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TANGLE (TANGALE) NATION, THE QUESTION OF CULTURE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

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Abstract

The study examined the issue of culture library/preservation, as it relates to the identity and traditions of the Tangle (Tangale) people located in Southern Gombe State, Nigeria. The Tangle People form part of the 400 ethno-linguistic groups in the country with a very rich and enduring culture. The study showed that the Tangles are endowed with many attractive tangible and intangible cultural heritages which were passed down through generations. However, these cultural heritage needs to be safe-guarded by ensuring that more documentations are done for future generations which will in turn be a catalyst for sustainable development. The objective(s) of the study among others was to stimulate a robust and scholarly documentation of the Tangle culture, that will project the rich Tangle culture, it sights and prospect. The research was hinged on the UNESCO Conservation of Cultural Heritage Theory which subscribes for ensuring proper cultural transfer to the next generation.

Keywords: Nation, Question, Culture, Preservation, Development, Future and Generation

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Introduction

The importance of the history, culture and tradition of any people cannot be over emphasis as the very existence of such a people is tied to all these factors especially in a fast changing world where a people's identity is under thread every now and then by 'modernization' and 'western culture' or influence. According to the 2024 CPD Singapore Education Services "Culture is a rich tapestry of traditions, customs, beliefs, and values that define a community's identity. As societies evolve and modernize, there is a growing concern about the potential loss of cultural heritage." As worrisome as this may sound, many of the 'minor' tribes in Africa and especially Nigeria are yet to wake up to this reality. Arguably, many of the rich culture(s) and tradition(s) of

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a lot of tribes are most likely going into extinction in some decades to come if deliberate majors are not taken to avert that. According to (Pamela and John 2017) "Some cultural practices are either going or have gone into extinction while others are gradually abandoned". The younger generation that is to be saddled with the responsibility of sustaining and transferring these culture and tradition to other generations after them, lack the necessary materials, knowledge and rudiments for doing that. Arguably, any generation or a Tribe to reach its full potentials, then it should know it's history, culture and tradition both tangible and intangible in clear-cut terms. Prott. & O'keefe defines and enumerated the components that make up cultural heritage. In their opinion, "cultural heritage includes moveable objects (works of arts)-, immovable cultural objects (monuments and sites), expressive activities (language, music, dance and drama) as well as intangible customs and traditions such as proverbs, rituals and intellectual norms".

Culture library/preservation as a means of preserving this rich cultures are not exploited in many societies/communities. Here, cultural heritage which provides for transferring this cultures from one generation to another is gradually becoming extinct. Moseti I opined that "Digital preservation seems to be the most rational method of safeguarding cultural heritage. By definition, it refers to processes and activities that ensure long-term, sustained storage of, access to, and interpretation of digital information" (137). Balogun and Adjei also observed that "most of the cultural heritage collections are not presently digitized, despite its benefits". Even with the advent of technology and the internet which has made storing or preserving these cultures easier as they can even be preserved on the net, the percentage of these cultures presently on the net is very minimal compared to the number of tribes we have especially in Nigeria. Individuals do not have easy access to this vital information(s) either as reference material or for other purposes. When a people's cultural heritage is not upheld and properly transferred to the next generation, then their identity remains vulnerable.

UNESCO defines culture as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value system, tradition and beliefs (UNESCO 1982). From the above statement, culture is the totality of man, projecting it impact on all that he comes in contact with as a being. The formation of how he response to his environment and his creator is imbedded in his culture. Every culture is a pattern or version of a society's representation or interpretation of the world. According to (J J Hoenigman 2010) Culture has three elements; idea or concept, activity or behaviour and artefact or form. These elements show how naked and vulnerable a people become when they are cut off completely from their culture. One could also deduce that culture is one of the most important factor that binds a people together for the betterment of all.

Cultural heritage is defined as a legacy of the pass, which we enjoy today and we will forward it to the coming generation (UNESCO 1972). It is also said to be as something that has been preserved from the past generation and passed on to the present (UNESCO 1872). According to Oyinma Blessing 2016 "Heritages are cherished characteristic features of a society passed down from generation to generation through conscious preservation. Heritages refer to the riches of extinct and extant societies which are of historic, educational, recreational, and economic importance, preserved and handed over from one generation to another Cultural heritage forms the medium of passage of culture by different communities for many decades now." This great institution has schooled many generations on the worldviews of the community they belong to. The level of break

down in this passage is becoming a 'new normal' that many communities are very comfortable with. Many times the younger generation is accuse of alien behaviour when as it were it's behaviour would have been formed in the cultural passage process, so most times we ask them to give what they do not have. The break in the transfer of culture is a major threat to the advantageous originality a community has. For instance, stories and myths of heroes and legends that have form certain pattern or beliefs a community stands for are disappearing into thin air. CPD Singapore Education service 2024 posit that "For many cultures, traditions were originally passed down through oral storytelling. These stories served as a way to teach moral lessons, recount historical events, and connect individuals to their ancestors." These stories and beliefs were birthed on the platform of discipline, courage, focus, hard work, strong morals and so on. Onyima B N agrees with the earlier definitions of cultural heritage as "the people's cherished arts, customs, festivals, sacred or worship sites, norms, values, ideologies, dress and dress-patterns, traditional monuments and architectures, which are cherished and conserved for their historical, political, educational, recreational and religious significance among others" is known as cultural heritage (275).

Cultural documentation according to *Federation Internationale de Documentation* (FID) in (Sulistyo Basuki, 2004) is the preparation, storage, and retrieval, spreading, evaluation of information recorded in the fields of science, technology, social science and humanities. The level of negligence with regards to the attitude of proper documentation, preservation and storing of cultural and traditional material calls for serious attention across many communities. The mentored in there be any is very poor and weak. The custodians of such valuable materials seems to have vanished. Many communities don't have intentional and deliberate arrangement for storing and preservation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The history and culture of the Tangle people till date is not safe-guarded as that of other ethnic groups in Nigeria. The evidence of this is the lack of access to a rich and robust stored, preserved and documented forms of these tangible and intangible materials and the missing links and many gaps one discovers whenever the scenario of the Tangle Nation is put to critical perspective. Though certain attempts have been made by other researchers to document this history and tradition but more leaves to be desired particularly with regards to the history, clear-cut culture and traditions and methods of passing them down to younger generations. Again many of the aged(old) people and critical stakeholders of this tradition are death and the few remaining have still not been reached in regards to getting some of this vital information that form the very essence of the Tangle people. (Kure 2021) posits that presently, there is no better way to preserve and transmit a people's culture and identity to future generations than to document them through preservative media platforms like books and audio visual material. Therefore, the preservation of the traditional cultural assets of the Tangle People remains a major challenge. (Rambi Ayala 2017) expresses his concern towards the attitude of negligence of cultural heritage in Tangale land when he submitted that "we have a responsibility to preserve and protect our cultural identity or else we shall wake up tomorrow and find out that Tangale and all that makes us unique as a people become extinct and confined into the dustbin of history and I say, YAN KAYE!"

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This research work will be hinged on the UNESCO Conservation of Cultural Heritage Theory. This theory refers to the measures taken to extend the life of cultural heritage while strengthening

transmission of its significant heritage messages and values. In the domain of cultural property, the aim of conservation is to maintain the physical and cultural characteristics of the object to ensure that its value is not diminished and that it will outlive our limited time span.

The research used the qualitative approach with the case studies technique. According to Rakhmat (2000) qualitative method is used because this method is considered as a research procedure that generates descriptive data in the form of the written or spoken words and behavior of people that can be observed. This approach is directed by the background and the individual holistically. In this case, the individual or organization must not be isolated into variables or hypothesis, but need to see it as part of a whole.

Research method with the case studies technique is used because as an empirical research, it may use various sources of evidences to find out more about contemporary phenomena in the real life context. The case method is also quite flexible and freely in using as many as possible data sources that makes this research rich in data. Thus, in explaining a phenomenon or an event, researcher can be more clearly (detail), profound and comprehensive.

The collection of data will be obtained through observation, interviews, document studies, as well as archive footage from other physical devices. Informant in this study are Representatives from the seven (7) clans, Dance groups, the Tangle Native Artisans.

THE TANGALE PEOPLE

The Tangle People are geographically located in southern part of Gombe State, Nigeria. It is believed that they have been on their present place of settlement for more than 100years. Rambi Ayala in his article titled Tangale Cultural Heritage: Snake as A Totem (1) published online said Notable Tangale Authors/Historians such as Rev. Samaila Kure, Ankale Tilling Yelyel, Sariel, Usaini Gwani and Dr.Tadi among others in addition to oral tradition are ubiquitously unanimous on the belief that the Tangale people migrated from Yemen through what is now Borno State. Due to constant tribal wars, they had to keep on moving from one place to another. They settled in seven different places before they came to their present location. Some of the places where they settled include Sanum Kude (Big San) near Ngazargamu and Kupto. At Kupto they were together with the Bolewa, Waja, Songom, Kare Kare, Tera, Longuda, and some of the present neighboring tribes. It was at Kupto that the tribes parted ways to search for new land and shelter. Many of them moved into mountainous areas because they were safer places to settle, this development brought the Tangale Nation to its present empire.

Cultural Heritage Menu:

Language

The Tangale people have a unique language of communication known as Tangle. This language is so rich and flexible in context, content and usage. Any message can be passed down to hearers who hear and understand the language at all levels. Clear vowels and consonant stands out in the language. This language is full of proverbs, wise sayings and inner meanings are well established in the language. The language is also used in relation to present and past tense with well-articulated nouns, pronouns and ideophones. The language also gives attention to gender sensitivity. The language stands as codes, signs and symbols that inspires and triggers communal development. Sadly, to mention at this point that majority of the youths cannot speak this language. This research

also observed that most of the houses in the Tangale settlement don't speak the language to themselves as they mostly speak Hausa and few others speak English to their children. Arguably, gaps are constantly created when one cannot understand the language of his people. Tangle has been the language of cultural transmission from one generation to another since its inception and the challenge of a major part of the population not knowing or understanding the language has remained a major obstacle for this cultural heritage passage.

Leadership and politics

The Tangale people have a well-established and strong leadership system and institution like other ethnic groups in Nigeria and Africa. This leadership institution is structure in a way that from the family level to general society people are put under check. The research observed that the central hub of leadership among the Tangale before the coming in of the Missionaries resided with the Mai. This Mai leadership structure gave the people a much needed coverage regarding leadership. The system also made provision for other Mai's who are saddle with the responsibility of overseeing the various clans. The people have so much regards and respect for the Mai and his assistance at various level. Nobody plays with the words of the Mai as it was seen as a representative of the gods. The breakdown of law and order was well attended to by appropriate quarters responsible for that. There is a clear laid down procedure for selecting a Mai by the kingmakers. The Mai system of governance has been part and parcel of the Tangale culture and leadership. Till today, the Mai stool is still respected and regarded as one of the highest authority in the land. So far more than 10 Mais have led the people in a rule that can be best described as just and fair.

Below is the list of the Mai since 1295

NAME	PERIOD OF REIGN	DURATION ON THRONE
Mai Kiu (Giu)	1295 – 1360	65 Years
Mai Tangal	1360 – 1445	85 Years
Mai Somboro	1445 – 1505	60 Years
Mai Akwi	1525 – 1605	80 Years
Mai Asonong	1605 – 1680	75 Years
No Ruler	1680 – 1700	20 Years
Mai Wuni	1700 – 1780	80 Years
Mai Mela	1780 – 1830	50 Years
Mai Dula	1830 – 1850	20 Years
Mai Sheru I	1850 – 1865	15 Years
Mai Bilam	1865 – 1888	23 Years
Mai Wana	1888 – 1912	24 Years
Mai Yamba Palpalu	1912 – 1951	39 Years
Mai Iliyasu Maiyamba	1951 – 1986	35 Years
Mai Muhammadu Iliyasu Maiyamba	1986 – 1996	10 Years
No Ruler	1996 – 2001	5 Years
Mai Abdu Buba Maisheru II	2001 – 2021	20 Years

Law and Justice

Any society or community without well-established laws will sooner or later run into anarchy. This fact and more ensured that the Tangale traditional system made provision of various laws, penalties and places were any form of injustice is addressed. Cases were handled or settled according to their magnitude and importance in Tangale land. Different courts were set up to attend to cases as soon as they arise and appropriate persons put in place to intervene. Even though the system encourages for families to learn to settle their issues/dispute as they arise, the lower court handled by the small Mais (District heads) were on ground to take of any of such issues that cannot be resolved at family level. Major issues were forwarded to the Mai who mostly intervenes on major issues. The Mai's court was like the present day supreme court.

Occupation/Economy

The Tangale people are known for their immerse hard work for many decades now. Predominantly farmers and vast in animal rearing. Hard work was always celebrated over laziness in the Taangale community. The Biblical account of the "He who does not work should not eat" applies to what is obtainable in the Tangale tradition. No family wants to give out their daughter out in marriage to a lazy man so he is expected to farm for the family of the girl he wants to marry from and also build a hut as part of the rite for marriage. Farming and rearing of animals is not restricted to a gender in the Tangale community as both genders are expected to be active participant in any. The women were not restricted to the kitchen like in other communities as they contribute their own quota in providing for the family. Farming and rearing of animals form part of the legacy that a parent ensures to pass down to their children. Ground nuts, millets, Bambara nuts, Corns, Beniseed, Beans, Maize among others are crops that they mostly farm. Most of these crops and more are still farm till today.

Other occupation the Tangale people subscribe to include Blacksmithing, Hunting, Hand craft work, pottery and so on.

Medicine

The Tangale land had a well-established medical system to take care of sicknesses and illnesses. The native doctors who treated disease and injuries with herbs and other natural ingredient were position in different locations for that purpose. Till today, many of these herbs are used for treating sicknesses and diseases. Even though some used Spiritism in their treatment, this was to take care of diabolic challenges. The medical system even had an arrangement were patient are admitted into the hospital called "Karpada" and were discharged when they recover. The people had so much confidence in most of these treatment centres that they do not hesitate to go there when the need arises. Some clans were expert in handling some diseases like snake bite, fever, ulcers, cold, catarrh among others.

Religion

Both Christianity and Islam are second religion as far as the history of the Tangale people is concern. The people believed that there is a god somewhere in the skies who they eventually referred to as "Yamba". Prayers were made to this god over concerns and challenges by families and the entire community. The existence of spirits and demons and relating with them had a filled day. The

worship of "Yeku" became a norm and some of the people even had shrines "shur la fi mana" at their backyards where they do consultation from time to time. Prayers for rain were offered through various sacrifices and means. Arguably, there are still some Tangale people who go to the mountains to worship "Yeku". Another god that the Tangale people subscript to is "Ballin" the snake (the Tangale Totem) who spiritually fights for the land and prevent the land from the enemy. The role of Ballin in the community has not been completely wiped out till date.

Conclusion

This study has shown how paramount it is to preserve, store and document the Tangale cultural heritage materials in a way and manner were their attractiveness and value remains intact thereby bringing about essay access to these materials so that they serve as a catalyst to more sustainable development. More funding is needed to secure and procure modern equipment to project this cultural heritage for onward passage to younger generations. Digitization of the resources will make them visible. Harnessing these materials will ensure their longevity and bringing the Tangale's cultural heritage and identity to prominence. The preservation and development of Tangale culture require a multifaceted approach involving documentation, education, community involvement, technology, policy advocacy, economic development, research, and sustainability. By addressing these areas, the Tangale people can ensure that their rich cultural heritage is maintained and passed on to future generations.

Recommendation

The preservation and development of Tangale (Tangle) culture are critical issues that encompass various aspects of community life, heritage, and identity. Here are some key considerations and strategies for ensuring that the Tangale culture is preserved and developed for future generations:

1. Documentation and Archiving
   - Oral Histories: Record oral histories, stories, and traditional knowledge from elders and community members.
   - Language Preservation: Document the Tangale language through dictionaries, grammars, and recorded conversations. Encourage its use in both formal and informal settings.
   - Cultural Practices: Archive traditional ceremonies, dances, music, and crafts through videos, photographs, and written descriptions.
2. Education and Awareness
   - Curriculum Development: Integrate Tangale history, language, and culture into the local school curriculum.
   - Cultural Festivals: Organize cultural festivals and events that celebrate and showcase Tangale traditions.
   - Workshops and Training: Provide workshops and training on traditional crafts, music, and other cultural practices.
3. Community Involvement
   - Youth Engagement: Involve young people in cultural preservation activities to ensure continuity across generations.
   - Elders as Custodians: Recognize and support elders as key custodians of cultural knowledge.

- Local Organizations: Support local cultural organizations and initiatives that promote and preserve Tangale heritage.

4. Technological Integration
   - Digital Platforms: Use digital platforms to share and promote Tangale culture. This includes social media, websites, and mobile apps.
   - Virtual Archives: Create virtual archives and museums where people can access cultural artifacts and information online.
   - Online Communities: Build online communities where Tangale people and others interested in the culture can connect and share information.
5. Policy and Advocacy
   - Cultural Policies: Advocate for local, regional, and national policies that support cultural preservation and funding for cultural projects.
   - Legal Protection: Ensure legal protection for Tangale cultural heritage sites and intellectual property.
6. Economic Development
   - Tourism: Develop cultural tourism that highlights Tangale heritage, benefiting the community economically while promoting cultural awareness.
   - Crafts and Art: Support the production and sale of traditional Tangale crafts and art as a means of economic development and cultural preservation.
7. Research and Collaboration
   - Academic Research: Encourage and support academic research on Tangale culture, history, and language.
   - Partnerships: Form partnerships with universities, cultural institutions, and non-governmental organizations to support preservation efforts.
8. Sustainability
   - Environmental Stewardship: Protect natural environments that are integral to Tangale cultural practices and livelihoods.
   - Sustainable Practices: Promote sustainable cultural practices that ensure the long-term viability of traditions.

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