

Narrative Study of Female Kete Weavers in Agbozume

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Abstract

The kete (woven fabric) industry in Agbozume has been one of the indigenous craft centres that has been in practiced from generation to generation in the Volta region of Ghana. The craft has contributed immensely to the economic and socio-cultural development of the area. Both male and female play enormous roles in the industry. Like many other indigenous crafts practiced in Ghana, the males dominate and are projected more than their female counterparts. Very little is known about the immense contributions females are making to the development of the industry, the society and Ghana at large. This research work, therefore, attempts to explore and identify female kete weavers in Agbozume and its surrounding villages. It also traces the origins of the female weavers with special reference to how they acquired the kete weaving skills, the prospects of them surviving in a male dominated industry, and the role they play in terms of marketing their products. The study is a qualitatively based, which enable the researchers to understand the socio-cultural set-up by the people. The research tools employed were: interview, observation and photography. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select fourteen (14) female master weavers for the study. (For the purpose of this paper, eight (8) are presented). Their kete weaving activities were narrated individually and was presented in a narrative form. The study unearthed, that, females do not only play supporting role to their male counterparts when it comes to kete weaving, but also practise the trade just like the males do. This presupposes that, should they be given the necessary support, it will attract more females into the industry and employment would increase to generate more income to reduce poverty in the area. Studies such as this would promote the many ways in which female Keke weavers are involved in the production and promotions of this indigenous craft.

Keywords: kete, (woven fabric), female, weavers

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Rita (1998), explained weaving as the art of placing two sets of parallel fibres at right angles to one another and interlacing one set through the other in an up-and-down movement, generally on a loom or frame. One set of fibres is held taut; this is called the warp. The other set, known as the weft or woof, is interwoven through the warp to make the fabric. Weaving is an aspect of textiles. "The design and manufacture of textiles is one of the oldest industries" (Colchester. 1991). Woven fabric caters for the fundamental human need for clothing, protection and fulfils a basic demand for decoration. Kente weaving in Ghana has been an art in transition and has been handed over from generation to generation, since its inception. This weaving tradition has gained popularity in renowned communities situated in the Volta, Ashanti and Northern Regions of Ghana.

Among the Ewes in the Volta Region of Ghana, Kete is woven by the people of Agortime-Kpetoe, Anlo Afiadeniyigba, Tsiamé, Sasieme, Abolove-Nolopi, Weta, Klikor and Agbozume. Agbozume and Agortime-Kpetoe are the two major towns noted for mass production of kete. Tettehfiio (2009) states that in the Volta region, for instance, the major vocation for the youth especially in the southern part of the region is weaving. This presupposes that should the business collapse, poverty would increase and should it survive and thrive well, employment would increase generating more income. This will result in the reduction of poverty and the rate of rural-urban migration with its associated vices. He went on to say, the region and the three northern regions are noted to have recorded the highest level of poverty over the past and needed to be addressed. Fortunately, for these regions especially, Volta region, they are endowed with indigenous crafts that need no formal training in order to acquire it, hence the need to fully explore it to the benefit of the people in order to address the poverty situation in the region.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study sought to bring to bear the fact that female do not only play supporting role to men when it comes to kete weaving but also participate fully in the craft production just like their male counterparts. The narrative study involves identification of female master weavers, their mode of acquiring the weaving skills, their role in national development and the sustainability of the industry.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Are the female kete weavers in Agbozume identified and studied?
2. Are the origins of female kete weavers in terms of weaving skills acquisition studied and documented
3. What are the prospects of these female weavers in terms of marketing their products?

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The researchers used qualitative research method. It was designed to enable the researchers understand the people and the social-cultural set up in which they live. It also probed deeply into the community. For interpretative result, the sample size was appropriate as Cantrell, (1993) points out that the sample size for qualitative research is based upon the purpose of the study not on specific rules. The researchers looked at what was useful, what will be credible and what can be done within the time frame as well as the resources available. The focus was on eight (8) female master kete weavers purposefully selected

for the study. Their kete weaving activities were individually narrated and were followed by the analysis.

2.2 Research Instrument(s)

The researchers used interviews and observation to obtain the needed information for the research. The researchers visited the master female kete weavers in Agbozume and its surrounding villages for interaction and collected collection of data for the study. Observation was also used when the weaving centres were visited, watched whatever is went on and took notes on them. The researchers used question guide which helped in the consistency of the interview.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study involved female master kete weavers who have been in the business for at least ten (10) years. A purposive sampling technique used by the researchers with the help of the assemblymen and some elders of the various communities in which the study was conducted. In all, fourteen (14) female master kete weavers were selected from six (6) communities in study area.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

In the data collection procedure, the respondents were briefed individually on the purpose of the meeting after they were purposively selected by the researchers with the help of the assembly men and some elders of the communities selected. They gave dates that were convenient to them for the interview. During the interview, the researchers tried as much as possible to make sure every question was understood by the respondents.

2.5 Method of Data Analysis

The analysis for the study outlined the life history of the weavers, narratives from the weavers about how they acquired the skills in weaving, years of practising, how their products are sold, family status, educational background and the number of apprentices that have passed through her tutorials. Pictorial evidence of the weavers are also provided.

3 Data Presentation

3.1 Quashie Adzovi

A forty-four year old Quashie Adzovi is forty years old and one of the experienced and skilful female kete weavers in Srohume. She is married with four children. Miss Adzovi attended Klikor Senior High Technical School and completed in 1993.

"I started showing interest in kete weaving at the age of 11 years when I was in the basic school. I was at the time living with my maternal grandfather who was then a master weaver. He always encouraged me and most at times allowed me to spin yarn for him. My mother was against the idea of me weaving kete cloth because she was of the view that kete weaving is solely reserved for men but not women. I have always been with my grandfather helping him until he constructed a loom for me. I started weaving though I was not perfect but, he was guiding and taking me through the various weaving techniques such as laying of warp, beaming, heddling and reeding. Anytime I complete weaving and the cloth is sold, he gave me some money (wages) to use. That was what even motivated me to be much more serious. I remained loyal to him and wove for him for almost five years before he gave me a set of yarns to start weaving as a master weaver. For the past twenty four years, I have been weaving constantly till date. Even when I was pregnant, I wove until I was in the ninth month. I remember when I gave birth to my first daughter who is now twenty one years old and a second year student of Weta Senior High Technical School, I resumed weaving after three months"

Quashie's husband is also a master weaver. All their children have their individual looms except the fourth child who is seven years and only helps the family by spinning weft yarn for them. Quashie is very good at weaving complex designs in kete clothes. *"I started weaving before my husband and there are some complicated designs that my husband cannot weave unless I handpick the designs for him"* Kete clothes woven by Quashie and the family are sold in Agbozume kete market by either herself or the husband. She also weaves categories of kete clothes that are not meant to be sold in the market but are rather commissioned for by individuals. These types of kete clothes are called "afevo". Afevo has more warp yarn than the ordinary ones sold in the open market therefore making the cloth much more compact and heavy in terms of weight than the one sold in the market. They are delivered to the owners at home.

The price of kete clothes woven by Mad. Quashie is determined by the cost of yarn and the design woven in the cloth. *"Although we estimate the price of kete cloth, the final price is determined by the customer in consultation with the middleman. I sometimes run at a loss and have to buy yarn on credit from my customers. Sometimes, I make very good profit. Kete weaving has been the major source of income for the family. I pay my children's school fees and feed them out of the income I earn. The government through the Municipal Assembly should help us sell directly to the customers because they collect tolls in the form of tax from us when we go to the market to sell our kete clothes"*.

Quashie has so far trained twenty young men and women including her three children who still weave under her supervision. Some of the kete clothes woven by Quashie include 'haliwoe', 'wogagba', 'takpekpe le Anloga', 'korsor korsor', 'ehianega', 'Atsusidomado', 'klogo', 'bishop', 'dahume', 'Easter Sunday', 'fiavi', 'fiawoyome', 'damlogbedzi'

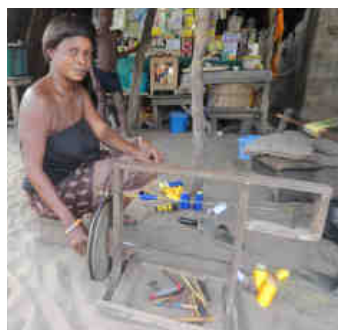


Fig. 1 Quashie spinning weft yarn



Fig. 2 Heddling process by Quashie



Fig. 3 Quashie weaving kete



Fig. 4 Korsor korsor

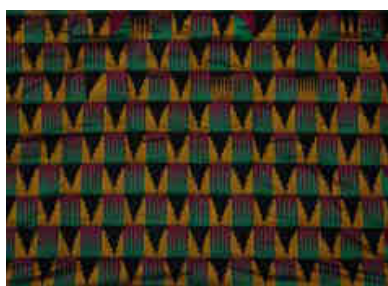


Fig.5 Dahume

Samples of kete clothes woven by Quashie

3.2 Soenyeamator Avevor Logosu

Madam Soenyeamator is another experienced female kete weaver in Agortorme. She is sixty five years and has five children; two men and three ladies. She had her basic education at Srohume African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) Zion Middle School. She dropped out of school due to family problems. She got married to her husband who is a master weaver from Srohume. In the process of assisting her husband to spin yarn, lay warp and draw broken yarns for mending, she gradually started acquiring some of the weaving skills.

In order to ease the financial burden on the family, the husband constructed a loom for her to start weaving. Madam Soenyeamator wove for six years in Srohume under the tutelage of her husband. His brothers helped construct a loom for her and she started weaving as a master weaver till date. *"I have been weaving as a master weaver for more than thirty five years because now it has been the major source of income for the family"*. Soenyeamator is one of the few female weavers who have the creative skills to weave "Afevo" which has a complex design pattern and difficult to weave. It is time consuming when working on this design and also very expensive. Her kete clothes (asivo) are marketed in Agbozume kete market by either her son or brothers through the middle men. The cost of yarn, the nature of design in the cloth and other expenses made during the process are the factors considered by Soenyeamator in pricing her clothes

When she was asked how she combines kete weaving and her family life? She says *"the family life and the kete weaving are not easy for a female weaver, fortunately for me I have my nieces and nephews around who assisted me at the time my children were young but now they are all old and I have grandchildren"*. She has so far trained nine kete weavers including her children. Familiar names of kete clothes woven by Soenyeamator include; 'andre' 'to ene', 'kpédo', 'takpame', 'lokpodzi', 'ekpega', 'wogagba', 'takpekpe', 'le Anloga', 'dahume', 'ehianega', 'damlogbedzi', 'Easter Sunday', 'sogey', 'avutso', etc.

When Soenyeamator was asked about her challenges in the kete industry, she said *"when I started weaving as a master weaver, we did not have middlemen acting on behalf of the customers. Years back, kete clothes were sold directly to customers and we really enjoyed weaving but now middlemen have taken over the only kete market we have. One has to pass through the middlemen before his or her kete cloth can be bought and they take wages (commission) for helping sell the cloth. They make it in a way that weavers cannot sell directly to the customers. This is making kete weaving unattractive to the kete weavers in and around Agbozume. We plead with the Municipal Assembly which collects tolls from us and other stake holders to help us sell to customers directly"*.



Fig. 6 Soenyeamator weaving kete



Fig.7 Lokpodzi



Fig. 8. Sogey

Samples of kete clothes woven by Soenyeamator

3.3 *Dadoho Amegayi Hodotsi*

Dadoho Amegayi Hodetsi, a fifty-six year old master weaver and hails from Agortorme. She is married and has seven children. Dadoho went to school at her early age but later dropped out of school due to the fact that the parents had less value for educating a girl child at the time. When she dropped out of school, she helped her mother to take care of the house and at the same time helped spin yarn for her father. Most of the yarns at the time were in the form of hanks therefore needed to be spun before using them to lay warp, unlike what exists today on cone and can be directly used without spinning on bobbin. “I always observed my father weave and anytime he went out to eat, relax or go to funerals, I sat in the loom and wove though he complained sometimes that I did not weave well, I continued because I enjoyed weaving. Gradually, I kept improving upon my weaving skills day in day out.

My father finally constructed a loom for me and I started weaving. I wove for my father for close to five years before I became a master weaver. I have been a master weaver for the past thirty three years”. At the time of visit, the last child of Dadoho by name Ophelia who has just completed Junior High School was busily weaving kete cloth. The mother told us that, Ophelia knows all the processes involved in weaving kete cloth but she still weaves for her. “I am now old and cannot see well, even when I am weaving and a yarn breaks I cannot draw the yarn through the eyes of the healds as well as the dents of the reed”. “It has not been easy being a female master weaver having sizable family like mine. Initially I found it difficult taking care of the children as a single parent and weaving kete but with time I became used to it because the family depends on the proceeds from the sales of the kete clothes”. Dadoho has so far trained fourteen weavers including her children.

Agbozume kete market has been Dadoho’s major sales point except the cloth is ordered for by customers “avɔdɔdɔɛ” which they come for at home. Her kete clothes were sold for her by the father, later by her late husband and now her kete clothes together with those of her children are marketed by her male children. The price of her kete clothes are determined by the price of the yarn used, the designs in the cloth and time spent in weaving. “Mostly our kete clothes are sold to customers from Cote d’Ivoire, Togo, Burkina Faso, Kumasi and Accra through the agents who are natives of Agbozume”. “The kete industry in Agbozume used to be a very lucrative business but now it is no longer the way it was. We sometime run at a loss and the way out is to go for yarns on credit or you call on friends or relations for short term loans to be able to continue working”. Some of the kete clothes woven by Dadoho include; ‘damlogbedzi’, ‘ehianega’, ‘wɔgagba’, ‘atikpekpi’, ‘fiawoyome’, ‘bishop’, ‘tagbatsutsunuku’, ‘atsusidomado’, ‘takpekpe le Anloga’ etc.



Fig. 9 Dadoho weaving kete



Fig. 10 Tagbatsutsunuku



Fig. 11 Fiawoyome

Samples of kete clothes woven by Dadoho

3.4 Ama Ashifoji

Another hard working female master kete weaver who attracted the attention of the researchers is Ama. She is thirty three years old and resides at Unity a suburb of Agbosume. She has two children. Ama is a Togolese who was brought to Ghana at a tender age to come and serve the deity at Klikor (trɔkosi). She had the chance to go through the non-formal education and therefore can read and write Ewe language. She has learnt some of the kete weaving skills from her friends from both Klikor and Agbozume through observation. When she started weaving she was guided by her friend as to how to lay warp, do hedding and reeding. Gradually she started acquiring skills prior to the actual weaving. *“I used less than a year to learn how to lay warp and secure the crosses, hedding and reeding processes”*. When she was ready to start weaving, she consulted Tɔgbui, the one in charge of the shrine for a start-up capital.

Ama has been a master weaver for eighteen years and has so far trained seven boys and a girl. *“Sometimes when I have orders from customers and I cannot meet the deadline, I call on them to assist me for a wage. I sometimes learn how to handpick new designs from them and they also come for help when the need arises”*. Anytime the kete business is experiencing a decline in sales, she goes to Nigeria and weave for wages until the business picks up. During May, June and July students are normally in school, it rains heavily around this same time therefore the demand for kete clothes around this time is very high meanwhile the supply is low. But around August to September and December to January, students are at home busy weaving for that matter kete cloth is much more in abundance in the market, far exceeding it's demands and causing reduction in price. In order to avoid the drastic reduction of kete price around this time, Ama goes to Lagos to weave for wages. Ama is one of the few women who go to Agbozume market to sell her kete clothes. She sells her kete clothes to customers through the middle men who take what they call “commission”.

Kete weaving has been my only source of income and that is what I use to pay my children's school fees, feed and clothe them. Also, yarn sellers, “trotro” drivers and the Municipal Assembly benefits from our business

Some of the clothes woven by Ama include; kpeɖo, takpeke le Anloga, kpekui, trɔkpɔnu, atsusidomado, lokpodzi, etc.



Fig. 12 Ama's kete workshop



Fig. 13 Ama spinning weft yarn



Fig. 14 Ama weaving kete cloth (kpeḍo)



Fig. 15 Ehianega



Fig. 16 Kpeḍo

Samples of kete clothes woven by Ama

3.5 Hudolo Cecilia

Hudolo Cecilia is a thirty-two year old female master weaver at Afuta. Afuta is about two kilometres away from Agbozume Township. Hudolo is married and has three children. The husband is from Dogbékɔfe but settled in Afuta with his nuclear family. She had her basic education at Agbozume Central Junior High School and has decided to go into kete weaving business after her basic school education. Whiles she was in school, her brothers were master weavers who worked in their compound. She was at the time helping her brothers spun weft and warp yarns for them and at the same time learning some of the basic weaving skills. She sat in her brothers' loom and wove anytime they were not in the loom, though they sometimes complained she did not weave well but she never gave up. Anytime her brothers finished weaving, they handed over the left over warp yarn to her to weave. This warp yarn were mostly about six to nine metres long which she wove and sold to "Zamlama" boys. The "zamlama" boys use the kete strips call "avɔbɛ́" to sew batakari. *"I was eager to start weaving on my own because I was making money out of the kete strips I was selling to "Zamlama" boys. My brothers also gave me money anytime they came back from market for the services I rendered for them"*.

With time, she developed much more interest in kete weaving and had asked her brothers to construct a loom for her to start weaving which they did and she started weaving. *"I wove for my brothers for one year before I became a master weaver."* Hudolo has been practicing as a female master weaver for the past fourteen years. Though a master weaver her kete clothes were marketed for her by her brothers until she got married. Her husband who is also a master weaver. *"It is not easy selling kete cloth in Agbozume market because you have to lobby through the middle men for the customers to accept and buy your kete cloth. It is therefore very difficult for a woman to sell kete cloth in the market"*

Hudolo gets up early in the morning, tidies up the compound stretches the warp in the loom and takes care of the children to

go to school before she starts weaving. At around 9:30 am, she gets out to prepare food for the family. She sometimes prepares food again at 2; 30 pm for the children when they are back from school. Hudolo encourages her first daughter who is twelve years to learn how to weave. In her absence her daughter Mary Ametepe a class three pupil of Klikor Central Basic School used to weave in her loom until she constructed a loom for her. Hudolo's nephews are also with her and she is guiding them to become master weavers.

"Kete weaving has been the main source of the family income since I started weaving as a master weaver. My children's school fees and all other expenses made at home come from the proceeds from the sale of kete clothes. The Municipal Assembly, yarn sellers and drivers who convey kete weavers to and from the market also benefit from our kete industry".

Some of the clothes woven by Hudolo include; kpevi (disco), glass, atikpekpi, bishop, fiawoyome, dahume, minamiawoe woanyo, elenuku, silk. Etc. She has not trained any master weaver so far.



Fig.17 Hudolo spinning weft yarn



Fig.18 Hudolo weaving kete cloth



Fig.19 Mary and her cousins weaving kete cloth



Fig. 20 Kpevi (disco)



Fig. 21 Elenuku

3.6 Atsiga Dangoe

Atsiga, a female master kete weaver at Afuta is married and has four children; two boys and two girls. Atsiga is one of the few master weavers who weave outside her compound. She erected a shed behind her house where she weaves with her son. Atsiga has not had formal education. She however learnt how to weave kete cloth from her friends and some members of her paternal family through observation and practice. She wove for about two years before she became a master weaver and has been practicing as a master weaver for fifteen years. She has constructed a loom for her elderly son beside her loom where

she is passing on the weaving tradition on to her son. The second as well as the third child also helps spin yarn for her. She got her start up capital from her father and now receives financial supports from her husband.

Atsiga's kete clothes are sold in Agbozume kete market by either her cousins or the husband. *"I went to the market with my cousins one day to observe how marketing of kete clothes is done in market. It was there that I noticed without pleasure that one has to lobby to draw the attention of the middle men as well as the customers to accept one's kete cloth for further bargaining. This has made most of us female weavers not to go to the market to sell our kete clothes"*. The prices of Atsiga's kete clothes vary. The variation is based on the following factors; the cost of the yarn used, design(s) in the cloth and the time it takes to finish the cloth. *"Our designs and the names given to our kete clothes are based on the situations and events that take place in our societies"*. When new designs come out and they are difficult for Atsiga, she calls on other master weavers to assist her handpick the designs just as she also helps them. *"I do not receive technical assistance from any person or group of persons apart from my colleague master weavers within my vicinity"*.

She has so far trained a boy and her son who is under training. Some of the kete clothes woven by Atsiga include; 'kpefefe', 'matsimata', 'damlogbedzi', 'Avutso', 'Fiazikpi', 'wogagba', 'Atsusidomado', etc.

According to Atsiga, middle men who act on behalf of the customers from Burkina Faso, Cote d' Ivore, Togo, Kumasi etc should be talked to, to stop siding with the customers for their personal gain. She advised that the government through the Municipal Assembly which collects market tolls from them helps stop the activities of the middlemen in the market.



Fig. 35 Atsiga spinning weft yarn



Fig. 36 Atsiga weaving kete

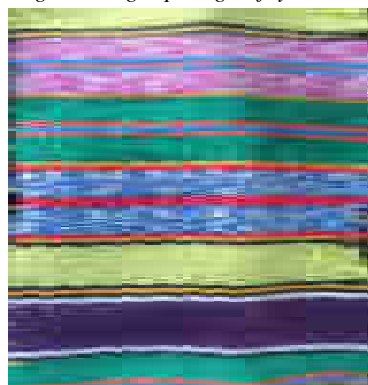


Fig. 37 Matsimata (Achimota)



Fig. 38 Damlogbedzi (kpevi)

Samples of kete clothes woven by Atsiga

3.7 Avevor Dorothy

Dorothy Avevor is a thirty-two year old female kete weaver in Ablotsivia but hails from Srohume. She is married and has three children; a boy and two girls. She had her basic education at Srohume African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) Zion J.H.S. She further went to A.M.E. Zion Vocational Institute at Satsimadza-Klikor, where she offered Fashion and Design. Dorothy is the third child of Soenyeamator. Just like other weavers, Dorothy learnt how to weave by observing her mother and other members of the family who are in the business. She also assisted members of the family by spinning yarn for them. She occasionally practised in her mother's loom and gradually acquired most of the weaving skills. While she was in J.H.S, a loom was constructed for her to start weaving. She wove under the guidance of her mother and her uncles for three years before she became a master weaver. *"It was the money that I was getting from kete weaving that saw me through the vocational school. During that time I wove on weekends and sometimes after school"*. She got married later and moved to her husband's house in Ablotsivia.

Dorothy has been practicing as a master weaver for twelve years. Her kete clothes are sold in Agbozume kete market to

customers who come from Accra, Kumasi and some West African countries by her male friends who are also master weavers. *“We sometimes sell our kete clothes to the local customers when customers from other places do not come in their numbers. The local customers buy from us and sell them later to customers from Accra, Kumasi and other West African countries. “Combining family life with kete weaving has actually placed male master weavers ahead of us in terms of pair of clothes woven within a period”.* According to her, taking care of children to go to school, preparing food for the family and other household chores take much of her time as a master weaver. She has so far trained two weavers. The name of some kete clothes wove by Dorothy include; novi, easter sunday, ahiawokpoemita, avutso, wogagba, etc.



Fig. 39 Dorothy weaving kete



Fig. 40 Wogagba



Fig. 41 Easter Sunday

Samples of kete clothes woven by Dorothy

3.6 Avevor Atsupui

A forty-five year old master weaver, Avevor Atsupui hails from Avloto. She is married and has five children, two boys and three girls. She had no formal education and started showing interest in weaving since she was young. Her two elderly brothers and maternal uncles were master weavers and wove in their family house where Atsupui was with the mother at the time. They did ask Atsupui to help them size both warp and weft yarns, spin yarn and draw broken yarns to be mended. *“They kept encouraging me though some of my aunties were of the view that kete weaving is meant for men and that I should discard the idea of weaving kete cloth and go into trading. I was determined because I noticed my uncles and brothers were making money at the time. They were always happy when they came back from kete market those days so I concluded within myself that kete weaving was a very fast way of making money”.*

Her brother constructed a loom for her and the uncle gave her yarns to start work with. She started weaving for the uncle for wages; this means that when the cloth was sold the profit was shared between her and the uncle. She did this for two years within which she learnt other skills involved in kete weaving processes. *“I have been a master weaver for the past twenty eight years and has been practicing constantly both in Ghana and Nigeria”.* She often travels to Lagos to weave for wages anytime the patronage of kete in Agbozume market is low. *“Agbozume kete market is our major sales point where people from in and around Agbozume come to sell their kete clothes. There are certain categories of kete clothes that are not sold in the market; they are called “Afevo”. Afevo is woven based on orders placed by the people. They are kete clothes that are used by chiefs, elders and important people in the society. They are very expensive as compared to those that are sold in the open market “Asivo”.* The prices of Avevor’s kete clothes are determined by the cost of yarn and the nature of design in the cloth. Anytime kete business is not doing well, Avevor falls on the yarn sellers for credit which she pays later. She seeks for assistance from her colleague master weavers when new and complex designs are available which she cannot handpicked.

The major problem they have according to Avevor is the middlemen. *“They connive with the customers and beat down the price so that customers can buy more to the disadvantage of the weavers”.* *The more customers buy, the more wages “commission” the middle men also get. We therefore call on the government through the Municipal Assembly who are direct beneficiaries of the kete industry and other stake holders to help us sell directly to the customers”.* The name of some kete clothes woven by Avevor include; matsimata, trɔkpɔnu, wogagba, ehianega, ahiawokpoemita, takpeke le Anloga, avutso etc.

She has trained five weavers including her two sons.



Fig. 42 Avevor weaving kete



Fig. 43 Ahiawokpoemita



Fig. 44 Takpekpe le Anloga

Samples of kete clothes woven by Avevor

4 Findings

4.1 Acquisition of kete weaving skills by the female weavers

The acquisition of kete weaving skills by the female in Agbozume is through observation and practice. It does not necessary matter the number of years one has to practice in order to acquire the weaving skills but it depends largely on an individual's level of understanding.

Also the government through the Municipal Assembly gets more revenue from the female weavers, yarn sellers, customers who come to buy kete clothes, loom accessories sellers in the form of tolls which aids in nation development. There is no doubt the industry is contributing significantly to the development of the people and the nation at large.

4.2 Marketing of kete clothes in Agbozume market by Female Weavers

A handful of female kete weavers forming 14.3% go to Agbozume kete market to sell their clothes while the majority forming 85.7% give their kete clothes to relatives (Male) to sell for them. This according to the female weavers is due to the activities of the middlemen. For example, one has to lobby through the middlemen before her kete cloth is accepted by the customer.

4.3 Educational Levels of Female Weavers

It was observed that out of fourteen (14) female weavers sampled, nine (9) of the weavers constituting 64.3% have had J.H.S/ Middle school education. One (1) out of fourteen (14) female weavers representing 7.1% had Senior High School education. Also one (1) out of fourteen female weavers had Vocational Education. Furthermore, one (1) had Non-formal education. Finally, one had no formal education.

Majority of the female sampled had J.H.S/ Middle school education. As a result of profits made by the weavers at the early stages of their career, most of them drop out of school in order to concentrate on their weaving careers. This implies that should this continue, the female weavers would be limited in knowledge of design processes.

5 Conclusions

The conclusion drawn from the respondents as narrated concerning challenges and some progress made by the female weavers in managing and marketing their produce indicate that;

1. Weavers face problems of marketing their produce as customers in consultation with middlemen most a times, dictate the price for kete clothes and the problem of frequent increase of yarn prices. The struggle one has to go through

lobbying to draw the attention of the middlemen to help them sell their clothes discourages the female weavers from selling their kete clothes in the market by themselves.

2. It has been noted that as a result of profits made by female weavers during the early stages of their weaving careers, most of them drop out of school in order to concentrate on their weaving careers.

3. It does not necessary matter the number of years one has to practice in order to acquire the weaving skills but depends largely on individual's level of creativity.

4. The kete weaving industry among the female weavers has contributed immensely towards the development of the individuals and the nation at large.

6 Recommendations

Having critically analysed the activities of the female kete weavers in Agbozume and its surrounding villages, the following recommendations have been made so as to harness the utmost benefits of the industry.

The stake holders of Agbozume market- traditional rulers, elders, concerned citizens and the Municipal Assembly must institute measures to regulate the activities of the middle men in the market to allow weavers to sell directly to customers and not through middle men.

Another area spotted was, as a result of profits made by female weavers during the early stages of their weaving careers, most of them drop out of school in order to concentrate on their weaving careers. The girl child who engages in kete weaving should be encouraged and nurtured at the early stages of their careers to stay in school and more especially pursue art programmes to the tertiary level for it will help in their design processes.

Also the government through the Municipal Assembly gets more revenue from the female weavers, yarn sellers, customers who come to buy kete clothes and loom accessories sellers in the form of tolls which aids in nation development. There is no doubt that the industry is contributing significantly to the development of the people and the nation at large. The study therefore recommends to the policy makers and women organizations to integrate the activities of these female kete weavers into the developmental plans of and actions to enable them actually come out confidently in their area of national development. Scholars, art historians, gender activists, sociologists, should also endeavour to document further on the immense contributions which these women are making to serve as a reminder or study materials to the generations ahead.

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