

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Daily life in Ghana is generally bright and vivacious. Many visitors wonder about the sources of Ghanaian energy and joy, considering the obvious “poverty” that surrounds them. The “secret” lies in the Ghanaian culture from which the citizens derive their high-spirited attitude to life in general.

Every year, festivals of different forms are celebrated to give thanks to God and the ancestors for protection and guidance throughout the year. In Ghana, certain days in the year are set aside by communities to celebrate such festivals. Some festivals last for four days. Others last for five or six days. Festivals are of social significance because they offer everybody in the community both young and old the opportunity to a collective expression to their joy. The atmosphere at Ghanaian festivals is always charged with the well known Ghanaian cheer and delight which sweep visitors off their feet at a go. At these festivals one also gets a good opportunity to see a visible expression of Ghanaian culture in various forms. The participants are dressed in colourful clothes; the paramount chief is dressed in royal regalia and carried in a palanquin all in expressing the deep sense of cultural heritage. In Ghana, there are two major types of annual festivals. These include harvest festivals and festivals in the memory of ancestors and past leaders.

Among the Ewes of Ghana, harvest festivals are celebrated in honour of the ancestors but one wonders why Asogli yam festival is celebrated with pomp and pageantry. The reason is explained partly in the fact that yam cultivation is considered to be very tedious and hazardous and as such, it is appropriate to set aside certain days of the year to express appreciation and thanks to God and the ancestors for protection and guidance. Another reason for which the festival is celebrated with pomp and pageantry is that the people are

happy for the opportunity given them by the ancestors to showcase their rich culture. To them, the festival affords them the opportunity to be celebrative of their hard work no matter what the past experiences might be. During the festival, art in the form of music, textiles, pottery, body art, drama, the act of pouring libation, incantations and many others are used to portray the activities of the festival. Artifacts and art are used in the performance of various rites and rituals throughout the festival. To the celebrants, those artifacts are mere objects which ensure the continuity of the festival but to the critical observer, art is totally enshrined in the celebration to the extent that negligence of them has the tendency to spell the doom of the festival. Study has also proved that the Asogli Yam festival possesses some economic values worth researching into but this could be possible if and only if the role of art is highlighted in the celebration.

This study therefore seeks to identify the specific art forms which play roles in the festival and also point out clearly the specific roles that they play as well as create a platform for the exploration of the socio-economic benefits of the festival in relation to the arts.

### **1.0 Statement of Problem**

Although art plays an important role in the celebration of Asogli Yam Festival of the people of Ho, Kpenoe, Takla and Akoefe in the Volta region of Ghana, a study of the literature on this festival revealed that the artistic aspect of the festival has not been treated by authors. Also, the socio-economic significance of the festival to the development of Ghana has not been explored. It is therefore necessary that a study about the Asogli Yam Festival be carried out to inform the general public about the role of art in the festival and to bring to bear its socio-economic significance on the development of Ghana.

### **1.1 Hypotheses**

- ▣ Art plays important roles in the celebration of Asogli Yam Festival.
- ▣ Asogli Yam Festival contributes to the socio-economic development of Ghana.

### **1.2 Objectives**

- ▣ To give a detailed account of the festival.
- ▣ To identify the specific art forms that play roles in the festival.
- ▣ To bring to light the symbolic meaning and beliefs as well as the spiritual role art plays in the Asogli Yam Festival.
- ▣ To identify the economic values of the festival which contribute to the socio-economic growth of the country.

### **1.3 Justification of Objectives**

- ▣ A detailed account of the festival will serve as a guide for the researcher to identify the various art forms that play roles in the celebration of the festival.
- ▣ Identification of the various art forms will help the researcher to document and classify them into groups which will allow for easy and detailed inventory of their roles.
- ▣ It will encourage the people of Asogli and all readers to appreciate the importance of the festival and enlighten them on the symbolic meaning of art in the celebration.
- ▣ This will bring to light the extent of economic benefits that the country stands to gain from the festival.

### **1.4 Research Methodology**

The research will employ descriptive research method and sampling design technique.

### **1.5 Justification of Research Methodology**

Descriptive research method will be used to describe the various stages of research. It will also be used with tables and figures to analyze and interpret data.

### **2.0 Statement of Assumption**

It is assumed that the study will expose the artistic and socio-economic aspects of the Asogli yam festival to readers and the world at large.

### **2.1 Importance of Study**

This work is important because, it serves as a platform for preserving and propagating Ghanaian culture and art in general. It also serves as an avenue for exploring the socio-economic prospects of the country. The study will help Ghanaians and all readers to know more about the Asoglis and their cultural systems. It will help arouse the curiosity of tourists, both foreign and Ghanaian to know and write more about the area.

### **2.2 Delimitation**

The study focused on the Asogli yam festival celebrated by the people of Ho, Kpenoe, Takla and Akoepe from the time of tyrannical King Agorkorli to date. However, the ethnographic description of the people dwelled on Ho, since Ho is the seat of the paramountcy.

### **2.3 Limitations**

The following constituted the limitations of the study:

- ▣ Lack of co-operation on the part of some respondents. Some respondents who have relevant information on the rites and rituals of the festival refused blatantly to divulge any information, on grounds of Christian doctrines

## **2.4 Research Tools**

Questionnaire, Observation and Interviews were used by the researcher to collect data

## **2.5 Definition of Terms**

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

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

**Artifacts:** works of art.

**Ancestors:** the spirits of dead people in the society who led good lives.

**Asoglis:** people of Asogli State.

**Asogli State:** an amalgamation of towns and villages (Ho, Kpenoe, Takla and Akoepe)

**Appellations:** praise names.

**Body adornment:** body decoration.

**Craft:** an activity involving special skills or making things with the hand

**Culture:** the general way of life of a people.

**Classification:** arranging into groups.

**Celebration:** a joyous occasion and other occasions

**Festival:** religious or other celebrations

**Game:** a competitive or educative activity.

**Paraphernalia:** a large number of small articles or personal possessions.

**Propitiation:** the act of calming spirits.

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

**Socio-economic development:** social and financial upliftment.

**Symbolism:** a meaningful representation of an object in a simple form.

**Role:** the function that a person has or a thing has.

**Respondent:** a person who answers questions.

**Recitations:** an act of saying a series of things in public loud.

**Regalia:** the special clothes and things carried by a royal or other person

**Rite:** a religious or solemn ceremony.

**Rituals:** actions that are always done at a fixed time and in the same way.

**Trade:** the change of goods and services for money.

**Transportation:** the act of moving from one place to another in a vehicle.

**Tourism:** the business of providing accommodation and services for people visiting a place.

**Tyrannical:** obtaining fame through unfair means.

## **2.6 Abbreviations**

IMF-International Monitoring Fund

HIPC-Highly Indebted Poor Countries

KNUST-Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

UCC-University of Cape Coast

UEW-University of Education of Winneba

## **3.0 Facilities Available**

- ☐ The College of Art Library, KNUST, Kumasi
- ☐ Social Science Library, KNUST, Kumasi
- ☐ Main Library, KNUST, Kumasi
- ☐ Asogli Traditional Council, Ho

- ▣ The Volta Regional Library, Ho
- ▣ Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, Ho
- ▣ Ho Polytechnic Library
- ▣ Balme Library, Legon
- ▣ African Studies Library, Legon
- ▣ U.C.C Main Library, Cape Coast
- ▣ The Walled City of Notsie in the Republic of Togo
- ▣ Ashanti Regional Library, Kumasi
- ▣ British Council Library, Kumas



Plate 1: Aerial view of Ho

### **3.1 Ethnographic Background**

The Asogli State comprises four traditional set-ups, Ho, Kpenoe, Takla and Akoefe. They are located in the southern part of the Volta Region in Ghana. These four traditional set-ups are linked together in terms of economic orientation, culture and general way of life in view of the fact that they have a common migration and settlement history. The Asoglis are believed to be the descendants of Togbe Kakla, the brave man who

masterminded the escape of the Ewes from the walled city of Notsie in the republic of Togo in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They speak Ewe as their mother tongue.

Table 1: Communities of Asogli Traditional Area

		POPULATION			
		2000			1984
NO.	LOCALITY	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	
1	Ho	61,658	29,595	32,063	37,777
2	Akoepe Tato	60	26	34	48
3	Akoepe Atsiati	698	324	374	556
4	Akoepe Avenui	477	212	265	599
5	Akoepe Gadza	524	263	261	601
6	Akoepe Tokor	705	330	375	537
7	Kpenoe	881	415	466	711
8	Kpenoe Ameyiborkorpe	35	21	14	6
9	Helutsekope	77	38	39	70
10	Kpenoe Hofedo	94	40	54	25
11	Takla Gorgame	1,658	735	833	1,223
12	Takla Tokor	424	51	201	394
13	Takla Agbokope	122	51	71	31
	<b>Total</b>	<b>67,323</b>	<b>32,273</b>	<b>35,050</b>	<b>42,578</b>

**Growth rate p. a. 200-2006= 2.9%**

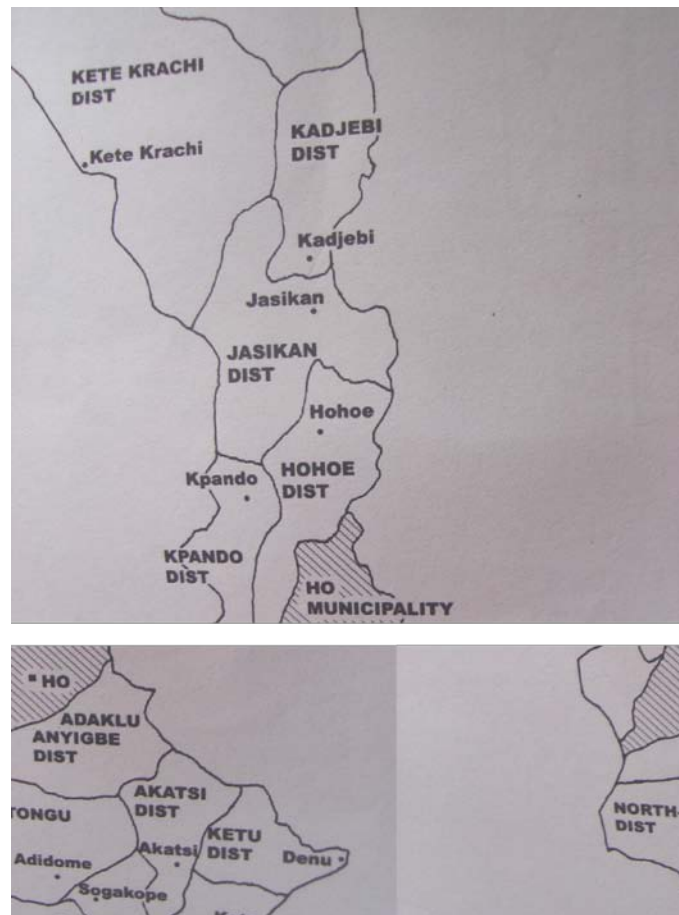
**Projected total Population: 2006= 80,000**

### **Geographical Location of Ho**

Ho, the most powerful clan at *Glime* (the walled city of Notsie), had warlike and clever elders. It was through the revolution which resulted in their escape that the name “Ho” came into existence. In Ewe, the word “Ho” means to move with bag and baggage. So when calling the people who are now known as Ho people the “ Hoawo”, one is unknowingly referring to them as people who moved with everything they had from the great wall of Notsie.



Ho, which is the Volta regional capital serves as the seat of the paramountcy of Asogli and has over the years legitimately assumed prominence. It is located between the Galenku Hills to the north and the Adaklu peak to the South. It is about 32 square miles in size.



Map 1: Location of Ho in Ghana

### Climate

Ho has a modified type of equatorial climate. There are two definitely defined seasons, a dry season from about November to March and a rainy season with a double peak, from March to July and from September to November. The table below shows the mean temperature ranges and rainfall figures of Ho:

Table 2: Temperature ranges and rainfall figures of Ho

YEAR	2005			2006			2007			2008		
MONTH	MEAN °C		RR	MEAN °C		RR	MEAN °C			MEAN °C		RR
	MAX	MIN	mm	MAX	MIN	mm	MAX	MIN	mm	MAX	MIN	mm
JAN.	34.1	22.0	42.2	34.1	23.4	78.4	35.1	22.5	2.2	34.3	21.3	0.0
FEB.	36.1	24.9	43.5	34.6	24.1	60.9	35.8	24.5	38.9	36.5	24.1	59.5
MAR.	34.7	24.3	173.6	33.8	23.6	110.5	35.3	24.4	122.1	34.3	24.1	146.1
APR.	33.9	24.7	651.2	34.0	24.6	60.7	33.1	24.0	199.7	33.1	23.9	128.9
MAY	32.1	23.9	65.3	32.5	23.4	234.7	32.9	23.8	128.1			
JUNE	30.3	23.0	117.9	31.2	22.8	289.2	30.3	22.7	262.0			
JULY	29.2	22.2	71.9	30.1	22.6	30.2	29.2	22.5	176.1			
AUG.	29.2	21.5	438	29.8	22.4	12.9	29.1	22.1	71.4			
SEP.	30.8	22.6	150.1	30.4	22.5	89.1	30.7	22.4	256.2			
OCT.	31.9	22.8	185.6	32.0	23.0	154.5	31.4	22.5	162.0			
NOV.	33.7	23.4	51.3	33.8	23.2	35.6	33.0	23.0	72.0			
DEC.	33.1	23.1	53.3	34.5	22.6	5.0	33.6	23.3				

#### KEY

RR-rainfall

Max.-maximum temperature

°C-unit for measuring temperature

Min.-minimum temperature

Mm-unit for measuring rainfall

Source: Meteorological Department, Ho

## Economic Activities

### **Farming**

The people of Asogli are mainly farmers who depend on the land for their living. In the past, farms were very small and close to the settlements but now the farms are far away

due to the drastic developments that have taken place over the years. Fallowing is practised and each year, new farms are cleared. Crops such as cassava, yam, melons, cereals and legumes are grown. There are also palm trees in the area from which women extract palm oil and kernel oil and use them for domestic purposes, as well as for making local soaps. Palm wine which is the chief native wine is also got from the palm trees.

### **Hunting**

Hunting is also practised by the Asoglis. Hunters organize themselves in the dry season when farming cannot be done, and go to trap fleeing animals for food and for the market.

### **Animal Husbandry**

Families keep their own sheep, goats and fowls which are slaughtered during festivals. These animals are penned and fed.

### **Local Industries**

Apart from farming, there are local industries such as basket weaving, mat making and *Kete* weaving (a woven fabric produced by the Ewes) and blacksmithing.

### **Leather Work**

Leather prepared from animal skin and hide of animals such as sheep, snake, cow and goat are used by the craftsmen of the Asogli State to produce articles that are used during the festival. Some of these articles or artifacts include hand bags, sandals, belt, and wallet. The leather used by craftsmen has different surface qualities. Some are very stiff; others are semi- stiff whilst another type is soft. The soft leather which is obtained from animals like sheep and goat are used to produce soft, gracefully ornamented bags, hats and

sometimes clothing. In order to attract good market during the festive period, traditional symbols are used to produce decorative leather works.

### **Beliefs and Religion**

The conception of the Asogli State about the structure of the world and of man's position in it pervades much of their social, religious and material behaviour. The traditional concepts are influenced mainly by the traditional religion, which combines a belief in a creator god, 'Mawuga' with belief in various spirits, including ancestral ones and those of living persons that could cause or prevent good and ill fortune. Nukunya (2003) in his book, "Tradition and Change in Ghana", described religion as the beliefs and practices associated with the supernatural. Frazer (1999) however considers religion as beliefs and acts which are aimed at the propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life. He went on to say that beliefs and practices associated with the supernatural in Ghana operate at many levels in different forms. They also differ from place to place though some general categories could be isolated including the high God, small gods, ancestors, witchcrafts, oracles, magic and sorcery.

### **Social and Political life**

The social and political lives of the Asoglis can be related to those of other Ewe-speaking communities. Each traditional set-up under the Asogli State is ruled by chiefs and queens who double as custodians of the land and traditional leaders. The chiefs provide spiritual and moral guidance for the people. They also settle land disputes and family problems such as adultery and assault cases.

Gavua (2000) in his book, "Handbook of Ewe land", described the social and political lives of the Northern Ewes where he stated that since their departure from their ancestral homes, they have not been particularly conscious of a common identity as a distinct ethnic group. Instead, they have identified themselves and associated their dialects with the respective towns and villages from which they come. He stated further that the Northern Ewes of which Asogli is part had their towns characterized by semi-autonomous subdivisions formed by groups of endogamous partriclans.(sub divisions of towns.

In comparing the past political life of the people with the present, he consented that, the traditional leadership positions of the past and their functions were quite different from those of today. He went on to say that prior to adopting their current system of leadership, most towns and villages were headed by chief custodians of land, who administered their communities in conjunction with chief priests of important deities. He also added that children were educated informally, guided and disciplined not only by members of their immediate families but also by other members of the community even if they were unrelated.

The manifestation of the beliefs of the people and practices associated with the supernatural, coupled with the hazardous nature of yam cultivation, culminated in the celebration of the Asogli yam festival.

### **3.2 ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS**

The thesis report consists of six chapters. Chapter One which is basically the Introduction deals with the Statement of the Problem, Hypotheses, Objectives of the Study, Justifications of the Objectives, Research Methodology, Justification of Research Methodology, Statement of Assumption, Importance of the Study, Delimitation,

Limitations, Research Tools, Definition of Terms, Facilities Available, Ethnographic Background of the Asoglis and Organization of Chapters.

Chapter Two deals with the Review of Related Literature which bothers on a brief Introduction of the Chapter, the Classification of Festivals, the Role of Art in Festivals, Socio-economic aspects of Festivals and References.

Chapter Three which is about the Research Methodology is made up of a brief Introduction of the chapter, Research Design, Population for the Study, Sampling Design, Data Collection, Research Tools, Library Research and a Summary of Discussion.

Chapter Four which is about the Analysis and Discussion of Data consists of Analysis of Results for Questionnaire, Interpretation of Results for Questionnaire, Presentation of Results for Interview and the Observational Approach and a Summary of Discussion.

Chapter Five deals with the Presentation of the Main Findings. It consists of an Introduction, Classification of Art Forms, the Role of Art in the festival, Symbolic meaning of works of Art used in the festival, Yam festival of the past, Social and Cultural significance of Asogli Yam festival, the Spiritual and Religious significance of the festival, the Economic significance of the festival and a Summary of Discussion.

Chapter Six comprises Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations, Appendix, Glossary and References

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature from different sources related to the topic. It looks at the socio-economic and artistic aspects of festivals with a particular reference to yam festivals

in Ghana and the world at large. It is introduced briefly by the classification of festivals in general.

Festivals are common to all human societies. They are the only means apart from worship whereby man has sought from time immemorial, to express his awareness of a transcendental being outside himself. Man has always believed that there are certain cosmic forces which manifest themselves in deities, gods in material form, or a God. These deities or supernatural beings are said to control the world through certain ineluctable laws, the infractions of which could cause misfortune. They are also believed to have feelings and senses similar to those of human beings and they react to stimuli in the same way as man.

Festivals are therefore manifestations of the practices and beliefs of a people. They are promoters of culture and builders of one's identity. Festivals perform many functions in the society. They serve as a means of commemorating and remembering important events in the history of a people. In the process, they perform other functions, both intended and unintended. As they involve re-creation of the past, they provide occasions for transmission of traditional cultures and values from one generation to the other. They help in uniting the people in expressing confidence in themselves and loyalty to their leaders. M. Cole (1975) discloses that a festival is a relatively rare climatic event in the life of any community. It is bounded by a definite beginning and end, and is a unified occasion which is set above daily life. Its structure is built up on a core or armature of ritual. Festivals bring about a suspension of ordinary time, a transformation of ordinary space, a formalization of ordinary behaviour. It is as if a community becomes a stage set and its people actors with a battery of seldom-seen props and costumes. Meals become feasts, and greetings, normally simple, become ceremonies. Although dependent upon life-sustaining



rituals, a festival is an elaborated and stylized phenomenon which far surpasses ritual necessity. It often becomes the social, ritual, and political apotheosis of community life in a year, Cole (1975)

### **1.1 Classification of Festivals**

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

Kwabena Bame (1991) in his submission classifies African traditional festivals into three categories, namely, harvest festivals, commemorative festivals and festivals for the gods. Bame elaborates that during harvest festivals, the participating members of a community or ethnic groups sacrifice or offer first fruits of yam and other crops to the Supreme Being, spirits and gods. He, however, describes the second category of festivals as festivals whose central focus is characterized by activities aimed at honouring the memory

of the dead and giving of offerings to the gods and ancestor spirits for the harvest as well as future well-being of participants. Bame indicated that the third category comprises festivals which are simply termed as “the festivals for the gods.” According to him, they are festivals which are celebrated annually in honour of specific tutelary spirits or gods.

Festivals can also take broader spectrums as presented by John Mbiti in his detailed classification. Mbiti (1990) expresses that in the life of the communities, there are harvest festivals, planting festivals, hunting and fishing festivals, victory festivals, coronation or accession festivals, and many others. With a more simplified classification, Opoku (1970) is of the view that annual festivals are of two principal types. There are those that offer sacrifices and thanksgiving to the ancestors, and there are those that introduce the new harvest.

### **1.2 Socio-Economic Aspects of Festivals**

Festivals are not mere occasions of enjoyment and merry-making, but they are also platforms for social, religious and economic development of the society in which they are celebrated.

S.K. Gadzekpo (1978) admits that, festivals are seasons of gainful economic activities for local craftsmen and food sellers. He further states that, festivals promote tourism; as foreigners come to catch a glimpse of the artistic development and the rich culture of the society. According to him, they purchase some of these things, giving the dual advantage of income for the society and the boosting of the African’s image abroad. His explanation points out the economic benefits that a society stands to derive from the celebration of festivals.

In her submission, Boamah (1972) describes the *Aluolie* festival as a social function which spearheads the belief of the people of *Sehwi* and also brings joy, unity and good tidings to them. She further states that, the festival has improved the development of the town, because before the start of the festival, family heads put up new buildings or extend their houses to cope with the accommodation problems experienced during the festival.

Ayisi (1980) comments that, festivals combine economic and religious activities, for they are observed with material things. The submissions of the three authors: Gadzekpe (1978), Boamah (1972) and Ayisi (1970) talk about the social and economic functions of festivals. This point is emphasized by Naylor (2000) in her statement that “festivals are integral to the life of Ghanaian communities. They are occasions for prayer, dance, and song, for eating, drinking and socializing and even for making money.”

Bame (1991) touches vaguely on the social importance of festivals and attests to the fact that Africans who celebrate annual festivals enter the New Year which is ushered in at the end of the festival buoyed up with hope that their objectives will be achieved. Thus, he is of the view that the well-being and continuity of their societies are always of paramount importance to them. According to him, Africans therefore celebrate festivals for no other reason than that which has to do with social benefits.

Chachah (1990) also talks about the religious and social aspects of festivals where he states that mostly, festivals provide occasions for social re-union among Ghanaians. Chachah goes on to say that relatives and friends see each other again during festivals, also, gifts and drinks are exchanged, disputes settled and an atmosphere of mutual co-operation established. Another writer: Attah-Fosu (2001) in writing about the economic importance of festivals describes festivals as ceremonies which bring most of the citizens

of a society together. This, according to his submission helps them to initiate development projects and to contribute financially towards these projects. Visitors who also come to witness the festival contribute economically to the locality.

Asihene (1980) describes the Apoo festival as an avenue for both social; and economic developments. He points out that the Apoo festival has improved the development of the town. He explains further that, for now and then, family-heads put up new buildings or extend their houses to cope with the accommodation problems sometimes experienced during the festival. According to him, most visitors who come to consult the great and revered Tano Mensah or attend the festival, in most cases remain at Takyiman to work. Of this group, those who are thrifty eventually become landlords and thereby help the development of the town. The influx of traders on this occasion has necessitated the extension of the market; this has also assisted to develop the town. He adds that while farmers on their part produce enough food for consumption during the festival, artisans also make kente-cloths, and other fanciful outfit which are commonly used during the festival.

It is clear that writers are particular about the social, economic and religious aspects of festivals in general but not those of Asogli yam festival. This therefore gives the researcher a leeway to explore the socio-economic and religious aspects of Asogli yam festival.

### **1.3 The Role of Art in Festivals**

The role of art in festivals cannot in any way be underestimated. This stems from the fact that festivals and art are related to the social well-being of a people. It has even been argued that a festival in itself is art, because it starts at a point and ends at another point,

which is a clear display of aesthetics. Some authors are however, of the view that art plays roles in festivals, but are silent about the specific roles that they play.

Kodzo Gavua (2000) described the *Peki* Yam festival as an expression of cultural and artistic displays. He explains that the *Peki* Yam festival is usually celebrated on the first or second Sunday in September, the sixth month after the planting of yam. Gavua adds that the *Fiaga's* most senior spokesman pours libation and offers prayers for the safety and welfare of all the chiefs and citizens and the success of all their undertakings. Drumming and dancing go on in all the towns of the state.

Time, people and scale are the components which lift individual objects and activities into the realm of art, Cole (1975). A festival may last a day or a week, but it unfolds over time set aside from the daily round. It can not be momentary or static, but rather it is a rhythmic series of events flowing together toward climax and resolution. Cole (1974) submits that people activate this time, rendering it extraordinary by their own unusual actions and looks. He further points out that these people mass in processions and crowds, they dance and pray and gesticulate, carrying art and becoming art forms themselves. Cole (1975) writes:

Multitudes of objects, decorated people, dances, skits and sacrifices transform a once quiet space into an arena of colour, sound and motion. The festival embraces the community, raising both people and place onto a plane marked by aesthetics, spiritual and social values.

Cole (1975) once again draws attention to the artistic representation of festivals. According to him, the totality of a festival cannot be conveyed in printed words and pictures. It can be charted and diagrammed to show complexity and duration, but such efforts fail to capture the drama and visual impact of the actual event. He explains further that *asafo* flags are thrown and swirled in dance, in processions; architecture becomes a

backdrop in shrine rituals and sometimes as sculpture to climb on. Drums tell of history, sing praises and art proverbs.



Plate 2: An *Asafo* dancer performing during Akwambo festival

Source: Herbert Cole (1974)

This submission of Cole (1975) paints a clear picture that conveys the message about the indispensability of art in festivals. He reiterates that festivals are perhaps the country's most significant, richest art forms. According to him, these ritually-based, multi-media, socio-political events have sometimes been called unified 'works of art', but Borgatti's term 'art event' (1976) is probably a more appropriate designation. In artistic terms, Cole(1975) admits that festivals are lavish, with organized displays: dances, costumes, music, drama and poetry. He is of the view that these activities also incorporate various life-sustaining rituals which recur many times during the festival.

Again another submission of Cole (1975) about the State Yam Festival states that, "ostentations, fine-crafted symbols of regal wealth and grandeur are formally positioned or ceremoniously carried by specially-appointed bearers. Umbrellas, state swords, guns, staffs, stools and jewellery display the opulence of the state; the symbols on them detail the powers and responsibilities of chieftaincy."



Plate 3: A paramount chief in palanquin  
Source: Herbert Cole (1974)

Indeed Cole's presentation succeeded in throwing more light on the role of art in festivals. This he did by pointing out that, festivals are not mere aesthetic expressions.

Kukah (1977) explains that, when a chief goes out with his retinue, whether in a procession or sitting in state, there is an act of drama and also, an art exhibition: "for these clothing, stools, swords, drums etc. were not limited to function, they were also meant to express the emotion and ideas of beauty and ugliness."

Kukah(1977) limits her description of art to the chief's regalia and the drama that comes with his procession but succeeded in pointing out the symbolic meanings of some of the art forms. In describing the *Odwira* yam festival of *Akuapem*, Opoku (1970) points out that the paramount chief and the principal chiefs are borne in palanquins, flanked on either sides by large gold-plated swords and muskets. He points out further that multi-coloured state umbrellas are made to flutter rhythmically to the beats of accompanying drums. Opoku again points out the various art forms that exist in the celebration of festivals when he describes the spectacular verbal art of the *Aburi* yam festival in Ghana. He says, "the priest changes the calabash, from which he has been pouring the drink to punctuate

his prayer, into the left hand and calls upon the gods and ancestors who never refuse to go on an errand.” The prayers are artistic, considering the way the liquor is poured and the recitations that accompany it:

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

Indeed the above recitations are artistic, considering the systematic recurrence of words and the rhythm that comes with it. Omosade (1979), a Nigerian famous writer also adds his voice to the verbal art associated with festivals when he dispassionately describes the incantations and invocations that go on during the *Ikeji* yam festival of the Igbo people in Nigeria. He explains that the sacrificial animals are cooked and yam *fufu* is prepared with yam tubers carried by the people. This *fufu* is mixed with soup and offered to *Ikeji* amidst incantations and invocations.

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

Bame (1991) further explains that in a festival such as the *Apoo* ceremony in which performing groups are constantly called upon to compose counter vilifying songs to hit back at other contestants and individual members have a compelling reason to develop



their artistic talents for that purpose. He goes on to say that as a result, during every *Apoo* festival, about half a dozen new songs are composed by members of various rival groups to replenish their repertoires. Again, a ceremony such as the *Argungu* fishing and cultural festival provides even greater incentives and more compelling reasons for participants to develop their artistic talents and potentials, if only because of the special focus its organizers place on the arts in its celebration.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the incorporated arts and crafts exhibition which affords craftsmen an opportunity to display and talk about their handicraft, would certainly motivate the artists involved to improve upon their handicraft during the successive celebrations of the festival.

Agbodo (2001) reveals that, festivals are days set aside for communal merry-making and that the day is marked with artifacts, chieftaincy regalia, cultural displays and other tourist attractions. According to him, chiefs and other traditional leaders attached significance to their art forms and amongst the Akan people for example, leadership regalia and prestige items for royals and others of high status represent an important area of artistic activity. He stresses that festivals in Ghana are characterized by intensive use of art forms. Some examples of these items are stools, skins, linguist staffs, amulets bracelets, gold rings, special *kente* cloths, masks, decorative local weapons like bows and arrows, shields, palanquins and the like. There are the performing arts like various traditional drums, dances and masqueraders.

Ansah (1999) gives a detailed account of the attire used during the celebration of the *Kundum* festival of the Nzemas in Ghana. He uncovers two distinctive dresses that are used: the *atwenekwasi* and the special traditional dress of the women. The *atwenekwasi* which is male attire is a shirt hanging from the waist and reaching almost to the knee. There is also a sleeveless “T” shirt and a foot gear called *Asorlor* which basically completes

the male dancer's attire. It consists of special long leguminous seed which are dried, sliced into bits about three-quarters of an inch thick and each hollowed out.



Plate 4: Group of dancers in *atwenekwasi* and *asorlor* attire at Nzema

Source: Timothy Ansah (1999)

The women of *Kundum* according to Ansah do not have any distinctive attire like the men's kilt but like men, the women put on their work-day clothes. Also, elderly women come in their best traditional attire, rich clothes, beautiful head gear, precious beads worn round the neck and wrist.



Plate 5: Elderly women in their native attire during the *Kundum* festival

Source: Timothy Ansah (1999)

In touching on the role of art for that matter, the dresses, Ansah admits that the dresses which some individuals and smaller groups fancy add fun to the whole show. Still on the role or function of art in the festival, Ansah elaborates that, on Wednesday, in the last week of the festival, the women dress gaily and together with the *atwenekwasi*, escort the chief during the afternoon procession through the principal streets of the town.

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



Plate 6: A chief rides in palanquin during a festival. In front of him sits his 'Okra' soul

Source: Timothy Ansah (1999)

Another very good explanation of the indispensable role of art in festivals is propounded by S.K. Amenuke (1991) in his statement which seems to portray a more unique description of art. He is of the view that at durbars, festivals and other ceremonial occasions, one will see a splendid display of umbrellas over the chiefs and elders of the society.

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

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

In Africa, Harvest festival is of a religious nature and has lots of dancing and music. Dancers wear masks and each dance tells a story. The stories range from a good ghost who looks after their crops and scares away the bad ghosts who try to spoil the food. Gyimah (1978) describes the *Dzawuwu* festival of the *Agave- Ewes* as essentially a thanksgiving festival where special portions of food are sprinkled to the gods. It is the time to pay tribute to the departed ones and to pour libation for the people to renew their loyalty to their rulers. Gyimah (1978) concedes that a great array of artistic performances is brought to the fore. The festival, he says has an impressive durbar of chiefs to climax it. Drumming and dancing feature prominently. Gyimah (1978) again talks about the in-row of art in festivals. He asserts that festivals are one of the best ways to immerse oneself into a local culture. It is at these events that locals are most dazzling, open, artistic and musical.

With an explicit account of the *Akwasidae Kese* festival of the Asante, Boaten (1993) is a force to reckon with. He paints a true picture of the festival with an in-depth description of the artistic display that comes with the procession of *Otumfuo* (the king of Asante kingdom) to the durbar ground. He admits that each individual in the procession has a role to play and did so with enthusiasm. The wealth and great power exhibited by *Otumfuo* (the king of Asante kingdom) is the benefit derived from the indispensable role of art.

In his presentation, Ammah (1982) solemnly describes the Twin Yam Festival of the Gas (the Ga-speaking tribe of Ghana) as a representation for art. He explains that a pair of horns which represents art works is used to represent an imaginary buffalo, from which the twins are believed to incarnate. The pair of horns is preserved in a sacred shrine until the occasion of Twin Yam Festival when it is exposed to the performance of a ritual ceremony. In the same traditional perspective, twins must equally share gifts in the forms of artworks presented to them, wear the same kind of new cloth, and are expected to react in common to any situation.

Euba (1990) observes *the Dundun* drumming festival of Nigeria as a central feature of the protracted *Egungun* festival which is held annually in Ede. In this Yoruba drumming tradition, he describes the ensemble of different drums that comprise the “*dundun*” (ensemble of drums) family. He says the drums have different art forms which are culturally staged as tourist attractions. In his discussion of the performance and musicological aspects of the *dundun* (ensemble of drums) and the training and status of drums, he emphasizes the showcasing of music and dance by the performers.

Kemevor (2004) echoes that artistic creations assist to enhance and make festivals more enjoyable and captivating. For instance, during the grand durbar, paramount chiefs and sub-chiefs together with their retinues become a source of 'mobile' exhibitions as they display very colourful classical costume, jewellery, dancing skills, patriotic music and inspiring poetic languages as a cultural heritage of Ghana. It is during these festive celebrations and other ceremonies that most artifacts in the various palaces are transformed into 'kinetic' art. That is, the works are seen in motion as Thomson (1974) describes them as 'Art in Motion'.

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

Akyempo (1986) describes the artistic roles of the *Aboakyer* festivals as portrayed by the *Asafo* Companies involved in the celebration. According to him, each company has its own colours and emblems to differentiate it from the other, thus the colours of the Number 1 *Asafo* Company of Winneba are blue, green, black and white, while the colours of the number 2 *Asafo* Company are red, yellow and pink. Whenever the companies go on outing, especially on the day of the festival, the members would be seen to wear fanciful dresses having a combination of the colours of the company. The companies guard these colours so jealously that if some members of one company wear dresses having the

colours of the other company, a riot may ensue. Akyempo (1986) adds that on the festivals day, activities such as Art and Craft exhibitions, dances, and 'concert' (short funny plays) and football matches are performed to grace the occasion.

Blankson (1973) describes the principal events of the *Fetu Afahye* festival, *bakatue* and states that, as the water flowed slowly into the sea, making the beginning of another season of bumper catch of fish, there were intermittent firing of musketry, clapping of hands, drumming, dancing and singing for joy, at the thought of the approach of a new era of wealth, prosperity and happiness. In his useful comments about the closing functions of the festival, Blankson reveals that at the end of the games, which are mainly native games such as *Ampe* and drumming, singing, dancing cultural displays and general merry-making to the music of native Brass Band, children lead the crowds in proclaiming at the seven-week celebration in the traditional way of "hooting off" (climaxing) the *Fetu Afahye*.

The usefulness of festivals in promoting art has been outlined by Asihene (1980). The chief's regalia including the stools, drums, emblems as well as the flamboyant umbrellas that enhance the pomp and pageantry at this festival are the handiworks of the indigenous artists of Takyiman in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The carnival dressing for example resorts to an incongruous variety of dresses full of violent clashes of hot colours which are quite in keeping with the merry-mood echoing all through the festival. The people of Takyiman are indeed artistically inclined. Because, activities like the durbar, town-parade and libation are all organized in an orderly manner although they appear to be hectic. Asihene (1980)



Plate 7: Talking drums being played to mark the beginning of Apoo festival

Source: E.V Asihene (1980)

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

Bolin and Dunstan (1985) indicate in their presentation that in non-western societies, art is not a separate, specialized activity; it is a phenomenon firmly meshed with other cultural sub-fields. This principle is well illustrated in *Bali's Eka Desa Rudra* festival, an astonishingly colourful spectacle held once every one-hundred years in Nigeria. Although its significance is primarily religious, this elaborate celebration is also a highly organized artistic occasion. It covers many days, involves most members of the community, and combines colour, poetry, dance, song, music parades, mime, intricate flower and food



offerings, and shadow puppet performances. The *Eka Desa Rudra* festival according to Bolin and Dunstan (1985) is a stunning display aimed at inducing good and evil forces to live in peace, harmony, and tranquility. Ingenuity and visual richness are evident in all the activities mentioned above and markedly so in temple offerings. Such objects are constructed with flowers and food and fashioned in a bewildering array of patterns and designs that exhibit great imaginative artistry and skill.

The above presentation is a remarkable approach in describing festivals as artistic events. It succeeded in throwing more light on the two variances: art and festival, a step in the right direction towards establishing a framework for determining the artistic roles of festivals and isolating views on whether Asogli Yam festival, the topic in question, possesses any artistic values. This mind-set is perpetuated by other writers who require to be brought into contention. H. Cole (1975) states in his “Art of Festival in Ghana” that a festival is a unified work of art. It can not be reduced or compressed without being changed into something else. The festival is therefore an irreducible unity with an elaborate temporal and spatial composition and practically infinite numbers of component parts. As in pointillist painting, each minor unit, each act and object contributes to the impact of the whole. To emphasize the visual arts, such as sculptured staffs or personal adornment, at the expense of verbal, kinetic, and musical arts is to misunderstand the complex but unified orchestration of all art forms which constitute the festival itself. Indeed the relationships among these varied forms give a particular festival its special character, just as components vary. Each festival is unique by virtue of the way in which its “ensemble” is composed and what particular elements and meanings are stressed. Some Nigerian and Cameroon festivals emphasize masquerades, others architecture. Still on the artistic roles of festivals, Cole (1975) admits that annual festivals in any one community can be usefully compared to one another, because festival has its special character and

artistic emphasis. Those of Anomabu, a coastal Fanti town, may serve as a brief example. Some are indeed “less artistic” than others, laying greater stress on family rituals with repeated but localized celebrations, or on social interaction and recreation, than on display. This latter is true of the *Ahoba* festival of the people of Anomabu in which amorphous crowds of people follow drummers and singers throughout the town.

Cole (1975) in his concluding statements points out that, the artistic impact of a festival stems not from isolated artistic forms or actions but from the formally orchestrated interaction of all the aesthetic resources of a community.

In conclusion, it can be said that all the above mentioned books echo the relevance of art in festivals and some socio-economic benefits that they possess but none has fully touched on the roles of art in the celebration of Asogli Yam festival, let alone its associated socio-economic benefits. Gavua (2000) who touched slightly on the art forms failed to mention anything about their symbolic meaning. Nothing has also been said about the socio-economic prospects of the festival. His presentation is therefore lacks many facts. Other writers, who did not dwell so much on the Asogli yam festival also in their sense of judgment, consent to the fact that art is indispensable in the celebration of any festival.

The other literatures reviewed have also shown that, the financial constraints that have bedeviled many countries in Africa and the world over can be resolved by the people themselves. The solution is enshrined in their own culture; an important aspect being festivals. The social life of the people can therefore be improved through specially organized festivals. Festivals serve as reunion of family members, relatives and loved ones. At this time, quarrels and misunderstandings are settled. It is also very clear that festivals provide a platform for solving other social problems such as ignorance about

one's own culture and history. Through festivals, the youth most especially, get to know about their own cultural heritage and historical background. The submissions of some authors have also brought to the fore the reverence accorded the gods and ancestors for bumper harvest as seen in yam festivals. Yam festivals are celebrated in many parts of the world to thank the benevolent spirits including the gods for their protection and guidance throughout the tedious farming period. Yams in various forms are offered during the celebration to the gods and ancestors for their assistance. Many writers debunk the notion that the abundance of yam necessitated the celebration of yam festivals and maintain that the tedious nature of yam farming is the main factor.

After reading through other related literature, a link has been established between art and culture. That is the unavoidable close relationship which exists between art and culture. Culture is intertwined with the practices and philosophies of a group of people. And as part of their practices, art is a vibrant entity which can not be done away with. Yam festival which forms part of our culture is given the boost by the artistic displays that go with it. This suggests that the culture of a people will go into oblivion if the necessary steps are not taken to project their arts. Mention can be made of authors such as H. Cole (1975), Bame (1991) and Gavua (2000) who can be considered as advocates of a good cause. Their idea stems from the fact that festivals can be considered artistic events which begin at a point and end at a point. It is therefore an established fact that none of the discussed festivals can be celebrated without the role of art. Much attention must also be given to the specific art forms which play roles in the celebration of festivals. This way, one will tend to appreciate the beauty of festivals the more. Through this appreciation, more people will be exposed to the realities of life.

Apart from the artistic roles, many writers have also conceded that, festivals play developmental roles. Areas such as tourism, sales of art and crafts, souvenirs, initiation of

developmental projects and many others have been stated in their presentations without any reference to the Asogli Yam festival. These areas therefore need to be explored and developed to serve the desired purpose. In other words, all the discrepancies that plague these areas of interest must be streamlined and put to a better use.

One very important and interesting input made by almost all authors is the admission that festivals whether celebrated in Africa or elsewhere in the world possess pomp and pageantry which make its sustenance always a possibility. A festival no matter the type or orientation comes with joy and happiness and must therefore be portrayed in that vein so as to ensure its continuity.

Having considered the various points raised by authors, it is now obvious that a vacuum has been created for the researcher to carry out an in depth research into the artistic roles of the Asogli yam festival and also to look into the possible socio-economic benefits of the festival. This in effect, will project the research topic in question as that which is aimed at contributing to knowledge.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the various research instruments and methods that have been used to collect data for the study. Mention has been made of the Research Design, the Population for the Study, Sample Population, Sample Design, Data Collection, Research Tools and Library Research.

#### **1.1 Research Design**

The descriptive, historical, analytical, and statistical research methods were employed for the interpretation of data.

#### **Descriptive Method**

A descriptive study was adopted by the researcher to describe and interpret events. This was basically manipulated to throw light on conditions and relationships that exist in the society and to bring to the fore the opinions that are held concerning the topic under study. Also, all the processes and trends of development that were evident throughout the

study were adequately taken care of by the descriptive approach. This method was used to describe both present and past events as and when necessary. According to Anderson (1990) any approach that attempts to describe data might be referred to as a descriptive method.

Looking at the nature of the study, the descriptive method was therefore used to bring out the various stages of the research. This method helped the researcher to outline and describe relationships that exist between variables which made it possible for a good conclusion to be draw

### **1.2 Population for the Study**

The chiefs, traditional priests, spokesmen, clan leaders, elders, queen mothers, the youth, both male and female, teachers and school children in Ho, Kpenoe, Takla and Akoepe constitute the population for this study. The population in terms of numbers is represented as 450 people.

### **1.3 Sample Population**

By the nature of this research, it was not possible to include all available population for study, therefore only the sample population was studied. The sample population includes some traditional leaders and people of the Asogli state. The table below shows a fair distribution of the number of people studied as against the place of study:

Table 3: Sample Population

Number	Place of Study	Number of people
1	Akoepe	20

2	Kpenoe	40
3	Ho	50
4	Takla	25

#### **1.4 Sampling Design**

Owing to the heterogeneity of the accessible population, it was rational that each place of study was treated as a stratum. Three strata were generated by this study. The first stratum consisted of members of institutions of learning, such as lecturers, teachers and students. The second category or stratum included workers of establishments such as, Centre for National Culture, Museums and Monument's Board, and gallery operators. The third stratum comprised chiefs, community heads, elders, drummers as well as those knowledgeable in the indigenous culture. Since there were many strata to deal with, the Stratified Random Sampling method was used for the study. In all, 135 copies of questionnaire were administered to the sample population and this represents 30% of the total accessible population of the study. The reason for this choice was that the resources for the study could not go beyond 30% of the total population for the study. Besides, Leedy (1974) asserts that for quality research, at least 30% of the accessible population for the study is a fair representation for an acceptable accuracy of results. The table below shows a schematic overview of the Stratified Random sampling method:

**Table 4:Schematic overview of Stratified  
Random Sampling method**

<b>Population Level</b>	<b>Stratum 1</b> -100 Members of institutions of learning <b>Stratum 2</b> -150 Workers of establishments such as Centre for National Culture, Museums and Monuments Board and Gallery Operators <b>Stratum 3</b> -200 Chiefs, elders, divine drummers, chief priests		
<b>Equalization Level</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Randomization Level (30%)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Sample Population</b>	<b>135</b>		

### **1.5 Data Collection**

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data relevant to the study were collected from the field by the help of research tools. The research tools used for the study were: questionnaire, observation and interview. Secondary data were collected from books, publications, catalogues, periodicals, newsletters, brochures, journals, magazines, charts, encyclopaedias and unpublished theses and monographs.

### **2.0 Research Tools**

#### **Questionnaire**

At prior notice, the researcher traveled to each place of study and administered questionnaires. The questionnaire format combined both close and open forms. This is advantageous in many ways. According to Best (1981), depending on the type of information, the researcher wants, both questionnaire types could be combined. He went on to describe their merits as follows: according to his submission, the close form type of questionnaire is easy to fill out, takes little time, keeps the respondent on the subject, is



relatively objective and is fairly easy to tabulate and analyze. The open form type of questionnaire in his view calls for a free response in the respondent's own words and this perhaps makes room for in depth response. He however, admits that both types have their own demerits, some of which he enumerated as close form questionnaire are restricted and gives way for prejudiced answers while the open form questionnaire because of its nature provides little returns. Best was quick to state that most questionnaires include both open and closed forms, notwithstanding their demerits. He explains further that it is therefore incumbent on the questionnaire builder to decide on which type is more likely to supply the information he or she wants.

Respondents were given 4 to 5 weeks to finish answering the 3-page well structured questionnaire. Some questionnaires were administered during the festive occasion while others were administered after the occasion on house to house basis to the sample population. Frantic efforts were made by the researcher to retrieve all questionnaires administered but this was not possible, as some respondents deliberately refused to return them or make them ready for collection. The table below shows the number of questionnaire which were collected per stratum:

Table5:Questionnaire distributions per stratum

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Questionnaires administered</b>	<b>Number of Questionnaires returned</b>
Stratum 1	50	50
Stratum 2	50	48
Stratum 3	35	34
	<b>Total= 135</b>	<b>Total= 132</b>

Out of the 135 questionnaire copies administered to the sample population, 132 were retrieved and this represents 97.8 % of the total number of questionnaires administered. The data collected were then assembled, synthesized, critically evaluated and translated conclusions drawn from them.

### **Observation**

For a study like this, the observational approach was indispensable. The lucid fact is that, the denominators: “festival”, “art”, and “culture” are exhibited in a visual spectrum than any other medium. Colours are displayed, forms and symbols are adorned and culture is portrayed. Best (1981) explains that certain types of information can best be obtained through direct observation. The researcher therefore adopted the participant observant method which enabled him to undertake on-the-spot observation of royal regalia at both the palace and durbar grounds. This tool was also at its highest peak during the performance of rites and rituals and was mostly combined with photography, both still and video to record pictures of artifacts and artistic performances. Information gathered from the employment of this tool was critically analyzed and interpreted using the experimental and descriptive research methods.

### **Interview**

Interview which is more or less an oral questionnaire was employed by the researcher to extract pertinent information from children, traditional leaders and the old folks who could neither read nor write. It was observed by the researcher that about 40% of the sample population comprising some community leaders and indigenous folks who had factual information relevant to the study could neither read nor write. In view of this, the researcher adopted the oral approach to forestall any such occurrences of shallow data

collection. He did this by preparing very simple interview questions which he interpreted in *Ewe* when the need arose. This allowed him to have a face-to-face interaction with resource persons and at the same time establish a rapport between him and the interviewee.

The researcher observed that certain confidential information which could not be divulged by respondents when employing the other research tools were willingly given out; as the researcher took time to explain the questions more clearly to the interviewee just the way he wanted it. The use of interview also afforded the researcher the opportunity to seek the clarification of the same information in several ways, at various stages of the interview, thus providing a check of the truthfulness of responses. While interviewing, the researcher also made use of tape and mp3 recorders to record relevant information which could easily be forgotten.

Other electronic devices were used by the researcher to collect data for the study. These included digital camera (both still and video), tape recorder and mp3 recorder. These were combined with research tools to collect relevant and reliable data for the study.

### **2.1 Library Research**

To make room for comparison and scholarly presentation of ideas, the researcher conducted library research to collect secondary data for the study.

The following facilities were visited for relevant literature: Balme library, Legon, African Studies library, Legon, Main library, KNUST, Kumasi; College of Art library, KNUST, Kumasi; Social Science library KNUST Kumasi, Ashanti Regional library, Kumasi; British Council library, Kumasi; Ho Polytechnic library, Ho; Kumasi Polytechnic library,

Museums and Monument Board, Ho; Volta regional library, Ho; U.C.C library. Cape Coast; U.E.W library, Winneba and internet cafes.

At these facilities, data were collected from the internet, books, journals, magazines, periodicals, encyclopaedias, newsletters, brochures, unpublished theses and catalogues.

The various data collected were evaluated and used as substantive literature for the research.

## **2.2 Summary of Discussion**

It is evident in this chapter that the research was approached in a practical manner. The field works carried out show and demonstrate the level of in depth research carried out throughout the study. The library research also points to the fact that all will not be well with a study such as this if it does not include what others have done in the related field of study. A scholarly approach was therefore used to enable the researcher to compare and contrast his findings with old information already existing in literature. It also made it possible for the researcher to compare and contrast his findings from books, magazines and other sources of literature with the field research carried out so that he can adequately criticize any wrong points raised in the work.

The various data collection methods and tools were carefully manipulated to acquire and interpret data. Many efforts were therefore made by the researcher to collate data necessary for the study. The next chapter discusses the analyses, evaluation and interpretation of the data that have been collected using the research methods and tools discussed earlier in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The information gathered from the employment of the instruments are presented and analyzed in this chapter. Interview, questionnaire and the participant observation tools were used by researcher to collect data from the sample population. A critical analysis of data collected using the three tools of research has been presented below:

#### **1.1 Analysis of results for Questionnaire**

The results for the questionnaire sent out have been assembled and discussed. Questions were focused on respondents' knowledge about the festival. In all, 135 copies of questionnaire were administered to the sample population and this represented 30% of the total accessible population for the study. However, 132 questionnaire copies were retrieved.

**Table 6: Returns for question 1**

Number	Question	Results	No. of Respondents	% of respondents
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1	Which people celebrate <i>Asogli</i> yam festival?	a) Ho, Kpenoe, Takla & Akoepe	50	38%
		b) the Asogli people	40	30%
		c) Ho and its environs	42	32%

Total= 132

100%

**Table: 7 Returns for question 2**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
2	Why do they celebrate the festival?	a) To thank the gods.	12	9%
		b) For stock taking and to honour the ancestors.	60	45%
		c) For unity & development.	30	23%
		d) to signify yam cultivation.	30	23%

Total= 132

100%

**Table 8: Returns for question 3**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
3	What activities constitute the festival?	a) <i>Dzarwuwu</i> , <i>Nubabla</i> , Hailing of new yam, all souls' day, durbar.	70	53%
		b) Feasting, dancing & drumming & durbar.	30	23%
		c) Pounding of <i>fufu</i> , singing and dancing.	20	15%
		d) Merrymaking, <i>gbormekplorkplor</i> , & thanksgiving	12	9%

Total= 132

100%

**Table 9: Returns for question 4**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
4	Does art play roles in the celebration of the festivals?	Yes	130	98%
		No	2	2%
Total=			132	100%

**Table 10: Returns for question 5**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
5	If yes, state some of these roles and if no, why?	a) It draws people’s attention to the beauty of the festival.	70	53%
		b) The traditional dressing of the celebrants.	20	15%
		c) The procession to the durbar ground.	32	24%
		d) The dressing of the chiefs and queens.	10	8%
Total=			132	100%

**Table 11: Results for question 6**

Numbe r	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
6	Which art forms are used in the celebration of the festival?	a) Visual art- colourful kente cloth, beads, sculpture- stool, linguist staff.	50	38%
		b) Visual art, verbal art, & performing art.	40	30%
		c) Sign board, cloth design, posters, printing of documents.	30	23%
		d) Kente, stools, sandals, state sword.	12	9%
Total=			132	100%

**Table 12: Returns for question 7**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
7	Does Asogli yam festival possess any economic values?	Yes	132	100%

**Table 13: Results for question 8**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
8	What are these economic values?	a) It provides a good season for farmers to sell their produce.	40	30%
		b) The festival attracts tourists.	60	46%
		c) Promotion of development projects.	20	15%
		d) Artists sell their works.	12	9%
Total=			132	100%

**Table 14: Results for question 9**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
9	What is the patronage of the festival these days as compared to the past?	a) It is not high.	11	50%
		b) There is a drop in the patronage of the festival.	25	19%
		c) It is average.	66	8%
		d) Decrease in foreign participation.	30	23%
Total=			132	100%



**Table 15: Results for question 10**

Numbers	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
10	What do you think are the causes of the changes in the festival?	a) Increase in modernization.	40	30%
		b) The change in regime.	30	23%
		c) Influence of Christianity.	10	8%
		d) ineffective planning	52	39%
Total=			132	100%

**Table 16: Results for question 11**

Numbers	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
11	How best can we improve upon the festival to make it attractive to people?	a) More social activities should be introduced.	55	42%
		b) The squabbles among the people of Ho-Dome have to be resolved.	35	27%
		c) Some of the outmoded customs must be done away with.	17	13%
		d) There must be sponsorships.	25	18%
Total=			132	100%

**Table 17: Results for question 12**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
12	Are some of the rites and rituals obsolete and require modification?	Yes	122	92%
		No	10	8%
Total =			132	100%

**Table 18: Results for question 13**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
13	What are these obsolete rites and rituals?	a) Going to the shrine to consult deities and embarking on a journey to the cemetery.	70	57%
		b) Nubabla, <i>vovlowofe nkeke</i> , sprinkling of mashed yam, & <i>gbormekporkplor</i> .	52	43%
Total= 122			100%	

**Table 19: Results for question 14**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
14	Do you have any idea about the kind of games that are performed during the festival?	a) Yes	125	95%
		b) No	7	5%
Total= 132			100%	

**Table 20: Results for question 15**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
15	Enumerate and describe them, taking cognizance of the philosophy behind.	<p>a) <i>Ekpodada</i>- a club tied by leaves of palm tree which is thrown for a catch. It promotes unity among the people, healthy rivalry and friendship, recreation, happiness, understanding, growth and development.</p> <p>b) <i>Adidada</i>-throwing of marbles. It promotes concentration and increases attentiveness. It also</p>	125	95%

		teaches the art of aiming and targeting. c) <i>Antorofoko</i> - rotation of a spindle-like object and using a stick to hit it to control its movement. This increases concentration and balancing.		
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**Table 21: Results for question 16**

Number	Question	Results	No. of respondents	% of respondents
16	In your view, should Asogli yam festival be maintained? Give reasons for your answer.	a) It should be maintained because it promotes the rich culture of the <i>Ewe</i> . b) It should be maintained because it maintains unity and development. c) It helps the economy of people.	132	100%

### **1.2 Interpretation of Results for Questionnaire**

The results of the well-structured, 3-page questionnaire copies have been analyzed statistically above. Sixteen separate tables which correspond with the total number of questions were used in the critical analysis.

Table 6 was used to analyze questionnaire results of question 1. Question 1 was focused on respondents' idea about the people who celebrate the Asogli yam festival. Three separate results were obtained. They are as follows: first result: Ho, Kpenoe, Takla, and Akoepe (this was obtained from 50 respondents which represented 38% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved). Second result: the Asogli people (this was obtained from 40 respondents which represented 30% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved). Third result: Ho and its environs (this was obtained from 42 respondents which represented 32% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved). All the three results affirm that the people of Asogli celebrate the yam festival and this adds to what was earlier stated in this thesis concerning those who celebrate the festival.

In table 7, questionnaire results for question 2 have been analyzed. Question 2 sought to know the motive behind the celebration of the festival. The following results were provided. First result: to thank the gods. (This was provided by 12 respondents which represented 9% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved). Second result: for taking stock of the previous year's activities (this was provided by 60 respondents which represented 45% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved). Third result: for unity and development (this was provided by 30 respondents which represented 23% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved). Fourth result: to commemorate and honour yam cultivation. (This was provided by 30 respondents which represented 23% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved). The four results emphasize the need for the expression of joy and thanks-giving to the benevolent spirits for good harvest.

Table 8 which was used to analyze questionnaire results of question 3 focused on the activities of the festival. Four different results were obtained. First result: *Dzawuwu*,

*Nubabla*, hailing of new yam (a joyous occasion to mark the entry of the new yam into town), All Souls' Day and durbar. This was gotten from 70 respondents which represent 53% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Second result: feasting, dancing, drumming and durbar. This was given by 30 respondents which represented 23% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Third result: pounding of *fufu*, singing and dancing. This was given by 20 respondents which represented 15% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Fourth result: merrymaking, *gbormekporkplor* (sweeping of town) and thanksgiving. This was given by 12 respondents which represented 9% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. The results did not cater for some very important activities of the festival such as *Teyuyru* (Hailing of new yam) *Tetsrolorlor* (Gathering of yam peels) and *Vovlowofenkeke* (All Souls' Day)

Table 9 analyzed questionnaire results of question 4 and this centered on whether art plays roles in the celebration of the festival. Two closed-ended results based on Yes or No were provided. A total of 130 respondents which represented 90% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved answered Yes while a total of 2 respondents which represented 2% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved answered No. It is obvious from the results presented that art is very important in festivals as indicated by some writers earlier in this thesis.

Table 10 was used to illustrate questionnaire results of question 5 which asked for specific reasons why art can be said to perform roles in the celebration of the festival or not. The results were presented as follows: first result: it draws people's attention to the celebration of the festival; this was given by 70 respondents which represented 52 % of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Second result: the traditional dressing of celebrants; this was given by 20 respondents which represented 15% of the total

number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Third result: the procession to the durbar ground; this was given by 32 respondents which represented 24% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Fourth result: the dressing of the chiefs and queens; this was given by 10 respondents which represented 8% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. The results of question 5 are clear indications that art is intertwined with the celebrations. Almost every activity and object used during the festival is characterized by some artistic features and roles.

The questionnaire results for question 6 are presented in table 11. Question 6 sought respondents' opinion about the specific art forms that are used in the celebration of the festival. Four results have been assembled. First result: visual art-colourful kente, bead, sculpture- stools, linguist staff. This was obtained from 50 respondents which represented 88% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Second result: visual art, verbal art, and performing art. This was obtained from 40 respondents which represented 30% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Third result: sign board, cloth design, posters, and printing documents. This was obtained from 30 respondents which represented 23% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Fourth result: kente, stools and sword. This was obtained from 12 respondents, representing 9% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. The results are indications that the four respondents accept the fact that specific art forms are used during the festival as suggested by the researcher in chapter one of this thesis.

Table 12 was used to analyze questionnaire results for question 7. Question 7 dwelled on the question whether or not Asogli yam festival possesses any economic values. Interestingly, a 100% answer of Yes was given by respondents. This affirms the second hypothesis of the thesis.

The specific economic values were presented in table 13 for question 8. The following results were obtained: first result: it provides a good season for farmers to sell their produce; this was given by 40 respondents which represented 30% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Second result: the festival attracts tourists; this was provided by 60 respondents, representing 46% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Third result: promotion of developmental projects; this was provided by 20 respondents which represented 15% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Fourth result: artists sell their works. This was given by 12 respondents, representing 9% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. This is indicative of the fact that all the four respondents have some ideas about the economic values of the festival.

In table 14, questionnaire results for question 9 have been analyzed. Question 9 asked for a comparison of the festival at present with the past. First result: it is not high. This was given by 11 respondents which represented 50% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Second result: there is a drop in the patronage of the festival. This was given by 25 respondents representing 19% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Third result: it is average; this was given by 11 respondents which represented 8% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Fourth result: increase in foreign participation. This was provided by 30 respondents which represented 23% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved.

Table 15 which was used to analyze questionnaire results of question 10 was focused on the possible causes of the low patronage of the festival. First result: increase in modernization; this was obtained from 40 respondents which represented 30% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Second result: the change in regime. This was given by 30 respondents which represented 23% of the total number of questionnaire

copies retrieved. Third result: influence of Christianity; this was given by 10 respondents which represented 8% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Fourth result: ineffective planning. This was obtained from 52 respondents representing 39% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Results for both question 13 and 14 indicate that the festival nowadays has a low patronage.

Question 11 was analyzed in table 16 in which respondents ideas were sought for possible ways of improving upon the festival. The results are given below: first result: more social activities should be introduced. This was given by 55 respondents representing 42% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Second result: the squabbles among the people of Ho-Dome have to be resolved. This was obtained from 35 respondents representing 27 % of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Third result: some of the outmoded customs must be done away with. This was obtained from 17 respondents which represented 13% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Fourth result: there must be sponsorship. This was given by 25 respondents which represented 18% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. All four respondents advocate the need for a possible improvement on the festival.

In table 17, questionnaire results for question 12 have been presented and analyzed. Question 12 dealt with whether or not some of the rituals of the festival are obsolete and require modification. Two closed-ended answers based on Yes or No have been obtained. In all, 122 respondents gave an answer of Yes which represented 92% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved while 10 respondents gave an answer of No which represented 8% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved.

Table 18 was used to analyze questionnaire results of question 13 which sought respondents' view on specific rites and rituals that are considered obsolete. Two separate



results were obtained. First result: going to the shrine to consult deities and embarking on journey to the cemetery. This was obtained from 70 respondents which represented 57% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. Second result: *Nubabla*, All Souls' Day, sprinkling of mashed yam and *gbormekporkplor*. This was provided by 52 respondents which represented 43% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved.

In table 19, results for question 14 have been presented. Question 14 focused on respondents' idea about native games that are played during the celebration of the festival. In all, 120 respondents gave an answer of Yes, representing 95 % of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved while 7 gave an answer of No representing 5% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved.

Table 20 presented results for question 15 in which respondents were asked to state specific games with their philosophies. Three results were obtained, namely: (i) *Ekpodada*- a club tied with leaves of palm tree which is thrown for a catch. It promotes unity among the people, healthy rivalry and friendship, recreation and happiness, understanding, growth and development. (ii) *Adidada*- throwing of marbles. It promotes concentration and increases attentiveness. It also teaches the art of aiming and targeting. (iii) *Antorofoyo*- rotation of a spindle-like object and using a stick to hit it to control its movement. The longer it rotates, the higher the scores. The three results were obtained from 125 respondents, representing 95% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved.

Table 21 was used to analyze questionnaire copies of question 16. Question 16 sought the general view of respondents on the festival. Three results were obtained from 132 respondents and this represented 100% of the total number of questionnaire copies retrieved. The results are as follows: first result: the festival should be maintained because

it promotes the rich culture of the Ewes. Second result: it should be maintained because it promotes unity and development. Third result: it should be maintained because it helps the economy of the people.

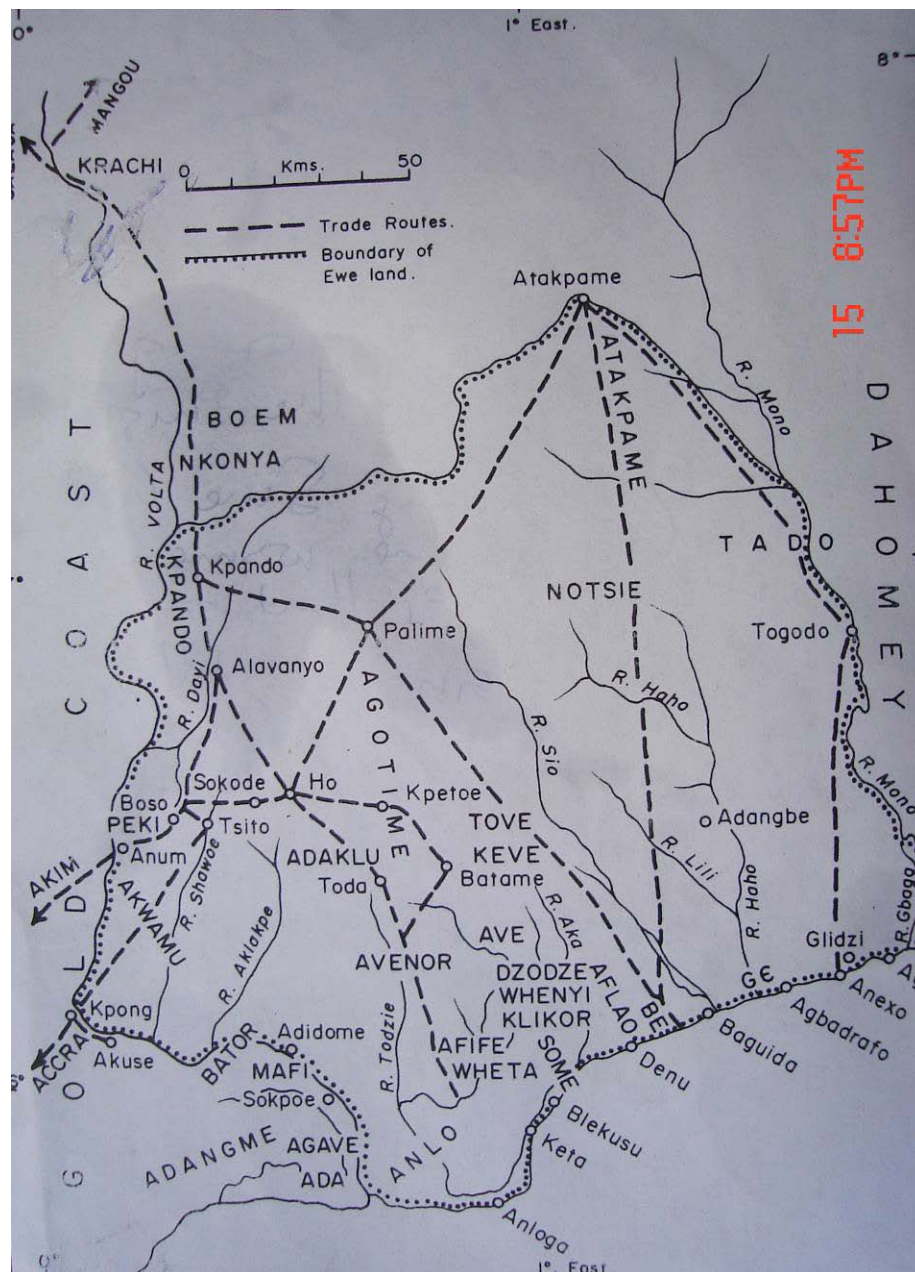
### **1.3 Presentation of Results for Interview and the Observational Approach**

The results for the various interviews conducted and the critical observations made of various paraphernalia and activities throughout the study have been presented. Interview questions on the role of art in the festival, the activities of the festival, the origin of yam cultivation, yam cultivation as an occupation and other areas which could not be tackled by the questionnaire approach were formulated and administered verbally to resource persons on one-on-one basis. Secondary data on the historical background of the festival have also been presented. In addition, critical observation of royal regalia, ritual and rite performances were carried out to collect data. The results have been outlined below:

#### **♦ Early History of the Ewe People**

The Ewe people inhabit the territory equivalent roughly to the south-eastern quarter of Ghana and half of the Republic of Togo. The current population is a little over one million. The people have a tradition of migration from the east- from Ketu; a town in the modern Republic of Benin- and have lived in their present habitat (Plate 20) from above the middle of the seventeenth century. They were later joined by a small number of immigrant groups from west of the River Volta. In their new homeland, the Ewe did not form a single political entity; they comprised a number of sub-tribes, i.e. chiefdoms and paramountcies. They occupied three distinct geographical areas: the southern chiefdoms in the coastal region; the northern groups in the upland-and-valley region; and the middle group in the central plains. At the turn of this century, there were about 120 of the Ewe sub tribes. Some of the more important sub tribes are : along the coast, eastwards from the River Volta-Anlo,

Some, Be, Gɛ; inland immediately behind the coastal “states” -Peki, Adaklu, Ave, Tove, Ho; and in northern Ewe country- Kpando, Watsi and part of Atakpame. All these polities were constitutional monarchies. The Ewe abhor tyranny and have destooled some chiefs because of arbitrariness.



Map 2: map showing some *dukorwo* and trade routes

These sub ethnic groups varied one from the other in size, degree of political centralization and military strength and were all independent of one another. They recognized themselves as essentially one people, sharing a common language and social customs, but far from uniting, they warred on one another. There were numerous quarrels, conflicts and instances of fighting between Anlo and ~~G~~ from as early as the 1680s. These were attributable to attempts by each state to engross as much of the slave trade as possible to the exclusion of the other; and also occasionally to slave raiding itself. Again, there were conflicts between Anlo and Agave (aided by the non-Ewe people of Ada and Accra) due mainly to a clash of economic interests, namely; salt and fishing rights in the lagoon and along the River Volta. In 1750, 1767, 1776 and 1784, there were instances of Ewe states fighting one another in concert with non-Ewe allies. In 1833, Anlo aided Akwamu to try to subjugate Peki, Kpando, Ho and their neighbours, and as late as 1864-1865, 1868 and 1873-1874, Anlo and these states fought in opposing camps.

These numerous intra-Ewe wars caused considerable disorganization in the territory and threatened to align individual Ewe states into “blocs” or *ententes* in partnership with some non- Ewe neighbours. Nevertheless, there continued to be trade and other contacts between the various sub tribes. There was mutual co-operation between the competing sub-tribes when the occasion demanded it until the imposition of European colonial government brought a new element into the political fragmentation of the Ewe.

#### ♦ Historical Background of the Asogli State

According to historical accounts given by Fianu (1986), the Asogli, like all Ewe-speaking people trace their origin from present-day Ethiopia through Oyo in present-day Nigeria and Ketu in Dahomey before settling at Notsie in about the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

In Notsie (in present-day Togo), the Ewes were ruled by a tyrant called Agorkoli. The tyrannical rule of this King spans the historical records of all Ewes. His subjects therefore, skillfully planned a rebellion highlighted by an escape from this King's walled city-state.

On the appointed day, the Ewes under their various leaders escaped from King Agorkoli. It was the leader of the Asoglis, Amega Kakla, who broke through a portion of the fortified wall which had been softened through a planned persistent splashing of water on the same spot by the residents of the walled city-state for all the Ewes to escape.



Plate 8: The spot through which the Ewes escaped

Source: picture taken by researcher at Notsie

The deceptive plan worked perfectly because the escaping subjects walked backwards out of the walled city leaving footprints on muddy ground which the King's soldiers believed were footprints of invaders. By the time the soldiers realized their folly, the Ewes had escaped to freedom.



Plate 9: The remains of the Notsie walled city in present-day Tog

Source: picture taken by researcher at Notsie

The sword (*Gligbayi*) used in breaking through the wall is today regarded as a sacred relic of the Ewes and is in the possession of the paramount ruler of the Asoglis in Ho. From Notsie, the Asoglis broke away from the larger group to settle at Kormedzrale (about 2 miles east of present-day Ho). At this site, the Asoglis, made up of the descendants of Amega Kakla settled and engaged in subsistence farming and hunting.

The people of present-day Akoefe, Kpenoe, Takla and Ho form the original Asogli. They are all the direct descendants of Amega Kakla.

Traditions recall that Amega Kakla had three sons and a daughter. These were Akoe, Letsu, Asor and Esa.

With time, the *Kormedzrale* land became too small for the Asoglis hence their further migration. The sons and daughters of Kakla Akoe and Kakla Letsu separated and retreated, founding the present-day Akoefe and Kpenoe and later Takla.

The descendants of Asor went ahead and founded the present-day Ho after a brief sojourn at Hofedo. The only daughter of Amega Kakla called Esa also migrated to settle at present-day Saviefe further north of Ho.

Currently, the Asogli Traditional Council is made up of thirty-three (33) traditional areas within the Ho District as a result of their amalgamation, with the Paramount Chief of Asogli as its President.

### **The Ho/ Asogliawo at war**

In all pre-Ho settlements and the early years of Ho, there were constant wars against Matse, Taviawo, Tanyigbe and Klefe as well as Abutia. These constant wars against their aggressive neighbours over political superiority and dominion, acquisition and extension of territorial land ended, more often than not, in victory for the three-pronged army of the people of Ho. But who are you to withstand the curse of the spirit engulfed Gligbayi when the Hoawo have come out of *Amlimatsitsi* in their war dresses *Adzarwusi* with their *Godetsega* (juju pant) ? Who are you to overpower the Hoawo when they are in their war dress? In these attires, the now-indefatigable “*Howadeawo*” intoxicated in bravery and Awadegbogbo assumed relentlessness until the enemy had been subdued.

Prior to the arrival of the *Hoarwo* (the last settlers) in the Ewe land, the Akwamu were the overlords of the earlier Ewe settlers and extracted tributes from them. Now, they heard and envied the victorious exploits of the Hoawo who besides their experienced war tactics had become extremely rich and culturally civilized as regards their annual *Tedudu* (Yam festival). It is these Hoawo that the Akwamu sought to stop and bring under their subjugation by fair or foul means so as to collect homage from them as well.

Not long after this, Akomu Koto, Akwamu war chief sent an order to the *Hoarwo* for tributes. When the Hoawo did not cede to this order, Akomu Koto asked the *Fiaga* of Ho to pick between pellets and salts (signifying war and peace respectively). Upon consultation

with the sub-chiefs of Ho, the brave Togbe Howusu of Dome on this injunction “ *Ne wodu dze ha wokuna*” picked the pellets and sent back to Akomu Koto the salt with the sliced meat from the back of the same messenger of Akomu Koto ( had they not been bathed in war in the past? )

The *Gearwo*, *Vovloarwo*, *Dofoarwo*, *Bosoarwo* and for sometime, the *Pekiarwo* (who later cross-carpeted or defected to the side of Hoawo) were brought to fight on the side of Akomu Koto. Again the Anloawo, on the side of the Akwamus were ordered to besiege the Akovia while the Akwamus Attacked the Hoawo on an appointed day. After an initial shoot-out at Sokode, the Hoawo waylaid the Akwamu midway between Sokode and Ho and held them from entering Ho. At the same time, the Akoviawo held on and scattered the Anloawo who fought for the Akwamu.

Smelling defeat at the hands of the *Hoarwo*, Akomu Koto with the *Anloarwo*, *Adakluarwo* and other followers fled from the *Hoarwo* through *Adaklu* to Tanyigbe. Here, he marshaled the forces of Tokokoe, Hodzo and Agotime to assist him against Howusu and his men at Matse, Taviefe and Ziavi. Meanwhile, the *Pekiarwo*, sensing Akoto’s treachery, defected, with Adaklu to the side of the powerful Ho warriors. Akoto, fearing to be captured by the Hoawo fled from his men in the night to Anum to “save his head”.

*Hoarwo* were victorious and the Akwamu defeated. This victory of the *Hoarwo* was to the indignation of the Akwamu, hitherto warlords of the neighbouring states. And to regain this lost glory, they allied with the Asante against their archenemy; Ho. One of the two Asante war leaders, Adu Bofour, after an early victory over the *Pekiarwo*, who were on the side of the *Hoarwo*, suffered a later defeat when they were leveled by the Ewes who rolled



the great rocks of Gemots (Gemi Mountain) over them at Amedzofe. The second war-leader, Nantwi, fighting against the great Howusu Mote Kofi, who due to his gallantry and valiance during the Akwamu War had been made the *Au afiaga* (warlord) of the Asogli State, chased the Akwamus into Takla on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1869.

The Asante routed Ho, plundered the Basel Mission at Ho Kpodzi and took the church bell. They also captured J. Bonnat, a French Roman Catholic Missionary who they found at the mission house in Ho. On the way back to Kumasi, they seized Ramseyer with his family and a friend, Kuehne (all whites) at Anum and marched them to Kumasi. It was not until Adolf Friedrich Herzog Zu Macklenburg, a German Governor in Lome, ordered the release of the Mission Church Bell, did the Asante return it to Ho where it still stands on display.

It is on record by Wiegrabe, P. in "*Erwegbale xexle fe Akpa Enelia* (1938)" that all the three wings of the Asante and Akwamu warriors converged at Agu in Togo where they met with the Ewe warriors.

Simply put, the Asantes suffered the greatest humiliation and lost most of their valiant men in the hands of the *Hoawo* under Howusu of Dome for and on behalf of the *Fiaga* of the Asogli State. The Dayi of Kloto, by a former alliance with the Hoawo fought with and helped establish a convincing victory for the *Hoawo* against the Asante and the Akwamu.



Plate 10: A section of the gallant Ho army  
Source: Asogli Traditional Council



Plate 11: A German's impression of the King of Ho and his warlord  
Source: Asogli Traditional Council



Plate 12: A picture of the early Basel mission that was burnt down by the Ashantis  
Source: Asogli Traditional Council

### **A Glimpse at Agbogboza (Yam Festival)**

Presently, *Agbogboza* which is believed to be the origin of the Asogli yam festival is celebrated with pomp in Notsie to thank the gods for bumper harvest. It marks the end of the traditional year in acknowledging, to a high esteem, the Supreme Being and the ancestors responsible for the well-being of men.

Yams were said to have been discovered in Notsie some thousand years ago when on a hunting expedition a hunter came face to face with some rodents digging and eating up the tubers of a climbing shrub. He also went ahead and dug up the remnants of those tubers, took home and cooked them for his hungry children. Within days, these hitherto lean children of his began to “swell up” signifying that this is a good food and his people started to call it “*Etea ame*” (it swells man) which later became “*Te*” (Yam).

To the Ewe, the annual *Agbogboza* was essentially a religious ritual in which the people expressed their gratitude to the almighty God through the medium of the ancestors (*vorloarwo*) and lesser spirits (*trowo*). What ever is the theme of the celebration or ceremony, the principal celebrant of the ceremony is the *Agbogbomefia* assisted in various categories by traditional priests. This way, the person of the *Fiaga* is held as the intermediary between the living on one hand and the Supreme Being through the intercession of the ancestors (*vorloarwo*) on the other who oversee the well-being of the state and citizenry. The same practices and beliefs associated with the *Agbogboza* have been emulated by the Asoglis in their annual yam festival.



Plate 13: A cultural performance during the annual *Agbogboza* in Notsie



Plate 14: Togbe Agorkoli IV giving his Key note address at an *Agbogboza* celebration



Plate 15: *Dzawuwu* performance at the *Agbogboza*

#### ◆ The origin of Yam Cultivation

According to oral tradition, the early settlers who arrived at Kormedzrale in the 15th century were good farmers, but before this, the people on their travels through wild forests and unknown lands had been feeding on wild berries, banana, pawpaw and other fruits which needed no cooking. When they arrived at Kormedzrale, their leader *Aye* and an old woman suggested that they settle there, because it was believed that, the land was full of manure and consisted of a mixture of clay and sand. It was also seen that trees

which grew on the land were large and had green leaves. Another factor was that, there were a number of streams from which drinking water could be obtained.

One day, an interesting discovery was made in which one of the settlers, a man was walking through a part of the forest at Komedzrale, when a green “thread” of tree, which had green leaves, and was winding itself, on a big tree nearby caught his attention. He noticed that this tree grew quite differently from the trees he had come across during their farming days at Notsie. He thus tried to unwind the tree from the big tree and to pull it off the ground. When he did pull, he noticed that the threadlike structure had deep roots which had remained in the soil during the pulling. Curiosity, therefore, caused this man to dig the ground with his fingers, until he came to the roots that had remained in the soil. He realized that the roots were big and were not like the roots he knew of. He then carried these dark brownish roots home and showed them to his wife who advised him to show them to the chief and the old woman. The old woman advised the man that the roots should be cut into bits and tasted to see whether they could be used as food. This was done but at the first trial, they were found to cause itching of the tongue and mouth, when eaten raw. The old woman was not disappointed so she again suggested that the cut-up roots should be put in fire and then eaten to see the reaction. During the second trial, it was seen that the roots were delicious to eat. So all the elders of the people, the chief, the old woman, the discoverer of the roots (yam) and his wife, ate the yams amid merry-making.

The discoverer of the roots, who was very happy, took the head of the yam and kept it in his room. After a few weeks, he noticed that the same green structures were growing on the yam-head. He again showed this to the chief, the old woman and the council of elders. They suggested that the best thing to do was to plant this yam-head in the soil to see

whether it would grow. This was done and within a few weeks, the thread-like structures which the discoverer saw in the forest began to appear. Within a few days, it grew long and started creeping on the ground. This was because; there were no trees around for it to wind itself on. The discoverer took care of the yam as it grew. After many weeks, the man dug up the roots and saw that he had got something similar to the roots he found in the forest. After eating this yam too, he got three yam-heads from it.

The chief and his elders suggested that the yam or “Ete” as they named it should be cultivated on a large scale. The chief and his elders again realized that in order to get a big farm land, they had to move a few miles away from Kormedzrale as their farm land. The place they moved to was the present site of Ho. Another school of thought links the origin of yam cultivation to a hunter. According to this submission, yam or “ete” which literally means “swollen” in Ewe was discovered by a hunter on his normal hunting expedition. Claims have it that, despite the fact that the discovery was made in the famine period, the hunter surprisingly refused to send the tuber home, but instead decided to hide it in the soil for use some other time. When he later went back for it, to his dismay, the tuber had germinated and grown bigger. This was how the cultivation of yam started.

Anquandah (1982) in his book, “Rediscovering Ghana’s Past” explained that yam farming evolved during the later stages of the Stone Age when stone hoes were believed to have been used for grubbing up indigenous white yam and yellow yam. He further explained that Guinea yam farming, though native to the people of the Guinea Coast flourished in the southern part of the West African,.

#### ♦ Yam Cultivation among the Asogli People

Yam cropping is a very hazardous endeavour and this is no exception with the Asoglis.

They liken yam cultivation to the reverence given to the chiefs and other traditional leaders in the community. This is so because, they believe that the same care and honour given to the chiefs and their co-hosts must be replicated in yam farming. Perhaps this is a step in the right direction towards justifying the long period of yam cultivation and the cumbersome nature of the practice, starting from the first stage (land preparation), to harvesting of the new yam.

Cumbersome as it may be, it sometimes results in the death of native farmers through snake bites and other natural disasters. Hence they say “if you want to engage in yam farming, be prepared to either reap the fruits of your labour or lose your life”. This most often than not scares away the youth from engaging in yam farming. Among the Asoglis, the common species of yams grown are *Puna*, *Teyibor*, *Avadze* and *Sonka*. In all, it takes 6 to 7 months for the seedlings to fully mature.

After acquiring a land, the native farmers of Asogli state undertake the following activities till the new yam is harvested: land preparation, mounding, planting, mulching and staking.

### **Time of planting**

Planting among the Asoglis and elsewhere in Ghana is determined by the ecology, for example the length of rainy season. For this reason, most planting is done between March and April.

### **Land preparation**

Land preparation is done early in the dry season or just before the rains begin. Land clearing is done essentially with hand tools such as machete and axe to clear grasses and



cut down shrubs, (Plate16). Thereafter the stubble is burnt. However, large trees are usually left because of the great difficulty of cutting them down. Several upright and slender trees are deliberately left standing, since they will later serve as stakes upon which the yam plants twine.



Plate 16: Some farming implements on display

### **Mounding**

Generally, four methods of yam planting exist but looking at the type of land tillage in the Asogli State, mounding is mostly carried out. With mounding, yams are planted mainly on mounds. Essentially, the top soil is gathered into more or less conical heaps, (Plate17). Hoes are used. The size of each mound, the distance between the mounds, and the number of yam stands planted are very important to Asogli native farmers. This is because, these parameters facilitate the growth of the yam seedlings. Mound creation on the whole yields some advantages: the mounds facilitate easy tuber penetration of the soil. They also facilitate harvesting and serve as a useful purpose in the water management of some fields. Mound making may help to keep tuber and roots above the water table in areas with high water table. Lastly, the process of mound-making collects



the rich top soil of the entire field into heaps. As such, the entire depth of mound consists of fertile top soil and hence contribute to high yields of mound-grown yams. Perhaps this is the reason for the big and fat tubers of yam produced by the Asogli native farmers.



Plate 17: Picture showing mounds among the Asoglis

### **Planting of New Yam Seedlings**

With much dexterity, the seedlings are carefully selected and inserted into the mounds and left to germinate. First and foremost, hoe is used to open up the soil and the yam seedling is inserted, and covered with an additional soil. Some two weeks later, the seedlings begin to germinate. It must be noted that the size of planting material (that is the seedlings) determines the size of the produce. Therefore, the bigger the seedlings, the bigger the resultant yam. Also, large mounds produce large tubers. This is so because scientifically, the big yam seedlings allow for good aeration and sunlight which are necessary for plant germination.

### **Mulching**

Soon after planting of yam, it must be mulched in order to protect it from excessive heat

and dessication. Mulching is the process of covering the mounds with grass and leaves to prevent the direct rays of the sun from affecting the yam seedling, (Plate18). The top of the mounds is therefore covered with much soil placed on the mulch to prevent the wind from blowing it away. This allows the plant to shoot well.



Plate 18: Some mulched mounds on display

### **Staking**

After the seedlings have sprouted to about 1 meter in length, the stakes are provided to allow the yam plant to twine on them. A stout stake is therefore placed vertically beside each mound and the yam plant led to twine on it. One stake may be used for one yam stand or the stake may be made to serve for two or three adjacent stands, (Plate 19).

### **Weed Control**

Weeding in between the mounds takes place about 3 to 4 times before the final harvest. In addition, a practice known as *tedomekaka* is carried out by carefully breaking loose the soil from beneath the newly formed tubers. This allows the free development of the yam growth stage.

## Harvesting

For most of the yam species of the Asoglis, the green leaves of the yam plant turn yellow as an indication that they are ready for harvesting. The tools used to prepare the land are the same tools used to extract the tuber manually. Due to the mysterious stories surrounding the discovery of yam, frantic efforts are made to harvest the crop. A period of hunger sets in as the people wait to harvest the new yam. It is to acknowledge the providence of God for his guidance and abundant provision that the Asoglis celebrate the yam festival, which fosters unity and development among the citizenry.



Plate 19: A picture showing some mature yam plants

### ◆ A detailed account of the Asogli Yam festival

According to Togbe Keteku, the celebration of Asogli Yam Festival was brought down from Notsie in the Republic of Togo where it is still being celebrated. He further explains that yam cultivation is a very tedious occupation and history has it that in those days some people who ventured into it did not live to enjoy the fruits of their labour. It was, and remains labour intensive, energy sapping and quite hazardous, hence the proverb “*Ne wonye eteti tsogbe wo dua ete la, ne egor ma kpor etsroa ha du o*”. Literally, this means “if it were the day of planting of yam that yam is eaten; the goat would never taste the peel”. Diligence was therefore required and the permission and guidance of the gods of the land and the ancestors were sought during the entire period from planting through harvesting.

Before the cultivation of yam, the chief priest together with other priests from the five divisions of Ho goes to *Dzohe* (a Grove of the “*Tro*” of yam festival)

### **Counting of Calendar**

The counting of the calendar for the festival starts from the first day yam is planted. With the idea that yam is normally planted in the second week of April, the calculation starts six months from this time. Thus, the yam festival is celebrated usually in the second week of September or getting to the third week.

Prior to the celebration of the festival, various preparatory activities including communal labour, advertisements, talk shows and so on are done to sensitize the citizenry. A planning committee whose duty it is to see to the success of the festival is formed. Members are normally very prominent natives of the Asogli state who are poised for action concerning the development of the area.

A different picture has however been painted by Dzide (2000) in his description about the counting of the calendar for the celebration of the Peki Yam festival in the Volta region of Ghana. He explains that the traditional Chief Fetish Priest in Peki (the *Wuve*) calculates the dates and informs the *Fiaga* (paramount chief) of the approach of this *Akwasidae* and the subsequent date for the celebration of the Yam festival. He continues that on the *Akwasidae*, the *Fiaga* provides three sheep and a gourd of palm wine. Early in the morning of the *Akwasidae*, the royal drums are played to summon every chief (*Dufia*) and his elders to the palace of the *Fiaga*. Dzide further explains that when the chiefs have assembled, the three sheep are slaughtered, dressed, cut up and divided among them. At the end of the ceremony, the chiefs return to their respective towns and drumming and dancing

continue.

A comparison of the Peki Yam festival with the Asogli Yam festival brings to the fore the extent to which our traditional people painstakingly count their calendar prior to the celebration of their well-cherished festivals. It also expresses a feel of certainty and trust for the forebears who are consulted in various ways to seek their consent and views for this activity of great importance.

### **Objectives of the Festival**

The festival is celebrated as a thanksgiving to God, and also to thank the gods and ancestors for a bumper harvest, and an occasion to offer prayers for good health and prosperity for all. It is also celebrated:

- ◆ To foster unity through forgiveness and reconciliation.
- ◆ As an annual stocktaking event for all occupational endeavours, especially farming.
- ◆ To mobilize both human and material resources of the Asogli State for job and wealth creation.
- ◆ To serve as an annual re-affirmation of allegiance by all chiefs and their subjects in the Asogli State to the Agbogbome stool.

### **Activities of the Festival**

The following information on the activities of the festival was obtained from respondents: According to the respondents, various activities characterized by rich cultural displays constitute the celebration of the festival.

### *Vovlowo fe Nkeke*

This is all Souls Day; and its rituals precede all the other rituals. It is the feeding of the departed souls through which their blessing and guidance are solicited for the years ahead. The ceremony is performed preferably on a Sunday morning at the forecourt of the *Agboghomefia's* palace.



Plate 20: Some chiefs and elders present at a *Vovlowo fe Nkeke*

Libation is first poured (Plate 21) to invoke the spirits of the departed after which various sacrifices are performed. Some of the items used are a calabash containing a solution of corn powder and water (*ewortsi*), two bottles of schnapps and sacrificial animals preferably, one male and female goats and one male and female fowl. The sacrifices are performed amidst various incantation, invocations, and drumming and dancing.





Plate 21: Libation being poured during *Vovlowo fe Nkeke*



Plate 22: A goat being sacrificed during *Vovlowo fe Nkeke*



Plate 23: Sacrificial animals on display

After the sacrifice, the meats are shared according to the designation of the chiefs (Plate 24) For instance, the waist is given to the *fiaga* as the base or seat of the Asogli paramountcy, the jaw goes to *Togbe Kasa* who happens to be the mouth piece of the Ho people. *Kasa*, a chieftaincy title adopted from the Asantes means; “to speak” and since it is

the jaw that is used to speak, the jaw of sacrificial animals is given to *Togbe Kasa*. In the same manner, the chest goes to *Togbe Howusu* who is considered as the war lord and the interceder of the Asoglis in time of war.



Plate 24: Meat being shared according to the designation of chiefs

A meal of cocoyam, plantain or cassava *fufu* is prepared considering the fact that the ban on bringing new yam to the town has not yet been lifted. Special parts of the meat are removed and used to prepare the “*vorvlo*” which is used in feeding the departed souls. This meal comes in two tastes; one is without salt and pepper while the other contains salt and pepper. Only the meat is consumed leaving the bones which are given to the ancestors. The bones are taken in a procession to the public cemetery where at a special site they are left for the departed souls. Here too, various rituals are performed to seal the proceedings and the participants return home amidst singing and dancing.

#### *Nublalba (the tying of herbal leaves)*

It is a ritual performed at Akoeffe to cleanse the Asogli State after the feeding of the departed souls. All chiefs and their elders are brought together to go through the cleansing rituals performed with powerful holy herbs by traditional priests of Asogli State.



According to custom, this ritual takes place on Thursday morning that precedes a market day under a big tree at Akoefe. This day must be *Asitoegbe* or the last day in the cycle of the four-day week. The main functionaries in this ritual are the *Blabu* custodians of the land, a privileged group whose main duty is to protect the interest of the paramount stool in particular and the community in general by acting as watchdogs. Membership is therefore drawn from the various stool lineages and is hereditary. Before the commencement of the rituals, gong-gong is beaten to inform the people that no woman born of man should be seen outside. This is because some aspects of the ritual are performed naked. Any woman or female who flouts this directive is punished accordingly. To the Asogli indigene, nakedness is considered as a sacred state of humans. Therefore, they believe that any ritual or rite performed in this state portrays some amount of seriousness and urgency and attracts the benevolent spirits including God almighty. To ensure proper contact with the world of nature, special seven herbal leaves believed to possess extremely high magical potency are selected for the *Nubabla*. These include: *Adudze Makpa*, (*Gliricida aciculata*) *Atroa Makpa*, *Wormakpa*, *Mitsi Makpa*, (*Khaya senegalensis*) *Elia Makpa*, *Wortsa Makpa* and *Sededor Makpa*. Each of these herbs must be included in the *Nubabla* to ensure successful results. In addition to the herbs are a bottle of palm oil, a calabash containing dry dough, two raw eggs, four gallons of palm wine, four fowls and soot that collects on the roof of a thatched kitchen.



Plate 25: The special herbs being sent to the ritual ground in a procession



Plate 26: The seven species of herbs for the *nubabla* ritual on display



Plate 27: Some of the items for the ritual on display

The actual *Nubabla* commences with the blessing of three of the herbs, *Atroa Makpa*, *Mitsi Makpa* and *Elia Makpa* the most powerful of the entire selection, after the pouring of

libation by the *Asinor*, the market chief, to give ritual sanction to the festival. With the three herbs, the *Blabu* move to a spot under the big tree where the grinding is done(Plate29) Two of the *Blabu* considered to be undefiled are stripped naked and made to grind the herbs into powder under the cover of the other *Blabu*. While grinding is going on, the names of all evil spirits who do not want the welfare of the people are mentioned. This action it is believed will help in warding off all evil spirits in the community. Therefore, no other person's name is mentioned during this ritual to prevent them from being harmed. As they grind the herbs, the two *Blabu* pass the grinding stone around the head at short intervals as a mark of innocence and chastity. After grinding, the concoction is mixed with palm oil to neutralize its power.



Plate 28: The market chief pouring libation to mark the beginning of *Nubabla*



Plate 29: Grinding of herbs taking place under the cover of the other *Blabu*

The *Afega*, the sacred ceremonial gong, is sounded intermittently to seal the grinding ritual. Thereafter the seven special herbs are tied according to the various divisions of the Asogli state.



Plate 30: Herbs being tied by a chief *Blabu*

The tied-herbs (Plate 30) are then sent to the road side for the concluding parts of the *Nubabla* ceremony to take place. No vehicle is allowed to pass. The herbs are spread on the floor and then smeared with the concoction resulting from the grinding ritual. Also, the fowls are slaughtered and their blood sprinkled over the herb in the process.





Plate 31: The herbs being spread on the floor at the road side



Plate 32: The blood of fowls being sprinkled on the herbs

The concluding rituals are carried out amidst incantations, sounding of gong-gong and drumming. (Plate 33) It is believed that all the evil spirits which do not want the well-being of the Asogli State would be tied in the process.

The highly charged bundles of leaves and plants are distributed to the various stool occupants, which they keep at the entrances of their house to ward off evil forces. The other participants serve themselves drinks of palm wine, after which the *Blabu* gather the remaining consecrated plants in sheepskin.



Plate 33: The *Nubabla* ritual in progress

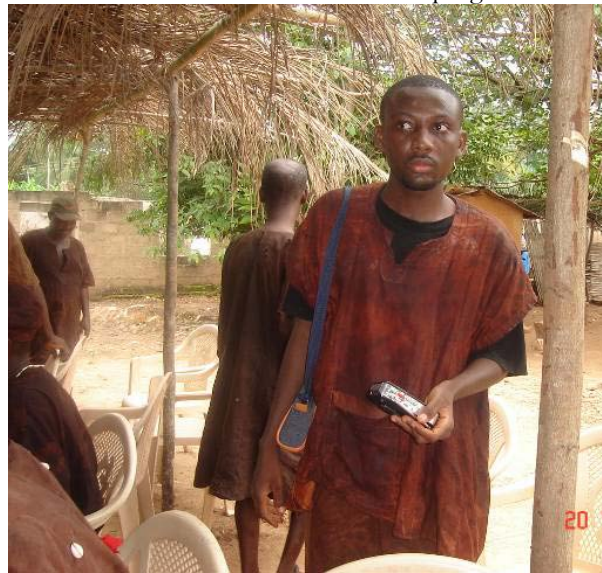


Plate 34: Researcher in a pose at the *Nubabla ritual* ceremony

#### *Gbormekporkplor (Sweeping of the Town)*

After the *Nubabla* ceremony, the whole town is now thoroughly “swept” to ensure that no evil spirits are lurking about to interfere with the celebrations. This part of the ritual is known as *Gbormekporkplor* (*gborme* means town and *kporkplor*: sweeping).

The *Blabu* meet in the house of their leader to begin the day’s ritual, dressed in *aderwu* (hunting smock). In contrast to *Nubabla*, *Gbormekporkplor* ritual requires the following items: two calabashes, one containing ordinary water, and the other a mixture of water

and palm wine: two different bundles of herbal leaves one of which contains *Aflatoga*, a kind of herb used in purification ritual, and the other is a mixture of *Yotsa*, *Adudze* and *Ewormakpa*. The third item in this ritual is *Blikpo*, a fresh shoot of palm branch about three feet long with a loop at one end, and two live creatures- a frog and chick (about a month old), tied to the other end. As the legs of the creatures are being tied to the *Blikpo* by the head of the *Blabu*, he recites spells which he punctuates with sprinkling light spittle over them. The bundle of *Yotsa*, *Adudze* and *Ewormakpa* herbs is placed in the calabash containing water; the three officials together place both hands in the calabash, collect some of the water into their mouths and spray it back into the calabash three times in unison, reciting invocations. Without any elaborate ceremony, another herbal leaf, *Aflatoga* is then placed in the other calabash containing the mixture of water and palm wine

The “sweeping” of the town begins as soon as the *Blabu* complete their ritual. They visit every house in the town, paying attention to every nook and cranny. The head of the *Blabu* leads the group with the *Afega* in one hand and the loop of the ritual broom (the palm branch with the live creatures tied at the end) hanging on the wrist of the other hand, as he moves, he pulls these creatures along on the ground by simply lowering his arm. Although the creatures eventually die, it is believed the act symbolizes man’s resistance to death. At the entrance of each house, he announces their presence by striking the *Afega*. He then enters the rooms and “sweeps” them by dragging around the creatures dead or alive. He is immediately followed by two carriers of the sacred water, who sprinkle water everywhere. Members of the household come forward to be sprinkled upon and blessed.

When this operation is complete, after several hours, the three men go to a sacred spot where the ritual “broom” and whatever remains of the sacred water are thrown away. The officials then return to the town, usually in the evening, to announce the completion of the day’s ritual to the elders. This is also the day on which members of the priesthood go to the sacred stream to purify themselves. Dressed in white robes, they sing appropriate songs to the accompaniment of *Avaga* bells as they go to the palace to pay homage to the paramount chief. The songs which are sung are full of praise, advice, and admonition. Before they leave the palace for their homes, the priestesses present a calabash of water to the chief who, in turn drops some coins in it. The water together with the coins is then thrown to the ground at their feet. The ritual symbolizes *Aforkorklor*, washing of the feet. The day usually ends with a procession by the general public through the principal streets of the town. In the palace, children engage in the struggle for the first bit of “the new yam”



Plate 35: The procession of the *Blabus* performing the *gbormekporklpor*





Plate 36: The life animals tied to the palm branch

*Teyuyru (the hailing of the new yam)*

The end of the *Gbormekporkplor* ritual officially permits entry of “new yam” into the town and marks the beginning of public participation in the festival. *Teyuyru* therefore is an activity which signals the official lifting of the ban on entry of the “new yam” into the towns. It is a period of joy during which the “new yam” is brought into all towns in the Asogli State and hailed amidst drumming and merry-making by both the young and the elderly through the principal streets of Ho. The ceremony begins at the big market where rituals are performed in the shrine of the *Hosi* (Plate 37) to solicit her protection, and guidance throughout the *Teyuyru* ceremony.



Plate 37: The shrine of the Hosi located in the big market.



Plate 38: Rituals being performed in front of the shrine of *Hosi*.

At the end of the opening rituals, a procession made up of the various *Asafofias* (War Lord) of the Asogli State, gong-gong beaters(*kpodolarwo*), traditional priests, custodians of the land and other celebrants march through the principal streets of Ho amidst shouting : “*woo woo*”, singing, dancing and drumming. See Plate 40



Plate 39: The procession on their way out of the big market



Plate 40: A celebrant in a dancing mood



Plate 41: A celebrant displaying artistry



Plate 42: Researcher in a pose at the *Teyuyru* ceremony

The celebration is marked by joy and happiness which are displayed in various forms. The celebrants are seen clad in all sorts of funny clothing such as masquerades, tattered cloths, and all forms of body adornments. Men dress like women while women dress like men all to express their happiness at the entry of the new yam. Other rituals are performed at shrines on the way to Heve, their final destination.



Plate 43: Libation being performed by the chief market priest on the way to Heve.

The procession finally converges at Mawuko Park in Ho Heve where celebrants are met by all the chiefs of Ho seated in state. At this gathering, there is much to eat and drink.



Plate 44: Celebrants at their final destination

#### *Dzawuwu (sprinkling of mashed yam)*

The Saturday after Ho market day is the Dzawuwu ritual ceremony. In the early hours of the morning, all heads and family members reunite to settle all disputes and other family misunderstandings. *Dzawuwu* is a ritual performed by feeding mashed yam from the “new



yam” to the gods and ancestors before anyone else tastes it. It is performed in all stool houses, shrines and individual homes of the Asogli State. The mashed yam or *bakebake* comes in two colours, the white *bakebake* and red *bakebake*. The latter is mixed with palm oil, pepper and salt while the former is not. The idea is to make it possible for the gods and ancestors and man to make choices between the two. The following items are used for the ritual: four tubers of new yam, two plates of mashed yam- one white and the other mixed with palm oil, a calabash containing corn flour or dry dough, a bottle of gin and a kitchen knife.



Plate 45: Some of the items for the Dzawuwu ritual ceremony

With his hunting smock on, the stool father begins the rituals by pouring libation with the drinks of corn flour and gin. (Plate 46)



Plate 46: The stool father pouring libation to invite the gods and ancestors

After this, he picks some of the white and yellow mashed yams and gently touches each with his lips. He picks one of the tubers of “new yam”, splits it into two halves, lays them upward about a foot apart and sprinkles the white and yellow *Bakebake* on either side of both halves. (Plate 47)



Plate 47: Both sides of sliced yam sprinkled with white and red *Bakebake*

The two categories of *bakebake* and the sliced yams are then fed to the gods and ancestors at the entrance of the chief's palace and the stool houses.



Plate 48: *Bakebake* being fed to the gods

Thereafter, humans are free to enjoy the *Bakebake*. This freedom comes with yelling, merry-making and shouts: “*woo woo*”. “We are happy because the time has come for us to enjoy our favourite yam fufu, thanks to the gods”. This was what one of the celebrants said during an interview. The celebration is thus climaxed by communal family feasting. The wife of the paramount chief and other sub chiefs cook the annual dinner and invite the public to partake of it.



Plate 49: Some tubers of yam on display



Plate 50: Pounding of yam fufu

### **Mini-Durbar**

The mini-durbar precedes the grand durbar of chiefs and people of the Asogli state. It is held some four days before the grand durbar. This is in recognition of the invaluable contribution of the other towns to the development of the Asogli state. The venue for the mini durbar is rotated among Akoefe, Kpenoe and Takla where a specific project is normally chosen for promotion. The mini-durbar also creates a platform for the people to make their grievances known to the government. Prior to the commencement of the durbar, the various chiefs and queen mothers of the Asogli state converge at the palace of the paramount chief of the selected town and move in a procession to the durbar ground with singing, drumming dancing and the recital of appellations as shown in (Plate 52)

At the durbar ground, the various performing groups are given the opportunity to showcase their rich culture through dancing, drumming and drama. Competitions such as yam weighing and the performance of native games take place. Speeches are given by the paramount chief of the selected town and a government official, in which both acknowledge the help and protection of the ancestors throughout the farming season. The ceremony is climaxed by joy and happiness as everyone leaves the durbar ground smiling



and thanking the gods for a successful programme.



Plate 51: Chiefs and elders of the Asogli state gathered in the chief's palace



Plate 52: A colourful procession to the durbar ground



Plate 53: A cultural performance at the durbar ground

## **Grand Durbar of Chiefs and People of Asogli**

To round off the festivities, a durbar is held during which the Paramount Chief and other divisional clan chiefs sit in state to receive homage from their subjects. The occupants of various stools and families converge at the centre of the town to form a colourful procession with the paramount chief to the durbar ground. As the procession moves through the principal streets of Ho, they are joined by the other sub chiefs to form a more formidable and complete human transposition to the durbar ground amidst singing, dancing and drumming. Characteristic of this occasion is the recitation of appellations which tend to place the various chiefs at different levels of traditional function. The retinue of the *fiaga*(paramount chief) to the durbar ground depicts the true culture of the Asoglis as seen in Plate 54. There is an interesting display of paraphernalia which includes various stool properties, spokesman's staff, state swords, state drums, specially decorated sandals, state umbrellas and the effigy of the *Hosi*(market goddess) among others. Other items on display are: cosmetics of all kinds, expensive *aggrey* beads (expensive beads) traditional lamps, blocks of incense and neatly packed bundles of women's clothing (Plate 55) The various items are nicely arranged in brass pans and these are carried by teenage girls with symbolic body adornments. Also among the procession are old women dressed in *atufu*, a dressing with protruding "back", portraying the philosophies of the state concerning fertility. The procession is led by the gong-gong beater, followed by the drummers, horn blowers, spokesmen, state sword bearers, stool carriers and the carriers of various native items including cosmetics and jewellery.



Plate 54: A colourful procession to the durbar ground

The occasion presents the setting for the delivery of special messages by the *Agbogbomefia* and Government officials. It is the biggest setting for the display of Asogli and Ewe culture through the performances of various groups. It is also an occasion for awarding outstanding citizens for their contribution to progress in Asogli. At the durbar ground, libation is poured by both the male and female priests: rites of sowing and harvesting of yams are dramatized. There is drumming and dancing, followed by speeches and greetings. This brings the ceremony to an end.



Plate 55: Various insignia on display



Plate 56: The *Agboghomefia* seated in state during a grand durbar



Plate 57: A cultural performance during the grand durbar

*“Tetsrolorlor (the Gathering of Yam Peels)”*

Eight days after the festival, there is a special ritual to “remove” the peels of the “new yam” from the houses. It is known among the Ewes as *Tetsrolorlor*. This ritual officially marks the end of the celebrations, but the use of yam as staple food continues till the beginning of the sowing season in early March. It has become customary in recent years to end the celebrations with a thanksgiving service in a Christian church on the ninth day after the festival day.

#### **1.4 Summary of Discussion**

This chapter highlighted the way the instruments mentioned in chapter three have been used to collect data for the study. It also outlined the various analytical approaches that had been adopted by researcher to interpret data. The main findings have been presented for discussion in this chapter. These main findings reflected on the historical background of the Asogli State and a brief history of the Ewes. These, researcher thought wise to include in the main findings bearing in mind that the Asoglis form part of the Ewes and the clear fact that the celebration of the festival is linked with the history of the people. Meticulous attempts were therefore made to link the celebration of the festival with history. In doing this the history of the Asoglis has been traced from the time of tyrannical king Agorkorli to date. In this chapter also, a detailed description has been given of the festival as this affords researcher the opportunity to outline the specific art forms used in the festival. Mention has also been made of the origin of yam cultivation and the culture of yam farming of the Asogli people. Here too, frantic efforts were made to link the origin of yam cultivation with the celebration of the festival. The next chapter will dwell on the interpretation of the rest of the findings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PRESENTATION OF MAIN FINDINGS**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the main findings for discussion. It dwells on the classification of the specific art forms that are used during the festival and their roles. The symbolic meanings of art works used during the festival have also been carefully outlined. In addition, a comparison between the yam festival of the past and present has been made. The social and economic significance of the festival have also been spelt out.

### **1.1 Classification of Art forms**

The artistic values of Asogli yam festival can not be overestimated. From the very first day of celebration to the very last, artistic values are portrayed in various forms. Bohn (1985) describes festivals as artistic events which reveal the identity of the people. The feel of certainty, belongingness and pageantry that characterize Asogli yam festival stems from the fact that art is at its best in the celebration.

The two main forms of art: Visual and Performing Art can be seen and felt throughout the celebration of the festival. Verbal Art which is also a subsidiary of Performing Art is portrayed in almost all the aspects of the festival.

### **VISUAL ART**

Visual art is the branch of art which refers to all the arts that can be seen and touched. It comprises Sculpture, Painting, Textiles, Pottery, Beadwork, Basketry, Calabash Art, Leatherwork, Architecture, and Jewellery, Body Art (body painting and coiffure). However, it is only Sculpture, Textiles, Pottery, Beadwork, Leatherwork and Body Art which are predominantly represented in the celebration of *Asogli* Yam festival.

### **Sculpture**

Sculpture refers basically to the field of art concerned with the production of two-dimensional and three-dimensional works of art through the processes of carving, modeling, casting, assemblage and construction of various materials such as metal, clay, ivory, stone, bones, wax and wood. In the celebration of Asogli yam festival, various sculpture pieces are used from the first day of celebration to the very last.



◆ Sculpture and *Vovlozwofenkeke* (all souls day)

This is the feeding of the departed souls through which their blessing and guidance are solicited for the years ahead. It is marked by the performance of various rites and rituals accompanied by drumming and singing. Sculptures used during this ceremony include, drums of different sizes and types (talking drum, gourd drum, war drum and sling drum), calabash, mortar and pestle.



Plate 58: *Atumpan* and *fontomfrom*



Plate 59: Gourd drum and *fontomfrom* on display



Plate 60: War drum (*lakhleU*)

◆ Sculpture and *Nubabla* (tying of herbal leaves)

*Nubabla* which is a ritual performed to cleanse the Asogli state of all evil spirits lurking in the environment, takes place amidst drumming and singing. In attendance are chiefs and elders of the Asogli State. Sculpture works used during this ceremony include: linguist staff, *donno* drum, sling drum, war drum, and *afega* (the ceremonial gong)



Plate 61: A sling drum being played



Plate 62: A war drum being played



Plate 63: *Donno* drum in a performance

◆ Sculpture and *Gbormekporkplor* (Sweeping of Town)

This ritual is performed to ‘sweep’ all evil spirits away from the society to make it possible for a happy and successful celebration to take place. The ritual is performed by the *blabu* custodians of the land who are considered as undefiled. The *afega* (ceremonial gong) and calabash constitute the sculpture works used in the ritual.



Plate 64: The ceremonial gong and calabash playing roles

◆ Sculpture and *Teyuyru* (hailing of the new yam)

The *teyuyru* ceremony marks the beginning of the entry of new yam into the town. Its activities are marked by joy and happiness which are shown in various forms including dancing, singing and drumming. Drums of the various performing groups and calabash form the sculpture art works that can be seen in this ceremony.



Plate 65: Calabash being used for pouring libation during teyuyru



Plate 66: Drums being played during the teyuryru ceremony

◆ Sculpture and *Dzawuwu* (sprinkling of mashed yam)

This ritual is performed a day after the teyuyru ceremony. It involves the feeding of the gods and ancestors with mashed yam. This ritual is performed in all stool houses, shrines and individual homes of the Asogli State. Sculpture works used are mortar and pestle for pound *fufu* and calabash for pouring libation.

◆ Sculpture and Mini Durbar

The mini durbar which precedes the ground durbar is held to create a platform for the other towns of the Asogli State to lay bare their problems for national development. It is normally rotated among Kpenoe, Takla and Akoepe. Stools in a procession, spokesman staffs with symbolic objects, umbrella top objects, sling drum and drums of the various performing groups constitute the sculpture works displayed during the mini durbar.



Plate 67: A stool being carried to the mini durbar



Plate 68: A sling drum leading a procession to the mini durbar





Plate 69: A linguist staff top depicting a seated female figure holding the Holy Bible



Plate 70: An umbrella top showing a carved abstract object

#### ◆ Sculpture and Grand Durbar

The grand durbar provides a bigger and broader setting for initiating developmental projects. During this occasion, the paramount chief who is the traditional head of the Asogli State sits in public to receive homage from his subjects. This is a very colourful occasion where much artistry is portrayed. Sculpture works used include stools of the various clans, state sword, ceremonial sword, umbrella tops, spokesman's staff, drums and a carved effigy of the *Hosi* among others.



Plate 71: An *asafó* drum decorated with cowries



Plate 72: A hilt of

a ceremonial sword with zoomorphic forms



Plate 73: The wooden effigy of *hosi* carried by a young girl

## Textiles

Textiles which involves weaving, printing and appliqué work produces materials such as cloths, mats and costumes. The indispensability of textiles is seen throughout the celebration of Asogli yam festival.

### Textiles and *Vovlowofenkeke* (all soul's day)

From the opening rituals to the end, textiles in the form of clothing and its accessories are displayed. Special costumes which portray the culture and identity of the people are used. Apart from the chiefs and elders who put on cloth to portray their status, all other participants of this ritual clad in *aderwu* (the hunting smock) Plate 74



Plate 74: Participants in hunting smock

### Textiles and *Nubabla* (tying of herbal leaves)

The *Nubabla* ritual which is normally performed at Kormedzrale (Akoepe) is meant to purify the whole community. The *Blabu* custodians of the land who are the main functionaries clad in the ceremonial dress *adewu* (Plate 75) as a clear indication that



textiles is indispensable in the performance of this ritual. Also, the chiefs and elders of the land are seen in their traditional colourful cloth to grace the occasion.



Plate 75: The *blabu* custodians in hunting smock

#### Textiles and *Gbormekporkplor* (sweeping of town)

This is a very special and important ritual performed to seal the preceding rituals of the *Nubabla* ceremony. The main functionaries, the *blabu* walk through the principal streets of Ho dressed in the hunting smock with much focus on the proverbial brown colour.



Plate 76: A traditional outfit for *Gbormekporkplor*

#### Textiles and *Teyuyru*



An exclusive form of artistry which is observed in this colourful celebration gives cause for admiration. A joyful and colourful occasion as it is, celebrants portray their sense of beauty and humour through the way they dress. Celebrants are seen in all sort of funny clothing and attire to grace the occasion.



Plate 77: Fanciful dressing during *teyuyru*

#### Textiles and *Dzawuwu* (sprinkling of mashed yam)

This ritual creates a platform for the spiritual feeding of the forebears with mashed yam before human beings taste the new yam. The dressing code for this ritual is traditional. The stool father who performs the ritual of sprinkling mashed yam does so in the native attire, *aderwu* and a sort of headgear.



Plate 78: Stool Father in hunting smock

### Textiles and Mini-durbar

The mini-durbar which takes place before the ground durbar starts from the palace of the paramount chief concerned. The procession to the durbar ground shows the beauty of traditional wears through their colours. The chiefs and queens dress in rich kente cloth while the chiefs' guards dress in hunting smock backed by well and neatly dressed cultural performers. Most articles at the durbar ground are made of textiles. The tent which serves as a shade and the umbrella which protects important personalities from the direct rays of the sun are typical examples.



Plate 79: Elders in traditional cloth in a procession to a durbar ground

### Textiles and Grand durbar

The grand durbar marks the end of the festival. The retinues of the paramount chief meet in his palace and form a colourful procession to the durbar ground. The sword bearer and the carriers of various stool properties dress in neatly-woven *kete* cloths. The chiefs and queens as well as elders of the community dress in rich *kete* cloth. The *kete* of the *fiaga* is normally more beautiful and unique than that of his sub-chiefs. The *asafo* group and the chief's guard are seen in hunting smock. All invited guest and the general public put on the best traditional dress of *Bubu*, *Fugu*, *Kaba* and western attires.



Plate 80: The *fiaga* and entourage in rich kente



Plate 81: *Asafo* group in hunting smock





Plate 82: A colourful display of textiles during grand durbar

## Pottery

Pottery can simply be defined as the production of pots of different sizes and shapes. Most of the pots produced are hand-built. They include ceremonial pots, ritual pots, cooking pots and vessels for storing riches, food, oils and relics. In the celebration of Asogli Yam festival, pots are used to perform various rituals. This can be seen during *Vovlowofenkeke* (all souls' day), *Nubabla* (tying of herbal leaves) and *Dzawuwu* (sprinkling of mashed yam)

### Pottery and *Vovlowofenkeke* (All Souls' Day)

During this ceremony, various rituals are performed to seek the indulgence of the benevolent spirits. Different animals are sacrificed to them for their protection and guidance throughout the festival. The sacrificial animals include: goat (both male and female) and fowl (both male and female). The blood of the animals is collected in an earthen ware as custom demands.

### Pottery and *Nubabla* (tying of herbal leaves)

The Nubabla ritual is a very important ritual which requires a lot of commitment. That is why the *blabu* are seen during this ritual performing their duties diligently. As part of the requirements for the ritual, libation is poured and animals sacrificed. The palm wine used for pouring libation and the blood of sacrificial animals are stored in a pot.



Plate 83: Pot for storing palm wine

#### Pottery and *Dzawurwu* (tying of herbal leaves)

The *dzawurwu* ritual which is performed early in the morning in all stool houses, shrines and individual homes, makes it possible for humans to partake of the new yam. Mashed yam which is stored in pots made of clay and bowls made of rubber are fed to the gods



Plate 84: Pot for storing mashed yam

#### **Beadwork**

Beads are ornaments made by passing strings through specially designed objects. These are used for decorating the human body. There are beads made of glass, seed and clay. Beads are used mostly during the mini-durbar and grand durbar. They are used as body adornment by chiefs and all who care to wear them. (Plates 85, 86, 87)



Plate 85: Beautiful beads on display



Plate 86: Beads adding beauty to the chief's regalia





Plate 87: A chief in beautiful beads during grand durbar

### **Leatherwork**

These are all works of art produced with leather, skins and hides. They include: bags, containers, hats, saddles, bridles, boots, sandals, seats, costumes, talismans, charms, musical instruments, belts and receptacles. Leatherworks can be seen in all the activities that constitute AsogliYam festival but they are more prominent during the grand durbar. Most of the royal regalia, including sandals, crown, talisman and many others, are made of leather. Some of the hunting smocks and hats worn by the asafo group members and the chiefs' guards are stitched with leather to create appliqué. (Plates 88 & 89)



Plate 88: The paramount chief in ritual cap (*dzokuku*) made of leather



Plate 89: *Asafofia* in appliqué outfit made of leather and fabric

## Body Arts



The arts of the body refer to all the materials or objects worn on the body or applied to the body purported to perform aesthetics and certain important functions. Body arts comprise painting, coiffure, body marks and jewellery.

- ◆ Painting: this is the painting of the human body in one or more colours. It could be done for religious, political, medicinal, entertainment, aesthetics and war purposes. Dyes, earth colours and cosmetics are used.
- ◆ Coiffure: human hair can be plaited, braided or treated in other forms. Hairstyles indicate one's position in the society and they can be for religious or hygienic purposes or for beauty and prestige.
- ◆ Body marks: various kinds of marks are made on the body for decoration, medicinal or religious purposes. These comprise painting, scarification and tattooing.

In the celebration of Asogli Yam festival, body arts are more predominant during the *teyuyru* ceremony, mini-durbar and grand durbar.

#### Body Art and *Teyuyru* (hailing of new yam)

This ceremony represents one of the most colourful activities that takes place during the Asogli Yam festival. The joy and ecstasy that fill people during this occasion is not seen only in the way they sing and dance but also in the way they dress and decorate themselves. Most celebrants paint their bodies with all sorts of designs, some of which are symbolical. Colours mostly used are the whites and the blues which throw more light on the joy and victory being expressed by the people. (Plates 90 & 91)



Plate 90: Girls displaying body art



Plate 91: A celebrant displaying artistic epitome

### Body Art and Mini-durbar

The mini-durbar is a very colourful occasion which adds a lot of life to the festival. Therefore, officiants cannot afford to dress shabbily to the durbar ground without putting their culture into consideration. Most celebrants including custodians of the land, members of the various cultural troupes and whoever matters in the interpretation of the

traditions of the Asoglis mark their bodies with all sort of symbolic designs. (Plates 92& 93)



Plate 92: Body painting and coiffure being portrayed



Plate 93: Cultural troupe displaying body decorations

### Body Art and Grand durbar

The grand durbar no doubt ends proceedings of this joyous occasion. In line with this expression of joy, celebrants leave no stone unturned as they are seen in all sorts of colourful outfits including body designs and very beautiful hairstyles.



Plate 94: Beautifully decorated chiefs' attendants in body designs

## **PERFORMING ARTS**

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

### **Drama**

This is a type of ritual and a form of entertainment. Drama is used in religious and social festivals. In indigenous drama, the audience often joins in the play by talking to the actors. Drama is part of indigenous life and it has social functions in the community. On the durbar day, various artistic performances are displayed in the form of drama. The rites

of sowing and harvesting are dramatized. Apart from the durbar day, days are set aside for the performance of drama which forms part of the programme for the festival. Here dignitaries and the general public are invited to witness various artistic performances and cultural displays.

### **Music**

Indigenous music is played at religious and social ceremonies. It accompanies ceremonies connected with birth, adulthood and death. There are a variety of indigenous musical instruments in Africa. These include drums, stringed instruments, wind instruments and self-sounding instruments. Musical performances of drumming and singing are visible throughout the celebration. All the activities in the festival which portray joy and merry-making are accompanied with music. It cannot be gainsaid therefore that without music the celebration of the festival will be boring and unattractive to the youth most especially.

### **Dance**

Dance is a passionate act in all indigenous African societies. It accompanies almost every occasion, both sacred and ordinary. The drum is used in all cases. Dance consists of vigorous and graceful body movements, rhythmic footsteps and complex hand and arm gestures which are often symbolic. Dances portray activities of daily life, war and peace time activities, farm work, joy and sorrow, domestic work and others. Dancing goes with music. If there is no music, there will be no meaningful dancing. Activities of the yam festival such as the hailing of new yam (*teyuyru*) and the durbar are characterized by artistic dances. Celebrants during *teyuyru* express their joy in various forms and one of them is dancing. Various body movements are made rhythmically to the sound of drums and songs. The types of dancing performed during the festival are *Borborbor* and *Agbadza*



## Verbal art

Verbal art is a branch of performing arts. It includes the recitations of libation, appellations, invocations, incantations and spells which are used to venerate and placate the spirits to offer security and continuity of life. Normally, verbal arts are rich in figurative expressions.

The impact of performing arts on Asogli Yam festival is immense and spans all the activities right from the very beginning to the end. This is because, in all the days of the festival, there are activities which are performed in various ways. Songs are sung throughout the celebration. Drums are also played and dancing complements it. Various forms of incantations and invocations are recited during the performance of rites and rituals. Much can also be said about the appellations that are recited in honour of the chiefs and queens as they move to the durbar ground. The way the appellations are recited and even performed requires knowledge about art.



Plate 95: A dramatic performance during a *vovlofenkeke*



Plate 96: An *asafó* drum orchestra in performance



Plate 97: A

cultural performance during grand durbar

## THE PROCESSION TO THE DURBAR GROUND

The hierarchical structure of the procession creates a beautiful design which portrays order, unity and balance. The array of colour coupled with the rhythmic movements of legs towards the durbar ground is nothing but a masterpiece. The *fiaga*'s procession is led by the gong-gong beater(*kpodola*), followed by the chief's spokesman (*okyeame*), sling drummer, sword bearers, carriers of stools, carriers of the effigy of *hosi* and carriers of various stool properties. In front of the *fiaga* is his chief guard. Flanked on the sides of the *fiaga* are the paramount queen mother of the Asogli traditional area and other sub-chiefs, all under the state umbrella. The *fiaga* clads in the most expensive kente with his ritual cap (*dzokuku*) on. The ritual cap is believed to possess the ability to protect him from all evil attacks. At the rear of the procession are guards.

The procession of the *fiaga* finally meets with the chiefs of the other suburbs of Asogli and form a colourful procession to the durbar ground. Heve which is considered as the front wing of Ho leads the procession followed by Dome, Aho, Bankoe and Hliha (the rear guards)



Fig.1a: Graphical representation of procession to durbar ground



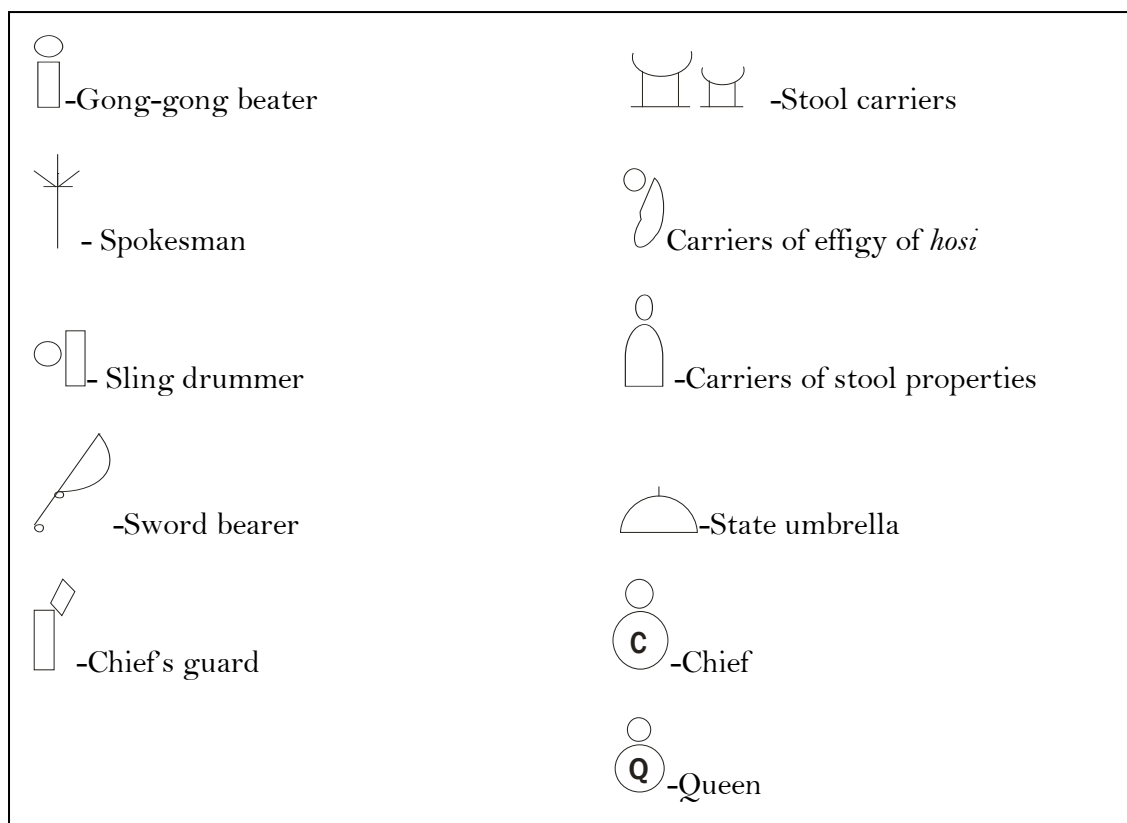


Figure 1b: Key to Fig 1a



Plate 98: Pictorial representation of procession to durbar ground

## SITTING ARRANGEMENT

The sitting arrangement of the *fiaga* and his subjects at the durbar ground presents a platform for artistic admiration. The paramount chief is flanked on the right by the paramount queen mother and on the left by the custodian chief. The chief's 'soul' sits right in front of his feet. The various sword bearers sit by the side of the chief's 'soul'. Seated close to the *fiaga* are sub-chiefs who form a human fence around him. The display of colour by the various regalia which have been worn portray the rich culture of the Asoglis.



Plate 99: *Fiaga* and subjects seated in state

## ARRANGEMENT OF SHEDS

An aerial view of the durbar ground reveals a beautiful and colourful scene. The sheds for the various sub-divisions of Ho and the other towns of Asogli state are artistically arranged. State umbrellas and other paraphernalia can be seen with beautiful colours at a cursory glance. The sheds which are normally made of tents are arranged in a rectangular shape. Cole (1975) describes festivals as Ghana's richest art forms which are ritually-based and sometimes called unified works of art. This therefore points to the fact that all

the arms of art perform specific roles in festivals so as to qualify it as a unified body of rich cultural display and artistic entity.



Plate 100: Colourful durbar ground

## **1.2 The Role of Art in the Festival**

The role of art in Asogli Yam festival is indispensable. And this has been confirmed by the numerous books reviewed earlier in chapter two of this study. Cole (1975) reveals that festivals are works of art as they start from a point and end at another point. Art therefore has a progression of activities which are spelt out in a festival. Even activities which take place before the start of the festival portray art. Yam cultivation involves art. For instance the creation of mounds is done artistically where the mounds are arranged in beautiful rows. Yam staking no doubt is also artistic considering the way and manner the stakes are erected. Farming implements such as hoes, machete which fall under applied art are artifacts. The culture of weeding grass and ploughing of the land for yam cultivation all constitute art. All these play a significant role of ensuring that the yam seedlings are sown and nurtured in a proper way for a good harvest.

All the activities which take place during the festival after yam cultivation are characterized by artistic roles in various forms. The roles of art in the festival have therefore been explained according to the classification of the arts in the festival as discussed earlier.

## **Visual Art**

### **♦ The role of Sculpture**

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

### **Spokesman Staff Top Object**

In the Asogli community, the staff is considered as the sign of office of the spokesman and on top of it are symbolic objects which carry various meanings some of which will be discussed later in this study. The Spokesman's Staff belongs to various clans of the Asogli community. It represents the ideas, philosophies and beliefs of a particular clan which owns it. The Spokesman's Staff serves as a medium of communication between the people and the chief and vice versa. That is why when a chief in the Asogli State wants to summon his subjects to the palace, he sends his spokesman who carries the staff. And as soon as the staff is shown, the people understand the message. During the mini-durbar and grand durbar of the Asogli Yam Festival, Spokesmen from various clans carry staffs which communicate to the people. Apart from serving as a medium of communication, the

Spokesman's Staff also helps in making the grandeur of the chief complete. A chief's procession without the Spokesman's Staff is incomplete.

### The Effigy of *Hosi*

This is an object which represents the market goddess (*hosi*). It is brought out during the celebration of the Yam festival. During the yam festival, it is carried to the durbar ground by a young girl in a solemn mood. The effigy serves as a temporal abode of the market deity. During the festival therefore, the deity is invoked into the effigy to maintain peace throughout the celebration. The effigy therefore plays a role of housing the spirit of the market goddess when the necessary rituals are performed.

### Umbrella Top Object

At the mini-durbar and grand durbar of the Asogli Yam festival, various colourful umbrellas are displayed over the chief's head. The top of the umbrellas are decorated with symbolic objects and figures which convey various meanings, some of which will be discussed later in this chapter. The umbrella tops serve as tools of communication which portray the identity of the Asoglis. Apart from serving as tools for communication, the umbrella tops also beautify the State umbrellas.

### The State Sword

The State Sword is a very important artifact among the Asogli people and the Ewes in general. It is considered as a symbol of protection. That is why the swords are arranged in a semi-circular formation as the chief is seated in state. The State Sword is used as a weapon for protection and commanding authority.

#### ♦ The Role of Textiles

The role of Textiles is indispensable in the celebration of Asogli Yam festival. Textiles in various forms such as *Kente* fabric, dresses, state umbrella fabric, tarpaulin and cover cloths are used. They play a major role of covering the human body to protect it from bad weather and make the wearer decent. Others are used to cover artifacts by way of protecting them from dust and dirt and at the same time beautifying them. Tarpaulin and state umbrellas serve the purpose of protecting people from weather conditions such as sunlight and rainfall. Textiles therefore are clearly used in the festival for protection against bad weather, dirt and also for beautification.

#### ♦ The Role of Pottery

Pots are used in various forms, sizes and shapes during the festival. They are used in storing herbal concoction, herbs, palm wine and the blood of sacrificial animals such as fowl and goat. The role of pottery as a storage container cannot be underestimated because the herbs, concoctions and palm wine that are stored in pots are used in invoking the spirits. For instance, during the *Nubabla* ritual, protective herbs and concoctions which ward off evil spirits are stored in a pot. Also, during the pouring of libation, the palm wine that is used is stored in a pot. Pottery therefore plays a religious role by ensuring that the spirits are invoked for the festival to take place successfully.

#### ♦ The Role of Beadwork

Many see beads as mere objects for body adornment but there is more to it. Beads are believed by the Asogli people to have medicinal values. For instance, it is believed that a barren woman who wears beads will be cured of her barrenness. Some beads are also believed to have the ability of protecting the wearer from unforeseen evil spirits. Therefore, just as how it can be said that the beads used during the Asogli Yam festival

serve the purpose of beautifying the body of the wearer, it can also be said that they perform medicinal and spiritual roles.

#### ♦ The Role of Leather Work

The leather works used during the Asogli Yam festival as discussed earlier include, chief's sandals, crown and talisman. The chief wears his sandals during the celebration to protect him from the wrath of the gods because it is an abomination for a chief to walk barefooted. This is because mother earth is considered to be sacred; therefore, anyone who tries to defile her irrespective of their status is liable to punishment. Quite apart from that, the pair of sandals protects the chief from danger as he may walk on piercing objects or on harmful creatures such as snake and scorpion or dirty ground. Also, the symbols on the sandals portray the concepts and beliefs of the community.

The chief's leather crown is used to decorate him during the durbar day. The crown also plays a spiritual role; as it is attached with talismans for the protection of the chief. The talismans are usually attached to the inner layer of the crown. They are filled with concoctions which help in protecting him from evil spirits.

#### ♦ The Role of Body Art

During the Asogli Yam festival, various decorations in the form of paintings and marks are made on people's body. Various hairstyles and jewellery are also worn to complete the outfit for the festival. The role of the body designs is basically to decorate the celebrants and make them attractive as well as add colour to the festival. Designs from geometric shapes such as circles, triangles and rectangles are painted on the body with white clay. Jewellery such as chain, bracelets and anklets are worn to enhance the beauty

of the body. Hairstyles such as *dzekoe* (solid hair), *edadzidi* (long hair) and *edakpui* (short hair) are plaited on the hair of mostly old women to add to the beauty of the festival.

#### ◆ The Role of Performing Art

Performing Arts used in the celebration of the festival include: drama, music and verbal art.

##### Drama

During the celebration of the festival, various artistic performances are displayed in the form of drama. For instance, on the durbar day, the rites of sowing and harvesting are dramatized where the youth are educated on yam farming. Therefore, drama in the Asogli Yam festival plays an educational role. A lot of drama is also seen during the performance of rituals. During the *Nubabla* ritual, drama is involved in the way all the *blabus* line up and recite incantations. Also, when pouring libation, the way the liquor is poured is dramatic. For instance, among the Asoglis when the liquor is poured away from the performer, it signifies bad omen but when it is poured right in front of him, it symbolizes good omen.

##### Music

The combination of singing and drumming makes music. Music is performed in almost all the activities of the festival. Music ensures that the celebrants express their joy and happiness. Music also plays a spiritual role in the celebration especially during the performance of rituals. Most of the rituals in the celebration of Asogli Yam festival such as *nubabla* and *vovlowofenkeke* are accompanied with music. Music together with drumming and recitations of incantations is used to invoke the spirits.

##### Dance



Dance is basically the expression of one's inner feelings through body movements. Dance usually goes with music, singing and drumming. During the Asogli Yam festival, various dances are performed. For instance, during the *nubabla* ceremony, the market chief who is possessed, dances to the tune of the drums and makes gestures to communicate to the people. Dancing therefore in the celebration of Asogli Yam festival plays a spiritual role, as it helps the traditional priest to be possessed. Apart from the spiritual roles that dance plays, it also helps the people to express their joy and happiness. For instance, during *teyuyru* (hailing of new yam), celebrants make rhythmic body movements in various ways to express their joy. Also, on the durbar, various dances such as *agbadza* and *borborbor* are performed to express joy.

#### ◆ The Role of Verbal Art

Verbal art plays important roles in the celebration. During the *vovlowofenkeke*, *Nubabla*, *dzawuwu*, *teyuyru*, *gbormekporkplor* and all the activities of the festival. Libation is poured accompanied by recitations. The recitations fall under verbal art. Also, during the durbar day, appellations are recited to hail the chiefs. The recitations and appellations play roles of ensuring the success of the festival. The recitations play spiritual roles while the appellations help the people to express their joy and at the same time show respect to the chiefs.

Apart from the specific roles that art plays in the activities that constitute the festival, there are also general roles that art plays throughout the celebration. The appreciation of Asogli Yam festival in various forms is gingered by the artworks and the artistic activities which constitute the celebration. The drama which comes with the pouring of libation, the recitations, the colourful attire of chiefs and their subjects, the chief's regalia, appellations

and various forms of praise songs help in projecting the aesthetic qualities as well as the rich cultural image of the festival. Culture and art are two inseparable entities. They work hand in hand. They can be said to be “brothers” or each others’ keeper. Without culture, there is no art and without art there is no culture.

Apart from promoting the culture of the Asogli people, art also helps in promoting the economic significance and importance of the festival. That can be seen in the numerous artifacts produced during the festival which are sold for money.

Art also creates a platform for the youth to learn and also develop skills in art. This is because a few weeks to the festival, most of the youth are seen learning an occupation in art such as *kete* weaving, carving, painting and pottery or improving upon their skills in order to produce artworks that will attract good market during the forth-coming festival.

The symbolic features of the festival are best portrayed using art. Many ideas, thoughts and concepts that need to be represented in a medium are given such attributes through art works. Some of these ideas and thoughts come in the form of proverbs which are represented with symbolic designs on such art works as spokesman’s staff, ceremonial swords, state umbrella and chief’s sandals. Most of these proverbs represent the ideas and beliefs of the various clans which own it. Special designs in cloths worn by the chief and his subjects are symbolic. The chief wears beautiful costumes of internationally famed *kete cloth* which conveys a message. His other accompanied regalia including crown, precious beads, and golden necklace with nuggets, bracelets of gold, anklets and rings convey some symbolic meaning.

Colour symbolism is also rife when talking about the role of art in the celebration of Asogli Yam festival. Different types of colours are used on artifacts during the celebration

to carry various messages to the people. Most of the regalia top objects are painted in gold which symbolizes royalty. Thus yellow, gold, white and silver are mostly associated with the festival. Yellow and gold symbolize royalty and wealth while white and silver symbolize victory and female authority respectively.

Education is another area that art helps to promote in the festival. The festival itself presents a setting for educating the youth most especially. During the Asogli Yam festival, the history of the Asogli State is recounted to educate the youth through the use of art works. Various art works in the form of audio-visuals are used to educate the youth. Artworks such as ancestor figures, ceremonial stool, brochures, inscriptions on banners and placards are used to educate the youth and all present about the historical and cultural background of the people. Many a time, the planting of yam and its hazards are dramatized for all to see. The sojourn of the Ewes and for that matter the Asoglis from the walled city of Notsie is also acted in the form of plays to educate the people.

### **1.3 Symbolic Meanings of Works of Art used in the Festival**

Symbolism in simple terms is the use of symbols to convey different meanings. It is a way an individual or a group of people express their social, political and ideological status as well as emotional state by the use of gestures, visual arts, body decorations and costume items. In the celebration of Asogli Yam festival, various art works and art forms are used which represent the ideologies of the people.

#### **The stool with a gong and ceremonial sword**

This stool (Figure 2) forms the main historical symbol of the Asogli State. It takes its source from Notsie in Togoland where the Ewes including the Asoglis lived under the

tyrannical rule of king Agorkoli. The stool is made up of three parts: the stool itself, the gong and the sword

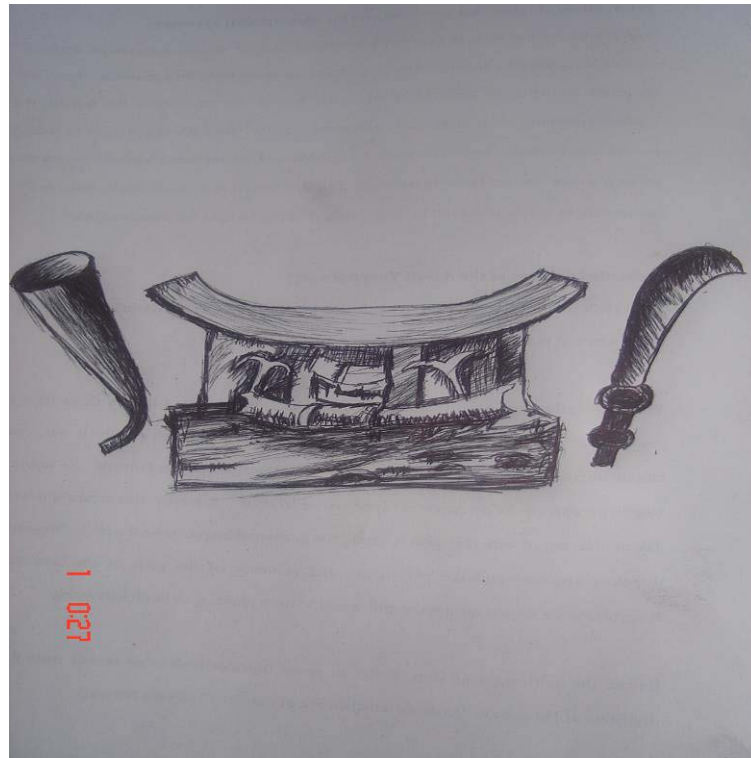


Figure 2: the stool with a gong and ceremonial sword

Source: Sketched by researcher

#### ♦ The stool

The stool is located between the gong and sword. It is the most important symbol of the Asoglis. This stool represents the stool used by the ancestors for purification rites during their stay at the Niger Basin where they were conquered in a fierce battle and had to flee to Notsie in the republic of Togo. The stool symbolically is believed to house the soul of the people of Asogli.

#### ♦ The gong

The gong (*afega*) on the right side of the stool has its own meaning. It is believed that when the Asogli people were at Notsie, the gong was always used to summon them together when the *fiaga* wanted to talk to the people. The gong beater was seen moving round with the gong to deliver the *fiaga's* message. It is also noteworthy that the gong played a very important role during the escape of the Ewes from the walled city of Notsie, as it was the particular gong used to summon the Asogli people together on the fatal night they escaped.

#### ♦ The sword (*Gligbayi*)

The sword which is on the left side of the stool represents symbolically the sword that was used by *Aye* and his people to bore hole in the great wall of Notsie during their escape. Interestingly, this sword was king Agorkolis' own sword which was used in boring the hole.

The original stool, gong and sword that were used during the escape from Notsie are still with the Asogli people. They are kept in a sacred place and no one is allowed to see them except the *fiaga* and his sub-chiefs who inspect them annually during the celebration of the yam festival. During this time, they go to the sacred place where the relics are kept and libation is poured to the ancestors in remembrance of their bravery during the escape from Notsie.

Since no one apart from the *fiaga* and his sub-chiefs are allowed to see the relics in the sacred apartment, during the procession of the chiefs to the durbar ground, a replica of the stool, gong and sword are carried instead of the original stool.

### The ceremonial stool of the *fiaga*

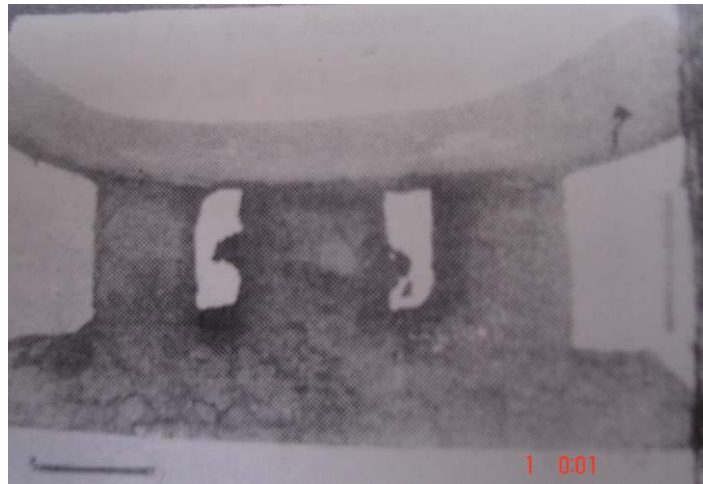


Plate 101: ceremonial stool of *fiaga*

The ceremonial stool of the *fiaga*, as in (Plate 101) is the principal stool of the state and is regarded as representing the whole Asogli state and enshrines its soul. It is believed to have power to drive away evil spirits or forces which seek to do harm to the people or the ruler, hence it is called *zigli* (protection). This stool which is painted black is also called a black stool. Its attachment of various ritualistic items including charms, miniature objects and herbal purifications makes it very powerful. The bars which are wrapped with powerful charms are believed to give eloquence to the occupant of the stool, the *fiaga*. This stool which is considered by the Asogli as sacred is never brought to the open during the yam festival. It is kept in the stool room and only brought out in the evening under the cover of darkness during the performance of purification rites. No one except the custodians are allowed to view it. In the olden days, anyone who flouted this rule given by the gods was beheaded. However nowadays such outmoded acts have been stopped but in place of that other punitive measures including caning and fining have been introduced.

### **The *Hliha Kpe* (Stone) staff of office**

*Hliha* is one of the five divisions of Ho, thus the *Hliha Kpe* got its name from this area, because this type of stone can only be found in Hliha. The stone has a rough projecting surface and is brown in colour. There is a proverb or saying connected with this symbolic stone which says “*Tagborlo metsoa Hlihao o*”, meaning “a man without a head pad cannot carry Hliha stone on his head. This symbol has been chosen by the *fiaga* to mean that chieftaincy is like Hliha stone, which is hard and tough. It is not everybody who can become a chief or a leader. It requires a clever person to become a chief to rule the people well and efficiently. Also, the symbol means that the *fiaga* alone cannot rule the people but he needs pieces of advice to help him in the administration of justice in the state which is not an easy job for him alone to do.



Plate 102: the *Hliha Kpe* Staff of Office

### **State Sword**

The state swords of the *fiaga* are made of solid metal and some of them are covered all over with gold. The swords are designed for different purposes. They are either designed



for piercing or for cutting or both and they usually have incised symbolical designs on them.

The extreme ends are pointed. They have been designed as such to serve as weapons during wars. It has been noted that in the olden days, ancestors were involved in constant and frequent wars. They were attacked by their enemies at free will and this created a high level of antagonism among the people. To avoid defeat, the state swords were designed to be used as defensive weapons when there was an unexpected attack. This meant that during an attack, the carriers of the chief's state sword could just remove the handle off the pointed end of their swords and use them to defend themselves and the fiaga. The handles of the swords are usually made of wood which have been coated with gold. Symbolically the state sword signifies authority and the ability of the paramountcy to defend itself in times of trouble. The sword is used for the swearing of oath of allegiance during the installation of a chief, festivals and other customary rites.



Plate 103: State Sword

### **Antelope on top of an elephant**

The proverb associated with this symbol is as follows: “although the elephant is huge, the antelope claims to be its lord.” This symbol was adopted by the Ho-Bankoe people for

their *fiaga*, Togbe Afede Asor II after a quarrel had ensued between them and Ho-Dome people. The Ho-Dome people claimed to be the first people to have settled at the present site Ho, so the paramount stool should be given to them and their chief made the *fiaga*. This degenerated into a protracted chieftaincy dispute which claimed many lives. The Ho-Bankoe people also claimed the same. But after the history of Ho had been studied carefully, it was observed that the Bankoe people were the first to settle on the land. It was also interpreted that Ho-Dome people were Adas who had run to the Ho area and sought refuge with the *fiaga*. The Ho-Bankoe people then adopted this symbol to show that although the Dome people may be together and more in number than them, they the Bankoe people under their paramount chief, Togbe Afede Asor II, who may be small in number as the antelope were their overlords.

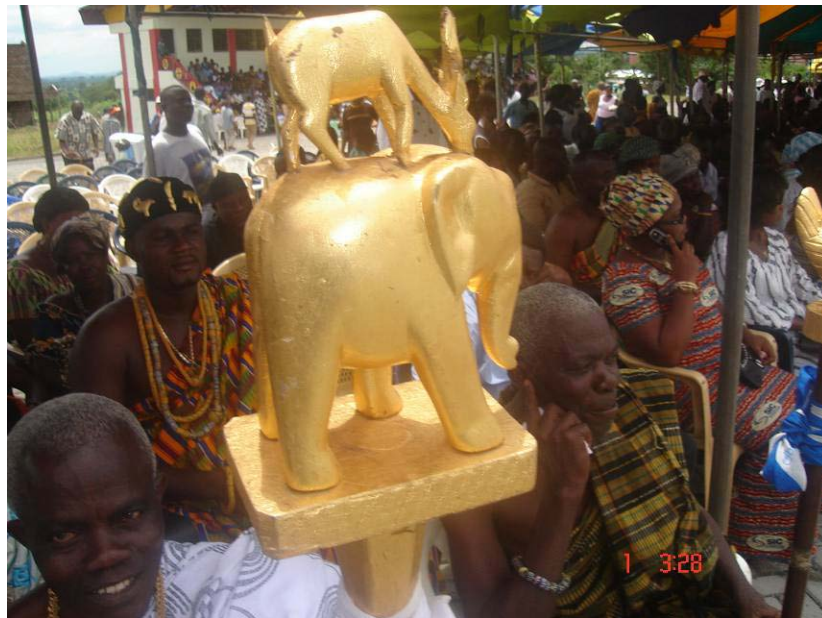


Plate 104: Antelope on top of elephant Staff of Office

### **The Staff with a coiled –up snake**

This spokesman's staff owned by the war lord of Asogli Traditional Area signifies that the people of Asogli like the coiled-up snake are calm people who would not start a controversy or quarrel. But when another person takes advantage of their calmness and

tries to show off or cause trouble for them, they would uncoil themselves like the snake and show the enemy how strong and powerful they are. They will then fight the enemy until they have completely got the upper hand.



Plate 105: Staff with

Snake

Coiled-up

### **Hand holding an egg**

This staff of office is in the custody of the *Afetoria* of Ho-dome and this is carried by his spokesman during festive occasions such as the yam festival. The Dome people who have past history of being strangers in the land see no reason why the chieftaincy titles

bestowed on them will not be held in high esteem. They have therefore chosen this symbol as it is known that the egg is one of the most delicate things in this world and that it is through the egg that the chicken comes into this world. To them chieftaincy is as delicate as an egg which can be equaled to life and must therefore be handled with care to prevent losing it. The Dome people also think that power is like an egg and when held too tight, it may break, or fall and break when held loosely. A successful ruler must be both firm and sympathetic.



Plate 106: Hand holding an Egg

### **The *Fiaga's* Ceremonial Sandals**

The knob on the sandals of the *fiaga's* sandals is symbolical as shown in (Plate 107). The name Asorgli was derived from Asor which is obtained from *avesor*. The *avesor* simply refers to thick thorn; therefore this symbol signifies the strength and power of the *fiaga*

and other rulers of the Asogli State. Their power and strength can be likened to the *avesor* with its venomous pointed edges. (This thorn gets its venom from the snakes which come to eat its fresh leaves and thorny edges as food.)



Plate 107: *Fiagas's* Ceremonial Sandals

### **The chief's umbrella**

The chief's ceremonial umbrella protects him from rain and the sun rays. It is carried with pride by its bearer and turned rhythmically in various directions over the chief's head. The ceremonial umbrella is not a mere umbrella under which the chief seeks solace against bad weather, it is in fact a symbolic object which adds to the perfection of the chief's retinue. The objects on top of the ceremonial umbrella are also not mere objects for decoration; they have symbolic meanings. The war lord of the Asogli State has a ceremonial umbrella with a finger pointing upwards. This signifies that only God is the intercessor of man in time of trouble.





Plate 108: Chief's Umbrella

### **The paramount chief's cloth**

The paramount chief wears cloth with very complex designs to portray him as the leader of the Asogli State. He is seen on the festival day in very rich kente which no other chief wears. Among the Asogli people, some few days to the durbar day, a messenger is sent to all sub-chiefs in the state to inform them about which dress the paramount chief will be wearing. This is to prevent the sub-chiefs from wearing similar or the same cloth that will be worn by the *fiaga* on the festival day. The complex Asante kente *adwinniasa* is normally worn by the *fiaga* on durbar days. This design literally means all skill is exhausted. It is complex, multicolored and very beautiful. The cloth has symbolic colours of golden yellow, black and red. The golden yellow symbolizes royalty and wealth, black symbolizes spiritual potency, energy and maturity. In the Asogli State, red signifies the “fire” in the people concerning development. The motifs and designs in the cloth which have been “picked” carefully, symbolize precision, versatility and ingenuity of the state.



Plate 109: *adwinnasa*

Source: Kwaku Offori Ansah(1993)

### **Body adornment (body painting)**

Apart from putting on kente cloth the traditional women and teenagers also make linear and circular designs on their bodies. The designs serve decorative purposes as well as spiritual purposes. The circular designs signify the presence of God and the linear designs stand for uprightness. Herbal concoctions are added to clay and applied to the body amidst singing. The clay helps in cooling the body under the hot sun while the herbal concoction serves spiritual purposes and is believed to protect the women and teenagers from any evil spirits that might be lurking around during the celebration. In addition to the body decorations, old women are seen dressed in a funny way (plate 110). According to them this portrays the fashion of the ancestors which shows how they dressed while escaping from the walled city of Notsie. The women stuff their back with all sort of tattered cloth, while smoking the pipe. They also wield a walking stick to control their movement.





Plate 110: old woman in *atufu* attire

### ***Aggrey* Beads**

Aggrey beads are used during the festival by the chiefs, women, teenagers and ordinary men. These *aggrey* beads are threaded and put around the neck, wrist, ankles and waist. Some of the beads serve as decorative objects while others are symbolic. The Asogli people in particular like beads in rich colours (plate 110). During the celebration of the festival however, all the types of colours of beads are used and each has a meaning of its own. The white beads symbolize victory, virginity and joy. The yellow beads signify the wealth and royalty of the state. Most of the designs on the beads are linear in nature which symbolizes stability, certainty and decisiveness.



Plate 111: Some *aggrey* beads

### **Hunting Smock (*Adewu*)**

This attire is worn mostly by the Asafofia (the war lord), asafo members and customary rites performers of the Asogli State during festive occasions such as the yam festival and other installation of a chief. Most importantly as the name suggests, it is worn by hunters during their hunting expeditions. The hunting smock is made of coarse cotton for the absorption of sweat and durability (plate 112). They are dyed with brown colours of locally produced dyes. It is dyed with brown to withstand the dirt generated from the everyday wear for both hunting and farming and also to disguise the hunters during hunting.



Plate 112: A traditional leader in hunting smock

### **The *fiaga*'s crowns**

The dressing of the *fiaga* is not complete without a crown. The crown shows outwardly that he is really a chief. He has two main crowns, the ceremonial crown and the installation crown (*dzokuku*).

#### The ceremonial crown

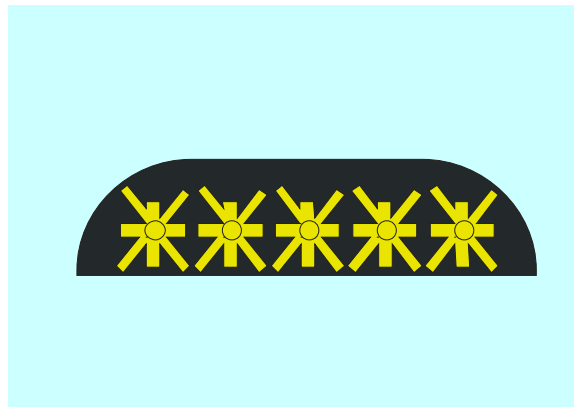


Figure 4: Ceremonial crown of *fiaga*

A critical examination of the *fiaga*'s ceremonial crown reveals that the crown itself is made of black velvet with golden crosses on it. On the crosses themselves are lines which converge to form a beautiful design. The black velvet is used because of the everyday use of the crown. By the use of the velvet, the crown therefore has the ability to withstand dirt which will show conspicuously on gay coloured velvet. The general outlook of the crown is that, it is shiny and fluffy which symbolizes wealth. The crosses on the crown stand for the protection of God for the king.



Figure 5: Installation crown of *fiaga*

Source: drawn by researcher

## **Installation Crown**

The installation crown is worn by the *fiaga* during special occasions such as the durbar day. Ultimately during the installation of a new *fiaga*, he wears the crown. It is a very beautiful crown with multi- faceted areas. It is attached with talismans and charms to ensure the total spiritual protection of the *fiaga* during such important occasions. The installation crown has features which are totally different from the ceremonial crown. It is longer in length has strips of leather surrounding it. The long strips are believed to spiritually hide the face of the *fiaga* from bad spirits. The solid nature of the crown signifies the strength and power possessed by the paramount chief over all his people.

### **1.4 Yam festival of the Past**

Considering the numerous benefits that the country stands to benefit from the celebration of Asogli Yam Festival, it is necessary to make comparisons between the yam festival of yesteryears and that of today so as to be able to bring out the advantages and disadvantages for consideration. The yam festival in the past which was known as *Eteza* was celebrated by only the chiefs and people of Ho. This was because the conditions at the time did not permit for any amalgamation.

### **Counting of Calendar**

In the olden days before the cultivation of yam, the traditional priests performed rituals and painstakingly calculated the calendar. Goats and fowls were offered to the gods and ancestors for good harvest. Yam mounds were made in sacred groves and various rites and rituals performed to seal proceedings. The calendar was calculated based on “moon” days. The festival was normally held in the second and third weeks of September.

### Drawing of Programme

After the chief traditional priest had informed the *fiaga* of the completion of the preceding rituals, the Ho Youth Association drew the programme for the celebration. This comprised the specific days of celebration, time and the activities that were to take place.

### First day of celebration

#### *Nubabla* Rite

This was held on a Thursday which is *Asitoegbe*. This involved mainly rituals which signified the tying of herbs to ward off all evil spirits in the society before the start of the festival itself. During those days the *fiaga* himself took part in the rituals. It was held in the central square at the time. The grinding of special herbs was performed by the *blabu* in the centre of the road without a cover. For this reason women were prohibited from attending this ritual, because are of the opposite sex. Seven species of herbs which were charged with a concoction were tied and placed at door steps, cross roads and the outskirts of the town to prevent evil spirits from coming into the town.

### Second day of celebration

#### Gbormekporkplor (purification of the town)

This ritual was performed on the following day which was a Friday. It was performed to seal the *Nubabla* ceremony. Live animals, frog or sometimes live chicken were tied to a palm branch and used to “sweep off” all malignant demons in the community. This ritual was performed by the *blabu* (customary rites performers). They started from the house of the head *blabu* through the principal streets to the outskirts of the town.

### Third day of celebration

#### Candle procession

In order to broadcast openly to everybody in the town that the next day was the day for the big celebration, in the evening of Friday, a candle procession was organized and all the natives participated fully. This was accompanied by drumming and singing and general merry-making. A torch light made locally was put in a big box and carried around through the town to tell the history of the Ho people.

### Fourth day of celebration

#### *Dzawurwu*

Early in the morning on this day, everybody who had a yam farm went with his wife and children to his farm to uproot the quantity he and his family needed for two or three days. After that, a meal was prepared for both the ancestors and gods of the land. This meal was made from the new yam which was mashed and mixed with palm oil. The traditional priest, priestesses, chiefs, elders and occupants of various stools offered it to their gods, stools and deities.

### Fifth day of celebration

#### Durbar day

On the durbar day, the *fiaga* put on his best cloth, sandals, and jewelry. The different stool occupants and members of their families converged at the centre of the town to form a colourful procession to the durbar ground.

The procession was led by the state executioner, followed by the *blabu*, sub-clan stool bearers and the *fiaga's* stool bearers. The *fiaga* under the canopy of his state umbrella



walked majestically to the durbar ground. At the durbar ground, the *fiaga* sat in state and received homage from his subjects.

#### The sixth day of celebration

##### *Tetsrolorlor*

This was held on a Sunday to round off the celebration. It literally means removing rubbish. Thus all the rubbish- remains of the yams left over the six days of feasting were gathered and thrown on the rubbish dump. This was symbolical. This same day the *fiaga* and his sub-chiefs attended a thanksgiving service to thank God for his protection and guidance throughout the festival.

#### **Disadvantages and Advantages of modern Yam Festival**

A critical look at both the Yam Festival of the past and that of today reveals some interesting observations for consideration. These observations relate to the influence of Christianity, the modernization of the festival due to the unavoidable influence of civilization, the elimination of some obsolete customs, the quest for pleasure and fun by the youth, and the change in leadership.

In the past, Christians were prevented from participating in the activities of the festival; because these were considered to be against the teachings of Christianity. In view of these, the Christians became mere observers who stood and watched unconcerned. But now, things have changed. The yam festival of today is celebrated by both Christians and traditional folks. The patronage of the festival has also increased drastically. Foreign participation in the festival has also been enhanced. These can be linked partly to the changes that have occurred over the past years and the change in leadership as regards the paramountcy. Due to civilization, superstitions and other misconceptions associated

with the festival have been annihilated except for some isolated cases. The newly installed paramount chief of the Asogli State, Togbe Afede XIV who is a technocrat with vision has introduced new touches to the festival which were not imminent during the past. These include: educational tour to the ancestral home of the Asoglis, reintroduction of native games which have almost gone into oblivion, recital of folktales, fund raising and launching of developmental projects.

In the olden days certain rituals such as *Nubabla* were performed naked in the streets by one *blabu* without any cover from the other performers. But with the advent of civilization such rituals have been modernized. Nowadays, despite the fact that *Nubabla* is still performed naked, the other *blabu* during the ritual provide a human cover for the naked *blabu*. Another ritual, *vorlowofenkeke* which was formerly performed in the cemetery has now been modified. It is now performed at a more different environment. That is at the forecourt of the *fiaga*. The practice where formerly a whole meat was left in the cemetery (because this is considered to be the final resting place of the ancestors) to the ancestors to feed on has also been modified. The meat of sacrificial animals is now consumed by humans, not the ancestors. Nowadays, it is only the bones that are placed in the cemetery because the former practice is considered to be archaic and also, a lot of meat is wasted.

In as much as modernization of the festival has brought some benefits to the people, it has also been negative in its effect. Due to the modernization of Asogli Yam festival, the strict rules kept during the festival period have been relaxed and so magical effects of the rites and rituals seem to have decreased. The modern touches have also made the festival to lose its past flavour and secrecy of rites put in place by the ancestors. These have exposed the rites and rituals to all sorts of infiltrations and adulterations. For instance the seriousness with which *Nubabla* was performed in the olden days is dwindling due to

modernization. Formerly no woman was allowed to witness the *Nubabla* ritual because some of the *blabu* strip themselves naked but nowadays due to curiosity and the so-called civilization some women witness it. Also in the past, no other animal apart from the sacrificial animals was allowed to even come near the ritual ground. But this is not the case nowadays. Sometimes, some recalcitrant people leave their animals to disturb proceedings of the ritual. Quite apart from the disturbances caused by stray animals, some of the rite performers are also guilty thereby making strict adherence to the rules difficult. Some of the *blabu*, who drink too much alcohol during the ceremony, misbehave and perform the rituals with no seriousness attached to it. The yam festival of today has also taken a different dimension in which social vices such as fighting, drunkenness, teenage pregnancy and the like are prevalent. During the past, the *teyuyru* ceremony was done with much decency but nowadays the youth with no respect for authorities and customs are seen drunk thereby creating chaos and pandemonium. Some youth due to drunkenness fight one another and sometimes try to rape the innocent girls who are also participating in the celebrations.

These vices make the otherwise educative and joyous occasion a platform or tool for promoting bad behaviour. Frantic efforts must be made by the organizers to eliminate these bad practices of the youth and rather promote the good aspects of the festival which far supersede the bad ones.

### **1.5 Social and Cultural significance of Asogli Yam festival**

The celebration of Asogli Yam festival boosts the social and cultural status of the people. The festival in the first place offers the natives of Asogli the opportunity to visit home at least once in a year. In the course of these visits, outstanding disputes and misunderstandings are settled. Therefore socially, Asogli Yam festival promotes unity and peace within the family system and the society as a whole.

Culturally, the festival creates a platform for the people to recount their historical past. During the festival, everything about the past history of the people is brought to light or remembered for the young ones to learn. This is very important because no society can forget its history. Apart from using the Asogli Yam festival to remember the past, its annual celebration helps to transmit, conserve and project the culture of the people. Also, the riches of the different clans are brought to light for visitors as well as the towns' people to ascertain the wealth of the various clans which will lead to respect for their values. The festival also creates a platform for natives to learn about their traditional dances, songs and folklores.

The Asogli Yam festival helps to break the monotony in the life of the people. The daily routine of going to the farm every blessed day to cultivate yam for food is halted by the advent of the yam festival. The yam festival brings a sort of relieve and joy to the people most especially, the farmers from a continuous period of hard work and labour. The farmers most especially are happy because yam cultivation is considered to be, tedious and cumbersome. A lot of time and energy is required for the preparation of the land. Much care and attention is needed for the yam plants to grow well. The harvest time is another energy-sapping venture in yam farming. Here a lot of strength and energy is used to carefully harvest the yam fruits. Therefore to the Asogli farmers, the yam festival is a period of rest and a period that they rip the fruits of their labour.

The festival also serves as a primary source from which the people draw their strength. That is with the idea that the festival will be celebrated in some few months, the men and women and children work vigorously on their farms in order to celebrate the festival well. To them any joyful celebration such as the Asogli Yam festival requires some money and enough resources in terms of food and other accompaniments. The festival in a lucid point is an instrument for hardworking and the acquisition of strength. Natives living outside the Asogli towns are not left out in the quest for money to celebrate the festival. Those staying abroad and other places in Ghana work harder to secure money to buy new clothing and other accoutrements needed for the festival.

The festival also brings together the whole Asogli State to profess unity and to swear their allegiance to the present *fiaga*. Throughout the year, the *fiaga* due to his tight schedule does not have adequate time for his people; therefore during the yam festival the *fiaga* sits in state to receive homage from the people. The social status of the people is thus enhanced.

## **2.0 The Spiritual and Religious significance of Asogli Yam Festival**

The pragmatic approach of the people of Asogli to the celebration of the yam festival seems apparent from the way the ceremonies are performed. The well-being and continuity of their society is always of paramount importance to them and that gives rise to their desire for good health and increase in the procreation of children and the fertility of the land and animals. These needs they believe and know can be satisfied by the Supreme Creator, the lesser gods and ancestor spirits. They therefore use the festival as a platform to express their gratitude to God and the lesser spirits. They do this by means of sacrifices and offerings. Libation is poured to the gods and ancestors to thank them for

their help throughout the previous years and to ask them to continue helping and guiding the people.

The presence of rites and rituals embodied in the festival give the Asogli people some psychological reassurance of the blessings and protection of the gods and ancestral spirits, and thus a feeling of security as they enter a new year. To them when by means of the rites they propitiate the gods and spirits, give them food and drinks, and solicit their blessings and protection, their feeling of security is heightened. The people also believe that the rites and rituals relieve them of any anxiety of a possible famine resulting from a poor harvest, disease, death and lack of children. The Asogli Yam festival can therefore be described as a festival which possesses religious and spiritual values.

### **2.1 The Economic Significance of the festival**

The economic development of a nation is a matter of great concern to its citizens. Various economic policies are adopted by governments to change the financial woes of the people for the better. Mention can be made of financial bodies such as the IMF, the World Bank and the HIPC economic policy. Ghana nonetheless has also sought for various economic aids from these financial institutions. However, little has been done by past governments and the present one to explore other avenues such as our rich cultural heritage. The cultural traditions of Ghana are effective tools for national development. Culture expressed in the form of festivals as in the Asogli Yam festival possesses rich economic values worth promoting.

The economic values of Asogli Yam festival are over-whelming. These can be seen in areas such as yam farming, art and crafts, tourism, native games, the hospitality industry, trade, housing.

### Yam Farming

The yam farmers of the Asogli State with the idea that the festival is approaching, go for loans to cultivate large portions of land for yam planting. After ploughing the land, much care is taken to sow the seedlings after which farm inputs such as fertilizer and pesticides are applied to the plants when the need arises. After the plants have matured, they are harvested and sent to the markets for sale.

A lot of money is made by the farmers from the sales of yam. This is the case because of the festive period which makes the demand for yam higher. Over thousand tubers of yam are sold by the farmers for consumption. Some of the tubers of yam are sold directly to consumers while some are also sold to retailers on wholesale basis. Towards the end of August, most yam tubers are ready for sale. However, the new yam is only consumed after the *Dzawuwu* rites have been performed. A lot of fun is derived from the sales of yam during the festive period, to the extent that some buyers try to hoard yam prior to the celebration of the festival. Yam tubers are sold during the festive period in various ways. Some yam tubers are sold by hawking, and others are sold on shelves in the market. Some are also sold on mobile trucks. In all these, the ultimate aim is to get yam to the people for consumption so as to ensure the continuity of the festival. Without yam, there will be no yam festival because it forms the basis for the celebration. Table 22 and Table 23 below show the sales of yam during the festive period and the sales of yam before and after the festive period of year 2008 respectively.

**Table 22: Price of Yam during festive period (2008)**

<b>Yam Species</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Unit Price</b>
<i>Puna</i>	1 tuber	GH ¢ 1
<i>Asana</i>	1tuber	GH ¢ 1



<i>Kplindzo</i>	1 tuber	GH ¢ 1
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**Table 23: Price of Yam before and after the festive period (2008)**

<b>Yam Species</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Unit Price</b>
<i>Puna</i>	1 tuber	GH ¢ 1.5
<i>Asana</i>	1 tuber	GH ¢1.5
<i>Kplindzo</i>	1 tuber	GH ¢1.5

Source: from yam retailers



Plate 113: Tubers of yam on sale

Yam farming in actual fact gives the nod for the celebration of the festival. Yam is used in various forms during the performance of rites and rituals such as *Dzawurwu* and some are also used for pounding yam *fufu*.

Despite the fact that yam farming is a necessity for the celebration of the festival, much has not been done by the authorities to sustain it and perhaps to improve upon it. Farmers struggle with the acquisition of loans for their farms. This is because most of the banks responsible for lending money such as the Agric Development Bank demand higher interest payments and also ask for collaterals which the farmers are not able too meet.

Another problem which exists is that which has to do with acquisition of land for farming. Most of the farm lands were formerly leased to farmers free of charge and sometimes at very low cost; but nowadays the cost involved in leasing of such lands is very high making it difficult for the youth to engage in farming.

If nothing is done to resolve these problems, it will come to a time that the yam festival will no more be celebrated. Therefore to ensure the continuity of the festival, stringent economic measures should be taken now and fast.

### **Arts and Crafts**

The celebration of the Asogli Yam festival makes it possible for the economic advancement of the local artists and craftsmen. The festive period presents a setting for the patronage of made-in-Ghana art works. The culture, philosophies and ideas of the people are expressed in their art works. During the festival, people travel from all walks of life both far and near not only to witness the festival but also to buy something in the form of a souvenir to send home. Most foreigners flood local art shops, trade fairs and durbar grounds to buy all sorts of gifts for their loved ones.

Most of the artifacts bought are souvenirs which are handy and easy to carry. They include statuettes, figurines, dolls, beads, leather works, kente, tie and dye, batik, calabash art, replicas of spokesman staff, state swords, stools, basketry and metal works. When these artifacts are bought, there is economic growth; as taxes are generated for the development of the district and Ghana as a whole. Employment is also increased for both artisans and the marketers of the artifacts and as a result, social vices such as armed robbery will be eliminated from the society.

## Wood Carving

About 60% of the souvenirs sold during the Asogli Yam festival are wood carvings. Ancestor figures, fertility figures, miniature spokesman staffs, state sword and stools are sold to foreigners and natives. These artifacts mostly serve decorative purpose but some are bought for the performance of rituals. Plate 114 below shows some of the sculpture pieces that are sold during the festival.

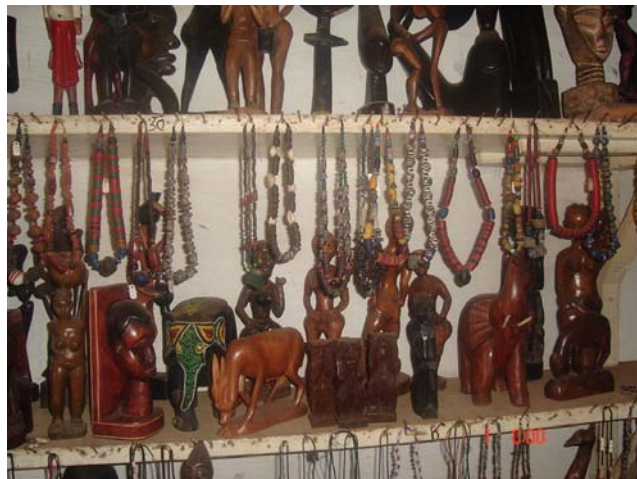


Plate 114: wood carvings and beads on display

About 10% of souvenirs bought during the festival are textiles. In the Asogli community, textiles production is an important craft since it provides clothing for the society as a whole. Various textile goods are made by the local artists and craftsmen for commercial purpose. They include kente stripes, appliqué fabrics, dyed fabrics and printed fabrics. Some articles made of kente and other materials are sold. These articles include caps, hand bags, hats and belts.

## Kente

Two types of kente designs are woven by the traditional craftsmen. These are the Asante kente and the Ewe kete. The Asante kente according to the local craftsmen was learnt from two Asante male weavers who were captured during the Asante war. They deem it

fit to include what they call the “foreign kente” in their works because according to them, visitors both foreign and local could easily make a choice between their Ewe kete and Asante kente. Apart from the kente fabric which is a “hot cake” considering its popular use during the festival, articles such as cap, hand bags, belts and the like are made from kente. These are sold to visitors at very high prices. Plate 115 below shows some kente stripes.



Plate 115: *kente* stripes on display

### Printed Fabrics

In view of the large customers that throng the festival grounds and art shops for textile goods, printed materials are also produced and offered for sale at very exorbitant prices. Traditional symbols are cut out on calabash stamps and used to print designs onto white fabrics and sometimes dyed fabrics. Because of the variety of designs that may be required by customers, sometimes the designs are printed on broad fabrics made of locally produced spun yarns and in other cases, the designs are printed on stripes of fabrics which are later sewn together to form a broader cloth. Apart from printed fabrics, T-shirts are also printed with traditional symbols and sold to the general public during the festive occasion.

### Dyed Fabrics

The dyed fabrics produced for sale tie and dye, batik and plain dyed fabrics. Most of the tie-dye fabrics are produced using *tritik* method where certain parts of the fabric are sewn to resist them from the in-take of dye. This makes such fabrics look like the traditional dye fabrics of Nigeria called *Adire*. The batik fabrics are produced using locally manufactured material and tools. The wax which was formerly applied with a shaped strip of bamboo has now been replaced by the *tjanting*. Mostly the batik cloth bears traditional designs which portray the culture of the people. The plain –dyed fabrics include wrappers, cover cloth and *adewu* which is a hunting smock. They are dyed in plain colours of indigo, yellow and brown respectively, symbolizing the ideologies of the people of Asogli. The dyed fabrics are all dyed with local dyes made from various natural sources. After production, the fabrics are exhibited at the durbar ground for sale or most a time they are sold in art shops and galleries.

### Appliqué

Appliqué fabrics are produced by the artists and craftsmen of the Asogli State by stitching pieces of leather or fabric of different shapes onto a plain fabric. Traditional cloths such as the hunting smock cover cloth and wrappers are sometimes decorated with appliqué designs derived from traditional symbols. Some of the designs are stuffed with charms and powdered concoctions for spiritual purposes. Cloths produced from such designs are usually bought by the traditional folks themselves for various religious purposes. Those with secular designs are bought by foreign visitors.

### **Bead Work**

Beads are produced locally in the Asogli State for various body adornments. They are put around the neck, around the wrist and around the waist for both religious and functional

purposes. Formerly, beads in the Asogli State were made from animal tusks, animal teeth and sometimes snail shells. Presently however, the Asogli craftsmen and artists manufacture beads from precious stones, clay, plastics, seeds, wood and rubber. The beads are decorated with all sorts of traditional designs and colours which attract potential buyers. In Plate 116 below examples of such beads have been shown



Plate 116: beautiful beads

### **Metal Work**

Goldsmiths are common in the Asogli State because iron smelting had been in existence in the area long before the coming of the Whiteman. Iron smithing is done currently in a furnace where various metal products are forged. During the festive period, the demand for various body adornments such as waist rings, girdles, wrist bands, fingerings bracelets, anklets and the like makes it possible to produce such products in large quantities for sale. Replicas of ceremonial swords and other metal products are sold to prospective buyers.

### **Leather Work**

Leather prepared from animal skin and hide of animals such as sheep, snake, cow and goat are used by the craftsmen of the Asogli State to produce articles that are used during the

festival. Some of these articles or artifacts are hand bags, sandals, belts, and wallet. The leather used by craftsmen has different surface qualities. Some are very stiff; others are semi- stiff whilst another type is soft. The soft leather which is obtained from animals like sheep and goat is used to produce soft, gracefully ornamented bags, hats and sometimes clothing. In order to attract good market during the festive period, traditional symbols are used to produce decorative leather works.

### **Calabash Art**

Decorated calabash wares are sold at exorbitant prices to tourists and natives alike during the festival. Calabash is carved by local craftsmen from gourd, a giant fruit of a climbing plant which is grown in the Ho vicinity. After carving, the calabash is decorated with beautiful designs most of which are traditional designs. The designs are made by painting, burning, cutting, embossing and spraying or a combination of any two of the methods. The calabash designs are mostly used as wall hanging decorative pieces. Figure 6 below shows a decorated calabash ware.

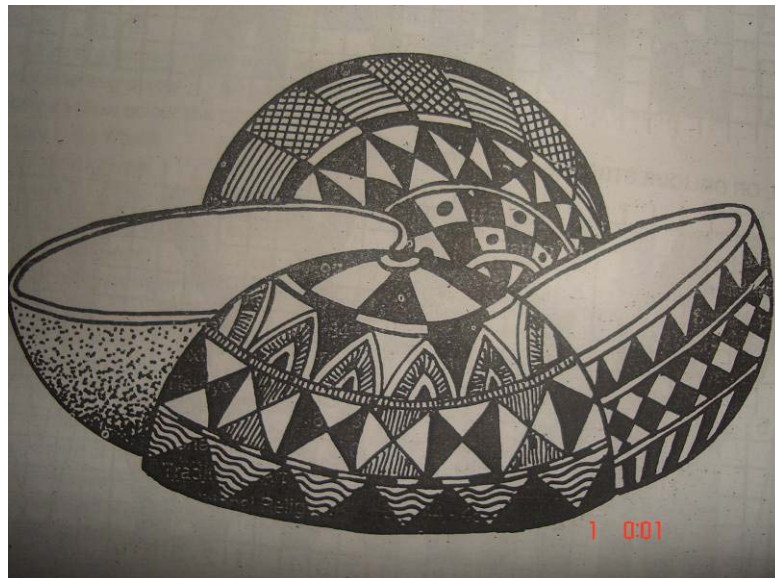


Figure 6: Calabash work

Source: drawn by researcher

## **Basket-Making**

Basket-making is one of the oldest crafts in the history of the Asogli traditional art. A range of raw materials are used depending on the end-use of the basket. The craftsmen use cane, palm leaves and sometimes palm fronds.

The baskets are woven with the hands, with the aid of simple tools like knife and bodkin. They are woven in different sizes and in various geometric shapes depending upon their uses. The round and bowl-shaped baskets are the commonest and are mostly used to carry food stuffs and domestic goods. Most of the baskets are more or less replicas of the original ones. This is because the craftsmen in the Asogli State believe that during the festival, tourists will prefer to buy baskets which are handy and portable than those that appear to be too large in size. The craftsmen therefore produce to meet the demands and a lot of money is made from the sales.

Tourism becomes very vibrant during the Asogli Yam festival where tourists, both foreign and local visit the Asogli State to witness the yam festival. The foreign and local tourists come from countries such as the United States of America, France, Britain and Germany. The local tourists are mostly nationals of the republic of Togo, Benin and Nigeria. Most of the foreign visitors are youths between the ages of 20 and 30. They are mostly students. The main reasons for visiting the area are adventure, and sightseeing. Others however, may be on study tour to collect data for their academic work.

The arrival of tourists in Ho during the yam festival is considered by the natives as a gateway to financial breakthrough. The hospitality industry operators, local restaurant operators, traders, tourist site managers and the transportation industry operators are direct beneficiaries of the economic fiesta.



### The hospitality Industry

Tourists who visit the Ho Municipality purposely to witness the yam festival have to get a place to lay their heads. The revenue of the hospitality industry is therefore boosted during this period. The numerous hotels and guest houses in the Ho Municipality including Woezor Hotel, Freedom Hotel, E.P. Social Centre, Taurus Hotel, Chances Hotel, Executive Gardens, Akpe Na Mawu Hotel, Kingfisher Guest House, Majestic Lodge, Fiave Lodge, Lord Hotel, Alinda Hotel, Work and Happiness Guest House, and Tarso Hotel are crowded with visitors. The visitors most of the time prefer hotels with natural and serene atmosphere with a traditional touch where they can interact and chat with the local people. The table below illustrates the patronage of tourists and natives at the Work and Happiness Guest House from June 2007 to October 2007. It also shows the rise in revenue during the festive period which starts from September and ends in October.

**Table 24: The Turn-Over of Work and Happiness Guest House (2007)**

Month	Natives	Tourists	Total	Revenue for Food & Drink	Revenue for use of conference room	Revenue for accommodation	Total
June	60	5	65	€1,000,000	€2,500,000	€4,600,000	€8,100,000
July	50	2	52	€800,000	€1,500,000	€3,000,000	€5,300,000
August	90	10	100	€2,700,000	€4,000,000	€5,000,000	€11,700,000
September	206	480	686	€5,500,000	€9,260,000	€14,600,000	€29,360,000
October	250	450	700	€7,560,000	€15,750,000	€21,000,000	€44,310,000

Apart from the preparation made by operators of Hotels and Guest Houses to meet the demands of high patronage during the festivities, land lords also put up new buildings or extend their houses to cope with accommodation problems experienced during the

festival. Local tourists who cannot afford the exorbitant prices offered by the exotic Hotels may lodge in less expensive accommodations offered by land lords.

### Restaurants

During the festive period, restaurant operators and local food vendors put facilities in place to contain the high patronage that is experienced. Most foreign tourists will prefer the local cuisines which are served at places such as the Soweto Restaurant, Kaneawope Restaurant, Salvation Chop Bar, Talk of the Town Restaurant, White House and Nic Gee Restaurant to the exotic hotel restaurants. To the tourists, they feel at home when they eat in the open and interact with Ghanaians. This makes it possible for them to know the people better in terms of the way they talk, eat, and dress and their general way of life. Some of the tourists take down notes while others take shots with their cameras.

### Tourists Sites

The dramatic visitation of tourists to the Ho Municipal area to witness the Asogli Yam Festival also creates an opportunity for them to visit places of interest in the area. These places of interest include: Kalakpa Resource Reserve at Abutia, Mount Gemi at Amedzofe, Kpetoe Kente Village and Ziavi Cultural Village.

### Kalakpa Resource Reserve

The Reserve which is one of the two found in the Volta Region, is located at Abutia, a village about 300 kilometers from Ho. The Reserve covers an estimated 324.0 square kilometers of land. The Reserve is more or less a sanctuary of monkeys which inhabits animals such as baboons, green monkeys, buffalo, bushbuck, bush pig, waterbuck and

grass cutter. Workers at the Reserve have confirmed that there is a drastic increase in their revenue during the Asogli Yam festival as a result of visitors trouping in to witness the festival.

#### Kpetoe Kente Village

Kpetoe which is east of Ho is noted for the production of the excellent and quality Kete cloth. The inhabitants, who are Ga-Adagme, claim they introduced the art of Kente weaving inherited from their ancestors to the rest of the people of Ghana. Two types of Kente are woven: the Asante Kente and the Agbamevor. The emphasis is on good quality Kente and not cheap products.

#### Ziavi Cultural Village

In the western valley of the “Galenku” hills and to the west of Ho is the small town of Ziavi Dzogbe. This village is noted for a cultural troupe, Ziavi Zigi. This troupe has performed on several occasions and has even been used for films of international repute. Even though this group performs at various functions, it is best to see them in their rural setting in the village. Tourists who visit Ziavi are charged a fee that is negotiable.

#### Mount Gemi

Mount Gemi which is located at Amedzofe stands as the most impressive of the mountains in the area, there is a huge metal cross erected at the very top of the hill. One also finds quite an impressive rest house at Amedzofe which can lodge up to five people at a time. In the Avatime area, there is a waterfall in addition to a spring near the town of

Biakpa. The table below shows figures compiled by the Ghana Tourists Board on revenues generated at Mount Gemi in the year 2007. It is however notable that the revenues generated in August, September and October are high; indicative of the fact that the yam festival has an economic impact on tourism in the area.

**Table 25: The Turn-Over of Revenue for Mount Gemi (2007)**

Month	Residents	Non-residents	Total Arrivals	Revenue (GH¢)
January	241	370	611	75.00
February	113	273	386	100.1
March	196	355	551	77.50
April	250	403	653	109.00
May	110	166	276	58.00
June	62	113	175	46.00
July	244	495	739	177.50
August	144	393	537	192.500
September	204	335	539	195.50
October	57	151	208	95.5
November	71	156	227	273.1
December	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	1,692	3,210	4,902	1,409.60

Source: Ghana Tourist Board

## Trade

Trade in general can be said to be very lucrative in the Asogli State during the festive period. A lot of sale is made during the period. Everyone therefore goes about their businesses with all hard work and seriousness to make enough money. Opportunity they say comes but once. Ice water sellers, groundnut sellers, vegetable sellers and other petty traders capitalize on the period to make as much money as they could, art and crafts shop owners, provision sellers, yam sellers and whoever is interested in business try to maximize profit during the festival

### Transportation

The transportation industry is not left out in their share of the national cake. During the festivities, the transportation sector generates more income than ever. This is because of the large number of visitors who storm the town during the festival period. In addition, there is a high demand for cars and other vehicles to convey both natives and visitors to the festival ground. Prior to the celebration, most commercial drivers and vehicle owners service their cars to prepare for the high demands for transportation during the festival.

### **Festival Games**

Despite the fact that games promote social cohesiveness, economic development, good health and skills, the native games which used to be performed during the Asogli Yam festival seem to be going into oblivion.

According to Alyce Cheska (1985) a game is a competitive activity that involves physical skills, strategy and chance, or a combination of any of the two elements. Games emanate from our immediate environment based on certain life happenings. Games just like any deep-thinking activity helps to release anxiety and stress and at the same time train the brain in readiness for future challenges. There are two types of games. These are games of

strategy and games of chance. Games of strategy prevail in a society with a complex social organization which requires that much care has to be taken to survive in such a society. Roberts and Sutton Smith (1962) found that games of strategy are most popular where obedience is stressed in child up-bringing. Such games may well reflect anxiety about powerlessness among children who lack the determination to achieve many of their goals directly. Games of chance on the other hand, are more popular in societies in which duty and responsibility are stressed during socialization. Such games may represent a form of defiance, a psychological release from anxiety about having to be responsible. It must be noted however, that no matter the type of game, all games involve competitive activities which require skills and strategy. More so, the way a festival is packaged will attract more audience and a possible increase in revenue. The package must include the setting, contestants and the general outlook of the festival. All these must be well synchronized.

Native games performed during the Asogli Yam festival, considering their nature can be classified under the second type of game which is aimed at imparting skills into the youth most especially, to enable them take their own initiatives. The performance of the games tells a story about the past. It draws awareness to some of the activities of the ancestors and at the same time helps in eschewing social vices. For instance, the youth who may be found engaging in all sorts of bad practices, will be engaged with something more educative. It has been researched that games are potential income-generating activities and that the Olympic Games which now generates a lot of revenue for countries all over the world, emanated from traditional games of Greece. With this finding, it is right to say that the re-introduction of the native games of the Asogli will create a platform for them to be developed. This development although may not reach the standard of Olympics, will be enough to generate some revenue for the local people and Ghana at large. Aside that, the native games help the youth to exercise their bodies and keep fit for work which will

generate income for the development of the area and Ghana in totality. Some of the native games performed during the festival are: *Kpodada*, *Tondofofo*, *Adolidada* and *Adidada*.

### *Kpodada*

*Kpo* in Ewe means a club but in this context, it represents the many, many, tender leaves of a palm tree tied together and formed into a cylindrical broom without broom stick but with a head and a tail point. The finished form is about eighteen inches long and about three inches in diameter. Two teams of about four members each play this game. One team throws the *kpo* from a distance towards the opposing team members who try to catch the *kpo* in mid-air with a hook (*egu*). Points are scored with each mid-air catch. Apart from the benefits of physically exercising the body, the players of the *kpodada* game bring togetherness and happiness to themselves and the section they represent. The game also promotes healthy rivalry and friendship, understanding, growth and development. Plate 116 shows the *kpo* and *egu* (hook) which are used for the *Kpodada*.



Plate 116: *Kpo* and *Egu*

### *Tondofofo*

*Tondofofo* also called top spinning is a competition which takes place between two competitors at a time. The main gadgets used are a spindle and a stick which are small

enough to be held in the hand. One of the two competitors sets the spindle in motion by rotating it in between the fingers while using the specially created stick to control its movement till it comes to a stop. After recording the points which are determined by how long the spindle rotates, the other competitor also has his turn. The competitor with the longer spinning time carries the day.

This game exercises the finger and also promotes endurance. Plate 117 shows the main apparatus used for playing the game.



Plate 117: Spindle and Stick

### *Adolidada*

*Adoli* is a plant with soft branches which is used for the *Adolidada* game. The game normally involves two groups. One of the group members throws a sharp metal blade (sickle) to pick branches of the *Adoli* branches which have been arranged laterally. The number of *Adoli* branches picked at a time determines the winner.



The competitive nature of *Adolidada* promotes the art of aiming and targeting. It also promotes attentiveness and endurance.



Plate 118: branches of *Adoli* and Sickel

### *Adidada*

*Adi* in Ewe refers to marbles. Therefore *Adidada* is simply the act of throwing marbles. This game takes place between two competitors. Before the game starts, groups of marbles which are considered to be the defense group are nicely arranged at a point in the field of play. At a distance, one of the competitors throws another set of marbles one after the other to hit as many marbles as possible from the large collection. The number of marbles hit at a time is collected and scored. The competitor with the highest score is declared the winner. *Adidada* promotes concentration and increases attentiveness. It also teaches the art of aiming and targeting.



Plate 119: Marbles

## **2.2 Summary of Discussions**

This chapter outlined and presented the main findings in a more practical way. It did so by giving detailed interpretation of data. Painstaking efforts were made to describe all variables involved in the field of study. It became clear in this chapter that art works used in the celebration of the festival possess certain symbolic values and that each art work belongs to a group of classification. This chapter also established the fact that art is indispensable in the celebration of Asogli Yam festival by outlining the specific roles that the art works play in the celebration. Much attention was also focused on the socio-economic significance of the festival as well as its spiritual value. A step by step approach was therefore adapted to present data on the various economic aspects of the festival bearing in mind their contribution to the development of the Asogli State and Ghana as a whole. A scholarly approach was also adopted to compare the Asogli Yam festival of the past with that of today. This afforded the researcher a platform to point out disadvantages and advantages that may exist so as to create a way for moving forward.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **SUMMARY**

Two types of data were used for this study. They included Primary and Secondary data.

The Primary Data dealt with data obtained from the field based on facts. The primary data were collected with the help of research tools such as the participant observational approach, interviews and questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed and interpreted

using basically the descriptive method. Primary data collected bordered on the celebration of the festival itself, its socio-economic features and the role of art in the celebration.

The Secondary Data were based on various literature extracts from books, unpublished theses, encyclopedias, brochures, magazines, monographs, periodicals and the net. Literature related to the topic based on the historical background of the Asoglis, the origin of Yam cultivation, the origin of the festival, the role of art, the social, economic and religious aspects of the festival was collected, assembled, and used as the substantive secondary data for the study.

The two hypotheses formulated for the study were protested and this was based on Yes or No hypothetical statements which sought the candid opinion of respondents on the topic.

The first hypothesis of the thesis is that “art plays important roles in the celebration of Asogli Yam Festival”. This hypothesis has been tested in Table 9 in Chapter Four. It was revealed that out of a total of 132 respondents, 130 respondents answered yes to the question as to whether art plays roles in the celebration of the festival. Two respondents answered no, indicative of the fact that the majority believe that art really plays important roles in the celebration of Asogli Yam Festival.

The second hypothesis of the thesis is that “Asogli Yam Festival contributes to the socio-economic development of Ghana”. This hypothesis has been tested in table 12 in Chapter Four. Table 11 shows that out of a total of 132 respondents, exactly 132 respondents who represent 100% answered yes to the questions based on this hypothesis. A decisive

conclusion can therefore be drawn that Asogli Yam festival contributes to the socio-economic development of Ghana.

## **CONCLUSION**

The economic emancipation of many nations has been propelled by different approaches adopted by governments in power. The trend was changed when the researcher decided to embark on a study to explore what the people “have” and are known for. That is their identity. The identity of a people is imbedded in their general way of life which has to do with their culture. The culture of a people shows what they are capable of doing something to fight for their own survival. The so-called developed nations such as the U.S.A, Germany, Russia and France did not attain their economic freedom on a Silver Platter They fought for it. Africa is not a continent cursed with poverty. She has both

human and natural resources which when harnessed well, will help in saving the continent from abject poverty.

With these facts at hand, the researcher took a bold step to explore the culture of the people to see whether there are some assets that can be used as tools for development. To achieve this in a more practical way, a vacuum was created which generated in the interest to write about the Asogli Yam Festival. The study was therefore approached in a practical way which resulted in the formulation of objectives. Four objectives were formulated for the study. Objective one was geared towards giving a detailed account of the festival which served as a guideline for the researcher to identify the arts in the festival. This objective has been achieved as shown in chapter four of this study where a detailed account of the festival has been given with pictures for clearer understanding. The second objective was to identify the specific art forms in the festival so as to be able to state their roles. This objective has also been achieved as demonstrated in chapter five where various art forms have been classified into groups for easy inventory of their roles. The third objective was designed to throw light on the symbolic meanings of art works used in the festival as well as their spiritual roles. This objective no doubt has been realized, considering the in-depth discussion of symbolism and the spiritual role of art in chapter five. The fourth objective was based on the identification of the economic values of the festival which was aimed at bringing to light the extent of economic benefits that the country stands to derive from the festival. A conclusion can be drawn that this last objective has also been achieved as can be seen in the fifth chapter of this study where the economic features of the festival have been discussed in detail.

The study is an eye-opener for a new Ghana. A new Ghana where the youth most especially will be conversant with their own culture. The study has succeeded in exposing

the riches of the Asogli people. It has also helped in promoting the arts of the area thereby attracting more tourists to the country. With this study, readers are now aware that the economic woes of the country cannot only be solved by falling on donor countries in the sub-region for loans but with the little that we have as a people, as painted in the Asogli Yam festival, Ghana will one day 'smile on the right side of her mouth.' It is therefore incumbent on the authorities concerned to put into practice the recommendations that the study has to offer:

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To ensure that the Asogli State and the nation at large benefit from the study, the recommendations based on the main findings must be seriously considered.

Considering the high demand for arts and crafts during the Asogli Yam Festival, stringent measures should be put in place by the government and philanthropists to encourage more youth to engage in this profession by providing money for the establishment of an Art Centre in the Asogli State. This will help train more people for higher productivity. Also with the establishment of the Art Centre, good quality work will be assured and this will attract high income which will be used for development.

Farmers play very important roles in the celebration by ensuring that there is good supply of yam throughout the festive period. They must therefore be motivated and helped in every possible way by the government, through the district assemblies, local authorities and philanthropists. Loans with flexible re-payment packages should be made available to such farmers. This will increase the employment rate in the area as well as boost the income of the individual farmers. The farmers themselves should also be up and doing in order to attract such kind gestures.

Following the earlier discussions on the patronage of the Asogli Yam festival which revealed that there is a drastic fall in the strict adherence of customs, the increase in social vices such as teenage pregnancy, and drunkenness, it is recommended that a code of ethics concerning the organization of the festival be drawn and made known to all celebrants; so that anyone who goes contrary to it will be duly punished. For example, decent dressing codes should be encouraged and also the youth should be restrained from taking too much alcohol. In another submission, to ensure that the customs of the Asogli are strictly adhered to, the traditional leaders of the State should put some fear into defaulters, spelling out the wrath of the gods. In addition, all the obsolete customs such as striping oneself naked in public during the *Nubabla* ritual and “throwing” of bones to the gods should be done away with. These will ensure sanity during the celebration.

The festival games which have almost gone into oblivion due to negligence should be re-introduced. This is because they have the potential to generate income for Ghana when the necessary measures are taken to develop them. The games should thus be studied and repackaged to meet the standards of Olympic Games so as to better the life of the people. The repackaging should include the increase in the time for each game, the modification of materials with the traditional touch still visible, and the venue for the games. The



youth should also be introduced to some of these games because apart from the fact that the games have economic potentials, they also help in exercising the body.

The last but not the least, prospective researchers on the topic should conduct an in-depth study into possible ways of modifying some of the rites and rituals of the festival and bring on board those that have the ability to preserve the culture of the people.

## GLOSSARY

The following non-English words have been explained for better understanding of the work.

1. Kente: a stripe-woven fabric produced by the Asantes of Ghana.
2. Kete: a stripe-woven fabric produced by the Ewes of Ghana.
3. Asante: twi speaking tribe of the southern part of Ghana.
4. Ewes: Ewe speaking tribe of the southern part of Ghana.
5. Dufia: Senior Divisional Chief
6. Trorwo: lesser spirits
7. Gligbayi: the dagger used by the Ewes to break the wall of Notsie during their escape.

8. Bakebake: mashed yam
9. Fiaga: paramount chief
10. Zigli: powerful stool
11. Hoawo: the people of Ho
12. Asafofia: war lord
13. Agbogbomefia: title of the paramount chief of the Asoglis
14. Blabu: customary rite performers of the Asoglis
15. Vovlo: food for the gods
16. Dzohe: sacred groove
17. Asitoegbe: the day before Ho market day
18. Fufu: pounded yam, cassava, cocoyam and plantain
19. Kormedzrale: a town presently known as Akoepe where most rituals are performed  
in the Asogli State.

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## APPENDIX

**NAME OF INSTITUTION:** KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY

**DEPARTMENT:** GENERAL ART STUDIES

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

**TOPIC: THE ROLE OF ART IN THE CELEBRATION OF ASOGLI YAM**

**FESTIVAL AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT OF GHANA**

**Contact number:** 0244174024

**E-mail:** richotat @ yahoo. Com

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box

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

Gender: M ☐ F ☐

Profession/occupation.....

1) Which people celebrate Asogli Yam Festival?

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.....  
.....

2) Why do they celebrate the festival?

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.....  
.....

3) What activities constitute the festival?

.....  
.....  
.....

4) Does art play roles in the celebration of the festival? [Yes] or [No]

5) If yes, state some of these roles and if no, why?



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.....

6) Which art forms are used in the celebration of the festival?

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.....

7) Does Asogli Yam Festival possess any economic values? [Yes] or [No]

8) What are these economic values?

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.....

9) What is the patronage of the festival these days as compared to the past?

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.....

10) What do you think are the causes?

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11) How best can we improve upon the festival to make it more attractive to people?

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12) Are some of the rites and rituals obsolete and require modification? [Yes] or [No]

13) What are these obsolete rites and rituals if your answer is yes?

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.....

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.....

14) Do you have any idea about the kind of games that are performed during the festival?  
[Yes] or [No]

15) Enumerate and describe them putting into cognizance the philosophy behind.

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16) In your view, should Asogli Yam Festival be maintained? Give reasons for your answer.

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*If you have any question (s) pertaining to the topic please state below.*

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.....

Yours sincerely,

Richard Gbadegbe  
(Researcher)

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Which towns constitute the Asogli State?

2. Why is Asogli Yam festival celebrated?
3. Which activities constitute the festival?
4. Give the artistic roles found in each of the activities and state their economic significance.
5. Give a brief history of the Ewes.
6. Can you give a brief account of the historical background of the Asoglis?
7. What is the origin of yam cultivation?
8. Describe yam cultivation among the Asoglis.
9. What are some of the problems encountered in yam cultivation?
10. Give the social and cultural significance of the festival.
11. Which festival games are played during the festival?
12. Can you recount the Asogli Yam festival of the past?
13. What are the symbolic meanings of art works used during the festival?
14. outline the economic potentials of the Asogli Yam festival