

# Minstrels and Global Reconstruction

Ogbalu Uche Janet

Igbo, Department, Anambra State University  
Igbariam Campus  
Phone No: 07038045003  
E-mail: ogbalujanu@gmail.com.

**Abstract:** *Minstrels are found in many parts of the world performing primarily in the king's court where they sing praises to the king and members of his cabinet, praising their prominent sons and daughters, recounting the good deeds of their ancestors and also singing the history of their community thereby entertaining the audience with these displays. In recent time, there has been cry from eminent sons and daughters of Igbo tribe that Igbo language and its culture will go into extinction in near future if nothing is done to promote this language. Their observation is based on the fact that Igbo people do not love their language and culture. They love foreign language and foreign culture to the detriment of their language and culture. The writer, having observed the performances of the traditional minstrels and their audience, found out that Igbo people are so much endeared to the songs of traditional minstrels. They patronize these minstrels. In this paper, the writer grouped Igbo land into three zones basing on the attitude of the people from each zone to their minstrels and their performance. From that, the writer determines the position of the minstrels in Igbo land.*

**Keywords:** Minstrels, Igbo, Ancestors, Audience, Performance

## INTRODUCTION

The existence of minstrels can be said to be as old as that community in which the minstrel is found. In support of the above claim Waldo Clarke (1976:1) asserts that:

*The earliest form of literature -was a simple account of some heroic deed recited or sung by that special gifted individual who becomes known as a bard or minstrel. These early poems describe in simple rhythm, the exploits of a hero, usually the king or leader of the tribe who has performed some deed of valour centering on the slaughter either of a notable beast or of a notorious enemy. These poems generally involve the description of a journey and sometimes a war or serious battle.*

This is to say that minstrels exist in Europe since the medieval period. In like manner it is equally as old as various communities in various parts of the world where minstrels perform in the presence of listening audience. Bamidele in *Iba* (2003:178) aligns that:

*During festivals, minstrels entertain audience. They sing praise in favour of a person. Example of Yoruba praise chants has many forms: lineage praise, chants, praise chants of towns and the praise chants of the exploits of several historical warriors or kings or gods.*

Niane in Okpewho (1990:23) from Senegal refers to minstrels as "carriers of our tradition." He notes that the authentic minstrels are found in villages and have similar characteristics in singing their songs. In like manner Azuonye in Okpewho (1990:42) asserts:

*Among the numerous singers of heroic tales in the formerly war like Igbo community of Ohafia in Cross River area of south-eastern Nigeria by far the most widely acclaimed virtuous in the 1970 's was a peasant farmer with a mellow singing voice named Kaaalu Igirigiri ... was like his predecessors and contemporaries, a non professional but specialist amateur. He was also a highly articulate connoisseur and critic, whose views on the functions and aesthetic principles of oral epic song, as practiced by Ohafia people seem to be truly representative of the tradition as a whole.*

The traditional minstrel is not a product of any formal school. He was brought up under the tradition of his people. He acquires the skills for his performance by watching other minstrels perform or he is sent to the minstrel by his parents to learn the act. Generally, minstrel's performance is not a profession but a hobby. Goody and Watt in Obiechina (1967:142) rightly observe that:

*In agricultural village dwellers in Africa, story telling is part of the*

*seasoned rhythm of life and closely related to the ecology of a particular area. Among all agricultural village dwellers in Africa, the ideal story telling period is after harvest when there is moon light.*

In most cases in these areas, the minstrels tell these stories in accompaniment of musical instrument known as "Ekpili". Minstrels are found in all parts of the world and they perform almost the same functions in their various societies: They entertain audience, they are the custodian of the people's tradition. They comment on various issues of the day that affect the lives of members of the society. They educate members of the society.

### **The Root of Emergence of Minstrels**

Ogbalu (2009:20) aligns that the root of minstrel's songs are the off spring of story-telling sessions which were introduced to the child at a very tender age. Ogbalu says thus:

*Because the events of oral literature were introduced to children very early in life and in a relaxed atmosphere and used as a form of entertainment and education, children grow up with these stories. In other words, these stories became part and parcel of their lives. They are therefore so much attached to these stories. Later in their adult lives, as children move out to big cities and urban towns, the lessons from these folk stories continue to influence their lives.*

Obiechina (1990:33) notes that:

*Within the scope of folktale, there is plenty room for the exercise of individual imagination and originality. Only the outline of a story needs to be known. The narrator takes outline and is completely free to embellish it with as much invention as he can muster and in fact, much value is attached to his resourcefulness in improvising new and interesting variations.*

Because traditional Igbo child is exposed to the events of folktales, in his matured life, he can compose any type of song and can use musical instrument to entertain his audience as minstrel Mike Ejeagha is doing in his "Akuko n'Egwu". The composition of songs by the traditional minstrels is not so difficult because once one knows the outline of the story one then can embellish it with as much invention as he can.

### **Grouping of Igbo Land into Zones Depending on the Roles of Minstrels**

Basing on the people's interest and their patronage of songs of minstrels, the Igbo land is grouped into three zones namely:

- i. Niger River Basin: Home of Romantic Epic: comprising of Local Governments of Anambra, Oyi, Ayamelum and Igbo speaking areas of Delta State,
- ii. Abia State and Igbo speaking people of Cross River State: Home of Heroic Epic
- iii. The rest of Igbo land outside these zones.

#### **i. Niger River Basin: Home of Romantic Epic**

This area is popularly known as the home of minstrels. One can rightly assert that in this area every average individual is a minstrel. Azuonye (1984:5) aligns:

*It was discovered that the Anambra river basin is in fact the home of many more tall tales of the same kind, tales which in spite of their extremely fantastic motifs are sometimes offered by their narrators and hearers alike as true account of the doings of heroes in the past.*

One will not be surprised at the emergence of such long tales 'ita' in this zone because their occupation is fishing and farming. In this area, communal fishing used to be quite common. Minstrels narrate their tales during "iji" period when Omambara River over flows its bank. During this period, as the river is receding, many fishes are left behind and people catch them in large quantity each day and smoking of these fishes lasted throughout the night till the early hours of the next day. To keep the fishermen awake during the tedious smoking of the fishes, it was required that tall tales of adventure with fascinating details are told with accompaniment of musical instrument 'ekpili.' This performance feature many choric songs which call for audience participation from time to time. This helps to keep the fishermen alert throughout their smoking exercise.

Apart from smoking of fishes during iji period, minstrels feature prominently during these periods:

- i. In the dry season November to January after yam harvest - resting period, minstrels perform to entertain the audience and get them relaxed from their tedious labour of harvesting.
- ii. During girls annual puberty ceremony, during this ceremony, people gather in the girls homes during which minstrels entertain the guests. People give them money in appreciation of their performance,
- iii. During story telling and wrestling competitions,
- iv. During Ita Okochi

During this period, prominent minstrels in the community compete amongst themselves to determine the best minstrel in the community. The winner is recognized

and rewarded. This competition takes place during 'Okochi' or folk festival in the community during this period people from all works of life both within and outside the country are invited. They come to witness this ceremony. Example of Tale from this area is the tale of Ozoemena Ndiva as performed by Onwura Ikem (as contained in Azuonye 1984:5). The story goes thus:

*Ozoemene Ndiva, the hero is specially created by 'Chukwu' God and planted in his mothers womb. His gestation period in the mother's womb is seven years. He has two super natural aides - Uchevune (his mentor) and Ezeagu the (witch). At the age of seven, he demands and is provided with a farming machet of extra ordinary width and length. This machet is specially forged for him by the whole of the Awka smithing community. With it, Ozoemene clears a huge tract of land stretching from Aguleri to Nsukka with only six strokes of machet. His purpose of clearing this forest is to farm on this land in order to feed his people, but during this clearing, he*

*Ozoemena nwe gbaa arọ naasaa a muli a,  
O nwee kenee nne a na nna a  
O zaa ya.  
O si va:  
Na unu ga-awalị a oḡu na mma;  
Ka nya wee nwuta anị lụo ọlu,  
Maka na agụụ na-enye ndị be ye nsogbu  
Nna ya bụ Ndiva wee kwe nwa a.*

About this tale, Azuonye remarks "The epic is thus an encyclopedia codex containing details of the arts and technology of the people". In his field work in this area, Azuonye and Udechukwu recorded two more romantic epics from this area from different minstrels. These performances take several nights to accomplish. As stated earlier, this area is the home of many more tall tales, the home of minstrels. The area needs further research in order that more tales be document.

## ii. The Home of Heroic Epic

This type of epic tale is found in parts of Abia State and amongst Igbo community of Cross River State, these areas are war like community. The heroes of these songs are ordinary human beings who operate within the normal world and within a known historical age. The heroes are folk champions, they are warriors, hunters, wrestlers, artists, farmers, house wives, mothers, husbands, chiefs, medicine men etc who are motivated by love, loyalty or the spirit of community, boldly confront danger in battle, hunting or other risky enterprises in the single minded quest for personal or communal honour. The success or failure of such

*disturbs numerous bad animals that inhabit the forest. Example of such monster is Nduye - Nduye who pursues him to kill. Ozoemene flees to other lands for seven years. During this period, he comes into contact with many different kinds of monsters, peoples and communities and learns numerous technical skills and arts which he bequeaths to his people.*

Because of the competitive nature of the minstrels and their performance which is organized yearly during Okochi festivals in the area, there exist specialists in each of the tales. For example Onwurah Ikem of Abo Aguleri is specialist in Ozoemene tale. The tale takes him five nights to complete Onwura claims to have learnt the tale from the hero's supernatural mentor, Uchevune. He claims that Uchevune appeared to him several times in dream and took him through the wonderful world of Ozoemene teaching him, the names of monsters, and persons with which Ozoemene came into contact and various, knowledge he acquired at each stage and special Ozoemene songs. Ozoemene sings:

*Ozoemene became seven years since he was born. He then greeted his parents They answered him. He told them: That you will provide me a hoe and machet So as to enable him get land to farm Because hunger is a problem with our people His father Ndiva agreed with him.*

heroes stem from personal drives and the physical prowess of the individual hero. This is in contrast to what is obtained in Anambra epic which deals with fantastic heroic-fantastic world in habituated by giants, monsters in their supernatural machineries of witches and magicians. Example of tale from this area is "Nne Mgbafor" Okpewho (1990:45) as performed by minstrel Okonkwo Oke of Akaanu.

In this song, Nne Mgbafor is presented as a woman who behaved like a man. After the death of her first husband, in her native Arochukwu, she sets out fully armed and clothed like a male warrior to search for another husband. She searches in a number of localities but fails to find a suitable husband in any of them. At last he found Uduma who had not yet fulfilled his manhood as required by the heroic ethos of his age by winning a human head in battle. In other words Uduma was a coward 'ujọ' or 'onye ụju' nne Mgbafor pressurizes her husband to go to war which had just broken in Ibibioland.

Uduma goes and is slain. When the news of his death reaches Nne Mgbafor, she immediately approaches the people of Ama Achara, the patrician that took the lead in the battle. They provide her with escorts to the battle ground

where she discovers the beheaded body of her husband in a heap of slain warriors. She dutifully buries the corpse under a tree and sacrifices a goat on the grave. Three market-weeks after returning from this expedition, she assails and over

*Nwata nwaami achowa di ya  
Yaa di!  
Nwata nwaami achowa di ya  
Ya iya!  
Mgbaafọ, ọ chowa di ya  
Yaa di!  
Nwata nwaami achowa di ya  
Ya iya!  
Mgbaafọ, ọ chowa di ya  
Ya aha di!  
Ọ chowa di ya  
Ya aha di!*

There are various minstrels in this area who sing, commenting on historical events and praising their heroes and heroines in various endeavours of life among such minstrels include Kaalu Igrigiri who sings about 'Amoogu' their hero and also sings about the events of Nigerian civil war. Azuonye in Okpewho (1990:43) says "Among the three men who are recognized throughout Ohafia as belonging to the pedigree of the most accomplished singers in the history of the people's oral epic are Oke Mbe of Saga, Okonkwo Oke of Akanu and IbiamNta of Qkon."

### iii. The Rest of Igbo land

In other parts of Igbo land, there are other minstrels that feature in important social activities such as during marriage ceremony, funeral ceremony, Ofoala ceremony, and in any other social activities they are invited to perform. Their songs and performances touch important issues of life such as religious life, marriage, politics and social lives of the people. They criticize deviant characters in the society and praise good characters. Some of these minstrels include:  
i. Minstrel Morocco Maduka, a native of Ukwulu in Njikoka local government. He is a well known minstrel who performs in many parts of Igbo land and beyond in one of his songs Okechukwu and Ikpeamaonwu, two brothers.

According to him, Okechukwu the junior brother becomes more prosperous than Ikpeamaonwu, his elder brother. Realizing that he should help his elder brother for Igbo world-view demands that one should be the brother's keeper. Okechukwu was helping his brother financial and other wise. He built an up stair for him and gave him money to enable him start a meaningful business Ikpeamaonwu being greedy and jealous, felt that he, as a senior brother should help his junior brother and not the junior helping him. He therefore went to a medicine man and he prepared a medicine to kill his brother and acquire his property.

As he was returning with the medicine, the vehicle in which he was travelling had a terrible accident. Okechukwu was the only the dead casualty. When Okechukwu heard about his brother's death, he wept bitterly,

powers a young man whom she finds wandering alone at Usukpam. She chops off his head and buries his body in her husband's grave as a befitting sacrifice to her husband. Okonkwo Oke sings:

*The woman started searching for her husband  
Yaa di!  
The woman started looking for her husband  
Ya iya!  
Mgbaafọ, she is looking for her husband  
Yaa di!  
The woman started looking for her husband  
Ya iya!  
Mgbaafọ, she is looking for her husband  
Ya aha di!  
She is looking for her husband  
Ya aha di!*

asking God why his brother should die. He did not know that his brother died so that he, Okechukwu should live. Because of his kindness and open heart he has for his brother God did not allow Ikpeamaonwu to live in order to kill his innocent brother. In his song, the minstrel is projecting Igbo world-view which has it that it is good to do good always, whatever one does, one will surely going to receive the reward. Good deed is rewarded with good fortune while bad action is rewarded with suffering and death. The minstrel projects Igbo belief in the power of supernatural forces that see all actions of man. The innocent is rewarded while the wicked is punished.

Minstrel Okonkwo Asaanaabo (7,7) from Enugwu-Ukwu from Njikoka Local Government of Anambra State about an illiterate Long John the and bicycle seller. In this song Long John bought bicycle from the bicycle sellers but failed to obtain receipt from him because as an illiterate, he never knew about receipt. As he was going home with the bicycle, the bicycle seller stopped him and accused him of stealing his bicycle. The seller invited police to the scene. On his arrival, the police questioned Long John about how he got the bicycle. Long John insisted that he bought the bicycle from the seller. He was then asked to produce the receipt to prove his ownership. Long John tore out the rebel of the bicycle and showed it to the police. As he could not produce the receipt, the police asked him to produce witnessed. Long John then asked the land on which they stood to be his witness, the mango tree standing behind them to be his witness and the roundabout before them to be his witness. The police then took him to cell and gave the bicycle to the bicycle seller as authentic owner.

Coming to the scene of this incident with the bicycle a day later, the bicycle seller had a terrible accident and died on the spot and nothing happened to the bicycle. The police on his arriving to the spot and seeing what happen brought Long John out from the cell and gave him back his bicycle. He told him that those forces he invited to be his witness had acted on his behalf.

In this song, the minstrel is stressing on the need of individual to be educated. He is also stressing on the need for



people to be honest in dealing with his fellow human being. The Igbo people believe that whatever man does on earth the supreme God and other minor gods or deities and other forces such as land, ancestors, trees are watching and will surely punish the offender while the innocent is rewarded.

Minstrel Mike Ejeagha from Eke in Enugu State is a well known minstrel. He is known for his 'Akuko n'egwu.' His songs are based on the traditional folktales. In one of his songs, Ugomma, a beautiful young lady whose parents kept at home and provided her with everything she would need. They instructed her not to step out of their house for fear of being killed.

As the parents left one afternoon, Ugomma looked out of the window and saw three young handsome men moving around. These were spirits who had come out to warn themselves in the sun. Ugomma opened the door and ran to them. She joined them in moving about. As they were about to depart, they called Ugomma and warned her to go back to her parents for they were spirits and would soon disappear. Ugomma refused. On getting to the river where they would disappear, they jumped into the river. Ugomma equally jumped into the river. She was then transformed to stockfish. In this song, the minstrel is stressing the consequences of disobedience, Ugomma disobeyed her parents and was transformed into stock fish. From this song the myth surrounding the origin of stock fish is made known.

### **Effect of Performance of the Minstrel**

In oral literature, performance plays an indispensable role for full articulation of the song as an aesthetic experience. Finnegan (1970:2) in support of the above asserts.

*There are connection between transmission and very existence (of the song) is much more intimate one ... the significance of performance in oral literature goes beyond a mere matter of definition for the nature of the performance itself can make an important contribution to the impact of the particular literary form being rendered.*

Uzochukwu (1982: 36) aligns "In such a situation the aesthetic satisfaction is heightened as both the visual and acoustic effects are realized." This means that in performance, the performer uses these unnatural, uncommon skills which he possesses such as verbal art, body movements, facial expressions, gestures and so on. The performer realizes that the success of this performance lies on the extent these mechanism he uses arouse the sense of humour and susceptibility in the audience. The skillful artist manipulation of images induces an effective response from the audience and enhances the communication of his message.

The performer also bears in mind that he is an entertainer as well as a social critic. He controls and regulates the people's behaviour while at the same time entertains the audience. He looks at the audience and knows the composition of the audience and therefore finds suitable materials and the best method to use in sending his message across so as to produce the desired effect on them.

Because the traditional minstrels are aware of their expectations of their role in the society, they take great care in composition of their songs and the actual performance. Igbo people are highly interested in the songs and performance of the minstrels and they always patronize the minstrels. Ashton (1957:20) explaining why people have vested interest on the traditional songs of minstrels, says: "The introduction of folkways in the minstrel songs is merely to give verisimilitude to a depiction of life of a particular locality". It implants realism in the songs and makes for easy comprehension by the audience. This is achieved because as Onyekaonwu (1986:230) rightly puts it: "In oral traditional story-telling two main aspects of performance are pursued. These are the physical performance aspect (usually visual) and verbal or oral performance aspect usually acoustic)".

This follows that the senses of sight and auditory senses play a great role in the full realization of the aesthetic values of the story being rendered. Okpewho (1990:161) also adds:

*Because the experiences and expectations of the society are woven round the events of minstrel songs, the suspension of disbelief by the audience is an easy one and this also accounts for their instant corrections given to the minstrel when he deviated from normal routine of the tales of normal way of telling the story.*

The songs of traditional minstrel are the embodiment of Igbo tradition. Ogbalu (2003:3) has it that the traditional music is rhythmic, didactic, melodious and possesses aesthetic qualities" Igbo people patronized it and love it for its functional roles in the society.

### **Minstrel and Composition of Songs**

Most of the traditional minstrel like Onwura Ikem of Abo Aguleri claim that his songs were revealed to him in a dream. Minstrel Ibeoke claims that what he will sing comes with the wind. The minstrels live in the community with other member of the society they experience the event of the society with other members of the society, so the materials for the composition of their songs are taken from his experiences in the society. Basing on their experiences they advice, praise good characters in the society and also satire the deviant characters.

Their musical instrument comprise of "Okpokolo", "Ekpili" and "Ubo". They feature in all aspects of Igbo social

life such as marriage, Ofala ceremony, installation ceremony, funeral ceremony and any other social function they are invited to perform. Traditional minstrel are always busy, they are always engaged by members of the society who invite them to come and entertain the audience during their social managements.

Today the minstrels are also changing their mode of performance in order to meet with the taste of time. Their musical instrument no longer consists of *Okpoko*, *Ekpili* and *Ubo-Mkpoko* rather foreign musical instrument are added. Some even have dancing troupe who are gorgeously dressed, dancing to promote the performance of the minstrel, minstrels now have many buses and cars with which they move about and also transport their tropes and instrument to places they are invited with ease. These they got as donation from their numerous fans.

### **The Place of Minstrel Traditional Minstrel in 21st Century**

The place of traditional minstrel in Igbo society is very high. Judging from their roles in day to day activities in the society, minstrel, comment, advice, educate, criticize, praise or condemn characters in the society, basing on the established code of conduct. The place of traditional minstrel in global reconciliation in the 21 century can be summed up as Minstrel Ozoemena Nsugbe acknowledge that Igbo people are hard working. He sings:

*Malị mgbe ndi Oka jiri kpuwa egbe  
goomenti epee nuro atenshonu  
fa aka emebego otomatik raitulu*

### **Meaning**

*Since Awka people have been producing gun,  
government had never paid attentions to them  
the government had paid attention to them,  
they would have been producing automatics riffles by now.*

He further sings that during Nigeria - Biafra war, the Igbo people produced *Ogbuigwe*, with this, they fought their war. After the war, the government neglected it. If the government had paid attention, this *Ogbuigwe* could have become an international weapon. He also laments that hunger is killing people because government is neglecting farm work. Salt was got from rivers at *Ogoja* during the war but these days the government is waiting for the European and their goods.

In these excerpts, above, the minstrel is playing advisory role to both the government and her citizens he is advising the government and those on corridor of power to sit-up and be alive to their responsibility. Minstrel *Kaalu Igirigiri* from *Ohafia* sings about *Iyang Olugun*, a brave woman who was able to secure the head of a man killed in an ambush and gave them to her cowardly husband (*ujo*) to present to his people as his achievement, thus making her husband win social respect from his people. *Iyang* is thus called "ogbu etui di ya" (killer and bestower to her

husband) from this song and others similar songs from the minstrel, he portrays the people of *Ohafia* as great warriors. This account for the presence of *Ohafia* people in such towns as *Abagana*, *Ukpo*, *Nanka*, *Umudioka*, *Abatete* etc. in the olden days, they were used by these people as mercenaries during their inter communal wars.

### **Functions of Traditional Minstrel**

- i. The traditional minstrels are projecting and preserving their people's traditional. They are also custodian of their people history.
- ii. The songs of *Kaalu Igirigiri* and *Ozoemena Nsugbe* are good examples of such preservation. Various government regimes of this country have been trying to revive farming but have not succeeded. *Ozoemena Nsugbe* attributes this to their giving money to the wrong people who divert it to their selfish eds.
- iii. The traditional minstrels are not left out in the cultural change of the society since they take the materials for their composition from the environment they adapt to the cultural change of the society. They are the custodian of the people culture and history which is handed down from one generation to the other.
- iv. Igbo people have many festivals most of these festivals are celebrated in honour of the deity or it may be to mark the history of an important event in the community. *Ekeji* festival as sung by *Kaalu Igirigiri* in *Okpewho* (1990:69) is celebrated as an honour to *Amooge*, their hero. Minstrel *Ozoemena Nsugbe* sings of the origin of *Ikeji* festival among his people. According to him, it was instituted by *Chukwu*, (The Great God) in *Aro* because *Arochukwu* is the origin of Igbo people.
- v. Politics is an aspect of Igbo cultural life. In traditional Igbo society, the people struggle to put their kinsmen in position of trust these days, minstrels are involved in political campaigns. Minstrel *Morocco Maduka* attributes the problem of Nigeria to incompetent leadership and therefore asks that the leadership of the country be given to *Ubanese*. He laments over the marginalization of Igbo people in the affairs of the country by various regimes. He therefore asks that Igbo people be given a chance to rule the country. Igbo people struggle for the realization of this noble goal made Igbo leaders to come together. *Champion* (Feb 16: 2002) reports that Igbo leaders met and reiterated their resolve to capture presidential seat in 2003 polls. For the success of this goal, they urge all Igbo people to come together.

The traditional minstrels are playing active role in projecting and perpetuation of Igbo views on the matters concerning politics. This accounts why most the minstrels comment on the government of the day.

Azuonye in *Uwa Ndi Igbo* (1984:2) rightly observes that the traditional Igbo bard is not only a traditor but an intellectual and mentor of the silent majority in the rural areas who do not read news papers". This means that in rural areas, the minstrels are looked upon as the mouth piece of his society. He plays the role of critic, judge, entertainer and the custodian of the people's language and their tradition. He praises hard work and selfless service of individual in the society. He is also an entertainer.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

As Igbo language is facing a lot of problems emanating from her people's attitude to the language and culture, the minstrels through their performance are holding on to the language and culture. They are projecting Igbo language and tradition to other people's of the world through their songs and their performances, Igbo people are now returning back to their root. They are now holding the minstrels and their performances in high esteem and there is no important social functions in Igbo land which minstrels do not feature.

### **Recommendation**

As observed from the proceedings above, Igbo people have high regard for the songs of minstrels and their performance, what is needed at this stage is for more people to join in this patronage.

Fund should be made available to minstrels in order to improve their appearance and make them more attractive.

The government should organize competitions for the minstrels just as the people of Omambara are doing. The participants should be rewarded accordingly, this will help in making the minstrels work harder it will also motivate youngsters to take up such compositions and performances as a profession.

The learning of the art and its performance should be introduced in the department of music in institutions of higher learning in the country.

Influential and well-to-do in the society should also help by donating fund and to the minstrels to enhance their performances.

Grants should be given to Igbo lecturers who wish research in Igbo oral literature to do so with ease.

### **REFERENCES**

- Anizoba, O.M. (1999). "The Attitude of Igbo People towards their Language" A Paper Presented at the Seminar, Organized by the State Ministry of Education, for Igbo Language Teachers. T.T.C. Awka April 28 - 30, 1999.
- Aston, J. N. (1957). *Folklore in the Literature of Elizabeth England*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Azuonye C. (1990). "Kaalū Igirigin: The Ohaffia Singer of Tales" in *Oral Performance in Africa* Ed. I. Okpewho. Ibadan: Spectrum books.
- Azuonye, C. (1984) "Romantic Epic of Anambra Igbo: An Introductory Survey" in 'Uwa Ndi Igbo'. *Journal of*

*Igbo Life and Culture*. Vol. 2 Pp. 4 - 16. Okike Arts Centre Nsukka.

- Bamidele, L. (2005). *Iba: Essays in African Literature*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University.
- Finnegan, R. (1970). *Oral Literature in Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Goddy and Watt in Obiechina (1967). *Transition from Oral Literary Tradition*. *Presence Africana* No. 63.
- Obiechina, E. N. (1990). *Language and Theme*. Washington D. C.: Howard University Press.
- Ogbalu, U. J. (2009). *Realism in Fiction: Appreciation of Igbo Folktales and Songs*. Ph.D Dissertation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
- Ogunbiyi. Y. (1981). *Drama, and Theatre in Nigeria*. London: Pitman Press.
- Onyekaonwu G.O. (1986). *The Development of Modern Igbo Prose Fiction, 1933 – 1983: A Historical and Stylistic Survey*. Ph.D Thesis of University of Ibadan.