

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**REBRANDING THE AESTHETICS AND THE PRESERVATIVE
QUALITIES OF OHUM FESTIVAL**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Ghana has a lot of festivals celebrated among almost all ethnic groups. Ghanaian festivals are a colourful and vibrant part of the culture. Each year festivals and durbars are held in various parts of the country to celebrate the heritage of the people. Public events often express, reflect, and reinforce community social relationships and cultural values. According to Clarke- Ekong (1995) such traditional festivals are celebrated to observe certain rituals and/or a type of event that has cultural undertones.

All festivals have a commonality in that they have as part of their focus the dramatisation of sacred myths, legends and traditions of origin or real historical events in the life of the participating group (Bame, 1991).

Most people believe that festivals help them forge close bondage with their ancestors and ask for their protection. Festivals are also held in order to purify the whole state so that people can enter the New Year with confidence and hope. Normally, a festival is to celebrate and remember something in the past. Throughout Ghana, almost every town and village becomes highly enthused with excitement at festival time. Each festival commemorates an event, a war, puberty rites or harvest.

According to Clarke-Ekong (1995) out of sixty-four festivals that he documented, ten celebrate the harvest seasons, seventeen honour ancestors for die role they play to ensure that a good harvest and prosperity continue. Ten festivals mark and rejoice by offering the first harvest to the ancestors. Many festivals are celebrated in Ghana. In fact every ethnic

group or clan has a festival it celebrates. This is so with the people of Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area. The Akyem Ohum is a commemorative festival that explicates the religion and origin of the Akyem people but thought of by many as harvest festival. The festival originates from the people of Akyem Old Tafo who happen to be the first inhabitants to the Akyem Abuakwa land. Ohum is celebrated to venerate their ancestors and the stool; give thanks for good harvest and as a reminder of the peace agreement established between the people of Kyebi and Akyem Old Tafo.

Cole (1975) stipulates that during festivals multitude of objects, decorated people, dances, skits and sacrifices transform a once quiet space into a glamorous scene. The festival embraces the whole community, raising both people and place onto a plane marked by aesthetics, spiritual and social values. Cole once again draws attention to the artistic representation of festivals. According to him, the totality of a festival cannot be conveyed in printed words and pictures. Such has been the case of Ohum festival. The use of art forms such as music, dance, sculpture, graphic art and many more for the successful celebration of the Ohum festival years gone by has been enormous. It is therefore an established fact that no festivals can be celebrated without the role of arts. Much attention should be given to the festival, specific art forms which add to the aesthetics of the festival by way of identification, appreciation and detailed documentation, this way the festival will be rebranded and one will tend to appreciate the beauty of festivals the more.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The role festivals play in the sustenance of the art forms of the Akyem Abuakwa people in the Eastern Region of Ghana and vice versa can never be relegated to the background. To the celebrants, those art forms are mere objects which ensure the smooth flow of the festival

but to the critical observer, art is totally indispensable in the celebration to the extent that ignoring them has the tendency to destroy the festival. This is echoed by Cole (1975) who is of the view that countless festivals in Ghana are ‘total works of art’. He goes on to say that these festivals are characterized by minor artistic forms and actions such as music, dances, sculpture and many more and can be seen as distinct, but when separated is subsumed in such festivals by the impact of the whole, a continuous and unified event mostly of aesthetic appeal and a showcase of rich cultural significance.

A study of the literature on this festival revealed that the aesthetics of the festival has not been delved into by authors by way of appreciation of the arts. Again a detailed historical accounts of the Ohum festival which is thought of by many as harvest festival but commemorative and how it is celebrated has not been documented. Opoku (1970) and Bame (1991) who are notable writers on festivals made no mention of Ohum festival of the Akyem Abuakwa. Yirenkyi (2009) who wrote an article titled Traditional Festivals in Ghana: categories and unique features, on the website of National Commission on Culture stated that Ohum is celebrated by the people of Kyebi and Asamkese leaving out the original custodians of the festival- Akyem Old Tafo. It is therefore imperative that a study of the Ohum festival is carried out to give a detailed historical account of the festival and to inform the general public about the aesthetics and role of the arts in the successful celebration of the festival; the role of the festival in preserving the art forms since it is part of our cultural heritage- a framework the society builds on and the most compelling evidence beyond our children, that we ever existed. This will serve as a propeller to rebrand the festival to attract the highest form of attention.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to trace the origin and examine the aesthetics and preservative quality of Ohum festival in Akyem Abuakwa traditional area. This in a way will give the festival a facelift.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the history of Ohum festival in Akyem Abuakwa traditional area.
2. To give an account of the art forms used during Ohum festival and the role they play.
3. To examine the aesthetics of the Ohum festival of Akyem Abuakwa and ways the art forms can be preserved and promoted.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What has been the history of the Ohum festival in Akyem Abuakwa traditional area?
2. What roles do art forms play in the success of the Ohum festival to date?
3. What aesthetic values does Ohum festival possess?
4. How can the aesthetics of the Ohum festival be preserved and promoted?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Studying and giving a vivid account of the Ohum festival of the people of Old Tafo in the Akyem Abuakwa traditional area is an educative venture for the people of Akyem Abuakwa, Ghana and the world at large. It will further help bring to limelight the unflinching support that the art forms have helped and continue to help in the celebration of the Ohum festival.

Aesthetic values of the festival will be sought for in this study to ascertain the importance of the art forms used in the celebration of the Ohum festival and why it should be preserved and promoted on all platforms.

Beneficiaries of this research will also recognize and appreciate the value of this festival as part of the culture of the people of Akyem Abuakwa. It will help to rejuvenate the importance attached to the celebration of the Ohum festival which is losing its significance of late.

It is hoped the study will undoubtedly boost tourism in the region and the country at large which in turn will help elevate the socio-economy in Akyem Abuakwa traditional area.

This study will make suggestions for subsequent research areas as a result of the findings of this research.

1.7 Delimitation

The researcher sought to study and give account of the celebration of the Ohum festival of the people of Akyem Abuakwa and the art forms used from the sixteenth century to date.

The research focused on the people of Akyem Tafo who are believed to be the custodians of the festival handed over to the then Omanhene by Okomfo Asare the state philosopher and high priest.

1.8 Limitations

The stool house and the sacred place in the Agyempremso grove were barred from visitors and nonmembers of the custodians of the Ohum rituals and rites hence the researcher could not give a firsthand account of happenings in the various places although they were

narrated to her. Due to limitations on number of pages, aesthetic qualities of some examples of art forms were left out from discussions.

1.9 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of understanding this study, the following words used in the work have been interpreted. It must however be noted that these words possess different dictionary meanings but only the context under which they have been used in this work was considered.

Aesthetics: interesting and beautiful arts.

Art: the way of creating beautiful things to satisfy human needs.

Appellations: praise names.

Body adornment: body decoration.

Culture: the general way of life of a people.

Classification: grouping

Celebration: a joyous occasion and other ceremonies that bring happiness.

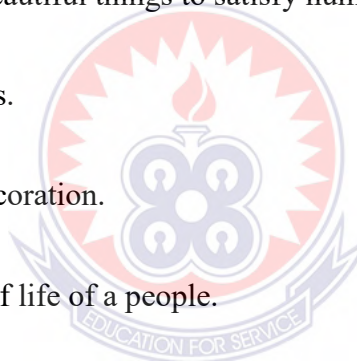
Festival: religious or other celebrations.

Paraphernalia: a large number of small articles given as gift or for personal use.

Preservation: protecting for posterity.

Propitiation: the act of calming spirits.

Rebranding: changing the face value of things.



Sacrifice: the act of giving up something for the sake of getting something more important and valuable.

1.10 Facilities Available

The Libraries of the University of Education, Winneba

The Department of Art Education, Winneba North campus

The University of Ghana, Legon

The Balme library, Legon

The Department of African Studies library, Legon

The Koforidua Library, Koforidua

The Bunso Community Library, Bunso

Okyehene's palace (Ofori Panin Fie), Kyebi

The KNUST Main Library, Kumasi

The College of Art and Social Science Library, Kumasi

The Ashanti Library, Kumasi

Online Research

1.11 Other Available Facilities

Individual homes of experts, Old Tafo palace, shrine, durbar grounds, some churches in Tafo and other Akyem Abuakwa traditional societies.



1.12 Organization of chapters

The thesis report consists of five chapters. chapter one which is basically the introduction deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, research methodology, research tools, delimitation, limitations, definition of terms, facilities available, other available facilities and organization of chapters.

Chapter two dealt with the review of related literature which bothered on a brief introduction of the chapter, festivals, types of festivals, classification of cultural festivals, importance of festivals, rebranding, cultural festivals rebranding, branding attributes of cultural festivals, art, philosophy of art and aesthetics, African aesthetics, aesthetics of festivals, role of art in festivals, preservation, preservation of art, ethnographic background of Akyem Abuakwa, historical accounts of Ohum festival and why it is celebrated.

Chapter three which is about the research methodology was made up of a brief introduction of the chapter, research design, library research, population for the study, sample, data collection and data analysis plan.

Chapter four presented analysis and discussion of data from the interview and the observational approach and the presentation of the main findings, it consisted of an introduction, analysis of data collected, celebration of Ohum festival: past and present, artistic forms and aesthetics reflected, the roles of art in the festival and their symbolic meanings, Ohum festival of the past, an account the preservative element of Ohum festival to Akyem Abuakwa art forms.

Chapter five comprised summary, conclusion, recommendations, reference and appendix.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature from different sources related to the topic. It looks at the socio-economic, aesthetics and aesthetics aspects of festivals and how rebranding could help facelift festivals to unearth its full potentials. It is introduced briefly by what festivals are in general. Festivals are common to all human societies. Festivals are therefore manifestations of the practices and beliefs of a people. They are promoters of culture and builders of one's identity. Festivals perform many functions in the society. They serve as a means of commemorating and remembering important events in the history of a people. As they involve re-creation of the past, they provide occasions for transmission of traditional cultures and values from one generation to the other thus preserving our cultural heritage that identify us as a people. This review tends to spell out important roles arts play in the celebration of festivals and the preservative qualities of festivals as well.

2.2 Festivals

Festivals are celebrated all around the world to pass the legends, knowledge and traditions onto the next generation and to mark a milestone in the life of a people and the celebrating community. Most of these festivals are colourful and vibrant celebrations filled with gaiety, lots of cuisines, drumming, dancing, socialising and generally creating a happy atmosphere.

“Traditional festivals are performed to observe certain rituals and/or a type of event that communicates important cultural themes, (Clarke-Ekong, 1997, p. 53).

Getz (2005) states that:

Festivals are themed, public celebrations. ‘Themed’ is a significant characteristic for festivals, they do not happen spontaneously, they are events specially organized and celebrated with clear intentions. The most common themes are celebrations of the arts which include music, dance, cinema, and theatre, also including feasts, carnivals (stressing fun, games and role playing)(p. 21).

Bame (1991) is also of the view that common to all festivals the staging of sacred myths, legends and traditions of origin or real historical events in the life of the celebrants. Cole (1975) makes an assertion that a festival is a special event relatively rare in the life of any community. It does not spring up spontaneously but is well planned with specific dates and periods. Thus it has a definite beginning and end, and is a unified occasion which involves a whole community which is set above daily life. Its structure is built up on a core or armature of rituals. Festivals bring about a suspension of ordinary time, a transformation of ordinary space, a formalization of ordinary behaviour. It is as if a community becomes a stage set and its people actors with a battery of seldom-seen props and costumes. Meals become feasts, and greetings, normally simple, become ceremonies. Although dependent upon life-sustaining rituals, a festival is an elaborated and stylized phenomenon which far surpasses ritual necessity. It often becomes the social, ritual, and political apotheosis of community life in a year.

In the classical cultural-anthropological perspective, festivals have been defined by Falassi (1987), as “a sacred or profane time of celebration, marked by special observances” (p. 2). Festivals celebrate community values, ideologies, identity and continuity.

Pieper (1965) believed only religious rituals and celebrations could be called festivals. Numerous forms and themes of festival are possible, and the term festival is often misapplied and commercialised. No widely acceptable typology has emerged.

However Goldblatt (2002) cited by Wang (2009) introduces festivals events as:

Kaleidoscope of planned culture, sport, political, and business occasions: from mega-events like Olympics and World fairs to community festivals; from programs of events at parks and attractions to visits by dignitaries and intergovernmental assembles; from small meetings and parties to huge conventions and competitions (p. 1).

Turner (1982) defines festivals as “generally connected with expectable culturally shared events.” He suggests that “manifesting in symbolic form what it conceives to be its essential life” is one of the approaches when a community celebrates the festival just as it “celebrates itself” (p. 6). Granovetter (1973) cited by Wang (2009) argues that the public rituals, sites and events, such as festivals, celebrations and the likes help people to form a sense of community. Festivals then are such kind of important public goods that function to establish collective cohesion by reinforcing ties within a society.

Festivals thus are an expressive ways to celebrate glorious heritage, culture and traditions. They are meant to rejoice special moments and emotions in our lives with our loved ones. They play an important role to add structure to our social lives, and connect us with our families and backgrounds. They give us a distraction from our day to day, exhausting routine of life, and give us some inspiration to remember the important things and moments in life.

2.2.1 Types of festivals

There are many types of festivals such as national, religious, cultural and seasonal. They all serve the purpose of bringing happiness to our lives, and strengthen our sense of community togetherness.

National festivals

Festivals connect us as a people of a nation. National festivals connect citizens to important moments of a nation's history such as: the founding day of a nation, our independence day or in AU Day which is celebrated throughout the continent, May Day, Republic Day etc. They solidify patriotic spirits in the society.

Religious festivals

Religious festivals are important for families. It helps us to teach principles and ethics to our next generations. All different religious festivals bring the same message of love, tolerance and understanding. On these occasions we express our gratitude to God, for the special thing or event that originated on this particular festival. Anquandah (2006) is of the view that Ghana's rich heritage of culture showcases a host of festivals which are of local and external origin. Christians have important festivals such as Christmas and Easter while Muslims observe notable festivals like the Id al Fitr and the Id al Adha. According to Kiran (2014) these are foreign inherited festivals celebrated by religious groups in remembrance of their Prophets or Messengers. There are others that are celebrated after the end of spiritual exercises like fasting or a special prayer season. Idri Fitr is celebrated by Muslims to mark the end of the fasting season. Traditional religion in Ghana also celebrates the Adaes (sacred days), examples are Adae kese, Fetu Afahye, and Kundum, this Bame describes as the second group of festivals which are characterized by activities aimed at

honouring the dead and giving of offerings to the gods and ancestor spirits for the harvest as well as future well-being of the people (Bame, 1991).

Cultural festivals

Falassi (1987) defines cultural festival as:

A periodically recurrent, social occasion in which, through a multiplicity of forms and series of coordinated events, participate directly or indirectly and to various degree, all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a world view (p. 2).

Festivals are typical elements and carriers which represent a nation or a region's collective cultural memories. The demands of communication, entertainment, consumption and trade could be met by hosting festivals. There are a host of cultural festivals celebrated in Ghana; they include Ohum festival of the Akyem Abuakwa, and Odwira by the Akuapems.

Seasonal Festivals

Seasonal festivals reflect attitude of people towards nature. These festivals are important because they are related to food supply. Human beings should adore nature and acknowledge its beneficence before partaking any of its gifts. Kobine literally meaning "Farming Dance" is a festival celebrated among the Dagaaba in the Lawra traditional area of Ghana. According to Bonye (2011), it takes place yearly between the months of September and October. It is generally celebrated to thank the ancestors for guiding them to the end of the farming season and usher in the harvest season. This indicates that the time it is performed, coincides with the end of farming season.

2.2.2 Classification of cultural festivals

Festivals in Ghana are annual or biannual event celebrated by different ethnic groups and towns in various parts of the country in commemoration of a past event or in recognition of some personalities. According to Kiran (2014) a notable feature of the Ghanaian society, and one that is of great interest to tourist, is the enormous number of traditional festivals that take place in various parts of the country throughout the year. This makes for an all year round celebration of festivals which are different from each other in their meanings, history and activities undertaken. These festivals make known some common qualities and beliefs of the Ghanaian society. Through these festivals, the people call to mind their ancestors and ask for their protection. Festivals are also held in order to purify the whole state so that people can enter the New Year with self-belief and hope. Therefore, the unique culture of Ghanaians cannot be without the numerous but different festivals in the country. Most traditional festivals are celebrated once a year and in the same location. They usually span a period of one week, with the last but one day being the most publicised. Some are also characterised by a ban on drumming and noise making in the period immediately preceding the festival. In most traditional areas, members of the community also embark on a cleanup exercise before the celebration of the festival.

Yirenkyi (2009) states that:

The celebration of traditional festival are happy occasions for locals and visitors alike and the good thing is that there are many of them; at least about 70 major ones, representing all the different ethnic groups of Ghana. Meanwhile, it is possible, despite their diversities, to group the many festivals into different categories such as harvest festivals, migration festivals, purification festivals and war festivals among the rest (p. 15).

Chachah (1999) classifies festivals into two major types: harvest festivals and festivals in memory of ancestors and past leaders. He further states that harvest festivals are based on the belief that the earthly gods have a tremendous influence on the physical environment and therefore determine the outcome of harvests. Chachah again points out the conditions of a good harvest and asserts that a good harvest is an indication of the full satisfaction and blessing of the gods. It is therefore natural to give them sincere thanks and to pray for their continual protection, before the community as a whole begins to enjoy the produce. He also reveals the outcome of a poor harvest and consents that a poor harvest is an indication of the god's dissatisfaction with the behaviour of certain individuals in the community. He hinted that as an antidote to this predicament, the community as a whole must be purified and the gods pacified in order to ensure good harvests in subsequent years. Chachah therefore describes the second category of festivals as those held to re-affirm Ghanaians' belief in the eternity of life and the unbroken link between the living and the dead.

Festivals can also take broader dimensions as Mbiti (1990) elaborates in his detailed classification. He expresses that in the life of the communities, there are harvest festivals, planting festivals, hunting and fishing festivals, victory festivals, coronation or accession festivals, and many others.

With a more simplified classification, Opoku (1970) is of the view that annual festivals are of two principal types. There are those that offer sacrifices and thanksgiving to the ancestors, and there are those that introduce the new harvest. Opoku then indicates that the people of Ghana have evolved various rites and rituals for all the important events in life. There are the rites of child naming, of puberty and initiation, and of marriage and death. But far more important than these rituals, which are performed only by the little family or

clan circle, are annual and seasonal festivals which bring together a whole people of a town or community. He gives a vivid description of some festivals in Ghana. He goes ahead to reveal some of the common features and beliefs such as the belief in life after death, the nearness of ancestors to the living descendants, the fact that through festivals the people remember their divinities and past leaders and ask for their help and protection, and lastly the use of these festivals to purify the whole state that the people can enter the new year with confidence and hope. Opoku has grouped annual festivals in Ghana into two. He mentions the harvest festivals like the Homowo of the Ga and the Bakatue of the Edena as examples. The second group he says is the ones which mark the period of remembering the dead, and gives the Adaye of the Akan as a typical example.

Unlike Opoku however, Bame (1991) classifies African or Ghanaian festivals into three closely related types: harvest festivals that incorporate group sacrifice, supplication and some form of abstinence; commemorative festivals that focus on activities aimed at honouring the memory of the dead and giving offerings to the gods and ancestor spirits for the past as well as future well-being of the participants; festivals for the gods which are celebrated annually in honour of specific titular spirits or gods. All festivals have a commonality in that they also have as part of their focus the dramatisation of sacred myths, legends and traditions of origin or real historical events in the life of the participating group (Bame, 1991).

Bame expresses that during harvest festivals, the community involved or ethnic groups offer first fruits of yam and other crops to the Supreme Being, spirits and gods. Some festivals, especially those of the northern region of Ghana are celebrated to mark the beginning of the farming season. Most farmers believe that the success or otherwise in the

yield of the crops is dependent on God or gods or ancestors; so they start by asking for the blessing of God, and gods for more rain for their crops he goes on to say that they are also occasions which serve as a platform to unite all farmers as they move into the farming season, examples are the Kakube and Kobina festivals of the upper west Region. Furthermore he says there are other festivals that are celebrated to mark the end of the farming season; this is occasioned by the bringing together of various farm products to show appreciation to God or the ancestors for a successful farming season. Sacrifices are also offered to the gods of the land in order to ask for their intervention in the next farming season. During such occasions various neighbouring communities, especially paramount chiefs are invited to share in these great celebrations. Example is the Yam festival celebrated in the northern region of Ghana and Asogli yam festival in the Volta region.

The majority of festivals are also celebrated in remembrance of the gods and the ancestors of the traditional area. Most traditionalists in Ghana are of the conviction that the gods and the ancestors are alive and need to be recognised as such. As a result, sacrifices are made in a bit to show appreciation to the gods of the land for protection them from hunger, feud, sicknesses and other calamities. Examples are Adae kese, Fetu Afahye, and Kundum, this Bame describes as the second group of festivals which are characterized by activities aimed at honouring the dead and giving of offerings to the gods and ancestor spirits for the harvest as well as future well-being of the people (Bame, 1991). He indicated that the third group is festivals which may simply be called “the festivals of the gods.” These he says are special festivals celebrated annually in honour of specific tutelary gods. He gave the Apo festival celebrated in Wenchi and other towns of Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana in honour of Ntoa, a tutelary god of the ethnic groups in the area as an example.

Bame (1991) classifies the numerous inter-related activities which give traditional festivals their structure into two broad components, which he says cannot escape the notice of an observer. They are the religious component, comprising rites and rituals, and the recreational aspect, comprising singing, dancing and general merry-making. He goes ahead to explain that the religious component and recreational aspects are carefully arranged so that they do not interfere with one another, although two or more can take place simultaneously. This he indicated is because some of them do not only take place in different locations, but also involve different individuals and groups. Thus, the different groups can and do perform their diverse activities in distant places at the same time. He says various rites and rituals which are performed by select groups and individuals in special locations such as homes, stool-houses, sacred groves, the shrines of gods and the banks of rivers, and singing and dancing can take place concurrently without interfering with each other.

In another development, Nolde (2000) views traditional festivals as special occasions in which a community gathers annually to remember, honor, and give thanks to God, the gods and the ancestors for their help and protection. His assertion agrees with Nukunya's argument that traditional festivals are associated with planting and harvesting of which the gods are solicited for protection and good yields for the season.

2.2.3 Importance of festivals

Festivals are important occasions on the traditional calendars of the various traditional areas. All the festivals have political, social, and religious significance for the people who celebrate them. They are celebrated for many reasons. Festivals are mostly celebrated to propagate the cultural heritage of society ethnic groups and nations at large. Festivals

highlight various aspects of a society. Festivals at national level help to promote solidarity and patriotic spirit in the society. Religious festivals all around the world bring convergence and propagate acceptance of all kinds of religions in different geographical segments. International festivals help to increase brotherhood and remove ethnic racism in the world. Celebrations of all kinds of festivals in a country improve the overall image of the country and show the acceptance of cultural diversity in the country. Festivals enhance community life as Mbiti (1970) stipulates that they revive communities, they are therapeutic, bonds are renewed, religious and social values are enacted and creativity in the arts enhanced.

Turaki (2001) supported this view with the explanation that festivals serve as social control mechanism in the society by establishing patterns of loyalty and code of conducts that place people under one umbrella in the religious system. This purports that festival meets the diverse needs of man in society whether social, religious or cultural.

Amoako-Atta (2001) writes that festival celebration is necessary to the Ghanaian in that, it is during this period of time that indigenes come from all walks of life to their hometown to contribute their quota to the village/town's development. He adds that the people believe in the closeness of the ancestors to the living beings, so during festivals, libation and other prayers are said to ask the ancestral spirits to prevent and protect them from epidemics, famine and to help them ensure bumper harvest in the subsequent years.

In this vein, festivals are one of the key factors that have helped in preserving community life in traditional African community. Nwuneli (1987) used the Mmonwu festival of Anambra state to bring to light the objectives and salient achievement of the festival; that

it attempted to link those who have migrated from rural to the urban areas for many years without seeking their root and has succeeded in rejuvenating their cultural heritage, boosted tourism and was a pride to their nation. Onyeneke (1987) also noted that no matter how large or small a group is in the community, they occasionally engage in a kind of festival of great value to them. They may include celebration of stages in life, planting and harvesting, veneration of local deities and many more. Looking at Onyeneke's opinion nearly all events celebrated in Igbo community have a festive undertone. Thus it is a vivid indication of the numerous natures of Igbo festivals, which filled their life with relaxation and entertainment.

Cole (1975) discloses that a festival is a relatively rare climatic event in the life of any community. It is bounded by a definite beginning and end, and is a unified occasion which is set above daily life. Its structure is built up on a core or armature of ritual. Festivals bring about a suspension of ordinary time, a transformation of ordinary space, a formalization of ordinary behaviour. It is as if a community becomes a stage set and its people actors with a battery of seldom-seen props and costumes. Meals become feasts, and greetings, normally simple, become ceremonies. Although dependent upon life-sustaining rituals, a festival is an elaborated and stylized phenomenon which far surpasses ritual necessity. It often becomes the social, ritual, and political apotheosis of community life in a year.

Leaders, festival spirit and experience can be the glue that bring people together through social cohesion, with joint plans and agreed strategic goals. Derrett (2003) considers that celebrations unite and rejuvenate a community and serves as the main strand that keeps a community alive and as well marks and record the passage of time and events as they unfolds year after year.

On the other hand festival period in general are times of peace. It is a time when quarrels and other differences are settled. The period of festivals as Kayode emphasized are periods when all conflicts and disputes must be abandoned for the sake of ceremonial co-operation (Kayode, 1984). According to Ejizu (1987) the rituals involved in festivals helps to bring the society together as a whole. It provides opportunity for making peace, renewal of bonds and relationships, get-together and merry-making. He further stated that rituals, celebrations and festivals occupy a position of significant importance in the traditional African societies.

Festivals have social, political, economic as well as religious significance in African societies. A significant social function of festivals is recreation. It is also during festivals that lineage members, their consanguine and affinal kins as well as friends come together to eat drink and be merry. It is also a time of reunion between the living and the death (Michi, 1983).

Festivals are also celebrated to mark the beginning of a traditional year. The following is a speech by Awulae Annor Adjaye III, the Omanhene of the Western Nzema Traditional Area during the annual 1994 Kundum Festival and cited by Clarke- Ekong (1997):

The Season has gone its full cycle and once again Kundum festival is here with us. Thanks to God's bounties, mercies and steadfast love. The reunion of families, friends and loved ones are so central to the celebration of this festival that one cannot help but seize this unique opportunity to wish all sons and daughters of Nzemaland the best of the Season's festivities and a happy welcome home. I salute all of you on this occasion for the dedicated services you have in various ways rendered to your friends, families and the state during the past twelve calendar months in our joint efforts to uplift the banner of self-identity, unity and self

actualisation in the areas of economics, politics and social-cultural development. I pray that you enjoy your stay and continue to contribute towards the improvement of the material conditions of our people. May God and our ancestors bountifully bless and guide you to wisely spend our leisure during this festive period. Akwaaba! (p. 53).

Mathias describes Ekpe and Ikoro festivals of Nigeria as festivals that mark the end of a planting season and the beginning of a new one are one of such religious activity. It is a time when the Eze, chiefs and elders pour libation and pray to the God almighty (Chineke Akwete) to keep and protect his people. It is also a time to thank him for the previous year and ask for mercy for the coming planting season (Mathias, 2014).

According to Namchoom (n.d) festivals are celebrated to bring people together, are helpful for strengthening relations among mankind and to promote close relationship and harmony among people. It is said that at the time of festival the enemy should also joined to enjoy the celebration, so by this we can make an enemy a friend and there will be no wars or fight among the people. One other interesting way the celebrations have helped the community is the opportunity for the young to meet, mingle and interact. It has been noted that up to 8 couples have tied nuptial knots after meeting during the festival. Someone commented that the festival has brought enemies together to work for the society.

The communicative role of festivals cannot be overemphasized. In that they become platforms through which the society is able to, communicate their intentions as well as individuals living in the society and government officials as well. Festivals are therefore one of the strategies to revive these traditions. Government policies and programmes over the years have also made attempts to create the enabling environment through which festivals can be used as platforms for dialogue with duty bearers (Nukunya, 2003).

Clarke-Ekong (1997) explains that through strategic manipulations Ghanaians have preserved many of their traditions despite rapid social changes within government, economic instability, and externally driven policy mandates. Notably, in the last ten years, and with the creation of the Ministry of Culture and Social Development, things cultural and or traditional now have government sanctioning and increased sociopolitical legitimacy. He further explains that elected politicians now give speeches at the public durbars that follow all significant festivals, and play active roles in the ritual events of their constituencies (personal communication with PR Director, Ministry of Culture, Accra, 1996). These speeches he says include calls for a return to simpler times and communal values of assistance to aid government in meeting the needs of the people.

The Ghana Daily Graphic newspaper of August 5, 1994 carried as one of its lead stories, 'CULTURAL FESTIVAL OPENS'. The Deputy Minister of Education cited by Clarke-Ekong (1997) reportedly said:

One aspect of the education reform program is to give our children a good grounding in the positive aspect of Ghanaian culture that would help free the minds of our youth from slavish dependency on foreign culture. He stressed the importance of culture as a powerful tool for unity, adding that our culture should indeed reflect the requirements of our time and aspirations of the popular masses in our efforts to build a peaceful Ghana. Government continues to struggle with the role that culture plays in national development and the ministries that oversee Ghana's cultural traditions. This is unfortunate. (Informant interview, Ministry official, 1995, p. 53).

Festivals allow for social interaction and negotiation of all kinds of relationships. Outline of activities available in festival tends to reflect the concerns of the community, thus providing opportunity for expressing particular norms, beliefs and aspirations of a society

while suggesting personal affirmation, political action, and social revitalization. Festivals facilitate and revitalize social life, it strengthens the identity of the group and its power to act in its own interest, and it indeed contributes to the articulation of social issues. The messages of festival concern the shared experience of the group and multiple interpretations of that experience. Festival brings the group together and communicates about the society itself and the role of the individual in it.

It is reported that festivals contribute to the local regeneration and prosperity of the destination. This is because it generates new employment opportunities (Prentice and Andersen, 2003; Smith, 2004). It encourages the development of the basic infrastructure construction which is visitor-friendly, environment-friendly and continual. In her submission, Boamah (1972) describes the Aluolie festival as having social importance which spearheads the belief of the people of Sehwi and also brings joy, unity and good tidings to them. She further states that, the festival has improved the development of the town, because before the start of the festival, family heads put up new buildings or extend their houses to cope with the accommodation problems experienced during the festival. Ayisi (1970) comments that, festivals combine economic and religious activities, for they are observed with material things. The submissions of the three authors: Gadzekpo (1978), Boamah (1972) and Ayisi (1970) talk about the social and economic importance of festivals. Naylor (2000) emphasizes in her statement that festivals are important to the growth of communities in Ghana, seasons for prayer, dance, songs, eating, drinking and socializing as well as making money.

As reiterated by Steoltje (1992) she discusses festivals as a cultural performance which is scheduled, temporally and spatially bounded, programmed, characterized by co-ordinated

public occasions and heightened occasions of aesthetic expression. She points that festival provides opportunities to observe the communicative system of the culture, conveyed through semiotically complex performance events. Although a festival enfolds large-scale social units, there obviously occurs small-scale social interactional communication, performance which constitutes face-to-face interaction. She further says, festivals occur at calendrically regulated intervals, are public in nature, participatory in ethos, complex in structure, and multiple in voice, scene, and purpose. Festivals are collective phenomena and serve purposes rooted in group life. Systems of reciprocity and of shared responsibility ensure the continuity of and participation in the festival through the distribution of prestige and production. She points out that a festival performance serves the purpose of the articulation of the group's heritage; it is a communicative situation actively engaging participants, presenting a combination of participation and performance in a public context (Steoltje, 1992).

Amoako-Atta (2001) in writing about the economic importance of festivals describes festivals as ceremonies which bring most of the citizens of a society together. This, according to him assists them to initiate development projects and to contribute financially towards these projects. Visitors who also come to witness the festival contribute economically to the locality.

According to Getz (2000), the majority of event stakeholders still select economic performance as the leading indicator of event success. From the positive point of view, festivals and events have main economic functions such as attracting investment, creating employment, and improving standard of living. One of the major goals of hosting festivals and events is money-making. Despite the direct income generated during the festival for

instance the admission fee, festivals and events can also provide a kind of economic stimulus for the local economy. The destination tourism is a good case in point. Festivals and events are considered to contribute significantly to the development wealth of tourism for the host communities which produce ripple effect spreading to other industries as well. As a result, a considerably amount of investment would be introduced to perk up the economy. At the same time, quite a few new job opportunities would be created, in order to meet the increasing demand in the labour market.

Festivals and events are now established methods for promoting destinations, supplementing their traditional role as forms of exhibition and performance (Roche, 2000) cited by Wang (2009). They are considered to be a strong contributor to the society, which also support and build on the city image, contribute to sustainable economic, social and regional development, create employment for artists and encourage the celebration of cultural diversity. Derrett (2003) concludes that festivals have played a significant part in the cultural life of communities, the publicity festivals and events can generate for a community not only have a cumulative impact on the location as a tourist destination but also feed into the image and identity of the community and assist with creating an appealing and consolidated sense of community. Derrett (2003) and Williams (1965) suggests that by participating in festivals we find a particular sense of life, a particular community of experience that hardly needs explanation. Festivals, as a social phenomenon, permit encounters with authentic expressions of culture.

Taking all the positive impacts into consideration, there is no denying the fact that by hosting successful festivals and cultural events, the quality of life of the local residents can greatly be improved to a certain degree. One other importance festivals and events emit is

to educate and enlighten their audience so as to create a climate for meaningful cultural impact. Cultural values, Klamer (1998) proposed are rated higher than economic and social values. Throsby (2001) includes in this category as those of aesthetic, spiritual, social, historical, symbolic and authenticity values. Relatively few cultural aspects could be influenced by festivals and events. One significant impact is to enhance the local and national identity.

2.3 Rebranding

This can be defined as "a process of giving a product or an organization a new image, in order to make it more attractive and successful" (Collins English Dictionary, 2014). Rebranding is done to increase consumer loyalty, enter a new market trend, create a stronger impact in the industry, and increase shareholder value or to revitalize a company. In this wise it is a feeling that is being evoked when the organization or the products name is mentioned. Festival thus becomes a commodity for sale that should have a brand name that emits an intangible and emotional and inerasable bond created by every interaction, even insignificant ones to consumers. There is a consensus that every organisation needs to develop strong brands as an essential part of its business strategy.

It is believed that the benefits tourist enjoyed from an event (festival) is transferred to the host destination (town /community) (Meyvis & Janiszewski 2004; Supphellen et al, 2004). When an event is properly branded, it has the ability of adding value to the host destination as a potential to make the destination unique in nature and even popular to prospective visitors.

2.3.1 Cultural festival rebranding

Cultural festivals are destination attractions and so share some attributes that attract visitors to visit such destinations. Destination is the place where attractions and hospitality are found Cooper et al (2005) cited by Bassegy & Arrey (2009). Blain et al (2005) define destination branding as: “a set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word, mark or the other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination. (2) Consistently conveys the expectations of a memorable travel” (p. 337).

2.3.2 Branding attributes of cultural festivals

Echtner and Ritchie (1993) believe that a destination image involves features such as mountains and feelings or attributes such as friendly people. Nickerson and Moisey (1999) argue that it is difficult for a marketer to provide an image such as relaxation, pleasantness, a challenging experience or something inspirational that would be interpreted in the same way by all potential visitors will certainly capture some of the consumers, but may inadvertently turn other people away. The cultural festival branding attributes is theoretically linked to service concept models (Anderson et al, 2008).

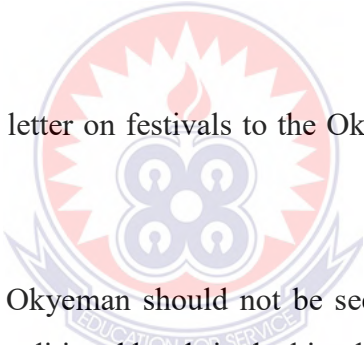
Bassegy & Arrey (2009) gave examples of attributes of festivals as follows:

In cultural festival, the attributes of the bands and floats form the core service attributes of the carnival. The attributes of the (destination) where the event is staged are regarded as peripheral attributes. The ambience of the environment, facilities, infrastructure, and presence of signage are a few examples of physical attributes of a cultural festival. The interactional attributes of a cultural festival can be defined by the attitude of residents toward tourism development and visitors to the event (p. 185).

Henderson (2007) cited by Bassey and Arrey (2009) in branding of Singapore used the following attributes for analysis – product (lots to do, cultural diversity, cosmopolitan, world class infrastructure); delivery (accessibility, efficient friendly, and safe); experience (at ease, stress-free, welcome) and end benefit (fulfilling, satisfying, enjoyable, rewarding and enriching).

Rebranding then is the process by which a service or product that was developed in one brand, or company is marketed in a different brand name or identity. The process of rebranding aims to reposition the brand or the company, or to distinguish itself from the negative opinions about the previous brands or to climb the success ladder by moving the brand still upwards.

Yeboah (2011) in an open letter on festivals to the Okyeman Traditional Council had this to say:



I think festivals in Okyeman should not be seen as a rite to be performed only by traditional heads in the kingdom in their various palaces but should rather involve the ordinary citizens of Akyem Abuakwa and even people outside the traditional area, it should also be marked in a grand style with media promotion so that with time the traditional area would become a tourist hub with people trooping in annually to partake in festivals and also visit other tourist sites in the area. To this end, I would make a very humble and passionate appeal to His Royal Majesty, Okyehene, Osagyefo Amoatia Ofori Panin and his able Okyeman traditional council to use their influence and power to promote the Ohum and Odwira festivals and other tourist attractions in Akyem Abuakwa to forge the development of Okyeman. Okyeman susubiribi! Okyeman ti ase! Okyeman NKOSO!

A successful rebranding effort is built on the concept that a brand has to occupy a place in a consumer's mind so that when a need arises, a consumer automatically associates a problem with a specific solution, or a brand in this wise choosing a destination over another one. It becomes imperative identifying attributes of the Ohum festival, aesthetics being one of them and rebranding it; this it is hoped will go a long way to give the festival a face lift and help in the patronising of Ohum festival in Akyem Tafo.

2.4 Art

The most fundamental general question about art would seem to be: what is art? There have been a lot of controversies surrounding what art is. Proust (2010) explains art as a selective re-creation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments. The artist's mind is a copy of the divine mind, since it operates freely in creating the many kinds of animals, plants, fruits, landscapes, countryside, and awe-inspiring places.

The philosophy of art seeks to answer this very interesting and complex question. It further considers definitions of beauty, taste, symbolism and representation. Canaday (1980) states that art's first function is to be "pleasing to the eye"—a sound enough idea as far as it goes (p. 3). It is obvious from the above analysis that objects are chosen because they are more attractive than others, the eye that chose them is pleased. The difficulty in finding a definitive answer to the questions about what art is still looms on. Gilbert (1992) reveals that the issue about what art is, is now more complicated than ever. Now works of art are created in media unthought-of some thirty or forty years ago, electronic images of all kinds are made and accepted as art. He further states that there is no concrete "object", nothing you could hang on the wall or place on a pedestal. Some types of contemporary art are preserved only in the memory of computers, and some disappear forever within minutes or

hours after they are created. Little wonder, then, that in our century, for the first time, we need to stand back and ask, "What exactly is art? How can we tell what is and what isn't? According to Avenorgbo (2008) some salient facts about art that reveal the intrinsic characteristics of art are:

- (i) Not everything is art.
- (ii) Artists create works of art, which reflect the skills, knowledge and personalities of their makers, and succeed or fail in realizing their aims,
- (iii) Works of art can be interpreted in different ways, understood, misunderstood or baffle the mind, subjected to analysis, and praised or criticized.
- (iv) Although there are many kinds of value that works of art may possess, their distinctive value is their value as art.
- (v) The character of work endows it with a greater or lesser degree of this distinctive value (p. 100).

2.4.1 Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics

The word aesthetic is derived from the Greek αἰσθητικός (aisthetikos, meaning "esthetic, sensitive, sentient"), which in turn was derived from αἰσθάνομαι (aisthanomai, meaning "I perceive, feel, sense"). The term "aesthetics" was appropriated and coined with new meaning in the German form *Ästhetik* (modern spelling *Ästhetik*) by Alexander Baumgarten in 1735 (Budd, 1998).

According to Wikipedia aesthetics (also spelt as *æsthetics* and *esthetics*) is a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of art, beauty, and taste, with the creation and appreciation of beauty. It is more scientifically defined as the study of sensory or sensori-emotional values, sometimes called judgments of sentiment and taste. More broadly, scholars in the field explain aesthetics as "critical reflection on art, culture and nature.

Anything could have an aesthetic appeal simply by virtue of being sensed and perceived. From the late eighteenth century, however, aesthetics became narrowed to mean not just sense perception in general but ‘perception of the beautiful’. In particular aesthetics is born as the study of the reasons that make some sensory experiences distinctly artistic, beautiful, musical, poetic or sublime. So that by the late nineteenth century aesthetics was mainly identified with the precept of ‘good taste’ in anything and everything that could be thought of. It is interesting for one to phantom that, aesthetics abounds in every animate and inanimate objects found in our surrounding, and festivals and art forms used in its celebration is no exception (<http://www.wikipedia/Aesthetics>, 2014).

Frolove (1984), explained Aesthetics in philosophy as the science of the law-governed aesthetical assimilation of the world by man, of the essence and forms of creative work according to laws of beauty (p. 315). In other words, aesthetics (also esthetics and æsthetics) is the subfield of philosophy aimed at beauty and art.

By its definition and characteristics, aesthetics basically consists of two major parts: the philosophy of art, and the philosophy of the aesthetic experience and character of objects or phenomena that are not art. Non-art items include both artefacts that possess aspects susceptible to aesthetic appreciation, and phenomena that lack any traces of human design in virtue of being products of nature, not humanity. According to Gyekye (2003) the dual-faceted conception of art constitutes the basis of aesthetic appreciation and evaluation and gives rise to the aesthetic values held by the African people in traditional societies. He further states that the objects that are aesthetically valued are works of art in fields of visual arts (such as painting and sculpture), verbal or literary arts (such as epic and dramatic poetry), and musical arts (such as dance and song). Equally valued aesthetically are events,

scenes, the human figure, humanity itself, and morality (or moral behaviour). Aesthetics, as a realm of knowledge, has its content communicated in sensory form. In conclusion, the term is applied to the study of all the arts and manifestations of natural beauty (Encarta World English Dictionary, 1999). Beauty is the central notion in African aesthetics (as it is in the aesthetics of other cultures), but the scope of its application – reflecting the focus of its concerns – is much wider in the African aesthetic experience and valuation than it is in the cultures (Gyekye, 2003).

In all these diverse areas the application of aesthetics is seen to appeal to the senses, and not necessarily a body of philosophical principles. In other words, aesthetics is now practically used to describe the ‘physical’ nature or qualities of both natural and man-made objects that man uses his five senses to assimilate and enjoy. Aesthetics then has to do with the entire spectrum of human perception. How things feel, taste, smell, as well as their appearance. These issues are inherent in objects and performances and not something that can be manipulated at the last minute.

2.4.2 African aesthetics

In our part of this world, indigenous Africans see beauty in particular things around them. This notion is portrayed in their philosophy of life. The life of the traditional African is controlled by the principles underlying these philosophies, and aesthetics is considered to be one of the basic aspects of their daily endeavours. African aesthetics generally has a moral basis, as indicated by the fact that in many African languages the same word means “beautiful” and “good” (<http://www.wikipedia/African art & aesth.htm>, 2014). “Beautiful” refers to the appearance of an animate or inanimate object; and “good” is mostly used to describe the inner qualities inherent in an object including moral behaviour of human

beings. The manifestation of this aesthetic quality is consistent with the use and meaning of African art, that is, it should be both beautiful and good, because it is intended not only to please the eye but to uphold moral values.

Aesthetics in African artefacts have generally been exhibited with reference only to cultural context and use. In African aesthetic principles and related moral and religious values, there is good reason to emphasize the formal aesthetic aspects of the objects and the moral and religious ideas they express.

It is evident in Gyekye's studies on the characteristics of African aesthetic values as it relates to aesthetics, probably, in several other cultures; according to him: aesthetic is characterized by delight, interest, and enjoyment experienced by human beings in response to objects, events, and scenes. It holds the attentive eye and ear of the person and arouses his or her appreciation and enjoyment as he or she looks and listens. Aesthetic values refer to those features of objects, performances, events, and scenes that draw people's attention and sustain interest for moments. The concept or value of beauty is central to the aesthetic experience and evaluation and is generally associated with works of art such as paintings, sculptures, and musical composition, as well as artistry through dance (Gyekye, 2003).

Even though the writer reveals that in African aesthetics the objects that are traditionally considered worthy for sustained appreciation and enjoyment in African cultures include painting, sculpture, music, and dancing, they may include more; that is to say the focus of African aesthetics is wider, its concerns are much greater. African aesthetics considers the beautiful to include more in life of a person than events, scenes, and works of art; it deals

also with the standards of value in appraising other aspects of human life and culture, such as humanity itself and morality.

Furthermore, Rattray (1959) indicates that in most aesthetic evaluations the purely aesthetic element may, probably, be the most important element. He gives an example of the traditional wood-carver who is particularly concerned about how his carved stool will attract the purely aesthetic judgment of an observer, which is how beautiful the stool appears to an observer, for its beauty may induce the observer to appreciate it. Clearly, beauty with respect to artistic products is defined in terms of functionality and symbolic significance as well as the purely aesthetic. Gyekye (2003) goes further to highlight a fact in African culture that “beauty is seen not only in works of art but also human beings” as well as the environment in which human beings live. In his explanation, it is evident that beauty is not seen only in works of art and in the human figure but also in morals and behaviour and in humanity itself.

2.4.3 Aesthetics of festivals

Aesthetics defined by Allen (2002) and cited by Avenorgbo (2008) is the field of philosophy that studies the ways in which human beings experience the world through their senses. It is especially linked to the recognition and appreciation of particular objects when they strike the senses in a pleasing manner. This author further explains that aesthetics mostly focuses on works of art and other similar objects that are purposefully designed for humans to enjoy.

Gyekye (2003) stipulates in his discussion that beauty (aesthetics) in Akan – and, generally, African conception is a many-faceted notion, with much wider application. It is not just a feature of works of art, there is also the idea of beauty of speech, thought, action

(behaviour), appearance, and of humanity itself. In other words, the multi-faceted conception of art constitutes the basis of aesthetic appreciation and evaluation and gives rise to the aesthetic values held by the African people in traditional societies. Gyekye indicates that the objects that are aesthetically valued are works of art in fields of visual arts (such as painting and sculpture), verbal or literary arts (such as epic and dramatic poetry), and musical arts (such as dance and song). Equally valued aesthetically are events (festivals).

A look at the contexts for the production of the arts in pre-modern (traditional, aboriginal) societies around the world and throughout time, we find that they are notably practiced in ritual ceremonies (festivals) (Alcorta & Sosis, 2005; Dissanayake, 1988, 2006). Indeed, festivals are collection of arts (conceived of as artfied behaviors). They are multimodal, including singing, instrument playing, dancing, literary language, dramatic spectacle, and the decoration of bodies, surroundings, and paraphernalia. They are also participative: even when an audience observes performance, they join in by clapping, moving, shouting, singing, and so forth. Chernoff (1979) a scholar of West African drumming has observed: “the most fundamental aesthetic in Africa is that without participation, there is no meaning” (p. 23). The arts in festival contexts include functions related to a society’s ancestry and identity; justification and feasibility of planned endeavours and the marking of time (e.g., calendric rituals (harvests), life-cycle rituals (weddings, funerals, births); communication with deities; relief of anxiety and stress; social coordination, to name but a few. In view of these assertions festivals on the whole can be linked with aesthetics since objects and performances used during the festive period are artfied.

Artification (originally called “making special”) refers to the universally observed penchant of human individuals (and groups) to “make ordinary reality extraordinary” (Dissanayake, 1992, p. 49). These alterations or operations serve to attract attention to and sustain interest in the new message. Basically, ordinary body movements when artified (or stylized) through formalization, repetition, elaboration, and exaggeration, become “dance,” ordinary language is made poetic or literary, and ordinary materials (bodies, artifacts, surroundings) are rendered extraordinary with paint, carving, and accoutrements of countless kinds. More broadly, a dance in a traditional culture becomes further enhanced as a narrative reenactment of historical (mythical) events. Artified behaviours, like ritualized behaviors, attract attention, sustain interest, shape emotions and stimulate aesthetic responses. Arts behaviors are among the most important mechanisms that link ritual practices with cognitive belief systems (Alcorta & Sosis, 2005). The arts and the process of artistic creation are part of aesthetics and they are most essential aspect of festivals.

2.5 Role of arts in festivals

Through festival the life of the community is renewed. People are entertained and their tensions find an outlet. Festivals also bring together the people as a group, thus strengthening their unity and cohesion. Religious and social values are repeated and renewed through communal festivals. Artistic talents are utilised to the full, in form of art, music, drama and oral communication. People seize such occasions to solicit blessings from God or the departed, and there is a general feeling that the visible and the invisible worlds co-exist for the benefit of man who are at their center... festival are religious ways of implementing the values and beliefs of society. Without them African life would be

dull...Human life needs some relevant rituals and festival to give it both solemnity and laughter (Mbiti, 1970).

Cole (1975) submits that people activate this time, rendering it extraordinary by their own unusual actions and looks. He further points out that these people mass in processions and crowds, they dance and pray and gesticulate, carrying art and becoming art forms themselves. He goes on to say that multitudes of objects, decorated people, dances, skits and sacrifices transform a once quiet space into an arena of colour, sound and motion. The festival embraces the community, raising both people and place onto a plane marked by aesthetics, spiritual and social values. Cole once again draws attention to the artistic representation of festivals. According to him, the totality of a festival cannot be conveyed in printed words and pictures. It can be charted and diagrammed to show complexity and duration, but such efforts fail to capture the drama and visual impact of the actual event. He explains further that Asafo flags are thrown and swirled in dance, in processions; architecture becomes a backdrop in shrine rituals and sometimes as sculpture to climb on. Drums tell of history, sing praises and art proverbs. He succeeds to draw reader's attention to art and festival as being inseparably linked. Cole reiterates that festivals are perhaps the country's most significant, richest art forms. In artistic terms, he admits that festivals are lavish, with organized displays: dances, costumes, music, drama and poetry.

Again another submission of Cole (1975) paints a clear picture of the indispensability of art in festivals. He states that:

Ostentations, fine-crafted symbols of regal wealth and grandeur are formally positioned or ceremoniously carried by specially-appointed bearers. Umbrellas,

state swords, guns, staffs, stools and jewellery display the opulence of the state; the symbols on them detail the powers and responsibilities of chieftaincy (p. 12).

Kukah (1977) confirms that, when a chief sets out, whether in a procession or sitting in state, there is an act of drama and also, an art exhibition and that these clothing, stools, swords, drums etc. are not limited to function but also meant to express the emotion and ideas of beauty and ugliness. Kukah limits her description of art to the chief's regalia and the drama that comes with his procession but succeeded in pointing out the symbolic meanings of some of the art forms. In describing the Odwira yam festival of Akuapem, Opoku (1970) points out that the paramount chief and the principal chiefs are borne in palanquins, flanked on either sides by large gold-plated swords and muskets. He points out further those multi-coloured state umbrellas are made to flutter rhythmically to the beats of accompanying drums.

Opoku again gives a vivid description when he describes the spectacular verbal art of the Aburi yam festival in Ghana performed by the priest, he says, the priest changes the calabash, from which he has been pouring the drink to punctuate his prayer, into the left hand and calls upon the gods and ancestors who never refuse to go on an errand. The prayers are artistic, considering the way the liquor is poured and the recitations that accompany it:

When I call one of you, I have called all.
Ye departed spirits of the serene Akan clans;
Today is your lustral day.
I have brought you a sheep, drink and new yam.
Receive these and visit us this year with a good harvest,
wealth and prosperity, fertility and long life (p. 18).

Indeed the above recitations are artistic, considering the systematic recurrence of words and the rhythm that comes with it.

Omosade (1979) also adds grandeur to the verbal art associated with festivals. He describes the incantations and invocations that go on during the Ikeji yam festival of the Igbo people in Nigeria. In addition he stresses on how the sacrificial animals are cooked and fufu prepared with yam and mixed with the soup are offered to Ikeji amidst incantations and invocations.

Bame (1991) further explains that in a festival such as the Apoo ceremony in which performing groups are constantly called upon to compose counter vilifying songs to hit back at other contestants and individual members have a compelling reason to develop their artistic talents for that purpose. He goes on to say that as a result, during every Apoo festival, about half a dozen new songs are composed by members of various rival groups to replenish their repertoires. Again, a ceremony such as the Argungu fishing and cultural festival provides even greater incentives and more compelling reasons for participants to develop their artistic talents and potentials, if only because of the special focus its organizers place on the arts in its celebration. Similarly, the incorporated arts and crafts exhibition which affords craftsmen an opportunity to display and talk about their handicraft, would certainly motivate the artists involved to improve upon their handicraft during the successive celebrations of the festival.

Another very good explanation of the indispensable role of art in festivals is propounded by Amenuke (1991) in his statement, which seems to portray a more unique description of

art. He is of the view that at durbars, festivals and other ceremonial occasions, one will see a splendid display of umbrellas over the chiefs and elders of the society.

In his compliments about the Egungun festival of Nigeria, Tunde (1956) explains that Egungun is a presentational religious art which imagines the collective spirits of the ancestors and builds them out of overlapping or stitched segments of cloth. During ceremonies marking the commemoration of the dead, that is yearly festivals and successive funeral rites, these remarkable assemblages “come out” to dance, to astound the viewer, correct if the need be, and offer blessings from the spiritual world they normally inhabit.

Another good description of the role of art in festivals is that of Onam festival in India. Onam is celebrated in the month of August or September. It is celebrated to mark the bounties of nature and a year of good harvest. The festivities begin ten days in advance and flowers adorn every home. A procession of elephants, fireworks and dancers are part of the festivities.

Boaten (1993) paints a true picture of the Akwasidae Kesse of the Asante festival with an in-depth description of the artistic display that comes with the procession of Otumfuo (the king of Asante’s kingdom) to the durbar ground. He admits that each individual in the procession has a role to play and did so with enthusiasm. The wealth and great power exhibited by Otumfuo (the king of Asante’s kingdom) is the benefit derived from the indispensable role of art. It is during these festive celebrations and other ceremonies that most artifacts in the various palaces are transformed into ‘kinetic’ art. That is, the works are seen in motion as Thompson (1974), describes them as ‘Art in Motion’.

Mbiti (1990) in his opinion accounts that festivals add to the grandeur of both personal and communal rituals. He further explains that these annual festivals involve wearing masks, dancing, feasting, making of offerings and sacrifices, praying, blessing people, and general jubilation. While talking about the benefits derived from festivals, Mbiti indicates that festivals also bring together the people as a group, thus strengthening their unity and cohesion. Artistic talents are utilized to the full, in the form of art, music, drama and oral communication the principal events of the Fetu Afahyε festival, Bakatue is described by Blankson (1973):

As the water flowed slowly into the sea, marking the beginning of another season of bumper harvest of fish, there were intermittent firing of musketry, clapping of hands, drumming, dancing and singing for joy, at the thought of the approach of a new era of wealth, prosperity and happiness (p. 10).

He further reveals that at the end of native games such as ampe and drumming, singing, dancing cultural displays and general merry-making to the music of native brass band, children lead the crowds in proclaiming at the seven-week celebration of the traditional way of “hooting off” (climaxing) the Fetu Afahyε.

Cole (1975) in another vein states that a festival is a unified work of art. It cannot be reduced or compressed without being changed into something else. The festival is therefore an irreducible unit with an elaborate temporal and spatial composition and practically infinite numbers of component parts. As in pointillist painting, each minor unit, each act and object contributes to the impact of the whole. To emphasize the visual arts, such as sculptured staffs or personal adornment, at the expense of verbal, kinetic, and musical arts

is to misunderstand the complex but unified orchestration of all art forms which constitute the festival itself.

Indeed the relationships among these varied forms give a particular festival its unique character, just as components vary. Each festival is unique by virtue of the way in which its “ensemble” is composed and what particular elements and meanings are stressed. Some Nigerian and Cameroon festivals emphasize masquerades, others architecture. Cole (1975) further admits that annual festivals in any one community can be usefully compared to one another, because festival has its special character and artistic emphasis. Ahoba, a festival of the people of Anomabu, a coastal Fanti town, is an example which may be described as “less artistic” than others, because greater emphasis is laid on family rituals with repeated but localized celebrations, or on social interaction and recreation, than on display. Unstructured crowds of people follow drummers and singers throughout the town. Cole (1975) in his concluding statements points out that, the artistic impact of a festival stems not from isolated artistic forms or actions but from the formally orchestrated interaction of all the aesthetic resources of a community. Indeed the unlimited efforts art play in the celebration of festivals cannot in anyway be overemphasized.

2.6 Preservation

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) Definitions of Conservation defines preservation as follows: The protection of cultural property through activities that minimize chemical and physical deterioration and damage and that prevent loss of informational content. The primary goal of preservation is to prolong the existence of cultural property.

In the widest sense, preservation encompasses

- Activities that prevent damage to paper-based and media collections, such as proper housing, environmental control, and disaster planning; and
- Activities such as treatment, replacement, or reformatting that address existing damage.

Preservation involves keeping a balance between collection-level activities such as environmental control, which can be difficult and/or costly to manage but provide the greatest long-term benefit for the most materials, and item-level activities such as conservation treatment, which are often more easily understood and managed but can have limited effect, especially if the items are returned to a damaging environment.

Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc, are considered by many to be two of the first conservation/preservation theorists. Ruskin, a poet, writer and art critic, believed nothing from the present should disturb the remnants of the past and that a building is born, lives and then, dies (Ruskin, 1849). In the same vein, festivals are born with a society and hence the frantic effort of unearthing the aesthetic values and preservative qualities of Ohum festival for the arts thereby promoting and preserving it on all platforms.

Preservation with regards to culture heritage involves activities associated with maintaining library, archival, or museum materials for use, either in their original physical form or in some other format. It is the protection of cultural property through activities that minimize chemical and physical deterioration and damage and that prevent loss of informational content. The primary goal of preservation is to prolong the existence of cultural property.

A heritage comprises legendary artifacts, history, cultural relics and monuments of our forefathers that are being preserved for generations yet unborn to learn from the past-be it good or bad. The importance cannot be overemphasized: Cultural heritage affirms our identity as a people because it creates a comprehensive framework for the preservation of cultural heritage including cultural sites, old buildings, monuments, shrines, and landmarks that have cultural significance and historical value. As human we can ensure effective coordination among concerned agencies in order to avert the diminution, depletion and destruction of the country's cultural heritage.

Tradition implies continuity through time, but not in a static or immovable aspect, given that every tradition must be situated within a continuous process of change and metamorphosis. They are undoubtedly important for the individual and for groups or social collectives as well.

Traditions help to give historical sense to identities and they are also structuring because they bring cognitive points of reference which are extremely important for people and collectivities. Perhaps we can dare to think that tradition -and more concretely the sense of tradition- is not only important but even indispensable for the individual; and that without the sense of tradition, no society is possible. Miri (2012) supports this view that the practice of preservation is as old as humanity and that when there was no philosophies, theories, rules, regulations or standards, man preserved his abode irrespective of how it was.

The protection, promotion, maintenance and presentation of our culture in its diversity are an essential requirement for sustainable development for the wellbeing of present and generations yet unborn. Although culture is dynamic, history, cultural values and

institutions give us our identity as Ghanaians and hence the need to respect, preserve harness and use our cultural heritage and resources to develop a unified, vibrant and prosperous national community with distinctive African identity and personality and a collective confidence and pride of place among the country nations.

The general concept of preservation relates to the safeguarding of cultural resources. The degree of the significance of the resource relates to its value or values. These values include social, economic, political, scientific, aesthetic, philosophical, spiritual, architectural, archeological, sentimental, age considerations and so on. Some of these resources may have a limited value in the present but which can increase exponentially in the future. A photo taken by a group of people may have inherent value at the time it is taken. The significance of the photo is probably limited to the members of the group. Years later the same photo can be significant not only to that group's descendants but possibly to all of society. Future generations can understand more about that era from the photo which contains clues to material culture of the period and to the socio-economic and cultural position of the group, tribes and society. This view is reiterated by Petherbridge (1987), who says the continuity of a society as we are familiar with depends to a large extent on the preservation of all past experiences recorded in written, printed, oral or symbolic form.

The extreme importance of preservation activity is clear: to provide present and future generations with tangible evidence of lives of important people of the past who have been linked with the particular area, and to serve as an inspiration and benefit for the people of the area both culturally and economically, eventually creating a significant and positive social impact on the daily lives of people and communities where such preservation measures are taken. In this regard, festivals which are important tools for preservation of

the arts should be harnessed for its continuity. This is heightened by a statement made by the Chief of the Miccosukee Indians of the Florida Everglades and cited by Lawrenz et al, who is of the view that things pertaining to culture is incomparable, that it cannot be made neither can it be bought; and when it is lost it is lost forever. That statement applied very aptly to the struggle for historic preservation. Our cultural heritage cannot be replaced with anything.

Historic preservation is a means of retaining the order and stability of the past by controlling the unknown consequences of the new. History is a continuous and irreversible process in which events are dependent upon one another. The past creates the present which, in turn, shapes the future.

2.6.1 Preservation of art

Bame (1991) discusses the artistic values of festivals concurrently with development. He is of the view that traditional festivals provide opportunities for the collective renewal of the arts as a form of community experience or as expressing group consciousness, as well as for developing artistic repertoires of the performing groups. He remarks that, although singing, drumming and dancing assume varying degrees of extensiveness in the programmes of different festivals, they are never completely absent in any traditional festival. To that extent, all traditional festivals more or less facilitate the development of the arts.

Agbodo (2001) reveals that, festivals are days set aside for communal merry-making and that the day is marked with artifacts, chieftaincy regalia, cultural displays and other tourist attractions. According to him, chiefs and other traditional leaders attached significance to

their art forms and amongst the Akan people for example, leadership regalia and prestige items for royals and others of high status represent an important area of artistic activity. He stresses that festivals in Ghana are characterized by intensive use of art forms. Some examples of these items are stools, skins, linguist staffs, amulets bracelets, gold rings, special kente cloths, masks, decorative local weapons like bows and arrows, shields, palanquins and the like. There are the performing arts like various traditional drums, dances and masqueraders.

A detailed account of the attire used during the celebration of the Kundum festival of the Nzema in Ghana is given by Ansah (1999). He describes two spectacular dresses that are used: the atwenekwasi and the special traditional dress of the women. The atwenekwasi which is the male regalia is a shirt hanging from the waist and reaching almost to the knee. Also a sleeveless “T” shirt and a foot gear called Asorlor complete the male dancer’s attire. It consists of special long leguminous seed which are dried, sliced into bits about three-quarters of an inch thick and each hollowed out.

The women of Kundum according to Ansah do not have any distinctive attire like the men’s kilt but they put on their clothes for daily work. Elderly women come in their best traditional attire, rich clothes, beautiful head gear, precious beads worn round the neck and wrist. Ansah admits that the dresses which some individuals and smaller groups fancy add fun to the whole show. He further admits that, the women dress gaily and together with the atwenekwasi, escorts the chief during the afternoon procession through the principal streets of the town on Wednesday in the last week of the festival.

The chief rides in palanquin with a small girl of about eight years sitting in front of him. The women tie kente or velvet or fold them just above the breast with no, kaba. The bare top may be artistically marked or decorated with special red or white clay solution. Some may adorn themselves with the kind of rich and precious beads of their ancestors. Similarly, the hair-style may be the typical coiffeur of their great-grandmother (Ansah, 1999).

The usefulness of festivals in preserving and promoting art has been outlined by Asihene (1980). The chief's regalia including the stools, drums, emblems as well as the flamboyant umbrellas that enhance the pomp and pageantry at this festival are the handiworks of the indigenous artists of Takyiman in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The people of Takyiman are indeed artistically inclined. Because, activities like the durbar, town-parade and libation are all organized in an orderly manner although they appear to be hectic (Asihene, 1980).

Festivals are occasions that expose to the outside world or to different groups the rich cultural heritage of a society. Gadzekpo (1978) explains that, traditional rulers dress in their rich kente and gold ornaments during festivals. Stools, palanquins and other handicrafts of the natives showing their level of civilization are exhibited to the admiration of all. He further explains that ordinary citizens dress in their best to add colour to the historical tradition of their people.

Bolin and Dunstan (1985) indicate in their presentation that in non-western societies, art is not a separate, specialized activity; it is a phenomenon firmly meshed with other cultural sub-fields. This principle is well illustrated in Bali's Eka Desa Rudra festival, an astonishingly colourful spectacle held once every one-hundred years in Nigeria. Although

its significance is primarily religious, this elaborate celebration is also a highly organized artistic occasion. It covers many days, involves most members of the community, and combines colour, poetry, dance, song, music parades, mime, intricate flower and food offerings, and shadow puppet performances. The Eka Desa Rudra festival according to Bolin and Dunstan (1985) is a spectacular display aimed at inducing good and evil forces to live in peace, harmony, and tranquility. Ingenuity and visual richness are evident in all the activities mentioned above and markedly so in temple offerings. Such objects are constructed with flowers and food and fashioned in a bewildering array of patterns and designs that exhibit great imaginative artistry and skill.

The above presentation is a remarkable approach in describing festivals as artistic events which helps in the preservation of the arts.

2.7 Ethnographic Background of Akyem Abuakwa

Modern day Akyem consists of three sub-divisions: Abuakwa, Kotoku and Bosome. The largest sub-division is Akyem Abuakwa which accounts for about two-thirds of modern Akyem territory (Addo-Fening, 2000). It is in the western part of Ghana's Eastern Region and bordered on the north and north-east by Kwahu and Asante-Akyem, on the east and south-east by Krobo (Manya and Yilo) and Akuapem, on the south by Agona (Central Region) and in the west by Akyem Kotoku and Akyem Bosome. The modern state of Akyem Abuakwa, also known as Okyeman (Akyem Abuakwa traditional area) is the largest traditional area in the whole of southern Ghana and one of the most powerful kingdoms within the Akan traditional system in Ghana comprising 801 towns and villages which are organised into five Divisions (*Adonteng* – 155 towns and villages; *Oseawuo* – 288, *Nifa* – 113, *Benkum* – 218 and *Gyasi* – 27). The traditional system of government in

Okyeman is one of the most sophisticated in Ghana, the structure made up of the King (Okyekene) and three councils of elected chiefs, sub-chiefs, councilors and elders. The Councils is in correspondence to the executive, state and county councils of western government (CINRMP, 2003)

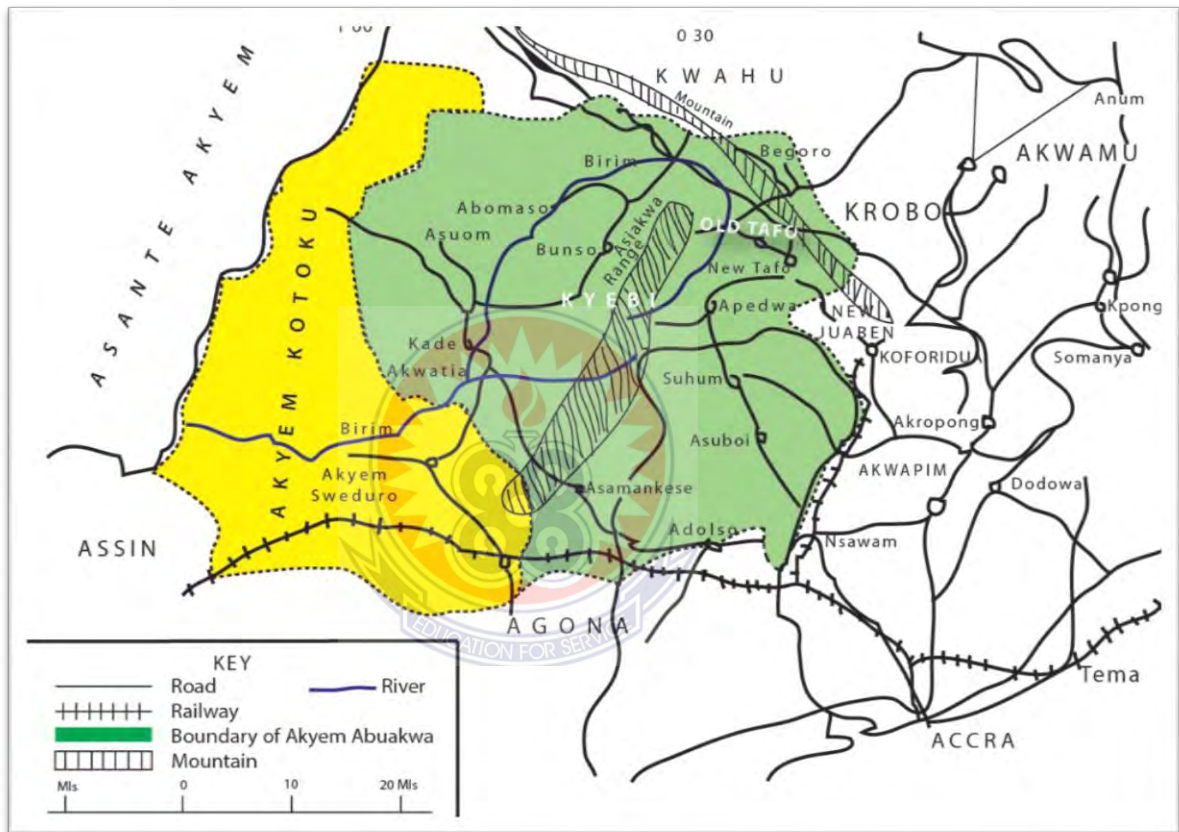


Figure 1: Modern Ghana showing the Akyem Area

Source: *The Akyem Factor in Ghana's History 1700-1875*

Okyeman is endowed with natural resources, including mineral resources, forest estate and biodiversity. It is home to the country's largest state-owned diamond firm. Some time in history, there were 27 gold and diamond concessions in the area. In addition, the area has considerable bauxite and kaolin deposits, which are yet to be exploited. The area

boasts of a number of forest reserves and numerous sacred groves, which are patches of forest set aside as sacred and strictly protected by customary laws (Ntiamoah- Baidu, 1995; Ntiamoah-Baidu et al., 1992; Dwomoh, 1990). Two of the forest reserves in the area: Atiwa range forest reserve and the Nsuensa forest reserve, have global importance in terms of biodiversity. (Ntiamoah-Baidu *et al*, 2001).

The Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area is commonly referred to as Okyeman. The historical appellation of Okyeman, “*Kwaebibirem*” (meaning the dark forest) validates the past extent and condition of forest lands in the area. Okyeman controls a significant portion of Ghana’s remaining forest. Okyeman lies within the Moist Semi-Deciduous (South-east subtype) forest zone according to Hall and Swaine’s forest classification of Ghana (Hall and Swaine, 1981). It is mainly because of its geographical location that, the Okyehene (the paramount chief of Akyem) has earned the appellation, *Kwaebibremuhene* (king of the dense forest).

According to Abban (2007) cited by Owusu (2012) the Akyem Abuakwa forests serve as a source and or constitute the entire or part of the catchment of three major rivers: Birim, Ayensu and Densu, as well as a large number of tributaries of these rivers. These rivers provide water sources for people in the entire area; therefore the survival of the people is interlinked with the survival of these rivers. Apart from the local importance, the Densu River is the source of water for half of the Accra Metropolitan Area.

The history of Okyeman dates back about four centuries ago when the story of the Asona clan of Adanse led by the powerful and fearsome leader, Nana Apeanin Kwaframa began to unfold. Nana Apeanin Kwaframa, the acclaimed leader of the Asona clan of the Adanse’s

able, courageous, shrewd and valiant attributes attracted the attention of some of the clans who felt cheated or threatened and looked up to him for succour and protection. This was long before the crystallisation of the Akans who lived in groups such as the Oyoko, Asona, Aduana, Asakyiri, Bretuo, Asene, Agona and Ekuoa, into states. Nana's reputation was likened to that of a leopard which in Akyem is variously called Okyem, Etwie, Kurotwiamansa or Osebo with Okyem being the most common name in the olden days. The Okyem, a widely feared wild animal but a good parent, ever-ready to protect its offspring so well that any attempt to steal the cub invites its wrath. With time, Nana Kwafra's group came to be known as Okyemfo (Okyem's people) whom many feared to provoke or attack. They were constantly referred to as Okyemfo which eventually corrupted into Akyemfo (Ayim, nd). Akyem has however, now been corrupted to be Akim.

Nana Kuntunkunuku succeeded Nana Apeanin Kwafra as the Okyem-hene (leader of the Okyem people). This title eventually became Okyehene. Before long, his martial strength and administrative skills were demonstrated. He proved unbeatable at war and found instant combat to every military manoeuvre by his enemies. He was regarded as a king who instantly recoiled like a snake to outwit his enemies. His people were referred to as Abukafo which was eventually corrupted to Abuakwafo (Ayim, n.d). The Akyem under Kuntunkunuku did not proceed directly to the present Birem (Birim) valley site. They rather wandered in Adanse for some time. Places associated with their peregrinations include Kotobiante, Dompase, Sesebenso, and Akokyeri. Later under the leadership of Agyekum, Adu Oware and Anim Kwatia, they moved to Asante Akyem where they made Dampong their chief base (Agyei, 1970) cited by Osei (2011).

With the sudden growth of the Asante nation under Osei Tutu in 1733, they began to ferret out the Akyem people again. The Akyems were therefore compelled to move on. Under the leadership of Ofori Panin, they proceeded to the present Birem valley, where they encountered the people of Tafo. It is believed that the Tafo people told them that they would allow them to settle on the land but on condition that they would only eat yam after the Tafohene had eaten the freshly harvested yam.

Probably when the Tafo people under the authority of Duedu Amo, the fighter saw the powerful Akyems advancing in their great numbers, they put up a fierce defense. Upon realizing the overpowering influence of the invading Akyems, they quickly made arrangements for peace. Ofori Panin agreed to observe the Ohum festival and all that went with it. In this way, although the Akyems ruled the Tafo people, they were always reminded that they came to find some people on the land on which they had settled. They paid their respect to the Akyem Manhene (paramount chief) at Kyebi (Kibi), but he also paid respect to them by celebrating their Ohum and refraining from eating the new yam until the Tafohene had done so. The Ohum festival marks the signing of a peace agreement between the Aduana people of Tafo and the Asona royals of Kyebi (Agyei, 1970) cited by Osei (2011).

The people of Tafo are believed to be a branch of Akwamus. As already mentioned, this event happened around 1600AD, a time that Ntim Gyakari reigned over the Denkyira. According to written literature on the pre-colonial era of Ghana, the gold trade in particular stimulated the process of urbanization and state formation especially in gold mining areas of Akanland along the trade routes leading northward and southward. The rise of the Denkyira at that time and the Asante later on illustrates this. Denkyira, under the reign of

Ntim Gyakari developed a militarised state and carried out wars of territorial expansion against Assin, Adanse, Twifo, Sefwi and all of south-west Ghana up to the Axim coast. Denkyira's economic power which facilitated this imperial expansion was derived from profits of the gold trade. Denkyira and Adanse settled along this trade route and populous market centres like Bono Manso and Fomase (Aquandah nd). With this, it is easy to deduce that Okuru Banin and his entourage probably ended up in the Birem valley as a result of seeking refuge from a war against a bigger opponent like the Denkyira.

2.8 Historical account of Ohum festival and why it is celebrated.

Existing records on Ohum festival is quite scanty since authors who wrote on festivals in Ghana did not give credence to it or gave out scanty information about it. Neither Opoku (1970) nor Bame (1991) made mention of the Ohum festival and the people of Akyem Abuakwa in their books. Amoako-Attah (2001) however, states in one sentence that Ohumkan festival is celebrated by the chiefs and people of New and Old Tafo in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Clarke-Ekong (1997), in her classification of festivals mentioned that Ohumkan celebrated by the people of Kyebi was celebrated in recognition of first harvest and the ancestors. An article published by the Ghana News Agency on Friday 22nd July, 2005 titled "Ohum to become major festival for Akyem Abuakwa" stated:

As part of efforts to by the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional council to improve tourism in the area, the council has decided that the Ohum festival will be celebrated annually as a major festival. Consequently, the Okyeman council will hold a grand durbar of chiefs and people at Kyebi, the capital town of the traditional area, on August 6, this year as part of the festival to bring families together and ensure unity in Okyeman.

Osabarima Adusei Peasah IV, Tafohene and Senior Divisional Chief of Okyeman, who announced this at a press conference at Kyebi on Thursday, said the council would exploit all resources at its disposal for the benefit of the people. He said the festival aside its sociological significance, would also serve as a mode of transmitting traditional knowledge to successive generations; and as a means of generating resources to improve infrastructure in the area. Osabarima Peasah IV said the council would use the festival to appraise the development strategies and objectives on education and health among others. He said the council would repackage the festival to give it an international dimension so that it could be added to the festivals in Ghanaian tourist calendar.

Highlight on the festival would include a durbar of chiefs and people of the area at Tafo on July 29, 2005, a clean-up campaign throughout Okyeman and a charity football match. The Ohum festival until these innovations was being celebrated only by individual towns along the Birim River.

Agyei Aninfining in his unpublished thesis titled, *Ohum among the Abuakwa, 1970* gave brief accounts of the origin, kinds and reckoning of the Adaes and how they affect the Ohum festival. He gives a short history of the Abuakwa people from their original home in Adanse, tracing it up to their annexation of the Tafo people of the Birem valley headed by Okomfo Asare. He talks of the mythical appearance of the Tafo people from the Birem River and the institution of Ohum. He gives a description of the Ohum festival celebration at Tafo and points out the differences in its celebration at Kyebi, the Abuakwa capital. He elaborates on the Abuakwa oaths and how they are reflected in the Ohum taboos. He pays attention to the significance of the rituals, the symbols and to some artistic aspects of the

festival and finally gives some suggestions which are meant to improve and enhance the Ohum festival and to render it more enjoyable in our developing society, Agyei (1970).

Cameron Duodu the Drum Editor, in an article titled, Great Day at Tafo, gave account about how he travelled to Old Tafo, in Akyem Abuakwa to watch the Tafohene and his people celebrate their Ohum festival and to find out the meaning of it all. This article also states emphatically that the Ohum is celebrated by all the Abuakwa people but the Tafo people are its custodians. It further explains that the Ohum festival takes place in all Abuakwa towns and villages on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and that for a child in Abuakwa, it means getting up early in the morning of Tuesday to go and wash 'chairs and stools'. On that day, he adds, nobody is allowed to eat before bathing for the festival is aimed at washing away evils of the past year and there is neither drumming nor dancing. Also, to make it impossible for any kind of defilement to take place, dead people are not allowed to be carried across the streets. They have to arrive at the cemetery by the 'back door'. The article points out another peculiar trait of the Ohum Tuesday. That is, nobody is allowed to pound fufu. Currently, the older generation of Akyem people takes it as a fast when they do not eat fufu for a whole day, so Ohum Tuesday is not a very popular day among such people. He says most housewives therefore try to make the best of the day by preparing extraordinary delicious stew usually with palm nuts. But everybody looks forward to Wednesday, when fowls are slain by the hundreds in celebration of the end of the previous day's 'fast'. Cameron Duodu further states that the ancestors are responsible for the ban imposed on all noise making. They are said to prefer uttermost tranquility or else they go back with their blessings. Food is sprinkled around the streets for them. This food is usually mashed yam or plantain, with lots of fish and eggs in it. Every house in the

village or town which has an ancestral stool puts some food in the ‘stool house’. This practice, he says is very popular with the kids, for they are allowed to eat the ‘ghost’ of the food after sunset. The article states that the Tafo people claim to be the original inhabitants of Akyem Abuakwa, and that their stool was brought from Birem River by their chief, Nana Okuru Banin I. He brought it out of the Birem River at Bunso and every year, the Tafo people have to go there and offer sacrifices to him. Later, when the bulk of the Akyem people came from Adanse, the Tafo people told them they would be allowed to settle on their land on condition that they would only eat yam after the Tafohene had eaten it; that is freshly harvested yam. In this way, though the Akyem people ruled the Tafos, Akyems were always reminded that they came to find some people on the land on which they had settled. Tafo people pay their respect to the Okyehene at Kyebi, but he also in return, pays his respect to them by celebrating their Ohum festival refraining from eating yam until the Tafohene has done so. The festival thus marks the signing of a peace pact; the writer adds. The above assertions by the writers give a clear indication that indeed Akyem Tafo people are the real custodians of Ohum festival.

The people of Akyem Tafo are said to be the original inhabitants of the Abuakwa land. The story begins with the mythical appearance of the *Tafohene* (chief of Tafo), Okuru Banin I and his Aduana clansmen from the Birem (Birim) River at Afriyie, a place near Bunso. Bunso is the corrupted form of the word *bunuso* (the deep pool). The Aduana clan as narrated by Nana Yaw Okyereh II, Omankrado of Akyem Tafo from oral tradition is said have their totemic animal as a dog with fire in its mouth because a mysterious dog brought them fire. Accompanying Chief Okuru Banin I was the high priest, Okomfo Asare who wore a pure white gown and carried the Ohum shrine. This was in about the year 1600AD;

Agyei (1970) confirms this assertion. The myth about the ‘appearance’ further explains that when the people of Tafo emerged from Birem at Bunso, they saw a Guan hunter and submerged into the river. The hunter upon seeing them exclaimed “*Ah anipa nie!*” meaning “such a huge crowd of people”. The queen-mother submerged and did not come out again due to this the Tafo people did not institute a queen-mother until the reign of Okuru Banin II, to honour her. Okomfo Asare came out of the river with a palm frond and a calico mat. This is how the river came to be known as *Bremu* (out of the palm frond) which was later called Birem until present day corrupted name Birim. It is an undisputed fact among Tafo traditional court historians, however, that when Okuru Banin I and his entourage ‘emerged’ from the Birem River, they spoke the Akan dialect and conformed to the general social and political organization of Akan ethnic groups elsewhere. This means that they had had some contacts with Akans before the Birem River incident at Bunso. The people of Tafo are believed to be a branch of Akwamus. As already mentioned, this event happened around 1600AD, a time that Ntim Gyakari reigned over the Denkyira. According to written literature on the pre-colonial era of Ghana, Denkyira, under the reign of Ntim Gyakari developed a militarised state and carried out wars of territorial expansion against Assin, Adanse, Twifo, Sefwi and all of south-west Ghana up to the Axim coast. With this, it is easy to deduce that Okuru Banin and his entourage probably ended up in the Birem valley as a result of seeking refuge from a war against a bigger opponent like the Denkyira.

After Chief Okuru Banin had emerged from the river with his entourage, he settled at *Afiriyɛ* and organized his kingdom. He set up three pieces of logs and kindled them with the fire brand he brought. He then set his stool near the fire. It must be noted also that in Akan, the land on which one sets fire on becomes his property. Okuru Banin I then sent his

hunters/farmers led by Nyano all over the hinterland to explore and bring news of any inhabitants. Nyano and his colleagues made a large yam plantation at the present site of Asiakwa. They roamed the vast forest area along the entire bank of the Birem River and brought meat and food stuffs to Okuru Banin's court and confirmed that no other group of people existed anywhere near them. Okuru Banin and his Aduana people therefore became the first occupants and the owners of the vast Akyem Abuakwa land.

Okuru Banin I and his people realised that *Afiriye*, their abode was not a conducive site. They had grave feelings at *Afiriye*, and on sacred days they heard mysterious voices speaking with flute-like softness. They believed then that the place was haunted. They therefore moved to Saaman, a place near Osino. From Saaman, Chief Okuru Banin and his men left for Awansa, a site between Osiem and Anyinasin junction. For this reason, the Tafohene is sometimes given the title, Awansahene (chief of Awansa). After a few years stay at Awansa, they moved again to Bomposo and then to their present Tafo town (Agyei, 1970) where the Ohum festival was instituted. Custom does not permit the Tafohene or any of his royals to set foot at *Afiriye*. As Nana Yaw Okyereh II recounted, every year, during Ohum, Obosomfo Asare as his clans men also called him due to wonders he performed returned from Tafo to the Birem River at Bunso to perform the necessary rites. The people met the celebrated priest at a large open ground at the *Agyempremo* grove. The anxiety that came along with his reappearance usually attracted a large number of spectators. The warriors and dancers jumped and danced around amid drumming and great jubilation. This continued until evening came. It is said that the priest used to bring with him, a large brass basin containing three huge fishes from the Birim River. The *Obaapanin* (leader of the women) used the fish for preparing mashed yam for the departed spirits during the Ohum

ceremonies. The penetrating aroma and the exciting decorations of the Okomfo (priest) on his return from the deep pool and his mysterious appearance were an expression of coming joy or an impending doom of each succeeding year. The people had the belief that if he appeared with his body smeared with *hyire* (white clay) and held *mmerenkensono* (fresh palm leaf) in his mouth, it signified peace and prosperity. On the other hand if he came covered with *ntwoma* (red clay) and held a flint to his mouth, the people knew there would be wars to fight and they would encounter great difficulties in the coming year. According to Nana Yaw Okyereh II, when the time came for the priest to finally leave the people (die), he dived into the Birem River, came out after some hours with three palm seedlings and asked the chief to plant the seedlings because he might not always be present to go under the water to obtain the *mmerenkensono*. He then taught the worthy successors, Okuru Banin and the elders all the secrets of Ohum and how the *mmerenkensono* was to be obtained. The successful pulling out the *mmerenkensono* marks the beginning of the whole ceremony of Ohum. The Okomfo then urged the *Tafohene* to celebrate the Ohum to ensure for himself and the state long life, prosperity and victory over his enemies. Ohum, he said would mark the anniversary of the birth of the state and be an occasion for the veneration of the ancestral stool and ancestors who formerly occupied them. It was also to mark the blessing of the departed ancestors on the harvest (especially the new yam) of the year. It has already been stated in the ethnographic background that the staple food of Okuru Banin and his Aduana clansmen was the yam, hence the big yam plantation of Nyano the chief farmer and his colleagues at Asiakwa. According to oral tradition, when the priest had finished with his sacred teachings, he went to Afiriye-Bunso, followed by a large entourage of drummers and dancers. On the banks of the river, he poured libation and urged the drummers to play

to a very high tempo as he went into an unusual state of uncontrolled emotion crying aloud uncontrollably. The people were filled with awe because his behaviour was quite unusual. He dived into the deep pool for the third time never to be seen again. After Okomfo Asare's departure, the Tafo people became the custodians of the Ohum festival till date; the Tafohene having the sole responsibility for the celebrations. All the rituals are performed on behalf of the Tafohene whenever he is due to pay homage to Okuru Banin I and Okomfo Asare at Afiriye.

Later, when the bulk of the Akyem people came from Adanse, under the leadership of Ofori Panin, they proceeded to the present Birem valley, where they encountered the people of Tafo. It is believed that the Tafo people told them that they would allow them to settle on the land but on condition that they would only eat yam after the Tafohene had eaten the freshly harvested yam. Probably when the Tafo people under the authority of Duedu Amo, the fighter saw the powerful Akyems advancing in their great numbers, they put up a fierce defense. Upon realizing the overpowering influence of the invading Akyems, they quickly made arrangements for peace. Ofori Panin agreed to observe the Ohum festival and all that went with it. In this way, although the Akyems ruled the Tafo people, they were always reminded that they came to find some people on the land on which they had settled. They paid their respect to the Akyem Manhene (paramount chief) at Kyebi (Kibi), but he also paid respect to them by celebrating their Ohum and refraining from eating the new yam until the Tafohene had done so. The Ohum festival marks the signing of a peace agreement between the Aduana people of Tafo and the Asona royals of Kyebi (Agyei, 1970). This has been so till present day.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the various research instruments and methods that have been used in gathering relevant data for the completion of this thesis. Mention has been made of the research design, population for the study, sample, sample design, data collection, research tools and library research.

3.2 The Design

The design used for this research was based on qualitative research methods which relies heavily upon the investigator's skills of observation and interpretation to provide valid information. Hakim (2000) describes qualitative research as being concerned with individuals own accounts of their attitudes, motivations and behaviour. She opines that qualitative research offers in-depth descriptive reports of individuals, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings, the meanings and interpretations given to events and things, as well, as their behaviour, it displays how these are put together into frameworks which makes sense of experiences; the difference between attitudes and behaviours, or how conflicting attitudes and behaviour are resolved. Hakim also states that qualitative research are used much more in disciplines where emphasis is on description and explanation, example in psychology, sociology and social anthropology, rather than on prediction such as in economics.

Some assumptions made by Creswell (1994) on qualitative research is that it involves field work. The researcher physically goes to the people's setting site or institution to observe

or record behaviour in its natural setting. He further states that qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures.

The Descriptive method simply helps the researcher to examine the phenomena at hand and describe vividly what the researcher has encountered. According to Anderson (1990) any approach that attempts to describe data might be referred to as a descriptive method. Per the nature of the study, observations made of persons, situations and events as they unfolded during the festival could best be described and interpreted using the descriptive method. This was basically employed to throw light on conditions and relationships that exist in the society and to bring to the fore the opinions that are held concerning the topic under study. Also, all the processes and trends of development that were evident throughout the study were adequately taken care of by the descriptive approach. Present and past events were brought to bear by the researcher to outline and describe relationships that exist between variables which made it possible for a good conclusion to be drawn. The researcher recorded potentially useful primary data thoroughly, accurately, and systematically with such methods as observation and face-to-face interviews as well as telephone interviews. Secondary information was mostly from books, articles, unpublished thesis and newspapers. The data collection methods observed the ethical principles of research. Data collected from these two categories were assembled, evaluated and conclusions drawn from them using the descriptive method.

3.3 Library Research

As pertains every scholarly writing for documented literature to be reviewed, information from books, internet, journals, magazines and unpublished thesis were collected, to support facts and to further clarify related topics.

Visits were made to the Libraries of the University of Education Winneba, and the department of Art Education Winneba campus where books and unpublished thesis that had related literatures to the thesis were read and relevant information was extracted to beef up the review chapter of the thesis.

At the University of Ghana, Legon, the Balme library and the department of African studies library were also visited for relevant information. Other libraries visited were the Koforidua Library, the Bunso Community Library and other private collections in the Eastern Region such as Okyehene's palace, which is Ofori Panin Fie at Kyebi were reliable places for useful information.

The history and origin of the Ohum festival of the Akyem Abuakwa were found at the Ghana Collection section of the KNUST Main Library, the College of Art and Social Science Library, the Ashanti Library and other private collections.

Online Research

Internet surfing played a major role in the research where a lot of useful articles, research papers, online books and documentaries on the topic in question was sought for.

Other Available Facilities

Individual homes belonging to experts on the Ohum festival celebration were visited for deliberations on the Ohum festival. The palace, shrine, durbar grounds and churches in

Tafo and other Akyem Abuakwa traditional societies were also visited by the researcher to collect data.

3.4 The Population for the Study

Best (1981) explains population as any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The population may be individuals bound by common factors. The population for this research consisted of members of Old Tafo in the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area of the Eastern Region of Ghana. Since the research focused on the celebration of the Ohum festival, the population for the study comprised chiefs, elders of towns, priests and priestesses, teachers, farmers, old men and old women, tailors and dressmakers, youth, students and pupils, sponsors and visitors. This population was further categorized into three divisions based on knowledge in the indigenous culture, expectations and trend in the celebration of the Ohum festival.

Category A: those knowledgeable in the cultures and traditions of Akyem Abuakwa such as chiefs, queen-mothers, elders of the palace, senior citizens of the land, priests and priestesses.

Category B: communes and aborigines of Akyem Old Tafo comprising the youth, farmers, teachers, etc.

Category C: visitors and sponsors.

Numerical representations are as follows:

Category A - 72

Category B - 68

Category C - 10

Total : 150

3.4.1 Sample size and sampling procedure

By the nature of this research and time constraint, it was not possible to include all available population for study, therefore only the sample was interviewed. The heterogeneity of the targeted population called for each category to be treated as a stratum and hence the use of stratified random sampling method which gave a better representation of the population. It consisted of 150 persons: the Omankrado of Akyem Tafo, 10 visitors, the chief priest, 40 selected elders in the palace, 20 senior citizens of the state, 30 selected youth living in and outside Tafo, 2 sponsors of the festival and 46 communes of Akyem Tafo.

Out of the population of 150, a sample of 50 respondents were interviewed which formed a percentage of 33.3 which is an acceptable percentage as Leedy (2005) asserts that for quality research; at least 30% of the accessible population for the study is a fair representation for an acceptable accuracy of results. The table below shows a schematic overview of the Stratified Random sampling method:

Table: 1

Schematic overview of the stratified Random Sampling Method

Category A – 70	Population
Traditional leaders	
Category B – 68	
Communes and aborigines of Akyem Old Tafo	
Category C – 12	
Visitors and sponsors	

Source: field work, 2014

Category A 70	Category B 68	Category C 12
Stratum 1	Stratum 2	Stratum 3

Table 1 continuation:

Randomization level 33.3%	26	20	4
	Randomization From stratum 1	Randomization from stratum 2	Randomization from stratum 3
Sample	Total from stratum 1, 2 and 3 $26 + 20 + 4 = 50$		
Data level	Sample of data collection 50		

This technique was employed to select the sample of 50 respondents which accounted for the 33.3% of the total population. This sample was shared among the three strata of the total population of 150 persons. Group A summing up to 70 had a percentage of 46.7, group B a total of 68 also had a percentage of 45.3 and group C 12 persons had a percentage of 8, totaling a 100%. Below are details of the summary.

Table: 2**Percentage of each stratum selected sample**

<u>Status</u>	<u>No. in sample</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Category A	26	46.7%
Category B	20	45.3%
Category C	4	8.0%
(Stratum 1)		
Category A; $70 \times 100/150 = 46.7\%$		
(Stratum 2)		
Category B; $68 \times 100/150 = 45.3\%$		
(Stratum 3)		
Category C; $12 \times 100/150 = 8.0\%$		

3.5 Data Collection

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data relevant to the study were collected from the field by the help of research tools. Secondary data were collected from books, publications, catalogues, periodicals, newsletters, brochures, journals, magazines, charts, encyclopedias and unpublished thesis and monographs.

Primary data collection for the study included, the paper and pen methods: personal field notes and live methods: observation, interview, audio taping, videotaping and discussion were employed. The field notes were used in recording the main events as they unfolded, while a recorder was used to capture the full interview using the respondent's language, terms, and concepts. Because interview is a reflective process, it enabled the interviewee to explore her experience in detail, and to reveal the features of that experience that had an effect on the issues investigated.

3.5.1 Interviews Conducted

The researcher was convinced that the nature of her research required the use of semi-structured interviews as the main technique of survey instrument apart from other data collection instruments. This is because most of the respondents were illiterates and semi-literates, and therefore would find the use of questionnaire quite uncomfortable. Also, she thought that most of the respondents would have more to offer by way of talking than writing. There was also the opportunity to ask questions whenever it was necessary for further clarifications. Apart from that most of the respondents were interviewed on the festival grounds so it was quite impossible to give out questionnaires. All 50 respondents were interviewed although some had no knowledge or brief knowledge about some questions posed. The researcher established a friendly relationship with some respondents,

in order to urge them to readily provide useful information. All the respondents were interviewed in their own chosen meeting place so they were relaxed to give sincere and in-depth opinions to the questions they were asked. She therefore interviewed respondents through “face-to-face” and telephone interviews for follow-up when necessary. Some were done at their homes, festival grounds and at work places of respondents. For all these interactions permission were sought first and upon agreement, respondents gave specific periods they could be ready to respond to the questions. For ethical reasons, respondents consent was sought and the agreed terms of confidentiality were respected. Some agreed for their responses to be recorded while others declined but their views were respected so they would not think it was a plot to be used against them but for academic purposes. They however agreed that notes could be taken while they responded to questions from the interview guide.

Most of the interviews were conducted in Twi language although English was also used. Responses for the interviews were recorded on a tape recorder or on a notepad where applicable. These interviews were later transcribed and salient information retracted and analysed. Names of notable respondents who gave relevant information and agreed have been mentioned in Chapter Four of this thesis although others remained anonymous.

The methodology has enabled the researcher to arrive at some important findings. This has helped her to make significant assumptions and adequate recommendations. It offered the researcher the necessary experience for collecting, analysing and presenting the data.

3.5.2 Observation

As a Qualitative research, observation is a naturalistic research or inquiry into everyday living (Taylor, 2002). To successfully ascertain the facts about the celebration of the Ohum

festival and the various art forms used and how culture was displayed, it was appropriate the researcher made critical observations. Consequently, the direct observation and ‘participatory’ approach were employed. The direct observation technique is a useful tool because it becomes the most effective means of recording subtle first-hand information.

This tool was used extensively during the performance of rituals and rites such as the laying of the Ohum bed and was mostly combined with straight photography, and video to record pictures of artworks and artistic performances. Observations of the Fontomfrom and Adowa dance movements, libations, royal regalia, linguist staffs and umbrella tops helped the researcher to interpret and appreciate these art forms graphically. These and many other occurrences were carried out and analysed to ascertain the authenticity of the data that had already been acquired by other methods of data collection using the descriptive method.

3.6 Data Analysis Plan

The next chapter comprises presentation and discussion of findings. Qualitative research methods relies heavily upon the investigator’s skills of observation and interpretation to provide valid information. The data analysis was done by content analysis manually, on the basis of data collected from the interviews, observations and the field notes. This is followed by a vivid account of how Ohum festival is celebrated, discussion and appreciation of art forms used and their relevance to the celebration of the Ohum festival.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses information gathered from the employment of the instruments. Semi- structured interviews and observation tools were used by researcher to collect data from the sample. The results for the various interviews conducted and critical observations made of various paraphernalia and activities throughout the study have been presented. Interview questions on the history of Ohum festival, knowledge of the role of art in the festival, the aesthetics and preservative qualities of the festival were also sought to establish the fact that the arts played major role in the success of festivals and that festivals are important avenues that help in the preservation of the arts and hence the need to give Ohum festival a facelift. The data is presented as follows:

Table 3: Category of respondents employed in this research

Sex	Total	Percentage (%)
Male	38	76
Female	12	24
Total	50	100

Source: Field work, 2014

Table 3 above gives a clear indication of a greater number of male respondents over female respondents. Male's number up to 38 approximating 76% and female 12 approximating

24%. Combining figures of male and female respondents gave a total of 50 representing a hundred percent. This is represented on the graph below:

Graph 1

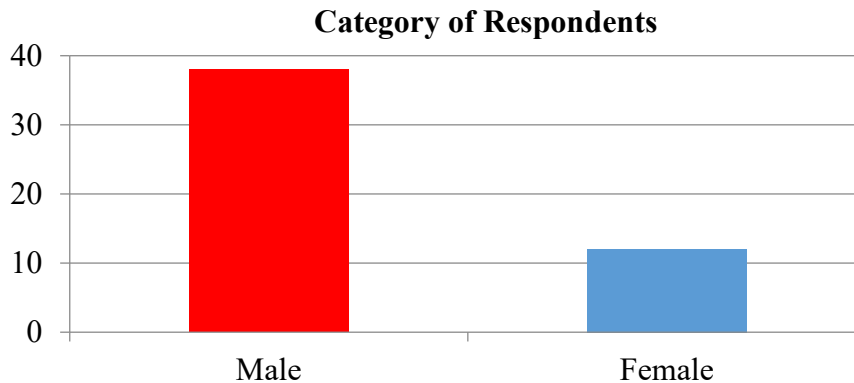


Figure 2: Respondents interviewed in the research

The reason for the high rate of male dominance over females was that almost all rites and rituals performed during the Ohum festival were done by males. During the laying of the Ohum bed sons of present and past chiefs were supposed to perform those rites going for the *mmerenkensono*, placing it on the *Ohum dua* taking it off from the *Ohum dua* and handing it over to the chief who in return strikes it on the bed thrice to signify the commencement of a two weeks ban on drumming and noise making are all done by males. A man who had slept with a woman the previous day was forbidden to take part in any of these rites and rituals because he was regarded as unclean to take part in this sacred ritual. The Akan belief in animism, that all animate and inanimate objects are possessed with spirits and hence sacred, give way for greater number of males only to handle and play drums, handle palanquin with chiefs seated in them, state swords, state umbrellas, chiefs seats and spokesman staffs, the spokesman himself a male. Besides these reasons, performing such duties as plucking of the *mmerenkensono*, carrying the chief in the

palanquin, playing drums and the likes required so much strength and hence male dominance in the celebration of the festival.

Females who were in their menstrual periods were regarded as unclean and were not allowed around sacred places for performing rituals and rites. This served as deterrent for more females to partake in the rituals and rites of the festival. Older women who had passed their menstrual period swept the ground for the laying of the bed and carried the items such as blankets and mats in the brass basin under the state umbrella because the items were regarded as sacred and meant to be used to lay the Ohum bed to invite ancestors to sit in state and to bless Akyem Tafo, Okyeman and Ghana as well. These women supervised the laying of the bed by the men. Other duties performed by these older women were preparation of mashed yam and sprinkling some along the streets and sacred areas as sacrifice to feed the spirits who had come home for the celebration of the Ohum festival on the early morning of Wednesday, the Ohum day which is regarded as *Ewukudae* (sacred Wednesday) on the Akan calendar. This day the chief receives visitors and well-wishers. Another duty of the females is to fan the chief as he sits in the palanquin and herald him with appellations; others dance according to the rhythms of the *Bomma* and the *Fɔntɔmfɔm* drums and circular music as well.

Table 4 shows a representation of residential status of respondents. This was collected to find out how many people travelled from near and far to join the celebration as against those who resided in their towns and automatically became part of the celebrants.

Table 4: Residential status of respondents

Sex	Visitors	Abor. R.	Abor. Non-R.	Non-Abor. R.	Total
Male	3	17	8	10	38
Female	1	6	2	3	12
Total	4	23	10	13	50
(%)	8%	46%	20%	26%	100%

Source: Field work, 2014

Out of the 38 male respondents 3 males were visitors who had travelled from near and far to join in the celebration of Ohum festival. Their female counterpart also numbering 1, total numbering 4 represent 8%. Aborigines residing in Akyem Old Tafo numbered 23, a total of 17 males and 6 females scoring a percentage of 46. A total of 8 males and 2 females representing 20% Aborigines who were not residing in Akyem Old Tafo were also engaged in the research. Other respondents who were resident in Akyem Old Tafo but not aborigines number up to 13, (10 being males and 3 being females) taking 26% as part of the 50 respondents who equaled a 100%.

These categories of respondent took part in the Ohum festival celebration intentionally or unintentionally. Out of the 50 respondents, a combination of 4 visitors and 10 aborigines but nonresidents had travelled to join in the celebration of the festival, a total of 14 representing 28%. The remaining 36 comprising 23 aborigine residents in Akyem Tafo and 13 non aborigines but residents with their percentage as 72% gave a clear indication that those who travelled to the festival were lesser than residents hence the impression created

was that the festival was unpopular or the interest in the festival had dwindled. This notwithstanding visitor had travelled to join in the celebration either for the first time or subsequent times. This then buttress the point that festivals serve as destination attraction as reiterated by Derrett (2007), who said the publicity of festivals and events serves as tourist attraction for the community, gives identity to the community and also assist with creating an appealing and consolidated sense of community.

Table 5: Age range of respondents

Sex	Below 20 Years	20-40 Years	Above 40 years
Male	6	17	15
Female	2	3	7
Total	8	20	22
Percentage	16%	40%	44%

Source: Field work, 2014

With the above information gathered, it was evident that a total of 8 respondents made up of 6 males and 2 females fell within the age range 20 years and below which represents 16%. 25 respondents, a total of 17 males and 3 females fell within the age range 20-40 years representing 40% and 22 respondents a total of 15 males and 7 females representing 44% fell within the age range of above 40 years. This data was collected to give a vivid account of patronage of the youth and the elderly. Categories (below 20 years) and (20-40 years) fell within the youthful age with a total percentage of 56. Propelled by their youthful exuberance they embraced aspects of the festival they were enthused about, from carrying

of the swords by few royals, to drumming and dancing related to culture and circular music as well as pageant shows, street carnivals and of course others who liked to gallivant along the streets taking sips of motions happening around them. The category above 40 years made up of the middle age to the old had a percentage of 44 far lower than the youthful category, observations made revealed that most of the respondents in their category were directly related to the rituals and rites of the festival, others came to pay homage to the chiefs and few others came to join in the celebration of the festival and some to do business.

Table 6: Educational background of respondents

Sex	PRI/JHS/MSLC	SHS	Tertiary	Total
Male	21	12	5	38
Female	7	4	1	12
Total	28	16	6	50
Percentage (%)	56%	32%	12%	100%

Source: Field work, 2014

The above table 6 gives a reflection of the educational level of respondents. The least educational level obtained was grouped under the heading PRI (Primary), JHS (Junior High School) and MSLC (Middle School Leaving Certificate) for which 28 respondents were marked for this category. Among these were illiterates, semi- literates and literates making up of 21 males and 16 females, a percentage of 56. Respondents who had attained SHS (Senior High School Certificate) were 16 in all, the break down as 12 males and 4 females; a percentage of 32. The highest form of education attained by some respondents was

tertiary education which includes Teacher’s Certificate, Diploma and University Education recorded 6 respondents. They comprised 5 males and 1 female summing up to 12%.

Graph 2

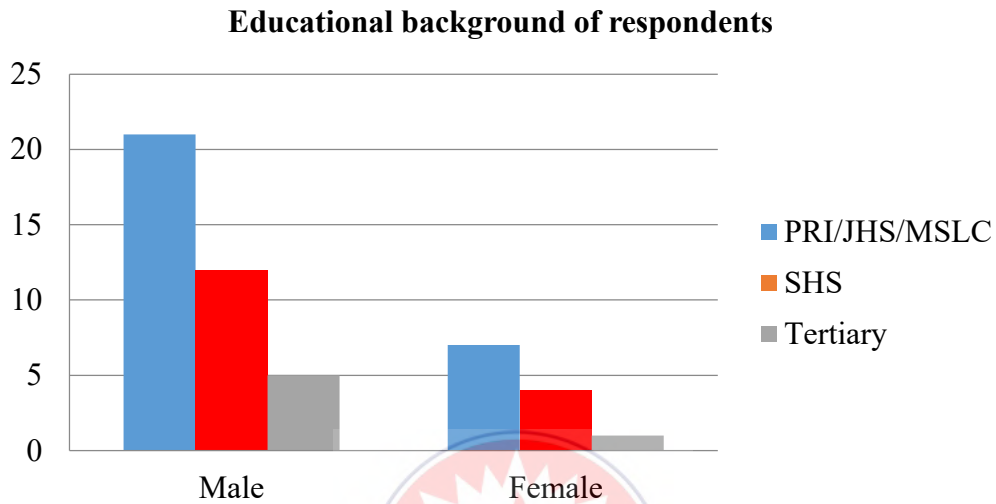
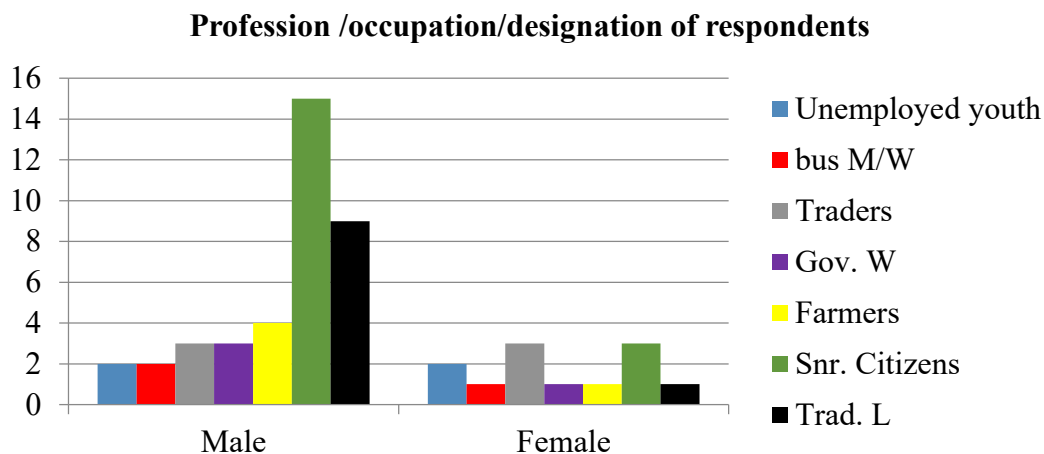


Figure 3: Educational level of respondents

Table 7: Profession/occupation/designation of respondents

Sex	Un. Y	B. M/W	Traders	Gov.W	Farmers	S. C	T. L	Total
Male	2	2	3	3	4	15	9	38
Female	2	1	3	1	1	3	1	12
Total	4	3	6	4	5	18	10	50
Per. %	8%	6%	12%	8%	10%	36%	20%	100%

Source: Field work, 2014

Graph 3**Figure 4: Professional status of respondents**

Considering the profession, occupation or designation in which respondents who played roles in the research study were employed, it became evident that they fell within the categories of youth, traders, businessmen and women, farmers, government workers, Senior citizens and traditional leaders.

The unemployed youth, made up of school going class in various levels of education, those engaged in apprenticeship and attendance in the chief's palace. They recounted their experiences with Ohum Festival and their expectations. Their total number was 4 (2 males and 2 females) a percentage of 8%. Those directly related to the chief's palace recounted how they had watched stealthily and participated in the rituals and rites performed during the Ohum festival each year. They professed rituals and rites of the festival remain unchanged or slightly changed. They reiterated how some parents often times warn their children not to engage in the learning of drumming and dancing and other practices associated with the cultures of the land since they saw them as evil or waste of time and a competition to their books. Oderinde (2011), was not far from right when he said that the

traditional festivals today are to a large extent seen by some as idol worship because of the deities associated with the festivals while some elites see the festivals as occasions that promote vices such as stealing, fighting, immorality, casting spell (by trying newly discovered charms/juju) on people. Hence many educated (Christians and Muslims) would not participate in these festivals, he continued by saying however that they are still very relevant as they provide a rallying point for people in a particular society, create cultural awareness and avenue of getting a practical experience of the people's customs, their way of life and their belief systems.

Other youth said they were not so concerned about the cultural aspects of the festival but were attracted to the social activities from sponsors' years ahead. Times have passed and there are various ways of doing things that could attract both present generation and the older as well giving in all aspect of our culture in the name of modernity robs us of our integrity as a people. Preservations become the ultimate. An earlier assertion made by the chief of the Miccosukee Indians regarding cultural heritage who said it cannot be made or bought and that when it is gone, it is gone forever, (Lawrenz et al., 2015).

Business men and women included sponsors of the Ohum Festival and companies who mounted sales point for their products and services; they included Joy Dadi Company, Accra Brewery Limited and the likes. This category of profession or occupation was 3 in all (2 males and 1 female) representing 6%. Sponsors professed they were fulfilling part of their social responsibility and also making profits. They looked forward to making the festival successful years ahead. Sponsorship included their products and services as well as money to help hype the festival. Profit made from the sale of their products and services could not be overemphasized.

Traders professed a boom in their sales and the need to celebrate the festival year after year. They engaged in the sale of petty goods and services such as food items, clothing, beads, foot wears, cosmetics, and hairdressing and barbering saloons during the Ohum Festival. Their total number was 6 (3 males and 3 females), representing 12%.

Government workers, policemen, bankers, research workers and health workers were not left out since they contributed immensely to the study. They were made up of 3 males and a female, a total of 4 a percentage of 8. Since they were working on the land of Akyem Tafo it was obligatory to pay homage to the chief and also join in the celebration. Policemen were present to give security and to enforce laws when the need arose. So did health workers, they were at post to give health care to emergency situations. This year a new clinic built by the proceeds from the previous year's festival was unveiled by the chief to replace an existing one which had outlived its purpose.

Farmers were also represented in the data collection. They comprised 4 males and a female, totaling 5, a percentage of 10. They spelt out some taboos associated with farming during the Ohum Festival and some rites performed in relation to farming such as no harvesting of yam until the Tafohene performs the Ohum rites, tastes of the new yam and allow farmers to harvest theirs. All this was done to prevent farmers from harvesting immature yams which was wild and poisonous. They professed the 'mfukra rites' this days was not done. They did not hesitate to put on record a high sale of product since a lot of visitors had arrived and definitely demand on food will be high. Food stuffs highly patronized were cassava and plantain used in preparation of 'fufu' one of the staple foods of the Akan.

Senior citizens residing in Old Tafo were also included in the research. They were made up of old men and women who had watched or taken part in the celebration of Ohum Festival years past until present day. They could recount the trend of Ohum Festival of old to present day and the changes that had occurred and various reasons attributing to the change and what they foresee in the future. This category was made up of 15 males and 3 females, a total of 18 and a percentage of 36.

Last and not the least were the category of traditional leaders comprising the Omankrado of Akyem Tafo, Okyeame, Okyerema Kofi Peasah and other elders of Akyem Tafo traditional court. Apart from other special duties performed in connection to this study, they had also held on to the customs and tradition of the land and handed it down to younger generations. This notwithstanding, they could be engaged in other professions but for the purpose of the research they were placed under the category of traditional leaders per their direct relation to the cultures and tradition of Akyem Tafo land. They numbered 10 (9 males and 1 female), a percentage of 20.

Table 8: Knowledge about the history of Ohum festival and why it is celebrated

Age Range	With Knowledge	No Knowledge	Total
Below 20yrs	2	6	8
20 – 40yrs	5	15	20
Above 40yrs	16	6	22
Total	23	27	50
Percentage	46%	54%	100%

Source: Field work, 2014

The table 8 above paints a picture of age range of respondent in relation to their knowledge about the history of Ohum festival and why it is celebrated. Out of a total 8 respondents with age below 20 years, 2 had knowledge about the history of Ohum festival and the reasons for its celebration. The remaining 6 had no knowledge at all. 20 respondents within the ages of 20 to 40 years had 5 of them with knowledge about history and reasons for the celebration of the festival and 15 with no knowledge about the subject. Fewer respondents numbering 7 from the youthful category ‘below 20’ and ‘20-40 years’ were palace attendants, royals and students who had read it through sources or heard it told orally. This revelation goes to buttress the point that knowledge about our culture and traditions are gradually fading away and unpopular among the youth who are future custodians. How this culture and traditions could be preserved remains a prime factor in this discourse.

Respondents within the ages 40 years and above, numbering 22 had 16 of them with knowledge about history and reasons for the celebration of the Ohum festival and 6 with no knowledge about the subject in question. Some elders lamented how, most of the youth were not interested in matters of traditions and culture but had rather embraced foreign culture with Christianity being the headway. They foresaw the future of our customs and traditions as bleak and bare but still hoped there is a bright light at the end of the tunnel through academic researches such as this and others yet to come and few of the youth who had expressed interest to take on the mantle of leadership to learn the traditions of the land. In all 23 respondents out of the total number of respondents (50) had knowledge about the history of Ohum festival and why it is celebrated, they represented 46%. Out of the 50 respondents, 27 representing a total of 54% had no knowledge about the history of Ohum and why it is celebrated. A vivid picture is displayed as to how the younger generation is

not well vexed in history, cultures and traditions of the land but the direct opposite for the older generation. This is presented on the graph below:

Graph 4

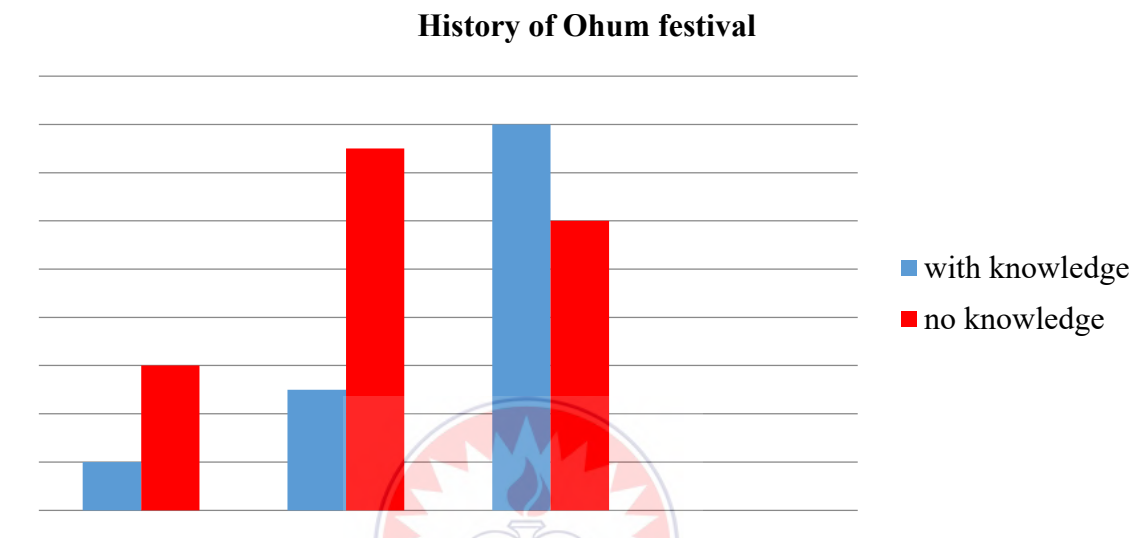


Figure 5: Responses gathered about the knowledge of Ohum festival

Table 9: Are objects and performances displayed during Ohum festival indispensable and considered as art forms?

Sex	Yes, considered	Yes, not considered	No, not considered	Total
Male	7	31	-	38
Female	2	10	-	12
Total	9	41	-	50
Perc.(%)	18	82%	-	100

Source: Field work, 2014

The above table gives an overview of respondent view about objects such as stool, clothing, sandals, linguist staff top, umbrellas, drums and performance such as drumming,

dance, libation pouring and their usefulness during the Ohum festival and whether they consider them as art forms or not.

Out of the 38 male respondents 7 gave the answer as these objects and performances are indispensable and could never be ruled out and also considered them as art forms. The remaining 31 accepted these objects and performance as indispensable but ruled them out as art forms. 2 out of the 12 female respondents also gave a “yes” as answer to the indispensability of the objects and performances used and made during Ohum festival and also accepted them as art form. The remaining 10 accepted these objects and the assertion that they were art forms. None of the respondents responded to the third question that objects and performances used during Ohum festival were not indispensable and not considered as art forms. A total of 9 male and female respondents were of the view that objects and performances used during Ohum festival were indispensable and also art forms; the percentage being 18%.

A total of 41 male and female respondents out of the 50 respondents gave resounding “yes” to the question as to whether objects and performance used and made during the Ohum festival were indispensable but did not accept that they were at forms. This number gave a percentage of 82. There was a clear indication about the uttermost importance of the objects and practices in the Ohum festival and how interrelated they are so much to be ignored. On the issue of these objects and performances seen as art forms, majority of the respondents had very narrow knowledge on that due to lack of exposure or education on these art forms.

The graph below indicates the responses to the question posed:

Graph 5

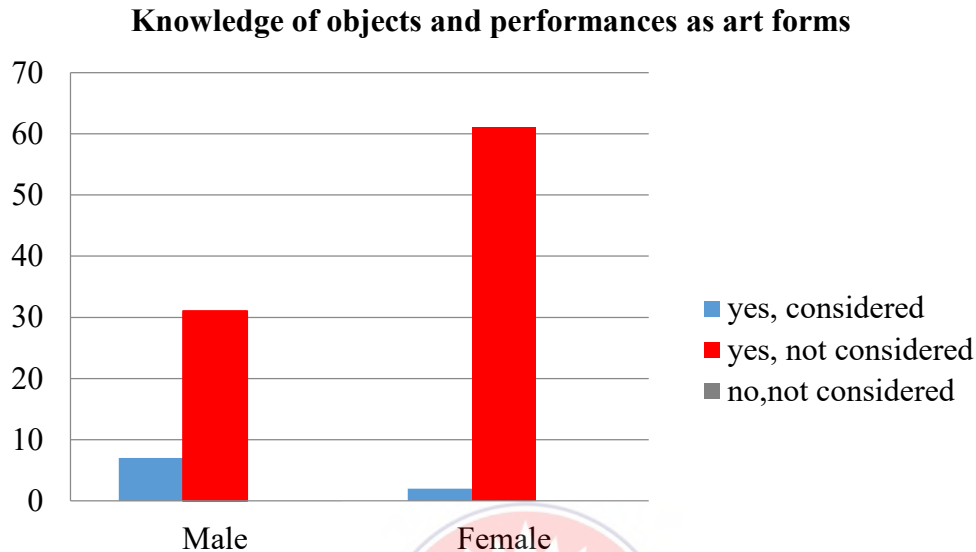


Figure 6: Responses about objects and performances considered as art forms

As elsewhere in the world, Ghanaian art is expressed in three forms: verbal, visual and performance. Proverbs, folklore, poetry, drum language may be cited as examples of verbal art. Visual art is expressed in tangible artifacts. Performance art is expressed in music-making, dancing, etc. Art forms draw people attention to the celebration of a festival due to the aesthetic qualities they possess. It is intertwined with the celebrations of the festival from the first day when a two weeks ban is placed on drumming and noise making to draw awareness to the commencement of the Ohum festival after the two weeks, to the thanksgiving service on Sunday, artistic values Art are portrayed in various forms. The general view of the respondents is that the various objects and performances used in the celebration of the festival cannot in any way be done away with. The Omankrado stated clearly that there would be no festival at all if these art forms are not present and that they remain the important strands of the festival. On the issue of these indispensable objects and

performances regarded as art forms the general consensus was they had no knowledge about art forms although few of the respondents who happened to be part of those with a higher form of education such as SHS and tertiary level considered them as art forms. The main forms of art: visual and performing can be experienced from the inception of the celebration to the last. It involves verbal art, drumming, dancing, sculpture, textiles, jewelry, leatherwork, and graphic design. The result of aspects of the interview could not be tabulated hence the researcher narration of how Ohum festival is celebrated and the various art forms used at each point in time could help unravel the indispensability of these art forms. Ohum festival of the Akyem Abuakwa traditional Area is celebrated twice in each year namely 'Ohumkan' which falls within sacred days in June and July on the Akan calendar and 'Ohumkyire' also within (September) on the calendar as well. Narrations and descriptions of how they are celebrated will give a clearer distinction between the two.

4.2 Preparatory Rites for the Celebration of Ohumkan

The origin and method of calculating the Ohum calendar is largely dependent on the Adae. The Akan calendar is divided into nine cycles of forty days called Adae. The indigenous calendar, in which every day of the year was named and listed, was used as a guide for the agricultural cycle of ground preparation, sowing and harvesting and also for observing local traditional festivals and other social customs. Adae does not merely mark a period in time, but is also observed as a special day for worship and veneration. The sacred days on which the dead are supposed to come home are known in Akyem Abuakwa and the other Akan traditional areas as *Dapa* (a good or lucky day) and *Dabɔne* (an evil or unlucky day). These days were believed to bring blessings as well as curses. The belief in ancestral visits on sacred days of the year, and preparations for ushering them have resulted to the Adae

festivals around which all the Akan festivals revolve; they include Odwira, Ohum and Adae. Odwira (to purify or cleanse) which falls on the ninth *Akwasidae* and enjoyed by all the Twi speaking people is principally a festival on which the supposed spirits of the black stools are honoured. Ohumkan is also an occasion for the veneration of the ancestral stool and the spirits of those who formerly occupied them. It falls on the fifth *Awukudae* and is usually between June and July.

Fifteen days to the fifth *Awukudae* falls on a Tuesday, that is when Ohumkan starts. About noon on this day, the Tafohene, the Ohum priest who represents Okomfo Asare of old, the sons of the Tafo royal house and several others who are the custodians of the Ohum rites go to pull out the *mmerenkensono* from a palm tree. According to Nana Yaw Okyereh II, 2015 (Omankrado of Akyem Tafo), previously they proceeded on foot to Bunso along the Birem river the annexation of the Tafo people, then it was changed to where the elders of the town planted the three palm seedlings given to them by Okomfo Asare centuries back and again changed to *epom kesiε* (dense forest) in old Tafo. Today, obtaining the *mmerenkensono* can be done in any nearby forest. Okyerema Kofi, a drummer and one of the custodians of the Ohum rites said that they take along with them, two bottles of schnapps and a ladder but no cutting implements. When they reach the grove, the people look around for an *atwerebeε* (a fully grown palm tree that has never been pruned). The Tafohene pours libation with a bare chest and takes his sandals off as it is required of any Akan about to pour libation; this is a sign of respect and great humility to *Tweduapon Kwame Nyame* (God Almighty), *Asaase Yaa* (earth) and ancestors. The remaining schnapps is poured out and shared among the gathering by the chief's eldest son. They place the ladder against the palm tree and the prince climbs up, bends down the freshest

palm frond right in the middle (*mmerenkensono*) of the already grown branches for the *Ohumkomfo* (head of custodians of the Ohum rites) and the chief to hold the mid portion and the tip of the *mmerenkensono* respectively. The chief pours libation again after which the three in a meditative mood pulls the *mmerenkensono* gently. This act is repeated three times. A successful pull out of the *mmerenkensono* signifies that the time is ripe for the celebration of the Ohum festival and that the departed ones are ready to come home to eat and to bless the living. If the pulling out becomes unsuccessful, it is taken that the gods and the spirits of the departed ones are not ready and that the Ohum festival is to be postponed until a later time when the *mmerenkensono* comes out successfully. When the *mmerenkensono* comes out, it is held up and never allowed to touch the ground. The remaining drink in the bottle is drunk. The *mmerenkensono* which may be about 16-18fts is brought to the town. People gather to catch a glimpse of how the custodians place the *mmerenkensono* on the *Ohumdua* and feverishly wait for dusk when the Ohum bed is laid to signify the commencement of the festival. Children are driven from the street to make way for the men carrying the *mmerenkensono* so are girls and women who are capable of menstruating for it is believed that the *mmerenkensono* is sacred and that no unclean thing – as menstruation is regarded as unclean by tradition- should get closer to it. The men put the *mmerenkensono* on the *Ohumdua*, a tree which is at the centre of the town; and wait until sunset, figure 7. Meanwhile, the daughters of the Tafohene (past or present) who are old women and have passed the period of menstruation and therefore regarded as clean go out to sweep the streets, especially around the *Ohumdua* where the people usually gather to listen to the proclamation for the date for the *Ohum* festival.



Figure 7: Men placing the *mmerenkensono* on the *Ohumdua*

Source: Researcher, 2014

This sweeping exercise has a symbolic meaning apart from the practical value of keeping a place clean by sweeping; it wades off evil spirits that might come to disturb the rite for the proclamation of *Ohum* and also clears the path for the ancestors to join in the performance of the rites and celebration of the festival itself. In the evening, the *Ohumkomfo* and the other custodians of the rites go to the *nkonguafieso* (the stool house) to collect the necessary materials for laying the Ohum bed, the linguist staffs, umbrellas and Akofena (state swords). This bed is provided as a sign of giving an honourable sleeping place, *adaye* to all the spirits who will be guests of the chief and the people for the next fortnight.

The items are neatly arranged in a *yaawa* (brass basin) and brought to the site where the bed is to be laid under the shade of a state umbrella for it is believed that those items are sacred and prestigious and should be accorded the necessary reverence.



Figure 8: Sweeping taking place at the site of laying the Ohum bed



Figure 9: Items for Ohum bed transported under state umbrella

Source: Researcher, 2014

This rite is officiated by the *Gyaasehene* (head of the chief's lineage). When making the Ohum bed, the custodians of the rites first lay on the ground *boadekana* (a fine light-ochre

straw mat) then a white plastic straw mat with buildings of muslims and Arabic inscriptions. Next is another *kete pa* (straw mat), followed by a flowery blanket, then another white and grey blanket is put on top. This is covered with a multicoloured striped blanket called *bommo* which is usually used to cover stools of great kings or chiefs. A heavy and costly blanket of most brilliant colours and the boldest designs is put on. A narrow border is left all around the *boadekana*. This unique and beautiful blanket, which is said to come from central Africa, is called *nsaa*. Paramount chiefs use pieces of this beautiful blanket to decorate their palanquins. Next to the *nsaa* blanket they adorn the bed with yet another rich bedspread which has a white background with black designs of totemic animals. This is followed by *nwera* (sheer-white calico cloth). After the *nwera* has been laid, they neatly place four pillows, two lie on the bed, side by side horizontally while the other two lie vertically on top of the first two at the upper part of the bed. Three neatly folded stripes of *edasobowo* (it is still tied on you) silk head kerchiefs is placed on top of the pillows and tacked underneath the pillows, figure 10 -18. Then comes the most precious gold silk *Kyime kyerewe* (seize and devour me) kente cloth an example of the loin cloth of the Kings and Queen-mothers of Asante. The two piece golden *Kyemetam* is spread out so that the mid portion forms a loop. The other half moves in a thin strip gradually opening up until it spreads out wide on top of a sheep's skin at the lower end of the bed, figure 19. Every facet of this rite is witnessed by everyone present.

Taboos associated with the laying of the bed is that no one goes closer to the site with any form of golden rings , necklaces, or earrings or sandals because the site at that moment is sacred. No woman is also supposed to touch or pick any part of the *mmerenkensono* as per the custom, it could lead to barrenness.



Figure 10: Laying *boadekana* Figure 11: plastic straw mat Figure 12: laying the *ketε pa*



Figure 13: Flowery blanket Figure 14: White/grey blanket Figure 15: *Nsaa kuntu*



Figure 16: *Bommo* blanket Figure 17: Kente Figure 18: *Nwera* (calico)

Source: Researcher, 2014

When the bed is set, the Tafohene is signaled to come in to declare the two-week silence, this heralds the Ohumkan. The *nsamanfo* (spirits) of the departed ones or the ancestors are supposed to come home during the two-week silence. They are therefore believed to be responsible for the ban imposed on noise making. They are said to appreciate absolute tranquility as the belief is that there is absolute silence in the land of the dead *asamando*. The ancestors are used to this, and any undue noise makes them very uneasy and drives

them away with their blessings therefore the need for the living to provide a conducive atmosphere to usher the ancestors to the town.



Fig. 19: The Ohum bed

Source: Researcher, 2014



Fig. 20: Tafohene's arrival to Ohum bed grounds

The Tafohene arrives under the cool canopy of a multicoloured state umbrella. He is accompanied by his elders and spokesman. The chief and his elders stand on the left side of the Ohum bed after he has placed his state swords and his spokesman's staffs on top of the pillows. He requests through *Nana kyeame* (the chiefs spokesman) that the *mmerenkensono* be brought down from the *Ohumdua*. The *Ohumtufohene* (chief custodian of the Ohum rites) and his members bring the *mmerenkensono* down from the *Ohumdua* (Ohum tree) carefully to avoid accidental fall. The chief puts off his sandals and pulls his cloth down to his chest to show respect to the ancestors, figure 22. He holds the tip of the *mmerenkensono* with the two men still holding the mid and end of it.



Fig. 21: Mmerenkensono Fig. 22: Reverence Fig. 23: Tafohene holds mmerenkensono

Source: Researcher, 2014

The Tafohene then recites the Ohum invocation thus:

Twi version:

Okomfo Asare bra O! (3x)

Obrempa, Otokotaka; ka na obema wo

Nana Banin, Oprapraku Santan

Adawuruwa Yampupu

Odiasibe ee, Akwaa ne Kwaagyebi ee

Boamporifaa ee! Mommra

Afe ano ahya; enne na yedee mmerenkensono rehwi fam

Tafoman nkwa so

English version:

Traditional priest, Asare come! (3x)

The he-man; go and he will give you

Nana Banin, Oprapraku Santan (ancestors)

Adawuruwa Yampupu (river)

Odiasibe, Akwaa and Kwaagyebi (rivers)

Boamporifaa! All should come

The years have come to an end



We are casting the *mmerenkensono* on the ground

Long live Tafo people

The chief then touches the bed with the tip of the *mmerenkensono* and then adds these

Words:

Twi version:

Okyeman nkwa so

Ghanaman nkwa so

English version:

Long live the Akyem Chiefdom

Long live Ghana

He touches the bed with the *mmerenkensono* for a second time and then say:

Twi version:

Awo, nkwa ne akwahosan ne siade

Obarima a ɔnwo ba no nwo

Obaa bonin nso ma ɔnwo ba

yeye bribiara a ma enye yie

Afrinhyia pa oo!

Mfie ngu yen mfie so!!

English version:

We ask for strength and prosperity

Let the impotent male be fruitful

Let the barren woman bear children

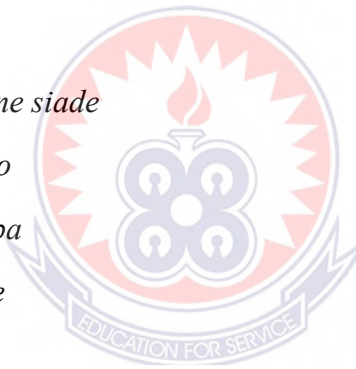
Let our toils be fruitful

Happy new-year

May many years be added to our ages:

He touches the bed with the *mmerenkensono* for the third time and then greets his people:

Twi version:



Afrinhyia pa oooo!

English version:

Happy new-year!

The people then respond:

Twi version:

Afrinhyia pa! Mfie ngu yen mfie so!

English version:

Happy new-year! May many years be added to our age!

The Tafohene then ends the invocation by saying:

Twi version:

Yentu ε!

English version:

Let us begin!

The crowd then responds with great joy. This marks the beginning of the new-year. The Tafohene pulls the *mmerenkensono* into shreds, and shares it out to the people standing by. Some noise is generated as a result of the sharing. After a little agitation, the place becomes calm again. The chief spokesman then informs the people that the activity on that day has marked the beginning of the two-week silence preceding *Ohumkan*. He spells out taboos associated with the two weeks ban on drumming and noise making as pronounced by the chief:

1. Nobody is allowed to make any loud noise during this period to scare away the ancestors.
2. Singing and playing of drums or any musical instruments at social gatherings (even churches) are also not allowed.

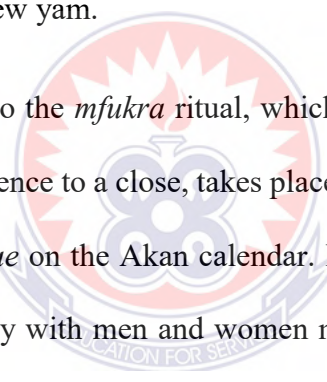
3. When death occurs, there must be no wailing nor should the body be laid in state and burial must be done quietly.
4. All debtors are free from the people they owe until the festivities are over.

The people are urged to abide by the rules to avoid getting into trouble with the authorities. Anyone who violates any of these rules is forced to sacrifice a non-castrated sheep with grown horns in order to appease the ancestors. The Tafohene leaves the scene, followed by the queen-mother and the sub-chiefs of the town; each of them carrying a strand of the *mmerenkensono*. The people also disperse into their homes with each person who received the *mmerenkensono*, carrying his or her strand home. At home, they hang the strand on their door posts and on frames supporting the roofs of their buildings. The remaining *mmerenkensono* is placed back onto the Ohum tree. The custodians of the rites collect the items used to lay the Ohum bed back to the stool-house to await the next year's celebration. The hanging up of the *mmerenkensono* strand on their door posts is of great importance to the people. They believe that, it serves as a guide to the incoming ancestors and also ward off evil spirits. The strands also serve as a means of calculating the number of years one has joined in the celebration of Ohum festival.

4.3 The *Mfukra* (bidding farewell to the farm) Ritual

Throughout the Eastern Region of Ghana, the bulk of the cocoyam and plantain is raised by Akyem Abuakwa people especially in the forests of Begoro. As already stated in the literature review, this place is sometimes called *Kwaebibirim* (dense forest) because of its abundance in rich natural resources. This area is in the Tropical rain forest with fertile valleys, soil, and fresh fauna. Names of farms such as *Fankyeneko* (take salt along), *Kɔɔɔbeda* (have some sleep after weeding) and *Bereporɔ* (foodstuffs ripe and rot) reiterates

how fertile the land is. The people attribute the fertility of the land to their God and ancestors who they think came to bless the land during Ohum. It is on account of this, that Akyem Abuakwa people therefore have special rituals which they perform during Ohum festivities on their farms. They believe that these special sacrifices promote good work on the farms and render the New Year one of peace and plenty. When it is viewed this way, the Ohum festival marks the blessings of the departed ancestors on the harvest of the year, it is by this rituals that some people have the wrong impression that Ohum is mainly a yam festival although it is during the festival that the Tafohene, first eats the freshly harvested yam to give formal permission to everybody in the Akyem Abuakwa chiefdom to also harvest and partake of the new yam.



According to the Omankrado the *mfukra* ritual, which is the first of the preparatory rites that draws the two weeks silence to a close, takes place on Monday; two days to the Ohum day itself which is *Awukudae* on the Akan calendar. Formerly, at dawn on this Monday, the whole town became busy with men and women making feverish preparations before they set off to visit their farms and to perform rituals there. By 8:00 a.m. the whole town was abandoned to the very young, the old and the sick. On the farms, the farmers went round tending their crops and choosing the ones they would send home for the festival and for the rituals. The farmers collected sufficient foodstuff to be taken home to last for the Ohum week. Firewood was also carried home to be presented to the *Ohene* (chief) during the ceremony on Tuesday. The farmers then prepared three small bundles of firewood at the *adehyehyei* (normally a tree stump on the farm where loads to be taken home are packed). They added to the three bundles of firewood some produce from the farm in small quantities. The most elderly farmer then invoked the spirits of the ancestors and that of

Birem Abena, the goddess of the Birem River, to partake of the first fruit of the farm. He did this by saying:

Twi version:

Pirempesuperempe ee!

Aniabena ee! Afihyiapa

Mfie ngu yen mfie so

Meyere nkwa so ('kunu' if woman)

Me mma nkwa so

M'abusuafo nkwa so

Me ara me nkwa so

English version:

Come Pirempesuperempe! (gods)

Come Aniabena! (Birem River goddess) Happy New Year

Long may we live

Long life to my wife/husband

Long life to my children

Long life to my family/clan

Long life to me also

This rite was an offering in which the farmers brought their first fruits of the ground to the ancestors and the gods. After this ritual, the farmers carried home their luggage, leaving behind the offering. The children are warned on their way home not to look back in order not to incur the wrath of the gods. Hunters and farmers who live in the neighbouring villages performed similar *mfukra* rituals and then got to the towns for the Ohum celebrations. Nobody was expected to stay behind in his hut on his farm on these sacred days. People who felt the Ohum had nothing to do with them and so chose to stay in the villages often confessed experiencing some unusual natural phenomena on those days.



Some reported of hearing strange and exotic music and noise in the nearby forests. They therefore hardly stayed behind.

Today, social change and the introduction of other forms of religion (especially Christianity), has made this ritual unpopular among most inhabitants of Tafo and the rest of Akyem Abuakwa, however some traditionalists still practice this ritual. Also formally on that Monday, visitors and indigenes who wanted to take part in the festival had to come on that day since no one was permitted to travel to Tafo on the Tuesday- *Benada-Dapaa*. It is said that in the olden days, there had been incidents when people who tried to journey across Tafo on *Benada-Dapaa* were hooted at. Strangers and visitors who arrived on this day were refused entry into the town. Since no other town in Abuakwa allowed them to come in, they had to stay in the bush and face all the consequences which included death. Monday became a day of great happiness, reunion, goodwill and toleration as it was a day that all visitors arrived. Friends and families stayed outside and received visitors with names and hooting such as “*onieooo!*” (Here you are) “*nkurasefo no abao*” (those from the village are in again) and the likes. Workers were given days off to attend festivals in their towns. These days Social change has reduced this practice to the minimal. People travel to and fro as they wish without any form of restrictions.

4.4 Benada-Dapaa

This is the Tuesday marking the end of the two-week ban on noise making it is a sacred day known as *Benada-Dapaa*. It is a day set aside for the preparation towards the great *Kru-dapaa- wukuo* (Ohum day). Aside from the fact that it is a day of holiness, both men and materials are purified and ennobled for the next day's Ohum; general cleaning of homes, streets is done religiously. The *nkonnuafieso* stool bearers spend time to wash and

scrub all the white stools, chairs and wooden artefacts at the palace. The state swords and spokesman staff are thoroughly cleaned, polished or sprayed to give them a new look. The whole palace, the stool houses together with the “fetish” houses are all given a thorough sweeping. In the individual homes, women and children carry household utensils and all dirty laundry out for washing and cleaning early in the morning; stools, chairs, tables, mortars and pestles are also scrubbed. On that day nobody is allowed to eat before bathing, for the festival is aimed at washing away the evils of the past year. *Benada-Dapaa* is mainly a day for remembering the dead and mourning quietly for them. Men and women move about in traditional mourning cloths of black, blue and brown. On this day there is absolutely no pounding of fufu or hitting the ground with any farming implement, neither is any farm visited. The Akans take this day as a form of fasting for they are deprived of their best meal.

Mashed yam or plantain is prepared in the afternoon and food with lots of bush meat are prepared in many homes and sent to *nsamanpom* (cemetery) and placed on the graves of deceased relatives who died not so long ago. The Tafohene, the *Ahenemma* (offspring of chiefs) and the royals also go to weed the mausoleum, set fire and prepare many kinds of unsalted and pepper-free foods and mashed yam for it is the practice of Akans to offer such foods to ancestors. Water and wine is added and presented to them. This is usually done a week after the person’s death. At about 5pm the elders in the palace gather around, town folks begin trooping in, libation is poured unto the drums and other percussions for it is believed that spirits dwell in the drums and they have to be pacified and for permission to be sought from them before they are played to dispel the two weeks ban on noise making. Late in the evening, at about 6:30 p.m. the *atumpan* drums dispel the silence followed by

the *mmomaa* drums, the *fɔntɔmfɔm* drums and the other percussions, figure 24. The people shout for joy, for it is the dawn of a New Year. All age groups join in the celebrations. Children are seen with their self-made drum also joining in dispelling the silence, figure 25. Some boisterous ones move around town amidst shouting and drumming for a year has gone and a new one has begun.



Figure 24: Drums dispelling silence

Source: Researcher, 2015

Greetings heard are:

Twi version:

Afihiyapa oo! Mfie ngu yɛn mfie so

Afida sesei na yete ase

English version:

Happy New Year! Long may we live

May we live to see the next year

Others whose relatives had passed on during the year mourn them for they wished they were alive to join in the celebrations. Elderly women mourn and mention names of ancestors. Today this act has gone down the drain. After a while, the *atumpan* drums



Figure 25: Children dispelling silence

remind the people of their duty to the gods and the spirits. The people then drift away in groups to their homes for the night.

As recalled by the *Omankrado*, in the olden days some of the elders were sent to consult deities from different parts of the regions during the two weeks ban on drumming and noise making and bring news of what might befall Abuakwa land the year ahead and the way forward. Over the night to dawn fire is set with three logs of ‘*Akwaana*’ wood as was done by Okrubanin I when he set foot on the Akyem land with his entourage to signify they were the first inhabitants of the land. They then deliberate on issues raised by these deities. The welfare of land is also discussed, together with issues that went well or not and measures put in place to sustain or change the issues. These days ‘*Esa*’ wood is used in place of ‘*Akwaana*’ wood figure 26, and no deities are consulted again, instead they pour libation first, sit to discuss issues of grave concern to the land. New rules that need to be set for the benefit of the people are discussed and compromise reached. The secretary records all deliberations in a book. Before they rise libation is poured again to thank the gods.



Figure 26: Three pieces of burning logs Figure 27: Secretary recording discussions

Source: Researcher, 2015

4.5 Ohum Day

This same dawn, the *atumpān* drums inform the people of the *Adae* and send poetic messages to both the dead and the living. The talking drums trace the origin of the people and praise the warriors and chiefs who helped to make the state great. The reigning chief is also praised and given condolences too for it is deemed that any issue that goes wrong on the land is blamed on the chief. The message of the drum is as follows:

Twi version:

Okofu Duodu Amoa

Ohene kyere ahene

Damirifa! Damirifa due!

Ofosu Siakwan

Okuru Banin nana! Okuru Banin a Ofiri Aniabena muo

Damirifa due! Damirifa due!

Tafo Awansan Kotoko

Okurukyereku Awansan hene

Nana! Dammirifa due!

English version:

Duodu Amoa the fighter

The king who arrests kings

Condolences!

Ofosu the man who blocks roads

Grandson of Okuru Banin! Okuru Banin who came from

Aniabena

Condolences! Condolences!

The porcupine of Tafo Awansah!

The king of Awansah!



Nana! Condolences!

In the *abusuafie* (family homes), men and women gather to drink spirits and palm wine and wish one another well. Before they depart, the *abusuapanin* (family head) pours libation inviting their departed ancestors to come and dine with them and also bless them with prosperity and happiness. The people wear their best dresses and prepare delicious meals, mostly fufu to break their fast from the previous days fast; for the Akans believe whatever food they eat apart from fufu is a form of fasting. Fowls, goats and sheep are mainly killed for the meals. The *Tafohene* (chief of Tafo) sits in state at the palace and receive greetings from his elders he in turn entertains them with drinks. All the musical groups –*bommafo*, *fontomfrom* and *mpintin* and *adowa* come to play and entertain the chiefs and their guests while dancers who know how to dance according to the dictates of the rhythms dance to them. The men and women as well as children of the town and nearby villages go to the palace to greet the chief and enjoy the drumming and dancing that go on. While some are absorbed in the drumming and dancing, others could be seen indulging in long chats with old and new friends and relatives some of whom have travelled for the Ohumkan celebrations. There are indeed happy reunions.

4.5.1 Rituals at the Stool House on Ohum Day

Later in the morning, the *Tafohene* and his elders go to the stool house to venerate the ancestors for the Ohum is an occasion for the veneration of the ancestral stool and the spirits of those who formerly occupied them. In reverence for the ancestors, the *Tafohene* and his elders which include his chief spokesman take their sandals off their feet and with bare shoulders they enter the stool room. This signifies their allegiance to the *Tafo*

community and to the ancestors. The abentia (horn) player follows them with such messages as:

Twi version:

Meesom! Meesom!

Na Oman yi bekae me?

English version:

I am serving devotedly

But will the people remember me?

The chief provides a sheep as offering to the ancestors. The Okyeame (chief's spokesman) then pours libation and with the help of the stool carriers and sons of the chief, they slaughter the sheep. The black stools are then purified with the blood of the slaughtered sheep. In doing this, the Okyeame calls the names of all the chiefs who have blackened stools in the room one after the other (a chief who has a black stool in his honour is one whose funeral has been organised by the succeeding chief and a stool given him in his honour; the stool thus bears the name of the past chief. He urges them to accept the sacrifice of sheep and of the drink and in return, grant the people of Tafo, health and prosperity. In time past, barren women who wished to give birth came for the blood of the sheep to be smeared on their bellies. It was strongly believed among the people that, any request made on that day at the stool house will be honoured. If any elder wishes to have a special blessing from the ancestors, he presented his ram or schnapps to the chief who acted as a spokesman and poured libation to the gods and ancestors on his behalf. Drinks are also offered to the state swords and linguist staffs. The Okyeame performs this ritual by sipping some of the drink and then blowing it onto them. It is believed that after these rituals are performed, the blessings of the ancestors of the land are invoked for the people throughout

the year. Nabofa said it is a common belief among the adherents of African traditional religion that there is a mysterious power in every blood because of its close connection with the vital life force which permeates all things, both animate and inanimate. This belief gave vent to the idea that when blood is misused it could be dangerous and at the same time efficacious when it is properly and reverently handled...shedding of blood is a common occurrence in traditional Africa. Substitutionary and expiatory sacrificial rites are based on the belief that there is a mystical power in blood which is capable of expiating guilt and impurities from man and his environment (Nabofa, 1985).

4.5.2 Presentation of Gifts to the Tafohene

After the rituals at the stool house, the Tafohene, now in his beautiful costume, sits in state with his elders and the people come to pay homage and to present to him pieces of firewood. The attire normally worn on that day is white to signify a joyous and victorious mood. Figure 28 shows some senior citizens of the town paying homage to the chief. This presentation ceremony commemorates the *gyentia* (firewood) Okuru Banin I brought from Birem River and the three pieces of burning log he kindled perpetually around the Tafo stool. The presentation also serves to replenish the stock of the fuel for the state fire which is kept burning always at *gyaase* (fire place) figure 31. Furthermore, it portrays the humility of the people and the reverence they have for their chief, for the piece of firewood is carried on their heads as they are presented to the chief. Men of high status, teachers and school pupils, Christians and Moslems as well as traditionalists also come to pay homage for it is obligatory they come since they live and work on the land of the Tafohene, figure 29. The Tafohene on his part gives out to the subjects who do the presentation, gifts as a sign of appreciation.



Figure 28: Senior citizens paying homage **Figure 29: Congregation paying homage**



Figure 30, 31: Pupils lined up to present firewood to gyaase

Source: Researcher, 2014

Late in the afternoon, selected schools in the township compete in quizzes and debates based on Ohum festival for which deserving schools are given awards.



Figure 32: Presentations of gifts to pupils **Figure 33: Presentation of gift to a school**

Source: Researcher, 2014

4.5.3 Ohum *Eme-eme*

Late in the afternoon at about 4pm, the *Tafohemaa* (queen-mother of Tafo) or elderly women of the palace prepares *etɔ* (mashed yam or plantain) with plantain and goes into the streets with some of the Ohum makers and throws the food in small bits on the streets. As they go along the streets, she calls the gods to come to partake of the *etɔ*. This is purposely done to drive away evil spirits and to appease the gods.

Twi version:

Pirempesupirempe ee!

Mo mmɛgye oo!

Mo mmɛgye aduane nni oo!

English version:

All ye gods

Come and partake

Come and partake of this food

Young men in the town cut the rest of the *mmerɛnkensono* which was placed on the *Ohum dua* during the Tuesday when the ban on noise making was announced into pieces and the strands plaited and placed one on each shoulder, with top speed they go round the town three times, on the last round they move to the *Ohum dua* and pierce the *mmerɛnkensono* into the soil at once. It is believed that these young men who partake in this exercise never go impotent. Formerly, if they happen to meet any impotent man as they went round the streets, he is seized and carried shoulder high; white clay is smeared on him to signify sanctification and wholeness. He was then forced to proclaim that his wife could be taken away from him if there is no issue between them by the next Ohum. Many people have testified that very often, these men became fruitful after the sanctification. The significance

of Ohum *eme-eme* is that the whole town is sanctified and cleansed from all evil. The Chief and his elders sit and wait until the young men finish the exercise and bring soil from the grounds to be shared by them. They receive the soil in leaves and sprinkle them in their stool rooms in their various homes; this they believe bring them wealth and prosperity. *Afrihyia aduane* (yearly food) consisting of *eto* with lots of fish and eggs, and yam *fufu* with unsalted soup prepared with meat is also put on the stool hovels in the homes that have ancestral stools.

4.6 Thursday

Formerly this day was for resting from any ritual or rite. Farmers go to their farms for foodstuffs and to harvest their new yams which were eaten on Friday after the rituals and rites at *Agyempremoso*. The linguist staff, swords, stools and palanquins are brought out and prepared for the Friday rituals. The palanquins and drums are covered with white calico for it is expected that those who visit the shrine should be in white to signify purity and sanctity before the gods and victory through the old year and the year ahead. The route to the shrine is also cleared for the next day. These days health walk has also been added as part of the Thursday activities. This year a new health clinic was inaugurated and *Nkosohemaa* (developmental queen mother) was also installed for her continuous support to developmental projects in Akyem Tafo and the Ohum festival as well.

4.7 Friday- *Agyempremoso* Rituals

Friday is the sacred day for the worship of Agyempremo Kofi, the protective god of the people of Tafo and its surrounding communities. At about 9 am, the Tafohene adorns himself in white before he approaches the *Agyempremoso* grove. He wears a silver crown or a white turban. His elders also put on white cloths. He is met at the entrance of the palace

by a large crowd of the people. The chief carried in his palanquin is followed by a file of his sub-chiefs, elders of the town and their retinue of followers with the drummers and horn blowers playing their instruments. The chiefs and people of Etukrom and Osiem (surrounding towns of Tafo) come to join the Tafo people and they all carry the Tafohene in his palanquin to the grove in a solemn mood figure 34 and 35. Leading the procession is the *Agyempremo sofo* (high priest of Agyempremo) who is also attired in a white cloth, a white head-kerchief, and holds a cow's tail and in the company of other priests and priestesses. On their way to the grove, the procession stops near the *Ohumdua* (Ohum tree) figure 30. Here, drinks are poured as offering to the tree. The sounds of the *mpintin*, *apirede* and *fontomfrom* drums are heard everywhere.



Figure 34, 35: The chief carried in his palanquin to the grove

Source: Researcher, 2015

The procession is met by groups of people with most of them clothed in white. The white attire worn by all and sundry on this day is to present themselves purified and sanctified before the gods at the shrine and to signify victory over all misfortunes in the past year and the year ahead. Besides this no earring or chains, rings, bracelets, hats or footwear are worn to the grove nor are any means of capturing events sent to the grove in a bid to show

humility to the gods and ancestors. The women especially, engage themselves in singing, dancing and rhythmic jumps and the waving of white handkerchief and cloths; creating an atmosphere of intense activity with a noisy background, all in praise to their gods and ancestors. The chief and the queen mother cross the river *Taako* which skirts the *Agyempremo* grove figure 34, 35. *Agyempremo* is a river with its roots from *Ehyiamankyini*, a neighbouring village which is believed to hold intense protection against bullets so that any man or warrior who bathes in the water goes to war and comes back unhurt by cannons or guns. This river god they believe protects them from any form of misfortune. At the shrine is a large pot filled with water from *Agyempremo* (able to combat cannons). Deities are consulted and any priest or priestess present could serve as a messenger to the gods. The *Agyempremo sofo* prays and incantations are said for forgiveness of wrong doings and also thanksgiving to the gods for success; libation is then poured with palm wine to *Agyempremo*. A sheep is slaughtered as sacrifice to appease the gods. The acceptance of the sacrifice is related with the side the sacrificed sheep falls and die; when it falls on the left it means the sacrifice is not accepted whereas when it falls on the right then the sacrifice is accepted by the gods. If it is not accepted, prayers and incantations are said again to appease the gods and another sacrifice is made until it falls on the right, then it is accepted. The blood of the sacrificed sheep is smeared on the stomach of unproductive women to change their course. Part of the meat is cut into small bits and thrown into the river *Taako* as sacrifice. Freshly harvested yam is then cooked with the rest of the meat which the Tafohene eats. No bone of the sacrificed sheep is to be crushed with the teeth nor any of the meat sent home for fear of any unclean person taking part in the meal. This is the first time he eats the newly harvested yam. The rest of the food is eaten

by his sub-chiefs and court attendants. From that point permission is officially granted for everyone to eat the newly harvested yam. At the grove, women come to present the chief with food stuffs, pepper, garden eggs and firewood for the cooking and feasting by all who care to eat. After the general feasting at the grove, the Tafohene and all the people returned home in the afternoon. He danced in his palanquin at vantage points until he got to his palace, figure 39.

He held a durbar until sunset; here chiefs and people from other towns were invited to grace the occasion. The chief thanked all and sundry for their various supports, his general view about the land through the year is expressed.



Figure 36: Scene at the grove



Figure 37: Ohum dua



Figure 38: Celebrants from the grove
Source: Researcher, 2015



Figure 39: Tafohene dancing amidst cheers

Messages from the deities were delivered to all so were new rules spelt out. This was really a great day and the climax of the festivities, *fɔntɔmfɔm* and *bomma* drummers and dancers entertain spectators. At the durbar, the mournful *abentia* was heard giving poetic messages as:

Twi version:

Sɔre ha!

Kuro yi wɔ wo?

English version:

Get away from here!

Is this town yours?

This is directed at the aliens and chiefs from other towns in the state who may be jealous of the power and pomp of the Tafohene. The durbar ended at sunset and the chief and his entourage dignitaries and people present at the durbar walked back to the palace amidst cheers from the town folks and drumming from the drums and other musical instruments. These days the grand durbar on Fridays after the rituals from *Agyempremoso* has been replaced with *fɔntɔmfɔm* and drum language contest. It involves drummers and dancers from neighbouring towns such as Kukurantumi, Kyebi, Asafo and Amanfrom. In the evening the town becomes animated with lots of activities they are entertained with brass band music, and street carnivals are hosted all over town. The youth is seen more boisterous than ever, they dance and move around till daybreak and retire to their homes.

4.8 Saturday grand durbar

On Saturday around noon the grand durbar is staged and invited guests made up of government officials, sponsors and chiefs from various towns and other dignitaries sits for the chief and his elders to come and sit in state to exchange pleasantries. An appeal for

funds is done to solicit for funds to help in developmental projects. Government officials also pledge unflinching supports from their government to the region and Ghana as a whole. One other event which has caught the attention of all is ‘Miss Ohum’ pageantry show which takes place in the night to dawn the next day. Young and intelligent girls contest and show of their beauty and intelligence in traditions and cultures of the land and other general issues, catwalk, and talent hunts as well. The best comes out as the winner who is crowned and prizes from sponsors awarded to deserving contestants. Other side attractions include top artistes who help to grace the occasion.

4.9 Sunday thanksgiving

On Sunday a thanksgiving service is held which involves all churches in town retiring at one point to give thanks to almighty God for yet another successful celebration. Prayers are said to ask for his mercies again the year ahead. The chief retires to the palace with his elders and this marks the official closure of the *Ohumkan* celebrations.



Figure 40: At the durbar

Source: Researcher, 2015

4.10 Ohumkyire

According to a speech from the Tafohene, *Ohumkyire* is celebrated on a low profile. Among the Akan, giving thanks for the second time is a custom. *Ohumkyire* follows this pattern. The second thanksgiving (*Ohumkyire*) falls eighty days after *Ohumkan*; that is on the seventh *Adae* which is in September. This is the second *Awukudae* after the *Kru-Dapa-Wukuo*. The *Ohumkyire* ceremonies are, in many respects, similar to those of *Ohumkan*. The only difference is that there is no presentation of firewood. The chief sneaks backdoor with the custodians of the Ohum rites and rituals to *Agyempremoso* grove to perform the rituals and rites.

4.11 How well do these objects and performances add to the beauty of the festival?

This question was close – ended with three options to choose out from as follows: a. neutral b. moderate c. very well. The responses were quite overwhelming. Below is the table 7 to present responses to the question posed to the 50 respondents:

Table 10: How well art forms add to the beauty of the Ohum festival

Sex	Neutral	Moderate	Very Well	Total
Male	1	4	33	38
Female	1	2	9	12
Total	2	6	42	50
Perc. (%)	4%	12%	84%	100 %

Source: Field work, 2014

The 50 respondents responded to the three options provided for the question. 33 of the male and 9 out of the 12 female respondents agreed with no agility that the objects and performances presented during the Ohum festival were themselves a beauty to behold and thus emitted this quality to the celebration of the festival. They represented 84%. A total of 6 respondents made up of 4 males and 2 females agreed in no uncertain terms that the objects and performances associated with the celebration of the festival moderately added to the beauty of festival and they represented a 12%. Out of the lot, a male and female, a total of 2 remained neutral to the question asked, they represented 4%. Below is a well elaborated graph of the responses to the question:

Graph 6

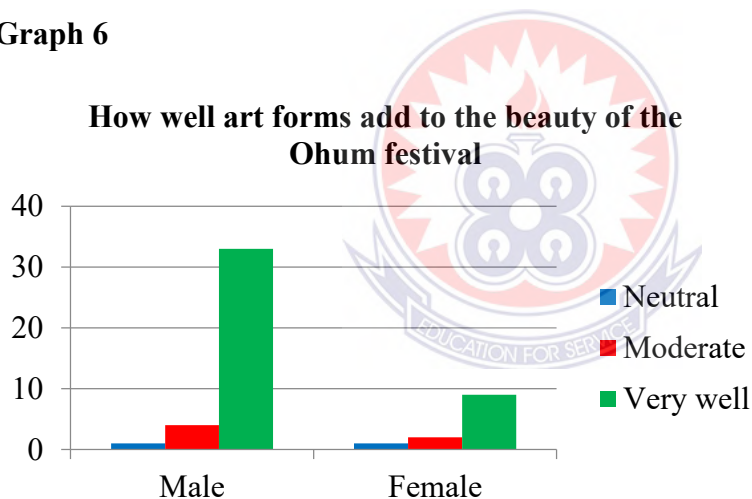


Figure 41: Effect of art forms on Ohum festival

Source: Field work, 2015

4.12 Artistic Forms and Aesthetics reflected and the roles they play in the festival.

Art forms, like any other African cultural phenomena, play a great role in the celebration of the Ohum festival. As elsewhere in the world, Ghanaian art is expressed in three forms: verbal, visual and performance. Proverbs, folklore, poetry, "drum language" may be cited as examples of verbal art. Visual art is expressed in tangible artifacts. Performance art is

expressed in music-making and dancing (Acqandah, 2006). Just as written documents authenticate history in literate communities, so in most traditional societies, art forms make the intangible past more real, whip up interest and reduce the stress of using mental imagery to attempt to paint word pictures. It is necessary to identify, describe and analyse the art forms to highlight the roles they play in the festival and life of the people. An attempt has been made to group the arts associated with this festival into the various art forms outlining the work of art under each category and presenting the meaning, their roles and the aesthetic values they possess through description of these art forms.

4.13 Visual Art

Visual art is the branch of art which refers to all the arts that can be seen and touched. It comprises sculpture, painting, textiles, pottery, beadwork, basketry, calabash art, leatherwork, architecture, jewellery, body art (body painting and coiffure), and communication design. However, sculpture, textiles, Jewellery, basketry, Leatherwork, communication design and body art were predominantly represented in the celebration of *Ohum* festival. Effort will be made by the researcher to give a description of the various art works under each art form and the roles they play in the successful celebration of the festival.

4.13.1 Sculpture

Sculpture refers basically to the field of art concerned with the production of three-dimensional works of art through the processes of carving, modeling, casting, assemblage and construction of various materials such as metal, clay, ivory, stone, bones, wax and wood. In the celebration of *Ohum* festival, various sculpture works are used from the first day of celebration to the very last. The umbrella tops, state swords, stools, chairs,

palanquin, spokesman's staffs, drums are art works used for the successful celebrations of the festival.

State swords/courier swords

The state swords are made up with gold plaited wooden handles and metallic blade painted black.



Figure 42(a): Akofena (state swords)

Source: Researcher, 2015

The illuminating gold colour fixed against the ebony black blade emits a sharp contrast that strikes the eye and draws attention. On each of these handles are carefully carved proverbial symbols super posed on spherical forms which serve as support. The blackened metallic

blades have both geometric and amorphous shapes of totemic animals related to the Akyem Tafo traditional court cut in them.



Figure 42(b): Akofena (state swords) Figure 43: Couriers with state sword

Source: Researcher, 2015

Figure 42(b) is a gold plaited well-polished wooden handle with the symbol ‘*funtu fu na afu, denkyem afu na afu*’ carved on a rectangular block upon a cylindrical shape. Incised in the metal blade in succession are four hollow oval shapes, a six-point star and the proverbial symbol ‘*funtu fu na afu, denkyem afu na afu*’. Apart from the contrast between the black metallic blade and the gold plaited wooden handle, the thin end of the blade contrasts with its broad end drawing attention to the symbol that has been repeated again to lay emphasis on the message the symbol emits; unity and democracy.

The sword is used as symbol of authority of the chief. The number of swords a chief possessed and how large exhibits his greatness. The swords are used as weapons of guarding and leading the chief when he is in a procession. The couriers brandish them to

wade off the crowd when they seem unbearable. The chief dances and makes gestures with it to pay allegiance to God, his ancestors and to his people. Symbolically the state sword signifies authority and the ability of the chieftom to defend itself in times of trouble. The sword is used for the swearing of oath of allegiance during the installation of a chief, festivals and other customary rites.



Figure 44: *Akonwa* (mini palanquin) Figure 45: *Apakayi* (palanquin)

Source: Photographs taken by researcher, 2015

Palanquins

These are specially made wooden seats. The mini palanquin is carved in the form of an armchair with the back rest and seat stuffed with velvet, figure 44. The arms of the palanquin are elongated to provide rest for the arms. A wooden rectangular box also covered with velvet is fixed in front of the seat to provide rest for the feet. The base is covered with strong wooden slabs to provide a flat base for the palanquin; also fixed underneath the base are two pieces of wood which stretches from the back to frontal view to serve as carriers for the couriers.

The chief's palanquin, also carved with wood has its frontal and rare side circularly shaped and covered with '*adwene asa*' kente and the sides curved in, stuffed and covered with

white fabric to give an impression of a cozy boat. A low stool is fixed inside to serve as a seat for the chief. The base is fixed with two rectangular stripes of wood to serve as handles for the couriers, figure 45. The chief dressed in white, coupled with the white covering of the palanquin and the white patches in the *adwinniasa* kente is a repetition and stresses on the importance attached to the wearing of white as a sign of purity during the *Agyepremoso* rituals and rites. To break the monotony of the all-white are the shades of red and blue patches of the sophisticated woven 'adwene asa' kente.

The mini palanquin is used to carry royals who are next in command to the *Tafohene*: the *Omankrado* and queen mother. The palanquin carries only the chief and sometimes his attendant. According to custom, a chief only sits in a palanquin when it is conferred on him by the paramount chief. They are covered in white fabric as a sign of purification before the custodians of the Ohum rites and rituals set off to the *Agyempremoso* grove. Upon return the chief parades the principal streets in the town in the palanquin dancing amidst cheering.

Seats and stools

For Akans seats mean more than mere supports for the body, a person's soul is identified with his seat, and thus serves different ceremonial purpose. It is his symbol of authority. There are different types of seats; these are ceremonial, ritual and domestic. The *akonwa tumtum*, (black stool), is a ritual stool and not displayed in public. These are stools representing the ancestors.

A chief, who during his lifetime led a good and upright life according to the ethical and cultural traditions of his society, had his stool blackened after his death. These seats are meant for the *Tafohene*. The *hwedom akonnwa* (Seat for the leader of multitude) (1) and

(2) are ceremonial seats used during the Ohum festival but on different occasions. *Hwedom akonnwa* (1) figure 46 is the older of the two. The chief used to sit on it during the grand durbar but now is used on the other days of the festival apart from the grand durbar.



Figure 46, 47: *Hwedom akonnwa* (1 and 2)

Figure 48: *Asesedwa* (ritual stool)

Source: Researcher, 2014

It is a black wooden framed seat with hide used for the back and seat rest and decorated with golden studs. The alternating rhythm of sharp contrasting colour of ebony black and golden studs gives the chair a dignified look. At the ends of the back rest are fixed two golden pinnacles. Images embossed on it include the cross and two state swords interlocked. The black stands against the golden brown hide and gold plated decorations make the seat inviting although it is meant only for the chief. On the whole, a straight line drawn through the vertical axis of the chair suggests a symmetrically balanced chair. *Hwedom akonnwa* (2) figure 47, is the latest seat used during the grand durbar. It is a magnificent wooden gold plated chair, with the back rest and seat stuffed and covered with wine coloured fabric and golden flowery images. At the ends of the back and arm rest are images of the head of a dog with a burning flame in the mouth. This is the totem of the

Aduana clan and gives information that the custodians of the chieftom are the Aduana clan. Other symbols include *gye Nyame* (except God) reiterating the belief in God as supreme. At the topmost part of the back rest is a relief carving of vegetation painted green and an elaborate palm tree with the frond bending down located in the midpoint of the branches; this also symbolizes the occupant of the seat is the custodian of the Ohum rite done specifically with *mmerenkensono*. Every aspect of the magnificent seat is symbolic. The third, the wooden stool made from *sese dua* (*Funtwnia africana*), has its seat the curved in a concave form. The central part made up of rectangular shaped blocks suggests the entrance of a magnificent building, making the stool rigid and masculine to suggest it as a male *asesedwa* (male stool). A proverbial animal, *denkyem* (crocodile) forms part of the design of the stool. The crocodile has the ability to survive on land in water too and hence the meaning as adaptability to all situations. It has a flat base to ensure stability of the stool figure 48. This totems and symbols communicate the values and beliefs of Akyem Abuakwa. It is used by the chief during the performance of the rites and rituals at *Agyempremoso* grove.

Drums

Drums are indispensable, the *petepreh*, *mpintin*, *dondo*, *atumpan*, *fontomfrom*, *dawuru* and *dawuruta* perform very important roles throughout the celebration. The sounding of the drums helps the people to express their joy and happiness. Also when the drums are sounded, they help in ensuring that the spirits are invoked during the performance of rituals. Various drum languages convey messages to the people. The chief priest is possessed by the spirits when the drums are sounded. The drums therefore play a role in ensuring that the various rites and rituals take place in the right manner.

The *petepreh* drum figure 49, oval shaped with groovy lines incised at the lower part and sticks fixed around the mid portion to serve as anchors for the strings that stretches the leather to be drum-tight. The black colour of the drum gives it an awesome look which befits the role it plays in the celebration of the festival. It is an important drum in the ensemble. Its main role is to summon townsfolk to the chief's palace when there is an occurrence and the chief wants to put a message across. During the festival it leads the procession to the *Agyempremso* grove for the rituals to be performed. The cylindrically shaped *mpintin* drum covered with red and black fabric forms part of the ensemble for *fɔntɔmfɔm* and *bomma*, the traditional court dances. The set of *dondo*, shaped like the hour glass also forms part of the ensemble; it is normally played to offset the thundering sounds from the larger drums. It is also played for the priest and priestesses to be possessed by the spirit, figure 51 and 55.



Figure 49: Petepreh drum Figure 50: Mpintin drum Figure 51: Dondo

Source: Researcher, 2014

The male and female *atumpan* drums known as the talking drums, are oval shaped with a slender cylindrical base rendering the drums unstable so leans against a wooden stand. There are curvy and undulating lines incised on the body to enhance its aesthetic appeal.

Sticks are fixed at the upper part to serve as anchors for the strings that stretch the leather to be drum-tight. By far the *atumpān* drums are the most important of the entire ensemble. They are used to dispel the two weeks ban on drumming and noise making. They are also played to appraise the chief and venerate the ancestors throughout the festive season, figure 52. The gargantuan male and female *fɔntɔnfɔm* drums, cylindrically shaped and painted black to give them a dignified look and with their self imposing structure gives off their sound like thunder which could be felt in the pulse. Their beauty is further enhanced by white fabrics and hides. They are the master drums among the *fɔntɔnfɔm* ensemble figure 53. The *dawuru* made with metal and *dawuruta* (sticks), figure 54, are all percussions in the ensemble that help to enrich the melody of the music played by the drums through out the festival whichn is a source of entertainment and for ritual purposes.



Figure 52: Atumpān drums



Figure 53: Fɔntɔnfɔm drums



Figure 54: Dawuru and dawuruta



Figure 55: Dondo played for a priestess

Source: Researcher, 2015

The spokesman staff

A chief has spokespersons—wrongly referred to as linguist (someone who studies, speaks or teaches several foreign languages) whose insignia are staffs. On these staffs are a variety of symbols ranging from clan totems to proverbial and historical incidents encoded in abstract or symbolic forms which represent values and beliefs of the people. These *akyeampoma* announce in non-verbal form the arrival of a chief. The bearer of *akyeampoma* need not always speak, for the symbols on the *akyeampoma* are intended to communicate that is why when a chief in Akyem Abuakwa wants to summon his subjects to the palace, he sends his spokesman who carries the staff. Wherever the chief is the spokesman and his staff is present. Apart from serving as a medium of communication, the staff also helps in making the chief's aesthetic appearance complete. A chief's procession without the spokesman's staff is incomplete. The spokesman staff is used from the inception of the festival to the very end. They are placed on the Ohum bed together with the ceremonial swords for the Ohum rites to be performed. They also form part of the *Agyepremoso* rituals and rites. It represents the ideas, philosophies and beliefs of a particular clan which owns it. Figure 56 is a spokesman's staff which is about five feet high. It is a wooden staff which is gold plated. It is made up of a long handle carved with several rings interlocking each other and interspersed with squared shapes incised with symbols. On top of the handle is a carved image of a dog sitting on a stool with a stick in the mouth. In front of the dog is a carved image of a three-legged hearth with three logs of wood interspersed in the openings of the hearth. This symbol is directly related to the chiefdom of the people of Akyem Tafo; the Aduana clan whose totemic animal is a dog with a flame in the mouth for it is said that a mythical dog brought the Aduana clan fire to

set for cooking, thus they are originators of fire. Figure 57 has the top of the staff as a proverbial symbol: *Ɔbaakofoɔ enkyikyiri edom* (one person cannot form a kingdom).



Figure 56, 57, 58, 59: Varied *akyeampoma* (spokesman staff)

Source: Photographs taken by Researcher, 2014

It is a carved image of *adwini* (mudfish) at the apex of the staff and other fishes beneath. This shows the accommodating nature of the Akyem Tafo people. Figure 58 also has the handle of the staff incised with groovy crisscross lines. On top of the handle is the image of a male holding the branches of a palm tree. This symbol gives an idea of the Akyem Tafo people as custodians of the Ohum rites performed with *mmerenkenson* from the palm tree an institution handed over to them by *Obosomfo* Asare, the state philosopher and high priest and therefore they were the only people who could announce the date for the celebration of the Ohum festival before any other town could celebrate it on the same day.

4.13.2 Textiles

Textiles is an art form which involves weaving, printing and appliqué work produces materials such as cloths, mats and costumes. The indispensability of textiles is seen throughout the celebration of Ohum festival. From the opening rituals to the end of the

celebration, textiles in the form of clothing and its accessories are displayed. Fanciful kente, printed fabrics, woven blankets, umbrellas and calico are special costumes which portray the culture and identities of the people. Apart from the chiefs and elders who put on cloth to portray their rank for a chiefs regalia should be more elaborate than his elders, an exclusive form of artistry which is observed in this colourful celebration gives cause for admiration. A joyful and colourful occasion as it is, celebrants portray their sense of beauty through the way they dress. Celebrants are seen in all sorts of clothing and attire to grace the occasion.

The priests and priestesses cloth

The priests and priestesses as part of the retinue for the Agyempremoso rituals dress in white fabric most especially calico which is complimented by an ‘*abotiri*’ as a sign of sanctity. The drapery on the cloth formed by several curvy lines which moves from different directions from the left towards one point at the right suggests an intense whirling of the body. They engage in *akomfo goro* (display of priests and priestesses) early morning before they set off to Agyempremoso and continue when they return.



Fig. 60: A priestess in white calico



Fig. 61: Chief and elders in varied fabric

Source: Researcher, 2015



Figure 62: *Nsaa* blanket



Figure 63: *Bommo* blanket



Figure 64: *Ohum* bed



Figure 65: Elders and chief in varied fabrics



Figure 66: *Batakari* (smock)



Figure 67: *Kente*

Source: Researcher, 2015

The white fabric complimented by their white body painting evokes a sense of purity, figure 60.

Chief's umbrella

Kyiniye kesiε figure 68 and 69, the chief's ceremonial umbrella protects him from rain and the sun rays. It is carried with pride by its bearer and turned rhythmically in various directions over the chief's head. Apart from its protection, it is a symbolic object which adds to the completeness of the chief's retinue.



Figure 68, 69: The chief's giant umbrellas **Figure 70: Symbol printed in umbrella**

Source: Researcher, 2014

The fabric apart from its durability is colourful, a combination of bright red, golden orange, and golden yellow, all these aimed at depicting the wealth of the people. The harmonious illuminating gay colours glitter as the sun beam falls on it. The sophisticated macramé chords appliquéd at the joints and edges of the umbrella add to its magnificence. In the fabric are printed symbolic designs of a dog with burning flame in the mouth-symbol of the Aduana clan-, a stool and juxtaposed to the left and right of the stool *akofena* signifying the protective nature of Tafodom, figure 70. Apart from its protective role, the items used for the laying of the *Ohum* bed is regarded as sacred hence ushered outside under the shade of the umbrella. The umbrellas are also mounted in front of the *Awansah Ahenfie* throughout the weeklong celebration to announce the *Ohum* festival proceedings. The object on top of the pinnacle of the ceremonial umbrella, *akoben* (a war horn), is also not a mere object for decoration; its symbolic meaning is vigilance and wariness.

The Chief's cloth

Chiefs are surrounded with attendants and elaborate paraphernalia so much so that, sitting in state; they become a complete exhibition of the arts of their people. The chief wears cloth with very complex designs to portray him as the leader of Akyem Tafo. He is seen on the festival day in very rich kente cloth which no other chief wears to distinguish him from the rest. The complex Asante kente *adwinniasa* literally meaning all skill is exhausted figure 71 or *Ekunkinin ntama* (cloth of the great) figure 72 is normally worn by the chief whenever he sits in state. The latter, a complex design, is multicoloured and very beautiful. The cloth has symbolic colours of golden yellow, green and black. The golden yellow symbolizes royalty and wealth, black symbolizes spiritual potency, energy and maturity, and the green, vitality. The motifs and designs in the cloth which have been “picked” carefully, symbolize precision, versatility and ingenuity of the state. Appliquéd in the kente are Adinkra symbols which are also proverbial. There is the presence of *gye Nyame* symbols echoing their belief in the supremacy of God, a criss-crossed *akofena*, a symbol of authority and *akodee mmowerε* a symbol of superiority. *Abotiri*, (headbands), are used as part of a chief's apparel in dressing to add to the rich source of aesthetic appeal, and proverbial communication and ritual purposes. On the visit to the Agyempremoso grove, it is expected that all who are involved in the rituals and rites wear white; in addition to the chiefs white cloth, he wears *abotiri* as a sign of purity figure 74.



Figure 71: *Adwinni asa*



Figure 72: *Akunnin ntama*

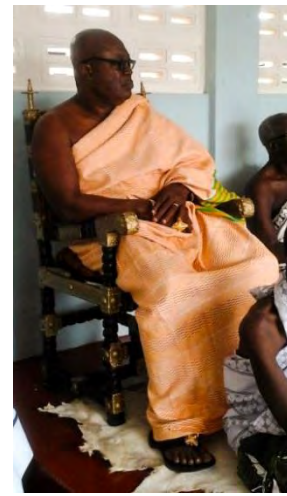


Figure 73: *Silky kente*



Figure 74: *Lace and abotire*



Figure 75: *Varied adwinni asa*

Source: Researcher, 2015

4.13.3 Leatherworks

Leatherworks are all works of art produced with leather, skins and hides. They include: bags, containers, hats, saddles, bridles, boots, sandals, seats, costumes, talismans, charms, musical instruments, belts and receptacles. Leatherworks can be seen in all the activities that constitute Ohum festival. Most of the royal regalia, including sandals, drums, and chairs have some parts made of leather. In the Akan code of dressing, the most appropriate footwear to put on when a traditional cloth is worn is with *ahenema* (traditional sandals).

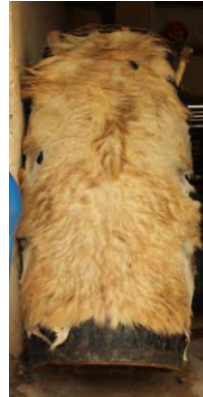


Figure 76: Hwɛdom akonwa Figure 77: decorated drum Figure 78: Drum top



Figure 79/80: Varied *ahenema*

Fully represented are different kinds of sandals with varied motifs to enhance their aesthetic appeal figure 79, and 80. According to tradition a chief always sits with his feet on a rest, the hide of sheep are used for that purpose figure 76. The sheath for the chief's *akofena* is made of hide to serve as a protective cover, figure 81.



Figure 81: Chief's Akofena in leather sheath

Source: Researcher, 2014



Figure 82: Varied sandals in leather

Source: Researcher, 2014



Figure 83: Canopies made with leather

4.13.4 Beadwork

Beads are ornaments made by passing strings through specially designed objects. These are used for decorating the human body. There are beads made of glass, seed and clay. Beads are used mostly during the mini-durbar and grand durbar. They are used as body adornment by queen mothers, priests and priestesses and all who care to wear them. Some of the beads serve as decorative objects while others are religious and symbolic.



Figure 84, 85: Beads worn for varied purposes

Source: Researcher, 2015



Figure 86 and 87: Beads worn for different purposes

Source: Researcher, 2015

During the celebration of the *Ohum* festival however, all the types of colours of beads are worn and each has a meaning of its own. The white beads symbolize victory, virginity and purity as worn by the priest figure 84. The beads are carefully chosen and worn by the queen mothers to compliment the colour of the designs in their cloth figure 85, 86 and 87.

4.13.5 Body Arts

The arts of the body refer to all the materials or objects worn on the body or applied to the body purported to perform aesthetics and certain important functions such as medicinal or religious, political and entertainment purposes. Body arts comprise painting, coiffure, body marks and masks, headgears and costumes. During the *Ohum* festival, priests and priestesses, *akomfo* employ art on their bodies, which function prominently during worship and spirit possession. The *akomfo's* bodies are painted with *hyire* (white clay) for identification and sanctification, and smeared with white powder when they are possessed to appease the spirit that has possessed the body of the *akomfo*. Their bodies become supports for creation and display of art. Some also keep their hair in *densikran*, a low

cropped hairstyle, or *mpesempese* long or short hair strands (rasta). Their costume is primarily white calico or patterned cloth with white background; others wear *fugu* (smock). The *akomfo* add a variety of beads and other protective materials to their costume which identifies them as *akomfo*. Beads are used extensively as charms to ward off evil and a form of professional identification. Some wear *dow*, (raffia skirts) and hold *bodua*, (flywhisk) in their hands figure 84. The *okomfo* is aesthetically decorated with white oval shaped long stringed beads that are crisscrossed two on two is smoothly curved on the body. The whitish beads and the white body painting in stripes of three at equal intervals contrasts on the dark body, arms and legs, the red band tied from the chest region to the back that cuts across the crisscrossed beads seem to draw viewers' attention to a focal point. Another red band is tied to the long strands of silky hair to compliment the other red band thereby creating a repetition for emphasis, this coupled with the colour 'red' reiterates the seriousness attached to the performance of the *Okomfo*. Every movement made by the *Okomfo* allows viewers to catch a glimpse of the white shorts worn underneath the undulating thin strips of raffia skirt. The overall aura created by the *Okomfo* is the presence of a supernatural being. This adds to the assertion that Ohum festival is a religious and cultural festival as well.

4.13.6 Jewellery

An observation of the chief's ceremonial crown reveals that the crown is made of black velvet with golden ornaments fixed on it. They are made up of varied lines, shapes and symbols to form a beautiful design. Other accessories include golden necklaces and bangles some sophisticated while others are simple. The elaborate ones are worn during the grand durbar figure 91 and the less elaborate ones, figure 93 over the week long celebrations.

Proverbial golden rings are also worn; the mud fish symbolizes total ownership, another meaning is adaptability to any situation figure 92.



Figure 88, 89: Body paintings

Figure 90: *Dow* and body painting



Fig. 91: Chief's crown

Fig. 92: Ring with mudfish

Fig. 93: Golden bangles

Source: Researcher, 2015

4.13.7 Graphic communication design

It is a form of communication that uses visual images such as letters, photographs, symbols etc. to create communication media such as posters, billboards, banners, emblems etc. purposely for education and advertisements. Throughout the celebration, graphic

communication played a very important role. It ranged from posters advertising the festival, to banners, flyers, billboards and the emblem of Akyem Abuakwa, figure 94, 95, 96 and 97.



Figure 94: Banner advertising *Ohum*



Figure 95: Poster advertising *Ohum*



Figure 96: Emblem used as decoration



Figure 97: Closer view of emblem

Source: Researcher, 2015

State emblem: *Susubiribi*

It is a circular shaped emblem with a yellow background. At eye level a black spotted leopard (ekyem), lies relaxed with face looking directly towards the observer. On top of the leopard is a stool and crown outlined with black. Juxtaposed to the left and right of the

stool is a ceremonial sword with a yellow handle and black blade and a reddish snake. The other symbols are the pan for prospecting gold and mattock. Behind the leopard is a tree with dark green foliage and an inscription '*susubiribi- Okyeman*'.

The harmonious blend of the shades of yellow and green seems to evoke a peaceful atmosphere. The greyish colour of the leopard and the reddish snake against the foreground and foliage creates a sharp contrast that draws observers' attention to a focal point: the leopard, stool, crown, snake, and sword. The black inscription against the yellow background helps the text to be readable from a distance. The history of Okyeman dates back some four centuries ago when the story of the Asona clan of Adanse led by the powerful and fearsome leader, Nana Apeanin Kwafra began to unfold; his courageous, shrewd and unconquerable attributes attracted the attention of some of the clans who felt cheated or threatened and looked up to him for succor and protection he was thus likened to the leopard, which in Akyem is called *Okyem* and it is a widely feared wild animal but a good parent, ever-ready to protect its offspring so well that any attempt to steal the cub invites its wrath. His people became known as *Okyemfo* (Okyem's people) whom many dreaded to provoke or attack. Nana Kuntunkunuku succeeded Nana Apeanin Kwafra as the *Okyem-fo Hene*. He proved to be unbeatable at war and found instant antidotes to every military attacks by his enemies. He was regarded as a king who instantly recoiled like a snake to outwit his enemies and hence the snake attached to the emblem. His people were referred to as *Abukafo* which was eventually corrupted to *Abuakwafo*. The valiant warriors' names Okyem and *Abukafo* gave birth to the name Akyem Abuakwa.

Symbolically, the leopard represents the king of the animals of *Kwaebibirim* signifying the power and authority of the Okyehene. The leopard in its relaxed and dormant position, with

the face looking towards the observer, looks peaceful, still and gentle. When provoked it would retaliate. The other symbols include the '*wirenkyimadu*' ne *awanfi*'sword, the proverbial snake '*asonawɔ*' which lay emphasis on the royalty and superiority of the Asona clan. *Susubiribi* is the motto of the Akyem Abuakwa State. It has several interpretations which are; Aim at something worthy; Aim high and let the star be your limit; think positively; Have regard for what is worthy and honourable; Be cautious of what you do or say.

4.14 Performing Arts

Performing Arts are visible but not tangible. They are activities performed by the help of our senses of hearing, seeing and our kinesthetic senses. They comprise basically drama, music, dance and verbal art.

4.14.1 Music

Indigenous music is played at religious and social ceremonies. Music is part of our livelihood. A variety of indigenous musical instruments and modern instruments are used during the Ohum festival. They include drums, stringed instruments, wind instruments and sound systems. Musical performances of drumming and singing and playing of sound systems are visible throughout the celebration. All the activities in the festival which portray joy and merry-making are accompanied with music. These days street carnival has taken the attention of the youth; they sing and dance to music played with loud speakers on the streets till they 'drop'. It can be gainsaid therefore that without music the celebration of the festival will be not be attractive to the youth most especially. The aesthetic value of a song derives also from the level of audience involvement which is a reflection of the amount of enjoyment generated by the performance. Gkyekye voices out that a musical

performance must arouse the involvement of the audience to be aesthetically appreciated and valued, because in the traditional African society music-making is a participatory in that everybody is a partaker (Gyekye, 2006). Music begins the whole celebration right after the ban on drumming and noisemaking is lifted. It is the atumpan drums which dispels the noise, then all other forms of music will follow till the end of the celebration on Sunday. The polyrhythmic sounds from the drum beats are all pleasurable to the ear. Children are seen with their own self-styled instruments making their own music with all the energy in them, it is a joyous atmosphere to be part of, figure 98 - 102.



Figure 98, 99: *Fɔntɔmfɔm* drummers

Figure 100: *Atumpan* drummer



Figure 101, 102: Children with self-styled musical instruments

Source: Researcher, 2015

4.14.2 Dance

Music definitely goes with dance. It is a passionate act in all indigenous African societies. It accompanies almost every occasion, both sacred and ordinary from joyous moments to sad moments. The drum ensemble is used in all cases in traditional dances although these modern times the music from the drums could be recorded and played back. The most prevalent traditional dance seen during the Ohum festival is *fontomfrom*, the traditional court dance of the Akans. It consists of vigorous and graceful body movements, rhythmic footsteps and complex hand and arm gestures which are often symbolic. These gestures portray activities of daily life, war and peace time activities, joy and sorrow, domestic work, and beliefs. At the beginning of the *fontomfrom* dance, when a dancer steps into the ring to dance, the first thing to do is to pay homage to the drummers with a dance gesture, (Possibly to give them a gift; and to the trees for being submissive in allowing themselves to be carved into drums). The *atumpan* drummer responds to the courtesy by drumming the dancers name, praise names and concludes with words of greetings. When this rapport had been established, the drummers provides continuous music for as long as the dancer stayed on the floor demonstrating with rollicking dance, incredibly talented, perfectly sharp, vigorous and precise body movements. When the last dancer in rotation completes his turn he leaves the floor and shakes hands with the drummer of the talking drums in appreciation.

Since *fontomfrom* was originally a court dance, commoners who are brave enough to step into the dancing ring are always required to observe the courtesies and mannerisms that drummers expected of such people; and how they comport themselves, in the way they

wore their cloths and in the quality of reward they gave to the drummers. All commoners dance barefoot and their cloth heaved down so that their shoulders would be bare in any traditional attire such as *fugu* figure 105(a). A dancer who ignored these could face sanction. However, royalty danced fully draped in their regalia. Although *fontomfroom* is mainly a male dance, females who understand the language of the drums could dance according to its dictates. It was important that all those who danced understand the relevant sections of the drum language that drummers quote while in the ring, otherwise society gave drummers the privilege to make rude remarks to those who do not come up exceptionally well in performance.

It is customary that the Tafohene sits in a palanquin and dance according to the dictates of the rhythm played by the drummers as he returns with his entourage through the principal streets of the town to signify victory. Heaving his arms into the air with his *akofena* and *bodua* (fly whisk) figure 106, he alternatively points down to the earth signifying his credence to 'Tweaduapon Nyame' and 'Asaase Yaa'. Swinging the arms to the left and right from the chest and back signifies his total ownership of everything from the north to the south, east and west of the land he rules. Occasionally he moves the fingers swiftly underneath the chin to signify his ability to behead whoever falls prey to his rule.

Unlike the chief, the commoners danced on bare feet. The chorographic movement is a pattern. The feet move very swiftly and very well calculated they never miss a beat. When dancers place both arms or palm on the head and clinch them together again behind the back they signify intense sorrow.



Figure 103 : Dancers



Figure 104 : Youth involved in street carnival



Figure 105(a): *Fɔntɔmfɔm* and (b): *Adowa* dancers

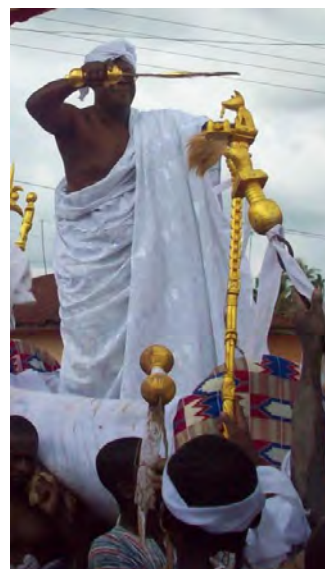


Figure 106: Tafohene dance

Source: Researcher, 2015

4.14.3 Verbal art

Verbal art is a branch of performing arts. It includes the pouring of libations, appellations, invocations, incantations which are used to venerate and placate the gods and spirits to offer security, health, prosperity and continuity of life and to praise prominent people in the society. Verbal arts are rich in figurative expressions. The impact of performing arts on Ohum festival is immense and spans all the activities right from the very beginning to the

end. This is because, in all the days of the festival, there are activities which require the use of verbal art. Various forms of incantations and invocations are recited during the performance of rites and rituals. Much can also be said about the appellations that are recited in honour of the chiefs and queens as they move to the durbar ground. The way the appellations are recited and even performed requires knowledge about art. During the rites for ban on drumming and noisemaking (the laying the Ohum bed), the Tafohene recites incantations calling on the ancestors to come and dine with the living in order to bless them. This art is done in a gracious manner that attracts the admiration of all. He heaves his cloth of his shoulders, wraps it around his chest, pulls the ends together and rolls it underneath the folds to form a protrusion. He slips his sandals off as a sign of humility to the gods and ancestors, legs apart he bows his head in a meditative mood then takes hold of the *mmerenkensono* with all passion and begins the incantation:

Twi version:

Birem Abena ei bra o! (3x)

(Okyeame and elders respond: *wie!*)

Okomfo Asare bra O! (3x)

(okyeame and elders respond: *aaampa!*)

Obrempa, Otokotaka; ka na obema wo

Nana Banin, Oprapraku Santan

Adawuruwa Yampupu

Odiasibe ee, Akwaa ne Kwaagyebi ee

Boamporifaa ee! Mommra (chief nods his head after each name)

(Okyeame and elders respond: *ampa ampa ampa!!!*)

Afe ano ahya; enne na yedee mmerenkensono rehwi fam

Tafoman nkwa so

(Response: *wie! wie! wie!!!*)

English version:

Birem Abena, come! (3x) (river)

Okyeame and elders respond: let it be!

Traditional priest, Asare come! (3x)

(Okyeame and elders respond: let it be!)

The he-man; go and he will give you

Nana Banin, Oprapraku Santan (ancestors)

Adawuruwa Yampupu (river)

Odiasibe, Akwaa and Kwaagyebi (rivers)

Boamporifaa! All should come (chief nods after each name)

(Okyeame and elders respond: it's true! it's true! it's true!)

The years have come to an end

We are casting the *mmerenkensono* on the ground

Long live Tafo people

The chief then touches the bed with the tip of the *mmerenkensono* and then add these

(Okyeame and elders respond: let it be! let it be! Let it be!)

Twi version:

Okyeman nkwa so

Ghanaman nkwa so

English version:

Long live the Akyem Chiefdom

Long live Ghana

4.15 The preservative element of Ohum festival to Akyem Abuakwa art forms

According to the *Omankrado* (next in command to the chief), 2015 and other elders and senior citizens of the state who form part of the category of respondents above 40 years, there has not been any incident whereby *Ohum* festival has not been celebrated in a year.

The strands of the *mmerenkensono* given to them to tie in their homes could be used to count the number of years one has taken part in the celebration of the festival. Since the festival is celebrated twice in the year: *Ohumkan* and *Ohumkyire*, two of each strand hanged represented a year figure 107, these strands hang in the palace of the *Tafohene*. As said earlier, *Obosomfo* Asare, the state philosopher and high priest handed the institution of the *Ohum* rites to Okrubanin I before his departure and ordered him to perform those rites to ensure the continuous support, blessings and protection from the gods around the 16th century when the Aduana clan settled on Akyem Abuakwa land. Until now it has remained so.

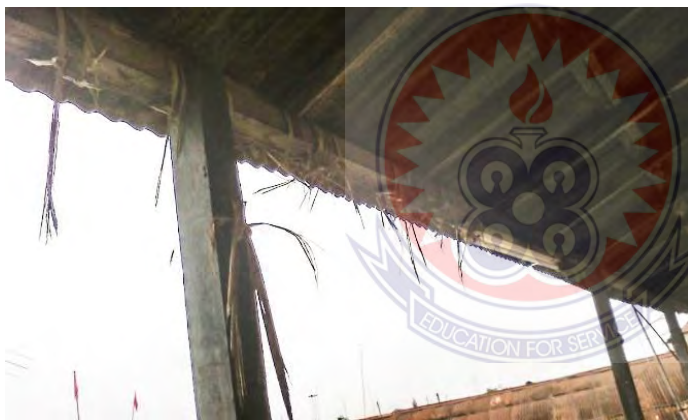


Figure 107: Strands of *mmerenkensono* hanged over years



Figure 108: Old *apakayin* (palanquin) used by Okrubanin II

Source: Researcher, 2015

Festivals undoubtedly are promoters of culture and builders of one's identity. They serve as a means of commemorating and remembering important events in the history of a people. As they involve recreation of the past, they provide occasions for transmission of traditional cultures and values from one generation to the other thus preserving our cultural heritage that identify us as a people. Huizing reiterates that the end of a festival tends to shed its radiance on the ordinary world outside rather than losing its effect. It provides working security, order and prosperity for the whole community until the festival comes around again (Huizing, 1950). The above discussion rests on a standpoint that festivals are recurrent. Getz (2005) is of the view that festivals are themed, public celebrations in the sense that they do not happen spontaneously, they are events specially organized and celebrated with clear intentions. The most common being celebration of the arts which include music, dance, cinema, and theatre, feasts and carnivals (stressing fun, games and role playing). Cole (1975) also draws attention to the artistic representation of festivals. According to him, the totality of a festival cannot be conveyed in printed words and pictures. It can be charted and diagrammed to show complexity and duration, but such efforts fail to capture the drama and visual impact of the actual event. He explains further that Asafo flags are thrown and swirled in dance, in processions; architecture becomes a backdrop in shrine rituals and sometimes as sculpture to climb on. Drums tell of history, sing praises and art proverbs, with this, he succeeds to draw readers' attention to art and festival as being inseparably linked. He reiterates that festivals are perhaps the country's most significant, richest art forms. In artistic terms, he admits that festivals are lavish, with organized displays: dances, costumes, music, drama and poetry. All these art forms mentioned by Cole are fully represented in *Ohum* festival which can be described as a total

work of art, at once subtle and complicated. It has a structure with component parts including visual, verbal and performance aspects, all of which are unified and orchestrated into a perfect polyrhythmic celebration.

From deductions made from the above discussions it stands to reason that if festivals are recurrent and *Ohum* festival as no exception, and that they are celebrations of the art, then the researcher will not mince words to say that, festivals are indeed representations of histories of the arts been told. They are a means of preservation of the arts and the arts a catalyst for successful celebrations of festivals. Festivals as part of our culture, like other cultures, is the sum total of our inherited traditions dating from our illustrious ancestors who as free men and women created ideas, values and institutions all of which enabled them to interact with each other harmoniously and to derive meaning and fulfillments in life (Acquandah, 2006). The ripple effect of celebrations of *Ohum* festival is preservation of the art forms of Akyem Abuakwa.

As society advances in age, the cultural essence of some traditional festivals is fading out. Their gradual erosion in people's minds has given rise to a serious crisis over their future; there is a strong possibility that they will be replaced by some alien festivals in the minds of some young people.

It is a joint duty by all to preserve the country's cultural heritage that has been passed down by our ancestors, and must be passed on to our descendants. Festivals are an environment for people to go back to their roots, to learn about their origins through word of mouth, performance, art works and their own experiences in the festival. It is a way to learn about history, from firsthand experience. Festivals are living and breathing culture museums that

ensure the continuity of our culture and traditions and environments to nurture traditional culture. Whiles the older generations complain that the younger generations are not involving enough the younger generations do not understand why they have to take part, hence creating a gap. It's crucial to provide people with a proper understanding and respect for traditional values, religion and beliefs presented through the festival. As they understand, they would change their behaviour.

According to Hodgson & Beaver (2011), cultures need preserving before they die out. Challenges and threats linger on, but not all change is bad. Culture is dynamic and helps people adapt to the world around them. The world has always been changing, cultures have always been adapting, how best to blend the two helps in preserving our culture. They go on to say that one sign of a healthy community is its simultaneous ability to preserve and invent its culture that is, to conserve its history and heritage while developing new expressions for current times. Often, the concept of preservation is interpreted as meaning stagnation when, in fact, heritage and history can be the basis for innovation and advancement. Moreover, heritage and history are frequently essential sources of meaning that give a place character and resonance.

People settle and move away, each leaving something to remember them with. All of these people present and departed rich and poor have stories to tell, stories that can be collected, conserved, and celebrated. The articulation of those stories can significantly contribute to preserving, celebrating, challenging, and inventing community identity. According to Jackson et al, preserving spaces and objects could be done by documenting stories from elders, and recording as well as facilitating a community's contemporary cultural practices.

Another way to preserve our arts is by sharing to the outside world and with young people in our culture, who may not know the riches of their cultural background. Art forms could be done publicly and also put on social media as a means of preserving. Education is another key factor to preservation of our arts through festivals. Learning about them from experts and the older generation helps us to understand them better thereby inculcating a habit of preserving them. Herbert as cited in Kemevor (2004) and cited by Thompson (2009) maintained that: Education is the means by which men acquire the civilization of the past and are enabled both to take part in the civilisation of the present and explained that civilization means the totality of transmitting, preserving, developing and achieving the culture.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Two types of data Primary and Secondary data were used for this study. The Primary Data dealt with data obtained from the field based on facts which were summed up with the help of research tools such as the participant observational approach and interviews. Analysis of data was interpreted using basically the content analysis method. Primary data collected were directed on the celebration of the festival itself and changes that have occurred, the role of art in the celebration, and the aesthetics of the festival. The Secondary Data were based on various literatures from books, unpublished thesis, encyclopedias, brochures, magazines, periodicals and the electronic media. Literature related to the topic based on the historical background of Akyem Abuakwa, festivals, types of festivals, classification of cultural festivals, importance of festivals, the concept of branding, rebranding, cultural festivals rebranding, branding attributes of cultural festivals, art, the role of art in festivals, preservation of art, philosophy of art and aesthetics, aesthetics of art, African aesthetics and historical accounts of Ohum festival Akyem Abuakwa.

5.2 Summary

This study set out to unearth the origin of Ohum festival and the reasons for its celebration from 16th century around the period when Ntim Gyakari reigned over the Denkyira. According to written literature on the pre-colonial era of Ghana, Denkyira, under the reign of Ntim Gyakari developed a militarised state and carried out wars of territorial expansion against Assin, Adanse, Twifo, Sefwi and all of south-west Ghana. The Aduana clan is

confirmed to be the first settlers on the Akyem Abuakwa land with their leader Okuru Banin I and Okomfo Asare as their high priest and state philosopher; they were later joined by the rest of the Abuakwa people. The mythical appearance of the Aduana clan from the River Birem still lingers on as there were no written records to approve or disapprove the claim although Akyem Abuakwa court historians still claim their ancestors came out from the river Birem based on oral tradition handed over to them. Addo-Fening (2000) agrees with the early phases of information on Akyem Abuakwa as "shrouded in myths of obscurity." He confirms that our knowledge of them is mainly from oral tradition. These myths and mysteries help create and sustain the authority and power of chieftaincy. However, the two schools of thought agree that Akyem Abuakwa has a link to the River Birem. The successful pulling out of the *mmerenkensono* marked the beginning of the whole ceremony of Ohum. The Okomfo then urged the Tafohene to celebrate the Ohum to ensure for himself and the state long life, prosperity and victory over his enemies. Ohum, he said would mark the anniversary of the birth of the state and be an occasion for the veneration of the ancestral stool and ancestors who formerly occupied them. It was also to mark the blessing of the departed ancestors on the harvest (especially the new yam) of the year. Since then it has been celebrated with all the pomp and pageantry unabatedly although the interest has dwindled.

According to data solicited from respondents on their knowledge about the origin of Ohum festival, it was realised that from the age 40 and below numbering 28, 7 of the respondents had knowledge about the history as opposed to 16 respondents from the total number of 22 of ages above 40 years. There was a clear indication that the youth purported to be custodians of our culture and traditions lacked knowledge about the Ohum festival, the

reasons thought of as lack of interest in learning about cultures and traditions from their elders who are custodians. This supports Okyeame Ampadu- Agyei's claim as cited by Smith- Asante (2000) that many people deliberately distance themselves from the past because they believe that traditional culture is backward or retrogressive and that they are alienated from the traditional beliefs and the rural environments where both nature and these customs play a far more meaningful part in people's lives.

The second objective sought to portray the roles art played in the celebration of the festival. The 50 respondents for the research gave a resounding 'yes' to the question scoring a 100%. 41 respondents a percentage of 82% had no idea that they were art forms but saw them as useful objects and performances that were indispensable. The issue of objects and performances portrayed as art forms, were consented by 9 respondents, a percentage of 18. They were educated on art and art forms so agreed that objects and performances displayed during the Ohum festival were art forms. A conclusion could conveniently be reached that majority believed that objects and performances extensively play important roles and hence indispensable in the celebration of the Ohum festival but are not known as art forms.

The third objective examined the aesthetics of the Ohum festival of Akyem Abuakwa and ways the art forms can be preserved and promoted. Indeed multitudes of objects, decorated people, dances and music, and verbal art were the main standpoints that drew the attention of many to the festival per the aesthetics they possessed. The researcher succeeded in highlighting specific art forms by way of extensive graphical appreciation. It was realised from historical accounts that the festival is recurrent and per the roles art played in the success of the celebration of the festival, the festival has the ability to preserve the arts although other equally important measures could be put in place.

5.3 Other findings

Other roles established from responses from respondents and personal observation are that throughout the festive season, especially on the Tuesday when the silence is dispelled and on Thursday when there are no performance of rituals and rites, families meet at their *abusua* to discuss issues concerning the family. They range from settling disputes, arrangements on funerals and celebrations, welfare of members, accounts on properties owned by the family such as buildings and farms and developmental projects. This in a way fosters peaceful coexistence between family members. Apart from this, people travel from near and far to their roots for the celebration. This helps them to form closer bondages with their family and their roots.

One other role festivals play is offering therapy to celebrants, whether actively or partially involved. The unfolding of events has the ability to take people off from their busy schedules to relax from every day stress at home or at work places.

The developmental role Ohum festival possesses cannot be overemphasized. There are expansions, renovations and paintings of houses, repair of streets and major roads, new businesses are established and sponsors speed up to complete projects they are undertaking. 2015 Ohum celebrations had the honour of crowning the C.E.O of Tigo Ghana, Rosh Motman as their developmental queen following developmental projects her company undertakes in the town.

During the grand durbar, government officials are invited to chair the function or as special guest of honours. They come with news from the presidency, solidarity messages and their plans towards the town and Ghana as a whole. The chief in turn spells out benefits received from the government and their expectations.

The economic role of the festival cannot be relegated to the background. Farmers, traders and businessmen and women had a lot to say. Their profit margin increased automatically because a once quiet town suddenly transformed into an arena of gaiety pomp and pageantry. A lot more people to count so it was obvious their sales will increase.

The festive period also gave the chief and his elders a pedestal to educate those present on issues regarding the festival, their cultural practices and taboos associated with the celebration of the festival this also serves as destination attraction to the town and its environs. Tourists and visitors tramped to the area to catch a glimpse of the activities.

5.4 Conclusion

There is no doubt about the role of arts in the celebration of Ohum festival, aesthetics being the prime; and the preservative quality of the festival to the arts as well. Festivals and our arts are part of our culture which brands us as unique people and gives us identity. Ignoring them make us lose our heritage from which we derive our authenticity and strength. The art of a particular ethnic group can reveal the ever changing human images and attitudes; so awareness of a people's indigenous art, visual and cultural symbols can become a pedestal for the transmission of cross-cultural understanding. Frantic effort should be made to promote and preserve our culture for continuity, the very strands that hold us together as a people. Absolute truth is found in Taylor's assertion, "It seems to me that a diverse, rich, and vital cultural ecology in any city, state, or country fosters opportunity for every citizen to inform these elements of their existence. A creative life-The opportunity to make something from nothing, or transform fragments of objects or thoughts into a cohesive whole, is an ennobling and empowering thing. Everyone should have the option to do so, no matter what their stage of life, circumstance, technical ability or training. An expressive

life- Finding your voice and having an opportunity to be heard is an essential quality of being alive and aware in the world. A connected life- The interpersonal and social sharing of meaning is the connective tissue between loved ones, community members, and civilizations. While the arts are not the only means to this sharing, they are among the most powerful and enduring. A remembered life- The accumulated actions and artifacts of our expressive lives are our most vital threads to who we were, who we are, and who we might become. Beyond our children, they are the most compelling evidence that we ever existed at all” (Taylor, 2007).

5.5 Recommendations

The youth and a section of adults have become strangers in their culture. They should be encouraged by way of formal and informal education to change their mindset that our culture and traditions are backward for which festivals and the arts are part and learn to accept them and be part of it. Quizzes, debates and essay competitions with attractive packages will help whip up interest in learning about our culture and traditions. Obsolete rituals should also be done away with during the festival to encourage all and sundry to embrace and participate fully in the festival since most Christian organizations discourage their members from attending these festivals because of the rituals involved. Effective documentation of our histories, culture and traditions should be enacted and made available in libraries with other relevant reference books to encourage reading and research work for interested individuals.

As part of the celebration of Ohum festival, art exhibitions should be mounted as well as brochures containing well documented art forms used in the celebration of the festival

shared to celebrants and others through social media, this will draw people's attention to the importance and uses of the arts and usher the arts to the limelight.

A museum should be opened to keep works of art and relics which are our heritage and proper maintenance culture duly observed to preserve, conserve and promote them as well, by this the Government should set aside funds to encourage the celebration of festivals for which Ohum festival is no exception because culturally, the occasions helps to transmit, conserve, and project the culture of the traditional area which falls in line with the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana Article 39 which recognises culture as an important tool for national integration and development and buttressed by the third objective of the Cultural Policy of Ghana published in 2004 by the National Commission on Culture and approved by the Ghana Government, which seeks to enhance Ghanaian cultural life and develop cultural programmes which will develop human and material progress through heritage preservation, conservation, promotion and the use of traditional and modern arts and crafts to create wealth and alleviate poverty.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY ON OHUM FESTIVAL IN AKYEM TAFO

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

NOTE: you are highly assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Biographical data of respondents

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box

Age: below 20 years 20-40 years above 40 years

Gender: Male Female

Profession/occupation/designation

1. Which people celebrate the Ohum Festival?
2. Why is Ohum festival celebrated?
3. Do you know about the history of Ohum festival? YES NO
4. Recount the history of Ohum festival if 'YES'.
5. How many times have you been to the festival? First time Several
6. If several have there been any changes in the celebration of the festival? YES NO
7. Has there been changes in the celebration of the festival?
8. If 'YES' recount the changes?

9. What are the reasons accounting for the changes?
10. Which objects and performances are indispensable in the celebration of the Ohum festival?
11. Do you consider them as art forms? YES NO
12. Which specific roles do they play in the celebration of the festival?
13. What are the symbolic meanings of these art forms used during the festival?
14. Is there the need to preserve our art forms: festival, dance, textiles etc? YES NO
15. What are the reasons for your choice of answer?
16. Are there any obsolete practices that need modification?
17. Any suggestions as to how the festival could be improved to attract more people?

