

Therapeutic Potencies of Indigenous Ghanaian Art Forms: A Case of Krobo Beads

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Abstract

In spite of the fact that several attempts have been made to study visual aspect of arts and though some attempts have been made to document visual aspect of arts use for therapeutic purposes, much attention has not been drawn to the study and documentation of the potencies of indigenous Ghanaian visual art forms. The quest for change in attitude towards assessing health care without any side effect in traditional and orthodox ways needed much to be desired. This study provides artful way of restoration without any side effect to battle aftermath. It assessed the efficacy of Krobos' beads used for curative purposes. The study provides information on the traditional means of using beads for restoration among Krobos' and further reviews the current trend of art therapy in other to provide road map for merging them for effective implementation and accessibility. A case study design was employed and findings indicated that, the potencies of Krobos' beads are manifested in psychological, physical, emotional and mythical means. It is therefore recommended that, in writing of art text books and other art materials, the inclusion of Ghana's artistic therapeutic potencies need to be included to enrich our repertoire of art historic knowledge.

Keywords: Therapeutic, Potency, Curative, Art Forms, Efficacy and Krobo.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The primary function of indigenous African arts is religious "emphasizing the people's need for magic and charm through talismanic objects and amulets and such other carvings that become the media of communication and contact with the spiritual world" (Awoonor, 1975 p. 56) and its purpose too is symbolic. The contemporary usage of the visual arts could be found in art therapy for it produces projective images through painting, drawing, carving, modelling, among others that serve as media of communication between the client and the therapist in the healing process. 'Art' is the creation of man that never dies and use as therapy to restore mankind to normality. Visual art forms play essential roles in diverse ways and for the purposes of therapeutic (Naumburg, 1950; Dickson, 1969; Sarpong, 1974; Edwards, 2004; Fenu; 2011). Dickson (1969) asserts that therapy is derived from a Greek verb 'therapeum' which means to take care of while 'therapeia' means service and treatment. Art therapy is effective treatment for people experiencing developmental, medical, educational, emotional and social or psychological impairment. It helps people to resolve conflicts, improve interpersonal skills, manage problematic behaviours, reduce negative stress, and achieve personal insight. Besides, it provides an opportunity to enjoy the life-affirming pleasures of art making (Wadeson, 2010).

According to Edward (2004), the use of art as an indicator or diagnostic instrument of mankind inner conflicts in a therapeutic way began in the late nineteenth century when Adrian Hill documented it in his book, *Art Versus Illness*, in the year 1945, after recovering from tuberculosis through art therapy. For Hill, who had discovered the therapeutic benefits of drawing and painting while recovering from tuberculosis, attested that, "the value of art therapy lay incomplete if not engrossing the mind as well as the fingers and in releasing the creative energy of the frequently inhibited patient" (Hill, 1948, pp. 101–102). This, Hill suggested, enabled the patient to 'build up a strong defence against his/her misfortunes' (Hill, 1948, p. 103). In UK, hitherto, the artist Adrian Hill is generally credited and acknowledged to have been the first person to use the term 'art therapy' to describe the therapeutic application of image making (Edwards, 2004). In the USA, around the same time, Margaret Naumburg, a psychologist, also began to use the term art therapy to describe her work. Naumburg's model of art therapy based its methods on, releasing the unconscious by means of spontaneous art expression; it has its roots in the transference relation between patient and therapist and on the encouragement of free association. It is closely allied to psychoanalytic theory. Treatment depends on the development of the transference relation and on a continuous effort to obtain the patient's own interpretation of his/her symbolic designs. The images produce are a form of communication between patient and therapist; they constitute symbolic speech (Naumburg cited in Ulman, 2001). Although the approaches to art therapy adopted by Hill and Naumburg were very different, and have been superseded by subsequent developments within the profession, their pioneering work has nevertheless exercised a significant influence. Essentially, Naumburg's position might be described as championing the use of art in therapy, whereas Hill advocated art as therapy. Subtle though this distinction may at first appear, it is of crucial importance in understanding art therapy as it is practised today.

This is because art therapy has developed along ‘two parallel strands: art as therapy and art psychotherapy’ (Waller, 1993, p. 8).

Cole (1990) argues that Africa also used art as therapy, although the psychological role of art is difficult to document and prove. Art thus elicit more dramatically psychological responses in traditional Africa societies. Cole (1990) further opines that the therapeutic potencies in traditional African art forms are normally hidden from view. Meanwhile, these potencies are tapped through the use of art forms for restoration. In Ghana, the traditional usage of art forms for therapy is on crestfallen because there have been some impediments towards documentation and accessibility of the art forms used for curative purposes. The Krobos, one of the traditional tribes in Ghana, for instance, has tapped the power in art for rehabilitation purposes in order to adjust to their environment. However, there is scanty scholarly documentation of the potencies of visual arts in the indigenous Ghanaian societies in general and the Krobos traditional area in particular. Many have different perception on the role and the efficacy of Krobos’ beads for curative or therapeutic purposes. The major question therefore remains as: What are the perceptions of people on the role and efficacy of Krobos’ beads for therapeutic purposes?

As customary of Visual art forms researchers who draw on Laing and Todd (2015) theory of change to articulate explicitly how a project or initiative is intended to achieve outcomes through actions while taking into account its context, we position the study to the prevailing Visual art forms (Naumburg, 1950; Dickson, 1969; Sarpong, 1974; Edwards, 2004; Fenu; 2011) to guide our input to the therapeutic potencies in traditional African art forms discourse. The remaining part of the article is structured as follows: First, we explore the literature on concept of art therapy, art therapy in Traditional African Society and beads in Kroboland, to understand how to problematize the need to unveil the role and efficacy of Krobos’ beads for therapeutic purposes. Second, we present the context of the study and data collection methods, and finally, we discuss our findings and inputs to empirical and practice and call for readers to engross.

1.1 Statement of Problem

In spite of the fact that several attempts have been made to study visual aspect of art use for therapeutic purposes, there is scanty scholarly documentation of the potencies of visual arts in the indigenous Ghanaian societies,. Visual art forms play essential roles in diverse ways and for the purposes of therapeutic (Naumburg, 1950; Dickson, 1969; Sarpong, 1974; Edwards, 2004). However, following the difficulties in documentation and the prove of psychological potencies in traditional art, though its realistic is ascertained, the therapeutic potencies in traditional Africa art forms are hidden from view (Cole, 1990). The traditional usage of art forms for therapy is on crestfallen due to inaccessibility. There is a dearth of study on the processes involved and the efficacy in using visual arts forms (Bead) to administer healing in Ghana. The study would assess efficacy of Krobo beads use for restoration.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study assessed the efficacy of Krobo beads used for curative purposes. Consideration would be given to some other selected Ghanaian visual Art forms use for restoration. The research is also intended assessing Krobo people perception on the use of beads used for restoring various ailments. The study would also further review and expand the related literature on the topic. Additionally, this study seeks to support the importance of conducting research in the art therapy field by demonstrating how therapy has evolved over time.

1.3 Objective

1. Assessing the perception of krobos on the role of Beads for therapeutic purposes
2. Examining the efficacy of Beads used for curative purposes by Krobo traditional societies.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are perceptions of Krobos on the role of Beads for therapeutic purposes?
2. How efficacious are Krobo Beads for curative purposes?

2.1 Concept of Art Therapy

Definition of art therapy varies due to its origin which is in two fields: art and psychotherapy (Malchiodi, 2013; Waller, 1993). It can focus on the art-making process as therapeutic in and of itself or it can be “art in therapy”. The psychoanalytic approach was the earliest form of art psychotherapy. This approach employs the transference process between the therapist and the client who make art. The therapist interprets the client's symbolic self-expression as communicated in the art and elicits interpretations from the client. Analysis of transference is no longer always a component. Current art therapy includes a vast number of other approaches such as Person-Centred, Cognitive, Behaviour, and Gestalt, Narrative, Adlerian, Family Systems, among others. The tenets of art therapy involve humanism, creativity, reconciling emotional conflicts, fostering self-awareness, and personal growth (Wikipedia, 2013).

Art therapy, according to Edwards (2004), is defined as a form of therapy in which creating images and objects play a central role in the psychotherapeutic relationship established between the art therapist and client. It is admitted that numerous and often conflicting definitions of art therapy have been advanced since the insertion of the term, and later the profession, in the late 1940s (Waller and Gilroy, 1978). Edwards (2004), however, argues that the difference between art and art therapy is the merging of the process and product in art therapy. The finished product of the client is the expression of his or her self, and is not meant to appeal to or draw praises from others. Art therapy is therefore explained as:

Releasing the unconscious by means of spontaneous art expression; it has its roots in the transference relation between patient and therapist and on the encouragement of free association. It is closely allied to psychoanalytical theory... Treatment depends on the development of the transference relation and on a continuous effort to obtain the patient's own interpretation of his symbolic designs... The images produced are a form of communication between patient and therapist; they constitute symbolic speech (Naumberg cited in Edwards, 2004 p. 3).

The American Art Therapy Association (2013) summarized that, art therapy is the therapeutic use of art making, within a professional relationship, by people who experience illness, trauma or challenges in living, and by people who seek personal development. Through creating art and reflecting on the art products and processes, people can increase awareness of self and others cope with symptoms, stress and traumatic experiences; enhances cognitive abilities; and enjoy the life-affirming pleasures of making art (AATA, 2013). Art therapy is a mental health profession in which clients, facilitated by the art therapist, use art media, the creative process, and the resulting artwork to explore their feelings, reconcile emotional conflicts, foster self-awareness, manage behaviour and addictions, develop social skills, improve reality orientation, reduce anxiety, and increase self-esteem (Wadeson, 2010). A goal in art therapy is to improve or restore a client's functioning and his or her sense of personal well-being. Art therapy practice requires knowledge of visual art (drawing, painting, sculpture, and other art forms) and the creative process, as well as of human development, psychological, and counselling theories and techniques (Vick, 2012). Today art therapy is widely practiced in a wide variety of settings including hospitals, psychiatric and rehabilitation facilities, wellness centres, forensic institutions, schools, crisis centres, senior communities, private practice, and other clinical and community settings.

Buchalter (2009) hypothesized how art in therapy is used to elicit movement, by demonstrated with a practical example. That is, he placed a sheet of 11"×14" drawing paper on a table in front of each group member and had them initial the sheet. Play very soft, soothing music and suggested clients to walk slowly around the room, so slowly that each step is very calculated and thought out. After every few steps he asked them to stop and draw their feeling at that moment on the paper in front of them (somewhat like musical chairs). This may be done once or a number of times. When the clients got back to their original seat, he asked them to examine the designs/marks and scribbles on the paper in front of them and related the designs created to their mood and their responses to the exercise. He then asked them to hold up the paper and have group members who contributed to the design share their thoughts about their contribution and/or the overall picture.

Buchalter (2009) again put forward that, a young girl client was given plasticine clay and asked to make anything that she wished. In her quest to manipulate the clay, surprisingly, mortar and pestle were what she created in the first session. What do you see? What visceral feeling or thought comes to mind? When interpreting art, this is an important ability to develop. At this juncture the mortar and pestle were viewed as a symbolic penis and vagina. The function of a pestle is to grind, pound, or stamp; therefore not only its shape, but also its practical use was taken as a representation for this client's sexual abuse. It is important to note that this interpretation was not made to the girl. Instead, it was simply identified as one possibility and noted for future reference. The image of the mortar and pestle is not one most teenagers gravitate toward. Thus, it was surmised that this represented a personal symbol that would need to be taken into account with the final art production. These practical examples of Buchalter (2009) clarify how art plays vital roles in restoring various ailments in a form of psychological, emotional, and some physical situations.

2.2. Art Therapy in Traditional African Society

Artistic lives and works of Africa revolved around social, political, economic, religious, psychological and aesthetic perspectives. Art objects and their situations may arouse people responses such as fear, devotion, guilt, or confusion that are not assessable (Cole, 1990). These responses are very visible in the various occasions and celebrations among the Akans. Colour can equally affect people's responses, either emotionally or physically. Antubam (1963) opines that, in Wasa states of Ghana, women who have ceased to bear children use yellow cloth. Colour thus plays a vital role in the sort of impression the artist or designer wants to create and the occasion for which a work of art or a style can be used. Antubam further asserted that some special beads known to Akans "bodomo" (beads) are said to posse the power to breathe and reproduce. This implies that the women wear these beads for some time in their waist and in the process the beads render them fecundity. Beads are small pieced or

perforated objects, usually spherical, that may be strung into necklaces and bracelets or attached to clothing or furnishings (Antubam, 1963). These views are supported by Dubin (1987) that, beads then played important roles in their beliefs and practices of sympathetic magic, love and fertility charms and their equivalents as the case may be from one generation to the other. Beads are made of a variety of materials: seeds, wood, ivory, bone, horn, shell, coral, pearl, jet, amber, gemstones, metals, ceramics, and plastics. Originally beads were made from natural materials such as shell. Subsequently they were replaced by glass beads obtained from European traders. Huber (1993) described how beads are used in the various rites of passage, namely, the naming ceremony of the Krobos, the dipo, marriage and death. During puberty rites such as ‘Bragoro’ of the Akan, ‘Gbɔtowɔwɔ’ of the Ewes (Eweawo), and ‘Dipo’ of the Krobos, beads are used.

2.2.1 Beads in Kroboland

In his discussion on beads in the Kroboland, Avotri (2009) states that Krobos use beads for variety of occasions, ranging from social, matrimonial, court / political, rites of passage, to religious and spiritual occasions. He, however, says that very little is known about the real origin of the bead culture among the Krobos. The popular legend among the people is that, beads used to be dug from the ground. It is not clear where the beads come from and how they managed to be deposited in the ground but there are numerous claims of beads dug from the ground. It is believed that the earlier settlers in the land currently occupied by the Krobos could have developed an elaborate bead culture or due to the frequent wars and raids in the area by criminal gangs (which made even the Krobos at a time run to live on the Krobos Mountain), these earlier group(s) might have resorted to burying their beads as a way of hiding them from the raiders (Avotri, 2009). Among the Krobos, conception marks the end of an individual’s life in ‘huani mi’ (meaning: spirit world) and the beginning of his life on the physical world. Hence, a woman who becomes pregnant for the first time undergoes a ritual called ‘mi nɔkpa fɔmi’ (literally meant: tying a belly rope). This rite is to ward off evil machinations of sorcery and witchcraft. It is performed by the priest or priestess who ties ‘t ɔ vi, nyɔli, and kɔli’ beads onto the fibre of the h ɔ tree to the waist of the pregnant woman (Avotri, 2009).

After birth, the child is named. As a seal on the name that is given to the child, La muomi’ (tying the la string) and the kɔli bead is performed. According to Nyumuah (1998), and Manye Lateki (deputy Queen of Many Krobo Traditional area) the la is made up of tɔvi, ɔli, and nyɔli beads. All these beads are tied together on a raffia fibre (hlowe) and then fastened to the wrist of the new born baby. These beads are priestly beads and carry special traditional messages. In the naming ceremony, k ɔ li signifies the expectation that the child would grow to become useful to the family and the society. Hence, in a way, the colour blue which is the colour of the bead appears to be the Krobos’ bead symbolism for wealth. The tɔvi, which is white, seeks to tell the child that there is light, righteousness, good citizens and right minded people in the society and the child should grow to become one of such. The nyɔli signifies the presence of evil, wickedness, and demonic forces in the world, and that the child should be aware to avoid them during his or her life time. Both the naming and the tying of the la string around the child’s wrist signify the official acceptance of the child into the family. These facts were confirmed by Manye Lateki according to Avotri (2009).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Guided by Laing and Todd (2015) theory of change, the researchers employed qualitative research approach for the study. Qualitative research is defined as “a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live” (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2001, p. 7). It is also used to explore the behaviour, perspectives, feelings and experiences of people and what lies at the core of their lives (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2001). Additionally, descriptive research methodology was utilised. Its usage in the study allowed for detailed description and exploration that provided better in-depth understanding of Beads. Both primary data and secondary data were used. The researchers made use of observations, interviews and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) as data collection instruments for the study. Semi structured interview guide approach was adopted for the research.

The population of the study constituted the Traditional priest, some beneficiaries’ of bead therapy, producers of Beads, dealers of beads and the general public from selected Krobo’s communities. In conducting the interviews, the purposive sampling technique was employed to pick the total respondents (N=20). To get a fair idea on people’s perception about the usage of beads in the study area, the respondents were chosen from almost all the beads activity dominated communities: Somanya (n=8); Odumase (n=4); Krobo Agogo (n=4); and Asesewa (n=4). Krobos community was intentionally chosen for the study because they are well known in Ghana and worldwide for bead production and selling. Purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). Thematic and content analysis were utilized for the study.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Perceptions of Krobos on the role of Beads for therapeutic purposes

The FGDs revealed that beads play central role in the culture of Krobos. The people normally adorned beads for fashion especially during the performance of Dipo (a customary rites to usher adolescents into adulthood), festivals, marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies, funeral rites and others. Some of the elderly were also aware of the efficacy of beads when one man disclosed that: *“Yes, beads can heal some ailment both physical and spiritual”* (FGDs, 2018). It was discovered that the purposes for beads usage were in diverse ways including protection, beautification and medicinal. There were reasons to the wearing of a bead and these reasons are well known by the traditional people. For example, whiles some beads are worn at festival, others are worn for protection against evil spirits. Again, some are preserved for the use by only chiefs. Some beads are also worn by women who need conception; they believe when they wear it, they will give birth. One of the interviewees confirmed this assertion when she stated: *“Those who give birth to twins also have special beads they wear, and new born children too have particular beads that are used on them to protect them against evil spirits”*. This is in line with Avotri (2009) who posited that, Among the Krobo, conception marks the end of an individual’s life in humanity (spirit world) and the beginning of his life on the physical world. Hence a woman who becomes pregnant for the first time undergoes a ritual called *mi nɔkpafɔmi* (literally, tying a belly rope. This rite is to ward off evil machinations of sorcery and witchcraft. It is performed by the priest or priestess who ties *t ɔ vi*, *nyɔli*, and *kɔli* beads onto the fibre of the *h ɔ* tree to the waist of the pregnant woman. Avotri (2009). According to Avotri (2009, p. 56) discussed Beads in the Kroboland, He said, Krobo use beads for variety of occasions, ranging from social, matrimonial, court / political, rites of passage, to religious and spiritual occasions.

Our interaction with a bead producer also revealed that beads are highly cherished in kroboland just like gold and other minerals in other areas. To the Krobos, the beads are very special for they are used to perform various rites and rituals in their communities. Among the benefits are: Beads are adorned to beautify the body; they are used to initiate girls into adulthood and other customs in our societies; and Beads are used to check weight either loss or gain in human being especially among women and children. In the kroboland, beads nurture the life of the people devoid of stealing because one does it at his/her own peril. Thus, if you steal somebody’s family beads, there is likelihood for you to die when rituals are performed by the owner. An interviewee had this to say: *“For instance if someone come for my mother’s beads by stealing and rhetorically I open my mouth by saying, mother your beads have been stolen please go for it, lo and behold the thief will bring it himself or face consequence of death through pursuance of the ancestors”* (Interviewed, female, 2018). These views are supported by Dubin (1987), he discussed that, bead played important roles in the beliefs and practices of sympathetic magic, love and fertility charms and their equivalents as the case may be from one generation to the other.

Additionally, beads are made for the purposes of incantation and rituals. Such beads are normally designed to take the shape of some creatures like; butterfly, snakes, centipede, and the likes. Those beads are sometimes difficult to reach as mentioned: *“Ahwenepa (literally good beads) are very rare and very difficult to get, because it possesses some special qualities which can evoke by our elders either for good or sometimes for bad purposes”* (Male interviewee, 2018). Some unique chemicals are sometimes added to certain beads in the production stage to make them perform extra functions. *“For instance, gold dust is added to some Bodom beads specially made for some kings, chief priest, elders of society, and some fetishes”* (Interview, male, 2018). This explains why Bodom beads (see figure 1), which the Krobos are the custodians, are the most expensive and popular beads in Ghana. A bead dealer emphasised the importance of the Bodom beads by saying that: *“A human being must not tell lies in presence of Bodom beads because if you do, you do for your own peril, anything could happen to you”*. The Bodom beads are mostly used by the priest because it is believed that the presence of the Bodom beads deter people from telling lies. To some of the people, beads are known to be their main source of livelihood. They only indulge in beads business to survive. One respondent stated: *“I have known and used beads since my infancy; beads making were business of our great ground father and we are also continuing the tradition as handed down to us”* (Interviewed, female, 2018). The Bodom beads have actually maintained the beads industry over the years and currently flourishing more than any other bead. One of the respondents even said that: *“the Bodom beads have collapsed most or all other beads except the Brass beads of Ashantis which is now selling”* (Interview, male, 2018). These findings are in line with Huber (1993) and Avotri (2009) who described how the bead is used in the various rites of passage, namely, the naming ceremony of the Krobo, the dipo, marriage and death. To them, the Krobos use beads for variety of occasions, ranging from social, matrimonial, court/political, rites of passage, to religious and spiritual occasions.



Figure 1: Bodom bead on a wrist of family member and other beads
Source: Field Data, 2018

4.2 The efficacious of Krobos' beads for curative purposes

Beads are very important in Ghana due to the various roles they play in related fields including health. An interview with a 90 year old priestess as confirmed the positive impact of the potency of beads when she mentioned that, *"my father was herbalist and traditionalist who used diverse visual art forms for curative purposes"*. She recounted a number of incidents she had used beads to restore humanity in a form of fertility, warding off of evil spirits, and protections. The use of visual art forms for restoration has been linked with paganism which has nowadays retired its usage. "Puwa", for instance, is the brightest among the white beads. These beads have come also to be known as the beads that were used in exchange for slaves. He said: *"They used just one of these beads in exchange for seven human beings"*. 'Puwa' is called 'Bakim Mutu' in Hausa which literary mean Human mouth. It is believed that when a child is sick or is being possessed by evil spell, one of these beads is just hang around the neck or any other part of the child's body with string thread, it protects the child from the evil spell that is coming from any bad act like witchcraft. For example, during the FGDs, one woman said: *"My son got relief from the attacks of witchcraft when a single puwa bead was used as necklace for him"* (Woman, FGDs, 2018). Another woman also mentioned that: *"Beads are wrapped around the calf of children who find it difficult to walk just to check and straighten the bones apart from its beautification"*; Interviewed with a mother of five who had used bead to cure her last but one child who was having feeble bones which prevented him to walk early. She postulated that, it took about three years before he was able to walk. "I took him to our village traditional priest who wrapped some special beads around his calf and other joints for some months which aided him to walk. *Beads can also treat diabetes because the ceramics dyes used for beads production has some power to cure diabetes.*" (Interviewed, Man, 2018). It can therefore be inferred that beads can be used for protection as well as healing of some ailments.

It is believed that, beads are properties of families as handed by the ancestors for the well-being of the family members. There are two types of beads on Krobolands, the older ones which originated from grounds and the modern ones made with glass. The older type is the one preserved by great ground fathers and therefore considered as a property to every family. It is believed that, when one steals this type of beads from a family, it will result in death. Even if a family member takes it without authority from elders, he or she will face consequences especially when sold and misuse the money for good purposes which in a way will benefit the whole family. The beads are only to be used for protection and wealth making. One of the interviewees said that: *"Even if you are a family member and you sell beads for bad intentions you will die for misusing the ancestors' property; the beads have power to protect and guide us from evil-doers internally and externally"* (Interviewed, male, 2018). Beads also help and make sexual intercourse more enjoyable to men and women, the main reason why women, especially Krobos, like wearing beads. A woman interviewed confessed: *"All that I know is that, beads are adorned by women to arouse the feelings of the opposite sex especially the one adorn at waist line"* (Interviewed, female, 2018). Though, beads are known to help induce fertility, people have other mentality. A priest stated that: *"the use of beads to induce fertility is a psychological inducement; I don't belief that there is any spiritual power in the beads but it is a psychological inducement"* (Interviewed, male, 2018). He explains that, when several medications fail, beads are given to the barren woman to be used by putting around their waist line after special prayers are offered. This he said would take the mind off from stress, anxiety, the Husband and

every trauma as the beads make her relaxed and helps her to become fertile. Antubam (1963) opines that, some special beads known to Akans as bodom are said to possess the power to breathe and reproduce. This implies that the women wear these beads for some time in their waist and in the process the beads helped rendered them fertile.

Beads have powers for special purpose in which they are made for. Some beads are powerful in preventing still birth and to sustain lovely relationships because certain chemicals are added during their manufacturing. Beads are mixed with cowry to perform special function(s) since the cowry represents spiritual inference. These specially made beads are mostly adorned by chiefs and top ranking members in societies to ward-off evil spirits and for protection. Even how the beads are arranged on string or thread made it medicinal. A woman said: “*At first, women wear beads around the waist line for decoration and also to attract men unto them but today some women use beads as ‘juju’ to retain men who come their way*” (Interviewed, woman, 2018). These views are supported by Dubin (1987) who posited that, beads play important roles in the beliefs and practices of sympathetic magic, love and fertility charms and their equivalents as the case may be from one generation to the other. Among the Krobo, conception marks the end of an individual’s life in ‘huani mi’ (spirit world) and the beginning of his life on the physical world. Hence a woman who becomes pregnant for the first time undergoes a ritual called ‘mi nɔkpa fɔmi’ (literally, tying a belly rope. This rite is to ward off evil machinations of sorcery and witchcraft. It is performed by the priest or priestess who ties ‘t ɔ vi, nyɔli, and kɔli’ beads onto the fibre of the h ɔ tree to the waist of the pregnant woman (Avotri, 2009).

4.3 CONCLUSION

Visual Art forms play special roles in social, political, economic, religious, psychological and aesthetic perspectives. The knowledge in the traditional usage of art forms for therapy is however inadequate for less is documented in the literature. The purpose of the study was to assess the efficacy of Krobos’ beads used for curative purposes. The Krobos’ perceived that beads have some powers to protect and also can cure some ailments. Special-made beads are mostly adorned by chiefs and other top ranking members in society to ward-off evil spirit and for protection. The beads are believed to have power to protect both children and adults against evil spell. Besides, the beads are used for special fashion including the performance of customary rites to usher adolescents into adulthood, festivals, marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies, funeral rites, among others. Beads are also known to be efficacious for curative purposes. The aspect of curative measures can be added to our existing health institutions for accessibility in Ghana and even beyond.

It is recommended that art therapy should be encouraged and professionals in art therapy who use art therapy effectively to administer restoration need not to be trained only but their activities also need to be documented for reference. In writing of art text books and other art materials, for instance, Ghana’s artistic therapeutic potencies need to be included to enrich our repertoire of art historic knowledge. Art students and writers are encouraged to embark on further research into the identification and proper documentation of therapeutic potencies of traditional visual art forms and further extend it to other ethnic groups in the country for easy identification and accessibility.

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