive from one proto-Igbo language and share lots of grammatical, lexical and phonological features in common". Commenting on the tuning of some Igbo musical instruments Onwuekwe (2005) observes:

*there is no particular system of tuning used, except that the producers have naturally developed a sense of perfect pitch that makes them be able to differentiate between one pitch and the other ... To produce perfect pitch, the slabs are dried around fire, then under a shade, then under the sun. This process is a long one which takes about a month or two, before the slabs are completely dried up and ready for use" She concludes.*

After undergoing these tuning processes, the sound of the 'Ikoru' slit drum travels very far covering a distance of up to ten kilometers especially at night. Having realized that sound travels farther at night, the Ibo prefer the night to day time, for sending messages with this instrument (Agu, 2005).

Innovations and adaptations have become part of the evolution of Igbo musical instruments over the years. Certain changes have taken place in delivery style, besides

performance situation, stage management, and audience participation. In spite of this development, modern influences that impinge on the people's traditional musical practices and organology have not been allowed to sweep away the basic musical ideologies of the society. Thus, whatever various performance techniques employed for variations and enjoyment of their music are utilized in the right manner so that texts assigned to them may remain comprehensive and useful to the people.

The Igbo race musical instruments are constructed locally with mainly home-based materials. Sons of the soil whose creative skills capture the peoples' interest are considered qualified music instruments technologists in this regard. The Igbo man's close tie devotion to orthodox religion of the Christian fold is instrumental in the strong opposition or resistance to artifacts carved to beautify the exterior portion of the instruments required in a majority of their socio-musical events. This prejudicial premise grossly cripples continuity or further attempts to forge ahead in embossing figures on the folks' musical instruments, irrespective of the exactitude of such engraving. In a bid to accommodate occasional neighbouring aboriginal musical styles; there has been persistent yearn to procure their musical instruments to that effect. This demand when materialized embodies derivation of acoustic properties from the assorted instruments and this further enriches their music with perspicuity.

Reasons abound why culturally, musical instruments are structured in diverse forms. These subsequently give rise to distinct dissimilarities in individual ethnic music and all it encompasses. Few Igbo musical instruments are traced to have originated during their inter-tribal migration, albeit such instrument performance techniques are modified to suit their ethnic context of performance. The paintwork, incised icons and embellishment of the exterior structure noticeable in their pre-christianity era signify visual identity of the gods and shrines to which they were attached for appeasement sake. They equally convey aesthetic appeal cum fundamentally indispensable meaning within the cultural matrix. The drums available in the musical tradition of Igbo represent, to a large extent, the people's dialect; in this case, a well-coordinated performance application is observed so as to establish ownership identity. Contrarily the exotic ones are, in no small measure, distinguishable from their musical trends, particularly in the area of folk tunes. This is due to borrowed stylistic features involved in playing them as opposed to the native ones.

Of the assorted musical instruments to our disposal, those constructed by the local wood carvers are mostly used to accompany native airs. Much expertise is exhibited in playing such indigenous ones. They are capable of imitating the people's tonal inflexion to a reasonable degree. Taking cognizance of the resultant acoustic properties that form tonality of the sounding body, these very instruments are thus, held with reverence - for their usage is highly restricted to remarkable events. This development apparently presupposes that a few of our locally produced instruments musically, manifest variables *in tandem* with vocal tessitura. Moreso, some musical instruments do convey public temperamental sensation as both objects and processes

of expressing musical sonority during social amusement, and religious meditation to which the people are ardent devotees. By indication of dimension, musical instruments have so far progressively augmented societal function and symbolism.

They are somewhat employed in magical province to exorcise certain supernatural capabilities. In this regard, stern rules supposedly determine their selection for a given societal event, and the musicians expected to play them. Likewise, human traits embossed on the framework of certain musical instruments; they do not only limit their uses but also make instrumentalists play them with much esteem. These, in connection with other qualities are associated with the musical instruments of Eastern Nigerian.

### **THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF IGBO MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**

The traditional musical instruments of Igbo origin are not void of linguistic-tonal inflection. Repertoire of song genres is handed down to successive generations through these instruments, with peculiar information transmitted by the indigenous ethnologists and folk musicians of the culture. The geographical distribution of the people's musical instruments, the increment and modification can be deduced via oral tradition, archeological findings, and from research typified by observation of their recent social invaluableness. The sonority and capability of the instruments determine their ensemble usage. Those with impression of care freeness are rarely used in worshipping ancestral gods wherever idolatry lingers on, though there is optimistic decline. Irrespective of disparity in origin, the instruments are cognate with one another in other perspectives.

The Havard Dictionary of Music alludes to musical instruments as “the generic name for all contrivances or apparatus producing musical sounds, with the exception of human voice”. The history and distribution of Igbo musical instruments are traced to their identical forms; especially the parts considered unessential to sound production, which invariably share cultic roles worldwide. Nettl (1963) is of the view that musical instruments came into being as a need for (instrumental music) special objects of ritual which emit sound. I suppose this claim does not probably apply to all cultures of the world because, a few racial groups are inclined to musical instruments for accompanying: vocal melodic music, recitative tales on genealogies or legends.

Others show keenness in forming pure instrumentation, or employing them in dance drama... as a privileged medium of communal communication... for information dissemination of disquietic kind/signal in terms of sound emitted on slit drum. Under organology, Nettl further affirms that instruments are among man's most complex achievements of technology... Thus, it is not surprising to find that a high degree of technical and creative energy is lavished on their structure. To a great extent, this complexity does not involve only those features of the instruments which produce sounds, for artist work which has nothing to do with music is frequently included and may play a role in the instrument symbolism' (207).

It is not amazing that Igbo people's musical ensemble almost lacks chordophone instruments. The virtually non-existence is noticeable till date, and in view of this, Lo-Bamijoko acknowledges that - "In present day Igbo land, most string instruments with the exception of 'Une' (music bow) have fallen out of use. One of the reasons for disappearing... was the adverse or solanic power that strings instruments allegedly exerted on their players". The availability of musical instruments among the inhabitants very much satisfy their social function requisites, considering numerous roles instruments play in their scheme of things.

This concept agrees with (Akpabot 1986a). "The African... picks his orchestral instruments... bearing in mind peculiarities of each instrument, its colouristic tendencies. The volume of sound it is capable of producing and what special effects it can contribute to the general good of the music". In cultural context, musical instruments are usually associated with hierarchical order, which points out the place and usefulness of their types in the entire musical structure, including those of any other family of instruments.

### **INSTRUMENTAL CLASSIFICATION**

Although four basic musical instruments are conventionally classified in this work, only MEMBRANOPHONE and IDIOPHONE (which are prevalent in the culture of the Igbos) are discussed in accordance with the globally acknowledged and most approved classification. That is, the standard devised, mentioned, defined and translated to English by E. M. Von Honbostel and Curt Sachs in 1914 based on the catalogue of a large instrument collection compiled by the Belgian, Victor Mahilon in 1893. However, for further theoretical details, reference to (Nettl, 1963) and Hood (1971) treatise on instrumental classification respectively.

#### ***Aerophone***

Aerophone class of musical instruments according to Echezona (1980), "Sounds by directing a jet of air against the edge of an orifice in such a way as to set up vibrations producing musical tone". Aerophone instruments are particularly tuned to definite pitches' with clearly perceptible discrete boundaries. Instruments of this family operate through the vibration of an enclosed cylinder of air. They comprise wind instruments through, in, or around which a quantity of air is made to vibrate. The air is enclosed in a cavity and may be set into motion by the sharp edge of a pipe, with the actions of a reed beating or free e.g. flute, or the compressed lips of the player e.g. horn and trumpet. The dept of the pitch depends on the length of the pipe. Some have cylindrical tubes, opened at one/both ends; it could be end blown, notched, or transversely blown. Others have single or doublereeds hence are classified as such. Some Instruments act very direct to the outer air such as spinning discs, bullroarer; few are made of conch shell and bones. Two basic types are: free aerophone and wind instrumentproper. The latter is sub-divided as shown below.

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### ***Chordophone***

Chordophone classification depends on the shape of the body. One or more strings are stretched to fixed points. Instruments whose tones are produced by strings, whether struck, plucked, or bowed e.g.. musical bow, zither, lutes, lyres, etc belong to this class. It also encompasses instruments with stretched strings acting as the sound producing agents. All instruments furnished with one or more tightly strained strings, which emit notes when vibrated by plucking, striking, friction/pressure and wind, come under this category.

### ***Membranophone***

These are vibratory membranes of mostly animals' hides and skin, stretched over a frame. That means, they emit sound when their stretched membranes are set in motion with bare or cupped palm, stick(s) or both combined. They are classified and described according to their shapes, method of sound production, techniques of manipulation, number of membranous coverage, pattern of lacing, method of tuning, the way the membrane(s) is/are fastened, method of beating and playing position. It is comparatively most widely distributed all over the world. The melorhythmic sound of the tensely strained membrane vibrates by friction. The degree of its tension affects and varies the pitch dynamics. Wooden drums are carved, hollow, tuned, and require skillful performance on them.

#### **CONGA DRUM (MBEMBE-ALA IN MBAISE DISTRICT OF IBO SOUTH)**

This class of membranophone involves three set of drums played together. They widely constitute the most essential fraction of nearly all-instrumental ensembles in Mbaise.

**Construction:** The mallet and chisel (Mkpo) are used to chip off the undesirable wooden fragments of the body during construction. Hides derived from antelope (Mgbada) ' caught as victims' of traps or during hunting expedition; or alternatively, peeled off live goats skin in commemoration of twelve children's birth (called "Ewu Ukwu' traditional ceremony) forms the wooden membrane cover.

Butchers supply these goats skin imported from Northern Nigeria, after slaughtering them. The head is attached to the shell, while the wooden pegs are fixed around the region of the rim of covered hoop, with palm frond string (Akwara-emere). The membrane is stretched over the wider open-surface end of the wood, but the terminal opposite is left uncovered.

According to the instrument makers, antelope skin is inevitably used because it is tough, durable and more easily accessible. The cane-shaped drums are constructed using such species of resonant tree trunk boughs as oil bean tree, (Ugba); or ebony and Obeche imported from Sapele, Mid-Western Nigeria by native wood dealers. It is carved out of wood in different sizes, considering the ensemble's demand. For instance, the female drum (Nne kwa), found in (Agbachaa-ekurunwa) women musical group is relatively smaller in size than that identified with "Abigbo". The bodies of

the three drums narrow down from the circumference of the frame to the adjacent end. Oke nkwa, the smallest drum (but highest in pitch) is about 35.56cm (14 inches) in length and 12.07cm (5 inches) in diameter. Etiti nkwa; medium size drum is much longer than the (Oke nkwa). The nomenclature ETITI means, "central" which implies that it is the average size of the three-in-one drums constructed together. "Etiti nkwa" is about 40.64cm (16inches) lengthwise, and 17.78cm (7 inches) in diameter. The biggest of the drums (Nne nkwa), yields the lowest possible tones and is considered the fundamental drum. It is about 91.44cm (3ft) in length, and 22.86cm (9 inches) in diameter.

**Tuning:** The series of pegs tied with string is tightened or loosened with mallet during tuning process, to adjust the tone according to a required pitch. The three drums are not tuned to the same scale. A non energy-sapping alternative measure is placing the drums in the sun. However, if the tone becomes too high, then some water is sprinkled on the membrane surface to reduce it. The male drum (Oke nkwa) and the medium drum (Etiti nkwa) obtain their tonal bearing from the master drum (Nne nkwa) tone.

**Playing Techniques:** Through practical assessment, I deduced that lower notes are obtained by beating the membrane radius, while the higher ones are by hitting around the membrane edge with cupped and tensed palms. A master drummer can produce many graded tones on these drums by striking them with a stick and using his curved or open palm to vary their tones. He could as well play with two hands or two sticks simultaneously. The drummer sits astride on the wooden body of 'Nne nkwa' and drums away with his fingers and, at times applying his palms. It demands expertise to alter the drum pitch/tone with drummer's heel during drumming. "Etiti nkwa" sound is comparatively lower than that of "Oke nkwa", but playing posture or stance, and drumming style are quite similar. The "Etiti nkwa" is tilted in opposite angle to the player who sits on a sizeable seat. The open-ended is left ajar on the ground. "Oke nkwa" is held between the laps with crossed feet and played vigorously with two hands fists. The Mbembe-Ala drums-which means, instruments sounding like the natives' tone language (language in which different pitch levels or tones, distinguished from words depending on the tone used) occupy a very distinct place in Igbo traditional music, because they are the foundation. The drums are non-musically used in those days to invoke the spirit of the god, "Ogwugwu".

### **THE FUNCTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL UTILITY**

The drums are used to accompany folk tune singers, and for instrumental dialogue in traditional musical groups, for example, "Odima, Ekeremgba, Ukom, Agbachaa-ekurunwa and Dandiko. A solo drummer drums them for personal pleasure and self-satisfaction at leisure. They provide dancing accompaniment, communicate to the dancers and the community respectively. Each of the three conical drums has a singing tone that can be multiplied through technical performance skill.



**Oke Nkwa:** The melodic fragment is maintained by this melorhythmic drum, exclusively tuned to interpret the song texts. Its improvisatory tattoos vary constantly with subsequent phrases. Exclusive of "Oke nkwa" that plays rhythmic variations, the rest play ostinato pattern. The very piercing tone of the smallest drum (Oke nkwa) in some cases, observes a quarter note rests, depending on the time signature, metric system, or musical mood.

**Etiti Nkwa:** This supplies strict rhythm within a consistent Ostinato technique. It is played accompanied with slit drum in concert duet. This medium pitch variety of drum blends (rather than obscure) the tones of the slit drum. The rhythm is conceived in two bar phrases. "Etiti nkwa" is just content to emphasize or stress the number of beats/measures in a bar.

**Nne Nkwa:** It is the biggest of the three drums and is used almost exclusively for ritual worship; in which case, it can be played singly. This tree trunk, large hollow drum has a series of booming sound that controls all other musical instruments of the ensemble by means of rhythmic variations.

#### ***Idiophone/Autophone***

Generally speaking, of the four major musical instruments codified by Honbostel and Sachs taxonomy, Idiophone, also called autophone preponderantly predominates over others in Igbo community. Idio means "self-sounding". Merriam (1954), under the theme-The Traditional in Contemporary Africa- refers to Idiophone as "Any instrument that yields a sound by its own substances, being stiff and elastic enough to vibrate without requiring a stretched membrane or string". And according to Nketia (1975), "Any instrument upon which a sound may be produced without the addition of a stretched membrane or a vibrating string of a reed is Idiophone". They are classified based on their playing methods and many of them lack discrete boundary or clear cut fixed pitches - in this case, their pitches are diffused and indefinite.

Apart from xylophone and linguaphone, the rest of Igbo idiophones are instruments tuned only in the course of construction. Their bodies vibrate and emit sound when they are sounded. Most are made of inherently resonant materials that produce sound by percussion or concussion that is, violent pressure/friction caused by contact of two entities. Modes of playing are by striking, stamping, scrapping, plucking, twanging and shaking actions.

#### **GIANT CLAPPERLESS BELL (OZURU-IGBO)**

**Construction:** The word "Ozuru-Igbo" means commonly found the Igbo. It is Mbaise people's special name for OGENE, also generally referred to as Alo across the Niger, South of Nigeria. The Umuopara Nguru in Mbaise specifically known for black smith work use disposed metals such as basins and bicycle parts in the production of this instrument. This cone-shaped metal, constructed by indigenous black smiths is of diverse sizes and could be single or in pair. The average size length was identified

during this research orientation. Its pitch is of almost the range of a 'B' in the one line 8ve. The godish and oval-shaped rim section tapers toward the vertex handle. The one being discussed here however is three or four feet long, made of a sizeable and elliptical cylinder of conical metal; with two large triangular plates jointly held together by being welded along the flanges.

**Performance Technique:** 'Ozuru-Igbo' is a struck idiophone with a lovely tone. Maximum sound is obtained by holding the vertex with a convenient hand, and hitting the rubber folded end of the short cane mainly at the sound bow. The open-ended rim circumference faces upward when the central part of the convex plate is struck. The base is positioned on a soft pad kept on the ground to control the sound and therefore regulates the resonator. 'Ozuru-Igbo' generates deep tone, which varies in accordance with the section of the bell struck. For a muted sound, the interior and hollow opposite end of the tapered handle is placed downward. On no account should the welded flanges directly facing the stooping player be struck. Doing so will mount to discordant sound; and could expose the instrument to the risk of being easily damaged. Any singer with a sonorous tone is said to have the voice of 'Ozuru-Igbo'. Men and women alike could play "Ozuru-Igbo"

#### **THE FUNCTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL UTILITY**

Among the natives, the 'Ozuru-Igbo' plays strong, weak and displaced (syncopated) accents as well as rhythmic and colouristic functions in their general music and dance. It is however, mostly found in the women's childbirth musical ensemble as the time liner, which in a pattern, and communicates to them for any alteration of the dance sequence. In maintaining the phrasal referent rhythmic pulse for dancers, the instrument supplies the main cue and directs their choreographic steps. Being a bass gong, it renders a background beat to music, and yields a monotone, which is basically a percussive bell rhythm. It equally produces a sustained reverberation, while serving as a metronome instrument to choristers in churches and the aforementioned musical group.

#### **SYMBOLIC AND REPRESENTATIONAL OR EXTRA-MUSICAL VALUES**

Stammerers are encouraged to drink water from 'Ozuru-Igbo' as a remedy to their tongue-tie. With it, town criers draw the villagers' attention; while diviners utilize it as they invoke the gods. It is sounded to punctuate the minuets recorded and read after the latest age-grade meeting deliberations. At times it is struck to draw attention to a point of correction marked by raising one's hand during the communal social gathering discussion. The 'Umuada/Umumboto', married first daughters of every house hold during their group condolence visit to the bereaved family of a departed husband/father play a single "Ozuru-Igbo" to announce their arrival and departure. In the course of this event, it is occasionally struck and alternated with choral shouts of grief. During the "Umunna", kindred male assembly for "Mmanya Ori", a given market day palm wine drinking, those in attendance are called to order during discourse by sounding the instrument in a running rhythm.

Before a person is allowed to speak in men's traditional gathering, he seeks the permission of the 'Ozuru-Igbo' player by raising his hand. If the instrument is struck, he is permitted to talk; and is expected to stop with its subsequent series of sounds. Loyalists to deities such as "Amadioha Ozuzu" ornament "Ozuru-Igbo" with "Odo", a powdery egg yolk-like "colour, and other necessary embellishments; thereafter they strike the instrument to summon or invite the spirit of their ancestors to come to their aid, or avenge for them through the media of their respective idols.

The rainmakers equally use it as a vital material object forming part of their antics. In making an observation or a remark in age-grade meeting, the speaker also solicits the permission of the "Ozuru-Igbo" holder, who with the intermittent striking of the instrument controls noise, restores peace, orderliness and tranquility. When gorgeously decorated, it is used to accompany corpse to burial ground. At a ritual ceremony, it punctuates incantations. In all these instances, the tones of the instrument either kindly implore, or issue warning and permission.

### **BASKET RATTLE (OYO)**

**Construction:** This instrument is also called OSHA by certain parts of Mbaise and its environs. It is made with rattan stems (emere) woven into a firmly fastened cup-like basketwork in connection with raffia palm string (Akwara ngwo). One fourth of inside basket container is the hollow resonator filled with small quantity of identical pebbles, picked up from local brooks and enclosed tightly at the base, with a sturdy network of woven rattan. The miniature basket shaker is fixed on a round base made of a calabash. The rest of the body is woven with the bark of flexible palm fronds material that bends and twists easily. "Oyo" is devoid of exterior openings all over its small bell shaped structure. The tiny and long upper part is the curved cane folded with osiers and rushes for handling it. Those whose proximity to the stream is far use metal and steel left over by local mechanics and ironmongers instead of pebbles.

**Playing Techniques:** Basket rattle emits sound by shaking action, which automatically makes the pebbles clink and jingle. The local name 'Oyo' is derived from its onomatopoeic sound, and is vigorously shaken to produce multimeteric beats/notes. It is held and lifted up and down, high and low-in latitudinal direction, or forcibly tapped (under the base) on the laps. The of dry sound quality produced depends on the texture, size and quantity of the rattling substance as well as the shape of the container.

### **FUNCTOINAL AND CONTEXTUAL UTILITY**

The "Oyo/Osha" is commonly found and played in women musical groups. They usually use it besides musical pot (udu egwu) and "Ogele" to supplement their birth songs. All entertainment based, female traditional-musical groups of Owerri district

employ it in their musical ensemble, examples are "Agbacha ekurunwa" and "Odima". The instrument produces rhythmic emphasis, and some elements of hollow sound, which define the unique phonic quality of the music.

### **THE SYMBOLIC AND REPRESENTATIONAL OR EXTRA-MUSICAL VALUES**

No taboo is associated with the rattle, "Oyo" among the people. It could be played by any rational being during performance, and is lent out at request. Modified types of this rattle are loosely hung on the branch of trees in most Igbo South farm settlements. As the wind blows, they dangle, swish and swing thereby generating sound that scares wild animals and aves. Therefore, they serve as scare-crows, and frighten, intimidate or threaten farm intruders. This protective measure is looked upon as representing indigenous farmer's economic well-being.

### **WOOD BOLCK/TEMPLE BLOCK (Okwa/Okoporo)**

**Construction:** "OkwalOkpokoro" also called "Ekere" is of similar class as "Ekwe", "Uhie" and "Ikoro" varieties of slit drums. It is the smallest of this family and has the highest pitch. During its construction process, a slit is bored on a piece of Iroko, (Apu) or Mahogany (Oji) pronounced Orzji. The very wood is hollowed out after dehydration to create resonance. A fully constructed one is approximately 7 - 9 inches or (17cm) long.

**Playing Technique:** "Okwa/Okpokoro" is played with an extra ordinary beater. Hitting at close proximity to the slit derives the highest tone. The pitch is at a range of "G" in the one line 8ve. It is the opened edge that is struck and alternated 'ad lib' with the opposite flat end. Rhythmic sequence produced is invariable. Two distinct tones are possibly derived from the wood block when struck with the unpadded beater.

**Non-Musical Use:** A few trado-medical practitioners employ it while invoking powers.

### **FUNCTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL UTILITY**

The Igbo woodblock is used in these instrumental ensemble: "diegwu", "ekere-mgba" of Ogidi in Amambra state, and "Okonko" in Umuahia and its environs where it performs as a metronome. It is used for entertainment in village musical ensemble such as "Dandiko" in Enyiogugu Community, Aboh Mbase, Imo State. In dancing and other ceremonial occasions, this struck autophone adds tone-colour to the drums. The rhythm it emits as a motor theme grinds on irrespective of any alterations in the general musical structure. In absolute gaiety, the woodblock appends syncopation to inherent sound. The dancer takes his cue from its standard bell rhythm. This rhythmic

instrument can equally play the variants or modification of a given pattern when the Musical need arises. Often times it is used instead of clapping and affords a good accompaniment to voice.

## CONCLUSION

This study is a by-product of organological investigation into the traditionally based musical instruments of Nigeria, Eastern region. Suffice it to conclude that their musical instruments are construction value-wise, of little significance compared to the strictly musical performance outcome. If considered ordinary objects, they are somewhat not as essential as their phonic properties emitted, or the aptly existing interrelationship between them and the instrumentalists. Besides, the instrumental phonic qualities and functionalities take precedence over their cultural symbolism. The importance attached to the structural design of a minority of the instruments is very minimal. With the advent of Christianity, the creative decorations on the sound emissive materials are also currently counter-productive. Evidentially, such decorative measures are at present being kicked against, given the devout Christians' biased interpretation to them. This speculation borne out of obedience to divine ordinance grossly affects the market supply, price, demand and distribution. By virtue of their poor demands nowadays, the makers are not only few but also work on part-time. In the course of planting season, the production reduces even to the barest minimum because by then, the makers resort to farming as a more resourceful and rewarding money-making venture.

In the past, under a handful of conditions, engravings (in the likeness of supernatural beings) aroused feelings of horror as they palpably manifest on the instruments in the face of music making. Christian doctrinology and other canon, or ecclesiastical injunctions, which the inhabitants have embraced very much, tell on the cultic uses of such instruments. Thus, the contemporary trend in musical performance practices has broken the close-tie, while their mental expression of the instruments workmanship has, in no small measure, influenced the used to be idea or belief attached to the performance situation. Again, due to other factors, some instruments employed in given festivals today and the instrumentalists mandated to play them are both considered mundane creatures. The implementation of rituals involving the use of instruments varies with the communal concept of ceremonial observances. Artifacts, antropomorphism and zoomorphism are therefore, non-existence as facets of the structural features of devotions musical instruments. Also the timbre and size, in relation to context of performance in the community, altogether speaks volumes for their cultural music functions and values. Aesthetic and other non-musical factors e.g. decorative motif connected to a musical instrument, is partly traceable to cultural contact.

Apart from the forgoing accounts of the strictly musical roles preference over the non musical functions of musical instruments, there is indication that save the

pagans, instrument makers and performers, almost the entire east of the Niger populace are rather opposed to the symbolic significance of the instruments. Compared to that, their aroused enthusiasm over the instrumentalists' technical conducts, coupled with other observances of no hidden codes during the musical presentation is undeniable. The resultant effect of this nonchalant attitude towards instrumental symbolism among the people, in this development, is gradually eradicating ritualistic taboos. Invariably, artistic design with closely guided meaning is made with caution, where applicable to a musical instrument; otherwise, such engraved inscrutable image may be associated with fetish. Steadfastness in instrumental workmanship for cultural identity as a whole, which correspondingly exhibits high degree of uniformity, similarly guides the people's collective performance behaviour, given rise to the same standard of musical effect.

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