

Eno-obong Usen Markson

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Abstract

African traditional folksongs constitute a vital component of orature, leveraging the nuances of indigenous languages in the articulation of social commentary through humour, satire and metaphor, thereby subverting dominant norms, interrogating patriarchal constructs, and reinscribing communal values and aesthetics. This study examines the cultural, social, and gendered significance of Ibibio women's satirical folksongs in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Ethnography of communication theory creates an understanding on how language and communication are used in cultural contexts; taking cognizance of the rules, norms and meanings behind how people speak, sing and perform in a given society. This study employed ethnographic research design which involves a combination of objective observations, semi-structured interviews and textual analysis of recorded and transcribed songs. Oral accounts, archival materials and existing documentation of Ibibio folksongs are also examined. Interviews were held with eight (8) female performers and cultural custodians from Ikot Abasi and Etinan Local Government Area to gather insights into the meanings, functions and reception of satirical songs and interviews were analysed thematically. Findings reveal that Women's Satirical Folksongs function as tools for moral instruction, cultural preservation, and community engagement, enabling women to assert their voices within a patriarchal society. However, the research highlights the rapid decline of this tradition due to modernisation, generational disregard, and lack of institutional support. The study recommended the urgent need for documentation, archiving, and promotion through agencies like FMACTCE and NCAC by means of cultural programs and education to ensure the preservation of this unique heritage for future generations.

Introduction

Satirical folksongs in Akwa Ibom State, like most other folk songs within the wide-ranging spectrum of African oral traditions, are rendered in indigenous languages. Odey and Ogar (2021, p. 127) categorise this form of rendition as poetry, arguing that pre-colonial poetry "is woven in oral performance and could be said to be highly functional, because it is close to the daily and social life of the people.". These songs are purposefully called to the task of ridicule, correcting social behavioural anomalies and provoking laughter. Historical data and folk accounts prove beyond every whit of doubt that these songs are deeply embedded in each region's oral tradition, serving as a veritable medium through which women, in the words of Ebingha and Edung (2025) are empowered with necessary vocality in the face of oppression, while also reflecting on sacrosanct societal norms. Satirical folksongs give women voice in that, through humour (masterfully spiced up by satire and metaphor), they are able to critique circumstances in which they find themselves as part of their daily cultural experience(s). These circumstances, cutting across marital prospects, societal expectations, economic hardships, etc—define the sociocultural realities of these women and, very profoundly so, shape their view of morality, culture, historical phenomena, and life in general.

Ibibio is one of the largest ethnic groups in Akwa Ibom State in southern Nigeria, with a large population of people. The Ibibio consists of 14 local government areas which are Etinan, Ikono, Ikot Abasi, Itu, Mkpak Enin, Nsit Atai, Nsit-Ubium, Nsit Ibom, Ibesikpo Asutan, Ibiono Ibom, Ini, Onna, Uruan and Uyo. This ethnic extraction has a rich history, laden with robust cultural traditions and cultural preservations cutting across folk songs and oral storytelling, all of which have proven crucial as an invaluable medium for the repository of history, conveyance of values and fostering of a deeper sense of community. Women's satirical songs are not just entertainment but powerful tools for social commentary and, at times, resistance against certain inordinate conditionings. They allow women to critique social structures without direct confrontation, often subverting power dynamics that threaten their social and emotional harmony, through wit and humour.

This study analyses folksongs and their functions within the cultural, social and gendered contexts of Ibibio. Understanding these songs based on examining the themes, performance styles and roles in both historical and contemporary context, gives an insight to the enduring power of women in the society. This study can also bring to light these diverse folk songs for the purpose of cultural preservation for future generations.

Review of Related Literature

The subject of folk songs as an effective satirical tool has gained prominence within intellectual landscapes of discourse in a way that highlights the inestimable significance of this form of African oral tradition. Scholars, critics, anthropologists and cultural enthusiasts have lent their perspectives on this area of scholarship, giving insightful hints that accentuate the beauty and relevance of orality. Ekpo, Nkanta and Effiong (2023), for instance, note that cultural heritage is expressed through language in diverse ways like folksongs, proverbs, folktales, myths, legends, etc. They note that the study of folklore has been generally useful to man in his bid to consolidate and organise his society's belief pattern, moral behaviour, customs, taboos and rituals to suit the cultural heritage milieu. Okon (2003) asserts contention that the ethnography of communication, or of speaking, is an approach within the field of sociolinguistics that offers a particular perspective for understanding language (speech) behavior in cultural and social contexts and as such, singing could be classified as language behaviour learned and performed in social contexts. She also notes that the assumption in ethnography is that every community has rules for any form of language behaviour such as greeting, conversing, insulting, praising, showing appreciation, agreeing or disagreeing.

According to Akpan-obong (2023), folk music provides women with a platform for agency, economic independence and social responsibility. Additionally, folk music accentuates women's marginalisation by reiterating negative cultural assumptions, narratives and stereotypes. It is important to pay attention to certain messages that depict certain cultures, folksongs, proverbs or narratives. Rogers (2013) corroborates this stance where he opines that music reflects and entrenches societal customs, beliefs and values. According to him, culture can have meanings, but it typically refers to the values or beliefs that are unique to an individual society. Bunting (2019) notes that the power of songs provides insight into specific issues, such as gender and gender norms and how they have progressed. However, Newton (2019) argues that it is naïve to assume that folk music rises above the general inequalities women face day-to-day. Women folksongs serve a representation which can either improve the conditions of the women or correct the wrongs in the society.

Essentially, some folksongs can be satirical, exposing human vices, abuses, shortcomings and follies to scorn or express a trenchant wit, irony, or sarcasm used to condemn and discredit vice or folly (Udosen and Anyanwu, 2022). Bande (2002) notes that folksongs are some of the ways women have derived to mock convention and the dominant discourse of patriarchy. Their narrative potency lies in their ability to satirise the surroundings without hurting directly.

The views examined here have beamed their scholarly light on the role of folk songs and satires in repositioning cultural and sociomoral values in general. Noticeably, not much has been explored on folk songs that are specific to women in terms of usage and significance. Also, very little has been appraised about the efficacy of these songs within the context of the Ibibio ethnic group. It is in this dimension that this study finds its significance as it sets out to fill this intellectual gap by examining the relevance of folk songs in the critique of human excess and sociomoral inadequacies, in a bid to underscoring the role of these renditions in safeguarding the moral fibre of the community.

The Role of Women in Ibibio Oral Traditions

Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom State in southern Nigeria are found within a patriarchal society structure. This kind of society has women under the control and leadership of men, and gender roles are established accordingly. Among the Ibibio people, socialisation of gender roles is to distinguish between men and women. Historically, women in Ibibio are faced gender by inequality and discrimination, especially in social roles and inheritance. Nana and Daniel (2023) state that in Ibibio community, daughters in the family had nothing to inherit from their fathers since they were seen as appropriate property to be inherited by men. They only inherited things like utensils and clothes from their mothers while all the father's property such as lands and houses went to the sons of the deceased. Ukpong (2014) notes that widows without male children were driven out while those who had male children were allowed to stay in the deceased's estate only on the condition of accepting to marry the deceased's brother. However, in recent times, some of these practices have been adjusted.

Traditionally, Parents in Ibibio give out their daughters' hand in marriage and before the daughters to go the husband's house, they would be given proper orientation on gender roles, thereby highlighting the fact that they would have no place to go in the event of opting to leave their husband's house, as they no longer had footing in their parents' house. Married couples in Ibibio land define gender roles traditionally and these definitions clearly drew the moral lines for what is culturally acceptable and what is considered to be deviant among them. More so, in the pre-colonial era, polygamy was the accepted norm for the Ibibio society. With this institution, women were born, raised and given out in marriage. A woman's worldview, self-concept and gender identity were nurtured within such an environment. The women played out survival spirit to be able to take care of themselves and their children. Akpan (2015; p.185) observes that the contributions of women were based on cultural gender division of labour, when before the colonial era was restricted to farm and household activities. In the face of survival, they had informal education, moral standards and expectations all woven into an unwritten tradition and culture with sets of divine punishment and records to enforce these beliefs. The folksong has its roots in the past when cultures relied on oral traditions to transmit cultural information and storytelling.

By reason of polygamy, when women had clashes with their co-wives (iban ufib) they subscribed to songs to spite each other. As time went on, women started belonging to groups,

organisations (trade and commerce) where they came together to share their plights in the society and they became more enlightened, thereby changing their scope of knowledge. They composed songs which were meant for historical orientation, emotional expression and creation of awareness on their predicaments. These songs were also utilized in the rectification of ills in the society; they were a potent force for entertainment, reinforcement of a sense of identity, and injecting cultural values into younger generations. Ibibio women played an important role in shaping communal life through their active participation in the composition and performance of these folksongs. Judging from the patriarchal society which they found themselves, some of these songs were satirical and sang with some sense of humour. Satirical folksongs allow women to comment on social issues, challenge wrong doings and hold individuals accountable, often using humor, irony and metaphor. These performances create a space where women can voice concerns about domestic roles, leadership, gender relations and moral conduct, thereby influencing public opinion and community standards.

Women also used folksongs to show solidarity, especially in events of collective labour, celebration or mourning. During communal events, folksongs did not just serve as a form of entertainment, they also united people, affirming shared experiences and emotions. Through these collective performances, women reinforce social bonds and encourage cooperation among community members. By indirectly addressing tensions through satirical verses or symbolic allusions, Ibibio women's folksongs facilitated dialogue and reflection without direct confrontation, thereby contributing in conflict resolution and reconciliation; bringing communal harmony and preserved relationship. Therefore, these folksongs were vital instruments through which women participated in governance, education and the moral shaping of the society.

From the foregoing, it cannot be overemphasised that Ibibio women have always played a central role in the preservation and transmission of oral tradition, particularly folksongs. As singers, they use songs to pass down history, moral values and communal knowledge. Through oral performances, women educate the younger generation, reinforce social norms and comment on societal issues. Their participation in oral tradition also provides a platform for expressing agency, preserving collective memory and maintaining cultural continuity within the Ibibio community.

Presentation and Discussion of Data

Ibibio folksongs are usually begun in a unique way, mainly with a call and response technique that initiates the performance that is to follow, thus:

Ìmíyún ìdí. Ìdúń àyá kpóko

We have come again. The environment will be shaken

These sonic lines serve as an introduction to folksongs. Because these songs address social vices, they are considered to be ‘table shaker’. Therefore, when women are seen presenting folksongs, wrongdoers are usually jolted. These satirical songs are presented and analysed according to their themes for easier understanding. The cover a wide range of themes that include:

a. **Marriage and domestic life**

These songs critique polygamy, marital neglect or unfair treatment as can be seen in the song below:

1. Èdí kpèye èbé mí énó

Èdí kpèye èbé mí éno	Come and help me beg my husband
Èdí kpèye èbé mí éno	Come and help me beg my husband
Ŷak ñduŋ ūfók ūfók	So that I can leave in only the house
Mbók ènyín	And take care of my child

This song pictures a wife who is deeply passionate about her children. In Ibibio land, a woman is expected to stay married not just for herself but for the sake of her kids. In the past, especially in the era of polygamy, a woman's concern in the home was to take care of mainly her kids while the man is believed to offer protection to his family. The song reflects that belief that no matter what, women endure in their husband's house for their kid's sake.

2. Èbé mmókóp òdó

Èbé mmókóp òdó?	<i>Husband have you heard that?</i>
Èbé mmókóp òdó?	<i>Husband have you heard that?</i>
Èbé àkpómá ùṇo ɳkániká	<i>When husband loves you, he will give you a</i>
watch	
Àdá díonó iní ûnám ùtóm	<i>So that you can keep track of time while</i>
working	
Àkpóusúá ùnó	<i>When he hates you</i>
Nyàrátón áté	<i>He gives you less, says that,</i>
sìné ké èsít ikót	<i>You should remain inside the bush</i>
tuá dó kpá	<i>And cry till you die.</i>

This song describes two contrasting marriage scenarios; one in which the husband loves his wife and one where he does not. It could be for women in polygamous homes, where a man cherishes the other wife but does not regard the other. The woman sings this song to confirm to the man that she is aware of the maltreatment he has been subjecting her into and that she knows that it is because of his lack of love for her. A man that loves his wife will not want his wife to suffer—as seen in this song, *Èbé àkpómá ùṇo ɳkániká*, *Àdá díonó iní ûnám ùtóm*, the husband makes sure that the wife is not burdened with so much responsibilities. Whereas if he does not love the wife as much, he will not care about how she suffers and the pains she bears to survive with her children. Rather, he would give her less which will make her want to work more in order to survive.

3. Èbé àdó ɔbufá

Èbé àdó ɔbufá	<i>Husband has remarried</i>
Mmá àṣiáń idem	<i>The woman is fulfilled</i>
Ñwan ñyin kúsiáń idem	<i>Our co-wife don't fill fulfilled</i>
Ké èbé ñyiń àkéré ñdàràké	<i>Because our husband gives no joy</i>

The lyrics here address polygamy, especially in a situation where a man does not take care of his wives. When a woman is newly married, it is common for her to be happy and feel fulfilled, as marriage is

regarded to be what completes a woman, to the Ibibios. Her co-wife(wives) sound(s) a warning to her, that she should not be overjoyed because their husband does not show affection and love for so long. He rather displays affection for his newly married wife and thereafter, shows her, his true self which the other wife(wives) consider(s) as despicable.

4. **Ńwán ìmá èbé**

<i>Ńwán ìmá èbé</i>	<i>Husband's favourite wife</i>
<i>Àmén idém àmó àním</i>	<i>Makes jest of herself</i>
<i>Àkpókpó ñsá</i>	<i>in the morning</i>
<i>Èyó àmásieře</i>	<i>When morning comes,</i>
<i>Àmén idém àmó àním</i>	<i>She makes jest of herself</i>
<i>Àkpókpó ñsá</i>	

This singer sings about a woman who is loved by her husband, especially in a polygamous home. A man who loves his wife provides for her, making the wife not to be involved with rigorous work like other women. As a result, she gallivants around, gathering gossips so that she could discuss with her husband. This act of hers makes the women to condemn her, using this song, they imply that they are not proud of her doings, rather, they are ashamed of her – as a woman is supposed to be more responsible in her home.

5. **Àyá'dád inó èbé**

<i>Àyá'dád inó èbé</i>	<i>She'll sell me out to husband</i>
<i>Àkámá útāfi</i>	<i>Keyholder</i>
<i>Àyá'dád inó èbé</i>	<i>Will sell me out to my husband</i>
<i>Kúkúkúkú uuh!</i>	<i>(Exclamation)</i>

This song especially concerns women in polygamous homes, who are cautious of their co-wives, those considered to be their husband's favourite wife. The husband listens more to his favourite wife and when it comes to her, his judgment towards his other wives is beclouded—the favourite wife comes first, in every of his decisions. The singer must have done something wrong and she cries because her co-wife, who is their husband's favourite, must have caught her in the act which in other words, she is in trouble. The favourite wife is considered as the key to the husband's heart as well as key to the house. The exclamation at the end of the song makes it sound like a mockery to the favourite wife, in her role to always gossip about other women's affairs to the husband.

b. **Economic hardship and labour**

These songs ridicule men who fail to provide while women bear the economic burden.

6. **Ìdíok èbé àbén èkpóròkó àním ké èsá mmí oo**

<i>Ìdíok èbé àbén èkpóròkó àním ké èsá mmí oo</i>	<i>Bad husband brings stock fish to the frontage</i>
<i>Èkpóròkó idóhó òffón àmí íbán èsíñéké</i>	<i>Stock fish is not clothes that women wear</i>
<i>Nyá dòrò ñduók</i>	<i>I'll throw it</i>

This song speaks out on how a bad husband can be. She states that her husband is not good enough because he is selfish. He only considers himself, takes care of his needs and ignores the needs of his wife. He considers his wife as his cook and pretends not to know that a woman has basic needs which should be attended to by her husband. The woman in her bid to show her displeasure, resorts to protest as seen in the song where she says, *Nyá dòró ɳduók*.

7. **Mbók ètéghé ènyé te ùdót**

<i>Mbók ètéghé ènyé te ùdót</i>	<i>I cook okro, he said it draws</i>
<i>Mbók ibába ènyé te ùkpáféd</i>	<i>I cook ibaba, he said it drags</i>
<i>Sé idém àdíá àfañ dó</i>	<i>See someone that eats afang</i>
<i>Sé idém àdíá àfañ dó</i>	<i>See someone that eats afang</i>

Food is used in this song to lampoon an irresponsible man who complains a lot. Whether his wife does the right thing or not, he is still bent on complaining. This song in a way shows the tiredness of women over their husband's constant nagging. In this song the woman tries to manage the resources at hand but her husband keeps frustrating her with his complaints, whereas in reality, he does not provide the family as much as making the wife live lavishly as the man envisions. In most cases, the man leaves the woman to fend for herself and their children and then he comes home and still expects a warm welcome and a richly delicious meal.

c. **Gender roles and expectation**

This highlights satirical takes on male dominance and social restrictions.

8. **Kú'dá èdém ünsé**

	Response
<i>Kú'dá èdém ünsé.</i>	<i>Öwí yo oh</i>
<i>Nkómmó àfó àdó ìnó.</i>	<i>Öwí yo oh</i>
<i>Ubók ñká mfó ènék unek afo üneke mbák ùbét</i> <i>Stop peeping at me</i>	
<i>I'm not saying you're a thief</i>	
<i>Your mates are dancing but you can't dance for the fear of your husband</i>	

This song came about during the colonial period when women started participating in politics and development. However, given the patriarchal nature of the Ibibio society, some women did not feel obligated to improve themselves. Most of them could not join in development for fear of displeasing or disrespecting their husbands; they would rather envy other women who stood out, hence its rendition. The singer states that she is not accusing the observer of anything because she has the right to observe but at the same time, she could possess the tendency of doing better. This song encourages women not to be onlookers, rather they should be agents of development.

d. **Moral and social norms**

The folksong serves as a tool for social regulation and moral education. In most cases it incorporates historical anecdotes for didactic reference. These songs reveal what corrupts and brings disorderliness to the society.

9. Ñkaná isó àfó'má

Ñkaná isó àfó'má *I face you, you love me*

Ñdiyon ñkaná èdém *When I turn my back*

Àfó kèpé òkpókpó *You size me up and down*

This song implies hatred. It talks about friends who pretend to love each other when they are together, whereas they backbite, judge and betray each other behind their backs.

10. Kú'dópó mbát ùdú'yet

Kú'dópó mbát ùdú'yet *Don't stain me mud*

Àsédó ñnámá ñkpó *I do nothing wrong*

Àfó ñtańg àwút idung *Yet you tell me to the world*

This song talks condemns the habit of gossiping. The singer is reprimanding a gossip who wants to involve her in gists that do not concern her. A gossip is known to spread stories around and therefore, looks for measures in which information can be gotten. A gossip tends to also spread fake information, particularly when there is no appropriate information about what is talked about. In typical Ibibio communities, people live communal lives, therefore gossips spread like wildfire and sometimes, the people involved in the gossip are usually called out for open confrontation which brings about confusion and fights. The term, *Kú'dópó mbát ùdú'yet* in this song serves as a warning to the gossips, telling them not to drag her name or involve her in unnecessary shameless talks. The singer does not want to associate with someone who is regarded as a gossip, for the fear of loss of integrity.

11. Èbó ke mkpí siàṇá

Èbó ke mkpí siàṇá? *Who said I will not show off?*

Èbó ke mkpí siàṇá? *Who said I will not show off?*

Ùñèn àkáp kúbó ñkwúá *Chickens even lay their eggs*

Àsian idém *and show off*

This song is a form of reaffirmation in the case of jealousy. It is observed that chickens fly out from where they lay eggs and even make sounds for awareness each time it comes out. It uses chickens to demonstrate the importance of showing off as it emphasises that if chickens can show off, who is she not to show off? It tells the society that there is no need to beat one's self up on other people's achievements but rather they should learn how to be proud of the little they have. It employs the use of metaphor in sending its message.

12. Mmém mmém èyín ìmá

Mmém mmém èyín ìmá *Soft love eye*

Àmáyòmmó àyá ùdóřo *When you get pregnant, you'll be tired.*

This song talks about a girl or woman who goes close to men or follows them around. That if she gets pregnant, her life will be filled with frustration. It can also serve as a warning for young girls to be wary

of men in order to avoid teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy without a responsible man in Ibibio land is considered as a sign of waywardness on the girl's part. In other words, girls are advised to steer clear off men, to avoid pregnancies which will jeopardise their futures.

13. Ñyiń ìnó

Response

Ñyiń ìnó *Ùká ìdóhó àfó dó*

Little thief

Your mother is not but you are.

The singer tries to reprimand a child who forms a habit that is alien to the family. Some of these characters are taken from outside, like peer groups. The mother warns the child not to embarrass her family by developing traits which are not found in their family. The mother admonishes the child to replicate her own character in order not to bring shame to the family. This song does not only condemn stealing, it also entails other bad characters which are unwanted in the society.

14. Àmí ñkéká àfañg ɳkéné

Response

<i>Àmí ñkéká àfañg ɳkéné</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>àfañg ɳkéné</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>Ñtó ɳká òdúk àdiápá</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>òdúk àdiápá</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>Mbōn ùnìe mmá ètómó mmá</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>ètómó mmá</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>Mbōn ùnìe ñsó ètómó ñsó</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>ètómó ñsó</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>Àmí ɳsió ùkót ñtuák isóṇ</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>ñtuák isóṇ</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>Ùmá ùwô ufók ɳdókó ñné</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>ɳdókó ñné</i>	<i>Kènéné kènéné</i>
<i>té ké ènyín fó àsém Ùmaṇi</i>	<i>Břaša brasa</i>
<i>àsém Ùmaṇi.</i>	<i>Břaša</i>

I went to afang with fishing rope

Afang with fishing rope

When I reached the rope cut loose

Rope cut loose

Those that had mothers called mothers

Called mothers

Those that had fathers called fathers

Called fathers

I removed my legs and stamped on the ground

I stamped on the ground

When you get home tell woman

Tell woman

That your child speaks Umani

speaks Umani

This song talks about hopelessness and sends a message to women. In Ibibio, when people go to the bush to pluck afang, they say ká afang, in English it could be interpreted as go to afang. Nkèné on the other hand is a fishing net. It can be seen in this song, *àmí ñkéká àfang ọnkéné*, meaning that the person went to hustle and, in the process, the singer acquired losses. Those that had loved ones beckoned on their loved ones while he/she was left in a confused state – as seen in where he/she stamped his/her legs on the floor. The singer sends a message that anytime someone gets home, he/she should tell a woman that the singer has succumbed to strange circumstances which is quite laughable. Note that, Umani is a small village in Port Harcourt, close to Ikot Abasi in Akwa Ibom State, of which trade occurs between them. The language according to the Ikot Abasi people is termed as not being understandable and made fun of. The song uses satire to describe the nature at which one can be hopeless in a bid to survive without people around which you can lean on. It highlights the importance of having someone around especially in times of helplessness or unpleasant situations.

15. Lockup store

	Response
<i>Ètúk òlóckup store.</i>	<i>Ñdá àdó ɳdiá ñkpo</i>
<i>Àlóckup store.</i>	<i>Ñdá àdó ɳdiá ñkpo</i>
<i>Small lockup store.</i>	<i>I eat from there</i>
<i>Lockup store</i>	<i>I eat from there</i>

This song is mainly sung to lampoon prostitutes. Lockup store here metaphorically refers to the female genital area. It indicates that the private part is the only way they feed, through their immoral profession, they see it as a source of income. Women who are into prostitution face discrimination from women, hence this song, to satirise them.

16. Èté Ñsímá

	Response
1960 ñkébòyó ké Ùyó	<i>Mbóm èyén</i>
1960 ñkébòyó ké Ùyó	<i>Mbóm èyén</i>
Èté Ñsímá àkéyóm ɳdiká Àbá	<i>Mbóm èyén</i>
Èté Ñsímá àyéré mmoñ èsié àmá	<i>Mbóm èyén</i>
Èté Ñsímá àmén àfoñ àmó àsíné	<i>Mbóm èyén</i>
Èté Ñsímá àstárt mótò àmó	<i>Mbóm èyén</i>

Èkprí èyén òró òkójóm ñdító ûneŋ	Mbóm èyén
Èkprí èyén òró òkótó mòtó èsié	Mbóm èyén
Èkprí èyén òró àmábiat mòtó èsié	Mbóm èyén
Èté Ñsímá òdúk mòtó èsié	Mbóm èyén
Èté Ñsímá àsió ikáñ èsié èdí oo	Mbóm èyén
Èté Ñsímá òtóp èyén òró òwút oo	Mbóm èyén
Èyák èkwó Ñsímá	Mbóm mbóm Ñsímá, Mbóm èyén
Èyák èkwó Ñsímá	Mbóm mbóm Ñsímá, Mbóm èyén
Ñsímá òwót èyén òwó	Mbóm mbóm Ñsímá, Mbóm èyén
Òwót èyén òwó ìtuáhá ùduók oo	Mbóm mbóm Ñsímá, Mbóm èyén
Òwót èyén òwó ikópó mbom oo.	Mbóm mbóm Ñsímá, Mbóm èyén
Ñsímá!	Mbóm mbóm Ñsímá, Mbóm èyén
Ñsímá!	Mbóm mbóm Ñsímá, Mbóm èyén
<i>In 1960 I was passing in Uyo</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>In 1960 I was passing in Uyo</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>Mr. Nsima wanted to go to Aba</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>Mr. Nsima finished bathing</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>Mr. Nsima wore his clothes</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>Mr. Nsima entered his car and turned the ignition</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>That small child wanted to hit chicken</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>That small child hit his car</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>Mr. Nsima entered his car</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>Mr. Nsima brought out his gun</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>Mr. Nsima shot the child to death</i>	<i>Sorry child</i>
<i>Let's sing Nsima</i>	<i>Sorry sorry Nsima, sorry</i>
<i>child</i>	
<i>Let's sing Nsima</i>	<i>Sorry sorry Nsima, sorry</i>
<i>child</i>	
<i>Nsima the murderer</i>	<i>Sorry sorry Nsima, sorry</i>
<i>child</i>	
<i>Killed someone's child without pity</i>	<i>Sorry sorry Nsima, sorry</i>
<i>child</i>	
<i>Killed someone's child without remorse</i>	<i>Sorry sorry Nsima, sorry child</i>
<i>Nsima!</i>	<i>Sorry sorry Nsima, sorry</i>
<i>child</i>	
<i>Nsima!</i>	<i>Sorry sorry Nsima, sorry</i>
<i>child</i>	

This song highlights historical events and teach a moral lesson. It reveals the ills faced in the society and refers it as a rather sad situation as seen in the response, *Sorry child*. The child in this song indicates the vulnerable masses whose little mistakes can lead them to untold difficulties. In this song, women enlighten the society be kind and not let anger take over them. This event is claimed to have happened in the 1960s. Mr. Nsima is seen to have been a wealthy man and in other words, in the present day, this song reveals how the rich oppress the poor.

e. **Cultural preservation**

Songs are not just used as means for cultural preservation but also to educate on certain practices which could strengthen the community's cultural heritage.

17. Ùmá ùnié èyén ùdók àná ìnwáñ

Ùmá ùnié èyén ùdók àná ìnwáñ *When you have a child, your door is open*

Mmùnèhé èyén ñkákád èyétá ùdók *When you don't have a child, termites will eat your door*

This song depicts the joy of motherhood. It encourages people to procreate and place value on their children because they bring joy to their parents as well as having whom to take care of them in old age. *Ùmá ùnié èyén ùdók àná ìnwáñ*, used here ironically means that if you have a child, your doors will always be open, especially with your child running around and making the place lively. Whereas people who do not have children experience silence and loneliness. In Ibibio land, children are very important, most especially the male child, whom they believe will bring continuity in the family name. Through children, the legacy of parents is preserved. Even in the community, it is the children that make up the next generation thereby handing down and preserving culture.

18. Kòkòrikökö!

<i>Kòkòrikökö!</i>	<i>(Sound of a bird)</i>
<i>Èyó èsieré!</i>	<i>Morning have come!</i>
<i>Ñsànkót ké èsít ìkót</i>	<i>A bird in the bush</i>
<i>Ònó ñwed èsók òbió</i>	<i>Sends a note to the community</i>
<i>Àté mbùfó èdémèré</i>	<i>That you should wake up</i>
<i>Ké ùbák ùnám èdí ùbák ùmá</i> <i>finish</i>	<i>Because early start begats early</i>
<i>Èdian ùbók èdí ibóp òbió</i>	<i>Join hands let's build the society</i>
<i>Ké ùbák ùnám èdí ùbák ùmá</i> <i>finish</i>	<i>Because early start begats early</i>
<i>Èdá èsít ìmá èbóp òbió</i>	<i>Let's build the society with love</i>
<i>Ké ùbák ùnám èdí ùbák ùmá</i> <i>finish</i>	<i>Because early start begats early</i>
<i>Èdá òkúk èdibóp òbió</i>	<i>Bring money let's build the society</i>

This song starts on a figurative note, using a bird to pass information. *Ñsànkót* is a bird that has characteristics of a chicken. Having seen the irregularities in the community, the women used a bird, far away in the bush to pass their message. It implies a wake-up call for members of the community to wake up from their slumber and build their community. It highlights the need for both leaders and citizens to join hands and their resources to do whatever it takes to upgrade their community on time, rather than procrastinate. Women are forces of development in the society; therefore, this song tells people to learn how to preserve their society through positive measures and togetherness.

f. **Love and romance**

Satirical songs are also used by women to let their husbands know their state of emotion as it is not in the nature of women to openly speak on such.

19. Èbé idá fükó àfró sé

Èbé idá fükó àfró sé	<i>Strong husband open afro and see</i>
Èbé idá fükó àfró sé	<i>Strong husband open afro and see</i>
Àmí ñké ùwát ké ûsuñ Calabar-Itu	<i>I went for a ride along Calabar-Itu</i>

fükó àfró sé

This song is made in a setting that depicts a woman who went on a journey and has been sex starved. Women in those days could not communicate freely on different matters especially concerning bedroom activities. In order to show their lascivious thoughts, songs like this were used to make their men aware of their state of mind rather than coming out plain to tell the husband how they feel. The expression, *Èbé idá fükó àfró sé* means that they have been sex-starved, therefore making their female genital area bushy. Afro there does not necessarily mean that they have not shaved, it means that, that area has not been touched by their men for a period of time (as seen in *Àmí ñké ùwát ké ûsuñ Calabar-Itu*, meaning that time travels far and they cannot keep waiting for it).

It is worthy to note that in the past, women assembled together in the evenings and performed these folksongs. However, as time went on, people were not able to meet up with the daily gatherings, therefore, Ibibio women perform these satirical folksongs during their market days, women meetings, festivals such as funerals, weddings, etc. These folksongs are also performed in communal functions such as during subtle protests, a means of showing solidarity. Hymes in his theory notes that communication is not only about what is said, but also who says it, to whom, in what setting, for what purpose, and under what cultural norms.

Findings of the Study

From the foregoing, a number of insightful findings have been made, which include the following:

- i. Ibibio women use satirical folksongs as a strategic form of social commentary and community engagement. These songs serve not only as entertainment but also as powerful tools with meanings which serves as moral instruction, cultural preservation, and the reinforcement of communal values.

Through satire women are able to criticise certain norms in the society which are unacceptable to them, the men's irresponsibility, domestic conflicts and even expose corruption.

ii. These songs serve as a means of correction in the society. By publicly ridiculing unacceptable behaviours in a social and entertaining format, Ibibio women contribute to changes in the society whereby adjustments are made towards shifting to a positive side. The society is constantly reminded on the disparities between ills and goods.

3. The sonic renditions highlight beauty, power and importance of Ibibio women in oral tradition. Despite operating in a patriarchal society, women use folksongs to assert their voices, challenge power structures, and influence communal discourse.

4. Through these songs, the oral tradition continues to thrive in the contemporary society and it also highlights the role of Ibibio women as agents of cultural transmission and preservation.

5. Most of these folksongs are becoming extinct as younger generations no longer pick interest in learning them.

Conclusion

This study has examined the role of Ibibio women in using satirical folksongs as a means of social expression, critique, and community engagement. It highlights how these songs serve multiple functions such as; educational, corrective, social and cultural, within the oral tradition. Through satire, women address issues such as male irresponsibility, social injustice, and moral decline, using humor and metaphor to convey serious messages in a non-confrontational manner.

The research reveals that these folksongs are potent tools for asserting women's voices in a patriarchal society and giving what Edung and Owan (2024) term "a far-reaching outcry against social and political wrongs" (182). By performing satire in communal settings, Ibibio women influence public opinion, uphold cultural values, and participate in the moral shaping of their communities. Their contributions reflect both creativity and agency, underscoring the importance of women's roles in the preservation and evolution of oral literature. Conclusively, the study affirms the significance of satire in Ibibio oral tradition and the central role women play in sustaining its vibrancy and relevance in contemporary society.

Recommendations

This study recommends that: The Federal Ministry of Art, Culture, Tourism, and the Creative Economy (FMACTCE) and National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) should take proactive measures in showcasing Ibibio women's satirical folksongs by documenting (including audio and video recording), archiving and promotion through cultural programmes, academic research, and community initiatives to avoid loss due to extinction and generational shifts. Women should also educate their children on the importance of these satirical folksongs and teach them how to perform them. Greater recognition should be given to their role in preserving cultural values and promoting social accountability through oral tradition.

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