

**PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT IN RURAL AREAS OF IKALE AND ILAJE  
THROUGH BIRIPO TRADITIONAL MUSIC**

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**Abstract**

For several years, Nigeria has suffered environmental degradation owing to illicit activities of individuals, communities, factories and companies. The resultant effect of these activities is an unhygienic and inhabitable environment by humans and animals alike. Although government has put in some effort aimed at curbing the menace of such illicit activities, the potentials of music in stemming the tide of the increasing environmental pollution have not been adequately explored. Biripo traditional music is one of such music that communicates to individuals on the dire need to save the environment from activities that undermine the safety of inhabitants. The paper therefore aims to study the textual content of the music and unearth the environmental themes contained in them. Utilizing ethnographic and analytical methods, the paper found out that Biripo traditional music possesses eco-musicological features and continues to play a significant role in orientation of the Ikale and Ilaje on environmental issues. The paper recommends that more Biripo musicians be supported by government through sponsorship in the waxing of albums that address environmental issues in the area under study.

**Introduction**

In Nigeria, it has become common practice for several individuals to be involved in so many daily activities that may not be environmentally friendly to where they inhabit. This attitude leads to various environmental challenges, degradation and at times environmental disasters which include flooding. However, music is a vital tool that could create awareness among people who ignorantly pollute their environment become well-informed and enlightened to create a good and healthy environment for community members both in the rural and urban areas. Titus (2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, and 2022) had studied environmental degradation and pollution from different perspectives. His works engaged the issue of sea degradation and pollution, oil exploration and environmental pollution using selected popular music songs. However, this study will engage rural environmental enlightenment on degradation and pollution among the Ikale and Ilaje people of Ondo State Nigeria using Biripo traditional music as paradigm.

The paper proposes some selected Biripo songs which in recent past served as an enlightenment to the people of these two communities. Biripo music is a traditional music used in various cultural

activities among the Ikale, Ilaje and Apoi people of Ondo State. However, the scope of the paper is limited to Ikale and Ilaje people only. The music features in social and ritual functions. Several studies on traditional music had focused on forms, practice, performance and impact of such traditional music. Conversely, there is little attention drawn to the use of traditional music in engaging environmental issues.

### **Education on Environmental Enlightenment**

The rampant and continuous activities of human beings which are actually not intended to hurt or harm his environment but a quest to meet his daily needs had unknowingly caused more harms than good. Nyika and Nwema (2021) stated that previously, the needs of man considering the scarce population of humankind were limited and had no interference on nature. However, in contemporary society, population rise of humankind has constrained man's needs and consequently affected the environment negatively to the extent of threatening the sustainability of land and water (natural) resources. Indiscriminate and unplanned use of the resources by humans has led to their scarcity. This situation is further exacerbated by modernization, deforestation, pollution and rapid industrialization. Therefore, the need to devise strategies aimed at introducing and enhancing Environmental Education among people to save existent natural resources and the entire earth is indispensable (Choudhary et al., 2019). In both rural and urban spaces, various activities engaged in on a daily basis had posed threat to the wellbeing of the environment which equally made it harmful for all living creatures including humans. According to Boca and Saracli (2019), the initiatives focusing on the need for environmental protection began two centuries ago with the motive of rescuing endangered species. However, the growing indicators of environmental degradation including global warming, climate variation and change, ozone layer thinning, soil and water pollution have imposed the need for environmental protection and diversified education initiatives focused on this subject. It is from these predispositions that the awareness of the importance to act responsibly towards nature at individual and collective level has grown among humankind.

Environmental education and enlightenment in Ìkálẹ̀ and Ìlàjẹ̀ is still relatively low due to environmental illiteracy among members of the society. Taking care of the environment to most people is limited to domestic sanitation which entails sweeping the house and the surrounding. However environmental education, "resonates with the model which refers to the environment in a holistic, human-oriented approach as interacting biophysical (organisms and life support systems), social (people living together), economic (livelihood, money and services) and political (power, policy and decisions) dimensions" (Goldman et al., 2013, p. 517). For an effective and impactful environmental education and enlightenment, the cooperation of all and sundry is important, being aware of action taken and the consequences of those actions will keep majority of humanity in check in order not to cause more harm.

Anthropogenic environmental crises, which are human generated environmental problems, require solutions that are grounded in both thoughtful analysis and emotional responses, promoting the creation of social bonding and the development of a common desire to implement changes in our personal lives and society at large. Music of various genres plays a significant role in curbing this various challenges, but for rural area such as Ìkálẹ̀ and Ìlàjẹ̀, traditional music such as Bírípó which is the focus of this paper will help penetrate and appeal to the emotion of the community members for positive and participatory environmental education and enlightenment. Over the last few decades,

awareness and concern about environmental degradation have grown around the world; these concerns are shared by people of different nations, cultures, religions and social classes (Lomborg, 2001). Environmental awareness is highly significant to maintain environment quality, protect human health and use natural resources sustainable not at the expense of on-coming generations. Environmental education will only be vital if basic environmental awareness and conservative practice are included. Incidentally, grassroots and low income earners' response to environmental awareness programme is often seen as promising and mostly used to make people feel indifferent to environmental policy overtures by the government (World Resources, 2002; Thomashow, 2002). In this paper, some selected songs in Bírípo music were purposefully selected to establish the fact that traditional music could be used as a potent means in addressing environmental issues; and can equally function as an environmental enlightenment song. For example, from a large collection of about fifty Biripio songs, the following are environmental related.

In the study, Bírípo songs were engaged as the centre of analysis emphasizing the environmental elements in the songs. This implies that while Bírípo music is perceived as the hub of entertainment among the Ìkálẹ̀ and Ìlàjẹ̀, Song 1 **Okun lala**, illuminates the beauty of the ocean,  
Song 2 **Mela moko nigo**, discusses the level of farm pollution,  
Song 3 **Agbeku Iroju**, encourages farmers due to low crop harvest,  
song 4 **Origho mi ja gbeni**, animals such as cobra, python and monkey were used to describe the beauty and richness of wild lifes in the community,  
Song 5 **Eeri**, describing the relationship between the kings and the goddesses of the sea,  
Song 6 **Efufu lele**, describes the gentle breeze as a messenger of *Eledumare* (God) which will take sicknesses away from the community  
Song 7 **Egungun terere** the big tree which also shows the beauty of trees in the forest of the Ìkálẹ̀ and Ìlàjẹ̀ environs.  
Song 8 **Ota wele gbe** using flower as a representation of joy in the community and in  
song 9, **Kuwe muse** the literary meaning of this song is to shun bad character nevertheless, emphasis was on various times of the day such has morning, afternoon and evening which are elements of nature. All the above songs were pointers to the rich natural resources in Biripio music as it relates to the place and space of the Ikale and Ilaje people.

31.

Agbe

$\text{♩} = 100$

Agbeku i ro ju oo agbeku i ro ju oo agbeku i ro ju oo a ye je un ase

i gbokan te le ri oo u se a gbeyi'e ma taa sugbonso to no ju o lo run a poga ri

da me ji la oo agbe ku i ro ju oo agbeku i ro ju oo agbe ku i ro ju oo

a ye je un ase Agbeku i ro ju oo agbeku i ro ju oo agbeku i ro ju oo a ye je

un ase i gbokan te le ri oo u se a gbeyi'e ma taa sugbonso to no ju o lo

run a poga ri da me ji la oo agbe ku i ro ju oo agbeku i ro ju oo agbe

ku i ro ju oo a ye je un ase

**Song**

Ile wa daara

*Ile nwa dara agbegbe wa uma suwon*

*Emama baaje o, ile wa uma dara*

*Omi wa uma sunwon*

*Ile nwa dara agbegbe wa uma suwon*

*Emama baaje o, ile wa uma dara*

*Omi wa uma sunwon*

**English Language Translation**

Our land is good our surroundings is serene

don't pollute it, our land is good

Our water is good.

Our land is good our surroundings is serene

don't pollute it, our land is good

Our water is good.

The above song admonishes community members and reminds them of the sereneness of their land and waters. The song is an appeal to community members not to pollute the land and waters. During an interview with one of the community members on pollution in the area, Prince Adewale on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022, he made it clear that some individuals are fond of maximizing making profit in their businesses at all cost without any concern for the environment or the people who will buy from them.

He mentioned and gave example of fishermen who make use local toxic chemicals for fishing. From his views, it is quite clear that most of the environmental challenges being faced in most communities today are induced by humans, hence environmental education and enlightenment is necessary to appeal to the emotions of members of society. These authors believe this will help reduce and curb the negative effects of anthropogenic environmental challenges.

### **Caution and Warning on Environmental Pollution**

Pollution is the introduction of contaminants into the natural environment that causes adverse changes. Pollution can take the form of any substance or energy. Pollutants, the components of pollution, can be either foreign substances/energies or naturally occurring contaminants. Environmental pollution and degradation is the outcome of every unhealthy action and decision made by humanity against nature and the environment. Adebowale et.al (2008) emphasise the fact that the environmental status of coastal areas globally is reportedly being stressed due to increasing industrial, commercial and population growth associated with such areas. This is therefore of high interest because of trans-boundary movements of such pollutants. Most often, in developing countries, the infrastructural facilities at these coastal areas are not adequate to meet the needs of the large population of people, thus causing environmental deterioration due to direct waste discharge which are not controlled nor seen as global threat. Human wastes occur in the coastal area globally because of the perception that oceans have a large capacity to assimilate waste. But unfortunately, neither the estuaries nor the coastal oceans are capable of assimilating pollutants indefinitely. There is therefore need to keep warning and creating awareness for people around this area. Bírípo traditional music around Ìkálẹ̀ and Ìlàjẹ̀ area function as a tool for cautioning, warning and creating awareness on environmental pollution.

Traditional music such as Bírípo functions in practices of some traditional rites as well as ceremonies and entertainment in Ìkálẹ̀ and Ìlàjẹ̀ communities. Bírípo music performance especially by its skilled musicians addresses various issues including environmental sensitization which is currently under discussion. Below is an example of Biripo songs that warn about pollution.

#### **Anpeja**

*Anpejayo mi farifaripejalerioo,  
Eeh, anpeja,  
Ma ma mu fafari pa eja nee rioo, apeja.*

#### **English Translation**

Fishermen don't fish chemicals  
Ooo fisherman  
Fisherman don't fish chemicals

45. Anpeja

T=88

An pe ja yo mu fa ri fa ri pe ja le ri oo an pe ja yo mu  
 fa ri fa ri pe ja ne ri oo an pe ja fa ri fa ri pe ja ne  
 ri oo an pe ja An pe ja yo mu fa ri fa ri pe ja le  
 ri oo an pe ja yo mu fa ri fa ri pe ja ne ri oo  
 juwobamufa ri fa ri pe ja e ja yi le ko an pe ja mamu fa ri fa ri pe ja ne rimoo  
 an pe ja bo nee ee eeh

The Bírípó song above educates the fishermen in the community to stop using toxic chemicals for fishing. This shows evidence of such unfriendly activities of some categories of members in Ìkálẹ̀ and Ìlàjẹ̀ who constantly depend on the aqua to make a living. An oral interview with a member of the community who happens to be a fisherman, Mr. Òsámúyìwá Joel on whether he uses chemical substances for fishing, he admitted and said it was when he had no idea that it could harm the aquatic creatures; but later noted that he had turn a new leaf when he got enlightened. The above song further enlightens on the hazard of using toxic substances. The song fits in properly on environmental education which is geared towards appealing to cognitive and affective domain of community members to foster positive change.

The second is an enlightenment song on deforestation

**ONEEGEGI**

*Oneegegiyi, ji wo bagegi tan,  
 Womabo mu oo,  
 Ugiemagbodo tan noko,  
 Ji inaki le riugi to mo,  
 Oneegegi ji wo bagegi tan  
 Womabo mu oo*

**Translation**

Woodcutters after cutting a tree  
 replace it by planting another  
 don't exhaust the trees in the forest  
 allow monkeys climb trees freely  
 Woodcutters after cutting a tree  
 replace it by planting another

46. Onee ge-gi

♩ = 100

O ne ge gi yi oo\_ O ne ge gi yi oo\_ ji wo ba ge gi tan wo ma bo mu ee oo

o ne ge gi oo u gi ema\_ gbo do tan no ko ji na ki le ru gi to mo O ne ge gi oo bi wo

sege lo pa da\_ o ne ge gi oo u gi ema\_ gbo do tan no ko ji na ki le ru gi to mo

O ne ge gi oo bi wo sege lo pa da\_

The issue of deforestation in Nigeria is crucial and paramount to the process by which the forest and the wild lives can be preserved. In Nigeria today, several illegal activities are going on in the forest due to agitation and high level of unemployment among youths and poverty among the grown-ups and adults. Everyone seems to be seeking a daily meal by struggling to make a living. The need to be engaged in pursuit of survival has made many to take the forest as a business through exploitation of trees and selling of hardwoods to both local and foreign vendors without considering the benefits of forest wood to the environment. According to Ikuomola et. al(2016), the forest reserve in Nigeria is estimated to cover about 10 million hectares, which accounts for more than 10% of land area, of approximately 96.2 million hectares; 923,768 km square with a population of about 170,790 in 2006 (National Directorate of Employment, 2012). Nevertheless, in recent times, the area marked as forest lands have been decreasing steadily due to the indiscriminate felling of trees and activities of illegal loggers which have continued in virtually every part of the country. The use of traditional knowledge among members of rural communities made them believe that it is necessary to replace a tree that has been felled. Meanwhile, loggers in Nigeria are not ready to comply since majority of the woods and felled trees were done illegally. Bírípó music is a traditional music that engages various themes and subjects. It also gives direct instructions and educates the members of the community on the accepted and non-accepted actions. The music in this context has been able to admonish the

loggers who are perhaps legal or illegal, licensed or unlicensed to consider replacing every tree that has been felled.

Ikuomola et.al (2016) gave a clear picture of the situation around the Nigerian forest. He pointed out the illegalities in Nigerian forests today. He mentioned how both local and foreign companies travel out with precious wood and hardwood illegally which they sell to richer companies abroad. Ikuomola explained the corruption among some Nigerian youths, adults, security agents, forest guards, community chiefs and elders of the communities who were directly involved in forest criminality. In the process of felling trees in the forest, several wildlife had also been encountered, killed and wasted as they try to fight and secure their home which has been taken away by the loggers. According to him, there is need for the government to focus on the forest, make and enforce more regulations to secure and protect both forest reserves and the wildlife. It is quite regrettable that a nation such as Nigeria blessed with great forest resources has turned its attention only to petroleum products and has shown less concern for other sectors.

Deforestation in the country has added to the increasingly climate change effects in the nation. Scientifically speaking, the destruction of these trees has a very powerful effect on the carbon cycle and boosts the greenhouse effect as a result of the depletion of carbon (Alamu and Agbaje, 2011) and it has to be stopped or reduced drastically in every capacity. The other part of the song in example 12 above which is under discussion, it mentioned that loggers should not exterminate trees in the forest to allow the monkeys to climb trees freely. The forest is known as the home of wild animals; deforestation on the other hand can render them homeless which may lead to extinction of some species of animals. Some of these animals relocate as soon as a particular forest is no more habitable. Some wild animals may move to villages close to them, thereby causing panic and chaos among the people.

The third song is an enlightenment song on waste management

48. **Panti inu guta**

$\text{♩} = 80$

Ma ko pan ti einu gu ta oo ee eeh oo pan ti i  
 ee eeh Ma ko pan ti einu gu ta  
 no gu ta afa o mi ya le to mi ya le base wa oo o ma le ko ni le ru lo  
 o mi ya le  
 ee eeh ji ma ba ko wa lo ifo  
 Ma ko pan ti einu gu ta oo ee eeh lo  
 ee eeh ji ma ba ko wa lo ifo  
 Ma ko pan ti einu gu ta oo ee eeh lo



**PANTI NU GUTA**

Ma ko pantu ei nu guta oo,  
panti uno guta, A fa omiyale,  
To miyale ba se wa oo,  
Oma le ko ni leri lo,  
Ma ko pantu ei nu guta oo,  
Ji ma ba kowa lomo lo.

**TRANSLATION**

Don not dump waste in water channel  
waste in water channel causes flood  
when flood occurs  
it destroys properties  
don't dump waste in water channel  
May flood not sweep away our children

Waste is any substance or material which requires to be disposed off as being broken, worn out, contaminated or otherwise spoilt and as such lost its usefulness (Olorunlana, 2022). According to her, waste is produced as a result of society's attempt to solve other environmental problems such as water and air pollution. Some of these rising amounts of waste give rise to new problems such as sewage sludge and residues from cleaning of gases. The concept of *panti* in the above song is waste. The song enlightens community members that indulging in such act may bring about flooding in the community. Titus (2019) narrated the degradation and flooding that occurred in the city of Ibadan, Nigeria, due to the neglect of traditional knowledge of simple cleanliness rule. The devastating effect claimed lives and property. Therefore, maintaining personal and environment clean up can save many their lives and property. From the song above the warning is straightforward and direct. Firstly, the song states the warning: *Ma ko pantu einu guta o* (Do not dump waste in the drainage...)

Unfortunately, some community members did not adhere to this warning, as waste are still dumped beside the road which rain eventually sweeps into the water channels. The song further states the implication of the wrong choice of action by community members:

<i>panti einu guta o,</i>	waste in the drainage
<i>A fa omiyale,</i>	will cause flood disaster

The above excerpt, explained the wrong action taken against the environment, most often human actions caused more harm than good to the environment neglecting that the adverse effect and consequences will be suffered by the humans. According to Titus (2019) the neglect of ogunpa river in Ibadan, led to a terrible flood which was referred to as *Omiyale* as used in the above song. In the last part of the above song, the consequence of taking wrong decisions and actions against the environment was clearly stated:

<i>Tomiyale base wao,</i>	when flood disaster occurs
<i>Omale konileru lo,</i>	flood can sweep away our properties
<i>Ma kopantieinugutaoo,</i>	Do not dump waste in the drainage
<i>Ji ma bakowalomo lo</i>	flood will not sweep our children away

It is always better to take precautions rather than face the consequences of flood which may lead to loss of lives and property which must be avoided particularly for the sake of the children who are more vulnerable.

The fourth song is an enlightenment song on food security

**Agbe Se Di E Di E**

*Agbe se dieedieeo Womaka*  
*Hedo nililo amuleji oo,*  
*momape nutori ere ni,*  
*Ere nu kankooo,*  
*jimabasakoba un ara*

**Translation**

Farmer take it easy stop  
using excessive fertilizer  
am aware it is because of profit  
do not think of only the profit  
avoid causing harm to your customers

49. Se dieediee

*J* = 80

A gbe se di ee di ee oo... A gbe se di ee di ee oo woma ka he do ni li lo

oo a mule ee ji oo

moma pe ni to ri e re ni ere nuka koo... ji ma ba sako koba un ara

A gbe se di ee di ee oo woma ka he do ni li lo

A gbe se di ee di ee oo oo a mule ee ji oo

ni ere nu ka koo... ji ma ba sako koba un ara

The song above is an admonishment to farmers to use less fertilizer to avoid harm to human to consumers of produce. According to an online tuition centre (byjus) fertilizer is a substance used to make the soil more suitable for growing plants. In the process of having more bounteous harvest, many farmers use either natural or artificial materials added to the soil or plants to provide nutrients that will in turn promote growth and productivity. These fertilizers contain essential nutrients required by the plants, including nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus. They also enhance the water retention capacity of the soil and increase its fertility. Fertilizers are mainly classified into two main types which are organic and inorganic. As good as fertilizers, they are still known to have negative impacts on the soil, humans and the environment. For example the ingredients in the fertilizers are toxic to the skin and respiratory system. Excessive use of fertilizers is also known to damage the plants and reduce soil fertility. Leaching may occur and the fertilizers reach the rivers causing eutrophication.

**Conclusion**

One of the major differences between African traditional music and other musical styles is its ability to communicate, not only to emotions but real life issues. Biripo traditional music is one of such musical types that constantly feature themes that focus primarily on issues that directly affect a people. The environment has been one of the most abused industries of human existence, especially in Nigeria. This has negatively impacted the health and economic lives of the people. Music which is an integral aspect of the people's cultural fabric therefore becomes a major means of enlightening society about the need to save the environment from activities that could be detrimental to the human race. The study showed that Biripo traditional music has the potency of creating awareness among the people. The songs selected for the study were transcribed to enable a more vivid understanding. However, it

was observed that Biripo traditional music is yet to receive wide publicity. It is therefore recommended that government should support Biripo musicians and indeed others whose songs are centered on themes that border on environmental issues. In this age of technology and the internet, such recordings can be disseminated on the cyberspace for easy accessibility by all and sundry.

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