

**COSTUME AS A SYMBOL OF CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN THE
TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE CEREMONY OF THE ESAN PEOPLE OF EMU**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project was written by me to the best of my knowledge and has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree. All ideas and suggestions are products of my personal research, and where the views of others have been used, they were duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was carried out by EGBELE OSAREMHEN TRACY under my supervision

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DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty for being there for me even in my darkest times and to my family and friends for their unwavering love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With a heart flooded with sincere love and gratitude, I give special thanks to my anchor and pillar (my parents) Mr. and Mrs. Collins Egbele. Your support, prayers, love and encouragement is the reason I am where I am today. Chirpings from a thousand birds cannot confer my gratitude.

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ABSTRACT

Costumes are symbols of cultural representation and it serves as an element of culture. A man's culture can be ascertained from the way he is dressed. That is to say, that costume is one of the significant visual aspect of culture. A man learns about his culture from birth, thus culture is the bedrock of every growing or developing society. Culture as it concerns costume is losing its symbolic and cultural significance due to ignorance and other societal factors. It is therefore imperative that this study aims at documenting costume as a symbol of cultural representation using the Emu people of Esan Land as a focal point through pictorial representation of key persons in a traditional marriage ceremony of the people. The study aims at identifying the costume in marriage ceremonies as a form of cultural identification and to determine measures to be taken to enlighten people on the significance of these costumes to the tradition of the people. In actualizing the aim of this study, interviews were carried out on indigenes of the stated people, visual representation in respect to the pictures of the costumes were used and various related literatures relevant to the study were also used. The study was able to show that there are various types of Esan materials but there is a specific fabric used for marriage ceremonies. These costumes are able to display the cultural aesthetics of the people and the social status of the wearer. To preserve the culture, it is recommended that awareness seminars should be held, cultural preservative organisations should be established and the media can play a great role in preserving our cultural heritage.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

From time past, costume plays a vital role in human endeavors and portrayal of people's identity. Costume is not just about clothing, rather it also serves as a means of representation as regards to an individual's social status, culture, religion, profession and sex.

Costume constitutes one of the most formidable and versatile cultural agents from the transmission of knowledge and values across ethnic, national, and international boundaries. It showcases the cultural aesthetics, artistic styles, and traditional representation of a people.

Costume is an element of culture; A man's culture can be ascertained from the way he is dressed. That is to say that costume is one of the significant visual aspect of culture. A man learns about his culture from birth; thus, culture is the bedrock of every growing or developing society.

A culture is the total socially acquired life-way or life-style of a group of people. It consists of the patterned, repetitive, ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that are characteristics of the members of a particular society (Harris 144)

Culture according to anthropologist's, is the sum total of learned, shared, and socially transmitted behaviour that includes ideas, values, and customs of groups of people.

There are diversities of culture across Nigeria. These different cultures have different ways they perceive things according to their cultural background. A man learns about his language, food, greeting, dressing, and cultural activities from associating with the people of his ethnic group. In the traditional society, there are mediums through which the culture of a people is portrayed, especially at cultural activities such as festivals, burials, marriage etc.

Marriage for instance also serves as a means by which the culture of an individual or people is portrayed through different cultural activities such as music, dance, and costume Wikipedia Encyclopedia defines marriage as a socially or ritually recognized union or legal contract between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between them and their children, and between them and their in laws.

Marriage occupies an important position in the affairs of Africans as regards what is acceptable to the peoples culture. Whatever cultural activities being practiced, be it burial, festival or marriage, the culture of the people is reflected in different ways.

For instance, in the marriage ceremony of the Emu people of Esan Land, costume plays a vital role as a symbol of cultural identification of the people. It serves as means of

communicating the Esan culture through the usage of traditional costume and accessories. Against this background, this research shall discuss the marriage costume of the Emu people of Esan Land. Emu is a town situated in the South Eastern part of Esan either Ubiaja serving as headquarters. The Esan people reside in Edo State, which is located in the South-South region of Nigeria. Among the Esan people, varieties of costumes are worn for different occasions. The focus of this study will be on the marriage costume of Emu people of Esan Land, its cultural symbolism and representation and how to propagate it to the public.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Culture as it concerns costume is now shambolic. It is losing its symbolic and cultural significance due to ignorance, apathy on the side of today's youths, Western influence, Christianity, media imperialism amongst others.

Most people in Nigeria no longer understand that costume goes beyond articles of beautification; it is also about expression symbolism, and identification. Nigeria is a country made up of diverse ethnic groups who share certain similarities. Due to this and other factors, it is not uncommon to see people from a different ethnic group imitate another ethnic group in dressing, food and even in dance movements. These are ways of promoting national consciousness and cultural unity, but it becomes a problem when such cultural values lose their symbolism, aesthetics or cultural values.

The people of Esan are one of the many ethnic groups who has experienced such, and it is to this regard that the researcher desires to examine the use of costume as a symbol of cultural representation in traditional marriage ceremonies using the Emu people of Esan Land as a focal point. With a pictorial representation of the bride and groom's costume, bride's father and mother costume as well as other key personalities costume during a traditional marriage ceremony of the people.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is aimed at documenting costume as a symbol of of cultural representation of the Emu People of Esan Land through pictorial representation of key persons in a traditional marriage ceremony of the people. It shall therefore establish the following objectives:

1. To document the costume of Esan people in marriage ceremonies
2. To determine the importance of costumes in marriages as a form of cultural identification
3. To identify the various kinds of costumes used in the marriage ceremony of the Esan people
4. To determine the various designs and nature of materials used for construction of the Esan costume.

5. To determine measures to be taken to enlighten people on the significance of these costumes to the tradition of the people.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This work seeks to address the essence of costume as a symbol of cultural representation. In an era where Westernization has taken captive the hearts of many, it is important to re-educate, enlighten, inform and document these information's. This work seeks to display the beauty of the marriage costume of Esan people and show its cultural importance to the people. It will be beneficial to everyone who is interested in learning about his or her cultural heritage.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The focus of this study is on costume as a symbol of cultural representation in the traditional marriage ceremony of the Esan people. This study is limited to the areas of colour, styles, and construction process as well as the design meaning of the various types of costumes for marriage ceremonies, choice of fabric or cloth, and other accessories used in the marriage ceremonies of Esan people and what they represent. It also hoped to explore in the area of cultural studies and other areas that may be relevant to this research study.

1.6 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Certain obstacles and challenges were faced in the cause of the study. One of such challenges was the limited access to materials for this particular topic. Language barrier was also another setback; the fact the researcher is not eloquent in the Esan language proved a major problem in gathering information for the said topic. Another issue faced is the covid-19 pandemic, which led to restrictive policies like the need for social distancing, and the restrictions placed on movements. Despite these limitations, this researcher employed diverse strategies in making sure that the aim of the research is actualized successfully. Another limitation faced is the loss of the stage pictures, which was an unforeseen challenge that required the researcher to rely on readily available outfits as visual documents.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the process of actualizing the aim of this research, the researcher made use of the primary and secondary research source.

The primary source comprises of the visual representation in respect to the pictures of the costumes and performance, creation of costume and accessories, personal observation of the marriage ceremony and conducting of interviews with the indigenes and other key personalities.

The secondary source consists of references form, existing literatures on the study of costume, culture and marriage. Information's were also sourced from journals, internet, published and unpublished articles and journals that are related to the study.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **COSTUME:** Costume is the distinctive style of dress of an individual or group that reflects class, gender, profession, ethnicity, nationality, activity or epoch.
- **CULTURE:** Culture is the special and exclusive product of men, and is their distinctive quality in the cosmos Culture is at one and the same time the totality of products of social men, and a tremendous force affecting all human beings, socially and individually.
- **SYMBOL:** is any object, typically material, which is meant to represent another (usually abstract) even if there is no meaningful relationship.
- **REPRESENTATION:** is something which serves as a sign or symbol to portray words or things

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF COSTUME

Costume reflects the customs and identity concerns of society, and often times reveal its implicit motivation. It highlights the cultural aesthetics, artistic styles and traditional representation of a people. A metaphor of cultural space, providing an identity and consciousness among the people. It is a known fact that costumes worn by people of a tribe reflect them, even as it preaches the aesthetics and artistic nature of that tribe. To support this Mark Twain, as quoted by Julie Umukoro says “what would a man be without his clothes? Without his clothes, a man would be nothing at all. The clothes do not merely make the man, clothes are the man. Without them he is a cipher, a vacancy, a nobody, a nothing "(Umukoro 68)

Costume design is the fabrication of clothing for the overall appearance of a character or performer. Costume is specific in the style of dress particular to a nation, a class, or a period. The most basic designs are produced to denote status, provide protection or modesty, or simply decorate a character. Costume design is a tool to express an art form, such as a play or film script, dance piece, or opera. Costumes may be for a theater, cinema, or musical performance but may not be limited to such.

Costumes are much more different from everyday clothing. Clothing refers generally to what is worn on the body as a covering for the skin, which is part of the

evolution in African culture, when they started considering nakedness in the public as disgraceful. It motivated people to make and wear clothes out of necessity to protect their bodies from cold, heat, rain, damp and other hazards in the environment. Costumes are used as a form of symbolic expression of oneself as well as a communicative tool that interprets its sociological effects at any given time. To support this, Anthony Duruaku states that;

"The objective of costume design is to set the tone and style, indicate time and place, characterize individuals and groups, underline personal relationship, create symbolic outfits when appropriate, meet the practical needs of performers and coordinate the entire production." (307)

The above means that costumes communicate a whole lot about a production and its values on day-to-day activities. It is important to also note that the clothes we wear in our daily life are a form of costume. They indicate station in life, occupation, and a sense of formality or informality.

As soon as we see what clothing people are wearing, we receive messages about them and form impressions so that we instantaneously relate those messages and impression to our past experience and our perceptions, and we also make valuable judgement. Even if we have never before laid eyes on someone, we feel we know a great deal when we first see what he or she is wearing. Pravina Sheila in her book 'costume:

performing identities through dress', defines costume as "the clothing of who we are but it signals a different self, one other than that expressed through daily dress"(Pravina 8).

This definition is opposed to the general belief that costume is a clothing of the people we are pretending to be. Roach-Higgins and B. Eicher have famously defined dress as " modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body. Costume according to these authors "delineates the modifications and supplantation's that indicate the out of everyday social role or activity. Eicher argues, "Costume is used by individuals to express a performance identity" (95).

From the above definition, we can denote that costume is usually set apart from dress in its rarity, cost, and elaborate materials, trims, and embellishments and its pronounced silhouette or exaggerated proportion. It is not meant to be ordinary but rather evocative leading to a better communication and often climax in a spectacle for public utilization.

Costume designer Pamela Keetch describes costume. She says: A person who gets up in the morning and gets dressed without giving it much thought is putting on clothing. But a person who gets dressed for the effect it will create is putting on costume.

From the above definition, we can deduce that one of the determinant factors of costume or what makes an outfit a costume is the wearer's behaviour and intention. In addition, it is accessed by an audience based on garment construction, fabrics, ensemble,

and accessories as well as by its relevance for the occasion. A good example is a Sari worn by a woman in India is a daily dress; the same garment worn by a Nigerian for a parade becomes a costume.

2.2 HISTORY OF COSTUME

Costume has a very long history. It is as old as man. The earliest forms of costume likely consisted of fur, leather, leaves, or grass that were draped, wrapped, or tied around the body. Similarly, foundations in the Greek celebrations performed in the sixth century B.C.E., honoring Dionysus, the god of wine and revelry. The revels (dances, songs, and choral responses) evolved into spoken drama in 535 B.C.E., when the playwright Thespis introduced an actor to respond to the chorus leader. The result was dialogue.

Another playwright, Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.E.), is credited with establishing what became the traditional costume for Greek tragedy. It consisted of a long, sleeved, patterned tunic, a stylized mask for instant character recognition, and a pair of high-soled shoes called corthunae. All of these garments were exclusively for theatrical use. One cannot act the hero in everyday wear.

Actors in Greek comedies also wore masks to indicate which characters they portrayed. Additionally, they would often add exaggerated body parts, padded bottoms or stomachs, and oversize phalluses to heighten the comic effect. Short tunics, much like those worn by ordinary citizens, were thought appropriate to comedy.

Although the Romans added their own twists, the costume conventions established by the Greeks essentially remained the same until the fall of the Roman Empire, when Western theater virtually disappeared for eight hundred years.

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (the rebirth of theatre), theatre ironically started in the context of the church. The Christian church was the sworn enemy of the drama (perceiving it to be both immodest and akin to devil worshiping). However, since services were performed in Latin, which fewer and fewer parishioners could understand, priests had to devise a way to dramatize the liturgy. From the fifth century C.E. forward, mystery plays, dramatizing events in the scriptures, and miracle plays, which depicted the lives of the saints, were increasingly performed both inside the church and on church grounds. As they became more elaborate, they moved into the market square.

Costumes worn in the early religious dramas were churchly garments. As the scripts became more secular, often involving townspeople in addition to the clergy, lay performers assumed responsibility for any costume pieces not owned by the church. Contemporary religious art provided inspiration for such characters as Daniel, Herod, the Virgin Mary, and assorted devils.

It was during the Renaissance that production elements, both scenery and costume, came to be even more important than the text. Throughout Europe, the nobility staged lavish court masques and pageants to entertain their guests. Costumes depicted gods,

animals, and mythological creatures, as well as such emotions as hope and joy. Designers for these festivities included Leonardo da Vinci and Inigo Jones.

During the sixteenth century a group of popular street comedy known as *Commedia dell'arte* emerged in Italy. These groups of itinerant actors presented largely improvised plays throughout Italy and Europe.

Like the Greek drama, mask and traditional costumes were used to portray stock characters. Pantaloon, the archetypal doddering old man, was often dressed in the wide trousers that now bear his name. The wily servant Brighella had a coat of horizontal green stripes, the forerunner of nineteenth-century British livery. Other comic characters include Arlecchino, or Harlequin, *Il Dottore*, a pedantic academic always dressed in black, and *Il Capitano*, a cowardly Spaniard. The serious characters in *commedia*, two pair of lovers and a servant girl, wore contemporary clothing.

Costumes for Shakespeare's plays were a mixture of various periods that audiences accepted as the standard convention. Most parts were performed in contemporary dress either owned by the actor (all were men) or provided by the theater's patron. On occasion, a helmet or breastplate might indicate a soldier. Fairies and nymphs might wear classical draperies.

The same principle applies to costume in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most actors and especially actors dressed as fashionably as possible. A turban indicated

an Eastern character. A plumed helmet signified a soldier. Performers provided their own wardrobe with the exception of specialty items provided by the theater.

The period between the 1770s and the 1870s saw a drive toward historical accuracy in costume design. As travel became relatively easier, reports, both written and visual, increased people's knowledge of other cultures. International exhibitions such as the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London in 1851 brought the material culture of exotic places to the public. They wanted what they saw and read about to be reflected on the stage. In the German principality of Saxe-Meiningen, Duke George II established his own theatrical troupe called the Menninger's. The Duke used every available resource to create authentic costumes for his actors. The Menninger's toured the continent widely, and the style of their productions greatly influenced such bastions of nineteenth century realism as the Theater Libre in Paris, and the Moscow Art Theater in Russia. In the United States, the productions of impresario David Belasco reflected his admiration for this new, realistic style. An inevitable backlash followed. In Russia, to cite just one example, constructivist artists designed highly conceptual costumes whose only relationship to clothing was that they were worn by human beings. Eventually both styles were recognized as valid, leading to the mixture of historically accurate or concept driven productions that continues in the twenty-first century.

In current practices, theatrical costumes are designed to support the script. If realism or historicism is central to the text, the costumes will accurately reflect the

clothing appropriate to the period or to the environment. Principally, costume around various ages has evolved. As stated earlier, the determinant factor of ones costume is the occasion it is to be worn. Whatever event it is be it a theatrical production or social function, it has to mirror or accentuate the event.

In Nigerian theatre, two types of theatrical traditions are easily identified. These are: the Indigenous Theatre Tradition and the Contemporary Theatre Tradition. The Indigenous Theatre Tradition is mostly acknowledged to be the first type of theatre idiom to emerge in the history of Nigerian theatrical culture. This is because it is subsumed in the culture of the people. It is a kind of theatre where societal expression, social pattern of life, ethical values, moral essence, religion and history are mirrored in a dynamic living form, as visualised in the numerous robust indigenous theatrical traditions of most societies in Nigeria such as religious ritual enactment, festival performances, initiation ceremonies, story telling sessions, masquerade displays and so on. Nevertheless, in these traditional performances, indigenous actors, costumes, make-up, masks, songs, mimes, folktales, dances have become the major high points of the communication of this theatre mould among various communities in Nigeria, Other traditional theatrical institutions like masquerade displays, initiation ceremonies, story-telling theatres also attest to the extensive utility of colourful and elaborate indigenous costume, masque and make-up designs in the evolution of these arts as theatre. For instance, Stewart (10) gives a

picturesque description of Ekong masquerade festival dance costume of the Ibibios from the Eastern part of Nigeria thus:

"The face and head of the dancers are completely obscured with a table-like structure fastened to the head. This is covered with brightly coloured fringed handkerchiefs and on top appears the head of a female goddess. This head is carved in soft wood and painted with white or pink with little mirrors as decorative base, because the Ibibio gods and goddess are supposed to have come from the waters of the rivers. However, the hands and feet of the dancer are carefully covered and a colourful cloth is usually worn about the waist of the dancer."

From the picture painted above by Stewart, one can easily deduce that the Indigenous Nigerian theatrical costumes and make-up are crafted with great artistic and aesthetic artistry deeply rooted in the culture of the Nigerian people. This postulation affirms Adedeji's (103) observation that: "Every theatre is informed by the nature of the culture from which it is construed and formalized".

There are some more organised and popular indigenous entertainment forms which are refined out of the aforementioned theatre forms in both the traditional and contemporary Nigerian society. Among these are the Yoruba Alarinjo theatres, Annang drama of Ibibio, Bornu puppet shows as well as the Hausa comical art of Yankamanci and the Tiv Kwagh-hir among others. In this regard, Kwagh-hir puppet theatre costumes are found in different shades of colours and varied design concepts, which are

spectacularly sewn into different styles, to integrate various societal activities into the Tiv design culture. Therefore, the masks of this theatre tradition are elaborate, reflecting the versatile aesthetic background of the Tiv people. In view of this, Enem (250) highlights that:

The Paraphernalia of Kwagh-hir are diverse in types and moral connotation. The puppets especially, are in different styles. Some are naturalistic, other grotesque and ridiculous, but all reflecting the moral prejudices and sanctions of the community. Historical awareness is shown in some puppets which represents event such as when the first motor bike was ridden in Gboko or the first woman emerged or when modern dress styles of European design gained local acceptance.

But among all the mentioned popular indigenous theatrical forms, the Yoruba Alarinjo theatre was “a highly prodigious and electrifying efflorescence of Nigerian theatrical culture”(Ododo 41). The Alarinjo theatre consisted of songs, lavish costumes, madque and extraordinary spectacle. Citing Clapperton (1590), Adedeji claims that:

The Alarinjo theatre first emerged from the dramatic roots of the egungun (masquerade) as ancestor worship during the reign of Alaafin Ogbolu who acceded to the throne at Oyo, Igboho about 1590, as a court Entertainment. (221)

Then came the 20th century, and a new theatrical movement evolved. This marked the commencement of entertainments of non-African origin on the Nigerian soil and this outlined the beginning of concerts of European nature in contemporary Nigerian societies as seen in concert performances in churches in Lagos and Abeokuta in the 40s.

Later on, this tradition was moved out of church and was established as professional theatre in Nigeria. The contemporary Nigerian theatre tradition is a mixture of African and Western dramatic styles or influence because it depicts an integration of African culture and Western production styles. Hubert Ogunde is an exponent of The Popular form of Theatre in Nigeria. Ogunde's theatre was a combination of influence of Western dramatic forms as seen in opera and cantata and the adoption of repertory system and the tenets of the Alarinjo theatre.

That Ogunde has changed the direction of Yoruba theatre dramaturgy and given it a new impetus and dimension with the western flavour. This can be perceived in the carnival-like costumes and make-up worn by his actors in his plays.

However, with the emergence of playwrights such as Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande, Kole Omotosho, Olu Obafemi, etc, one observes a new vigour and versatility in the Nigerian literary theatre and they portrayed the Nigerian culture in the aspects of music, dance and costume.

Types of Costume

There are two basic types of costume, and they include:

Traditional costume and

Modern costume

Traditional Costume

According to Encyclopedia.com, "Traditional dress may be defined as the ensemble of garments, jewelry, and accessories rooted in the past that is worn by an identifiable group of people. Though slight changes over time in color, form, and material are acknowledged, the assemblage seems to be handed down unchanged from the past." Examples of traditional costumes include Buba, Elemu Sokoto, Siki, Agbada, and Sapara by the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria. The Sari worn by Indian women, the kilt by people in Scotland and Flamenco dresses, common with the Andalusian people of Spain, the Igbu-Ododo and Obenuku worn by the Esan people of Nigeria. Various countries and ethnic groups all over the world have their distinctive costumes.

Under traditional costumes, we have other sub types of costumes, which are:

Royal Costume: These are outfits worn by Emperors, Kings, Queens, Princes or Princesses as a symbol of authority and to distinguish them from their subjects and others in the society. Various royal costumes are worn for various functions. Different countries and ethnic groups have their own styles.

Ceremonial Costume: These are costumes worn for very special occasions, such as coronations, graduations, parades, religious rites, marriage ceremonies, festivals and other important events. The costumes worn at these events are special to the occasion and symbolic; they can reflect historical or cultural preferences that are no longer in vogue. Examples of ceremonial costumes are: royal cloak (ermine lined), crown and scepter of a monarch, court dress, such as the robe and wig worn by British judges, the full-dress

uniforms of military personnel (or ceremonial suit of armour), religious clothing, such as liturgical vestments and cassock worn by priests, Wedding clothing, including wedding dresses, masquerade costumes such as the Eyo masquerade of Lagos.

Modern Costume

These are costumes that reflect the current times. Modern costumes are mostly worn for day to day activities. The types of modern costumes include:

Historical Costume: This type of costume is a replica of that from an earlier historical period. They showcase lifestyle and culture of that time period in history. These types of costumes are mostly worn during theatrical productions, carnivals or during Halloween. Examples of historical costume are: Cavemen costume, Civil War costume, Renaissance costume, Viking costume, colonial costume, and the likes.

Fantastical Costume: According to Collins dictionary, fantastical costumes are costumes "conceived or appearing as if conceived by an unrestrained imagination; odd and remarkable". They are normally extravagantly fanciful in nature. They have slight relation to the real world because of their extravagance and strangeness. These types of costumes are mostly used in theatrical, film productions, Halloween and certain carnivals

Dance Costume: A dance costume is the clothing worn by a dancer when performing before an audience. A dance costume may be custom designed for use in a specific dance work, or it may have a traditional design, such as those used in some ceremonial and folk

dances. Typically, dance costumes are designed to harmonize with the dance and not hinder the movements of the dancer.

Occupational Costume: An occupational costume is a clothing worn strictly for professional or work related purpose. These include the wigs and garments worn by lawyers, overalls and helmet worn by engineers, and many more. Such costumes are able to decipher the occupation of the wearer.

2.1.4 FUNCTIONS OF COSTUME

1. Costume can be used to depict mood and style
2. It helps to show the geographical background (domicide) of the wearers.
3. Costume can be used to distinguish occupation and lifestyle
4. It indicates gender and reflects age
5. It establishes and clarifies characters relationship
6. It reflects the characters psychology
7. Costume can be used to distinguish an individuals social, political, religious, or economical status.
8. It establishes the relative importance of characters.

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

The concept of culture has a very long evolution, it is vigorous in nature. Anthropologists postulates that culture is generally adaptable as it provides people an adjustment to their physical and social environment, the basic needs of individuals within

the society such as feeding, shelter, procreate, comfort, clothing, and safety. This simply implies that culture is a learned attitude transferred by a member of a society, which can be said to begin at the onset of the birth of a child. To support this, Richardson Boyd states that:

Culture is information capable of affecting individuals' behaviour that they acquire from other members of their space through teaching, imitation, and other forms of social transmission (79).

Culture is the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. It is the features and knowing of a particular group of people, surrounding languages, religion, food, social habits, music, arts and every aspect of their lives. To this Edward Taylor contributes that: Culture is that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. (15)

The culture of a people means a lot to them, their lives and beliefs are expressed as they live and go about their everyday businesses. This simply explains that culture determines the communication of a people and how it proceeds among individuals, no matter how homogenous. To this, Ngugi wa Thiong O contributes that; Culture in its broadest sense, is a way of life fashioned by a people in their collective endeavor to live and come to term with their total environment. It is the sum of their arts, their science and all the social institutions, including their system of beliefs and rituals...Such values are

often expressed through the people's song, rites, these varieties of artistic activity have come to symbolize the meaning of the word, culture.(Bose. 23). Says about culture:

"we can now define Culture as the crystallized phase of man's life activities. It includes certain forms of action closely associated with particular objects and institutions; habitual attitudes of mind transferable from one person to another with the aid of mental images conveyed by speech-symbols . . . Culture also includes certain material objects and techniques . . ."

It can also be seen as the beliefs, systems of thought, practical arts, manner of living, customs, traditions, and all socially regularized ways of acting are also called culture. So defined, culture includes all the activities which develop in the association between persons or which are learned from a social group, but excludes those specific forms of behavior which are predetermined by inherited nature." Hiller (3)"

From the above definitions by various scholars of culture, one can say that there is no culture without a people and no people without culture. It encompasses all areas of man's life. As admitted by Sarpong "culture is dynamic, never static . . . , and have not only been manifested and shared by the members of a society, but also been passed on from one generation to another in an uninterrupted succession" (23). It is so binding on the people that it has become difficult for society to change its culture or an essential part of it overnight. Culture is a social and objective fact, which molds us; because the society of our origin gives it to us. It is a more or less knotted society where individuals seem to have the same beliefs, values, ideas, language, practices, dress code, food and so on. By

nature therefore, culture becomes obligatory; for even though there is no constraint, a man from birth has to consent to what society approves of. Sarpong further reiterates that “in every society . . . by reason of his culture, man is confronted with two sets of norms: what is done and what ought to be done; real and ideal culture. (24).

2.2.1 TYPES OF CULTURE

Culture is divided into two types: the physical objects of the culture and the ideas associated with these objects. They are: Material culture and Non material culture.

Material Culture: According to Cliffs note, "Material culture refers to the physical objects, resources, and spaces that people use to define their culture. These include homes, neighborhoods, cities, schools, churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, offices, factories and plants, tools, means of production, goods and products, stores, and so forth. All of these physical aspects of a culture help to define its members' behaviors and perceptions.

Non Material Culture: This according to e-notes refers to the nonphysical ideas that people have about their culture, including beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, language, organizations, and institutions. For instance, the non-material cultural concept of religion consists of a set of ideas and beliefs about God, worship, morals, and ethics. These beliefs, then, determine how the culture responds to its religious topics, issues, and events.

When considering non-material culture, we make reference to several processes that a culture uses to shape its members' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The most important of these are symbols, language, values, and norms.

2.2.2 ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

Culture is made up of various elements and they include:

1. Symbols

Every culture is filled with symbols, or things that stand for something else and that often evoke various reactions and emotions. Some symbols are actually types of nonverbal communication, while other symbols are in fact material objects. Culture is a system of symbols. Symbols are anything used to represent express and stand for an event situation. Symbols direct to guide our behavior. It is used to show an event of past, present or future. Bowing head, whistling, winking of the eyes, prostrating, handshake are all symbols in form of gesture. Other symbols have to with clothing or other signs or even colours. Like among the Edo people of Nigeria, the colour red signifies royalty but in other places, it might signify bloodshed, war or danger. All are the symbols, which express a specific object idea about a subject matter. Other examples amongst others are flag, anthem, picture, statues are symbols. Symbols are the short expression for the identification of an object or situation.

2. Language

Language is a source of communication and aids to transmit messages from one person to another. It helps to mold the behavior and of a person. Language differs from culture to culture and is transmitted from one generation to another. Language can either be spoken or written. It is a primary means used to transmit information and ideas. Knowledge of local language can help to give a clearer understanding of a situation and provides direct access to local people and express ones opinion.

3. Norms

This decides the rules and regulation of a society. Norms are often divided into two types, formal norms and informal norms.

Formal norms, also called laws, refer to the standards of behavior is considered the most important in any society.

Informal norms, also called folkways and customs, which refer to standards of behavior that are considered less important but still influences how people behave in the society.

4. Values/Beliefs

Every society and institution have their unique set of basic beliefs and values (called moral codes) which is shared by most of its members. These are the mental pictures of societal reality and it forms the basis of defining the societies right or wrong. Values are a culture's standard for discerning what is good and just in society. They help shape a society by suggesting what is good and bad. Values are for transmitting and

teaching or educating the citizens on the right or wrong way to function in a society. Beliefs are the convictions that people hold to be true. Individuals in a society have specific beliefs, but they also share collective values.

5. Artifacts

The last element of culture is the artifacts, or material objects, that constitute a society's material culture. In the simplest societies, artifacts are largely limited to a few tools, the huts people live in, ornaments, and the clothing they wear.

2.2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

Culture is learned

Culture is not genetic—we are not born with culture. A baby can be raised in any culture, and he or she will learn the culture, religion, language, and the skills that are appropriate in that culture, whether its fighting, dancing, cooking, sewing or whatever it may be. We learn our culture as we grow up in it, through a process called enculturation, which is also known as socialization. Culture can be learnt both formally and informally. For example, we learn our religion formally through an institution such as church, or mosque, or synagogue. We learn our history and language at schools through history lessons and English lessons. But we also learn our culture informally and unconsciously from family, friends, and the media. We observe and imitate others, and communicate with others, absorbing and learning our culture in the process.

Culture is shared

Culture is something that a group of people shares- its practices and its understanding. If an individual thinks something or behaves in a certain way that is not culture—it is a personal habit. But if most of the people in a society, do it, then it is culture. Culture is shared between members of a group, meaning they all think and behave the same way because they grew up in the same culture. People who are in the same culture are able to interact with each other without constant misunderstanding because they can relate to their thoughts, actions and even share a common language.

Culture is Symbolic

Culture is based on symbols, and culture is spread from generation to generation through symbols. People learn their culture's beliefs and behaviors through symbols. A symbol is something that means or stands for something else. For example, the Ada and Eben two curved swords are symbols of authority and royalty among the Benin people of Nigeria.

Not only does culture involve symbols, but symbols are used to transfer culture from generation to generation through language. Culture can be seen as the collection of symbolic knowledge that people in a society share.

Culture is integrated

Culture is a complex system, made up of many parts that are interconnected and related to each other. Some examples of the parts of culture are education, technology,

marriage, medicine, economics, family, beliefs and religion, government, cuisine, mode of dressing and language. Since everything is connected, if one part of the system changes, other parts also change. One part can influence the others. For example, generations ago, women were homemakers and mothers. But, now, most women are in the workforce. Because of this change, other parts of culture have changed, such as attitudes towards marriage and family, and people may live together without being married. Also, now there are daycare centers to care for children while the mothers go to work. Because one part of the cultural system changed, other parts changed as well.

Culture is Dynamic.

This simply means that cultures interact and change. Because most cultures are in contact with other cultures, they exchange ideas and symbols. All cultures change, otherwise, they would have problems adapting to changing environments. And because cultures are integrated, if one component in the system changes, it is likely that the entire system must adjust. A good example is that of females putting on trousers in Africa. Though of Western origin, it has now been inculcated into the African way of life. We now see not just men but women also putting on trousers.

FUNCTIONS OF CULTURE

Communication

Culture provides the ambience for the development of human communication systems such as language, both verbal and non-verbal e.g (gestures and symbols).

Identity

Culture influences how people see themselves and others, in terms of ideas like gender, age and ethnicity. Durkheim for example, suggested societies have a functional requirement to develop Social solidarity –which is the belief that we are connected into a larger network of people who share certain beliefs, identities and commitments to each other (47). And Social integration: A feeling of commitment to others, such as family and friends, is needed to create a sense of individual and cultural purpose. It gives people a sense of pride belonging or identifying with a group or society.

Value systems

Cultural institutions are a source of values and people's behaviour are conditioned by the cultural values they receive through the socialization process.

Perception:

Matsumoto argues that culture gives “meaning to social situations, generating social roles and normative behaviours” (87); meaning, it shapes how we see and understand the social and natural worlds. Offe for example, argues Western cultures generally operate under the belief that “the future” is not predetermined, whereas “Some African societies” are characterised by “the notion of a predetermined future not controllable by individuals” (50).

Transfer of Knowledge

Culture is transmissive in nature. It helps in transmission of customs, rituals and the knowledge behind everything it bears. This becomes possible when a young generation conceives cultural practices from the preceding generation. Another way of transfer of knowledge in culture is when socialization takes place in a peculiar culture.

Molds Personality

Culture can mold personality. A good example is a child who is brought up in a specific culture. Gradually culture molds him into a person with common behavior and practices in society. Later on, when the child grows into adulthood and migrates to a different place, culture molds his personality to the new customs and circumstances. He begins to practice the behavior pattern taught to him by the new culture.

ELEMENTS OF COSTUME

According to August Wilson in his book 'The Theatre Experience, he points out four (4) elements of costume design and they are:

1. Silhouette (it encompasses Shape and Line)

This is the first important element of a costume. It combines its line and silhouette. Silhouette is the fastest way to identify the time and place of a period costume. It also tells what parts of the body are emphasized, hidden, or displayed by the clothing. The silhouette should complement the body of the wearer as well as be in sync with the time period.

Colour

Colour suggests mood. Bright warm colours for a happy mood, dark somber colours for a dark mood. It is the most eye catching and arguably the most important element of costume design. Colour can change in brightness, vividness, or shade to accomplish a different effect on the costume and actor. It can be used to match skin tone or scenery, or create a contrast with scenery to focus the audience attention. When picking the colour of an outfit for an event or production, certain facts can be put into consideration such as:

1. Historical accuracy

In certain time periods, such as the Renaissance, some colours were reserved for those of royal or noble birth. Purple is generally considered to be a royal colour, as is true red. Peasants and merchants didn't wear these colours because they simply didn't have the means to purchase fabrics or dyes in those colours as they were imported from distant countries and tended to be very expensive. Lower-class people generally wore earth-toned fabrics – browns, greens, blues, and so on – as they were much easier to acquire and maintain. In this case, colour is a great way to show class distinctions as well as representing the time. Among the Benin people of Nigeria, the colour red was reserved for the royalty while white was used for rituals.

2. The mood or emotion the character is intended to evoke

Colours help define the mood of an event or production. Black in Africa signifies mourning and ritual while in the western world, black represents elegance, power, sophistication. Though they also use it for mourning but not as intense as Africans.

Colour is universal therefore; it means many things to many people. The Colour white can represent purity, like the wedding dress of a bride, but it can also represent mourning, ritual, and sacrifice.

In most instances though, bright colours reflects joyous occasions while dark, dull colours are for sad events.

3. Showing connections or contrasts between characters or groups of characters

Colours are a simple and clear way to group similar characters together, or show difference between the groups. Costuming similar groups of characters in similar colours is a great way to show connections between families, class distinctions, similar trades or employments, cliques, or friend groups. In a wedding ceremony, the families of the couple might select colours of their choice to differentiate both families at wedding ceremony. The friends of the couple can also do the same. Thus, the colour each group wears serves as a means of contrast or connection.

TEXTURE

Texture is the element of design that describes surface appearance and feel. Textures are compared to other textures with which they are combined and to the person wearing them. Texture refers to the surface qualities of things. Texture is determined by the arrangement of the component parts in fabric. These are the fiber, the yarn, the fabrication. Textures have the physical properties of weight, size, bulk, shape, light absorption and reflection. Textures can produce illusion that change apparent body size, can make one look heavier or thinner.

SPACE

Space refers to the area between different shapes. This includes the silhouette of the actor's body, the distance between the actor wearing the costume and props, backgrounds or other actors, and the outline of the costume, if it is larger than the actor wearing it.

CHAPTER THREE

ESAN LAND AND CULTURE

3.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF ESAN LAND AND THE PEOPLE OF EMU

The modern Esan nation is believed to have been organized during the 15th century, when citizens, mostly nobles and princes, left the neighbouring Benin Empire for the northeast; there they formed communities and kingdoms called Eguares among the aboriginal peoples whom they met there. The biggest influence on Esanland came from the Benin Empire. In 1460, Oba Ewuare passed laws of mourning that prohibited sexual intercourse, bathing, drumming, dancing, and cooking. These laws proved too restrictive for many citizens, and these citizens fled the kingdom to Esanland. This exodus shaped Esanland's modern cultural identity and gave rise to the term "Esan," or "refugee." Oral tradition has heavily supported this theory. Prominent Esan and Edo historians have collected stories about this migration. It is evident in the pre-colonial history of Esan that Esan as a name, referring to a settled people had long existed before the 15th century. In other words, there are cultural evidence in Esan oral traditions, which are indicative of the fact that before the 15th century, Esan consciousness was in existence. J Egharevba, the Bini historian writes:

“The early people of Esan or Ishan were Bini emigrants from the first and second periods of the Bini Empire. Esan is the name of the first man who migrated became the founder and progenitor of Esan.”(21).

Two issues are raised by Egharevba, the issue of origin and that of the derivation of name “Esan” Egharevba had no conclusive evidence on either the origin of the Esan people or their name. Rather, what would appear plausible in the assertion is that “Esan progenitors” may have had a common migrating stock with early Benin settlers. Benin traditional or palace historians who are essentially imperial in their outlook see the origin of Esan as beginning from the reign of Oba Ewuare 1 in about 1440 A.D. and the name Esan being derived from the description of the manner in which the Esan people fled – ‘Esanfua’ – during Ewuare 1 reign. Dr Christopher Okojie contradict this when he says:

“It would at first appear that the Esan's did not originate until after 1440, when Oba Ewuare imposed his laws on the great Benin stool. No, before this time there were inhabitants scattered in the jungles now comprising Ishan as evidence by our own Esan folklores featured Ogiso – the common name for Bini rulers before the advent of the great Oranmiyan.”

It would appear pertinent to emphasize the point that Esan people did not suddenly come into existence during the reign of Oba Ewuare 1. The people who existed in the Esan geographical area had a knowledge of themselves according to Esan extant traditions. When the exodus occurred, Benin immigrants fled or moved to various places

in what Edo land and therefore the eventual settlement of these B immigrants was not peculiar to Esan. It is argued, that naturally people hardly migrate to places unknown, the Bini immigrants went to settle where they had previous contacts. Furthermore, migrants would move to places where they hoped to have security and accommodation. In other words, there were contacts and intersections between Bini and Esan before the exodus of the 15th century. 'Esan-fia' does not explain the origin of Esan. It's doubtless therefore, that Esan-fua as a term was a concocted expression often told as jokes against neighbours. Alagoa describe such a tradition as a "stereotype of abuse."

Although the Ewuare version of Esan origin may mean the origin of organized political institutions in the area and the phase of radical societal restructuring due largely to increased migrants from Benin into the area it would not be appropriate to see it in terms of the origin of all that is the Esan entity. This view is more pronounced since some communities owe their origin to areas other than Benin. One of such communities is Irrua, which according to tradition was the earliest kingdom founder in Esan by a warrior from Ifeku, an island near Idah. Butcher in the same vein claims of Irrua origin that some sections of the community migrated from places like Uke near Benin and Agbede in Etsako while Otouruwa inhabitants are said to have migrated from Uhe near Ife at about the same time that B people migrated from the region. Like Bradbury in his Bini Studies. Butcher contents that Esan is of heterogeneous origin. Although this view complements

the migration theory, an archaeological dimension to these contentions make them more plausible than the oral traditions of the Irrua.

Recently, archaeological evidence from the Ekpoma part of Esan have revealed that people lived in organized politics in the area from about half a millennium years ago. According to Peter Darling, these people who were engaged in the taste of massive earth constructions known as the Iyala were the inhabitants of a mini – kingdom at the time.

In his words, “The men once engaged in this gargantuan task were most probably, the ancestors of the present day Bini and Esan (Ishan) speakers still living in the area.”

Apart from this evidence from Darling, Emessiri and Webster have shown that despite the similarities in B and Esan languages, their common words and intonation were derived from a common Kwa stock. Ordinarily, there exist over forty percent differences in both languages especially in technical terms. These technical terms include words of invisible objects, which learners of a new language can hardly use. They include the word bone which is Ugboloko in Bini while in Esan it is known as Ugue. Also blood in Bini is esagien while in Esan it is called arhanlen. On the other hand, words for common visible objects are identical. Again, a third category of words derived from the period of European contact to the present day reveals identical names.

There are on the whole 35 established kingdoms in Esanland, including Amahor, Ebelle, Egoro, Ewohimi, Ekekhenlen, Ekpoma, Ekpon, Emu, Ewu, Ewatto, Ewossa,

Idoa,[3] Ifeku, Igueben, Ilushi, Inyelen, Irrua, Ogwa, Ohordua, Okalo, Okhuesan, Onogholo, Opoji, Oria, Orowa, Uromi, Udo, Ugbegun, Ugboha, Ubiaja, Urhohi, Ugun, Ujiogba, Ukhun, and Uzea.

3.1.2 THE HISTORY OF EMU

It will serve a useful purpose to remember right at the onset that there are two parts to every Esan district: the royal family and the common people. They were quite distinct, for nearly all the ancient ruling houses came from Benin City or its suburbs. The head of the ruling house Gs was and still is, the Onojie, who with his family, servants and brothers inhabited Eguare, the administrative capital of the district. Another important thing an enquirer must take notice of is the use of the word brother by Esan people. It can mean anything from a male blood relation to a very good friend.

The correct name is Emulu. The founder of Emu, Oriomon and Erakpe of Ohordua were full brothers. Before the death of the two Princes, Kuoboyowa and Ezuwarha, Warrior Okhirare was finding enough trouble in his secret dealings with his idol, Princess Elonmon. After the enactment of the unnatural mourning laws, existence became near impossible for the two lovers, and so they fled the city with all they possessed.

While the father Okhirare and his first son Erakpe, settled at Ohordua, the second son Oriomon crossed the Utor stream and established a settlement which later came to be

known as IDUMOGBE. Oriomon was a great farmer who devoted all his energy and knowledge to getting out of the soil as much yield as possible.

In 1463 when in stooping to conquer, Oba Ewuare the Selfish invited all Esan leaders to Benin, it was round about May when the yam plants were just spreading and needed roping with constant attention to ensure good yield. That, in farmer Oriomon's mind was the wrong time for social visit particularly as the journey to Benin at that time took anything from three to six months. He asked his son, Uwagbo to deputize for him Ewuare's diplomatic stroke turned this apparent disrespect to one's sovereign into a boomerang, which hit old farmer Oriomon. His son returned to be the ruler of his people, including his father! Uwagbo became the first Onojie of Ewuare and to spare his father further insult he moved to the present Ewuare called ORAKHUAN.

1. EGUARE:

This place is better known as Orakhuan and while it had population of 917 in 1953, this had grown to 1749 in 1963. It consists of two following components:

(a) IDUMUAGUE

(b) AMA

(c) EMOA, majority of its founders came from Afuda Irrua and here the Iyasele lives

(d) UNEME and

(e) OBIDIGBON, which was founded by Uwagbo himself.

2. IDUNEMA

Ema, one of Oriomon's sons founded Idunema. This quarter with Idumogbe forms AGADAGA.

3. UGUN

Here the Oniha lives in Emu.

Idumogbe (the original settlement of Oriomon), Idunema, Ugun, Obolo and Akhiomen because of their geographical positions together form USOLO, which had a population of 2210 in 1963.

4. IBHIADAN

This consists of Odogbe, which came from Eguare, Idumu-Oise, Okede from which some migrated to establish part of EBHURU of Ubiaja, and OKPOGHO. As explained already Idu-ogbe, Oriomon's original settlement was named after Oriomon's second son who remained with his father to develop the place.

5. EMUNEKHUA

This consists of IBHIOZE, EKE, UDOH and OBODOGUN. They constitute the early settlers of Emu, soon after the arrival of Oriomon. Ibhioze was founded by a Benin man called Eke and his junior brother UDOH were the founders of Udoh. Obodogun

settlers were immigrants From OKPANAM in Asaba Division now Oshimili Local Government Area. Odin, the founder of Orowa was a brother of Oze of Emunekhwa, making one wonder at the sense in the protracted land case between Emu and Orowa.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF MARRIAGE IN ESAN LAND

From earliest times, marriage and family life in Esanland were central to the evolution and survival of Esan, and other Nigerian societies; hence, several laws were put in place to regulate them. Although with slight variation in terms of traditional requirements for marriage and procedure, marriage and family life were essentially the same across pre-colonial Nigerian societies in terms of nature and practice. But according to M.A Makinde, while it is hard to know adequately how marriages in pre-colonial Nigeria were conducted before the coming of Islam and Christianity, marriage was however the outcome of love, common aptitude and association. Consequently, marriages in pre-colonial Nigeria were basically conducted according to inherent local customs and traditions across Nigerian societies. Hence, Makinde observed that:

"Three influences come to play in the traditional marriage. The first is the influence of the parent, the second is the direct arrangement between a man and woman, and the third is the recommendation of friends and relatives. Before this modern time, parents arranged marriages for their children. This was very common among women."(9)

After the successful tying of the nuptial knot and parental blessings obtained in accord with local customs and traditions, family life begins in pre-colonial Nigeria. However, before the engagement can begin in the first place, the grand parents of the intending couple will carry out investigation on the family of either the bride or groom. They try to find out whether the family is free from anything that may pose a danger to their children in the future.. More so, they also visit the native doctors (seers) as tradition demands to ascertain or obtain divine forecast of the compatibility, success, and productivity or otherwise of the intended marriage.

In precolonial Nigeria, traditional marriage was a community affair. In this period, people grew up and reside in the community where they were born. With this, the people were together as one and every one of them in the community are familiar with each other. So the way marriages are done bring people together.

Marriages before today were neighbourhood affairs. People stayed in their locality much more than they do today. As a result, marriages were contracted among the local people. Today, matters have changed a great deal due to travel and education.

However, in pre-colonial Esan custom there were three ways by which a man could come to have a wife: this is by betrothal, by the dowry system and by inheritance.

(i) BETROTHAL (EBEE):

This particular way of giving out the young innocent child to man old enough to be her father is the most cheapest, selfish and commonest way of giving out a child in marriage. A man could 'beg' for the hand of a girl from conception to the age of five. Seeing a woman pregnant the man would send her a log of firewood (for night heating since the mud houses with thatched roofs were very cold), and say, 'may the departed spirits deliver you safely, if the child should be a girl, I beg for her hand in marriage'. The man might be anything up to sixty. years in age. Should the pregnant woman have a baby girl, he renew his request with more presents like logs of wood, yams etc. There might be two, three or more prospective suitors asking for this foetus hand in marriage ! The mother and father at this time usually are quite non-committal. On the hair-washing day, that is when the baby is three to four months old, the man who is invited to help pound the fofou for the ceremony know he had been accepted,. and he could afterwards come to ask for the girl's hand formally. In most other places, by the time the girl was five, it was time to get serious with the request, and with a calabash of palm vine, passed through a middleman, usually the girl's uncle or cousin or godfather and came up to 'salute the father'..

A discrete man say nothing on that day it is merely on a reconnaissance greeting. A few market days after. he repeats his visit, with perhaps, a bigger keg of palm wine. Then with much head scratching and much speaking in parables and ancient idioms, the

‘go-between’ (middleman) informs the father of the child on their mission. Those present, and the suitor given the usual dispatch the palm wine. Esan non-committal answer of I hear followed with, the equally non-committal I shall convey your requests to my master; the speaker might be the Ominjiogbe, the virtual owner of all in the Uelen. This type of visit was repeated several times, until his tenacity was rewarded with acquiescence. From that moment on he had bought an object for which he would continue to pay until Death do them part. There was no actual monetary bride price demanded, but the firewood and water he supplied to the mother during the dry season, yams frequently given and to the father he gave palm wine and often gave free labour in his farm or came to assist during the house building season was done in form of a bride price. The more he made himself useful, the happier the marriage turned out to be. There was no question of whether the poor girl liked her suitor or not, if she understood what all the ‘goings-on’ meant at all; in fact she was often unaware of the arrangement until she was coming of age. A sensible girl, therefore knowing the odds against her, would as well make up her mind to develop a liking for her husband-to-be, who had virtually become a servant to her family.

Once a year during the community festival special presents were made to the father (a bundle of seven yams and a calabash of palm wine), to the mother, yams and a calabash of oil, and to the girl, beads, cloth etc. By the time the girl was ten to fifteen, when the intended husband must have been nearly bald from carrying loads to his future father-in-law’s house, he must have spent well over Ebo Isen, a hellish lot of cowries

numbering about 94,000 equivalent today to some N3.90. He could then start a gentle agitation for his wife to be sent to him.

On the long run this method of marriage. was more expensive but it commended itself to everybody because of easier payments, spread over five to fifteen years, and an Ebee was a tamer, more lovable, more trustworthy and more manageable wife than any other type.

(II) THE DOWRY SYSTEM:

The system of paying bride price was rarer, but was more lucrative system for the father; however only the. well-to-do could leave their daughters to grow before marrying them out. The patient father asked and got a heavy sum of money cash down, for his grown up daughter. No fixed amount of money is made, prices differ according to families.

Although this system gave the father an avenue for money, the girl who by then was between ten to fifteen years old, had gotten to the age when, despite her sex, she could express her likes and dislikes. She could refuse a man despite his bags of cowries because of his ugly one eye, or a limp, habitual drunkenness etc. In practice however, the girl was forced and carried on men's shoulders with fruitless wailing, to the husband's house, and for the next three months the unhappy husband and his relatives had to stand

guard over their bride, lest she bolted away. In Ugboha the dreaded juju masquerade was the effective messenger who led the protesting damsel to her unwanted husband.

Instances were many when the confounded husband after trying all methods of bribes and appeasements in vain resorted to a bestial mode of cohabitation the strong men of the family gathered, held the girl down and a grotesquely unnatural husband and wife relation was effected. The idea was to consummate the marriage and get the stubborn girl pregnant at all costs. Once so, she would be afraid of offending the departed spirits, as she would surely do, if while carrying a man's child she as thinking of deserting him, which was equivalent to thinking evil of him. Then when she had the baby the chances, in Esan expression, were ELO OLE KI DERE - her eyes would come down.

(iii) BY INHERITANCE (EGBASI OF ESAN 'A', IZO OF ESAN)

This is a marriage by chance, and it is relished only by the poor and primitive, particularly when the woman to be inherited is old or evil looking. Upon the death of a man, the wife, if she was not an Onojie's daughter, was inheritable after due burial of the father by the son. If she was the father's only wife and the heir's mother, then an uncle or Omijogbe or the nearest patrikin, inherited her. If there were many wives, an heir who might not have been able to marry a single wife of his own, would suddenly find himself the owner of several wives. He could pick the younger and most beautiful ones and the other women may be gifted to his junior brothers, while the women that he does not want would be returned back to their family so as to refund the dowries on them. Sometimes

some of the women who were asked to go and refund dowry, were unwilling to leave their children; in that case if there was no one to inherit them, the Egbele (family) gives them an open license at the ancestral shrine which free such women to do whatever they liked as long as they did not bring open dishonor to their children's family. Until more recently, this system of marriage was not practiced in Ekpoma. As soon as a man died the wives, particularly the childless ones, went to their homes. This Ekpoma custom arose in an attempt to curb the true behaviour of next-of-kin, who used to be more anxious for what was likely to be inherited, rather than do all in their power to save the sick man

2. METHOD OF INHERITANCE (UHANMIN):

After the mourning period of a deceased husband, the woman may go and stay with her parents or may stay in her husband's place, with her children; This is precisely three months after the woman is now prepared to be inherited. However, she had to be in her husband's place on the day of inheritance, the Edion of the Egbele were invited by the heir and inform them of his intention to inherit his father's wife or wives. A goat was slaughtered at the ancestral shrine to formally inform the long line of dead ancestors that from that day on, the woman in question had become his wife. He then stepped across the woman's extended legs, a thing that is adulterous if done to a woman not one's wife. Whether there were two or more wives, it required just one goat to inherit all of them.

Before the formal inheritance, the intending inheritor must have gone to the woman's parents or guardian for the arrangements to smoothen the way. He went to them with a calabash of palm wine and cash of 2,800 Cowries now equivalent to N11.70k.

A woman who lost her husband must be inherited in this way within three months or she became a free woman. If there was no one to inherit her and she insisted on staying to look after her children, the freedom from Egbele had to be given on the day the other wives were inherited. Any sharing of the wives for the other brothers also had to be done on the same day.

Princesses, whether daughters of ruling or dead Enijie, were not: Inheritable. The reasons for this is that they are married without any payment of bride price and, secondly, their noble birth made them marry as far as possible, for love They could not be forced to marry the heirs to their late husband's. Such heirs might be unbecoming.

3. PLEDGING:

Marriage sometimes followed this system which in the main was disguised slavery. A person could pawn himself, his son or more often, his daughter to raise funds either when he is in trouble or needed money badly to pay a troublesome creditor. The pawn had to perform any given duties. The person pawned could not be released until the capital had been paid fully. Where a man pawned his daughter for a big amount, he might never be able to redeem her before she came of age. The Creditor might then take the girl

as his wife, making appropriate deduction in lieu of this. The poor girl just had no choice in the matter.

It is noteworthy that, during this period, the polygamous marriage was largely the generally accepted standard of marriage; and family life and the extended family. Polygamy was in pre-colonial Nigeria dominant and popular because the society laid excessive emphasis on children, most especially on the number of male children a family had. This is usually the basis upon which a family is accorded dignity, respect and recognition. Put differently, having a large family during the period enhanced a man's social status. Therefore, demonstrating the centrality of polygamy in pre-colonial Esan, Okojie reveals that "Every Esan wife knows she is one of a series, and therefore had to make her position secure by doing all that would give her full claim as the First wife. She who plants the Ihianloto, Ukhinmin Tree (*Neubodia Leavis*) in the space between her house (at the back) and the husband's, in front, owns the compound and is the First wife."(4)

At this juncture, it should be emphasized that in pre-colonial Esan, people were not totally given a free rein in the area of marriage and family life. So, marriage and family life were strictly regulated by extant customary laws across Nigerian communities, which continue to evolve to meet the changing need of marriage and family life. Consequently, these institutions were not anarchic and inimical to societal growth

and development in the pre-colonial period. This is the demonstrable reality in pre-colonial Uromi land, where according to Ojiefoh,

"Although their customary laws are not written down in books, the rules, traditions and customs were known to everybody in the remotest hamlet of the Chiefdom. It would be wrong therefore to say that customary law is very flexible. It is only flexible because society changes every day... Ethnic laws or customary laws seem to bend to meet the demand. In fact, this social response of customary law to the society is what makes customary law flexible"(9)

Further, he observed that critical aspects of the Uromi customary law on which marriage and family life in Uromi land were based and structured emanated from the decree made by the Oba of Benin or the Onojie (regional head of Uromi). Thus, they are mostly Benin law and custom, which Oba Ewuare 1 ordered all the Onojies who attended the conference of 1457 to uphold in their domain through the swearing of an oath, the Royal Ekete "The Benin Throne." They include:

1. Do not marry your daughter or your stepdaughter.
2. Do not marry your sisters or your brother's wife.
3. Do not sleep with your mother or father's wife.

In the event of anyone contravening these laws, if confession does not take place, the accused would die, unless the gods are appeased.

In modern times though, with the coming and acceptance of Islam and Christianity, things have changed.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 THE NATURE OF THE TRADITIONAL COSTUME OF THE ESAN PEOPLE

For many centuries before British agents colonized Esan, they had various clothings for various events. “Ishan cotton” an indigenous crop was used to manufacture Ukpon-Ododo the thick multi-coloured cloth. “Ishan cotton” locally called olulu was of long, strong and coarse lint. By the 19th century, it was obvious that Esan had a long history of cultivation and use of cotton. However, Esan people did not export cotton to other areas, but instead exported large quantities of native cloths manufactured from indigenous cotton to many places including Benin and Agbor. Cloth weaving in Esan was an important pre-occupation by women in pre-colonial times. Women did the transformation of the wool into cloth. The varieties included Ukpon-asiso specially woven as work cloth or sewn as the farmer’s bag, Ukpon-agbo or the ordinary wrapper, Ukpon-ododo or the multi-coloured cloth and Ukpon-nogian – the scarlet cloth. In the process of weaving the native cloth, dried wool was picked from the plant and separated from the seeds with wooden tools known as Osomuro and Ukpelomon. The wool was spun into threads after beating into some softness. The wool was thereafter drawn out and

spun into threads that were later dyed with various colours of black, red and yellow. The vertical and horizontal handlooms locally called erindo were used to weave the threads into cloth. Both the ordinary (undyed) thread and the dyed ones were alternatively used to achieve specific artistry (Talbot 45). Other sticks used as tools to process cotton included Eben, Aha, Okidore and Ikpifeme. The most valued cloth for farm work was Ukpon-asiso, thickly woven and coarse in texture.

The Ukpon-agbo was woven with un-dyed threads. They were usually woven for women who tied them as wrappers before the advent of European textiles. The Ukpon ododo or multicoloured cloth was the popular Esan cloth, which attracted commercial status from European traders beginning with the Portuguese in Benin during the 15th century.

Among the various clothings named, the Igbulu or Igbu-Ododo or Ukpon Ododo is the most important fabric. It is worn mostly during festive or ceremonial occasions by the elders and all noble or influential men who could afford to purchase it for it is an expensive wrapper. Colorfully striped cloths for special occasions, especially those with a predominance of red, are called ukpon-ododo, the local meaning of which is cloth of flowers" (Andrew Ogbeide, Ekpoma, 10 April 1980).

The traditional clothing and ornaments worn by Esan people also comment upon the gender, age, and status of the wearer. In times past, young boys and girls went naked until puberty. Girls wore strings of akpono, discoid waist beads now made of plastic, but

once produced by painstaking chipping shell into shape. At one time akpono beads were a measure of the wealth of a family and the value placed on their daughters; waist beads were also given as gifts to young women from their suitors. Today akpono beads are used almost exclusively for ceremonial occasions, and mostly wear with clothing.

Traditional adult attire, consisting of unstructured wrappers, is still common in Esan villages. Men wear large wrappers, constructed of three long panels of handwoven cloth, in two common styles. In the first, called Igbulu or Igbu. The cloth is wrapped around the body under one arm and over the other shoulder like a toga, and worn with a small loin wrapper below (now replaced today by trousers). The second style, called Ubunuku, consists of a cloth wrapped around the lower body and tucked in on the right side or bunched up in front, leaving the chest bare. This style, which might be worn relaxing at home, is also typical male ceremonial and ritual attire. A man of status might wear a large wrapper every day, even to and from his farm where he would strip to his loincloth for work. A common person would formerly simply wear the loincloth and perhaps a tunic for all but special occasions. A sturdy hand woven tunic is still common among farmers and hunters, despite the loincloth has been replaced with shorts.

Traditional women's clothing consisted of a smaller wrapper constructed of only two handwoven panels, worn around the body from the armpits to the ankles, and tucked in at the left side. In the seclusion of her home, she might wear the wrapper only from the waist down, but quickly rearrange it should a male stranger arrive. For ceremonial

occasions, women may wear a special wrapper in this way, or an elaborate outfit consisting of blouse, wrapper, head tie and shawl in the costliest of fabrics. Ceremonial occasions also demanded the use of ornaments by both men and women.

Traditional Esan hairdos are closely related to those of Benin, and reflect the wearer's age, gender, rank and life transitions. Today, however, most men of all social classes will crop their hair closely. Gone are the plaited hairstyles of men from royal and chiefly families, and the elders' single plaited ponytail decorated with a bead (Okojie 43). The priest's traditional long curls (ogbihiagha) are rare, but long locks can still be seen among children dedicated to various deities.

Traditional female hairstyles are more elaborate, but nowadays they are relegated to ceremonial occasions, as women prefer to plait or bind their hair in pan-Nigerian styles. The young girl's red-dyed plaits (eto-ikpododo) and bangs, which were left long as a sign of modesty, are now defunct, as is the showy hairdo dressed with coins and beads (ojieto) which was the virginal girl's reward after clitoridectomy (Okojie [1960]: 43, 45). All of the hairstyles of adult women of status are elaborate, often requiring the addition of hairpieces or the use of a wig, and decorated with beads and other ornaments.

Esan leatherworker uses the untanned hides of antelope, deer or cow which are skinned. After the hair is removed from the hide, the leatherworker cuts out the basic elements of a flywhisk (ijiakpa), small ceremonial fan (azuzu), or the large fan of men of status, also known as azuzu.

The Ijakpa was made of leather tassels with knitted and decorated handle. Because the wearing of Igbulu-ododo left a part of the body exposed the Ijakpa was used for killing flies and other insects that perch on the exposed body. A cap, Arhu, made of same or different material or even beads are won on the head to match with the face, added colour to the man's personality and acted as a shade over the head from the rays of the sunshine.

All Esan men and women possessed loin cloths. For example an average Esan man had a loin cloth for ordinary wear and three pieces sewn together known as igbu or male coverlet. This would give a total of four pieces on the minimum of loin cloth needed by every male. The woman also needed at least two wrappers of two loin cloths sewn together as one. A European visitor James Welsh who visited the area in 1588 observed that wrappers were tied by women above their breasts to cover them up to their knees (Hodgkin, 1960, p.144). Thus, the woman needed an average of four pieces of loincloth at any given period.

4.2 THE NATURE OF THE TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE COSTUME OF THE EMU PEOPLE OF ESAN LAND

The Emu people like other Esan people use the same material for their traditional marriage ceremonies. With an exception to the Iyenle whose Igbu-Ododo is a white fabric with multi colours.

During the traditional marriage ceremony, the groom puts on the Igbu-Ododo, same with other elderly men present. The Igbu-Ododo or Ukpon-Ododo which means cloth of flowers is a colorfully striped cloths for special occasions such as wedding ceremonies, festivals and many more ,especially those with with a predominance of red. Before the introduction of trousers, the men wore loincloth, Obenuku a small wrapper tied around the waist before putting on the Igbu-Ododo. Other accessories like the Ijakpa, which is made of leather tassels with knitted and decorated handle. A cap (Arhu) is optional with neck beads and waist beads. Only men wear the Igbu-Ododo.

The bride normally ties a wrapper reaching from her chest to her ankle. Her hair is decorated with beads also her neck and hands. The women normally tie a two wrapper around their waist reaching to their ankle. They also tie head gears (ugbaletu) and wear a blouse. They also put on hand beads and neck beads. These days though, other jewelries asides beads are used.

4.3 PICTORIAL INTERPRETATION OF THE TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE COSTUME OF THE EMU PEOPLE OF ESAN LAND

Below, a pictorial representation of the key persons in a traditional marriage ceremony of the Esan people will be analysed.

INTERPRETATION OF BRIDAL COSTUME



Figure 1: The Bride on a gold wrapper mixed with black, red, and other body adornments

Figure 1 above is a picture of an Esan bride. Before the bride wore colonization, velvet wrappers or other hand woven materials, her hairstyle is similar to that of a Benin bride. Today, people use different colours of wrappers, some even wear gowns but decorate their hairs with beads and put on coral neck and beads.

In the picture above, the bride is putting on a velvet wrapper with the colours, gold, red, and black which are known to be rich cultural colours, the most times represents royalty or honor. The hand beads on her hand are known as (Ikpemwin-obo), the neck beads fully adorned on her neck is called (Ikpemwin-urhu). Her earrings are called (ebale'hor). Her hair is decorated also with coral beads, and they are known as (Ikpemwin-eto)

INTERPRETATION OF GROOM'S COSTUME



Figure 2: The groom putting on a white singlet with the Igbu-ododo wrapper and a beaded crown

Figure 2 above represents an Esan groom. Before colonization an average Esan man had a loin cloth for ordinary wear and three pieces sewn together known as igbu or male coverlet. This would give a total of four pieces on the minimum of loin cloth needed by every male. Now though, the groom puts on a white top or singlet (e'wu). The groom in the picture is tying the Igbu-Ododo, under the Igbu-Ododo is a trouser. On his hands are hand beads (Ikpewin-obo) and the beads on his neck (Ikpewin-urhu). He is

putting on a cap made from beads (ukparhu). This Igbu-Ododo has the dominant colour of green and red which represents a new beginning and royalty or honor.

INTERPRETATION OF BRIDES PARENTS COSTUME



Figure 3: The brides parents; the mother is putting on a two wrapper and a blouse, the father is putting on the Igbu-ododo wrapper and a white shirt

Figure 3 above shows an Esan couple. They represent the parents of the bride. During special occasions like a marriage ceremony, families and friends of the couple

dress their best to portray how important the occasion is. Esan women normally tie two wrappers. The wrappers are tied from the left to the right of their waist reaching their ankle; the wrapper the bride's mother is tying is called a judge wrapper, which is common among the women of the south region of Nigeria. They normally use expensive fabrics or the best of what the family can afford. The wrappers are called (aku'kpon). The head tie the woman is tying is called (Ugbaletu). On her hand are coral beads called (Ikpemwin-obo), while her neck is adorned with coral beads (Ikpemwin-urhu). The blouse she is putting on is made of lace material and it is called (E'wu). Her beaded earring is called (ebale'hor)

The father of the bride is dressed like a typical Esan traditional man. The white shirt (E'wu) he is putting on accentuates the Igbu-Ododo he is putting on. The wrapper is hand woven. On his neck and hands are coral beads. (Ikpemwin-urhu and Ikpemwin-obo).

INTERPRETATION OF GROOM'S PARENTS COSTUME



Figure 4: The groom's parents; the father is putting on a white top and the igbu-ododo wrapper on the shoulder is the ijakpa. The mother is putting on a red blouse and red two wrapper with head tie.

Figure 4 above represents the groom's parents. The father is dressed like a titled Esan man. He is putting on a white top (E'wu), on his shoulder is a whisk called (Ijakpa) The Ijakpa is made of leather tassels with a knitted and decorated handle. In the Olden day because the wearing of Igbulu-ododo left a part of the body exposed the Ijakpa was used for killing flies and other insects that perch on the exposed body. These days its more of an accessory carried by titled men or people of high class. His hands and neck

are decorated with beads (Ikpemwin-obo and Ikpemwin-urhu). The wrapper as stated previously is the Igbu-Ododo.

The mother of the groom is dressed in a red red lace blouse (E'wu), a red judge wrapper (Aku'kpon). The wrapper is tied from left to right and it is a two wrapper (the bigger wrapper is tied first then the smaller one is tied on top). She is also wearing neck beads and hand beads (Ikpemwin-urhu and Ikpemwin-obo). On her ears are ear rings called (ebale'hor).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

Costume perform a cultural function, as a vehicle for cultural representation revealing the way of life, norms more, world-view and temperament of a given culture. Culture is made up of two components, materials and non-material. The non-material is made up of the ideas behind the norms, value, belief system and social institution while material culture consists of all the artefact and fashion of the people. It is in this latter component that costume belongs.

Costume help create cultural identity and unity among a given social group. Indeed some ethnic and tribal groups are identified not just by the pattern, but also by the colour of their costume. Examples of this are the Esans with their multi coloured wrapper and the velvet wrapper for women, and the famous beaded hairstyle their brides put on. The symbolism of these expressions are highly valued.

Culture cuts across all dimensions of life as practiced by a group in a given setting and within an age. The culture of a people is identifiable by the kind of costume they put on, as it is always the first call of attention, not only for the external covering of the body, they are unique identities particular to people, which identifies them in any gathering.

Cultural symbolism is the hallmark of the Nigerian traditional dress. It is consciously/unconsciously weaved to bear emblems unique to its owner.

One of the major features of costume is that it helps to locate a particular culture where a play is set and establish symbols. It is the need to solve problems such as these (wrong interpretation of cultural norms and values), that a research work as this becomes pertinent. Wrong interpretation of people's culture is a serious problem as it can ridicule, lead to violence and even reinforce stereotypical notion. Proper understanding and application of costume therefore can play a very important part in reflecting and indeed enhancing cross-cultural understanding.

5.2 FINDINGS

This research was set out to examine costume as a symbol of cultural representation in the traditional marriage ceremony of the Ewu people of Esan Land. The main way of achieving this is by documenting the information gathered. In the process of documenting this information, a photo exhibition portraying various costumes required in a traditional marriage ceremony of an Ewu couple with key persons in the marriage ceremony was held to enlighten the public.

In the process of gathering information for this research, it was deduced that the costumes used for an Ewu marriage ceremony are not just outfits of beautification but it helps determine a lot about the families of the bride and groom. The costumes helped

highlight the cultural aesthetics of the people and the social status of both families. Such differentiation can easily be noticed with the way the bride's father and the groom's father were dressed. The groom's father being a titled man is holding an Ijakpa and the dominant colour of his wrapper is red while the bride's father did not carry an Ijakpa and the dominant colour of his wrapper is green. Among the Esan's, the colour red represents royalty, high status or honor.

The study also shows that despite the various types of fabrics the Esan people have, the Igbu-Ododo is the material used among the males for traditional marriage ceremonies, though with the advent of Christianity and Westernization most people prefer wearing European outfits or using African print materials in makes a trouser and a top for traditional marriage ceremonies. There has also been the erroneous behaviour of women tying the Igbu-Ododo wrapper, which is not supposed to be. Before the coming of the white man, an Esan bride wears a velvet wrapper but these days most prefer putting on gowns.

The fabric most especially the Igbu-Ododo is hand woven by Esan women and the colours varies. Though its a multi-coloured cloth, it always has a dominant colour which for titled men is normally red.

The research so far proves that many people need to be educated on the cultural importance of these costumes.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This research was carried out to investigate the problem on the misunderstanding of costume as a symbol of cultural representation using the traditional marriage ceremony of the Emu people of Esan Land and its effect on the society. The goal was to determine and suggest ways through which the documentation of these marriage costumes can be made possible, and to determine the importance of costumes in marriages as a form of cultural identification. This was necessitated by the cultural apathy dominating the society.

In the course of this research, it was sufficiently established through pictorial representation the various traditional marriage costumes of the Emu people of Esan Land. The research also discovered that the major reason for the lack of interest in understanding traditional costumes is because of media imperialism, Western influence and Christianity.

It is the conviction of this research that if the stated recommendations are implemented, not only the marriage costume of the Emu people of Esan Land but other cultures also will be able to restore and protect the cultural symbolism and representation of their costumes.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequent upon the observations and findings of this study, the following recommendations and suggestions are made:

1. Creation of clubs and organisations tied to cultural preservation: A good way of preserving our cultural heritage is by creating and joining associations or clubs that affiliates with the ethnic background. These types of organisations also known as social clubs are gatherings where one can practice and learn of ones culture.
2. Preservation of cultural heritage through education: The appreciation of cultural heritage should be communicated through an integrated education approach in this global society. Sustainability in the preservation of cultural heritage through education should be encouraged. It is a way of how tangible and intangible cultural heritage can be safeguarded. This can be achieved by inculcating cultural values and symbols into the educational system at various levels(primary, secondary and tertiary). Parents also can endeavour to teach their children the culture if their people.
3. The use of the media: Digital storage can play a large role in the preservation of cultural heritage. It can enable the sharing of cultural and historical heritage

around the world. Digital storage is not only the most popular method of preservation, but it is the trend for the future.

4. Awareness Seminars: Most of the people go behind the latest trends ignoring all the traditions behind. There may be a very few among the older generation who has a thorough knowledge of various art and cultural forms. The younger generation must be convinced about the need of capturing such immense information from their elders so that no art form gets extinct.
5. Workshops: Workshops are the places where all inhibitions go away. They are excellent platforms for interaction, learning and growth. Workshops are conducted under the guidance of experts in various fields. The interactive platform gives the attendees a platform to share their knowledge with others and also to learn new things.
6. Live performances: No seminar or awareness session can have the impact as that of a live performance. A large number of people get a chance to see and learn about old art forms. It has become quite common to see a person having no idea about a particular art form becoming a fan of the same after watching a live performance by an excellent artist. This research recommends that live performances portraying various cultural aspects like music, dance and costume should be carried out more often.

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