

MANDYENG FESTIVAL OF BEROM

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Introduction

Cultural festival is a portrayal of diverse cultural activities of a people, as well as their glamour of monumental merriments, usually with displays of various aspects of the people's culture in form of music, dance, dressing, occupation and religion of the people. This is periodically celebrated with the intention of sustaining cultural heritage, activities and development. Cultural festivals are mirrors of a community; they market its values through a celebration that serves as a unifying force which binds the people and their ways of life. In further description, a festival is an event, a communal observable fact, and practice in almost all human cultures. In such events, there are usually a variety of colorful displays of drama, music and dance. In such displays, there exist certain innermost meanings underlying them; the chronological ancestry as well as the involvement of the natives, members of neighboring communities and casual visitors to the event whose presence makes it a pure tourist affair (Falassi, 1987 and Abioye, 2017).

Traditional African festivals, in general, are deliberate concepts that are carefully planned by the traditional institutions in communities. In the case of the Berom people of Jos Plateau, the *Dagwoms* (district heads) of various borough in consent with the *Bedamajei* (village Heads) and clans found in the community will agree on a fix date for the festival, This will involve cleansing and reconciliation, libation, jubilation, horse races, merrymaking, marrying, fun fare and Hamlets organizing music and dance groups. Ogunba, (1987) opines that:

Festival rites are important for several reasons: first, they are the chief media of the religious expression of the people. Secondly the institution of the festival is in itself a giant cultural establishment which can accommodate virtually every experience of the community and mould it into its own special idiom. In practice, therefore, the festival often achieves more than mere

religious expression and has material that can be an important source for the reconstruction of Yoruba history once the idiom is understood (p. 88).

To the African communities, festivals are not mere entertainments; rather, festivals equally serve as means or system of communication. Its origin and value to the people transform into systematic culture of projecting messages in a way and manner that requires the utilization of ethics, imagery, tradition and ethos of the host culture through the festival (Ezenagu & Olatunji, 2014).

Most African cultures celebrate many festivals, due to the presence of many gods and goddesses that need to be appeased through the festivals. For instance, the Yoruba and the Igbo of Nigeria, have gods that represent different elements of nature, such as rivers, stones, storms, and forest just to mention few. Due to the metallurgical and rejuvenation, the gods are becoming more and more anthropomorphic. Okonkwo (2018) recorded two major gods of the Yoruba culture which are;

- (i) **Olódùmarè**, the supremedeity of the Yoruba ethnic group that is said to be living in the sky
- (ii) **Orishas**, the intercessors between the world and of humanity and divine and there are about forty (40) Orishas some of which are;
 - (a) **Female Orishas**: *Aja* - forest, the animals, and herbal healing; *Aje* – wealth; *Ayao* – air; *Egungun-oya* – divination; *Mawu* - the sun and moon; *Ọ̀bà* - first wife of *Sango* and *Orisha* of domesticity and marriage; *Olókun* - patron *Orisha* of the descendants of Africans who were carried away during the Atlantic Slave Trade or Middle Passage; *Ọ̀ṣun* - presides over love, intimacy, beauty, wealth and diplomacy; *Ọ̀ya* - *Orisha* of the Niger River; represents wind, lightning, fertility, fire, and magic; *Yemoja* - a mother Goddess; patron deity of women, and the *Ogun* river.
 - (b) **Male Orishas**: *Aganjú* - volcanoes, the wilderness, and rivers; *Babalú Ayé* - the Earth; strongly associated with infectious disease and healing; *Erinlẹ* - medicine, healing, and comfort, physician to the Gods; *Èṣù* - trickster, psych pomp, *Orisha* of crossroads, duality, beginnings, travelers, fertility, and death; *Ibeji* - twin *Orisha* of vitality and youth; *Kokou* - a violent warrior *Orisha*; *Ọ̀bátálá* - creator of human bodies; represents light, spiritual purity, and moral uprightness; *Oduduwa* - *Orisha* of humans; *Ọ̀gún* - presides over iron, fire, hunting, politics, and war; *Oko* - *Orisha* of

agriculture; *Osanyin* - the forest; *Osùmàrè* - rainbow serpent associated with creation and procreation; *Ọ̀soosi* - *Orisha* of the hunt and forest; *Şàngó*, also *Shango* - *Orisha* of thunder.

All the above gods and goddesses mentioned have special festivals that are still being celebrated in one way or the other in their honour. Among the Yoruba festivals is the *Eyo* festival; *Eyo* is the name of costumed dancers (spirit manifests) that come out during the festival with the aim of escorting the spirit of a dead Lagos king or high chief and to usher in the new king or chief. Other festivals celebrated among the Yoruba people are *Igogo* Festival, *Ojude* Oba Festival, *Olojo* festival, *Osun-Osogbo* festival etc.

Among the Igbo ethnic group of Nigeria are gods which they served before the advent of Christianity which are called the *Alusi*, and the supreme of all the deities is known as "*Chukwu*", meaning "great in size". However, there are smaller deities in *Odinani*, each of whom is liable for a specific aspect of nature. In Igbo folklore, these lesser *Alusi*, as elements of *Chukwu*, have their own exact use, unique traits, attributes, and functions. There are eight popular deities with each having a festival celebrated in its honour. These deities are *Amadioha*, *Ala*, *Ikenga*, *Anyanwu*, *Ekwensu*, *Njoku Ji*, *Idemili* and *Agwu*. Some common festival celebrated among the Igbo people are:

- i. Yam festival: the festival is often celebrated for two days in honour of the ancestors and the gods. During the first day of the festival, alters are created after then the villagers go to the farm to grow new yams. On the second day into festivity, young men wrestling in merriment, eating and drinking go on throughout the day.
- ii. Peace week: it is the week of unification, appeasement of the gods who are in control of all the crops as well reconciliation amongst Igbo people. This event is vital because it is followed by the gathering of the crops. It is believed that for a bumper harvest, there must be no physical abuse or harmful language (Oyesile, 2018).

The Hausa culture though greatly influence by Islamization, yet still has some deities that are still being worshipped. One of which is the *Jinn* deity (*Aljanu* or *Iskokiin* Hausa); they are the supernatural spirits. The worshipers are known as the *Yan bori* and it is their belief that the *Jinn* possesses all the powers possessed

by God. They believe that Jinn is a supernatural spirit that has the power to give or take life; give or withhold health, fortune, offspring, rain and bountiful harvest as well as peace and can unleash epidemics on their adherent when they commit sin. Those who practice *Bori* are seen as super humans such that at the slightest provocation, they collapse instantly with the seizure of Bori. They are only resuscitated at the hearing of music played by a drum. The music is provocative to the Jinn he or she is possessed by. As the music plays, the worshiper, who is in a collapse state, instantly begins to respond by performing the abnormal feats of the spirit (Abubakar, 2017).

In most cultures in Nigeria, masquerades (spirit manifest) are said to be embodiments of spirit and human world. In some cultures such as Igbo, it is believed that masquerades are spirits that spring from the soul; though it may seem as a myth to people who do not believe. The spirit manifest plays a significant entertainment role during festivals. Ogwu in Abioye (2014) makes a generalization on the beneficial role the masquerade (spirit manifest) plays during festival in Africa thus:

...masquerade play important roles in the traditional African setting, they serve as the link between the living and their dead relatives. It is believed that the dead visits the living from time to time through this medium. It is on this premise that the African traditional society was built upon and thus has helped a lot in safeguarding the society to a large extent (p.103).

With the inevitable role and symbolic reasoning on the masquerade, one may likely jump to the conclusion that all African societies have masquerades that entertain them during celebrations/festivals; that insertion is not true, as the Berom people of Plateau State do not in any way or by chance have a masquerade. They only believe in the supremaercy of *Dagwi* (the father of the sun). The chief priest and the aged were serving as the intercessors between communities and families. Due to acculturation and inculturation the idia of habalist begins to manifest bringing the concept of honorarium to the ancestor called the *Vu Vwel*.

Vu Vwel (Ancestors): They are the spirits of the deceased who enjoyed and have attained some level of spirituality, as well as attained a good old-age; married with decendants; filled with wisdom and must have possessed some

exceptionalities; must have died a natural death and were the subject of sect by their descendants. There are the good and the bad *Vwu Vwel*; people with good character at their sojourn are most likely referred as the good ancestors while people with bad character; who died of an epidemic and were not given proper burials are the antithesis. *Vu Vwel* are never in anyway being worship, they only serve as intercessors between humans and the spirit world.

The ancestors are answerable to *Dagwi* (the father of the sun) the only God the Berom people worship. The Berom people believe that *Dagwi* is the one who enable the *Vu Vwel* to interfere in the affairs of their descendants be it good or bad. The only service rendered to *Vu Vwel* which as a later development is usually the pouring of the libation beer in a special pot reserved to the ancestor in a ritual hut; only done at the time of the first fruits festival of the Berom people called *Vwana* or *Bwana*. The pouring of the beer to the ancestors is far away from the concept of worship to the deity, but another way of appeasing the ancestors which they believe are God's messengers to free themselves from plagues and to receive goodies. *Vu Vwel* are not in anyway treated as a deity because no prayer is offered to it. Even when a plague befell a community and it is believed to be from *Vu Vwel*, special prayers and sacrifices are offered through the *Vu Vwel* to *Dagwi* for cleansing and healing. (Oral interview conducted to Da Dalyop Zongo on 1st August, 2018).

Festivals across the globe are dominated by traditional music and dance of the host community. Traditional music, which is created entirely from traditional elements, bearing no stylistic affinity with western music, takes dominance. The music done during festivals represents continuity with the past with historical elements that tell of the stories of the heroes and heroine (Euba, 1969). The music further gives opportunity and leading in order that the present may be better understood. The traditional music of the Berom people especially those sung during festivity are micro-polyphonic in nature, with reference and philosophic validation of the true stories of the past. This study is purely historical such that it digs into the socio-cultural benefits derived from *Mandyeng* festival, its music and dance inclusive. Data are gathered from primary and secondary sources with aural interview granted to some experts of *Mandyeng* dance.

Nature of *Mandyeng* Festival

Mandyeng is the mother of all the festivals in Berom land. In Berom traditional calendar, the festival marks the beginning of a new year for the Berom people. Before the advent of the colonialists, the festival was a major celebration that ushers in the rainy season. The festival normally takes place between March/April. Gwom (1992) describes the *Mandyeng* festivals as:

A festival performed at the end of the dry season to usher in the rainy season. During such a time, marriages are contracted, horse racing, traditional dances, merrymaking, circumcision are performed and land matters cases resolved in all the areas occupied by the Berom satellite district (p.144).

In the past, the Berom regarded *Mandyeng* as the most vital festival as prayers are rendered to Dagwi (the supreme God). Locally brewed beer are poured to the ancestors, with total reconciliation taking place amongst families, marriages, merriments, music and dances, horse racing etc. The festival is belied that it ensures a good farming and hunting period and harvest, but not all Berom communities celebrate it. The communities that perform 'Mandyeng' claim their roots from Riyom, they include; Vwang, Kuru, Zawan, Gyel, Rim, Bachit, Bangai, Lwa, Sot, Jol, Wereng, Kwi, Gwol, Kakuruk, Kuzeng, Kurak, Kuchin, Rahos and Tahoss. Farming activities cannot commence without celebrating the festival. Today's *Mandyeng* has been stripped of all the ritual rites because of Christianity. Prayers for bumper harvest are made; and until all the rituals associated to the festival are done no one could till the ground.

Nyam (2005) recorded two basic routes of Berom migration that is the Riyom and the Kabong routes. All the Berom settlements that come from those routes have rituals and linguistic similarities as well as share certain festivals in common. In the distribution of the festival cycle, Riyom, one of the districts in Berom land plays a very vital role; such that all the villages that perform the festival must wait for Riyom to finish its own before they commence theirs. The festival, which is celebrated in a cycle, follows a sequence reenacting the migration routes, of which Riyom is the root. There are other Beroms which by migration and historical facts do not come from Riyom, but still perform the *Mandyeng* festival. Such districts are: Du, Kabong and Shen. Others who claim to have their routes in Riyom but do not perform the *Mandyeng* Festival are Ban, Tatu, and Kpang Communities; rather

they perform known as the Nshok Festiva. All these show that the celebration of the festival is a matter of choice or mere adoption (Jacobs, 1995).

Mandyeng is a festival that marks the beginning of the ritual year and the beginning of the New Year across the Berom land. There is also extinguishing of the old fires as well as lightening of a new one as it symbolize a new dawn of unity and forgiveness among the people. The lightening of a new fire is done by rubbing sticks together at the ritual grown. The festival which also signifies bounties, fruitfulness in times of children and plenty game to provide skin for clothing. The prayers for such bounties in always carried out by the Chief priest on behalf of the entire community. The festival is performed, to prepare their minds for the faming season, good harvest, many children, and plaques as well as pray for a better year with no wars. In order not to mix work with pleasure, the chief musical instruments used for the Mandyeng are immediately put away after the festival till another festival period. This implies that people should settle for work and not pleasure at all times.

Before the commencement of the festival in February or March, there are preliminary events such as the hunting expeditions and lightening of the fire at the Nott (*Kwit*) ground then followed by the Mandyeng festival proper. There is also mandyeng Ngu or Mandyeng Berang that is normally done by children during the dry season. Riyom as the root of the Mandyeng celebrates Mandyeng Ngu. The name Ngu derived from the sound of the chief instrument call the Juu (one tone flute) which children blow while they dance. The second children Mandyeng also celebrated in the dry season by children from Gyel and Vwang communities is the Mandyeng Berang (leaves Mandyeng). Children dance by waving the leaves like whisks at the Mandyeng field. Mandyeng is sometimes celebrated twice a year in Gyel Community, the practice which is not done every year, but celebrated in years which they believe is a half year according to the traditional calendar. The Mandyeng is referred to as Mandyeng Begwom (small Mandyeng) that is done around February prior to the Main Mandyeng festival in March.

Mandyeng festival, which usually begins in Riyom and lasts for three days, can last longer in some other communities. For example, in communities like Gyel and Rim, the festival lasts for five and four days respectively; and when the preliminary events such as the hunting game, lit of fire are included, it extends to

about two weeks. Fwil community follows with theirs a day after Riyom and other villages follow suit. The activities for the days are as thus:

- i. Day 1: The council fixes the announcement of the Mandyeng by the Priest-chief on an agreed date.
- ii. Day 2: Preparation of local brew, food, decoration, costumes and cosmetics, music and dancing equipment and so on.
- iii. Day 3: Day of music and dance. This moves in a regular pattern to different sites in the community. (Mandyeng ends in Riyom After three days)
- iv. Day 4: Day of visitation to loved ones, eating and drinking, dancing and horse racing etc. Here, small group of praise singers move from house to house playing guitar and singing.
- v. Day 5: Closing ceremony. Rituals are performed and musical instruments used for the ceremony are kept for another season. (Oral interview with DaBot Dumu on the 13, August 2018. Dalyop Zongo, 6 August 2018. Jacobs, 1995).

Musical Instruments/Costumes.

All the musical instruments of this festival are either blown or plucked instruments. Rattles are tied on both ankles to keep and maintain song meter while dancing. Percussive instruments such as the drums are not in any way used in this festival. The musical instruments are considered sacred and have been so passed from one generation to another and as such, the ancestors are involved. There are special rituals observed before the instruments are kept away till the next season. This ritual is performed in Riyom and Gyel communities but not performed in the rest of the communities. In Riyom for instance, the rituals are carried out by the elderly ones led by the representative of the chief-priest and the ritual family Lo Mbok who are in charge of the Mandyeng festival. The instruments are afterwards kept in the house of the priest-chief till another farming season.

In Gyel community, the significant ritual, which closes the Mandyeng festival is called the *Tusrie*. The rituals are carried out by a, non-blemish, hard-working boy and a girl that was not scarred by smallpox, who bears animal's name because of how significant the animals are to the Berom; names such as Chundung, Dachung, Bot, Kangyang etc. The boy and the girl who are selected for the ritual, usually go to the house of the custodian of the instruments and blow five times. This is believed keep the instruments in good shape for the next Mandyeng. The instruments used during the festival are as follows:

1. **Juu:** this is the chief musical instrument used during the Mandyeng festival, it is a single-tone musical instrument made from the giant cane or bamboo. The reeds are cut from two-octave set with heptatonic scale while in some places pentatonic scale and each player take a single pipe. The player blows a short rhythmic pattern in a hocket style. The notes that are designed to interlock and form an underlying melody. In Mandyeng festival, women play Juu made from giant cane while the men play those made from bamboo.

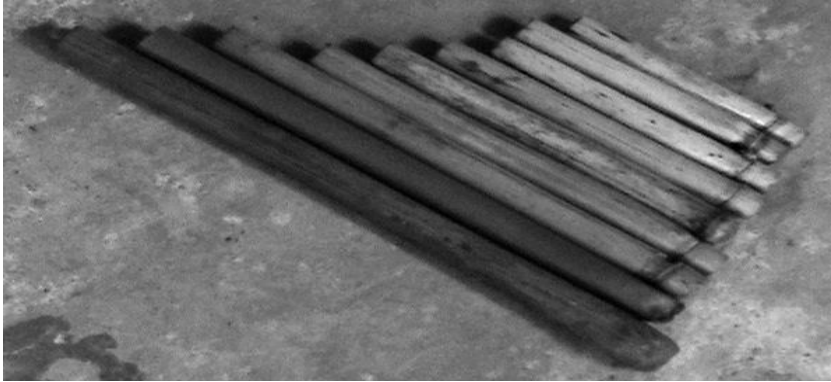


Plate 1: Complete set of *Juu*

2. **Nzing:** This is a long un-pitch trumpet; a replica of the Hausa *Kakaki*, and is constructed from a long hollow plant of about 30 to 40 meters. The instrument is strictly blown by men because it requires enough energy and puffy cheeks to be able to produce a desired sound.
3. **Agoro:** A wind instrument blown during the Mandyeng festival, it is long and masculine in nature; though not as long as the *zing*. It also uses a bell made from a giant cow horn.
4. **Durim:** This is a horn made from antelope tusk. The instrument is one of the chief instruments used at the Mandyeng festival. The horn is usually side blown most of which are un-pitched and used as a ceremonial or signal instrument during distress moments. After the festival, the instrument is put away until the next Mandyeng festival.

5. **Waga:** These are ankle rattle made from fan-palm leave and filled with rattling seeds or sharp sand. Waga is tied with strings around the ankle to keep the meter in dance.
6. **Yom Ko:** It is a common African chordophone musical instrument. The instrument is made from dried cereal-stock laid parallel and bound together. The turning of the instrument is usually pentatonic and usually played with thumb.

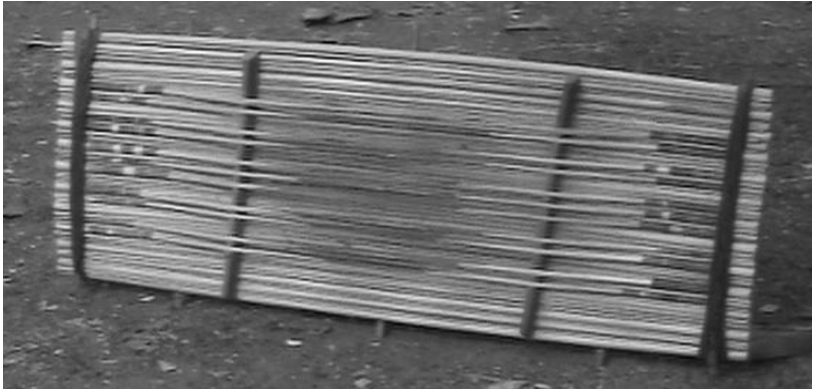


Plate 2: *Yom Ko* (Raft Zither)

7. **Yom Shi:** The second string instrument used during the Mandyeng is the Yom shi (lute). It is a spike lute. It is a fretless lute with neck make of a stick that passes through a calabash resonator, and the strings loop over it. The strings of the instrument are constructed from gut or tendons and can be made from nylon. There are two strings tuned in perfect fifth apart.



Plate 3: *Yom Shi* (Lute)

The costume used by dancers during the Mandyeng festival is captured by Gwom (1992) as thus:

In the scene, the actors and the actresses wore lion-cloth or pennies shield made of raffia, local chain on the right or left foot depending on the part of the body actively involved. The Churu, or Pwok, Nyan as these are called, were usually nicely made and exclusively worn by the men while women on their part wore Mason, another raffia made of leave form tied around the waist with leaves front, bangles, had Gyem, a handbag on left shoulder, Yobo a ring or cornstalk put on the ears or usually with a fine looking grass-made yobo for nouse call Bwereng. She would then put round her head a whitish bandage call E rwanand a stick to compliment. Common to both the males and females are the painting of legs. Heads and body with – Tee- a red clay powder ground from certain stones found deep in the ground (p:145).

In totality, modernism has grossly affected the activities of the festival; such that the festival has virtually been stripped of all its rituals and the costumes not left out. The women now tie rappers while the men wear shorts, with raffia round the waist and vest.

Socio-Cultural Functions of the Mandyeng Festival

Mandyeng festival enhances the general living of the people culturally and socially as Mbiti (1970) in Ezenagu & Olatunji (2014) outlined the following benefits:

...through festivals the life of the community is renewed. People are entertained and their tension finds outlet. It also brings together the people as a group, thus strengthening their unity and cohesion. Religious and secular values are repeated and renewed through communal festivals. Artistic talents are utilized, drama and oral communication. Where the festival involves beliefs concerning the unseen world, the link between human beings and the spirit is renewed (p.46).

The Mandyeng festival provides the basic social structures, which give grounding to social relationships and cohesion among people in society in general. The pre-Mandyeng event which is the lighting of the fire at Nott ritual ground that symbolizes the end of the old year and the beginning of the New Year ensues

reconciliatory negotiations between aggrieved clans, friends and families. The implication for not going through such a process brings cause to the entire people in the community as such; all means of reconciliation are employed in order to have a peaceful year.

The cardinal prayers of the Berom people are made to Dagwi the supreme God of the Berom people. The prayer as made by the chief-priest is aimed at thanking Dagwi for his blessings in the past year, for children, food and games. Hunting expedition is paramount; therefore, rituals of cleansing are offered to Dagwi and warriors embarking on the group game. These warriors are mandated to drink *Bwere* (local beer) in the same calabash; this is done by joining of mouths in twos while they drink the *Bwere*. The hunters also share food; the process which involves the eating of food not from the plate but by removal of the food from each other's mouth and eating same. The process is continued until it goes round and gets to everyone involved. The process might be disgusting but symbolic to the total unity of thrust and love among the hunters. The same process is also performed whenever the Berom people are going for war or a special mission.

Another symbolism that is glaring is on the choice of the musical instruments used during the festival. The *Juu* pipes are wind instruments that signify life because of the use of air in the process of sound production. The music is played in a hocket style with each single pipe tone producing a note as such; multiple tones are joined in succession to produce melodious music. Thus, the absent of one pipe will make the music incomplete. That is to say, the music brings unity, love, and reconciliation to be complete.

The festival also increases the economic activities as it attracts visitors from the neighboring communities who participate as viewers and some with their merchandise as well. During the pre-colonial celebration of the festival, trade by barter among communities was experienced during the festival. The exchange of slaves for grain and most importantly, exchange of marital vows; as Mandyeng is regarded as a good time for marriages. During the festival, marriages usually took place on the first or second day of the festival. The period is considered as the most suitable period of marriages because the brides add to the labour force of

farming. This signifies that after the festival all pleasures are left behind as the people are expected to go to farm.

In communities where they celebrate Mandyeng festival, only few marriages took place outside the Mandyeng period except for those resulting from elopement. In addition, infrastructure in various households is improved upon, such as changing of house roof from old to new grass. During the period, people of the same clans who reside in neighboring villages return to their homes to strengthen their family ties and underpin the customs and values of the community. The festival provides the avenue for elders and the leaders to augment the upholding of ethics and principle structures of their communities. As they come together for such festivals, they teach the younger ones and thereby pass on folklores to the younger generation. (Bonya, 2011).

Mandyeng Music and Dance

The most dominant and functional activity exhibited during the Mandyeng festival is music. Mbiti (1969) aptly put the functionality of music and other events during festivals as follows:

Artistic talents are utilised to the full, in form of art, music, drama and oral communication. People seize such occasions to solicit blessings from God or the departed, and there is a general feeling that the visible and the invisible worlds co-exist for the benefit of man who are at their center... festival are religious ways of implementing the values and beliefs of society. Without them African life would be dull...Human life need some relevant rituals and festival to give it both solemnity and laughter (p. 137)

The traditional music made during the Mandyeng festival is entirely created from the traditional fundamentals and has no stylistic perpetuity in western music. The music is the representation of the continuity of the past. It serves as a validity meter that evaluates the genuineness of the story of the past. The music also gives prospects of erudition, in order that the present may be better understood. The music of the festival is both instrumental and vocal. However, instrumental music and dance take dominion during the festival, the vocal aspect comes at intervals in-between the musical presentations. When the instruments are playing, vocals are suspended with only the man using the guttering sound left to go with the instrumentation. There are differences in musical patterns and dance steps

performed by every community that celebrates the festival. Each community has its own pattern of music and dance with only Kuru and Gyel communities, having great similarities in terms of their music and dance. Though the Mandyeng festival has utterly lost most of its rituals and some basic activities such as the, games, horse riding; and the days of celebration of the festival have been reduced to one day, the festival still maintains its musical style and the dance steps.

Mandyeng dance is one of the physical aspects of the festival, in which both the performer and the people dance to the rhythm of the music. The dance is not in any way dedicated to any deity and is spirit-manifest (masquerade) free, as Berom people have no known historic trace of any deity or spirit-manifest (masquerade); thus the dance is just for merriment and celebration of the new farming season. The dance steps are stylized and gender based in a square shape, with men playing the artillery instruments such as the *Zing*, *Agworo* and the *Durum* (horn) in front. Right behind the instrumentalists, one person singing guttering sounds moving in the rhythm of the dance. Behind the man making guttering sound are the male dancers whose duty is mainly to keep to the rhythm of the music produced by the ankle rattle in dance steps.

The female actors, plays the *Juu* pipe flute and their position is right behind the male dancers. They dance uniformly as they blow the *Juu* musical instrument. Every hamlet under the community performing the festival organizes its own dance group in the village square designated for that special function. The strength of the dance solely lies on the legs. The dancers swing their legs uniformly in consonance to the melody of the music.

Conclusion

Africa is a multi-cultural continent with diverse norms, values and beliefs. Therefore, it would be grossly unjust to generalize its cultural practices without going deep into a research to fish out various differences. Judging African culture from a distance, one may be tempted to believe that they all have similar cultural practices; but that is not so in most cases. Take the case of the Berom people of Jos Plateau State Nigeria where it has been confirmed that, they have no trace of spirit-manifest (masquerade) and deity.

The Berom people have very captivating festivals, which Mandyeng is the mother of them all. There are other festivals such as the Nshok and Badu that are celebrated by Berom communities that do not perform the Mandyeng festivals; such variant festivals can as well be looked into. Sympathetically, the festivals are fast going extinct. The few villages that still celebrate the festival have totally stripped the festival of all the rituals attached to it. The event has now been turned into a fun raising programme for the community. In the past, the festival was regarded as one of the vital Berom festivals that ensure good harvest and anytime the festival is successfully hosted, hunger and famine are grossly eradicated.

The sequence of Mandyeng festival over the years has generated so many hypotheses that the Mandyeng has rebuilt the migration routes taken from Riyom by an assortment of groups. There are variants in Mandyeng celebrations within the major and minor Mandyeng celebrations. These other festivals that emanated from the festival need to be dug into.

In the course of this study, the researcher was faced with lots of questions which answers are yet to come. Some of such questions are:

1. What is the main reason behind the sequential distribution of the festival? Does it have any link with the migration routes of the Berom people?
2. What explanations are there for the variants of Mandyeng festival? This needs to be properly looked into.
3. Berom people are surrounded by tribes who value and worship deities, celebrate spirit-manifests (masquerade), yet Berom is not in any known manner influenced by such patterns of worship. Could it be that Berom people have deities that they worship apart from Dagwi their supreme God?

These and many more questions need answers.

Studies into various festivals that abound in Berom land should be given some serious attention in order to salvage the tradition from going into extinction, as most young Berom boys and girls shy away from participating in the cultural activities. Festivals such as Mandyeng that bring healing, reconciliation and eradicate hunger when adopted as a national event will attract tourism that will boost the economy. A boost in agricultural yields can take Nigeria out of recession.

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